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PhD Thesis

„The associations are all we have". Comparative Study of the Romani Associationism and Ethnic Mobilization in Spain and Colombia

By

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To my loving parents, Halina and Andrzej

To my husband, Kuba

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEPG	State Council for the Roma People (*Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano)*
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FACCA	Federation of Cultural Cristian Association of Andalusia
FAGIC	Federation of Roma Association in Catalonia (*Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña)*
FARA	Federation of the Roma Associations in Andalusia (*Federación de Asociaciones Romaníes de Andalucía)*
FSG	*Fundación Secretariado Gitano*
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIPG	Comprehensive Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia (*Plan Integral del Pueblo Gitano en Cataluña*)
POS	Political Opportunities Structure [theory]
PROROM	*Proceso Organizativo del Pueblo Rom (Gitano) de Colombia*
SKOKRA	Council of Organizations of the Americas Kumpeniyi Rom (*Saveto Katar le Organizatsi ay Kumpeniyi Rromane anda´l Americhi)*
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UR	Spanish Romani Union (*Unión Romaní Española*)
URC	*Unión Romaní de Colombia*

1. INTRODUCTION

In my private and professional life, I have witnessed at close hand the diverse manifestations of the Romani ethnic mobilization, first in my home-country – Poland – and as I have grown older, in different European and Latin American countries. My path led me to live in Barcelona for six years, during which I studied, worked and researched Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain. My involvement in Romani activism, through voluntary work but also professionally as an employee, has given me a unique chance to experience at close range the *modus operandi* of Romani organizations and to observe the overall continuum of Romani ethnic mobilization, with its achievements and pitfalls. The experiences and observations I accumulated over many years fed my curiosity to understand what I saw more schematically, systematically and comprehensively, not as isolated instances of activism, but as a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic social phenomenon. My many travels, experiences of Romani activism rooted in different contexts and environments but also my academic training (B.A. and M.A. in Comparative Studies of Civilizations at the Jagiellonian University) led me to inquire comparatively, searching for global, more universal answers and gaining insight into how these diverse environments determine differences (or similarities) in the manifestations of Romani ethnic mobilization that I observed. My comparative approach pushed me to look as far as possible, in order to find comparable cases in seemingly distant and largely unknown places. My curiosity, thus, pushed me to travel to Latin America and investigate the Romani ethnic mobilization beyond Europe.

All this lies at the foundation of the 4-year-long research conducted for this dissertation.

Broadly speaking, the objective of this research is to explore the nature of ethnic mobilization, its underlying dynamics, the characteristic elements that compose it and to assess how the political environment (associated with emerging and shifting political opportunities) influences the birth and development of ethnic movements, determining and affecting the strategies and discourses adapted, based on two case studies of Romani associative movement.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that this dissertation fulfils a number of aims. More specifically, through this dissertation I aspire:

- To make a contribution to the scholarship on ethnic mobilization from a standpoint of anthropology
- To theoretically conceptualize and operationalize ethnic mobilization, systematizing contributions to the field of research from diverse academic disciplines and branches
- To develop a theoretical-analytical model informed by an inter-disciplinary approach
- To develop and operationalize a comparative model of analysis, enabling the drawing of conclusions with regards to the nature of ethnic mobilization
- To provide, contextualize and analyse empirical evidence of the Romani ethnic mobilization in two diverse settings
- To increase the body of knowledge regarding the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia, which remains significantly under-studied

- To put in perspective the available body of knowledge on Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, by contrasting available scholarship with my own findings
- To draw broader conclusions with regards to the nature of ethnic mobilization, based on case studies of Romani ethnic mobilization

Thus, I aim, on the one hand, to systematically and rigorously describe and analyse the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization specifically, examining how this population engages in socio-political action in order to pursue its collective interests and claims and, identifying commonalities and differences from a comparative perspective. On the other hand, however, I aspire to provide a more universal understanding of ethnic mobilization, producing a conceptualization and operationalization of the term, as well as pointing to tools which permit its analysis. My hope is that the theoretical-analytical model I propose is feasible and adaptable to the study of cases of ethnic mobilization, regardless of the population among which ethnic mobilization occurs.

In order to adequately situate my discussion, it is of utmost importance to provide a clarification of the terminology used throughout this dissertation.

Scholars have long struggled to convincingly answer the question of "who are the Roma?", providing a concrete but also comprehensive definition of this population. An example of these intense debates is the discussion on the European Academic Network on Romani Studies (EANRS) entitled: "Roma: A Misnomer?" which sparked fierce exchanges among scholars of Romani Studies (Friedman and Friedman 2015). These debates have not managed to arrive at a consensus, but rather provided an overview of the diverse approaches, understandings and conceptualizations of the Romani people. Likewise, Marushiakova and Popov (2016), for example, have also attempted to provide such a comprehensive overview. These academic debates reflect not only the very complexity of defining the Roma, but revealed tensions with regards to who can legitimately shape these definitions: discussions regarding ownership ("who is in charge of definitions?") and the role of Roma and non-Roma scholars are important themes which commonly reappear in such academic exchanges.

While it is not the place to resolve these discussions, providing an answer to the "essence" of being a Roma, it is relevant, to draw some broader considerations. This dissertation does not aim at resolving the ever-present dilemma of a common definition of the Romani peoples, but rather aims at analysing the patterns of ethnic mobilization of those who *self-define as Roma*. In my understanding of Romani ethnicity, I tend to subscribe to the arguments of Ethel Brooks, posted in response to the above-mentioned discussions on EANRS. She wrote: "It is really a question of self-ascription, but this is combined with the ascription that others give; hence the confusion, often, as to who is Roma. In many ways, the outside ascription has won here, where Roma becomes a stand-in for Gypsies in the older (dare I say gypsylorist?) sense. (…) It is important for us to engage these questions, but in the end, it is the complexity that I, as a Romani and as an academic, will hold onto. Growing up, I 'knew' what our relationship was to Roma and what our relationship was to Irish or Scottish Travellers. It was very clear and did not need debate. Again, the question is one of self-ascription. (…) In the eyes of outsiders, of course, we were (are) all Gypsies. Personally, I would rather not lose the complexity of self-ascription in the name of neatness." (Friedman and Friedman 2015:214-215)

I also identify strongly with the understanding of the notion of Romani ethnicity provided by Nicolae Gheorghe, who wrote: "The Gypsy 'archipelago' is formed by a mosaic of various groups speaking both different dialects of Romani as an oral language and a variety of languages of the surrounding societies. The Romani and associated other Gypsy communities share a number of religious and church affiliations; they maintain cultural boundaries not only between themselves and the surrounding environment, but also between various Romani groups itself. (…) Multiculturality might be an appropriate concept to describe the basic reality of the Gypsy people." (Gheorghe and Acton 2001:55)

In this dissertation, I use the term "Roma" to refer to the population which self-defines as Roma in both case-studies: in Spain and in Colombia. The term "Roma" is also used with regards to broader issues, relevant for this population, for example related to policies, regardless of the place of origin and/or residence of the actual population in question.

The word Roma is an endonym originating from *Romanes* (the language of the Roma) used by diverse Romani groups to describe themselves. Literally the term "*Rom*" means a man or a husband and "*Roma*" is its plural form. The term "Roma" has been established as an all-encompassing term, referring to the diverse panorama of Romani communities throughout the world during the First International Romani Congress in London in 1971 and is recognized and used by the majority of international organizations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It should be noted, nonetheless, that the more specific definition of the term "Roma" as well as the explicit inclusion of sub-groups (considered as belonging to "Romani" ethnic groups) varies considerably between these institutions.

Furthermore, it should be noted that under the broader term "Roma" there are different sub-groups which may define themselves using different or more specific terms. In the case of Spain, the Romani population is considered to belong to the *Caló* sub-group. The term "Caló" originally refers to the dialect of *Romanes*[1] spoken in the Iberian Peninsula by the Roma, and includes Spanish and Portuguese Roma, as well as populations in Latin America who originate from this region. On the other hand, the Roma in Colombia tend to define themselves specifically as *Kalderash* Roma.

Nonetheless, throughout this dissertation, I use the term "Roma" for both groups of population in Spain and in Colombia, disregarding of their specific sub-group ascription. I use the term "Romani" as an adjective throughout this thesis.

Furthermore, when specifically referring to the majority population that is not Roma, I simply use the term "non-Roma". Nonetheless, in numerous quotes from interviews and some citations, the term "Gadjo[2]" is used to define to the non-Romani population, which I have maintained as in the original. The term "Gadjo" is commonly used in *Romanes* to refer to non-Roma individuals (or societies) but by

[1] It must be clarified that *Caló* should be considered as a dialect of *Romanes* or a so-called para-*Romanes*. As a consequence of centuries-long persecution of Roma throughout Spain, the Spanish population of Roma has forgotten the original *Romanes* but maintained a variation of the language which uses Spanish grammar and includes lexical terms originating from *Romanes*.

[2] "Gadjo" (singular masculine), "Gadji" (singular feminine) and "Gadje" (plural).

some it is considered pejorative. In Spain, instead of the word "Gadjo" the term "Payo" is used most often to refer to non-Romani population[3].

Finally, in quotes and citations, I maintain the original spelling and terminology used.

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusions.

In **Chapter Two, "Theoretical Approaches to Romani activism, ethnic mobilization and associationism",** I provide insight into the concepts and their underlying theoretical conceptualization of the key terms relevant for the object of study. I provide an initial framing of Romani activism, to situate my discussion in what I consider as expressions of Romani ethnic mobilization. Subsequently, drawing from existing scholarship, I engage in conceptually and theoretically situating the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, by analysing various definitions and approaches. I then propose my own theoretical model, through dissecting one of the most dominant definitions of ethnic mobilization provided by Susan Olzak (first published in 1983). In this process, I establish five key elements which compose ethnic mobilization and which I treat as macro-variables. I also provide an original contribution by conceptualizing ethnic mobilization as a multi-dimensional and multi-directional process. Finally, I conceptualize the term "Romani associative movement", situated at the intersection of theories of social movements and the literature on civil society. I treat the "Romani associative movements" as my units of analysis.

Chapter Three, "Methodology and fieldwork", is divided into three sub-sections. In the first, I present my methodology and research design, describing the inter-disciplinary and comparative approaches and presenting the design of data collection. In the next sub-section, I describe in detail the process of field-work. I begin with a personal equation, describing my professional and activist involvement, as well as providing information regarding my previous research experiences. These previous experiences in different roles of diverse character, as I argue, have also informed this dissertation. I then provide specific information with regards to the field-work conducted in Spain and in Colombia. Finally, in the last sub-section, I provide an insight into the process of data analysis and triangulation, defining the objective and underlying questions and hypotheses. I also describe in detail the process of data analysis based on the theoretical-analytical model I have established.

In **Chapter Four, "Setting the scene: social and political context of contemporary policies and the Romani associative movement",** I provide the necessary description of a broad and complex environment in Europe and Latin America, which allows the specific case-studies of Romani ethnic mobilization to be situated within a wider context. More specifically, the objective of this chapter is to provide a description of the broader social, political, historical, cultural, legislative and economic contexts in which Romani ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves. Drawing from scholarship and recent literature on Roma, I present a comprehensive picture of the environment which conditions the dynamics of Romani ethnic mobilization. In doing so, I provide a critical analysis of the socio-political and policy approaches to Roma as a community, or to the so-called "Romani issues", from a regional/ continental perspective, namely in Europe and in Latin America. In the final section of this chapter, I

[3] It should be noted that in Spain the term "Gadjo" (spelled as "Gacho" o "Gachi") is also being used, most notably in Andalusia.

present an analysis of these broader socio-political contexts of Europe and Latin America in which Romani ethnic mobilization takes place, enabling me to disclose how multiple international forces influence the emergence, shape and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries.

Chapters Five and Six present the findings from the case-studies. In **Chapter Five, "Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain**", I provide empirical evidence, and discuss and contextualize my findings with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization. In **Chapter Six, "Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia",** I present and discuss the findings regarding the Romani ethnic mobilization there. Both chapters have a similar composition in which I discuss the actors and structures of Romani ethnic mobilization, the frames of collective identity and collective interests, strategies of collective action and the question of timing and external factors conditioning the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization. Both chapters present my empirical findings from the field-work conducted, illustrated and supported with the data collected.

In **Chapter Seven, "Romani ethnic mobilization from a comparative perspective: Discussion",** I engage in a comparative analysis of findings presented in the two previous chapters. More specifically, the objective of this chapter is to discuss the empirical findings from both case studies from a comparative perspective, identifying similarities, synergies and differences as well as their causes. I also aim to critically asses and contrast these findings from a theoretical standpoint. Finally, I identify possible contributions and provide an additional body of knowledge to the study of ethnic mobilization. This concluding chapter is divided into two sub-sections. In the first section, I focus on developing a comparative perspective of findings from both countries, analysing differences and similarities against the backdrop of theoretical assumptions embraced initially; this section follows the analytical model which I have developed. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss my contributions to the field with regards to the understanding of ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process.

In the final chapter, **Chapter Eight, "Conclusions",** I recapitulate the findings and conclusions of this dissertation, providing a brief synthesis. I also consider the possible academic and social impact of my research and outline the potential future lines of research.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO ROMANI ACTIVISM, ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AND ASSOCIATIONISM

2.1 Ethnic mobilization – definitions and approaches

Drawing a clear-cut definition of what ethnic mobilization actually is inevitably causes difficulties. There are different aspects of ethnic mobilization which the academic literature deals with: collective ethnic behaviour, ethnic separatist party vote, ethnic autonomous movement, ethnic conflicts, ethnic nationalism. For some, ethnic mobilization is related to political processes (typically of formal and electoral politics), and is associated closely with theories of political mobilization. The Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science defines political mobilization as: "the activity of rousing masses of people both to express themselves politically and also to undertake political action" (Bealey 1999).

Under this approach, ethnic mobilization is concerned principally with formal politics and the ability to influence existing institutions of power through collective action via formally established channels (for example by mobilizing votes during elections). With regards to Roma, Vermeersch (2006) also uses this term, although his understanding of what is in fact political is very broad, embracing in his analysis actions which take place outside of formal politics as well.

Others perceive ethnic mobilization as a type of a social movement, in which ethnicity and collective ethnic identity becomes a key ingredient. Under such an approach, the term refers rather to collective actions with "some degree and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority" (Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007: 11).

Consequently, ethnic mobilization is often used interchangeably with a number of different terms such as: "ethnic movement" (Olzak 2001), "political mobilization of ethnicity" or "ethno-political mobilization" (Cartrite 2003), leading to further terminological confusion.

Although definitions of ethnic mobilization may differ in terms of what is emphasized most, all of them include two essential elements: (1) ethnicity, and (2) mobilization. Ethnicity is a defining element of ethnic mobilization – it is the existence of a distinct identity which differentiates the group from others, enabling ethnic mobilization. "A key identifying feature of ethnic mobilization (as compared to mobilization along class, regional, occupational, or some other lines) is that claims are made based upon particular identity of boundary, defined by the presence of racial or ethnic markers" (Olzak, 2006: 37). In the process of ethnic mobilization, distinct ethnic identity acquires a political dimension and becomes activated as a resource for collective mobilization (Veredas 2004). Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that identity is both a category of social practice and a category of analysis and as such bears a "multivalent, even contradictory theoretical burden" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000:8). Brubaker further reminds us that "ethnicity, race and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals—as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring 'groups' encourages us to do—but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms" (Brubaker, 2002:167). He proposes to critically "rethink ethnicity"

beyond reification of boundaries or essentializing, and inevitably homogenizing, perspectives on ethnicity. He challenges the concept, which he refers to as "groupism", which leads to the perception of ethnic groups as internally homogeneous and externally bounded. He rather shifts the perspective towards "groupness", paying attention to identifications (rather than identities), categorisations (rather than "shared culture") and the process of making and re-making groups, concluding that ethnicity (like race and nations) are not "things in the world" but ways of seeing, interpreting and representing the social world (Brubaker 2002; Brubaker 2004). Such an approach allows to take into account the political, social cultural and psychological contexts as well as various types of agencies which affect this process. These discussions are important to understanding how ethnicity can be activated in a process of ethnic mobilization. Such understanding of ethnicity as relational, processual and dynamic is at the heart of this dissertation.

