

**EXCLUSION OF ETHNIC GROUPS FROM THE REALM OF HUMANITY**  
Prejudice against the Gypsies in Britain and in Romania

**Afrodita Marcu - Xenia Chrysochoou**  
University of Surrey, Panteion University

---

**RESUMEN**

Se analiza el prejuicio contra minorías étnicas como el establecimiento de la diferencia entre los grupos sociales en dimensiones valoradas y también como la negación de las semejanzas evitando la inclusión de endogrupos y exogrupos en la categoría superior de seres humanos. Esta investigación analiza en la minoría gitana los dos conceptos que se utilizan para describir el fenómeno de la deshumanización de grupos ajenos: su ontologización e infrahumanización. Se pidió a los británicos y rumanos de la muestra que clasificaran a su grupo nacional y a los gitanos a partir de las características juzgadas típicamente humanas y típicamente animales según la literatura teórica de la ontologización e infrahumanización. Los resultados indicaron que la ontologización de los gitanos ocurre en ambas muestras nacionales mientras que su infrahumanización solo ocurre en los participantes británicos. Se analizan las implicaciones de los resultados desde la perspectiva de infrahumanización y ontologización.

**ABSTRACT**

Prejudice against ethnic minorities is investigated not only as the establishment of difference between social groups on valued dimensions but also as the denial of similarities that would prevent the inclusion of both ingroups and outgroups in the superordinate category of human-beings. The present study sought to explore the two concepts that are advanced to describe the phenomenon of dehumanisation of outgroups: their ontologisation and their infrahumanisation in relation to the Gypsy minority. British and Romanian participants were asked to rate their national ingroup and the Gypsies using characteristics judged typically human and typically animal following the ontologisation and infrahumanisation literature. The results indicated that the ontologisation of the Gypsies occurs in both national samples whereas their infrahumanisation is only verified for the British participants. The implications of these findings are discussed from the perspectives of the infrahumanisation and ontologisation.

---

**Key words:** ontologisation, infrahumanisation, ingroups and outgroups, Gypsy

Social psychology has often focused on the study of prejudice and stereotypes as phenomena of inter-group relations and studied their behavioural expression in terms of evaluative judgements of the out-group and/or in terms of unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources (Brown, 1995, 2000; Doise, 1978; Sherif, 1966; Tajfel 1974, 1981). Recent studies suggest that ethnic prejudice may go beyond mere evaluative judgements, and may include semantic-anthropological considerations. While

evaluative discrimination consists of judging out-groups in terms of positive versus negative attributes in order to confirm a difference between in-group and out-group on valued dimensions, semantic-anthropological discrimination involves judging out-groups in terms of natural and cultural characteristics (Moscovici and Pérez, 1997; Pérez, Chulvi and Alonso, 2001).

Moscovici (1968) put forward the idea that *nature* and *culture* constitute dimensions along which representations of human groups are organised. It is important therefore to look closer at these two concepts. Culture means “civilisation”, “human development”, “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development” (Williams, 1988), which “begins at the point at which humans surpass whatever is simply given in their natural inheritance” (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999), while Nature is “the primitive condition before human society”, “plants and creatures other than man”, (Williams, 1988), “the material that is subject to [a cultural] process of transformation, but it is not properly part of human society until it has been so transformed” (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999: 256). Etymologically speaking, culture originally meant the cultivation of the land, as in agriculture, and marked humans’ transition from a hunter-gathering state to a sedentary form of social organisation. Thus, culture was initially “a thoroughly material process, which was then metaphorically transposed to affairs of the spirit”, and its semantic origins indicate humanity’s “historic shift from rural to urban existence” (Eagleton, 2000). By contrast, nature is often defined as what existed prior to culture or simply outside human society (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999), often viewed as inferior to culture and as something that needs to be dominated and controlled. In Western discourse, Nature is commonly seen as the material necessary for the production of Culture. Strathern points out that often the dichotomy culture / nature revolves around the idea of domination and control, where “the wild is transformed into the domestic and the domestic contains within it primitive elements of its pre-domesticated nature” (1980: 181). This view of culture as dependent on the exploitation and transformation of nature is also present with Edgar and Sedgwick (1999) who argue that the cultivation of the natural world and the human ability to construct and build are fundamental elements of culture.

