Music, 'Race' and Diaspora: Romani Music Making in Ostrava, Czech Republic

Melissa Wynne Elliott
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School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London
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Abstract

This thesis is a contribution towards an historically informed understanding of contemporary music making amongst Roma in Ostrava, Czech Republic. It also challenges, from a theoretical perspective, conceptions of relationships between music and discourses of 'race'. My research is based on fieldwork conducted in Ostrava, between August 2003 and July 2004 and East Slovakia in July 2004, as well as archival research in Ostrava and Vienna. These fieldwork experiences compelled me to explore music and ideas of 'race' through discourses of diaspora in order to assist in conceptualising and interpreting Romani music making in Ostrava.

The vast majority of Roma in Ostrava are post-World War II émigrés or descendants of émigrés from East Slovakia. In contemporary Ostrava, most Roma live on the socio-economic margins and are most often regarded as a separate 'race' with a separate culture from the dominant population. Chapter 1 considers Romani history and origins in the light of postmodern perspectives. Academic and grassroots debates are reviewed and I explore their significance in the context of contemporary Romani music making in Ostrava. The history of 'race', the history of Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia 1399-1948, and their increasing interweaving and fatal collision in the Nazi-led Holocaust, is outlined in chapter 2. The legacies of the Holocaust, Romani history and contemporary racial experiences are considered in relation to the anthem of the Czech and Slovak Roma.

Chapter 3 considers life for Roma under Czechoslovak socialism and I examine recordings of Romani music and memories of this time. In chapter 4, the vast socio-economic and cultural changes following the demise of the Communist party and the influence of the modern nation-state and nationalism are explored in relation to Ostrava Roma and the major reinterpretations of Romani musical traditions that have been taking place post-1989.

The phenomenon of Rompop is discussed in chapter 5, particularly its contemporary expressions in bands, parties and discos in Ostrava, which is then used as an example in the consideration of possible connections between music and ideas of 'race' in a theoretical interlude. Chapter 6 explores new trends in Ostrava music making that mark a fundamental rupture with traditions and draw on a variety of cultural expressions from around the globe. In chapter 7, I introduce the small and separate group of Vlach Roma in Ostrava and their strong diasporic connections to other Vlach. I conclude my theoretical challenge to conceptions of music and 'race' in chapter 8 by offering a framework with which to consider Romani music making in Ostrava and its racialisation, drawing on Hall's theory of articulation and discourses of diaspora.

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A note on terminology and languages

There is often confusion arising over the terms Rom, Roma, Romani/y, and Gypsy, and use varies widely. The word Gypsy, not exactly equivalent to the clearly pejorative *Cikán/Cigán*[1] in Czech/Slovak, is understood by some to be offensive and insulting. However, others would challenge the insulting connotations implied by what they feel should be a word without negative associations (for example, Cartwright 2001:8). Roma, *Romové* in Czech, is currently the term most widely used by Romani and non-Romani academics, human rights activists and Czech sympathisers in the Czech Republic, although some academics use Roma and Gypsies interchangeably (for example, Silverman, Hancock, Acton). Previously denoting just one ethnic group, the term Roma is used now to include all groups of Gypsies/Roma, such as Romanchial, Servika, Hungarian, Vlach, Boyash and Sinti. The singular of Roma is Rom, literally meaning man in Romani. The word Romani, or Romany depending on the transliteration, is the adjective of the noun Rom, *Romský* in Czech, or the language, *Romština* in Czech.

Any use of languages other than English in this thesis is determined by its relevance. If people I worked with often used particular Czech, Slovak, Hungarian or Romani words for an important concept, then they are given in the language(s) most commonly used. Amongst Roma in Ostrava, that language was mostly Czech, with some Romani, and some Slovak amongst older generations. Song lyrics are given in the language most commonly used and translated as closely as possible to English. Czech, Slovak or Romani translations of English words are also intended to provide reference points for those familiar with these languages. Czech is abbreviated to Cz, Romani to Ro, Slovak to Sl, Hungarian to Hu, and German to Ge.

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[1] In the Slovak language, the verb *cigániť* translates as to lie. Owing to the proximity of Slovakia, there is much influence from Slovak on the use of Czech in Ostrava.

Introduction

Roma are possibly the least understood and most poorly represented people in Europe, which is inextricably connected to their widespread socio-economic suffering. Myths, rumours, racist stereotypes, prejudices and plain falsehoods about Roma/Gypsies abound, which include the legendary musical ability of Roma. This thesis is a contribution towards a historically informed understanding of contemporary music making amongst Roma in Ostrava and, stemming from that, a theoretical challenge to conceptions of relationships between music and ideas of 'race'.

After living in the Czech Republic for two years, my research began in earnest with a library survey of Romani history and music and a theoretical investigation into connections between music and racial ideas, organically developing into an exploration of diasporic discourse as a possible way to challenge some of the problematic issues in understanding such connections. My research is primarily based on fieldwork conducted in Ostrava, Czech Republic, between August 2003 and July 2004 and East Slovakia in July 2004, as well as archival research in Ostrava and Vienna. These fieldwork experiences further compelled me to explore more productive and responsible conceptions of music and racial ideas through diaspora discourse to assist in conceptualising and interpreting Romani music making in Ostrava.

Figure 1: Map of the Czech Republic

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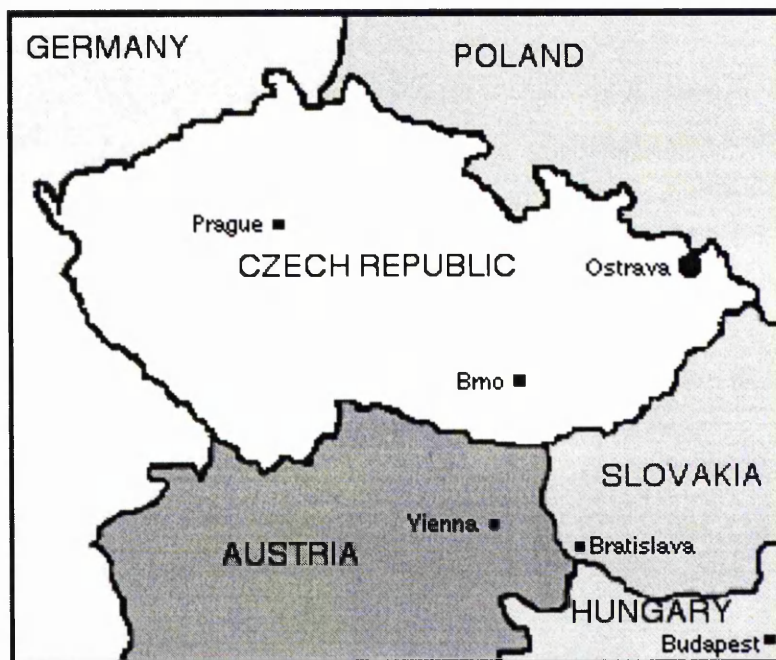
0.1 An introduction to Roma in Ostrava

> The city of Ostrava is not simply ugly. It is spectacularly, memorably ugly, the immense tombstone of an idea carried to its illogical extreme. Set on the southern edge of the Silesian hills where the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia meet, Ostrava was the crucible that forged the aspirations of Eastern European communism for two generations, the foundry that poured the Iron Curtain. It was populated according to a production plan, and the days of its 350,000 residents are regulated still by whistles and clanks. Abandoned mine shafts, smokestacks spewing grit into the air, mountainous slag heaps, the blackened faces of men and women just up from the coal pits, children who never stop coughing: these are Ostrava's landmarks and citizens. (Viviano 1994)

The mines had all closed by the time I arrived in Ostrava in August 2003, but many Roma spoke nostalgically of employment in the mines, steelworks and chemical factories under socialism that petered out after 1996. Some Romani communities are now facing 100% unemployment, with an overall level of around 80% Romani unemployment in Ostrava,[2] compared to the city average of 18.4% in 2004,[3] which is well above the national average. The pollution has decreased, but many people have been left with breathing difficulties and childhood asthma is widespread. Ostrava is still viewed as ugly by outsiders, but that does not concern most of its Romani residents who are in socio-economic freefall and constantly fear skinhead attack.[4] Many flats and houses that Roma have been forced to inhabit have been deemed uninhabitable by the town council, as the abandoned mine shafts below have caused the land to sink, causing permanent damp problems and poisonous fungi. Nevertheless, many Roma have been moved to these areas and despite repeated requests the council is unwilling to relocate them to safe housing.[5]

In the city of Ostrava, Roma now make up an estimated 10% of the city's population.[6] Currently, out of approximately 30,000 Roma in Ostrava, around 90% are émigrés or descendants

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[2] There are no official unemployment statistics specifying ethnic origin, however Czech social workers and Roma at the NGO "Life Together" have estimated the extent of Romani unemployment in Ostrava to be around 80%. The European Romani Rights Centre has estimated that Romani unemployment is seven times the national average in the Czech Republic http://www.errc.org, accessed on 14/03/05.

[3] http://www.answers.com/topic/ostrava, accessed on 15/03/05

[4] Although there are many different skinhead movements across Europe and the U.S., I found that the skinheads in Ostrava were overwhelmingly characterised by their ideas of white supremacy, hatred of Roma and dark-skinned people, violence, mass rallies and support of Ostrava Baník football team. There were many reported and unreported cases of skinhead attack on Roma and others in the Czech Republic. I did not manage to talk to any skinheads in Ostrava, although I did talk to people that had been to their rallies and were studying the movement, such as Kumar Vishwanathan. It was a worryingly strong movement in Ostrava, recruiting increasingly younger members, attracting the concern of some primary school teachers.

[5] For more information concerning housing, employment and social injustices for Roma, see articles by the European Roma Rights Centre, Patrin website, the Christian Science Monitor, country reports on human rights by the US state department, Amnesty, and Romani news sites such as http://www.romnews.com and http://www.romove.cz.

[6] Ostrava's population was 315,442 in 2003 http://www.answers.com/topic/ostrava, accessed on 15/03/05.

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of émigrés, who have arrived from rural East Slovakia during the last 50 years where they had been settled since around the 14th century. These émigrés were predominantly from Slovak Romani groups and a few Hungarian Romani groups (these labels were allocated by researchers according to groups' traditional Romani dialect and occupations). The previous Romani population living in the Czech lands since around the 14th century was destroyed in the Nazi-led Holocaust during World War II. Smaller contemporary Romani groups in Ostrava include Vlach and Sinti. The Vlach remained separate from other Roma, through maintaining traditional structures and practices including their own king, legal system and court, the buying of brides, endogamy and the Vlach Romani dialect (see chapter 7). The Roma I focus on in the rest of the introduction and chapters 1-6 are the non-Vlach Roma in Ostrava, who have tended to merge with one another. Their socio-economic level is drastically lower than the majority population and the many other minority groups in Ostrava (Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks, Germans, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Vietnamese) and racial discrimination has affected many areas of their lives.

Although a thriving skinhead movement in and around Ostrava represented an extreme minority, prevalent opinion in Ostrava stated implicitly and explicitly that Roma were inferior to other 'races' and cultures. Even though many Roma were fiercely proud of "being Romani", Roma themselves had imbibed this discourse to some degree, which was exemplified in the often heard statement "I'm a Gypsy, but I'm a good person" (Cz: *Já jsem cikán ale jsem dobrý člověk*). There was a tendency for both Roma and non-Roma in Ostrava to explain Roma's socio-economic circumstances and cultural differences in terms of 'race' politics that essentialised Roma and ethnic Czechs into a binary system of stereotypes, with many traditional and contemporary stories to support these interpretations.[7]

Through a combination of the effects and pressures of communist and post-communist government policies, traditional community structures and cultural practices have been eroded, and traditional ways of life have been abandoned. Despite various initiatives, the Romani language is increasingly unused. Roma have come under increasing pressure to live according to perceived national cultural norms, and in many ways they are doing so, even though the majority

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[7] My presence in Ostrava was generally viewed as outside this binary system of stereotypes, and I was predominantly welcomed by Roma who mostly saw me as a potential outside ally. Czechs and Roma often saw me as a connection to "Western" economic success and fashions, and I was welcomed for that: my professed interest and research into Romani music was mostly not understood and often dismissed. In certain situations, my presence was complicated and I felt the effects of being drawn into this binary system: if Czechs mistook me for being Romani; if Roma found they had by implication included me in tirades abouts white people; if Roma found my interest suspicious and invasive; if Roma declared "she's one of us"; or if Czechs realised my sustained interest in Romani music and people.

of Romani teenagers and adults had attended remedial special schools, presently being replaced by other forms of segregation and streaming in mainstream schools, and were subsequently unemployed, living in substandard Romani ghettos. In Ostrava, Roma were largely assimilated without experiencing integration. During my fieldwork, the Czech Republic joined the European Union (1 May 2004), which was greeted with widespread scepticism in Ostrava, for it accompanied further unemployment and rapidly rising prices of basic items that were not matched by increases in social security benefits, agitating already inflamed social tensions.

In Ostrava, I found that very few Romani musicians were able or wished to play Romani music that was considered traditional, and Roma were mostly consuming a variety of mainstream Western pop music, hip hop and Rompop, a style that incorporates traditional Romani elements into a pop sound. There were a variety of contemporary activities, situations and music making that were considered Romani, which did not conform to traditional notions of Romani culture, and were not accepted as Czech either.

0.2 Fieldwork

My research into Romani music in the Czech Republic grew out of two years living in Prague (1999-2001)[8] and ethnomusicological interests stimulated by the Masters programme at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2001-2002). Whilst in Prague, I attended a concert and festival of Romani music, and heard a wide range of prejudices and horror stories about Roma from my students, colleagues and the media. I was puzzled about how and why a group of people could be so widely reviled, and intrigued by the atmosphere and energy created at the annual international *Khamoro* (Ro; sun) festival of Romani music that encompassed such a variety of styles and performers.

After I had done some detailed reading, made an initial trip to the Czech Republic to organise fieldwork and stay with a Romani family, and started to make sense of the prejudices I had encountered during my time in Prague, I began to appreciate the effects of racial ideas and racialised experiences. In Ostrava, racialisation of people, experiences and ideas into essentialised stereotypes, and the consequent hierarchies, marginalisation, segregation and discrimination, were overwhelmingly prevalent. I had read about traditional Romani folklore in the Czech Republic and Slovakia as described by Davidová & Žižka (1991) and Jařabová & Davidová (2000), but what I initially encountered in Ostrava offered a very different perspective on Romani

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[8] During the first year I taught business English in the city and worked at an international pre-school, and in the second year I taught music at an English language Czech high school.

music and culture that brought into question the nature of Romani music. How and why was music "Romani", a stubbornly racial label in Ostrava, and what were the connections between music that was considered Romani and the city's raging racial politics?

I started to explore the connection between music and discourses of 'race' theoretically, then in the context of my fieldwork, and subsequently theoretically again. Interrelated practical and theoretical problems immediately became apparent, for which there were no easy solutions, and I was struck by the persistence of regressive, unrealistic and unhelpful ideas and concepts. Through reading cultural theorists such as Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall, I came to discourses on diaspora. Aspects of this literature strongly resonated with my fieldwork experiences and opened up avenues to approaching ideas of music and 'race' in ways that I suggest are more realistic, productive and more politically responsible, primarily in the context of Romani music making in Ostrava but also as part of a more general theoretical challenge.

After an initial visit to the cities of Ostrava and Brno in January 2003, I completed a month of language preparation (July 2003) and conducted four intensive periods of fieldwork between August 2003 and July 2004. In order to carry out fieldwork, I made contact with a local NGO "Life Together" (Cz: *Vzájemné Soužití*) who allowed me to stay at the new Co-existence Village (Cz: *Vesnička Soužití*) in the north of Ostrava.[9] The village was less than a year old when I arrived and had been built in response to the devastating floods of 1997 that left thousands homeless and hundreds of Roma living semi-permanently in metal cabins, as they were the lowest priority for re-housing by the local council.

The Co-existence Village was an experimental solution for a handful of victims of the floods, which tackled rapidly rising social tensions, a chronic shortage of affordable housing, and a desperate need for a new start for the most disadvantaged.[10] The village comprised 30 households: ten Romani, ten ethnic Czech and ten ethnic Czech and Romani. (In Ostrava, I found that Roma were often categorised in opposition to Czechs, even though the vast majority of Roma there had Czech citizenship). I had a room in the community centre, and therefore soon became involved in village life. Village relations were emerging quickly internally and with the surrounding area, and it was a privilege to witness the negotiations taking place in this new

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[9] I was not officially connected to "Life Together", but undertook voluntary translation work and English language teaching as goodwill gestures, and often felt myself to be an "international presence" in general and an outside observer during some difficult situations that arose. I joined in some of the activities promoted by the NGO, but remained a free agent in terms of my movements, who I spoke to, and what I felt able to write about afterwards, although I have been influenced by spending time with people dedicated to detailing and fighting injustices against Roma.

[10] Other conditions for acceptance in the Co-existence Village project were: being long-term unemployed, being reliant on welfare benefits, having children, and being committed to the idea of co-existence.

environment that was loaded with all kinds of pressures, not least from people willing the project to fail. Nearby Romani ghettos were accessible by foot or a short bus ride, and the village was also a meeting point that enabled me to gain access to other Romani communities in Ostrava.

During my fieldwork, I kept up a busy schedule, visiting the four community centres under the auspices of the "Life Together" organisation to participate in and watch different cultural activities, help out, or just sit and chat. I taught English to a group of unemployed teenagers and groups of adult women, and provided an ad hoc translation and homework help service, which, as well as enabling me to feel that I was contributing to the communities, was very helpful in establishing good relations and contacts. It was important to keep up regular visits to families that I was close to, which usually involved drinking very sweet coffee and consuming large quantities of food and vodka. The pressure to consume lessened as people became more familiar with me and trusted that I had a favourable opinion of them.

Figure 2: Sketch of Romani communities in Ostrava
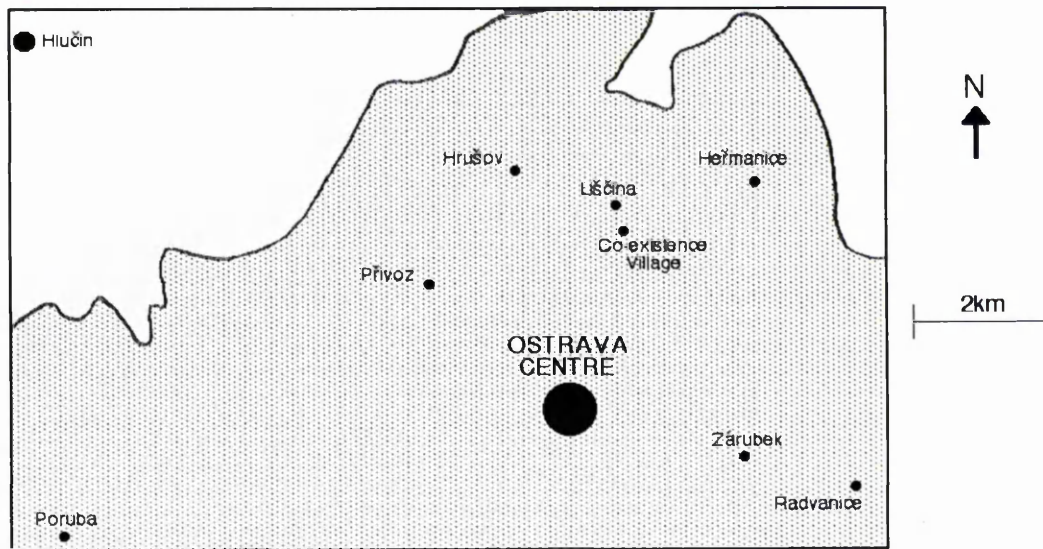
I went to family parties, often being invited because I owned a video camera and people had heard that I gave hosts a copy of my recording. I attended the weekly parties of the Romani community centre in Přivoz most Saturday afternoons, and their theatre rehearsals for a performance recreating a traditional Romani wedding. I attended one-off cultural events, festivals and celebrations in Ostrava, which included elements of Romani musical traditions, pop, hip hop, jazz, Latin, Rompop, breakdancing and traditional dancing. Although most of my stay was spent with non-Vlach Roma (predominantly Slovak and Hungarian Roma), I also visited three Vlach

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families including the Ostrava-based king of the Czech Vlach. I went to other towns and cities in the area including Opava and Brno to visit well-known Romani musicians, and I spent time at the Ostrava radio archives, the Vienna Phonogramm archive and the Romani museum in Brno. I also made a trip to East Slovakia to visit relatives of Romani families I knew in Ostrava who lived in the Richanva settlement, near Prešov.

I learnt Romani music for six months from a local Slovak Romani musician called Janko, and played in one of his bands, *Gypsy Imre*. This band was a combination of Janko on alto saxophone, Štefan, his brother-in-law who played the accordion and came from the esteemed Žiga musician family, Jiří, a Czech amateur violinist, and myself on the French horn. The band played a variety of gigs in the area ranging from art exhibition openings to local music bars, and a joint concert in the local prison with Romani and non-Romani prisoners, organised by "Life Together". My experience playing and learning Romani music with Janko was an extremely intense time. Janko and his wife regarded me as a daughter and they tried to guard my affections and movements jealously. I was often reluctantly drawn into the family's domestic issues, and the learning of songs was surrounded by lengthy rituals of coffee drinking, eating and conversation, frequently interrupted by visits from other Roma to sort out money disputes, business deals and other problems: it could take several hours to learn one song.

I mostly used Czech to communicate with Roma in Ostrava, as many were not familiar with Romani, knew just a few words, or only understood passively. The lingua franca was almost always Czech, especially amongst the younger generations, with the exception of some children from the Zárubek community. Those that did speak Romani spoke to me in Czech and taught me words and phrases in Romani. For some interviews with musicians that I met only once or twice, I had the assistance of Jiří Macháček, who was not an interpreter, but often helped in moments of difficulty.[11] Musicians who were happy to be interviewed were usually those that had had previous interview experience and had therefore polished their stories and points of view. Roma who I spent a lot of time with did not see the need for me to interview them formally or record their speaking voices, partly because they were nervous of speaking under pressure, but also because they were highly suspicious of having their views recorded. In contrast, Roma were usually keen to have their music, dancing, festivals and celebrations recorded.[12]

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[11] Renata Beranková transcribed the interviews in Czech from recordings and any translations from Czech are my own unless otherwise stated.

[12] I recorded using a Panasonic digital video camera mini DV and Sony mini disc player, purchased with the help of an AHRC (formerly the AHRB) fieldwork allowance. I took photographs with an APS camera.

0.3 Thesis structure

The thesis concurrently explores the historical background and contemporary expressions of Romani music making in Ostrava, as well as a theoretical framework to challenge conceptions of the connections between music and ideas of 'race'. The three strands running through the research can be summarised thus:

- The role of representations of distant and recent pasts in contemporary contexts of Romani music making in Ostrava

- Interpretation of diverse contemporary musical expressions of Roma in Ostrava

- A theoretical framework exploring relations between ideas of music, 'race' and diaspora that aids interpretation and understanding of Romani music making in Ostrava

The rest of the introductory chapter outlines the content of the following chapters, explains important background concepts of Romani music in Ostrava, and situates my research in the context of the increasingly coherent body of work on Romani history and music, through a literature review. Finally, I consider my research specifically in the development of Romani music research in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Chapter 1 considers Romani history and origins in the light of postmodern perspectives. Academic and grassroots' debates are reviewed and I explore their significance in contemporary Romani music making in Ostrava. In chapter 2, I begin with a statement on 'race' and then I explore the history of 'race', the history of Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia 1399-1948, and their increasing interweaving and fatal collision in the Nazi-led Holocaust. The legacies of the Holocaust, Romani history and contemporary racial experiences are considered in connection to five different performances of the anthem of the Czech and Slovak Roma, the only popularly known surviving song from the concentration camps.

Chapter 3 considers life for Roma under Czechoslovak socialism, conceptions of 'race' and class particularly relevant to Romani experiences of Communist party rule, and postmodern developments in racial discourse that foreshadow issues in following chapters. The mass rural to urban Romani migrations, increased socio-economic stability, advances in sound technology, and state-led devaluation and attempted erasure of Romani identity, all had enormous impacts on Romani music making, and I examine recordings of Romani music and memories of this time. In chapter 4, the vast socio-economic and cultural changes following the demise of the Communist party and the influence of the modern nation-state and nationalism are explored in relation to Ostrava Roma and the major reinterpretations of Romani musical traditions that have been taking place post-1989.

The phenomenon of Rompop is discussed in chapter 5, particularly its contemporary expressions in bands, parties and discos in Ostrava. I examine the life of one particular musician in Ostrava, Janko Ferenc, detailing my experience of learning Romani songs with him and his experience of traditional and Rompop bands. The music of two other Ostrava Romani musicians is discussed in the context of Rompop. In a theoretical interlude, following on from previous chapters' explorations of 'race' I consider how music and ideas of 'race' may be connected, drawing on Hall's theory of articulation (1973) and Gilroy's writings on relations between ideas of music and 'race' (1993), and using the concrete example of Rompop in Ostrava as discussed in chapter 5. In chapter 6, I explore new trends in Ostrava music making that mark a fundamental rupture with Romani musical traditions and draw on a variety of cultural expressions such as hip hop, international pop, beauty contests, cultural fusions and collaborations, and those associated with the Romani international movement. In chapter 7, I introduce the small and separate group of Vlach Roma in Ostrava and consider their strong diasporic connections to other Vlach.

Chapter 8 concludes my theoretical challenge to conceptions of music and 'race', by offering a framework with which to consider Romani music making in Ostrava and its racialisation, further drawing on Hall's theory of articulation and ideas of diaspora. I pull together the theoretical aspects of the previous chapters and an exploration of diaspora discourse to form a framework with which to aid interpretation of Romani music making in Ostrava, with particular attention to how 'race' is conceptualised. The appendix details my visit to a Romani settlement in East Slovakia, and a CD and DVD of audio and audiovisual examples provide evidence for analyses in chapters 2 to 5.

In the interests of not marginalising important elements of Romani life in Ostrava, I took a wide-ranging approach to Romani music making. There were inevitably problems in separating and dividing experiences for the purposes of organised interpretation, and these were compounded by the lack of importance attached by Roma in Ostrava to information concerning a music's history, origin and age, and to conceptualising music verbally or categorising it stylistically or historically. The situation surrounding Romani music making in Ostrava is introduced below.

Concerning traditional Romani repertoire and Rompop, a style that emerged in the 1960s incorporating traditional Romani elements into a pop sound, there was a great deal of confusion about where songs came from and how old they were. When I asked musicians where songs came from or how old they were, these questions were mostly met with slight irritation, a partially or wholly invented answer, or bewilderment that I could be asking such an irrelevant question. In any case, direct questioning was often viewed as suspicious, particularly questions that delved

into the past. Initially it was difficult to comprehend how Romani musicians and non-musicians tended to categorise music and why. I found that Romani musicians mostly categorised melodies as good (Cz: *dobré*) or weak (Cz: *slabé*), but after that the most important distinctions were old and modern.[13] Where songs had come from seemed irrelevant, except to the oldest musicians and the history of a song was submerged into the style in which it was being interpreted. In this way, a chronologically old song would be deemed modern if it was played in a style that conformed to perceived norms of sounding modern. Furthermore, if Roma regularly played a song and its (possibly non-Romani) history had passed out of consciousness, then it could be perceived as Romani.

Czech and Slovak researchers interested in Romani music have predominantly studied what they deemed to be a private, authentic folklore, which they collected and meticulously categorised (for example, Davidová & Žižka (1991), Belišová (2002). See also chapters 1-3). They tend to view Rompop and other developments as unwelcome aberrations, and many are involved in projects to save traditional Romani folklore, something in which most Roma in Ostrava and elsewhere are disinterested. Their work on traditional folklore categorises primarily according to the ethnic group of the performers, and secondarily the musical style and themes of lyrics. In contemporary Ostrava, I found that although there were still divides between different Romani groups, musical divides based on ethnic group only functioned between Vlach (chapter 7) and non-Vlach Roma (chapters 1-6).

From my own research, the characteristics that are important to Roma, and the detailed work done by Czech and Slovak researchers, I have made four broad distinctions in order to help conceptualise the plethora of Romani music making I encountered in contemporary Ostrava: traditional styles reinterpreted (chapter 4), Rompop (chapter 5), new trends (chapter 6) and Vlach music (chapter 7). These divisions are not discrete and some Romani music making may not sit easily in only one area.

Traditional styles were understood as such amongst contemporary Ostrava Roma for one reason only, because they sounded old (Cz: *starý*) or traditional (Cz: *tradiční*): the terms were used interchangeably in the context of music (see chapters 1-4). In my experience, 'traditional' primarily signified singing in the home on an ad hoc basis for Ostrava Roma, which was occurring less and less. This usually involved a solo voice or solo and supporting voices, with the possible addition of acoustic guitar or accordion. Songs typically associated with this context

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[13] A further confusion lay in the Czech word for composed (Cz: *složené*) as used by Romani musicians. Romani musicians were seemingly claiming to have recently composed traditional Romani folklore, and I discovered that *složené* could refer to writing new words to an old tune, making a new arrangement, or indeed original composition.

were what some researchers refer to as authentic Romani folklore, although in contemporary Ostrava, it was more usual to sing Rompop songs in this context, as traditional songs were increasingly, though not completely, forgotten. In contrast, the practice of singing and dancing to popular music tapes and CDs in the home was not perceived as old or traditional, because the music featured electric instruments and amplified sounds.

In my experience, 'traditional' also referred to dulcimer band instrumentation and the associated style and repertoire, all of which became widespread in Hungary from the latter half of the 18th century, blending folk music and Classical harmony: many male Romani musicians used to play in dulcimer bands, performing *verbunkos* (Hu; 18th century Hungarian army recruiting dance), and then *nóta* (Hu; 19th century Hungarian popular art songs) (Kovalcsik 2003). *Nóta* comprised *hallgató* (Hu; 'for listening', un-metred slow songs) and *čardáše* (Cz; quick dances). The bands also played regional folk songs, wedding music and anything else currently popular such as operetta or opera numbers, as well as some specifically Romani songs. The typical instrumental combination was two violins (one lead and one contra rhythm, later replaced by the viola), double bass and dulcimer, with the possible addition of clarinet (which performed a highly decorated, running descant over the lead violin's melody), and later accordion or saxophone. Vocalists, who were often female, were sometimes added. These bands became popular in Slovakia and the Czech lands, and the music they played was usually what people thought of as "Gypsy music" (Hu: *cigányzene*) in this region.

Today, these bands incorporate well-known pop hits and popular classical numbers, and have replaced many traditional instruments with keyboards, guitars and drum kits or electric drums, in which case they were no longer regarded as traditional. However, I found that these bands still functioned purely for profit, playing whatever non-Roma wished to hear, occasionally including a few Romani folk songs. Throughout the centuries, dulcimer bands have led to the rapid incorporation of different songs and elements into what is known as Romani music, and conversely led to the suggestion that there is no such thing as Romani music. In contemporary Ostrava, there was rarely opportunity for Romani bands to play for money to non-Roma, as Roma were unwelcome in or banned from bars, cafes, hotels or clubs. As far as I knew, there were no dulcimer bands in Ostrava during my fieldwork.

I found that dulcimer bands that used traditional instrumentation still existed in nearby Opava and Brno, but as a minority activity. Their repertoire comprised Hungarian *nóta*, (traditionally private) Romani folksongs, recently composed material, classical music, and music from other cultures. The style and arrangements often incorporated devices and techniques that are modern or appropriated from other cultures, yet people still referred to the music played by

these dulcimer bands as old. A song could be described as old/traditional in one context and new/modern in another. Direct questioning did not elicit this knowledge, and I found that the best way to learn was simply to look, listen and check my interpretations through trial and error with different people.

During my fieldwork, I found that music was understood to be 'modern' (Cz: *moderní*), implying fashionable, contemporary, urban and developed, amongst Roma if it was understood to sound modern, usually through the use of amplification and electric instruments, but also through obvious incorporation of musical ideas from other modern styles such pop, jazz, soul or funk. Although traditional lyrics, melodies or musical devices may be used, music was still regarded as modern as long as it was reinterpreted to sound as such. Of course, there is no fixed boundary between modern and traditional, however, Romani styles that are considered modern date from the 1960s with the explosion of pop and were referred to as Rompop. The distinction of modern was very important to many Roma, as they were concerned not to be associated with anything perceived as old-fashioned, backward or primitive. The way the distinction worked allowed history to be forgotten and old songs and traditional features to become modern, if desired.

My distinction of new trends indicates the inclusion of music making that was either tenuously related or unrelated to traditional styles, such as hip hop, break dancing or Latin. The types of cultural expressions indebted to these styles were unlikely to be described specifically as "Romani", but constituted an ever-increasingly important role in Romani music making and identity in Ostrava. These trends were all included in what were billed and conceived of as Romani cultural events: in Romani community centres, there were often events in the style of "Miss World" beauty contests that were viewed as quintessentially Romani. During my fieldwork, hip hop was very fashionable amongst Roma, and enjoying hip hop was viewed as a very Romani activity, in a way that enjoying rock music for example was not. Furthermore, some contemporary mainstream Rompop bands strongly identified themselves as Romani and used Romani lyrics, yet their aesthetic in no way referred to Romani tradition (for example, the Brno-based band Gulo Čar).

Having outlined the background to investigating contemporary Romani music making in Ostrava, I briefly review literature concerning Romani history, culture and music, in order to situate my thesis and the structure I have chosen within the existing body of research on Roma.

0.4 Review of literature on Romani history

In reaction to the general invisibility of Roma in historical discourses, there have been some notable attempts to redress the situation. As with many other subaltern people, "ethnic minorities" and non-Westerners, Roma are often dehumanised in their representation in dominant discourses as homogenous, muted, other and passive. In the few representations of Roma in European history, they are presented as criminals, sometimes as victims, or obstinately deviant and therefore marginalised. Whatever the drawbacks of literature published since the 1970s on Romani history and culture, these works are steps towards attempting to understand Romani experience from more informed and empathetic positions.

Hancock (for example, 1987, 2002) has made detailed linguistic studies of Romani languages and tireless efforts to redress the way Romani history has been distorted, edited and dominated by non-Roma (see chapter 1). Romani history from Romani points of view, stretching back further than someone's living memory, cannot be constructed via written sources or preserved artefacts, even if written by a Rom, for history from Romani points of view is only present in oral culture such as songs and epic tales (Ro: *paramisa*). There are some Roma who strive for dialogue with dominant groups and institutions in European countries amongst whom only certain kinds of usually written history are valued. On the other hand, as some Roma try to maintain their distinctiveness, they do not see why dominant, perhaps alien, structures should dictate and perhaps threaten their sense of history and culture.

Acton has made a sustained contribution to Romani history and Romani studies since the 1970s, particularly concerning Roma in the UK, but also Europe-wide. In terms of this thesis, the relevance of his work lies in his critical analysis of historical and methodological issues associated with studying Roma and Romani issues. One important issue he consistently raises, is the impossibility of making a universally acceptable definition for Gypsy, comparable to the problems of defining a Jew (1974:2). Many problems associated with studying Roma are according to Acton, connected to the under-theorisation of studying minorities and processes of adaptation, assimilation and modernisation. Acton attacks the way non-Roma scholars seem obsessed with legitimating Roma 'in the light of a primordial, self-sufficient and geographically bounded whole', which 'fixes Gypsies in a single, sedentarist territory, and freezes them in a mythical past' (1997:189), after which everything is a pollution of lost purity. Acton prefers to conceptualise Roma as complex, pioneering *bricoleurs* who take things from their surroundings, and reconstruct their meaning for their own use (borrowed from Lévi Strauss). Drawing on Derrida, Acton challenges Western-centric methods and history that have tended to work in

binary oppositions of purity as desirable and hybridity as contamination, which dismiss Roma as hybrid even though they have been a long-standing example of cultural coherence.

Barany (2002) has made the most recent attempt to produce an overarching historical and contemporary picture of Roma in Eastern Europe, making a comparison of seven countries,[14] focusing on socio-economic and political aspects. Barany tries to come to terms with methodological problems, and explain the 'age-old predicament of Gypsies,' mostly conceived of as their political, social and economic marginalisation (2002:1). He presents the Roma in different East European countries as having broadly similar experiences, regime change hardly affecting their marginality. His concluding advice to the Roma of Eastern Europe is to embark on a road of socio-economic and political integration, which reveals his preoccupation with a US style liberal agenda, and it is unsurprising that Barany bemoans the dominance of Romani studies by anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists and historians. Conversely, Crowe has contributed in a less overtly political manner on Eastern European Roma, taking a non-comparative, country-by-country approach tracing Romani history back to the Middle Ages when Roma probably arrived in Eastern Europe (1991, 1995).

Guy has written widely on Czech and Slovak Roma, and is the editor of an invaluable collection of articles mostly concerning historical, socio-economic and political factors in Romani life from their arrival in Eastern Europe to the present day (2001). The academic significance of this compilation is not undermined by its self-consciously overt political agenda of improving the actual living situation of Roma in Eastern Europe. In the introduction, Guy provides a historical context for and incisive analysis of the current situation in Eastern Europe, highlighting the demise and crisis of vast Roma populations, notably since 1989. Guy's article on the Czech and Slovak lands uses a wide variety of Czech and Slovak sources to provide a historical context for tackling contemporary issues of Roma identity and standards of living. Whilst being sensitive to cultural and historical concerns, and recognising the great diversity of Roma both within and between different Roma communities, Guy gives a practical account of the Czech and Slovak Roma situation and what can be done to ease the problems.

Davidová and Jařabová (2000) published the first book in the English language by a team of Romani and non-Romani academics based in the Czech Republic about Czech and Slovak Roma. The foreword makes their agenda abundantly clear: the Roma are very often living in terrible conditions and are victims of racism, and this book is part of an attempt to redress the situation by raising general awareness and educating those who have an interest in Romani history and contemporary cultural and social conditions. There are many moral judgements

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[14] Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics

throughout the work, which attest to the strong emotions involved in Romani studies and the high level of ignorance about Roma. Czech academics Davidová and Hübschmannová have been writing about Czech and Slovak Romani history, as well as linguistic, social and cultural issues since the 1960s.

0.5 Review of literature on Romani music and culture

Although there are large gaps in the body of knowledge about Romani culture and a lack of analysis in general, there are some distinguished books and articles on the subject. The first notable scholars to take a sustained look at Romani culture that went beyond stereotypes and attempted to form understandings from Romani perspectives were Acton (for example, 1974, 1981) and Okely (1983). Focusing on English Roma, Okely (1983) carried out extensive anthropological fieldwork and theorising about Romani culture and the way it interacts with and is formed in the context of wider society. Romani writers, such as Kenrick, Hancock and Gheorghe, have made sustained contributions to discourse on Romani culture. One point that all these writers are keen to emphasise is that there is no such thing as a Romani culture, rather, there are incredibly diverse, multiple ideas and manifestations of culture and identity, which may or may not be labelled Romani.

Acton and Mundy's seminal collection of articles (1997) comprises a multitude of approaches and scattered foci. Notably, Stewart employs an anthropological approach to explore the notion of group identity without a nation, focusing on ideas of economic and extra-domestic autonomy. He discusses the idea of 'brotherhood', which was often worked out and reinforced during the *mulatšago* (Ro; celebration), suggesting that these musical celebrations achieve an ideal of brotherly behaviour, which then serves as an inspiration for behaviour outside the *mulatšago*. In a similar vein, Kertész-Wilkinson's ethnomusicological article proposes that the social significance of song and dance performance lies in its reinforcement and renewal of the ethnic, kinship and gender boundaries of social structure, whilst transcending these boundaries to serve as a model for a more 'democratic' way of life.

Two anthropologically orientated scholars, who have written ethnographies of Hungarian and Spanish Roma, are respectively Stewart and Gay Y Blasco. Stewart (1988, 1997) draws on fieldwork in Hungary, particularly during the socialist era, and a wide-ranging theoretical background. Gay Y Blasco (1999, 2002) questions the notion of a Romani diaspora in terms of cultural, linguistic and biological unity, for different Romani groups very often do not recognise each other as belonging to the same social or moral community. Romani activists increasingly

draw on political discourses of dominant societies in order to petition for human rights and minority status, thereby reducing 'Gypsyness' to a 'badge which comes to symbolise nothing but itself' (2002:186), and attracting little grassroots support. Gay Y Blasco compares Romani activists and a community of Spanish Pentecostalist Roma, who both wish to reformulate the meaning of 'Gypsyness' by turning to the *gadjo* (Ro; contemptuous word for non-Roma) world for their tools, with the consequence that 'Gypsyness' is becoming more comprehensible to non-Roma. These studies are clearly oriented by the development of anthropology as a discipline in a similar way to which my research is oriented by ethnomusicology.

Romani music has long been a source of fascination for non-Romani audiences, music collectors and classical composers; it has been appropriated, romanticised and exoticised.[15] However, it is only relatively recently that ethnomusicology has begun to take Romani music seriously as a part of a wider Romani culture. The first musicologists to take a sustained interest in Romani music were Bartók and Kodály. They collected and preserved many melodies through field recordings and made transcriptions, analysing and putting them into musical categories (see for example, Bartók 1931). As Brown (in Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000:119-137) details, for many, this project was tainted by its role in furthering the Hungarian national project and its consequence of othering Roma in Hungary as non-Hungarian. Later however, Bartók was to modify his opinions and include Romani music in his revised, ethnically-hybrid conception of what it was to be Hungarian (ibid:132-137).

It is only relatively recently that East European Romani music has been considered from the point of view of its practitioners. Baumann (2000) edited a seminal collection of articles concerning Romani music, comprising a wide variety of approaches, including those associated with American anthropology, British ethnomusicology, more traditional East European ethnomusicology, and East European scholars who have received training in the West. Radulescu takes a traditional approach to the Romanian situation, by tackling the hazy distinction between Romani and Romanian music, concluding that however much people may want to make a distinction (for various reasons), it is impossible to isolate purely Romani music. Giurchescu considers Romani dance style as a marker of ethnic identity, noting that the ethnic split between Roma and non-Roma has always been intensified by the opposition between socially integrated and non-integrated Roma, and posits that because of their lifestyle, Roma have developed what is referred to as a 'double cultural competence' (Giurchescu in Baumann 2000:324). Kovalcsik draws attention to the great differentiation between Roma groups in Hungary, despite the fact that

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[15] For example, classical composers who have appropriated Romani music include Bizet, Bartók Liszt and Brahms.

mainstream Hungarian society tends to view them as homogenous. Silverman approaches Romani music in Skopje, Macedonia, from the point of view of gendered spaces. Although the collection lacks coherence, it also draws strength from the widely differing methods, approaches and case studies.

Perhaps most interesting out of Baumann's collection is Pettan's work. His study of Kosovan Roma focuses on Romani performance style, proposing that variation is a 'cultural mode', and that the key to understanding Romani musicianship 'in broad terms might be their attitudes', for their goal is not to imitate a tune, but to create a personalised version of it. The Romani repertoire in Kosovo uses many tunes from different ethnic groups inside and outside the region, only the manner of performance giving the music its distinctive character. He suggests that no musical parameters are considered obstacles for a tune's adoption and performance, whether structural or timbral. Pettan fleshes out his ideas with pertinent examples in various articles (1992, 2005, 2005a) and a video he shot in Kosovo (1999).

American ethnomusicologists have become increasingly fascinated with Romani music. In Slobin's book about musical change in Central and Eastern Europe (1996), Silverman contributes an article about music and politics in relation to the Roma of Bulgaria and Macedonia, positing that music is constitutive of politics: music shapes politics, economics and social life, as well as being shaped by them. The paradox of the Balkan Roma is that they are powerless politically and powerful musically: most Balkan non-Roma value Roma's musical abilities whilst discriminating against them as people. Silverman shows the need to go beyond studies of Romani music style and repertoire, and look at their marginalised position in relation to their music. The esteemed Keil and Keil volume *Bright Balkan Morning* (2002) provides a scenic look at Romani music in Greek Macedonia, with many first person accounts, photographs, an accompanying CD by Feld, and an introductory historical foreword from Hancock. Lange (2003) uses fieldwork to consider the negotiation of musical performance amongst a congregation of Roma and non-Roma in a Hungarian Pentecostalist church.

There is some journalistic writing of particular relevance, such as Cartwright's piece on censorship of Roma musicians in Romania, drawing on investigative journalism and NGO reports (2001), bringing our attention to the difference in status of Romani musicians within and outside Romania. An expanding body of reliable information that focuses on Romani culture is available on the Internet, notably the Patrin web journal.[16]

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[16] http://www.geocities.com

0.6 Research on Romani music in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

In the Czech Republic, focus has overwhelmingly been on traditional Romani folklore using traditional methods of collecting field recordings, analysis and categorisation. This rigorous research into tradition has paid scant attention to the role of music within wider society and recent changes that have occurred in Czech Romani communities. Contemporary studies of Czech Roma predominantly focus on socio-economic changes and studies of culture tend to be locked into notions of what Romani culture was in the past and the surviving remnants of that, rather than looking at the explosion of Rompop, radical re-interpretations of tradition, and developments associated with hip hop, jazz, pop, Latin and other styles.

Jurková published an article entitled *Co víme a nevíme o hudbě "našich" Romů* (Cz; What we know and do not know about the music of "our" Roma), where she compares how well examined the music of Gitanos, Hungarian and Balkan Roma is with the mere fragments known about Romani music in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (2003:96). The oldest sources of Romani music in the Czech lands date from the beginning of the 20th century, although Romani presence has been substantiated from the end of the Middles Ages.

Cikánských písničkách (Cz; Gypsy songs) by Jožka Černík, published in 1916, contains the oldest scores and texts of known songs of the Roma collected in South Moravia. Since the mid-1950s, Davidová and Hübschammanová have been making audio recordings, and some of their extensive collection in the Vienna Phonogramm archive was published on the LP *Romane giľa: antologie autentického cikánského písňového folklóru* (Ro;Cz; Romani song: anthology of authentic Gypsy song folklore, Davidová & Gelnar 1971), which includes recordings of Slovak and Vlach Romani music.[17] The oldest collection of field recordings of Vlach Romani music has been released on the CD *Vlachika Djila* (Ro; Vlach songs) (Davidová & Jurková 2001). *Romane giľa* (Ro; Romani song) contains a set of scores, text transcripts and an accompanying recording (Hübschammanová & Jurková 1999). On the basis of field recordings, two researchers, Havel and Macourk, made several anthologies of transcripts: *Aven Roma* (1985) contains idiosyncratic arrangements of 40 songs with piano accompaniment.

The Hungarian ethnomusicologist Kovalcsik has edited a collection of books: *Vlach Gypsy Folk Songs in Slovakia* (Kovalcsik 1985), *Folk Music of the Sedentary Gypsies of Czechoslovakia* (Davidová & Žižka 1991, redistributed as *Čhajori Romaňi* 1999) and *The fair is*

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[17] Many of these field recordings were released in 2002 by the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv and the Brno Museum of Romani Culture on the CD *Giľa-Ďila-Giľora: Písně olašských a usedlých Romů* (Ro; song-song-song: Cz; Songs of the Vlach and Settled Roma).

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ahead of me: Individual creativity and social contexts in the performances of a Southern Hungarian Vlach Gypsy slow song (Kertész-Wilkinson 1997). Slovak researcher, Belišová has made two volumes of *phurikane giľa* (Ro; old/ancient songs), which she describes as the 'authentic' Romani folklore only found amongst Romani communities (2002). *Dúral me avilem* (Ro; From far I come) comprises an anthology of hitherto unknown song texts of Vlach Roma (Stojka, Davidová & Hübschammanová 2000). Moravian music folklorist Holý together with historian Nečas has transcribed and written about the songs of Moravian Roma in the concentration camps during World War II (Holý & Nečas 1993), and Andrš has written about Romani prison music (1997). Davidová and Jurková (1999) *Romové: Tradice a současnost* (Cz; Roma: Tradition and the present) contains the most recent detailed review of the limited knowledge on Romani musical folklore in the Czech Republic.

Researchers have most often divided Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia into five subethnic groups: Slovak, Sinti, Hungarian, Vlach and Moravian & Czech. These are based primarily on linguistic differences and traditional employment. However, in terms of Romani music in the Czech Republic post-World War II, Jurková presents Moravian, Slovak and Vlach as the three main groups (2003). Music of the Sinti (German Roma) has not survived, Hungarian Romani music is closely related to the Slovak group, and very little Moravian or Czech Romani music has survived after the Holocaust even though music was one of the traditional professions of Moravian Roma (Davidová 1991). Today, there are very few Sinti in the Czech Republic, and they have often intermarried with other Roma, although they were traditionally endogamous. In Ostrava, I did not encounter any Moravian Roma who had preserved their distinctive music (although there are some in Brno). Hungarian Roma from south and southeast Slovakia who came to the Czech Republic post-1945 have in many respects merged with the larger numbers of Slovak Roma. I outline the background to Slovak and Vlach Romani music below.

The oldest recorded stratum of Slovak Romani song repertoire is *phurikane giľa* (Ro; old/ancient songs). It has two forms, *hallgató* (Hu; slow songs for listening) and *čardáše* (Cz; quick dances), which have their roots in the Hungarian *nóta*. Essential features of *hallgató* are slow tempo and *rubato 'agogika'* with a basic pulse of around 60 beats a minute (Jurková 2003:101. See chapter 2 for more about *hallgató*). The texts belong to several thematic spheres: *čorikane giľa* (Ro; songs about orphanhood and poverty), *hareštantska (hertenošika) giľa* (Ro; songs about prison) and *mulatošna giľa* (Ro; drinking songs). The majority of texts about these themes are sung to *hallgató* melodies, however occasionally a *čardáš* melody is used. (Paragraph based on Jurková 2003 and Davidová 1991, who are indebted to Sárosi 1977).

Čardáš originally came from the Hungarian folk dance, disseminated predominantly by Romani music groups (see chapter 3 for more about *čardáš*). Its origin is in the Hungarian *verbunkos*, which from the end of the 18th century was used to guide men recruited into the armed forces. The men danced *čardáše* either solo, or as a couple dance with women, with the men improvising solos. It is a 2/4 time dance, with offbeat quaver syncopation. The melody is usually created in two sections, which corresponds to four lines of text, it is in the major or minor key, and its range does not usually go beyond an octave. The texts of *čardáš* are often love poems, or expressing aspects of men and women's relations, or about belonging in the *mulatošna giľa* (Ro; drinking songs) or more rarely in *čorikane giľa* (Ro; songs about orphanhood and poverty). Textual form is not fixed and the number of syllables in an individual verse of a four-verse scheme fluctuates. (Paragraph based on Jurková 2003 and Davidová 1991, who are indebted to Sárosi 1977).

In Slovak and Hungarian Romani groups, there are musician clans, and it was mostly the men from these clans who played instruments professionally in bands (Cz: *kapely, bandi*). They were hired by non-Roma neighbours particularly for wedding celebrations, which often led to the creation of non-Romani songs in the style of Romani ones in the repertoire of these Romani groups, and a mixture and closeness exemplified in some songs with parallel Romani and Slovak texts. Whilst male musical activities were instrumental and professional, concentrated outside their own community, women for the most part sang within their own community, and female professional instrumentalists are seen as exceptional (Jurková 2003:100).

Davidová and Jurková recognise a varied group of *neve giľa* (Ro; new songs) that are compositions incorporating aspects of *phurikane giľa* and popular music, which mostly falls under the rubric of Rompop (see chapter 5).[18] Romani music shows the constant absorption of influences from their surroundings and their transformation, however as Jurková points out, little is known about the composition of song repertoire, that is, the creation of a singer's personal repertoire. Some songs were inherited over generations and constituted a stable component of the repertoire, others are new or new variations of old songs influenced by changes in the environment, and others post-World War II were learned from recordings (2003:110).

The music of the Vlach reflects their long stay in Romanian Wallachia and later, their itinerant way of life. The repertoire of the Vlach has kept the genre of ballads, which are epic songs with mythological or historical themes. Their previously itinerant way of life is linked to

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[18] There is another layer of songs in the repertoire of Slovak Roma that does not correspond to either *phurikane giľa* or Rompop. The songs in this group are few and their origin lies in popular or *volkstümlich* (Ge: folk-like) songs (see Jurková 2003:103).

songs of a psalmodic type and texts show the basic values of Vlach culture: travel, horses, horse trading and wine drinking (Jurková 2003).[19] Two other genres are similar to those in the Slovak Romani repertoire: *louke d'ila* (Ro; slow songs for listening) and *khelimaske d'ila* (Ro; quick dance songs). Vlach Roma were not traditionally professional musicians, and traditional Vlach music is characterised by the absence of musical instruments: accompaniments are created through clapping, stamping, finger snapping usually by women, and different non-verbal vocal techniques (Hu: *bumbázi*) by men (see chapter 7).

This overview of research on Romani history, culture and music, highlights the approaches, successes, scope and limitations of what has already been achieved. In general, knowledge is scattered and approaches many and varied. In the Czech Republic, however, traditional methods and attitudes dominate the literature, which pays inadequate attention to contemporary developments and the interconnection between music, identity and socio-economic factors. My thesis contributes to understanding how Romani musical traditions are being reinterpreted, the development of Rompop, and the emergence of new trends, through a case study of Vlach and non-Vlach Roma in Ostrava that views historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts as vital to comprehending the music making.

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[19] The last recordings of these songs were made in the first half of the 1960s, demonstrating a narrow range not going beyond the interval of a fifth and microtonal melismatic melodies (Davidová & Jurková 2001).

Chapter 1 Romani Origins and History

Over the years, Roma have been identified with an incredibly wide variety of people: Huns, descendants of Cain, aborigines of the Alps, Druids, Tartars, the lost tribes of Israel, Ethiopians, Fakirs and many more (Juvalomursh 1909:7). Although Romani history potentially stretches back 5000 years as part of Indian history, before the 12th century there is only hypothetical evidence of this largely based on linguistic comparisons. The vast majority of pre-20th century European historical evidence is from non-Romani sources, the purpose of which was often to denounce social deviancy. Most populations have a sense of a long, coherent history, with numerous artefacts to testify to it; however implausible a sense of history may turn out to be on analysis, people construct it out of a need to ground themselves psychologically, often creating a coherent picture and logical, linear progressions. For Roma, constructing a sense of history appears to be an especially difficult task since their culture has been almost exclusively oral before the 20th century. Even when considering the last century, Romani history is heavily reliant on non-Romani sources, although this situation has been changing in the last few decades.

Origins may seem a long way back to start the process of contextualising contemporary situations, yet Romani origins remain an unresolved and highly contentious issue in a world where understandings of roots, identity, nation and histories play such vital roles. The often negative, critical, patronising and sometimes falsified histories of Roma that have been woven by non-Roma continue to affect perceptions of Roma by others and themselves; deconstructing and reclaiming their origins and history is therefore an essential contemporary project.

This chapter begins by discussing contributions from postmodern discourse that assist in interpreting how and why Roma have been represented so poorly in European history and in enabling Roma to take back control of their origins and history. I go on to outline some significant contributions from both academic and grassroots[1] debates on Romani origins that reveal important practical and ideological concerns. Developments in Romani politics and examples from my fieldwork in Ostrava inform how the question of Romani origins is pertinent to many contemporary political, socio-economic and cultural issues. Finally, I propose ways in which questions of Romani origins remain significant for manifestations of contemporary Romani music making in Ostrava.

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[1] I employ the term grassroots to signify Roma who are not involved in any national or international politics and who do not have so-called middle class professions, such as teaching or social work.

1.1 Postmodern perspectives on origins and history

<u>Who am I?</u>
...Tell me it isn't true, mama,
That the Roma were only the weeds in history
and the lowest among men!
Among others I seek my place,
my past,
I want to know where my tomorrow will lead.
Here and there I wander and ask:
Who am I?
Open your hearts people, please
tell me that I'm not just a vagabond wind in a forest,
that a Rom is a person,
that a person can be a Rom.
(Extract from a Romani poem by Tera Fabianová, translated in Jařabová & Davidová 2000:18)

Roma as a group are unsupported by any ancient religion,[2] glorious history or large corpus of literature in the Romani language (although a body of literature has started to emerge since the 20th century).[3] Although there is a rapidly increasing number of linguistic, anthropological and ethnomusicological studies and works concerning social issues, mostly in specialist journals, many non-Roma acquire their ideas about Roma from the media and fiction. Hancock (1987:116-128) points to an otherworldly image of Roma in romantic fiction, contained in fantasies and the creation of a kind of composite Gypsy who wears Spanish flamenco dress, travels in an English Gypsy caravan and plays Hungarian Gypsy music. 'Outsiders have projected onto Gypsies their own repressed fantasies and longings for disorder... Gypsies do not travel about aimlessly, as either romantics or the anti-Gypsy suggest' (Okely 1983:232).

Another consequence of not having a canon of Romani history is the general exclusion and misrepresentation of Roma in history books. Hancock finds particularly offensive the lack of willingness by non-Roma to accept that the enslavement of Roma in Wallachia and Moldavia between the 14th and 19th centuries even happened, and the lack of recognition of the racial motivation and extent of the Romani holocaust (Ro: *Porajmos*). The continued negative portrayal of Gypsies in U.S. school textbooks until as late as the 1980s was, according to governmental and educational responses, not supposed to represent real Roma people (Hancock 1987:2). Nevertheless, the negative images of Roma that have been created by non-Roma have become institutionalised in Euro-American folklore and it is Romani people that feel the consequences of

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[2] Although there are connections between Romani and Hindu practices, particularly concerning cleanliness and pollution practices, Hinduism is not perceived to be a Romani phenomenon. Different Romani groups have adopted Islam, Catholicism, Pentecostalism and other religions; there is no specifically Romani religion.

[3] The vast majority of work in print concerning Roma is romantic fiction.

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these stereotypes: debates about Romani origins are not disinterested theoretical explorations of linguistic evidence from over a millennium ago. On the contrary, origins can be highly relevant to contemporary situations of Roma as they struggle to forge identities in societies that tend to devalue Romani culture and history, if they acknowledge it at all. The purpose of this section is two-fold: to briefly summarise aspects of postmodern challenges to received historical narratives, and to show how this may be of particular relevance to subaltern people such as Roma in terms of present identity construction and representation.

The past forms the most fundamental subject of enquiry in history, yet any account of the past is necessarily partial and mediated through our contemporary situation. Whenever a history may have happened or been written down, if one is reading, writing or thinking now, one is necessarily affected by contemporary factors, such as personal experience, commonly accepted ideology, hegemony, power relations and societal processes. Similarly, these factors determine the sort of selections people make, both in terms of what is worth recording at the time and preserving and what is worth mentioning later in books that in many societies are published and sold for financial gain. On a deeper level, Foucault pointed to the power relations involved in determining what is significant enough to qualify for a historical canon, how it is represented, and what gets effectively erased (see Foucault 1971 in Rabinow 1991:78-86).

Those concerned with oppressed groups often point to the way in which history has been written to legitimate their subjugation. For example, Said (1978) analyses in depth the way non-European cultures have been othered and orientalised through processes of exotification, stereotyping, and the creation of violent and aggressively sexual images. The West represents itself as the natural centre or "self", with the Orient as the peripheral, barbarous, irrational "other" needing to be "civilised" by the rational, advanced West.[4] History written according to this kind of imperial ideology has served to legitimise colonialism and the economic exploitation of "other" peoples by making it appear natural or inevitable. Said (1978) emphasises that the unequal relations of economic and political power that function behind myths of representations about "the Orient" are integral to European discourse and its material civilisation: "true" accounts of history are therefore merely the results of cultural strategies employed to retain power and increase material gain. History is a crucial tool of hegemony in legitimising present ideology[5] and

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[4] One deconstructing technique that Derrida suggests in order to reveal intertextual implications, is switching the represented centres and margins when reading text. Derrida asserted that Western thought was dominated by binary opposites such man and woman, good and evil, self and other, whereby the second was a conceived of a corruption of the first (Dorbolo 2004).

[5] Ideology, as conceptualised by Foucault and Bakhtin, is the embodiment of beliefs, values and categories that constitutes a way of looking at the world, used as a way to justify dominant interests, or as Mills

politics by naturalising it as the inevitable culmination of the past, thereby putting seemingly natural limits on accepted thought, discourse and behaviour, which tends to result in subalterns accepting their situation as natural and immutable (see Walia 2001:23-28).[6]

Postmodern developments have called for increased reflexivity, or at least a pursuit of self-awareness that accepts the influence of one's personal experience, upbringing, culture, ideology, position and a myriad of perhaps unknowable factors that affect one's perceptions and interpretations. Indeed, post-structuralists have often been interpreted as inciting both nihilism and chaotic proliferation of meanings. However, their theories can be far more productive and radical challenges can be mounted to commonly accepted versions of history, which can show how these histories tend to discriminate against everyone except those who are currently in dominant positions. Past, present and future can be contested, are transformable and not inevitable. Reason does not have to be forsaken, only the dogmatic representation of itself as natural and permanent: postmodern approaches assert there is always more than one meaning, yet meanings do not have to be infinite or of equal value. There is emancipatory potential in the work of rewriting history now that many modernist structures of historical knowledge and its positivist epistemology of naïve realism have been undermined. One does not have to fully reject the empirical method, but if truth is situational and political, and alternative epistemological systems can be used to dislocate Eurocentric monologic conceptions, wider visions of history that include interventions from subaltern groups are possible.

When considering Roma in Europe, it can be helpful to understand their position in terms of an orientalised "Other", an other *within* rather than in some far-off land. Perhaps their otherness within is why they are often perceived as more threatening than more geographically distant others. European historical and contemporary discourse has exoticised, romanticised, demonised, feminised, othered and stereotyped the Roma, and constructed endless myths of barbarous, irrational and aggressively sexual Romani behaviour. The ways in which Roma have been represented in European history can be summed up with Sartre's famous quote: 'The European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters' (cited in Said 1994:237).

In terms of Romani history, I contend that the powers of hegemony, ideology and political expediency are so prevalent that what we are left with are rich resources for

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explains 'a simplistic and negative process whereby individuals were duped into using conceptual systems that were not in their own interests' (cited in Walia 2001:28).

[6] Gramsci's notion of "common sense" as a site of ideological construction enables the West to create myths of power and dominance, in which the subaltern critic must decipher the combination of coercion and persuasion (Walia 2001:28-33).

understanding how dominant ideologies conceived of and conceive the Roma, but very poor resources for exploring their history in a way that would challenge the *status quo*. Prevailing historical categories are so complicit with dominant notions of meaning and value, that it is very difficult to write history in opposition to hegemonic practices. Even some Roma themselves are rewriting their history based on the categories and systems of their oppressors; it is very difficult not to. The effects of hegemony are at work so potently that many Roma have imbibed to varying extents dominant views that the Romani 'race' and 'culture' are inferior to white European 'races' and 'cultures'. Nevertheless, ideas associated with post-structuralism and postcolonialism offer Roma and other subaltern groups more conceptual tools with which to challenge extant histories and rewrite narratives on their own terms, rather than conforming to dominant methods and categories that may not necessarily be appropriate.

This thesis is not about rewriting Romani history, nevertheless, when considering contemporary contexts it is important to understand critically the kinds of history to which the Roma have been and are consigned. These histories are part of what Roma are imbibing and opposing, the psychological effects of which are alluded to in the poem *Who am I?* at the beginning of this section. The principal tools for identity construction in the present and future are interpretations of the past. I contend that representations of Romani history and challenges to it are crucial in understanding contemporary Romani cultural expressions and attitudes towards and struggles for identity, rights and improved social conditions. Hancock sums up the potential contemporary importance of establishing the origins of Roma: 'Romani identity is a Western phenomenon, albeit one with early and significant Asian roots. Yet this is important to know about, for it gives us a history and a legitimacy as a people' (cited in Guy 2001:viii).

1.2 Academic debates concerning Romani origins

Most academics now agree that Roma's origins are in India. Evidence is sketchy, but owing to linguistic research, it is commonly accepted that Roma left Northwest India around the 8th or 9th century and followed early migration routes through present-day Afghanistan, Iran, Armenia, Turkey and Greece.[7] They entered Europe as early as the 11th century, although historical documents only substantiate their presence there from the 12th century (Crowe 1995:xi). The principal evidence for Romani origins in India lies in the similarity of Romani and Indian languages: there are many correlations between Romani and Hindi vocabularies (particularly everyday words concerning food, colours, anatomy, numbers and so on) and grammatical

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[7] See Acton (1981:1) for a map detailing migration patterns.

structures. Persian and Armenian elements in Romani point to an extended presence in the Near East, and the many Greek words assimilated into all dialects of Romani suggests a prolonged period in Byzantium/Greece before dispersal across Europe from the 13th and 14th century (Matras 2002:17-18). However, neither the social or ethnic background of the Roma's ancestral population nor the reasons for migration have been satisfactorily explained.

These mysteries have taken on an ideological dimension as some Roma have become increasingly interested in tracing their history and origins in light of political, cultural and personal agendas. Amongst non-Romani scholars, conclusions about Roma origins have been influenced by their general attitudes towards Roma. For example, Matras (2002:14) draws attention to Rudiger (1782), who sympathised with Roma and suggested that Roma had been forced to move away from their ancient homeland by invading armies and social unrest, and contrasts this with Grellman (1783), who proposed that Roma had origins in a population of outcasts, or *Sudras*. Grellman advocated European forced-acculturation policies and felt that Roma's miserable conditions were their own fault caused by their refusal to integrate. Both Rudiger and Grellman's ideas persist in various forms in contemporary discussions.

Matras (2002) unravels linguistic signposts in order to shed light on Romani origins and migration patterns. He cites Pott (1844:42), who drew attention to a possible direct connection between Roma and castes of commercial nomads in India itself by pointing to the word *ḍomba*, which appears in Kashmiri medieval texts denoting a low caste of travelling musicians and dancers (2002:15). Today, the word *ḍom* continues to mean a caste-type affiliation referring to various populations in different Near East and Central Asian regions that specialise in service sector trades such as smithery, basket-making, cleaning (including sweeping and corpse-burning), music and dance entertainment (Matras 2002:15).[8] Hübschmannová explains that *ḍom* begins with a cerebral *ḍ*, which under the influence of European speech sounds has in most cases become an *r* in Romani, thus *ḍom* becomes *rom* (Jařabová & Davidová 2000:26). The "*Ḍom* hypothesis" explains how the socio-ethnic profiles shared by Indian groups in the Near East and Central Asia and the *ḍom* of India could be attributed to ancient traditions, rather than coincidental similarities or features acquired by respective groups at different times and places. It

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[8] There have been various populations of Indian origin notably in the Near East and Central Asia since medieval times, who, like the Roma, have tended to specialise in peripatetic service sector economies. Dominant settled populations marginalised these groups and contact was restricted to economic transactions (Matras 2002:14).

explains similarities in social organisation and ethnic identity whilst allowing for linguistic diversity (Matras 2002:16).[9]

Matras draws attention to further clues in the story of the Persian king Bahram Gur, *Shahnameh*, as told by the 11th century Persian poet Firdusi, which has received much attention in Romani studies. The story tells of the king inviting 10,000 Indian musicians, called *Luri*, to Persia around 420 C.E. to serve as official performers. Although attempts were made to settle the *Luri*, they remained nomadic musicians. This story has confirmation in various Arabic and Persian texts, and although no direct connections have been established, the *Luri* have often been associated with the ancestors of the Roma (Matras 2002:17). Another name that is often connected to the commercial nomads of the Near East is *Jat*, or *Zutt* in its Arabic form, used in reference to various Indian populations in the Arab world at different times (see Matras 2002:17 for further detail).

Activist scholars who are heavily involved in the Romani civil rights movement, such as Kochanowski and Hancock, have suggested that the Roma may themselves be descendants of warrior castes, or the *Rajputs*, who migrated as a result of medieval Islamic invasions in India (Kochanowski 1963, 1974, Hancock 1987). The "*Rajput* hypothesis" creates chronological problems in relation to historical records and linguistic evidence, although Kochanowski attempted to resolve them by suggesting that several waves of Indian migration converged in Byzantium to become a single population. Hancock claims that as a *Rajput* warrior population accompanied by their camp-followers of a low, untouchable caste status, moved westwards into Persia in military campaigns against Islam, caste differences were dissolved as they became more remote from their homeland, giving way to a shared Indian ethnic identity (Hancock 1988:204). Hancock contends that warrior origin has an appeal to Roma themselves.

1.3 Romani grassroots debates concerning Romani origins

Geographically and temporally distant origins and sketchy histories now play a variety of roles for Roma in the Czech Republic. Interest in origins is certainly not ubiquitous amongst Roma, and academic texts often characterise Romani grassroots as being unconcerned with and sometimes unaware of their Indian origins, in contrast to middle-class Romani and non-Romani intellectuals and activists (see for example, Gay Y Blasco 1999). However, Roma today are making more attempts to (re-)construct their history and origins, some hoping that discovery of a

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[9] For more in-depth analyses, see Matras 2002, Jařabová & Davidová 2000, Hancock 1987 and 2002, and the journal *Roma* vol.1 no.1 edited by W.R. Rishi.

glorious past or an important hereditary connection to someone important may improve their current condition, or reveal a history of a nation. These attempts are being made both on an informal personal basis and formally through institutions. Considerations for those embarking on research concerning the reconstruction of Romani origins and early migrations revolve around how to interpret potential connections between linguistic features and socio-ethnic characteristics, such as traditional occupation profiles. For some, these connections have an important bearing on contemporary Romani identity and are therefore likely to remain controversial, highly political, as well as unresolved and unsubstantiated.[10]

During my fieldwork in Ostrava, I came across very different opinions and reactions from Roma about their origins. The Roma who were associated with the international Romani movement and had the benefits of higher education tended to be aware of the academic debates concerning Romani origins and history. They had access to academic and historical materials via the Internet and Romani magazines, newspapers and cultural organisations. Nevertheless, in my experience, the possibility of having been part of either a warrior or untouchable caste in India was of no importance to them.[11]

The reasons that the more formally educated Roma I met in Ostrava seemed so concerned to establish their true origins lay in their wish for the Roma to have a formalised history, in the way that other Western nations often do. They felt it would give the Roma more legitimacy as a people and greater influence when it came to fighting for civil rights and gaining recognition for the value of their culture. Indeed, the young educated Ostrava Roma's concerns were highly practical, local and contemporary, whilst taking pride in knowing the little-known history of Roma in exacting detail, knowing as many aspects to contemporary Romani culture as possible, and their links with Roma in other countries. Although for the most part these educated Roma did not socialise much with other less formally educated Roma (partly through lack of time), they often declared that Roma of all nations and backgrounds were one people with common origins, for they believed that better co-operation and unity of Roma across the world would combat local injustices more effectively. Nevertheless, their education, beliefs and often more financially

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[10] The present is particularly uncertain for those who are positioned as marginal and different, and one of the most effective ways to deny this uncertainty is to articulate the past in coherent, unequivocal, and most probably extremely artificial ways (Ganguly 1992:31). Researchers have noted the tendency for people in diaspora to develop myths, rationalisations and theories to explain their plight or situation. For example, Skinner recounts a Jewish belief that 'a Jewish Messiah would come to crush the other nations of the earth, restore the exiles to Zion and reign forever' (in Harris 1982:19).

[11] Young activist Roma in Ostrava with connections to the international Romani movement did not number more than a dozen.

secure position, had the effect of alienating them from other Roma in Ostrava, and so they were most often working with each other and like-minded Roma from other cities and countries.

Aside from the very few formally educated Roma in Ostrava, I noticed that the vast majority were divided about notions of their origins. Most Roma I encountered were aware of the possibility of Indian origins and some had assimilated the idea, but only a few were aware that the evidence for this hypothesis was primarily linguistic. Many believed that the proof must lie in their physical similarities to Indians. This idea often lead to long discussions, as they listed all the fellow Roma they knew who had blond hair, blue eyes or pale skin and who did not look like their stereotypes of Indians.

In Ostrava, many Roma are immediately distinguishable to other Roma and non-Roma through physical characteristics such as swarthy skin tones. During my fieldwork, I noticed that the vast majority of Roma accepted and used prevalent racial categories that non-Roma employed in the Czech Republic. They distinguished people as "black" (Cz: *černý*), which usually corresponded to "Gypsy" (Cz: *Cikán*), although increasingly "Africans" (Cz: *Afričany, Černoši*) were included in this definition as there were increasing numbers of international students and refugees. In opposition were categories of "Czech", even though most Roma in Ostrava had Czech citizenship, and "European", meaning white European, for which Roma often used the term "white" (Cz: *bílý*).[12] There was the additional, less used category of "mixed" (Cz: *míchaný*) that most often signalled one Romani and one Czech parent: most children of "mixed" parentage were considered Romani. Roma had imbibed a binary opposition of black and white, whereby black was inferior to white.[13] One consequence was that a "white Rom" (Ro: *parno Rom*) was often regarded as special and often envied, whilst sometimes being resented for being able to pass for being non-Romani and therefore having a much better chance of employment.