On the other hand, mobilization is "the capacity to harness resources (including solidarity, organizations and material resources) in an effort to reach some collective goals" (Olzak, 2007:668). Canel defines mobilization as "the process by which a group assembles resources (material and/or non-material) and places them under collective control for the explicit purpose of pursuing the group's interests through collective action" (Canel, 1997:207). On the other hand, drawing from the literature on new social movements, della Porta and Diani argue that "the capacity for mobilization depends either on material resources (work, money, concrete benefits, services) or on the non-material resources (authority, moral engagement, faith, friendship) available to the group" (D Della Porta & Diani, 2009:8).

The interplay and relationship that these two elements hold with each other, allows for a greater understanding of the nature of ethnic mobilization. Scholars are still to agree whether the existence of collective ethnic identity is a prerequisite for mobilization or *vice versa*. Recent scholarship suggests that group identity can be analysed "as both an important precursor and as a consequence of mobilization" (Olzak, 2006: 38).

In order to explain the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, scholars have typically drawn from theories about social movements. Vermeersch (2011) but also Olzak (1983), among many other scholars[4], have

[4] For example, Esteve (Esteve 2010) and Dietz (Dietz 1999b), among others, opted for another way of explaining the diverse theoretical strands in the study of social movements – including ethnic ones, defining two major and most influential schools, namely: 1) The so-called "American school" – represented by scholars such as Tilly, Tarrow, McAdam, McCarty, Olson (Theoretical approaches of resources mobilization theory and political opportunities structure); 2) The so-called "European school" – represented by scholars such as Offe, Touraine, Melucci (Theoretical approaches of the so-called "new social movements"). On the other hand, Gibb distinguishes four main "schools" or "traditions" in the field of social movements: collective behaviour perspective, resource mobilization theory, new social movements and the political process model (Gibb, 2001). Furthermore, others pointed out to the big differences between perspectives adopted by social sciences in studying social movements in Latin America in comparison to those adopted in Europe or North America (Goirand 2009).

tried to delineate the main theoretical strands regarding the literature of ethnic mobilization, defining 4 such main "schools" of thought. Following Vermeersch's typology, I will briefly review these approaches:

1) *The culturalist perspective* emphasizes the significance of strong subjective bonding and values within ethnic groups for shaping the lines of ethnic mobilization. This approach is close to primordialism. Ethnic mobilization is perceived as a natural reflection of cultural structure and ultimately it is the cultural content that is considered determinant for a group's pattern of mobilization (L. E. Harrison and Huntington 2000). Critics of this approach argue that culture or cultural essence is too diffuse to be used as a variable (Glazer, 2000:223). Others point to the fact that this approach is tautological. Furthermore, this approach is often rejected because of its inability to perceive culture and identity as dynamic and fluid, rather than stable properties. Also, this approach fails to account for the role of agency.
2) *The reactive ethnicity perspective* uses an economic perspective to argue that the primary cause of ethnic mobilization lies in the coincidence of ethnic bonding and relative deprivation. The rise of ethnic mobilization is seen as a process prompted by unequal division of resources along ethnic lines. Ethnic antagonism is generated by competition (Drury 1994). Critics of this approach argue that economic disadvantage is not a sufficient condition for the occurrence of ethnic mobilization – the level of mobilization does not seem to be dependent of the level of disadvantage. Furthermore, ethnic mobilization also occurs among groups which are not economically disadvantaged (Piven and Cloward, 1995; Cougghlan and Samarasinghe, 1991; after: (Vermeersch 2011)).
3) *The ethnic competition/ resource mobilization perspective* – focuses on leaders making rational calculations about their identity and invoking ethnicity in their struggle for resources and power. The mobilization of ethnic groups in collective action is effected by leaders who pursue a political enterprise (Barth 1994). Usually this approach regards ethnic group identity not so much as a pre-existing fact but as a phenomenon which arises, or gives new meaning to collective identity through the process of mobilization. Self-proclaimed group leaders invoke an ethnic group identity or apply new meaning and interest-based connotations to existing ethnic terms – identity and interests are mutually reinforced (Bell, 1975, after: (Vermeersch 2011)). Ethnic activists or ethnopolitical entrepreneurs 'produce' ethnic groups, not the other way around. It is an instrumentalist perspective – ethnicity is seen as a calculation of social, economic, and political profits carried out by political elites (Nagel 1997). Critics of this approach point to the fact that this model does not explicitly account for the role of external factors (political elites and the State) and ignores the structural context of contentious politics. Furthermore, this approach questions the importance of ancestry and traditions in ethnicity, denying its relevance in the process of collective identity forming.

4) *The political process perspective* emphasizes the role of macro-politics, especially the external context consisting of the institutional environment (political opportunity structure) and the dominant political discursive context (framing processes) (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; S. Tarrow, 1994). This approach is inspired by the literature on social movements which emphasizes the articulation of identity and awareness of the influence of power relations in the creation of identity (Cohen and Arato 1995). Like competition theory, it regards a number of organizational aspects as important: the activities of leaders, their resources, their ability to make claims and garner the support of the masses. Ethnic mobilization is seen as a two-way relationship between political action and interests which are shaped by the institutional environment and dominant discursive context. Ethnic identity is utilized as a basis for mobilization in search of access to political power, material resources and control of representation (McAdam et al., 1996). Two elements are the backbone of the political process perspective: the political opportunities structure and the framing.

- *The political opportunities perspective (POS)* is defined as the formal and informal conditions, the stable properties of the institutional environment, such as: state propensity to repression, the openness of institutionalized systems (official recognition of ethnic groups, existence of special channels for ethnic representation), the existence of elite allies or shifts in political alliances (McAdam et al., 1996). March and Olsen introduce the concept of the "logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 2006) which argues that the strategies and preferences of the actors are determined by institutions: "Institutions create or socially construct the actors' identities, belongings, definitions of reality and shared meanings" (Rothestein, 1998:147). However, critics of this approach point to the fact that the formal and informal internal organizational processes of ethnic mobilization, as well as the question of strategic choices, leadership, representativeness being left out (Bousetta, 2001 in:(Vermeersch 2011)). Jenson also argued that the institutional political context is overemphasized (Jenson 1998). That is why the POS approach introduces another variable of 'framing'.
- *Framing:* draws from the writings of Erving Goffman, who understands "framing" as a scheme of interpretation (Goffman 1974). In the study of social movements, importance is given to deliberative processes of framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; McAdam et al., 1996). Frames and meanings are constructed by leaders "to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and demobilize antagonists" (Benford and Snow 2000):198). Framing is always negotiated and to a degree is influenced by the complex, multi-organizational and multi-institutional arenas (Ibid.). Frame diffusion (how frames are spread) and frame resonance (how frames become effective) are affected by the

cultural and political environment. Movement identity is created through framing and constituencies do not exist until they are defined through an identity frame (Jenson 1998).

- This approach, arguably the most popular among scholars in recent years, is also not without its flaws. Escobar, for example, has emphasized, that there is a widespread view among theorists that "social movements cannot be understood independently of culture" (Escobar, 1992:405), arguing that the analysis of social movements has to account not only for political aspects but should pay equal attention to cultural elements. Some critics point to the fact that political process approach denies the existence of identity prior to the mobilization process. Goodwin and Jasper also underline the fact that movements which do not target the state as their main opponent are poorly served by the political process model (J. Goodwin and Jasper 1999). Others argue that some movements seem to respond more to threat than to opportunity ((J. Goodwin and Jasper 2014)Meyer and Staggenbourg, 1996, in: (Goodwin & Jasper, 2004:123)).

A more recent trend which tries to overcome the theoretical and pragmatic divisions in the study of social movements and other forms of collective action is the introduction of the study of contentious politics. Contentious politics is defined as: "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, in which governments are approached either as targets, initiators of claims or third parties" (Tilly, 2008:5) and consists of the "public, collective making of consequential claims by connected clusters of persons on other clusters of persons or on major political actors, when at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a third party to the claims" (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2009:2). The definition of contentious politics refers to diverse types of collective political struggles; it includes social movements but also "less sustained forms of contention – like riots and strike waves - and more extensive ones—like civil wars, revolutions, and episodes of democratization—and it intersects with routine political processes—like elections and interest group politics" (Tarrow 2013). The introduction of contentious politics aims to synthesize different theoretical traditions of studying social movements and other forms of collective political action (including ethnic mobilization). Under this approach, these authors define 3 main components of contentious politics: interactions, claims and government. Three main properties of contentious politics are (although consensus is still to be reached): political opportunity structure, collective actors and performances and repertoires.

The vibrant discussions among scholars regarding the theoretical approaches, relevant variables and the very nature of social movements, is increasingly pointing to the need for greater synergies, rather than divisions, in scientific perspectives on social movements. In the academic literature, there has been widespread agreement already for some time that "each of these [different theoretical] approaches showed but one side of the coin" (Klandermans, 1991:17). In an attempt to harmonize the diverse theoretical perspectives, McAdam et al. (1996) propose an analytical model for comparative

studies of social movements. By analysing different theoretical approaches, the authors define three variables, which make such a comparative perspective possible, namely: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and cultural framings. This model synthesizes the competing leading theoretical paradigms of social movements – arguing that all three factors have been defined as key in the majority of different paradigms.

If ethnic movement theories draw from inquiries into social movements or can be in fact defined as a type of a social movement, then it is appropriate to adopt a similar approach.

2.2 Dimensions of ethnic mobilization

As a means of simplification, in an attempt to overcome these theoretical divisions and to operationalize the concept of ethnic mobilization for analytical purposes, I propose a slightly different approach. The model proposed incorporates and combines the main common features present in the majority of theories on social movements and ethnic mobilization (such as those described by McAdam et al., 1996), and at the same time allows for a detailed analysis of different components or *ingredients* of ethnic mobilization, relevant for this study. The point of departure for this model is the popular definition of Susan Olzak (1983) on ethnic mobilization: “**ethnic mobilization is a process in which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity (for example, skin color, language, customs) in pursuit of collective ends**”.

By dissecting this definition into separate elements we may ask: **Who** (leadership, formal structures such as organizations) mobilizes **whom** (identity frame), with **what** aim/ **why** (collective interests and goals) and **how** (strategy, through what activities)? An underlining question of great importance, absent but sensed in Olzak’s definition, is the question of **when**. The processes of ethnic mobilization do not happen in a vacuum but rather are influenced by a variety of external factors. Ethnic mobilization is also a dynamic process – changes and shifts in environment in which ethnic mobilization takes place (when) continuously affect the remaining components (who, whom, what for and how).

Breaking down the concept of ethnic mobilization into these ingredients enables a detailed analysis of relevant elements in a more transparent way, at the same time allowing for an insight into relationships which these components establish between each other in a rather dynamic manner. In order to clarify in detail what these components entail and how are they understood, I will now describe and conceptually embed these elements, linking them to relevant theories already exposed in the previous section.

2.2.a. Who – defining the actors

Ethnic mobilization requires some degree of organization – groups who engage in collective action do so through a number of formal and informal vehicles. Activist networks, non-governmental organizations, political parties, but also churches and unions, among many others, can become such vehicles, which provide platforms for collective action and guarantee some degree of continuity. They are the organizational expressions of collective agency, becoming actors who engage in direct

interactions with constituencies, targeted authorities and allies; they may become the spokesmen who represent collective claims in public spheres; they help to articulate the identified problems or grievances and set the agenda for collective goals to be pursued. These actors or vehicles are often referred to in academic literature as *mobilizing structures* (McAdam et al., 1996). Mobilizing structures are "those collective vehicles, formal and informal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (ibid.;3). Mobilizing structures are not only "social movement organizational forms" but also a range of micro-mobilizations with potential for generating mobilization, like family units, friendship networks, voluntary associations (McCarthy 1996). These micro-mobilizations are especially relevant for recruiting new followers to the movement. Leaders and activists must effectively choose mobilizing structures and successfully frame them as usable and appropriate to the social change required. These framings are both internal – directed towards adherents and activists of the movement itself – and external – including bystanders, opponents and authorities (ibid.). The so-called social movement organizations (SMOs) are crucial blocks of the mobilizing structures of a social movement – they are the formal side and a formal, organizational expression of the movement (Kriesi 1996). Kriesi (1996) defined 4 types of formal organizations of a social movement:

- SMOs: mobilize constituencies for collective action and do so with a political goal
- Supportive organizations: are service organizations, such as friendly media, churches, restaurants, educational institutions; they contribute to the movement indirectly
- Movement associations: are self-help organizations, voluntary associations, clubs created by the movement itself in order to cater to some daily needs of its members
- Parties and interest groups: they pursue political goals but normally do not depend on the direct participation of their constituencies for attaining these goals; they are specialized in political representation and normally do not have resources for the mobilization of their constituencies; they are typically carried out by the elites.

I introduce "the who" component with regards to the mobilizing structures, normally regarded as organized structures. Nonetheless, under this model "the who" component also refers to the agency of individual leaders or outstanding personalities who in one way or another contribute to the movement and its defined goals, which the mobilizing structures approach rarely takes into consideration. With regards to the subject of this dissertation – the Roma, I include under this variable all those formal and informal vehicles, organized and structured but also individual agency, involved directly in ethnic mobilization. These are, among others:

- Romani organizations[5] (voluntary associations, non-governmental and non-profit entities lead by Roma) of different profiles (cultural, educational, professional etc.) and scopes (local, regional, international etc.)
- Formal and informal activist networks
- Roma-lead institutions (such as museums, galleries, cultural centres, businesses)

[5] According to Roma Initiatives Office of the OSF, Romani organizations are those who have at least 50% of Roma in leadership structures (such as the Board). I adopt a similar approach.

- Leaders and activists, not-organized Roma elites, intellectuals, artists or others capable of influencing and advancing the common collective agenda
- Romani political parties
- Religious institutions

From this description I intentionally exclude pro-Roma organizations and entities. Pro-Roma organizations are typically lead by non-Roma but act in favour of the Romani community, through providing services, representing Roma claims and advocating for Roma rights. They interact in the same field of “Romani affairs” but they cannot be considered Romani mobilizing structures as they are not structures generated and lead by the Roma themselves (Kóczé and Rövid 2012). There is a strong sense of ethnic adscription of the actors aiming to represent Romani claims, and the division among actors is clearly defined along lines of (declared) ethnicity (or the perceived organizational identity of each actor, whether Roma, non-Roma or mixed). The arena of Romani affairs, understood as a field of interaction between actors, is described in subsequent chapters. For the moment it is important to underline that the so-called pro-Roma structures play an essential role in the overall ethnic mobilization and in the field of “Romani affairs” – they oftentimes shape the political and policy agendas, become (an) influential (at times even (a) dominant) voice(s) among the multiplicity of other actors involved, and commonly interact with communities. The emergence of the so-called “pro-Roma microcosm” (Kóczé and Rövid 2012) leads us to reflect critically and problematize the relationships which different types of actor, most notably Roma and non-Roma, establish with each other. Rather than including the pro-Roma organisations as a type of mobilizing structure, I consider them as *allies and partners*, who often become powerful and influential in supporting claims articulated as part of the Romani ethnic mobilization. Nonetheless, it should be noted that at times, instead of being allies they become competitors with Romani structures, struggling over influence, participation and funding. A problematization of this situation will be discussed in more detail later on in the text.

Thus, I consciously exclude the pro-Roma organizations from “Romani mobilizing structures”; nonetheless, they remain present in the analysis as actors which interact within the same field of activity. This dissertation focuses principally on understanding the way in which the Roma organize collectively; it is ultimately a question of leadership and ownership within the paradigm of Roma-lead change, focusing on the process driven (although not without external influence) by Romani people themselves.

Finally, in analysing the “who” component it should be underlined that the emergence, development, consolidation and/or decline of mobilizing structures is a dynamic process influenced by a variety of factors. Such a dynamic perspective into the “who” allows for an insight into the conditions which affect the shape and evolution of these structures over time.