Culture is also often taken to mean *civilisation*, an achieved state or condition of organised social life, with emphasis on secular and progressive human self-development (Williams, 1988). Often, civilisation is contrasted with *savagery* and *barbarism*, where, etymologically speaking, civilisation (from the Latin *civis*, a townsman) means the culture of those who are

settled and is set in contrast with the culture of the moving hordes (from the Old Turkic *ordu*), who are viewed as a threat<sup>1</sup>. Following the meaning of civilisation, different cultures leave open the possibility of conflict as in Huntington's (1996) thesis about the "clash of civilisations", for some cultures will be perceived as more or less "civilised" than others.

Culture has often been depicted as being in a relationship of domination of Nature: as Donna Haraway highlights, "nature is only the raw material of nature appropriated, preserved, enslaved, exalted or otherwise made flexible for disposal by culture in the logic of capitalist colonialism" (1989: 13). Donna Haraway (1991) has illustrated the power imbalance between humans and animals by showing how primatology and animal studies in general have been used as a tool to justify "domination based in differences seen as natural, given, inescapable, and therefore moral" (p.8). Interests of domination have given animals "a special status as natural objects that can show people their origin, and therefore their pre-rational, pre-management, pre-cultural essence".

Given this view of Culture as an agentic and engaged control of Nature, one might inquire whether culture as a "historically created system of meaning and significance" or as "a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives" (Parekh, 2000: 143) would also encapsulate the idea of domination and transformation of nature. Following a parallelism, it could be argued that just as culture, as a superordinate category, implies the idea of instrumental reason and control of nature, so human culture, in the sense of beliefs, symbolizations, norms and values, would imply the idea of control of human instinct, of surpassing whatever is given in humans' natural inheritance. Thus, enculturation (the social process by which culture is learned and used by a human infant) would involve a polishing of human nature, a sort of domestication at the human level, whereby humans learn to dominate their instinct, express culturally accepted emotions and engage in socially sanctioned behaviours.

Following this line of thought, the "essence" of humanity in the Western world is based on the passage from a state of nature to a state of culture, from wilderness and nomadic group behaviour to civilisation and sedentary life where one's individuality is expressed and fulfilled. Representations of social groups might, therefore, be organised around the idea that some groups are closer to "fulfil their human potential" in the sense that they have domesticated their natural aspects and have achieved the civilised state. Indeed, Pérez and his colleagues (Pérez, Chulvi and Alonso 2001) suggested that when an ethnic minority constantly resists the majority's

strategies of social integration, the majority attributes the minority an essence different from the human one. They focused on the Gypsy minority in Spain and found that Gypsies were attributed more natural (or animal-like) characteristics in the condition where participants were informed that Gypsies had not socially integrated despite the majority's multiple efforts to convert them. This attribution of more animal-like characteristics serves as an explanation of why the minority has resisted social pressure to integrate and has remained at the fringes of society. The majority attributes the absence of integration to the different *essence* of the minority, to their inability to leave their animal condition and creates a new ontology for them, excluding them from humanity. To describe this process the concept of *ontologisation* has been put forward (Moscovici and Pérez 1997, Pérez, Moscovici and Chulvi, 2002). *Ontologisation* consists of an operation of classification by which one minority can be represented not only as an out-group but can also be represented as outside the social map of human identity. This exclusion of the realm of humanity goes beyond ideological prejudice (involving evaluation) and consists of a categorical prejudice (involving the essentialisation of groups) that serves to create social distance between groups or to deny similarities between majorities and minorities (Moscovici and Pérez 1997).

Recently, Chulvi and Pérez (2002) studied the social representations of ethnic minorities, including Gypsies, and found that categorising them in terms of *nature* as opposed to *culture* was more salient than evaluating them in terms of positive and negative attributes. They found that humans were characterised by *reason, culture* and *autonomy*, whereas animals were represented by *instinct, nature*, and *emotional dependence*, with Gypsies and other ethnic minorities being ascribed about a quarter of the positive animal attributes. Chulvi and Pérez found that the typical traits assigned to Gypsies suggested their having an essence different from that of humans, which functioned to explain why they have maintained their specific lifestyle despite centuries of forced cultural assimilation. The study showed that Gypsies were represented as antisocial nomads with a questionable morality and a preference for isolation within a self-enclosed universe beyond the realm of the human species.

The process of ontologisation has obvious consequences for current multicultural societies, since the non-assimilation of minorities might throw them outside the boundaries of humanity. For example, Verkuyten (2001) analysed the rhetorical strategies used by majority members in the Netherlands to construct the behaviour and the practices of immigrants and ethnic minorities as deviant from the norm (abnormal). One of the strategies used

was to present extreme cases of behaviour or violation of social norms and basic values to justify judgements of abnormality and accuse the minority. More importantly, majority members rejected the argument of cultural diversity to explain differences in the behaviour of ethnic minorities. Such an argument would have placed both groups (majority and minority) in an intergroup perspective of evaluative differences. Instead people categorised minorities outside the boundaries of normal human behaviour (Chrysoschoou 2004). Excluding the other from the realm of humanity may have disturbing consequences: Tajfel (1981, 1984) argued that dehumanising the out-groups can serve to exterminate them, as in the case of the Nazi Germany.

