Full Length Research

Intersectionality and social psychology: identity crises and coping strategies of Roma LGBTQ+ persons in Hungary

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Abstract

Numerous national and international comparative studies have indicated that Roma people in Hungary (e.g., Kende et al., 2020; Géczy & Gergelics, 2020; Géczy & Őry, 2020; etc.) and LGBTQ+ people (Takács & Szalma, 2015; Máté, 2018; etc.) are separately subject to high levels of prejudice and discrimination. The experiences of individuals who identify as both Roma and LGBTQ+ remain not well-addressed in Hungary (Máté, 2015). This study addresses the heightened disadvantage faced by Roma LGBTQ+ individuals, employing the framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991) to examine how overlapping identities related to ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity create unique challenges for individuals. Drawing on qualitative interviews with individuals of intersectional identity, the research integrates intersectionality theory with foundational concepts from social psychology, such as social identity (Tajfel, 1978), prejudice (Allport, 1999), and coping strategies (Breakwell, 1986). The findings provide insights into the lived experiences of Roma LGBTQ+ individuals, highlighting the specific ways they navigate their intersectional identities within a context of pervasive discrimination and prejudice. With the exploration of coping strategies, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological and social processes involved in managing intersecting minority statuses.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, Roma, intersectionality, social psychology, identity, coping strategies, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity remains one of the most intricate and least examined in contemporary social psychology, particularly with regard to groups that have been systemically marginalised. In Hungary, both the Roma and the LGBTQ+ communities experience intense discrimination, but the realities of those who identify with both groups remain largely unexamined in scholarly work or public conversations (AraArt, 2021; Kende, Nyúl & Faragó, 2020). This lack of research is especially concerning because the integrating framework of intersectional discrimination does not merely increase—it multiplies, creating new forms of exclusion and identity risk that are in need of specialised analysis and policy action (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2019). In light of this, the experiences of Roma LGBTQ+ people warrant dire scholarly consideration that examines the shifts within geopolitical, historical, and socio-psychological lenses.

The experiences I intend to analyse are grounded in the concept of intersectionality by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), which considers how oppressive forces like racism, sexism, and heteronormativity are interwoven and perpetually reinforce one another. In this case, it is crucial to understand the intersection of stigmas associated with Roma ethnicity and LGBTQ+ identities in Hungary, considering the Roma and queer identities within Hungary and how they are perceived. Adding to this, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) illustrates the impact of belonging to marginalised communities on self-esteem and the resultant coping strategies, which include passing,

withdrawal, or redefinition of identity (Breakwell, 1986). Collectively, these concepts provide strong explanatory power on the identity negotiation of Roma LGBTQ+ individuals in oppressive settings.

The history of anti-Roma sentiment in Hungary is rooted in centuries of discriminatory legislation alongside violent ethnically motivated persecution, heavily stereotyping culture, and the quietly acknowledged Roma Holocaust (Pharrajimos) during WWII (Nagy, 2007; Lőrincz, 2021). Though Hungary formally adopted policies aimed at fostering equality in the post-socialist period, there is mounting evidence of enduring anti-Roma sentiment standing unchallenged and socially normalised throughout the political and demographic spectrum (Kende, Hadarics & Lášticová, 2017). Alongside these challenges, the LGBTQ+ community has been subjected to legal and social marginalisation, with same-sex partnerships only recognised in 2007 alongside legislation from the 2010s and 2020s that curtailed transgender rights and LGBTQ+ visibility (Takács & Szalma, 2015; PEW Research Centre, 2020). The intertwining legacies of exclusion for Roma LGBTQ+ individuals' scholarship highlight the unique nature of their vulnerability resulting from simultaneously targeting a dual minority identity.

Social psychology looks at the effects of this compounded marginalisation, not only as external barriers to opportunities but also as identity crises, chronic stress, and mental health disparities aligned with Meyer's (2003) minority stress model. The internalised stigma and identity concealment as internal stigma, with harassment, family rejection, and institutional exclusion as distanced stressors, give birth to an ongoing "alarm reaction" with great psychological cost (Birkett, Newcomb, & Mustanski, 2015; Költő, Várnai, & Németh, 2022). The narrated experiences of Roma LGBTQ+ individuals often depict the exclusion from and rejection by the wider society and from their own minority groups, emphasising the idea that intersectional minorities may settle into this concept of "minority within a minority" (Fremlova & Georgescu, 2014).

Coping strategies among these individuals suggest that both individual-level and collective-level responses, such as emigration, activism, and reinterpretation, are used (Verkuyten, 2005; Corradi, 2021). Still, lacking institutional support or recognition of intersectional discrimination within Hungarian law, such strategies are too often piecemeal and have little ability to transform systemic inequalities (AraArt, 2021). Additionally, the invisibility of Roma LGBTQ+ individuals within both Roma advocacy and LGBTQ+ movements creates a lack of representation that intensifies non-belonging and psychological distress (Baker, 2015).