In fact, Roma covered an entire spectrum of physical appearance, leading to comments (by Roma) that some of them look Arabian, Spanish, Czech, or even Japanese. Amongst Roma in Ostrava, skin tones were commented upon openly with the clear premise of the lighter the better. As people travelled more and images were disseminated globally, "everyday" racial categories were being expanded to include Arabs and East Asians, and black was being differentiated into

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[12] When I was present, Roma would often talk about how bad "Czech" people were. Sometimes they criticised "white" people and then scrambled to try and make it clear that they were not including me.

[13] Traditionally black is associated with sadness, grief and death in Romani custom, as well as being 'a certain seal of the distinctness and erstwhile fortunes of the Roma' and the colour of the earth (Davidová in Jařabová 2000:109). Amongst contemporary Ostrava Roma, I found that being white (Cz: *bílý*) is also associated with negative attributes such as meanness, coldness and heartlessness, although it is also associated with success, beauty, power and money.

sub-categories of Africans, Indians and Roma. I met very few people in Ostrava who did not subscribe to the racial thinking outlined above.

When it came to considering origins, the actual place or country did not seem to matter to Roma in Ostrava (suggestions included Egypt, Israel, India, "Arabia" and Africa), for they perceived themselves to have black origins. As mentioned, although sub-categories of black were becoming increasingly important, the overriding demarcation was between black and white, which previously meant respectively Gypsy and non-Gypsy for the purposes of everyday living in this area. Although times are changing, the Czech Republic is becoming more cosmopolitan, and there is an emergent sense of black pride amongst younger generations, the persistence of a black/white binary and its hierarchical implications were extremely prevalent. In Ostrava, the perception of Roma having black origins, whether they were in India, Egypt or elsewhere, overwhelmingly implied something negative for Roma and non-Roma alike.

When I encountered grassroots Romani discussions about origins, there was often some heated debate, but discussions inevitably ended in similar ways. These can be summarised by saying that most Roma admitted they did not definitely know their origin, it did not actually matter very much because it did not change anything about their present situation, and the conclusion that wherever they came from they were not wanted anywhere now. On a couple of occasions this led to a discussion about the advantages and possibility of having a Romani country (but where?), or the only semi-serious hope of a Romani planet (Mars being the usual candidate) owing to their unwelcome status on Earth. There was a sense of futility about anything changing for the better, and I found that most discussions by Roma about their origins were flippant and those who knew about the likelihood of Indian origins talked of it with some mirth. Perhaps the perceived distance from India (geographically, socially and culturally) was causing their mirth, as most did not know very much about the country beyond stereotypes, and it was unlikely that they would visit or form any cultural or social link with India.

The Indian hypothesis had been received in a basic form through word-of-mouth and television. Most grassroots Roma felt much more comfortable with oral rather than written forms, which affected how they gained their information and what kind of information they received. The grassroots held deep suspicions about books and intellectuals: reading and writing were considered suspect activities, partly because many Roma were uncomfortable working with these mediums, but mostly because Roma often said that they had no way of verifying what people wrote in books and therefore could find no reason to believe them. In contrast, if information was passed on via word of mouth or via television, grassroots Roma were far more receptive and could judge the reliability of the knowledge partly based on what they knew of the person. When

information about Indian origins had been disseminated via oral mediums, awareness had spread widely, although vital details in the written sources had been lost.

Stories (Ro: *paramisa*) recounted orally traditionally played an important role in Romani culture.[14] However, these days, Roma in Ostrava hardly ever tell folkloric stories, and I suggest that the television and a different type of storytelling that involves contemporary events have mostly taken their place. Nevertheless, the first folkloric story about Romani origins that I heard in Ostrava (November 2004) appeared to be a variant of three stories I had previously encountered in the work of Hancock (in Tong 1998:115-126), Fonesca (1995:89-92) and Stewart (1997:18). It was told during dinner at the flat of a Romani family in Ostrava.

The family had welcomed me most warmly, assuring me that I should feel as if their home was my home too, and they had talked at length about Romani hospitality, emphasising that I should feel free to use anything in the house. Suddenly, the father told me to be very careful, "because all Roma steal". "Surely not all?" I asked. "Oh yes, all Roma steal" they replied. "So should I be worried now?" I wondered aloud, to which they responded that I was safe in their home. "But how do you know all Roma steal?" I asked, the reply to which came swiftly and certainly, "they have to". Thus, the story began, told by the father of the family. A long time ago, when a blacksmith had made the four nails for Jesus' crucifixion, a passing Gypsy stole one of the nails. Consequently, the Gypsies were banished from the city walls and condemned to a life of wandering and stealing. (This also explained why Jesus had a nail for each arm, and only one for his legs). The story was short and told in a manner that suggested he was relating something that happened last week. I said that the story was interesting, but surely it was just a legend? To which the whole family chorused together, "No, no, it's true!"

We went on to talk about the appalling social conditions and discrimination Roma in Ostrava face every day. They had innumerable long and detailed stories that catalogued a series of abuses by Czech people against the family. The stories usually included details about how Roma were much better characters than Czechs, which underlined their pride in being Romani. Later on, we went to an exclusively Romani nightclub and I had at least five self-appointed bodyguards from the extended family to protect me against thieves. Other Roma I knew were at the nightclub that evening and I had a regular stream of concerned people who came to whisper in my ear that I must be careful, because there were Gypsies (Sl: *Cigány*) here. Of course, everyone

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[14] Long fairy tales (Ro: *bare paramisa*) were the most important type and good narrators (usually men) were always admired (see http://romipen.euweb.cz/Romipen-10-site.html, accessed on 08/09/04, for further detail).

there except me was a Gypsy, for Roma in Ostrava used the word 'Gypsy' to refer to themselves, rather than 'Rom'.

It was hard to understand such exchanges and at first it was difficult for me to take seriously either the story about the nail or the theatrical bodyguards and urgent warnings. However, after several months of living in Ostrava, I started to understand a little more. Despite the fact that most Roma believed that they have common origins and were in some way connected to other Roma (especially in the face of "white" threats, debt collectors and officials, a remarkable solidarity is evident), their advice was never to trust anyone, even including close members of your own family. Even though most do not steal, life is so desperate for many Roma that there is a constant possibility of needing to steal from either non-Roma or other Roma. Whilst Roma felt they could rely on most other Roma for support just by virtue of common Romani identity, it was not always the case. I suggest that the story about the stealing nature of Gypsies and warnings were a way of preaching the necessity of extreme vigilance in a very unstable situation, both to me and as a reminder to themselves.

Wherever I went in Ostrava, there was always a stream of short and extremely long stories featuring dire warnings, by Roma about other Roma, by Roma about Czechs, white people and bad people in general, and by non-Roma about Roma.[15] I contend that the art of Romani storytelling is certainly not extinct in Ostrava (as scholars have sometimes declared), rather that the long, detailed stories now tend to feature themselves, their family and contemporary events that are usually confined to the last few years. These long contemporary stories (mixed in with short versions of traditional myths and more distantly past times) fulfilled the traditional function of conveying to younger generations what are ideal, good and bad behaviours, and the social realities they have to face. Stories most often described real encounters with Czech shopkeepers, teachers, officials, and institutions of different kinds. In most cases, Czechs fulfilled the role of calculatingly wicked characters, although there were also stories about how a good-hearted Czech person had broken the mould. In these stories, Roma were wronged and subsequently either were disenfranchised or used their wits to score some kind of moral or financial victory.[16]

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[15] I was touched by Roma's concerns for my well being, and the only threat I encountered during my fieldwork was verbal abuse from an old man who thought I was Romani (I was walking with a group of Roma) and from a Czech skinhead because I was a foreigner.

[16] In Ostrava, there were ambiguous attitudes to stealing amongst Roma. On one hand, they had assimilated the dominant attitudes of society that prescribe that stealing, mostly meaning "light fingers", pick-pocketing and mugging, is wrong, though how far stealing is directly equated with short-changing and fraud in Czech society is doubtful. Indeed, I heard many stories from Roma of white people stealing Romani purses and Roma using that as a justification of the wickedness of white society. On the other hand, many Roma in Ostrava were painfully aware of their low socio-economic position and were proud to recount times when they secured some kind of moral or financial victory preferably over a *gadje* or another

The second story I heard concerning Romani origins was from a middle-aged Rom, Ladislav (Puki)[17] whilst we were playing music together. He was a talented painter and musician, unemployed and living on social welfare in the rundown Zárubek ghetto (see chapter 5 for more detail about Puki). He strongly believed that Roma were God's people. For, he explained, Roma have been treated so badly by other people and do not have anywhere to go on earth. Therefore, they must be God's people and will one day be returned to God where they will no longer suffer. It was an extremely short story, gravely told, with analogies to the life of Jesus. Ladislav is a Catholic, as are most other Roma in Ostrava. Although he did not attend church on a regular basis and did not feel comfortable in a church environment (like many Roma in Ostrava), his belief in God was fervent and he had formed a highly personalised religion loosely based on Catholicism. His religion and origins were both very significant for him and he had integrated them in a personal manner.[18]

Amongst grassroots, I found that origins were only important in as much as they helped to make sense of or ameliorate the immediate present, exemplified by Ladislav's story. Grassroots Roma in Ostrava often felt that they were living in a hostile environment under great pressure, and their concerns and interests tended to lie in the immediately practical and useful, rather than allegiances to systems of belief or ideologies. The consideration of where Roma were going, where they had come from, and wider ideological implications, was mostly confined to Romani activists who had more affluent, professional lifestyles. Many academic and activists' debates are influenced by the concerns of grassroots Roma who need practical and immediate solutions for their difficult lives: theories of origins have been co-opted in order to give Roma a historical coherence as a people or nation, which in turn give them more political weight when negotiating rights for all Roma. I suggest that theories of Romani origins and history are employed by Roma to understand and ameliorate the present, although amongst grassroots socio-

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Rom, particularly if that Rom is wealthier. However, in practice I also found that most Roma led extremely honest lives.

[17] Some male Roma have an official Czech first name and a Romani nickname used amongst friends.

[18] There is an ongoing debate concerning whether Roma are religious in the narrower sense of identifying with a system of belief such as Christianity or Islam, or if they are believers in natural and animistic power and spirits. However, for the purposes of this research, it can be said that Roma's religious belief, folkloric wisdom and spiritual practices have to varying degrees been shaped and/or transformed by their environment, and in Ostrava, I found there to be highly individualised religious beliefs that blended elements of Catholicism, other Christian sects, belief in natural and animistic spirits, and folkloric wisdom. In spite of Roma's noticeably non-conformist approach to religion, during my fieldwork almost all Roma I spoke with proudly told me that Roma are Catholic. Many grassroots Roma in Ostrava did not know about Muslim Roma in the Balkans, and others considered them outside of their scope of reference. A few Ostrava Roma were drawn to Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostalism.

economic pressures mean that concerns are local and immediate, whilst more educated, affluent Romani activists tend to take a more formally historic, global view of local problems.

1.4 Significance of origins for Romani music in Ostrava

In Ostrava, I found that ancient Indian origins did not have any direct influence on Romani music, in a similar manner to their lack of direct relevance to daily life.[19] However, differing notions of Romani origins are manifested in different ways in contemporary Czech Rompop embraced by the World Music market, the non-mainstream Rompop popular amongst grassroots in Ostrava and Slovakia,[20] old Romani songs (Ro: *phurikane giľa*), and contemporary interpretations of old Romani songs. Each of these styles have particular associated musical characteristics, discussed more fully in later chapters, but in this section I primarily consider their song lyrics in relation to notions of origins.

The conditions of marginalised lives, such as high levels of orphanhood, poverty, illness, premature death, starvation, drunkenness, violence, prostitution and prison sentences, and their associated emotions, are expressed graphically in many old Romani songs that can be found in Davidová & Žižka (1991) and Belišová (2002). This picture relates to views I found during my fieldwork, especially amongst older generations, that Roma have always had extremely difficult and poverty-stricken lives, sometimes because of the outside world and at other times owing to ideas of an unchangeable Romani character.

The song lyrics employ more sophisticated Romani language, detail and often refer to local concerns.

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[19] Although widespread acceptance of likely Indian origins is a 20th century development, it is apparent from historical accounts that there has always been an awareness of "non-European" Romani origins, and at least partly on account of this many Roma have led marginalised lives in the Czech lands and Slovakia since around the 14th century.

[20] Cassettes of this music were available under the counter in second hand shops in Ostrava and not in mainstream music shops. They had a strong influence on contemporary local Romani music making in Ostrava, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

Odoj roma Ostravate niš na keren,	Those Gypsies in Ostrava don't do anything,
čak o cakle phageren. (x2)	but break bottles. (x2)
Pijena, pijena, mulatinen,	They drink and drink, have fun
pal e džuvla gondolinen. (x2)	and think of women. (x2)

Ma keren oda, romale, ma pijenë,	Don't do this, Gypsies don't drink,
me čhavore bokhale, (x2)	my children are hungry, (x2)
Cinen lenge bochňa maro,	Buy them a loaf of bread
kaj te n'aven bokhale! (x2)	so that they won't be hungry. (x2)

Recorded Ostrava, 1967, Jan Horváth (born 1941, Nagyröce, Hungary) Davidová & Žižka
(1991:144)

This song is representative of the desperation and plight of Roma expressed in many older songs, describing Romani poverty and self-destruction. It also shows how critical Roma could be of other Roma's behaviour, which did not tend to feature in contemporary Rompop songs, although was often discussed in conversation. In a version of this song I encountered in Ostrava, in March 2004, the words were altered so it did not draw attention to Roma in Ostrava as being particularly bad (see below). The second verse that refers directly to Romani poverty and misdemeanour was omitted. The third line of the first verse was sung in Czech the first time (Cz: *Pije, pije, Roma pije*: Drink, drink, Roma drink) and in Romani the second time (Ro: *Roma pijen mulatinen*: Roma drink and celebrate), presumably on account of forgetting the Romani version the first time. I propose that these changes relate to the contemporary rapid fragmentation and destruction of a sense of community amongst Roma in Ostrava, which means that internal conflict and criticism tends to stay behind closed doors, rather than expressed in well-known songs. There appears to be a need to assert the essential sameness of all Roma in the face of contemporary irreconcilable difference and distance.

Niča Roma niča Roma na keren	No Roma, no Roma do anything
čak o cakle phageren (x2)	but break bottles. (x2)
Pije, pije, Roma pije	drink, drink, Roma drink
Le kerenca[21] počinen. (x2)	they pay with bracelets. (x2)

Transcribed and translated by Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz, personal communication June
2004.

It is significant that many of the old songs that survived amongst younger generations in contemporary Ostrava do not refer directly to poverty and suffering.[22] The following is an

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[21] Fennesz-Juhasz noted that what sounded like *carenca* was sung here, but suggested that it most plausibly was *kerenca* (Ro; with bracelets/wristbands), although it could conceivably be *carenca* (Ro derived from Cz; with rags) or even *čarenca* (Ro; with bowls).

example of an ancient song that is still well known in Ostrava that often produces mirth when sung, partly because of its understood age, but also because of the feeling that the words do not make conventional sense. Significantly, there are no implications of ill-starred Romani origins or a negative Romani essence.

Andro verdant grundzi nane,	There are no grapes on the cart,
Man pirano šukar nane,	I haven't got any handsome lover,
Loli phabaj prečhinava, hop-hop-hop,	I cut a red apple in two, hop-hop-hop,
Jepaš tuke, jepaš mange, hop-hop-hop. (x2)	Half for you, half for me, hop-hop-hop.

Recorded 1987, Větřní u Českého Krumlova, Czech Republic, Irena Hrdličhová (born 1938, Prešov, East Slovakia) Davidová & Žižka (1991:154)[23]

There were Rompop songs that were not available in mainstream record stores, instead circulated via parties and the local cassette circuit (see chapters 5.1 and 5.2 for further detail), and the ones I encountered in Ostrava focused less on the negative and difficult aspects of life, often celebrating being Romani and functioning more as escapism from harsh material realities rather than bemoaning them.[24] Particularly amongst younger generations, there was much embarrassment concerning the poverty depicted in many old songs, as well as irritation about the prevalence of non sequitur statements in lyrics that many younger Roma dismissed for not making sense (Cz: *nesmysl*).[25] Contemporary Rompop songs often focused on Roma as an idealised proud group of people who are beautiful, know how to dance, play music and celebrate. In contemporary Ostrava, poverty was seen as shameful and frustrating, affecting everyday life in undignified ways, and although contemporary songs featured love and relationship problems, they were not strewn with references to poverty and desperation. Amongst younger generations, generally, the past is steadfastly not spoken about or referred to as something unimaginably long

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[22] For example, out of Davidová & Žižka's collection of Romani folk songs (1991), the only songs I regularly heard in Ostrava were the first verses of numbers 11/12, 28, 36, 39/40, 47, although others were known. These songs were often about relationships or seemingly nonsensical. At funerals, *hallgató* were still played, but without the lyrics that were traditionally mostly about poverty and suffering.

[23] Altering lyrics of traditional songs to reflect one's present situation was a common practice and I encountered a subversion of this song that substituted contemporary concerns for traditional lyrics.

Andro verda drugos nane,	There are no drugs in the car,
Man pirani šukar nane,	I haven't got a handsome lover (female).
Loli baba prečhinava, hop-hop-hop,	I cut a red cake/granny[23] in two, hop-hop-hop,
Jepaš tuke jepaš mange, hop-hop-hop. (x2)	Half for you, half for me, hop-hop-hop. (x2)

Jan Ferenc, 2004, Ostrava (born 1951, Spišska Nová Ves, Slovakia) Fieldwork diary (2 April 2004).

[24] My proficiency in Romani was limited and in the field I relied on Roma's translations into Czech of Rompop songs that they played to me when I was visiting their homes.

[25] Amongst Roma, the perceived correspondence of old and modern sound worlds to old and modern lyrics was almost isomorphic and I suggest that the decline of old musical styles is related to the rejection of old style lyrics and their evocation of poverty and desperation, as will be discussed in chapters 2-4.

ago and irrelevant. There is a rejection of traditional notions of origins, which, I suggest, mostly manifests itself in the assertion of Roma as an essentially proud, beautiful people who are musically gifted, dance and celebrate with each other in harmony.

Below are a few short examples of contemporary song lyrics in Rompop that were popular in Ostrava during 2003 and 2004. They are simple, rely on easily comprehensible, generalised emotions and aspirations, and create a generalised, ideal picture of Roma, particularly women. Many Rompop songs in the Romani language that were popular in Ostrava often included hackneyed phrases such as *šukar čhaj Romaňi* (Ro; beautiful Romani girl) or *Čhavale Romale* (Ro; Romani people/lads).[26]

Aničko dušicko	Aničko, my dear
me tut kamava (x2)	I love you
Cinav tuke čhenora	I buy earrings for you
Andre tire kanora	for your ears
Aničko dušicko	Aničko, my dear
me tut kamava	I love you

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Andre baros loli ruža avel	In the garden, a red rose is coming
Avel o čhajora	The Gypsy girls are coming
phirel te khelel (x2)	they are going to dance
Čhavale Romale	Romani lads
Phirav me bašavel	I'm coming to play [music]

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Uba baro, Uba baro	Uba the big. Uba the big
Javela, javela	is coming, is coming
Baro bijav	A big wedding
Imar kerela	he is already celebrating

Translated by Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz, personal communication April 2004.

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[26] The Romani used was often basic, comprehensible to those who did not actively speak Romani.

Many popular Rompop songs were in the Slovak language.[27]

Keď som išiel ces Košice sam	When I walked through Košice alone
Mal som dievča ani ňevzem sam (x2)	I had a girlfriend, I didn't even know myself
Som tu a mam ťa rád, ňemusiš sa báť	I am here and I love you, you don't need to be afraid
Zavri očká, nemusíš sa báť (x2)	Close your eyes, you don't need to be afraid

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Na Cigánskej svadbě u nás	At a Gypsy wedding in our house
Hrá tam dobrá kopela (x2)	there plays a good band
Keď Cigánka dá si zahrat'	When a Gypsy girl requests a song for herself
Vdalinove zahra čardáš	*Vdalinove* play a *čardáš*

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Fúká vietor fúká z daleka	A wind blows, blows from afar
Mala bysom mala frajera, och	I would have, I would, a sweetheart,
Ale mi ho ale nebralo	If a beautiful girl from Tabor
Krásne dievča z Tábora	hadn't taken him away from me

Translated by Renata Beránková, personal communication April 2004.

The Rompop popular in Ostrava was often in contrast to mainstream Czech Rompop that drew heavily on traditional styles and made politicised references to the poverty and misery of Roma and their conditions of rejection and marginalisation (see also chapter 2). The stars of mainstream Czech Rompop are now relatively affluent and internationally successful, and often have political aims in line with many Romani activists campaigning on behalf of grassroots Roma who tended to prefer other music that does not focus on Romani misery. The lyrics have more references to Romani blood/origin (Ro: *Romano rat*),[28] *gadje* in opposition to Roma, and the future of the Roma people. Here is an example from Gulo Čar, a band that has become increasingly successful in the Czech mainstream in the last few years, winning the 2003 Angel award from the Popular Music Academy for best World Music. They combine soul and funk music with Romani lyrics and some Romani melodies.

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[27] Slovak was easily comprehensible to Ostrava Roma whose Czech dialect is strongly influenced by Slovak.

[28] *Romano Rat* is also the name of an internationally successful Czech Rompop band.

O čercheňa dičhonas	When the stars shined
Sako manuš giľavlas	Each person sang away
O čhavore khelenas Devla	And the children danced. God!
Kaj savore Roma hin	Where are all the Roma?
Palo svetos phirenas	All over the world they roamed
O dživipen rodenas	And they looked for life there
Kaj sa tumen Romale	Where you are, Roma,
Ňikhaj amen na kamen	They don't want you anywhere
Kaj savore Roma san	Wherever you are, each Romani person
Khere sar tumen aven	Return home
Na kamen amen...	They don't want you...[29]

This song is a political statement, referring to the historical marginalisation and rejection of Roma, and their dispersal all over the world. It was not surprising that this band were not popular or well-known amongst Ostrava Roma: the lyrics refer to a politicised and somewhat romanticised notion of shared origins, roots and history that did not match their contemporary identity or aspirations. Furthermore, I found that although Roma in Ostrava were often despairing in conversation, they regarded music as something they could enjoy, dance to, celebrate with, and be comforted by.[30] Many regarded Ostrava as home, however unstable, and regarded migration as a measure of last resort: in conversations, Roma in Ostrava made it clear to me that they were unsympathetic towards unrealistic ideas of a "return home" to a Romani country, or indeed any political talk of improvements that would not realistically happen (they have had their hopes raised and dashed too many times by well meaning activists and organisations).[31]

A fascinating although anomalous example of awareness of Indian origin having a direct effect on Romani music making is the most beloved informant and long time friend of Czech Romist Eva Davidová, Juraj Šándor (Djuri) (1938-1991). He was a sedentary Slovak Rom from Trebišov, East Slovakia, and was renowned amongst his community for his moving interpretations of traditional songs and his inventive improvisations about his own life.[32] According to Davidová, 'he felt his Indian roots', and sang what she called a 'newly created

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[29] My translation of the Czech lyrics in the sleeve notes, track ten of the album *Baro Drom* (Ro; Long Journey) (2003).

[30] As discussed in chapter 2, the aesthetic of this style of Rompop was also unattractive to many Roma in Ostrava, catering for an often politicised general World Music audience rather than local Romani tastes.

[31] I encountered this view many times, particularly when accompanying employees of the NGO *Life Together* or when I was translating for (American) human rights activists who made flying visits. Roma in Ostrava were always polite and welcoming to foreign activists, but they made it clear to me that they did not expect anything to change through these visits: there had been too many of them with too many promises and too little change. Furthermore, they did not believe these visitors could understand the situation in a short visit.

[32] He was nearly illiterate and never left Trebišov. Although his family was poor, he refused many invitations to perform publicly because he only wanted to sing for people he felt understood his music.

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Indian-Gypsy style' which he expressed in his many vocal improvisations (source: Vienna Phonogrammarchiv catalogue).[33]

To sum up, the different lyrics of traditional songs, their contemporary interpretations, Czech commercial Rompop, and Rompop popular amongst Romani grassroots in Ostrava, illustrate and construct the varying contemporary realities of Roma and consequent differing attitudes towards their origins. (The equally important corresponding aesthetic differences between these styles will be discussed in chapters 2-5.) Traditional songs often depict ideas of essential Romani poverty and marginalisation, in Romani, which, ironically, correspond to some degree with commercially successful Czech Rompop on the World Music market that often politicises the history of Romani poverty and marginalisation, also in Romani. Crucial differences lie in the relative affluence and mainstream acceptance of contemporary commercially successful Rompop musicians, their often non-Romani audiences, overt politicisation of origins and history, and aesthetic that is embraced by World Music.

Neither traditional songs nor commercially successful Rompop were popular in Ostrava due to the content of their lyrics and associated aesthetic. Ostrava Roma did not appreciate the focus on ongoing Romani poverty and misery in traditional lyrics, especially when they were surrounded by it and wished to escape it, and they did not relate to the political pronouncements of the Rompop embraced by the World Music market. This was epitomised in their alteration of traditional lyrics where traditional songs were still sung, and widespread preference for non-mainstream Rompop that used undemanding lyrics celebrating Romani life and considering love relationships, in simpler Romani and Slovak (and sometimes Czech).

In this chapter, I have explored how different people, especially Roma in Ostrava, have created and understood Romani origins and history, particularly in relation to their contemporary concerns, and how these understandings have been manifested in different Romani music, especially the lyrics. In light of postmodern approaches to origins and history, I propose that the narratives encountered in this chapter can be understood as temporary stopping places of truthful meaning that reflect the political, social and personal concerns of the narrators, including myself.

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[33] For published examples of Djuri's songs, see Davidová & Žižka (1991: 44-45, 77-79, numbers 1 and 14). For audio examples, see Davidová & Šenkyřík in cooperation with Phonogrammarchiv (2002 numbers 19, 20 'Improvisation on Indian motives', 22 and 36).

Chapter 2 Roma in the Czech Lands and Slovakia 1399-1945: Discourses of 'Race' (Part 1)

Following on from discussion of Romani history and origins, this chapter considers the history of discourses of 'race', the history of Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia, and how they increasingly collided throughout the 19th century and most dreadfully in the Nazi-led Holocaust. During the incarceration of Roma in Nazi concentration camps, there emerged a body of Romani songs, of which only one song has remained in the current repertoire of Czech/Slovak Roma, *Čhajori Romaňi* (Ro; Little Romani girl). This song was later co-opted as the anthem for Roma in the Czech and Slovak Republics.[1] I explore the diverse contemporary significances of this song for Roma in Ostrava in the context of the legacies of the Holocaust and their own experiences of 'race'.

This chapter begins with an overview of the history of discourses of 'race' and related concepts, followed by a statement on my own approach to 'race' to clarify my position for discussions of music and 'race' here and in following chapters. I then outline a history of the Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia 1399-1917 and during the first Czechoslovak Republic 1918-1938, which prepares the way for a description of some of the most acute examples of how conceptions of 'race' affected Roma in Czechoslovakia during 1938-1945 and the aftermath. The last section proposes ways in which this history is understood today in Ostrava and how it is significant in five different performances of the anthem *Čhajori Romaňi*.

2.1 What is 'race'?: history and development of discourses of 'race'

The purpose of this section is not to give a definition of 'race', but rather to examine where past and present connotations of this word have come from and to reach working ideas about it that benefit my consideration of how music and 'race' may intersect, with particular reference to Romani music making in Ostrava.

The discipline of anthropology and at times closely related field of ethnomusicology have had a chequered history concerning ideas of 'race'. Anthropology can at once claim to have done much to combat racist ideas, whilst having been heavily involved in the racist ideas and research that provided colonialists with justification and knowledge needed for exploitation. To understand better what 'race' has come to signify today, the historical evolution of the term must be

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[1] There is also an international Romani anthem *Dželem Dželem* (Ro; I walked).

considered. I shall give a very brief summary of the main phases of the meaning of 'race', as suggested by Banton, Wade, Cox, Goldberg, Hall and others.[2]

The word was first introduced into the English language in 1508 in a poem (Banton 1998:17).[3] Until the 18th century, 'race' denoted royal lineage, and consequently no one from the popular classes belonged to any 'race'. In Europe, between the 16th and 18th centuries, people's origins were mainly explained through the Bible, by linking descendants to the common ancestor of Adam (monogenism) (Banton 1998:18). During the 19th century, when scientific discovery acquired great importance, 'race' began to be used in a quasi-scientific manner to categorise species of humans with separate sources of ancestry (polygenism). Arguments raged over whether humans represented one species with different 'races' being sub-species or if different 'races' were different species. Racial types were ordered hierarchically and these '"natural" differences were increasingly seen as "biological" differences' (Wade 1997:10).

In 1859, Darwin upset the debate by positing that species and subspecies evolve over time.[4] Evolutionary explanations began to view 'races' as inter-graded rather than distinct, although they took a long time to have any effect on racial thinking. Two important events at this time had great impact on the debate: the abolition of slavery and the rise in European colonialism. Goldberg suggests that whereas previously, morality had been defined by virtuous behaviour, people began to talk in terms of 'stocks and breeds of people with natural, innate, fixed qualities' (1993:6,34-6). Thus, some 'races' were characterised as innately inferior and irrational, supported by science, providing a semblance of legitimacy for the continued dominance over blacks in the U.S. and European colonialism. In light of this, many scholars view the concept of 'race' as exclusively connected to modernity, nationalism, imperialism and the rise of an exploitative capitalist system (see chapter 3.1).

This quasi-scientific approach manifested itself in cultural anthropology through practices such as measuring cranial capacity and comparing physiologies supposedly in order to find out how intelligent different 'races' were.[5] Boas later discredited practices of cranial measurement by using the same practices to show that there is much more variation over an individual lifetime and between generations, than between so-called 'races'. There were parallel ideas in ethnomusicology, displayed in notions that music can be understood through processes of

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[2] For further detail, see Banton (1997,1998), Wade (1997,2000,2002), Cox (1948), Goldberg (1993), Hall (1984,1990,1996,1996a,1997)

[3] *Dance of the Sevin Deidly Sins* by the Scotsman William Dunbar

[4] In his work *Origin of the Species* (1859)

[5] See for example, Deniker (1900/R1926) and Deniker's tables detailing the average height, cephalic and nasal index size of different "races" of men (1900/R1971).

measurement and categorisation.[6] At this time, culture and personality were mainly understood to be isomorphic with 'race' and language, thus it was understood that a particular 'race' spoke a specific language, played certain kinds of music and acted in certain ways because of 'race'. The 19th century marked the beginning of widespread scientific racism: 'even for self-proclaimed egalitarians, the inferiority of certain races was no more to be contested than the law of gravity to be regarded immoral' (Barkan 1992:2-3).

In the 20th century, eugenics emerged as a partnership between science and social policy, based on the idea that reproduction should be restricted for people deemed to be biologically inferior. Although the idea had lost currency in most circles by the 1930s, under the Nazis 'race' became a juridical category, acquiring full legal status, taken to horrifying conclusions in the Holocausts. After 1945 'race' mostly became a taboo word and concept in Europe; UNESCO made a post-war statement that all humans are fundamentally the same, in America the civil rights movement was gaining ground, and in academia racial theories that were used to explain social phenomena were often superseded by larger and more encompassing explanations that did not need a concept of 'race', for example, Marxism. Genetic science began to gain currency, and 'the idea of "type", based on a collection of traits passed as an unchanging bundle down the generations, was untenable' (Wade 1997:13). The majority of scholars in all fields came to the conclusion that biological 'races' do not exist, only genetic variation that does not conform to the drawing of lines around groups that characterised racial thinking.

After World War II, the word ethnicity eventually came to fill the gap left by the sidelining of discourses of 'race'. The word ethnic derives from the Greek word *ethnos* meaning 'a number of people living together' (Liddell & Scott 1968:480), and meaning pagan or heathen from about the mid 14th to mid 19th century, when it gradually began to refer to "racial" characteristics (Wade 1997:16). With the exception of Weber, no sociologist or anthropologist paid any attention to ethnicity until the 1960s, when it became a commonly used word, although often (conveniently) undefined.[7] In anthropology, ethnicity primarily refers to aspects of relationships between members of groups who consider themselves and may be seen by others, as culturally distinct, based on a belief in common ancestry of a group, however distant or historically tenuous that may appear to an outsider. Ethnicity is often given meaning through sentiments of shared culture, perhaps through a distinctive type of music, dance or art form, or

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[6] See for example, Densmore's tables of interval measurements, listings of the first and last pitch of songs and how many 'accidentals' a song contains, and so on (1913, 1923, 1929). Despite the fact she was studying Native American music, all her categories are based on what was important for much of European folk and classical music. It should be noted that Densmore was not alone in using these methods and the preoccupation with measurement pervaded ethnomusicology until at least the 1970s.
[7] The word ethnicity first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972 (Anthias 1992:27).

common language, dialect, religious belief or practice. Barth defined ethnic groups as 'categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus [they] have the characteristic of organising interaction between people' (1969:10), shifting the emphasis from an alleged substance or content of ethnicity to the social processes and self-ascription that produce and reproduce boundaries of ethnic identification and differentiation.[8]

It was only in the 1990s that discussions of 'race' started to reappear in the fields of anthropology and then ethnomusicology. This comeback has not been satisfactorily explained; however, most scholars suggest that the necessity of combating the virulent forms of racism that persist has prompted the urgent re-evaluation of 'race' (for example, Wade 2002:5). In North American academia and media, the word 'race' is openly used in a way that is much less prevalent in Europe.[9] As I understand it, many, particularly white, Americans feel that 'race' simply means phenotype, with skin colour the predominantly though not uniquely important feature, and fail to appreciate the wide reaching contemporary racial politics in play.[10] This has provoked a backlash from mostly ultra-liberal academics who fear the erasure of the history of 'race' and racism and the lack of recognition of ongoing imbalances of power resulting from racial politics. Perhaps the pendulum has swung too far with implications that every situation is fundamentally racialised. Nevertheless, there are attempts to address the tendency to relegate experiences of 'race' to long-gone history and the frequent obfuscation caused by rhetoric of ethnic, religious or cultural difference, where the same disempowerment, exploitation and social control of groups of people persist.

Some parts of academia have begun to talk about 'race' in terms of power imbalances where whiteness stands for dominance. This may be a welcome development that surpasses limited biological conceptions of 'race', challenges the non-racialisation of white people, and recognises the ongoing effects of 'race' on people's lives and society. However, I am concerned by the tendency to impose this model that is strongly based on U.S. social conditions on the rest

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[8] Although there have been developments in academic discourses of ethnicity, it is also apparent that in many contexts the concept of ethnicity has only replaced the rhetoric of race with more politically palatable language: euphemisms like ethnic cleansing refer to phenomena that may previously have been viewed as racial. Furthermore, there has been a marked split in the usage of race and ethnicity between academic and everyday language, which some scholars have cited as a reason for abolishing the words race and ethnicity in academic language, for they may be too laden with other meanings from everyday usage.

[9] It is noticeable that in the last few years there has been a sharp increase in interest in the discussion of "race" in the U.K. media (although this discussion has a much longer history), perhaps partly in response to the widespread use of the word in the U.S.

[10] There may be vested interests in reducing race to benign physical differences, particularly as there are ongoing compensation claims from families of ex-slaves. This and the following paragraph are based on discussions held at a conference in March 2005 at New York University "Music, Performance and Racial Imaginations".

of the world, the justification for which often lies in the global dominance and spread of American culture and ideas. Conversely, I suggest that racial politics often have highly localised dimensions that are not influenced by the U.S. and cannot always be understood by positing the whiteness of power.

This overview of the development of discourses on 'race' demonstrates its changing meanings and role and its co-option into various ideological and political projects. Most contemporary academics agree that 'race' is a social construct that undermines essentialist ideas of 'race', and many scholars are conceptualising it as inextricably connected to power, dominance and the development of capitalism (see chapter 3).

2.2 Statement on 'race'

I here outline my general approach to the concept of 'race'. The empowering and disenfranchising effects of racial ideas are real. However, although people often experience 'race' itself as objectively perceptible, it is a socially constructed abstraction. It constructs meaning from aspects of physical difference, particularly external phenotypical difference produced by a combination of genotype and environment. However, not all aspects of phenotype are deemed important in racial constructions, only those constructed to be of racial significance,[11] for example differences between physiques of men and women are not important in racial thinking, even though they may be interwoven with racial ideas in people's worldviews. (In contemporary Europe, skin tone is one of the most popularly recognised phenotypical aspects deemed of racial significance, along with bone structure and hair).

There are no objective measurements, and no natural or permanent boundaries to divide people into racial groups. The range of phenotypical variation covers an entire spectrum, with no natural dividing lines or cut off points, and that there is often more variation within certain perceived groups than between groups underlines the socially constructed character of group formation. The relative importance of phenotypical differences has changed over time within groups and what is conceived of as sufficient for determining a racial group in one situation may be irrelevant in another. That which is conceived of as a racial group has certainly changed over time, and it is important to think about how much and in what ways different cultures and

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[11] Discussion of this point is outside the scope of this thesis. See Wade (2002) for further detail. He contends that not enough consideration has been given to concepts such as human nature, phenotype and biology, which are often used to describe what race means, particularly in differentiating it from other social constructions and phenomena. Many conceptions of race rely on ideas of socially constructing physical difference or phenotype, without questioning what these terms mean.

societies educate people to think racially, how biological attributes may be viewed, how ideas of 'race' are constructed politically, and different connotations of the word 'race' in different languages.

In popular perceptions, different ideas have often become attached to racial categories, such as likely behavioural patterns, religion, origin, beliefs, tastes, status, class, nationality, allegiances and opinions. These may become attached to 'race' through processes such as imbibing propaganda, media influence, folklore, rumour, research, experiences with only a few members of a racial group, and so on, and may eventually come to function as fixed stereotypes on the basis of which people have prejudices about another based on a racial identification. The meanings that people attach to constructed phenotypical signifiers are used to construct hierarchical ideas of groups, attracting labels such as white, black, East European, Asian, Czech, Jew and endless other categories loosely connected to skin colour, geo-political region, religion, nation-state, or ethnic group, according to the expediencies of the context. Although there may not be any defined boundaries to groups and they may be constantly shifting, from the way somebody appears they may be racially identified by themselves or others as belonging to a group that may display similar phenotypical (and perhaps other external)[12] features. (People may also be racially identified in spite of their phenotypical attributes, owing to knowledge of their ancestors.[13])

Despite popular, often confused, conceptions of 'race', it is not a characteristic or set of characteristics and cannot be defined by content. Rather, it is a condition brought about by relationships with other people in specific contexts, making it social and political. For example, western European colonialists assigned people positions in a racial hierarchy that they constructed for political and economic purposes (Goldberg 1993:26-27,76). These hierarchies of 'races' are not real in the sense that they have any scientific basis or reflect any natural order. However, the motivations for, the use of institutionalised domination in, and the effects of, this type of ranking has been and is real, producing conditions of 'race' whereby relationships are mediated through racial ideas. No 'race' relations exist between two groups that do not have a relationship; there must be relationships between people for groups to form and what may become important as a marker of racial difference is a matter of context.[14]

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[12] A case could be made that external features such as dress, hairstyle or cosmetics could contribute to racial identification, although usually only in combination with phenotype.

[13] There were a significant number of Roma in Ostrava and Slovakia who were pointed out to me as not looking like Roma, often owing to pale skin, blond hair or light-coloured eyes. They were accepted as Roma because their parents were Romani, however they were identified as such in spite of their phenotype.

[14] Race is often conceived of as a collective concept, meaning that personal exchanges between individuals are mediated through wider relations between groups. However, Cox contends that 'if, for example two

There is need to historicise experiences and constructions of 'race', and as Wade proposes, studying the processes of racialising in racialised identifications, rather than 'races' themselves, is a way of avoiding reifying or fetishising racial categories (2000:14).[15] If one settles on a particular meaning for 'race', or advances a particular understanding of 'race', then whilst temporarily stopping for the purposes of communicating something, I suggest that it should not be considered a permanent, fixed meaning, but instead viewed as part of particular negotiations of power and identity. Postmodern methods of deconstruction, linked to theories of power and hegemony, have been useful in shifting the focus from substance to process and in considering processes of racialisation in conjunction with other important axes of difference. They emphasise the multiple ways in which 'race' is experienced. Feminist theory draws attentions to the way in which black men may have different experiences and interests to black women. Similarly, it is not always appropriate to conflate the interests of black women with those of white women.

As proceeding sections show, when the Roma arrived in Europe, they were initially dominated in ways that did not necessarily involve concepts of 'race'. However, issues of 'race' have subsequently been employed in different ways, or deliberately ignored, as justification and explication of Roma's treatment.

2.2 Entry of Roma into the Czech lands and Slovakia (1399-1917)

There are wildly differing estimates concerning when Roma arrived in Europe, ranging from Roman times to more substantiated claims of sometime before 1300 when Roma started to be enslaved in Wallachia and Moldavia. The first documented appearance of the Roma in the Czech lands was in 1399 (Guy 2001:286).[16] A large band of Roma obtained letters of safe conduct from

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persons of different racial strains were to meet and deal with each other on their own devices... without preoccupation with a social definition of each other's race – then it might be said that race here is of no sociological significance' (1948:320). Certainly, many situations involve people of so-called different races where race plays no important role. However, I would allow for the possibility that when two individuals meet, their respective physical appearance may say to either or both of them that they must be of the same or a different race. Because of the current prevalence of many people's racial thinking, a meeting between two individuals <u>may</u> become racialised. Each localised situation and different units of analysis, should be taken on their own merits, rather than assuming that race only concerns relations between relatively large groups.

[15] Importantly, Wade warns against prejudging the nature of race as exclusionary, for it oversimplifies racialising processes: there is often a delicate tension between inclusion and exclusion in processes of racialisation frequently connected with ideas of nation and bound up in processes of Gramscian-type hegemony (2000:14). Furthermore, the flexible manner in which race has been co-opted into racist arguments belies the understood fixity of race, underlining the need for historicising processes of racialisation (Wade 2000:15).

[16] There is controversial speculation that they arrived as early as 1217-1218, or even 1092 (Guy 2001:286).

King Sigismund at Spiš castle in Eastern Slovakia in 1423, although they did not remain there long, travelling through and prefiguring the 'western pattern' of Roma development (Fraser 1992:76, Horváthová 1964:37 cited in Guy 2001:286). In Western Europe, Roma made their living by using niches within the more developed market economies that opened up to them through their nomadic lifestyle. However, in Eastern Europe, where market economies tended to be less developed, Roma were needed for labour and were often encouraged or forced to settle. The Czech and Slovak lands reflected this West-East divide: as early as the 15th century, Roma settled around the feudal castles in Slovakia, the men employed as grooms, smiths, musicians, and soldiers, and the women as domestic servants and washerwomen. In Bohemia and Moravia, Roma tended to remain nomadic, pursuing traditional occupations such as horse trading, peddling, telling fortunes, performing magic tricks, begging and thieving (Guy 2001:287).

In the Czech lands and Slovakia, Roma remained distinct from the local population because of their darker skin, language and customs, although initially the highly religious local population welcomed and respected them. The local population and governing bodies, who provided them with safe conduct permits, believed the legend propagated by Roma that they were in religious exile from Egypt and condemned to wander for seven years as penitent pilgrims as a punishment for their ancestors who had not repented for enslaving the Jews (Crowe 1995:32).[17] This legend was well received, but as the seven years ran out and the region became destabilised, the Roma became increasingly unwelcome and outlawed.

Their arrival in the Czech lands coincided with incursions by Turks, and Roma were often accused of being spies, incendiaries or soldiers working for Turks: many Christians in the Czech lands had no first-hand experience of Muslims, and on account of their strange language, customs and darker skin, Roma were assumed to be Muslim spies (Guy 2001:287, Crowe 1995:34, Kalvoda 1991:94).[18] In 1541 King Ferdinand I expelled all the Roma from his kingdom after a series of fires in Prague were blamed on them, when they were accused of working for the Turks. Some indications of this change in attitude by the majority populations came from previous suspicions that the Roma were indifferent to religion and from the chaos and fear of Turks that beset the region after the Turkish conquest of central Hungary in 1541 (Crowe 1995:34).

Sedentary and nomadic Roma became isolated from the local peasants and new Roma settlers were only allowed to live on the periphery of towns and villages, permitted only to make simple farm tools and excluded from more profitable metalworking (Crowe 1995:34). Policies

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[17] The word Gypsy is based on the belief that the Roma came from Egypt.
[18] Ironically, in Muslim lands Roma were assumed to be Christians (ibid).

regarding Roma were uneven in the Czech lands and Crowe believes that government decrees were mostly reactive to public alarm because they were reissued several times, a sign of inadequate enforcement (ibid). However, when public feeling exploded against the Roma in 1556, the government intervened to stop Romani women and children from being drowned and supported services that nomadic Roma provided (Crowe 1995:35).

During the 17th century, Bohemia was submerged within the larger history of the Habsburg Empire and accompanying Germanisation, and the political situation considerably worsened for the Czech lands and Slovakian Hungary with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), famines, epidemics and the flight of many people. There was a complex series of wars and rebellions accompanied by social and economic instability, during which the Roma were treated savagely, and became victims of state-sanctioned mutilation and execution, supposedly in order to deter further attacks from the region's enemies (Kalvoda 1991:94). They suffered from increasingly harsh legislation by Leopold I, and later Joseph I, who ordered 'that all adult male [Gypsies] were to be hanged without trial, whereas women and young males were to be flogged and banished forever...they were to have their right ear cut off in the kingdom of Bohemia, in the county of Mähren [Moravia] on the contrary the left ear' (Crowe 1995:37). Roma were outlawed and Charles VI later ordered the execution of any Romani woman or child who re-entered Bohemia (ibid).

The harshness of these policies changed during the reign of Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and Joseph II (1780-1790), who attempted to assimilate Roma into the peasantry in order to make them productive workers and raise taxes from them as part of a plan to transform their realm into a centralised state. Nomadic Roma were forcibly settled in serfs' villages and expected to take up useful occupations, build roads and work in fields and forests. Roma were beaten if they were not productive enough and were ordered not to waste any time on music (Kalvoda 1991:95). They were not allowed to own horses, speak Romani, wear their traditional clothes, and their children were often forcibly removed and brought up by non-Romani Christian families. The word for Gypsy (Cz/Sl: *Cikán/Cigán*) was banned and Roma were renamed New Citizens (Ge: *Neubauern*) or New Hungarians (Hu: *Ujmagyar*) (Postma 1996:40). Other new restrictions included the destruction of Romani slums on the outskirts of villages and the building of new homes where Romani men and women were to sleep apart. Roma were not allowed to leave villages without permission (Crowe 1995:39).

The money and attention required for these assimilation policies inflamed local hatred of Roma and in 1782, 41 Roma were executed after local authorities in Slovakia accused 151 Roma of 'roasting and eating several dozen Hungarian peasants' (Crowe 1995:39). However, when

Joseph II ordered a commission to investigate, it found that the Roma were 'guilty of no more than theft and [the remaining 110 Roma] were released after a beating' (ibid). In the Czech lands, Roma indirectly benefited from Joseph II's Serfdom Patent of 1781, which made serfs into subjects of the state rather than of lords, theoretically legally equal (Crowe 1995:39). Assimilation of Roma did not succeed, and although there were patchy material benefits and inclusion in citizenship rights, the scheme raised local antagonism between Roma and non-Roma and oppressed an entire people culturally and socially.

These policies waned with the death of Joseph II and onset of the devastating wars triggered by the French Revolution (1789). Roma returned to their wagons and nomadic lifestyle in the Czech lands, whilst in Slovakia Roma settled on the outskirts of villages. Information on Roma in the Czech lands and Slovakia is practically non-existent for the next 50 years, when there was a revitalisation of Czech national identity and development of a Slovak one (although it suffered from persistent attempts at Magyarisation).

The only sources of Romani history during the second half of the 19th century come from Hungarian censuses.[19] In Czech districts, Roma were required to register with the local authorities who usually escorted them to the borders of their district as they considered them a nuisance. In Slovakia, numbers swelled due to a high birth rate and the building of new huts, although the sedentary nature of the Slovak Roma at the end of the 19th century did not bring elevation up the regional socio-economic ladder (Crowe 1995:42). The only Roma to rise above the low Romani status were professional musicians who were appreciated for their talents at noblemen's courts. Consequently, during the second half of the 19th century and start of the 20th century, some Romani musicians received the first permissions to own a house and settle permanently, which usually became the starting point for a Romani settlement (Sl: *osada*) (Crowe 1995:42). A slightly earlier though anomalous example of a Romani musician finding status through favour with the nobility was Cinka Panna (born 1711 in Gemer, now part of Slovakia). It was extremely unusual at this time for a woman to be a violin virtuoso, composer and leader of a Romani band, but she had great success at court, and was highly sought after amongst the nobility of the surrounding region.[20]

The outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) found the Czech lands and Slovakia caught in the midst of military mobilisation by German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish powers.

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[19] See Crowe 1995:41-42 for more detail. Roma would most likely have been affected by the decree from Vienna 'several years after the 1848-1849 revolutions' that 'all national cultures were to be allowed equal and complete freedom of non-political development', which in line with extensive Magyarisation was soon revoked by a refusal to accept different nationalities (Crowe 1995:40).

[20] http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/, accessed on 27/10/04

For the Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, war with their fellow Slavs in Russia and Serbia was unacceptable, resulting in mass defections and surrenders. The imperial powers reorganised regiments on a mixed racial basis and arrested thousands of Czechs, sentencing 5000 to death at military tribunals (Crowe 1995:42). Partly as a result of this and inspired by a Czech-led movement in the United States, the concept of an independent Czechoslovak nation gained currency throughout 1917-1918 and Czechoslovak independence was declared on 28 October 1918.

2.3 The birth of Czechoslovakia (1918-1938)

The status of the Roma changed with the birth of a multinational Czechoslovak Republic,[21] and Roma were recognised as a separate nationality in 1921, along with Jews. In comparison to the number of Germans living in Czechoslovakia at the time, the number of Roma was regarded as insignificant and consequently there were no significant reforms specifically affecting them (Crowe 1995:44).[22] After the war, Slovakia was less industrially and agriculturally developed than the Czech lands, and although attempts were made to close disparities, some Slovaks felt that Slovakia and Ruthenia (where the bulk of Czechoslovak Roma lived) were left underdeveloped and treated like colonies during the First Czechoslovak Republic (Mamatey and Luža in Crowe 1995:46,49). There was a world economic depression in 1929-1933, and Slovakia was hit very hard. During its peak in 1932-1933, approximately a third of Slovakia's population was without income (Crowe 1995:42).

In some ways, little changed in terms of Romani lifestyle or in the number of complaints made against them by peasant organisations that accused them of stealing and begging. Peasants resented Roma having so little that imprisonment actually improved their conditions. Indeed, Roma were committing crimes to avoid hunger, and their imprisonment was financed through Czechoslovak taxes (Crowe 1995:45). The government circulated copies of 1888 Austrian regulations on nomadism and the repressive rules that formed the basis of law 117 were directed against nomadic Roma in 1927. Guy proposes that 'such legislative changes were of less relevance to the settled Roma of Slovakia than their widespread destitution in the depressed economic conditions after the First World War and in the 1930s, which provided fertile ground for the rise of political extremism' (2001:288).

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[21] There were four main groups: Czechs, Slovaks, Silesians and Hungarians, as well as smaller groups of Germans, Jews, Roma and others.

[22] Before World War II, there are estimated to have been over 100,000 Roma in Czechoslovakia, the bulk in Slovakia (Kenrick 1999:149).

Roma were excluded from large towns, especially spa-towns with a tourist trade, and some Slovaks retaliated against stealing crops with pogroms. Even though young children were murdered, the national newspaper condoned these attacks, calling one attack 'a citizens' revolt against gypsy life. In this there are the roots of democracy' (Crowe 1995:46), adding that 'the gypsy element, such as it is today, is really an ulcer on the body of our social life which must be cured in a radical way' (Novaček 1968:25-6 cited in Guy 2001:288). As Guy sums up, although many Czechs remember the interwar republic as a period of liberalism, for most Roma these were years of unrelenting poverty with the constant threat of unpredictable racist attacks and occasional pogroms (in Tong 1998:50). Guy and Kalvoda (1991:95) suggest that in retrospect this violence appears to be a prelude to the Holocaust.

Not everyone was hostile, and there were attempts to improve education for Roma. In 1925, Romani schools were opened in several communities in Ruthenia and Eastern Slovakia, and in 1929 a group of physicians in Košice created the "League for the Cultural Advancement of Gypsies", which, although initially concerned with Roma's health problems, soon broadened its interests to opening schools and forming theatre and music groups that performed all over Slovakia (Crowe 1995:46). Czechoslovakia was the only functioning parliamentary democracy in the area, and the most prosperous and industrialised, although this relative prosperity did not necessarily trickle down to the poorest, including Roma, or effectively "trickle across" from the Czech lands to Slovakia. In any case, everything that had been built up disappeared with the break-up and conquest of Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Towards the end of the 1930s, many Roma fled to Czechoslovakia from the German Reich and occupied Austria. Numbers swelled and by this time the whole country was in a state of severe economic depression, fuelling anti-Roma feeling. Boundary changes were forced upon the country and the territorial unity of Czechoslovakia was broken, first through diplomatic pressure and then by outright military attacks. In October and November 1938, the greater part of the Czech borderlands were annexed by Nazi Germany in the Munich Accords, and on 2 November 1938, Hungary claimed 4,570 square miles of Slovakia through the Vienna Award.

2.4 World War II and the aftermath

In March 1939, the remaining parts of Czechoslovakia ceased to be an independent state: the Nazis occupied Bohemia and Moravia, making it a theoretically autonomous protectorate, and Slovakia was set up as an independent republic with a Nazi puppet government. To understand Nazi policy towards the Roma in the Czech Protectorate and Slovakia, it is necessary to know its

antecedents in Germany itself. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, they inherited anti-Gypsy laws and sentiments already in force since the Middle Ages. The public had a long history of resentment and mistrust towards Roma, which was exemplified in 1933 by the findings of an SS study group that proposed sending all Roma out to sea and sinking the ships. (Paragraph based on Kenrick & Puxon 1972:59-62).

The Nazi interest in Roma as a 'race' began in 1933, when the Gypsyologist, Wolf, was sent lists of persons whose genealogy he traced back to their eight great-grandparents. If one of these eight was Romani or if two were part-Romani, then the person in question was defined as at least part-Romani. The racial criteria for being Romani were therefore twice as strict as for Jews. In 1936, the anti-Gypsy campaign was extended Europe-wide, through Interpol's establishment of the "International Centre for the Fight against the Gypsy Menace" in Vienna. They sought and received co-operation from other European governments in identifying Roma throughout Europe. By February 1941, the "Racial Hygiene and Population Biology Research Group", founded by Dr Ritter, had classified 20,000 pure or part-Gypsies and had 30,000 files, approximately equal to the number of Roma in Greater Germany. Ritter was particularly anxious to hunt down part-Roma and those who had merged into society to become "invisible" Roma. (Paragraph based on Kenrick & Puxon 1972:59-62).

When the Nazis established their racial hierarchy, the Roma posed an inconvenience, for their widely accepted Indian origins meant they would be considered 'Aryan'.[23] However, in Nazism (and neo-Nazism), 'Aryan' came to refer to non-Jewish Caucasians, especially of Nordic type, supposed to be part of a 'master race' (http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/Aryan, accessed on 02/04/06). Controversy continues until the present about whether the campaign against the Roma was racially or socially motivated, which perhaps to some extent reflects the conflicting motivations of the Nazis. However, after 1942 it is certain that the Romani Holocaust (Ro: *Porajmos*) was racially motivated, partly confirmed by the racial nature of experiments carried in the latter years of the war in order to prove that Roma had different blood and skull structure to 'Aryans', for the Nazis never recognised Roma as 'Aryans' (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:60).

In 1936, Korber wrote in *Volk und Staat* (Ge; Nation and State): 'The Jew and the Gypsy are today far removed from us because their Asiatic ancestors were totally different from our Nordic forefathers' (cited in Kenrick & Puxon 1972:59). Similarly, Günther in *Rassenkunde Europas* (Ge; European Racial Lore), referred to by Friedman as 'the Bible of Nazi

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[23] Previous meanings of 'Aryan' that are no longer in technical use refer to people and languages classed as Indo-Iranian, and later, Indo-European (http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/Aryan, accessed on 02/04/06). The Romani language belongs to the Indo-European language group.

anthropology', wrote; 'The Gypsies have indeed retained some elements from their Nordic home, but they are descended from the lowest classes of the population in that region. In the course of their migration they have absorbed the blood of the surrounding peoples and have thus become an Oriental, Western Asiatic racial mixture, with an addition of Indian, Mid-Asiatic and European strains... Their nomadic mode of living is a result of this mixture. The Gypsies will generally affect Europe as aliens' (cited in Kenrick & Puxon 1972:59). The attempts to distance Roma racially from Europeans are clear and their deemed socially deviant behaviour was rationalised by their supposed racial impurity or mixture. In 1935, two laws were passed to make non-Europeans second-class citizens, including Roma.

Some writers have suggested that Roma were classified as asocials in order to sidestep the issue of 'Aryan' ancestry, however Kenrick and Puxon do not accept this, for even though in camps Roma wore the black triangle of asocials, they formed a different group, some wearing distinctive brown triangles with the sign Z (Ge: *Zigeuner*), or they were consigned to special Gypsy camps. Furthermore, a Nazi party proclamation in 1938 stated that the so-called Gypsy problem was 'categorically a matter of race' (Ge: *mit Bestimmtheit eine Frage der Rasse*) and was to be dealt with in that light (Hancock 1987:65).

Nazi policies were applied to the Czech Protectorate and Slovakia, although the fate of individual Roma very much depended on which part of the country they were in. The first anti-Roma measures came in 1939, which decreed that all nomads should settle within two months or face incarceration, the official reason being to teach them discipline at work (Jařabová & Davidová 2000:40). Sporadic arrests began in 1941 in the Protectorate, but it was not until 1 January 1942 that a decree, in the name of crime prevention, was made to control all Roma movements until which time they could be transported to concentration camps (Crowe 1995:49).

On 10 June 1942, following the example of the German SS, Protectorate police issued a decree to eradicate the 'Gypsy nuisance' or 'Gypsy menace', ordering all 'Gypsies, Gypsy half-breeds and persons living a Gypsy life' to register in police stations and forbidding Roma to leave their permanent accommodation (Jařabová & Davidová 2000:40). The majority of the Sinti and Roma in the Protectorate who could prove they had regular dwelling and work remained temporarily free following the registration. However, adult identity cards were removed on 'race biological' grounds and replaced by so-called Gypsy documents (Kenrick 1999:170). From March 1943 onwards, they were ordered to report to assembly centres where they were interned for the final selection for Auschwitz where a special Gypsy Family Camp had been built. No one knows exactly how this was organised, but there is evidence that interventions of local mayors, personal friendships, and in a few cases bribery, were helpful in avoiding deportation, although

the majority were transported to Auschwitz along with the prisoners of the Czech Gypsy camps (Nečas in Kenrick 1999:170).

On 16 December, 1942, Himmler decided to liquidate the Gypsy camps, and so began a programme, mostly at Auschwitz, that killed over half a million Roma (some say as many as 600,000), that is, between a quarter and a third of all Roma who were living in Europe at that time (Hancock 1987:81). Out of about 13,000 Czech Roma in 1939, several thousand escaped to Slovakia before deportations began, but only a few hundred Czech Roma survived the concentration camps; they were decimated from 6,540 in 1941 to about 500 after the war (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:135).[24]

Conditions in Hungarian-occupied Slovakia were very hard and some Roma were sent to work camps and later to the extermination camp at Dachau. In the puppet Slovak fascist state, the treatment of Roma did not reach the level of systematic extermination in Bohemia and Moravia. Therefore, it was largely considered a refuge, although the Slovak fascist leader Mach in 1942 promised that the "solution" to the Roma problem would soon follow that of the Jews in Slovakia. Edicts imposed compulsory labour on Jews and Roma, and Roma were forbidden to enter parks, cafes and restaurants, or use public transport. Roma were expelled from the quarters they occupied in nearly every town and village in Slovakia, although these orders were executed unevenly across the country. Other restrictions and edicts followed, and a number of pogroms by local fascists took place.[25] 'It is generally accepted that only the end of the war saved the Gypsies of Slovakia from sharing the fate of their fellows in Bohemia and Moravia. One writer has mentioned that accusations of cannibalism were made against the Gypsies as part of the preparation for a campaign against them' (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:138). The Nazis' divide-and-rule policy meant that Roma extermination was delayed in the Slovak puppet state, and only a few hundred out of about 100,000 Roma died at the hands of Slovak fascists. (Paragraph based on Kenrick & Puxon 1972:134-139).

The extent of Czech and Slovak complicity in Roma extermination is unknown; there were undisputed pogroms by Slovaks, there is evidence that Slovaks and Czechs tried to protect local Roma, and some Roma fought alongside Slovak partisans and were decorated for their heroism. Only recently have studies been published about Czech involvement in operating

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[24] For detailed information and first-hand accounts of the atrocities the Roma suffered in the work, concentration and death camps, see Kenrick & Puxon (1972), Kenrick (1999), Hancock (1987), Jařabová & Davidová (2000).

[25] At Ilija, all 112 men, women and children of the Romani community were killed. Similar massacres occurred in 1944, in reprisal for the Romani role in the Slovak National Insurrection against the fascist puppet government (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:137).

Romani concentration camps at Léty and Hodonín,[26] and there remain many unanswered questions. Kenrick and Puxon suggest that the order for expulsion of Roma from communities where they were sedentary and relatively integrated has repercussions today: forced to leave their homes and make primitive camps in scrubland several kilometres away, Roma existed for several years as outcasts without education and basic necessities, breaking any trust and interaction between Roma and Czechoslovaks. (Paragraph based on Kenrick & Puxon 1972:134-139).

After the war, the opening of the concentration camps provided little immediate relief, as most were too weak to even walk out. People were destitute and faced news of relatives who had perished. Roma and Jews had to face the realisation of how widespread the destruction of their people was. Roma outside the camps had been living in terrible conditions, outlawed and deprived of normal human contact, isolated in remote areas: this hampered their re-integration, producing a generation debilitated by war-weary parents, many of whom suffered nervous breakdowns or committed suicide (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:188). Many Roma would not give information about their families for fear that the persecution would recommence, and survivors began an indeterminate period in displaced persons camps, often in the same buildings they had been held in by the Nazis. Military courts, determined to reassert their authority, passed death sentences and long prison terms that affected many Roma who, unbalanced by their traumatic experiences in camps, sought revenge on known Nazis (Kenrick & Puxon 1972:189). For a variety of reasons, many Roma were refused the papers they needed after release, and entered into a cycle of imprisonment, deportation orders, refusal by other states to provide necessary papers, followed by further imprisonment and deportation orders: in 1972 there were estimated to be 30,000 stateless Roma in Europe (ibid).

During the Nuremberg trials no Roma were called as witnesses. Concerning restitution claims by Roma, a circular from the Interior Ministry of Württemberg in 1950 stated that 'it should be borne in mind that Gypsies had been persecuted under the Nazis not for any racial reasons but because of an asocial and criminal record' (cited in Kenrick & Puxon 1972:190). When racial persecution was proved, the Supreme Court overrode these decisions, ruling that there was no racial persecution, only measures justified by the demands of national security. Many Roma were illiterate, almost no Romani writers survived the war, and, because Roma have been mostly overlooked since then, it is very difficult for historians to piece together the Romani experience during World War II. Often they have had to rely on Jewish and other survivors' accounts. The general ignorance of the Romani holocaust is exemplified by the fact that when the US Holocaust Memorial Council was established in 1979, 65 individuals were approached, none

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[26] Nečas (1994), Pape (1997 in Guy 2001:288)

of whom were Roma. Even after an appeal in 1985, there was again no Romani representation on the council, although they have since taken a more active interest in the Romani situation (Hancock 1987:80).

Jařabová (2000:62) proposes that of the 500 Czech Roma that survived, most settled somewhere else because of traumatic memories and many took non-Romani partners. The Roma identified as such in post-war Czechoslovakia were mostly from rural Eastern Slovakia. They had very different cultural and social backgrounds and therefore did not make contact with remaining Czech Roma who have now completely disappeared through assimilation or migration (Jařabová 2000:48), along with their unique dialect (Hübschmannová 1991:5). When I refer to Czech Roma post-World War II, these Roma are migrants from Slovakia and their descendants (approximately 80%), migrants from Hungary/Hungarian Slovakia and their descendants (approximately 10%), and the rest are mostly nomadic Vlach (Cz: *Olašští*), with very small numbers of Sinti and Moravian Roma.

The issue of war reparations still concerns a small number of Roma in the Czech Republic. Unlike many Jews, most Roma have not been recompensed for their suffering during World War II. Even now, they are only allowed to apply in person for compensation.[27] During Communist party rule, public mention of the Holocaust was taboo in the effort to suppress inter-ethnic tension, and whilst West Germany began to compensate Romani survivors living there in 1953, victims in the Soviet bloc were deprived of compensation because it was believed that those regimes would keep the hard currency for themselves.[28]

One issue that is currently being fought is on behalf of Czechoslovak Roma who were forced to flee to the forests where they lived without basic amenities and suffered rape or attack during this time. The Czech government requires "proof" before it feels able to provide financial compensation, but, of course, there is no documentation from this time about those events and if the process takes long enough, there will not be any surviving Roma from this era to compensate (source: conversation with Kumar Vishwanathan, 7 October 2003). The Czech-run Romani concentration camp at Léty is being investigated and thus far the government has not admitted Czech involvement. There is now a pig farm on the site of the camp, which is a gross insult to many Roma and non-Roma who feel that it should be kept as a memorial to the significant part this camp played in the extermination of Roma in the Czech lands.[29]

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[27] The average age of Holocaust survivors reached 'about 80' in 1997
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/42728.stm, accessed on 27/10/04
[28] http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/compensation.htm, accessed on 27/10/04
[29] http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/lety.htm, accessed on 27/10/04

Amongst the international Romani movement, it is important that the extent of and reasons for the Romani loss and suffering during the Holocaust is widely recognised. Conferences have been organised and research is still being undertaken specifically about the Romani Holocaust to reveal more (for example, in London 1998, Prague 1999, Stockholm 2000). There are ongoing struggles in the Czech Republic as Romani organisations fight for visible monuments and commemorations for murdered Roma. The Czech authorities are unwilling to have prominent Romani commemorations and the debate is still raging about how far Czech people were voluntarily complicit with the Nazis' aims to exterminate Roma. Much soul-searching is still being done and at a national and international level the issue is unlikely to disappear for some time.

2.5 Significances of Romani history and World War II amongst contemporary Ostrava Roma: the song *Čhajori Romaňi*

During my fieldwork encounters with Roma in Ostrava 2003-2004, I found that Romani history up to the end of World War II was at most known vaguely, and the Holocaust was only once referred to without my prompting. This was partly connected to Roma's preoccupation with the present, but also due to lack of information. The Roma who were settled in the Czech lands since about the 15th century were effectively annihilated during World War II and there were few Romani survivors who had significant memories of the war (partly due to the low life expectancy of Roma). Furthermore, the majority of Roma in Ostrava were unlikely to consult academic books and Romani aspects of history and the Holocaust were not usually discussed in schools. Occasionally, Czech television documentaries that featured the Holocaust mentioned the Romani loss; nonetheless, amongst Romani grassroots the issue had to a large extent disappeared.

Roma in Ostrava are mostly from East Slovakia and therefore did not necessarily have any direct connection to or knowledge of what happened to Roma in the Czech lands during the war. Contemporary grassroots Roma were under a great deal of daily practical pressure and unless something could directly help them find employment, better housing, more income and so on, there was not very much interest in other matters. In Ostrava, I frequently encountered the view that Romani history was an unchangeable series of repetitions: Roma were always unwanted, people were always trying to harm or destroy them, and it was not so important whether it was specifically the Nazis, Communists, skinheads or nominally democratic governments. If the Holocaust was discussed, knowledge was incredibly vague and there was often an air of resignation that accompanied the idea that nothing could be done about it: I found that the Holocaust was mostly perceived as only one of an ongoing series of tragedies.

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The only well-known song from the concentration camps and World War II that remained in popular consciousness was *Čhajori Romaňi* (Ro; Little Romani girl).[30] During my fieldwork, I found that contemporary performances and uses of the song revealed aspects of differing attitudes of Ostrava Roma towards the Holocaust and their history. Amongst grassroots Roma, I found there to be a fairly unified way of performing *Čhajori Romaňi*, most likely due to its status as the Czech and Slovak Romani anthem and its consequent universal familiarity amongst Ostrava Roma.[31] I have therefore made a representative transcription of the song as I encountered it amongst Romani grassroots in Ostrava. This does not mean that I encountered no variation, but in the case of this song, it is possible to generalise about the performance of the melody. In contrast, versions by professional instrumental groups were much more varied, probably because they were aware of and were resisting its now hackneyed performance amongst the grassroots. I have omitted any ornamentation that is not essential to the song's performance or not usually sung.

Figure 3: transcription 1 of *Čhajori Romaňi*

Čhajori Romaňi, jaj,	Little Romani girl, alas,
Ker mange jagori,	make me a fire,
Nacikňi, nabari, jaj,	neither small, nor big, oh,
Čarav tro vod'ori.	I adore you.[32]

(translation: Belišová 2002:104)

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[30] The insightful book *Žalující píseň* (Cz; Accusatory Song) by Holý & Nečas (1993) focuses on the fate of Czech and Moravian Roma in Nazi concentration camps and their songs.

[31] I cannot substantiate how this song came to be the anthem. In the home, although the song had a special significance, it was not reserved for special occasions and was sung as part of a sequence of songs during an evening.

[32] This line literally means "I lick your soul", which is an expression of politeness which could better translate as "may I implore you" (Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz, personal communication April 2004).

In Ostrava, this was the main verse and had become standardised as the anthem version.[33] Often, it was the only verse performed, although people sometimes added additional verses, improvised or learnt. Other fieldworkers have found that in Slovakia and Bohemia the number of verses of Romani songs had decreased to a usual two, simply because people could no longer remember any more (Belišová and her research team, 2002). I found that this held true for Roma in Ostrava, for although the number of remembered verses for traditional songs was often one and sometimes two, more were sometimes improvised spontaneously. The opportunities and desire for Roma in Ostrava to sit round and sing songs was decreasing all the time: for most, the preferred way to experience Romani music was to play Rompop on a stereo system. I met a few families, usually families that had traditionally been musicians, that did sit round and sing with each other on special occasions, and I met a few that wanted to show me that they could still do that. However, in general the practice had declined drastically, which contributed to the shortening of versions of popularly known traditional songs.

The customary way to sing the anthem was for a solo voice to sing the first line '*Cha-jo-ri Ro-ma-ňi*' and for other voices to join in harmony on '*jaj*' (or '*joj*'). The word "alas" has been used to translate '*jaj*' and '*joj*', although it is not strictly a word. Rather, they are emotionally meaningful sounds with powerful expressive content, or vocables. All the voices continue in harmony in a heterophonic style. Although the top voice is leading, there is room for others to express themselves within their line to the extent that each voice can move at a slightly different time. The final cadence is usually elongated by slowing down the final descending scale, resting on the second degree, sliding down to the raised seventh, and sliding back up to the tonic. Sometimes the second half of the verse is sung twice. Davidová & Žižka (1991:69-73) collected two versions of the song, one of which corresponds to the Aeolian minor with a raised seventh below the tonic (in Ostrava, 1968), and the other which uses a mode that flattens the second degree and raises the third degree and seventh below the tonic (in South Bohemia, 1987).[34] I only ever heard versions corresponding to the Aeolian minor with a raised seventh below the tonic.

