From Stigma to Resistant Career Discourses: Toward a Co-Cultural Career Communication Model for Non-Dominant Group Members

Elena GABOR
Bradley University, USA
Patrice M. BUZZANELL
Purdue University, USA

Abstract: Career communication focuses on Western and dominant members' work and careers in formal economies. Applying co-cultural theory to anthropological data, we show how groups, such as the Roma people, operate within dialectics of inclusion-exclusion, dignity-stigma, individual-collectivity, and legality-illegality to construct career discourses marked by resistance and resource recuperation. Building on Lucassen, Willems, and Cottaar (1998), we have identified five characteristics of Romany experiences of work and resistance: (a) the entire family functioning as the work unit; (b) mobility; (c) preference for self-employment; (d) the rhetoric of recuperation; and (e) work used as resistance toward dominant majorities. In doing so, we offer an ideological critique of career and the Roma. Our model is applicable to other marginalized groups.

Keywords: Roma career theory, co-cultural theory, culture of honor, stigmatized groups, resistance

1. Introduction

When the first author told acquaintances that she was writing about Roma careers, they laughed: "What Gypsy careers? Careers in fortune telling and petty theft?" Many people in Eastern Europe believe that the Roma, also known as "Gypsies," are lazy, dishonest, and lacking in the discipline and work ethics required by organized settings (Amza, 1996; Gallup Romania, 2003; C. Zamfir & Zamfir, 1993). In popular novels and films, Roma images are mostly negative or romanticized (Gabor, 2007). Even in academic studies, their representations are "dominated by the themata of robbery or popular acrobatism, as if their psychology were already prefigured from the beginning" (Moscovici, 2011, p. 455). The Roma, a diverse minority using the Romani language or divergent dialects, with no common territory or religion but with a resilient social structure, have occupied one of the lowest positions in European collective discourse and resource access (European Commission, 2012). Gurr (1993) included the Roma in his list of minorities at risk, using such criteria as substandard ways of life coupled with growing birth rates, seasonal labor, little health care access, illiteracy, and few means for integration in society–"that is, if they wanted to be [integrated]" (p. 49).

Whereas education and professional degrees often contribute to evaluations of work alignment with careers, the word "career" also implies spatio-temporal movement in work content and status as well as access to resources (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Buzzanell &

Goldzwig, 1991; Inkson, 2007; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) that many Roma simply do not have, as most are forbidden access to them by the majority or reportedly do not desire such access (Barany, 2002; Stewart, 1997a, 1997b). Unlike other marginalized groups who seek at least partial societal integration, many Roma resist the very discourses and values that constitute career (D. Smith & Greenfields, 2012).

The experiences of the first author, who grew up in communist Romania across the street from a community of Kaldarashi blacksmiths between 1977-1988, attest to the complexity underlying any evaluation of Romany occupations. Although the communist regime forbade private enterprise, the Roma managed to secure contracts with state-owned construction companies that bought their metal tubes and installed them in apartment buildings. The men worked in the shop while women made and sold baskets, wooden spoons, flowers, or copper jewelry. The Roma women often came through the Romanian neighborhood collecting old clothes, scrap metal, and glass bottles that they later recycled or sold for money. They also offered fortune-telling services. The Romany village had an architecture that reflected the social hierarchy. The *Bulibasha*, the leader, had the biggest house near the metal shop. Relationships between the two communities were peaceful, but Romany women often complained to Romanian women about mistreatment in state hospitals and schools.

Using anthropological data, we show how the Roma who embrace strategies of adaptation to historical changes have developed careers that may be judged by the dominant majority as non-careers, marginal and illegal, but are meaningful and justified as resource recuperation by the Roma themselves. Our goal is to contribute to interdisciplinary career research by developing more inclusive theorizing applicable to global in/formal economies and centered in communication (Arthur et al., 1999; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Buzzanell, 2000; Khapova & Arthur, 2011; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Not only can an examination of Romany careers add considerably to the concept of career itself, but it also offers a site in which a stigmatized group enacts resistance and control dialectically to shape work-related activities (Mumby, 1995).

To accomplish our goal, we conduct our ideological critique (see MacDermaid, Roy, & Zvonkovic, 2005) through the use of stigma and co-cultural communication lenses. First, our approach to stigma centers on messages and occupations Roma use for identity repair and stigma negotiation (e.g., Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark & Fugate, 2007; Meisenbach, 2010; R. Smith, 2007). We rely on Meisenbach's (2010) stigma management communication theory which proposes that: "(a) stigmas are discursively constructed and managed via both non-stigmatized and stigmatized individuals' perceptions, (b) stigmas shift and are shifted by discourses and material conditions, and (c) stigmas vary by degree" (p. 285). We suggest that centuries of marginalization, enslavement, and discrimination have produced relatively stable social constructions of stigma toward the Roma who have responded mostly through isolation, resistance, and in-group orientations (Barany, 2002; T. Smith, 1997; Stewart, 1997a, 1997b). Second, our co-cultural communication lens (Orbe, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) enables us to question the monocultural assumptions regarding career and further explore Roma's experiences as a co-cultural stigmatized group. Co-cultural experiences and theory have not been utilized to develop insights about work and career, particularly when linear and advancement-oriented career theory no longer applies.

The organization of our essay is as follows: (a) applying co-cultural communication to the

Roma, and (b) problematizing "career" theory to display why career has not served marginalized groups' interests. In this second section, the process of problematizing the discourse and practices of career is a two-step ideological critique. We make assumptions visible so that they can be evaluated first for accuracy and utility in a particular context and second for their ethical nature or unfairness (MacDermid, et al., 2005). To do this critique, we have two subsections: stigma and Roma: and Roma experiences of work and resistance. In these subsections we delve into stigmatized principles that guide the Roma economy, culture, and work experiences. We next bring together concepts of stigma as well as the culture of honor/law, as explained by Nisbett and Cohen (1996), and co-cultural communication (Orbe, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) to provide a framework for understanding the Gypsy discourses surrounding work and non-work. Our final section is our (c) conclusion. Given that work and careers are so essential to groups' viability and identities, we extend co-cultural communication approaches to create new theorizing that can assist not only non-dominant group members but also dominant group members who find that career theory and practices do not coincide with their experiences, interests, and aspirations.