In another line of research, Leyens and his colleagues (Leyens et al. 2000, 2001) thought that if people have a tendency to essentialise social groups they might do so not only at the level of cognitive abilities but also in terms of their ability to feel certain emotions. They distinguished between primary emotions such as *fear* or *disgust* which are considered in common sense to be common to both animals and humans, and secondary emotions such as *pride* or *remorse* which are socially constructed and are attributed exclusively to humans. Leyens et al drew on this distinction to explore the type of emotions that people attribute to in-group and out-group. In a series of mostly experimental studies (Gaunt et al. 2002, Leyens et al. 2001, Paladino et al. 2002), they found that people associated more primary rather than secondary emotions with out-groups, while they attributed more secondary than primary emotions to their in-group. They called this phenomenon *infrahumanisation* or *lesser perceived humanity* of the out-group, meaning that out-groups are perceived as less human than the in-group. Contrary to ontologisation, infra-humanisation through the differential attribution of emotions is not contingent on a history of failed assimilation and conversion, and is supposed to happen with all out-groups, regardless of their relationship with the in-group.

Despite this crucial difference, however, the two concepts (ontologisation and infra-humanisation) are close in the sense that they describe a process of denying humanity to social groups based on the distinction between nature and culture. In that sense, it can be hypothesised that a generally devalued group such as the Gypsies will be both ontologised and infra-humanised. If this is the case, despite their difference, the two concepts describe similar phenomena of dehumanisation. This is precisely what the present study sought to explore.

Moreover, the present study undertook to investigate the Gypsy minority in Britain and in Romania in order to examine the influence of different

histories on the discrimination of Gypsies. While in Britain the Gypsies are a very small minority, in Romania they constitute an estimated ten percent of the population. Equally, a cross-cultural in a Western European and an Eastern European country study would counterbalance any possible Western European bias in the data on the dehumanisation of the Gypsies.

In particular, the present research proposed to investigate whether ethnic majorities, British and Romanian, or the Gypsies, would be ascribed more cultural, or human-like, or more natural, or animal-like, characteristics<sup>2</sup>, in line with the thesis of ontologisation and whether they would be attributed more primary or more secondary emotions, in line with the concept of infrahumanisation.

Firstly, it was expected that more natural characteristics would be attributed to the Gypsies than to the ethnic in-group, whereas more cultural characteristics would be assigned to the in-group than to the Gypsies, and that the Gypsies would be attributed more natural than cultural characteristics. Secondly, it was hypothesised that more secondary emotions would be attributed to the in-group than to the Gypsies, and that the Gypsies will be attributed more primary than secondary emotions. These hypotheses were expected to occur regardless of the nationality of the participants.

## **Method**

### ***Pilot study***

Initially a pilot study was carried out in Britain among 56 undergraduate psychology students. Half of them were asked to name 20 characteristics typical of humans and not of animals, 10 positive and 10 negative, while the other half were requested to name 20 characteristics typical of animals and not of humans, 10 positive and 10 negative. The most frequently mentioned characteristics were subsequently selected and included in the main study: 5 positive human (friendly, compassionate, intelligent, loyal, creative) 5 negative human (selfish, greedy, untruthful, prejudiced, cruel), 5 positive animal (free, self-sufficient, unsophisticated, adaptable, group-behaviour), and 5 negative animal (wild, noisy, dirty, aggressive, dependent).

For practical reasons, no pilot study was carried out in Romania. However, a post-hoc study undertaken with 37 Romanian participants validated the results of the pilot study. The participants were requested to rate the 20 characteristics as either human or animal. A *t*-test indicated a significant difference between the human characteristics rated as human ( $M =$

8.24,  $SD = 1.51$ ) and the human characteristics rated as animal ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ), with  $t(36) = 33.06$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Another  $t$ -test revealed a significant difference between the animal characteristics rated as animal ( $M = 6.70$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) and the animal characteristics rated as human ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SD = 2.52$ ), with  $t(36) = 24.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

The 37 Romanian participants were also asked to rate the 20 characteristics on positivity and negativity. Their ratings coincided with the British participants' ratings, with the exception of *unsophisticated*, which was rated negative by the Romanians. In addition, the Romanians were not clear as to whether *cruel* and *loyal* were typically human and whether *self-sufficient* and *dependent* were typically animal characteristics. Therefore these attributes were retrieved from the analysis.