2.2.b. Whom – the identity frame

Ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize constituencies for collective action. In order to do so effectively, leaders and activists need to define who the ones are who are targeted for mobilization. In this process it is necessary to delineate who “we” are as a group in order to construct

a common understanding of collective identity shared by the constituencies of the ethnic mobilization. This definition of collectivity is not self-evident – after all, not all groups with a distinct identity mobilize. "Collective identity involves the ability to distinguish (collective) self from the 'other' and to be recognized by those 'others'"(Flesher Fominaya, 2010:395). Ethnicity or shared ethnic identity can be activated as a powerful mobilizing tool, but only when it is skilfully crafted to accommodate commonly shared properties, interests and goals. This process is referred to in academic literature as *identity framing* (Benford & Snow, 2000; McAdam et al., 1996; Jensen, 1998). Powerful identity frames are constructed through discourses and narratives which articulate who "we are as a group", and may produce new meanings on the collective interpretation of "us". These frames often activate or underline the existence of a boundary which separates "us" from "them" – defining who we are inevitably determines "who we are not". Some activists engage in "boundary framing" (Hunt et al 1994:194; also see Silver 1997) and "adversarial framing" (Gamson 1995) — which seeks to delineate the boundaries between "good" and "evil" and construct movement protagonists and antagonists (Benford & Snow, 2000:616). Boundary framing takes places as much between "us" and "them" as well as within the movement groups themselves, in a process of consolidation (for example between more radical activists within a given group) (Flesher Fominaya 2010). Identity framing is also a dynamic process – frames of identity shift over time, become more or less exclusive, and have more or less rigid boundaries. McAdam et al, argue that "Participants frequently shift their collective definitions of who 'we' and 'they' are. They do so especially through two processes. First, they create new connections among individuals, networks, and previously constituted actors in the form of named coalitions, fronts, and organizations. Second, they activate, deactivate, and redraw boundaries separating one actor from other, creating collective stories about the two sides." (McAdam et al., 2009: 5)

Choosing an appropriate frame of identity may help to increase the mobilization potential – a concept which refers to "that part of the population which, because of its situation, has attitudes favourable to a movement or a certain issue" (Melucci, 1988:339). This is also important because of mutliple individual identities and its intersectionality with identity markers different than the ethnic ones, causing internal diversity within the constructed "us" frame. The process of construction of collective identity (or what Bernstein reffers to as "identity for empowerment[6]") "is complicated by the diversity of the group members and is facilitated or hampered by both internal and external factors" (Bernstein, 2008:281).

[6] Bernsetin also distinguishes between different analytical levels of collective identity in social movements, pointing to the fact that identity may well be used as a strategy and as a goal, and not only as an "identity for empowerment" or the collective frame of who "we" are as a group. She does clarify however, that "content of identity for empowerment is critically important for social movements because it affects who is mobilized and what issues are deemed as valid and pursued" (pg.293). This argument is key to understanding how identity frames work and emphasizes that identity, interests and structures intersect and are in a constant interdependent relationship between each other (Bernstein 2008).

The conscousisly crafted identity frame can also be interpreted as “the public expression of self” (McDonald 2002). In this process, activists often engage in strategic essentialism (Spivak), using group identity as a basis for political and social struggle.

Some scholars have pointed out the importance of emotions and affective ties in collective identity formation (Goodwin & Jasper, 2014; Hunt & Benford, 2004). Others have stressed the importance of maintaining bonds of solidarity “through shared leadership, organization, ideologies and rituals (Flesher Fominaya 2010). “Symbolic resources as signifiers of collective identity” (Helman and Rapoport, 1997 in:(Flesher Fominaya 2010)) also become relevant.

It has already been mentioned that scholars are still to agree whether collective identity in social movements is a pre-requisite or indeed a product of mobilization. (Or can they be both? See for example Flesher Fominaya, 2010). Some scholars, such as Barany (2002) argue that collectively shared identity is a condition *sine qua non* of ethnic mobilization. Others, such as Saunders (Saunders 2008) question the existence of collective identity altogether: “Collective identity (in the singular) at the movement level does not exist, but collective identities do” (pg.232).

The frame of collective identity is of key importance for the potential success of ethic mobilization – both in terms of capacity to mobilize constituencies for action as well as for reaching collective goals. After all, not all of those who the mobilization claims to represent feel identified with the identity frame or are mobilized to participate in the struggle directly. Edelman, for example, argues that: “almost always it’s a small minority that participate in the movement who claims to represent their interests, and maybe even more importantly, it’s a small minority that feels identified with the movement” (Edelman, 2003:1).

The identity frame is of utmost relevance also for understanding Romani ethnic mobilization. Considering the enormous diversity of all groups considered as Roma, it is important to analyse how the Romani identity frame is constructed, paying attention to divergent or competing frames in different settings and the evolution of the Romani identity frame(s) over time; it is also important to underline that numerous narratives can be deployed simultaneously by different actors. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the existing narratives which convey identity frames are not shaped exclusively by Roma but by a number of other actors as well, among them the pro-Roma organizations, scholars and policy-makers. The diverse discourses on Romani identity shaped by scholarly discourse, the media and policy also affect the way in which Romani actors themselves formulate their identity frames. This dissertation will look into these diverse narratives formulated by diverse stakeholders, paying attention to the way in which they influence the self-articulated discourses shaped by Romani actors themselves.

2.2.c. What for and why – objectives of ethnic mobilization as a frame of collective interests

Alongside the identity frame, which enables the identification of “who we are mobilizing”, it is also key to craft frames of “what are we mobilizing for”. It is not enough to define a collective identity of the

group – a *frame of collective interests* is also necessary. Frames of collective interests can be understood as a way of interpreting or constructing the meaning of reality, by identifying problems and solutions which are experienced collectively by the group. Benford and Snow (2000) differentiate between “diagnostic framing” – which identifies problems – and “prognostic framing” – in which perspectives are given as to how to remedy the defined problem. These frames are consciously constructed and set the agenda for ethnic mobilization, through providing possible reasonable and feasible solutions. Through this process, specific goals are defined which should be pursued collectively.

Regarding diagnostic frames, Benford and Snow make reference to a vast body of academic work dedicated to the so-called “injustice frames”, which “call attention to the ways in which movements identify the ‘victims’ of a given injustice and amplify their victimization” (Benford & Snow, 2000:615). Such diagnostic frame, common in social movements, directs its attention to identification and attribution of blame or responsibility for the injustice experienced by the group.

The prognostic frames need to include a perspective of collective benefits which ethnic mobilization may provoke. A realistic prognostic of what can be accomplished, leading to an improvement of the current situation, is a strong motivational incentive.

According to Strijbis, “Typically, ethnic claims consist of demands for affirmative action, functional or territorial decentralization or recognition of nationalist claims to territorial separatism or irredentism. But demands for integration into supranational institutions and the adoption of international norms also figure prominently among the claims of ethnic minorities” (Strijbis, 2012:35).

Nonetheless, the collective interests are not given – they need to be consciously identified and articulated in order to become collective goals. The choice of these frames is relevant and needs to be strategically made - in order to increase its resonance, the collective interests frame needs to reflect the interests and grievances of the groups’ members. Framing processes “are deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed: Frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose — to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, to acquire resources, and so forth. Strategic efforts by social movement organizations to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers were initially conceptualized as “frame alignment processes”(Benford & Snow, 2000:624).

The identity frame and collective interests frame are closely intertwined. This specific interpretation of reality, laid out through the collective interest frame, may become part of the group’s collective identity. In fact, Melucci defines collective identity “as a process in which the actors produce common cognitive frameworks that enable them to assess the environment and to calculate the costs and benefits of the action” (Melucci, 1988:343), making identity and interests frames inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

Collective interests frames also include an additional component – the so-called “motivational framing”, which provides “ ‘a call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action”

(Benford & Snow, 2000: 617). Collective identity and interests frames together produce collective action frames which are defined as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (Benford & Snow, 2000:614).

2.2.d. How – strategies, performances and repertoires

In order to pursue goals encompassed and articulated through the collective interest frame, the actors (the mobilizing structure, leaders) need to develop strategies of collective action through which to pursue these goals. In the literature on contentious politics, these strategies are referred to as *performances* (McAdam et al., 2009) and are defined as a whole range of actions which collectives may follow, such as petitions, public meetings, press statements, demonstrations, lobbying, etc., in order to achieve pre-established goals. Taylor argues that a distinctive feature of social movements is the use of protest; he argues that “Protest can encompass a wide variety of actions, ranging from conventional strategies of political persuasion such as lobbying, voting, and petitioning; confrontational tactics such as marches, strikes, and demonstrations that disrupt the day-to-day life of a community; violent acts that inflict material and economic damage and loss of life; and cultural forms of political expression such as rituals, spectacles, music, art, poetry, film, literature, and cultural practices of everyday life” (Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007:263).

According to some scholars, “within any particular regime collective claim making clusters in a remarkably small number of performances” (McAdam et al., 2009:5). These sets of performances can be clumped together into *repertoires*, often referred to as “repertoires of contention” which can be understood as types of different tactics widely recognized, developed over time and typically used in collective action. These repertoires correspond to the power-holders “as governments and other major political actors regularly exert controls over various known performances, attempting to prescribe some, tolerate others, and forbid still others “(ibid.:5).

The tactical repertoires available to social movements are defined by three distinctive features: contestation, intentionality and collective identity (Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007:268). Leaders must choose and adopt particular forms of collective action – a particular set of tactical repertoires - which are perceived as viable for the goals to be achieved.

In should be noted, however, that collective action repertoires should not only target the opponent, such as the state or authorities. In fact, tactical repertoires are bi-directional – as much as they are directed towards the opponent they are also directed downwards – towards the constituencies. If ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize support and harness resources, it is also important to analyse in what ways the tactical repertoires are employed internally. “To consider the construction of collective identity as one of the defining features of a tactical repertoire means recognizing that a movement’s particular forms of protest are not only directed to external targets, but they also have an internal movement building dimension (della Porta and Diani 1999).” (Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007:270). Nonetheless, in scholarship on social movements this aspect is recognized but often, and mistakenly, treated marginally. The capacity to adapt effective repertoires internally,

towards the potential constituencies and supporters of the movement is essential, since “a movement’s ability to mobilize will, of course, influence its ability to achieve its goals” (Bernstein, 2008:293). Furthermore, tactical repertoires can also be deployed with the objective of mobilizing sideways, searching for external support from strategic allies, which can provide further leverage to specific claims and demands (Rucht 2007). Therefore, while analysing social movements’ performances and repertoires it is necessary not only to assess their effectiveness in terms of achieving goals – the potential success of social movements is, in fact, dependant on their capacity to mobilize support in the first place. With regards to scholarship on Romani ethnic mobilization, this aspect has been specifically overlooked so far.

2.2.e. When – the transversal variable/ external factors

There is a general consensus among scholars that ethnic mobilization does not take places in a vacuum. The question of its emergence, development and transformation over time is, in fact, dependant on external factors or circumstances in which it takes place. Expressions of ethnic mobilization should not be treated as independent events but should be assessed in relation to the political, historical and spatial contexts at a concrete point in time. Changes in these overall contexts under which ethnic mobilization emerges and takes place often create “windows of opportunity”, enabling new possibilities for collective action. This overall context is often regarded in the literature as the *political opportunities structure*, and is strongly inspired by theories of the political process perspective. A political opportunities structure refers to formal and informal political conditions, such as stable properties of the institutional environment (for example, state propensity to repression or the openness of the institutional system) or more volatile factors such as the existence of elite allies or shifts in political alliances. Tarrow defines political opportunities as “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success or failure” (Tarrow, 1994:85). Numerous analytical models have been developed over time by scholars in order to crystallize which elements of the political environment are determinant for social or ethnic movements. Kriesi et al., (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Giugni, 1995), for example, point to the importance of existing national cleavages, the character of formal institutional structures (such as parliament, public administration, the existence of democratic procedures), the structure of alliances and the prevailing informal strategies of the State in dealing with social movements. McAdam, in an effort to synthesize the diverse conceptions regarding the dimensions of political opportunities (based on the work of such prominent scholars as Tarrow, Kriesi or Brockett) developed a consensual list of the features of political opportunity:

- “The relative openness or closure of the institutional political system
- The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity
- The presence or absence of elite allies
- The state’s capacity and propensity for repression” (McAdam, 1996:27)

What is important in the political opportunities structure approach is its dynamic dimension, namely the changes and shifts which these components undergo over time. Therefore, political opportunities are defined "by both enduring and volatile features of a given political system" (McAdam et al., 1996:13).

Such a dynamic and relational perspective is necessary to understand ethnic mobilization – the shifting conditions of the broad political system influence the shape, nature, strategies, discourses and the very objectives of collective action at a given moment in time. Furthermore, the political environment and collective action are in an interdependent relationship of mutual influence. The structure of political opportunities is not independent of social movements, rather "the structure of political opportunities is now more a product of the interactions of the movement with its environment than a simple reflection of changes occurring elsewhere" (McAdam et al., 1996:13). Furthermore, it should be noted that opportunities for mobilization may well be conflated with opportunities for policy change, or that opportunities may at the same time be in concert with mobilization and formal policy change (. Meyer and Minkoff 2004).

Regime change, shifts in political alignments, the introduction of new legislation, may all produce political opportunities. However, in order for these changes to translate into collective action, these shifts need to be perceived and framed as opportunities in the first place. The availability of political opportunities does not automatically translate into increased protest (Koopmans, 2007:24). Changes in political environment in some instances may produce opportunities for collective action, and in others may constrain them (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). Furthermore, what "provokes mobilization for one movement or constituency may depress mobilization of another, and be completely irrelevant to a third" (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004:1461). Leaders must effectively recognize and frame political opportunity as such, in order to capitalize on shifting contexts and translate them into collective action.

Additionally, it should be noted that the emergence of "political opportunities" is not limited exclusively to the national scope. On the contrary, processes of globalization and growing interdependence between state-bound politics and international developments, leads to the increasing impact and role of international politics on domestic affairs (Maiba 2004; Sadurski 2004; Schöpflin 2000). That is why, in keeping with recent scholarship, in analysing the "when" variable I move beyond a state-centric perspective and analyse concrete developments vis-à-vis international contexts.

Numerous scholars have pointed to the fact that the "political opportunities" approach, due to its enormous popularity, has become an overly-used term, which is applied without scientific rigor as to what actually can be considered a political opportunity. Goodwin and Jasper point to the structural bias of political process theory (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999) while others argue that "the lack of consensus on the relevant dimensions of the concept of political opportunities has resulted in their exponential growth" (Porta & Diani, 2009:17). Meyer and Minkoff, on the other hand, argue that "this diversity of approaches may provide credible answers to particular problems, but it also produces a situation in which the same terms are used to describe completely different factors" and that "scholars use

different terms for the same phenomena and offer different understandings of which phenomena are relevant altogether” (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004:1460). Although significant steps have been undertaken (Kriesi et al., 2007; Della Porta & Diani, 2009) with the aim of synthesizing, delineating and specifying the dimensions of political opportunities and the relationship and co-relation between mobilization and political environments, scholarly consensus has still not been reached.

I introduce the concept of “when” as a transversal and overarching variable, which is significant and bears influence on the remaining elements of this model. The “when” draws strongly from literature on political opportunities structures, and should be understood as a dynamic process of constant interplay between the “when” variable (in space and time) and other elements. The appearance of specific political opportunities is analysed through a number of questions: for whom is the political opportunity relevant? With what aims? How is the political opportunity incorporated into frames of collective action (collective identity, collective interests)? How does it affect strategies of collective action employed at a specific moment? The underlying hypothesis is that political opportunities and ethnic mobilization are in a constant interplay with each other and that changes in ethnic mobilization can be seen as a dynamic process of adaptation, alignment and transformation to the ever-changing political and social environments. Koopmans provides guidelines for this model in describing “mechanisms of strategic change”, as well as the dynamics of diffusion, and contractive and transformative mechanisms (Koopmans 2007). Kriesi, too, provides a dynamic framework for studying political context by analysing “mechanisms linking structures and configurations to agency and action” (Kriesi, 2004:77).

With regards to Romani ethnic mobilization, the “when” component will be key in analysing the process of the emergence of Romani ethnic mobilizing structures (such as the Romani NGOs) and their development, evolution and/or decline over time. By situating key dates (identified moments of political opportunity) on a timeline and relating them to the stages of development of specific moments in Roma ethnic mobilization, it will be possible to define correlations between them from a dynamic perspective. This approach will enable assessment as to whether specific political opportunities provide incentives (and are recognized as such) to the actors of Romani ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, the political opportunity structure will include other important external factors which are not necessarily linked to the political environment of nation-state administration, such as the impact of international developments and their influence on state politics or ethnic mobilization (diffusion), as well as the role of private funding in shaping the objectives, activities and strategies of Romani ethnic mobilization. In fact, as argued in the following chapters, international developments have played a significant role in advancing and creating political opportunities for Roma, especially in the context of EU Roma-related politics (Kóczé and Rövid 2012; Rövid 2011).