This research focuses on self-identified Roma LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences and coping mechanisms regarding prejudice, discrimination, and identity problems in current-day Hungary. To address these issues, the author conducts semi-structured in-depth interviews. The analysis blends social identity theories, intersectionality, and minority stress frameworks to reveal the experiences of a doubly marginalised population. This work advances the social psychology intersectional policy advocacy gap aimed toward the active formulation of policies that intersectionally consider and respond to the needs of minority groups.

Diffusion of theories

One of the major critiques of the feminist wave of the 1970s–1980s highlighted the phenomenon that feminism treats women as homogenous entities and ignores further inequalities that exist among women (Crenshaw, 1989; 2001; Hooks & Lutz, 1993; Hooks, 1989; Sebestyén, 2016; Kóczé, 2009). Reflecting this, intersectionality has been developed, which refers to the interplay of disadvantages along different dimensions (Crenshaw, 1991; King, 1988), such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc. In contrast to the study of these dimensions as separate systems of oppression, intersectionality examines how they construct each other (Collins, 1998). Another important 'property' of these dimensions is that they are inseparable from each other. The interaction between these hierarchical systems determines all social positions. To speak of gender apart from racial, class, ethnic, and other divisions is inaccurate and distorting: there is no such thing as gender apart from racial and class divisions, no such thing as race apart from gender, and no such thing as class apart from gender or racial divisions (Ferber, 1998; Brewer, 1999).

These dimensions in the social psychological sense are nothing more than social identities (Tajfel, 1981). Disadvantage, on the other hand, can be called discrimination, which involves prejudice (Allport, 1999) and social representation of the majority society towards the group. This representation is a negative content and value qualification, constructed collectively by society (Moscovici, 1961) and influenced by power discourse and positioning (Howarth, 2000). In essence, it is minority existence itself, a social construction from the construction of which the minority itself is excluded, thus inheriting its own identity from outside, along with discriminatory practices (Wagley & Harris, 1958; Simpson & Yinger, 1986; Billig, 1991; Howarth, 2004; 2006; Andreouli, 2010).

Being a minority, or lack of (self-)esteem and aspects of coping with it

Minority identity is therefore a social identity (Tajfel, 1978), which is the individual's belonging to different groups. In the case where group membership is associated with benefits and positive categorisations, the individual's positive self-image is strengthened (Tajfel, 1981); however, if the group membership has negative

connotations, it is associated with a negative self-image (Voci, 2006). There are several possible ways of coping with a negative social identity (Tajfel, 1981): individual mobility when an individual leaves their original group. If this is not possible, peer competition may occur, where the aim is to change the group's position. In this case, there may be various forms of collective action, such as protest, social activism, or, in extreme cases, terrorism, the essence being the attempt to change the system. This happens when people perceive the social system as unjust and/or unstable. Social creativity is another possible response, where they seek to change the group's evaluation of them by adopting characteristics that positively differentiate them from the dominant group.

There are various principles of identity (self-identification) (Breakwell, 1986). These are permanence/continuity, i.e., the preservation of the continuity of the self-concept. Distinctiveness/uniqueness: the separation of the self from others, the emphasis on distinctiveness, and the desire to be different from others. Self-efficacy: identity seeks competence and control, the lack of which leads to a sense of powerlessness. Self-worth/self-esteem: positive evaluation of oneself or one's group, sense of personal and social worth. If even one of these principles is violated, we can speak of an identity under threat.

We can distinguish 4 forms of coping with a threatened identity; these are (Breakwell, 1986): submission: the threatened person recognises the norms and expectations that their environment has of them and tries to comply fully with them. This type of compliance is often equivalent to assuming a subordinate position. Passing: a kind of becoming unnoticed, in which the threatened individual leaves the group or remains silent, denying belonging to the group. Isolation: a passive strategy where the individual tries to minimise the impact of the threat by isolating themselves from their environment. Negativism: the individual denies the

stereotypical stigmas directed towards them. By negating these stigmatisations, they also protect their positive self-esteem and the continuity of their identity.

Both Roma and LGBTQ+ identities in Hungary are stigmatised by prejudice (Kende et al., 2017; 2020; Pogány, 2006; Tileagă, 2006; Márián, 2013; FXB Centre, 2014; Géczy and Gergelics, 2020; Géczy and Őry, 2020; Takács and Szalma). 2012; 2015; Gregor and Rédai, 2015; Máté, 2017; 2018; Diversity Education Working Group, 2020), we can speak about minorities who may suffer from identity crises caused by prejudice daily. Such identity crises can be marginalised identity when the individual is unable to identify with any group, or the somewhat similar experiential rootlessness syndrome (Pataki, 1989), when the individual is unable to self-define and has a constant experience of ambivalence.

Minorities excluded by the majority society may also react to exclusion as a group, one of the basic reactions of which is closure, which leads to an appreciation and deep respect for the culture, tradition, and 'otherness' of their community (Hegedűs, 1996; Bakony, 2009). This closure can both complicate assimilation and acculturation drives and affect the acceptance of ethnic identity, as those who for some reason have changed their values and mindset concerning their minority community may experience a new identity crisis and/or stuckness, which may result in self-denial and lack of self-identity (Géczy and Gergelics, 2020).