### Participants

One hundred and fifty students, 73 British and 77 Romanian participated in the study. Of the British sample, 13 were male and 62, female, with ages ranging from 18 to 50,  $M = 21.21$ ,  $SD = 5.46$ , *Median* = 19. Of the Romanian sample, 19 were male and 57, female, with one data missing. Their ages ranged from 19 to 29,  $M = 21.82$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ , *Median* = 21. All participants were British and Romanian citizens, respectively, and no participants belonged to the Gypsy minority.

### Procedure

Each participant responded to a questionnaire asking them to attribute a range of emotions and a range of attributes to their respective in-group, British or Romanian, respectively, and to the Gypsies. The emotions had been selected to represent primary (joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, surprise, protectiveness) and secondary emotions (affection, pride, admiration, remorse, conceit, nostalgia and rancour), as in Leyens et al 2001<sup>3</sup>, while the attributes had been selected following a pilot study to represent either characteristics that were particularly human or characteristics that were shared by humans and animals (see pilot above). The valence of the emotions and of the attributes had also been checked in the pilot.

It was found that the British evaluated more positively the secondary emotions ( $m=2.99$ ) than did the Romanians ( $m=2.81$ )  $t(72) = 2.12$ ,  $p < .05$ . Also in general for the British both the primary ( $m=3.14$ ) and the secondary ( $m=3.32$ ) emotions were judged as more important for people in their country than for the Romanians (primary  $m=2.81$ ; secondary  $m=2.96$ ; primary  $t(72) = 2.86$ ,  $p < .01$ ; secondary  $t(72) = 2.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

## Results

Results are organised in two sections: ontologisation, and infrahumanisation.

### *Ontologisation*

The 2(nationality: British/Romanians) x 4(attributes: culture to in-group/ culture to out-group/ nature to in-group/ nature to out-group) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor yielded a significant main effect of attributes,  $F(3-444) = 115.29, p < .001$  and a significant interaction between attributes and nationality,  $F(3-444) = 6.73, p < .001$  (Multivariate tests attributes  $F(2-147) = 156.7, p < .001$ , and attributes by nationality  $F(2-147) = 6, p < .01$ ). In this case the effect of nationality was not significant (see table 1 for means and standards deviations).

**Table 1**

*Means (and standard deviations) of the attribution of characteristics*

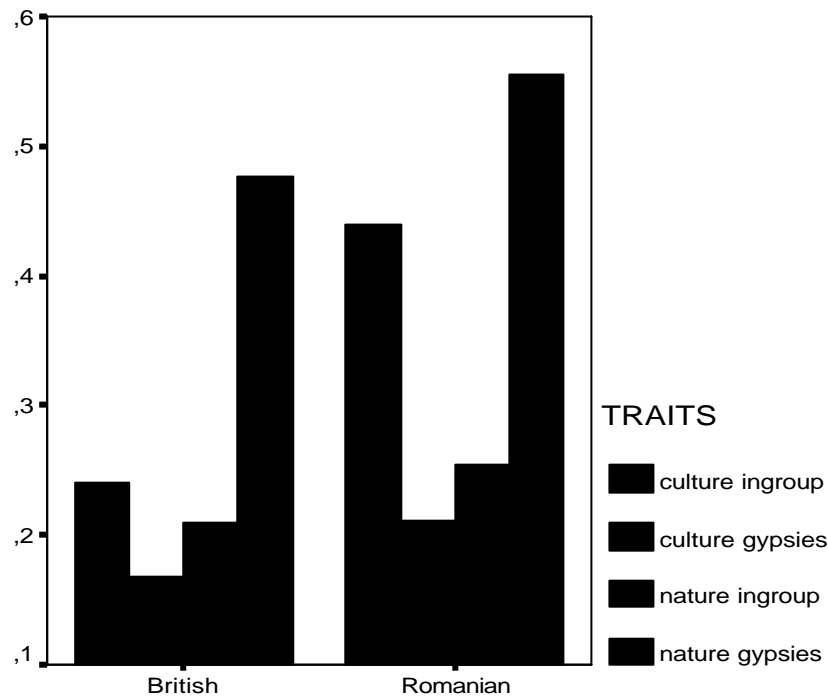
	Cult/ ingroup	Cult/ Gypsies	Nat/ ingroup	Nat/ Gypsies	Total
British	.24 (.19)	.17 (.17)	.21 (.16)	.48 (.20)	.27 (.14)
Romanians	.44 (.17)	.21 (.17)	.25 (.14)	.56 (.20)	.36 (.14)
Total	.34 (.21)	.19 (.17)	.23 (.15)	.51 (.20)	

*Note.* One-way ANOVAs revealed that the British and the Romanians differed on the attribution of characteristics relating to culture when attributed to the in-group: culture in-group  $F(1-148) = 45.13, p < .001$ , and to nature when attributed to the Gypsies: nature to Gypsies  $F(1-148) = 5.64, p < .01$ , with Romanians assigning to their in-group more attributes relating to culture and more attributes relating to nature to the Gypsies than their British counterparts.