2.   Applying Co-Cultural Communication

Roma have not all reacted similarly to the historical, economic, and political transformations that took place in Eastern Europe in the 1990s and then in Western Europe through the formation of the European Union. Acton (1974) proposed a typology highlighting four Romany adaptation strategies: *conservative* (inward orientation, minimizing contact with the outside world and resisting lifestyle changes); *cultural disintegration* (demoralization, impoverishment, and violation of even in-group norms), *cultural adaptation* (acceptance of outside influences that appear advantageous as supplements rather than replacements of their own culture), and *passing* (identity concealment to compete equally with dominant members). The Roma have used these strategies during slavery, world wars, pogroms, and forced collectivization in Eastern Europe (Barany, 2002; Hancock, 1987).

Roma cultural adaptation strategies appear both similar to and different from Orbe's co-cultural communication theory. Orbe (1996) defined "co-culture" as non-dominant groups whose "experiences are often made invisible by the pervasiveness of the dominant culture" (p. 158). Rooted in standpoint and muted group theories, co-cultural theory examines how co-cultural groups interact with dominant societal groups. Orbe's model is built around two dimensions: preferred outcome of interaction and communication approach used in interaction. In terms of preferred outcome, Orbe advanced three possibilities: assimilation (attempt of the co-cultural group to fit into the dominant society through the elimination of cultural differences); accommodation (promotion of multiculturalist collaboration); and separation (creation and maintenance of unique group identities outside of or within dominant social structures). Given these desired outcomes, Orbe (1998c) considered three communication approaches: nonassertive (placing others' needs above oneself); aggressive (confronting, attacking, or sabotaging others); and assertive (aiming toward collaboration but often perceived as more aggressive by dominant group members). Applications of co-cultural communication theory have investigated the Afro Punk co-culture (Ramírez-Sánchez, 2008), the dance-fight-

game capoeíra (MacLennan, 2011), and minority groups such as African American men (Orbe, 1994b), women, gays, and lesbians (Orbe, 1998a), and first-year college students (Orbe & Groscurth, 2004).

We argue that prior scholarship has analyzed these different co-cultural groups from the assumption that they function in a culture of law, whereby all follow a system of rules enforced by the state. From an anthropological viewpoint, nomadic peoples and herdsmen often adhere to cultures of honor. These people carry their most valuable property with them and risk having it stolen. They have little recourse to law enforcement or government (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). In a culture of honor, inspiring fear is viewed as a stronger strategy than promoting friendship; cultivating a reputation for swift and disproportionate revenge increases the safety of person and property. Nisbett and Cohen (1996) found that: "Such cultures seem to be particularly likely to develop where (1) the individual is at economic risk from his fellows and (2) the state is weak or nonexistent and thus cannot prevent or punish theft of property" (p. 4). Cultures of honor also appear among groups that have little allegiance to national governments. Examples include cowboys, gang members, frontiersmen, and ranchers of the American West, where official law-enforcement often remained out of reach. Once cultures of honor exist, it is difficult for members to transition into cultures of law. Transitions require that people willingly back down and refuse to retaliate immediately. From the viewpoints of cultures of honor these behaviors appear weak and unwise.

We argue that the concept of culture of honor ties into Romany resistance toward dominant majorities. After centuries of discrimination, Roma have developed a culture of honor because they learned that they cannot get fair treatment in non-Roma courts. Therefore, they seek justice either on their own or in designated Romany justice organizations such as *Kris* or *Divan* (Barany, 2002; Stewart 1997a, 1997b). We used anthropological, sociological, and historical data (Barany, 2002; Fonseca, 1996; Hancock, 1987; Overlock, 1999; D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012; T. Smith, 2012; Stewart 1997a, 1997b; C. Zamfir & Zamfir, 1993) to examine Roma's economic and rhetorical behavior as a co-culture and, by extension, the career communication of group members who do not subscribe to traditional careers but rather to practices characterizing informal economies ruled by family ties rather than legal rules (Godfrey, 2011).

3.   Problematizing Career Theory

Traditionally, career has been defined as opportunities for promotion, time spent on the job, and organizational attachment (Hall, 2002). Developments in the world of work, such as globalization, outsourcing, and new technologies have prompted researchers to develop concepts that incorporate these realities. However, few studies compare career development across cultures (exceptions include: Juntunen & Cline, 2010; Turner & Lapan, 2003) although "boundaryless" careers highlight physical, relational, and psychological mobility (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Whereas recent career models seek to include groups like temporary workers or stay-at-home parents, the Roma engaged in spoon making or fortune telling would not be considered to have careers, because of the stigma associated with these occupations.

Career conceptualizations for stigmatized groups have been problematic because of careers'

linkages to societal contributions and modernist assumptions of progress and linearity. To distinguish "good" from "bad" careers, Wilensky (as cited in Miles & Snow, 1996) connected individual and societal interests with effective careers that benefit self and others and integrate individuals into communities (p. 97). If individuals' work does not contribute to organizations' needs and interests, then there is no effective career. If the most salient features of careers are *effectiveness* for multiple stakeholders (individuals, organizations, and societies), then the concept of career is not responsive to the needs and practices of culturally different groups whose values and practices may be in opposition to those of the dominant society.

