

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO RACE AND ETHNICITY: THE ROMA IN POSTCOMMUNIST CENTRAL EUROPE

INSTRUCTOR:

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Fall semester, 2016/2017

No. of credits: 2

Course e-learning site:

Office hours: Mondays, 16:00–17:00, Room FT 205, upon appointment

AIMS AND FOCI OF THE COURSE

The course takes its departure from that of Michael Stewart on "Anthropological Approaches to Ethnicity, Racism and Nationalism." It is deliberately planned to couple the theories, concepts, methodological assumptions, and empirical investigations of anthropology with the respective building-blocks in the sociology of race, ethnicity, and majority-minority relations. While bridging the two courses in a kind of a sibling-relation, the current program attempts, however, to provide an independent interpretation of the formation of the 'Roma issue' in contemporary postcommunist societies. In other – practical – terms, this course is thus conceived as an independent unit that can be taken without preliminary training in "Anthropological Approaches...", while it aims at offering an interdisciplinary completion for earlier attendants of the latter.

The course focuses on the overt and covert social, political, economic, and cultural 'usage' of the (re)invented concepts of race and ethnicity in postcommunist societies. It gives an overview of the leading theories of post-communist social stratification and places the concepts of race and ethnicity into the context of the deeply altering patterns of distribution of power and wealth. In this contextualization, relations of institutionalized power will be analyzed from formal/legal and empirical/practical perspectives alike, pointing to hidden interests of representation/under-representation of ethnic minorities in the background. Similarly, major principles of the new neoliberal welfare policies will be analyzed from an ethnic/racial perspective by exploring those massive – and complex – interests that lead to the financial/material 'disenfranchisement' on racial/ethnic grounds and that serve to stabilize the newly established property-relations of postcommunist societies. These discussions will orient us in reviewing the explanatory power of certain recently born conceptual constructs of contemporary sociology in characterizing postcommunist societies, such as: 'intermingled relationships of class and ethnicity,' 'intersection between race and poverty,' 'ethnic deprivation and the birth of the new underclass', 'racial disadvantage

as the source of social exclusion', etc. The critical examination of these constructs will incorporate both the rapidly expanding theoretical literature and some key empirical investigations that took their departure from one or another powerful strand of it. By combining theory and the thorough revision of its translation into operationalized notions and empirical methods, a distinct part of the course aims at contributing to the ongoing international debate on the social scientist's responsibility in situating him/herself in 'consciousness raising' and 'empowering' movements. Ideas of 'value free,' 'neutral,' 'objective' empiricism will be discussed in this context, and a few extra-sensitive matters of running research in Roma communities will be raised against the built-in power relations of such research.

The course will consist of four larger blocks. It will be run in the form of lectures combined with discussion sessions on different aspects of the 'racial/ethnic issue' in our region, with a focus on various aspects of contemporary social stratification (altogether 12 classes are planned – see below). The discussion sessions are designed to explore some key dilemmas of empirical research on race/ethnicity. They will heavily build on exploring and systemizing the students' own experience in matters of identity, prejudice, community and personal degradation, etc. and intends to provide an introduction to the actual planning of race/ethnicity-sensitive sociological investigation with some of the conclusions in mind.

In the Spring semester (2015), a new course launched on 'Roma Exclusion: The Racialization of Poverty' that will provide insights into the main structural factors and currents in local communities that make Roma poverty different from the similar state of non-Roma through processes of racialization. For this purpose, the Spring course will offer an introduction to the concepts and the methodology of understanding different manifestations of poverty partly through familial interviews and partly through analyzing representations of the problem in films and documentaries. While the Spring course can be attended independently, students of the course on 'Sociological Approaches...' may find it interesting to register also for the 'Roma exclusion...' course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students attending this course will gain:

- Insight into those historical, structural and institutional factors and processes that produce and reproduce the multiply disadvantaged positions of Roma in Central European societies.
- By looking at associations between poverty and institutionalized and personified manifestations of discrimination through a comparative lens, they will become capable of contextualizing ethnic/racial differentiation in the working of post-socialist welfare states.
- Further, attendants of the course will acquire a set of methodological tools for assessing certain policies and measures in light of their impact on racial/ethnic inequalities and the ethnicization of poverty.
- By writing their short essays/reviews, students' skills in critically examining different schools of thoughts in interpreting poverty and ethnicity will be

enhanced and their ability in writing high-quality literary reviews will be developed.

- Through active participation in the weekly discussions in class, students will acquire skills in orally presenting given scholarly arguments and defending their own standpoints in debates.
- By drafting short written assignments throughout the course and also by accomplishing their final essays, they will demonstrate capabilities in translating theoretical concepts into research designs for fieldwork on exploring interethnic relations and also in assessing policy outcomes against their implications on the broadly understood ethno-social relations within the region.