Finally, in terms of minority identity, an important coping mechanism is the reinterpretation or reframing of identity to the values and contents received from the majority or others (Verkuyten, 1997, 2005; Leudar and Nekvapil, 2000; Verkuyten and de Wolf, 2002; Wetherell, 2009; Corradi, 2021; Baker, 2015). The essence of reinterpretation is that minority members take the possibility of self-definition into their own hands, in defiance of the given constructions of majority/power.
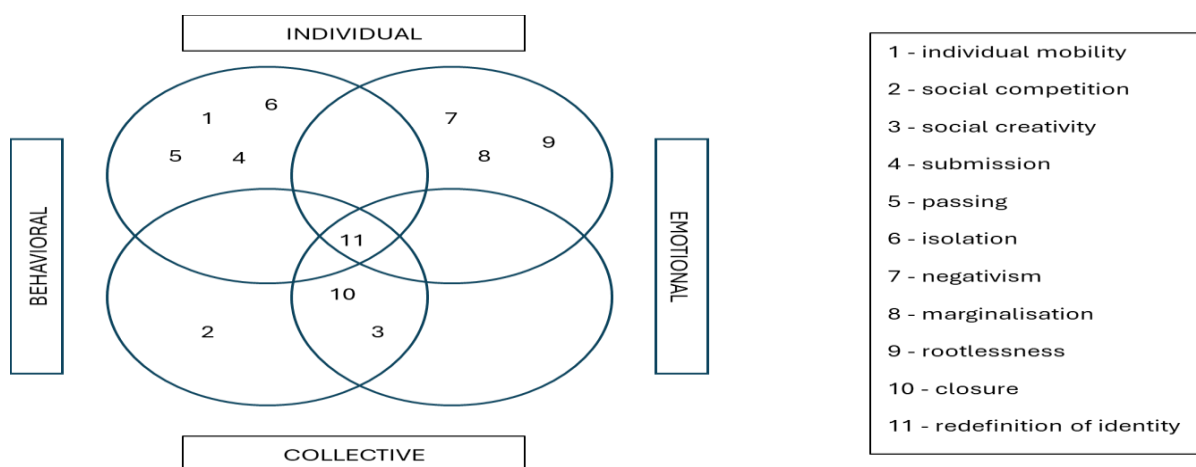

Figure 1: *A framework for interpreting the struggles with minority existence along individual, collective, emotional and action dimensions* - own ed.

The often painful experiences and lived experiences determined by the majority society and the political elite in power, and coping with these emotions and experiences, require very demanding mental and psychological work from individuals. Meyer (2003) is the first to formulate the theory of minority stress, which highlights precisely these psychological problems. Meyer lists various factors that contribute to the development and persistence of minority stress. He calls experiences of prejudice, such as discrimination and hate crimes, distant stressors, while naming fear of rejection, internalised negative social attitudes, and anxiety about concealing identity as proximal stressors. In addition to these aspects, the social and societal environment plays an important role in the development of minority stress, which may vary depending on the country, culture, ethnicity, and the

social perception of certain minority groups. The result of minority stress is a continuous "alarm reaction,", which has a negative impact on both physical and psychological processes.

Since Meyer's theory, there has been a large body of international and some domestic research on the relationship between being a sexual minority and physical and psychological health (Stall, Dodge, Bauermeister, Poteat, and Beyrer, 2020; Marshal et al., 2008; 2011; Birkett, Newcomb, and Mustanski, 2015; Takács, 2007; Background Society, 2017; Poet and Mtsi, 2022), which has strengthened the theory's proposition that some of the differences in the physical and mental well-being of minorities are shaped by a chronic, socially generated excess anxiety that affects the stigmatised groups but not the dominant groups.
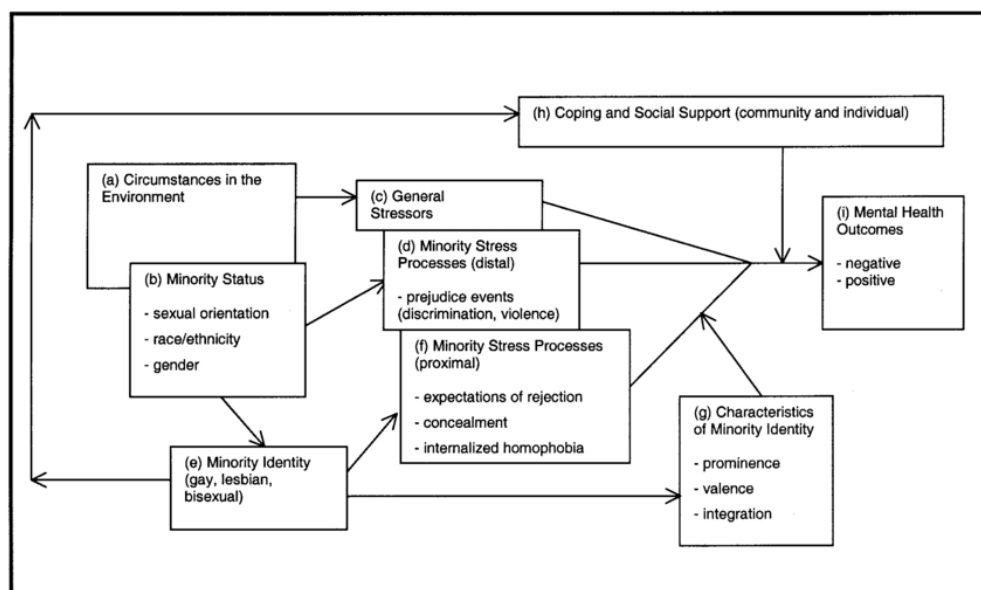

