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## PROBLEMS OF ROMA COMMUNITIES ABROAD AND IN UKRAINE IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SPACE OF THE LATE 20TH AND EARLY 21ST CENTURIES

**The purpose of the study:** to investigate the problems of Roma communities abroad and Ukraine in the socio-cultural space of the late 20th – first quarter of the 21st century. **Research methods.** To solve the set goal, general scientific and special methods were used, including: historical and cultural, analytical, informational. The method of cultural analysis was used to consider foreign materials on the life, lifestyle, and culture of Roma communities. The use of historical and cultural and informational methods made it possible to identify conceptual principles for understanding an objective idea of the historical foundations of the problems of Roma communities abroad and Ukraine and to outline further scientific prospects for the chosen topic. **Scientific novelty.** For the first time, the problems of Roma communities abroad and Ukraine and their features in the foreign scientific discourse of the late 20th – first quarter of the 21st century are analyzed for the perception and formation of an objective idea of Roma communities. The view of scholars from abroad and Ukraine on the problems of Roma communities is revealed in order to increase the level of self-identification, integration of Roma into society, as well as the development of Roma cultural heritage. Foreign studies of Roma culture and art take place in various contexts, including social, political, and culturological discussions. Issues are raised regarding discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma community in connection with ethnocultural features, such as: the stability of the Roma ethnic culture in observing special rituals, customs, and lifestyles that are passed down from generation to generation; the lack of a stable affiliation of the Roma to a single people and their division into sub-ethnic groups. The problems of Roma communities from abroad and Ukraine in the socio-cultural space of the late 20th – first quarter of the 21st century of American, European, and Ukrainian scientific discourse are considered. **Conclusions.** It has been proven that the specific way of life of the Roma is marked by a deep connection with nature, adherence to traditional values and a special way of social organization. It has been shown that the Roma traditionally pay more attention to spiritual development and observance of traditions than to the accumulation of material wealth. This is reflected in their artistic and musical creativity, religious rituals, legends and fairy tales, which are preserved and passed down from generation to generation. The mentioned studies provide a deeper understanding of the problems faced by Roma communities, highlight their cultural heritage and emphasize the complexity of the socio-economic situation in which the Roma population finds itself.

**Key words:** Roma, Roma communities, Roma cultural heritage, Roma culture and art.

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## ПРОБЛЕМИ РОМСЬКИХ ГРОМАД ЗАРУБІЖЖЯ ТА УКРАЇНИ В СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ КІНЦЯ ХХ – ПЕРШОЇ ЧВЕРТІ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ

**Мета дослідження:** дослідити проблеми ромських громад зарубіжжя та України в соціокультурному просторі кінця ХХ – першої чверті ХХІ століття. **Методи дослідження.** Для розв'язання поставленої мети було застосовано загальнонаукові та спеціальні методи, серед яких: історично-культурологічний, аналітичний, інформаційний. Метод культурологічного аналізу використано для розгляду зарубіжних матеріалів щодо життя, побуту, культури ромських громад. Використання історично-культурологічного та інформаційного методів дозволило виявити концептуальні засади щодо осмислення об'єктивного уявлення про історичні засади проблем ромських громад зарубіжжя та України й окреслити подальші наукові перспективи обраної теми. **Наукова новизна.** Вперше аналізуються проблеми ромських громад зарубіжжя та України та їхні особливості у зарубіжному науковому дискурсі кінця ХХ – першої чверті ХХІ століття для сприйняття й формування об'єктивного уявлення про ромські громади. Розкривається погляд науковців зарубіжжя та України щодо проблем ромських громад задля підвищення рівня самоідентифікації, інтеграцією ромів у суспільство, а також розвитку ромської культурної спадщини. Зарубіжні дослідження ромської культури і мистецтва відбуваються у різних контекстах, включаючи соціальні, політичні, культурологічні дискусії. порушуються питання щодо дискримінації й соціального виключення ромської громади у зв'язку з етнокультурними особливостями, такими як: стійкість ромської етнічної культури в дотриманні особливих обрядів, звичаїв та способу життя, що передаються від покоління до покоління; відсутність сталої приналежності ромів до єдиного народу та їхній поділ на субетноси.