Recapitulating, below is the schematic table which synthesizes the proposed model and how it relates to concepts, theories and different paradigms:

Table 1. Schematic table of the analytical model of ethnic mobilization:

COMPONENT AND UNDERLYING QUESTION	DEFINING FEATURES	RELATED THEORIES/ CONCEPTS
WHO • **What actors and vehicles are mobilizing?**	• Formal and informal structures • Individuals • NGOs • Political parties • Networks • Churches	• Mobilizing structures • Agency • Micro-mobilization • Social movement organizations
WHOM • **Who is being mobilized?**	• Constituencies • Adherents • Supporters • Allies • Opponents	• Identity frame • Collective identity formation • Political dimension of ethnicity • Boundary framing • Adversarial framing • Narratives
WHAT FOR AND WHY • **What are the aims of mobilization? What are we mobilizing for?**	• Objectives and goals • Reasons for mobilizing • Claims and demands • Problems and solutions • Discourses	• Collective interests frame • Diagnostic frames • Prognostic frames • Injustice frames • Frame alignment process • Motivational framing
HOW • **What strategies are employed to pursue these goals?**	• Strategies • Collective actions such as protests, lobbying and advocacy, press statements etc.	• Collective action • Performances • Repertoires of contention • Tactical repertoires • Bi-directional repertoires (external and internal)
WHEN • **When does ethnic mobilization occur**	• "Windows of opportunity" • Political environment	• Political opportunities structure • Political process theory

and how does it evolve?	• Stable and unstable properties of political system • National cleavages • Shifts in political alliances	• Dynamic perspective • Mechanisms of strategic change

2.3 Ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process

Ethnic mobilization is ultimately about mobilizing – resources, human capital, support – in a variety of ways. What is important to note, however, is that it is a complex process, which takes place in multiple directions. In this context, it is relevant to analyse who is being mobilised and who the target of mobilization is. Collective action typically targets the opponent, such as the state or the authorities, with the objective of accomplishing shared collective interests. However, as much as these actions are directed towards the opponent they are also directed downwards – towards the constituencies. If ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize support and harness resources, it is also important to analyse in what ways the mobilization tactics are employed internally. The capacity to adapt effective repertoires internally, to the potential constituencies and supporters of the movement is essential, since "a movement's ability to mobilize will, of course, influence its ability to achieve its goals" (Bernstein, 2008:293).

This aspect is often overlooked when analysing the effectiveness of ethnic mobilization – typically movements are evaluated based on the success of their actions and the ultimate fulfilment of the demands voiced by the collective. However, the ability to effectively mobilize the constituencies – taking advantage of the potential agency of the communities themselves – may, in fact, improve the overall capacity of collective action. Furthermore, effective mobilization of strategic allies, through coordinating collective struggles across movements and interests, ultimately increases the political leverage of these struggles.

Therefore, ethnic mobilization is a process which takes place in different directions – internal and external. I propose to analyse these multiple directions of ethnic mobilization based on the model proposed below:

- MOBILIZATION DOWNWARDS (or internal mobilization) – is the overall sum of efforts directed at mobilizing constituencies, in this case the Romani population. It refers to the ability to empower members of the group, activate their potential and their direct involvement; fostering ownership by the constituency of the ethnic mobilization efforts and their leaders.

- EXTERNAL MOBILIZATION:

    - UPWARD MOBILIZATION – refers to the efforts which are directed to external targets, typically associated with power-holders and the State. It refers to the ability to

advocate for a desired change, assuming the responsibility and power of the State to provide responses to the collective interests of a group. In the case of Roma ethnic mobilization, the typical target of mobilization is the State and intergovernmental structures, especially the EU.

- MOBILIZATION SIDEWAYS – refers to actions directed at mobilizing external support by establishing alliances, generating support and joining forces with other actors (external to Roma mobilization) for the same collective goal. Typically, it is based on building strategic alliances and aligning specific collective interests with other social demands and movements. Sideways mobilization is important as it provides greater political leverage in advocating for collective demands. After all, "a set of actors with similar goals strengthen their position when coordinating their activities or even joining forces" (Rucht 2007: 202). Furthermore, ethnic mobilization can also direct its attention towards bystanders – the un-involved non-Romani masses, associated with the majority society in order to foster public support for Romani claims, change public attitudes or challenge existing stereotypes.

In order to understand these dynamics better, it is important to understand how the actors who are driving the process of ethnic mobilization (in this context, mostly Romani NGOs) relate to the external world which surrounds them. We can differentiate between three types of actors with which the mobilizing structures establish and maintain a different type of relationship:

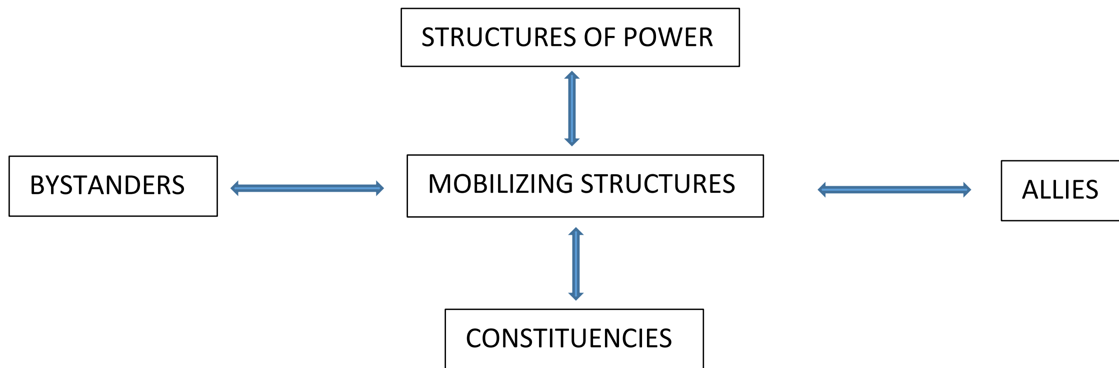
1) Broadly understood institutions and structures of power, which typically become the main targets of ethnic mobilization and towards which mobilizing structures direct their claims and demands. Often these structures are regarded as opponents (McCarthy 1996) and are associated with formal structures of power such as the state administration, public authorities, intergovernmental organizations etc.

2) The constituency which the mobilizing structures represent and engage with. They refer to the potential adherents of the ethnic movement, in this case broadly understood, the Romani community.

3) Allies, which are external to the ethnic mobilization itself but who may share common objectives and collective interests and may support the ethnic mobilization in variety of ways. Nonetheless, rather than mobilizing broadly understood majority societies, the conceptualization of allies refers to specific structures, organizations and institutions which act or have the potential to act as stakeholders.

Schematically, this relationship can be represented as presented in the figure below:

Figure 1. Schematic figure of ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process



The process of ethnic mobilization is multi-directional and multi-layered, also because the relationship which mobilizing structures establish with different sets of actors (type 1,2 and 3) is also bi-directional. More specifically, there is a constant interplay between the mobilizing structures and the actors with which they engage which influences the actors involved mutually. It is also a dynamic process which transforms actively over time.

These diverse directions of mobilization have been often overlooked by scholars, especially with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization. The potential success of an ethnic mobilization depends on the capacity to effectively mobilize in these three directions. This dissertation aims at gaining insight into these three levels of mobilization – the five elements of ethnic mobilization presented in the previous sections have been traced in all three levels of mobilization, in an attempt to understand the complexity of Romani ethnic mobilization.

2.4 Framing Romani activism

Although the first signs of Romani activism can be traced back over a century (the first Romani associations were set up in Bulgaria in the beginning of the 20th century, (Marushiakova and Popov 2005), it wasn't until relatively recently that this phenomenon became widespread. Throughout the past few decades, and especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Romani groups across Europe increasingly started to carve out spaces of socio-political participation and representation, searching for a political voice on behalf of this group. The transition to democracy, increased interest of international agencies such as the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe or the EU in issues related to minority-rights, as well as the appearance of "participation discourse" in European governance (Goodin, 2008; Steffek, n.d.; EC 2001:16) have created opportunities for direct involvement by Romani groups in the political affairs which affect them.

The Roma themselves have responded to this shifting context by searching for ways of representing the collective claims and interests of this community both nationally, as well as in the international

arena – hence the proliferation of different expressions of Romani activism. In this process of transition from a passive collection of individuals to the emergence of Romani agency as active protagonists in social and political affairs, the Roma have applied different strategies and used a variety of vehicles to communicate their interests and claims. Arguably, these efforts have been effective to some degree – Roma have increasingly become recognized as active agents and political subjects in public affairs and are involved in policy-making processes. Even if the principles behind these efforts, such as "For Roma, with Roma" (of the OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan), often sound like empty slogans, nonetheless, it signals a change in approach towards the Romani community by recognizing the potential of Romani agency, both individual and collective.

However, when speaking of the plethora of different expressions of Romani activism – from NGOs, to political parties, from public protests through lobbying and advocacy, from community initiatives to involvement in transnational networks – under which theoretical paradigm should it be interpreted? The question is more important and the answer more complex than it may seem at first glance.

In the literature regarding Roma, different theoretical approaches have been used in order to explain the phenomenon of Romani ethnic activism: ranging from identity politics, ethnic mobilization, social movement, civil society, political activism, politics of recognition etc. (Vermeersch 2006; van Baar 2011b; McGarry 2012; Kóczé and Rövid 2012; Kóczé 2012a; Rövid 2011; Barany 2002a; T. Acton and Ryder 2013; Guy 2013; Trehan and Sigona 2010). In fact, there are vibrant discussions among scholars as to which theoretical approach is most suitable to describe, and theoretically embed, this phenomenon. Arguably, this lack of consensus is due to two reasons: (1) conceptual and terminological confusion, and (2) disagreement regarding the nature of Romani activism.

So what is activism? Gellner (Gellner, 2009:1) defines it as a "practice of campaigning to re-make the world in line with a consciously articulated programme". Activism can take on different institutional forms and be expressed through a variety of actions. Ethnic activism therefore, is triggered and centred around features of ethnic identity, collectively shared by members of the group. Activism is often associated with social movements, and word clusters such as "social movement activism" are commonly found in the academic literature (see for example (Olesen, 2005; Smith, 1996). Activism is also frequently referred to in the scholarship on civil society, as it is often organized around non-governmental organizations.

When it comes to the phenomenon of Romani activism, we can find a number of excellent pieces of academic literature dedicated to this topic (see for example (Vermeersch 2006; McGarry 2012; van Baar 2011b; Barany 2002b; Trehan and Sigona 2010; Guy 2013). In analysing this phenomenon, scholars draw from a number of different disciplines and theoretical paradigms, and often focus on different aspects or expressions of Romani activism. There seems to be a disagreement, however, on what the nature of Romani activism is and consequently, which term is most adequate to describe it. In a vast portion of the literature on Romani activism, the term "movement" is associated with it (for example, "the Romani movement"(Marushiakova and Popov 2005; Vermeersch 2006). However, there are some voices which question whether Romani activism can in fact be considered a type of a social

movement (Barany 2002a; Trehan and Sigona 2010). Social movements are often defined by the repertoire of actions which is applied in pursuit of its collective ends, "mainly via use of non-institutional means, such as conducting marches, boycotts, and sit-ins"(Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007: 7). In the case of Romani activism, however, a vast portion of the repertoires include using formal channels of influence, rather than those outside the institutions. Thus, some other scholars claim that it is more appropriate to speak of Romani movements (in plural), as the different expressions of Romani activism (international, national and local) which lack a convergent approach and seek different collective goals. From this perspective, the mobilization of the Roma is rather viewed as a process of the elites, detached from local communities and lacking representativeness (for example: Barany, 2002a; Kovats, 2003; Trehan, 2001).

In order to avoid confusion, I adopt the term **ethnic mobilization** with regards to Romani activism (which elsewhere may be referred to as Romani movement, Romani activism, Romani political mobilization, Romani ethno-politics etc.). This term, also frequently used in academic literature related to the Roma, may be helpful in describing this phenomenon and is broad enough to accommodate different forms of Romani activism. For me, therefore**, the overall continuum of Romani activism, observed throughout the world, ranging from community actions, cultural activities, political mobilization, and protest, among others, are considered an expression of ethnic mobilization among the Roma.**

2.5 The Romani associative movement as a unit of analysis

Ethnic mobilization can take on a variety of forms and expressions and can be linked to virtually all spheres of human interaction, ranging from entities as small as family units or friendship networks to structures as big as nation-wide ethnic political parties. Such broad scope of analysis, however, makes it difficult to locate different outbreaks of ethnic mobilization systematically under a unique analytical framework. In order to narrow down the scope of analysis, I locate the formal associative-type structures, such as non-governmental, non-profit associations, at the heart of the analysis. Three main reasons underline this choice.

Firstly, the non-governmental organization is among the most popular of formal structures which serves as a vehicle for social movement and ethnic mobilization alike. Social movements require some degree of organization and coordination – and this is often done through a variety of formal structures. Furthermore, social movements can be understood as "a form of collective action outside of institutional channels" (Kriesi, Soule, Snow, 2007: 6), which explains why the use of non-governmental organizations have been so prominent in social movements across the world. Social movement organizations (SMOs) "have proliferated at an incredibly rapid pace during the last three or four decades" and the most common forms are those of "small, local, mostly volunteer, SMOs" (McCarthy & Edwards, 2007:136). They quickly became "one of the chief vehicles for mobilization in claim making" (McAdam et al., 2009:21). In numerous studies of social movements, organizations play a central role not only instrumentally – as a resource or a vehicle enabling mobilization – but also as

"arenas of interaction", which "sustain distinctive cultures of interaction and shape trajectories of mobilization" (Minkoff & Clemens, 2007:157).

Furthermore, the past few decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of non-governmental organisations, not necessarily in the framework of social movements but as a trend of shaping more democratic societies, as part of the expansion of the civil society sector. This trend has often been referred to as the "NGO boom" (Dietz 1999b) or "global solidarity boom" (Salamon 1994). One of the factors contributing to this rapid development of civil society is the proliferation of the so-called "participation discourse"(Bereményi & Mirga, 2012: 31), endorsed and promoted internationally (for example by the EU, EC 2001). Also, some scholars argue about the importance of "networks of engagement", through which citizens can actively participate in the public domain, for the healthy functioning of democratic states (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). This "deliberative turn" in governance is perceived by some as having positive effects on citizen participation and involvement in public affairs (Goodin 2008).

Finally, the choice of putting NGOs at the heart of the dissertation is especially relevant for the subject population of this analysis – the Roma. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the organizations of civil society (especially the NGOs) became the principal organizational structures which represent their collective interests and claims (Vermeersch 2006; Rostas 2012; Trehan and Sigona 2010; Marushiakova and Popov 2005; Kóczé 2012a). This "NGOization of Roma rights" can be seen as a failure of political integration of Romani representatives in formal political structures, such as political parties (McGarry 2012; Rostas 2012) but can also be understood through the framework of deliberative democracy discourse (Carrasco 2007). Considering the proliferation of Romani NGOs as the main mobilizing structures of Romani ethnic mobilization, it seems logical to position them at the centre of scientific inquiry.

Therefore, I treat the overall continuum of Romani activism – or what I define as Romani ethnic mobilization – as my principal units of analysis.

2.5.a. From *civil society* to associative movement

In the literature concerning Romani ethnic mobilization or the so-called Romani movement, often reference is made to Romani *civil society* (or in fact, both terms tend to be used interchangeably), in order to describe the phenomenon of the proliferation of NGOs as tools for representing Romani interests and claims.

In the relevant literature we can find a plethora of definitions of *civil society*. For example, according to Kubik (Kubik, 2007:34), civil society as a term, refers to 3 main ideas:

- Civil society as a normative concept, referring to "an ideal self-organization of society outside of the state's control"
- Civil society "as a public space institutionally protected from the state's arbitrary encroachment"
  or the sphere which mediates between society and the state

- Civil society as "a set of organized groups/ associations, whose members deliberate or act collectively to accomplish common goals".

Kóczé (Kóczé 2012a), following Tabbush (2005), also provides a comprehensive overview of theoretical approaches to *civil society*, distinguishing between two main frameworks, namely:

- Neo-liberal pluralistic paradigm. Scholars: Gellner (1994), Putnam et al. (1993), Fukuyama (1995), Habermas (1992). Under this approach, civil society is conceptualized as a pre-condition of healthy democracies. It emphasizes that pluralism can help keep states accountable and transparent and provides ways in which diverse interest groups can represent collective claims, allowing for a more democratic and participatory system of relationship between the State and its citizens.
- Neo-Gramscian ideological perspective: Cohen and Arato (1994), Lewis (2001), Haberson et al. (1994), Tabbush (2005). This perspective challenges the binary opposition between the State and civil society, and contemplates civil society as an interdependent category between the state and the market (Tabbush 2005). It also introduces the concept of hegemony, which civil society can challenge and contest but can also uphold and reproduce.