Figure 2: *Minority stress processes in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations* (Meyer, 2013)

In the crossfire of prejudice: Roma LGBTQ+

We know from numerous national and international comparative studies that in Hungary, both Roma (Kende et al., 2016; 2017; 2020; Pogány, 2006; Tileagă, 2006; Márián, 2013; FXB Centre, 2014; etc.) and LGBTQ+ individuals (Takács and Szalma, 2012; 2015; Gregor and Rédai, 2015; Máté, 2017; 2018; Diversity Education Working Group, 2020; etc.) are separately subject to high levels of prejudice and discrimination.

Discrimination against Roma in Hungary can be documented from 1724, when Károly Habsburg issued decrees proposing a stricter method of justice for certain crimes against wandering individuals. These were followed by the laws of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, which were written in the spirit of forced assimilation and in various ways curtailed the cultural and lifestyle

characteristics of Hungarians of Roma origin (Nagy, 2007; Tóth, 2006).

Throughout Hungarian and international history, thanks to successive legislation and communications of power, prejudicial attitudes towards the Roma have become completely natural, culminating in the Pharrajimos, or Roma Holocaust, in 1935. The number of victims of the Roma Holocaust is still unknown, with historians estimating the death toll at around 1.5 million. However, Hungarian history books today make no mention of it, which reflects the distortion and falsification of collective memory and the neglect of the severe treatment of the Roma. The Roma society and the families of the victims do not receive any compensation for this.

Despite the emergence of democratic institutions, feminism, multiculturalism, and other ideologies emphasising equal opportunities after the regime change, studies in recent decades have shown that anti-Gypsyism in Hungary has not decreased but rather has shown an increasing trend (Csepeli, Fábián and Sik, 1998; Erős, Enyedi, Fábián and Fleck, 1994 in Erős, 1998; Fábián and Sik, 1996; FHBX 2014; Eurobarometer 2015; Keresztes-Takács et al., 2016; Kende et al., 2017; 2018; Lőrincz, 2021). Nothing could prove this better than the emergence of extremist parties (Jobbik, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom) that openly embrace anti-Roma politics, the tragic events of the Roma murders of 2008-2009, the advocacy of segregation in schools and housing, the media representation of Roma people, or the communication of the political elite in power.
"The main finding of this research is that the prevailing political and public discourse of anti-Roma attitudes has led to an overt rejection of Roma that is common to all sections of society and is not related to the background factors that have been used in previous research to distinguish between prejudiced and less prejudiced people. (...) Today in Hungary, anti-Roma attitudes do not encounter any moral barriers, so they are highly valued in practically all strata of society, even in the context of a general egalitarian value system." (Kende et al., 2016:623.)

Regarding the history of prejudice against homosexuals, I would highlight 2 years. The decriminalisation of same-sex sexual relations took place in 1961, before gay couples in our country were criminalised and punished with imprisonment. The other important date is homosexuality being removed from the WHO International Classification of Diseases in 1981, before which it was considered a psychiatric illness and various 'treatments' were used to 'cure' it. As we can see today, measures coming from 'above', i.e., from the legislator, or from outside, i.e., following global, foreign pressure, may not necessarily influence a society's attitude or attitudes towards a particular subject or phenomenon. This is also supported by the results of attitude studies on homosexuals (Takács and Szalma, 2012; 2015; Gregor and Rédai, 2015) or, nowadays, on the much more extensive sexual/ethnic minorities (ESS, 2023; Background Society, 2019; PEW RC, 2020).

Takács (2011) has identified different approaches to homosexuals in our country in his research – which I think can be interpreted in a broader sense, from the perspective of the LGBTQ+ community. One is the morality-based view, which considers homosexuality as a sin against religious law. The other is the individual choice, which is morally reprehensible, regardless of whether it is punished or not. The third is the disease model, i.e., that homosexuality is a disease, the result of childhood trauma or a bad socialisation pattern. The fourth approach is the deviance model, which classifies homosexuality as a behaviour driven by a defiance of widespread social norms. According to the private-affair model, it is not necessary to intervene in the lives of homosexuals (for example, through sanctions), but rather to do so "within the four walls", because of the negative impact on society, especially on minors, of exposure to homosexual behaviour. Lastly, we can talk about the human rights approach, which states that sexual orientation is a fundamental characteristic, i.e., a variant of human sexuality, and that the state must ensure legal and social equality for all, regardless of sexual orientation. Takács examined (Takács, 2011) the distribution of different approaches and attitudes in our country. They found that the most widespread is the private affair model (mean: 4.20), followed by the deviance model (mean: 4.04), the disease model (mean: 3.68) and the almost identical human rights approach (mean: 3.58).