Розглядаються проблеми ромських громад зарубіжжя та України в соціокультурному просторі кінця ХХ – першої чверті ХХІ століття американського, європейського та українського наукового дискурсу. **Висновки.** Доведено, що специфічний спосіб життя ромів відзначається глибоким зв'язком із природою, дотриманням традиційних цінностей і особливим способом соціальної організації. Показано, що роми традиційно приділяють більше уваги духовному розвитку й дотриманню традицій, ніж нагромадженню матеріальних благ. Це відображається в їхній мистецькій і музичній творчості, релігійних обрядах, легендах і казках, які зберігаються й передаються від покоління до покоління. Зазначені дослідження надають більш глибоке розуміння проблем, з якими стикаються ромські громади, висвітлюють їхню культурну спадщину та підкреслюють складність соціально-економічної ситуації, в якій перебуває ромське населення.

**Ключові слова:** роми, ромські громади, ромська культурна спадщина, культура і мистецтво ромів.

**Relevance of the problem.** Roma communities abroad and in Ukraine face a number of problems. These include social discrimination, gender inequality, prejudices against Roma, employment problems, etc. The problems of discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma community due to its ethno-cultural characteristics remain relevant.

**Analysis of recent studies and publications.** In his work *Gypsy Law: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture*, V. Weirauch substantiates the traditional laws and culture of the Roma. The author argues that Romani culture is traditionally based on certain principles that ensure their self-identification and interaction within the community. However, the author notes that Romani culture is under threat of decline due to changes in society and globalization (Weyrauch, 2001). M. Stewart's study "Gypsies and the Problem of Justice: Minority Protection and the European Convention on Human Rights" is devoted to the protection of minority rights, in particular those of the Roma, within the framework of the European Convention on Human Rights. The author argues that it is necessary to ensure effective protection of the rights of Roma and other minorities in all European countries (Stewart, 2008).

M. Stewart notes: "Roma communities must be involved in all stages of decision-making that affect their lives and inclusion in society" (Stewart, 2016, p. 8).

M. Fotta's work emphasizes that: "Support for Roma rights must be multifaceted, taking into account the characteristics of their culture and life experience, and must be directed at various levels – from international to local" (Fotta, Brazzabeni, & Cunha, 2018, p. 9).

The work of M. Lang, M. Brazzabeni, and M. Cunha, *Gypsy Economy: Romani Livelihoods and Notions of Worth in the 21st Century*, is devoted to the economy of the Roma and their ways of earning a living. The authors explore various aspects of Roma life, including their views on money, business culture, and ways of earning a living, as well as their own views on values and wealth. The researchers note that in many cases, Roma remain in a difficult situation due to limited opportunities.

A. Johannessen's scientific work "The Romani Women's Movement: Struggles and Debates in Central and Eastern Europe" is devoted to the problems of discrimination and social exclusion of

Roma in the European Union. The author rightly points out that it is necessary to ensure equal rights for Roma and prevent their social exclusion (Johannessen, 2022).

V. Weirach's study *Gypsy Law: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture* offers a unique perspective on Roma culture and traditions through the prism of their legal system. The author argues that Roma law is based on natural laws and customs that are preserved and passed down from generation to generation. Thus, he reflects Roma culture as multi-layered, with a deep history and significance of law (Weyrauch, 2001).

**The aim of the study** is to examine the problems of Roma communities abroad and in Ukraine in the sociocultural space of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

**Presentation of the main material.** Cultural scholars consider the rights of Roma to be an integral part of their culture and identity. The traditional customs and rituals of Romani culture, which are an important element of identity, are the focus of V. Weyrauch's study "The Law of the Gypsies: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture" (V. Weyrauch). This work is an important study of the Roma legal system, which remains relatively understudied (Weyrauch, 2001).