Further (see table 1 and figure 1), paired sample *t*-tests showed that the British did not assign differently attributes relating to nature and culture to their in-group. However, they followed the pattern expected by ontologisation as they ascribed more attributes relating to culture to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = 3.24, p < .01$ , less attributes relating to nature to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = -9.40, p < .001$ , and more attributes relating to nature than attributes relating to culture to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = 14.11, p < .001$ .



**Figure 1**  
Attribution of cultural and natural characteristics to the in-group and to Gypsies by the British and the Romanians



With the Romanians, all differences were significant in the direction expected by ontologisation (see table 1 and figure 1). They ascribed more attributes relating to culture to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(76) = 9.30$ ,  $p < .001$ , less attributes relating to nature to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(76) = 12.55$ ,  $p < .001$ , more attributes relating to nature than attributes relating to culture to the Gypsies,  $t(76) = -12.74$ ,  $p < .001$ , and more attributes relating to culture than to nature to the in-group,  $t(76) = 8.75$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Thus, from these results it can be safely concluded that both national majorities ontologise the Gypsies in line with the first hypothesis.

#### *Infraculturalisation*

The 2(nationality: British/Romanians) x 4(emotions: primary to in-group/ primary to outgroup/ secondary to ingroup/ secondary to outgroup)

anova with repeated measures on the last factor yielded a significant main effect of emotions  $F(2.46-364.04 \text{ Greenhouse-Geisser correction}) = 4.90$ ,  $p < .01$  and a significant interaction between emotions and nationality  $F(2.46-363.04 \text{ Greenhouse-Geisser correction}) = 13.42$ ,  $p < .001$  (Multivariate tests emotions  $F(3-146) = 4.40$ ,  $p < .01$  and emotions by nationality  $F(3-146) = 14.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, the effect of nationality was not significant (see table 2 for details about the means and standard deviations).

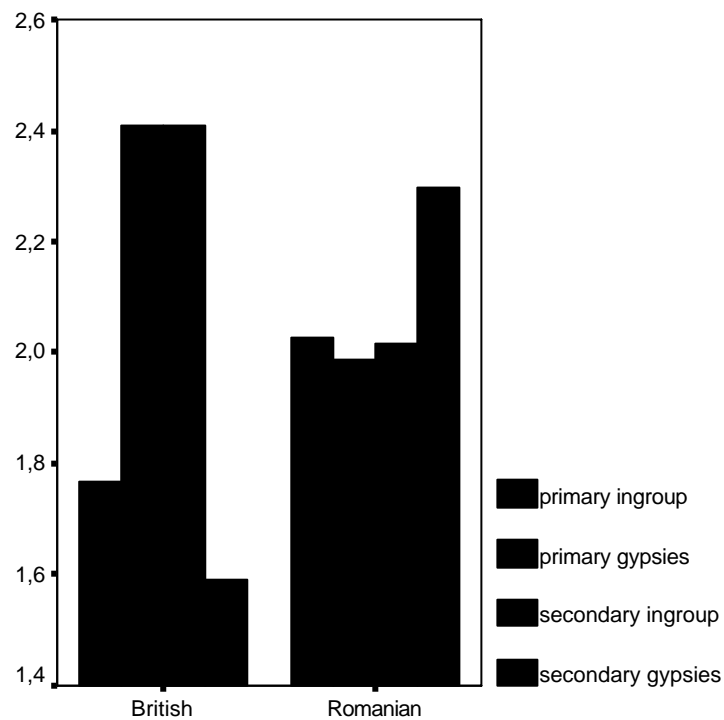
**Table 2**  
*Means (and standard deviations) of the attribution of Emotions*

	Primary/ ingroup	Primary/ Gypsies	Secondary/ ingroup	Secondary/ Gypsies	Total
British	1.76 (.89)	2.41 (.98)	2.41 (.83)	1.59 (.76)	2.04 (.04)
Romanians	2.02 (.79)	1.98 (.86)	2.01 (.98)	2.29 (.79)	2.08 (.04)
Total	1.9 (.85)	2.19 (.95)	2.20 (.93)	1.95 (.85)	

Further (see table 2 and figure 2), paired sample  $t$ -tests showed that the British followed the pattern expected by infrahumanisation as they attributed less primary emotions to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = 4.65$ ,  $p < .001$ , more secondary emotions to the in-group than to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = 6.99$ ,  $p < .001$ , more primary emotions than secondary emotions to the Gypsies,  $t(72) = 5.47$ ,  $p < .001$  and more secondary emotions to the ingroup than primary emotions,  $t(72) = 3.7$ ,  $p < .001$ .