Coming back to the issue of legislation and disenfranchisement, it should be mentioned that since 1 July 2007, there has been the legal institution of registered partnership, which is more a legally recognised form of partnership than marriage, which gives the parties much more rights (for example, in terms of inheritance) and which has been prohibited for same-sex couples in Hungary since 2011 under the Basic Law. Furthermore, the family as defined in the Fundamental Law can only consist of a married woman, man, and child(ren). Next in line is Law 33, passed in 2020 during the COVID-19 epidemic, which prevents a transgender person from requesting that their documents include the gender and name of their gender identity. A law followed this, also in 2020, tightening the adoption of single people, and then the so-called "paedophile law", adopted in 2021, which is responsible for confusing homosexuality with paedophilia, for degrading sex education for children and for sabotaging free culture and scientific discourse.

All this shows that a Roma LGBTQ+ individual in Hungary is subject to discrimination related to both their ethnicity and their sexual minority. However, it is important to note – as the intersectionalist paradigm points out – that these are not separable dimensions, nor are the resulting disadvantages, discriminations, and stigmatisations.

According to the report of AraArt 2021 (AraArt, 2021), Hungary does not currently have an intersectional law in its legislation – contrary to the EU guidelines – and there is little chance of changing this. For this reason, there is no information on violations against Roma LGBTQ+ persons. There are separate Roma and separate LGBTQ+ cases. There are 3 NGOs in Hungary today which are trying to tackle this problem in the framework of the civil era, which was also impossible.

Secondly, I would like to draw attention to the multifaceted and diversified impact of the theatres of exclusion, which deepens the identity crisis and swells it into individual psychological problems. A Roma LGBTQ+ person is socially excluded, which includes the aforementioned disenfranchisement and lack of opportunities, equal opportunities, and representation. This exclusion is determined by political power. We can

talk about social exclusion, which is the quality of social relationships, i.e., attitudes, behaviour, and attitudes towards them, which are mainly characterised by prejudice. This social exclusion affects Roma LGBTQ+ people in two ways. On the one hand, from the majority society (Kende et al., 2017; 2020; Pogány, 2006; Tileagă, 2006; FXB Centre, 2014; Géczy and Gergelics, 2020; Géczy and Őry, 2020), which is based on ethnic racism, with discriminatory elements such as shunning (on buses), housing difficulties (denial of rent based on origin) or even abuse. On the other hand, they may also be victims of exclusion from their own two minority communities. They can be excluded from the non-Roma LGBTQ+ community, which is based on anti-hypocrisy as in the previous case (AraArt, 2021), and from their own Roma community of origin if it has heteronormative elements in which homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia are prominent (Fremlova and Georgescu 2014; Baker 2015; Dunajeva, Kóczé and Cemlyn 2015; Máté 2015). In addition, and perhaps the most psychologically damaging, they may also experience 'exclusion' in their family relationships, such as disinheritance or alienation (Máté, 2015; Sartori, 2022).
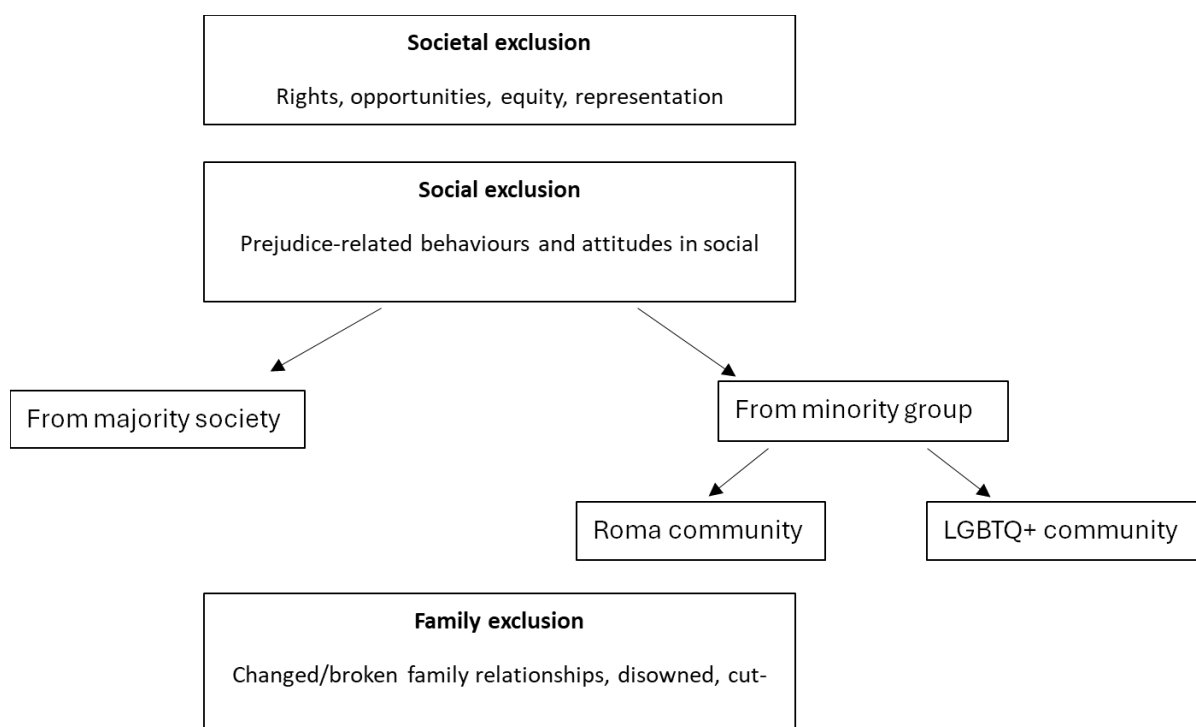

Figure 3: *Theatres of exclusion* - own ed.