Using the example of Roma communities in Europe and North America, V. Weyrauch explores how Roma laws and traditions interact with the official legal systems that exist in different countries around the world. According to the author: "Roma do not have a single code of law, but they believe that traditions and norms should be passed down from generation to generation as a kind of law" (Weyrauch, 2001, p. 8). "In Romani culture, myths and legends play an important role in shaping moral norms and Romani identity" (Weyrauch, 2001, p. 21).

Thus, Romani culture has a significant layer of myths and legends that the Romani community perceives as its own legal system and moral norms. Another aspect of the problem is taboos and prohibitions, which are important elements of Romani culture and art. Some of these prohibitions are related to family life, marriage, and divorce, and they can influence how the Roma community resolves conflicts and other legal issues. For example, traditional Roma culture rejects the breakdown of relationships and divorce between spouses, which can lead to complex situations when considering such legal issues.

V. Weyrauch notes that there are important role models in Roma culture that influence the legal system. "Taboos and prohibitions in Roma culture can influence the legal system, particularly in relation to marriage, divorce, and family life" (Weyrauch, 2001, p. 43). For example, the role of the senior family member and the knowledge they possess can determine how legal issues are resolved. "Roma have great respect for older family members who have a wealth of experience and knowledge about traditions and rules of conduct" (Weyrauch, 2001, p. 56).

V. Weyrauch has made a significant contribution to the understanding of Roma culture and their legal traditions. However, it should be noted that the study is not a complete or definitive elaboration of the Roma legal system. (Weyrauch, 2001).

M. Stewart's study is also devoted to the legal status of the Roma minority in Europe and their interaction with legal institutions based on the European Convention on Human Rights. The monograph examines the main problems faced by Roma communities in different European countries, including discrimination, inadequate representation in politics, low levels of education and employment, and access to justice.

The author analyzes the ways in which Roma communities try to protect their rights, including the use of international legal instruments and appeals to European courts. The author pays particular attention to the issue of the effectiveness of protecting the rights of Roma, in particular its dependence on the domestic policies of countries that are members of the European Union.

One of the author's main arguments is that the protection of Roma rights in Europe requires more effective legal instruments and political support that would allow Roma communities to use them effectively. M. Stewart rightly points out that solving the problems of Roma minorities should not only be an attempt at their economic development and social integration, but also a matter of protecting their rights as a minority.

The study reflects the various cultural problems faced by Roma communities in different European countries. One of the problems is that Roma culture and art are sometimes subject to discrimination and stereotyping. For example, in some countries there is a stereotype that Roma are thieves and criminals, as a result of which Roma communities face violence and discrimination, and the police do

not respond to their calls for help, which makes Roma feel alienated and insecure.

In addition, Roma culture has its own traditions and customs that may conflict with the country's legislation. For example, in some Roma communities, there is a tradition of early marriage, with girls marrying at a young age. This custom may conflict with the laws of the country, where marriage can only be contracted after reaching a certain age.

One of the problems mentioned by M. Stewart in his work is that the incompatibility of Roma cultural traditions with the country's legislation can lead to conflicts between the Roma community and law enforcement agencies. Such situations can exacerbate feelings of alienation and insecurity among the Roma community.

In addition, M. Stewart's book *Roma and the Problem of Justice: Minority Protection and the European Convention on Human Rights* (Stewart, 2008) examines other cultural issues faced by Roma communities. One of these is that Roma, as a minority, often do not have sufficient access to justice.

Roma communities may face inequality in access to the judicial system because Roma have low levels of education and do not know the language of the country in which they live. This situation can make it difficult for Roma to defend their rights in court and obtain a fair decision.