However, for the Romanians this was not true as the attribution of primary and secondary emotions to the Gypsies approached significance but the difference was on the opposite direction from the one expected, i.e. more secondary than primary emotions were attributed to the Gypsies  $t(76) = -1.92$ ,  $p = .06$ . Moreover, the crucial attribution of secondary emotions between ingroup and Gypsies was significant but again in the opposite direction, i.e. more secondary emotions to the outgroup  $t(76) = -1.99$ ,  $p = .05$ . The results seem to indicate that Gypsies are not infra-humanised by the Romanians. This contradicts the hypothesis according to which both national groups will infra-humanise the Gypsies.

**Figure 2**  
 Attribution of primary and secondary emotions to in-group and to the Gypsies by the British and the Romanians



### Discussion

The present study examined the ontologisation and infrahumanisation of the Gypsy minority by the British and the Romanian majorities. The findings supported all three hypotheses relating to the thesis of ontologisation, in both national samples: more cultural characteristics were attributed to in-group than to the Gypsies, more natural characteristics were assigned to the Gypsies than to the in-group, and more natural than cultural characteristics were attributed to the Gypsies. These results therefore suggest that the ontologisation of the Gypsies occurs in both Britain and Romania, and, taking into account the previous research on the ontologisation of Gypsies in Spain, it could be argued that the ontologisation of Gypsies seems to constitute a pan-European phenomenon. It could be said that this apparent

cross-cultural dehumanisation of the Gypsies may function as a common marker for cultural identity, as Pérez and his colleagues suggest, or may reflect the low social status that the Gypsy minority has across European countries.

Regarding infrahumanisation, the hypothesis according to which more secondary emotions would be attributed to in-group than to out-group was supported only for the British participants, as they attributed significantly more secondary emotions to their in-group than to the Gypsies. However, in the case of the Romanian participants, the hypothesis was not supported, as the Romanians did not attribute significantly more secondary emotions to their in-group than to the Gypsies. Similarly, the hypothesis according to which the out-group would be attributed more primary than secondary emotions was only supported by the British participants, who assigned more primary than secondary emotions to the Gypsies. By contrast, the Romanian participants attributed the Gypsies more secondary than primary emotions, thus failing to support the hypothesis.

We have no explanation for the present findings which only partially support the theory of infrahumanisation. The results seem to suggest that the Gypsies are infrahumanised by the British, but not by the Romanians. Consequently the present findings somewhat beg the question about the universality of the process of infrahumanisation, and to a certain extent challenge the assumption of infrahumanisation as a good indicator of dehumanisation. Furthermore, given that the Romanians in this study ontologised the Gypsies the absence of infrahumanisation from their part raises the question concerning the relation between ontologisation and infrahumanisation.

Although, only speculations can be advanced at this stage, a suggestion can be made concerning the relation of these two concepts. Although, the post-hoc tests showed that both the British and the Romanian participants culturally valued the secondary emotions significantly more than the primary ones, they also indicated that the British rated the secondary emotions significantly more positively than did the Romanians. It could therefore be argued that the British are treating the emotions as a more valuable *resource* than the Romanians and they reserve them for their own group. If in the Western world being *human* is constructed in contrast to the *animal* then the characteristics believed as being uniquely human are more positively valued (irrespective of their particular evaluative content). Thus, these characteristics will be reserved to the ingroup in the same sense that even negatively evaluated attributes that are, however, linked with agentic state or with high status groups are associated to the in-group (Glick and

Fiske 2001). In this sense, the process of infrahumanisation consists in denying valued symbolic resources (this time not cognitive but emotional) to an out-group. The fact that human-like emotions are denied to the out-group shows, perhaps, that animals, as a devalued out-group, are used to delegitimise other out-groups, as was the case with the use of the attribute *Jew* in Italy to characterise other groups (Volpato and Durante 2003). In that sense, infrahumanisation, following an unequal distribution of emotions, is not based necessarily on an essentialisation of the social group but constitutes the expression of an evaluative prejudice.