Generally, the term refers to "the arena outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individuals and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests"(CIVICUS, 2013: 10). *Civil society* can take on various forms and refer to non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations, community groups, faith-based organizations, trade unions and informal civic groups, as well as cooperatives, charities, think-tanks, cultural foundations, social enterprises or the academia. Also, individuals who aim at advancing or defending viewpoints that others may share, such as activists, leaders, human rights defenders, artists, writers or public intellectuals, are also part of *civil society*. Such understanding of *civil society* implies that the arena "is fluid and dynamic: groups and individuals can move in and out of it, and be within civil society and other spheres simultaneously" (Ibid.).

For the past few decades, the civil *society sector* has expanded considerably across the world. Different developments contributed to this growth – among them the fall of communism in Easter Europe and democratization of different regions across the world, disenchantment with economic, political and social models, social yearning for togetherness as well as embracement of the "deliberative democracy" discourse (Edwards 2009). Despite the ideal that civil society contributes to "good governance" and is in fact a pillar of healthy democracy, numerous scholars problematize the reality of civil society functioning, pointing to internal paradoxes, un-democratic or un-civic mechanisms and unexpected consequences of the participatory discourse (Kóczé 2012a; Edwards 2009; Cooke and Kothari 2001). Kóczé (Kóczé 2012a) but also Trehan and Sigona (Trehan and Sigona 2010) have been among those scholars who demonstrated some of these dynamics with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization.

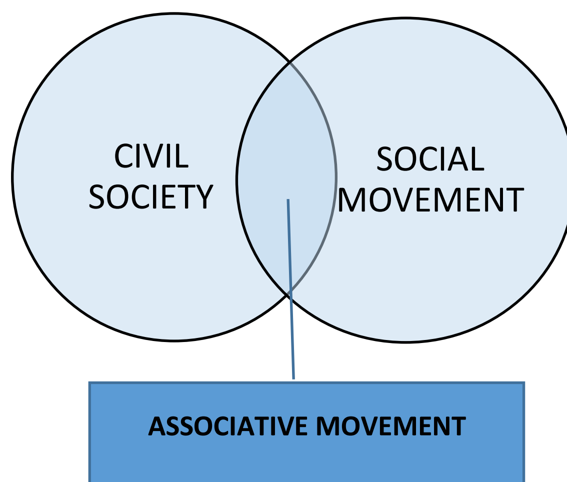
Using the term *civil society* in relation to Romani ethnic mobilization is somewhat misleading, as it implies a plurality of structures. As described above, *civil society* is a broad term which includes a

variety of non-state actors. For Romani ethnic mobilization, however, evidence shows that NGOs or other associative, voluntary, non-profit organizations are in fact the dominant actors, while academic groups, trade unions, or think-tanks (or other type of structures associated with *civil society*) remain marginal or are absent altogether.

This is why, with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization, treated in this study as a principal units of analysis, I introduce the term *associative movement*. This concept draws from the Spanish term *movimiento asociativo*, commonly used with regards to the phenomenon of citizen participation in voluntary associations of the civil society sector. Carrasco defines the term as “a form of community organization, often different from their own forms of organization and interaction within the groups themselves” (Carrasco 2007b:28). Theoretically, this concept can be found in those places where social movement theories and the literature on *civil society* intersect. On the one hand, some organizations can be seen as a type of *mobilizing structure* of an ethnic movement – they seek a fulfilment of common goals, represent interests and claims in public spheres, and are vehicles of ethnic mobilization. Nonetheless, as described in the previous section, mobilizing structures can have many different forms, not necessarily only those of NGOs. On the other hand, NGOs can be seen as a sector of civil society. However, civil society embraces many other types of structures, NGOs being only one of them. Therefore, the term associative movement refers to NGO-like structures (foundations, non-profit, voluntary associations etc.) who at the same time seek advancement of collective goals on behalf of their constituencies. The very term connects both concepts: “associative” implies the voluntary, formal, non-state character of these structures (linking them to theories of civil society) and “movement” relates to the social change agenda which these structures pursue (making reference to theories of social and ethnic movements).

The figure below illustrates this relationship:

Figure 2. Conceptualization of “associative movement”



2.5.b. Understanding Romani associative movements

Considering the importance of NGOs as mobilizing structures in a social movement and considering the importance of Romani NGOs for Romani ethnic mobilization, the model expounded above seems logical for the study of Romani ethnic mobilization. It allows for the analysis of ethnic mobilization patterns through the perspective of NGOs. It helps to narrow down the scope of analysis to a specific sector of Romani civil society (NGOs) and to specific expressions of ethnic mobilization, based on NGO activity. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, not all mobilizing structures are NGOs – there are numerous other forms, such as political parties, religious institutions, informal citizen groups or networks. Similarly, Romani civil society is not limited to NGOs only – other civil society forms among Romani communities can be found as well.

In my understanding, the Romani associative movement embraces the existing formal non-state structures of socio-political organization of this community, namely the wide diversity of Romani associations, organizations and foundations of the third sector lead by Romani individuals. From this approach the following structures are excluded:

- Informal citizen groups without legal status
- Ethnic political parties (Romani political parties)
- Pro-Roma organizations
- Entities which are not oriented towards advancing the Roma community's agenda[7]
- Religious institutions (Churches, Mosques)
- Consultative bodies (minority self-governments or similar state-sponsored entities)

Therefore, the analysis developed in the subsequent sections, is oriented specifically (although not exclusively) to Romani NGOs. The analytical model of ethnic mobilization will be projected and applied to Romani NGOs, however, the overall conditions (including the existence of other mobilizing structures) will be assessed in order to understand the broader environment under which Romani NGOs operate. The elements of "who, whom, why/what, how and when" will allow a dynamic assessment of Romani NGO activity, understood here as an expression of the ethnic mobilization of Roma. Such an approach is innovative because it also allows us to understand how ethnic mobilization among Roma emerges and evolves, paying attention not only to those who are mobilized but also to those who remain passive. In studies of social movements, a vast portion of attention goes to the inquiry into those actors who are mobilized, participate actively and become active agents of the social movement. Much less attention is given to those who are excluded from the movement, or those who

[7] Here the division is also dynamic and fluid. For example, a Romani sports club may be excluded from this list. However, a Romani sports club which uses sports as a tool for community-organizing and awareness building may be considered as a type of mobilizing structure, committed to Roma rights defence. In general, I exclude those entities which do not interact in any way with institutions of power (for example any level of state administration).

do not identify with it. Edelman argues that “we should pay the same attention to the non-participation that we have always paid to participation and mobilization” (Edelman, 2003:2). Applying this model to the study of Romani associations will also allow inquiry into the aspect of non-participation, as recommended by Edelman.

3. METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

3.1 Objectives, key questions and the model of analysis

The objective of this research is to explore the nature of ethnic mobilization, its underlying dynamics, the characteristic elements that compose it and how the political environment (associated with emerging and shifting political opportunities) influences the birth and development of ethnic movements, determining and affecting the strategies and discourses adopted, based on case study of Romani ethnic mobilization.

Drawing from scholarship on ethnic mobilization, I have developed a theoretical-analytical model, which allows me to explore the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization. The following questions guide the analysis:

- If the process of ethnic mobilization is "a process in which groups organize around some elements of ethnic identity to achieve collective aims" (Olzak 1983), in the case of Roma, who mobilizes whom, based on what elements of ethnic identity, with what objectives and in what way?
- When is this process generated and how does it evolve?
- How is this process affected by contextual, external factors, associated with political opportunities?
- From a comparative perspective, what similarities and differences can we identify and why?

The unit of analysis of this dissertation is the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, observed based on the case study of Romani ethnic mobilization in two different geographic contexts. Thus, I treat the "Romani associative movement" – the overall continuum of Romani activism - in each country as separate units of analysis. The delineation, also through conceptual and theoretical description, of the "Romani associative movement" is available in the "Theoretical Considerations" chapter.

The model of analysis combines different approaches. This dissertation is conceived as a descriptive-explanatory case study (Yin 2009), combining both approaches: as a descriptive monography as well as an analytical model exploring the dynamic causal relationship between variables. Thus, in case study chapters, the analysis is developed as a descriptive-interpretative and explanatory investigation. Furthermore, as was explained previously, this dissertation is conceived as comparative (Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971), in which empirical data from both case studies is compared and analysed under a unique framework. Thus, the model of analysis is comparative and explanatory, seeking dynamic causal relationships between variables. Such comparative analysis allows one to draw broader conclusions regarding the nature of ethnic mobilization.

Consequently, the process of analysis was conducted in two stages.

During the first stage, each case-study was analysed in detail, in order to examine the gathered data, restricted to the country context. This stage was more descriptive, in the sense that it provided a

detailed illustration of the Romani ethnic mobilization in each country. Nonetheless, the macro-variables were also analysed in relationship to each other, allowing them to provide a more in-depth understanding of the dynamic of emergence and evolution of Romani associative movements in the specific context and environment of each country. The country chapters are not linear or chronological. Rather they examine the overall phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization through key elements and from a dynamic perspective. Each case study chapter includes similar elements, enabling comparison in the second stage. The structure, as explained above, aimed at moving beyond mere description towards discovering mechanisms, patterns and dynamics.

During the second stage, both cases were analysed and compared with each other. On the one hand, each variable was compared between both case studies in order to find similarities and differences and to examine the determining factors which explain the result. On the other hand, however, I compared the relationship which different variables hold with each other in both case-studies. In other words, the variables were not analysed separately as independent units; rather, the interplay between concrete variables was examined, in order to account for the dynamic relationship between the variables.

Below, I delineate the key hypotheses and provide a summary of the theoretical-analytical model adopted.

3.2 Hypotheses

Drawing from the theoretical frame established, I delineate three major hypotheses which guide this thesis. The theoretical-analytical model (discussed further) will enable me to test these hypotheses based on empirical evidence gathered during fieldwork. It should be noted that the conceptualization and operationalization of key concepts referred to in these hypotheses is available in the chapter "Theoretical Considerations".

1. *Ethnic mobilization requires a degree of organization and, consequently, is a process which is driven by diverse types of formal and informal vehicles of collective action. The* modus operandi *of these actors determines the dynamics of ethnic mobilization and ultimately determines the potential "success" of mobilization efforts.*

Ethnic mobilization is a process defined by the collective action of specific groups which organize around some elements of collectively shared ethnic identity in pursue of collective benefits (Olzak 2007; Olzak 1983). As such, it requires a degree of organization; after all, ethnic mobilization is not driven and sustained by individual agency but is conducted by a number of vehicles of collective action. These vehicles, regarded in academic literature as "mobilizing structures" (McAdam 1996; Kriesi 1996), are at the heart of ethnic mobilization as actors which drive the process. Leaders must choose effective structures which are appropriate and usable for the social change required; these structures also need to be perceived as reliable and legitimate by the opponents of the mobilization (typically associated with the State) and by the constituencies, whom the mobilization represents. The development of ethnic mobilization and its potential "success" (with regards to the achievement of articulated claims

and demands) depends on the *modus operandi* of these vehicles of collective action. Depending on the frames of collective identity and collective interests constructed by these actors, and the strategies employed to pursue collective interests, the effectiveness of ethnic mobilization varies. It is for this reason that the "mobilizing structures" are at the heart of this thesis and constitute the main focal point of the analysis.

This hypothesis aims to observe the ethnic mobilization process from the perspective of organizational structures of mobilization, based on a case study of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia. I emphasize the importance of these "mobilizing structures" for the overall ethnic mobilization dynamics, assessing how these actors construct frames of collective identity through narratives and discourses, articulate the objectives and aims of mobilization and examine diverse strategies to pursue these claims.

2. *The question of the emergence, development and transformation of ethnic mobilization is dependent on the external factors in which it takes place; these factors are associated with the structure of political opportunities (POS).*

Ethnic mobilization does not take place in a vacuum but emergences and develops in a specific time and space. Thus, diverse manifestations of ethnic mobilization should not be treated as isolated events but should be assessed in relation to political, historical, cultural, economic and spatial contexts. I draw on literature informed by the political process perspective (PPP) approach, and especially by political opportunities structure (POS) theory (Gamson and Meyer 1996; D. S. Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Kriesi 2007; Jenson 1998; D. Meyer 2004; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996), which stresses the importance of the institutional environment and other external factors, against which ethnic mobilization should be evaluated. Stable and unstable properties of the political system, as well as shifts in political alliances and political environment, among others, may all produce "windows of opportunity" which affect the dynamic process of transformation and adaptation of ethnic mobilization patterns.

The objective of this hypothesis is to adopt a dynamic perspective of ethnic mobilization, accounting for shifts and changes in the overall processes of ethnic mobilization against the backdrop of external factors which condition and affect ethnic mobilization. I emphasize the importance of analysing instances of changes and shifts, and especially of turning-points, in ethnic mobilization vis-à-vis the broader context in which these changes are produced. This focus allows me to understand the factors which influence these changes and understand the underlying dynamics of mutual interplay between ethnic mobilization patterns and the external factors associated with POS. I also argue that the relationship between ethnic mobilization and POS is bi-directional – meaning that as much as POS influences the ethnic mobilization's claims, interests and strategies, effective mobilization also leads to concessions and changes which open up new "windows of political opportunity".

3. *Ethnic mobilization is a multi-directional process which is directed externally ("upwards" and "sideways") and internally.*

Ethnic mobilization is ultimately about mobilizing – resources, human capital, support – in a variety of ways. What is important to note, however, is that it is a complex process, which takes place in multiple directions. Scholarship on ethnic mobilization typically emphasizes the relationship between the actors and the opponent which ethnic mobilization targets. Such an approach, however, does not acknowledge sufficiently the multi-level and multi-directional process of ethic mobilization. Collective action typically targets the opponent, such as the state or the authorities, with the objective of accomplishing shared collective interests. Nonetheless, as much as these actions are directed towards the opponent they are also directed internally – towards the constituencies. If ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize support and harness resources, it is also important to analyse in what ways the mobilization tactics are employed internally. The capacity to adopt effective repertoires internally, towards the potential constituencies and supporters of the movement is essential for the movement's ability to achieve its collective goals (Bernstein 2008; McCarthy 1996; Della Porta and Diani 2009). Furthermore, collective action may also be employed externally sideways – targeting potential allies and/or bystanders, seeking broader social support for specific struggles.

It is for this reason that it is relevant to analyse who is being mobilised and who the target of mobilization is, acknowledging the multi-directional character of ethnic mobilization. I differentiate between three directions of ethnic mobilization: 1) external upwards (directed towards the State institutions); 2) external sideways (which target potential allies and bystanders) and 3) internal (directed inwards, targeting the constituency). The aim of this hypothesis is to asses this multi-directional character of ethnic mobilization based on a case study of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia. I emphasize that, in order to provide depth to the study of ethnic mobilization, it is necessary to critically analyse these different layers of ethnic mobilization.

3.3 Research design

This comparative investigation (Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971) is based on case studies (Yin 2009) and draws from a multi-sited ethnography approach (Marcus 1995). The theoretical, methodological and analytical frames are, inter-disciplinary, drawing from diverse branches of social sciences and different theoretical approaches. This chapter will briefly outline the methodology applied to this investigation as well as present the fieldwork conducted as part of this dissertation.

3.3.a. Inter-disciplinary approach

Miller argues that the term "interdisciplinary" is "the generic all-encompassing concept and includes all activities which juxtapose, apply, combine, synthesize, integrate or transcend parts of two or more disciplines"(Miller, 1982:6). Choi and Pak clarify, nonetheless, that "Interdisciplinarity analyses, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole" (Choi & Pak, 2006:351). This dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from diverse disciplines in order to critically assess and evaluate the topic of this study –ethnic mobilization, based on a case study of the Romani population in two countries.

There are various reasons to explain the choice of adopting an interdisciplinary approach in this dissertation. On the one hand, available scientific literature on ethnic mobilization (Vermeersch 2011; Olzak 2007; Olzak 1983; Olzak 2006; Olzak 2001; Cartrite 2003; Veredas 2004), and more specifically on the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization (McGarry 2012; Vermeersch 2006; Rostas 2009; Trehan and Sigona 2010; Barany 2002b; van Baar 2011b), draws from numerous research traditions, scientific branches and theoretical and methodological approaches. Based on the review of relevant literature on ethnic mobilization, and more specifically, on Romani ethnic mobilization, I decided to construct theoretical and methodological frameworks which draw from multiple research traditions.

