

Editorial:
**Introducing the Journal of
Gypsy Studies**

Özge Burcu Güneş[‡]
Başak Akgül[°]
Danielle V. Schoon^Υ
Ibrahim Sirkeci[°]
Deniz Eroğlu Utku[∞]

After much preparation and hard work, we are pleased to release this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Gypsy Studies* which is an international, peer-reviewed journal aiming to publish quality and rigorous research and scholarship, as well as intellectual conversations/interviews, book reviews, conference reports, viewpoints, and letters on the groups known as and associated with Gypsies. As the production of academic work pertaining to the cultural, social, economic, and political lives of Gypsies is increasing, there is a need for research and theoretical contributions that centre on issues of poverty, discrimination, the sedentary/nomad divide, migration, urban policies, and citizenship and identity, among others. This is particularly important as right-wing political parties are on the rise in many countries where Roma/Gypsies live, and Roma/Gypsies face violent attacks and forced evictions everyday. Although some governments and international organisations engage more and more with Roma/Gypsy organisations and development and inclusion programs, tangible change is rare on the ground.

This journal has been created by the hard work and dedication of a small team of academics initiated by Başak Akgül, Doğa Elçin, and Ibrahim Sirkeci in 2015 and among several brilliant colleagues who offered help and support, including Özge Burcu Güneş, Deniz Eroğlu Utku, Danielle V. Schoon, and

[‡] Dr. Özge Burcu Güneş, France. E-mail: ozgeburcugunes@gmail.com.

[°] Başak Akgül, Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Bogaziçi University, 34342 Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey. E-mail: akgulbasak@gmail.com.

^Υ Dr Danielle V. Schoon, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC), Department of Dance, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA.
E-mail: schoon.2@osu.edu.

[°] Prof Dr Ibrahim Sirkeci, Regent's Centre for Transnational Studies, Faculty of Business and Management, Regent's University London, NW1 4NS, United Kingdom.
E-mail: sirkeci@regents.ac.uk.

[∞] Dr Deniz Eroğlu, Department of Public Administration, Trakya University, Edirne, Turkey. E-mail: denizeroğlu@trakya.edu.tr.



Margarite Blignaut. We are grateful for their support as well as many colleagues who joined the editorial boards and served as reviewers.

The aim of the *Journal of Gypsy Studies* is to create a platform where different disciplines and approaches can be brought together to address important topics and establish a genuine forum for serious discussion and exchange among researchers in the field. The journal addresses a broad audience of students, professionals, policy makers, and enthusiasts, and offers an accessible venue for sound scholarship and research.

The *Journal of Gypsy Studies* invites submissions in all disciplines, including (but not limited to) history, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, law, musicology, cinema, literature, psychology, and linguistics. Contributions on under-researched regions where large Gypsy populations live are particularly welcome, especially the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

Given the pejorative adjectives attributed to the term, we are aware that use of the word ‘Gypsy’ may provoke controversy. However, the decision to use this word in the journal’s title is informed by a desire to challenge the stereotypes it conveys, aiming at a (re)definition of the word. Furthermore, we intend the term to be expansive and inclusive so that use of this term can highlight ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity, referring both to the Roma that originated in India specifically as well as other peripatetic communities from various geographical areas, such as Jenische, Sinti, Lom, Dom, Irish Travellers, and others. Yet, we value approaches that problematize the word ‘Gypsy’ in a world where discriminatory acts and discourses are common, and hope that research informed by these approaches will also find its place among the journal’s pages.

To conclude, we would like to express our concerns about increasing political and financial pressure on academic institutions and colleagues around the world. We stand in solidarity with those whose academic freedom is threatened. We hope that the *Journal of Gypsy Studies* will contribute to the dialogue and help widen the space for science and freedom of expression.

Articles in this issue

In this inaugural issue, we present five articles. Ann Marguerite Ostendorf’s article examines the appearances of Gypsies in court records in North America within a discussion of identity and race in Early America. Joan Scott’s “an Egyptian and noe Xtian woman” offers insight into both the experiences of colonial American Gypsies, as well as into the minds of Virginians grappling with how to consider the multitude of identities within their new social order. Scott, they argue, entered the colony twenty years before she was charged with fornication, which suggests she arrived as a young woman or even a girl. While unmarried, she bore a child whose father the court considered a man of color. By allowing the court to believe in her Gypsy identity and non-Christian religion she worked the court in her favor and saw her case dismissed.



The second article of this inaugural issue examines factors behind the asylum demands of Serbian Romani women migrating to Western European countries. Drawing upon ethnographic data collected in rural Serbia, Jelena Čvorović and Kathryn Coe underline kinship as the major factor determining the migration patterns of Romani women. Roma/Gypsy migration to Western Europe is a much-discussed topic, however with the increase of international migration and the recent refugee influx, Roma/Gypsy populations' mobility is under the spotlight more than ever. In this regard, Čvorović and Coe puts a less studied perspective forward – the importance of kinship in a gendered perspective.

Elif Gezgin and Margaret Greenfields offer an insightful account of the Bourdieuan approach to researching Gypsy / Romani communities. Part of an ongoing research endeavor, their intervention is promising on both theoretical and empirical grounds. From the perspective of theory, their approach aims to develop an alternative way of modelling identity construction by remedying the tendency of opposing agency and structure in Bourdieuan analysis. In this regard, Roma/Gypsy groups is a pertinent case to study, since both agency and structural elements are in interaction and interplay with regards to their positions within societies. From an empirical viewpoint, Gezgin and Greenfields's study bring together two country cases (Turkey and Britain) that are usually considered apart from other European cases. This is partly due to histories and legal and administrative structures of both countries, but also because of the heterogeneity of Roma/Gypsy groups. Yet, this article highlights many similarities and contrasts between Turkish and British cases with the use of Bourdieuan concepts.

Recep Volkan Öner and Aslı Şimşek, in the fourth article, explore the relationship between the gentrification of Canakkale city centre and Romani people's right to the city. They focus on the Romani neighbourhood of Fevzipasa in Canakkale. They frame their argument and analysis of the gentrification of the neighbourhood within the Lefebvrian concept of 'the right to the city'.

The last article, Judith Okely's autobiographical piece, highlights the journey of a scholar whose work inspired many young researchers in the field of Romani studies. Drawing on many years of ethnographic fieldwork, Okely's piece is an excellent contribution for those who are interested in and working on ethnographic research methods, ethnographic fieldwork practice and writing, and the history of the Romani/Gypsy studies. It raises and answers questions touching on the topics of applied and engaged research, intellectual reciprocity, the positionality of the researcher, and research ethics.