Learning outcomes are supported, in addition to the course design, by the instructor's continuous feedback on students' accomplishments and also by formal assessment of their course-work.

ASSESSMENT

Marking for the course will be based in 30 per cent on assessing contribution to the in-class discussions, in 30 percent on the midterm essay, and in 40 per cent on the more extensive final essay.

Toward the end of Part II of the course (see below), a set of titles will be announced to provide ample choice for the preparation of the midterm essay. The optional titles will address certain conceptual, methodological issues, dilemmas of choosing the appropriate research techniques and matters of operationalization – all covered by the introductory lectures, in-class discussions, and the adjoining reading list. This writing should be of a length of 1500-2000 words. It has to be submitted through e-mail to Dr. J. Szalai (szalai.julia@chello.hu).

Deadline for submitting the midterm essay will be set in due course in class. Individually addressed comments will be given within a month.

In a similar vein, a set of titles will be offered to choose from for the final essay. The titles will provide a scope for further developing students' research ideas and methodological approaches, while will give weight also to the proper theoretical foundation of these designs.

The final essays of a length of 2500-3000 words should be submitted to the above e-mail address. Deadline of submission will be set in due course in class. Individually addressed comments and final grading will be provided within a month.

THEMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

I The (re)invention of race and ethnicity in the post-communist era

1) The politics of poverty – competing concepts and vested interests (September 23, 2016)

- The major taboos of communism: poverty and ethnicity; dissident movements and the issues of poverty and ethnicity – the rise of new concepts of human rights
- The "moment of truth 1": the sudden discovery of poverty – prevailing explanations of the phenomenon at the start of postcommunist transformation
- The "moment of truth 2": the (re)discovery of ethnic/racial minorities; (re)conceptualizing ethnic/racial otherness in the public discourse
- A window to the West: The (re)discovery of poverty and ethnicity in advanced welfare states

2) The interplay of poverty and ethnicity: as reflected in sociological research : methodological dilemmas, research results and their interpretations (September 30, 2016)

- Competing concepts of poverty and their imprint in empirical research
- Approaching ethnic/racial belonging: whose rights to define?
- Sampling and the dilemmas of validity
- Majority-interests in the maintenance of the intersection between poverty and ethnicity; the socio-politically intended confusions around minority-rights
- The ghettoization of poverty on ethnic grounds
- Institutional segregation and social exclusion
- Institutional discrimination in an East-West comparative perspective

Reading list to Part I

Lewis, Oscar 1968. The Culture of Poverty. In: *On understanding Poverty*. (ed.: Daniel P. Moynihan), Basic Books, pp. 187-201

Ladányi, János – Szelényi, Iván 2001. The Social Construction of Ethnicity in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary during Market Transition. *Review of Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 34-79.

Quadagno, Jill 1996. *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*. OUP, pp. 17-31.

Emigh, Rebecca Jean, Fodor, Éva and Szelényi, Iván 2006. The Racialization and Feminisation of Poverty? In: Emigh, R.J. and Szelényi, I. (eds.): *Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender in Eastern Europe during the Markwet Transition*. Praeger, pp. 1-32.

Open Society Foundation.2010. *No Data – No Progress*, OSF online publication

Herbert J. Gans 1995. *The War Against the Poor*. Basic Books, pp. 11-58.

II A few decisive fields of social stratification: the racial/ethnic dimension

3) Roma and non-Roma opportunities at start: early childhood (October 07, 2016)

- The impact of demographic differences on the familial status of children
- Child poverty, ethnicity and some consequences on early socialization
- The new interpretation of the 'right to knowledge' and segregationist moves in education
- Ethnic/racial self-consciousness and universal education
- Lessons from the desegregationist attempts in the US in the 1960s

4) Departing Roma and non-Roma careers: education (October 14, 2016)

- Ethnic/racial segregation in education in a comparative perspective
- Educational inequalities through different prisms
- Arguments for and against affirmative action

5) Roma and non-Roma in and outside the labor market; some aspects of everyday life (October 21, 2016)

- Knowledge, occupational mobility, and the traditional segmentation of the labor market in Central Europe
- Economic change, unemployment and marginalized labor
- Changing functions of the informal economy in postcommunist societies
- 'Black labor' and its socio-economic functions
- Work and the use of time – ethnic/racial differences
- Work-based social protection as the tool to raise the flexibility of labor market
- Sources of income: an ethnic/racial comparison
- Social network, social support
- Welfare and low income: the self-perpetuating character of chronic poverty and the institutionalized forms of maintaining ethnically/racially informed differences in household-economies

Reading list to Part II

Stack, Carol B. 1974. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. Harper & Row, pp. 45-61, 108-123.