Čhajori Romaňi forms part of the style known as *hallgató* (Hu; for listening). It is literally a song for listening to rather than dancing, owing to its slow unmetred style. It conforms

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[33] I encountered one other version of this main verse in Ostrava that altered the last line to *džanav som korkori* (a mixture of Slovak and Romani) meaning "I know, I am alone". This version was from a musician who often talked of his isolation and suffering, so it is likely to be a personalised version.

[34] This corresponds to the Jewish *Freygish* or *Ahavah Rabbah* mode and the Arabic *Hijaz* mode. It is unusual for Roma in Central Europe to use this mode, even though it is sometimes known as the Gypsy minor, probably because it is widely used in Eastern Europe.

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to Jurková and Davidová's criteria for *hallgató*. Its basic form is a four-lined stanza[35] and the lines have regular numbers of syllables that are not necessarily the same for each line. In this case, each line has six syllables, or if you count the formalised insertion of the vocable *joj*, the syllabic pattern is a regular 7-6-7-6. Melodically, one syllable corresponds to one tone, except during the final elongated cadence, and melodic sections correspond with textual sections. Lines are divided by distinct pauses, the most marked between the second and third lines, noticeable in performances and in the melody's two-part structure AB (or ABA'C).[36] The span of the melody is relatively wide at over an octave. An essential feature of the song type *hallgató* is the slow tempo and the very flexible *rubato* performance style, with a basic pulse of around 60 beats a minute (Jurková 2003:101). Indeed, performances I encountered in Ostrava all had *rubato* delivery, although the basic pulse was much faster. In general, I observed that the slower a *hallgató* was performed, the more solemn the occasion was.

Belišová (2002:104-5) and Davidová & Žižka (1991:69-73) demonstrate considerable variation in themes of verse texts they collected for a particular *hallgató* melody, although the syllable structure for the most part remained consistent. Jurková (2003:101) notes how easily new phenomena and contemporary concerns are organically incorporated, remarking on how there were fewer names of towns or prisons and more concerning life and customs after the resettlement of Slovak Roma in the Czech lands. I suggest the implication is that in Slovakia customs were an integral part of life, whereas after migration to a different place and lifestyle, there was increased need to remember customs and affirm Romani identity through song texts.

Jurková notes that in the interpretation of *hallgató* the singer often performs each verse somewhat differently and the form of a song can be varied in different interpretations:[37] she contends that because of this variation in interpretation, a harmonic framework proves necessary as a stable element (2003:103). During my fieldwork, when I was crosschecking songs that I had learnt from one musician with another, it was noticeable that melodic variation was entirely acceptable and welcome as long as it did not deviate from the basic implied harmony. Traditionally, women predominantly sang *hallgató* monophonically, although multi-voiced delivery that used Classical-Romantic harmony created by "rule of thumb" was also known

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[35] Belišová (2002:13) postulates that the number of lines in a strophe is most commonly four but can be eight.

[36] Belišová (2002:14) claims that the majority of *hallgató* have an ABCD structure, which could be applicable to *Čhajori Romaňi*. However, I suggest that ABA'C better describes the performances I encountered.

[37] Belišová notes that 'the interpretation of a song may alter slightly, or even significantly, especially when singers come from different regions. On the other hand, we met (in Svina, for example) singers who have a favourite melody template and use it with each song, only varying the texts' (2002:13).

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(ibid). Based on my knowledge and field experience, I am assuming that the translation from Jurková (2003:103) "rule of thumb" in relation to the creation of Classical-Romantic harmony, refers to the practice of improvising harmonies by ear that conform to a Classical-Romantic harmonic soundscape, without any theoretical knowledge or score.

During my fieldwork in Ostrava, I found that the "rule of thumb" creation of Classical-Romantic harmony to which Jurková refers, was still evident amongst musicians who had wide experience of traditional dulcimer music. However, in general, contemporary "rule of thumb" harmonisation in Ostrava was far more indebted to Rompop and other pop music, most commonly relying on pitching a third below the melody and following the main key. More skilled musicians used a combination of thirds and sixths, but traditional harmony that exploited pivot chords and notes, suspensions and chromaticism, had been drastically simplified in ways that corresponded to most Roma's listening experiences which favoured Rompop and pop over dulcimer and Classical music.

When Ostrava Roma did sing together, *Čhajori Romaňi* was perhaps the most widely and best-known traditional song. The lyrics refer to the Holocaust and concentration camps, and for many people it was a highly emotional and meaningful song, a symbol of Romani solidarity that some feel had waned since the start of democracy. Some people cried when they sang or heard this song and sometimes it provoked some kind of reminiscence or outburst of emotion. On the other hand, the song has become a cliché, probably through overuse, and some Roma, particularly younger ones, were unable to take the song seriously. Sometimes they sang it in a bored manner that suggested they had sung it a thousand times before, or with mirth. If older people were present who were affected by the song, then out of respect the younger people often curbed their behaviour. However, for many younger Roma, the connection to the Holocaust had been lost even if it still loosely signified some kind of Romani solidarity.

Below, I have explored five examples of *Čhajori Romaňi* that I encountered during my fieldwork and archive research, also presented synchronically on p.90. They range chronologically from 1969 until 2004 and geographically from Bohemia to South Moravia to Ostrava. I aim to show how similarities, differences and contexts of performances of *Čhajori Romaňi* reveal, reinforce and help construct, contemporary attitudes towards Romani history, the Holocaust and Romani solidarity.

At the flat of Marcela Botošová, Ostrava, 6 March 2004 (DVD example 1)

I became increasingly close to the Botoš[38] family during the length of my stay in Ostrava. After a total lack of interest in my research (they were more interested in me as an *Angličanka* (Cz; English person)), the family became increasingly curious and wanted to help. One evening after eating, the females all went to the bedroom leaving the men to drink vodka in the kitchen. They locked the door and said they wanted to sing so that I could video them for my project. After Marcela's daughters, Andrea (aged 19), Marcela (aged 18) and Karolina (aged 2), and niece, Jitka (aged 15), had entertained and involved me in dancing to Rompop, hip hop, international pop and Arabic pop, mostly in the style of pop videos, their mother thought it was time to sing traditional songs (Ro: *phurikane giľa*) for me.

We had already talked extensively about Romani life and Marcela Senior (aged 39) had made it clear several times before that she wanted me to have a very positive impression of Romani culture and recognise that traditional ways still continued, at least within her household. Reluctantly, the girls sat down and tried to decide what to sing.[39] It was difficult for them to think of anything for a while, another indication that this was not a very regular occurrence. The first songs they sang *a cappella* were Rompop, because for the girls singing traditionally was connected to singing unaccompanied or without electric instruments in the background, and not just a question of repertoire. However, with some encouragement from their mother, they sang three traditional songs, one of which was *Čhajori Romaňi*.

Even though Jitka was the youngest singing, she started the first line solo of *Čhajori Romaňi*: she often took a leading role because of her confident and strong singing voice for which she was renowned. The girls were giggly and gave each other looks that communicated a benevolent boredom. As the song progressed and they lost their self-consciousness, the girls started to take the song seriously and become more involved. After a rushed beginning, the tempo slowed down during the first couple of phrases into a comfortable slow pulse as the group settled into singing together, almost as slow as the traditional 60 beats per minute Jurková refers to (2003:101), in contrast to the quicker pace of the following examples.

They sang three verses, and used the same style of harmonisation throughout, singing a third below. The harmonisation became more confident when Jitka switched from singing the melody to harmonising. Although Andrea confirmed the plan before they started ("start *Čha-jo-ri*

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[38] In Czech, family names alter according to whether a family member is male (no ending or masculine adjectival ending), female (either *–ová* or feminine adjectival ending) or more than one is referred to (*-i* or plural adjectival ending) e.g. Botoš, Botošová, Botošovi or Bilý, Bilá, Bili.

[39] I had not requested them to sing, nor stated any preference for a particular style.

Ro-ma-ñi, and then everyone joins in on *jaj*"), they were certainly used to singing this song in this kind of arrangement. They may not have done so often by choice, but their ability still existed. Their singing voices had elements of traditional qualities more often heard in older Roma: good projection, a slightly nasal quality, and spontaneous slides between notes for added emotional effect. This was surprising in an environment where microphones were always used to sing in public and pop singing was a stronger influence than traditional Romani singing style on these girls. I did not hear the particular third verse they used anywhere else, seemingly a specifically family version, although no more details were forthcoming.[40]

Figure 4: transcription 2 of *Čhajori Romañi*

Rubato ♩ = 70-80

Cha-jo - ri Ro - ma - ñi,   jaj,   Ker man-ge ja - go - ri,

Na cik - ñi, na - ba - ri,   jaj,   Ča-rav tro vo - dó - ri,

Na somas me khere, jaj,	I was not at home,
Na džanav, ko avjas.	I don't know who has come.
Avjas mri phuri daj, jaj	My mother has come
Rozmukhle balenca	with loose [flowing] hair
Rozmukhle balenca, jaj	With loose hair
Rovjate jacenca	with tear-stained eyes
Rovjate jacenca, jaj	with tear-stained eyes
Rozumkhle balenca	with loose hair.

Transcribed and translated by Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz, personal communication April 2004

Marcela Senior took a backseat in the singing, as she was not as confident as her daughters. She became overcome with emotion, which led her to talk about the suffering of the Roma and the sense of community they used to have before the mass redundancies and the increased dispersal of Roma across the city. She went on to describe the difficult lives of Roma in Slovakia and all over the world, as well as previous generations of injustices, including the

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[40] The second verse seems to be a variation of the second verse Davidová (1991:70) collected in Karviná u Ostravy, 1970.

Holocaust. I suggest that there was a theatrical element in externalising these emotions for my benefit, even though the emotions were real. For the girls, they had seen their mother's emotions many times before and were slightly embarrassed. The song did not have such strong, emotional connotations for them, yet they knew how to sing it in a way that emotionally affected others. They showed respect for their mother, but communicated their distance from her emotions, partly by descending into giggles with each other at every opportunity. Giggling was a common way for Romani girls to express nerves, embarrassment and excitement, and the presence of the camera also encouraged this.

Marcela Senior was a rare example of a grassroots Romani activist. She had minimal school education and had worked for many years in a wood processing plant in Ostrava before she was made redundant in 1996. She was an incredibly strong woman who had divorced her husband yet still looked after him domestically, had raised three children and had two grandchildren by the time her fourth child arrived, cared for a disabled sister and ageing parents, as well as campaigning on local issues and voluntarily running a theatre group for disadvantaged Romani children. Other Roma disapproved of her driving a car, for it was uncommon for Romani women to drive, and they were often uninterested and unsupportive of her activism. She made an effort to know as much as possible about Romani history, culture and contemporary events in the manner of more middle class Romani activists (although she could not afford to subscribe to Romani magazines). She campaigned on local Romani injustices, which attracted derision from other Roma who did not believe she could change anything and resented having their hopes raised, and attended public meetings, spoke to journalists, and applied for funding for projects from the local council. Although she had had small victories in the local press and had been involved with theatre productions, to date she had not had any more than small, short-term achievements from all her efforts. Her daughters were alternately proud and embarrassed about her work.

This performance in its broad context of my long relationship with the family showed me important aspects of how the Romani Holocaust is viewed today in Ostrava. The way Marcela Senior reacted to it encapsulated many conversations and experiences we had shared, for it reminded her of the Holocaust as part of the larger context of how she felt that Roma were always persecuted and discriminated against, and her strong will and efforts to improve the local Romani situation unmatched by the meagre results. The decline of Romani traditions and sense of community grieved her deeply and she always became slightly emotional when traditional songs were sung. Her sense of connection with all other Roma was reflected in her deep pain

concerning the Romani Holocaust. She was unusually knowledgeable about it, but did not attach any more importance to it than other present, past or prophesied catastrophes for the Roma.

Her daughters, however, had little such sense of the decline in community and tradition, and little sense of Romani solidarity, activism or history, despite Marcela Senior's efforts. They were much more concerned with the lack of suitable men to marry, fashion and contemporary popular culture, the boredom, frustration and lack of income as a result of their unemployment, which stunted their participation in consumer culture. The attempts by Marcela Senior at continuing Romani tradition and fostering a sense of Romani history and active engagement with local Romani issues, were often frustrated by the lack of relevance these held for her daughters and their contemporaries. Nevertheless, her daughters' ability to sing in a semi-traditional style was not typical in their age group and largely a tribute to Marcela's efforts. It is possible to generalise that the vast majority of young (and older) grassroots Roma in Ostrava were apathetic about Romani history, the Holocaust, traditions, or contemporary activism, and overwhelmingly desired the individual financial success that they believed would enable a modern, fashionable, contented and secure lifestyle for themselves and their families; they did not view themselves as connected or part of a wider struggle, as Marcela did.

At the flat of Marcela Botošová, Ostrava, 9 July 2004 (DVD example 2)

I was staying with Marcela for the weekend at the same time as some relatives from Bohemia were visiting. One of them, Petr, was a singer and guitarist in a local Romani band in Bohemia and he had brought his guitar to Ostrava. After people had eaten, the singing and drinking began, and a few relatives from other Ostrava suburbs also paid a visit. During my fieldwork, this kind of evening was not unknown, although uncommon: in this case, it was induced by all the visitors, as well as Petr's and my common interest in music.

Marcela's brother-in-law, Jirka (father of Jitka), arrived with much theatre: he was doing community service in place of a jail sentence, had hurt his leg during it and was leaning heavily on a stick as well as sporting an enormous hat. I had heard Jirka singing on another occasion: he particularly loved singing traditional songs, taking great pride in them and his own ability. He had a strong, nasal voice and when singing faster, rhythmic songs, he used any furniture around him to add extra offbeat *čardáš* rhythms. After some Rompop singing from Petr and his daughter, and some general discussion about Roma, Jirka wished to sing me a traditional song, which he explained was part of *Cigánsky plač* (Sl; Gypsy Tears), another way of saying the *hallgató*

repertoire. He spontaneously launched into *Čhajori Romaňi*, with Petr improvising a traditional dulcimer-style guitar accompaniment.

Jirka seemed slightly anxious at the beginning and set a quicker pace than was usual, which meant the guitar initially had trouble following him: the guitar would expect longer pauses at the end of phrases and more extended cadences, during which he could improvise more elaborate arpeggiated patterns. Jirka's emphasis of certain beats and more strictly rhythmic interpretation reflects his own musical preferences. This interpretation of *Čhajori Romaňi* had the same first two verses as the previous example, except that the last line of the second verse was the same as the last line of the first verse. Due to conversation interference, the DVD example only features the second half of the first verse and the second verse.

Figure 5: transcription 3 of *Čhajori Romaňi*

The man sitting next to Jirka at the kitchen table left the room during the first verse. This would not be seen as rude and his exit could have had many reasons. However, it was not uncommon for Roma to avoid all contact with *Cigánsky plač* music, except at funerals, for it strongly signified sadness and the genre was strongly associated with funerals in contemporary Ostrava. *Čhajori Romaňi* was the only *hallgató* commonly sung and not exclusively associated with funerals. Conversely, during the first verse, Jirka's niece, Andrea, broke from her domestic activities to joke in the background by waving a lighted match behind Jirka's head, evoking the singing of an emotional song during mass gatherings where people often wave lighters. This is further evidence that traditional songs were no longer taken seriously by many and the understood

emotion of the song was easily subverted. Dsepite this, Jirka, Petr and other older members of the family became serious towards the end of the song's performance, after the amusement caused by Andrea and the lack of initial synchronisation. They finished in pensive, solemn silence, broken by Marcela's husband vaguely reflecting on how good it was to hear Jirka sing.

I felt that the performance was partly didactic, in order to show me Gypsy tears/*Cigánsky plač* as a "tradition" and a deeply personal expression of it. However, it also revealed the joking as well as painful, pensive reflection that could be brought about by this song's performance. The mood was unlike any of the other Rompop songs that were sung as contributions to a predominantly light-hearted and lively evening.

Giľa-Ďila-Giľora (Ro; Songs)[41] (2002, track 29) (CD example 1)

This track is a field recording made in Ostrava 1968[42] by Davidová at the home of Ján Červeňák. He performed the first solo line and others, who all sound female, joined in on '*jaj*' in harmony. Approximately five voices are heard, as family members joined in gradually throughout the performance. The harmony appears richer than in the first example of *Čhajori Romaňi* because there is a descant line a sixth above the main melody as well as a countermelody a third below, and the melody is doubled an octave above the male soloist (see Davidová's transcription below).

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[41] The Vienna Phonogrammarchiv and the Brno Museum of Romani Culture released field recordings by Davidová in 2002 on the CD *Giľa-Ďila-Giľora: Písně olašských a usedlých Romů* (Ro; Songs-Songs-Songs, Cz; Songs of the Vlach and Settled Roma).
[42] In the Vienna Phonogramm Archiv this recording is marked as Ostrava 1968, on the CD released in 2002 of the recordings it appears as Ostrava 1969; however, in Davidová & Žižka (1991:70) the transcription is labelled Karviná u Ostravy 1970.

Figure 6: transcription 4 of *Čhajori Romaňi*

Verse 2

Na somas me khere	I was not at home,
jaj *Na džanav, ko avl'a.*	I don't know who has arrived.
Avl'as mri pirani, jaj	My beloved has arrived
šukar čhaj Romaňi	the beautiful Gypsy girl.

Verse 3

Akana terd'il'om, jaj,	I just stood up,
Akana pot'ind'om,	I just paid,
Imar mandar phučen, jaj,	And they ask me right away
Kaskera čha jil'om.	Whose daughter I married.

(Source: Davidová & Žižka 1991:69-71)

The first, second and fourth[43] verses are sung in an AB structure, whereby each letter represents two lines, (or aba¹c whereby each letter represents one line). In the third verse, the last two lines are repeated to make an ABB structure, whereby each letter represents two lines, (or aba¹ca¹c, whereby each letter represents one line). It is not clear why the structure altered in the third verse, although it is likely that it was to emphasise that verse's lyrics. During my fieldwork, I noticed that Romani musicians repeated tunes or particular verses or choruses many times over, not just on account of different lyrics or improvisations, but because they were emotionally significant or simply because they liked them: at parties, a favourite tune of the moment could be repeated up to five times during the same event. In this performance of *Čhajori Romaňi*, the first two verses are almost identical to those heard in the first two examples. The third verse is different and one may imagine that the last two lines are somehow significant to the singers, shown in their repetition.

The lyrics of the third verse appear to be thematically separate from the first two verses, perhaps indicating that the seriousness and emotional power of the song was not particularly revered over any other *hallgató* and not so strongly or emotionally connected to Romani solidarity and the Holocaust at this time. The special poignancy of the song perhaps only came about later, as Romani communities were shattered in the socio-economic freefall of recent years.[44]

This performance is representative of the many versions of this song I heard in Davidová's collection in the Vienna Phonogramm Archiv, mostly conforming to ways in which Davidová describes traditional *hallgató* performance. The performance takes place privately in

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[43] The fourth verse is not reproduced in Davidová & Žižka 1991:69-71.

[44] I cannot verify this further, as questioning and conversation did not elicit this kind of information, partly because this kind of topic was completely uninteresting and irrelevant to the Roma I was working with.

the home, amongst family members. There are four verses all with different lyrics, noticeably more than in contemporary performances. It is highly expressive, the voices are powerful, nasal and confident, and the delivery is *rubato*, speeding up, slowing down and holding pauses for different lengths as the moment called for. There are noticeable elements of spontaneity in the way people joined in and chose their line of melody and countermelody, moved heterophonically, and coloured the pitches and spaces between pitches with vibrato and slides (some shown in Davidová's transcription above). It is apparent that the performers were used to singing in such situations from their confidence and control over a performance that incorporated so much individual expression from so many people in the heterophony, without the performance coming apart.

On the other hand, the "rule-of-thumb" functional harmony with which researchers characterise traditional performances is missing: by 1968, particularly after the liberalisations of the Prague Spring, the rapidly spreading influence of pop music was likely to have been affecting the harmony of performances of traditional Romani songs. There is sparse information concerning the background to this recording, however, in terms of my thesis this performance is one indication of the kind of experiences older Roma may have had of family performances of *Čhajori Romaňi*, which some of them still talked about and continued to reference during my fieldwork. This performance also shows differences in past voice production and general performance style: when heard alongside more recent performances, contemporary voice production is noticeably less nasal and strong, and the heterophonic style incorporates less musical freedom.

Horváth family band, Brno, 8 March 2004 (CD example 2)

Jan Horváth was head of the Horváth family in Brno, who are renowned as an outstanding traditional musician family with a successful family band.[45] In an interview, Jan brought up the subject of World War II without any prompting from me. He talked about his father and his family band that had to play music for the Germans in Slovakia. He said that during this time the Roma were oppressed and not regarded as people, for "the Germans wanted one 'race' and others counted for nothing". His father and the band were forced to play and if they refused, they would be shot. His father was ill and did not want to go and play, but the SS came with guns and said that if he did not go, they would shoot all his "black family" (interview with Jan Horváth 2004). Jan was deeply concerned with the historical and contemporary situation of people (Roma and

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[45] For further discussion of the Horváth family band, see chapter 4.

non-Roma), spiritually, socially, culturally and musically, all inextricably interlinked in his worldview. His son, Eugen, was concerned with contemporary injustices against the Roma, but, above all, he wished to talk about musical issues. The political agenda held by his father seemed to have less importance in his life as he tried to make a career for himself as a violinist.

After I had interviewed Eugen and Jan, the family gradually arrived for what they called a rehearsal in the spacious living room of the family home, although it took the format of an informal recital. The seven-piece Horváth family band was made up of six members of the Horváth family and a family friend. Jan now played the viola, having given the responsibility of *primáš* (Cz; lead violin) to his son, Eugen. His youngest son played the dulcimer, his oldest son the double bass, his 21-year old daughter sang and his son-in-law played the accordion.[46] The clarinettist was a longstanding friend of the family, who had played with them since he was young. In a traditional manner, all the instrumentalists were male, and the vocalist was female.

Although Jan bemoaned the general decline of musical standards and quality of life in the Romani community many times during my visit, the family seemed to be a lot more affluent than most other Roma in Brno, and many of the band had been trained classically at Czech music schools, had studied with well-known Hungarian musicians, and had been schooled at home in Romani music. They had a high level of technical competence on their instruments and every piece had been immaculately and creatively arranged. Eugen said that they played in a traditional style and drew on traditional repertoire, but also incorporated new ideas that different members of the band came across, such as aspects of Balkan music.

The Horváth family band used a different melody in their performance of *Čhajori Romaňi* from that usually used, though it is still a *hallgató*.[47] The key is C minor and there is no regular pulse. I have indicated the harmony using chord letter names, rather than Roman numerals, because that was how Romani musicians I encountered during my fieldwork referred to chords.

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[46] Musician families traditionally inter-married, and the daughter of a *primáš* was often married into a musician family (Jurková 2003a).

[47] The melody used is similar to the one used for *Marel o Del* in Davidová & Žižka (1991:62) and *Ma maren, Ma maren* in Hübschmannová & Jurková (1999:22), who note that *Čhajori Romaňi* is sometimes sung to this melody.

Figure 7: transcription 5 of *Čhajori Romani*

Rubato ♩ = 60

Harmony

Voice

Cha-jo-ri Ro-ma-ñi Ker man-ge ja go - ri___ joj___ na cik-ñi

na ba - ri___ joj Cha-jo-ri Ro - ma - ñi

joj___ na cik - ñi na ba - ri

joj___ Cha - jo - ri Ro - ma - - ñi

The overall structure is instrumental introduction – verse one – instrumental interlude – verse two. The instrumental introduction outlines some of the harmonic interest and melodic features to come. The violin starts on a long, solo low A flat and then spreads up through an F minor chord with added 6ths (D) and 7ths (Eb) to the F almost two octaves above, when the rest of the band enters. One of the main melodic motifs is then introduced in a decorated form on the violin, which leads to a G major chord. As the harmony briefly resolves to C minor, the clarinet then takes over the melodic interest, foreshadowing his virtuosic accompanying in the verses, and his solo runs and arpeggios in the instrumental interlude. C minor is not established at this point, due to the rapidly moving inner parts and the movement of the bass from C down the melodic minor scale (C, Bb, Ab). The end of the introduction is marked by a cadential chord sequence: A (natural) diminished, G major, C minor, accompanied by a bass line ascending the melodic minor scale correspondingly A natural, B natural, C, during which the violin introduces melodic fragments from the voice's final line of the verse.

The singer then enters with the main melody, whilst the band supports harmonically and adds a rich texture above and below her line.[48] The harmony is in some ways very straightforward, but sounds more complex because of the sheer number of added passing notes

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[48] Although she usually used a microphone owing to the size and volume of the band, on this recording she did not, due to technical difficulties.

and dense texture, which give the impression of an extremely rich harmony. The harmony refers directly to the 19th century Hungarian *nóta* that combined folk melodies with Western art music harmonic influences. Typical features include harmonic shifts from minor to major based chords, for example C minor to A flat major (whereby C and E flat act as pivot notes), and chromatic shifts that involve changing one note of a chord, for example, F minor to F half-diminished seventh, whereby F and A flat remain, C is changed to B, and an E flat is added (see transcription for both examples).

The structure of the verse is ABB. There are slight changes to the repeated B section, in the vocal emphasis (particularly concerning the different lengths of the syllable *joj*) and harmonic emphasis, I suggest in preparation for the end of the verse: a C minor seventh chord leads into the B section's repeat, providing a dramatic dominant seventh to tonic emphasis, and in the repeat of B, the final subdominant to dominant to tonic progression is less decorated, providing a clear signal of the verse's end. Furthermore, B is performed slightly slower the second time, which has the effect of adding to the emotional intensity.

In contrast to the more usual version of *Čhajori Romaňi*, the fourth line of the first verse is a repetition of the first line '*Čhajori Romaňi*'. Also, the '*joj*' that is usually connected to the end of the first line is instead linked to the beginning of the third line, which gives a different structural effect to the first three examples. The singer performed both verses without much melodic variation; there was so much happening from the band in terms of variation and decoration, it hardly seemed necessary for the singer to provide much variation. Nevertheless, the whole band played the second verse noticeably slower, which intensified the emotional poignancy. In Romani dulcimer (and Rompop) bands, it was always the instrumentalists who improvised, rather than the vocalists. The instrumental interlude features a traditional clarinet solo that follows the harmonic progression and time frame of the verses, using features of the verse melody within fast scalic and arpeggiated runs, thereby giving a strong sense of orientation to the listener.

Although this rendition of *Čhajori Romaňi* was very intense and expressive, these characteristics were common to all the pieces played by the band and there was nothing exceptional about the performance of this song. It was part of a carefully constructed repertoire for making a living out of playing music at public concerts. If this song had special significances for the performers and their audiences, it was not perceptible from hearing the performance in the context of an informal recital. Jan and Eugen's experiences and beliefs affected the band's general approach to music and songs were judged on their quality and explored in terms of style and arrangement. *Čhajori Romaňi* was no different in this respect: the strong personal views,

beliefs and experiences of Jan and Eugen Horváth in relation to Romani solidarity, history and the War were not specifically discernible in their performance of this song, meaning that it appeared to have no special significance in this context.

Věra Bílá's album *Cigánsky plač* (Sl; Gypsy Tears) (2002, track 17) (CD example 3)

This album stars Věra Bílá (née Giňová), the most commercially successful Romani musician from the Czech Republic on the "international platform": her CDs are sold worldwide and she has toured all over Europe and the US. Bílá is a well-known though distant figure in Ostrava, in spite of family connections,[49] respected for modernising traditional songs, producing new Rompop songs, and her international and financial success. She was initially considered to have remained close to grassroots Roma and many Roma in Ostrava had copies of her early CDs; however, as she had become a wealthy, international figure and in the last few years been associated with various drinking and gambling scandals, reactions in Ostrava became more ambiguous. Musical interest in her had diminished as she increasingly conformed to world music market trends by collaborating with different (non-Romani) musicians and using sounds such as African drums. Most Ostrava Roma expressed some kind of distance or alienation from changes in Bílá's musical and personal direction, preferring Rompop that is not on the World Music market.

Although Bílá used many traditional Romani songs and aspects of the traditional dulcimer style on this CD, the modern harmonies, arrangements, amplification and CD presentation mean that Bílá was still regarded as a modern exponent of Rompop, embraced by the World Music market. Although her other CDs use more newly composed material, they still refer to a style of performance associated with traditional Romani singing. Indeed she was born into the Giňa family, renowned for traditionally being a musician family, and Bílá sang in a traditional style for many years with the family (interview with Rokyta 2004). The intensity and nasal quality of her voice, from her oldest recordings with other members of the Giňa family,[50] remains remarkably constant in all her CDs, despite the widespread use of microphones and pop style accompaniment.

In this performance of *Čhajori Romaňi*, she uses the standardised main verse as outlined above, and repeats it twice, the second repetition being almost identical to the first. In each verse, the last two lines are repeated to make an ABB verse structure. In the customary manner, she

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[49] She is distantly related to the Botoš family, as well as having closer family ties in Ostrava.
[50] Jan Rokyta has made some early recordings of Bílá singing with her family, and they can be found at the archive in Ostrava Radio.

sings the first line solo, and other voices and a dulcimer joins in on *jaj*. The harmonisation differs from other interpretations through the use of close vocal harmonies featuring intervals of a second, fourth, fifth and seventh, as well as the more usual third and sixth in (see transcription below). Although the dulcimer uses untraditional (in terms of dulcimer music) chords, such as D major ninth and a supertonic seventh (F sharp seventh), it still plays in a traditional style using the pauses at the end of lines to explore chords in an arpeggiated fashion and extemporising melodically and harmonically during the moving vocal lines. In the first verse, the melody ends with a progression from the second to first degree, harmonised with a C sharp against an E minor chord background, and the second verse ends with a melodic progression from the second to third degree, rather than the traditionally ubiquitous second to raised-seventh to tonic melodic progression, harmonised with a tonic chord and vocal unison. This is the only major melodic change; however, the rejection of the traditional finality of a unison tonic with a tonic chord is remarkable and disconcerting for those used to the inevitability of the traditional version.

Figure 8: transcription 6 of *Čhajori Romaňi*

Even though Bílá's vocal delivery is traditionally powerfully projected and of a nasal quality and the style does refer to a traditional flexible, *rubato* style of interpretation, the increased tempo, rigid musical organisation, and amplified voices, suggest a less emotionally charged atmosphere. This is also implied by the rich, close, jazz-inspired vocal harmonisation that gives it a laid-back rather than emotionally charged and drawn out feel. The carefully chosen breaks and length of pauses in the melody and the relative "cleanness" of the movement between notes, with few slides, do not even suggest the spontaneous emotion associated with traditional performances of this song. The spontaneous sadness and gravity usually associated with the song (even if it was only subverted) are not apparent in the performance style, which is sanitised by the

combination of increased tempo, highly synchronised rich harmony, clearly preconceived arrangement and quality CD recording.

In this version of *Čhajori Romaňi*, I suggest Bílá was drawing strongly on traditional Romani repertoire and style. However, likely well-aware of the lack of commercial demand for highly traditional interpretations and the song's hackneyed use within Romani communities, she drastically reinterpreted the mood and significance of the song through the musical style and reduction of lyrics, providing a sanitised and commercially viable expression of *Cigánsky plač* (Sl; Gypsy tears).

Below, a synchronic presentation of the representative transcription of a number of performances of *Čhajori Romaňi* heard during my fieldwork (figure 3) and transcriptions of the five performances explored in this chapter (figures 4-8), is given.

Figure 9: synchronic presentation of the six transcriptions of *Čhajori Romaňi*

The differences in musical detail provide more evidence of the diverse contemporary significances of this song for Roma in Ostrava and the ways in which their history is understood. Figures 4 and 5 are very similar to figure 6, in terms of musical structure and harmony, with some simplification of vocal embellishments and harmony: all three performances are in the context of singing in the home. The smaller number of participants and simplifications in figures 4 and 5 relate to the decreasing popularity of traditional singing (and consequently the decrease in ability

to sing in a traditional style) that is connected to the desire to put distance from a tragic, painful history and its associated traditions and define Roma as modern, fashionable people. The lyrics and melody shape of the first, most well known verse are the same in figures 4-6 and 8, perhaps the most defining features of the song and least available to alter whilst maintaining the song's familiarity.

₄ The performances of the traditional song *Čhajori Romaňi* I have explored demonstrate differences that reflect, reinforce and help construct, the different contexts of performance and the concerns and perceptions of the performers and intended audiences. The first two performances (see figures 4 and 5) drew attention to a deep divide between younger and older grassroots Roma. The performance context of these performances showed me that younger Roma were not (yet) strongly emotionally connected to the song, which was linked to their perceptions of traditional songs, Romani history, the Holocaust, and Romani ethnic/political solidarity as irrelevant to their present concerns and aspirations. For older Roma, the song was more tightly bound to general ideas of Romani suffering that included the Holocaust, and as the Czech and Slovak Romani anthem it was bound up with looser ideas of Romani solidarity and community, if only on a micro level. The example recorded in 1968 (see figure 6) shows one manifestation of how *Čhajori Romaňi* was performed and understood in the more distant past, perhaps suggesting that contemporary performances revealing its clichéd role as the only popularly surviving *hallgató* and its potent emotional significance as a Romani anthem are most likely recent developments. World War II and Romani history as such are far from the minds of the vast majority of contemporary Ostrava Roma, if known at all: where the song survives, it has a clear contemporary relevance in its musical language and/or in its social importance in family situations or as an anthem of solidarity.

Performances by professional bands show their desire to draw on traditional repertoire as well as expand its musical and emotional potential. The Horváth family band did not abandon the more traditional significance of *Čhajori Romaňi* as a slow, arrhythmic, sad *hallgató*, and preserved many traditional aspects of performance. Yet, they expanded the emotional possibilities through using a less common melody (see figure 7), virtuosic instrumental technique, and a creative arrangement. This interpretation conformed to the band's overall approach to their repertoire and reputation as a professional traditional family band that is fully modern and relevant to contemporary concerts for Romani and non-Romani audiences. In this way, this performance of *Čhajori Romaňi* was no different from the band's other songs, and although different family members understood the band's music making in relation to Romani history and

the Holocaust in different ways (see also chapter 4), these were not discernibly expressed in this performance.

In Bílá's case, *Čhajori Romaňi* was reinterpreted for the world of commercially successful Rompop on the World Music market. She nominally drew on Romani tradition, the idea of Gypsy tears, and the woeful history of the Roma, and musically referred to aspects of traditional style, especially in the melody (see figure 8), lyrics and vocal timbre. However, the song is emotionally sanitised by her highly controlled delivery, use of harmony (see figure 8) and rigid arrangement, providing undemanding listening for consumers, divested of its significance as an anthem or meaningful associations with Romani history.

The five performances of *Čhajori Romaňi* show different aspects of how this song is understood in different Roma's lives, and in the process reveals differing attitudes to Romani history and the Romani Holocaust. Individuals understood and interpreted the song differently, according to their contemporary concerns, aspirations and perceptions of the past: issues of 'race', Romani solidarity, history and suffering, were associated (or disassociated) with these performances in ways that were relevant to performers' identity, experience, worldview and performance purposes.

Chapter 3 Romani Music under Socialism: Discourses of 'Race' (Part 2)

In socialist Czechoslovakia, life for Roma underwent several fundamental changes, partly owing to the fallout from World War II, but also owing to the effects of the Czechoslovak Communist party's policies (1945-1989). Following World War II, a massive labour shortage caused by the expulsion of Germans from the Sudetanland led to widespread Romani emigration from rural East Slovak settlements in particular to industrial Czech areas, notably Ostrava. These urban areas offered housing and employment opportunities unavailable in rural Slovakia, and the state provided unprecedented economic stability for Roma. Nevertheless, this stability came at the price of sustained attempts to devalue and erase Romani culture and identity, the systematic placing of Romani children in special schools, and doing the most dangerous jobs in mines and factories. Life changes that Roma faced were both voluntarily and forcibly induced, profoundly affecting developments in their culture.

Another crucial factor in the fundamental changes that took place in Romani music making post-World War II was developments in sound recording technology. Advances in cassette technology enabled recordings of Rompop and other popular music to be disseminated to every household and the use of pre-recorded music at celebrations and communal gatherings, as well as in cafes, pubs and restaurants, the traditional venues of dulcimer bands. On one hand, this precipitated the decline of ad hoc singing in the home, dulcimer bands, and paid work for professional Romani musicians. On the other hand, it gave rise to the extensive consumption of Rompop. The widespread availability of cheaper electric instruments and amplification equipment hastened the decline of playing acoustic instruments and the traditional style singing. Furthermore, developments in sound technology meant opportunities to make good quality recordings of Romani music in studios and the field more cheaply and easily.

This chapter starts by considering the intersection of discourses of 'race' with class, culture and genetics, which are fundamental to understanding the effects on Romani lives of socialist policies that were implemented in Czechoslovakia 1945-1989 and their legacies in the different socio-political climes of post-1989 (see chapter 4). This is followed by an outline of how Roma fared under Czechoslovak socialism, and then, based on interviews, I specifically explore the lives of Romani musicians in Ostrava and the surrounding region during this time. Finally, in the light of the previous discussions, I take a comparative look at my own, Davidová and Rokyta's collections of Romani music in order to interpret further the musical and social changes that occurred during socialism.

3.1 What is 'race'?: the intersection of discourses of 'race' with discourses of class, culture and genetics

Many scholars have considered links between ideas of 'race', agendas of modernism, colonialism and capitalism, and social stratification or class. Cox (1948:22) and Goldberg (1993:1) contend that it is of crucial importance to realise that racial antipathy only arose with modernity. For racial discrimination grew out of class interests as a way of justifying economic exploitation, which had the dual effect of better dominating a section of the workforce, and dividing workers into antagonistic racial categories in order to rule them better (in Wade 2002:17). There are several problems with this formation of 'race' and class, for 'race' is reduced to class and racism is perceived as a form of false consciousness, as it is really class difference (ibid). It does not allow for class diversity within 'race', nor changing class structures and differing contexts.

An opposite view is exemplified by Omi and Winant's "racial formation theory" in which 'race' is a fundamental dimension of social organisation (in Wade 2002:17). They oppose all class reduction, analysing racial formation and racial projects as *sui generis* social phenomena that may be related to class factors, but in which people have their own interests and goals that are defined in terms of racial identifications and meanings (Omi and Winant 1986, Winant 1993 in Wade 1997:23).[1]

Most scholars' theories fall between these two opposites, often building on theoretical revisions within Marxism (drawing on Althusser and Gramsci), whereby superstructural elements such as racial factors have a degree of autonomy from base economic structures, but disagreeing on the precise relationship (Wade 2002:18).[2] There needs to be a balance in conceptions of 'race' and class between the dominance of economic and cultural explanations: one cannot be explained in terms of the other, yet there should be caution in treating 'race' as an analytic category and thereby reifying it.[3] Furthermore, phenotypical factors in racial formations need to be considered in their localised contexts and their meanings and relevance not assumed *a priori*.

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[1] Unfortunately, in both these arguments, nature and biology are often reduced to physical appearance.

[2] Wade finds two common assumptions: 'race' acts as an 'ideology or mechanism of exclusion (and thus also inclusion)' in social contexts with acute political and socio-economic inequalities, and that 'race' lends a quality of permanence and fixity to exclusion and inclusion, because of the "biological" aspects to 'race' (2002:18).

[3] Many scholars disagree that 'race' should be analysed alongside class, gender, ethnicity and other important axes of difference, rather it is a way of experiencing these other differences. Hall's approach retains 'race' as a concept, but not an analytic one: it is 'the modality in which class is "lived"' (1980:240 cited in Gilroy 1993:85). In the same vein, Gilroy (1993:22) comments that the postcolonial economic and social crisis of British society is '*lived* through a sense of "race"'. Hall and Gilroy's positions avoid problems of reifying 'race', yet acknowledge its importance in people's life experiences, and avoid simply explaining 'race' and class in terms of each other.

Ideas of 'race' and class merged in pertinent ways during socialism that powerfully affected Romani lives. In socialist Czechoslovakia, Roma could be described as wage labourers, part of the working class or proletariat (as all citizens were supposed to be). Capitalist exploitation of people at first sight appears to be what the Czechoslovak Communist party was struggling against, for in the Communist party's view, the exploitation of and discrimination against Roma during capitalist and pre-capitalist times had led to a degenerate Romani culture, identified through a combination of dress, name, language, lifestyle and phenotype (mostly skin colour). The Communist party's solution to their so-called backward culture was to remove all traces of Romani culture and give them equal opportunities to other people, which would ultimately make them indistinguishable from the majority population.

Although in theory, 'race' should have played no part, in practice, the Roma were overwhelmingly singled out for the hardest, most dangerous and menial wage labour jobs, such us working in chemical factories, down mines and in the steelworks. During 40 years of socialism, their situation did not alter, and they were not able to become educated as most Romani children were assigned to special schools. The fact that the government and public had no interest in changing this situation amounted to economic exploitation along racial lines. Although everybody was officially of the same "class", social stratification still occurred along racial lines, even though the government did not officially recognise racial or ethnic difference.

The more recently identified "cultural racism" (or "new racism") functions in a similar way to biological racism, although constructions of phenotype are obscured by references to cultural characteristics. Particularly in advanced capitalist countries, popular discourse has largely replaced physical differences associated with 'race' with cultural differences associated with ethnicity. The cult of difference still ideologically continues if the different and essential nature of human groups continues to be proposed, and if differences are still regarded as fixed and ultimately defining.[4] When the issue of integration and assimilation of ethnic minorities arises, it is often posited that ethnic characteristics or cultural traditions pose insurmountable barriers to these processes.

Class-based analyses often demonstrate concern for the rise of identity politics that has diverted attention from basic economic and class inequalities that have their roots in racism and cannot be erased by "cultural solutions". Problems are purposely misdiagnosed, the blame shifted

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[4] Kuper proposes that 'culture is not a matter of race. It is learned, not carried in our genes' (1999:227). However, he warns against culture becoming a euphemism for 'race' (1999:14), and on employing concepts of culture: Kuper comments, 'the difficulties become most acute when... culture shifts from something to be described, interpreted, even perhaps explained, and is treated instead as a source of explanation in itself' (1999:xi).

onto the victims of class inequality through the implication that their culture is disadvantaging them, and those in power maintain the *status quo* inequality and exploitation whilst taking no responsibility (see Sivanandan 2001).[5] For example, I found that in Ostrava, the high rate of unemployment amongst Roma was explained to me by non-Roma as resulting from essential cultural differences such as a lazy and inferior work ethic rendering them essentially unemployable, rather than a consequence of economic factors, their lack of access to standard education, or discrimination. It is remarkable that groups that are presented as exhibiting insurmountable essential cultural difference are largely the same groups that previously presented insurmountable essential racial difference, and are most often popularly recognised by their appearance and phenotype.[6]

During my fieldwork, I often encountered points of view to the effect that many so-called ethnic minorities were "just as racist as everybody else". I was convinced that Roma's essentialising of Czech/white people was somehow different from the situation vice versa, but I could not find the language to express how or why. Although 'race' has also been positively co-opted as a way to mobilise politically and culturally by those that have been colonised and oppressed along racial lines, I suggest that it is still inextricably connected to domination and exploitation: this mobilisation is a backlash against exploitation and domination according to 'race'. In the case of Roma in Ostrava, their essentialising of white people reveals prejudices and frustrations that are insignificant without a machinery of power with which to act on them. Conversely, the essentialising of Roma that takes place in Ostrava means that unemployment, lack of access to resources of education, health and housing, physical attacks that go unpunished and poverty, all disproportionately affect Roma along racial lines. I suggest that racial prejudice is the essentialising of other people using phenotype and a combination of other characteristics as identifying features, which when combined with a machinery of institutionalised power or agendas of domination and exploitation, constitutes racism.

During post-socialist times, the majority of Roma (though not all) could be described as an underclass: 'unemployed and gradually unemployable persons and families at the bottom of society in which, for the majority of people above the level, the increasingly democratic structure of the educational system created more and more liberty' (Myrdal 1964 cited in Rex & Moore

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[8] The journal *Race and Class* exemplifies this approach, with the vast majority of its articles discussing contemporary and historical discrimination and capitalist exploitation of black people in lower/under classes.

[6] Although racist attitudes have created fixed relations between 'race' and behaviour, the flexibility of concepts of 'race', ethnicity and culture have been exploited to create racial groups that serve current agendas. It is doubtful how different the ethnic or cultural differences of contemporary popular opinion are from previously thought of racial differences, showing the flexibility of racialising processes and racism in the persistence of dominance and exploitation.

1967:61). In a city such as Ostrava, where there is high unemployment across the board,[7] there are significant numbers of unemployed ethnic Czechs as well as Roma. In this case, Rex warns that 'there is the likely development of racist theories by the ruling class as a means of diverting the hostility of unemployed native workers, and the more spontaneous scapegoating by some of the workers who blame the minority for their condition' (1967:72). Indeed, newspapers and TV programmes often featured horror stories about Roma acting outside the norms of Czech society, implying an essentially degenerate Romani culture. Although I came across negative attitudes towards Roma from all sections of Ostrava society during my fieldwork, I encountered particularly aggressive attitudes amongst unemployed and manual labourers, who portrayed Roma as a useless, dangerous and detrimental element in Czech society that should somehow be removed. In Ostrava, Roma face genetic racism and a cultural racism that cites an inferior culture.

In his recent work, Gilroy has posited the end of cultural racism, drawing attention to new versions of determinism brought about by advances in genomics and nano-science: 'we are once again in a period in which social and cultural differences are being coded according to the rules of a biological discourse' (2000/R2004a:34). In Ostrava, it is doubtful whether the previous period of biological determinism has ever been completely shaken off. However, there are worrying recent developments: Kumar Vishwanathan, director of the Ostrava NGO "Life Together", told me of a conference held at Ostrava University in January 2003 on the subject of Roma, where a psychologist outlined the neurological deficiencies in Romani brains. Although no Roma had been invited, Kumar and a group of Romani women attended anyway, and there took place a tense public interchange in which the Roma told the psychologist she was wrong and she explained their biological inadequacies to them. I suggest that a shift to genomic explanations of 'race' could be smooth in this environment.

3.2 Conditions for the Roma under the Czechoslovak Communist party

Communism was never actually achieved in the former Czechoslovakia or in any of the former Eastern Bloc, and so the societies created by the Communist parties are often referred to as socialist rather than communist. If utopian communism had been achieved in the way that was envisaged by many Communist party members, there would have been no need for concepts of 'race', ethnicity or ethnic culture. In fact, everybody would be the proletariat, so there would be no need for any concepts of identity at all. That Czechoslovakia was a centralised socialist state,

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[7] During 2003-2004, unemployment stayed at around 20% in Ostrava, according to newspaper and radio reports (fieldwork diary 2003-2004).

rather than a communist utopia, meant that labels such as "Romani" or "Gypsy" had very relevant and potent meanings. In order to phase out the relevance of being "Gypsy" in socialist Czechoslovakia, Roma were referred to as "citizens of Gypsy origin" to indicate that distinct Romani identity was a relic of the past (Guy 2001:290). There has been much written concerning socialism, Communist parties, and the particular forms that they took in Czechoslovakia during the period: a general knowledge of the political and socio-economic formations of socialism and communism shall be assumed and the less explored area of how the Roma fared under fluctuating socialist policies in Czechoslovakia is discussed.

In 1945, Czechoslovakia was reconstituted as a state of Czechs and Slovaks rather than the multi-national state of 1918-38 and there was no recognition of Roma as a national or ethnic group. The Communists' electoral achievements in 1946 accompanied tougher and more restrictive measures towards Roma and the government argued that Romani claims to citizenship were unconvincing. The Communists' coup in February 1948 that made Czechoslovakia an integral part of the Soviet bloc signalled a further change in Romani prospects: the party had already stated that its ultimate aim in addressing the needs of Czechoslovak Roma was 'their integration with the rest of the population, and the raising of their economic, social, and cultural levels to those of the Slavic society' (Crowe 1995:55).

As the government struggled to rebuild a country that had been left destitute, traumatised and embittered by the loss of 250,000 people, a national expulsion campaign began to remove Germans from the Czech lands, and Magyars from Slovakia.[8] Over the next three years 1.5 million people, many of whom were Roma, moved to the Sudetenland, including Ostrava, from other parts of Czechoslovakia to ease the labour shortage created by the mass expulsion of Germans (Crowe 1995:54). Furthermore, the rapid industrialisation of Soviet command economies required an enormous amount of unskilled labour. Many Slovak Roma, particularly from eastern regions, went to camps in the ecologically devastated urban parts of Northern Bohemia and Moravia, where they did the most menial, dangerous, unskilled jobs. Often they chose these areas owing to the high chances of securing work and housing, at a time of severe housing shortages. As well as providing a much-needed labour force, this had the effect of promoting social and economic conformity amongst Roma, and as a further means of Romani integration, some of these resettled Roma were prevented from joining relatives in other regions (Kalvoda 1991:100). After World War II, the Vlach Roma returned to their nomadic lifestyle.

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[8] Guy (2001:289) states that three million Germans were violently expelled. However, Crowe (1995:54) states that officially 1,859,541 Germans and 68,407 Magyars were expelled.

However, for the traditionally settled Slovak Roma the rapid and extensive migration had an enormous impact on their lifestyles.[9]

In the aftermath of the war, Slovak Roma found that their shanties either were in a terrible condition or destroyed, and in East Slovakia, the economic situation was particularly dire relative to the Czech lands, especially in areas of high population density where Romani unemployment was particularly high (Jařabová 2000:68).[10] It was often Romani men from East Slovakia who migrated first to organise work and housing, usually followed by close family, and then sometimes extended family came to join them, either in waves or all at once, which explains the predominance of particular Romani surnames in certain towns. Davidová (1991:30) portrays the movement as an entirely voluntary urbanisation, although one may wonder how much "choice" there was in practice, particularly as the government was promoting this migration. Roma living in Ostrava today often told me of their fathers having to move there for work, without any connotations of choice: for Roma this was not relevant when searching for even the smallest amount of badly paid work.

Davidová (1991:30) categorises the settlement patterns of Roma in Czechoslovakia following the migrations of 1945 onwards:

- Isolated camps next to villages (these are mostly in Slovakia and have remained very similar to pre-war conditions)[11]
- Scattered in villages (mostly in Czech)
- Scattered on state properties or living in cabins along the borderlands (in Czech)
- Partly scattered and partly concentrated in small towns (in Czech and Slovakia)
- Scattered in large industrial towns (in Czech, e.g. Ostrava, Karviná)
- Scattered in large cities, living in various types of flats (e.g. Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Košice)

Roma who were suddenly transplanted post-World War II from isolated rural settlements in Slovakia to large Czech industrial towns faced basic adaptation problems associated with rapid urbanisation. Although they did not have to worry so much about food and warmth and had new opportunities, Romani migrants were affected by problems of being away from family and home, drastic changes in types of occupation, pollution and associated illnesses, and not knowing the ways of city life. Each living situation had its own living patterns and associated lifestyles, which affected the kinds of cultural developments taking place. In Ostrava, I particularly noticed differences in lifestyles and cultural developments on community trips to the countryside, when

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[9] Although many Slovak Roma stayed in the Czech lands, some returned to Slovakia where conditions began to improve (Kalvoda 1991:99).

[10] In the mid 1950s, the majority of the 95,000 Roma in Slovakia were living in 1,305 Romani settlements in a total of 14,935 cabins and substandard shanties (Jařabová 2000:68)

[11] See appendix

some older Roma spoke nostalgically about having lived rurally and felt at home out in the open, and others who only knew urban life expressed fear of wildlife and the countryside.[12]

In 1949, the Communist party created a commission to study the so-called "Gypsy question". They concluded that previous governments were to blame for the Roma's low social and economic status and the Romani "problem" could be solved if they were transformed into a conscientious proletariat and adopted trades. The first attempts at resolution took the form of adult education and attempts to eradicate illiteracy (Jařabová 2000:70). In 1958, it took a different turn and full integration of Roma was attempted with act 74/58 that required all nomadic and semi-nomadic persons to register in February 1959.[13] This affected the Vlach Roma in particular, but also itinerant entertainers, umbrella repairers and grinders who traditionally moved between Czech and Slovakia (Jařabová 2000:73).[14] Certain lifestyles were outlawed and people were forcibly settled to become workers: nomadic Vlach groups even had the wheels removed from their carts and their horses shot in 1959 (sources: conversations with several Vlach eyewitnesses living in Ostrava, Jařabová 2000:73).

Romani language, dress, lifestyle, customs, music, dancing, professions, working culture, family life and so on, were all judged to be in need of reform. As one Czech periodical put it at the time, 'under socialism it is totally unthinkable to build some 'socialist and national' Gypsy culture from the fundamentals of something which is very primitive, backward, essentially often even negative and lacking in advanced tradition... The question is not whether the Gypsies are a nation but how to assimilate them' (*Demografie* 4,1 1962:80-81 cited in Kalvoda 1991:98). According to Communist party ideology, the Romani way of life was deformed by their bitter historical experience and had no contemporary relevance: Romani resistance to change was merely a symptom of living in concentrations, the remedy being isolation from other sufferers (Guy 1998:34). The idea was that everyone should affect the basic habits of settled life, adhere to norms and fulfil their civic duties according to the demands of Communist party policy. Everybody should go to school, be literate and work.

The Roma, in many ways, simply did not conform to Communist party ideas of a conscientious proletariat and it aimed to spread the Roma as thinly as possible across Czechoslovakia. They started this project by classifying Roma into three groups according to how assimilated they were judged to be, which then determined the kind of resettlement policy that

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[12] One particularly ironic moment was on a community trip to the countryside in March 2004 when a group of Roma were offered horse-rides by a local farmer. The adults were excited about it, but the children were petrified and only a few of the children overcame their fear to enjoy the experience. It was not lost on the adults that horse-trading and associated traditional skills were quintessentially Romani occupations.

[13] The USSR had taken the lead by banning nomadism in 1956 (Guy 2001:290)

[14] 46,500 people (mostly Roma) aged 15 and over were registered in 1959 (Jařabová 2000:73).

was deemed appropriate to them. Classification was carried out arbitrarily, without any consultation with Roma themselves and irrespective of family ties or other life circumstances. The result was that the policy was completely ineffective and built up enormous resentment amongst non-Romani Czechs and Slovaks, who were also in desperate need of housing and felt sidelined by people that they still considered unwelcome "foreigners".

By 1968, the government admitted its failure, and actually decided to consult with Roma in planning their future. With the unexpected liberalisations of the Prague Spring that year, many educated Roma and some scholars, notably Davidová and Hübschmannová, began to criticise the policies of dissolving the Romani nation and culture and pushed for recognition of Romani nationality and the rights to form Romani organisations.[15] Hübschmannová pointed out that only a small minority of Roma were traditionally nomadic, the vast majority having been settled for centuries as blacksmiths and musicians in Slovakia. She emphasised the way in which Roma had developed very separate characteristics, both physical and cultural, through living in highly segregated conditions: therefore they should be granted ethnic or national status. Hübschmannová posited that the reason Roma had not faded away was because they had a 'national consciousness' (Kalvoda 1991:101).

Finally, funded by the National Front, the Union of Gypsy-Romanies was founded in January 1968. Its membership grew rapidly, attracting Roma from all levels of society, and they published their own magazine and organised festivals of Romani song and dance. Younger Romani musicians and pop groups appeared on television singing in Romani and the media began to refer to Roma as *Romové* rather than the pejorative *cikány* (Kalvoda 1991:102). Proposals were made at several universities for the support of Romani culture, with emphasis on the need for study and training in Romani language. The media started to denounce the prevalent and widespread prejudices against Roma and general interest in Romani culture significantly rose, reflected in the number of articles published on the subject.

The subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, 20-21 August 1968, and the accompanying programme of "normalisation" reversed all the liberalisations of Prague Spring. After increased calls for Romani ethnic and national recognition, the Union was violently dissolved in 1973. The government again decided to ignore all demands for Romani recognition, returning to the policy of dispersion and resettlement. In the Czech lands, the policy of resettlement was resisted and many Roma who did not want to be resettled returned to Slovakia, often leaving their accommodation in disrepair, in turn causing resentment amongst non-Romani Czechs who were concerned about housing and taxes.

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[15] In 1968, censorship was abolished and journalists and others began openly criticising the government.

In the 1970s and 1980s, censorship was strict, and although scholars wrote as much about Romani culture as editors would allow, government propaganda still held up assimilated "citizens of Gypsy origin" as role models for Roma, emphasising the benefits of socialist society (Kalvoda 1991:103). Davidová characterises the late 1970s and 1980s as an abandonment of forced assimilation in favour of socially-based solutions that modified and liberalised its policies of social integration, understood as a form of compromise through establishing co-existence whilst maintaining some of the ethnic group's distinctive features (Jařabová 2000:75). Guy sums up the years of "normalisation" from 1968 to 1988 as 'a partially chronicled story of sporadic and uneven development – often dependent on local initiatives rather than stemming from the capital cities' (1998:51). The disjointed approach accounts for highly variable conditions, even if that was not the intention.

Charter 77, a dissident group established in 1977, started to chronicle the specific human rights abuses suffered by Roma. They made scathing attacks on the Communist party's policy towards Roma in general, branding it 'racist repression' (Charter 77 1979a:7 cited in Guy 1998:52). The most serious findings were: the growing practice of sterilising Romani women either through pressure, or without their consent at all; bias of the juridical system against Roma; use of laws to exclude Roma from residency and municipal housing; and what they believed to be the cynical plan to keep the Roma as a mass pool of unskilled, uneducated, mobile workforce to sustain the factories and heavy industry, deliberately preventing their upward mobility and integration. The Czechoslovak government rejected all these internal and external "Western" criticisms, by drawing attention to success stories of assimilated Roma.

Guy gives more credit to the Communist party's intentions towards the Roma, believing that they really did seek to equalise the social status of Roma by giving them opportunities to be workers.[16] In defence of the Communist party, there was probably not a cynical plan to keep Roma unskilled and uneducated, as they could and did find unskilled labour by importing 'what amounted to indentured workers' from less-developed socialist Cuba and particularly Vietnam (Guy 1998:64-65).[17] Nevertheless, the Communist party did not take account of the powerful forces of ethnic, racial and cultural identities, and did great harm to Romani life, the consequences of which are still being paid for today, as both non-Roma and Roma themselves

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[16] However, Guy throws into question the prevalent view, which I found many Roma in Ostrava shared, that the Communist party helped raise Romani standards of living. He asserts that the Roma's better living conditions were brought about more by a move within the Romani communities to take advantage of employment possibilities that were created by the peacetime state-socialist economic boom after the 1930s depression and subsequent war (Guy 2001:9).

[17] Together with Roma these darker skinned workers also became targets of racist attacks after the fall of Communism.

feel ambiguously about a systematically devalued Romani culture and identity. The relationship between Roma and the Czechoslovak Communist party is not simple or easily evaluated; some Roma received unprecedented opportunities for education, housing and employment, and even status within the Communist party. However, others had their way of life and culture destroyed, some were denied residency and housing, and many were unable to escape poverty.

In November 1989, there was a relatively peaceful fall of the Communist party's regime known as the Velvet Revolution. Many Roma played an active role in the mass demonstrations and the formation of the Romani Civic Initiative Party (*Romská Občanská Iniciativa*), a partner in the coalition that came to power in the first post-socialist elections.

3.3 Life for Romani musicians under socialism

This section is based on interviews and discussions with Roma between 2003 and 2004, who were looking back after 14 years of a nominally democratic government and an economic system which has been moving towards a liberalised market economy that despite certain benefits has not generally favoured many Ostrava Roma. Ostrava was supposed to be a show town of socialism that boasted the benefits of socialist state-run industry: indeed, there was abundant employment and money flowing into the city. These days, Ostrava is an area that still attracts one of the highest percentages of electoral votes for the Communist party in the whole country, which can be attributed to the city's flourishing under socialism and its sudden and rapid demise afterwards: it is not only amongst the Roma in Ostrava that the end of socialism is still bemoaned. Typical contemporary comments I encountered from Roma regarding the regime change were: "democracy is only for the rich, there's no democracy for Roma/poor people"; "under socialism we had jobs, we could buy things, now there's nothing here for us"; "under the Communists you could walk in the streets safely, because you knew the police would come". Contemporary Roma in Ostrava did not appear to be particularly attracted to the ideology of communism or socialism, rather, their concerns were practical and they remembered a time when they had jobs, regular money and some security, a situation that happened to be brought about by the Communist party.

An important issue when dealing with the past is that Roma people often had ways of conceptualising time, which whilst not being homogenous strongly featured certain attitudes. In my experience, Roma did not like talking about the past or future very much, for they had a very strong commitment to the present. During my fieldwork I noticed that the only times Roma would speak about the past without being prompted, was either when someone died or at emotional points during parties usually after considerable consumption of alcohol. Two years ago is often

regarded as long-gone history: as one Rom (age 22) put it to me, "it is like a museum, not something to be thought about". Conversely, making definite plans for more than a couple of days in advance, was unusual. Therefore, talking about socialist times elicited extremely vague memories and evaluations mostly to the effect that Roma were a lot better off under the Communist party than now, the notable exceptions to this point of view being the Vlach who predominantly support Western-style capitalism and speak bitterly of socialist times. In fact, one of my best sources with regard to life for Romani musicians under socialism was Jan Rokyta, a non-Romani dulcimer player who had played with Romani bands since 1958 and enjoyed talking about the details of his memories.[18]

Life for Romani musicians was very different during socialism, when compared to contemporary patterns. Rokyta remembered that in the 1950s Romani musicians tended to work in as few as ten villages, with perhaps only a hundred melodies. He said that bands had very small repertoires, but a very deep understanding, mostly playing music associated with their birthplace. When Slovak Roma moved to Ostrava, their first piece of furniture was the radio and they listened to new music from Radio Budapešt and Radio Bucharest learning many new songs and techniques by ear. For example, Rokyta claimed that Romani double bass players started to pluck instead of bow for styles such as the foxtrot, in response to influences from the radio during this time (interview 2004). He recalled that after the 1950s, there were music schools and conservatoires, which some Roma attended, and as a result, the music began to be much more technically perfected, with more virtuosity and quicker *tempi*. By way of example, Rokyta mapped the progress of the Giňa family band:

> ...the whole family moved from East Slovakia only at the end of the 1960s, and I feel that in the first recordings I have of them from 1971 they were still young and searching for their style and technique. By the 1990s they were skilled, practiced players, an excellent band, the top in the Republic... The *primáš* (Cz; first fiddler) son, Josef Giňa Junior, played with them on dulcimer and he was always drawn towards technique. He was such a motor. The band was 50 years old and more so they were skilled technically, but he was the motor who always said "faster, faster" (interview 2004).

Eugen Horváth, a renowned violinist from Brno, remembered attending music school during the late 1980s, where he learnt scales and technique as well as classical violin repertoire, whilst at home, his father instructed him in Romani music and improvisation. In addition, Eugen's father sent him to Hungary for a few months to study with a distinguished Hungarian

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[18] Rokyta was one of the only non-Roma to play in Romani bands. He is highly respected by Romani and non-Romani musicians and was given the Romani nickname *Parno* (Ro; white), something usually reserved for Romani males to be used only amongst other Roma. He is also a well respected radio presenter and folklorist.

Romani violinist.[19] Such an apprenticeship used to be a normal part of a young Romani musician's training, although nowadays there does not tend to be any money available for foreign sojourns or formal tuition (interview 2004. See also chapter 4).

During the socialist era, Romani musicians in Ostrava looked for performance opportunities and mostly found them in cafes (Cz: *kavárny*), pubs (Cz: *hospody*), wine bars (Cz: *vinárny*), or restaurants. Rokyta said that during socialism, the *status quo* for bands in the region was that half of them worked down the mines during the day and the rest subsisted on social welfare, coming together in the evenings and at the weekends to play. Bands regularly swapped locations, travelling as far as 30km to play at a pub. There was intense competition and much inter-group fighting, and Rokyta remembered that Josef Giňa Senior (deceased) had been forced to change venues over ten times.

Josef Giňa Junior recollected working in a particular wine bar that was especially for tourists. He had to play for several hours non-stop even if there was only one person in the room. He found this absolutely soul destroying, although it paid well in comparison to other work. Mirga Kalman, a renowned violinist in Ostrava, attributed his now permanent bronchitis to playing his violin every night in the smoky atmosphere of pubs and wine cellars, though he never smoked himself. All the Romani musicians I spoke to about this time described playing a combination of background music and requests that were mostly folk music from the area, popular songs and the occasional Romani song. During the last 15 years, this kind of work has dwindled away through a combination of financial reasons, changing fashions and increasing hostility towards the Roma. Nowadays, the Roma are mostly a resented and feared presence in Ostrava and the Czech Republic as a whole, and so people are unwilling to hire them to play (or even serve) in cafes and pubs where non-Romani people are relaxing.[20] There was little money available for live musicians and pre-recorded music seemed to be preferred anyway.[21]

There were other performance opportunities for Romani musicians during the socialist period at folk or wine festivals, for which they needed a non-Romani contact and guarantor. Rokyta said that he acted as such for many Romani bands. Some older musicians, like Mirga Kalman, remembered playing at folk festivals in Slovakia before migration to the Czech lands: there were more opportunities in Slovakia for Romani musicians and bands were more often

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[19] This apprenticeship was actually in 1990, but is redolent of traditional practices associated with earlier times.

[20] In Hungary and Austria, Roma who commute daily from Bratislava are still employed to play live music, but they tend to play popular classics (for example, "The Blue Danube") for tourists, rather than folk or Romani music (conversations with Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz, Vienna, March 2004).

[21] Furthermore, as was traditionally the case, I overwhelmingly found that non-Roma in Ostrava did not have any interest in Romani folk music. They were also unfamiliar with contemporary developments in Rompop.

composed of Romani and non-Romani Slovaks. Kalman showed me photos of him in such bands, all dressed in Slovak national costumes, which they had had to borrow for the occasion. Although broadly, Roma were not socially integrated and occupied a low-class position in Slovak society, talented Romani musicians were greatly esteemed and had become part of Slovak national culture (interview with Rokyta 2004). They were taken care of financially and Rokyta claimed that from playing at weddings alone, a Romani musician could have expected to support his family comfortably. It used to be standard practice in Slovakia that non-Roma hired their Romani neighbours to play at their weddings and there was a co-existence and closeness between Slovak and Romani folk music, some songs having parallel Romani and Slovak texts. Indeed, Rokyta described Romani musicians as a bridge between Romani and East Slovak genres, which in any case had no strict borders between them (interview 2004).

When Roma people moved to Ostrava and other locations in the Czech lands, they were perceived as outsiders with no cultural role: the massive post-war influx of East Slovak Roma was never felt to be a part of Czech culture. Czech folk music had developed differently from Slovak folk music and so, although Romani musicians traditionally picked up songs from their surroundings extremely rapidly, they did not have a strong pre-established cultural role in their new location as Romani musicians. Furthermore, the primary reason that migration took place was for employment in the mines or heavy industry that was rapidly expanding in the Czech lands. Although interest in music was maintained and some musicians migrated, it is crucial to note that employment opportunities for migrants were not intended to be in music.

Another factor in Romani musicians losing their performance opportunities was the preference for pre-recorded music over live music, and the takeover of discos at weddings. This was partly owing to changing fashions, but also to the financial savings and simpler organisation of using pre-recorded music. In the Czech lands, folk festivals came to be dominated by non-Romani Czech musicians and Romani musicians were not needed to play national folk music. As Rokyta concisely explained "without money, Roma do not play": Romani dulcimer bands exist primarily for financial gain, therefore, as a result of declining public demand and available finances the bands have correspondingly waned. Likewise, with the increasing appetite for discos and pre-recorded music, as well as the financial savings of not hiring live musicians, work for Romani musicians in Slovakia has also dwindled. Well-paid wedding work is still available for a few Romani musicians, but it is rare (interview with Rokyta 2004).

Music making in the home also declined under socialism. Apart from the rising popularity of listening to cassettes rather than making live music as a family unit or amongst friends, there was a change in status of Romani music brought about by the Communist party's

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policies. Roma were taught to believe that their culture was regressive and unworthy of preservation or development,[22] which led many Roma to feel shame about traditional ways. For example, I found that some Ostrava Romani parents did not want their children to participate in Romani summer camps, because these camps represented a past, primitive lifestyle that had been replaced with a modern, urban lifestyle. Some Roma I spoke with (and not only teenagers) felt ashamed of the older style of music-making such as dulcimer bands and family music making in the home, simply because to them it represented something backward and old fashioned that had not been modernised.

Many Roma in Ostrava were uncomfortable that I was interested in older ways of music making as much as modern developments and sometimes proudly mentioned that they did not know any old songs. To be modern (Cz: *moderní*) was an extremely positive attribute within the Romani community and to that effect pre-recorded Rompop and other popular music had almost entirely replaced ad hoc music making in the home. Concurrent with feelings of shame associated with Romani traditions, I found that there were feelings of nostalgia for the socialist era and before, when people had long story-telling and singing sessions round the fire in the forest, spoke Romani, were "free" and apparently did not have any worries, or at least no urban concerns. In my experience, whilst these two extremes did actually represent two camps of opinion, there was a whole spectrum of opinion in between that combined feelings of nostalgia with a compulsion to become as urbanely developed as possible through education, employment and urban cultural expressions, although I found the latter to be by far the stronger influence, especially amongst younger generations.

In summary, Communist party policies did severe damage to Romani culture and music, through suppressing various aspects, and representing it as a backward, unnecessary and negative phenomenon. However, there were other concurrent factors that contributed to the demise of professional Romani musicians, traditional dulcimer bands and music-making in the home: developments in technology, changing tastes and the need to economise financially, both within and outside Romani communities, have gradually favoured pre-recorded music over live music, and pop over folk music.

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[22] Rice details and explores a situation with some similarities in socialist Bulgaria. The Communist party viewed village music as 'created, according to them, under the conditions of feudalism and capitalism...a symbol... of the very social and economic conditions the communists were trying to eradicate'. However, in contrast to Romani music in socialist Czechoslovakia, their solution in Bulgaria was to transform village music into 'great art as part of the Party's progressive goals for the betterment of humankind under communism' (2001:27). See also Rice (1994) and Buchanan (1996).

3.4 Recordings of Romani musicians in the Ostrava region between 1958 and 2004

This section presents a comparison of three series of recordings made in the Ostrava region between 1958 and 2004,[23] revealing some of the musical changes that have occurred in Romani music making in Ostrava during this time especially in relation to the history of Roma in socialist Czechoslovakia and post-1989 recollections of this time. Some of these changes are directly related to the implementation of Communist party policies and its ideology, and others are more indirectly connected, bound up in a combination of wider social and political change and technological advances. On the question of social change and its connection to musical change, I am taking the approach that with few exceptions, social change does not cause musical change nor vice versa, rather that they are bound together and mutually influencing in an ever changing process, 'articulated' (cf. Hall in Grossberg 1986:141) in the manner outlined in the theoretical interlude. During my fieldwork, I found that people viewed changes in Romani music sometimes quite differently especially in regard to socialism and other social changes, therefore the views voiced here are either attributed to specific people or my own reached through a combination of fieldwork experience and reading.

The most prominent ethnomusicologist and active collector of Romani music in Czechoslovakia is Eva Davidová.[24] Born in 1933, Davidová is a non-Romani Czech who as well as having done much fieldwork and research about Romani music making and culture is a well-known ethnographer and photographer. Her recordings date from 1956 to 1997 and mostly feature music of settled Slovak Roma with some recordings of Hungarian, Vlach and Moravian Romani music. Since then, younger researchers have taken over fieldwork activity, and Davidová has concentrated on publications, teaching at Olomouc University, and establishing the Romani museum in Brno (1991). Since the 1989 revolution, she has helped to establish Romani studies (Cz: *Romistika*) as an academic subject in the Czech Republic.

Davidová and Hübschmannová became interested in Romani culture through chance meetings with Roma in the early 1950s, which established their lifelong interest in and solidarity with Roma, conducting their early research unsupported alongside paid employment. In many cases, Davidová and Hübschmannová were the first to record in their chosen communities and often became accepted as friends or even as members of Romani communities (Fennesz-Juhasz

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[23] There are only two known surviving collections of Romani music recorded in Ostrava from the socialist era: one made by Eva Davidová in collaboration with Jaromir Gelnar in the 1960s held in the Vienna Phonogramm Archiv, and the other recorded by Jan Rokyta through his job with Radio Ostrava. The radio station still holds all the recordings, made mostly in the 1970s and 1980s, in its archive.