In the following, I will present the lived experiences and occurrences of the arenas of exclusion as narrated by Roma LGBTQ+ persons and the types of coping strategies they can apply against them within the qualitative research framework

RESEARCH

In my research, I used a semi-structured in-depth interview method with 6 individuals who self-identified as both Roma and LGBTQ+, who I interviewed using a snowball method. The interviews were conducted in 2020-21 and the follow-up and analysis in 2022.

In formulating my questions, I always kept in mind that the conversation with the subjects should be conducted along the lines of their content (e.g. how they describe themselves: gay, homosexual, LGBTQ, etc.) on different issues, so that they are not demarcated and positioned with their everyday experiences in this situation. The main research questions were:

1) What does it mean for them to be Roma? What does it mean for them to be an LGBTQ+ person in Hungary today?

2) What coping strategies do they use to face prejudice, discrimination, and stigma?

3) Is it difficult to reconcile the two identities (Roma and LGBTQ+) - why/why not?

In addition to identifying the "theatres of exclusion", my analysis of the interviews will focus on coping strategies

for different minority and marginalized identity crises and psychological problems related to minority stress.

The first questions of the interview were general demographic questions. Based on the demographic data, the majority of the interviewed subjects are urban, highly educated, and live in good financial conditions on average.

It is likely that 1) in an urban environment, the respondents could live their gender identity and sexual orientation more freely and more incognito and/or 2) by going to university and moving out to a bigger town, they could have been confronted with their identity and could have faced it in a more supportive/resilient community. However, similar demographic characteristics of the subjects may also be explained by the snowball sampling.

The arenas of exclusion

1. Social exclusion

Representation

"But, for example, if we assume that it is usually gay men who have achieved great success or results, then there is no image of Roma at all. But there is plenty. There is plenty. But the point is that, let's say, in the media, or let's say in the postings, there is no image of... not only gay Roma, but not even the regular Roma image. In the public media." (Subject1)

- Disenfranchisement

"Right in the middle of a COVID virus we need to pass two laws against the LGBTQ society, which is really so here. So this law 33 to abolish transgender, that's for me, I don't know." (Subject4)

"But in the meantime, they don't understand that I don't have the same rights as I have to either adopt with my partner, or to get married, or to have an inheritance, or to visit a hospital, or to have my partner bring the child home from school, kindergarten without permission, to sign his school book or a paper." (Subject5)

"Discrimination, so I feel disadvantaged for being one, because I don't have the same rights, or that I'm not accepted in society as a heterosexual couple, or a man or a woman, whatever. Or even in terms of the child issue, that's why I get angry, or I'd rather say f***ing upset, because f**k you guys, when you need my tax, then I'm good, then I'm a useful member of society." (Subject6)

(Equality of) opportunity

"I was a passive language user, I spoke a little bit when I was little, because my grandmother always spoke to me like that. But as soon as I moved to kindergarten, the kindergarten teachers didn't allow it." (Subject2)

"No one ever respects that you don't want to take a bath or change into PE clothes in PE class. So that was not respected. You couldn't put anything on under your gym clothes and then there's me who never undressed, go put on that gym clothes that's going to have every part of your little body out or it's going to show so much. So, no one cared what you were going through, a lot of times assimilation and what you live in is not transformation, it's this kind of squeezing through, this kind of squeezing through, literally raping your soul by not giving you a choice. There is no appeal." (Subject5)

"And I sometimes feel that on the street I am deprived of being who I am, of being able to love my partner the way I love him or the way I feel, and I have to live within the four walls, essentially." (Subject6)

2. Social exclusion

2.1. Majority Exclusion

"(...) I've experienced several times that people didn't sit next to me on public transport! The bus was full, there was a seat next to me, they refused to sit next to me." (Subject1)

"(...) I had a classmate in secondary school who really really disliked me and it was precisely because I was a gypsy. So, to this day, if we see each other on the street and if I say hello she never says hello back to me." (Subject4)

2.2. Exclusion from minority groups

2.2.1. Exclusion from the LGBTQ community

"On a relational level, when, if you are looking for a relationship it's difficult sometimes, but it's the same in the gay community. I don't even know, there are these applications and that if I talk to someone there, they start communicating with me in English because they think I'm a foreigner, until then I'm totally ok and they like me. When I answer in Hungarian, they ask me what nationality I am, how well I speak Hungarian, and then I say, well, I'm a gypsy. Oh well then, sorry, no, so there are some very rude rejections."