On the other hand, according to several authors (Escobar 1992; Gibb 2001; E. G. López 2013; Dietz 1999a), the topic of social movements has not been adequately addressed from the standpoint of anthropology. The development of different theoretical frameworks to explain this social phenomenon has been based on animated debates among sociologists and political scientists. Gibb distinguishes four main "schools" or "traditions" in the field of social movements: the collective behaviour perspective, resource mobilization theory, new social movements and the political process model (Gibb, 2001). These four theoretical currents share three key elements that define this social phenomenon:

1) social movements are not organizations but rather networks;
2) social movements need the existence of a collective identity;
3) social movements address cultural or political conflicts with other actors (ibid. 3).

This characterization, which in broad terms can be applied to all theories of social movements, demarcates the conceptual basis for addressing this problem from the anthropological standpoint. Nonetheless, Escobar (1992: 395) argues that anthropologists have remained largely absent from this debate, and therefore, the question of social movements remains invisible in anthropology as such. He concluded: “although there has been a current within anthropology that has looked at certain types of social and political movements, highlighting the role of cultural and symbolic factors for the political, there recently has arisen a gap between these very same sets of concerns - generally speaking, the link between the cultural and the political, and the nature and modes of political practice - and anthropological practice” (Escobar, 1992:401). Likewise, others have argued that “anthropological analysis of contemporary ethnic movements suffers from a number of gaps and contradictions” (Dietz, 1999:81), advocating for the need to draw from other disciplines in the study of social movements.

Furthermore, an epistemological and methodological exchange between anthropology and political science has been advocated for by a number of scholars from both disciplines, most convincingly by Jan Kubik and Myron J. Aronoff (2013). These authors argue that a convergent approach is needed to contribute to the development of both branches of science, and especially in studying social and political phenomenon with a focus on comparative politics. The benefit of such an exchange can be attributed not only to the concepts and theories deriving from anthropology which can inform political science, but also to its research methods. They argue: “These anthropological methods par excellence [ethnography and extended case study] are employed to produce greater understanding of some of

the most challenging political issues of the day. We also suggest how anthropologists can provide political scientists with a more nuanced understanding of the range of factors or variables essential to develop context-sensitive interpretations of political phenomenon" (Aronoff & Kubik, 2013:xv).

It should also be noted that the emerging scholarship on "anthropology of policy" (Cris Shore and Durão 2010; Wedel et al. 2005; Chris Shore and Wright 1997) makes important contributions to the study of public policies, which provides a relevant background against which social movements, and ethnic mobilization, should be critically analysed.

This interdisciplinary, convergent approach, which draws from and combines the approaches, concepts and methods of various academic disciplines seemingly is becoming a widely accepted academic trend, especially in the study of social movements. After all, a number of social and political concepts such as political culture, politics of identity or conflict resolution are complex, and in academic inquiry, cross-disciplinary. Indeed, "the practice of anthropology of social movements draws on different perspectives" (López, 2012:94).

Beyond the limited amount of anthropology in the research on social movements, the application of this framework to the case of Roma presents some difficulties. Several researchers have discussed whether the different forms of socio-political activity carried out by Roma can, in fact, be considered as a type of a social movement (McGarry 2012; Vermeersch 2006; Andrzej Mirga and Gheorghe 2001). This is why the application of a conceptual framework of ethnic mobilization, rather than social movement, may be more appropriate to the case of the Roma.

3.3.b. Comparative context: Selection of field-sites

Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis which sharpens our powers of description and plays a central role in formulating the concept by focusing on suggestive similarities and contrasts between cases (Collier 1993). Lijphart, a key scholar who has shaped our understanding of comparative politics, defined the comparative method as the analysis of a small number of cases, including at least two different case studies, to discover empirical relationships between variables (Lijphart 1971). He further argues that: "a clear distinction should be made between method and technique. The comparative method is a broad-gauge, general method, not a narrow, specialized technique.(…) The comparative method may also be thought of as a basic research strategy, in contrast with a mere tactical aid to research" (Lijphart, 1971:683). Despite the fact that Lijphart's teachings are over four decades old, they continue to mould our understanding of comparative studies and have also informed the approach of this PhD thesis.

On the other hand, according to McAdam et al. (1996), the development of a theoretical approach to research on social movements can be characterized as innately comparative, as it has been developed based on a constant dialogue between national scholars, based on national case studies. The development of the discipline has led to the establishment, according to these authors, of three key elements - pillars of knowledge - about the phenomenon of social movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes. These three elements, which broadly speaking, can be

found in most theories on social movements, establish solid variables for developing a comparative analysis. These same concepts guide the analysis of the dynamics of ethnic mobilization. Additional elements come to affect the character of such mobilization - as these processes are not born in a vacuum, but rather are determined by other factors such as the political environment, historical moment, condition of democratic institutions, legal framework or degree of proliferation of structures of civil society, among others.

To develop a feasible comparative analysis of the ethnic mobilization of Roma in Latin America and Europe, I have sought a pair of different countries representing diverse historical, political and cultural contexts, but which share common relevant features, enabling comparison. Namely, I sought countries which:

- are characterized by multicultural and multi-ethnic social composition, creating the basis for the existence of different frames of the politics of recognition (Taylor 1994)
- have a historical presence of Romani communities, which have also come to develop their own mobilizing processes in order to achieve collective benefits (the presence of dynamics of ethnic mobilization) (Olzak 1983)
- have existing public policies and a legal and regulatory framework directed towards Roma
- have had a certain historical momentum that has allowed the emergence of "political opportunity" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996)

The choice of Colombia in Latin America and Spain in Europe has come to meet these goals. First, both countries have a historical presence of Romani communities, which have also developed collective action processes in order to achieve shared benefits - so-called ethnic mobilization has occurred in both cases. In Spain, several academic contributions on this subject have been produced in recent years (Aguilera 2000; Dietz 2003; Méndez López 2005; San Román 1994a; San Román 1999), documenting the proliferation of this social process. In Colombia, in contrast, instances of ethnic mobilization have occurred relatively recently: the first Romani organizations were born early in the new millennium (Lozano Uribe 2005; H. Paternina 2014) but have already achieved some level of institutional recognition and a considerable degree of success.

Secondly, following the theoretical approach of McAdam et al., in both countries a certain historical momentum allowed the emergence of "political opportunity". In Spain, this historical momentum is associated with regime change – the process of transformation from a dictatorial state into a democratic state. With the death of General Franco in 1975 and the formulation of the democratic Constitution (1978), the social status of Roma changed considerably, at least in the eyes of the law - the Constitution recognizes the equality of all citizens (Article 14) and penalises discrimination (Penal Code, Article 510). In addition, the right of association (Article 22.1 of the Constitution) created a regulatory framework that allowed Roma to establish entities of social and political representation. In Colombia, however, the historical momentum is more recent. In an atmosphere of political crisis in the late 1980s and thanks to a student social initiative (called "the movement of the seventh ballot") the

convening of the National Constituent Assembly was accomplished, leading to the development of the new Colombian Constitution, adopted in 1991 (Esteban Restrepo 2002; Archila and Pardo 2001). The new Constitution recognized the pluri-cultural and multi-ethnic character of the nation, leading to a series of legal provisions such as official recognition of ethnic languages (Article 10), obligation to recognize and protect national diversity (Article 7), non-discrimination (Article 13) or recognition of traditional authorities (Article 246). According to Bonilla: "this legal and political recognition has become a tool which has facilitated the process of the assertion of cultures which have been undervalued up to now, as well as the defence of their collective differentiated rights and the protection of individual rights that compose it" (Bonilla, 1999:10). This political event had opened up a political opportunity space that conditioned the emergence of ethnic mobilization of Colombian Roma and other ethnic peoples in Colombia.

Third, both countries, despite the obvious differences, have a similar socio-cultural composition, namely that of multicultural states. Spain is a multicultural and multi-ethnic country, which has a high immigrant population level - according to the National Statistics Institute, there are more than 5 million foreigners living in the country. On the other hand, according to DANE (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística 2006), approximately 15% of the Colombian population belong to some ethnic group. The multicultural reality of both countries requires a response from the state in order to confront the implications and consequences of such a varied social composition, creating the basis for the existence of the various politics of recognition (Taylor 1994). These three common elements permit the development of a feasible comparative analysis based on relevant similarities.

3.3.c. Design of the data collection

The data collection of this dissertation relies principally on methods typically regarded as "qualitative", although not exclusively. This section will outline the design of the data collection, describing the techniques and instruments used as part of the qualitative method of data collection.

This PhD thesis incorporates elements of ethnography. In understanding ethnography as a research method, I draw from the approach of Wacquant, in which ethnography: "is a social research based on the close-up, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think, and feel the way they do" (Wacquant, 2003:5).

My ethnographic fieldwork, however, should not be understood as the typical work of an ethnographer submerged in a studied community which observes the rituals of daily life. After all, "ethnography as a method (participant observation), is not limited to the study of culture" (Aronoff & Kubik, 2013:26). Rather, it is an ethnography of leadership and representation, on the intersection of public and private spheres.

Furthermore, this dissertation is inspired by the multi-sited ethnography approach (Falzon 2009; Marcus 1998; Marcus 1995; Coleman and Hellermann 2012). The term, coined by Marcus (1995), challenged the dominant single-site "Malinowski-style" ethnography in order to respond to an

increasing concern with the global interconnectedness of social, cultural and political phenomena. According to Marcus, “Ethnography moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the “local” and the “global,” the “lifeworld” and the “system” (Marcus, 1995:95). He further argues that multi-sited ethnography: “moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation.” (ibid. 96)

Methodologically, Marcus (1998) proposes seven strategies to conduct a multi-sited ethnography, namely:

1) follow the people
2) follow the thing
3) follow the metaphor
4) follow the plot, story, or allegory
5) follow the life or biography
6) follow the conflict
7) conduct a strategically situated (single-site) ethnography

Falzon on the other hand argues that “The essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connections, associations, and relationships across space (because they are substantially continuous but spatially non-contiguous)” (Falzon, 2009:2). In this case, adapting Marcus’s typology, I conduct multi-sited ethnography by “following the metaphor”. However, my research goes beyond the scope of the “realm of discourse and modes of thought” (Marcus, 1995:108) as it also incorporates the dimension of collective action, of transforming the metaphor into specific activity. Beyond “following the metaphor”, this PhD thesis more specifically “follows a question”, namely that of Romani ethnic mobilization in diverse contexts. The national case studies are necessarily interconnected with global, international phenomena in a variety of ways; what brings those together, beyond the focus population - the Roma - are the dynamics of ethic mobilization, ethic revival, politics of identity and identity framing, just to name a few. Thus, I approach multi-sited ethnography as “the mode of construction to follow a single thread across multiple sites” (Hennessy, Fortin, Kadir, Muntean, & Ward, 2015:2).

Furthermore, I have adopted the case study approach, or more specifically, the “extended case approach” (Buroway 1998; Hennen 2008; Gluckman 1961). According to Yin: “case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.(…) As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (2009:1).

Adopting the case study method is appropriate as it represents a comprehensive, all-encompassing research strategy, which combines diverse sources of knowledge and data collection techniques, beyond those limited to ethnography (Yin 2009); after all, "ethnography is just one of several tools available to the case study scholars" (Aronoff & Kubik, 2013:50). On the other hand, the "case study method has belonged to the basic tool of political analysis since the inception of the discipline" (Aronoff & Kubik, 2013:49). Gradually, in the 1950s and 1960s, anthropologists have also embraced a case study method, which they refer to as "the extended case method" – a method which "emulates a reflexive model of science that takes as its premise the intersubjectivity of scientist and subject of study" (Buroway, 1998:4). Gluckman argued that: "the most fruitful use of cases consists in taking a series of specific incidents affecting the same persons or groups, through a long period of time, and showing … [the] change of social relations among these persons and groups, within the framework of their social system and culture" (Gluckman, 1961:10). Furthermore, after Ragin, I adopt a case-oriented method which he considers a "classic comparative method" (2014:53). He argues that case-oriented methods are "oriented toward comprehensive examination of historically defined cases and phenomena. And they emerge clearly from one of the central goals of comparative social science – to explain and interpret the diverse experiences of societies, nations, cultures and other significant macrosocial units" (Ragin, 2014:53).

For this reason, rather than restricting myself to the use of ethnography, I have also embraced the extended case study method, as a methodological guideline for the data collection.

Following Yin´s approach, I combined a variety of different primary and secondary sources of knowledge and evidence (Yin 2009) through different qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection, such as documents (self-produced by organizations, reports, policy-related, minutes of meetings, press, etc.), archival records, in-depth and informal interviews, field visits, focus groups, questionnaires, ethnography, participant and non-participant observation (as an active member of organizations, as an observer during general assemblies, working sessions, formal and informal meetings), in order to contrast the data collected during the study. I have also relied on existing academic literature, studies and reports, non-academic texts (press, blogs, interviews, reportages), as well as photos, videos and audio recordings. The use of social networks, most notably Facebook, proved to be important for contacting relevant informants and maintaining contacts with them over longer periods of time, as well as a way to search for relevant information and analyse the reactions and behaviour of my informants and contacts with regards to significant developments.

As part of my data collection method, I have used the ethnographic technique of both participant and non-participant observation to understand the dynamics behind the "associative movement" – focusing strongly on individual leaders, discourses, narratives, their relationships to each other, their communities and the public (institutions and society at large). Nonetheless, I relied more heavily on participant observation; after all, "most writers posit participant observation as the defining method of ethnography" (Kubik, 2009:26). I also concentrated on conducting field interviews based on a loosely established script, adapted to each interlocutor as appropriate. The interviews were often preceded by a number of preliminary meetings or conversations or exploratory interviews. I took notes during

all interviews; furthermore, the vast majority were recorded and a small portion were transcribed. Finally, throughout the entire period of fieldwork I maintained a field journal, which allowed me to record, keep track and organize the different types of information gathered.

With regards to the universe of the study, its clear delineation has been somewhat challenging. The clear articulation of the universe under investigation is important for the strategic choice of a sample, which in a meaningful way represents the universe (Emmel 2013). The object of my research – Romani ethic mobilization – is an extensive phenomenon which involves a plethora of diverse types of actors; approaching the topic with the ambition of including a comprehensive sample of all those actors would be unrealistic. For this reason, I have chosen a sample which is representative but not exhaustive of the phenomenon under study. To do so, I define my universe as the field of interaction between different types of stakeholders and actors involved in the Romani ethnic mobilization: Romani and pro-Roma organizations, Roma and non-Roma individuals engaged, various institutions of the State with whom those actors interact (and which deal with in one way or another with Romani issues). I refer to this field of interaction as the arena of Romani affairs; its discussion is dealt with in the subsequent chapter, “Setting the scene”.

On the other hand, however, I have sought to examine the relationship with the uninvolved segment of the Romani population, who the structures of Romani ethnic mobilization claim to represent but who remain passive and disengaged from it. This decision was taken in order to provide a more comprehensive perspective of the Romani ethnic mobilization, analysing not only the Romani ethnic mobilization actors and targets, but also its relationship with their constituencies. Thus, beyond researching the organization of ethnic mobilization and its internal dynamics and strategies, I also aimed to examine the patterns of disengagement and its underlying reasons and narratives. This universe of research, consequently, refers to the Romani population, detached from ethnic mobilization but affected (directly and indirectly) by it. Therefore, in order to reflect the complexity of Romani ethnic mobilization and provide more depth to the analysis, the research design encompasses two universes, from which samples were drawn.

More specifically, as for my units of observation, I predefined four major categories of informants in two geographical contexts, which represent the sample from both universes defined above. The two broader geographical contexts were Spain and Colombia, although it should be noted that the most intensive research was conducted in Barcelona (Spain) and Bogota (Colombia).

The four categories of informants are:

1) Romani activists, engaged in Romani ethnic mobilization;

2) un-affiliated Romani community members, who do not participate in Romani ethnic mobilization;

3) non-Roma advisors, consultants and members of Romani organizations, current and past;

4) representatives of public institutions with whom Romani actors interact.