Specifically, if some Romany families live without official identity papers and fail to pay taxes, their work appears invisible to the dominant society. As Moscovici (2011) pointed out, "no matter whether they work or not, Gypsies are all represented as not working or in a 'private' working sphere" (p. 455). Moreover, obtaining data on Romany occupations is difficult. Indicators of occupation, professional attainment, and intergenerational mobility that make groups noticeable and, perhaps, "worthy" of concern in societies are simply unavailable (EC, 2004). Barany (2002) found that simply counting the number of Roma is a frustrating exercise for most national censuses. The Roma are thus seen as a group that is difficult to identify, assimilate, and describe statistically—a group without career.

Additionally, career theory and practice is still linked with modernist notions, enterprising organizing processes, and cultures of law. Modernist tenets surface in career language that privileges progress, linearity, and a drive toward coherent thematic representations and structures (Arthur et al., 1999; Buzzanell & Goldzwig, 1991; Ibarra, 2003; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). As such, career develops within seemingly impartial and competency-based structures, decision-making, and bureaucratic processes (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979; Schein, 1992). Contemporary notions of enterprise, self-empowerment, and corporate missions create discursive spaces in which career identities are produced (Inkson, 2007). In everyday behaviors and discourses, career is tied to personal branding, consumerist ideologies, and disciplining of selves to construct malleable professional images (Hearn, 2008) and "no limits" careers (Lucas, Liu, & Buzzanell, 2006).

Because career necessitates particular kinds of career capital acquisition and refinement, it operates best in societies characterized by cultures of law. According to Nisbett and Cohen (1996), cultures of law operate where government and its enforcers are recognized by everyone and are difficult to avoid. Members follow unwritten contracts through which they agree to give up some personal freedoms in exchange for governmental protections. Cultures of law require maintenance; otherwise they can change into cultures of honor, where respect for individuals or groups stems from the revenge that they may enact when properties, persons, or prerogatives are not respected (Acton, Caffrey, & Mundy, 1997; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). In cultures of honor, individuals are more likely to work for themselves or small groups (e.g., family).

Moreover, careers in cultures of law are envisioned as mechanisms for worker motivation, differential allocations of resources, and varying prestige and status. Hall (2002) distinguished among meanings of career in popular and behavioral science literature, namely, career as advancement, profession, and lifelong sequence of jobs or role-related experiences. Advancement is the most common meaning of career. It is fueled by popular media and scholarship that still imposes directionality, specifically upward trajectories of work achievement. For the Roma

who learn a trade from their parents or extended family, a simple advancement pattern from apprentice to independent professional is normative (T. Smith, 1997; Stewart, 1997b). This pattern differs from more prestigious professional and organizational advancement models in status, numbers of and budgetary discretion in "ladder" rungs, and decision-making about work processes (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

Career as profession implies the notion of career choice. However, "choice" is not inherent in Roma cultures, due to lack of resources, lack of exposure to career choices, or family/group socialization. Juntunen and Cline (2010) and Juntunen et al. (2001) observed similar structural constraints when they investigated career psychology among Native Americans. Many Roma work in informal economies (Godfrey, 2011). Their work is viewed by family or community as necessary and possible for their lifestyles—filling needs as they exist, rather than seeking out work that is personally fulfilling—and relying on family ties rather than regulated structures (Fonseca, 1996; T. Smith, 1997; Stewart, 1997a, 1997b).

Moreover, career as profession fits only those few Roma who had access to formal education and became teachers, doctors, lawyers, scholars, engineers, and so on. It is a challenge to find statistics on national percentages of Roma with formal education and professional careers since many declare different ethnicities for fear of discrimination (Barany, 2002). In most cases, professional careers take place mostly outside of the Roma communities, and imply deliberate dissociation, especially by omission, with one's ethnic and cultural heritage (D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012). Roma communities sometimes regard professional members with pride (Fonseca, 1996; Overlock, 1999) and other times as impure because these professionals work and mix with non-Roma (Barany, 2002).

Even after the fall of the Berlin wall and the implementation of targeted social and economic policies regarding minorities, few Roma maximize their formal education. According to a 2004 United Nations Development Program survey for Southeastern Europe, 66% of Roma aged 7-15 were enrolled in primary school, compared to 96% of the majority population; 17% of Roma aged 16-19 were enrolled in secondary education, compared to 74% of the majority population, and 1% of Roma aged 20 and older were enrolled in tertiary education, compared to 7% of the majority (http://vulnerability.undp.sk./). Countries like Hungary have laws that grant jobs only upon successful completion of eight grades. As a result of educational gaps, the numbers of unemployed Roma is considerable, ranging from 44.5 % in Romania and 73.2 % in Kosovo (O'Higgins & Ivanov, 2006). As D. Smith and Greenfields (2012) found about Roma and other marginalized groups in the United Kingdom, few of the programs established to tackle unemployment specifically targeted these populations with programs addressing community needs. The Roma minority is especially challenged when it comes to acquiring and maintaining jobs because of educational obstacles. For many Roma, formal education does not exist in their mental landscape of possibilities because of cross-generational poverty and discrimination (EC, 2012; Hawke, 2010). Others have the resources but fear discrimination in the *gadje* (non-Roma) schools and believe that all there is to learn can be learned in the family (Barany, 2002). By definition, career is associated with organizations whose entry is difficult to breach by Roma. Career as profession thus eliminates those who do not undergo specialized education, job sequencing, and career capital development in terms of education and networks (Feldman, 2006).

Finally, career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences (Hall, 2002) seems more inclusive. This definition entitles categories of workers whose roles as stay-at-home mothers, part-time employees, and contingent laborers, enable them to claim careers (Williams, 2000). Many Roma may fit this definition of career, especially women who engage in home-based care giving. Yet, care giving remains marginalized in contemporary European societies (Hochschild, 2003). The importance of the family in Roma lives and individual economic destiny is missing from role-oriented career models (T. Smith, 1997).