2.2.2. Exclusion from the Roma community

"In our community we can observe that people who are attracted to their own sex, if they are male, are looked down upon, despised and humiliated to an unconscious level. Here I've developed a little bit." (Subject1)

"(...) by the way, the majority are the Roma guys who used to call me names, who used to laugh at me, and they don't queue up to see me (the cashier - ed.) anyway." (Subject4)

"One of my aunts told me that it's good, we can go there anytime (subject with her partner - ed.), we can eat, drink, that we will have a separate plate, or she will buy a paper plate and a plastic spoon and then she will throw it away, if we have eaten there." (Subject5)

3. Family traumas

"I came out at about 16 and then things changed a bit. And I don't know, um really, I became more distant, me and him with me, this mother-child relationship is a bit different for us, and it's like I'm lost, really..." (Subject3)
"...she (her mother - ed) doesn't need a gay child, because she puts them in the institution..." (Subject4)
"Then my mum came out of her shell, she was furious, what do you mean I'm gay, she didn't bring me up like that! She doesn't want that! What will the rest of the family say, what will the village say? Then my father came in the same way, the same thing, that hah... he just shrug his shoulders, he just says one thing, my son is gay, how nice! No grandchildren. After that I didn't even talk to them for about 2 weeks because I was ashamed." (Subject1)
"But my mother was totally shocked, because after I went home, and we tried to talk about it, we managed to some extent, but somehow we didn't. And then she started to take drugs, like Rivotrin and everything you can imagine." (Subject2)

Coping

1. Individual action

Individual mobility

" (...) and I get to the point that we won't have adequate protection or even legal security for our lives here, then we can have whatever house we want here, whatever opportunities we have for our little family that we create in this narrow way, then there will be no staying" (Subject5)
(...) I am definitely planning my future abroad. If they were not there, I think I would think about whether to leave or not to leave." (Subject3)

Passing

" (...) for example, my partner is no longer my Facebook friend, I don't know for how long. Because I don't want to expose him to the fact that I'm in a relationship with him, or that I'm exposing my child to it, and obviously now I fear for his privacy the most. Because I don't put my child's face out there or I don't put out there that we're a couple." (Subject5)

Isolation

"Basically I don't get to know people like that, with whom I think that they are, um, not accepting or I don't know (...) Basically I find it difficult to open up to other people, and um, usually it's that other people open up to me, and um, but why would someone open up to me who is not accepting, because it's obvious in a way." (Subject2)

2. Collective action

Peer competition

"Well, I personally help the Roma and young Roma people, for example, by starting a solidarity project with other group mates, within the framework of which we will go back to the dormitory, 99% of which are young Roma, and we will give them career guidance training and talks." (Subject1)
"I started going to pride in 2004, maybe or something like that, I'm not going to lie, I think that's when I started going to pride, and then I became an activist, I became a volunteer, then I became an activist, I went to all kinds of LGBTQ organisations' programmes." (Subject5)

3. Individual emotional

Negativism

"(...)because I'm not brown, I don't really have those so-to-say racial signs (laughter), I don't believe in that either." (Subject1)
"(...)I saw through others how they judged, for example, the tanner-skinned gypsy children at school, and I never knew where to put myself because I have the color of my skin in between, this creole brown skin, and I felt the aftermath of that when something happened about gypsies, negative prejudice and not. I tried not to pick up on it or not to perceive it" (Subject5)

Marginalization

"(...)taking into account that I am slowly becoming an intellectual by getting my first degree, so I don't feel that I am a Gypsy in certain Gypsy communities anymore."(Subject1)
"(...) I'm not so much concerned with these nationalities that really that, that this is it and that is it and that's it and that's it and that's it really that it doesn't define me."(Subject3)
Rootlessness

"For some reason I still have this strong prejudice against gypsies. Even though I am one, but I don't understand, I don't feel like I belong there, you know, but at the same time I don't feel like I belong to the Hungarians then either, you know." (Subject6)

4. Collective emotional and action

Social creativity

"And the first such positive experiences were, because I

was a (***) program participant, so most of the people who came to the college were Roma, when we started to get to know the values." (Subject3)

"(...) when I was at university, there was a program called (***) (...) And there was a kind of breakthrough, that I was okay, actually I kind of liked myself a little bit, for example, that I was a vehement...(...) I met gypsies who respect tradition, you know, they keep these different traditions, so I was interested in everything, because obviously I couldn't meet this in my own environment..." (Alany6)

5. Collective - individual - emotional – action

Identity reinterpretation

"(...) I went to the (***) program for a long time because I had a great time being in a community, an intellectual community, who were people like me, you know, because I had a completely different image of being a Gypsy" (Subject 6)

Minority stress - psychological difficulties

"Well, do you know how many times I thought about suicide, like, I can't take this anymore and I'm going to end it all? A lot of times. Even I was trying to figure out who I was and accept myself. And there are many people who commit suicide (...) It was the environment, because even then I knew from time to time that I wouldn't be able to deal with it (...) I was very afraid of them. I was very afraid of them, and it was the family that... that made me decide to end my life." (Subject4)