M. Stewart's work, "Roma and the Problem of Justice: Minority Protection and the European Convention on Human Rights," also mentions the problem of environmental pollution in Roma communities, which can have a negative impact on the health of residents and the ecological situation around settlements. However, some customs of Roma culture, including the nomadic lifestyle, may be incompatible with the requirements of state authorities regarding environmental protection.

Consequently, cultural problems of Roma communities can affect virtually all areas of their lives, for example, access to justice, receiving medical care, and finding an ecologically friendly living environment.

In M. Stewart's work, "Roma and the Problem of Justice: Minority Protection and the European Convention on Human Rights," Roma art is not presented here as a specific issue in focus. The writer addresses the subject of Roma rights and legality in international and national law.

The author notes that Roma musicians and dancers are known throughout the world for their talents and contributions to world culture. He also emphasizes how the cultural heritage of the Roma may be threatened by the social problems faced by the Roma minority. (Stewart, 2008).

A group of authors, M. Fotta, M. Brazenbeny, and M. Kunha, focus on the economic life of Roma communities in the modern world in *Gypsy Economy: Romani Livelihoods and Notions of Worth in the 21st Century* (Fotta, 2018).

The authors explore various forms of the Romani economy, including traditional means of earning a living, such as trade and crafts, as well as modern forms, such as working on the internet and using social networks to sell goods. M. Fotta, M. Brazenbani, and M. Kunha substantiate the concept of "value" in Romani communities and their economic relations, pointing out that the Romani concept of value may differ from traditional capitalist approaches.

One of the researchers draws attention to the role of stereotypes and discrimination in the economic life of Roma communities, especially in the context of traditional professions that are perceived as "unworthy" or "low-skilled."

Scholar V. Gorbik points out that Roma communities have their own concept of value, which may differ from traditional capitalist approaches. This may include, in particular, different views on the value of manual labor and other forms of art, which may have an impact on the economic life of Roma communities.

Therefore, although the researcher does not focus directly on the culture and art of Roma communities, her research may be important for understanding the economic and cultural life of these communities, which undoubtedly influences cultural development (Gorbik, 2003).

The problems faced by Roma in the European Union, such as discrimination, marginalization, and social exclusion, are studied by A. Kots. The scholar analyzes various aspects of Roma life, including their history, culture, economic situation, and problems. The study is the result of many years of scientific work by the author.

The following considerations of the scholar were significant for the study: "Roma, like many other minorities, are recognized for their culture and traditions, which are an integral part of cultural heritage" (Kóczé, 2020, p. 17).

“Traditionally, Roma have a strong attachment to a particular culture and heritage, which ensures the preservation of their identity and national self-determination” (Kóczé, 2020, p. 18). “In a sense, Roma culture is their main weapon in the fight against stereotypes, discrimination, and social exclusion” (Kóczé, 2020, p. 20).

A. Kóczé offers her own perspective on the situation of Roma in Europe, examining the mechanisms underlying their discrimination and social exclusion. In addition, she examines the effectiveness of EU policies on Roma and recommends better approaches to solving problems related to the integration of Roma into British society (Kóczé, 2020).

The study “Gypsy/Traveller Women in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities” by N. Kurtova is devoted to the Roma/traditional Manouche women’s problems in different European countries. The author considers many spheres of women’s lives, including social exclusion, lack of access to education and health care, use of violence, human trafficking, and religious discrimination. N. Kurtova uses various sources of information, including interviewing women, decomposing statistical data, and a review of the legislation of the countries where these groups live. The author investigates a number of projects and programs proposed to heighten the living standards of traditional Manouche Roma women.

N. Kurtova’s research provides a better understanding of the complexity of the problems these women face and contributes to understanding possible ways to improve their situation and ensure more equitable living conditions (Kurtova, 2023).

Summarizing, the analyzed works illustrate that the Roma community faces social and economic problems, often being connected with discrimination and inefficient protection of their rights. However, researchers propose different solutions regarding these communities’ gaining more support and legal protection, such as legislative changes, political reforms, social integration policies, and different forms of economic support for the Romanian communities. Against this backdrop, it is important to continue researching and drawing attention to the problems faced by Roma communities and developing and implementing effective strategies in favor of their rights and self-realization.