Thus, I established my units of observation at the individual level. This strategic choice enabled me to focus on discourses and to interpret the meaning of the actions and narratives observed. It also allowed me to understand the relationships, dynamics of interactions, dependencies and points of contention between the different categories of actors, making it possible to conceptually reconstruct and interpret the complex, dynamic, multilevel and dialogical nature of ethnic mobilization.

The choice of these categories of units of observation was not random. Rather, it stemmed from my previous experience, knowledge and observations of the field (especially in Spain, as will be explained in detail in the next section). Prior to conducting fieldwork, I realized that, due to the complexity of the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, in order to grasp its various dimensions and dynamics, I need to look beyond Romani individuals engaged in activism and interpret their discourses and actions in relation to others: their constituencies and communities; representatives of public administration whom their actions target and with whom they interact; non-Roma advisors, supporters, partners and at times competitors, who often exert significant influence on Romani actors and structures.

Furthermore, I complemented the choice of units of observation with additional informants, which provided depth and contextualization to the data collected. Thus, in order to contrast some of my findings and contextualize my research, I also frequently spoke with scholars who have conducted research among Romani communities in both countries. Additionally, to understand better the context in which the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization takes place, I have also looked for instances and experiences of ethnic mobilization among other minority groups other than the Roma, in order to situate the Roma-related developments within a broader context of socio-cultural dynamics and political and policy treatment of minority groups. Analysis of the state of the civil society sector in each country (especially representing minority struggles), the existence of other ethnic or minority associative movements (through an inter-ethnic comparative approach), the legal status of minorities, minority-majority relations and cultural-diversity management, were among the themes incorporated into this analysis.

3.4. About fieldwork

3.4.a. Preliminary remarks: Personal equation

Before describing in detail the process of fieldwork in both case-study contexts, it is important to add a few preliminary remarks.

First of all, I should highlight that I am of mixed background, born to a Polish mother and a Romani father (*Bergitka* Romani group in Poland). My father is a well-known Romani activist and scholar, who has been actively involved in Romani activism ever since I can remember: he is the author of numerous articles, books and publications, a founder of Romani associations in Poland and has been actively involved in the Roma-related work of numerous intergovernmental institutions (Council of Europe and the OSCE) and initiatives. Ever since I was a child, I was a witness to his active involvement in the struggle for Romani rights; early in life I participated in events organized by Romani associations and met numerous personalities of Romani activism, among them Roma from across the world. I grew up

with a strong sense of my ethnic identity and ethnic pride, which later on in life pushed me towards the path of Romani activism, on the one hand, and an academic interest in studying issues related to the Romani population, on the other.

Involvement in Romani activism

My involvement in socio-political activism advocating for the rights of the Romani population in Europe dates back to my first years at university.

In 2004, I co-founded the first Romani youth organization in Poland – the Roma Educational Association "Harangos" – and through this activity, I engaged in research and grassroots activism, especially with Romani youth. Since then, I have been employed by, collaborated with and have been a member of a number of Romani associations, in Spain and in Poland. My active engagement through activism has allowed me to establish a broad network of contacts and collaborators across Europe and beyond, by working together on common projects, strategizing and participating in common events or engaging in lobbying activities. I have participated in innumerable conferences, seminars, workshops and projects across Europe and in a number of countries in Latin America and the US, as a participant, speaker and occasionally, as co-organizer. Most notably, I have participated in the First European Roma Youth Summit (Córdoba, 2010), the Second and Third European Roma Summits (Cordoba, 2010 and Brussels, 2014); co-organized the "Primavera Caló" Romani youth festival (Barcelona, 2010) and the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014 (Krakow, 2014), which brought over 1000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries for the 70th anniversary of the 2nd August, considered the Memorial Day of the Roma Holocaust.

Naturally, this engagement is relevant for the development of this PhD thesis. As an activist in the international "Romani civil rights movement" (or what some refer to as "the Romani movement") as well as nationally, especially in Spain and Poland, I was a witness and, on occasions, an active participant in numerous important developments with regards to Romani-related issues. More than a decade of personal involvement in Romani activism allows me to view current developments with a certain perspective in time, being able to trace shifts and changes in Romani-related politics and policies as well as in structures of Romani activism. It allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of policy processes (national and international) and to observe the *modus operandi* of Romani actors involved. Over the years, I have seen internal discussions among Romani activists transform into public narratives, problems become articulated demands, collective action bring achievements; I have also seen new Romani actors emerge and some Romani structures decline. Being a board member and an employed member of staff of Romani organizations at different points in time, has given me a privileged look into the intimacy of Romani entities, their daily struggles and challenges, their internal dynamics and interaction with diverse types of other actors. Furthermore, my involvement in Romani activism has also opened my eyes to the heterogeneous *universum* of Romani populations across the world: the diverse sub-groups and dialects, traditions and histories, life-styles and life-trajectories. It shaped my understanding of Romani ethnicity as an 'archipelago', a mosaic shaped by diverse elements; I agree with Nicolae Gheorghe, a renowned Romani sociologist and activist, that

"multiculturality might be an appropriate concept to describe the basic reality" of the Romani people (Gheorghe & Acton, 2001:55).

Professional experience

It must be noted that this thesis also draws from my personal engagement and professional experience of working (as an employed member of staff and through numerous collaborations) with Romani organizations, especially in Spain. From April 2008 until September 2012 I worked as the European project coordinator for the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia (FAGIC), the Romani federation of the region which brings together the majority of local Romani associations. Working with FAGIC gave me a unique opportunity of conducting my field research from up close, in accordance with the participant observation technique. Through this professional experience, I was able to participate in the day-to-day life of the Romani federation and interact with its member organizations, witnessing at first hand the internal dynamics of their *modus operandi*, their relationships with each other, their constituencies and the public authorities. It also provided me with concrete knowledge about policy-processes, the dynamics of lobbying and advocacy and the numerous obstacles and challenges stemming from these efforts. As a European project coordinator I also maintained strong ties with other Romani actors outside of Spain and was able to follow, and to some extent, be involved in Roma-related developments in the international arena.

I also mentioned that I was a founder of a Romani youth organization in Poland, "Harangos". In 2010, I co-founded another Romani youth organization "Ternikalo 21," which is a member of the International Roma Youth Network ternYpe. Through "Ternikalo 21," I had the opportunity to work closely with Romani youth in Spain, organize a number of youth events and exchanges, festivals and training courses and help in the process of connecting Spanish Romani youth with their peers across Europe.

Additionally, since 2008, I have been collaborating with numerous Romani organizations across Spain, through exchanges, professional engagement, brainstorming and assistance. I have established close relationships, especially with Romani youth organizations (such as *Nakeramos, Yag Bari*), as well as with Romani women's organizations (especially *Voces Gitanas*). Beyond Spain, I have also collaborated with a plethora of other Romani organizations and networks, as well as engaged in a number of international initiatives (for example, as part of the Alliance for the European Roma Institute). I consider most of these as professional experience, although in most cases I was not employed or remunerated for my work, help or expertise.

These professional experiences have also shaped my academic interest towards studying the dynamics of Romani ethnic mobilization and simultaneously they have informed this dissertation in the formulation of research questions and hypotheses, choice of units of observation and access to the field of research.

3.4.b. Previous research experiences

Early engagement

All of my previous experiences outlined above – my involvement in Romani activism and my professional experience - have prompted my gradually increasing academic interest in assessing what I observed from a more informed and systematic perspective. This dissertation is, in fact, a result of this growing interest, seeking answers to the numerous questions which have reappeared constantly throughout my years of activism and professional work. Driven by my own involvement in activism, I sought a deeper understanding of the nature of ethnic mobilization, social movements and activism, of the minority-majority relations and the broader struggle for social justice. My life and professional trajectories have also fed my curiosity and the need to understand and critically reflect on my own ethnic identity; in this process of personal identity construction the interaction with Romani communities, beyond my own group (*Bergitka* Roma), has been of significant impact.

Consequently, these experiences have been the driving force for my academic engagement with so-called Romani studies. Even during my first years of university education, I wanted to use scientific methods to gain knowledge about the Romani communities. For my Bachelor's thesis (B.A. 2004-2007) in Comparative Studies of Civilizations at the Jagiellonian University, I decided to assess the impact of the experiences of the Holocaust on Romani identity construction. I defended a bachelor's thesis entitled "Romani identity in the process of transformation" under the supervision of Dr Agata Świerzowska.

Master's thesis

My academic interest in studying various phenomena related to the communities who self-identify as Roma continued during my master's studies. This time, informed by my professional experiences of working at FAGIC, I decided for the first time to scientifically assess the Romani associative movement in Catalonia. In 2011, I defended a master's thesis in Comparative Studies of Civilizations at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, entitled "Birth, Evolution and Future of Roma associative movement in Catalonia" (Anna Mirga 2011) under the supervision of Dr Ireneusz Kamiński.

The core part of this thesis was based on fieldwork carried out in Catalonia between 2008 and 2011. Throughout 2008, a total of 25 in-depth interviews (a total of approximately 35 people) with principal Romani leaders and activists in the four provinces of Catalonia were conducted. This section of the study formed part of a larger project commissioned by the Catalan government (*Generalitat*) under the direction of Dr Teresa Sordé i Martí, from the Department of Sociology of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB). This project had the aim of producing an academic and audiovisual exhibition/documentary dedicated to the Romani associative movement in Catalonia. Although the exhibition was never presented, the field work interviews had been conducted. The methodology of this study, as well as the script of the interviews were developed by Dr Sordé i Martí; I was the investigator who conducted the in-depth interviews and carried out the transcription and analysis of the contents. As the in-depth interviews were conducted with the principal Romani activists in the region, most of whom are elderly men, I was interested in analysing the opinions and approaches of

the Romani youth in relation to the subject of this thesis. For this reason, throughout 2010-2011, a total of 10 extensive written surveys were conducted with Romani youth. The data gathered became the backbone of my master’s thesis.

Understandably, the master’s thesis, and especially the data I gathered for it, have also informed and influenced this dissertation in a variety of ways. This master’s thesis represents my first attempt to assess the dynamics of Romani ethnic mobilization in Catalonia using scientific methods, systematically and rigorously. The findings of my master’s thesis have informed the design of this dissertation, especially with regards to the research questions and hypotheses, the selection of units of observation and units of analysis. It should also be noted that this dissertation relies on the findings and sources gathered for my master’s thesis as well.

Research experiences

My professional work as well as my engagement in Romani activism have also lead me to participate in numerous research projects of various types in different roles.

In 2004, in the first year after the creation of the Romani youth organization “Harangos”, I was involved in the evaluation of the educational part of “The pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Małopolska province in the years 2001-2003”. The evaluation was based on research conducted with different actors, among them school principals, teachers, Romani assistants and Romani families, aiming at assessing the effectiveness of the pilot program which had been launched in the previous years.

Once I moved to Spain, I was engaged in different research projects, especially once I started working at FAGIC. Out of these different experiences of being part of research projects of diverse types, the most important was the evaluation of the study “Evaluating the 6 years of the Comprehensive Plan for Roma Population in Catalonia”**,** financed by the Open Society Foundations under the EU Framework Advocacy Grant, which I co-coordinated in partnership with the EMIGRA research group of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB), under the supervision of Dr Bálint-Ábel Bereményi between November 2011 and November 2012.

The general objective of the evaluation project was to assess the “Integrated Plan for the Gitano Population in Catalonia” particularly focusing on its design, execution and impacts, though this latter only to a limited extent. The time scale we evaluated was between 2005 and 2010, although there are also related pieces of information corresponding to 2011. For the study, we have used a mixture of qualitative techniques of data collection including interviews, reconstructed participant observation, focal groups, surveys, and the exploitation of archives and documents. The findings from this research have also informed this dissertation, especially with regards to the interplay between public policies and Romani activism.

These diverse previous research experiences have proved to be invaluable for my process of training as a researcher and a scholar. They allowed me to gain knowledge of research design and implementation as well as to become familiar with various techniques and tools of data collection and

analysis. I have also learned to use qualitative data analysis (QDA) software such as Atlas.ti, which proved to be an important tool for systematic organization and analysis of the data gathered for this dissertation.

On the other hand, these experiences have led me to understand the complicated and frequently ambiguous status of a researcher, who constantly has to negotiate different roles while in the field. This was especially relevant for me as a person with a Romani background who researches topics related in one way or another to the Romani population. Throughout these experiences, especially in Spain, I learned that my status as an investigator was ambiguous, even more so than for a researcher coming from outside of the Romani community – as a foreigner, a stranger and an investigator, I was an outsider. However, as a Roma, declared and recognized by my interlocutors (often initially with a dose of disbelief), I was an insider, facilitating my entrance to the field, gaining trust and accessing the intimacy of Romani families and communities[8]. My professional experience and personal involvement in Romani activism added an additional layer to my status as a researcher. Over the years, and thanks to my previous research experiences, I have tried to maintain a balance between these different roles, learning how to negotiate and separate different roles depending on the context, field and objectives of research.

These personal challenges which I encountered and dealt with over the years reflect a broader discussion emerging within the field of Romani Studies, specifically, and more broadly, with regards to the salience of "subaltern" scholarship. In fact, heated debates about the status of Romani scholars, or more broadly, the relationship between ethnicity and academic performance, have recently been taking place (Bogdán et al. 2015; Ryder 2015; Kóczé 2015; E. Brooks 2015). In this debate about the status of Romani scholars, too often ethnic background has been juxtaposed with academic merit, as if these too were mutually exclusive. Rather, I argue that these should be treated as complementary qualities, which are relevant to the researcher but not necessarily to the quality of the academic performance. In this regard, ethnicity should be regarded as an added value in research, but should not overshadow the quality of academic production.

My previous academic experience, and most notably my participation in different research projects, allowed me to negotiate these different roles and to rely on my academic training in order to differentiate my role as a scholar from other involvements. A knowledge of scientific methods and their rigorous application during the fieldwork and data analysis stages enabled me to mitigate the challenging ambiguities resulting from my "outsider within" status.

Fellowship

In Autumn 2012, I approached the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Roma Initiatives Office with the idea of conducting a research project aiming at understanding better the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization and its underlying processes. The project proposed to look closely into the

[8] I have written about the status of Romani researchers as "outsiders within" elsewhere (Mirga-Kruszelnicka 2015).

strategies of ethnic mobilization among Romani communities in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts in order to identify favourable "ingredients" which contribute to the emergence and greater success of ethnic-based social movements.

Numerous publications and some excellent works can be found on the question of Romani ethnic mobilization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Although relevant, few authors assess this problem from a comparative perspective or go beyond Europe, and have given little attention to the development of the Romani ethnic-based movement in the countries of the Latin America. The choice of investigating the process of ethnic mobilization among Roma in countries of Latin America is worth highlighting, as the Romani mobilization in this part of the world has been shaped independently from the European processes and policies. Additionally, the process of birth and evolution of Romani associations in Latin America is lacking adequate, evidence-based data. The limited networking between the Romani leaders and communities of both continents puts into question the robust discourse on the "Roma transnational identity" and impedes an exchange of experiences and practices on a global scale. This research project was envisioned as a first step towards bringing the Romani communities from both continents under the same analytical framework, in order to grasp the nature of "Romani movements" in Europe and in Latin America. The strategies of action adopted, the discourse and framed collective interests, the level of impact at the policy level and the community mobilization capacity varies, depending on the interplay of a plethora of factors such as the political regime and regime change, the politics of recognition and institutional approach towards cultural diversity, the socio-economic condition of Romani minorities, the existence of political alliances with other communities, the frame, quality and "strength" of Romani identity, and the type of leadership. Exploring the Romani associative movement from a comparative perspective allows one to define the strategies for mobilization and the representation of interests, the political and cultural discourse, and the level of efficiency and impact of NGOs, in order to effectively empower the Romani communities.

The original fellowship project was approved for the period between February 1st, 2013 and April 30th, 2014, and later extended until May 30th, 2015.

This fellowship project, envisioned as a comparative study, selected representative countries, suitable for the implementation of the objectives of the project. The choice of selected countries has not been random but rather aimed at selecting comparable cases – namely countries which share a number of key characteristics. Six cases were selected – Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Spain, Slovakia and Macedonia – each presenting a variety of different policy approaches, social, political and cultural constellations and divergent historical trajectories. However, they share key characteristics, relevant for this project. They:

- are multi-cultural and multi-ethnic countries
- have a significant Romani population
- have experienced a radical political change, considered as a political "window of opportunity" (such as regime change, transition to democracy, legislative changes like adopting a new Constitution)

The project focused principally on the Romani associative movement (especially through Roma-lead civil society), as the main structured vehicle for the representation of Romani rights and collective claims. However, the implementation of the project extensively considered other structures which are, or have the potential to become, parallel vehicles of action in Romani communities (such as political parties, formal and informal networks, religious institutions such as Evangelical Churches, etc.).