When theory encompasses boundaryless, protean, and enacted/storied careers, or career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur et al., 1999, p. 3), career communication can play off of boundary tensions such as inside-outside organization, work-family, employability-personal fulfillment, and evolution-stagnation (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002; Inkson, 2007; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). However, these careers assume that individuals and careers "evolve"—implying that people acquire their true career selves over time and space. These career processes do not fit many Roma in marginal occupations shaped by family needs and involving everyone in the family.

In sum, we have problematized contemporary career language and assumptions that still align with dominant group members' experiences and modernist notions. Grounded in cultures of law, new career models are not compatible with Roma ideologies.

3.1. Stigma and Roma

There is little doubt that the Roma are stigmatized through their socio-cultural identity, namely, "perceptions of [their] social group membership" (Allen, 2004, p. 10). According to a 2003 Gallup poll in Romania, two thirds of Romanians believed that the Roma should not be allowed to travel abroad because they damage the image of Romania. Almost half supported the idea of demographic policies that would limit the rise of the Roma population. A third (36%) believed that the Roma should be forced to live separately from the rest of the society because they cannot become integrated. Dominant populations in other European countries have had similar views of this minority (Hancock, 1987; D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012).

Here, in keeping with our communicative approach to career, culture, and identity, we examine Roma experiences of stigmatized work and stigma as a communicative process (Meisenbach, 2010; R. Smith, 2007). As Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Ashforth et al. (2007) have shown, stigma is often associated with occupations that are considered "dirty" because they involve garbage, human refuse, involvement with those considered less desirable in a particular society, physically taxing work that leaves its mark on the body, and work that might be considered morally questionable. "Dirty" workers exert much identity and emotional effort to discursively construct their work as valuable to society, difficult to accomplish, supportive of other life interests such as providing for families, and associated with communal values (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Ashforth et al., 2007). As Meisenbach (2010) pointed out, stigma is a communicative process that is "materially and discursively constructed based on non-stigmatized and stigmatized perceptions" (p. 272).

For the Roma, many characteristics associated with dirty, marginalized, or stigmatized work infuse their traditional work of blacksmithing, scrap metal collecting, musical entertaining,

flower selling, basket and spoon making, horse dealing, fortune telling, and begging. While some Roma blacksmithers, construction workers, or musicians could be well regarded in non-Roma communities, certain Roma horse dealers may be avoided at fairs for fear of dishonesty (Stewart, 1997a). Romany music is recognized as having influenced the compositions of Brahms, Liszt, and Beethoven (Fraser, 1992); but various Romany styles of interpretation are stigmatized as "Gypsy kitch" (Barany, 2002). Fortune telling still has a market in Eastern Europe; some fortune tellers, such as Maria Campina interviewed by writer Andrei Codrescu for PBS Frontline (2002), have achieved great wealth and fame.

The Roma are marked by multiple layers of stigma through their socio-cultural identities, occupations, and socio-political and economic structures. Because stigma is defined in contrast to and perpetuated by certain dominant societal groups and attendant ideologies, it entraps stigmatized individuals into beliefs that lack of privileges and rights is a given and a norm (Moscovici, 2011). Accordingly, some Roma can and do refuse to participate in mainstream society. They operate at the margins of society, attempt to hide their identities in order to access resources, and/or elevate their membership and work through counter narratives that challenge the status quo (Lindemann-Nelson, 2001). Such is the case for Roma who may choose to lie to their potential employers about their identity, since certain employers actually go as far as to print in the job ad "Roma should not apply" (EC, 2004). As Stewart (1997a) found with regard to other co-cultural groups, the Roma employ conscious discursive and action-based strategies to challenge power when communicating with dominant group members.

3.2. Roma Experiences of Work and Resistance

In this section, we present evidence from anthropological and sociological literature on Roma using the work of established Roma scholars (Fraser, 1992; Hancock, 1987; Lucassen, Willems, & Cottaar, 1998; D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012; Stewart, 1997a, 1997b; C. Zamfir & Zamfir, 1993) to identify the characteristics of Romany experiences of economy, work, and resistance. Lucassen et al. (1998) devised a model for what they called "the Gypsy economy" that consists of three characteristics: (a) family functioning as the work unit; (b) mobility; and (c) preference for self-employment. We identified two additional characteristics: (d) the rhetoric of recuperation; and (e) work used (even if only occasionally) as resistance toward dominant majorities. These two characteristics may not apply to all Roma. According to D. Smith and Greensfield (2012), they apply to those who have been conservative in the face of external change, have minimized contact with the outside world, and accept stigma through stories that bolster and refocus the stigma (Meisenbach, 2010).

First, the entire family as the work unit means that all members of the family contribute to the family income, including children and the elderly. The family as a work unit also involves working in physical proximity of one another and/or working together on the same task. Stewart (1997a) found that even under the ideological pressures of the communist regime, the Hungarian Vlach Gypsy way of life involved the entire family working together. This phenomenon, also present among the Gypsies and Travellers in the United Kingdom (D. Smith & Greensfiled, 2012) is in marked contrast to the enterprising stories of career in the new economy whereby *individuals* not only locate their work interests, calculate their career resources, and hone

their abilities over time (Arthur et al., 1999), but also craft new identities and employment accounts to maintain employability in turbulent economic times (Ibarra, 2003). Most of these mainstream career narratives do not deal with political issues such as forced relocations and would view family- and community-based work, living, and career as anachronistic or atypical although there are some similarities to migrant (individual or nuclear family) and contingent seasonal (individual) workers.

One key element in the family as work unit characteristic of Romany life and career is the traveling group. Lucassen et al. (1998) looked at the socio-economic functioning of traveling groups and found that Romany occupations did not differ essentially from economic activities by sedentary people. While characteristics of Romany work and careers are found in other groups, they are aligned with those marginalized and perhaps with those hoping for more permanent or regular employment arrangements.

