

## **Romani Racialization Beyond Majority-Minority Narratives: Transnationalism, Activism and Solidarity**

21–23 May 2025  
Vila Lanna, Prague

**Conveners:** Tina Magazzini and Martin Fotta, Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences

### **CONFERENCE NOTE AND CALL FOR PAPERS**

Roma are frequently characterized as ‘Europe’s largest ethnic minority’ – an undoubtedly evocative and potentially politically efficacious description, especially within the EU context. It might be insightful, however, as a thought experiment, to pause and reflect on how this phrase frames Romani people, which relations and processes it foregrounds and which, in turn, it hides. For instance, there is no ‘second-largest minority’ in Europe, which places Roma in a unique and somewhat isolated position. This is also reflected in how Romani Studies have developed, in what has been described as a ‘splendid isolation’ from other strands of racial and ethnic studies (Willems 1997). In addition, the formation and the character of Romani people are Europeanized by this characterization and implicitly separated from extra-European processes and connections, such as colonization or the secular Romani presence in the Middle East, the Americas and elsewhere. As a ‘minority’, Romani social place and space are only posited in relationship to the ‘majority’ and in isolation from other subalternized communities, such as migrants. Moreover, the fiction of post-racial societies in which the mainstream society is treated as ‘non-ethnic’ serves as a benchmark for policies and discourses targeted at ‘ethnic’ minorities such as the Roma.

This conference aims to develop an alternative view and explore the social position of the Romani people, the character of anti-Romani stereotypes and Romani agency as related to other ethno-racial projects and broader global processes. Building upon the analysis of relational formations of race (Molina et al. 2019), of the race-migration nexus (Erel et al. 2016), of ‘thick solidarities’ (Liu and Shange 2018) or of the notion of ‘intimacy’ (Lowe 2015), among other points of reference, we aim to bring together critical approaches on Romani racial formations, ethnicity, membership and belonging that go beyond siloed, comparative and compartmentalizing approaches to ask: How can we reimagine the Romani racial project(s) when it is related to other racial projects? What transnational and inter-cultural connections can be traced? What histories of mutual influences between Romani and other ‘ethno-racial’ communities can be uncovered? What solidarities and politics become imaginable when we sidestep the ‘majority’ that dominates the field politically?

We are particularly interested in exploring the affordances and limits of political alliances and accounts of experiences from beyond the EU. Some non-exhaustive topics that we are especially keen to explore are:

- Methodological and epistemological questions of how and why to produce critical knowledge on relational racialization in Romani studies.

- How the racialization(s) of Romani people changes over time in relationship to broader global processes.
- How the racialization of Roma in diverse contexts relates to the racialization of other communities, and Romani views of such relationships, connections and differences.
- The ways Roma-related knowledge production and classificatory processes have obscured transnational, inter-institutional and cultural connections between European and non-European sites.
- Entanglements of Romani racialization and migrantization (or the race-migration nexus).
- The lived experiences of Romani activism, of building solidarities with other social movements in contemporary times, and the contradictions such solidarities entail.
- How different social justice projects inform each other or are pitched against each other.

### **Roundtable**

In addition to the panel presentations, we also aim to organize a roundtable discussion that will be open to the public.

### **Application Procedure**

Proposals (maximum 500 words) accompanied by a brief CV (1 page) should be sent to Tina Magazzini (magazzini@eu.cas.cz) by November 30, 2024. Feedback to applicants will be sent by December 15.

### **Practicalities**

The two-day conference will consist of non-parallel panels consisting of 20-minute presentations with extensive discussion. English is the working language.

We aim to cover accommodation for all participants, as well as travel costs for a limited number of participants. We invite applicants to inform us of their situation by email and specify if they would require such funding. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We aim to foster a constructive space in which authors can present work that is tentative, experimental or in progress. The conference will take place in person, to allow for panel discussion and feedback.

Scholars, researchers and activists from all disciplines are encouraged to apply. We particularly welcome applications from Romani scholars, scholars of color and early-career scholars.

This event is organized by the Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences and the Prague Forum for Romani Histories. It is supported by the Lumina Queruntur award (LQ300582201) – project “Romani Atlantic: Transcontinental Logic of Ethno-Racial Identities” (more: <https://www.romaniatlantic.cz>).