Magyari-Vincze Eniko 2006. Social Exclusion at the Crossroads of Gender, Ethnicity and Class: A View on Women's Reproductive Health. CPS CEU – OSI

Kertesi, Gábor – Kézdi Gábor 2010. *The Roma/non-Roma Test Score Gap in Hungary*. Corvinus – KTI

Szalai, Júlia, Vera Messing, and Mária Neményi 2010: *Social and Ethnic Differences in Education in a Comparative Perspective*. Chapters II and III. Online publication (www.edumigrom.eu)

- Brüggemann, Christian 2012. *Roma Education in Comparative Perspective*. UNDP Bratislava
- Fullinwider, Robert 2002. Affirmative Action. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2002 Edition)* (ed.: Edward N. Zalta)
- Kertesi, Gábor 2004. *The Employment of the Roma – Evidence from Hungary*. Budapest Working Papers No 1, Institute of Economics, HAS – Dept. of Human Resources, Corvinus University
- Ferge, Zsuzsa 2008. Is There a Specific East Central European Welfare Culture? In: Oorscot, W, Opielka, M. and Pfau-Effinger, B. (eds.): *Culture and Welfare State, Values of Social Policy from a Comparative Perspective*. Edward Elgar, pp. 142-161.

III Institutionalized power and powerlessness

- 6) Identity formation, identity strategies, ethnic identity (October 28, 2016)
- Theories on identity-making
 - Threatened identities
 - Inter-group relations and the formation of ethnic identity
 - Identity and culture
 - Intersectionality in identity development
- 7) Introduction to the theories of 'identity-politics' and struggles for 'recognition' and 'redistribution' (November 04, 2016)
- 8) Citizens' rights, minority rights and the political representation of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe (November 11, 2016)
- Some controversies of postcommunist minority legislation
 - Experiences of minority self-governance – some empirical evidence
 - The making of second-class citizenship
 - The politics of informality

Reading list to Part III

- Neményi, Mária – Vajda, Róza 2014. Intricacies of Ethnicity: A Comparative Study of Minority Identity Formation during Adolescence. In: Szalai, J. – Claire Schiff (eds.): *Migrant, Roma and Post-Colonial Youth in Education across Europe: Being 'Visibly Different'*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 103-120.
- Breakwell, Glynis 1986. *Coping with Threatened Identities*. Methuen & Co., pp. 9-45.

- Taylor, Charles 1994. The Politics of Recognition. In: Gutmann, A. (ed.): *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. (ed.: Amy Gutmann). Princeton University Press, pp. 25-75
- Habermas, Jürgen 1994. Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State. In Gutmann, A (ed.): *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (ed.: Amy Gutmann). Princeton University Press, pp. 107-149.
- Marshall, T.H. 1950/1987. *Citizenship and Social Class*. Pluto Press, pp. 3-51
- Fraser, Nancy 2008. Rethinking Redistribution and Recognition: Class, Identity, and the Conditions for Radical Politics in the “Postsocialist” Age. *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp.31-44.
- Sen, Amartya 2007. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. Penguin Books, pp. 18-40.
- Molnár, Emilia – Schafft, Kai A. 2003. Social Exclusion, Ethnic Political Mobilization, and Roma Minority Self-Governance in Hungary. *East Central Europe/L’Europe du Centre-Est* Vol. 30, Part 1, pp. 53-75
- Vermeersch, Peter 2014. The Romani Perspective : Experiences and Acts of Citizenship across Europe. In: Isin, E.F. – Nyers, P. *The Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*. Routledge, pp. 477-486.

IV Social stratification – revisited

- 9) A critical overview of leading theories of race/ethnicity as important constituents of social differentiation in post-communist societies (November 18, 2016)
 - The role of class vs. ethnicity
 - The racial foundations of the ‘new underclass’
 - Human rights, social rights, welfare rights
 - Ethnicity, social exclusion and social disintegration
- 10) Race/ethnicity: individual, familial, community and macro-social aspects – a summary (November 25, 2016)
- 11) Seminar on Roma life: watching a documentary, followed by in-class discussion (December 2, 2016)

Reading list to Part IV

- Gans, Herbert J. 1995. *The War Against the Poor*. Basic Books, pp. 58-74

- Parsons, Talcott 1965. Full Citizenship for the Negro American? A Sociological Problem. In: *The Negro American* (eds.: Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark). American Academy of Arts and Sciences – The riverside Press, pp. 709-754.
- Ivan Szelenyi 2001. *Poverty under post-communist capitalism - the effects of class and ethnicity in a cross-national comparison*. Paper presented at the workshop “Culture and Poverty”, Central European University, November 30- December 2, 2001
- Szalai, Julia 2013. Fragmented Social Rights in Hungary’s Postcommunist Welfare State. In: Evers, A.– Guillemard, A-M. (eds.): *Social Policy and Citizenship: The Changing Landscape*. OUP, pp. 283-305.
- Baar, Huub van 2011. *The European Roma: Minority Representation, Memory and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality*. F. & N. Eigen Beheer, pp.271-315.

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