[24] Space prohibits giving a full list of the hundreds of recordings Davidová has made and readers are referred to the Phonogramm archive at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna.

2001:166). They are primarily interested in Roma as people and have campaigned for many years for Romani rights and cultural recognition in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Most of Davidová's recordings were made in the home as "exploratory" recordings, meaning that Roma had been asked to sing something specifically for the microphone. These recordings represent different vocal genres reflecting the family's specific Romani group: mostly traditional songs in Romani passed on within the family, some with instrumental accompaniment; songs learned from famous Romani singers via cassettes and the radio; and new contemporary songs. There are also live recordings of weddings, christenings or other celebrations, and a few recordings represent the kind of music that was played by Roma locally to non-Roma, as well as stage folk music presentations (Fennesz-Juhasz 2001:166). Davidová's recordings were predominantly made in the former Czechoslovakia, though she has also recorded in France, Spain and the ex-Yugoslavia region.

Over the years, Davidová has worked in partnership with many people, but of particular interest here is her collaboration with Jaromir Gelnar, when they made field recordings in Ostrava from 1961 to 1969. Her recordings made in East Slovakia are also highly relevant, since about 90% of Roma currently in Ostrava have come from East Slovakia or have parents or grandparents from there. Davidová deposited her 40 hours of field recordings in Vienna, partly owing to the excellent facilities there, but also owing to its location outside the socialist bloc.[25] Although I do not know of any specific persecution suffered by Davidová, during the socialist era the social and political conditions meant that her work would have been unpopular and viewed negatively by the government and much of the public. The importance of these recordings to my thesis lies in their general musical characteristics and comparative value in relation to my contemporary recordings made during fieldwork in 2003 to 2004.

Jan Rokyta made the only other significant collection of recordings from the Ostrava region during the socialist period.[26] They were recorded at the Ostrava radio studios between 1976 and 1997, although predominantly in the late 1970s and 1980s, where Rokyta still works. In the mid-1970s, he was very excited by the high standard of folk music played by his talented colleague Josef Giňa and his family in nearby Opava, and decided to feature them centrally in a series of recordings for Ostrava radio (interview 2004). As well as generating opportunity for these musicians, the purpose of these recordings was to produce short sound bites that could be used in radio programmes. Consequently, the examples were much shorter and condensed than a

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[25] In March 2004, I went to the Vienna Phonogramm Archiv, which houses one of the largest collections of Romani music in the world.

[26] Space prohibits giving a full list of the hundreds of recordings Rokyta has made and readers are referred to the archive at Radio Ostrava for many of his recordings of Romani and other East European folk music.

performance *in situ*, as he explained that radio listeners would not have tolerated ten verses of the same song. Another reason that Rokyta chose to work with the Giňa band in this capacity was because as well as being talented, they were a stable, reliable band when others were more fluid. He felt the stability came from being a family group, with three brothers forming the mainstay (interview 2004).

One of the main sources of differences between Davidová's, Rokyta's and my collections, is in the purpose of making the recordings. Davidová's purpose lay in preserving a traditional culture that was under severe threat from Communist party policies and changing musical fashions, and was connected to her interest in Roma as people and friends. Rokyta's purpose lay in promoting high quality folk music and fulfilling his job at the radio. My recordings function as audio and visual evidence gathered during an intensive fieldwork period, as part of a wider research project for my doctoral dissertation. While being personally invested in the Roma as people, I was not especially interested in the preservation of traditional culture.

Concerning recording equipment, Davidová used much less technologically developed devices with tapes that were relatively expensive and bulky, meaning that she only recorded the actual music with perhaps a short spoken introduction by way of explanation, rather than letting the tape run to capture some of the context.[27] Rokyta's recordings were made in the artificial but well-equipped environment of the studio and recording time was limited to a couple of minutes for each song due to financial demands and radio programming requirements. Rokyta recalled limiting the musicians to two verses, although they had a strong inclination to play more as they were paid by the minute for what they produced.[28] Time and tapes were not often constraints on my recordings, which meant that the performers could continue for as long as they wanted and the context was usually captured as well. When recording folk songs, I had other problems relating to Roma nowadays not being able or not wanting to remember a song and not recollecting more than one or two verses.

Davidová and Rokyta were working under and around certain political constraints imposed by the socialist government. I was not too worried about governmental interference in my work and I was not acting against any state law or policy, although my studies generated much unpopularity and derision from the vast majority of non-Romani Czechs that I encountered. Amongst Roma there was puzzlement as to why I should be researching their culture: why was it

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[27] Davidová has included much written information surrounding each recording, mostly concerning musicians' biographical details.

[28] Each musician received 50 crowns for one recorded minute (approximately £1.25 at the time of writing). There were five musicians, so it was costing the radio 250 crowns per minute (interview with Rokyta 2004).

so interesting and why conduct musical research when what they felt they really needed was financial support and employment. Davidová and Rokyta had clearly comprehensible purposes in terms of the Roma they worked with, whereas the Roma I worked with tended to focus on my "useful" roles, such as teaching English, translating, and visiting Romani community centres, because they could not necessarily relate to my stated purposes.

Rokyta's work was mostly with one family, the Giňovci (Giňa family) based in Opava, 30km from Ostrava. As well as friendship, there was an employer-employee relation. Davidová's work tended to be concentrated on a few key families, to whom she would repeatedly return for short visits over many years. Because my research was full-time for a period of several months, rather than spread out over several years on a part-time basis, I was able to get to know and participate in the day-to-day life of several families over a prolonged stretch of time. This certainly affected the kinds of recordings I made and the kinds of relationships I developed. I do not think that one particular approach elicited better or worse recordings; rather, it is clear that different sorts of recordings were produced according to the different relations that were in place between performers and the person recording.

Davidová's collections are mostly grouped according to the location of the recording and the ethnic group and family the performers belong to, whereas Rokyta's recordings are classified according to the genre/style of music performed. My recordings are grouped according to the context of performance. In terms of represented Romani groups, the Giňa family is Slovak Romani, the vast majority of my recordings feature Slovak and Hungarian Roma, and I shall only consider Davidová's Slovak and Hungarian recordings.[29]

The Giňa family is a traditionally professional musician family. Rokyta's recordings of them are all of music making that takes place in public, mostly for non-Roma. Davidová's Slovak Romani recordings in Ostrava represent two families who were not professional musicians, but sang in the home. Some of the families I worked with in Ostrava were traditionally professional musician families, and others were not, but none of them could make their living by playing music, with the possible exception of the Hungarian violinist Mirga Kalman, who made money playing at Romani funerals on top of his pension.[30] Other Romani musicians in Ostrava relied on welfare and supplemented their income through music. I recorded a mixture of mostly music that took place in public and some that was only for private situations at home. There are no

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[29] Slovak and Hungarian Romani cultures are extremely close, almost synonymous in Ostrava. The Vlach musical tradition needs to be considered separately.

[30] By professional I mean those musicians who make the bulk, or a significant part, of their income from performing music.

professional dulcimer bands left in Ostrava and the nearest I could record was the Giňa band in Opava and the Horváth band in Brno.

In terms of repertoire and style, both Davidová and Rokyta focussed on the most traditional end of the musical status quo, Davidová because that is what she felt needed to be preserved, and Rokyta because that is the style he himself plays and was most aesthetically drawn to. I did not focus on any particular style during my recordings, rather taking every opportunity to discover what people were doing, rarely requesting certain styles or songs. The repertoire in Davidová's and Rokyta's collections sometimes overlap, and repertoire that overlapped with my collection featured in both Rokyta's and Davidová's collections rather than in only one.[31] Although more could be read into this observation, the most relevant interpretation here is that, although musical fashions change there are some songs that endure better through the generations. The songs in my collection that feature in the preceding two were not performed at parties, functioning as either children's songs or symbols of tradition associated with communal singing in the home.

Owing to the professional tradition of the Giňa band, Rokyta's recordings have the most variation in terms of different song and dance types represented. Slovak Romani folk music is represented by recordings of *čardáš* and *hallgató*. Rokyta explained that the repertoire included from the Vlach Romani group (Ro: *Vlachiko*), was originally a nomadic dance only for males, possibly connected to beating shoes owing to its regular crotchet rhythm (interview 2004). Hungarian music is represented in the *čardáš* and *verbuňk* (music traditionally used for recruiting soldiers marching to war). East Slovak folk music was included: *krúcená* is a circle dance for male-female pairs that involves twirling around, originally from Romania (interview with Rokyta 2004). There is also wedding music from the region of Šariš, East Slovakia:[32] *redori* are wedding dances for the closest male relatives of the bride, who are all obliged to dance with her whilst putting money in a small basket with corn which is there as a symbol of fertility. Lastly, there are four recordings of "Rom-folk-soul", a short-lived style pioneered by Josef Giňa Junior in 1997. Giňa composed the songs and played all the instrumental parts himself, overlaying them on the recording. The music is characterised by rich jazz and soul harmonies, and repetition of a few lyrics.

The repertoire of Davidová's Ostrava collection is differentiated according to ethnic group and family. In Ostrava, the Slovak Roma she recorded were Maria Gažiová who sang with the Cerveňák family, and Jano, a half Slovak half Vlach Rom. The style and repertoire of these

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[31] For example, *Duj duj duj duj, dešuduj, Čhajori Romaňi, Motoris, Motoris, Adad'ives mušines tu te merel, Nane oda lavutaris, Bašav mange bašav.*

[32] Josef Giňa Senior's hometown is Kojatice, near Prešov in the Šariš region of East Slovakia.

recordings are homogenous, and differences in Jano's style and repertoire can be accounted for by Vlach influences. In Davidová's writings, she clearly categorises songs of the settled Slovak Roma into old songs (Ro: *phurikane giľa*) and new songs (Ro: *neve giľa*), and the vast majority of her recordings feature old songs, for she believes that 'the most important element of Gypsy culture is its authentic folklore' (Davidová & Žižka 1991:29).

My recordings are best considered firstly in terms of the music's context, such as celebratory party, funeral, festival, beauty contest, community centre disco, music in the home, then according to genre, for example, dulcimer band music, traditional singing, Rompop, pop, hip hop, and lastly in terms of style, such as *čardáš*, *hallgató*, ballad or tango.

From all the recordings, it is noticeable that the rise in technical proficiency of instrumentalists has led to a general increase in performance tempo. Rokyta explained that competition for speed has existed amongst Romani musicians for as long as anyone can remember: "such a competition is not official, it simply proceeds amongst them [the musicians]... but everyone brags that they played faster than the other... they launch their reputation through it" (interview 2004). The issue of tempo is not so remarkable concerning music-making at home, for competition is much less fierce, principally because they are not making music at home to earn money.[33]

Concerning instrumentation, the dulcimer band used to be the typical mode for professional Slovak and Hungarian Romani musicians (see introduction). Traditionally there was a single melodic vocal line, although over the years more vocal harmony has been added. The Giňa family often provides four- or five-part harmony that shows their technical resources as a family band and as Josef Giňa Junior told me (interview 2004), the influence of the close vocal harmonies used in some popular music coming from Western Europe and the U.S., particularly soul. (He made it clear that to me that these were strictly musical and not political choices). In Rokyta's recordings, there are clear soloists (violin, clarinet, singers) and accompanists (bass, viola). The only instrument to fulfil both roles is the dulcimer, which conforms to the traditional arrangement of dulcimer bands. Josef Giňa Senior is the ubiquitous violin soloist (Cz: *primáš*) on Rokyta's recordings, partly because he is head of the family, but also because he was the most gifted and experienced. Josef Giňa Junior features on the recordings as a budding soloist picked to follow in his father's footsteps. Davidová's recordings in homes are more vocally orientated, with the occasional guitar or accordion accompaniment. Sometimes there is more than one singer featured, in which case it is apparent that it was the older person dominating and the younger one

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[33] Regarding tempo, I noticed that the more alcohol people consumed during an evening of music-making at home, the slower and more emotionally drawn out the *hallgató* and Rompop ballads became.

accompanying. My recordings show a mixture of instrumentation, from the more traditional dulcimer bands and solo voices with acoustic instruments in the home, to electric Rompop combinations and singing and dancing to pre-recorded music.

One of the greatest shifts to have taken place in Romani music is in harmony. Davidová's recordings still represent the dominance of the traditional monophonic singing, for multi-part singing was a later development, most likely to have emerged as a result of the influx of popular music that features much close-harmony singing. In some cases, the popular music infiltrating from Western Europe and the U.S. was imitated as a gesture of political protest against the Communist party, as an aesthetic choice, as a way of becoming more popular for financial gain, and/or as a way of allying Roma with all things modern to dispel the Communists' assertion that Roma had been held back by a backward Romani culture. The majority of Rokyta's recordings feature the traditional harmonies of a dulcimer band.[34] The *čardáš* traditionally employs the harmonic pattern of | A B | C D |, that is, one change per crotchet in 4/8 bars (interview with Rokyta 2004). The following version of a well-known *čardáš* employs a typical harmonic structure, taken from a book of Hungarian popular songs published in 1958 that I found in a second hand shop in Košice. It reflects the influences of European Classical-Romantic art music, and was representative of the harmony employed by the Giňa dulcimer band on Rokyta's recordings (see figure 10).

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[34] It is noticeable that older recordings feature different keys that accommodate singers' ranges, whereas my recordings relied on fewer, simpler keys. In my experience, only the most experienced Romani musicians could transpose any song to any key. Nevertheless, I found it was still regarded as an important asset amongst musicians, if not essential as before.

Figure 10: transcription of *Megy a Gőzös Lefelé*

(Source: Szól a Nóta 2 1958:7)

The overall structure is ABB where A is bars 1 to 8 and B is bars 9 to 16 (or aa¹baba, where a¹ is a transposition of a up a perfect fifth and each letter represents four bars). The bars are in 4/8 and the main harmonic changes occur every crotchet. Quaver offbeat harmonic changes tend to be either a chromatic change to the preceding harmony (for example, D to D°) or a passing chord to the next downbeat harmony (for example, Dm E⁷ | Am). There are also examples of accented passing harmony in the first bar of the A section, whereby Gm⁶ is resolved to A⁷ by pivoting on an E. Although in the book this song is titled *Megy a Gőzös Lefelé* (Hu; The steamboat drives down the river), when I learned it in Ostrava it was simply referred to as *Maďarský* (Cz; Hungarian) *čardáš*.

The version of this song that I learned in 2003 was melodically the same, but it was thought of in 4/4 rather than 4/8, and the harmony had been simplified. This was typical of the musical changes I noticed, for like much popular music the predominant pulse was now 4/4 in Rompop and more traditional Romani music (which I suggest gave the music a heavier feel), and harmonies had either been slightly or vastly simplified from what was previously regarded as usual. (Very experienced musicians who came from traditional musician families kept many harmonic complexities of the dulcimer style and indeed added new ones. However, these musicians were very few and numbers were declining along with the style and repertoire as a whole as it continues to lose popularity and therefore financial viability post-1989).

Below is a transcription of one performance of *Maďarský čardáš* (October 2003) by the accordionist and violinist of the band Gypsy Imre. The performance rhythm is here transcribed literally to show the traditional flexibility in interpreting quaver or semiquaver movement. However, in terms of harmonic change, it is noticeable that although many of the features are maintained, such as harmonic movement on every beat (for example in bar 3 and 17), chromatic alterations of chords (for example B minor to A sharp diminished in bar 5), and minor to major chord shifts using pivot notes (for example E minor to C major, using the pivot notes E and G, in bars 17-20), there are fewer of these features in comparison to the previous version.

Figure 11: transcription of *Maďarský čardáš*

A harmonic difference between the two versions that is not indicative of sweeping change over time is the accordion's variation of the harmony when a section is repeated (for example, the repetition of bars 1-4 at bars 13-16 and 21-24). This can be understood as part of the freedom of being the only provider of harmony in a small ensemble, or indeed as part of a process of creating the harmony by ear. In larger dulcimer bands, there is a need to establish the harmony beforehand, and Rokyta's recordings feature the maintenance of harmonic structure in different verses and improvisatory sections (see figure 13).[35]

Rokyta suggested that one of the most powerful factors in musical change amongst dulcimer bands was the radio that picked up Radio Bucharest and Radio Budapest (interview 2004), stations in socialist countries and therefore legitimately and cheaply available. There are examples of musical jokes in some of Rokyta's recordings that feature sudden breaks or a regular but surprising discordant harmony, and he claimed that these jokes came from the radio, which then spread through all the dulcimer bands in the region. He also attributed the fashion of modulating a song up a tone to the influence of music played on the radio. As well as the declining abilities of contemporary musicians in Ostrava to negotiate this kind of harmonisation,

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[35] In chapter 2, the performance of *Čhajori Romaňi* by the Horváth family band features harmonic alterations on the repeat of section B. This can be attributed to the highly creatively arranged character of this band's repertoire that arises out of long hours of rehearsals (interview with Jan and Eugen Horváth, March 2004).

there was increasing tendency, derived from pop music, to harmonise the melody uniformly at a third or sixth apart, which hampers possibilities to harmonise in a traditional dulcimer band style. The majority of my recordings reflect the simplification of harmony that has taken place in most Romani music making, notably in Rompop: songs were predominantly harmonised with one chord per bar based on root position chords, with the occasional dominant seventh at cadences.[36] Whilst also related to the influence of popular music, the simplification is connected to the Communist party's legacy of not educating Roma, sending the majority to special schools and using them to work in the mines and factories, the initial reason for the encouraged migration of Roma to Ostrava. Although electric instruments have recently become widely available to Roma for music making, the vast majority must learn on his/her own without any tuition or accessible, successful role models: the legacy of negative educational experiences and limited opportunity lives on after the decline of socialism, noticeable in the limited harmonic possibilities available to most Rompop musicians in Ostrava.

Figure 12 is a transcription of a performance of a Rompop song, featuring the vocal solo then taken over by a keyboard solo, harmony and bass line (see DVD example 8). The harmony is basic, using four chords: tonic, subdominant, dominant and a flattened leading note major chord. The three musicians performing were all amateurs who jammed together borrowing the equipment set up at the Romani community centre in Hrušov, Ostrava. They were usually out of work and from extremely socio-economically deprived backgrounds, without the benefit of musical training from inside or outside the family.

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[36] Rokyta proposed that much of the value of Romani music lies in its harmonies and this simplification has destroyed the soul of Romani music (interview 2004).

Figure 12: transcription of a Rompop song

In contrast, some commercially mainstream Rompop has capitalised on much richer chords and harmonies influenced particularly by jazz, funk and soul, which has taken some Romani music in a different harmonic direction (see CD example 4). Indeed, six of Rokyta's recordings feature the young Jožka Giňa (Josef Giňa's son) starting to experiment with richer chords, which he said were part of a project to extend the (harmonic) possibilities of Romani music (interview with Jožka, April 2004). This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4, with sound examples (CD examples 7 and 8).

Concerning rhythm, dulcimer bands traditionally had no need for a drum, for the combination of bass (downbeats), *secundo* (offbeats, fills) and dulcimer (both) gives enough rhythmic distinction and stability for the melody to work over. In the home, rhythm is provided by different methods: stamping, clapping, slapping thighs or pieces of furniture, finger-snapping, or using two spoons. Vocal techniques include saying *hup* on the off beats (like *bumbázi*. See chapter 7). Methods I encountered to indicate a change in rhythm particularly in the *čardáš* from crotchet accompaniment to quaver accompaniment, was to let out two or three high pitched whistles through the teeth, or to shout *chupah*. In my experience, *chupah* signalled enjoyment or

appreciation of something that happened in the music, but could also be uttered as a rhythmic or tempo changing device.[37]

Sound production of Romani singers in Ostrava has changed since the oldest recordings, from a more nasal, textured vocal production to a softer, throaty and clean production associated with much pop music. I suggest that this can mostly be accounted for by the introduction of microphones and changing tastes and fashions precipitated by the huge rise in popularity of pop music from abroad. My recordings reflect some of the older style of singing, but mostly the vocal production more reminiscent of international pop.

Improvisation has always been an important feature of Romani music and this was demonstrated in different ways in all the recordings. In dulcimer bands, traditionally it has been organised by the pre-established harmonic structure and timescale of a verse, the improvisation mostly functioning as melodic embellishment over the top. In figure 13 (see also CD example 4), the violin provides an introduction that introduces the main melodic elements of the verse in an embellished form. The first time the voice enters, the melody is usually sung in its simplest melodic form. Then, instrumentalists "try to create variations... if the melody proceeds in quarter-notes and eighth-notes, the variation proceeds in sixteenth-notes, in order to demonstrate clearly quick playing with short notes in a comparatively modest tempo... they copied this variation technique from serious [classical] music...They want to decorate the melody, firstly and lastly to show that they can" (interview with Rokyta 2004) (see also CD example 2). All of the dulcimer band performances on Rokyta's recordings follow this formula.

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[37] In Davidová's recordings of Vlach Roma, making rhythm and bass without instruments is more common (Hu: *bumbázi*), as traditionally they did not play musical instruments.

Figure 13: transcription of *Motoris Motoris*

Mo - to - ris mo-to - ris   šta - re   ker-en - ken - ca

kaj   man__   te vo - ži-nav   mi - re   čha-vo - ren - ca

kaj   man__   te vo -ži-nav   mi - re   čha-vo - ren - ca

In Davidová's recordings of singing in the home, there are melodic variations, especially between locations; however, with the exception of Djuri's recordings as discussed in chapter 1, extended vocal melodic improvisations were rare.[38] Instead, improvisation took the form of changes to pre-existent lyrics or additional verses. Inclusion of songs or lyrics that refer to moving to or being in the Czech lands are particular to those places, yet are in keeping with the pre-existent Slovak style. For example, in the song *Khere, khere* (Ro: home, home) *kolibate*, the word *kolibate* (Sl: *koliba* is a small Romani house in Slovakia) has been replaced by *Karvinate*

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[38] Recordings made in Slovakia (1956-1969) are melodically virtually indistinguishable from those made during the same period in Ostrava and Prague. Some of Davidová's recordings obviously differ from Rokyta's recordings from the 1970s in the occasional substitution of new melodies to the same lyrics. For example, *Bašav mange bašav* is sung to one melody in Davidová's recordings and a different one in my and Rokyta's recordings. The song *O poštaris avel* was sung to one melody in Davidová and Rokyta's recordings and to a completely different one in my recordings.

(*Karviná* is an industrial town close to Ostrava). Interestingly, in Ostrava Davidová recorded an old Romani woman singing the new version and a young Romani girl singing the older version (Vienna Phonogrammarchiv 8.1.1969 no.365 B 42557 40'50) (CD example 5). Is the older woman singing to come to terms with the present and the radical changes in her life? Is the young girl singing through the nostalgia and longing she has inherited for a life and place she never knew?

My recordings reveal the same tendency for musical improvisation to be melodic, instrumental and limited to the pre-established harmony and timescale of a verse, as in Rokyta's recordings. Improvisations are noticeably simpler in conception than in Rokyta's recordings, partly owing to the loss of harmonic complexity and also to the widespread lack of experience and skill amongst most amateur Romani musicians in Ostrava (see figures 12 and 15). Figure 15 is a transcription of the saxophonist, Janko Ferenc, who played in the bands Gypsy Imre and Gypsy Amor (see chapter 5), playing a song called *Malsum Malsum* with accordion accompaniment (CD example 6). Janko was considered locally to be a "good musician", well known for his improvisations at large parties, and respected for his musical knowledge. Indeed, I found his improvisations to be amongst the most musically interesting outside the traditional musician families. Janko taught me the skeleton melody as that outlined in figure 14, and in his performance (figure 15, CD example 8), the skeleton melody is easily discernible the first time he plays the melody, with only a few slides, acciaccaturas, chromatic passing notes and melodic embellishments (second and third beats of bars 4 and 8). It is only on the repeated section that he decorates the already heard ending with a chromatic scale (bar 19). In subsequent sections, Janko adds more embellishment in the form of chromatic semiquaver runs (bar 23), octave displacement (bars 21-22), chromatic passing notes (bar 35), more use of semiquavers (rather than quavers) (bar 57), and melodic additions (the second beat of bar 27).

Figure 14: skeleton melody of *Malsum Malsum*

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Figure 15: transcription of *Malsum Malsum*

Although improvisation of lyrics did take place during singing sessions in the home, due to the decline in the occurrence of these sessions and decreasing ability in Romani (the use of the Romani language was considered backward under the Communist party), it was rare, often related to not being able to remember the lyrics they previously knew rather than making a song specific to their situation. Rompop songs did not invite improvisations of lyrics during these sessions or at parties, except for the insertion of somebody's name into songs if it happened to be their birthday, for perhaps contemporary Rompop lyrics were sufficiently relevant to Roma's needs in those situations.

Rokyta's, Davidová's and my recordings show different aspects of Romani music making in Ostrava during socialist times and some of the extensive changes that have happened post-1989. The described musical changes have occurred in relation to the contexts of enormous political upheaval, socio-economic changes and technological developments. The economic stability of socialism saw the flourishing of some Romani musician families, who, though under economic, political, social and cultural pressures, found ways to continue to develop their music as professional musicians, reflected in Rokyta's recordings. Traditional singing in the home changed and declined with the widespread availability of recording and playback technology and the Communist party's branding of traditional Romani culture as regressive and attempted erasure of Romani identity, as Davidová's and my recordings show. As there was no official platform for Romani music under socialism, most of the dominant population (and even some Roma) came to view Romani musicians as playing music of "other cultures" and/or having no "culture" at all, meaning that opportunities to earn money playing Romani music outside Romani communities were very few. As the socio-economic prospects of many Romani communities collapsed post-1989, there was little money to be made playing Romani music within impoverished Romani

communities, and few opportunities amongst a mostly separate and ignorant dominant population. As reflected in my recordings, with the widespread availability of technological equipment and electric instruments and the devaluation of traditional Romani culture and Romani identity in general, there has been an explosion of self-taught, unemployed Romani musicians playing musically simplified Rompop that idealises Romani identity on substandard electric instruments exclusively amongst other Roma (see chapters 1 and 5), and an increasingly desperate struggle for the economic survival of the more sophisticated and polished music of the traditional musician families (see chapter 4).

Chapter 4 Roma Post-1989: Traditional Styles Reinterpreted

Since 1989, the situation in Ostrava, and what was described as the Communist bloc, has changed drastically, economically, politically, socially and culturally. There has been an explosion of literature attempting to explain the demise of state-socialism and what has been happening in its wake. However, for my purposes, important questions relate to understanding the fundamental changes that have happened in Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic since the revolution in 1989 with specific reference to how they have affected Roma, particularly Romani music making practices in Ostrava.[1]

These transformations have been manifested in the re-interpretation of traditional Romani musical styles, by which I mean the traditionally private Romani folk repertoire of *phurikane gil'a* (Ro; ancient songs) and the dulcimer band style that was used by Roma to play many kinds of music professionally for non-Roma. (Other post-1989 musical developments are explored in chapters 5-7). I use the term reinterpreted, rather than continued or preserved, as I wish to signal the abrupt changes in circumstances of Roma post-1989 that have helped precipitate the near impossibility of finding traditional music played in traditional contexts, whilst acknowledging the minority I came across who continued to draw openly on traditional styles, repertoire and contexts. Contemporary performers who strongly referred to traditional dulcimer bands used *phurikane gil'a* in their repertoire, though songs of various backgrounds and aspects of different styles were also incorporated.

In this chapter, I review post-1989 developments for Roma in Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic and then critique nation-state discourses that have strongly influenced contemporary racial discourse and conditions in the Czech Republic. In light of this context, I consider the work of violinist Mirga Kalman (based in Ostrava), Josef Giňa Junior (based in Opava, 30km from Ostrava) and the Horváth family band (based in Brno, Moravia). I conducted interviews, played music with these musicians, and attended public performances by Kalman and the Horváth family band. Finally, I consider *čardáš* dancing in Ostrava and how it has been reinterpreted in the context of family celebrations, community centres and dance troupes. The shifting lives, dancing and music making of Roma were closely connected to the rapidly changing conditions post-1989.

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[1] Space limitations dictate that knowledge of the major developments associated with post-Communism must be assumed. However there is a large body of literature on many aspects of the subject, for example, Holmes (1997) Lampland, Bunzl & Berdahl (2000), Sakwa (1999) and Verdery (1996).

4.1 Roma post-1989 in Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic

"Post-communism" is employed by academics as a catchall term to describe transition processes from Communist party governments and associated structures to democratic regimes with free market economies, the negative aspects of which are epitomised in the term's definition of the present in terms of the past (that is, communism). Major changes associated with post-communism include an increasingly diverse society, the uneven introduction of market elements into the legacy of a state-socialist bureaucracy, liberalisation of prices, rapid changes in class structure, and critique of previous social norms (socialist principles) for inhibiting market development (Sakwa 1999:5,123). New regimes have been struggling against the legacy of state-socialist bureaucracy, a social structure that equated political office with social status, an economy of now redundant heavy industry, environmental disaster caused mainly by the heavy use of brown coal, and mentalities associated with living under a state-socialist system. After the initial euphoria of liberation from the old regime, many people felt disillusioned by an unstable economic situation; the creation of a very small super-rich stratum; huge rises in unemployment; crime and drug abuse; poorly functioning democratic processes; and the sharp decline in living standards for many, including the majority of Roma. For many, post-communism can be summed up by Michnik's comment that 'if there is anything worse than communism itself, it is what comes after' (Sakwa 1999:114).

When considering the Romani situation in Ostrava, it is crucial not to lose sight of the fact that the whole region has been in a dramatically rapid and fundamental transition process for the last 15 years, as it attempts to completely re-orientate itself economically, politically, culturally and socially. The Czech Republic as a country has only existed since 1993 when Czechoslovakia relatively suddenly separated in what was dubbed the Velvet Divorce: there was no bloodshed although there are residual feelings of ambivalence, nostalgia and animosity about the split. Furthermore, the experience of a succession of democratic, fascist, socialist and again democratic regimes since 1918; invasions by the Nazis and then Russians; and its history as an unwilling pawn in others' political experiments, has left the Czech Republic with fundamental, unresolved questions of identity. These questions have become more urgent in the light of swiftly increasing cultural/ethnic diversity caused by labour movements from the East and West, refugees seeking asylum from different parts of the world, European membership, and the increasing visibility of already established ethnic minorities, accompanied by a far right, nationalistic backlash.

Across the country, many Czechs feel hard done by as the divide between rich and poor becomes increasingly poignant. The fragile national economic situation is made bleaker through increasing contact with and knowledge of much richer countries and an influx of products for sale that are relatively very expensive and only in reach of foreigners and the super-rich stratum that has developed (some of whom, it is speculated, are likely to have been amongst the privileged under Communist party rule). Even though the Czech Republic is increasingly being considered a first world country, and worthy of E.U. membership as of 1 May 2004, there is an increasingly visible poverty that is not just associated with the Roma: as Minh-ha points out, 'there is a Third World in every First World and vice versa' (in Mercer 1998:59). In Ostrava, resentment has grown as other parts of the country have experienced greater economic benefits from the transition process whilst Ostrava is experiencing the stigma and socio-economic consequences of a now mostly redundant industry created by the Communists who had privileged the city over others.[2]

Post-communism has also seen positive developments in some areas for Roma. In the optimistic and more tolerant times of the first post-1989 Czechoslovak parliament, there were 11 Romani representatives in the Czech, Slovak and federal parliaments (although since 2001 there have not been any). In April 1991, the Slovak government officially recognised Roma as a nationality, guaranteeing equal legal and political rights, and the Czechs followed albeit more hesitantly (Orgovanová 1994). Furthermore, when Czechoslovakia became part of the Council of Europe and the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) in May 1990, more attention was paid to Roma on a European level (Hübschmannová 2002).

There has been a blossoming of Romani culture, with a new Romani theatre in Prešov and department of Romani music in the Košice State Conservatory, new magazines, newspapers and journals with Romani editorial teams and articles published in Romani and Slovak/Czech (Sobotková 1998). There has been an explosion in publishing about Romani issues and history by Romani and non-Romani authors, some in the Romani language, and programmes on television and radio specifically for Roma. A host of educational initiatives have been launched, including a new masters course in Romani studies established at the Charles University in Prague and the Museum of Romani culture set up in Brno in 1992.

The Romani political party (Cz: *Romská Občanská Iniciativa*) initiated the highly successful measures of placing Romani advisors in ministries and council offices, and Romani

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[2] Paragraph based on experience of living in the Czech Republic for three years 1999-2001 and 2003-2004.

learning assistants in schools.[3] In 2002, there were 140 registered Romani political parties and social and cultural associations in the Czech Republic. Although some exist only in name, many are incredibly active, organising political campaigns, cultural events and social aid, which have the benefit of being multi-faceted and having widespread support amongst Roma as well as nominal government support. International connection between Roma has never been so great: the first World Romani Festival was held in Brno, July 1990, attended by the then Czech president, Vacláv Havel, a member of Charter 77,[4] and the Roma declared themselves a non-territorial nation at the Fifth World Congress of the International Romani Union in Prague, 2000. The International Romani Union is now a member of the ECOSOC[5] section of the UN with the status of consultant. (Paragraph based on Hübschmannová 2002).

These developments have certainly not penetrated all sections of Romani society, nor effectively countered the overwhelming new pressures that have arisen post-1989, and Havel's sympathies with the Roma were deeply unpopular, as the growing Romani minority was perceived as a threat.[6] With the separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics, Roma faced a severe crisis of citizenship, nominally because most had Slovak citizenship yet had lived and worked for many years in the Czech lands (see Guy 1998:58-61 for details of the ways in which Roma were systematically excluded from citizenship by the Czech state).

Czech identity can be described as both ethnic and national, and the ethnic homogeneity the society appears to promote is embodied in its name, the Czech Republic, reflecting the dominance of the ethnic majority.

> For the first time in their history the Czechs are living in an ethnically homogenous state and the evidence to date, still fragmentary, suggests that the Czech majority finds it a very agreeable state of affairs that it has to make no effort to deal with diversity (Caplan & Feffer 1996:166).

In reality, the Czech Republic is not ethnically homogenous, although it is revealing that anyone has analysed it as such.[7] The ethnic Czech majority is so large and dominant that it has not

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[3] In Ostrava, NGO workers made it known to me that they felt these measures would only effect significant social change if there were large increases in numbers of these advisors and assistants.

[4] Charter 77 was an informal and open association of people in Czechoslovakia from 1977 to 1992, who were opposed to the process of normalisation and committed to human rights.

[5] United Nations Economic and Social Council

[6] One comparative international poll registered 91% of Czechoslovaks holding unfavourable views about Roma, a higher percentage than any other European nation in the survey (Times Mirror 1991 cited in Guy 1998:56).

[7] The Czech statistics office recorded in the 2001 census that out of a population of 10.2 million, there are 9.25 million Czech, 380,000 Moravian, 11,000 Silesian, 193,000 Slovak, 52,000 Polish, 39,000 German, 22,000 Ukrainian, 18,000 Vietnamese, and 11,700 Roma inhabitants (http://www.czso.cz/sldb/sldb2001.nsf/tabx/CZ0000, accessed on 19/03/05). http://www.nationsonline.org,

seriously considered diversity sufficiently. However, with Romani birth rates far outstripping those of ethnic Czechs, many inter-ethnic marriages, increasing applications for asylum and citizenship from non-ethnic Czechs, and requirements of E.U. membership, the Czech Republic is having to revise ideals of ethnic homogeneity.

Since 1989, there has been a significant rise in neo-fascist, white supremacist and extreme right wing groups and opinion. Racially motivated attacks have increased against Roma, there being 400 recorded by Czech authorities after 1989 (Farnam 2002) and more than 50 Roma murdered by skinheads since 1989 (Hübschmannová 2002). Until more recent pressure, there appeared to be tacit popular and institutional approval for such actions, and very light or non-existent sentences for the perpetrators. This has started to be addressed recently with some heavier sentencing and non-toleration of overtly racist comments in the media, partly owing to international pressure and the influence of a growing minority of more liberal, plural-minded, often younger Czechs.

Despite these legislative efforts, many Roma still live with daily discrimination, prejudice, fear of racist attacks, and the trauma of having experienced racist attacks that have gone unpunished, a situation that has led to some 70,000 Czech Roma having fled the country, and a huge increase of applications for asylum abroad.[8] Two documentaries screened in the Czech Republic in 1997 showed an irresponsibly one-sided portrayal of Roma who had asylum in Canada and the U.K. The images were utopian, and provoked a sharp escalation of asylum applications and Roma selling all their possessions to buy air tickets. Notable Czech politicians were quoted in the media as supporting the flight of Roma, the mayor of Ostrava offering to pay for tickets for those Roma wanting to go to Canada (Mulder 1999).

The fragmentation of Romani communities through so much emigration has often led to a feeling of transience and a lack of investment in community life. Another consequence of widespread emigration has been a brain drain, which started under Communist party rule and has accelerated since 1989. Many highly talented people have been seeking better paid, more prestigious and more numerous opportunities in richer countries, which has affected all ethnic groups. Many Romani (and non-Romani) musicians have increasingly been touring and settling in Western Europe, partly for better opportunities and partly to escape the discrimination and skinheads in the Czech Republic. The band *Čerchen*, that were known for writing original songs

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accessed on 19/03/05, claims the same figures as the Czech statistical office, with the exception that 171,000 are Roma. Most studies put the number of Roma in the Czech Republic at closer to 300,000. It is widely agreed that these great disparities arise because many Roma do not declare themselves as such in surveys.

[8] The number is according to the Czech Helsinki Committee (Farnam 2002).

promoting *Romipen* (Ro; Roma-ness), emigrated to Britain, almost all the *Khamoro* (Ro; sun) folklore group emigrated to New Zealand, and the group *Perumos* went to Belgium (Hübschmannová 2002).

In the run-up to joining the E.U., the way the Czech Republic was treating its minorities became of European significance. European pressure was put on the Czech government to address Romani conditions and several studies of Czech Romani conditions appeared, particularly by European organisations. This appeared to be a chance for the Romani situation to improve drastically; however, as Kovats (2001) pointed out, many reports confused symptoms such as discrimination and prejudice for causes, and largely homogenised Roma, resulting in generalised policies that did not address specific situations and actually added to mystification rather than enlightenment about Roma. Consequently, there have been a series of cosmetic measures to improve matters like Romani representation and encourage Romani politics and cultural projects, whereas housing, employment and education, the major causes of inequality and subsequent discrimination, have been largely ignored. The "problem" has been shifted from a socially based one as understood by the Communists to an ethnic one that has substituted cultural issues for dealing with the socio-economic situation.

In terms of education and employment, the Roma have been faring very badly in the Czech Republic since 1989, the first to be laid off with the collapse of heavy industry, and the last to be employed by often prejudiced ethnic Czech employers, confirmed by many stories heard during my fieldwork. As dissident group Charter 77 predicted, the demand for unskilled labour fell, and massive unemployment has led to extreme pressures on a socially ostracised, poor, urbanised minority, fused with a resurgent ethnic consciousness (1979b:7 cited in Guy 1998:58). There have been a handful of studies done concerning Romani housing, education and employment in the Czech Republic, which can be summarised thus; with a few exceptional enlightened initiatives, a bad situation has been getting dramatically worse.[9]

Romani unemployment stands at about 80%, in comparison to a national average of about 9% and the OSCE reported that Czech towns have been systematically moving Roma into isolated ghettos with substandard conditions (Farnam 2002).[10] Government reports showed that 75% of Romani children did not pass the entrance tests to attend "normal" primary school due to not speaking Czech well enough; the way the tests were constructed favoured children who were

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[9] See, for example, publications by the Prague-based Socioklub (1999, 2000, 2002).
[10] The Czech statistical office put unemployment at around 9% in the 2001 census, however there are no official statistics regarding specifically Romani unemployment. The World Bank investigation in 2000 put Czech Romani unemployment, which is long-term and structural, between 45% and 70%, with some communities experiencing 100% unemployment (Kovats 2001).

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native Czech speakers and had had a lot of educational play from a young age (Farnam 2002). Many Romani children are sent to special schools (Cz: *zvlaštní škola*) regardless of their actual intellectual ability, where they do not follow the curriculum and are unlikely to gain the skills or qualifications necessary for employment. During my fieldwork, there was a decrease in numbers of Romani children in special schools in Ostrava, although I heard many stories of new forms of discrimination based on streaming in standard schools. I also found that parents were frequently disillusioned and suspicious of the state education system, which is exclusively based on ethnic Czech culture and concerns, and often openly discriminates against Romani students. Some parents preferred to keep their children within the relative safety of the community, or did not enforce school attendance owing to their own traumatic experiences. There was a vicious circle in force, worsened by rapidly rising prices of basic goods, the bombardment of advertisements for expensive products, the emerging chasm between rich and poor, frustration and depression that can lead to alcohol abuse, and the increasing availability of street drugs.

With the resurgence of ethno-nationalism and the primacy of nation-state citizenship, Roma in the Czech Republic have become the ultimate outsiders within. Although it is seriously misleading to treat Roma as a homogeneous group, I suggest that whilst most are assimilated in many ways, they are not integrated culturally, socially, politically and economically, and they do not conform physically to dominant norms: they have therefore become targets for far right groups, and convenient, mostly voiceless scapegoats for society at large. Through conversations in Ostrava, I found that many non-Roma viewed Roma as a drain on state resources at a time of economic instability and uncertainty, and a social and cultural threat to (nationalistic) conceptions of what the country should be. In Central and Eastern Europe,

> ethnic minorities tend to be either largely or entirely excluded from the symbolic and affective constitution of the state and live in a situation of grudging toleration, in many respects second class citizens, even though all civic duties fall on them equally to others (Caplan & Feffer 1996:155).

Consequently, ethnic minorities have often become disillusioned with the state and have been increasingly reliant on their own localised institutions and political parties, as well as transnational connections, to bypass the nation-state and discriminatory systems.

In this vein, some Roma increasingly view pan-European and international organisations as guarantors and protectors of their rights. The status of Roma has now been raised from a minority to a "nation", with its own parliament (International Romani Union) that aims to increase Romani standing and power within European and international institutions. These political moves are surely positive steps, although it is doubtful whether the Roma can ever be an

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influential lobby with political weight, precisely because they have minimal backing from nation-states and because the potent ethno-nationalist basis of Romani politics risks alienating non-Romani sympathisers. Furthermore, it has been noted by many that the exceptional quantitative rise in Roma organisations and politics since 1989 has been matched by a phenomenal decline in the standard of living for most Roma (Hübschmannová 2002). If the political, ethnic, racial, cultural, economic and social are not understood and dealt with concurrently and interactively, any progress and improvement will be severely limited and may even backfire, as shown in the socio-economic improvements under socialism and the focus on political and ethnic rights post-1989.

4.2 Roma, the nation-state and nationalism

Since their arrival in Europe, Roma have sometimes experienced total exclusion and expulsion by society and states, but more often they have lived in conditions that reflect a balance between selective inclusion and exclusion.[11] For example, Roma in the Czech lands in the 15th and 16th centuries provided various specialised, often peripatetic services that fulfilled a need within society, although they were made to live outside the boundaries of towns and villages, as discussed in chapter 2. Whilst a balance of inclusion and exclusion has persisted, it has taken on different forms and dynamics with the rise of the modern nation-state.

There are many pre-histories to the nation-state, including the Hellenic city-states, the Greek and Roman empires, feudal states and absolutist states. The rise of the modern nation-state is hard to define or date chronologically, partly because modern is a highly contested term, as is nation, and to a lesser extent so is state. The word nation derives from the Latin *nasci*, meaning a people born in the same place and territory (Ratcliffe 1994:29). However, this relatively narrow sense of nation is now untenable, partly owing to new political formations and more advanced technologies that enable constructions of nations over a much wider area, even globally.[12] Conceptions of state differ through the emphasis that is attributed to various aspects of its role.[13]

Although there are a plethora of definitions of nations amongst contemporary research, most agree that it has something to do with being a "people", bound together in some way by

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[11] Alluded to in Wade (2000:14). See also chapters 1-3.
[12] Broadly speaking, conceptions of nation fall into two camps: primordialists claim it is a necessary and natural aspect of the human condition based on pre-modern ethnies, for example, Breuilly (2001), Smith (1995), Van den Berghe (1981), Geertz (1973) and others advocate nations as historically specific inventions, for example, Kedourie (1960), Anderson (1983), Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1990).
[13] See for example Ratcliffe (1994:45), Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989), Weber (1970:77) and Hall (1984:9-10).

some fairly stable characteristics supposedly acquired from birth, such as common ancestry, name, territory, history, language, religion, or various cultural attributes.[14] One's membership of a nation could, but does not necessarily have to be from birth, and is potentially changeable: likewise, the concept of what constitutes a particular nation changes over time, either gradually or with great ruptures. Definitions involving criteria inevitably seem to fail, and one of the most convincing and notorious definitions of nation is Anderson's; an 'imagined political community... imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (1983:6). It is 'imagined' because even in the smallest national community people will never even meet or hear of the majority of the community, let alone form a community in the more limited sense of face-to-face personal relations. Crucially Anderson shifts the emphasis from definitions based on criteria whereby one can judge a nation's falsity or genuineness and thereby create hierarchies of nations, to focus on *how* nations are imagined and therefore formed.

In the conception of nation-states, there is an implicit assumption that nation automatically implies state in order to secure its cultural identity. However, the ideology of a bounded, geo-political space for each 'race'/culture is and has always been untenable, unattainable and indeed unnecessary. The nation-state is an ideological preference not a natural entity.[15] No modern nation possesses a given or natural ethnic basis, even when it arises out of a national independence struggle (Balibar 1991:93) and there is no nation-state comprising of one nation: they are all multi-national. Furthermore, many nations exist that have no state of their own, either submerged within a multi-national state, or spread across many nation-states, which in some cases has not necessarily damaged their identity as a nation (for example, Kurds). Nevertheless, nation-states need to resolve any contradictions involved in unity at least to lend the effect of cohesion and give people the ability to reproduce this impression: in other words, the state must create a coherent nation from a multitude of ethnicities, identities and interests. Nation building through homogenising and unifying processes that transcend the merely political entity, is embedded into the ideology and institutions of the nation-state: 'nation-states differ from other forms of the state by legitimating the power of the dominant class in terms of a shared culture and history that unite the populations contained within them' (Basch *et al.* 1994:36). The hegemony

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[14] This sounds similar to some concepts of ethnicity, particularly in terms of constructing similarity amongst adherents and drawing boundaries that make others outsiders; indeed, some scholars have proposed that nation is a special kind of ethnicity (Ratcliffe 1994:38).

[15] Nevertheless, discourses about identity still tend to be framed in terms of nation-states, referred to by Gupta as 'hegemonic representations of...spatial identity' that persist in 'an increasingly postmodern world' (1997:75). One may regret the persistence of the nation-state framework even within anthropological disciplines and to some extent in this thesis, yet one cannot ignore the influence of the hegemonic nation-state discourse on the existence of countervailing ones, or vice versa.

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of a nation-state determines what is considered normal and acceptable, and labels and oppresses the deviant.

The ethno-political myth of "one nation one state" forms the basis of nationalism as an ideology and there is an obvious contradiction involved between how nationalists view nations and how they actually are.[16] If ideas of nation, state, ethnicity and 'race' do not coalesce within the nation-state, which inevitably has been and is the case, oppression and persecution of those conceived of as oppositional, inferior or deviant to the state's hegemonic norm often results.[17] In response these smaller ethnies may try to preserve their identity, even against the odds, perhaps exaggerating their disadvantages and deprivations, resulting in the belief that their material and cultural interests can only be protected if they have their own state or administrative unit (Ratcliffe 1994:39).

In nationalist ideology the hegemonic 'race'/ethnicity is not conceived of in racial/ethnic terms and is thereby naturalised, whereas the subordinate populations may become dominated through processes that ethnicise or racialise them as ethnically/racially different or deviant from the norm, often politely called ethnic minorities. In this environment, one can understand the reluctance of ethnic minorities to be labelled as such, for even though they are included in nationalist discourse, they are simultaneously delegitimated by it. On the other hand, those who neither form part of the dominant population nor are labelled as an ethnic minority, can be further marginalised, for they do not have any semantic place and are consequently afforded no protection or resources (Ratcliffe 1994:39).

Broadly, one can say that there is interplay and tension between inclusion and exclusion towards those perceived as 'other'. For nationalists, it is not acceptable to have those perceived as racially and/or ethnically different living in one's state, although in practice it does not usually lead to automatic genocide or expulsion. Rather, there tends to be a balance between inclusion for labour exploitation and material, social and cultural exclusion (see Wade 2000:14). Even during the Nazi genocide, Jews and Roma were usually first committed to slavery for labour purposes.

It is easy to demonise nationalism as a violent, hegemonic, oppositional force, and one only has to look to Europe's far-right nationalist parties and fascist skinhead groups to perceive these characteristics. One reason that so-called ethnic minorities often accept the hegemony of the

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[16] Taylor estimated that in 1996 there were over five billion people in the world organised into some 180 nation-states. There are a very large number of potential nations on earth, substantially more than there are viable nation-states (1996:8).

[17] Is this where racism becomes inseparable from nationalism? The two discourses are extremely close, even if nationalists shy away from the label of racist: at the very least, 'racism is constantly emerging out of nationalism, not only towards the exterior [xenophobia] but towards the interior [ethnic minorities/immigrants/persons of "mixed race"]' (Balibar 1991:53).

nation-state may be that there is such a potent naturalisation of the nation-state form that many cannot envisage a world not organised around this political formation. There is also the idea of progress and potential individual material gain from a growing national wealth. However, nationalism has a more positive face as well, and it does not seem appropriate to equate the nationalism of fascists and colonialists with nationalism as a force of liberation for the oppressed. In the former Soviet bloc, nationalism was widely perceived as a force that helped to free Eastern Europe from Soviet control. In post-colonial situations, nationalism has contributed to overthrowing the legacy of colonial oppressors and building identities and viable political and economic entities. A Romani nation may be both ideologically and in terms of realisable goals, far away from a nation-state, but the idea of "Romanestan" (the Romani nation) has helped to empower at least some Roma and helped to inspire more interaction with the international community.

As this and the next four chapters show, life for Roma post-1989 has undergone dramatic changes in many ways. On top of the socio-economic freefall for Roma, the conflicting demands of the Czech nation-state in economically troubled times have precipitated a surge in popular nationalism that openly cites Roma as unwelcome foreigners and worse. Furthermore, there has been a huge rise of far right, fascist groups that physically attack Roma with little fear of repercussions. Most Roma in Ostrava are included in citizenship rights (even though many were almost excluded in the 1993 citizenship debacle), are part of the bureaucratic system, and have to a large extent assimilated culturally. However, they remain institutionally excluded culturally, politically, economically and socially, particularly now that their use as a labour force has been undermined. In Ostrava, I found that "Romanestan" was not seen as a likely saviour.

I have outlined the historical background and the nature of contemporary pressures on Romani life in the Czech Republic post-1989. This contextualises the following explorations of reinterpretations of traditional Romani music making that I encountered during my fieldwork in and around Ostrava.

4.3 *Phurikane gil'a* and dulcimer bands reinterpreted

The number of Romani musicians who still use *phurikane gil'a* (Ro; ancient songs) as material for public and private performance is declining all the time, which has come about through an interrelated combination of socio-economic changes and shifting fashions both within and outside Romani communities. The decreasing number of professional (and amateur) Romani musicians who know and/or are able to interpret *phurikane gil'a* is interlinked with this decline, as they do

not play what cannot sell or what others prefer not to hear. The Romani musicians featured in this chapter represent a very small and privileged group, for the majority of their income is from working as professional musicians. Although they may not feel themselves to be well off, they do not struggle for basic necessities and their lifestyle is noticeably better than many other Roma. Most have had some formal, institutional music training, and they are all descended from traditional musician families. Other contemporary Romani musicians use aspects of *phurikane giľa* material and the dulcimer band style in their repertoire, as discussed in chapter 5; however, the musicians featured in this chapter can and do perform entire performances of *phurikane giľa* and have in varying ways honed their ability to play in and further develop a traditional dulcimer band style.

Mirga Kalman[18] and his family

I met Kalman through his doctor, Petr, a Czech-German-Jewish man who had been assigned a large number of Roma to his care, owing to other doctors' reluctance to treat Romani patients.[19] Along with another Czech, Jiři, a violinist who was interested in Romani music, we all went unannounced to Kalman's flat in the suburbs of North Ostrava. We were immediately welcomed warmly as if our visit was entirely expected, and one of Kalman's daughters was called from next door to make coffee.[20]

Kalman was born in Slovakia into a Hungarian Romani family and had minimal school education. He grew up playing the violin and from his teens played in dulcimer bands. He had never studied at a conservatoire and was in awe of anyone who could read musical notation, including his cousin who he was proud to say had attended *konservatoř* (Cz; conservatoire). His family moved to Ostrava in the 1970s because of the better employment and housing opportunities and Kalman ended up working most nights in local pubs and *vinárny* (Cz; wine bars) playing the violin. This type of work had led to Kalman's now permanent bronchitis, due to the smoky atmosphere of the pubs.[21] He was most proud of his performances at Communist party supported folklore festivals and Vlach celebrations and showed me some photos of him and his

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[18] The convention for Hungarian names is to put the family name first.

[19] During an interview, another Rom told me how Petr had been much criticised and scorned by his colleagues for his work with Roma and Petr concurred that it was true (interview with Rafael 2004)

[20] Although Kalman was of sound mind, like many other Roma I met, he was extremely vague about any details of his past. He was open to the idea of researchers and had had positive experiences with Milena Hübschmannová in Slovakia, commenting that she spoke better Romani than any Romani person and was willing to try everything.

[21] Despite the fact he has never smoked, Kalman said his doctor had declared the state of his lungs to be that of someone smoking 60 cigarettes a day.

band dressed in borrowed traditional Slovak folk costumes with their instruments, comprising both Romani and non-Romani members.[22] He had played with two bands, one traditional and one that used electric instruments. Both bands included Slovak, Ruthenian and Romani repertoire.

When I met him, he was in his sixties and had cut down his playing to strictly non-smoking spaces and gigs that he really wanted, which usually meant funerals. It was not clear if wanting to play a gig was based on how much he was being paid, the status of the gig, or feelings of enjoyment or duty (traditionally, it is important to have music at Romani funerals). Kalman did not appear to think that the issue of enjoying playing the violin worth discussing, although the matter of payment engendered much dialogue. He was in the fortunate position of knowing a variety of repertoire that had enabled him to play for Slovak Romani celebrations, non-Romani Czechs and Slovaks, and the lucrative Vlach Romani celebrations. This had given him a degree of financial success: the combination of his musical skills, advanced age and stable finances meant that he enjoyed status and respect from other Roma. Although he lived in a small flat in a run-down looking housing estate, inhabited mostly by Roma reliant on social welfare, he preferred to stay around people he knew.

Kalman had a daughter who had immigrated to Canada seven years before I met him. He often talked about her and he had applied several times without success for a visa to visit her.[23] The last time I saw Kalman, his daughter had sent him a video of a Christmas family party, which had arrived that day to great excitement. We watched it with Kalman's wife and other daughter, which gave rise to a series of complex emotions: firstly, they were impressed with scenes of the flat, the decoration and how much nice food there was. Then, when the family started to appear in the film, they were surprised that nobody seemed to be talking to each other. They could not believe how much weight various members of the family had gained, and were appalled at how "sad" (Cz: *smutná*) the party seemed to be despite the luxury. The wife and daughter started to cry, and Kalman began to criticise how boring the film and party were.

They were offended that there was no personal message to them on the film, and when some of the relatives started to make music on a keyboard and saxophone, Kalman could barely contain his irritation. We recognised some old favourites - a mixture of *phurikane giľa* and older Rompop hits - that were played in a manner that suggested the influence of "jazzy" romantic schmaltz rather than Romani music. Although Kalman's wife and other daughter were relieved

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[22] Kalman said that they had always borrowed other people's traditional costumes for performances as they did not have any of their own and needed to wear them at Slovak folk festivals.

[23] It is extremely difficult for Roma to obtain Canadian visas, even tourist visas, and he and his wife had been refused each time, having paid a substantial non-returnable application fee and having travelled to Prague for interviews.

that people on the video had started to become intoxicated from alcohol and were expressing themselves more through talking and dancing, in the end, Kalman could not bear listening to their music any longer because of their lack of "rhythm" and "feeling", and the video watching was cut short. This experience resonates with those of many Romani families in Ostrava that have relatives in Canada, England, Belgium and other Western countries. On one hand, people in Ostrava are impressed and jealous of their relatives, yet they miss them and feel their geographical, cultural and social distance from their own lives.

Kalman had an ambivalent attitude towards modern developments in music and found much, although not all, Rompop lacking in the right energy and many musicians lacking in technique and musicality. As if to underline the complications of Kalman's feelings, after the video watching his teenaged granddaughter wandered into the flat. Šarlota was a tomboy, dressed in baggy jeans, baggy T-shirt and a baseball cap, sporting a sprayer chain. She spoke to her grandfather in rap style Czech, which totally confused him, with rap style hand gestures and accompanying body movements, whilst swinging her chain. Her passion for hip hop was a complete mystery to Kalman. To his uncertain amusement and alarm, Šarlota claimed with a cheeky grin that the huge cross round her neck was real gold.

Yet, she also sang *phurikane gil'a* with her grandfather in a stunningly beautiful voice and I later encountered her at the Přívoz community centre where a group of around 30 youngsters were putting on a theatrical re-creation of a Romani wedding under the guidance of the centre leader, Petr Ličko.[24] She was taking the solo part in the performance of the song *Joj Mamo* (Ro; 'Oh mother'), one of the most widely known *phurikane gil'a* in contemporary Ostrava. Despite her young age, her singing voice had a traditional quality that had great penetration and projection without the aid of a microphone. In her world, there was no contradiction in her love of hip hop, her hip hop inspired clothes, speech and gestures, and singing *phurikane gil'a* in a voice that strongly referred to the traditional style.[25] Kalman found singing a point of connection to his granddaughter, although she also represented a world that was increasingly alien and worrying to him.

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[24] I encountered a number of attempts to recreate theatrically a traditional Romani wedding in different community centres and groups in Ostrava. It was one of the only popular ways for youngsters to be connected to Romani traditions. Well-known *phurikane gil'a* were usually used and traditional *čardáš* dancing was incorporated with varying degrees of success according to the children's experience of them.
[25] After I left, a band was set up in 2005 with Kalman, his granddaughter, Jiři and two other local Romani musicians, that played mostly *phurikane gil'a*. They did not have any gigs as yet, but were planning a slot for the local radio and a recording (personal communication with Jiři and informal recordings sent over the Internet April and June 2005).

After his granddaughter left, Kalman and I settled down to check through some Romani songs that I had learned from another musician. It seemed to me that after the confusions of dealing with his daughters and granddaughter, Kalman experienced a great deal of emotional relief in getting out his violin and playing old songs in the manner he appreciated. Our method of checking evolved into my playing the melody on the French horn as I had learned it and Kalman joining in on the violin as soon as he realised what the song was and in which key I was playing. It soon became apparent that Kalman concurred on the rendition of the vast majority of *čardáš* songs, with differences usually a question of variation or differing decoration of the skeleton melody, which he found to be an entirely acceptable and welcome degree of difference. The basic harmonic implications were the same in both our interpretations.[26]

Kalman was able to identify clearly whether a song was Slovak, Hungarian or Romani, which reflected his experience of playing a variety of styles in different situations and having to make decisions about what to play to which audience. Other contemporary musicians seemed less able to make these distinctions, perhaps because it was not important to them to do so in their playing context exclusively amongst Roma. Kalman was unfamiliar with a number of songs that were newer Rompop songs, but the only area of serious disagreement was concerning the *hallgató*. Kalman was well known for being the master of *hallgató* throughout the area and other musicians that did not play for funerals did not want to play or listen to them very much, for they were often described as too sad, funereal and old-fashioned for everyday playing. Therefore, musicians were much less familiar with these songs and recalled them less easily and I suspect that the musician who initially taught me *hallgató* had invented some phrases for the purposes of teaching me, as he rarely played them.

Kalman was the oldest active Romani musician I met in Ostrava, and like many other Roma, found enjoying pop and traditional Romani music something of a paradox. Unlike the reasoning of other Roma, although he was not against re-interpretation of old songs or the creation of new ones, he found many of them musically unsatisfactory. Furthermore, it was unnecessary for him to come to terms with them for the purposes of his paid work. The reason Kalman still got work in 2004 was precisely because he played in a traditional style that was still favoured in some contexts, mostly funerals. According to Kalman, funerals were the best-paid gigs (and by implication those with the most status), although he claimed that he would play at a funeral for nothing if asked, because of the importance of having music at funerals. It seemed that he had only been tested on this once when he was promised money for playing at a funeral and

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[26] There was a disagreement about one song, *Aničko, Dušicko*, which appeared to be a question of different versions.

was never paid. He was still disappointed by that and similar experiences of having been cheated of payment for his playing and felt that it reflected the general demise in standards of music and behaviour.[27] He was one of many Roma that bemoaned declining behaviour amongst fellow Roma, citing the lack of trust that has become endemic in intra-Roma relations, lack of loyalty towards other Roma, lack of community, and drug abuse.[28] Kalman expressed feelings of being fed-up with many aspects of life and Romani music in Ostrava and said he would relish the chance to play music with different people.

Kalman could not find any cassettes of his playing, and so invited me to come to a funeral the following week in the large Catholic cathedral in the centre of Ostrava when he was performing (19 January 2004). The band accompanying Kalman at the funeral was comprised of three musicians that Kalman had chosen for the occasion: tenor saxophone (countermelody), accordion (chords) and double bass. Kalman's practice was to hire musicians from a general pool that he knew, according to the situation. Their purpose was solely to support and accompany Kalman, who was the *primáš* (Cz; first violin in a dulcimer band).[29] At this funeral, the accordionist and bassist were probably in their late 20s or 30s and the saxophonist was in his 40s, and they were obviously not of the competence that Kalman wished. They had not rehearsed for this occasion, and although they had played with each other on previous occasions, the band was struggling in places to remember the right chords. Kalman expressed his frustration through facial expressions and movements.

The deceased, Petr Sčuka (aged 55), was well-known in Ostrava for his good character, warm hospitality and "open door", and he had had employment during socialism as a refuse collector. I estimated there were over 300 people present at his funeral, the majority of which, I was told, were relatives from Slovakia. About three quarters of an hour before the ceremony started, people came into the cathedral to pay their last respects, crowding around the open coffin. As Kalman explained, during this time, music is essential in creating the appropriate atmosphere. Kalman and his band started playing just before the people started to enter the cathedral,

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[27] I assume that he felt non-Roma were also affected by this trend; however, what he felt compelled to talk about was the decline in the Romani community.

[28] As discussed, there were other problems facing Roma, but these problems were the ones people generally wished to talk to me about.

[29] The *primáš* - almost always male - is the most important musician, his authority stemming from both musical skill and strength of personality. He was usually from a traditional musician family and his importance lay in his playing reflecting and shaping the individual sound of the band, in terms of repertoire, ornamentation and agaogics (Jurková 2003a). A band was often named after the *primáš* and usually considered "his". The *primáš* was regarded as being at the very top of the Hungarian and Slovak Romani social scale, which already privileged musicians (ibid).

performing a medley of *hallgató*, one after the other without a pause: at funerals, the only Romani music allowed was *hallgató*.[30]

As the *primáš*, Kalman took all responsibility for finances, organisation, repertoire, spatial positioning in the cathedral, musical direction, and level of emotional intensity at different points, and the band was completely subservient to him. He chose popularly known *hallgató* and interacted with the mourners both in a physical and emotional way through his performance. At first, when there were only a few mourners, he drew the band in close to the coffin, and played in an intimate manner. As some women vocalised their grief in cries that echoed round the immense cathedral, Kalman responded to their outpouring with increased intensity in his playing. When a considerable number of people had gathered around the coffin and the ritual had begun to take on its own dynamic, Kalman withdrew his band to the side to more subtly support the emotional outpouring taking place (DVD example 3).

In the example, it is clear how much Kalman is leading the band and setting the emotional tone through the intensity of his violin playing. He communicates with the other band members through exaggerated movements with his violin, looking at them, frowning at them if they are not playing the correct chord, and even saying things. In the background, the cries of mourners can be heard, and Kalman is quick to notice and keep the emotional intensity high to match the emotional peaks. The example features four verses of a popularly known *hallgató*. The first and second verses are played quite simply, with the violin playing melodic phrases and adding to the sustained sound in between. The accompaniment is mostly sustained chords with fragments of melody and countermelody from the tenor saxophone. On the third time the saxophone plays a more confident countermelody and the violin changes octave for some sections, creating more striking harmonies with the saxophone. The last time, Kalman adds some melodic decoration in between phrases, and elongates the verse with a slower tempo, which has the effect of intensifying the emotion. I felt that Kalman wanted to add more melodic decoration in between phrases, as I later discovered he characteristically did in his playing, but his priority needed to be providing clear leadership for the band.

Similarly, at the end of the ceremony, Kalman re-set the atmosphere for the procession that led the coffin out of the church back into the outside world. He played a march, slowly enough to still be solemn, yet energetically enough to give a sense of *finale* to the proceedings. The band then went to the burial at the cemetery, where they played more *hallgató* at the

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[30] See http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/death.htm, accessed on 12/04/05, for further information about traditional rituals connected to death. In contemporary Ostrava, the colour of mourning is black amongst Roma, rather than the traditional red or white. Most Romani traditions are no longer followed.

graveside. Even though Kalman and the band had made it clear to me that they were all emotionally disengaged from the funeral proceedings and primarily interested in payment, I still felt that it was inappropriate for me to attend this more intimate gathering as a guest of the musicians rather than the mourners, and I relied on Kalman's description after the event.

When I spoke to Kalman almost two months later, we talked about aspects of the funeral including his band, the number of people there, and the priest who appeared to be drunk, bored, and ignorant about the deceased.[31] We commiserated over the organist who had cut off the band mid-flow at the start of the service, going on to play and sing arias out of tune, leaving everyone in a state of confusion. There were no hymns because, as was explained to me, Roma are not allowed to sing or partake in parties when in mourning.[32] There were no prayers and the minimum of participatory Catholic rituals, as although most Hungarian and Slovak Roma are Catholic, only a few are regular church attendees and therefore many are unfamiliar with formal, ritualistic elements of Catholicism. I attempted to discuss Kalman's performance, but he was steadfastly vague and uncomfortable when talking about his playing. He was completely unused to talking about his music making, accustomed only to performing. His sensitive responses in the funeral situation had not been worked out in advance as part of a conscious personal musical ideology, rather they had been acquired and honed over a lifetime of performance.

Kalman had a wide and deep experience of *phurikane gil'a* and dulcimer band style, and when I met him he was continuing to play in a traditional style at home with his granddaughter and at funerals with whatever combination of instruments he could find to accompany him. New demands meant that Kalman played with non-traditional instruments such as the saxophone, which added a non-traditional but popularly enjoyed countermelody (in the manner of Rompop) and with musicians that were not as harmonically skilled or musically experienced at playing *hallgató* as he needed. He had adjusted to the changing demands of Romani funerals that often struggled for financial resources through what he thought to be his modest fees for poorer families. At funerals, Kalman played traditional music that people still recognised in a way that was meaningful to them in times of grief.

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[31] In place of talking about the deceased, the priest had delivered a ranting lecture about church attendance and how it was good to see the church so full.

[32] It was very difficult to find any reliable information concerning mourning rituals and practices amongst Roma in Ostrava: acceptable practices and their rationale seemed to differ between families. In general though, I found that attending funerals was viewed as vital, and as soon as Roma suspected somebody was about to die, word was immediately sent to relatives, no matter how far away. People travelled great distances to be with family at this time. Celebratory music and dancing was not considered appropriate when grieving, although how long this lasted appeared to be a personal choice. I later discovered that Fülöpp (1999:14-15) had found little reliable information on Slovak Romani death and burial rituals, noting differing practices. For other information on Romani mourning rituals in other Romani groups and countries, see Silverman (2003) and Heinschink & Teichmann (2002).

Josef Giňa Junior

I met Jožka[33] through Jiři Macháček, who had played with him some years before and helped him to get work playing at local music festivals. The first time we met was in a pub in Opava. He arrived in a shirt, tie and black suit, with his hair slicked back, an ostentatiously held mobile phone, and a cigarette casually placed in the corner of his mouth. Pleased he was taking our meeting seriously but feeling badly under-dressed, we launched straight into a lengthy discussion of his musical life, joined later by his relative, Marian, who was similarly dressed.[34] Both were in their early middle age. The second time I met him was in his family home, along with several family members, where we were treated to much alcohol and a general exchange of music, Romani and any other repertoire we knew.

Jožka's family had come from the East Slovak village of Kojatice in 1958 for work, and Jožka was born in Opava. As his father, the famous *primáš* Josef Giňa, was no longer alive, they rarely went back to Slovakia these days. As well as being a renowned performer, Josef had repaired musical instruments, as well as his official job of car mechanic. Jožka learned the violin from his father from the age of three and despite strong encouragement from him to be a violinist, he turned his attention to the dulcimer, later also learning the viola, cello, double bass, accordion, guitar, bass guitar and keyboards. The Giňa family have a long tradition of being professional musicians and Jožka said that all the male members of the family played instruments. He had taught his children the dulcimer and guitar.

He explained that the strength of his musical education lay firstly in his grounding in scales, chords and dynamics and secondly in the multifaceted focus on styles. "Here in Moravia we played Moravian music, polkas, and for our Roma which we encountered, if they were Hungarian we played Hungarian...when they were Vlach Roma we played Vlach". He was also proficient in standard and Evergreen jazz repertoire, and knew Jewish, Romanian, Rompop and classical pieces (including by Czech composers), not to mention traditional Romani songs, which I later heard him perform on the dulcimer in a remarkably similar style despite the songs differing backgrounds.[35] When I met him, he had two bands, one in Opava and one in Plzen (West

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[33] Jožka is a Czech diminutive of Josef (analogous to Joe and Joseph), which is different from Romani nicknames. His father's nickname was Džodžko, Jožka in Hungarian, and although he initially claimed not to have a nickname, he later said his nickname was Kirvo (Ro; Godfather).

[34] Jožka was used to interviews and talked a lot, even though he sometimes seemed to become incoherent.

[35] Jožka felt that much folk music from these different cultures was intertwined, although one could tell easily from the singing style if the performance is for example Romanian, Hungarian, Romani, Jewish, Arab and so on, presumably accounting for the homogeneity of his dulcimer style when performing folk songs. His renditions of jazz were also played in the same light, *rubato*, expressive and flamboyant manner.

Bohemia) where he also had family. The bands were traditional, comprising two violins, viola, bass, clarinet and dulcimer, and these days he plays either viola or dulcimer. They worked as a pool, the specific demands of gigs dictating the number and type of musicians used. Jožka's philosophy was to take any type of gig and then find the players according to what was required. Although he made money from music, he was registered officially as unemployed, like almost every other Romani musician, partly because work was so unreliable, particularly in the wintertime.

Aside from the changing demands of making a living out of music, Jožka thought that playing with feeling and understanding was the most important aspect of performance. He said that performers and audience should be able to feel directly the music played. On the other hand, technique was crucial and Jožka felt that the naivety and lack of technical expertise amongst Romani musicians in Ostrava was fundamental in their lack of financial success. He appreciated that there was not much work available to Romani musicians in Ostrava, but declared that

> they must excel, not be oppressed… if they don't excel, they can find their feet in another country. They should search for another place if they are living on welfare. Why should a musician paint when he doesn't know how and can only play music?

Jožka described Romani musicians in Ostrava as "*domácí muzikanti*" (Cz; home musicians), attributing their lack of ability to play traditional instruments to not learning them during their childhood. Furthermore, he said that bands in Ostrava had bad managers who wasted any grants they received and did not understand the importance of buying good quality mixing desks, power cables, microphones, keyboards and so on. Instead, they bought the cheapest, thinking they were good. The incompetence of other musicians and their managers irritated him, but ultimately did not elicit much sympathy: having grown up in a traditional musician family, he simply would not allow technical inadequacy, poor equipment or a bad manager to dictate his musical expression.

Jožka thought that most Roma were happy playing simple songs and uncomfortable tackling anything else because they were not brought up to appreciate more difficult music from a young age. In contrast, his father had taught him harmony and songs every day and he was made to play with his father's band from the age of six daily, even in the middle of the night: his father would also wake him up to listen to any good music that came onto the radio, particularly from Rumania. This further highlights the advantages of growing up in a traditional musician family.