This view of infra-humanisation does not deny the importance of the antithesis Nature/Culture in Western common sense. On the contrary it shows how much the identity of the *human* category is based on its differentiation from its natural aspects. However, conceptualising infra-humanisation as an expression of evaluative prejudice could allow, perhaps, for results such as the ones displayed by the Romanians here who ontologised the Gypsies but do not infra-humanise them.

In the present research we started with the idea that ontologisation and infra-humanisation are different aspects of the same process of dehumanisation. The results of our Romanian sample cast some doubts. Why would the same people be ready to attribute more animal-like traits than human-like traits to Gypsies but not more primary (animal-like) than secondary (human-like) emotions? Perhaps the answer is to be found in a closer examination of the concept of ontologisation and the semantic qualities of the attributes.

In this study, following the literature, people were asked during a pilot study to produce attributes either typically human or typically animal. The attributes retained were friendly, compassionate, intelligent, creative, greedy, selfish untruthful and prejudiced for humans and free, unsophisticated, adaptable, group-behaviour, wild, noisy, dirty and aggressive for the animal. However, if for methodological reasons people were asked to produce these attributes in relation to humans and animals, the phenomenon of ontologisation is not based on this distinction but on the opposition between nature and culture. As discussed earlier nature is considered the primitive condition before human society (Williams, 1988), and culture begins at the point at which humans surpass their natural inheritance (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999) and where the wild is domesticated (Strathern, 1980). If we look closely at the attributes produced spontaneously by the participants we could see that their content reflects this division. From one part we have the *free* from societal constraints, *wild*, *noisy* and *dirty* being that reacts instinctively (*aggressive*, *unsophisticated*), lives as an aggregate (*group beha-*

*viour*) and passively adapts itself (*adaptable*) to the situations. This representation characterises the primitive state of nature. On the other hand, we have the *intelligent* and *creative* being that, with these qualities, domesticates its natural instincts and the natural forces; it constructs artefacts and can be *friendly* and *compassionate* but also *selfish* and *greedy*, *prejudiced* and *untruthful*. These are relational qualities that arise in a societal organised condition. One could see the “division of the individual in what is constrain, forbidden, civilised and what corresponds to the spontaneity, the pleasure, and the indomitable force of the affective impulses” (Moscovici 1994: 25). According to Moscovici (1994: 29) the rupture between nature and society is to be found in the “amalgam between the individual, the animal, the instinct and the collective from one part and the human, the reason and the law on the other”. The former corresponds at the absence of order and differentiation and is threatening whereas the latter represents societal organisation and distinction.

Humans, in the Western thought (both common and scientific) are expected to surpass the natural collective characterised by anarchy and to evolve towards a societal collective viewed both as constrain and as an accomplishment. Thus, those, as the Gypsies, that were not able to integrate more complex forms of organisation belong to a separate ontology. Their ontological status facilitates their exclusion, their discrimination and even their extermination.

Of course, the results presented here can only be a starting point for discussing these ideas. The present research is, in our knowledge, the first where the infra-humanisation of an outgroup did not occur. More research is needed to clarify the conditions under which the phenomenon is absent. In particular, more research is needed in order to clarify the relation between ontologisation and infra-humanisation. A first path to follow might be the one suggested here, namely to investigate whether infra-humanisation is part of a process of evaluative prejudice based on the use of the animals as a devalued outgroup to delegitimise other groups and whether ontologisation constitutes the outcome of a process of classification organised by the antithesis between nature and culture.

### References

- Brown, R. (1995). *Prejudice. Its Social Psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brown, R. (2000). Social Identity Theory: past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 745-778.
- Chrysoschoou, X. (2004) *Cultural Diversity. Its Social Psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Chulvi, B. and Pérez, J.A. (2003). Ontologisation versus discrimination d'une minorité ethnique (les Gitans). *Nouvelle Revue de Psychologie Sociale*. 2 (1). 6-15.

