

and mandatory for all historical periods in the development of a given ethnos. Many examples of ethnic communities which have lost its territorial, economic and partly linguistic integrity exist, and yet – they have preserved their self-dependant way of life (typical example in this regard are the Roma).

Although ethnic communities are generally characterized by stability, they undergo some changes in time, preserving some continuity. To explain in detail the reasons for the changes in the ethnic structure, it is necessary to consider the nature and symptoms of the ethnic processes. Ethnic processes are classified as ethno-generating, ethno-evolutionary and ethno-transforming, and further on - the nature of those processes, their way of manifestation and specific characteristics are also clarified. The main role in the development of the ethnic processes among the Roma, is being played by the group organism, which has stabilizing effect and retains individual groups in their current stage of development.

Many researchers highlight a certain type of a pre-class society ethnic community, which type strongly resembles the modern Gypsy ethnos. Gening (1970) suggests that these “supra-tribe” ethnic communities should be called “intergroups” (intergroup ethnic community). Several authors assign Roma ethnic community to intergroup ethnic community, given the following reasons: the Gypsy community is not a homogeneous community, and is divided into a number of internal sub-groups, each bearing the attributes of the ethnic group (Maruschiakova, 1992, in bulgarian); Roma groups are often hostile to each other; many of them have their own potestary (group) authorities; the various dialects differ to such extent that the members of the various groups are not able to understand each other; anthropological features and macrosociety’s attitude toward them has helped to create the awareness of a community and solidarity, and the common land of origin, together with the similar historical fate of the groups, despite the huge differences between them, are the reasons for the emergence of common cultural and historical features (Maruschiakova,1991, in bulgarian); complex hierarchical structure of ethnic consciousness (Popov, 1991, in bulgarian) etc.

Some of the existing classifications of the Roma ethnos are presented in the study, in which classifications usually a single leading attribute of the ethnic community is taken into account, such as the ethnic consciousness in some of the cases (Maruschiakova,1992, in bulgarian; Tomova, 1995, in bulgarian; Kertikov, 2002, in bulgarian), while in other cases, that leading attribute is the common dialect (Pamporov, 2006,2008, in bulgarian). Maruschiakova (1992, in bulgarian) combines more indicators of different kinds, in attempt to elaborate an ideal hypothetical model of the Gypsy group. She further compares different categories of Roma groups with the model, and thus determines the degree of degradation of their ethnic identity. The proposed scheme by Marushiakova, is built on the specific features of the Roma self-consciousness and their contemporary state. Other additional criteria are the language, the way of life, boundaries, endogamy, professional specialization, the time when they settled in Bulgarian lands, etc. Marushiakova offers a widely built hierarchical classification of the Roma population and its groups in Bulgaria, and marks three groups of Roma: settled gypsies (the so-called Yerlyi); former nomads (the so-called Kardaraschi or Vlach gypsies), and Roma gypsies