Second, with regard to the characteristic of mobility, Roma again appear to be but are not truly unique. Lucassen et al. (1998) found that: "Well into the twentieth century, European agriculture and industry made use of tens of thousands of seasonal workers who left homes every year for months at a time to earn a living abroad or in other parts of the country" (p. 154). We could add that this is also a 21st century phenomenon, with people from Eastern Europe going to Spain, or Italy during the summer to participate in agricultural seasonal jobs. The same phenomenon is observable with Mexican workers coming to the United States for seasonal jobs. In these cases, workers can be categorized as participants in non-standard or "deviant" work. Ballard and Gossett (2008) found that "real" workers are those who are considered core employees, operate in fixed locations in time and space, and have unrestricted membership status. Workers characterized by mobility such as part-time and temporary workers may be communicatively isolated and even feared by "regular" workers (Ballard & Gossett, 2008). Unless mobility is upward, skill-building and increasing in status with temporary permanence in position and organization, mobile workers such as the Roma still are considered suspect in the world of work and career.

Third, self-employment is a decided preference of the Roma. The arguments focus on cultural norms stressing that through self-employment the necessary boundaries between their own and non-Roma worlds can be upheld (Fonseca, 1996; Fraser, 1992; Lacková, 2000; D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012; T. Smith, 1997; Stewart, 1997a, 1997b). Arthur and Rousseau (1996), Hall (2002), and Inkson (2007) found that the increase in self-employment, independent contracting, private consulting and entrepreneurship for groups was caused by downsizing and outplacement. For the Roma, it was centuries-long discrimination and communal orientations (Hancock, 1987).

Discrimination in schools (EC, 2004, 2012) and intergenerational values have contributed to Roma not sending their children to *gadje* (non-Roma) schools. Traditionally, most education is done at home (T. Smith, 1997). Even today, going to a *gadje* (non-Roma) school is rejected for four reasons: years of deep cross-generational poverty have eliminated education as an option to even be considered; fear of discrimination and mistreatment; in the case of nomadic families, being on the road means constant moving; and the belief that everything there is to learn can be learned at home from the group (Barany, 2002, Flecha & Oliver, 2004). Moreover, generations of Roma have managed to survive and even accumulate fortunes without literacy,

so many do not believe in the value of a formal education (McLaughlin, 1980). Centuries-long illiteracy is the main reason why Gypsy culture has remained primarily oral (Barany, 2002; Crowe, 1994).

Lucassen et al. (1998) suggested that the ideology expressed by many Roma does not deviate much from the arguments put forward by most self-employed people seeking autonomy, independence and self-fulfillment. In light of Lucassen et al.'s observation, we can thus say that the entrepreneurial career model is one that fits Roma experiences. However, this model is not fully satisfactory because it does not include the following two characteristics: the rhetoric of recuperation and the element of resistance to the dominant majority.

In the remaining part of this section, we bring together Meisenbach's stigma management communication theory, Orbe's theory of co-cultural communication, and Nisbett and Cohen's concept of culture of honor to begin development of our co-cultural career communication model. Here, we show that some Roma have created unregulated occupations that seek to recuperate resources from the dominant majority, while discursively reframing the stigma placed on them by the majority. As a co-cultural career discourse, we propose *the rhetoric of recuperation* as the use of stories and parables centering around discrimination and injustice to justify the economic necessity of marginal activities such as fortune-telling, begging, or petty theft. Such rhetoric is used often by Roma to explain why it is acceptable to deceive a non-Roma. Paul Polansky, an activist for Eastern European Roma Human Rights, described an old legend circulating among Czech Roma:

> Most Gypsies that I lived with take great pride in stealing. One of their oldest oral histories speaks of the ancient times when all horses roamed free until the Gadjo took all of them himself. The Gypsy then started to steal back what was once free for all men. Many Gypsies think stealing is proof of great intelligence. … In my experience of living with Gypsies, I found that only those Gypsies without jobs, or those who were refused jobs because of the color of their skin, made a life out of crime. (para2)

Stewart (1997b), who lived among the Hungarian Roma for eighteen months, found a similar legend:

> When Holy God gave out wheat to the *gażos,* he called the Rom as well to give them some. But the Rom did not have a sack, because they were poor. Then the Rom said to Holy God, "Dear Holy God, give us ours in the *gażos*'sack!" So Holy God poured the wheat into the *gażos* sack. But afterwards the *gażos* did not want to give wheat [to the Rom], even if the Rom asked for it. That's why the Rom steal from the *gażos*. (p. 18)

According to Meisenbach's model, these narratives illustrate acceptance that stigma applies to oneself on one hand, and a challenge of the public understanding of stigma on the other hand. Resource characteristics in these narratives are: they should be readily available, because they were given by God or Nature, they are now in the hands of the *gadjo*, therefore the Roma need to get it back. The *gadje,* the non-Gypsies*,* appear as tyrannical and forgetful, since they seem to have forgotten the initial equality. Through stealing, Roma re-establish the

initial social order.

These researchers emphasized that Gypsies engage in stealing only when the access to paid jobs is restricted, which occurs more and more nowadays in Europe (Barany, 2002; Flecha & Oliver, 2004; D. Smith & Greensfield, 2012; Stewart, 1997b). Stewart (1997b) found that, for the Roma, trading was a way to assert control, or at least a rejection of external control:

> As Gypsies put it: "We make money turn around for us, turn around and come to us." They do this by organizing, persuading or manipulating others into doing business. The Gypsy role in the market is managing people. A Gypsy once told me that anyone can be a trader "if they have the words." (p. 92)

In the same vein, all deals with *gadjos* are considered *sales*, "as against *swaps* with fellow Gypsies" (p. 92). Stewart also observed that many Roma spoke proudly about cunning and trickery even while earning honest wages in *gadjos* institutions:

> The point was that, although the game of life was set up so that the *gażos* could exploit the weaknesses of the Gypsies, there were also activities in which the Gypsies could gain the upper hand and redress the balance. In these, the Gypsies got something for nothing, palmed objects that the *gażos* thought belonged to them. Participation in such activities, which went under the generic term of "Gypsy work," was what any self-respecting Gypsy man or woman aspired to. (Stewart, 1997b, p. 19)