- Doise, W. (1978). *Expériences entre groupes*. Paris: Mouton.
- Eagleton, T. (2000). *The Idea of Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Edgar, A. and Sedgwick, P. (Ed.) (1999). *Key concepts in cultural theory*. London: Routledge.
- Gaunt, R., Leyens, J.-P., and Demoulin, S. (2002). Intergroup relations and the attribution of emotions: control over memory for secondary emotions associated with the ingroup and outgroup. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 508-514.
- Glick, P., and Fiske, S.T. (2001). Ambivalent stereotypes as legitimizing ideologies: differentiating paternalistic and envious prejudice. In J.T. Jost and B. Major (Eds.), *The Psychology of Legitimacy: emerging perspectives on ideology, justice and intergroup relations*. (pp. 278-306). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Haraway, D. (1989). *Primate visions: gender, race and nature in the world of modern science*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D.J. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Huntington, S. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Leyens, J.P., Paladino, M.P., Rodriguez-Torres, R., Vaes, J., Demoulin, S., Rodriguez-Perez, A. and Gaunt, R. (2000). The Emotional Side of Prejudice: The Attribution of Secondary Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. 4 (2) 186-197.
- Leyens, J.P., Rodríguez-Pérez, A., Rodríguez-Torres, R., Gaunt, R., Paladino, M.P., Vaes, J., and Demoulin, S. (2001). Psychological essentialism and the differential attribution of uniquely human emotions to ingroups and outgroups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*. 31. 395-411.
- Moscovici, S. (1968). *Essai sur l'histoire humaine de la nature*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Moscovici, S. (1994) *La société contre nature*. Paris: Seuil (2<sup>ème</sup> édition).
- Moscovici, S. and Pérez, J.A. (1997). Representations of Society and Prejudices. *Papers on Social Representations* 6 (1) 27-36.
- Paladino, P.M., Leyens, J.-P., Rodriguez, R.T., Rodriguez, A.P., Gaunt, R., and Demoulin, S. (2002). Differential association of uniquely and non-uniquely human emotions with the ingroup and the outgroup. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 5, 105-118
- Parekh, B. (2000). *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Pérez, J.A., Chulvi, B. and Alonso, R. (2001). When a Majority Fails to Convert a Minority: The Case of the Gypsies. In F. Butera and G. Mugny (Eds.). *Social influence in social reality: Promoting individual and social change*. Ashland: Hogrefe and Huber.
- Pérez, J.A., Moscovici, S. and Chulvi, B. (2002). Natura y cultura como principio de clasificación social. Anclaje de representaciones sociales sobre minorías étnicas. *Revista de Psicología Social*. 17 (1). 51-67.
- Sherif, M. (1966). *In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Strathern, M. (1980). No nature, no culture: the Hagen case. In *Nature, culture and gender* C. MacCormack and M. Strathern. (Eds.). Cambridge: University Press.

- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social Identity and Intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13, 65-93.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1984). Intergroup relations, social myths and social justice in social psychology. In H. Tajfel (Ed.). *The Social Dimension*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Verkuyten, M. (2001). Abnormalization of ethnic minorities in conversation. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 257-278.
- Volpato, C. and Durante, F. (2003). Delegitimization and racism. The social construction of Anti-semitism in Italy. *New Review of Social Psychology*, 2, 286-296.
- Williams, R. (1988). *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana Press.

---

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the concepts of *civis* and *ordu*, please refer to the article in The Guardian regarding the Gypsies: *Acceptable hatred: Beneath the enduring hostility to Gypsies lies an ancient envy of the nomadic life*. George Monbiot, Tuesday November 4, 2003 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1077154,00.html>

<sup>2</sup> Here, natural attributes are those shared by animals and humans, whereas cultural attributes are uniquely humans.

<sup>3</sup> Following the post-hoc study where participants in both countries were asked to judge the emotions in relation to whether they were typically human or animal, it was found that *affection*, although considered by Leyens et al. a secondary emotion was judged as a primary emotion. In addition although *disgust* was considered in the literature as a primary emotion, participants rated it as a secondary one. Thus, these two emotions did not take part in the analysis.

**Afrodita Marcu** obtained her MSc in Social Psychology from the University of Surrey, Guildford, in 2003. She is interested in how multicultural societies deal with cultural diversity and the potential conflict brought about by cultural and economic differences between majority and minorities. Her research interests include prejudice against ethnic minorities, and the social psychological processes involved in the delegitimization and dehumanization of ethnic minorities, immigrants, and refugees. [a.marcu@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:a.marcu@surrey.ac.uk)

**Xenia Chrysochoou** is an associate professor at Panteion University in Athens, 2003. She has worked in France as an associate lecturer at the universities of Lille and Paris and the Institute for Teacher Training in Reims and as lecturer at the University of Surrey. Her research interests include: the social psychological processes of mobility and migration in modern societies, justice issues and resource allocation between different groups especially in the context of intergroup conflict. She has published a book on *Cultural Diversity. Its social Psychology*, 2004. [xeniachr@panteion.gr](mailto:xeniachr@panteion.gr)

**Address.** A Marcu Department of Psychology, School of Human Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH, England