

# Patterns of Exclusion

## Patterns of Exclusion:

*Constructing Gypsy Ethnicity and the Making  
of an Underclass in Transitional Societies of Europe*



János Ladányi – Iván Szelenyi

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Drawing on historical and demographic data from the past 150 years, Ivan Szelenyi and Janos Ladanyi examine how the social conditions of the Roma (Gypsies) has changed over time and across countries. While Gypsies always tended to be poor and at the margins of society, the depth and nature of their poverty and the ways they were excluded varied substantially. In addition to providing a detailed history of these changes, the book also contributes to debates regarding Gypsies' status as part of an underclass. The historical case studies show that during the nineteenth century Gypsies belonged to the lower class, during the interwar years they could be seen as a lower caste, and it is only during the last two decades that they are in the process of becoming an underclass. The underclass debate has so far been framed in ideological terms. This book's main aim is to turn this ideological controversy into an analytic project: under what socioeconomic conditions is a social group's situation sufficiently different from earlier times? Is its exclusion from society sufficiently rigid that underclass is the concept that best describes its condition?

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