With a turbulent history of slavery and persecution in Europe, the Roma have developed resistance mechanisms similar to the ones developed by African American and Brazilian slaves. For example, MacLennan (2011) discussed the notion of *malícia* to refer to a strategy used by fighters of capoeira (a dance-fight-game invented by former slaves in the Americas). Translated as *malice* in English, the term refers to "a sly style of intelligent trickery" where "the intent is to make the other person out to be a fool" (MacLennan, 2011, p. 152). Merrell (2003) explained: "the slaves in Brazil developed *malícia* into a carefully honed instrument by means of which to generate subversive acts against their masters" (p. 279). One can argue that the Roma engage in resistance through work (and non-work) that involves cheating dominant group members who restrict access to resources via blunt discrimination and neglect. Marginal occupations such as petty theft, fortune telling, and trading where work is done not on the product, but on the customer (Stewart, 1997a) are *malícia*-like activities with both economic and communicative outcomes. These activities can be seen through lenses of creative initiative, entrepreneurship, and resistance, accomplishing identity affirmation through "managing people" and "having the words." By justifying *malícia* with the rhetoric of recuperation, the Roma can repair their threatened social identity by telling stories in which they reposition themselves in "the real story" that exonerates them (Lindemann-Nelson, 2001).

We claim that marginal occupations such as fortune telling and petty theft can be seen through similar lenses of creative initiative and resistance, accomplishing separation through "managing people" and "having the words." Both of these activities are targeted to non-Roma members of society (e.g., Romany women will not tell the fortune to another Rom, and,

traditionally, a Rom would not steal from another Rom) (Stewart, 1997a). In conclusion, the recorded history of centuries-long marginalization of the Roma (Barany, 2002) stands proof that economic discrimination has been just one aspect of Roma–*Gadje* relational processes, to which some Roma responded by creating marginal activities supported with resistant narratives of recuperation that enabled identity repair and expressions of entrepreneurship and pride.

4. Conclusion

Our study develops a co-cultural career communication model that includes the experiences, ideologies, and motivations of non-dominant group members and cultures, such as the Roma, and that incorporates stigma management, co-cultural communication, and stigma theory with rhetoric of recuperation. To surface and problematize the exclusionary nature of career conceptualizations and practices, we identify the communicative and material aspects of careers born from the clash of two groups: Roma and majority. Romany discourses about work and personal lives serve to remind us that between Roma and resources there is a dominant majority that is viewed as discriminatory, neglectful, and forgetful. While many Roma attempt to make a living within cultures of law, others earn livelihoods within cultures of honor created in social spaces where law is weak. In our study, we focused on those Roma that chose to make ends meet through marginal or illegal activities motivated by recuperation and justice. Our effort was to develop career theory inclusive of stigmatized groups who engage in occupations designed specifically as a method of reifying ingroup-outgroup identities.

To develop our theory, we first noted that the most widely accepted meanings of "career" are those with modernist connotations of formal education, promotion, social recognition and power—aspects that most Roma do not have. Roma themselves would probably never consider to name their occupations "careers." However, we argue that the co-cultural communication strategy of *malícia* (MacLennan, 2011; Merrell, 2003), which is assertive and aims towards separation as per Orbe's classification, enables Roma to construct alternative careers, values, and practices. We found that: most Roma construct their occupations primarily based on the needs of the extended family and not the individual; the whole nuclear family participates in bringing income to the family; and most Roma prefer to be self-employed and have found ways to maintain independence from *gadje* institutions even during controlling political regimes. Among those Roma who make a living in illegal or semi-illegal occupations, the psychological fulfillment typically sought in protean careers (Hall, 2002; Inkson, 2007) can be equivalent with the psychological satisfaction of tricking a *gadjo*. Here, the rhetoric of recuperation plays a significant role of justification, stigma management, and identity repair. By presenting theft or cheating as a response to an initial injustice done by the *Gadje*, the act is rendered acceptable. Being savvier than the *Gadjo* in a trade is proof of intelligence. The non-Roma have control over material resources, therefore illegal and semi-legal activities can be used as tools for recuperation. Careers and work appear negotiated through and with *the other,* the outsider, the non-Gypsy, in a relationship that aims at independence but reifies dependence.

It is our belief that, in order to be inclusive, career theory and vocational counselors need broad and flexible definitions of "career" and "work." Cultural openness can accommodate informal economic activities (Godfrey, 2011), opposing work ethics (e.g., ethic of production

and ethic of non-production), and multiple voices. For instance, as an informal, irregular and unregulated activity, fortune telling allows Romany women to contribute income to their families and increase their socio-economic status within the family (Barany, 2002; T. Smith, 1997).

Although we recognize limitations to our research, notably the use of anthropological and sociological reports rather than interviews and direct observations, we believe that our findings offer theoretical and pragmatic implications. Future studies would benefit from direct access to Romany voices including Romany women and children. While the first author observed first hand a broad range of Romany economic activities in her native country of Romania, as a non-Roma she never had the chance to be more than an observer/consumer of Romany work. Future studies should assess whether our career model with its five characteristics (i.e., family as a work unit, mobility, self employment, rhetoric of recuperation, and work as resistance) and configuration of co-cultural, stigma management, and recuperative rhetoric can be applied to other non-dominant groups' experiences in informal economies. Practical implications of advancing a co-cultural career communication model may lie in a better understanding of Romany economic actions or inactions, in more effective United Nations and European Commission policies, as well as educational/counseling benefits and resources. In closing, we hope that co-cultural career communication understandings can contribute to truly new career practices, theoretical intersections of communication and career, and sustainable and mutually beneficial alliances between dominant and non-dominant group members.

References

Acton, Thomas. (1974). *Gypsy politics and social change*. London, UK: Routledge.