His favourite musical topic was harmony. Jožka felt that the traditional style of Romani music was too limited harmonically and basic chords benefited from the addition of sixths, ninths, elevenths and so on, as well as diminished, augmented and cluster chords. Figure 16 (CD example 7) is a transcription of Jožka's accompaniment on the dulcimer of a traditional Romani

song *Motoris Motoris* played on the violin by Jiři Macháček. Jožka uses many traditional features, such as playing a different chord on almost every beat and providing a melodic, chromatically moving bass line, often in contrary motion to the chromatic movement of the upper line (for example bars 3-4). Less traditional features include the extent of the chromaticism that leads to crunching dissonances that do not resolve for several beats (for example, the D flat, D and G cluster on the second beat of bar 2 that does not resolve until the first beat of bar 3). At two points, Jožka shows his distance from traditional accompaniments by inserting rolled chords at bar 9, a supertonic seventh chord, and bar 14, a supertonic chord with an added flattened sixth.

Figure 16: transcription of the dulcimer accompaniment to *Motoris Motoris*

Figure 17 (CD example 8) is a transcription of a performance by Jožka of *Čhajori Romaňi*. It is transcribed with a regular pulse described as rubato in order to show the expansiveness of the dulcimer accompaniment. Jožka allows himself time to explore sweeping,

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rolling chords on the dulcimer, featuring running melodic additions (bar 5) and chromatic clusters (bar 10). The traditional feel of the song as a *hallgató* is maintained, however, the harmonic possibilities are extended, with the result that a (overly?) familiar traditional song is performed with freshness and creative verve, providing new musical and emotional insights.

Figure 17: transcription 7 of *Čhajori Romaňi*

Jožka believed that people's conception of dissonance was too limited and that conventionally dissonant intervals were beautiful. He was surprised that I was so accepting of his harmonic ideas, and I felt that he must have often encountered resistance to this point of view. He was supportive of some developments in Rompop, particularly those that exploited more complicated harmonies in a jazz style, but was dismissive of most bands that to him did not appear to know their scales or understand harmony. He dismissed Věra Bílá's Rompop as "predictable, easy to take in, simpler to record with simpler vocals [than his music]". Nevertheless, he praised her ability to sing and finds the music nice to listen to and well-arranged. Even though she has incorporated many non-Romani elements, such as Latin rhythms and African drums, he finds her music thoroughly Romani: he welcomed the expansion of Romani music to incorporate different musical elements.

Despite the obvious contemporary exclusion of Romani musicians from Czech music and most Czechs' preferred music consumption, Jožka insisted that Czech people needed Roma to play music, because, he said

> Czechs are immune to music. Maybe they're sick of it or they don't understand. They would like to play like Roma, but they will never be able to. They would only be able to if they played with Roma everyday... and not only one or two years... at least 20.

In the past, Czechs and Slovaks were reliant on Romani musicians to provide live music for weddings and so on (see Introduction). However, Jožka remained convinced that Czechs still needed Roma musically because of their emotional inadequacies concerning music. (In my experience Czechs seemed musically completely independent of the Romani population, both practically and emotionally).

I suggest that Jožka's belief helped sustain him in unstable, difficult times, for whilst the name Giňa still gave family members great advantage and reputation, this musician family no longer saw its strength as primarily lying in a family band or remaining insular. These days, to secure their income they needed to work with others, including non-Roma, try new technologies and imbibe new musical developments. Since the death of Josef Giňa Senior, members of the family band have mostly pursued their own projects in the interests of making a living. For example, Jožka spent two years in England playing music and secured a recording contract, although in the end he had returned suddenly to Opava due to the illness of his mother and had broken the contract.[36] Other family members have had success making non-traditional style music

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[36] He claimed that when he heard of his mother's illness, he broke the recording he had done in two, apparently making the British record producer cry. It seems he did not go back afterwards for various reasons, although he told me that he did try to return to England in the summer of 2004 but was not

with musicians outside the family, for example, Věra Bílá and Jožka's nephew who is a classical violinist. Jožka had taught his son to play the dulcimer extremely well; however, Jožka claimed there were no opportunities for his son to play in groups in the Czech Republic and was very concerned that he should have musical stimulation outside the family. Jožka saw his musical future tied to his ability to reinvent himself in rapidly changing contexts, either in the Czech Republic or elsewhere, and maintaining the technical prowess that enabled him to communicate feeling through music so directly.

The Horváth family band

I met the Horváth family band through the music specialist at the Romani museum in Brno, Tomáš Šenkyřík. We spent a day (8 March 2004) doing interviews with Eugen Horváth and his father Jan, followed by observing an open rehearsal at their family home. I later heard them in concert as part of the International Roma Day celebrations in Brno on 7 April 2004.[37] I learnt much from this family; however, in the following section I highlight aspects concerning musical and social changes post-1989 and ideas about music and 'race'.

Eugen was 29 years old when I met him. During the 1980s, most musicians in his father's band died (now only his father and the clarinettist remain), therefore, in 1989, when he was 14 years old, Eugen was ordered by his father to play with the family band in the local *vinárna* (Cz; wine bar) where they usually performed. About this time, he finished his schooling in the administrative mess that followed regime change, when he said only 50% of pupils were attending school. He described working in the *vinárna* playing what people requested, including Moravian and Romani music. "If your people [white people] wanted our music [Romani music], then we would play it." Eugen felt there was a big difference between what he used to do, playing in a *vinárna* - using acoustic instruments, taking requests, and playing at a dynamic level appropriate for people talking - and what he mostly did in recent years, concert playing. He described how in his recent experience of festivals, it was different again as there "you always have to play at the maximum".

Owing to increasing freedoms in the lead up to the revolution and post-1989, geo-political borders became more porous and the Horváth family started to listen to more records from abroad, Hungarian musicians came more often to visit the Czech Republic, and the Horváth

admitted due to a misunderstanding caused by an international criminal having the same name as him (telephone conversation 7 July 2004).
[37] International Roma Day is on 8 April, so the celebration was the night before.

family went to visit Hungary. Eugen's father was so impressed with the Romani musicians there that he arranged for Eugen (aged 15) to study with a *primáš* in Budapešt for a month in the manner of a traditional apprenticeship. Eugen said that he learned a lot whilst he was there: he was taught twice a day by the *primáš*, living with him as part of his family.[38] Furthermore, there was music in the home "all the time" and he played as much as possible with the other musicians there who were apparently some of the best.[39] "It really helped me a lot, they gave me such inspiration... I heard the quality so that I was immersed in it, and when I came home after a month I was totally full/charged". Eugen said that he would have liked to stay longer, but it was very expensive for his father, alluding to the financial constraints that mean such apprenticeships are no longer commonplace for aspiring Romani musicians, even those from traditional musician families.

At 17, he joined a 12-piece band that toured the Czech Republic and released three records. The band fell apart because of certain "complications" for the bandleader that resulted in his permanent emigration, the circumstances of which Eugen was still fearful to talk about. When he was about 22 (in 1997), the Horváth family band was formed with its present line-up. At that time, there were no dulcimer players in Brno, so Eugen's father decided that his youngest son should learn to play the dulcimer and arranged for him to study with a famous Hungarian player who was in fact part of the extended Horváth family. The dulcimer player and his immediate family came to stay whilst the tuition took place.

Eugen explained that the family band "draws from old songs which are forgotten", old Romani songs that he said people no longer knew. "We take apart [the songs] and give them a new coat", which meant giving them a new arrangement. Eugen's sister sang with the band, and "almost 70%" of their programme was built with singing because she "really gives us a lot, because the singing says something to people". Eugen said that they drew on the influences around them, because presently there was much "mature and refreshed music" and they made a point of listening to "great musicians". He did not want to describe the band's music as either traditional or modern, because although they used traditional songs, they also took on influences from Romania, Hungary, the Balkans, and whatever was new and developing that inspired them. He said that they were "very fired up by jazz and black music", and he felt that jazz had also developed a lot because of having drawn on different influences.

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[38] Eugen could not remember the name of the musician family, but thought the first name of his teacher was Bango.

[39] Some of these musicians apparently played in the Vienna Philharmonic.

Eugen said that Slovak music inspired him, because he said that was where he was originally from, but he thought Hungarian music was the closest to "his" Romani music, for "the influences are the same" (he regarded Romanian music as the next closest). Nevertheless, when you took apart the detail of the music, he said that Hungarian music was a bit different from theirs, because Hungarian music is "immaculate, refined... the mess is removed". In "his" music, it can be "messy", although the technical competence should be there: it should not be played "academically, rather through feeling". He explained further: "I know which notes I will play, but in the moment it occurs to me that I will play four notes completely differently... Each person takes a solo and embellishes, but when you're playing in a concert and reaching boiling point, the emotion and feeling makes you play things differently, although there is some grounding to it". In a similar manner to Jožka, Eugen was committed above all to the importance of communicating musical feeling, but regarded technical competence as vital to this: they both had a traditional approach to new ideas. Through listening to them both playing, I noticed that "feeling" was predominantly communicated through a *rubato* style and rapid (though not great) fluctuations in dynamics and intensity.

"Since the 1990s, many bands have been doing modern things", and a friend of his, a bass guitarist, proposed that he worked with Ida Kelarová. With three other Roma from Brno, the band *Romano Rat* (Ro; Romani blood) was formed in 1998. He described their music as "not really traditional...it was something else...I listened to other musical territory...I imbibed other ideas, I have my own [ideas], so I synthesised it all in myself and created my own style". *Romano Rat* played at WOMAD (World of Music, Arts & Dance) in Gran Canaria and Prague (2000) and Spain (2001), and many other festivals,[40] and the excellent sound production and technical support there amazed him; he loved the sheer level of noise that made his heart "start to ache". I found that this love of high noise levels was very common amongst Roma of all ages; they liked to have the volume so loud they could feel the vibrations inside their bodies.[41]

Eugen explained that in the current climate it was very difficult for Romani bands to "get a break", because they were black: "people don't want the Roma to pull the Czech Republic upwards. I feel that way, I don't know if it is like this, but so far I feel like this". He felt that whites who played averagely still got better opportunities than Roma although he acknowledged that success also required luck (giving the example of Věra Bílá and Kale who were discovered by the manager Smetana when he came in for dinner at the *vinárna* in Prague where they were

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[40] See www.kelarova.com for more details. Ida Kelarová & Romano Rat has released three CDs, *Cikánská Krev/Gypsy Blood* (1999), *Staré Sizy/Old Tears* (2002), and *Dadoro* (2000).

[41] Although *Romano Rat* had split up after almost six years, he was really looking forward to the band re-forming for a new project in the future.

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playing everyday). Furthermore, he claimed that how a band sold was completely dependent on the manager, which is a post-1989 development. Eugen felt that opportunities for playing at festivals were constrained by who has played before, "even if you play a thousand times better".[42] Tomáš then pointed out how Romani bands were starting to promote themselves and Eugen remembered that they had had the chance to play at a folk festival in Bojkovice, but only because Tomáš had secured the job for them (analogous to Rokyta's role pre-1989 as discussed in chapter 3). Eugen described it as a "hippy festival", and his father in particular had really enjoyed it, but they had ended up being paid considerably less than another band. This was explained to them by dint of the other band's "big name", but Eugen felt that it was a question of discrimination.

In 2002, Eugen had played for the musical *Cigáni idú do neba* (Sl; Gypsies go to heaven). When they were recording the soundtrack in a Bratislava studio, he worked with a dulcimer player who he played with in breaks between recordings:

> And so we played, and the difference, you would have to hear it... when he started to play the harmony, when a white person listens to it, it seems in the moment as if he knows how to play, but he doesn't fully understand. The white person says it's completely beautiful... If perhaps a black pianist plays to you, then you hear a really rich harmony, nature is really there, yes, a really large space. But when a white plays it is so... Hang on, there are now whites playing almost as well as blacks, yes it must be said...

He then said that in America, musicians are on a par, because of all the studying white people put in, "but still when blacks play, it is nature", but then remembered that he also liked Sting and Peter Gabriel, who are "not black, but if I close my eyes, I feel that I am hearing a black person, the sensation..." Eugen clearly perceived a link between musical ability and ideas of 'race', particularly concerning the perceived positive effect of black people being closer to "nature", even though he believed that training was also an important factor in musicians' abilities.

When I questioned him if he perceived a link between African-American *Černoši* (Cz; black people) and Roma in a racial sense, he said that there was no such link, rather, there was a common experience of being regarded as black and a strong musical connection. He saw musical similarities between traditional Romani music and black music, by which he meant jazz and soul: "there is a given theme, melody, and then the theme is played and every member of the group improvises... and the melody graduates/gets higher. Also the feeling is the same". He did not find any rhythmic correspondence. In the case of hip hop, Eugen did not find any musical similarities, but attributed widespread Romani appreciation to a common experience of blackness.

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[42] Of course, this is not only a problem for Romani musicians in the Czech Republic. However, their particular situation was aggravated by widespread prejudice against Roma.

Here, the youth of today... they really feel hip hop, because I have to say that it's because it is black, and we are black, as black, it is ours and we feel it like this... When you take Roma people... almost everyone, when you ask them what they are listening to, then the majority listen to black music, soul, jazz, because it is the closest to us. For example, I have never seen Roma who would play rock or heavy metal, because I know Roma now, they are like this. Though in Ostrava there is someone who plays rock pretty well.

Eugen was a thoughtful person, who liked to qualify what he said even to the point of contradicting himself as part of a process of reflection. He attempted to be precise about dates and facts, as he had had some interview experience and thought they would be important to me. He was extremely passionate about music and Romani issues, constantly seeking different ways to describe things to me. For Eugen, his ideas of music and 'race' were connected both in his experience of being discriminated against and in ways that he believed people played music, whether that was traditional Romani or other styles.

Eugen's father, Jan Horváth, was born in Slovakia and had 11 siblings. He remembered traditional life there: his grandfather was a blacksmith, and others around him worked with livestock and practised handicrafts. He spoke nostalgically of life in Slovakia. His father and most of his male siblings were musicians who played Romani music: there was a guitarist (he also played *džengo* Cz; Gypsy Swing),[43] bass guitarist, tenor saxophonist, clarinettist, accordionist and some of them composed. One brother was paralysed in a wheelchair although used to play the violin. All of them either had made their living entirely from music, or had jobs and supplemented their income from music, under socialism: the brothers had played professionally for 20 years in *Kvintet Ondřeje Horvátha* (Cz; The Ondřej Horváth Quintet).

Jan believed that the Czech Republic was good when it was part of Czechoslovakia: "the Communist party looked ahead and gave priority to art, work and education. Today, the Roma have it bad. The Communists had a better understanding of social questions". The contemporary situation pained him greatly – "Romani blood is much exploited" – and he thought it would get worse. Jan explained that older musicians who were in the traditional folklore groups were mostly deceased, and since the Revolution, there had been less support for folklore. Consequently, Jan felt that the Roma had been abusing and exploiting the *gadje* with Romani music that is not traditional: "the problem is that it is not authentic tradition". He compared it to a poet writing poetry that gives people nothing, or wine without alcohol. He felt that Romani culture was disappearing and that these days many Romani musicians were stealing other people's music. Of course, Romani music has always borrowed from its surroundings, but Jan felt that the feeling of Romani music was no longer Romani. He believed that "today the world is so perverted that in

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[43] The style created by Django Reinhardt (1910-1953), also known as Gypsy Swing or Manouche.

the scope of culture, there is not any that comes from the heart; although it would be called artistic, it's [just] for money". He believed that God made Roma Romani, and they must thank God for giving them their culture, and try to make it grow. He thought that the Czechs should help them in this, especially the minister for culture.

The concept of God and the spiritual world played a fundamental role in his life, colouring his view of everything else including music, culture and society. "God knows we don't have a country. The word *'Amen'* remains, in the religious sense of a prayer, and in the Romani language it means 'we'".[44] Despite this, he did not think Roma would ever establish a country for themselves, because the world was so bad, the proof of which lay in Roma emigrating because they were seeking the peace, calm, food, and work they could not get in the Czech Republic.[45] Jan was enthusiastic and passionate when talking about music and spiritual matters, but was consistently vague about any concrete matters such as biographical details, as they did not seem important to him. In the light of what he perceived as declining social and musical conditions since 1989, he took increasing comfort in spiritual solutions. Concerning music, he said,

> I have found the correct point in music, and on this point I can stand and give advice...
> Music is an enchantress... it embodies a lot, like a [psychic] medium... there is black magic
> and white magic... it contains a large life... a big strength... Music is like a fluid that gives
> people energy... Music gives you character, it forms the spirit... Music is soul.

He said that if he can close his eyes, listen to music and then smile that means the music is from the heart. He thought that when people move to artistic music in a way that appears drunken, or as if they are on drugs, it proves that "art does not lead to salvation, for everyone is just superimposing themselves onto the music: outside is Satanism". For Jan, music was one medium of channelling a strong and lively spirit world that was core to his life and which he saw in everything.[46]

Concerning Romani folklore, Jan said, "it is really difficult because it's based on emotion... the artistic physiognomy of a person. It comes from the heart... the spirit of the songs, the harmony of the songs", underlining the crucial role of the *primáš*, for "a *primáš* must emit a beat from himself, be the leader, artistic creator and must ornament". In Romani music, he emphasised the necessity of improvisation, for "it's not folklore if I am playing songs from

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[44] Jan is only person I encountered who perceived a meaningful link between the Romani word *'Amen'* (meaning 'we') and the religious use of the word (meaning 'and let it be so').

[45] He also claimed that the world would end in 2050, which he said did not stem from Biblical knowledge, rather it was just his opinion. His speech was sometimes confusing and muddled, and so I have highlighted strands running through many of his thoughts.

[46] Jan was involved with Ida Kelarová's projects to heal one's soul through singing. These are spiritual projects that use the medium of music, specifically Romani music. See http://www.kelarova.com/en/, accessed on 03/03/05.

notation...it is mindless, not from the heart, you know. It is as if someone from your family has died and you cannot cry, there is no grief". I felt that Jan was trying to convince me of the superiority of Romani folklore by drawing attention to its improvised style that he said came more directly from emotion than other musics:

> At music school, conservatoire, high school... there is no folklore, because there is something else there, something else comes up, another domain... because you must have more patience with folklore, traditional patience, meaning philosophically, I would say it is native/aboriginal, I would say what is living in a person is another area, that is where the feeling parts are, really agonising and heartfelt... and today's artistic activities... will wither away.

He saw music as a number of genres (or as he would say, domains) that could not easily be traversed: "the person that plays classical music cannot feign folklore, and the folklorist cannot imitate jazz... because everyone has his own source." Jan felt that Hungarian music was not Romani because it was not "authentic" (Cz: *original*) like his playing: it stemmed from different feelings and pain, and its performers were schooled, trained and very talented.

He had the same opinion as Eugen that black music drew on nature and that black people have experienced great suffering like Roma. When I asked Jan if he thought there was any hope for me to understand Romani music as a non-Romani person, he replied: "you can play, but you will not understand it like for example me. You will play to me and an English mentality would be there... But if you were to fall in love with a Rom musician and live with him at least five, ten years..." Again, an understood essential element in Romani music, or at least Romani music deemed authentic, was revealed. This appeared to stem mostly from the experience of being Romani and the kind of pain and feelings this embodies, in combination with a natural or biological element and a "correct attitude" that showed someone to be authentically Romani.

Old style dancing re-interpreted

The *čardáš* has its origins in the Hungarian *verbunkos*, slow dances from the 18th century performed at the recruitment of young men to the army (Hu: *palotás*).[47] A quick *čardáš* followed, danced either by men or mixed couples in which the men did solo improvisations. During the first half of the 19th century, the slow part fell into disuse and the *hallgató*, which is not danced to, and *čardáš* became the two basic types in the traditional repertoire of Romani bands in Hungary, Slovakia and Moravia as well the borderlands of Slovenia and Croatia (Jurková 2003a). Gusztáv

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[47] For further exploration of Hungarian Romani and non-Romani dance forms, see Gusztáv (1995), Kertész-Wilkinson (1997), Balázs (1992), Dobszay (1993).

explains that in Hungary Vlach Roma consider the *čardáš* to be Hungarian rather than Romani (1995:49); however, amongst Ostrava Roma, I found that it was regarded as a quintessentially traditional Romani form. This may be explained through the geographical and cultural distance that many Ostrava Roma have had from Hungary and East Slovakia for many decades. The *čardáš* is always in a quick tempo 2/4 time, with offbeat quaver syncopation in the accompaniment. In my experience, it gradually quickened during performance, an increased tempo set at the beginning of each repetition of the song or a section.

Traditional *čardáš* dancing is strongly connected to traditional dulcimer music; however, in Ostrava the dancing appeared to be surviving much better than the music. I found that whilst the vast majority of Ostrava Roma were not likely to listen or dance to traditional *čardáš* music, they were extremely likely to know how to dance in a traditional *čardáš* style, albeit to differing levels of expertise. This can be accounted for by the many inter-generational contexts of dancing at family celebrations and parties where *čardáš* dancing was the preferred dance to faster songs, and by its potential to be performed to any reasonably quick duple rhythm, meaning it could also be used to dance to many Rompop songs at discos, parties and cultural events as one option in a palette of dancing possibilities, as will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6. In Ostrava, it was expected that males and females alike should be able to participate in *čardáš* dancing, including those that were not very physically coordinated and even those who had physical disabilities.[48] This was expected in a way that did not apply to singing ability. Many Roma were aware of the reputation and mystique of Romani musicianship and a few confessed to me in hushed tones that they could not hold a tune. Conversely, nobody ever said that they could not dance and Roma who were not able to dance with appropriate style and ease, were openly ridiculed, although not dancing did not ever seem to be an option. In my experience, everyone was expected to dance at celebrations, but if any Rom could not sing they only had to remain silent to avoid shame.[49]

In Ostrava, most dancing was learned through traditional practices of looking at and imitating elder relatives from the youngest age possible. Clapping movements were encouraged

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[48] In the Czech Republic, I found that attitudes to physical and mental disability were still strongly influenced by the Communist party policy of keeping people with disabilities behind closed institutional doors: most people were uneasy about disability. Romani families usually tried to look after those with disabilities in their family homes and they came to family parties. Thus, I found that they were tolerated although ignored as much as possible and were sometimes the objects of ridicule.

[49] This situation often made life difficult for Roma who had grown up in state-run children's homes and had not been brought up inculcated with dancing practices. I was informed by employees of the NGO "Life Together" that there was a disproportionate number of Romani children in state-run children's homes and many social workers removed children on grounds such as not eating three meals a day or not having heavily stocked food cupboards as is customary for many Czechs. Roma usually eat when they are hungry rather than at regular times and do not usually stockpile food, partly through living hand to mouth and partly so as not to incur jealousy or accusations of hoarding from other Roma.

from babyhood, and toddlers' attempts to dance and finger-snap were greeted with delight and further demonstrations. Female toddlers were encouraged sit on their feet and shake their upper bodies from side to side rapidly whilst leaning round in a circle. Male toddlers were encouraged to slap their feet and knees rhythmically in the style of solo male *čardáš* dancing. After this age, boys and girls were expected to hold their own at parties and dance with other youngsters and adults. Boys as young as eight were expected to lead their older female siblings or grandmothers at parties. Although this was the way in which many Roma in Ostrava learned to dance, Romani community centres were responding to the breakdown of family and community structures, dispersal of relatives and declining concern with continuing dancing tradition (in the face of new social and financial demands), by providing opportunities to learn how to dance. These took the form of informal sessions whereby younger Roma were exposed to and consequently learned from slightly older youngsters who were dancing. In one community centre, formalised classes were organised.

In Ostrava, a number of Romani dance troupes performed *čardáš* dancing, mostly formed through Romani community centres (I came across eight during my fieldwork).[50] On stage they bore some resemblance to Communist party organised folk dancing troupes that were promoted across the whole ex-Soviet region, performing choreographed group folk dances in folk costumes with unsmiling expressions. Off-stage, these Romani groups were often disorganised and extremely fluid, based around friendships and family that lived locally, forming for a particular event and later disbanding, only to reform with different members for another event. Life for Roma in Ostrava was unstable because of rapidly changing and declining social circumstances and frequent emigration attempts, which the temporary nature of the dance groups reflected. Although some groups danced in more traditional ways than others, they almost always used recently recorded Rompop hits with *čardáš* rhythm and tempo as backing music.[51] DVD example 4 shows the youngest group of children from the Zárubek community centre in Ostrava performing traditional Romani dancing to a Rompop soundtrack, at a day centre in Prague.[52]

During my fieldwork, there were opportunities for traditional and other Romani dancing groups to perform at local festivals, organised by town councils or individuals. Some festivals

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[50] I was not able to ascertain precisely when Romani dance troupes had become widespread in Ostrava. However, it appeared they became popular after the establishment of Romani community centres in the last ten years. I felt that that although specifically Romani dance troupes were a post-1989 development, they were inspired by socialist-era folk troupes.

[51] The only exception I encountered was at the Přívoz community centre, where a live, acoustic band of two accordions and a violin had been paid to provide backing music for the *čardáš* dancing practice.

[52] One of the staff members at the day centre used to work for the NGO "Life Together" and had invited a group of Roma from Zárubek to dance at the day centre's celebration.

were specifically for Roma and others are free festivals in town squares for the general public. In Ostrava, adult leaders at Romani community centres were usually responsible for organising dance troupes for specific events. Although dance troupes did not usually practice unless there was a specific event to aim for, when a performance opportunity arose, rehearsal schedules could become very intense, sometimes everyday after school for several hours in the week leading up to an event.

Using *čardáš* dancing in the context of a dance troupe necessitated re-interpretation in terms of choreographing a style that mostly developed un-choreographed. As will be discussed, recent rapidly changing circumstances have required further re-interpretation of style and teaching methods in Ostrava. The re-interpretation of *čardáš* dancing was only one of various kinds of dancing happening at the community centres, and community leaders, mostly women and some men in their late thirties, often bemoaned the general lack of *čardáš* dancing skill amongst the younger generation and by default often ended up fulfilling the role of a coach. I found that many Roma in Ostrava regarded teacher-pupil relationships with great suspicion, partly because it reminded them of negative experiences at school, but also because people traditionally learned to dance through processes of imitation and were used to this method. However, as more Romani children knew only "western" education methods involving teacher-pupil models and were less steeped in old style culture during childhood, a need had arisen for someone to act as a sort of coach to pass on important aspects of *čardáš* dancing, particularly solo moves that hardly featured at communal celebrations, such as the male leg-slapping.

In my experience, the children led and initiated rehearsals with an adult giving supervision by ensuring other children or adults did not disturb them, and occasionally mediating in their frequent disagreements. The times when the adult became a coach were usually driven by a sense of desperation, either because the event was fast approaching and the children were unprepared or disorganised, or because the children's dancing was so poor that they felt compelled to intervene. Adults did not usually articulate precisely what they felt was poor, rather, they shouted their disapproval and demonstrated either on their own or as a role model in front of the group whilst they were dancing. In this way, traditional methods of learning by imitation were in some way preserved but re-interpreted according to changing circumstances. In contrast, when young Roma practiced other styles of dancing, adults never interfered in questions of style or choreography.

At the Romani community centre in Přivoz, *čardáš* dancing was exclusively led and directed by adults at least partly due to the large number of children involved. The adults were on very good personal terms with the children, only emphasising their authority at certain moments

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if they felt it was not going well. Rehearsals started with the boys practicing their *čardáš* steps with a coach, followed by girls practicing theirs and then practice in couples. After that, they worked on a theatre piece about a traditional Romani wedding. The centre had organised for two local accordionists and a violinist to accompany the children live during their rehearsals, which was highly unusual and can be attributed to the influence of the community centre's leader Petr Lička, who was a practicing Romani musician in Ostrava and did everything he could to support local Romani musicians and culture, traditional and non-traditional. It is remarkable that he used untraditional educational methods in order to maintain traditional Romani culture.[53]

For the purposes of contemporary public performances, I found that it was understood to be ideal to have four mixed couples in a troupe. However, I frequently found that it did not work out like this. Although traditional *čardáš* dancing was only for males or male-female couples, in contemporary Ostrava Romani girls stayed interested in *čardáš* dancing for longer than boys (who were predominantly interested in breakdancing), and so mixed couples were usually made up of very young boys and teenaged girls and more often troupes featured only female-female couples. In the interests of encouraging everyone, if there were an odd number of dancers a solo position would be created in the centre at one end of the formation. In this way, traditional *čardáš* dancing practices were continued, whilst accommodating contemporary needs.

Some groups tried to recreate traditional Romani dress as their performance costume with brightly coloured long flowing skirts and matching blouses or tops that covered female dancers past the elbow and up to the neck. Male dancers wore trousers and shirt, possibly with a waistcoat. For many groups, traditional dress was altered according to contemporary concerns. For example, all-female groups in Zárubek and Hrušov made costumes that were brightly coloured with long flowing skirts, but these skirts were worn low on the hips like hipsters jeans, with blouses that tied in the middle just under their breasts, exposing their midriff. This development was connected to contemporary ideas of fashion and what was attractive to the opposite sex. I noticed that at festivals, their audience included many young males, and to be a good dancer was considered highly desirable amongst Romani communities. In terms of body image, although having some extra weight when one was older was encouraged, it was generally considered ideal for young single females to be simultaneously slim and curvaceous (as wider global fashions promoted); these new costumes emphasised these ideal features, as well as having a fashionable image, thereby enhancing their prospects of attracting male partners. DVD example

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[53] Petr had set up a community centre that was extremely stable and well run. He had attracted European grants for his work, built a small studio for Romani bands in the basement of the centre and organised free weekly parties at the centre that was filled to capacity and which featured live music from local Rompop bands.

5 shows an all-girls dance group based at the Hrušov community centre in Ostrava, performing at a Romani festival near Olomouc, exemplifying points made in the previous two paragraphs.

Inter-generational family parties almost always featured Rompop renditions of *čardáš* rather than old style interpretations. Older Roma's bodies may not have been as supple or healthy as when they were younger; however, after having attended a large number of Romani events, I am able make some generalisations concerning differences in their style. The older style was more sedate, in that less movement was employed, which did not come across as any less energetic or exciting. Steps were smaller and more delicate by both men and women, and there was a more modest physical distance between male-female couples when dancing (see DVD example 6 at a birthday party in a community hall in Radvanice, Ostrava). Younger dancers were often more flamboyant in their movements, and men experimented more with same-sex couple dancing, which was seen as comical and *risqué*, and not something older male Roma did, as will be discussed in chapter 5.[54] Most younger Roma appeared to be at least proficient in traditional style *čardáš* couple dancing (and tango), and at parties the influence of other music and dance styles and Rompop interpretations of *čardáš* appeared to have affected the dancing style relatively little: indeed, young men harmoniously danced with their grandmothers and great-grandmothers, and the only concessions made by the young appeared to be dancing in a slightly less wild and energetic way, as older people complained or withdrew if they felt physically overwhelmed by their younger relatives. DVD example 7 shows dancing between younger males and older female relatives. Although in many families it was usual for the male to lead, however young, there appears to be a slight struggle for control between the first young male shown and his older female relative.

Traditional style couple dancing has remained strong in the context of inter-generational parties owing to its social importance, and choreographed traditional dance troupes survive amongst Romani children, sometimes embracing but often competing with other fashions.

This chapter has discussed developments in Romani life and traditional music making in Ostrava since 1989. After the fall of the Communist party regime, Roma in Ostrava have been increasingly excluded in the Czech Republic, through an interrelated combination of their lack of productive role in the economy, the rise of far-right nationalism, and a national discourse that increasingly draws on a racial discourse that others Roma as outside dominant cultural and racial norms. The effects on Romani culture have been profound as it has increasingly functioned

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[54] Female-female couples were not viewed as comic, and young and old female Roma often danced in couples or larger groups with other females.

separately from the local surroundings, in contrast to before. Hence, many traditional opportunities for professional Romani musicians have disappeared, on one hand precipitating their decline and on the other, necessitating radical reinterpretations of tradition. Within Romani communities, community centres specifically for Roma have developed, where traditional dancing styles have been maintained and reinterpreted as contemporary needs have dictated, epitomising the demise of traditional music making, the rise of Rompop, and the reinterpretation of traditional dancing in the context of family celebrations and youth work. In terms of the nation-state, Roma have been included in the bureaucratic structure in so far as they have citizenship and are subject to its rules and power: the featuring of Romani dancing at local festivals highlights the selective inclusion of the Romani minority in the Czech Republic, in stark contrast their socio-economic and racial exclusion.

Chapter 5 Rompop

The phenomenon of Rompop is generally thought to have emerged in the 1960s (sources: conversations during fieldwork, Jurková 2003) in response to pop music developments particularly in Western Europe and the U.S., although also in Czechoslovakia, and to the increased availability of electric instruments and guitars.[1] 'The term *Rom-pop* does not only imply new lyrics, but also a distance from folk music traditions' (Davidová 1992:18). Indeed, the majority of Rompop features newly composed lyrics and melodies, and electric instruments, although traditional lyrics and melodies are sometimes also used and some traditional aspects of performance, attitudes and creativity have been maintained. In Ostrava, I found that the most important difference between Rompop and (folk) traditions was the conceptual distance that negotiated a modern identity for Rompop whilst drawing on or at least referring to aspects of traditions that were perceived as old fashioned.

It could be argued that Rompop is a direct continuation of a dynamic Romani tradition that incorporates non-Romani elements and influences from Roma's surroundings into Romani music making, for 'creative transformation of these influences belongs to the very basis of musical expression of those Roma groups whose members performed music as a traditional profession' (Jurková 2003a). However, I suggest that the fundamental shifts that have taken place in Rompop mean it is worth considering as a separate phenomenon, even if the boundaries remain blurry between traditional styles, Rompop and the "new trends" considered in the following chapter.

This chapter explores the phenomenon of Rompop (Romani pop music) particularly in relation to amateur and professional bands at Romani parties, discos and community centres in Ostrava. I discuss how Rompop developed in relation to traditional Romani music making and popular music styles, creating five categories of Rompop production to help conceptualise the plethora of musical activities considered under the auspices of Rompop. Localised Rompop phenomena in Ostrava are explored, particularly through their role at family parties and community discos. I go on to consider one Rompop musician in particular, Janko, his family and my experience of being his student. Although he was primarily a Rompop musician, he was also part of the band Gypsy Imre that I played with whilst in Ostrava. I discuss the band's diverse repertoire, unusual combination of members and performance contexts. The music of two other

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[1] From conversations during my fieldwork, it was apparent that pop music from the West had found its way to Ostrava during the socialist era, despite restrictions: this flow became much greater following 1989. Many Roma in Ostrava told me that during the 1970s and 1980s, Romani men wore their hair long like Western pop stars, although the police would come round to cut off their hair.

musicians who play Rompop, Puki and Jaroslav, is briefly explored, as well as Rompop music making at Romani community centres.

5.1 Rompop

There has been a democratisation of instrumental music amongst Romani communities engendered by the rise of Rompop and the increased availability of electric instruments; no longer does playing musical instruments and performing in bands belong exclusively to traditional musician families. Playing Rompop music does not have to entail a lengthy and intense training process, for melodies, lyrics and harmonies are often extremely straightforward, played on more easily learnt electric instruments, and can be performed adequately with a minimum of musical technique and experience.

Despite this democratisation, the most commercially successful proponents of Rompop have come from traditional musician families (for example, the Giňovci, Věra Bílá, Terne Čhave and so on). This can be explained through the attitudes and skills to make money from music that were already in place in these families: when formal tuition is unaffordable, parents can still teach their children musical instruments to a high standard in musician families, benefiting from the high quality of live music making taking place in these households. Children can imbibe the attitudes and self-promotion required to make money from music from their family, and are encouraged by the family support for professional music making. Furthermore, there is already a family structure for the basis of Rompop bands in traditional musician families.

Jan Rokyta felt that Rompop grew out of financial necessity: Romani musicians were decreasingly needed to play Czech and Slovak folk music as ethnic Czechs or Slovaks increasingly started to play it. There had also been a decline in many folk festivals since Communist party support was taken away and the folk festivals that have flourished were often unwilling or fearful to invite Romani musicians to play. For many professional Romani musicians, Rompop has been a financial necessity as other opportunities have diminished (interview with Rokyta 2004).

Furthermore, Rompop was essential in responding to shifting tastes, inspired by pop music, within the Romani community for more "modern" sounding Romani music. Modern was often synonymous with drumkits or drum machine beats, electric instruments and amplified sounds, and I suggest that this desire to be "modern" at least partly stemmed from the Communist party's devaluation of Romani culture as backward. As a whole, I found that the Romani community in Ostrava was quite familiar with mainstream Czech, Slovak, U.S. and U.K. popular

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music scenes. They were increasingly familiar with Hungarian Rompop, although this tended to be amongst Hungarian and/or middle-class Roma, and mainstream Arabic pop was also gaining popularity amongst a few Roma. Local, national and international Rompop expressions have multiplied in tandem with the rising popularity of pop music over the last four decades. The flourishing contemporary international Romani scene has inspired interest from the few Roma involved in the international Romani movement in Ostrava to listen to Rompop from the Balkans, Spain, Macedonia and elsewhere: I found that they were not usually interested in the traditional Romani folk music from these areas, but related to the pop that sounded exotic yet familiar, and rejoiced in the international connection of Roma through Rompop. The Romani language used in Rompop is often basic, so although the dialect may be different, there were not many problems in comprehension, even for Roma who did not actively speak Romani.

Contemporary Rompop musicians represent a diverse group of people: their products differ significantly from one another and they play in vastly different contexts. To clarify the contemporary situation in the Czech Republic I have separated Rompop musicians into five groups:

> 1)   Commercially successful on the World Music market. Music produced on CD (e.g. Věra Bílá, Ida Kelarová, Iva Bittová)
> 2)   Commercially successful in Czech mainstream record stores. This is a very small group, because if they were successful in the Czech mainstream it was usually the result of being successful internationally. Music produced on CD (e.g. Gulo Čar, Terne Chave)
> 3)   Commercially successful on the Romani cassette circuit in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, hired for large parties and Romani festivals (e.g. Gypsy Pardubice, Gypsy Šumperk)
> 4)   Hired for local larger parties and events, perhaps with a few recordings on the Romani cassette circuit (e.g. Gypsy Amor, Gypsy Koro)
> 5)   Playing in community centres for no financial reward and occasionally playing for local parties and events sometimes for payment. Bands are often very fluid and these musicians may play with many different individuals and groups (e.g. Franta, Puki)

These divisions are not rigid, but they help to present the wide range of music making that was happening under the auspices of Rompop in the Czech Republic during my fieldwork. The large divide between the first two groups and the rest lies in the mainstream commercial viability of their music; quality of recording; and access to good promotion, marketing and management. Romani bands whose commercial success puts them in the first two groups often played Rompop whose aesthetic draws far more on jazz, soul, funk, Latin, Spanish, African and other influences, than Romani traditions. The lyrics are usually in Romani, but the sound is often a fusion of styles, beats and exotic sounds, attractive to the world music market, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2. The latter three groups use a variety of languages, including Czech, Slovak and Romani, but the

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style is fairly homogenous, drawing on conventional pop sounds, Romani traditions and some jazz influences.

The distance between those in the third group who have success on the Romani cassette circuit and those in the fourth group who are mostly hired locally for parties with perhaps only a few cassettes out on the circuit, partly lies in differences in the quality of musicianship and extent of their own material. Musicians associated with the third group's characteristics rely less on arrangements of songs from other bands' cassettes and have more original material. However, I suggest that the difference mostly lies in the third group's better managers, promotion and organisation, which enables them to secure more prestigious, larger and better paid gigs.

The distance between the fourth group, who have a degree of financial success and local prominence, and the fifth group who only play in community centres, local festivals and small family parties for little or no financial rewards, sometimes lies in the level of skills and musical experience necessary to perform a wide range of repertoire. However, the overcrowded unofficial Rompop market cannot support the number of musicians wishing to play for financial reward: there was simply not enough paid work available within the Romani community in and around Ostrava to make a profession out of playing music, and at best it supplemented social benefits or manual job salaries.[2] I found that in Ostrava, outside of the Romani community there seemed to be little or no interest in listening to Rompop or hiring Rompop musicians.[3] The vast majority of musicians in Ostrava performing Rompop fell into the fourth and fifth categories, with a select few in the third category. The rest of the chapter focuses on Rompop musicians in Ostrava in these latter two categories.

The basic line up for a Rompop band in Ostrava usually included two vocalists, keyboard, second keyboard or electric guitar, electric bass, keyboard drums or drumkit. Singing in harmony was ubiquitous therefore at least two singers were needed. There were usually two rhythm instruments, either guitar or keyboards, which tended to play chords in the prevailing rhythm (most often quick, *staccato čardáš* quaver offbeats or a slow ballad sustained onbeat). A drumbeat was provided either by one of the keyboards or a kit. Two or three of the keyboard players and guitarists usually doubled up as vocalists, meaning that a Rompop band usually had

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[2] Of course, an overcrowded market for musicians is not unique to Ostrava Roma, although the racial prejudice that excluded Roma and Romani musicians from most entertainment venues in Ostrava drastically worsened the situation.

[3] Every few months, the commercially mainstream band Terne Čhave played at a nightclub in the centre of Ostrava, during my fieldwork. Their music sounds mainstream in that they have fused a variety of styles that potentially appeal to a wide audience. They were always billed as World Music rather than Romani and their audiences in Ostrava were mostly non-Roma.

between four and six members.[4] The alto saxophone was the most common additional instrument.[5] Preferred musical instruments such as guitars, keyboards and drumkits were too expensive for many Roma, although they were easily shared and many Romani community centres had set up music rooms with equipment for use on site.

Rompop melodies mostly stay within an octave range and are in a major or minor key with a minimum of sharps or flats. Singers usually sing the melody in close harmony, usually a third apart, with little embellishment or improvisation. Instrumental interludes provided opportunities for melodic improvisation, usually either with the right hand on a keyboard or alto saxophone. Key changes mostly comprised shifting the song up a tone in order to increase the energy and intensity. Harmony was predominantly based on chords I, IV and V, with some use of V^7, VI and II chords, changing one chord per bar in the most basic interpretations (see DVD example 8, figure 12 for a transcription). More advanced players added some chromaticism, often by shifting one or two notes in a chord up or down a semitone (see bars 10-11 in figure 18). The bass was often the chord's root although more advanced players added a sense of melody and chromaticism into their bass movement (bass movement of bars 1-9 in figure 18). Rhythm tended to be limited to a 4/4 crotchet pattern for ballads or a syncopated 2/4 or 4/4 čardáš rhythm for faster songs.

CD example 9 (transcription in figure 18) of the band Gypsy Amor playing *Kaj Džava* (Ro; Where are you going?) on their third recording in 2004 (Gipsy Records, Czech Republic) with Janko Ferenc playing the saxophone solo, exemplifies many of the points in the previous paragraph. After the typical four bar rhythmic introduction setting a rapid speed, the melody is introduced vocally in a mostly undecorated form, with a countermelody predominantly a third below. A traditional feature maintained is introducing the first line (bars 1-2) with a solo voice and vocal harmony joining in from the second line (bars 3-5). (The synthesiser set to an accordion-like sound is reminiscent of a traditional sound). The melody is within the span of an octave and a semitone, entirely diatonic, employing mostly stepwise movement after the initial leap of a perfect 5th, retaining the traditional slide up from the raised leading note to the tonic at the cadence point (bars 4-5). Typically, there is only a small amount of melodic material, which is repeated many times, the verse using an AABBABBA structure (see figure 18), the 32 bars irregularly split into 5+5+3+3+5+3+3+5 bars, rather than the more usual division into 4 and 8 bar

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[4] A typical line up might be vocalist + keyboard, vocalist + guitar, bass, drummer. More commercially successful Rompop could afford to have more players, singers and different instruments.

[5] It was seen as much more difficult to play acoustic instruments amongst Ostrava Roma. The only fashionable acoustic instruments in Rompop bands in Ostrava were the saxophone and drum kit, although keyboards often provided drumbeats and imitated a saxophone sound. Guitars and basses were always electric.

phrases. The basic harmony changes each bar following a I I IV V I structure in section A and in section B modulates to the relative major via a pivot chord VI/IV followed by the dominant and tonic in the new key. There is harmonic decoration in chromatically altered chords in bars 2 and 7: E minor is chromatically altered to F diminished, and G sharp diminished provides a chromatic transition between C major and D major. The melody and harmony do not alter on any of the repeats or in any of the three verses. Rhythms feature offbeat quaver syncopation, often pre-empting the beat (for example, bars 3-4), adding to a sense of hurrying, vivacious excitement.

Between the verses, the saxophone takes over with a more rhythmically active, decorated form of the melody, over the same time frame and harmonic structure. Janko was very proud of the saxophone part in thirds, as he played both parts for the recording, something he considered innovative. He adds chromatic decoration by slipping down a semitone and up again (bar 11) and changes the rhythm in section B to a crotchet triplet (bar 18), giving a more expansive feel to this section. It is a very tightly controlled improvisation (perhaps partly because of having to record both saxophone parts) that is almost identical on every repeat, although between verses 2 and 3, the pulse is accelerated to prepare for the final verse. During Janko's solo, the vocal "hup hup" on offbeats is a traditional feature that indicates enjoyment, and although not applicable here was also a traditional way to speed up a pulse (here done on the synthesiser). The ending is a Rompop cliché, landing on chords I V I in a staccato crotchet motion with the melody going from tonic to leading note to tonic, followed by I V I at half speed, in a heavier, more final manner with the melody going up to the dominant and coming back to the tonic via either the subdominant or leading note.

Figure 18: transcription of *Kaj Džava*

The vast majority of Rompop songs are ballads or *čardáše*. During my fieldwork, the *hallgató* form had fallen out of existence in Rompop, with the exception of the occasional introduction on the keyboard that referenced the traditional freestyle arpeggiated dulcimer accompaniment to *hallgató*, functioning as a kind of atmospheric introduction to a fast song (I witnessed this only twice). The monophony of traditional Romani folk music has been superseded by harmony that in its basic form involves singing at the interval of a third or sixth below the melody line, but at its most complicated involves a deep familiarity with Classical-Romantic functional harmony or jazz chords.[6] I suggest that in the Rompop played in Ostrava, rhythm has remained traditional, with duple time rhythms always favoured over triple, due to the *čardáš* style dancing often performed to Rompop, which necessitates duple time. Contemporary Rompop melodies ignored characteristic melodic features in Romani folk music such as the combination

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[6] During my fieldwork, I noticed that when girls, in particular, wished to sing their favourite Rompop hits together informally, they often used a monophonic style when there was no accompaniment available or if they did not have the skills to sing in harmony.

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of the raised seventh below the tonic and flattened seventh above, keeping strictly to diatonic sounds. Below are two further examples of Rompop melodies, introduced and taught to me by Janko Ferenc.

Figure 19: transcription of *Keď som išiel ces Košice sam* (Sl; When I walked through Košice alone)

Figure 20: transcription of *Nebola si celý tiž den doma* (Sl; Don't be in pain the whole day at home)
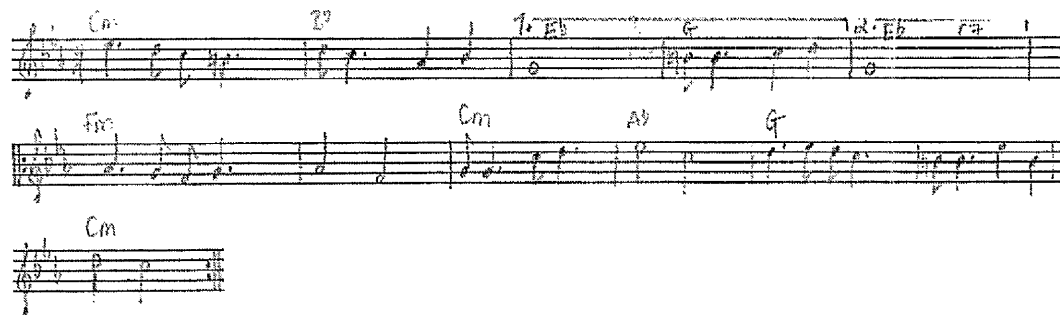
One of the biggest changes in Romani music during the last few decades has been the composition of new melodies and lyrics for which the composers and authors take credit and financial remuneration, in contrast to the anonymity of most traditional Romani folk song composition.[7] I encountered local bands that mostly played songs from cassettes of successful Rompop bands featuring in the third category.[8] In this context, they claimed a reinterpreted folksong, a new arrangement of a Rompop song, or the writing of new lyrics as their own "compositions". This accounted for the initially confusing claims that all Rompop bands played

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[7] Amongst the Vlach Roma, it was more common to know who composed a particular folksong, partly because songs were often composed in relation to specific personal life circumstances, although traditionally they would have been unlikely to gain financial reward for their efforts (interview with Rafael 2004, Stojka et al. 2000;87,95).

[8] Bands in Ostrava did not play songs from bands in the first two categories, partly because they were not familiar with this kind of Rompop.

different songs, despite my obvious experience to the contrary, for the important thing was that each band played the songs in their own way, either through their own arrangements, lyrics or style, not that their starting point (a cassette recording) was the same.[9]

In the past, professional Romani musicians made the bulk of their income playing mostly non-Romani music for non-Roma. However, in the case of Rompop in Ostrava, Romani musicians have taken elements from non-Romani and Romani culture and made something specifically Romani, which they are able to sell to other Roma. In Ostrava, a large number of young Roma, almost all men, were involved in playing Rompop for which they had a deep commitment, demonstrated by the many hours they devoted to rehearsing. However, they were also desperately seeking opportunities to make money from their passion and often discussed the possibilities.

Most Rompop bands on the Ostrava semi-professional circuit had members in their late teens or twenties. There were less Rompop musicians in their thirties, and very few over forty. Bands of teenagers mostly played at community centre events and occasionally at lower profile local festivals. Young adult bands dominated Romani clubs (bars and clubs which had an exclusively Romani attendance), more high profile community centre events and open-air local public festivals. Bands with slightly older members often had more established connections with regular large parties and even medium profile festivals for non-Roma. However, during my fieldwork in Ostrava, there were rarely opportunities to play outside the Romani community and when there were at local festivals, around three times a year, there was not any payment on offer.

The production and circulation of most Rompop occurred separately from other kinds of music.[10] The vast majority of Rompop listened to by Ostrava Roma was disseminated outside mainstream record stores, via audiocassettes in second-hand shops, and local bands using the material on these cassettes. Although Rompop cassettes were bought in second hand shops, they were brand new.[11] On entering the shop, the cassettes had to be requested, and a selection was brought out from under the counter. What was on offer depended on the time of the month, as new batches arrived at the beginning of each month and the most popular cassettes were bought

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[9] This resonates closely with Pettan's findings that performance style is much more important than repertoire in "Romani music" (1992, 2000). Pettan's study of different interpretations of the *Lambada* by Romani and non-Romani Kosovan bands demonstrates how important it is for Romani bands to use already extant songs as their starting point rather than something to be reproduced as closely as possible (1992).

[10] A small amount of Rompop has entered the mainstream through labels such as Kampa and Universal Music (Věra Bílá), Xantypa (Ida Kelarová and Romano Rat), and Indies Records (Iva Bittová, Terne Chave, Gulo Čar).

[11] One of the main producers of Rompop cassettes for sale in Ostrava was Gipsy Records, who recorded at Studio Květa (in Bučovice, near Brno).

up early in the first week. Cassettes were sold for approximately 120 crowns,[12] and although mainstream artists sold cassettes in record stores in towns for at least double that, Rompop cassettes were certainly not considered cheap amongst their consumers. The overwhelming majority of Rompop consumers considered themselves Romani, and because around 80% of them in Ostrava were unemployed (Farnam 2002) and reliant on state social support that left precious little after rent and bills, there was a much wider circulation through bootleg copies exchanged with friends and family.

There was a particular format for Rompop cassette covers (see figures 21 and 22): they stated the band name, the number of the cassette released by that band, and the town in which they were based (for example, Gypsy Amor 3, Orlová). Amongst listeners, bands were identified by their name, or more frequently by their location. A band called Gypsy Amor based in Orlová may be known simply as Orlová. Rompop bands outside the mainstream all begin their names with Gypsy, the foreign word giving the band status.[13] Cassette covers were brightly coloured, produced with cheap materials, and usually featured pictures of the band members or lead performer. The pictures were always posed and usually very serious looking (see figure 21). Being serious (Cz: *vážný*) was a quality highly valued by Roma, implying that you will get things done and keep your word: projecting the image of being serious may help in procuring work.

Cassette covers often referenced ideas of mainstream success, such as financial wealth and foreign travel: one particular cover features the guitarist of Gypsy Koro wearing sunglasses and holding a Spanish guitar, superimposed onto a idyllic, Mediterranean-looking backdrop (see figure 22), certainly perceived as a symbol of success (particularly bearing in mind that most Czech Roma had never seen the sea in person). Inside the cover, there was a list of song titles, members of the band and their instruments (see figures 21 and 22). If the melodies or texts were composed by somebody, that was noted as well. There was never any extra information about the band or the songs. This was unnecessary because consumers usually knew about the band through word of mouth and in my experience did not have any interest in the background to songs. There was no date of recording, only the name of the company, the studio's contact details, and an advertisement for receiving cassettes cash on delivery (Cz: *zaslání na dobírku*).

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[12] Approximately £3 at the time of writing
[13] Examples of band names include Gypsy Koro, Gipsy Milan Tancoš and Gypsy Daktar. Spelling varied between Gypsy and Gipsy. I was often consulted on what would be a good English name for a band, providing evaluations of names such as Gypsy Crazy, Gypsy Boys and so on.

Figure 21: cassette cover of Gypsy Amor

Figure 22: cassette cover of Gypsy Koro

In Ostrava, I found that Rompop bands were most often formed through local male family contacts. The reasons for this were partly circumstantial, for local male relatives were likely to spend time together, have had exposure to the same songs, and perhaps already have had some experience making music and dancing together. (Furthermore, this was traditionally how bands were formed). It was explained to me that another reason bands tended to be family based was that the finances were less tense if the money stayed within the family, although that certainly did not always mean financial harmony between band members.

In Ostrava, women were not included in Romani bands, at least partly because they usually started having children at the age of 16 or 17 and were expected to stay at home full-time with young children. During my fieldwork, it was often said that having children was the most important thing, and it would be incomprehensible for girls to prioritise music or dancing over

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having a family by the time they reached this age.[14] One teenage girl composed songs on the keyboard, but was never invited to join a band, and her sister was a talented singer and guitarist but had no interest in playing publicly. Jitka (aged 15) was asked to be a singer in a local Romani band, but in the end her father banned her from participating. It was neither traditional nor usual for females to play musical instruments and even less common for them to play in bands.

There was rarely an inter-generational element in Rompop band members (in contrast to traditional dulcimer bands),[15] and bands often focused around male relatives, with friends joining as needs dictated. As families in Ostrava have become increasingly divided, there were less family-based bands and more bands based around local community centres: in Ostrava, families perceived themselves as living far apart from relatives if they were living in a different part of the Czech Republic, or indeed if they merely lived in another district of Ostrava. Some families remembered when they all lived on the same street, but owing to financial and housing pressures, families were often required to move frequently, according to their changing financial circumstances and because their flats and houses often had severe structural problems, hence the perceived increasing division of families.

The main way a local Rompop band earned money was at parties. In Ostrava, the vast majority of parties were family celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, Christenings, less often funerals, and more rarely, weddings.[16] The band was often chosen because of a family connection: money involved would to some extent be kept within the family, the contact and arrangements would be easier, and the price was likely to be less. I found that Roma were very proud of any musicians in their family and liked to hear them play.

In my experience, musicians were unwilling to say how much they earned from playing unless they felt it was a good amount of money. They were very conscious of maximising their status and future income and so secrecy about past income was important if it was little. I found most Romani people very eager to talk about money, down to the exact crown of their social support money, electricity bill, or clothes and food bought. Musicians who spoke freely about money could suddenly become reserved about exact payments for gigs, unless they wished to emphasise how much they earned from a particular performance. There was extremely intense

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[14] My own childless situation at age 26 and living away from my partner in order to conduct research into music, was met with incomprehension by Roma in Ostrava. Conversely, being unmarried was seen as quite normal and understandable, as weddings were expensive and marriage an extra piece of bureaucracy.

[15] I noticed that brothers and cousins sometimes played together who had as much as a 20-year age gap, so although not of a different generation, there were sometimes wide disparities in the ages of performers.

[16] Celebrations were usually strictly for close family, for that usually provided more than enough guests (I found that most family parties included around 40-50 people). Sometimes close friends were invited, particularly if the family was for some reason smaller than usual.

competition between Rompop bands and far too little work available, mostly low paid or voluntary, leading to a system whereby Rompop bands repeatedly undercut each other to secure a gig for extremely little money.[17] Competing bands often verbally insulted each other, calling others weak (Cz: *slabé*) or criticising their lack of rhythm or tempo, in the hope of obtaining work for themselves.

5.2 Discos and Parties

The family parties (Cz: *zábavy*) I attended in Ostrava conformed to a pattern. On the basis of attending around 30 parties, I found that they were almost all held in Romani community centres, as these were the only affordable, sizable rooms available for hire to Roma, although if someone were fortunate enough to have a large flat then that would be the preferred option. The band set up in the venue in the morning and usually practiced from then until shortly before guests arrived, who came in small groups from about 2pm until 6pm or even later. On arrival they were served a large meal, often beginning with goulash soup followed by meat, sauce and dumplings, each plate brought out as a guest sat down.[18] A group of female relatives would be responsible for preparing and serving all the food. Copious amounts of vodka and Fernet (a Czech spirit) would start being consumed, at first quietly and relatively slowly, gaining momentum as the evening progressed. Vodka was the preferred beverage, drunk in the form of a toast, *Na zdraví* (Cz; to your health). You could toast anybody at any time in order to drink, although often at least a few others toasted at the same time. During this early part, there would be live and/or pre-recorded music.

When most guests had arrived, eaten and consumed a substantial quantity of alcohol, the dancing started, often led by the person whose celebration it was. People tended to dance or rest as they felt necessary, although it was usually men who asked women to dance for couple dancing. Many women danced with each other and often groups of three or four women were made, alleviating any problem of gender imbalance or needing an invitation to dance. There were usually breaks in the live Romani music for pre-recorded international pop, when people danced on their own or as part of a large group.

In my experience, one of the most important things at Romani parties was for bands to play songs with which people were familiar. Bands were harshly judged on their choice of

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[17] From an amalgam of conversations, I understood that local Rompop musicians often received as little as a few hundred crowns each (between £5 and £8 at the time of writing) for performing music at parties lasting as long as 16 hours. For Roma hosting the parties, this was an enormous amount of money to pay (perhaps over 1000 crowns for a band).

[18] Roma never sat down to eat together for any meal, eating when they were hungry or when they arrived somewhere.

repertoire, and new songs could only be introduced gradually, in between familiar ones. Guests should be able to join in singing, especially during well-known ballads that expressed commonly felt sentiments or offered comfort, for example, *Nemusiš sa bat'* (Sl; you don't have to be afraid). One experienced musician in Ostrava told me that for him, one of the secrets to musical popularity at a Rompop party was to start by playing something certain to engage all the older people present, but then make sure that absolutely everybody's tastes were catered for, it being important to play a mixture of songs that allowed people to dance fast and slow, sing along at various points, and be driven to tears of sadness as well as joy in the same evening.

All generations were represented at family parties, although after midnight, people started to take younger children home or found somewhere for them to sleep. Parties usually went on all night, with the very last leaving at five or six o'clock in the morning. A lot of stamina was required and people alternately rested, ate, drank and danced. After the initial cooked meal, a buffet was there for grazing on throughout the night. The food provided was far too much, for the embarrassment and social stigma of under-catering was understood to be terrible.

During my fieldwork, Romani family parties conformed to this pattern to a remarkable extent, whether the party was for someone's 6th or 70th birthday, Christening or anniversary. If it was somebody's birthday celebration, there was usually a presentation of gifts after the dancing had been going for a while, and the celebrant would stand to receive gifts from a line of relatives who used standard Czech greetings at birthdays.[19] The celebrant danced with all the relatives there of the opposite sex. If the party was for a Christening, people stopped the dancing during the evening to make a group toast to the baby. I did not attend any weddings because there were not any while I was in Ostrava. It was explained to me that Roma could no longer afford weddings in Ostrava and mostly settled for cohabitation. As the majority of Roma perceived little need for formal Catholicism outside birth and death rituals, getting married was often viewed as expensive and bureaucratic, involving far too many administrative problems. Young Roma often told me that they preferred not to marry anyway, although I was told quietly of people's desires to marry, frustrated by lack of money, a venue and occasionally parental blessing.[20]

Roma described to me weddings that they had been to in previous years. An aspect unique to wedding celebrations was the bride and groom dancing together whilst all the guests pinned money to the bride (this was a source of great worry for Roma who were concerned not to

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[19] For example, *hodně stěstí, zdraví a spokojenosti* (Cz; I wish you happiness, health and contentment)

[20] One unmarried couple I knew well could not get married because the man's family did not have any money and the woman's family were wealthier and light skinned and wanted her to marry a non-Rom or a light skinned Rom. They would not pay for a wedding with her partner and cut off all contact with her for five years during which time she gave birth to three children. It was only since January 2004 that contact was tentatively renewed.

look mean but did not have much to give). At midnight, the bride "disappeared" with some of her young female relatives. The groom with his young male relatives would have to "find" her, usually in a club by prearrangement, and they would be reunited to dance the night away there with other young adults. The actual church ceremony was described as short and not requiring the attendance of guests, something to be done quickly in order to pass onto the important business of the party.

Romani family parties that deviated from standard procedures mostly did so due to lack of financial resources. For example, a band may not have been hired in order to reduce the cost and music would only be played from a stereo. The Botoš family included many musically talented members and could not afford a band, so when they held a party, they used a combination of pre-recorded music and involved everybody performing in some way for the others, either by singing or playing an instrument. Two parties I attended featured pre-recorded music all night, but conformed to the pattern of playing mostly Rompop, interspersed with international pop music.

During my fieldwork, family parties were a source of great excitement, to be looked forward to for months beforehand and talked about for a short while after. Each party I attended displayed a sequence of emotions: at first, with the exception of the children, people were subdued, calmly eating, drinking, toasting and joking a little. As the alcohol took effect, people were more exuberant and louder, and eventually they started to dance. The exuberance became increasingly pronounced until most people were quite intoxicated and the dancing was wild and even out of control. It was usually about this time that people started to remember their problems, perhaps absent children, family in jail or deceased family members, and became upset or angry, perhaps crying. Some people listened to these outbursts and others carried on dancing in high spirits, unperturbed. Often, arguments broke out between couples, old and young, and other members of the family sometimes provided an audience and support. (They often explained to me that I should not worry because it "always happens"). After these explosive, public outbursts, high spirits were usually restored as sympathy was given, tears dried and couples reunited to dance. There was a sense of catharsis, which usually resulted in restored and renewed family relations. Only once did somebody storm off into the night not to return, and on one occasion a physical fight started.[21] I found that this emotional pattern was not understood as a conscious ritual amongst Roma, even though it occurred at every party I attended.

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[21] One small family party I attended ended with much furniture, glasses and the garden fence broken and one man in hospital. With so much unemployment, poverty and frustration, there was much for people to become distraught over, especially under the influence of copious amounts of vodka.

The only Christening party I attended was in the Hrušov community centre at the invitation of one of the band members playing at the party (who lived in the Co-existence Village). The family hosting the party was a well-known Slovak Romani family in Ostrava.[22] The actual Christening was done at one o'clock in the Catholic Church next to the community centre with only the parents and godparents in attendance; the whole ceremony was over in 20 minutes.[23] Although the ceremony was regarded as crucial, the focus of the day was the party, which was seen as the Romani part.

The party conformed to the standard pattern of Romani parties in Ostrava, starting with copious eating and drinking at tables to the accompaniment of *čardáš* and ballad Rompop hits, interspersed with pre-recorded pop music that gave a chance for the band to eat and drink as well. Dancing had started slowly from about six o'clock. There was much *čardáš* dancing, often in couples and sometimes in small groups: other simpler styles for those who were less skilled included holding your partner's hands and stepping from side to side. Slow dances were performed in ballroom hold. After a few hours of fairly sedate dancing and drinking, everyone had become quite intoxicated from the alcohol. One woman started crying about her sons who were either in jail or living outside Ostrava, one couple had started arguing, and one man had stormed off into the night in anger about a family dispute. Nevertheless, the atmosphere was soon restored when the couple made up and the woman had been comforted, and everyone was dancing again. To everyone's amusement, one particularly intoxicated woman took over the microphone and everyone crowded round to dance wildly, sometimes falling over.

By the end of the party, the band were also extremely drunk, and as they accompanied me home they raved about how many songs they knew and what a success they had been. One member claimed to know over 200 songs; however, during the previous 16 hours during which I had been present throughout, they cannot have played more then 40 songs, some repeated as many as four times. Although musicians were expected to drink, eat and enjoy themselves during a party, there was disapproval from the hosts that some of the musicians had become incapacitated from alcohol. In this case, band members were not part of the family: Franta (vocals and bass), who was at the time in charge of the music room at the Hrušov community centre, had been asked by one of the family members who also worked at the centre, to provide music. He

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[22] There were three brothers and their families, one of whom had done well financially. The other two had not and they and their families often relied on him for financial support for parties and many other things. He was paying for the party and about halfway through the evening repeatedly pointed this out, contrasting his financial situation with that of his brothers. One of the brothers was a househusband whose wife went to work at one of the community centres and he was the object of much hilarity on account of his domestic role, which was still almost always fulfilled by females amongst Ostrava Roma.

[23] I later saw a video of the ceremony.

had invited his brother (guitar), cousin (keyboard and vocals), his cousin's contact (vocals) and a more distant relation (keyboard) to play, and they had spent an entire day the weekend before rehearsing for the party. Although they were not an established band, they had much repertoire in common and could quickly pick up new songs by ear that conformed to the expected patterns of Rompop.[24]

The other main context for Rompop was at community centre discos. At the Přivoz community centre, there was a *disko* (Cz) every Saturday afternoon where local Rompop bands played, interspersed with pre-recorded international pop music. Although these events were primarily for Romani youth, they were still multi-generational: mothers, fathers and even grandparents came and sat on chairs around the edges of the dance floor. Those dancing ranged from toddlers to people in their late twenties. Roma came from all over Ostrava for these discos, although the majority came from the street that the community centre was on, which at one end was a rundown ghetto of Romani families. Other community centres held their own discos, mostly once a month on Friday evenings. In a similar way, there was adult supervision and pop music, but most of the music was pre-recorded American/international pop and there were never any live bands.

At the Přivoz community centre, there were two strands to the disco, Rompop and international pop, reflected in *čardáš* and ballad slow dancing style to the Rompop, and disco dancing to international pop. Different local bands from Ostrava played each week. The bands and certain musicians within them had informal groups of admirers who crowded round when bands were practicing and stood as close as possible to their preferred musician when he was performing (sometimes one area of a room could become very crowded). The musicians and admirers alike were all young males. Some of the admirers were budding musicians who were trying to pick up and understand as much as possible by standing close to good performers.

One Saturday there was a "battle of the bands" competition, a format taken from the U.S. and Western Europe. The vast majority of bands played Rompop, although a few played versions of western pop but with Czech lyrics (for example, versions of Michael Jackson's songs were popular). The winner was decided on a combination of audience reaction and a panel of judges who were the community centre leaders, and received a modest cash prize. Even though "battle of the bands" is not a traditional Romani format and the event incorporated non-Romani songs and ideas, it was perceived as a thoroughly Romani event, mostly because all the competitors were

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[24] At their request, I tried to teach a simple Klezmer tune to Franta and his brother, Honza, which they could not pick up and thought extremely complicated. They could pick up a comparably difficult Rompop song without any problem.

Romani, they were mostly playing songs perceived as Romani, and even non-Romani songs were interpreted in a Rompop band format.

In Přívoz, people danced in groups of similar ages during the disco dancing, but most *čardáš* dancing was in couples of male-female partners if possible (often of dissimilar ages) although there were often female-female pairs. Conforming to tradition, males always led couple dancing, even if the female was much older or taller (see DVD example 9, which was shot at a Saturday afternoon disco in Přívoz community centre, showing the different couple dancing taking place there). Males tended not to dance with each other, unless they were trying to be comic. At his 40th birthday party, Miroslav appeared mid-evening wearing a woman's wig, dress and shoes. He firstly chose men to dance with, to the accompaniment of giggles and shouts that appeared to indicate enjoyment as well as a sense that Miroslav was doing something *risqué*. Roma in Ostrava did not automatically shun homosexuals or transvestites,[25] yet acceptance was limited and many Roma spoke of homosexuals and transvestites negatively. Most Roma knew at least one Romani homosexual and tended to regard them at best as unfortunate or worse, a shame (Cz: *ostuda*). Miroslav's transvestite performance so thoroughly amused everyone, partly because he was married and his heterosexuality was not in question: afterwards he changed back to his usual clothes and other younger males continued the *risqué* role-playing.

One particularly slim and delicate-looking young male Rom who could dance very well, was taken onto the dance floor by a heavier built man who proceeded to dance with him as if he was a woman, to the delight of others. The more delicate Rom danced with grace and agility, and his partner clearly enjoyed dancing with him. When it was done as a joke, people showed their approval, especially when they were simulating attraction for each other and it appeared reminiscent of overacted romantic films. This kind of display of sexual attraction would not happen during serious Romani dancing and Roma associated it with the embarrassing behaviour of white people who they felt overexposed themselves and acted too sexually in public. When the couple continued dancing with each other for many dances simply because they were enjoying themselves, the approval disappeared. Apart from anything else, I noticed that it was not polite to dance with the same partner for many dances in a row at Romani parties.

At Romani children's summer camps, there was usually a big party towards the end of the week and children were encouraged to dress up. At least a few boys (usually between about 8 and 12) cross-dressed, with stereotypical props such as make-up, short skirts, high heels, large fake breasts and a low neckline. This was always greeted with much hilarity and support from all. Romani women were not in the least offended, perhaps because they would never dress like that,

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[25] Transexuals were unknown to them, except perhaps on the television.

and had often helped the boys with their costumes. Role-playing was generally encouraged amongst Romani children, whether it was playing a doctor, priest or someone of the opposite sex.

I only encountered one example of theatrical cross-dressing by a woman, which I noticed was greeted with less approval and some obvious discomfort. Many parties I attended included some understood comic moments of men simulating sexual attraction for each other and dancing together. In contrast, female-female couple dancing was considered normal, and in my experience Romani females did not simulate sexual attraction for each other to be comic. The fact that many Roma were in long-term heterosexual relationships, had children from their late-teens, and that heterosexuality was assumed unless proved otherwise, meant that gender role-playing at parties was a safe and controlled way of playing with the boundaries of sexual behaviour that were otherwise strictly maintained during everyday life.[26]

Parties and discos were nearly the only times when Roma could hear live Rompop, get together with large numbers of their family and/or community, drink a large amount of vodka without any slur on their reputation, dance, achieve emotional catharsis in a controlled, mostly supportive, public environment, and safely play with established social boundaries such as those concerning gender and sexuality. Rompop usually provided an undemanding, familiar background to family parties and discos, which was understood and danced to by all generations present. Rompop was a vehicle for solidarity at celebrations, expressing easily comprehensible emotions and musical ideas that were co-opted into the emotional patterns of family celebrations.

5.3 Profile on Janko, his family and Gypsy Imre

Janko categorised musicians into two groups, good and bad. He did not find stylistic categorisations such as Rompop to be relevant. Like many traditional Romani musicians, he saw his strength in potentially being able to play any kind of music well, in contrast to many local musicians who usually confined themselves to Rompop. Nevertheless, demand meant that Janko mostly played Rompop with Rompop bands at larger parties across the region, for which there was significant remuneration (by the time I knew him he was not interested in playing for smaller, less well-paid events). At home with his brother-in-law and Gypsy Imre,[27] Janko played an eclectic mixture of Romani folk songs, Hungarian *nóta*, Rompop, Slovak pop, tango, Czech

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[26] I found that as I was often the only non-family member at these parties, I received much unwanted sexual attention from males. I was expected to fend for myself on these occasions and my actions were observed closely. Sometimes, older women offered me refuge sitting next to them. I rarely experienced unwanted sexual attention from Romani males outside party environments and it never took a physical form.

[27] Named after a Hungarian Romani violinist. No more information was forthcoming.

schmaltz, film music, musette music, jazz, folk and anything else that he happened to be attracted to or come across.