"I grew up in a way that, for me, it's very difficult to talk about... so there was a survival plan. (...) So we were trained in survival techniques, if something goes wrong, what can you jump into at night without freezing, you grab your backpack and run. (...) And to live with that, for a little child, to be in constant fear that you could be hurt at any time for something that you can't help and you don't know why you're being hurt, it's a degree of fear (...)" (Subject 5)

"That if I don't have that community (a vocational college - ed.) when I... started coming out today, I might get lost like that, or I don't know..." (Subject2)

"At that time I wasn't so good with them (my friends - ed.), I was withdrawn. (...) really just sitting at home, I wasn't so good mentally." (Subject3)

"For a long time I was thinking where I should live, but at the moment you're in a state of escape, question marks, exclamation marks, or stay, so how long can you stay at home without shooting yourself in the head (...) I don't know how long I'll be mentally healthy. Of course, a lot of times I fall into the trap of freaking out because I'm crying or I'm in a rage or I feel helpless" (Subject 5)

"However, it affects all the other people around me and then everyone immediately bats their eyes or heads where I am and it makes me feel very frustrated and very confused. And there I am already nervous and I have cried several times in the street because of that." (Subject4)

"(...) He (the subject's previous partner - ed.) was so mentally ill from all this that we were attacked by a group of 15-18 aged young people in ***city name***, for example, that he actually went completely crazy and moved abroad." (Alany5)

CONCLUSION

Looking at the theatres of exclusion, it is clear from the subjects' accounts that invisibility – lack of representation – is a cardinal element of the Roma LGBTQ+ experience, which has a major impact on societal, social, and individual dimensions. Separate Roma media representations are reported, or separate LGBTQ+ representations are also talked about by the subjects – in the context of pride – but Roma LGBTQ+ persons "do not exist" on the social stage. This is also exemplified by the legislation discussed in the literature/historical/contextual exploration section – subjects could also "only" talk about the disenfranchisement of their LGBTQ+ identity; they cannot even think about Roma LGBTQ+ disenfranchisement due to a lack of knowledge and opportunities. Also along the lines of equal opportunities, the assimilationist constraints on Roma culture within the walls of certain domestic institutions and the curtailment of the experience and free expression of LGBTQ+ identity are evident. Experiences linked to prejudice are the first arena that, I think, illustrates multiple exclusions. It appears from the majority society along different social interactions (bus, school), it appears from the LGBTQ+ community (relationship rejections and difficulties), and it appears from the Roma society (exclusion, ridicule, stigmatisation, and disgust). This is where the multiple "minority of minorities" situation emerges: the minority, prejudiced, stigmatised, disadvantaged situation within the LGBTQ+ community, which is in a minority compared to the majority society, and the minority, prejudiced, stigmatised, disadvantaged situation within the Roma community, which is also in a minority compared to the majority society. However, the bridge between the two identities (Roma and LGBTQ+) is still invisible, elusive, and unintelligible. In their family environment, the subjects also experienced a severe rejection after their coming out, which may be a deeper and more painful experience than all the peer/social disadvantages and discrimination listed so far.

In the context of coping, it can be noted that the most commonly used type is functioning in different individual coping styles – emigration (individual mobility), secrecy (passing), distrust (isolation), removal of the stigma of being Roma (negativism), the crisis of ethnic identity (marginalisation), and the feeling of belonging nowhere (rootlessness). Among the collective, group-related struggles, peer competition as a Roma and as an

LGBTQ+ activist in the field, and the beneficial effects of different NGOs on Roma identity are reported by the respondents, which aim to promote Roma culture (peer creativity) and to reframe it (identity revaluation) through their programmes. While this is an extremely important undertaking, and indeed, according to the subjects, it invokes positive Roma self-concept-reinforcing mechanisms; here again, Roma LGBTQ+ intersectional identity is lost from view and remains invisible.

Finally, it is the diversity and depth of the mental and psychological difficulties associated with minority stress that gives a great sense of the true gravity of this multiply burdened situation. To list them all, I believe, requires no further explanation. The difficulties include self-acceptance issues, fear of family rejection, constant terror, feelings of loss, loneliness, isolation, frustration, confusion, the urge to run away, and suicidal thoughts.

Summary and outlook

By examining the theoretical framework, it is clear that intersectional identity is a social construct that can be interpreted in absolute socio-psychological terms, including stigmatisation burdened by prejudice and possible scenarios of coping with multiple minority existences.

By looking at the historical, legal, and social contexts of the stigmatisation of Roma and LGBTQ+ identities by prejudice, it is already clear that there is only a Roma and only an LGBTQ+ set, the intersectional pattern of Roma LGBTQ+ identities is very difficult to grasp and interpret, and it seems from the interviews that the multiple exposures of this situation are difficult to understand and put into words by the intersectional people themselves. Thus, we can speak of invisibility and impenetrability, i.e., that they do not really belong to either group because neither the Roma nor the LGBTQ+ community accept them.

A good solution to this seemingly unresolvable situation could be to create and strengthen one's own community with a focus on a redefined Roma LGBTQ+ identity and to sensitise the two minority groups, the Roma community and the LGBTQ+ community, on the issue so that the Roma LGBTQ+ identity can be an identity that exists and is visible not outside these sets but within the intersection of these two sets..

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