

Summary

Gender the Romani Way. Patterns, Roles, Identities

The main theme of the book *Gender the Romani Way. Patterns, Roles, Identities* are constructions of femininity and masculinity among Romani people from three groups living in Poland: Polska Roma, Kalderash and Lovari. The work is based on many years of multi-site research conducted in 2001–2006 and 2009–2013. It is a compendium of knowledge about contemporary Roma, in which the author focuses on the description of living practices, shows the multitude of attitudes and individual experiences within *Romanipen*, and gives voice to the Roma themselves, emphasizing how different attitudes coexist today. The aim of this book is to present the problems related to gender issues among Romani people and the practices related to their life in general. Too often, when speaking or writing about Romani people, the researches refer to stereotypes or historical works which are outdated and do not take into account the changes which have taken place in the Roma culture over the last few decades. When designing and conducting her research, the author attempted to take into account many areas related to contemporary Roma, always trying to show the male and female perspective.

Chapter 1 presents the subject and course of the research, the area, and the methodology used. Chapter 2 briefly presents the diversity of the Gypsies (Romani people) in the world. It presents two approaches to the Roma identity, influencing the way of thinking and writing about this community: substantialist (essentialist) and relational. It also presents the discussion on terminology. Chapter 3 includes basic information on the Roma groups living in Poland: a short historical overview, the social organisation of the groups and the relations between them. It discusses the concept of *Romanipen* (the essence of being Romani) and its fundamental rules, as well as the dichotomy: Roma people – *gadje*. Chapter 4 discusses the concept of pollution and

its role in preserving Roma culture. It presents the rules which are in force in the groups researched by the author. Chapter 5 focuses on the construction of femininity and masculinity, analysing four aspects: behavioral patterns, sexuality, dress codes and attitudes towards education in its broadest sense. Chapter 6 discusses paid work and domestic labor, also describing gendered responsibilities. Chapter 7 is devoted to family life: the principles of entering and dissolving unions, the issue of female and male agency, and marital power relations. The author examines the issues related to parenting, discusses the role of upbringing, and the practice of motherhood and fatherhood. The last chapter focuses on the problem of Romani authorities and male and female power, it also distinguishes between traditional and modern leaders.

The author demonstrates that contemporary cultural change among Roma is an adaptive strategy that allows survival in the non-Romani world while preserving the foundations of *Romanipen*. Gender remains the key field of this dynamic, where traditional patterns collide with the increasing agency of women who negotiate their position in education, labor, or family life. The book is a unique testimony to the transformation of social rules in the first decades of the 21st century, proving that the Romani identity is a living process, constantly shaped by subsequent generations.

Translated by Bożena Lesiuk