This varied repertoire was interpreted in a fairly homogenous style, whereby melody was the most important aspect, presented in a basic form with some embellishments and then improvised upon. The harmony was always based around conventionally diatonic harmony, with some concessions to features associated with jazz, tango, pop and so on. In some ways, Gypsy Imre was a typical "Gypsy band" playing a combination of Romani and non-Romani music - whatever they thought was attractive - to non-Romani audiences for financial gain. In other ways they were very untypical, partly due to Jiři's intellectual interest in Romani music and his promotion of the band as playing specifically Romani music, meaning that there was an emphasis on performing Romani folksongs and Hungarian *nóta* (also perceived as "Gypsy music"). Jiři dissuaded Janko and Štefan from playing the jazz and *schmaltz* numbers that they often wished to, as he knew that the sort of artistic, liberal non-Romani audiences they were mostly playing to were attracted to the "exoticism" or perceived foreignness of Romani music. These audiences were unlikely to be impressed by their ability to play jazz or well-known numbers, flying in the face of Janko and other "Gypsy bands'" traditional rationale of playing mostly well-known non-Romani music to non-Romani audiences.[28] Furthermore, the combination of two Roma and two non-Roma (one Czech and one British) with intellectual interests in Romani music, was perceived by everyone as extraordinary.[29]

I first met Janko on 26 September 2003 at the opening night of an art exhibition in the small town of Hlučín, a few kilometres northwest of Ostrava. To celebrate the opening, there was an evening of contemporary Czech poetry with musical interludes from Gypsy Imre: Janko on alto saxophone, his brother-in-law, Štefan, on accordion and a non-Romani Czech man, Jiři, on violin. I was surprised to see them playing at an elitist, contemporary art exhibition opening, as I had been led to believe that Romani music was of little interest to the majority ethnic Czech population and the Roma were extremely culturally segregated in Ostrava. This was true; however, I was later to discover the unusual circumstances of Gypsy Imre.

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[28] My view of the audiences was confirmed by conversations in the pub after concerts and experiences collaborating with a literary circle that were highly represented at these events for music and poetry projects. I felt that Janko's and Štefan's misreading of their non-Romani audiences was symptomatic of the increasing separation that has occurred between Romani and non-Romani communities in Ostrava.

[29] Although there are examples of Roma and non-Roma playing together in Communist party organised folk festivals and contemporary Rompop groups such as *Alom*, no such bands existed in Ostrava as far as I knew when I was there. Gypsy Imre provoked surprise from Roma and non-Roma alike, because we were thought to be too far apart culturally and socially. Although it was unusual, though not unknown, for Roma and non-Roma to collaborate culturally when I was in Ostrava, it was unknown for them to collaborate through "Romani music".

They had formed following the collaboration of Štefan and Jiři who had met whilst playing informally in an Ostrava pub some two years previously. A few months before I met them, Janko had been invited to join and they had been doing regular gigs and concerts since, all arranged by Jiři, who as well as being a semi-professional violinist, was a journalist and literary magazine editor. The fact that Jiři had many contacts in the local contemporary artistic scene explained why Romani musicians were playing in an exclusively non-Romani art exhibition: Jiři was acting as a guarantor for Janko and Štefan amongst suspicious non-Roma, enabling "safe" contact with "Romani culture" for select artistic audiences. Without Jiři or another similar figure, such opportunities would not be available amongst non-Roma, and their acoustic sound was not in demand amongst Romani audiences.[30]

The next time I met Janko and Štefan was at their house a few days later. Janko's father owned a house in the north of Ostrava, and it was divided into three semi-private flats: one for Janko and his wife, Růžena; one for Štefan, his wife, Alžběta, and their five children; and one for the father, Janko's other sister and her daughter. It was more shack than house, which appeared to have been hastily constructed and did not have insulation, heating or a hot water system. There was a sizable scrap yard outside, protected by a high fence with a broken door, all of which were the objects of Romani and non-Romani neighbours' complaints. People said derisively that it looked like part of a Slovak Romani settlement, somewhere many Ostrava Roma had been glad to leave behind. The inside was furnished with old, cheap items, always fastidiously clean, and cheerfully decorated with plastic flowers, plastic fruit, frilly tablecloths, pictures of the Virgin Mary and colourful pottery figures. Štefan, Jiři, Janko and myself squeezed into Janko's flat to play, along with several interested children. Růžena immediately provided us with coffee and cake, and later insisted I ate chicken and potatoes because I must be hungry. Although I was mostly unaware at the time of the theatrical element to this meeting, later I understood that one of their charms was second-guessing what you are feeling, hopefully in order to establish a special connection.[31]

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[30] After the event, the band approached me, having found out who I was. At first, I was viewed as a potential ticket to England and the band was very friendly, inviting me to join them in a nearby pub to play. I had brought my French horn with me and contrary to my fears, there was not any question that the French horn was inappropriate or untraditional. They had not seen one before, but merely wished to know if it was loud, that being a positive characteristic. I did my best to jam along, but eventually gave up through exhaustion from not knowing the repertoire or much of their style. Janko was quick to express his regret that I did not know the songs and immediately offered to coach me. He said he did not want to teach me anything at that moment, because it would look bad in front of other people in the pub, and he did not want to give away any "secrets" publicly.

[31] Guessing that I was hungry after being there for four hours, or that I was slightly shy of playing my French horn in front of them, were safe suppositions, but were presented as if they had a special power for seeing inside me. The same process was enacted when I later introduced other people to them.

Janko was born in 1960 in Spišská Nová Ves (East Slovakia) but moved to Ostrava with his family in time to start school.[32] They moved because his father, whom they simply called *starý* (Cz; old) in place of his name, came to seek work in the mines. After the minimum of schooling, Janko became a labourer on a construction site. Later he worked making windscreens for buses and cars. When he was 17, he married Růžena and had four children (two now living in Slovakia, two in Ostrava).[33] When he was about 19, Janko spent two years in a medium security prison, after beating up a man in a fight. He talked about his time in prison mostly in terms of how he had managed to have a better existence than most by talking nicely to the kitchen workers, and exchanging cigarettes for favours and better food, an example of intelligence for which he often congratulated himself.

Janko did not start the saxophone until he was 21 although he had played the guitar since the age of eight. Janko was part of the Ferenc family, who were known for their musical abilities, although not considered amongst the most renowned. His youngest sister, Alžběta, had married Štefan Žiga, who was part of a well-known Slovak Romani musical family (based in Levoča), which was a source of jealousy. Neither Štefan nor Janko had received formal music lessons, although both had grown up around music played and sung by their family, and their fathers played the accordion and saxophone respectively.

Štefan had been encouraged to imitate his father on the accordion and in turn encouraged his eldest son, also called Štefan (age five), to imitate him. During my fieldwork, although the boy could not yet play, he learned to hold an accordion and simulate all the necessary movements associated with playing, and was growing up surrounded by the songs that his father hoped he would eventually learn. All of Janko and Štefan's children had danced and sang to the music played in the family home from an early age. When there was a moment to relax and make music as a family, Alžběta sometimes sang and danced with the other female members of the family, encouraging the children to join in. Štefan's eldest child, Věra (age eight), was starting to learn the violin, but because there was no great violin player within the immediate family or vicinity,

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[32] Janko was one of the only grassroots Roma with whom I did a formal interview. This was partly because he was an eccentric man, who freely leaped from topic to topic, and so despite seeing him several times a week for six months I was left confused about basic biographical details. Furthermore, Janko was one of the only Romani adults in Ostrava who welcomed being formally interviewed.

[33] Janko was a grandfather ten times over, reserving special affection for his youngest grandson, born to his youngest daughter and her non-Romani partner. Having a non-Romani partner did not cause any friction, indeed was considered a good thing and a step up in the world. Indeed, anticipating my having children, many Roma suggested that I should consider encouraging a match between these hypothetical children and their own. This relates to traditional Romani ways of arranging marriages and although this no longer happened formally amongst the Slovak Roma in Ostrava, parents still encouraged, cajoled and wished for certain matches.

she was starting to take lessons at a local music school, which was very unusual for Romani children in contemporary Ostrava.[34]

Janko claimed that no one had taught him anything on the guitar and that it was his idea to learn the major, minor and seventh chords in every key, and his initiative to practice scales and chords for four hours a day. When he had started to learn the saxophone, he already knew all the scales, chords and a considerable amount of repertoire, yet retained his regime of scales and chords, only playing a few songs in between. When he had had a job, he had come straight home to practice.

One of Janko's brothers also played the guitar, another the keyboard and his sons played the saxophone and keyboard, but there was not a Ferenc family band, as was common in other musician families. Although I was never given a direct reason for this, I surmised that problems lay in how geographically far apart most of the family had become and the lack of money for everyone to have an instrument, as instruments were bought, sold, borrowed and shared, as family fortunes fluctuated, these days mostly between poor and completely broke. Furthermore, the nature of this family's relations was very strained. It suffices to say that problems of poverty, physical and mental illness, unemployment, racial discrimination, personal jealousies, domestic violence, alcoholism, cramped living conditions and lack of education, had all taken their toll on family relations.

Janko had lost his job in the mass unemployment that swept the region in 1996 and had been receiving social benefit ever since. He was very unhappy about this, because he was used to being employed and having a certain amount of financial freedom. Janko said that when he was working, he had accumulated a fair amount of money and had even had the luxury of smashing his saxophone when enraged, only to buy a new one. He and his wife estimated he must have broken over 20 saxophones. He could not afford to behave like this in the last few years and merely simulated breaking his saxophone in moments of anger. According to Janko, there were fewer personal jealousies under socialism, because generally people all had enough to survive and "live a little". These days, people like him were surviving on the absolute minimum of social support, with a few "business deals" or concerts for a little extra. Janko and his family often got into financial difficulties with loans and loan sharks, perhaps when they desired something more

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[34] Štefan was distantly related to Kalman (see chapter 4), but I was told that he lived too far away and was not a close enough family member to give violin lessons to Věra. Alžběta encouraged Věra to gain as many skills as possible, for she saw that it was now possible for women to have well-paid jobs outside the household and was keen for life to be better for Věra. This was also a sign of gradually developing ideas of women's liberation amongst Romani communities: Alžběta regretted having children so young, not learning different skills and languages, and not ever having had paid employment, something she thought would be personally liberating. Many Romani mothers I met in Ostrava articulated similar views.

than food and rent, or if they were helping out a friend, which resulted in long chains of loans, as everyone attempted to help out their friends by borrowing money.

Contrary to prevalent stereotypes I encountered amongst non-Roma in Ostrava, Janko and others did not enjoy receiving welfare. Even though he certainly had a lot of time to play music, he said he did not need this extra time, because he already had the basics and only needed to hear a new song once or twice before he was able to play it. His family watched a lot of television, particularly the commercial *TV Nova* channel, which had many adverts for products they were not able to buy and showed imported soap operas that presented outrageously luxurious lifestyles.[35] Consequently, like many other Roma, Janko firmly believed that if he could only acquire more money all his problems would disappear. Of course, having a job would ease some problems and give him more financial freedom, which was what he craved far more than having time to spend on music.

> It's better to work, to earn money, you know, and you have a better life, you can buy anything you want, but when you receive social support, you don't live, you aren't allowed to buy things. You're not allowed anything. But so much the better that I know how to play music... (Interview with Janko 2004)

Štefan, a qualified bricklayer, had a full-time job and could only play music in the evenings, which was a source of resentment for Janko. Štefan also had a part-time job, secured through Jiři, playing the accordion with a local theatre company. Štefan tried to keep his music jobs a secret from Janko, and Janko liked to keep Štefan in the dark about his gigs, at least until he had done them, apparently from fear of sabotage. There were strong rivalries and jealousies between them, but also a bond if threatened from the outside.

Since Janko had been made redundant, his health had declined dramatically, becoming extremely overweight and diabetic. In the past, he had gone swimming and running several times each week, but no longer had the motivation or health to exercise. His weight was a source of both pride and shame, for he enjoyed being big and "strong", yet was ashamed of his size and that he could no longer walk very far without crutches. He often tried to find solace in drinking bottles of vodka, but admitted that it made him more angry, depressed and paranoid. He seemed to fear going outside, only venturing out to play for the occasional concert, recording or rehearsal, seriously hampering his ability to make money from music. He believed that almost everyone was evil and trying to cheat or rob him and that the streets were no longer safe, taking refuge in

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[35] *TV Nova* had also been responsible for a variety of irresponsible reports regarding Romani life in Canada and England, presenting utopian images. See, for example, Culik 1997 *A Nova TV Report causes a Stampede in the Czech Republic* www.arts.gla.ac.uk/Slavonic/staff/zelezny14.html, accessed on 06/06/03.

his saxophone which he played everyday for several hours, either by himself or with the accompaniment of cassettes.

During his life, Janko has exposed himself to different types of music, mostly through copied cassettes though also through learning from his father. Apart from Hungarian *nóta*, Czech, Slovak and Romani folk and pop music, he was strongly influenced by jazz, particularly American jazz. He was always trying to slip jazz numbers into performance programmes, partly because he enjoyed playing them, but also because that was what he believed impressed people. His jazz interest extended to traditional and popular jazz classics, which influenced his interpretation of Romani melodies. Whilst playing a basic, less-decorated version of a Romani melody, his style more closely resembled older, traditional ways of playing. However, when he came to improvise on these melodies, his references to jazz become very apparent: he filled out the harmonies, assumed the pose of a jazz musician, and employed saxophone techniques often associated with jazz, such as flutter-tonguing, glissandi and holding on to extremely high vibrato notes. At the beginning of DVD example 10, as part of the band Gypsy Imre, Janko is improvising on a well-known *hallgató, Kdy zemřu půjdu do nebe* (Cz; When I die, I'll go to heaven) adding features of jazz mentioned above. It is shot at the opening of a photography exhibition in central Ostrava. The skeleton melody is presented below.

Figure 23: Transcription of the skeleton melody of *Kdy zemřu půjdu do nebe* **(Cz; When I die, I'll go to heaven)**

The violin preludes the *hallgató* with chords going to the tonic, so that the band can hear the key in which they will perform, and then begins the melody. Janko joins in at the end of the first phrase, slipping down to a third below the melody. During the second phrase, Janko plays a third below the melody for the first four notes, and then moves to the tune, adding in an interlude of an ascending D minor broken chord and descending scale during the pause between phrases. He thus takes control of the music, making the band wait for his improvisation. He plays the third phrase without any decoration until the end when he adds in semiquaver G and F sharp before the bottom B. The fourth phrase is played undecorated. Janko starts the fifth phrase with a laid-back

triplet rhythm on bottom A, swinging up to the E above in the skeleton tune via the C, D and E flat. After a fairly traditional start, Janko has by this point introduced a jazz-feel to his interpretation of the *hallgató*. Into his stride, he jumps up an octave for the sixth phrase to a long, vibrato D, then running down the scale much more quickly than usual in semiquavers to the G sharp, making slides between the final four notes, dramatically slowed down. The seventh phrase begins again on a long, vibrato top D, this time falling into an extended semiquaver and demisemiquaver run that uses all the notes of the skeleton melody (A harmonic minor). The run ends on the supertonic, going to the leading note as if to end, but not before a last semiquaver run following A harmonic minor, ending with the skeleton melody B C A (phrases 7-8). Although Janko follows the skeleton melody closely, the way he embellishes it uses some features of jazz music. In the DVD example, after another repetition of the *hallgató* with further improvisations from Janko, the band segues into a version of *Čhajori Romaňi*, followed by the beginning of a well-known *čardáš*.

Family celebrations always provided Janko with a chance to play: the family usually gathered in Štefan's flat for birthday, Christmas, Easter and New Year parties, New Year being the largest. They occasionally invited a few other people, but were limited by lack of space and the fact that some Roma were unwilling to come to the ramshackle house that had a reputation for alcoholism and other problems. During these parties, Janko and Štefan played and any other guests that sang or played joined in. They were proud to be continuing the ways of their Slovak past and present connections, and they were one of the only families in Ostrava who regularly continued performing traditional (as well as new) repertoire. Usually there was buffet-style food and copious amounts of vodka drunk between each song.

When there were more people present than immediate family, the women sat together outside the main circle of music and drank more slowly. After a few hours of sitting and making sure the younger children did not disturb the male adults, they also got up to dance and sing. Although they always simulated shyness and embarrassment at the start, they usually ended up singing at full volume and throwing everything into dancing. I found that in this context, the children were free to move and dance however they chose as long as they did not disturb the men too much. Alžběta and her daughter Věra, who were females under 26 but over eight years old, held back and did not dance with men. Růžena, who was understood to be a woman past childbearing age,[36] was more inclined to dance with men inside and outside the family. Štefan and Janko were proud that the behaviour of these women was what was traditionally acceptable and

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[36] In conversations during my fieldwork, it was often remarked that childbearing was unusual and considered unwise or even wrong after early thirties.

that this family had preserved many Romani traditions and values, even though I found that most Romani families in Ostrava had not.

On 5 February 2004, a family party was held for myself and my London-based band who were visiting. The party proceeded as usual, except that the women in the band were all treated as males, partly as they were able to play instruments and were seated in the central circle with the males. The other two females from London that did not play instruments gravitated towards the other women and children. The party proceeded with copious amounts of vodka, the Romani men making toast after toast. Things became louder and wilder as everyone attempted to jam along with Romani songs, the dancing started and the children got more excited, until Janko deemed it was time to regain his authority over proceedings. Everyone was made to hush whilst Janko made an emotional speech, something he enjoyed doing, about meeting me. He then played a *hallgató* with tears streaming down his face, something he rarely did by choice due to its sad quality. It was highly theatrical, but a mark of him wanting to show me how much this evening meant to him.

For six months, I went three or four times a week, to learn Romani songs from Janko or to practice with Gypsy Imre at his house. In terms of learning traditional Romani folk songs and the mechanics of playing Rompop and other songs, Janko was my main source. There were very few others in Ostrava who had deep familiarity with traditional Romani folk music, Rompop and other popular melodies. Unlike others, Janko had experience of teaching, even though he claimed not to have enjoyed it.[37] The length of sessions was unpredictable, often lasting entire days or evenings. Růžena was always present in the next room or the outside yard, providing copious and regular amounts of coffee, fruit tea, tobacco, cake, soup and main meals, and on occasions, beer. This was part of the traditional Romani hospitality that I received in every Romani household; every guest must always be well cared for in terms of food, drink and any other need they have. They were unfailingly generous, including offering to lend me money and give me accommodation. In return, they were demanding, expecting that I always put them first, take their advice and help with certain requests. I helped Janko obtain a good quality, second-hand, reasonably-priced, saxophone from England, organising for someone to carry it over to Ostrava and paying the difference in price that he could not afford.[38] Sometimes I took their advice, but often I was forced into agreeing with them and then acting regardless of their counsel.

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[37] Janko said that he had briefly taught the saxophone at a music school, which he had hated. He had also taken on a young Romani man as a sort of apprenticeship about four years before I met him, and he was still hurt that in his view the young man had not repaid him and just stolen his repertoire.
[38] This was regarded as sufficient payment for my six months of tuition and meals (approximately £100 at the time of writing).

Janko took his role as teacher very seriously and proudly referred to himself as my *učitel* (Cz; teacher) in front of me, his family and friends. He prided himself on being able to teach me the *originál* (Cz; authentic) version of the songs *dokonale* (Cz; perfectly), without any mistakes, attributing his skills to his memory, experience and care in listening to how I repeated after him. He liked to show off to his family and friends how a non-Romani person without any prior experience of playing Romani music under his guidance could quickly learn to play Romani melodies in a convincing manner, something that they expressed surprise about.

It was very important to Janko that we understood one another psychologically, and by way of a compliment he would remark on how well we comprehended one other. If he wanted to show dissatisfaction with me, he would say that I did not understand him or that he did not understand me. Linguistic understanding was entirely separate from the question of psychological understanding. Janko wanted our relationship to be intense: he was a volatile, paranoid, angry and unhappy man who wanted to feel that he had a degree of control and power over me. We settled into a productive partnership, whereby Janko controlled proceedings and I withdrew or opposed only at carefully chosen moments. Janko and I, as well as people around us, were pleasantly surprised that we had a relatively calm relationship with one another for over six months.

Janko taught me songs by ear,[39] starting the process by playing me the whole song, including improvisations, to check that I liked it and wanted to learn it. This was important to him, for if I did not find the melodies personally satisfying, in his opinion there was no point in my learning them. After discussing if I liked a certain melody, starting at the beginning, he would play segments of its skeleton form on his saxophone for me to repeat on my French horn. I then played the whole skeleton melody through to check if I remembered it correctly. He would then accompany me with a countermelody when we would add some embellishments, perhaps followed by a solo improvisation from Janko, and we would finally record it onto mini-disc for posterity. Later on, back at my residence, I transcribed the songs and brought back any problems to the next session. This method of learning was in some ways similar to the way in which I noticed Rompop musicians learning songs from cassettes, in that segments were repeated and then imitated until musicians could play it correctly, when they would make their own arrangements.

If I got something wrong, Janko mostly just played the segment again rather than verbally explaining my mistake.[40] After a few months, when I had become accustomed to this way of

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[39] Clearly, the oral teaching method described here is common to many cultures in one form or another.
[40] I found this a useful approach, as I usually knew what had gone wrong and just needed more time to put it right myself.

learning and the musical styles, melodies became predictable and easy to learn, which started to worry Janko because he thought I would no longer need him, and so he started to invent mistakes I was making. Sometimes he played a tune one way and after I had learnt it, played it differently, pointing out my "errors". As soon as I reassured him that he would be my only teacher in Ostrava, the situation was restored.[41] An additional problem was Janko's memory: he did not have anything written down because he did not read music and said that he had drunk so much alcohol over the years that his memory was sometimes affected. Occasionally, I learnt a melody and three months later in a band practice, he corrected something. One of the ways that I knew Janko was teaching me well was by crosschecking songs with other musicians. With only two exceptions, the only differences amounted to small, acceptable variation, mostly meaning different melodic decorations or melodic variation at cadences that still implied the same harmonies. Below is an example of a two variations of a *čardáš* that imply the same harmonies, and examples of typical, possible endings played according to spontaneous impulse.

Figure 24: transcription of two variations of a *čardáš* and nine final cadences

Variation 1

Variation 2

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[41] Janko felt the need to appear as if he was retaining secrets, partly so I should not lose interest in him. He claimed that there were certain secret melodies and techniques; however, it became apparent that if there were an incentive, usually financial, these "secrets" would not remain private for long. Concerning countermelodies, Janko preferred to show me how well he could play them, rather than teach them. It became obvious what he was doing, and he was perturbed that I began to pick out countermelodies on my own, mostly consisting of playing a 3rd or 6th below the melody. A similar situation developed around the question of improvisation, Janko preferring to impress me than teach me.

Nine possible final cadences

Concerning style, Janko never spoke of a "Romani style". However, he clearly played traditional Romani melodies in a specific way that he expected me to pick up. If I played a melody in a way he thought appropriate, then he did not say anything.[42] However, if he felt there was something wrong, then he would become exasperated, perhaps because he was not used to people who could play Romani melodies without the associated style. Janko usually criticised by making a general comment, for example, "you are playing too heavily", although what he meant was usually very specific, for example, that one particular note should be much shorter. Much of Janko's melodic style was traditionally Romani, in that he played in a light, highly *rubato* manner with rapid increases and decreases of intensity. Without hearing any accompaniment, the metre of Janko's playing was not always obvious, as there was no precise regular pulse. The skeleton melody was always embellished with extra notes or varied, and improvised sections allowed free and usually rapid melodic movement over the pre-established harmonic structure for the duration of one verse and refrain. It was during these improvisations that Janko demonstrated his jazz influences.[43] He believed that his capacity to perform melodies with great emotion, which usually meant more *rubato* and embellishment or variation, was vital to his success with audiences.

When learning new melodies, I was eager to know their names, any lyrics that went with them, where they were from and how old they were (see Introduction). However, my questions

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[42] The highest praise that he gave was to tell me that I would make a lot of money, which in his terms meant that I would be popular and financially successful because I could play the melodies in a good way.

[43] In order to improvise, Janko emphasised the need to be proficient in all major, minor and seventh chords, and all major, minor and chromatic scales. He also advocated practicing certain arpeggiated patterns and chord progressions. Janko had a certain style of improvising that worked very well on the saxophone and later I heard him improvising on the guitar in a manner that suited the guitar well. However, when it came to improvising on the French horn, he was always disappointed by my lack of agility in comparison to the saxophone. He thought that I just needed to practice more to attain the flexibility of a saxophone. In the end, it was up to me how I decorated melodies and it usually produced encouraging comments from Janko and the rest of the band. I never improvised solos, partly because there was an established high, rapid melodic style that was not compatible with the French horn, although I learnt to appreciate how Janko and Štefan improvised.

were either met with vagueness or a response that let me know I was asking irrelevant questions. Sometimes, I knew Janko invented certain information to please me. Occasionally he invented things that would eventually become factual, for example, under sustained pressure from Jiři, the non-Romani violinist, Janko ironically invented a title for a Hungarian *čardáš*, which after a few months became its undisputed title.[44] When Janko and his friend wrote down some song lyrics for me, the vast majority were simply called *čardáš*, with a couple called *Hallgató, Pomale st* (Cz; slow) or *Disko*, referring to the speed and style of the song. Of course, outside influences have meant more emphasis on a title that somehow refers to some standardised lyrics, but for older repertoire there were not usually any titles that Roma used: songs were usually referred to by their first line of lyrics or melody.[45] Furthermore, after a song had been in the Romani repertoire for a time, it was often considered Romani, by which point people had either forgotten where it came from or else it was no longer relevant. It was almost useless to ask any Romani musician in Ostrava where melodies had come from and eventually it was easier for me to identify a song through its features.

One of the Rompop bands that Janko played in, Gypsy Amor, was a source of both joy and disappointment to him, financially and emotionally. He had been playing with them for about a year and was immensely excited whenever they had a gig at a party. Janko was overwhelmed with pride when they recorded their third cassette in Studio Květa, near Brno. However, there were endless financial and political problems. The other members of the band were related to one other, which made Janko feel like an outsider, as well as living further away from the band's epicentre in Orlová. He often thought that they were cheating him out of money and keeping the difference inside the family. Janko also felt that he lacked control partly because they contacted him by mobile phone for gigs and rehearsals: he did not have a landline, and more often than not his mobile phone had been taken to a second hand shop, when he had run out of money, meaning that they sometimes had to phone me.

While in Ostrava, I formed the impression that gigs were notoriously unreliable for Romani musicians as people booked bands and then decided they could not afford to, another band undercut them, or the party was cancelled. Sometimes musicians were cancelled as late as

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[44] Janko named the song *Baro d'ives* (Ro), which he claimed meant "big day", which it does; however, it also means "long moment", "boredom" or "white day". It was characteristic of the humour Janko liked to employ, especially when Jiři did not understand Romani and was bothering him with what he felt to be unnecessary questions.

[45] Czech and Slovak researchers have assigned each Romani song they collected a "title", usually based on the first line of lyrics, and Rompop cassettes used short titles for each track. See chapter 1 of Carson (1996) for a description of a corresponding situation concerning how songs came to be known and named amongst Irish folk musicians and how they were artificially fixed and recorded by researchers.

on the day and several musicians complained to me of being cheated and not receiving the correct money after the gig. Some musicians even ended up playing gigs for free because nobody paid them afterwards. Written contracts were not an option, but many musicians had started to insist on at least half the money in advance. Judging from the many anecdotes I heard concerning musicians' payments, it seemed that musicians were as guilty of cheating their fellow musicians as party organisers.

One event that Gypsy Imre took part in on my initiative was an afternoon of music and discussion in the local Heřmanice medium security prison with prisoners and residents from the Co-existence Village.[46] The NGO "Life Together" was concerned about the stigma and fear associated with prison amongst Roma, often meaning that Romani prisoners received no visitors and had major re-integration problems on release. Therefore, they organised this event to counter such fears and prejudices, particularly as there were disproportionately high numbers of Romani prisoners. During the afternoon, prisoners performed different theatrical and musical numbers and a prison choir sang a mixture of Romani and non-Romani songs.[47] There were many pop bands in the prison on the enlightened initiative of a particular musician-social worker.[48] After a frank discussion between prisoners and villagers concerning prison life, fear, drugs and other topics, the finale to the afternoon was collaboration between the prison Romani band and Gypsy Imre.

It was not difficult to find repertoire in common (traditional Romani songs and Rompop) and Janko knew most of the prison band, claiming that they were amongst the best Romani musicians in Ostrava (not just the prison). The traditional structure of vocal verse and chorus interspersed with instrumental sections of the same length prevailed and the performance proceeded as if we had practiced together due to our common understanding of how to perform these songs. The prison band was excellent, singing in four-part harmony with skilled instrumentalists on electric guitars, bass, drumkit and keyboards. Our acoustic instruments were amplified and the eclectic mix had an extremely rousing effect on the prisoner and village audience of about 60, as well as the prison guards. Janko was elated about the performance, even though he had broken his golden rule of never playing without cash payment.

Janko was a pragmatist and only believed in identifying himself and his music as "Romani" if that was advantageous to him. He was not romantic about any Romani essence or 'race', always saying that you have to judge people individually, never referring to any Romani

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[46] There was extensive local media coverage due to the radical nature of such an idea in Ostrava.

[47] I later discovered that Tomáš Novotný had founded the prison choir in the 1970s, when he was a pastor during the socialist era (he is now a university professor and director of the renowned Jewish choir, Adash). He gave me a CD of the old choir that also featured an extensive Romani and non-Romani repertoire.

[48] There were Romani, non-Romani and "mixed" bands that performed covers of well-known pop songs and some original compositions, but only one band was a Romani band that performed Romani repertoire.

(or Czech) characteristics, either social or cultural. He told me specifically that anyone could learn Romani music if they wanted to: his "secrets" turned out to be that there were no secrets or essential Romani element unavailable to non-Roma, as so many Romani musicians liked to hint at. This attitude was partly in reaction to the racial discrimination he had suffered as a "Gypsy", as he was angry about being treated as badly as other "Gypsies" with whom he often did not identify.[49] Consequently, he felt that the way forward was to reject such labels unless they benefited him in some way. Janko certainly did not want to be seen to play only Romani music, particularly as he found it hard to accept that some non-Roma were genuinely interested in it. In my opinion, he played Romani music, in particular Rompop, the best because he had a better understanding of it, having grown up with it. However, as Janko himself said, it was not about being Romani and anybody could play it if they spent long enough with it and had general musical skills. In contrast to everyone else I met in Ostrava, Janko insisted that there was nothing special about being Romani except the way in which other people labelled you.

5.4 Jaroslav Krošťan

In his forties, Jaroslav had composed his own Romani songs for many years. I met him at the offices of the NGO "Life Together" where he had come to get a letter that asked for work as a musician translated into English in order to send it to Sweden. I also agreed to make a recording of him and his brother singing and playing their guitars, which he could then use to promote himself to try and gain work in other countries. They were both living on state benefits, hit hard since the 1996 mass redundancies, and Jaroslav had six children, most of whom were also living on benefit.[50] He claimed that all his family were very musical and had good singing voices. Indeed, his wife had run a successful Romani children's choir in Ostrava for some years (ending about two years before I was there) that had toured around the Czech Republic. When I asked why it no longer existed, the family agreed that it was because the children in the choir had got older and therefore had less interest in choir singing and more responsibilities at home. They alluded to insufficient interest from younger generations, but in such a climate of despair, they no longer appeared to have the motivation to organise such activities.

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[49] Janko never used the word Rom (Cz: *Rom*), preferring the more usual word for Gypsy in Ostrava (Sl: *Cigán*).

[50] Jaroslav's family was from Slovakia and all members had been badly hit by the mass unemployment, rising prices and other problems. Jaroslav's daughter, Světlana (age 14), was the Czech representative at the World Children's Parliament, chosen due to her experiences of racial discrimination when she was sent to a special school (Cz: *zvlaštní škola*) and then fighting successfully to enter mainstream education.

For the recording, Jaroslav and his brother came round to the Co-existence Village with an entourage of ten family members. Jaroslav borrowed a guitar from the community centre for the occasion, as he had had to pawn his own. His compositions featured original music and lyrics, though the musical style was heavily indebted to famous British and American popular songwriters, such as Bob Dylan and Phil Collins. The lyrics, in a mixture of Czech and Romani, drew heavily on established Rompop themes and phrases. His repertoire predominantly featured his own fast songs and ballads, as well as popularly known traditional Romani and Rompop songs.

The harmonies used in his compositions were predictable and simple, mostly altered every bar or half-bar, with suspensions at cadence points, conforming to the sound of well-known pop music (for example, see figure 25). Jaroslav employed close vocal harmonies, featuring intervals of a third and sixth, in the manner of much Rompop popular in Ostrava, with the occasional sustained countermelody against a quicker melody. Melodies were simple and diatonic, usually within an octave range. An attractive feature of his melodies, common to much Rompop, was starting the melody line after the first downbeat of the bar (for example, bars 5 and 9 in figure 25). Guitar rhythms mostly used either faster 4/4 rhythms with emphasis on second and fourth beats, in the manner of the rhythmic emphasis of a čardáš, or slower 4/4 ballad-style crotchet beats with an emphasis on the first and third (see bars 1-4 in figure 25). Song structures conformed to verse-refrain patterns, with instrumental introductions and codas that repeated the last line of a chorus. CD example 10 (figure 25 is a transcription) shows these features in my recording of Jaroslav and his brother playing guitars and singing at the Co-existence Village community centre.

Figure 25: transcription of a ballad by Jaroslav Krošťan

Towards the end of the recording session, when Jaroslav and his brother played a well-known traditional Romani song, their families spontaneously started to dance *čardáš* style and Jaroslav's wife began to sing along. Many aspects of traditional *čardáš* performance were maintained. An unmetred, expressive *hallgató* style section at the beginning led into the faster rhythmic part, where the guitar rhythms provided the effect of bass onbeats as well as the emphasised quaver offbeats of *čardáš*. However, the harmony was simple, changing every bar and the singing style was more indebted to pop and Rompop that suited the use of microphones: less nasal and spontaneously expressive, but smoother and more stylised in its expression.

Like Janko, Jaroslav had a pragmatic approach to being Romani, in that he wanted to maximise his opportunities by benefiting from his understood Romani identity, particularly in light of having suffered so much on account of it. On the other hand, Jaroslav also led me to believe that his compositions were distinctively Romani and had developed out of a unique experience of being Romani and his Romani essence. He firmly believed in Roma's innate musical ability, specifically Romani characteristics such as a warm heart, kindness, capacity to celebrate and emotional sensitivity, and specifically Romani experiences of suffering, all of which he believed were revealed in Romani music. I noticed that these characteristics certainly applied to Jaroslav's family, but Jaroslav extrapolated that these characteristics were essentially Romani. From conversations with Jaroslav, I understood that he viewed his compositions and performance as simultaneously individual and racial expressions.

5.5 Puki and Romani community centres

This section introduces the music of Puki, particularly in relation to the musical scene at the Romani community centres in Ostrava, demonstrating another face of Rompop (see group 5 on p.164). I met Ladislav, known by his nickname Puki, on the Romani children's summer camps in August 2003. Puki was in his early forties and a talented musician, painter, artist and potter. He was unemployed, except for the occasional temporary contract for manual labour, and lived on social support in the Romani ghetto of Zárubek (south Ostrava). His family came from Slovakia and he had lived in Ostrava all his life. Puki was a middle-aged bachelor who still lived life as a young man. He was eager for any chance to jam music with different people and carried a cheap uncovered guitar over his shoulder, which sometimes doubled up as an umbrella. He was quiet and humble with deeply held beliefs, particularly concerning a Romani essence that he believed was fundamentally good. Although he was berated for his lack of knowledge of chords, much

younger musicians were happy to jam with him in the Romani community centres that were primarily used by teenagers.

Puki was an ardent Catholic, although rarely attended church, and felt that his music was intimately connected with his Romani identity and religion, as discussed in chapter 1. Like other Roma I met in Ostrava, Puki claimed to like many kinds of music and did not particularly favour Romani songs over others in his playing, unlike younger musicians. In fact, he knew so many Romani songs well that he found more interest in working out how to play Beatles, Rolling Stones and other 1960s and 1970s Western pop that he had collected bootleg copies of on cassette. He had played the violin when he was younger, but had given it up to play the guitar. Like other Ostrava Romani musicians, he did not read music and learnt his repertoire by ear, either from other people or cassettes. He did not know the names of any chords or any theoretical aspects of music (something which other musicians such as Janko looked down on him for) and found the sound he required through a combination of his ear, experience and experiment.

I had many conversations and two recording sessions with Puki, one acoustic at my request and one with microphones at his request. Like almost all other Romani musicians, he was adamant that he sounded much better with amplification. They never explained to me exactly why, but based on my experience, I suggest that this preference was connected to contemporary tastes prevalent among Ostrava Roma for modern, artificial sounds and volume levels that overwhelmed your body and blocked the ability to think (see also chapter 4): I spent many a loud afternoon and evening in the confined space of a community centre music room or party room with the volume of music emanating at a level I considered adequate for a room four times the size, although nobody ever complained about the noise.

When Puki arrived at the Hrušov community centre to make a recording with me, he immediately found three people to jam with for the purposes of the recording.[51] They soon found repertoire in common and Puki took the main vocals and guitar chords, with the others playing keyboard, instrumental solos and creating vocal harmonies (see DVD example 8, featuring Puki on guitar and vocals). The others appeared to be slightly jealous of the attention Puki was receiving and shouted criticism at him in front of me about his guitar chords and singing that I felt they hoped would communicate to me that they were the better musicians. Puki did not fight back, as it was true that he did not know chord names, even though he was the more experienced, older and in my view, better musician. Influences of mainstream education were filtering through to Romani musicians, one of which was the esteem in which they held people who had a solid

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[51] It would have been impossible to prearrange it and it was guaranteed that some musicians would be hanging around the centre.

theoretical harmonic knowledge and could read sheet music. They felt that reading notation would increase their repertoire exponentially, though they had not yet acquired this skill. When I pointed out the advantages of learning music by ear, musicians happily agreed with me that it would be ideal to be able to do both.

The equipment at the community centres was usually poor quality, which musicians always complained about; however, there was great competition to use it. At the centres, everyone's rehearsal was open, and girls sometimes came in to tease and hang around the boys, flipping between taking it very seriously and laughing at it all. Boys often came in to check out their competition and find out which songs other bands were playing. In the community centre at least, the competition was friendly and if not all band members had turned up, others joined in. Unless people were practicing for something specific, it was acceptable to jam along with any group if there was space. If someone's standard was not good enough, people soon let him know mostly by shouting, although people did not tend to play unless they already knew the song well. Indeed, learning songs was something to be done in private and even though the music rooms at community centres were only rehearsal rooms there was an atmosphere of informal recital. Musicians did not work on musical aspects in these rooms, only stopping to clear up discrepancies in harmony or lyrics, or to find new sounds on the keyboard.

Community centres were the places for un-established male musicians without traditional musician family backgrounds and the advantages that went with that, to meet, play, demonstrate their ability, form bands, hear new songs, pick up the latest technique or stylistic fashion, and learn about forthcoming community events or local festivals that may give them opportunities to perform. The majority of musicians that used the community centres were in their late teens, with some in their twenties and a few even older. There was some competition between musicians, but it was mostly good-natured rivalry, for paid work did not directly come out of playing at community centres. They were from the very poorest, most disadvantaged backgrounds, did not own any musical instruments, were unemployed and as yet could not make any money from their music, although they almost all hoped to.

To sum up, the phenomenon of Rompop has many different faces: on a national and international level, Rompop's aesthetic appeal crossed racial boundaries through musical fusion, whilst reminding us of its Romani identity through Romani lyrics eloquently translated on sleeve covers. On a local level, Rompop has helped build a unique and separate Romani identity, particularly manifest in specifically Romani events. In Ostrava, Rompop did not attract any interest from non-Roma and has developed separately from non-Romani music. This resonates

with the socio-economic development of Romani communities that occurred increasingly separately from non-Romani communities in the Czech Republic, as discussed in chapter 4. Greater local musical isolation had occurred in tandem with increasing local cultural and social isolation, which was most often demarcated along racial lines in Ostrava. Nevertheless, the local isolation of Ostrava Roma has been accompanied by greater connections with global popular music trends, which have offered resources for Rompop and other Romani musical developments, as will be discussed in chapter 6. Local Rompop in Ostrava reflected and intensified the isolation of Roma, whilst emphasising their reliance on local, national and European non-Romani material and financial resources to maintain community centres, and on non-Romani global trends for musical resources. I understood the unpaid Romani cultural contributions to local festivals as symptomatic of the post-1989 emphasis on misguided, cheap and politically correct cultural solutions to social disharmony, rather than more costly and electorally unpopular socio-economic improvements so desperately needed. Some Roma in Ostrava were also of the same opinion and spoke of feeling used and exploited for their cultural contributions.

Non-Roma no longer appeared to have any need for Roma in Ostrava economically, socially or culturally, and the consequent ways in which Romani communities have suffered and non-Roma have become increasingly resentful and prejudiced, have promoted ideologies that use 'race' as the explanation of the widening chasm between Roma and non-Roma. Amongst Ostrava Roma, that Roma were perceived and treated as a different 'race' was not in question, and neither was the Romani identity of Rompop; however, people understood how these interlinked quite differently. Some found an essential Romani essence manifest in Rompop, others saw "Romani" as a purely artificial construction, and others saw a more complicated history and reality to being "Romani". In my experience, whatever Roma understood about themselves racially, they connected it to Rompop in some way, for example, as a racial emblem, as an essential expression of being Romani, or as a result of financial expediencies. The next section discusses theoretically some of the ways in which the connection between musical and racial phenomenon can be understood.

Interlude: How are Ideas of Music and 'Race' Connected?

Discourses of 'race' resurfaced in ethnomusicology in the late 1990s, slightly later than in anthropology.[1] The introduction to Bohlman and Radano's *Music and the Racial Imagination* (2000) highlights ethnomusicology's reluctance to deal with 'race', drawing attention to ethnomusicology's former musician-centred orientation which led to aestheticism and inadequate, fixed conceptions of ethnicity, culture and so on. Bohlman and Radano stress the way in which music has often been conceptualised as non-racial or racial according to whether it is European or non-European.[2] Their criticisms of ethnomusicology are, I feel, justified; however, in their enthusiasm to promote the importance of 'race' in understanding music, they seem to be advocating that 'race' is crucial to comprehending every musical situation, without explaining how the relationship between ideas of 'race' and music may actually function. There are situations in which music is not racial in any important sense, in that other aspects are more significant.[3] I contend that every musical situation has the potential to be racialised, but does not necessarily have to be. Even if some people feel a musical situation is racialised, others may not, and there may be other aspects far more crucial to understanding it.

In this theoretical interlude, I use the example of Rompop in Ostrava in order to demonstrate a working conception of relationships between ideas of music and 'race'. I start by considering Gilroy's three approaches to relationships between discourses of music and 'race' (1993) and look at their political implications. A diagram then summarises my own working model of how ideas of music and 'race' can most usefully be conceptualised, as inspired by Hall's theory of articulation and Gilroy's third anti-antiessentialist approach.

Gilroy calls his first approach to conceptualising music and 'race' essentialist, as it views music as the primary means to explore critically and reproduce politically the necessary essence

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[1] In the fields of anthropology and ethnomusicology, a radical break with the assumptions of racial categorisations that posited the isomorphism of music, culture, nation, language and 'race', occurred with the work of Boas, who in 1911 proposed their non-equation in his work *The Mind of Primitive Man*. This does not mean to say that popular opinion has followed suit. Gilroy finds it significant that 'prior to the consolidation of scientific racism in the 19th century, the term 'race' was used very much in the way that the word "culture" is used today' (1993:8).

[2] Like Gilroy before them (1993:107), they emphasise that hybridity does not erase 'race', taking the example of the so-called transnational mix, which in Bohlman's view is highly racialised: its overt denial of 'race' through hybridity does not succeed in neutralising 'race', only masking it, which actually ends up drawing attention to it.

[3] For example, when I put on a CD of rock music that I enjoyed as a teenager, when by myself or with old friends, this is not racial in any sense relevant to understanding the situation. In another context, the choice of the same CD could become racialised and be an extremely important factor in understanding the situation.

of a 'race'. I propose that this position legitimates ideas such as Roma being natural musicians, as folklore and stereotypes would have us believe, which may seem relatively harmless; however, the same logic can be used to argue that Roma are naturally criminal or inferior. Another manifestation of this approach is exemplified by the much-quoted T-shirt slogan 'it's a black thing, you wouldn't understand'. Gilroy claims that from a musical point of view, this suggests that a certain type of music is always produced by a certain 'race' and you have to actually be a member of that 'race' to comprehend the full significance of the music to that 'race', a sort of cultural insiderism that is founded on an absolute sense of ethnic difference (1993:3). In relation to Roma, this would mean that Roma can only make music that sounds Romani because of their fixed, 'race'-specific preference for Romani metaphysics of music. In this position, Gilroy suggests that 'race' is privileged over all other dimensions of social and historical experience, cultures and identities, and leads to notions of cultural purity and integrity, where hybridity is seen as pollution: this overintegrated sense of cultural and ethnic particularity is very popular today and not monopolised by any group in particular (1993:31).

People who ally themselves with this approach are often disappointed and puzzled with people's actual cultural choices and behaviour, which do not necessarily conform to stereotypes of what certain 'races' should be. For example, I suggest that some people are disappointed to find members of minority cultures, such as Roma, listening to Rompop and hip pop, rather than, for example, dulcimer music. Gilroy points out that cultural leaders may be looking for an artistic practice that can disabuse the masses of any illusions that prevent them from consuming the appropriate cultural products and can bring people back to the fold, and may be frustrated in their attempts to revive so-called "traditional" cultural consciousness (1993:31). This approach is unable to locate where the essence of artistic and political sensibility is located, but it is still popular anyway, often adopting a realist approach to aesthetic value[4] that minimises political and philosophical issues in processes of artistic representation (ibid).

I suggest that one obvious breakdown of this approach is that it is possible for people to play convincingly music of a 'race' not perceived to be their own. Gilroy questions what sort of analytical problems arise if a style, genre or particular performance of music is identified as being expressive of the absolute essence of the group that produced it (1993:75): there may be many contradictions that will need some sort of resolution if, for example, diasporic musics come into contact with a so-called original. Crucially, where certain music becomes emblematic, constitutive or synonymous with the idea of a certain 'race', rather than just associated with it, it is difficult to see how music actually embodies racial authenticity and identity (1993:76). During

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[4] This approach infers that aesthetic value continues to exist whether it is perceived or not.

my fieldwork, these kinds of contradictions were noticeable when Roma explained to me how some music was essentially Romani and incomprehensible to non-Roma, even though they could not identify how or why. That this same music was also incomprehensible to some other Roma was something that contradicted their beliefs, and I found that conversations often ended in a confused way, or this fact was ignored.[5]

Gilroy's second position of anti-essentialism explores views that understand music as connected arbitrarily to socially constructed notions of 'race'. This would mean that any music could become connected/disconnected with any constructed racial category. Presumably, these musics and racial categories would be fluid, dynamic constructions. Whilst this idealistic view of free-floating, fluid musical identities may be a way to dodge the fixity and more sinister implications of ethnic absolutism, anti-essentialism is not sensitive to the ongoing power of specifically racialised forms of power and subordination, which ends up abandoning those people who comprehend their lives through what this does to them (Gilroy 1993:31-35,80). For example, Roma in the Czech Republic are racially and ethnically discriminated against, in terms of physical and verbal abuse, employment, housing, education, cultural opportunities and so on, and it is clear that some comprehend their lives through positive and negative, external and internal identifications with Roma as a 'race'. Denying the reality of racial experiences by understanding experiences of discrimination based on ideas of 'race' as only arbitrarily connected to a constructed notion of racial identity, is unhelpful in trying to comprehend some people's lives and is socially and politically dangerous in terms of not recognising a potentially explosive situation.

Gilroy posits that much modern racism functions through denial that a group constructed through an idea of 'race' could have any cultural integrity or the capacity to conceive or reproduce any worthy culture or music (1993:31). Although anti-essentialism may appear to be politically correct, it may in fact spawn racism through denying racial existence and its connection to a culture or music. Anti-essentialism denies outright the possibility that racial identity can be lived as a coherent, if not always stable, experiential sense of self (Gilroy 1993:102). I suggest that we are not at a point where the idea of race or its connection to music is universally disappearing, therefore although anti-essentialism is a temptingly idealistic position, it is totally inadequate and politically dangerous when trying to understand contemporary racialised situations.

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[5] A further pitfall is the politically-suspect, potential alliance between researchers and the support of ideas that particularly non-Western music is somehow essentially unrepresentable, pre-rational or sublime (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000:1-11, Gilroy 1993:77).

Gilroy pays least attention to his third anti-antiessentialist position, characterised by a social constructionist view of racial identity, but without reducing it to an ideological effect. 'Race' is not an imagined community, but as Monson encapsulates it, a 'condition produced through coping with the historical legacy and contemporary reality of white supremacist abuses' (2000:5). Gilroy invokes Foucault's notion of the technology of power to suggest that racialised subjectivity should be seen 'as the product of social practices that supposedly derive from it' (Gilroy 1993:102 in Monson 2000:4): 'it is the workings of racism that produce the order of racial truths and not the other way around' (Gilroy 2000/R2004a:116). In anti-antiessentialism, music cannot be reduced to a fixed dialogue between a thinking racial self and a stable racial community, and understanding the hybridity of musical cultures cannot be reduced to any simple notions of essentialist or anti-essentialist conceptions of racial identity or non-identity (1993:110). Gilroy does not elucidate how his third position functions; however, he clearly advocates music as a 'changing rather than unchanging same' (1993:101),[6] and the character of 'race' as a condition resulting from historical and contemporary realities rather than a priori, objective facts or ideological effects.[7]

In terms of my fieldwork, the general approach of Gilroy's third position strongly resonates. Roma in Ostrava do not have any essential racial identity or music, yet racial relations and their connections to music were real, and not imagined: music was often strongly racialised by Roma and non-Roma in Ostrava. Nevertheless, the interrelationship of music and racial ideas of Roma is constantly developing in relation to specific contexts and cannot be reduced to fixed or essential meanings or relationships: there is a dynamic stability.

The homology between musical form and social structure or positioning is controversial and has provoked a multitude of responses.[8] As Gilroy's first two positions show, any attempt to link ideas of music and 'race' mechanically will be an oversimplification and lead to undesirable political consequences. However, when the relationship is problematised, only vague generalisations are made and the actual functioning of such a relationship is understandably often

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[6] 'The changing same', whereby the same is maintained without reification, is indebted to Leroi Jones (1967:180-211 in Gilroy 2000/R2004:129).

[7] In Gilroy's later works (2000 onwards), he does not flesh out the functioning of connections between music and 'race', instead focussing on his vision of 'planetary humanism' whereby humankind is liberated from racial thinking in tandem with the abolition of 'sexual division' (2000/R2004a:12,16). Gilroy points to a recent demise in cultural racism and rise in genomic constructions of 'race', particularly in medical science, and suggests this crisis of 'race' and representation signals a chance to free ourselves from the 'bonds of raciology' (2000/R2004a:15)

[8] Ethnomusicology has been struggling with this question for decades, producing many approaches ranging from the mechanistic to those influenced by postmodern discourses. For example, Erlmann's endotropic performance emphasises the intraracial construction of identity through a shared experience of style (in Monson 2000).

avoided. I suggest that the homology between discourses of music and 'race' is not a problem that requires a definitive solution; nevertheless, understanding of both musical and racial ideas may be enhanced, and politically dangerous and intellectually inadequate viewpoints can be avoided through its exploration. For the purposes of this thesis, I offer my own conception of how ideas of music and 'race' are linked, inspired by Gilroy's anti-antiessentialist position and Hall's theory of articulation, using Rompop in Ostrava as an the example of this.

OTHER FACTORS
POWER RELATIONS

ENCODING
(Music is in some way associated with a racial idea)
(Rompop is associated with being racially Romani, for example through lyrics, the context of Romani community event, or an aesthetic)

Production

Circulation

Reproduction

Use

MEANINGFUL DISCOURSE
(the notion of racialised music is articulated)
(Rompop is presented as a racialised Romani music)

DECODING

Preferred/dominant meaning of racialised music, which may become a habitual meaning, or even a naturalised perception
(Rompop is emblematic and/or constitutive of being racially Romani)

Less Preferred/dominant meaning of racialised music
(Rompop is related to the experience of being considered racially Romani)

Other meanings

Deviant meaning of racialised music
(Rompop is arbitrarily connected to Romani identity)

The cycle of encoding, meaningful discourse, decoding and encoding, corresponds to the cycle of production, circulation, use and reproduction. In the encoding stage, Rompop is

associated with the idea of being racially Romani, potentially in numerous ways, perhaps through the context of a community event that is billed as "Romani", a shared aesthetic that is only popular amongst those perceived as Roma, or song lyrics that refer to essentially Romani characteristics.

Through circulation (performance/recordings), ideas of Roma as a 'race' and Rompop have become articulated in a stable formation (although they do not necessarily have to be), subject to the influences of many outside factors and power relations that encourage or discourage this articulation. Rompop has become stably articulated with ideas of Roma as a 'race' by its repeated use in cultural events billed as Romani, Romani family parties, Rompop lyrics that refer to being Romani, and the fact that Roma in Ostrava exclusively played and listened to Rompop, which were all interlinked with Roma's socio-economic position and understood status in Ostrava. Rompop's circulation was outside the mainstream, exclusively amongst Roma, internally perceived to have a pan-generational, pan-Romani social role as the accompanying music for inter-generational dancing at important celebrations. Furthermore, when asked to contribute to local public festivals, the majority of the contributions, identified as Romani by Roma and non-Roma alike, featured Rompop music.

At the decoding stage, specific meanings are articulated to Rompop as Romani music through experiences of it, which become perceived to some extent consensually as dominant, less preferred, marginal or deviant, according to a combination of individual needs, socio-economic, political and cultural factors, and power relations. Limits placed on accepted meanings are based on notions of what makes sense, experience and understood group needs. I encountered opinions that valued Rompop as an essentially Romani expression, constitutive and/or emblematic of a Romani essence. Janko's views arbitrarily connected Rompop and Roma: any other style of music could be the most popular and preferred mode of expression amongst Roma, and it was simply coincidence that Rompop was the current preferred vehicle of expression, and was therefore equally accessible to non-Roma. Based on my fieldwork experience, I suggest that Janko's views were deviant in the context of Romani communities in Ostrava.

There were other Roma who preferred not to talk about a Romani essence, rather, their individual experiences of growing up in a Romani community and being treated as Romani. Their ideas of music were more complicated, in that music was an important and necessary part of life that made living life bearable as a Romani and was something that bonded families and communities, but was not reflective of any Romani essence: it was merely an emotionally and socially important tool for some Ostrava Roma. I found that the most dominant meanings amongst Ostrava Roma were simplified views that posited Rompop as a racial emblem. I found

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less dominant views concentrated on the individual significance of Rompop that often related to individual experiences of being (racially) Romani. More complex views of connections between ideas of music and 'race' were not as common, and I found that they were regarded as unnecessary (and in that way deviant). I suggest that the simplified dominant views of music and 'race' that were essential and highly racialised were interlinked with the polarised racial and socio-economic context in Ostrava. In this polarised context, there was precious little need for nuanced ideas of music and 'race' amongst Roma in Ostrava.

Decoded meanings feedback into and influence what is encoded in further expressions of Rompop. Hence, if Rompop is regarded as a racial emblem and a Romani cultural event is organised, it is likely that Rompop will play a significant role in this event and will continue to be understood as a racial emblem. Similarly, if Rompop is regarded as a pan-generational Romani music in Ostrava, it is likely that it will play a significant role in multi-generational family parties, events that include a cross-section of different Roma, and as a representative Romani expression at non-Romani local festivals, thereby consolidating and developing its status in Ostrava as quintessentially pan-Romani.

To clarify further this conception, I outline the basis for Hall's theory of articulation. It conceptualises the relationship between signifier and signified, initially in the consideration of television discourse. Rather than signifiers and signifieds floating freely in completely fluid, arbitrary relationships, Hall suggests that they are articulated, playing on the double meaning of the word 'articulate': to utter or speak forth in the sense of expressing, and the idea of connection through a specific linkage that can be stable, broken or reformed, but never essentially fixed (Hall in Grossberg 1986:141),[9] therefore meanings can alter with context and circumstance. Hall contends that the unity of a particular discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements, which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary "belongingness" (ibid:141). In this way, it can be understood how ideological elements can in certain conditions cohere together within a discourse, and can later cohere with other elements in different ways.[10]

For music to have racial meaning or significance, this meaning must be decoded successfully. The receiver of the meaning is not a blank screen and may have extensive experience of decoding many encoded musical expressions, so in this way meaning is dialogic (or

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[9] To envisage what is meant, it is helpful to imagine an articulated lorry, whereby different loads may be joined onto the back or removed: the articulation is not completely arbitrary, and there is stability albeit temporary and under certain conditions.

[10] Hall uses the example of the way religion and politics, which may have no necessary articulation, have been articulated and re-articulated endlessly in different historical contexts (Hall in Grossberg 1986:142-144).

reciprocal), sustained by cultural codes that cannot guarantee stable meanings, with interventions caused by power relations in discourses that attempt to fix meaning (Hall 1997:10). Hall envisages four stages of communication: production, circulation, use and reproduction (1973:507-508). Each stage is relatively autonomous from the others and has its own determining limits and possibilities. Messages are not open to any interpretations and can be received only if it is recognisable or appropriate (ibid). They have a 'complex structure of dominance' at each stage imprinted by institutional power relations, sustained by the articulation of connected practices. Hall proposes that power relations at the point of production will loosely fit those at the point of consumption (1997:10, 1973:507).[11]

There is, following Hall (1973), a degree of habituation produced when there is an alignment and reciprocity between the encoding and decoding sides of meaning exchanges and the functioning of the codes on the decoding side will frequently assume the status of naturalised perceptions. Often when codes have been naturalised, then the processes of coding are concealed, which has an ideological effect. One encoding can lead to many different decodings, but power relations and ideology may have the effect of hierarchically organising meanings so that there may be dominant or preferred meanings. There is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding: the former can attempt to emphasise certain meanings but cannot prescribe or guarantee them, for decoding has its own conditions of existence. Rather, encoding will have the effect of constructing some limits or parameters within which decodings will operate. Without limits, any message could be understood from any signifier.

When using this model to interpret particular cultural expressions, it is important to keep situations contextualised and historicised.[12] The articulation between ideas of music and Roma as a racial group in the Czech Republic is a dialogic one and cannot be conceived as a part of a mechanical code: it is a 'changing rather than an unchanging same' (after Gilroy 1993:101) continually negotiated over time in different contexts, between Roma people within communities, perhaps with Roma from other communities/groups/countries, and with surrounding non-Romani communities. The meanings or articulations of racialised Romani music may also be negotiated with record companies, researchers and those interested in cultural preservation.

This articulation is negotiated continually in light of new personal experiences and relationships with other people, musical or political developments, or shifts in conception, resulting in new articulations between different/same ideas of 'race' and different/same music. It

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[11] One important flaw in this image is in the notion of power relations; they have no explanation in that they are just there, acting down on every situation and every process, but to explore this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[12] As Giddens has pointed out, there is a danger of a 'retreat into a code' (1987:84).

is a complex process, tied up in Foucauldian-type power relations as articulations define what is considered normal or deviant, and some interpretations become dominant or preferred and others, even if they seem reasonable, do not (Hall 1973:513-517).[13] Some articulations may become naturalised, in the sense that the articulation between a racial idea and a certain type or aspect of music may come to be perceived as permanent, natural or essential, concealing processes of coding (Hall 1973:511). This may happen for all kinds of reasons, from the ideological desire for cultural, racial or ethnic cohesion, political or economic expediency, or personal reasons. If an idea or meaning is to be broadly understood and accepted, there must be enough consensus on articulations between elements, despite many different, competing individual viewpoints (Hall 1973:514).

The working model I have presented is over-generalised in order to include rather than exclude specific examples and is therefore of limited use except perhaps in countering other inadequate assumptions. It is so over-simplified that it could perhaps be applied to the homology between music and ideas of other social phenomena or forms of identity, for it does not escape the (regressive?) principle of understanding identity as intersecting axes of difference however de-essentialised, processual or performative they may be. In this conception, however, what makes 'race' different is the unique history or genealogy of how 'race' as a discourse has been articulated in different societies, and its unique role within the discipline of ethnomusicology. There is not anything inherently racial about any music, although there are many situations where the articulation between certain music and ideas of 'race' has become very stable, or even naturalised, or at least is experienced as such: music can be experienced as constitutive of 'race', but can also be conceptualised in terms of its potential for creating racialisation through articulation processes.

The model is also, I suggest, too predicated on linguistic models. Hall's theory of articulation is indebted to a linguistic, semiotic model, initially used to consider television discourse (1973): although he appears satisfied in applying it to identity (1986, 1996), it is not clear that linguistic models can be so easily transferred to social or indeed musical meaning. Social phenomena, music and identity may be characterised by many elements of code also

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[13] An example is the history of the Jewish mode known as *Ahavoh Rabboh*. Scholars mostly agree that this mode was banned and considered deviant by Jewish priests around 800 B.C.E. However, around the 13th century, it became strongly articulated with East European Jewish liturgical music, valued for its capacity to express intense and agitated emotions, and yearnings for Zion. In German Jewish communities during the 18th century, it was often regarded as exotic but inferior. During the 19th century, this mode became articulated with more secular forms of Jewish music such as Klezmer, becoming known as the Freygish mode.

present in language; however, music cannot adequately be treated as a language, for language is representational and music is, depending on one's viewpoint, mostly or wholly not.[14] For the moment though, we are reliant on "talking about music" in order to discuss musical meaning and perceptions, and knowledge will to some extent be determined by that (see Seeger 2004, Small 1996, Rice 2001).

This interlude is a starting point that, whilst problematic, provides an intellectually and politically acceptable approach from which I can go on to consider the contribution of diasporic discourse as a more productive tool with which to conceive of Roma in Ostrava and their relationship to music, which questions the idea of conceptualising people based on axes of difference: ideas of 'race' attain more fluid positions that can be invoked or dissolved more easily within the larger, and I would argue, more productive, flexible and positive framework of diaspora, as will be discussed in chapter 8.

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[14] Hall refers to it as 'a special case of language' (1997:19).

Chapter 6 New Trends

A number of new cultural trends have emerged in Romani communities in Ostrava over the last decade, mostly influenced by a widespread interest in pop, hip hop, and other popular styles such as jazz, Latin, funk and soul. Although the boundaries of this chapter blur with the previous one, the focus here is the development of new cultural trends that have little or no connection to traditional Romani music making. The trends I am identifying as new have all emerged since the fall of the Communist regime, although in some cases may be older than phenomena noted in the previous chapter: new denotes a break with what is contemporaneously understood as traditional Romani culture and its direct descendants such as much of Rompop.

On one hand, traditional Romani music making has been characterised by a highly dynamic folk tradition incorporating surrounding influences, as well as the ability to perform the music of any surrounding community for financial gain: in some ways, new trends do not break with the tradition of incorporating and adopting outside influences. However, whereas the examples included in the previous chapter were rooted in a dynamic tradition that carried forward aspects of musical tradition, in recent times, examples of Romani music making include performances that bear little or no relation to any Romani traditions either in context or style. During my fieldwork, I noticed that Roma accepted cultural performances by Roma based on hip hop as Romani, even though the goal of these performances was often to imitate American hip hop stars as closely as possible rather than to use hip hop or international pop[1] to make independent cultural expressions. The appellation of Romani was here connected to the understood 'race'/ethnicity of the performers and the performance context.

I found that most Roma in Ostrava had a wide variety of musical interests outside Rompop. Some musicians eagerly launched into Beatles and Dylan songs on their guitars, some expressed admiration for American and British 1970s music, and others covered Michael Jackson numbers with their bands. I was told that Jackson was an idol amongst Ostrava Roma in the mid 1990s and his influence helped to popularise breakdancing; for example, his famous moonwalk had been widely imitated amongst Ostrava Roma. Younger Roma tended to be more familiar with hip hop and international pop artists such as Jennifer Lopez. Generational differences were often apparent in Roma's musical interests outside Rompop, and unsurprisingly, Romani teenagers

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[1] I use the term 'international pop' to indicate pop artists and their songs that have become commercially successful and household names across the globe. They are most often Western and English-speaking, although not necessarily.

most strongly embraced the new trends I refer to in this chapter, with younger children swift to imitate teenagers. Roma in their twenties were more divided: some embraced these new trends more wholeheartedly than others who tended to prefer what they were listening to as teenagers and only welcomed new developments in Rompop.[2] Older Roma tended to support teenagers' engagement with new trends, although remained in supportive, organisational roles rather then being actively involved in consumption or production. I also encountered some older Roma who expressed their dislike and puzzlement towards new trends.

These new trends were made possible by increased contact particularly with Western popular culture since 1989, specifically via the television, which featured many references to Western popular culture in foreign soap operas, documentaries, advertisements, films, and broadcasting of live concerts of Western pop musicians. Some young Roma purchased mainstream popular music CDs and cassettes in record stores, which were usually copied many times and passed between homes, and there were cheap bootlegs of popular albums at local markets. Moreover, Western culture was increasingly disseminated via the Internet, which some Roma had access to at school.[3]

This chapter draws on examples from my fieldwork, exploring Romani music making in Ostrava based on hip hop, international pop, beauty contest "Miss" events, cultural collaborations and fusions involving interpretations of Latin dancing. I also explore the relatively recent access to and consumption of Romani music from many other countries.

6.1 Hip Hop

Particularly for younger Roma, it was important to be connected to global popular trends perhaps most of all hip hop: the most powerful trend sweeping the Romani community in Ostrava when I was there 2003-2004 was breakdancing or B-boying (Cz: *Break/Brajk*) as part of a wider interest in hip hop culture, specifically American (rather than European) expressions. All over Ostrava, males from a few years old up to late thirties practiced their breakdancing moves by putting on a hip hop CD, grouping round in a circle, and each person taking a turn to go into the centre to execute moves, as is standard practice in other movements of breakdancing. Females and older

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[2] One musician, Franta (aged 22), to the ridicule of his partner and younger friends, claimed that hip hop was just noise, unlike Rompop songs that have real melodies for which you need to be able to sing well. Franta appreciated all kinds of ballad singing including Phil Collins, Sting and so on, but rejected anything that was not diatonic, melodic and sing-able. He found it puzzling that hip hop should be so popular amongst Roma, particularly when he prided himself on being thoroughly Romani.

[3] I did not notice any interest in fashion/popular culture magazines, which correlated to the general antagonism felt amongst many Roma in Ostrava towards the written rather than spoken word.

men often looked on and particularly impressive moves were greeted with murmurs of approval, for they had swiftly picked up appropriate ways to appreciate breakdancing. Romani breakdancing in Ostrava resonated with other accounts of breakdancing in America and Europe:[4] boys started their turn by toprocking (dancing in a circle), followed by downrocking (moves on the floor), ending with a freeze (a position that is held for a few seconds). The moves attempted on the floor were often windmills (legs in an upwards V whilst spinning on the top of the back), spinning round on the head (often with the aid of a woolly hat or even a helmet), flares (a gymnastics-like move as if on a pommel horse), or Jackhammer (bouncing up and down on your hands whilst circling round on the floor). Occasionally, a moonwalk, worm (rippling the body whilst on the floor) or uprocking (similar to toprocking but with two people mimicking a fight/disagreement) were included. In Ostrava, breakdancing sometimes included gymnastics moves such as somersaults or backflips.

These sessions mostly took place in community centres because of the large spaces available: most Roma did not have the opportunity to practice privately in the home, in contrast to Rompop musicians who could listen to cassettes and learn lyrics at home, even if they could not play there. Public breakdancing sessions often functioned as practices, although often appeared like formal performances owing to the number of people watching. Some of the boys had learned their moves from music videos and the television, although many of them learned by imitating other males around them. Some younger males had Internet access through school, family or friends, and learned a great deal that way. Only males participated and any attempts by females to join in or imitate were met with toleration and amusement as long as they stopped again quickly. Despite the international rise of B-girling, there was no female Romani breakdancing that I encountered in Ostrava.

Although many ethnic Czechs appreciate hip hop, it was amongst the younger Romani community that it was almost universally appreciated. Romani teenagers even described liking hip hop as a particularly Romani characteristic. In Ostrava, I found that there was little sense of hip hop's roots or history, rather a vague feeling that it came from America and was black. It seems that many fans of hip hop worldwide are similarly unaware of its history which is often obscured by rapidly changing developments since its likely inception in the Bronx in the 1970s,

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[4] See for example, Toop (1991), Reese (1998), http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/ breakdancing/, accessed on 17/01/05, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breakdancing, accessed on 17/01/05, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_Hop, accessed on 17/01/05. I did not encounter any terminology for breakdancing amongst Roma in Ostrava, which is why I use the terminology established in English. This also links breakdancing in Ostrava with the American breakdancing movement, which Ostrava Roma were drawing from for their moves and ideas. Breakdancing terminology is indebted to Toop (1991) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop, accessed on 17/01/05.

its subsequent commercialisation during the 1980s in the U.S. and its spread to Europe and the mainstream in the 1990s.[5]

One aspect of B-boying roots that has been maintained is the element of competition. It is widely believed that dance-offs were used to decide which gang's territory would be used for imminent battles, whereby representatives from each gang attempted to outdo the other by performing moves that could not be matched or had never been seen before: these days, organised competitions also involve impressing through style.[6] Amongst Ostrava Roma, practice sessions did not divide people into opposing teams, rather the aim was to be the most impressive mover out of those present. Under the auspices of a public performance, breakdancing contributions were often organised into two opposing teams, frequently lining up opposite each other rather than forming a circle (partly also, I suggest, to enable better viewing for the audience). In formalised performances, there was more uprocking and simulated expressions of hostility, and the pressure was intense to perform well, if only because family and peers were likely to be watching. As far as I knew, these breakdancing sessions were good-natured, were not used to resolve disputes, and were without formal winners. Rather it was an opportunity for young Roma to come together and be associated with something fashionable that they could relate to and had the facilities and skills to participate in.[7]

The other three (or four depending on who one believes) elements of hip hop are much less established as active art forms amongst Ostrava Roma. The equipment needed to be a DJ or MC was too expensive. Graffiti as an art form had not taken off amongst Roma, I suggest partly because their culture is traditionally biased towards the aural rather than visual, but mostly because of the juridical consequences of being caught doing graffiti. Indeed most Roma were very keen to avoid brushes with the law: stories of unfair treatment at the hands of the law abounded and (perversely) often meant that Romani adults encouraged their children to be rigorously law abiding. With the exception of miming and lip-synching with recordings of famous MCs, beatboxing was the only other aspect of hip hop I saw actively performed. Like breakdancing, the equipment needed was minimal and relied on somebody's skill in using their

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[5] See Toop 1991 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop, accessed on 17/01/05 for further detail.
[6] See Toop 1991 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop, accessed on 17/01/05 for further detail.
[7] There were rumours of gang warfare involving Roma in Ostrava; but fights that appeared to be related to allegiances to different Ostrava localities, as far as I knew, did not involve any connection to hip hop culture, confirmed by Roma's lack of awareness concerning hip hop's roots.

mouth to make rhythmic, drum machine-like noises, often with the aid of a microphone held as close as possible to the lips.[8]

Roma in Ostrava who appreciated hip hop were not articulate about why they liked it. However, from conversations, festivals and parties, I got the overwhelming impression that what was most appreciated was hip hop's image as fashionable, modern and successful, and specifically that the vast majority of performers were considered black (Cz: černý)[9] by Ostrava Roma, including Hispanic Americans. For the vast majority of Ostrava Roma today, to be black is associated with all kinds of negative meanings and certainly not associated with being fashionable, strong or successful. Traditionally and contemporaneously, black is associated with sadness, grief and death in Romani custom (Davidová in Jařabová 2000:109).[10] Today, amongst Ostrava Roma, I found that being white (Cz: bílý) was also associated with negative attributes such as meanness, coldness and heartlessness, although it was also associated with success, beauty, power and money. Although Roma in Ostrava would not be described as black in the contemporary U.K. or U.S., Roma and non-Roma alike in Ostrava considered "looking Romani" to be black. Young Roma often spoke to me about understanding and feeling close and connected to black hip hop musicians. They did not articulate any specifics, but I suggest that young Roma directly related to this urban art form and their understood shared blackness.

