

# The dynamic nature of interethnic attitudes in Bulgaria

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## AIM OF PROJECT

Prior research conducted in Bulgaria show that negative attitudes towards different groups and discrimination (in particular of Roma) have historically existed and remain persistent, though they do change too. **As social psychologists we are interested in 1) the nature and intensity of negative attitudes and behaviours** between ethnic groups in present-day Bulgaria (e.g. comparing the ethnic Bulgarian majority and the two major and historically established ethnic minorities) and **2) strategies to improve interethnic attitudes** and relationships.

## 3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Secondary analysis of **International Social Survey Programme ISSP 2003** data for comparisons between Bulgaria's 28 regions
2. Our **own survey** (1216 respondents)



3. **Semi-directive interviews** among ethnic Bulgarian majority (20 interviews) and Roma and Bulgarian Turks (10 interviews for both groups)

### Funding institutions

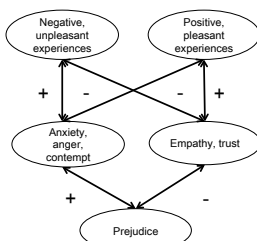


Bulgarian-Swiss Research Programme (BSRP)

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

### 1 ETHNIC BULGARIANS' & BULGARIAN TURKS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ROMA

How do interpersonal experiences with Roma fuel or reduce prejudice? The role of emotions



N = 576 ethnic Bulgarians (Montana, Stara Zagora, Kardzhali)  
N = 320 Bulgarian Turks (Stara Zagora, Kardzhali)

Positive and negative contact related to prejudice through positive and negative emotions. Associations did not differ between ethnic Bulgarians and Bulgarian Turks. See more in Visintin et al. (under review).

### 2 ETHNIC BULGARIANS' & BULGARIAN TURKS' MUTUAL ATTITUDES

How do perceptions of history (Ottoman domination, Revival period) explain current prejudice?

#### Perception of (in)group victimhood

**Ethnic Bulgarian male, 38 years:**  
"The Ottoman Yoke, for me it is a yoke. Sorry, it may be *presence* as some people say, but for me it is exactly a yoke."

**Bulgarian Turkish male, 46 years:**  
"In 1984-85 when we were made to change the names, it was terrible, we weren't going out, we were hiding."

#### Acknowledgement of (out)group's suffering

**Ethnic Bulgarian female, 66 years:**  
"I don't think it [Bulgarian Rebirth Process] is discussed among people. It is already in the past, just politicians raise the issue again and again for their own reasons and purposes."

**Bulgarian Turkish female, 26 years:**  
"Older Bulgarians don't like us, because of what happened... Well, yes because I'm Turkish, and the Ottomans they were Muslim as well, that's why."

**But also group guilt and group forgiveness...**  
See more in Green et al. (in press)

### 3 ROMA'S EXPERIENCE

How do Roma's ethnic and national identities relate to prejudice experiences?

**53.5%**  
think of themselves quite a lot to very much as both Roma and as members of the Bulgarian nation

**3%**  
think of themselves quite a lot to very much as Roma while not at all as members of the Bulgarian nation

**4%**  
think of themselves quite a lot to very much as members of the Bulgarian nation while not really to not at all as Roma

N = 320 Roma respondents

Roma's social identities also convey psychological adaptation to anti-Roma prejudice, which in turn drives minority activism. See more in Pereira & Green (in press)

## IMPACT OF RESEARCH

- Understand social disparities and regional differences within Bulgaria
- Studying the **perspectives** of ethnic Bulgarians and ethnic minorities in **parallel**
- **Training** of junior scholars in Bulgaria
- **Dissemination** to policy makers and NGOs working on minority questions

## PUBLICATIONS

- Green, E. G. T., Visintin, E. P., Hristova, A., Bozhanova, A., Pereira, A., & Staerkle, C. (in press). Collective Victimhood and Acknowledgement of Outgroup Suffering across History: Majority and Minority Perspectives. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Pereira, A., & Green, E. G. T. (in press). Minorité Nationale et Identité Sociale Stigmatisée: Discours Identitaire des Roms de Bulgarie. In C. Staerkle, & F. Butera. (Eds.). *Le conflit dans la vie sociale : Approches psychosociales*. Lausanne : Editions Antipodes.
- Pereira, A., & Green, E. G. T., & Visintin, E. P. (in preparation). How intergroup contact relate to minority activism: the interplay of ethnic and national identification.
- Visintin, E. P., Brylka, A., Green, E. G. T., Mähönen, T. A., Jasinskaja-Lahti, I. (2016). The Dynamics of Interminority Extended Contact: The Role of Affective and Cognitive Mediators. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Visintin, E. Green, E. G. T., Bakalova, D., & Zografova, Y. (2016). Support for Multiculturalism in Contemporary Bulgaria: The Role of Identity and Ethnic Diversity across Districts. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 51, 1-13.
- Visintin, E. P., Green, E. G. T., Pereira, A., & Miteva, P. (under review). How positive and negative contact relate to attitudes towards Roma: A majority and minority perspective.



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