Acton, Thomas; Caffrey, Susan & Mundy, Gary. (1997). The theory of Gypsy law. In Thomas Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy politics and traveller identity* (pp. 142-152). Hertfordshire, UK: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Allen, Brenda. (2004). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Amza, Tudor. (1996). *Tiganii, necunoscutii de langa noi* [The Roma, the strangers among us]. Bucharest: Atlas-Lex.

Arthur, Michael; Inkson, Kerr & Pringle, Judith. (1999). *The new careers: Individual action and economic change.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Arthur, Michael & Rousseau, Denise. (Eds.). (1996). *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ashforth, Blake & Kreiner, Glen. (1999). "How can you do it?": Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity. *Academy of Management Review, 24*, 413-434. doi: 10.2307/259134

Ashforth, Blake; Kreiner, Glen; Clark, Mark & Fugate, Mel. (2007). Normalizing dirty work: Managerial tactics for countering occupational taint. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50,* 149-174. doi: 10.5465/AMJ.2007.24162092

Ballard, Dawna & Gossett, Loril. (2008). Alternative times: Communicating the non-standard

work relationship. In Christina Beck (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 31* (pp. 301-348). Mahwah, NJ: LEA.

Barany, Zoltan. (2002). *The East European Gypsies. Regime change, marginality and ethnopolitics.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Buzzanell, Patrice Marie. (2000). The promise and practice of new career and social contract. In P. M. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 209-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Buzzanell, Patrice Marie & Goldzwig, Steven. (1991). Linear and nonlinear career models: Metaphors, paradigms, and ideologies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 4*, 466-505. doi: 10.1177/0893318991004004004

Codrescu, Andrei. (2002, October). *Romania my old haunts*. [Video Documentary]. PBS, Frontline. Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/romania/.

Crowe, David. (1994). *A history of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

European Commission. (2012, May 21). *National Roma integration strategies: A first step in the implementation of the EU framework*. Retrieved from http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0226:en:NOT

European Commission. (2004). *The situation of Roma in an enlarged European Union.* Retrieved from www.ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=99&langId=en

Feldman, Daniel. (2006). Toward a new taxonomy for understanding the nature and consequences of contingent employment. *Career Development International, 11*, 28-47. doi: 10.1108/13620430610642363

Flecha, Ainhoa & Oliver, Esther. (2004). Romaní women and popular education. *Convergence, 37*, 7-26.

Fonseca, Isabel. (1996). *Bury me standing: The Gypsies and their journey*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Fraser, Angus. (1992). *The Gypsies.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Gabor, Elena. (2007). The stereotype caravan: Assessment of stereotypes and ideology levels used to portray Gypsies in two European feature films: *Gadjo Dilo* (Tony Gatlif, 1997, France) and *Time of the Gypsies* (Emir Kusturica, 1989, Yugoslavia). *Intercultural Communication Studies, XVI* (2), 277-293.

Gallup, Romania. (2003). *Intoleranta, discriminare si autoritarism in opinia publica [Intolerance, discrimination, and authoritarianism in public opinion]*. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.ro/romana/poll_ro/releases_ro/pr031016_ro/pr031016_ro.htm

Godfrey, Paul. (2011). Toward a theory of the informal economy. *Academy of Management Annals, 5*, 231-277. doi: 10.1080/19416520.2011.585818

Gurr, Ted. (1993). *Minorities at risk. A global view of ethnopolitical conflicts*. Washington, DC: Institute of Peace Press.

Hall, Douglas Tim. (2002). *Careers in and out of organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hancock, Ian. (1987). *The Pariah syndrome*. Retrieved from http://www.reocities.com/~patrin/pariah-contents.htm

Hawke, Leslie. (2010). *The Roma and the media*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=RjDBxbhsETs

Hearn, Alison. (2008). "Meat, mask, burden": Probing the contours of the branded "self". *Journal of Consumer Culture, 8*, 197-217. doi: 10.1177/1469540508090086

Hochschild, Arlie. (2003). *The commercialization of intimate life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Ibarra, Herminia. (2003). *Working identity: Unconventional strategies for reinventing your career*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Inkson, Kerr. (2007). *Understanding careers: The metaphors of working lives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Juntunen, Cindy & Cline, Kara. (2010). Culture and self in career development: Working with American Indians. *Journal of Career Development, 37*, 391-410. doi: 10.1177/0894845309345846

Juntunen, Cindy; Barraclough, Dominique; Broneck, Cheryl; Seibel, Gennea; Winrow, Scott & Morin, Paula. (2001). American Indian perspectives on the career journey. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*, 274-285. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.48.3.274

Kalleberg, Arne; Reskin, Barbara & Hudson, Ken. (2000). Bad jobs in America: Standard and non-standard employment relations and job quality in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, *65*, 256-278. doi.org/10.2307/2657440

Khapova, Svetlana & Arthur, Michael. (2011). Interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary career studies. *Human Relations, 64*, 3-17. doi: 10.1177/0018726710384294

Lacková, Ilona. (2000). *A false dawn: My life as a Gypsy woman in Slovakia* (C. Bulkin, Trans.). Bristol, UK: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Lindemann-Nelson, Hilde. (2001). *Damaged identities, narrative repair*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lucas, Kristen, Liu, Meina & Buzzanell, Patrice Marie. (2006). No limits careers: A critical examination of career discourse in the U.S. and China. In Mark Orbe, Brenda Allen, & Lisa Flores (Eds.), *International and Intercultural Communication Annual 28* (pp. 217-242). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lucassen, Leo; Willems, Wim & Cottaar, Annemarie. (1998). *Gypsies and other itinerant groups–A socio-historical approach*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

MacDermid, Shelley; Roy, Kevin & Zvonkovic, Anisa. (2005). Don't stop at the borders: Theorizing beyond dichotomies of work and family. In Vern Bengston, Alan Acock, Katherine Allen, Peggye Dilworth-Anderson, & David Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theory and research* (pp. 493- 516). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