As far as I could tell, nobody understood the vast majority of the lyrics, which led me to think that many of the political and social messages were lost on them.[11] What I suggest was understood more than anything was that black culture in deprived urban ghettos could be extremely fashionable and desirable, and could lead to great financial success, social status and stardom on television, things that many Roma openly craved. Many Roma were infatuated with America, most obvious in their fashions and accessories, but also in their musical tastes.[12] Although the contemporary American stars that Roma identified with were hundreds of times richer than most of their Romani (and non-Romani) fans and most probably had little

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[8] There is a parallel to beatboxing in the Romani practice of bumbázi or oral bass (see chapter 7); however, I suggest there is no functioning connection between them and practitioners of each in my experience did not crossover or influence the other.

[9] Černý (Cz adjective: black) was used to describe anyone considered not to look white. Černoš (Cz noun; black person) was increasingly used only to refer to people considered to appear to have African origins.

[10] Furthermore, in Romani custom, black is 'a certain seal of the distinctness and erstwhile fortunes of the Roma' as well as the colour of the earth (Davidová in Jařabová 2000:109), although I found no contemporary notion of this in Ostrava.

[11] When I asked people if they knew that some lyrics were hostile towards women, they were surprised though unconcerned, not because they condoned violence towards women, but because it did not directly affect their enjoyment of the sound itself. In community centres, female organisers would unknowingly put on CDs of hip hop music with extremely violent lyrics for very young children to dance to.

[12] Some Roma jokingly renamed and referred to Ostrava suburbs with high populations of Roma as the Bronx, Chicago and Brooklyn.

understanding of their lives, I found that many young Roma in Ostrava were attracted to images of hip hop that at once promoted and idealised the frustrations of poor, black, urban ghetto lives whilst offering an image of black international success, wealth and power. Hip hop in Ostrava was not used for political protest as it has been in other contexts; however, based on conversations, interviews and experiences of over 25 occasions where hip hop and breakdancing were featured in Ostrava Romani gatherings, I suggest that understood racial identifications/connections with overtly successful American hip hop artists was extremely important in the context of Ostrava Roma's enthusiasm for the music.

Hip hop has become an integral part of Romani performance at Romani festivals and other public performances in Ostrava and the region. When Roma were asked to perform in town squares as part of public festivals in different cities and towns, there were inevitably one or two hip hop acts as a part of the Romani contribution. Similarly, hip hop-based acts formed at least a third of all "Romani cultural events" that I attended. These contributions usually took two forms, the first being male breakdancing to a CD, and the second being male and/or female mime singing and/or dancing routines using the dance moves of well-known hip hop/hip pop artists. These routines were not exact copies of choreographed videos, rather, moves learned from videos were used to create their own sequences.

Many young Ostrava Romani males dressed in a style appropriate to hip hop, and when breakdancing, this dress was ubiquitous: it included baggy jeans, perhaps with one leg turned up, T-shirts with designer logos, baseball caps, sprayer straps, trainers with designer logos, or designer sportswear. In Ostrava, this dress signified a fashionable image and association with hip hop culture and understood attitudes. Clothing fashions have been in response to leads from America, although Ostrava Roma appeared to be a number of years behind the changing fads for designer logos, most of which were purchased as fakes at markets. For hip hop performances, females often dressed in high cut skirts and low cut tops, with knee high boots, or perhaps tracksuits with designer logos. Offstage, dress was toned down to jeans, tops, sweaters and tracksuits with designer logos, as Romani females did not usually walk on the streets without being covered: with the onset of puberty, females never usually revealed their shoulders, lower neckline or bare legs in public.[13]

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[13] Roma widely thought it was strange and ridiculous for females after about ten years old to expose a lot of flesh in public like they saw white people doing, especially in the context of sunbathing or swimming, but also on the street. On a different note, NGOs were tackling problems associated with Romani prostitution and sex trafficking, and many Romani families were also concerned that their females should not be mistaken for prostitutes by dressing scantily.

The dress and format of hip hop contributions to cultural events and festivals were very similar at each event. During my fieldwork, I attended five "Romani cultural events" (Cz: *Romská akce*) in Ostrava, two of which were organised by Miroslav Červeňák. He relied almost solely on his powers of persuasion and people's good will to give their services without remuneration. His events were always successful, hosted by him with a combination of political soapbox style, good-natured humour, and panache. He firmly believed that the old Romani traditions were best and should be returned to; however, he willingly supported young Roma in whatever cultural pursuits they chose. Almost everybody attending these events was Romani, apart from those visiting from special schools or children's homes (both of which included a disproportionately large number of Romani children). At one event, the mayor and his assistant arrived for a short while.[14] These events were held in different Romani community centres around Ostrava, and the largest was held in the centrally located Don Bosco community centre, attended by well over 300 Roma from all over Ostrava.

At this event, as well as a Rompop band, traditional Romani singing, and a re-creation of a traditional Romani wedding, there were many hip hop-based contributions. Different breakdancing groups performed in the standard format described in the previous paragraphs, and some groups mimed to hip hop songs. The item that provoked the most response was a dance routine by 14 girls performed to the song 'Shut Up' by the Black Eyed Peas from their third album Elephunk (A&M/Interscope Records, 2003). This song, which I suggest is more hip pop than hip hop, was seemingly known to every Romani youngster and repeated many times over during discos, as many as five times in one evening.

Almost everybody knew the meaning of "shut up" (although I was frequently used to check the translation) and I often heard children telling or singing to each other to "shut up". The socially acceptable aggression of the lyrics was something that strongly appealed and these performances also seemed to be a way for young Romani females to dress in otherwise socially unacceptable ways. The aggression, cool, power, dress and success of the images that were acted out in these performances would be likely to give them problems on the street. In fact, many Roma were extremely nervous and wary on the streets of Ostrava, particularly in the centre of town, and therefore tended to confine their frustrations and expressions of power or even aggression to their own communities.

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[14] I met the mayor and his noticeably more vocal assistant on a number of occasions in the context of various Romani issues. I was convinced of their need to portray a good impression to outsiders and remained unconvinced of their commitment to their Romani electorate. One positive development was the employment of a Romani advisor to the mayor who was vital in mediating in a number of crucial situations (unrecorded interview with the Romani advisor to the mayor, September 2003).

Many Roma I spoke to referred to having two personalities, one for amongst their family and fellow Roma, and one that struggled with the outside world. Although many described their face for the outside world as being the louder, nastier and more horrible one, I observed that in practice it was more complicated. When dealing with non-Roma in Ostrava, I often found that Roma harboured feelings of anger and frustration, yet contrary to their descriptions, still appeared subservient in public (understood non-Romani spaces) in a way that suggested defeat. At home, I found that frustrations were more likely to emerge, perhaps because of the more relaxed atmosphere. Occasionally when in town with Romani friends, I was puzzled by their asking for special treatment from shopkeepers, such as asking for discounts or special packaging, knowing the hostility that permeated many such exchanges. This often led to some kind of grudging response from the shopkeeper, which my Romani friends held up to me as further evidence of Czech meanness. However, if a shopkeeper ever did anything particularly kind, this example was talked about with great surprise for days, to prove that fortunately there were a few good white people.

In this context, the image of hip hop fulfilled a need amongst young Roma to see black people acting without any subservience, pleading, shame or fear, for their parents' angry responses were mostly talk, as they were fearful of the consequences of any subversive action. Although hip hop lyrics were mostly not understood, images of black pride and success that did not accept disrespect were clear enough to Ostrava Roma and were acted out at cultural events, made pertinent by their everyday lives which lacked a sense of power, control or conventional success.

In some ways, hip hop is a fundamental aesthetic break with Romani traditions that have emphasised sung lyrics to melodic lines implying tonal harmony, when most of the preferred hip hop in Ostrava emphasised heavy drumbeats and rapped lyrics. On the other hand, Romani traditions of openly appropriating influences from around them are epitomised in Romani fascination with hip hop. Hip hop is not yet being used to make independent Romani cultural products; instead, Roma were reliant on closely imitating American stars, whereby imitation was the aim rather than independent creation arising out of experiencing exported American hip hop and borne out of the lives and experiences of Ostrava Roma.

I suggest that in time, Roma in Ostrava will start to use already established hip hop sounds and symbols as their starting point to make more independent cultural products highly relevant to the challenges of Romani life in Ostrava, in similar ways to developments in

Rompop.[15] As discussed, Roma learnt dance moves from music videos to create original routines, indicating that Roma were not always just imitating; however, I suggest these music videos will become more of a starting or reference point, rather than dictating expression, as Roma become more confident and familiar with hip hop. It is significant that the white Czech hip hop scene is largely ignored by Ostrava Roma, although it may become of more interest if they wish to gain more familiarity with rapping in Czech.[16]

6.2 International pop

The influence of English-language pop has had an impact on Romani communities since the 1960s, not least in its influence on Rompop; however, its influence on Romani cultural expressions and consumption of music has been massive following the liberalisations of 1989. In Ostrava, I encountered five Romani musicians who had learned English-language pop songs from cassettes, joining together syllables that resemble the sounds of English words, accompanying themselves on the guitar. Favourites were well-known songs from the Beatles, Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones. It was usually men in their thirties and forties who remained faithful to these styles and played these songs. Younger musicians imitated later styles and at the Romani community centres there was great interest in creating dance routines to the accompaniment of well-known English-language pop songs, particularly amongst Romani girls.

Dance routines were most often performed by all-female groups of between two and six, although occasionally more. An acceptable way for Romani girls to perform publicly was dancing.[17] Although there was not a strict age when girls had to stop performing as part of a dancing group, after the age of 14 it would be unusual to continue. This was partly due to

[15] As far as I knew, there were no Czech Romani hip hop artists making their own outputs during 2003-2004, although in January 2005, via the Internet, I found out about the Czech Romani hip hop artist, Radoslav Banga, known as Gipsy. After collaborations with other Czech hip hop artists, he released his first English language solo album "Ya favourite CD Rom!" Although he feels strongly about anti-Romani racism, his lyrics are not in Romani and he appears to have remained separate from other Czech Romani artists (Campbell 31/12/04 www.tamizdat.org and Vaughan 16/12/04 www.radio.cz, accessed on 10/01/05). I never encountered any interest in his music in Ostrava; however, it should be noted that Ostrava is not necessarily representative of the rest of the Czech Republic. Bands may have large Romani followings in other cities that were not even known by most Roma in Ostrava and *vice versa*.

[16] During my fieldwork, some Hungarian Romani bands that incorporate elements of hip hop were starting to make an impact amongst Hungarian Romani families in Ostrava through copies of videos sent from family in Hungary. One Romani band in Hungary that draws on American and Hungarian hip hop is *Fekete Vonat* (Hu; Black Train) (Kovalcsik in Jurková 2003:94). Owing to the rapid spread of fashions throughout Romani communities, I suggest that developments in Hungary may foreshadow a Czech Romani hip hop scene.

[17] I found that in Ostrava, Romani dancing groups and choirs were considered an acceptable activity for Romani girls, in contrast to participating in Rompop bands.

responsibilities at home, which usually included helping to raise younger siblings or having their own children. Furthermore, by this age girls were considered ready to look after younger children in community centres, either by assisting with schoolwork, organising activities and games, or helping with dancing groups. In general, it was not considered appropriate for females after around the age of 14 with women's bodies and responsibilities to be dancing in public performances.

I followed the progress of one female trio working on a pop dancing routine for a month before a performance at a Romani festival, near the city of Olomouc, Moravia, an hour by train from Ostrava. They practiced each week at the Liščina community centre under the gaze of interested peers. The girls were very proud of having produced their own dance routine through working with one another and much time was devoted to perfecting the synchronisation involved. In a similar format to pop videos, this routine included moves that everybody did simultaneously or in sequence. There was no solo star and each person did short solo moves within the routine. The performance was at a festival called *Romský Pouť* (Cz; Romani Pilgrimage), organised annually for Roma all over Moravia by the Catholic charity Charitas.[18] The main aim of the event appeared to be to promote Catholicism amongst Roma, although it was doubtful how effectively this was achieved.[19] The main point of the festival for these young girls was to perform their dance routine, for which they had spent so long working, in front of their peers that had also travelled there and a wider audience.

Although the weather was cold and wet, the girls' enthusiasm was not dampened and they carried off their routine to the song 'Make It Happen' (Mariah Carey, Sony, 1992), loudly amplified over the speaker system, which was greeted with much applause, encouraging squeals, and shouts. The Romani audience were clearly engaged with their performance, young and old alike; although they were supportive of all performers to some extent, this performance was culturally relevant and easily comprehensible to all present. This was in contrast to some of the contributions that drew on traditional Romani songs, acoustic instrumental playing and choir

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[18] At the festival, dance routines to international pop was only one part of the cultural offerings. There was a large contingent from Ostrava, who also contributed breakdancing, Latin dancing, a Rompop keyboardist and more traditional *čardáš* style dancing. Other Romani groups from all over Moravia contributed very similar things, with the exception of Latin dancing. Other groups also featured children's choirs singing traditional and more recent repertoire and traditional Romani music groups playing in a dulcimer band style, which were noticeably absent from the Ostrava contingent.

[19] The Catholic service that began the festival in the cathedral was well attended by ethnic Czechs and some Roma. That day, the offertory was accompanied by Romani singing, which was not a usual practice. Most Roma were waiting in town for the music and dancing to start. A Bible passage and a speech by a priest opened the music and dancing, urging people towards Catholicism, during which most people chatted or looked in another direction. Roma I spoke to were glad of the free food and a venue in which to celebrate, but they were not interested in being lectured to by authority figures.

singing, which, whilst appreciated, provoked less enthusiastic audience responses. The girls were pleased with their performance, yet did not continue working as a group, as there was not anything else to work for in the near future: when there was, they would see who would be part of a group then.

International pop music also formed a regular part of Romani family parties and community discos. On a practical level, breaks for pre-recorded pop music at events gave live bands time to rest in between sets whilst music continued uninterrupted. Furthermore, it gave people a chance to dance in two completely different styles: dancing to Romani music involved a style that in the Czech Republic was particular to Roma and dancing to pop music involved an unremarkable style with small body movements in time to the beat, recognisable in discos throughout the world. Every party and disco I attended incorporated music understood as specifically Romani and music understood as part of global fashion.

Based on conversations and my impressions from attending discos and parties, I suggest that these international pop breaks were practical solutions to live bands requiring breaks from playing; however, they were also catering for Roma who as well as enjoying Rompop wanted to be connected to globally fashionable music. Playing both kinds of music was also a political statement by community centres and families that underlined their outward-looking gaze from Romani communities as well as their internal concerns. Many Roma were eager to demonstrate to me their familiarity and connection to global fashions and culture, especially through internationally well-known pop music, far more than their connection to Rompop, which I felt was taken for granted.

Roma in Ostrava were often excluded from Czech national culture around them, and so it was easier to connect with pop music that represented global and perhaps 'race'-less expressions, transcending local problems in Ostrava, the Czech Republic and Europe. Regardless of what I view as the sinister racial realities of commercial pop, I suggest that amongst Ostrava Roma international pop was viewed very positively, for it had the effect of simultaneously erasing 'race' and glamourising racial difference through easily accessible images and aesthetics that signified unproblematic 'race' (as a "skin-deep" glamour), cosmopolitanism and global interconnection.

6.3 "Miss" events

A phenomenon that was immensely popular amongst the Czech Romani and non-Romani populations was the beauty contest or '*Miss*' as it was referred to in Ostrava. Romani females did

not participate in official national contests, instead organising their own *Miss Roma* events.[20] I heard accounts of a few Roma participating in local beauty contests alongside ethnic Czechs in Ostrava, although this was not usual. Roma have taken the beauty contest and made it their own, both nationally and locally.

The persistent popularity of beauty contests in the Czech Republic is in stark contrast to their demise in Western Europe, where they are commonly regarded as degrading to women. During my fieldwork, I found that there was no such notion amongst Romani communities in Ostrava, and beauty contests were socially accepted opportunities for young girls to show off their talents and beauty, and for communities to come together for a big and exciting event. It was not clear to me how much these events directly functioned as opportunities for boys to size up available girls for potential relationships; however, it was obvious that the single female contestants were trying to look conventionally sexy and fashionable in their choice of costumes and dancing styles, which was commonly understood to enhance their chances of attracting men, many of whom were present.

In Ostrava, *Miss* were immensely popular events that saw hundreds of local Roma crowding into Romani community centres. The largest *Miss* I attended was at the Hrušov community centre, with 16 competitors and at least 200 people in attendance. The oldest participant was 15, although most of the girls were younger, between about 9 and 13. There were three rounds: the first round entailed a catwalk for which most girls wore a dress; the second round was a display of talent for which each contestant danced except for one girl who sang; and the third was a swimsuit round for which only half the girls participated, I suggest due to the traditional stigma attached to being scantily dressed in public. 'In a way they [*Miss* events] go against *romipen* (Ro; Roma-ness), as according to a traditional cultural law it is *ladž* (Ro; shame) to expose [a] half naked body' (Hübschmannová 2002).

Hübschmannová feels that organising a *Miss* is much easier than developing Romani identity through promotion of Romani language and finding ways to transmit oral culture, implying that the *Miss* is an unhelpful development of Romani identity, falling into embracing stereotypes of "wanton Gypsies" and so on (2002). It is tempting to view the popularity of *Miss* as part of a general decline and dying out of Romani culture, as many non-Roma and some,

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[20] Indeed there was a scandal in 1993 when the winner of a Czech beauty contest declared her aim to cleanse her Bohemian hometown of Roma (Stewart 1997:2-3). Ironically, the winning factor for the non-Romani winner of the 2001 Czech beauty contest was a rendition of a Romani song, sung in traditional Romani costume (http://www.myczechrepublic.com/czech_news/aktuality/eng/2001/april.html, accessed on 10/03/04). Further work would be useful concerning the connections between concepts of beauty, body politics and racial ideology in relation to the exclusion of Roma from these national contests.

particularly middle-class, Roma feel it is.[21] On one hand, I suggest that *Miss* was inextricably linked to the devaluation of Romani language and traditional Romani practices both within and outside the Romani community, which has hastened their demise and encouraged Romani preoccupations with being modern and fashionable. However, I disagree with the premise of Hübschmannová's position that a *Miss* somehow substitutes for positive Romani identity, for these events were vital in negotiating and stabilising relevant Romani identities in Ostrava that were rooted in the present. The male and female community leaders and Czech social workers who organised and supported the event did not feel that the cultural displays were familiar to their upbringing; however, although they were not likely to do anything similar themselves, they were happy to assist the children and found the *Miss* to be a positive and popular vehicle of expression. This was perhaps linked to the popularity beauty contests received more widely in the Czech Republic, which underlined the Romani experience of them as fashionable, popular and positive. Although many Roma were dismissive of Czech behaviour, they did not put pressure on younger Roma to reject Czech culture and norms, for they were eager to experience any advantages of living in the Czech Republic.

All four community centres that were attached to the NGO "Life Together" were invited to the *Miss* at Hrušov and people supported participants from the same area of Ostrava as themselves. There were cash prizes that were much sought after, as well as the status that being crowned the winner gave, particularly in terms of attracting a good man. There were many men present: they seemed not to feel embarrassment at seeing girls on display and some supported the girls' contributions by being dance partners, playing the keyboards, operating CD players and introducing them. Although the event was specifically "Romani", the community centre from the Co-existence Village was invited, meaning that there was a small contingent of ethnic Czech children and adults present. Whilst they were made formally welcome, there seemed to be some discomfort when ethnic Czech co-residents supported participants from the Co-existence Village. Although the Romani participants from the village attracted much support for their popular contributions, and one was declared the winner, their ethnic Czech supporters mostly attracted either stares or turned backs. I suggest that the defensiveness was caused by these people not being familiar rather than the fact they were Czech.[22]

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[21] During a visit to Ostrava University, one academic declared to me that Romani culture did not exist at all in Ostrava. Although I appreciate many researchers' disappointment over the decline of traditional Romani practices, it is irresponsible and unhelpful to suggest that Roma no longer have valuable and worthy culture.

[22] I also initially encountered this defensiveness at the community centres despite being formally welcomed and later witnessed the same reaction towards other strangers. Once I became a familiar face, I was treated

The second round showed the range of cultural expressions that were considered part of a Romani event. Dancing contributions included an array of styles, from aerobic routines to international pop music, pop dance routines, "Latin" dancing, čardáš dancing to Rompop, and couple dancing to soul and hip hop. Some girls dressed in the costumes inspired by traditional Romani dress that they used for the čardáš dance troupes, even though they were performing pop routines. Others wore fashionable clothes, referring to hip hop culture or designer sportswear. There was one singing contribution from Jitka, which was greeted with much enthusiasm. She sang a well-known Rompop song as a duet with Franta, who provided harmony at a third below Jitka's melody, with live keyboard accompaniment. From conversations I had at the event, I understood that people admired Jitka's courage in standing up to sing, rather than the seemingly easier dancing option, and they also thought she sang very well: she won second prize.

The girls were not judged on how "Romani" their contributions were, for their Romani identity was not in question; rather, each was evaluated chiefly for the quality of what they offered. I noticed that the positive influence of Romani and non-Romani adults and social workers involved in the organisation of these events: they helped maintain a positive atmosphere and prevent a descent into bitter comparisons, and owing to the fact that the judges knew the participants extremely well, prizes were calculated to encourage those who had tried hard, shown character or needed a boost, not only rewarding examples of socially accepted norms of talent and beauty. Prizes were equally distributed amongst participants representing the different community centres, yet there appeared to be consensus amongst the audience at the end that the best contributions had won the prizes.

The beauty contest is a form that Roma have been excluded from nationally and locally, but has been co-opted into Romani events to provide a popular, fashionable format in which young Roma can display their sense of fashion, beauty, and talents through singing and different dancing styles. This collage of different cultural references - Romani, traditional and global trends - under the umbrella of a specifically Romani event, helped negotiate and express contemporary Romani identities and situations in Ostrava.

6.4 Cultural fusion and collaborations

Particularly in urban settings, every cultural expression is hybrid, fused or collaborative, often despite popular labels. This section explores recent forms of cultural expressions amongst

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with warmth and openness, and I noticed that Roma resented other strangers calling me a foreigner, stating that I was one of them.

Ostrava Roma commonly understood to be collaborative or a fusion. The first example I describe was known as *latinský tanec* (Cz; Latin dancing), combining aspects of *čardáš* dancing with impressions of Latin dancing as seen on Czech television. The second example is an event that clearly embraced both Romani and non-Romani Czechs, which was called *Společenský Ples* (Cz; Community/Communal Ball).[23]

I was assured that "Latin" dancing amongst Ostrava Roma was only around two years old. There were only two community centres where Latin dancing had really taken off, Zárubek and the Co-existence Village. Romani dancing was not encouraged at the Co-existence Village, I supposed, because in the context only Roma were familiar with it, drawing attention to cultural differences. Furthermore, at Romani family parties people practiced Romani dancing anyway, and was therefore not an obvious activity for Romani and non-Romani children to learn together.[24]

Instead, there were dancing classes taken by Lucka (Franta's partner) at first and later by a non-Romani Czech woman. Lucka took an approach that was widespread amongst Romani community centres, for she let the children organise themselves, giving practical and emotional support by operating the CD player, mediating in disputes, giving adult supervision and sometimes demonstrating moves. In contrast, the Czech woman who took over instituted formal, adult-led, highly structured sessions. Although nobody articulated this to me, I realised that these classes promoted a dance style that was understood to be neither Romani nor Czech, and therefore provided an understood neutral ground for Romani and non-Romani participants. Lucka explained to me that she and the children had learned about Latin dancing from the television, and were proud that nobody had taught them anything and they had picked up everything themselves. The music they used had Latin beats and mostly had Spanish lyrics. An image of Latin dancing was created through gyrating hips, rotating wrists in the air, and moving rhythmically on the spot.

At Zárubek, I found that the incorporation of "Latin" dancing was driven purely through an aesthetic fascination for the music and dancing. The children and adults enjoyed the music and dance style that they found exotic and beautiful, with rhythms that they particularly liked. It offered new horizons outside the already established *čardáš* and disco dancing. The community

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[23] In some ways, the collaborative work of *Gypsy Imre* could be considered here; however, the idea was not to create a musical fusion, rather for the whole band to play in a way that was as "Romani" as possible, meaning that Janko and Štefan were more dominant musically and Jiři was more dominant organisationally.

[24] When I lived at the village, there did not appear to be any dominant cultural ideology in force, at least not for the first few months, and community activities seemed to draw on understood Romani, Czech and culturally neutral (for example, Latin dancing) expressions in a more or less haphazard manner.

in Zárubek was particularly closely-knit and the centre was the focal point: there was almost 100% unemployment and much time was spent at the centre by adults and children who relished the possibility of something new or different in an existence that many openly said was very difficult and boring. Dancing was a very important part of the centre's activities, particularly as it gave them opportunities to travel and attend festivals and events that wished to feature their dancing troupe. No money was made from these activities and they were reliant on grants to fund such trips.

I accompanied the group on three trips, the first of which was to Prague where they danced at an open day for a day centre for people with mental health problems. The trip had been organised by a social worker who used to work with Romani children in Ostrava but had moved to Prague the previous year. She was well-liked; however, the adult Roma appeared insulted that they had somehow been lumped together with mentally ill people, a particularly sensitive issue in light of the unrealistically high proportion of Roma sent to special schools for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, the children enjoyed the occasion and performed their routines of traditional and "Latin" dancing.

At the event, the "Latin" dancing was preceded by a costume change into shorter, tighter skirts, although still below the knee, for they did not need to swing their skirts in this style. The youngest girl (age 6) was even wearing a miniskirt. They danced in a manner extremely similar to the girls at the Co-existence Village, incorporating elements of *čardáš* dancing, pop routines, and images of "Latin" such as gyration and other movements of the hips and rotation of the wrists above the head. In contrast, in *čardáš* dancing, the lower body is covered by a full skirt and although the skirt is swung using the hands, the lower body stays relatively still, whilst the upper body is shaken rapidly from side to side.[25] International pop routines have influenced some of the choreographed formations and synchronised moves. *Čardáš* elements were less obvious, although the "feel" of the dancing, and the facial expressions and attitudes of the dancers were unchanged from the traditional dancing. One movement taken from *čardáš* dancing was turning through 360° whilst taking two steps to the right or left: in *čardáš* dancing hands were held low to swing the full skirts during the turn, whereas in the Latin dancing, hands were held high above the head whilst rotating the wrists.

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[25] It is possible that this is connected to the traditional Romani belief that the upper body is clean and lower body is unclean. In Ostrava, although Roma talked a lot about hygiene and cleanliness, they did not talk about ritual cleanliness. Some vestiges of traditional beliefs in ritual cleanliness have been passed down without the context, such as wearing long, full skirts for traditional dancing, and this may be another such example.

Although the styles were clearly separated, I noticed that elements of the "Latin" style seemed to be creeping into the *čardáš* style, such as the occasional movement of the hips and rotation of the wrists. A significant difference to the "Latin" performance of the group from Zárubek from others I saw at Romani events was that they used Rompop music that incorporated elements of Latin music rather than Latin music per se: the lyrics were in Romani apart from references to *señorita*, syncopated Latin rhythms were featured, and there were sounds reminiscent of a Spanish guitar. The mixing of Rompop with "Latin" dancing further encouraged crossover between the styles.

During my fieldwork, examples of organising events in Ostrava specifically to embrace Roma and non-Roma only took place at the Co-existence Village. After New Year, there was a *Společenský Ples* (Cz; Community/Communal Ball) held at the village. A *ples* (Cz; ball) is a traditional Czech event, with several held around the country: many Czechs are proficient at ballroom dancing, due to school and evening classes during their school years, and most older Romani Czechs could also dance tangos, waltzes and foxtrots.[26] However, as many Roma in Ostrava had attended special schools and had been excluded from mainstream cultural activities and events, most Roma had not attended a Czech ball. In recent years, Roma have organised their own balls, which use Rompop bands, but because people paid to attend, balls remained a minority activity that have not encroached on the dominance of family parties.

After a mostly successful yet tense first 15 months as a village, a celebration *ples* was organised for village residents and friends and family of the residents who they wished to invite.[27] The ball started with buffet-style food that could be purchased from a room at the back, allowing people to have already eaten at home, making the evening cheaper so as not to exclude poorer residents, and there was much vodka drunk, which was brought by guests. The regionally well-known Rompop band Gypsy Koro was playing, as the bassist, Mirek Giňa, member of the well-known musician family, lived in the village.[28] They played popular Rompop melodies all night, repeating those that were particularly well liked, some with Czech and Slovak lyrics and others in Romani.

Unusually for Roma, children were left at home for this celebration. Also in attendance were representatives from the Catholic charity Charitas who had recently taken over control of the village, dissolving the previously democratically organised village council and forcing out

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[26] Interest in ballroom dancing has diminished amongst Czech Roma and non-Roma in the last decade.

[27] An earlier celebration for the village's first birthday had flopped through lack of attendance, various tensions had reached boiling point, and there was a need to remember the ideals of co-existence that had initially brought them together.

[28] *Gypsy Koro* had local success playing for bigger parties and one or two weddings in the Ostrava vicinity, so people felt fortunate to have secured their services.

their partner, the NGO "Life Together", to the disgust of many residents. Charitas was feared and revered in the village owing to its overwhelming power and status as provider of much-needed financial resources. The representatives from Charitas had clearly never been to a Romani party before and, frustrated by the initial lack of dancing and to the amusement of others, initiated various efforts at dancing, in a mixture of ballroom style and what they thought was Romani. As people warmed up, they joined the dance floor in their own time. Romani style dancing prevailed, with the efforts of ethnic Czechs tolerated with amusement as they mixed ballroom styles with the *čardáš* dancing they could see around them. In couple dancing between Roma and non-Roma, non-Romani partners attempted to keep up with their Romani wives or husbands with some embarrassment, but after some initial discomfort people acted with relative ease.

After a few hours of eating and dancing, a raffle was drawn with the numbers from people's tickets, and it turned out that everybody had won a prize: in the end Charitas' generous funding won people over. After the raffle, the dancing became wild and people became increasingly drunk. One friend that was invited seemed to be drunk when he turned up and under the gaze of Charitas, Roma were much more self-conscious about it than would have been usual at family parties, trying to cover up his behaviour, which they would not have bothered to do at family parties. After what had appeared to be a relatively harmonious if contrived evening in light of village tensions that had arisen over the previous months, the police were called to the village in the early hours to break up a fight outside the centre, which was in fact not directly related to the ball.

In some ways, this evening was an example of how Roma and Czech people could share a socio-cultural event during which everybody took on something new and had something to refer to, although it seemed to me that Roma were forced to make less compromises as their music and dancing style dominated and a Romani party format was roughly followed. Many non-Romani residents were only partially familiar with Rompop and Romani dancing; although they could use ballroom styles to dance, it seemed like a second best option. On the other hand, for Roma, differences from normal celebrations included the absence of children, no unlimited food, and paid-for tickets to gain entrance, all of which could be seen as significant compromises on the part of Roma. The residents were united in suffering discomfort under the gaze of Charitas, however benign it might have been, and the raffle provided a common experience that benefited everyone with prizes.

Amongst Ostrava Roma, recent cultural fusions and collaborations have been partially successful in that the purposes of these activities have been seen to be fulfilled in the promotion of co-existence; however, I suggest that as these type of events and activities become more usual,

it will become easier for everyone to make compromises and interact in a way that engenders less tension and discomfort, simply because they will be more familiar with each other. Clearly, certain factors encouraged these activities, such as ensuring that people were not financially excluded, understood Romani and Czech aspects were seen to be evenly represented, understood "culturally neutral" or un-contentious ground were provided where people have difficult histories of interaction (for example, the raffle and "Latin" dancing), and spaces were used where people did not feel that they were being watched and judged. Political aims to foster better relationships between Roma and non-Roma in Ostrava cannot happen through cultural collaborations alone: histories, socio-economic inequalities and cultural questions need to be addressed as interconnected, towards which I suggest the Co-existence Village project has made some progress.

6.5 The international Romani movement

As has been noted earlier, the international Romani movement has been increasingly active in a number of ways since 1989. In the field of culture, its role is epitomised in the organisation of International Roma Day. In previous years, this day has taken the form of several locally organised festivals and celebrations on and around it under the auspices of International Roma Day around the world. Some international Romani organisations have given bureaucratic support and small financial assistance to local projects, but the onus has been on local organisers. During my fieldwork in Ostrava, a committee of young Roma in their late teens was making plans for International Roma Day 2004. They had connections to the national Romani organisation *Athinganoi*, which organises meetings and conferences in Prague, where young Roma can meet other Roma from the Czech Republic and other countries. The committee had big plans for the day and had put in much groundwork in terms of planning projects in schools and community centres, a public concert featuring well-known Romani musicians, and a parade through town. They were convinced that the town council would support their work with a large grant, but in the end, there was no money, and they had to scale down their plans drastically, to a discussion forum, football tournament and disco. No other Roma I spoke to in Ostrava were interested in International Roma Day, barely knew of its existence, and were spectacularly disinterested in attending any discussion forum.

There was a different story in other Czech cities. I was invited to attend an event in Brno that raised money for Roma in Slovakia, which was held in a large club venue in the centre of

town with tickets priced as for any other entrance at that club.[29] The atmosphere was celebratory and at least 300 people attended, spending money enthusiastically at the bar. The atmosphere was very different to events in Ostrava: this was connected to the lack of available venue in Ostrava for a large Romani celebration; the higher standard of living many, though not all, Roma experience in Brno; and the organisational support and expertise of the Romani museum.

There were at least ten well-known Romani bands performing, mostly from Brno but also from Hradec Kralove and Prague, and the evening also featured extremely proficient performances of breakdancing from local children. Bands included: Gulo Čar who play in soul and funk styles as discussed in chapter 1, a local group playing Gypsy Swing (Cz: *Džengo*), and the Horváth family band playing in traditional style, which seemed to be appreciated equally to the more fashionable contributions. The whole evening had an atmosphere of confidence, success, inclusion and smooth operation that were often missing from events I attended in Ostrava: they had extremely proficient organisers, many contacts to draw from who would play to an extremely high standard for no money, knowing that they had achieved and would achieve more success with the help of the organisers. In Ostrava, the venues, resources and expertise were not there to back up the talent as it was in Brno, which, by no means a paradise for Roma, offered more.

The ability to create localised expressions of solidarity with other Romani diasporic communities was highly dependent on the local financial, material and organisational support available. In Brno, substantial local interest was aroused in International Roma Day by staging a well-organised and promoted, locally appealing event in a large, fashionable venue with many aesthetically varied, high quality and well-known musicians. The proceeds of this event went towards supporting Roma in Slovakia, from where, like in Ostrava, many Roma had come post-World War II.

In Prague, Roma from all over the Czech Republic involved in the international movement gather for the annual *Khamoro* festival of Romani music. Since 1999 the most successful and celebrated Western and Eastern European Romani musicians have come together each year for three nights of performances in popular entertainment venues.[30] The festival has grown enormously, attracting many curious non-Romani tourists as well as a Romani audience who I noticed tended to remain separate from the tourists. In Ostrava, the festival was mostly unheard of, except amongst those who already had an interest in the international Romani

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[29] There was a similar event held at a club in Prague.

[30] The festival was founded by a non-Romani Bosnian couple, Jelena and Dzemil Silajdzic, film makers living in Prague since the war in ex-Yugoslavia. I attended in 2001 and 2003 at the invitation of their daughter who was a student of mine at The English College in Prague.

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movement. For them, it was an event of great importance and pride. Martin Grinvalsky (aged 17) told me how exciting it was to meet Roma from different countries and how good it made him feel to communicate with them. He was extremely proud of his international Romani contact and experience, rejoicing in the varied cultural expressions representing different countries, drawing attention to their great quality and variety, as well as the famous names the festival attracted.

During my fieldwork, I noticed that the international Romani movement and the cultural expressions it helps promote had almost no impact on Ostrava Roma except for the small group of youngsters who were already interested in the movement's politics. For them, international gatherings of Romani musicians were valued opportunities to make and solidify connections with other Roma in other countries. The quality and appeal of the music at these events helped create their pride in being Romani and part of a global diaspora that seemed strong and productive on these occasions.

In summary, there was a plethora of cultural activities taking place amongst Romani communities in Ostrava that was sometimes bewildering in its diversity. Roma were espousing cultural forms that had little or no connection to established Romani traditions. Sometimes this was through a wish to integrate locally with non-Roma (for example, Latin dancing), desire to be connected to global non-Romani fashions that were perceived to be successful (for example, international pop), perceived racial connection to other "black" cultural forms that had great prestige and allure (for example, hip hop), desire to reinvigorate thoroughly what is promoted as Romani music (for example, *Gulo Čar* through jazz, funk and soul styles), or a wish to connect with other Roma internationally (for example, the *Khamoro* festival). This summary is not designed to characterise each musical style with a specific political project and clearly there were many intentions and meanings in the widespread consumption of, for example, hip hop.

There were no strict rules about what was considered "Romani music" amongst Ostrava Roma and it appeared that community events and centres provided opportunities for a multitude of music and dancing practices to be embraced as Romani in some way. In many circumstances, the main criteria for musical practices being considered Romani was the proponents' understood Romani identity and their participation in a performance, event or community centre designated as Romani. Of course these were not the only important aspects and non-Roma could be included in Romani events or be said to perform Romani music or dance, particularly if what was being performed conformed to understood traditional (for example, Romani folk songs) or tradition-related (for example, Rompop) Romani music. The situation was never clear cut and relied on

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negotiating a range of opinions within the Romani community and what was understood to be Romani externally, with all the vested political interests this included.

Chapter 7 Vlach Roma in Ostrava

The length of this chapter reflects the shorter time I spent with Vlach Roma (Cz: *Olaš*, Ro: *Vlachika*), their proportionally small number in Ostrava (approximately 2000-3000[1]), and the fact that I was only able to talk about music with Vlach Roma and listen to cassette or video examples with them, rather than witness any live music making. I found that Vlach Roma in Ostrava tended to be viewed by other Roma as a small, closed and homogenous group, and they made great efforts to appear impenetrable to outsiders: as well as maintaining strict boundaries between themselves and non-Roma, they also maintained spatial, cultural and socio-economic distance from the historically more sedentary Slovak and Hungarian groups that they called *Rumungro* (Ro).[2]

Only a brief resume of the history of Vlach Romani diaspora is given, for although there has been much written concerning different Vlach groups throughout Europe and America,[3] owing to the limited scope of this thesis I refer only to that which directly relates to my fieldwork experiences in Ostrava. I make particular reference to interviews with one of the Vlach kings of the Czech Republic and Rafael (married to the king's niece), and time spent with two Vlach families. I was met with a great deal of suspicion and I was not allowed to photograph or record anything, except on the last occasion I visited Rafael when I was allowed to record an interview on mini-disc.[4]

I received most of my information from Rafael, who was in his forties and had lived in Ostrava for 22 years with his wife and daughter. He grew up in Central Slovakia with five sisters, but when he came to Ostrava as a soldier he found his wife and settled there. Rafael was eager to point out to me that the terrible conditions he described in contemporary Slovakia, where most of his family still lived, only affected *Rumungri* and no longer the Vlachs. He had always traded

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[1] The Vlach king living in Ostrava gave me this figure. He also claimed there were approximately 50,000 Vlach Roma living in the Czech Republic but resisted revealing his sources for these numbers. According to a rough estimate, Vlach may represent about 15-20% of the total Roma population in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Hübschmannová 2003 http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/index.html). The Romani population in the Czech Republic is estimated to be between 250,000 and 300,000 (http://www.romove.cz/en/article/18158, accessed on 12/12/05).

[2] I found Slovak Roma to be displeased with the label *Rumungro*, and some found it pejorative.

[3] See for example Gusztáv (1995), Kertész-Wilkinson (1997, 2000 in Baumann 2000), Lange (2003), Nitsiakos (1985), Stewart (1987, 1997), Stojka, Davidová & Hübschmannová (2000), Sutherland (1975), Weyrauch (2001).

[4] There had recently been high profile police involvement with the Vlach community in Ostrava relating to drug scandals. Vlach were extremely wary of journalists and the only reason I could speak to these families was due to the personal recommendation of their family doctor, who was held in high esteem by his Romani patients.

independently (Ro: *šefti*) to earn his money, partly because due to discrimination he could not secure a "contract" in post-1989 Ostrava looking like a Rom, but mostly because this was considered the best way to earn money.

7.1 Historical background of Vlach Ostrava Roma

'Vlach' refers to a widespread group of inter-related families and clans, united by their dialects of Romani that reveal a strong influence of Romanian, likely to have been imbibed during their enslavement in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia between the 14th and 19th century (Hancock 2002:17-26).[5] After freedom from slavery, the Vlach spread out all over Europe and North and South America, maintaining much of their dialects and traditional folk songs in diaspora. Vlach groups continued their nomadic lifestyles with relative disregard for the various regimes, politics and changes that were going on around them. As Rafael explained:

> The Gypsy is not interested in politics. It doesn't matter if Havel or Husák is president. What matters is feeding and taking care of their children, having work. They are not into politics (interview with Rafael, 2004).

In Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech lands, Vlach peripatetic groups were labeled according to their profession: horse dealers (*Lovara*), sieve makers (*Čurara*), rag-and-bone men (*Drzara*), cloth dealers (*Pochtanara*) and fishermen (*Mašara*).[6] These days, Vlach in Slovakia and the Czech Republic are *Lovara*.

Unlike the other Romani groups in Czechoslovakia, Vlach remained nomadic until they were forced to settle in 1959, when the Communist party issued a law (74/1958) that forbade all nomadism, and forcibly removed wheels from Romani wagons and shot their horses (Jařabová 2000:73). Vlach Roma highly value free enterprise, free movement and freedom from wage labour and often referred to this outrage in our conversations.[7] In Ostrava, they remained highly independent of non-Vlach systems, preserving many social structures that other Romani groups no longer have such as the practice of buying brides, having a king and *kris* (Ro; Vlach court).

As Rafael and other Vlach explained to me, Vlach were extremely aware of kinship, family relations, status and popularity within the community, all of which strongly influence social interaction with each other. Their professional and material position was extremely

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[5] The name Vlach is given by researchers to include all groups whose dialects are strongly influenced by Romanian, although the usual self-denomination of Vlach is simply Rom. The Romani in this chapter is the Lovara dialect, not the East Slovak dialect of other chapters.

[6] http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/index.html, accessed on 12/12/05

[7] See also Stewart (1987), Nitsiakos (1985)

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important to their identity,[8] and trading was the only acceptable profession, even though conditions had become more difficult recently. "From childhood we went to fairs, our fathers traded in horses... We have always traded. We've done business for a thousand years. Now it's bad, everything is getting worse. Now we sell clothes, carpets and cups" (interview with king 2004). The ability to acquire a large amount of wealth through doing business attracted very high status, and although more rarely practiced, the romance of generations of traditional horse-trading persisted, for this was the way most of the Ostrava Vlach Romani families had become rich. This wealth was extravagantly displayed in the interior decoration of their houses, ostentatious gold jewellery and gold teeth.[9]

In contrast with other Romani groups, who I found viewed the Communist provision of wage labour for all as a positive step, every Vlach I spoke with was eager to tell me that no Vlach ever supported communism and how much they respected the democracy and free markets of the West. They were very proud of having perceived western and capitalist attitudes, and were happy to co-operate with whites for the purposes of business or some other advancement. In the last few years there had been much speculation by the media and other Roma that Vlach were heavily involved in drug dealing, although Vlach were keen to point out to me that this would be against their rules of living (Ro: *Romaniya*).

This situation represented some of the tensions between Vlach and non-Vlach Roma in Ostrava: non-Vlach felt that Vlach had become rich through dishonest means, horded their money greedily and given all the Roma a bad reputation for being dishonest, breaking state laws and faking poverty. Vlach felt that the other Roma groups were not as Romani as them because they had assimilated to a greater extent, proved in their supposed stupidity in seeking wage labour or living on state benefits. Any employment of non-Vlach Roma was usually manual labour (Ro: *buti*), work particularly despised by Vlach.

> There is a big difference between Vlach and *Rumungro*. The *Rumungro* are more musicians, their language is similar, but they are a completely different race. It is something like the Poles and Czechs. Vlach are at a higher level, the *Rumungro* are 50 years behind us (interview with King).

Other Vlach that I met in Ostrava appeared to concur with this view, often using the term *druhý ras* (Cz; other/second race) to describe *Rumungro*. Rafael was less willing to acknowledge intra-Roma (or any) racial differences because he felt that 'race' was used as a reason to treat people

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[8] The importance of money is reflected in the ongoing traditional practice of putting money in a baby's cot to ensure financial success and in a coffin to appease the spirit of the deceased.

[9] Vlach residences I visited had used every available space for display cabinets of ornaments and fancy glassware, pictures, brightly coloured cloths and plastic flowers.

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badly, in contrast to his wife (the king's niece) who felt that Vlach were superior to other Roma, epitomised by their lighter skin. All the younger Vlach women had dyed their hair blond and verbally drew attention to their fair skin and beauty, in comparison to *Rumungri's* darker skin. On the positive side, non-Vlach Roma often respected Vlach's seeming independence from the state and other people, socially, culturally and economically, and Vlach particularly admired *Rumungro* musicians. "*Rumungri* like music the most, because they play it well and their women sing beautifully. The musicians command good respect" (interview with king).[10]

I was able to arrange an interview with one of the elected "kings" of the Czechoslovak Vlach Roma.[11] When I met him, he was living for part of the year in Ostrava and part of the year in Germany. During the socialist period, he had immigrated to New York for 30 years, and he said he was later given asylum in Manchester for a few years, along with 70 members of his family. At the family home in Ostrava, I also met his daughter, who had American citizenship and flawless English, and his granddaughter, Tiffany, named after the New York store. Like other Vlach, the king was keen to show his disgust for communism, the Czech Republic in general, and particularly the skinhead fascists who had attacked so many Roma in Ostrava and gone unpunished by the state.

Whilst suspicious of the state's institutions, rules, laws and the media, unlike other Roma, Vlach were confident about using them to their economic advantage, something that the king actively encouraged. He had invited select journalists to do highly controlled, short articles about him, posing with his crown for photographs.[12] I suggest that his image – including his western-made linen suit, waistcoat and Panama hat combination, crown, wealth, ostentatious interior decoration of his home, and veneer of being highly sought after, busy and unattainable – was calculated to signify the king's important and demanding role and duties. The position of king is revolving, for which elections are held every six to seven years. It was explained to me that there

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[10] One exceptional young Vlach Rom I knew through teaching young Roma English consciously tried to work with other Roma, working voluntarily at a Romani community centre. He did not mention his Vlach identity to me until after six months of knowing each other, when he told me about going to a funeral: amongst Vlach, funerals are at least three days long and have many more preserved associated rituals and practices than non-Vlach Roma. His good intentions were often thwarted by his many commitments within the Vlach community and the lack of acceptance he encountered amongst non-Vlach Roma, noticeable in their shunning him from conversations and activities and in the wild accusations of malpractice made against him.

[11] There was supposed to be one elected Vlach "king" (Ro: *kraj*) for each country and one king for all Vlach above them (currently a Pole living in Germany). One Czech Vlach king lived in Brno and the other in Ostrava, and neither acknowledged the authority of the other.

[12] He had one newspaper cutting and photograph framed in his residence that was decorated in a palatial fashion in the outskirts of Ostrava. Lee believes that the wearing of crowns is for the benefit of *gadje* and not something taken seriously within the Vlach community, rather regarded as an eccentricity of their leader (in Weyrauch 2001). I found that the king took the trappings of kinghood extremely seriously, and I was not allowed to take a photograph of him without his crown.

were four candidates, and only male adults were allowed to vote: factors of age,[13] family (older family members may have been former kings), standing and popularity within the community,[14] Roma-ness (Ro: *Romipen*), wealth and past experience were taken into account during the voting process.

One of the main duties of the king was to act as a role model for the education of young Vlach, hold a *kris* (Ro; Romani court) when deemed necessary, and ensure that appropriate punishment was meted out to offenders. If the king needed any advice, there was a council of six male elders. A *kris* was convened only when necessary, and in theory several could occur in a week, although the king's daughter explained that in practice, there was never more than one a week. In the past (and still to some extent in other countries), the Vlach *kris* primarily dealt with problems regarding ritual pollution (Ro: *marhimo*).[15] However, in contemporary Ostrava, the *kris* mostly dealt with issues of marital fidelity, family feuds and problems of cheating between Vlachs. The court does not have any interest in evidence of Vlach cheating non-Vlach or any legal offences that only fell under the jurisdiction of the state. In some cases, Vlach law was stricter than state law: Rafael mentioned a case of sexual intercourse between a man and his step-sister, which is not incest under Czech law, but is considered as such under Vlach law.[16]

In line with traditional practices, banishment was the worst form of punishment amongst Ostrava Vlach, taking the form of temporarily shunning offenders. As Rafael explained:

> Simply the offender would not sit at the table with other Vlach, not eat with them, not talk to other Vlach. If there is some happiness, he cannot go there. If there is some sadness amongst us... he can come... But otherwise he is banished.

The king described his power to banish someone from the Vlach clan (Cz: *rod*) for between 15 and 20 years for a serious crime, such as a man having oral sex with his wife (Cz: "*udělá manželce francouzský styl*"). Although the king did not explain this law in terms of ritual pollution, it relates to the traditional notion that the upper part of the body is clean and the lower half polluted, and must therefore be kept separate (see Kertész-Wilkinson 1997:107). In the worst

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[13] During conversations, I noticed some controversy amongst Vlach over whether increased age was synonymous with increased wisdom.

[14] The issue of being popular (Cz: *popularní*) appeared to be extremely important to the Vlach. The king should be the most popular person, demonstrated in his election and also in the large number of people that would attend his funeral. It was explained to me that popularity was gained through good social behaviour, although from other conversations I felt it was also connected to a family's historical standing in the community.

[15] Ritual pollution is a complicated and contested subject, possibly related to Hindu notions of pollution, which has been written about elsewhere, for example, in Stewart (1987) and Weyrauch (2001).

[16] Rafael told me of another example: if a Vlach falls over and speaks vulgarly through drinking too much, that person would be banished for half a year (interview 2004).

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cases the offender is permanently banished and thought of as if he had died. Rafael explained that the offender would not be able to talk to anyone else Vlach apart from his/her spouse.

> Those who commit more serious wrongdoings... say, if someone took his daughter-in-law to "live" [have sexual intercourse] with him... they will fully throw him out of the family. The father-in-law has already died. He shuts himself away and dies, and nobody speaks to him if he is living or dead.

The king presented Vlach laws to me as encouraging pragmatic modern living for Vlachs. The king and other Vlach were very keen to present themselves to me as modern, Western, wealthy and savvy. One of the ways in which they tried to show me this was in their rejection of "irrelevant" practices, laws and beliefs: the king said that these held them back from becoming economically successful and leading a modern life.[17] He claimed that these days Vlach should above all be citizens of nation-states.

In other ethnographies, researchers have clearly linked practices such as the separation of women when eating to the perceived potential of women to ritually pollute men, with food being a likely vehicle of contamination. The Ostrava king unambiguously linked the separation of sexes to the different social needs of men and women, for men wished to joke at the dining table in a way that would not be appropriate around women. Vlach in Ostrava displayed signs of traditional practice, such as the *kris*, Vlach laws, the buying of brides, and the institution of the king, although I found that they were mostly reinterpreted as pragmatic tools for modern life that were also in keeping with Vlach identity. Each adult Vlach I spoke to in Ostrava gave me the overwhelming impression that they would do whatever it took to maximise their finances and improve their chances in society, even if it meant sacrificing some tradition.

The older Vlach I met claimed that the youngsters were still interested in tradition, although they no longer dressed traditionally, preferring Western fashions.[18] As Rafael explained, Vlach families in Ostrava were very conscious of their history and the fact that they had not always been so wealthy: Rafael was proud of how Vlach had independently improved their lot

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[17] When asked about current laws and rules for daily living, the king dismissively summed them up thus: "It is important for a wife to be a virgin when getting married, because the family, principally the mother of the groom, wants to know it. Women do not have many rights in our [community]. 95% of us are Catholic and we keep more to the Bible... When a woman is in another state [pregnant], she must not sleep with her man from the second month. As Vlach we have special rules for food: women do not sit with men to eat, because the men make fun and jokes that the women should not hear" (interview with king). In Ostrava, there are no longer any restrictions on eating *gadjo* food.

[18] Older women all wore traditional loose, long skirts and the men all tended to wear short jackets (which Kertész-Wilkinson (1997:11) has suggested is connected to pollution concerns about keeping the upper and lower body separate), but it is debatable how much this is connected to fashion or traditional belief. Other Romani men tend to wear jackets rather than coats, but were unaware of such beliefs.

since the days of his grandfather in Slovakia, and now had the financial means to acquire clothes that were expensive and fashionable.

> Young girls want to dress nicely according to fashion... they want to fit into society... in order to be accepted... they take what the era offers... They buy modern shoes. Not like when Vlachs walked... If we saw how they travelled in the past... They didn't even have acceptable shoes. We call them *cerula* [Ro; shoes of rags]. They made them from a blanket/tarpaulin bound around their feet and in these they walked. It was a bad era.

I found that Vlach Roma in Ostrava were well aware of how precarious their history had been - including slavery, poverty, the injustices perpetrated by the Communist party, and contemporary skinhead threats - and they were determined to secure a stable future with whatever means it took. Whilst music did not play a large role in the priorities and concerns articulated by Vlach, music was important in many ways that seemed to be taken for granted, as discussed in the following section.

7.2 Vlach Musical Traditions

Vlach musical traditions developed almost exclusively vocally until around the 1970s, partly due to the impracticality of carrying musical instruments whilst traveling around in wagons during the summer to sell produce and services, and partly due to lack of money to buy them (Fennesz-Juhasz 2002). There was much private music making, although historically music was not a source of income for Vlach. These days, music was still not considered a mainstream profession for Vlach, although there are a small number of professional Vlach bands outside the Czech Republic, particularly in Hungary. In Ostrava, I found that when Vlach referred to musicians, they specifically meant instrumentalists.

> Before, when our grandfathers, most of them... were horse traders or made feeding troughs, they also played a lot of music... not everyone but somebody amongst them played the violin or guitar, not like today when many are musicians (interview with Rafael 2004).

In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, traditional Vlach songs are still rarely presented in public, but when they are it is usually in the context of cultural presentations and festivals (Fennesz-Juhasz 2002).[19]

Historically, the Vlach have lived in small, closed, endogamous groups, which strongly regulated contact with outsiders. This has meant that their dialect and traditional songs have been remarkably well preserved by oral tradition throughout the generations.

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[19] Rare examples include the Makula family from Kendice and Petrovany and Lenka Kotlarová from Brno (Fennesz-Juhasz 2002).

A song comes to this era over the years. We say there are songs 200 or 300 years old. They are sung in the family, Vlach Roma in Czech know them, there are Vlach almost everywhere who know them... There are songs that are very old, sang by our great-great-great-grandmothers or our great-grandfathers. Each time grandfather or grandmother sang to us, we fixed this song in our heads. They teach one or two and the song goes further. Also amongst themselves they compose new songs for a new age. Completely new, yes (interview with Rafael).[20]

The oldest repertoire was known by many Vlach and the later songs were more particular to each group's geographical location. This may have led to a breakdown in musical understanding between Vlach communities; however, the rise of international travel and Vlach business practices that regularly crossed national borders provided opportunities for collecting and distributing cassette and CD recordings of new Vlach music from different places, meaning that many of the most recent recordings of Vlach music were known widely across Vlach communities.

Some of the benefits from the strict regulation of contact with non-Vlach are that out of the five subethnic groups of Roma in the Czech and Slovak republics, the Vlach have best maintained both a passive and active competence in Romani, which is the primary language of all age groups, spoken at home as well as in public.[21] Rafael explained that Vlach in the Czech and Slovak Republics came from the same families and communicated in exactly the same ways. Furthermore, when Vlach from different parts of the world met each other, their dialects were mutually comprehensible. The understood musical situation is analogous to the linguistic one, for Czech and Slovak Vlach music was conceived as the same, and as geographical and cultural distance of Vlach host countries increased, so did the difficulty in understanding the music. Rafael was keen to emphasise that the most important factor was shared Vlach identity, as opposed to any similarities of cultural or linguistic expressions themselves.

Vlach music is not the same throughout the world. Each Vlach race is how it lives, say, Yugoslavian, Croat or Serbian... what they have in them is according to the instruments and music that they have there. They conform to the melodies of white people, but the utterance [performance] is Vlach. So different Vlach communities' music is not fully the same, but, like the language, you can make yourself understood with them... but the song is different... We say that in Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, Kiev, Germany, Poland, Central Europe, the songs are the same, the utterance [performance] is like it is here in the Czech Republic (interview with Rafael 2004).

Vlach I met were immensely proud of their international connections, both in their business connections and love of many different kinds of music from all over the world, in particular

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[20] Rafael sometimes referred to Vlach as "us" and at other times as "them". The reasons for this were not clear.

[21] Vlach were eager to tell me that they could understand the Romani spoken by *Rumungro*, but the *Rumungro* could not understand Vlach Romani.

mainstream international pop music, which they viewed as a powerful symbol of being modern. I found that the sense of a network of Vlach living all over the world gave Vlach in Ostrava great pride and security. The Vlach men said that it gave them more freedom to travel to different places, knowing there were other Vlach there who would always welcome them. Rafael proudly told me of going to Appleby horse fair in England and his joy at being able to communicate with Vlach from all over the world there.

Rafael told me that Vlach often hired non-Vlach Romani musicians to play at celebrations.[22] The Hungarian Romani violinist, Kalman, and Slovak Rom, Josef Giňa, also described to me their experiences of playing for Vlach events, which were regarded as prestigious and financially rewarding opportunities. These two musicians learnt Vlach songs as part of their repertoire and reported that Vlach greatly appreciated their renditions. The remuneration was legendary: Kalman described how he was once paid 6000 crowns[23] for one song. Rafael explained that it was good work for *Rumungro*, for the Vlach had a tradition of requesting songs by offering money.

> In Ostrava, there are not any Vlach musicians... only *Rumungro* bands... but we invite such groups not from our race, and we understand what they sing... There are *Rumungro* bands who play only our songs immaculately... One *Rumungro* comes to earn money. Amongst Vlach, when the family is together, they sing a lot and each person wants to have a solo. A solo means that you invite your family, godfather or godmother to sing, in short the whole family, anyone wanting a solo.[24] So the *Rumungro* knows that here amongst us he earns money. We give 1000 crowns for a song that someone plays. He can take 100,000 crowns in an evening. He receives another 30,000 for playing. So when he goes home he has 130,000 crowns.[25]

Rumungro musicians are particularly needed at funerals, when music making is important in creating the right emotion for expressing grief, and the rewards are high for those musicians (interview with Kalman, Heinschink & Teichmann 2002). In Ostrava, many Vlach funerals were held at a castle on the outskirts hired to them by a family of Greek Communists.

Researchers have divided traditional Vlach songs into two main genres: the quick, dance song (Ro: *khelimaske d'ila*) and the slow, lyric song (Ro: *louke d'ila*), similar to the way in which Slovak and Hungarian Romani traditional songs have been divided (Kertész-Wilkinson 1997, Stewart 1987, Stojka et al. 2000). Dance songs are accompanied by techniques imitating various instrumental sounds or functions: rhythmic finger snapping, hand clapping, feet stamping,

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[22] See also Kertész-Wilkinson (1987, 1997), Stewart (1987), Stojka et al. (2000), Pettan (1992, 2005a)

[23] Approximately £150 at the time of writing.

[24] Traditional singing, mainly in the context of slow songs, involves introducing the song with a spoken formula addressed to those present and payment: see Hübschammanová (2003) Fennesz-Juhasz (2002), Stewart (1997) and Kertész-Wilkinson (1997).

[25] Approximately £3250 at the time of writing

drumming on table or chair tops, beating on household appliances (for example, milk churns and spoons), and the oral bass (Ro: *bumbázi*) that is the characteristic Vlach vocal accompaniment to dance tunes.

> One singer emits sharp, interjectional syllables (e.g. bb bb; bdi bdi; hh hh) in the so-called *estam* rhythm, where even quavers are accentuated and uneven ones omitted (2/4: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪); sometimes also short quick rhythmic formulae (e.g. *bdi dabadaba* / 1 quaver + 4 semiquavers) or rhythmic shouts (*Hopp*! *Ža, šej, ža*!) are articulated. Against this background, the leading voice engages in wordless syllabic singing to the strophic tune modified by the "rolling technique" (Hu: *pergetés*), with the fundamental quavers being partly segmented into semiquavers and syncopated (Fennesz-Juhasz 2002a).[26]

This oral bass is performed by men, and employed on occasion by Slovak and Hungarian Roma to accompany their *čardáš*, as I found on three occasions during my fieldwork. Since around the 1960s and 1970s, musical instruments have been increasingly used to accompany dance and slow songs, those mentioned being the guitar, keyboard and trumpet. They may also add a countermelody to traditional melodies, which is a new feature.

In Ostrava, the practice of Vlach hiring non-Vlach Romani musicians was rapidly decreasing as Vlach musicians made their own music with acoustic and electric instruments and formed new bands with new repertoire. As Rafael explained, although the Vlach in the Czech Republic, in particular the men, traveled a great deal on business, to visit relatives, on holiday, and often owned residences in different countries (for example, Germany), they were often extremely wealthy and their mobility did not prevent them from making instrumental music. Since the late 1970s, a number of successful bands of professional Vlach musicians have emerged that employ traditional Vlach songs, for example in Hungary, that have followings all over the world.[27] The need for *Rumungro* musicians has diminished, as more young Vlach who were not necessarily professional musicians were able to experiment with making music on keyboards in their free time. According to all the Vlach I met in Ostrava, there were no longer any professional Vlach musicians residing in the Czech Republic, although this did not appear to be a source of disappointment or loss for anyone. They had cassettes, amateur musicians, and could hire professional musicians from as far as Slovakia for the purposes of celebrations, weddings and funerals. There were enough Vlach to play a song on keyboards and sing into a microphone to make a party lively without the need for musicians (i.e. instrumentalists), as seen on the video of a Vlach wedding that Rafael showed to me.

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[26] http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/index.html, accessed on 14/12/04.

[27] For example, *Kalyi Jag* (Ro; Black Fire) founded in 1978 who perform Vlach and other Romani songs. The numerous bands following them include *Ando Drom* (Ro; On the Road), founded in 1984 in Budapest, who also employ both Vlach and non-Vlach Romani songs from the Balkans and Spain (Kovalcsik in Jurková 2003:94).

The king explained that in Ostrava, Vlach men and women sang together at celebrations even though they were seated at separate tables.[28] I found that the dominant Vlach view on gender understood men and women as equal but with different roles, presented as a pragmatic division of labour.[29] The women certainly did not have any public power in terms of taking part in the *kris*, elections or in making business deals, although they had influence in child-rearing and in the running of households. I was told that male and female babies were equally desired and the ideal was a mixture. A high level of institutionalised education amongst Vlach men or women has not so far been viewed as needed or beneficial, although they regarded it essential to be "educated". Girls usually left school early and became domestically active in the home, so as to leave the men free to conduct business activities.[30]

When I visited one particular family, only the women were present and we sat at the dining room table with the younger women sipping sweet white wine whilst the older women sat on a sofa behind empty-handed, and the children ran around us. The younger women did most of the talking, and there was a feeling that they were representing the whole family, with the older women interjecting when they felt the need. The women all said that music was not important to the community, but they liked different types of music: Vlach, other Romani, and popular styles. They took it for granted that at celebrations men and women would sing together, and sing if they were "bored" in daily life. They said that every Vlach was able to sing, although fewer played instruments. From their descriptions, I felt that music was an integral part of their lives, but because there was no money to be made from it, it was not labeled "important".

The king said that professional musicians (*Rumungro* and Vlach) enjoyed high status and respect amongst Vlach, and were valued for their skills. However, like most other Vlach I spoke to, he said that he did not feel strongly about music and claimed that there were no Vlach laws concerning it. Conversely, Rafael thought that music was very important for every celebration, event and in daily life, describing music as "always there and always done" (interview 2004). Rafael sang and played the guitar and drums, although he said he did not play any more due to ill health. He added that Vlach men usually liked to drink and sing together loudly in pubs, which other people did not like (though not because of the quality of the singing, Rafael pointed out), and Vlach had been banned from many pubs in Ostrava. Vlach liked to have big meetings in the

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[28] In some Vlach communities, women are not allowed to join the men's celebrations (Ro: *mulatšago*) (see Stewart 1987). I was assured that the women and men had an equal right to sing (although I did not witness any live Vlach music making during my fieldwork).

[29] Other researchers have noted a tendency both to denigrate and worship women, as the sources of ritual pollution but also of life and family security (see for example, Stewart 1987).

[30] These days Vlach usually complied with minimum state education requirements, which other Roma said had not always been the case.

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open air, but the police in Ostrava broke them up because the authorities were nervous of large Romani gatherings, even though the Vlach were not breaking the law. The restaurants in Ostrava that Vlach frequented were owned by non-Roma and all the Vlach I spoke to felt the need for a Vlach-owned venue or restaurant, as a way of avoiding such clashes.

At Rafael's house, he and his wife talked me through a Vlach wedding in Ostrava that had taken place the previous summer, whilst watching an amateur video of the event. They explained that the buying of brides was still practiced among Vlach, and the bridegroom's male family would have gone to the bride's family home to ask formally for the bride some months or even years before the wedding. This wedding celebration had taken place in Hotel Jindřich Dům in the centre of town, and guests had arrived in white limousines. The proceedings had begun with the males of the bridegroom's family asking where the bride is and the bride's male relatives feigning ignorance. After a while, the bridegroom's family had offered some money.[31] The bride's relatives had taken the money to see if it was real and had then immediately dismissed it for being too little. More and more money was offered, and eventually the proposal had been accepted. Rafael explained that it was important not to accept too little in order to show how valuable the bride was.

The usual age of a bride was 14, and for the bridegroom it was 18, as was the case in this wedding. Marriages were arranged and in this case, the bride and groom had never seen each other before. When the bride was finally brought out in a huge white dress,[32] she met her husband by having the first dance with him. They did not look at each other, partly because that was traditional, but mostly, Rafael's family felt, because of shyness. Their dancing style involved a swaying motion side-to-side, a very gentle dance, appropriate for the confined space, the bride's huge dress and necessity of dancing with all her male relatives in turn. From other guests, there was some traditional male dancing performed, and girls sang with microphones in harmony, to keyboard accompaniment. "Sad music" was not allowed at weddings, although Rafael was quick to point out that slow music was not necessarily viewed as unhappy. The wedding was unconnected to state legislation, although completely binding within the Vlach community. Rafael explained that some Vlach couples decided to make their marriage legal under Czech law when they both come of age (18): he and his wife got married under Czech law 15 years after their Romani wedding.

In summary, amongst Ostrava Vlachs music was not thought to be important because it did not make any money. It was taken for granted that music was listened to and sung on a daily

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[31] 1000 crowns in this case, approximately £25 at the time of writing.

[32] According to Rafael, the dress cost 30,000 crowns, approximately £600 at the time of writing.

basis, and did not arouse much controversy. Their knowledge of very old songs connected them with a long chain of history, and their familiarity with recent Vlach music of other diasporic groups underlined their diasporic connections. Despite Vlach reservations about *Rumungri*, their willingness to hire *Rumungro* musicians and listen to other Romani groups' music, in their view, further demonstrated their ability to respect and enjoy what was good both inside and outside the Vlach community. Vlach agreed that their acquaintance with international pop music was proof of their modern and fashionable identity.

Chapter 8 Diaspora Discourses and Romani Music Making in Ostrava

The word 'diaspora' is Greek, meaning a scattering of seeds, later coming to signify the Jewish experience of forced dispersal after the fall of the Second Temple. Greek and Armenian dispersals later came to be regarded as examples of diaspora. Migration, dispersal and diaspora are certainly not new phenomena, and although the effects of globalisation (such as accelerated transnational movements particularly to the industrialised world) and challenges posed by diaspora to the modern nation-state, have certainly contributed to interest in diaspora (cf. Tölölyan 1996), they do not explain the explosion of interest in the concept, which has appeared increasingly since the 1970s and particularly the 1990s.

The progression of an increasingly significant debate concerning diaspora(s) can be followed in the journal *Diaspora* (established in 1991). Previously thought of dispersals, migrations and transnational movements are now being reconsidered under the auspices of diaspora, at least partly because people who feel they are not living in their homeland can benefit from describing themselves as diasporas for the sake of status or having a political or national project recognised internationally (cf. Vertovec 1997, Tölölyan 1996).[1] Schnapper comments that 'in the United States, it has become a social handicap to be unable to refer to a diaspora. Like "ethnic", "diaspora" is a source of prestige and satisfaction' (1999:247-8). Furthermore, I suggest that in some quarters the apparent newness of diaspora may superficially appear to sidestep using the often disreputable words 'race' and 'ethnicity', therefore contributing to the popularity of the term. Experiences considered diasporic have become extremely diverse, sometimes even including professionals, such as businessmen, medics and academics, making their careers internationally. Diaspora eludes consensus of definition, often appearing so broad as to have lost its conceptual content and is both over-used and under-theorised.[2]

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[1] For example, the Palestinians have begun referring to themselves as a diaspora, certainly partly to help legitimate and equalise their claims to the disputed territories in relation to Jewish ones. In terms of traditional theoretical models the Jewish story can be regarded as a diaspora success story: after dispersal they preserved distinctive cultures, and a nationalist project to return culminated in the Jewish state of Israel. Clearly, it has been far more problematic than this and not everyone would view what has happened as successful or desirable. However, after 2000 years of exile, if they so choose, Jews now have the opportunity to return to a historic homeland. In over-simplified terms, the definition of Jews as a diaspora with an historic right to a certain territory helped them to establish the Jewish state of Israel.

[2] Clifford remarks that 'diasporic language appears to be replacing, or at least supplementing, minority discourse' (1997:311). Anthias suggests that diaspora 'now constitutes [a] kind of mantra, being used to describe the processes of settlement and adaptation relating to a large range of transnational migration movements' (1998:557). Hall warns that if the idea of diaspora is something more than 'everybody now goes everywhere', then dwelling must also be conceptualised, although it is questionable whether dwelling

Many theoretical discourses are sometimes found lacking in their ability to embrace heterogeneity, fluidity, movement and important global/local connections. In this chapter, I look to a discussion of diaspora discourse for conceptual tools to aid interpretation of Ostrava Roma, who I understand to be an internally and externally labelled group made up of different fluid, heterogeneous communities and individuals, with various historical and contemporary connections that influence and are influenced by their interweaving with musical practices. After my statement on diaspora, a discussion of diaspora discourse and how it may relate to Roma in Ostrava, I briefly review literature concerning music and diaspora in order to situate my own contribution.

The latter part of the chapter draws together theoretical issues and fieldwork examples explored in preceding chapters, focusing specifically on music in diaspora as a challenge to conceptions of the connection between music and 'race'. Rather than expelling or reifying ideas of 'race', I consider it within the larger framework of diaspora discourse where ideas of 'race' can be articulated with music, or not, as appropriate to the context. I identify five areas of possible ambivalence in diasporic consciousness that more traditional discourses fail to conceptualise adequately, by ignoring them, privileging one side, or offering over-simplified mechanistic models: a sense of hybridity and boundedness; ambivalence between maintaining continuity with the past and adapting to new circumstances; ambivalence between feeling at home and feeling removed; potentially ambivalent transnational, national, local and non-national ties and allegiances; and the importance of traveling experiences as well as the sedentary norm. These areas of ambivalence provide a larger framework in which 'race' is allowed to become irrelevant or important to understanding different expressions of music making by Ostrava Roma.