Roma integration and rights are matters of immediate concern, and the academic study of

Roma culture, discrimination, and rights is applicable to the development of the scientific basis for addressing these problems.

As M. Stewart noted in his study: “Roma rights should be considered as part of the broader issue of human rights and minority protection. These rights must be supported and ensured by states and international organizations” (Stewart, 2016, p. 5).

A. Kóczé notes that “discrimination and social backwardness of Roma in the EU is systemic and widespread, requiring comprehensive measures and long-term efforts to ensure full and effective protection of the rights of Roma minorities” (Kóczé, 2020, p. 3).

Analyzing the problems of Roma economic development, M. Fotta states: “An important task is to develop and support the economic activities of Roma and their participation in society in order to reduce their backwardness and improve their quality of life” (Fotta, Brazzabeni, & Cunha, 2018, p. 2). M. Fotta draws attention to the lack of jobs for Roma and insufficient attention to their needs in terms of entrepreneurship development. She states: “One of the main obstacles to the Roma economy is their absence from the sphere of lending and borrowing. This puts Roma at a disadvantage compared to other citizens in terms of their ability to develop their own business activities and maintain their standard of living. Roma who are engaged in small-scale entrepreneurship do not have access to loans to start their businesses or loans to expand their activities” (Fotta, Brazzabeni & Cunha, 2018, p. 10).

Another important aspect that requires the attention of researchers is the problem of gender inequality in the Roma community. A. Kots draws attention to the fact that women in the Roma community are in an unequal position compared to men and other women in society. She writes: “Roma women face challenges at every turn – from access to education and health care to employment and decent housing. They also face gender discrimination within the Roma community and beyond” (Kóczé, 2020, p. 23).

Therefore, in supporting the rights of Roma, it is important to take into account their needs in terms of education, health, housing, employment, and entrepreneurship development.

Regarding the role of states in protecting the rights of Roma, the authors point to the need for active state policies aimed at combating

discrimination and violence against the Roma minority. However, as A. Kotsy notes: “State authorities often show insufficient interest in issues related to the social inclusion of Roma. Moreover, their policies are not always effective and do not contribute to the real integration of Roma into society. The problem is that such programs are often developed without the participation of the Roma community itself and ignore its needs and views.” (Kóczé, 2020, p. 184).

M. Stewart argues that states should be obliged to protect the rights of Roma to equality before the law and non-discrimination: “States have an obligation to ensure equality before the law and to protect their citizens from discrimination. This also applies to the Roma minority, which often faces violations of its rights. To address these issues, states must develop and implement effective legal measures and policies” (Stewart, 2016, p. 4).

In conclusion, it can be noted that Roma cultural heritage is an important element of world cultural heritage, and research on this topic is a relevant and important task for science.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** Thus, after analyzing the scientific works of foreign and Ukrainian researchers, we can conclude that the Roma minority still faces

significant difficulties and discrimination in various spheres of life. An analysis of studies devoted to the problems of Roma communities shows that in order to support the rights of Roma, it is necessary to address the problems of stereotypes and discrimination, ensure their participation in decision-making, and implement multifaceted support at various levels. It is important that decisions affecting Roma are made on the basis of research and consultation with Roma communities themselves, rather than on the basis of stereotypes and prejudices.

The foreign studies analyzed, which are new to Ukrainian scientific knowledge, allow for a better understanding of the problems of Roma communities in the sociocultural space from a scientifically sound perspective. These studies offer a more comprehensive and in-depth view of the problems of Roma communities and Roma cultural heritage, and also show the complexity of the socio-economic situation of the Roma community. The studies analyzed in the article are important not only for stimulating new discussions in Ukrainian Roma studies, but also for the wider public, as they contribute to a more accurate and objective understanding of Roma culture and its contribution to world culture in general.

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