MacLennan, Janet. (2011). "To build a beautiful dialogue": Capoeira as contradiction. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 4,* 146-162. doi: 10.1080/17513057.2011.556828

McLaughlin, John. (1980). *Gypsy lifestyles*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Meisenbach, Rebecca. (2010). Stigma management communication: A theory and agenda for applied research on how individuals manage moments of stigmatized identity. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 38*, 268-292. doi: 10.1080/00909882.2010.490841

Merrell, Floyd. (2003). Capoeira culture: An impertinent non-Western art form. In S. Hart and R. Young (Eds.), *Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies* (pp. 278-289). New York: Oxford

Miles, Raymond, & Snow, Charles. (1996). Twenty-first-century careers. In Michael Arthur & Denise Rousseau (Eds.), *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 97-115). New York: Oxford University Press.

Moscovici, Serge. (2011). An essay on social representations and ethnic minorities. *Social Science Information, 50,* 442-461. doi: 10.1177/0539018411411027

Mumby, Dennis. (2005). Theorizing resistance in organization studies–A dialectical approach. *Management Communication Quarterly, 19,* 19-44. doi: 10.1177/0893318905276558

Nisbett, Richard, & Cohen, Dov. (1996). *Culture of honor. The psychology of violence in the South*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

O'Higgins, Niall, & Ivanov, Andrey. (2006). Education and employment opportunities for the Roma. *Comparative Economic Studies, 48*, 6–19. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.ces.8100147

Orbe, Mark. (1996). Laying the foundation for co-cultural communication theory: An inductive approach to studying "non-dominant" communication strategies and the factors that influence them. *Communication Studies, 47*, 157-176. doi: 10.1080/10510979609368473

Orbe, Mark. (1998a). *Constructing co-cultural theory: An explication of culture, power, and communication.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Orbe, Mark. (1998b). From the standpoint(s) of traditionally muted groups: Explicating a co-cultural communication theoretical model. *Communication Theory, 1*, 1-26. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.1998.tb00209.x

Orbe, Mark. (1998c). An outsider within perspective to organizational communication: Explicating the communicative practices of co-cultural group members. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *12*, 230-279. doi: 10.1177/0893318998122003

Orbe, Mark, & Groscurth, Cristopher. (2004). A co-cultural theoretical analysis of communicating on campus and at home: Exploring the negotiation strategies of first generation college (FGC) students. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 5*, 41-47.

Overlock, Janis. (1999). *Training programs for Romany journalists*. Retrieved from http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1145

Polansky, Paul. (n.d.). *Original research on Gypsies*. Retrieved from www.paulpolansky.nstemp.com/original%20research.html

Ramírez-Sánchez, Rubén. (2008). Marginalization from within: Expanding co-cultural theory through the experience of the Afro Punk. *Howard Journal of Communication, 19,* 89-104. doi: 10.1080/10646170801990896

Rothschild-Whitt, Joyce. (1979). The collectivist organization: An alternative to rational-bureaucratic models. *American Sociological Review, 44*, 509-527. doi: 10.2307/2094585

Schein, Edgar. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Smith, David, & Greenfields, Margaret. (2012). Housed Gypsies and travellers in the UK: Work, exclusion, and adaptation. *Race & Class, 53*, 48-64. doi: 10.1177/0306396811425985

Smith, Rachel. (2007). Language of the lost: An explication of stigma communication. *Communication Theory, 17*, 462-485. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00307.x

Smith, Tracy. (1997). Recognizing difference: The Romany "Gypsy" child socialization and education process. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 18,* 243-257. doi: 10.1080/0142569970180207

Stewart, Michael. (1997a). The puzzle of Roma persistence: Group identity without a nation. In T. Acton & G. Mundy (Eds.), *Romani culture and Gypsy identity* (pp. 82-96). London: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Stewart, Michael. (1997b). *The time of the Gypsies*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Sullivan, Sherry; & Baruch, Yehuda. (2009). Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration. *Journal of Management, 35,* 1542-1571. doi: 10.1177/0149206309350082

Thomas, David & Alderfer, Clayton. (1989). The influence of race on career dynamics: Theory and research on minority career experiences. In Michael Arthur, Douglas T. Hall, & Barbara Lawrence (Eds.), *Handbook of career theory* (pp. 133-158). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, Sherri & Lapan, Richard. (2003). The measurement of career interests among at-risk inner city and middle-class suburban adolescents. *Journal of Career Assessment, 11*, 405-420. doi: 10.1177/1069072703255870

United Nations Development Program. (2004). *Vulnerable groups in Central and South Eastern Europe*. Retrieved from http://vulnerability.undp.sk./

Williams, Joan. (2000). *Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Zamfir, Catalin & Zamfir, Elena. (1993). *Tiganii—Intre ignorare si ingrijo*rare [Gypsies—Between ignorance and worry]. Bucharest, Romania: Editura Alternative.

Authors Note

Elena Gabor (Ph.D., Purdue University) is an Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication at the Department of Communication, Bradley University, Peoria, IL. Her research interests focus on issues of occupational socialization, work, identity, and careers. Her 2007 article in ICS analyzed the portrayal of Roma in two European films; her more recent interests are in the occupational socialization experiences of classical musicians. Her 2011 article published in the Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research used qualitative interviews to understand turning points in the development of classical musicians.

Patrice M. Buzzanell (Ph.D., Purdue University) is Professor in the Brian Lamb School of Communication at Purdue University. Author of around 130 articles and chapters, her research centers on the everyday negotiations and structures that are produced by the intersections of career, gender, work-family, and communication such that people construct resilience and occupational aspirations, especially in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). She has served as President and on the Executive Boards for the International Communication Association, Council of Communication Associations, and the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language & Gender. She was named ICA Fellow in 2011.