8.1 Statement on diaspora

Based on my fieldwork experience and following the emerging discourse on diaspora, I propose that diaspora is an experience or condition whereby people continue to be connected to a culture, time or space that they feel at a cultural, temporal or spatial distance away from; it is a condition of being removed from but still connected to somewhere, sometime or something, whilst existing

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really is the opposite of diaspora (Clifford 1997:44). Furthermore, diaspora must also be differentiated from travel, as it involves 'dwelling, maintaining communities and having collective homes away from home' (ibid:251). Exploring the difference between migration and diaspora is a thorny problem, for in any definition of diaspora one must consider whom it rejects or marginalises in contemporary political contexts that have rapidly given much more social and political status to diaspora and tended to disparage migration (ibid:244).

in a different situation, most often caused by transnational movement.[3] The time spent in this condition or the feelings experienced must be significant enough, that it does not constitute a visit, tourism, mild nostalgia or passing interest. Maintaining communities may or may not be part of a diasporic experience; people may have an individual experience of diaspora. It can be temporary or permanent, individual or collective, involve projects to return or not, involve alienation or integration into one's diasporic surroundings, involve dwelling or continuous travel; it is about a diasporic consciousness of removal and connection to something else whilst negotiating the present. Diasporic conditions occur and develop over time and often over many generations. Particularly in the case of second and third generation migrants, if there is no feeling of distance from a culture or area that people have never lived in or experienced directly, then there is no diasporic consciousness. Nonetheless, there may often be a sense of connection with and removal from another culture or area that may not be based on direct experience, as well as a sense of disconnection from the situation in which people are living, in which case they could be said to have some diasporic consciousness. Experiences of diaspora often differ between first, second and third generations, according to their specific circumstances (see for example Reyes 1999, Werbner 2000, Knusden 2001, Turino & Lea 2004, Hyder 2004).

Although there may be many obvious outward signs of diasporic conditions, such as maintaining culture, cuisine, language or contacts understood to be from a place, culture or time from which people feel removed, which may lead researchers to consider people in the light of diaspora, it is not up to researchers to decide in advance whether people are or are not experiencing diasporic consciousness. I understand diaspora to be a condition that may arise from personal and/or communal circumstances, but is mostly based on interpretation of one's own situation with all the methodological problems that implies. It is necessarily an ambivalent experience that involves negotiating one's immediate, present context, as well as removal from and connection with something else. Nevertheless, I suggest that if there are communities in one place that clearly understand themselves and are understood by others to be from another place or culture, it is likely that there is a strong, internally and externally perceived, diasporic consciousness permeating the group, manifest to differing degrees in individuals.[4]

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[3] The idea of homeland, removal and deterritorialisation in some cases may be better understood in temporal terms as removal from a previous era or culture, a mythic home, or a future homeland. As Conner points out in his article considering the significance of homelands to diaspora, 'ethnic homeland is far more than territory' (1986:16); removal from one's home is not simply deterritorialisation. The hegemonic discourse of the nation-state centres round legitimacy of geo-political, limited, bounded sovereignty, and we should not be too ready to define diaspora according to this spatial discourse.

[4] Turino comments 'as with any aspect of identity, there is a subjective factor as well as object conditions that make particular types of identification possible' (Turino & Lea 2004:5).

Music is potent in its capacity to be articulated with diasporic consciousness and identity, and for both to be mutually influenced by this articulation. Monson (2000:6) points to music's cross-modal quality and I draw attention to its non-representational quality that offers great flexibility in its potential interpretations and articulation with different meanings and ideas. Musical changes and developments can consolidate or alter people's sense of diaspora through re-articulation, and, as Werbner (2000:15) proposes, can potentially be used to create feelings of home out of diasporic situations, perhaps through a shared aesthetic. I envisage music's connection to diasporic consciousness as functioning through a mutually influencing articulation, in a similar way to that of the articulation of music and ideas of 'race' as discussed in the theoretical interlude.

Amongst some Roma in Ostrava, diasporic consciousness was articulated to traditional Romani dulcimer music: I found that the music encapsulated removal from and connection with some Roma's rural Slovak childhoods, whilst they lived in very different times in Ostrava where/when this music was no longer publicly played or widely appreciated. This kind of articulation did not exist for others who had had different experiences. For some, certain Rompop music from the Balkans was articulated to the idea of other Romani communities living in the Balkans and the sense of many interconnected Romani groups scattered across the globe. This music had no such meaning for other Ostrava Roma. Appreciation of hip hop by Roma may or may not have been directly articulated to a sense of removal from feeling racially/socially accepted by others in Ostrava and to a perceived connection with black American urban stars. In section 8.5, I provide some examples from Ostrava Romani music making to illustrate the articulation of diasporic consciousness with music. There is certainly room for more consideration of psychological aspects of diasporic removal and connection in relation to music, but this outline suffices for the purposes of a theoretical challenge to ideas about connections between music and 'race' in the context of Romani music making in Ostrava.

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8.2 Literature on diaspora discourse

Rather than focusing on essential features of diaspora,[5] Clifford suggests looking at diaspora's borders, at what it defines itself against, suggesting two possibilities: the norms of nation-states, and indigenous and autochthonous claims (1997:250). It is apparent that diaspora cultures are not consistently anti-nationalist, but sometimes the reverse.[6] On the other hand, diasporas can be seen as actual threats to the integrity of nation-states, because of loyalties to another nation, nation-state or transnational networks of allegiance. Furthermore, diaspora as a conceptual tool can be used to challenge the idea of the nation-state (as the nation-state may also ideologically challenge diaspora). Diasporas do not consistently act in opposition to or independent of nations or states, actual, failed, lost or desired, but rather in dialogue with them: as Tölölyan comments, 'diasporas are the emblem of transnationalism because they embody the question of borders, which is at the heart of any adequate definition of the Others of a nation-state' (1991:6).

Diasporas are conceptually the very opposite of autochthonous people.[7] Indigenous people conceptually lie in between diasporic and autochthonous people, and may attain the status of indigenous after previously being perceived as migrants. Diasporic consciousness is likely to be more threatening to a nation-state than a repressed autochthonous/indigenous minority, or even a large immigrant community that cannot be said to have any strong diasporic consciousness, for the issue is loyalty: citizenship ideally involves a terminal loyalty to a nation-state, which proves difficult if one's national loyalties are elsewhere, multiple or possibly conflicting.

Diasporic consciousness can also be approached more positively vis-à-vis the nation-state: 'the stateless power of diasporas lies in their heightened awareness of both the perils and

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[5] Conceptions of diaspora moved away from the previously quintessential Jewish paradigm of violent dispersal and consequent longing for return to a homeland. In an early definition, Safran proposed six compulsory features of an ideal diaspora (still based on the Jewish paradigm); a history of dispersal, myths or memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and collective identity defined by this relationship (1991:83-99). For other origin-oriented paradigms, see Tölölyan (1996), Conner (1986), Butler (2001), Cohen (1996, 1996a), and Cohen (1997:178-180) for eight essential features of diaspora, very similar to Safran's. Today, not even the so-called original Jewish diaspora can be understood through these models. Anthias (1998:558) criticises conceptions of diaspora that privilege origin in constructing identities for their essentialism and do not examine trans-ethnic relations. Although criteria-based models help to limit the overuse of diaspora and despite recognition that diasporas may not fulfil all criteria, these classificatory approaches are limited and inevitably exclude and make hierarchies of diasporas. The debate has shifted from establishing an ideal type of diaspora to more postmodern approaches that focus on diaspora as a process, condition, mode or consciousness, for example, see Clifford (1997) and Vertovec (1997).

[6] For example, the Jewish diasporic network of support for the Israeli state, Kurdish aspirations, and the Sikh project for Khalistan.

[7] Autochthonous people may also undermine a nation-state's hegemony, for example in the case of the U.S. and Australia.

rewards of multiple belonging, and in their sometimes exemplary grappling with the paradoxes of such belonging, which is increasingly the condition that non-diasporan nationals also face in the transnational era' (Tölölyan 1996:7-8). In Europe, multiple belonging to a region, country, the E.U. and U.N. may involve serious contradictions. Much may be learnt from diasporic people, for they permanently have to deal with such contradictions: communities with a high level of diasporic consciousness are also "imagined", needing modes of reproduction, representation and so on, but they are mostly fostered by stateless power and more obviously incorporate multiple belonging.[8] Even though one can point to the growing possibilities of transnational communities of interest, loyalties to the nation-state have become of primary importance and in the current political climate some citizens' diasporic allegiances are enough to make them regarded as state enemies.[9]

Conceptually, diaspora discourse may be a way of disabling or at least seriously undermining the ideology of the nation-state. Gilroy (1993:2) proposed that the political problems created by the 'fatal junction' of nationality and culture must be examined, and the significance of the modern nation-state as a political, economic and cultural unit must be urgently re-evaluated. He finds that diaspora is a valuable idea because it is 'an alternative to the metaphysics of "race", nation and bonded culture coded into the body' and puts 'emphasis on contingency, indeterminacy and conflict' (1997:328 cited in Anthias 1998:557). Diaspora signifies the avoidance of the failures of essentialist conceptions of 'race', culture and ethnicity, for it refocuses attention onto 'transnational and dynamic processes, relating to ethnic commonalities, which can recognise difference and diversity' (1998:558) and can be employed to challenge the understanding of ethnicity often promoted by nation-states.[10] As Hall describes, diaspora challenges essentialised notions of identity:

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[8] Cohen puts an idealistic slant on the diasporic situation, proposing that the world now has space for multiple affiliations beyond the nation-state, and that diasporic allegiances are now more acceptable and recognised. He suggests conceptualising nation-states as the vertical organisation, which criss-crosses multiple, permeable, overlapping systems of horizontal organisation that create communities of interest not place (1996a:517). In another vision, Appadurai posits five dimensions of global cultural flows that move in non-isomorphic paths (1996:35-37), which may be constrained and influenced by the territorial borders of nation-states but occur regardless.

[9] Some predict that the nation-state is here to stay in a powerful form and others foresee its demise due to increasing globalisation and transnationalism, coupled with intense localising processes. Certainly, more rapid and accessible global communication and movement has contributed to the undermining of the relevance of national territorial borders, but conversely has strengthened various nation-building projects through diasporic networks of support. Geo-political, territorial conceptions of space may not be the most relevant factors in diasporic consciousness and cyberspace activities can seriously undermine the importance of territorial communities (although in some cases cyber activities assist the realisation of such). Economic and cultural activities increasingly function irrespective of national borders.

[10] To date, ideas of diaspora have not superseded debates on 'race' and ethnicity, although have helped push them forward, for example, Gilroy (1993), Hall (1990) and Clifford (1997).

Diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other peoples into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising form of "ethnicity." ... The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity: by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (Hall 1990:235).[11]

This is where I feel that diaspora as a conceptual tool and lived reality diverge, for there is no reason to suppose that people in diaspora are any less essentialising or racialising about their identity or any less aggressively territorial. Many diasporic communities have a virulent, parochial ethno-nationalism or sense of racial/ethnic boundedness that is extremely essentialising and fixed, whilst maintaining transnational connections and cosmopolitan mindsets concerning some aspects of their lives.

Although diasporas are constrained by the nation-state and global capitalism (and potentially defined against them), they cannot be conceived merely in terms of these phenomena, for contemporary diasporic practices exceed and criticise them. Hall (1990), Clifford (1997) and Gilroy (1993) view the concept of diaspora as offering resources for emergent postcolonialisms, proposing a diasporic discourse that articulates both 'roots and routes' in constructing alternate public spheres (see also Gilroy 1987), forms of community consciousness, and solidarity that maintain identification outside the national time/space in order to live inside with a difference. Clifford argues for a fluid diasporic discourse that does not just refer to transnationality and movement, but the political struggles involved in dwelling to define the local, perhaps as a community distinct from the dominant population (1997:252). Furthermore, diaspora can also refer to personal struggles to construct identity and a sense of place or resist the hegemony of dominant discourses in a context of feeling removed or displaced. Anthias describes diasporic conditions as put into play 'through the experience of being *from* one place and *of* another, and it identifies with the idea of particular sentiments towards the homeland, whilst being formed by those of the place of settlement' (1998:565).

When considering music in diaspora, far more than the geo-political, economic and spatial must be taken into account, for music can and often does function irrespective of national or other spatial borders; irrespective of linguistic barriers or socio-economic differences; across

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[11] As Um (2005:12) concisely explains, whereas hybridity previously meant a mixture or amalgamation, it is 'now understood as a variety of dialectic articulations which include, for example, a dialogism that Bakhtin describes as an ability to be simultaneously the same and different'. In the context of Roma in Ostrava, this concept is useful: a brief example of this is that Roma are Czech but not Czech, they are citizens but also foreigners in Ostrava.

time (due to recordings); and, due to its mostly non-representational character, can signify multiple meanings to individuals and groups in many different contexts and cultural/ethnic groups. Music can be appreciated globally or limited to highly localised contexts of appreciation. Furthermore, music can exist alone or incorporate language, dance and visual mediums, thereby limiting and/or extending its possible meanings and appeal. Limitations of music occurring over linear time and played by live musicians, have to some extent been subverted by technological advances in sound recording and the wide availability of playback devices. Thus, when considering music in diaspora, even though spatial, geo-political and economic discourses may be crucial to interpretation, I approach music as a mostly non-representational aural medium that is articulated to many possible social, political and other meanings and identities, which can also be combined with other cultural modes of expression.

8.3 Diaspora discourse in relation to Roma

Roma are the single largest transterritorial ethnic minority in Europe, some six to eight million in Central and Eastern Europe and a further million in Western Europe,[12] and have been transterritorial/deterritorialised for the last millennium. As discussed in chapter 1, some activists and intellectuals in particular suggest that Roma are in diaspora from Indian roots, yet for most Roma Indian roots are either unknown or irrelevant to self-understanding. I found that many Roma in Ostrava felt in diaspora from their rural childhoods in Slovakia, rather than India. Nevertheless, I found that Roma in Slovakia who have historically lived there for centuries did not necessarily feel "at home", and also experienced some kind of diasporic consciousness from better, more prosperous and secure times.

During my fieldwork in Ostrava, I understood that many Roma did not feel "removed" from any particular place, yet did not feel "at home" in any geographical space either. Rather, they appeared to feel most "at home" amongst people and cultural contexts they felt to be their own. In Ostrava, I noticed fundamental ambiguities amongst Roma concerning feelings of home and removal. Some became very angry at the thought that they were treated like foreigners when many Roma in contemporary Ostrava had been born there and often had an intense pride in

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[12] 'Gypsy Populations and their movements within Central and Eastern Europe and towards some OECD countries' vol. III no. 9, p.3, OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Working Papers, Paris, 1995. Numbers of Roma are notoriously difficult to estimate, partly due to statistically "invisible" assimilated Roma, the fear of identifying oneself as Romani to authorities, some nomadic activity, and ongoing political agendas that may wish to either accentuate or play down the number of Roma in a particular region or country. There is the further problem of how to count children from "mixed" parentage.

aspects of Ostrava, (amongst other things demonstrated in their insistence that the best beer was brewed there). I noticed that when they visited other places in the Czech Republic, they missed the familiarity of Ostrava as a city very much.

Roma also had national allegiances to the Czech Republic, overtly supporting the national sports teams. I noticed that Roma in Ostrava had conservative tastes in food, used only to the kind of food prepared in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. With the exception of one or two exclusively Romani foods, many dishes had been adopted as Romani that Czechs and Slovaks also claimed as their own.[13] On some occasions, Roma claimed Czech and Slovak music as their own whilst on others dismissed it as being Czech or white music. For many, Ostrava/the Czech Republic was simultaneously a birthplace, home and site of their rejection and entrapment in frustration, unemployment and poverty. For many older Roma, I found that there was a more or less constant feeling of diaspora, as they missed the older ways of community, using the Romani language and traditional values. For those that have either been born in Ostrava or lived there since childhood, diasporic consciousness fluctuated according to the context: when they were amongst their relatives, with music playing that they felt was their own in some way, with food prepared by Roma how they liked it, I suggest that many felt very much at home, as this was a context they were familiar with and in which they had been included for their wholes lives. However, when on the street, in shops and outside what they understood to be their areas, they often talked about an extreme sense of alienation, rejection, violence and hate towards them, not compatible with ideas of home.[14]

For Vlach Roma, the situation was slightly different, partly due to their increased wealth and international networks, but also because of their worldliness and independence in terms of travelling and ability to negotiate institutions and bureaucracy. Their sense of history was different, in that they felt they were a travelling people; their sense of diaspora was different, due to the fact that so much has been maintained in common with other Vlach communities around the world, not least in language and music, with regular gatherings occurring at horse fairs across Europe. Nevertheless, Vlachs explained to me that they realised nation-states afforded the best

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[13] For example, bean soup, fried pork and potato salad, and *halušky* (Cz/Sl; small dumplings) are considered "Romani" but are extremely common in others' diets in the area. *Goja* (Ro; stuffed intestines) was a dish that I found attracted much pride amongst Roma for being quintessentially Romani (though not amongst Vlach).

[14] When Ostrava Roma described travelling to places like London, they did not necessarily feel any more sense of removal than when on the streets of Ostrava: for some Roma, home was still only the small area around their house and their families, and at least in London they claimed to feel the security of ethnic anonymity, in contrast to Ostrava.

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social and economic protection, and citizenship with host countries should be prioritised alongside diasporic connections.

The Romani diasporic condition does not fit with criteria-based models of diaspora, partly because it is difficult to identify from what or where Roma are consciously removed. Some Roma have assimilated into their host cultures to such an extent that they are not obviously in diaspora, yet many maintain, or are forced to maintain, cultural (and sometimes spatial) distance from the dominant population due to their understood foreignness (although the exact nature of their foreignness is conveniently undefined).

Butler (2001:192) criticises Kozaitis (1997) for describing Roma as a diaspora without a connection to a homeland.[15] Although Roma share features with other so-called diasporas, such as problematic issues of assimilation and discrimination, Butler feels that without a homeland, Roma are better described as nomadic even though the vast majority of Roma in Eastern Europe are sedentary and many have been since at least the 15th century. (Contemporary government bureaucracies mostly consider Roma as an ethnic minority). Butler has also ignored the nation-building project for Romanestan and the fact that many Roma may not be in diaspora from India or any other verifiable original homeland, but from another place they consider home to which they cannot return (such as Slovakia). There may be a connection to a future or past home(land), rather than with an actual geo-political territory; a temporal longing for past times or a lost golden age when Romani culture was perceived to be more pure or authentic, and Roma had more economic, physical and cultural security. It seems that Butler has fallen into the trap she warns others to avoid: homogenising and using diasporic as an ethnic label, rather than as a conceptual tool.

8.4 Literature on music and diaspora discourse

In order to situate my conception of the relationship between music and diaspora discourse, I shall briefly review what has been written about it. In 1994, Slobin guest-edited an issue of the journal *Diaspora*, specifically concerning music. It turned out to be a collection of articles all loosely falling under the rubric of researching music amongst understood diasporic communities, rather than a conceptual advance (for example, Averill 1994 and Velez 1994). Slobin advocates a "commonsense approach" rather than a theoretical one, which has led him to make some questionable generalisations, one such example being that alongside food, music is the main means of identification of diasporic groups (1994:245). Previously, Slobin (1993) argued that

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[15] Stewart (1997) also refers to the Roma as a diaspora.

people live at the intersection of three types of –cultures: subculture, superculture and interculture, presenting a global musical view of the world by exploring the musical implications of Appadurai's –scape system (see Appadurai1996). Diasporic music was approached as an example of interculture, emerging from the linkages that subcultures set up across national boundaries, and how those abroad think of those "back home". Overall, Slobin uncontroversially argued for multiple viewpoints, overlapping perspectives, and complex layers of musical codes in approaching micromusics.

Baumann (1990) explores Bhangra in Britain, considering the problem of how aesthetic shifts are articulated to social changes, arguing that it is persistently theoretically and aesthetically problematic. Of particular relevance for this thesis, in his book *Contesting Culture. Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (1996) Baumann draws attention to the tendency to reify one's own and other's cultures, particularly with 'race' as a foundation of culture, vis-à-vis the anthropological approach to it as an analytical problem. He claims that although reification makes no analytical sense, it is not false and perhaps desirable for political mobilisation (Baumann 1996:13-14).

The *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*[16] has published many important contributions to the subject of music in diaspora. Ramnarine (1996) explores the musical genre Chutney in both Trinidad and London as an Indian-Caribbean tradition. She looks at the historical processes that have moulded this "Indian" diasporic music and how Chutney has been used to express Indian-Caribbean identity in different contexts. Knusden (2001) discusses identity amongst first and second generation Chileans living in Oslo, investigating changes in meanings of performing the Chilean dance *Cueca* as a 'symbolically loaded' diasporic musical culture, relating these changes to the immigrant situation. Again, as Blacking did (1995), Knusden explores the relationship between musical practice and social change. Knusden also draws attention to important psychological factors such as a "sense of loss" and defence mechanisms such as the development of a "mythical consciousness" (2001:72), as well as the capacity of *Cueca* performances in diaspora to create links in time and space that revive personal and collective memories (2001:81).

Turino (2003) explores 'trans-state cultural and musical processes' with a framework that comprises three ideal-type social formations as an alternative to the concept of "global culture": immigrant communities, diasporas and cosmopolitan formations, whereby Zimbabwean popular music is discussed in the context of Zimbabwean cosmopolitans. This article achieves many things, including a sparkling critique of globalism as a discourse, however, for the purposes of this thesis, I refer to his work on diasporas. Like others before him (for example, Safran 1991),

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[16] The *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* is now called *Ethnomusicology Forum*.

Turino approaches diaspora as an ideal-type social formation that has certain characteristics, without all having to be present for classification as such (also in Turino & Lea 2004). Differentiating diasporic from immigrant communities, Turino asserts that diasporic cultural formations 'tend towards longevity and recognition of social continuities across space and time' (2003:60), rather than immigrant communities that 'tend to assimilate and fade within a few generations' (ibid). As opposed to the bilateral relations of immigrant communities, diasporas tend to involve multiple sites in multiple states, both synchronically and diachronically, the incorporated cultural resources of which are 'basic to diasporic cultural dynamics' (ibid).

In Turino's introduction to Turino & Lea (2004), art and identity in diaspora communities is briefly explored. Artistic practices are viewed as particularly important in the realisation and presentation of identity, for 'they are usually framed as heightened forms of representation for public perception, practice and effects' (2004:10). The large number of elements that comprise musical sound and performances, mean that for Turino 'taken together, these elements make musical performance a particularly rich semiotic field that has the capability of producing particularly complex effects' (2004:17). Important contributions in this collection on music in diaspora come from Sugarman (2004), Yazedjian (2004), Diethrich (2004) and Erlmann (2004).

Much has been published concerning music in diaspora that falls under the rubric of Postcolonial Studies. Sharma, Hutnyk & Sharma (1996) consider critically the politics of New Asian Dance music in, as they call it, 'multi-racist Britain' (ibid:1). They discuss the limitations of discourses of hybridity in the context of soaring racial violence, working from the premise that the margins have become the new centre, and the margins are where the displaced dominant centre is still exercising power. Sharma draws attention to the dangers of trends that centre so-called migrant communities, which reproduces neo-colonialism (see ibid:19) as part of 'the logic of contemporary global racialised captialism' that '(re)produce[s] new forms of exploitative social relations, at local, national and transnational levels' (ibid:28). Other people who have considered Asian music in Britian are Hyder (2004) and Coulombe (2002). Maira (1998) looks at Bhangra remix and hip hop in New York.

Monson (2000) questions idealised notions of African diaspora music as fully resistant to Western hegemony and a source of unambiguous black cultural pride, pointing out that the idea of a unified black musical ethos is at least partially dependent on experiences of racism. Further, the idealisation by "outsiders" is dehumanising in its expectations of perfection. Monson points to intradiasporic stratifications of power, some forsaking the global in claiming elements of diasporic cultures as signs of a cultural authenticity, and others taking opportunities to market

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"traditional" music to the West through the use of traditional interpretive practices that generate new meanings in a social context that increasingly has dialogue with the West (2000:10). Monson points to the strangeness of the situation in which 'a person's understanding of himself or herself and their sense of the social world no longer coincide with the place in which they take place' (2000:6), attributing music's symbolic power across diasporic settings to its ability to link several expressive modalities, including language, dance and visual display, as well as present idealised ethical and social sensibilities.[17]

Um (2005) edited a collection of articles concerning diasporas and interculturalism in Asian performing arts. In the introduction, her insights about performing arts in diaspora are dominated by the particular findings of the extremely loose collection of articles in the book that fall under the wide auspices of Asian diasporas. Um draws attention to the importance of power relations involved in performances of the arts and artists in diaspora, 'which are often associated with a culture of alterity or a space of weak power' (2005:7). This question is vital in considering music in diaspora, as people in diaspora must often negotiate their positions in the light of two or more conflicting contexts. Articles of particular relevance to my research include Wong's exploration of taiko drumming in Los Angeles. She charts how taiko has been redefined, starting as Japanese drumming, becoming a Japanese American form, metamorphosing into a broadly Asian American expression, and then a multicultural activity that includes many non-Asian participants. Wong draws attention to the flexibility of taiko's identity, and connects it to the distinctive characteristics associated with first, second and third generation Japanese Americans. She waits to see if distinctive fourth and fifth generation identities will emerge. Other articles draw attention to the diversity of expressions and identities that are encompassed in labels such as 'the British South Asian diaspora' (Farrell, Bhowmich & Welch) and the challenge that diasporic art forms pose to nationalist conceptions of culture in the "home" country (Gorringe).

Reyes (1999) considers the little-explored area of music and refugees, specifically Vietnamese refugees, following their journey from displacement, to transitory camps in the Philippines and Hong Kong, to their resettlement in the U.S. and the differences that have emerged between first, 1.5 and second generations.[18] She discusses the vital role of music in these processes, particularly as a psychologically necessary vehicle of expression when words are

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[17] This idea is taken from Feld's "iconicity of style" (1994), where music becomes a "cross-modal homology" linking many different modes of cultural expression (Monson 2000:5-6).
[18] The 1.5 generation differ from the first generation because they did not decide themselves to immigrate, usually as an adult, yet differ from the second generation because they were born and spent some of their childhood in their country of origin.

unavailable, raising issues of displacement, movement, hybridity and adaptation under the auspices of ethnomusicology.

Using examples from my fieldwork and the previous chapters, the latter part of this chapter draws together the challenge and benefits of diasporic discourse in conceptualising connections between music and ideas of 'race' in Romani music making in Ostrava. It explores five relevant aspects of interpreting Romani music making in Ostrava, drawing on diasporic discourses.

8.5 Discourses on diaspora in relation to understandings of Romani music making in Ostrava

In Ostrava, Romani music making provided contexts that expressed and negotiated perceptions and experiences of 'race'. As discussed in the interlude, amongst perceived groups of individuals, certain interpretations of articulations between music and meanings are prevalent or privileged, although there are necessarily going to be many other meanings and connections. For example, although prevalent interpretations in one context may connect essentialised views of 'race' to music, other connections can still exist that assume music to be connected to ideas of 'race' as an ongoing process or condition, or not at all connected. In particular contexts, certain meanings gain prevalence over other possible meanings without obliterating them, owing to notions of what makes sense, effects of dominant ideology and power relations, as well as particular group or individual needs and conditions. Often, as an outsider to the context they are studying, researchers are able to privilege and create other connections and interpretations apart from those that are privileged in the situation in which they are working, as they may be more removed from pressures that create extreme or essentialised interpretations. By privileging positions that draw on ideas of diaspora, I offer interpretations that provide alternative tools to engage with and understand Romani music making in Ostrava without devaluing those I encountered during my fieldwork for they are integral to my conception.

So why draw on ideas of diaspora to challenge notions of music and 'race', instead of focusing on developing more critical and progressive aspects of racial discourse? Exploring diasporic discourse may indeed assist in developing racial discourse, but I suggest that diasporic discourse may be more fruitful than racial discourse as a tool in conceptualising identity in ways that do not merely substitute terms to mask concepts of identity that rely on notions of difference. For if concepts of diaspora can encompass 'race' in a way that allows both its possible relevance and irrelevance in interpreting situations, I suggest that they offer more productive approaches and politics that do not reify or deny 'race', and at least opens the possibility for its eventual

demise. Furthermore, ideas of diaspora are appropriate for considering music as a non-representational medium that can be articulated to many possibly ambivalent meanings, including racial meanings or not as the context allows, producing extremely stable, dramatically changing and widely differing articulations.[19]

In the context of Romani music making in Ostrava, ideas of diaspora outlined at the beginning of the chapter are very effective in centring pertinent aspects that are often marginalised or ignored by modernist discourses of music and racial ideas, alongside those favoured by more traditional discourses.[20] In other words, the ambivalence of diasporic experience is centred: it is possible to feel at home yet displaced, at home yet a foreigner. Ideas that rely solely on notions of bounded cultures, essentialised identities and the isomorphism of culture, 'race' and nation, mean that Roma can be conceptually placed on the peripheries as an essentialised group whose non-national, hybrid musical practices and cultures somehow invalidate them. The benefits of ideas of diaspora lie in centring the ambivalence of experiences of hybridity, rupture, displacement, movement, removal and transnationality alongside non-reified experiences of bounded-ness, stability, nationality, home, and sedentary experiences. Working with the conceptual framework of the articulation of music and (racial) meaning, I have identified five important aspects of interpreting Ostrava Romani music making that benefit from concepts of diaspora. They have grown out of a need for interpretative tools for understanding Romani music making in Ostrava, although I suggest they could be further developed into a wider challenge to conceptualising music and racial identities.

The first aspect that diaspora makes an important contribution to is experiences of hybridity and boundedness, conceived of as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy,[21] whereby people may encounter ambivalence between experiences understood as more or less hybrid and bounded. The diasporic condition will necessarily involve processes of hybridisation as people from one context are transplanted into another, for example, as Roma have moved across Europe, their musics have often demonstrated more in common with their local surroundings than with other Romani diaspora communities. There will necessarily be some hybridisation as people

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[19] My interpretations reveal an assumption that music can operate on a spectrum from passively reflecting identity and situations to providing contexts of negotiation to actively producing new developments in wider spheres, in a similar way to how Born & Hesmondhalgh account for the 'range of musical representations of identity' in their four structural articulations of music and identity (2000:35-36).

[20] I am characterising traditional discourses as those that privilege bounded, stable, "pure", continuous aspects of culture, and postmodern discourses as those that focus on fluid, hybrid, ruptured, processual aspects of cultural expressions.

[21] See Gilroy (1993) for more discussion of a spectrum of bounded-ness.

negotiate living in one place whilst understanding themselves as coming from another, or feeling as if they belong in a certain time or context whilst living in another.

An example of negotiation of these experiences is in the combining of perceived traditional elements of the Hungarian/Slovak dulcimer band style with Romani folklore and Western pop in many expressions of Rompop. This multiple referencing can be understood to reflect and negotiate perceptions of the different times, places and ties that many Roma were negotiating in their lives. As younger Roma increasingly lost contact with traditions associated with past times in Slovakia and felt compelled to present themselves as modern, the traditional elements in Rompop lessened, more elements were appropriated from pop, jazz and other popular styles, and incorporated traditional elements were not viewed as exclusively traditional and were re-articulated as modern features, for example, *čardáš* rhythms, *hallgató*-like introductions, and the style of improvisation (see chapter 3.4). In Ostrava, Rompop reflected and negotiated a fully modern, fashionable Romani identity that has moved on from the past, but which signifies an essential bounded notion of Roma. Thus, processes of hybridity incorporate notions of mixing and fusion as well as boundedness. Romani music making in Ostrava is incredibly dynamic, drawing on traditional music of different Romani groups, pop music, hip hop, jazz and whatever else is available. The rapid adaptation and appropriation of different elements into Romani music making in Ostrava was fundamental, not something happening on the periphery of a central, pure canon of tradition, yet due to its context appeared to consolidate rather than compromise Romani identity, especially regarding a widely understood racial essence.

Diasporic experiences produced ambivalence between a need to maintain stability and continuity with the past and to adapt to new situations. I found that some Roma in Ostrava found security in the idea that they were part of a tightly bounded group that had constancy, stability and continuity with the past. However, it also proved necessary to be highly dynamic, changeable and adaptable in order to function in such difficult circumstances. The ambivalence between experiencing continuity and change could possibly relate to everyone in some way, not only diasporic contexts, but my point is that in diasporic contexts these ambivalences are intensified and become more crucial, difficult and urgent to negotiate.

I found that in Ostrava, Roma's representations of themselves as a tightly knit group, a loose collection of Romani families, continuing an essential character, and rejecting traditional practices, varied to the point of being contradictory. I found that a person often expressed seemingly contradictory views on different occasions. I suggest that what I was often encountering was ambivalence towards a need to embrace ways of life that strongly drew on

aspects of their surroundings and Western trends; a need to maintain a tightly bounded identity that drew on positive aspects of the past; a need to maintain a bounded, stable identity that appeared fully modernised; a need to embrace all Romani generations; and a need to embrace people seen as on the edge of being Romani such as families that had Romani and ethnic Czech members and Roma brought up in non-Romani children's homes.

Romani-organised *Miss* events (see chapter 6) provided ways in which Roma felt as if they were doing something fashionable yet the event was viewed as entirely Romani. The large audiences were from different cross-sections of Romani society and non-Roma from the Co-existence Village community centre in Ostrava, the contestants were all Romani, and the judges were a mixture of Romani community leaders and non-Romani social workers representing the different communities in Ostrava. The contestants' parading in fashionable dresses and then swimwear remained the same as conventional contests; however, during the talent round, there was opportunity for great variety of contributions, including *čardáš* dancing, Latin dancing, pop and hip-hop dances, aerobics dance routines, and Rompop singing.

The judges made sensitive decisions based on who was best, who needed encouragement, and an equal spread of prizes between the different Romani communities represented: their intimate knowledge of Roma in Ostrava was crucial in their sensitive judgments. In this way, the event was completely owned by Roma and perceived as Romani, yet provided room to appropriate non-Romani elements, embrace people and culture that were not Romani, and allow reinterpretation of what was considered Romani. There were elements of stability and continuity with the recent and not so recent past (for example, *čardáš* dancing and Rompop singing); however, incredible adaptability was demonstrated in the way completely new and non-Romani elements were easily incorporated into an event considered quintessentially Romani.

Thirdly, ideas of diaspora centre the ambivalence between a sense of home and displacement or removal from home. Roma that immigrated to Ostrava made their new home there, yet often maintained strong ties to family in places from where they had come. I found that particularly amongst the older generations, there was a sense that Ostrava was not really home, but neither was Slovakia any longer, for their lives had diverged so much from childhood memories and the lives of their relatives still in Slovakia.[22]

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[22] Space prevents me exploring connections between music and memory. An interesting recent discussion of this topic is Shelemay (1998). Combining musicological and anthropological approaches, her work challenges the divide between the cognitive and cultural, collapses the dichotomy of individual and collective, and explores the difficult area of how unconscious processes and memories may become encoded into music.

For younger generations that had never known any home except in Ostrava, the notion of home was potentially further complicated, for they were often treated as foreigners and did not experience the same rights and privileges as their ethnic Czech co-residents. Some younger Roma had a strong sense of home with their families and communities; however, this sense was often at odds with older family members' notions of home and intermingled with experiences of rejection, discrimination and foreign-ness elsewhere in their hometown. Of course, these kinds of experiences are not unique to Roma in Ostrava, but they were heightened owing to their history of migration, diaspora, and historical and contemporary marginality.

Younger Roma had little or no experience of places and contexts that their parents often felt strong ties to, indeed, some of these contexts no longer existed: in some ways, the younger generations were displaced from a sense of home that they had never experienced. The homes in Slovakia that older generations knew were often a source of acute embarrassment for younger Roma who prided themselves on their modernity, urbanity and fashion. Conversely, Roma sometimes idealised the Slovak settlements and past traditions for their strong sense of community, connection to nature and folklore, all of which had faded: a few Roma advocated returning to past practices, conveniently minimising the accompanying terrible hardship.

This conflict was often played out when Roma organised children's camps or trips to the countryside, with some Romani families enthusiastically participating and others suspicious of what they saw as a return to old fashioned and primitive behaviour. At these camps, singing around the campfire highlighted that many were incapable of participating and a few strong singers and musicians dominated. They did not sing traditional songs and traditional stories had been forgotten and/or had no willing audience. Even those that thought these camps were culturally "coming home" realised and bemoaned the situation that traditional storytelling and songs were either forgotten or irrelevant to young Roma.

Musically, particularly younger Roma enjoyed hip hop and breakdancing. Although many ethnic Czechs also enjoyed hip hop, it was viewed as a particularly Romani activity. I contend that this was connected to the image of hip hop that celebrates the culture of young, urban, often poor and marginalised blacks in America, alongside financial success, confidence and fashionable images of commercial hip hop artists. The hip hop culture that young Roma were consuming gave them role models who were very different to those connected to Slovakia or Ostrava: these role models were more relevant to their needs relating to surviving in a capitalist, openly racist, urbanised, grossly unequal society, coming from positions of disadvantage, deprivation and adversity. In traditional folklore, Roma are mostly presented as victims, unlucky, desperate and poor, and traditional Romani songs were considered a private, non-commercial and

old-fashioned repertoire. Younger Roma were creating their sense of home that was very different from their parents' sense at least partly through identifying with and sharing appreciation of the aesthetic of urban, black American hip hop music.[23]

The fourth aspect of diaspora I discuss is ambivalent transnational, national, non-national and local ties and allegiances. Groups, such as Roma, that do not have their own nation-state tend to be particularly badly served by discourses that are driven by the hegemony of the nation-state. As a group, Roma have not fit in with nation-state norms, and across Europe and North America they have been consistently marginalised and have often been at a socio-economic disadvantage as a consequence. Over the last millennium, Roma have migrated many times and a few have been and continue to be nomadic or semi-nomadic. In Ostrava, most of the Romani population have come from rural East Slovakia where their society and culture developed through sedentary existence: migration to urban Ostrava was a seismic rupture driven by desperate socio-economic need and the promise of opportunity. As families and communities were scattered and traditional practices and structures eroded, Roma increasingly relied on state structures and under socialism this reliance was actively encouraged whilst traditional Romani life was banned or marginalised. This has meant that many Roma have grown up in an atmosphere that promotes reliance on the state and strong ties to Ostrava as a city and the Czech Republic. As well as pressures from governments and hegemonic national norms, I suggest that these allegiances are partly explained through a lack of other possible allegiances within Ostrava Romani communities outside family, and genuinely wanting to be accepted and fully integrated into the Czech Republic as citizens. I found that although Roma have often been completely disenfranchised by the state, younger Roma in particular felt completely Czech and proud of coming from Ostrava and were often frustrated that others did not necessarily see it in the same way, still regarding them as foreign to Ostrava and the Czech Republic.

Musically, although many young Roma were involved in local amateur Romani cultural events and festivals, and supported local Rompop bands, the music that was consumed and emulated above others was Rompop from Slovakia and other parts of the Czech Republic, hip hop from America, and mainstream American and British pop. There was little local musical

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[23] Werbner (2000) argues that a shared aesthetic gives especially the second-generation migrants tools to create non-diasporic ethnic communities, no longer politically or sentimentally concerned with transnational issues. In the case of Ostrava Roma, second and third generation migrants were creating a different sense of home from their parents', partly through drawing on global trends of hip hop and re-contextualising this aesthetic in order to explore their local situation. Although global trends are drawn on, second and third generation Ostrava Roma are predominantly unconcerned with transnational issues: despite this focus on the local, I would argue that the way their identity is understood by themselves and others means that their situation can still be regarded as diasporic.

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interaction with non-Roma. A few Roma who were also involved in the international Romani movement made a point of consuming Romani music from other Romani diasporas: when they travelled to Prague for meetings, they also encountered Romani bands from Western Czech Republic that were mostly unknown in Ostrava. For these particular Roma, contact with other Romani diasporas was regarded as vital in combating local and international injustices against Roma, and music was an important part of this contact. ·

Roma in Ostrava tended not to share in non-Romani local culture and music, as they were unwelcome in bars, clubs, cafes, restaurants and other entertainment venues, and had to stay indoors for fear of skinheads when Ostrava's football team was playing. Nevertheless, allegiance to Ostrava as a city was still strong, particularly noticeable when Roma from other parts visited, and many Roma still supported the local football team despite their exclusion by the dominant fan base. There were also ties to East Slovakia where many relatives lived: a particularly strong ambivalence was some younger Ostrava Roma's adoration of Slovak Rompop bands and their rejection and embarrassment concerning Slovak Romani origins, family, traditions and lifestyle. In this way, musical allegiances existed in spite of contrary concerns.

Amongst Ostrava Roma, national allegiances were ambivalent and multi-layered, with ties to the Czech Republic, Slovakia and sometimes to Hungary, often noticeable in what music Roma consumed. Adulation and jealousy of Western European countries, Canada and the U.S., and transnational allegiances to other Romani diasporic communities were evident in aspirations for emigration and consumption of international pop music and hip hop. These elements shifted, combined and conflicted in different individuals and contexts. Allegiances were sometimes, but not always, apparent in music making and consumption patterns, but also showed up ambivalence.

The case of the Vlach Roma was somewhat different as they had been traditionally nomadic since their freedom from slavery up until the law banning nomadism in 1959 that saw massive changes in lifestyle and further emigration all over the world. The contemporary nomadism of Vlach Roma based in Ostrava was a kind of international jet setting for business purposes, maintaining personal connections, tourism and searching for the best living possibilities. They tended to have extremely weak connections to nation-states, as they maintained traditional community structures, the role of king and their own legal system. They prided themselves on never doing wage labour and on working for themselves in loose relation to non-Romani systems, which again weakened connections to the non-Vlach world and nation-state. Connections to nation-states centred on how modern, capitalist and deregulated states were for the purposes of maximising lifestyle and business priorities, but I suggest their allegiances

rested primarily with Vlach communities. However, as the importance of doing business, security and luxury lifestyles were so highly valued, they were starting to rethink their relationship with the nation-state and increasingly prioritised citizenship over Vlach structures and traditions, for they thought that only the structures of the nation-state could ensure a safe and prosperous economic and living environment.

Musically, shifts have taken place as boundaries between Vlach and non-Roma have become more permeable. Some Vlach, particularly in Hungary, have realised the financial potential of commercial music that draws on traditional Vlach repertoire and pop music. Traditionally, Vlach had an almost exclusively vocal, private repertoire and there were no professional musicians, although as they have become richer and more sedentary, they have incorporated musical instruments into Vlach music, formed Vlach bands, recorded CDs, and performed at public, non-Vlach festivals. There were no professional Vlach musicians in Ostrava, but they readily consumed Vlach music from other Vlach diasporas, other Romani groups, and had amateur musicians who sometimes sang and played the keyboard at Vlach celebrations in Ostrava. Vlachs I interviewed were proud of their consumption of international pop music and engagement with a number of popular styles from all over the world. They had particular allegiances to Western popular music forms that they directly connected to their preference of capitalist, free market economies and multicultural environments in which one was not distinguished as a Vlach and immediately negatively stereotyped. On the other hand, Vlachs tended to be extremely proud of their long-standing traditions and diasporic connections that drew on and cemented these traditions. There was a delicate negotiation between ties to nation-states, Vlach communities, local interests and personal priorities.

Fifthly, diaspora privileges movement and travel as well as sedentary experiences. Movement and travel have often been conceptualised as anomalous episodes in a sedentary norm, or an abnormal condition, exemplified in governments' attempts to settle nomads over centuries. In Ostrava, I found that although Roma's lives were predominantly sedentary, they were overshadowed by uncertainty, rapidly worsening social conditions, the threat of skinhead attack, and an unstable sense of community that meant emigration, asylum seeking, travel for work and visiting scattered family members remained a constant possibility and regular reality.

Many Roma from Ostrava had emigrated or received asylum in England, Canada and Belgium, where most had stayed. Many men, in particular, travelled regularly to Poland, England, France, Germany, or different parts of the Czech Republic for as little as a few days of underpaid manual work. Some women had been caught up in international sex slave scams, having been promised work as waitresses in Western Europe, underlining possible dangers

involved in migration.[24] Romani families were very often large and scattered, and extended visits were common, as were shorter visits for funerals when attendance by family members was viewed as vital. In this environment, experiences of movement and travel were potentially as important as sedentary experiences, and the constant possibility of movement and upheaval, even if not realised, created a sense of temporary existence, uncertainty and lack of investment in communities, whilst Roma experienced feelings of entrapment in Ostrava, caught in a cycle of unemployment and poverty.

Musically, travel and movement by Roma contributed to the dissemination of music and the appropriation of new ideas, alongside sedentary experiences that allowed local musical practices and norms to be established. Apart from the dissemination of music over the Internet, television and radio, Romani travel spread homemade bootleg copies of cassettes of Rompop bands to and from Slovakia, Hungary, the Western Czech Republic, the Balkans and Western Europe. Furthermore, homemade videocassettes of television programmes featuring Rompop and other Romani bands (for example, from Hungary) were disseminated amongst scattered family members who then shared them with their local Romani communities. These cassettes often provided new material for local Rompop bands who would play cassettes many times in order to learn and fix a song in their memories.

Although there was an established process of dissemination of relatively cheap Rompop cassettes, Roma still made bootlegs of these cassettes to disseminate them further to family members in Ostrava and abroad, which then provided material for imitation and inspiration to local musicians there. This is how Goran Bregović's composition *Bubamara* (Ro; 'Ladybird'),[25] which had been so popular in Serbia, became part of Romani repertoire in Ostrava. Even though Roma in Ostrava did not know where this song had come from, it was rapidly incorporated into Rompop band repertoire and accepted as unambiguously Romani, at least partly due to its Romani lyrics, *čardáš* rhythm accompaniment, and catchy, simple tune. The harmony and improvisatory sections were variously simplified or elaborated to suit local needs and competencies in Ostrava. The song's origin in Serbia was not regarded as important or relevant and it was seamlessly incorporated into local repertoire.

When I visited some Ostrava Roma's relatives in Folkestone and London, I found that keeping up with Rompop music popular in Ostrava was an important way for these émigrés to feel connected to their family in Ostrava. The music had taken on a strong emotional quality for

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[24] The source of this knowledge was Kumar Vishwanathan, director of the NGO "Life Together".

[25] *Bubamara* was featured in Emil Kusturića's film 'Black Cat White Cat' for which Bregović, a non-Rom, wrote the soundtrack.

them that embodied the ambivalence of their particular diaspora, having secured some financial stability and escaped skinhead attacks and abuse, yet having lost their familiar social and cultural circumstances and networks and put a large distance between themselves and their family. I found that an unemotional Rompop song could prompt outbursts of tears and pain. In a similar fashion, at Romani family parties in Ostrava after much vodka had been consumed, there would inevitably come a point where people would remember absent family members who were dead, abroad, estranged or in prison, usually accompanied by a slower, more emotional Rompop ballad. In this way, Rompop songs were a vehicle for expressing the pain of the dispersion of families in different countries and building a sense of home away from one's understood home.

Of course, other modes of cultural movement played as vital a role as Romani travel. Music from all over the world was disseminated on television and radio through soap operas, films, documentaries and so on. The Internet meant that young Roma in particular could download and imitate the latest Western pop and hip hop music and music videos featuring the latest fashions. Latin music and dancing was being consumed via the television and in the last couple of years Roma in Ostrava have been imitating the dance style: CDs with Latin beats and Spanish lyrics were procured and the dancing drew on images from the television, elements of pop dancing routines, and experiences of traditional *čardáš* dancing.[26] Imitation Latin dancing had taken on an important role at the Co-existence Village in Ostrava, as it was used as a culturally neutral medium for ethnic Czech and Romani children to learn dancing together and make up routines for performance: nobody had taught Roma this style, rather, it had been spontaneously imitated and appropriated from the television for particular local needs.

In each of these five areas, the significance of racial ideas can be incorporated as a relevant aspect to interpretation, or not; when considering 'race' and its connection to music, ideas of diaspora are able to encompass the wide variety of experiences, ideas and meanings of 'race', whilst allowing the possibility for 'race' to be completely submerged and dissolved if appropriate. It does not reify the idea of 'race' or dispose of it. Rather, it centres the ambivalence of Roma's experiences and ideas, at times racially constructing themselves as an essentialised, bounded group, at times rejecting the notion of 'race', and at others experiencing and negotiating 'race' as uncertain, hybrid, dynamic and constructed. Racial ideas may be irrelevant or of little significance in music making situations, or extremely significant; diasporic discourse does not lose interpretative value through lack of fixed, essentialising or non-essentialising ideas of 'race', but is also able to embrace them as necessary. Extreme interpretations of 'race' and utopian ideals are embraced without being endorsed as part of spectrums of interpretation and processes of

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[26] This had no connection to the Spanish Romani diaspora's Flamenco dancing.

shifting and evolving meanings. Yet concepts of diaspora as proposed in this section theoretically offer possibilities for eventually dissolving 'race', whilst allowing for the fact that we are nowhere near realistic dissolution, and experiences of essentialised, non-essentialised and ambivalent ideas of 'race' must still be encompassed. It is only by taking on board all these aspects that effective and politically responsible tools to interpret Romani music making in Ostrava can be offered.

In contemporary Ostrava, I found that Roma predominantly understood themselves to be a different 'race' from ethnic Czechs, but perceived music to be bound up with this identity in different ways. The most dominant views were that Romani music making reflected an essential Romani character that was revealed in both music itself and the style and context of performance. Other, less dominant, views perceived music to be more freely associated with understood racial identities, and isolated views posited the random association of Romani music and racial identity. These views were interconnected with particular musical styles and their use that consolidated and/or altered perceptions of music and 'race'.

In summary, ideas of Roma as a racial group and ideas of what constitutes Romani music have changed over time and continue to evolve. Of course, multiple meanings will always be understood from music and any group is necessarily heterogeneous and constantly developing; however, I suggest that diasporic consciousness amongst Ostrava Roma, caused by migration and rapidly changing and difficult conditions in Eastern Europe, heightens the ambivalence, difficulty and urgency of interpreting music, 'race' and their connection. There are specific conditions and histories connected to Romani music making in Ostrava, not least the extreme racialisation of Roma and their culture that has taken place, which makes my approach relevant. When considering relationships between music and racial ideas, diaspora discourse offers alternatives to extreme essentialist and anti-essentialist positions: there can be stability between music and racial ideas without it being fixed. Furthermore, one can centre ambivalences involved in music being connected to multiple ideas that privilege displacement, travel, transnational ties, hybridity and flexible notions of 'race', as much as ideas of national identity, fixed homes, sedentary existence and inflexible conceptions of 'race'. Ideas of diaspora can embrace concepts of 'race' as potentially insignificant in some contexts, whilst engaging with the realities of powerful experiences of music and 'race' in other contexts.

Postlude

Almost a year after my fieldwork, I hear regular news of my friends in Ostrava. It seems that not very much has changed, in that it continues to be increasingly difficult to make ends meet with rising prices and diminishing welfare. Roma are still hungry for employment and there continues to be none available to them. Plans for migration abound, if as yet often unrealised. There are still celebrations, parties and discos, and community centres do their best to provide opportunities and support for Romani children. The NGO "Life Together" continues to launch well thought-out projects and schemes; yet, it remains a very small island in a sea of desperation. Reports of Neo-Fascist activity continue to become more alarming. For example, calls by the NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) for the re-establishment of Greater Germany as established by the 1938 Munich Agreement that include the Sudetenland in the Czech Republic, and the party's alliance with Neo-Fascist groups who use music festivals as political rallies, such as the event "Rock for Germany – against globalisation and foreign ways of thinking" (Ge: *Rock für Deutschland*) on 9 July 2005 in Gera, only increase anxiety and fear amongst Roma.[1] The ambiguities, contradictions, conflicts and frustrations of life for first, second and third generation Roma in Ostrava appear more urgent than ever as they negotiate diasporic consciousnesses characterised by experiences, processes and senses of being at home yet displaced, a sense of bounded-ness and hybridity, simultaneous national, non-national and transnational allegiances, sedentary and travelling experiences, a sense of continuity and ruptures of change, and notions and experiences of 'race' that are to differing extents, according to context, significant or irrelevant.

Of course, life for Roma in Ostrava shares many characteristics with other communities, despite the historical and contextual specificities of their manifestations. Negotiations between generations, following and co-opting global fashions, negotiating perceived tradition, change and newness, and issues of integration, assimilation and cultural preservation, are common to many people, although perhaps emphasised and more urgent where diasporic consciousness is strong. Further work could be done in order to present discourses of diaspora as a more general theoretical challenge not so connected to specific contexts: I would need to refer to and study many more contexts that exhibit diasporic characteristics. It would be beneficial to address precisely how encoding and decoding may function in musical contexts, which would certainly involve questions concerning the nature of music, questions of embodiment and performance, and psychological aspects.

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[1] See reports by Tolerance a Občanská Společnost concerning *Rock für Deutschland* http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=servis/z2005_0516, accessed on 11/08/05, and the recruitment of very young children to skinhead groups.

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Appendix Roma in East Slovakia

Many Roma in Ostrava have relatives living in Slovakia, particularly in the Eastern region. Some still have close family members there and most have a large number of extended family residing in East Slovakia. Most Roma in Ostrava over 30 years old had visited relatives in Slovakia in the last few years or had childhood memories of Slovak Romani settlements (Sl: *osady*).[1] There was a general perception in Ostrava that relatives in Slovakia had a much harder life. When talking about them, they focused on the extreme poverty and hardship Roma faced in the settlements: the lack of running water, electricity and proper shelter. There are middle class Roma in Slovakia and those that have flats in towns and cities, but when Roma moved from Slovakia to Ostrava after World War II, it was mostly families from settlements that were encouraged and motivated to emigrate for the better employment and housing opportunities in the Czech lands. I found that many contacts were maintained between Ostrava Roma and their relatives in Slovakia, and that flows of music were part of this diasporic connection.

In July 2004, I went to visit Richnava, a Romani settlement near to Krompachy, Prešov, in Eastern Slovakia, with Štefan Botoš, a Rom who lives in Ostrava whose wife's family live in the settlement (Sl: *osada*). We were accompanied by my partner, Štefan's brother-in-law, Petr, also living in Ostrava, and Petr's uncle, one of the settlement's community leaders who needed a lift back from Ostrava. I only spent 10 days in Slovakia as part of my fieldwork, therefore this is a short appendix that explores the socio-cultural issues that arose when relatives from Ostrava accompanied by a British researcher visited. It only minimally outlines the far more urgent and prominent socio-economic issues this community faces.[2]

9.1 The Richnava settlement

We arrived in Richnava after a five-hour drive from Ostrava in the full heat of summer. The dusty track from the town up to the settlement worked the car hard and when we arrived it felt and looked like the middle of nowhere. High above the town, in which Roma were unwelcome, there

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[1] The number of Romani settlements in Slovakia was put at 616 (100 of those without water or electricity) with 126,000 inhabitants in 2000, by the Office of the Commissioner for the Solution of the Romani Minority Problems (http://freemario.webpark.sk/en/racism/rac1.htm, accessed on 03/04/05). Other people claim that the number is as low as 281 settlements, 20 of which are without water and electricity (Reynolds 2004)

[2] For further information see Elliott (2004) and numerous reports from Amnesty, ERRC, the Christian Science Monitor and Reuters.

was a sprawling settlement of approximately 1000 Roma (nobody knew the exact number) in tiny shacks, ranging from house-like to pieces of scavenged corrugated iron, spreading up the hillside towards the forest edge as their population expanded. I was told that initially the settlement was a couple of houses set up over 100 years ago as a consequence of Roma not being allowed to live in the town.[3]

The majority of residences did not have an electricity supply: only a few houses were connected to a source. None of the settlement was connected to the mains water supply or sewage system, meaning that residents relied on dry toilets and a single water pump that they were certain caused many of their stomach and intestinal complaints: bottled water was unaffordable. There were no proper roads in the settlement and in the rain the tracks down the hillside turned into mudslides, further cutting off any connections to the outside world and endangering the children's education as going to school became dangerous.

None of the residents had full-time employment or even part-time work outside the settlement. A scheme had been set up by the town council that allowed 300 adult males from the settlement to don orange vests two mornings a week and clean the settlement's tracks and toilets for small remuneration. The chosen men were immensely proud of their orange vests and this work, showing off to anyone who would listen. The bulk of the settlement's income came from social security payments, which had been cut in half since the start of 2004. When I arrived in July 2004, people were in a state of desperation, as they could not survive on the halved benefits, often missing meals, going without bottled water, medical treatment, and wood for heating.[4]

The settlement officially should not have existed, hence the lack of infrastructure, yet there had been no serious attempt to resettle the inhabitants anywhere else, despite a number of promises from the local government that alternatively offered to re-house residents and improve the settlement with a community centre and water supply. Trust between local authorities and Roma was at an all time low and bitterness had set in following the February-March riots in the nearby Trebišov Romani settlement and confrontations all over East Slovakia. According to Roma I spoke to, a child had been caught stealing bread from a shop following the cut in benefits and the violent treatment of this child at the hands of police had provoked an uprising, met with the deployment of over 1000 (numbers vary upwards) Slovak soldiers, resulting in many Romani arrests and beatings (sources: conversations with Roma in Richnava, http://romnews.com/community/index.php, accessed on 23/08/04).

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[3] There was no way for me to verify this information.
[4] Roma told me that collecting wood in the surrounding forest was illegal and they described unpleasant encounters with police concerning this matter.

The Slovak government has been under much E.U. pressure to conform economically and reduce its welfare payments, but this has been against a background of widespread unemployment not only amongst Romani Slovaks (who like Czech Roma have been the worst hit by massive rises in unemployment). Earlier in 2004, the American reporter Julie Danesha had been staying in the Richnava settlement and her reports on the situation had made her *persona non grata* in Slovakia, with a stamp on her passport to prove it (sources: Kumar Vishwanathan, Roma in Richnava). There were ongoing problems regarding the forced sterilisation of Romani women, a particularly sensitive issue for the community. With Slovak Romani birth rates far outnumbering ethnic Slovak rates, some non-Roma had become concerned about the demographic implications.[5] Two women described to me how they suspected their daughters had been sterilised without consent when they had been into hospital for their first children and been unable to conceive again. Apart from the human rights' implications (see Amnesty reports),[6] it is devastating for a community that believes that children are 'happiness'. Roma have often been accused of not wanting to work and therefore having children to maximise their welfare payments; however, I encountered only desperation for employment and willingness to work in any capacity. Traditionally, Slovak Roma have had large families and often continued to in order to secure their future when the state offered so little protection. I found that Roma loved and valued children very much, putting their needs before adults': the more children there were, the better. In an environment where there was very little purpose or hope, children gave unemployed and disenfranchised people a reason to carry on their routines despite the odds.

This is a brief summary of the conditions facing Roma in the settlement of Richnava. There was an unmistakable atmosphere of desperation, destitution, despair, humiliation and anger. Conditions have always been worse in East Slovakia than other Czech and Slovak regions, but the freefall effect of the first half of 2004 had clearly had a particularly striking impact on all aspects of life, including cultural phenomena. It should be noted that music and culture were not regarded as important in this context, although once people had told me about the settlement's problems, they were often willing to engage me about music. For the first 24 hours, I encountered musically only Slovak television and pop music. There were a number of televisions and stereos in the settlement, some of which remained in particular residences, and others that were passed around. Where there were televisions, they provided continuous background noise and proof that

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[5] The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe released a report suggesting that many ethnic Slovaks were alarmed by soaring Romani birth rates, aggravated by a study that predicted Roma would become the ethnic majority of Slovakia by 2060 (2003:1-2 http://files.csce.gov/coerced%20sterilization.pdf, accessed on 03/04/05)
[6] Out of many reports, see for example, http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news/press/14746.shtml

most other people did not live in the humiliating conditions they had to endure. When I was given a tour of the settlement, I encountered various groups of people sitting outside their houses doing absolutely nothing sometimes to the accompaniment of loud pop music, mostly English language disco and hits. Often it was so loud on such a poor quality stereo it was difficult to recognise anything except a beat and general noise.

Women got up early to do their chores, which involved cleaning, washing and childcare, endless tasks without a mains water supply and in the dusty heat of the summer or with the mud and non-waterproof roofs in the winter. The women worked extremely hard and there were no unpleasant smells or uncleanliness in the settlement, except for the unavoidable at the dry toilets. This left the men and older residents to sit around and the children to play their games. Sometimes, men collected mushrooms from the forest to sell by the roadside further down the hill, but there was a lot of time to sit and feel angry and depressed, emotions I encountered as I went round the settlement. This depression extended to parties and celebrations, which according to residents were not celebrated with the same regularity or enthusiasm as before. People spoke to me nostalgically about celebrations that had always lasted two days, as recently as New Year of 2004, before the welfare cuts. Now, people hardly bothered and musicians who used to make music spontaneously around the settlement rarely did so now, partly, they claimed, because when the suffering and sadness was so great, music seemed inappropriate and people did not have the heart to sing or play. Furthermore, I heard that most instruments had been sold or pawned.

In Ostrava, I had seen a video taken in 2003 by a family member visiting Richnava that showed a party involving lots of children dancing to disco music with adults looking on, in a very similar manner to discos in Ostrava, the main difference being that parties could only happen outside in Richnava, and almost always happened inside in Ostrava. Roma in Richnava explained that parties had usually been dominated by contemporary pop, hip hop and Rompop music, with a live band if possible from the point of view of availability and cost. There had been no such party since New Year 2004 according to the residents of Richnava, and they insisted they did not bother to sing very much any more. Aside from recent developments, Roma in Richnava said that for some years, they had regarded the singing of traditional Romani songs as old-fashioned and in some way comic. Two Romani musicians teased me that they knew exactly what music I had come for, because old-fashioned traditional songs had been all that non-Romani music researchers had previously been interested in. I assured them that much as I liked to hear traditional songs, I would also like them to play what they wished.

After I had gone around most of the settlement, two young men were, I felt, coerced into playing and singing for me, and many children and some adults gathered round for the excitement

generated by the music and my video camera. One started to play the guitar and sing, and the other singer joined him later on to sing in harmony. They chose popular and well-known Rompop hits, songs that everyone in the settlement appeared to know. The second man who joined later was not in the mood for singing, people explained, and he seemed to feel some embarrassment on account of this. I found that Romani musicians were understandably averse to playing or singing on demand, and that gentle suggestions or hints about enjoying listening to music were more likely to elicit positive responses, but I had no control over this particular coercion. The children did not dance or move to the music, and I found this strange, especially in light of their dancing capabilities when pop music was played: the music was "staged" for the camera.

Later on, when we were about to visit a nearby family of Vlach (a little out of the settlement), people gathered round to have a look at the accordion I was carrying (that I had purchased from a Rom in Ostrava). A crowd quickly developed and the accordion was subjected to general evaluation and attempts at playing, but it was unanimously decided that it was the wrong type as it was not a button accordion. Nonetheless, through this, word got round that I was interested in music, a guitar with only four strings was produced, and a spontaneous performance emerged outside on the track. A community leader arrived for "crowd control" and most of my recordings of the gathering are littered with Romani commands to the children from him. The same songs as before were performed along with more well-known Rompop favourites. I noticed that the Rompop repertoire played in Richnava crossed over with repertoire popular in Ostrava during my fieldwork, although there were also some other songs that I had never heard before. Even though the Ostrava Roma present and I had not heard some songs before, they were easily comprehensible in the light of experience with other Slovak and Czech Rompop. The Ostrava Roma were musically "at home" if not in other respects.

Guitars appeared to belong to people, but also to have communal rights, and messengers were sent to procure "the good guitar" from wherever it had ended up. It started to rain and eventually when it became unavoidable, we headed inside the nearest shack to continue. Ladislav Horváth, a guitarist and vocalist, led the session, with a friend providing vocal harmony and extra guitar accompaniment. Other people were free to enter, join in, suggest songs and leave. Nevertheless, Ladislav was leading, albeit with deference towards the community leader present.

The women present kept suggesting traditional songs, thinking that they were helping with my project (in light of their experience with other ethnomusicologists), but the men dismissed these suggestions vocally because they knew that I was open to other songs. Nevertheless, later they seemingly voluntarily launched into a series of traditional songs. I was then made to request traditional songs to the collective amazement of those present: they were

puzzled and impressed that I knew them, although when I said that I had spent the previous year researching Romani music in Ostrava it was less puzzling. It turned into a sort of game to compare what I knew with what they did, and two variations were leapt on with great glee as they "corrected" versions I had learned in Ostrava. Nevertheless, our knowledge of traditional songs was almost exactly the same. Melodies hardly differed and neither did the harmony. It was interesting that they found the two variations so noteworthy when they were merely a question of different decorations on the same skeleton melody. Their delight in correction was perhaps caused by having learnt them in Ostrava and being foreign myself: people in Ostrava had mostly taken these traditional songs from the Slovak settlements, so perhaps their renditions were not viewed as so reliable or authentic as those in Slovakia.

Only two or three verses were performed of each traditional song, partly because no more were remembered and partly, I suggest, because these songs were so well-known that lack of interest required them to move quickly onto a different song. The only remarkable difference between the performance of traditional songs in Richnava and Ostrava was the irreverence with which they were sung. In Richnava they thought it was extremely comic to sing these songs, as they were so old fashioned. Although in Ostrava, these songs were not popular, when they were sung, they were treated with more respect and reverence by the older generations, and this often subdued younger generations even if they did not respect the music *per se* and found it old fashioned and irrelevant. I suggest that in Richnava traditional songs were so well known that they were taken for granted, sometimes reminding them of better conditions and at other times reminding them that not very much had changed in their living conditions even though they wished for great improvements. The songs were seen as old fashioned and irrelevant, with Rompop providing a vessel for serious emotion and expression. In Ostrava, the situation was similar, except that the songs were no longer well-known and often reminded Roma of their poor relatives in Slovak settlements and much worse times and conditions, invoking a measure of sobriety.

Later into the night, I brought out a bottle of wine, some younger men turned up, and the rock 'n' roll started with much enthusiasm. The English lyrics were mostly unknown although vaguely English sounding syllables were emitted with the melody. Ladislav was extremely disappointed that I could not hear him with amplification and with the rest of the Rompop band he was part of that met outside the settlement. (All Richnava's Rompop bands had dissolved as equipment and instruments were sold). He was at least partly hoping that I would find him some work in England playing music and wished to show me the breadth of his repertoire and skills, from traditional Romani folksongs and Rompop to rock 'n' roll and playing his guitar behind his

head. Although he stopped regularly to tell me how much better his renditions would sound if they had microphones, Ladislav threw himself into the performance, becoming increasingly excitable as the wine flowed and people became more relaxed and enthusiastic.

Sadly, at this point I had to leave my partner to continue filming, as I was overwhelmed with stomach cramps. The next morning, my Romani hosts scoured the settlement for any kind of western medicine, but when I was unwilling to take some unidentified tablets, they assured me that Romani cures were in fact more effective. The family we were staying with were concerned that I would blame them for my illness. In my view, I had picked up a stomach bug as I was not accustomed to this kind of living, despite my precautions and the cleanliness of the settlement, and when it became apparent that I in no way held them responsible, one of the older Romani women came to diagnose my ailment by burning matches and then dropping them into a bowl of water. I was told that the woman would know the cause of my illness from the patterns in the water and she declared that I had become ill through meeting so many new people in a short space of time, leaving me weak and drained by so much contact. She healed me by then rubbing the water with burned matches three times on the inside of each wrist, then ordering me to drink three times from the water and to wash my face three times with it.[7] To everybody's relief, I soon recovered enough to eat and catch a lift out of the settlement in the car with Štefan.

After I left the settlement, I saw a number of Romani bands playing on the streets of the bigger cities of Bratislava and Košice, as well as at a lakeside tourist spot in East Slovakia on the border with the Ukraine. Romani musicians who had enough socio-economic advantage to buy instruments, organise a band/gigs and travel, could make a living in a similar manner to the traditional dulcimer bands, by playing popular hits and requests for tourists. They mostly played popular Western pop hits (with varying degrees of English lyrics), Czech and Slovak pop hits, and internationally well-known tunes, mixed in with the occasional traditional or non-traditional Romani song, which appeared to pass unnoticed by audiences who just carried on drinking or dancing, as they did not seem to be listening closely.[8] One group playing on the streets of Košice

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[7] This experience resonated with an occurrence of another stomach bug I had had ten months previously when I was with a Romani group from Ostrava visiting Prague. When I failed to recover quickly, the community leader put some kind of herb into water and rubbed the insides of my wrists with the water three times. I was then told to drink from the water three times and then he used the water to mark the sign of the cross on my forehead. I would have liked to talk about the experience afterwards, but I understood it was something special not to be discussed after the event. I later discovered from young Roma that some older Roma in Ostrava used these kinds of healing, although people increasingly relied on conventional Western medicine and increasingly viewed traditional practices as embarrassing and old fashioned.

[8] This context of playing for tourists and entertainment venues in Slovakia clearly correlated to descriptions of Romani musicians in the Czech Republic playing in entertainment venues during the socialist period and the early 1990s, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

played traditional Romani folk songs in a traditional manner, and tourists clearly appreciated the "exotic" traditional display.

During my time in Slovakia, I noticed that Slovaks appeared comfortable with idea of Romani musicians in a way that Czechs did not, I suggest because of the ways in which Roma have historically contributed to and helped develop Slovak culture (see Introduction). In Slovakia, I encountered a separation between conceptions of Roma as a group and Romani musicians. The former was despised and feared, and the latter were admired and respected for their talent and ability to please. When I was in Ostrava, Romani musicians did not seem to represent anything relevant or familiar to ethnic Czechs and Roma were largely despised as a homogeneous group, I propose, owing to the increasing separation of Romani and Czech music making since Roma from Slovakia arrived after World War II, and the almost total separation of Romani musicians and communities along racial lines since about 1989.

9.2 Impressions from Ostrava

My friends from Ostrava, Petr and Štefan, who were visiting their family when they accompanied me, were torn with conflicting emotions during the visit. On one hand, they were shocked at how bad the socio-economic situation had become and how quickly it had worsened. They were filled with sorrow for their relatives, but were desperately uncomfortable about being labelled the rich relatives from Ostrava. Of course, they felt themselves to be desperately poor in Ostrava, and used me to confirm this to their perhaps disbelieving relatives. They did bring things like second hand clothes and some products that could be procured cheaply at markets, but they did not feel like they had cash to give away.

In some ways, they idealised the Slovak ghettos, as the lingua franca was Romani and many structures of community hierarchy, organisation and support were still intact. There was a very strong sense of community in the ghetto, as everyone was forced to help one another, nobody could lock their doors, and families there had been interconnected for decades. Štefan told me that he felt inferior because his active Romani was poor, although he could often passively understand. He found it humiliating to communicate through Slovak and Czech, particularly as Roma in Richnava had difficulties with Slovak and kept commenting that if he could only stay for a whole week, his spoken Romani would be fluent. Petr's Romani was perfect as he had grown up in Richnava, having moved to Ostrava ten years previously.

Some of the Rompop consumed in Ostrava was from Slovakia, and some Rompop consumed in Slovakia was from the Czech Republic: they were to some extent retaining a

common repertoire and certainly maintained a common Rompop sound and style. Ostrava Roma knew the same traditional songs and many of the Rompop songs, and easily related to ones they did not know. Although Ostrava Roma were increasingly consuming the output of an expanding number of Czech Rompop bands, many of these recordings were also known in East Slovakia, copies of which were passed on via family contacts, and copied again in Slovakia. There appeared to be increasing socio-economic divides between Roma in Ostrava and their families in East Slovak Romani settlements, yet they still had much in common musically, even though, I suggest, some understood meanings, attitudes, and the context of playing the songs were noticeably different, especially concerning traditional repertoire.

Petr and Štefan felt that Roma in Ostrava were scattered too much and nobody trusted each other any longer: one could not even be sure that another Romani person would help any more. There was only a weak sense of community and Romani language left, and they idealised the Slovak settlements for these reasons. In other ways, Ostrava Roma felt superior for having more money, occasional work, flats and houses, more education and more experience of the world, as Slovak Roma were almost entirely trapped in their settlements. On one hand they felt bad that their relatives had a much worse situation than them, but on the other hand, they felt themselves to be struggling and also in need of help and support. A few Roma in Ostrava told me that they thought the devastating cuts in Slovak welfare were a precursor to the same happening in the Czech Republic, and followed the progress of Slovak Roma through the media and family contacts with a great sense of foreboding.

To sum up, this appendix provides a short excursion into life in one of the Slovak settlements where so many Ostrava Romani families came from. I have described how different their lives were from Ostrava Roma's, the conflicting emotions generated by this, and the common bond of family, Romani identity, a Rompop style comprehensible to both, and a shared traditional repertoire, which however denigrated it was, was still a point of shared history. The divergence between the lives of Slovak Roma in Richnava settlement and their family in Ostrava was striking; however, family bonds, musical interaction, and a sense of common destiny due to their shared Romani identity, were keeping these two Romani diasporas connected.

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