The comparative variable extended beyond Romani ethnic movements and included parallel observations regarding other ethnic movements observed in each country. Such an inter-ethnic comparative perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the general context in which Romani mobilization emerges, as well as the identification of the specific characteristics of Romani associative movements.

Over the course of the fellowship, fieldwork was conducted in all six countries. The duration of fieldwork research varied in each case, depending on the time frame and available resources. The implementation of the project followed a variety of academic methodological data-collection approaches, especially qualitative methods, ranging from ethnographic fieldwork, participant and non-participant observation, in-depth and informal interviews, archival research, etc. The research in some cases resembled "detective" work, as in some places there is very limited information available regarding the Romani communities (especially in Latin America). In these cases, the research followed "snowball sampling," allowing me to access more data and contacts as the investigation evolved in time.

Throughout the fellowship (part 1 and part 2), over 280 in-depth interviews were conducted with a wide variety of relevant stakeholders and informants: Roma and non-Roma activists, leaders, thinkers, scholars, state officials, journalists, civil society representatives, donors, legislators and other representatives of public administration, as well as pastors, artists, non-associated individuals and families.

Similarities and differences between the Fellowship and PhD

Obviously, the Fellowship's objectives are related to the academic objectives of this doctoral thesis, as both projects focus on analysing the dynamics of ethnic mobilization in Romani communities from a comparative and inter-disciplinary perspective. However, the grant provided by the Open Society Foundations, beyond providing and expanding the body of knowledge based on fieldwork, also aims at contributing to the work done by the Roma Initiatives Office (collaboration with NGOs, calls for grants, strategic development of Romani associations) inspiring new solutions, strategies, discourses and/or specific projects.

While this thesis seeks to explore the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization, through analysis of its "ingredients", the fellowship project aims to make an assessment of these dynamics, focusing on aspects of success or failure.

Below, I provide a table summarizing the synergies and differences of both research projects to understand the connections and contributions of both projects:

	PHD THESIS	FELLOWSHIP
OBJECTIVES	Explore the nature of ethnic mobilization, the characteristic elements that compose it and how the political environment (understood as the political, juridical and legal framework, the approach to the treatment of minorities and multiculturalism, etc.) influences the birth and development of ethnic movements, determines and affects the strategies and discourses adapted, based on case study of Roma. The central focus falls on the insight into mobilizing structures (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996).	Explore the "ingredients" which compose the ethnic mobilization of Roma and its characteristics. Focus on the elements and strategies which contribute to the success of ethnic mobilization. Establish networks between Romani communities and organizations in case-study countries. Research into alternative strategies of social organization and claims-making, leadership patterns beyond the associative movement.
KEY QUESTIONS	If the process of ethnic mobilization is "a process in which groups organize around some elements of ethnic identity to achieve collective aims" (Olzak 1983). In the case of Roma, who mobilizes whom, based on what elements of ethnic identity, with what objectives and in what way? When is this process generated and how does it evolve? How is this process affected by contextual factors? From a comparative perspective, what similarities and differences can we identify and why? In studying ethnic mobilization, what contributions can be made from an anthropological perspective?	If in the process of ethnic mobilization (Olzak 1983) of Roma, the NGOs are the principal mobilizing structures, what are the elements which contribute to the success of this mobilization process? How can we measure the success of ethnic mobilization? How is this process different in the case-study countries? How can we measure the maturity of mobilizing structures (NGOs)?
METHODOLOGY	Comparative investigation (Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971), based on case studies (Yin 2009) and a multi-sited ethnography approach (Marcus 1995). Inter-disciplinary approach. Mixed method of data collection, with an emphasis on qualitative techniques.	Comparative investigation (Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971), based on case studies (Yin 2009) and a multi-sited ethnography approach (Marcus 1995). Inter-disciplinary approach. Mixed method of data collection, with an emphasis on qualitative techniques.
SOURCES OF DATA, TYPE OF INFORMANTS	Documents (self-produced by organizations, reports, policy-related, minutes of meetings, press, etc.), archival records, in-depth interviews, informal interviews, field visits, focus groups, questionnaires, ethnography, participant and non-participant observation (as an active member of organizations, as an observer during general assemblies, working sessions, formal and informal meetings, etc.). Profile of informants: Romani leaders and activists, un-associated Roma, Romani organizations, political parties; pro-Roma actors; public administration representatives; institutions (churches,	Documents (self-produced by organizations, reports, policy-related, minutes of meetings, press, etc.), archival records, in-depth interviews, informal interviews, field visits, focus groups, questionnaires, ethnography, participant and non-participant observation (as an active member of organizations, as an observer during general assemblies, working sessions, formal and informal meetings, etc.). Profile of informants: Romani leaders and activists, un-associated Roma, Romani organizations, political parties; pro-Roma actors; public administration

	schools, social services etc.); Roma and non-Roma experts, scholars and public intellectuals.	representatives; institutions (churches, schools, social services etc.); Roma and non-Roma experts, scholars and public intellectuals.
INCLUDED CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES	Spain and Colombia	Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Slovakia, Spain and Macedonia
DURATION	March 2012 – March 2016	February 2013 – April 2015
KEY CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	• Ethnic mobilization (Barany, 2002; Drury, 1994; Olzak, 1983; Olzak, 2006; Vermeersch, 2011) • Social movements (inter-disciplinary focus, with special interests in an anthropological approach) (Escobar 1992; Gibb 2001; Aronoff and Kubik 2013) • Politics of recognition and politics of identity (Taylor 1994; N. Fraser 2003) • Mobilizing structures (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Kriesi 1996) • Theory of framing (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Benford and Snow 2000; McAdam 1996) • Political opportunities structure (Vermeersch 2006; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; D. S. Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Kriesi 2004a) • Participation (Arnstein 1969; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004; N. Fraser 2003) • Leadership (Ganz 2010; Han et al. 2011) • Associative movements (Carrasco 2007; Salamon 1994)	• Ethnic mobilization (Olzak 1983; Olzak 2006; Vermeersch 2011; Barany 2002a; Drury 1994) • Social movements (inter-disciplinary focus, with special interests in an anthropological approach) (Escobar 1992; Gibb 2001; Aronoff and Kubik 2013) • Politics of recognition and politics of identity (Taylor 1994; N. Fraser 2003) • Mobilizing structures (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Kriesi 1996) • Theory of framing (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Benford and Snow 2000; McAdam 1996) • Political opportunities structure (Vermeersch 2006; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; D. S. Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Kriesi 2004a) • Participation (Arnstein 1969; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004; N. Fraser 2003) • Leadership (Ganz 2010; Han et al. 2011) • Associative movements (Carrasco 2007; Salamon 1994) • Empowerment (Batliwala 2002; Batliwala 2007; Batliwala 2015) • Evaluating social change (Guijt 2008)
MODEL OF ANALYSIS	Descriptive-interpretative and explanatory investigation	Comparative-evaluative model

TARGET GROUP/BENEFICIARIES	Above all, targeting the academic community, with the objective of increasing the body of knowledge and providing theoretical input based on conducted fieldwork.	Provide knowledge regarding the Romani associative movements, targeting mainly the civil society audience (Roma and non-Roma NGOs), as well as donor organizations (such as the foundations of the OSF) and public administration.
FINAL PRODUCT	PhD thesis as monography	• Final report • Recommendations to NGOs working with OSF (workshops, seminars, discussions) • Input to strategic work of RIO (internal)
UTILITY /APPLICABILITY	Academic contributions regarding Romani ethnic mobilization.	Potential to provide recommendations to civil society, government and donors on the strategic development of Romani NGOs.

Table 2. Synergies and differences between the dissertation and the fellowship project

3.4.c. Fieldwork in Spain

It should be noted that in case of the Spanish fieldwork, it is difficult to provide a fixed time frame during which the research was conducted. Prior research projects, as well as my professional experience in working for and with Romani organizations in Spain date back to 2008. All of those experiences, as was explained earlier, informed this PhD thesis as well. The data gathered for my Master's thesis, different research projects I was involved in and the fellowship projects, has been incorporated into this dissertation.

Since the beginning of my PhD studies, I have continued to gather data with a specific focus on this dissertation. In the case of the research in Spain, I relied on a "purposive sampling" technique (Palys 2008) using my prior knowledge of the environment and the extensive mapping out of entities and individuals which were relevant for my fieldwork and where chosen as my units of observation. This selection was made to contrast, contextualize and validate the data gathered in previous years. This process has been ongoing throughout my PhD studies since 2012. Nonetheless, there were also periods of more intensive data collection in Spain. Namely, in the first phase, between 10th September and 16th December 2013, 47 in-depth interviews were conducted with relevant interlocutors: 23 with Roma (among them staff of administrative bodies, leaders, pastors, politicians and scholars), 1 with the Ministry official, 9 with relevant scholars, 6 with non-Roma activists (among them *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*, non-Roma NGOs), 1 with a photographer of Romani communities. Additionally, 6 events were attended (among them 1 training session for the Romani youth, which I conducted), and 3 extensive field visits were conducted (Valencia, Madrid and Sant Adrià del Besòs), although representatives, scholars and leaders from other regions were also consulted. Additionally, formal and informal correspondence via e-mail, as well as conversations via phone and Skype were conducted.

Since then, between 2014-2016, I have been conducting follow-up research in Spain – I have travelled repeatedly to Spain (mostly Barcelona), attended a number of Roma-hosted events and conferences, maintained relationships and conversations with Romani organizations and leaders, conducted interviews in Spain as well as through Skype or during international events I attended, in order to stay up-to-date on the current developments regarding the situation of Roma in Spain.

Throughout the period of fieldwork, I targeted different categories of informant, pre-defined in the research design as my units of observation. More specifically, I addressed the following categories of informants:

- Romani organizations (of diverse scope) and their leaders and members (Roma and non-Roma)
- Romani community members (non-associated or not active) – with a specific interest in women and youth
- Relevant members of the Romani community, such as those considered "elders of respect", pastors, prominent personalities
- Romani intellectuals, politicians, journalists and scholars
- Non-Roma interacting with Romani organizations (experts, advisers)
- Representatives of pro-Roma organizations
- Relevant non-Roma scholars and academics who have worked on/ with Romani communities locally
- Representatives of public institutions, both administrative staff and appointed officials, of Roma and non-Roma origin

3.4.d. Fieldwork in Colombia

It should be noted that many of the decisions taken with regards to the research design and fieldwork in Colombia originate from my previous experiences in Spain but also in other European countries. My previous experiences, both academic and otherwise, have shaped my initial research questions, the field of interest and my perspective with regards to what I wanted to learn about Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia. Knowing the field of research in Spain well was a determinant factor for envisioning the central focus of my fieldwork to be conducted in Colombia. Thus, prior to my travel to Colombia I had already planned what type of information I needed to gather and what type of informants I wanted to reach out to in order to conduct a feasible comparison.

Duration and location

The fieldwork in Colombia lasted between May 1st, 2013 and July 31st, 2013. The base of activity was established in the capital – Bogota, due to the proximity of relevant institutions, governmental bodies, universities, etc. Additionally, the only two formally registered Romani organizations are established in the capital and are the main relevant interlocutors shaping the public policies and discourse on Roma.

It should be noted that my home in Bogota was not in any of the districts where Romani families live but in the very centre of the city, close to all the institutions and governmental bodies. This was a conscious decision. From my initial preparations prior to my trip and especially thanks to a number of contextualizing interviews conducted with other scholars who had done research there, as well as some Romani activists, I knew that Romani organizations are strongly linked to specific families. I also knew well beforehand about the conflicts existing among different Romani entities in Bogota. As I wanted to investigate and work with both principal *kumpeñy* and "their" corresponding organizations, I knew that being too close to one might exclude me from working with the other. I stayed at a friend-of-a-friend's house which gave me a good excuse to explain why I moved into a room in the centre instead of staying close to districts where Romani families lived. Later on, during research, often my closest Romani informants visited me in my house which also created an atmosphere of intimacy and a neutral ground in which to speak freely.

This methodological choice of where to establish my base of activity proved to be helpful: it allowed me to establish relationships with members of both organizations and *kumpeñy,* without being excessively associated with either of them. This was essential – it enabled me to acquire a perspective of both organizations, to "get both sides of the story", helping me to find a balance during research and contrast information coming from both organizations. On the other hand, however, it also excluded me from observing the day-to-day life of the *kumpeñy* and made it more difficult to establish contacts with un-affiliated members of the Romani community, those who are not involved in Romani ethnic mobilization. Over time, however, I also managed to find informants who are outsiders to Romani ethnic mobilization struggles, complementing my fieldwork with this additional perspective, which I had previously included in my research design.

Beyond Bogota, I also conducted a number of exploratory field visits to Medellín, Calí, Bucaramanga and Girón, conducting interviews there, as well and visiting Romani families.

Groups addressed: Empirical sample

For my fieldwork, I have defined a diverse set of target groups or interlocutors which I wanted to get to know and speak to. The variety of interlocutors was meant to broaden my perspective towards a variety of outlooks on the Romani mobilization in the country. This choice of units of observation was based on my previous experiences in Spain. This provisional classification which I designed initially has been later on validated during fieldwork and proved to be relevant for my object of inquiry:

- Romani organizations and their leaders and members (Roma and non-Roma)
- Romani community members (non-associated or not active) – specific interest in women and youth
- Relevant members of the Romani community, such as those considered "elders of respect", pastors, outstanding personalities
- Non-Roma interacting with Romani organizations (experts, advisers)
- Relevant scholars and academics who have worked on/ with Romani communities locally

- Relevant scholars who have not worked with Roma, preferably active in local universities and experts on ethnic mobilization, policies of cultural diversity etc.
- Representatives of public institutions, both administrative staff and appointed (Roma and non-Roma)
- Members/ Representatives of indigenous organizations and Afro-Colombian groups

In total, 49 in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse profile of interlocutors: 20 Romani individuals and leaders (among them pastors and public administration staff), 10 with public administration representatives, 9 with scholars, 4 with indigenous/ afro-descendant communities and 1 with a flamenco dancer. A number of interviews were conducted over the telephone or via Skype, many of them from Europe. Not all of the interviews were recorded – in some occasions the speakers disagreed or evidently felt uncomfortable (especially my Romani informants). In those cases, I considered it much more effective to conduct an interview without recording it – the type of information and the intimacy of the conversation varied according to whether there was an audio recorder in front or not. The interviews which were not recorded were followed up with detailed notes during or immediately after the conversation. Also, much of the most "juicy information" was given "off the record" by public officers or experts, which is also not recorded but is included in the notes (as "off the record").

Also, I attended 6 events:

- First Interethnic Congress in Bogota (*Primer Congreso Distrital Interétnico*)
- *Foro Unidad y Diversidad. Red de Comunicación Interétnica de Bogotá* (where I was invited as a speaker)
- *Socialización de avances de programa "Fortalecimiento de la investigación sobre movimientos sociales en la diversidad y dialogo intercultural",* UNAC
- *Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito*
- Workshop run by INNPULSA and the Ministry of Commerce for the Roma
- *Reunión de Mesa Nacional de Diálogo - Capacitación de proyectos - Sistema General de Regalías*

Contacting the target group. Preparations:

The contacts with the above mentioned individuals started well before my trip to Colombia. Through the analysis of academic publications, internet sources such as websites, Facebook, YouTube and news releases, as well as self-generated writings (of Romani organizations and individuals) I had an idea of where to start from in order to reach my targets.

In my initial phase, also before my fieldwork in Mexico, I contacted relevant scholars who have studied or might have knowledge of people who have been investigating Roma in Colombia. Through the Roma Virtual Network, I gained additional contacts and hints. Through my contacts in the Roma-related politics and "movement" I received a number of recommendations, too.

In Mexico I had two relevant informants who have been helping me to better contextualize and understand the specificity of the Colombian case. One is a Romani dancer and artist and a personal friend of Dalila Gómez - a prominent Romani activist and leader in Colombia (from the organization PROROM). The other is a Catalan Romani activist, an active member of SKOKRA (Council of Roma Organizations and Kumpanyi in the Americas), who has travelled many times to Colombia and knows the majority of the relevant activists there. Both of them recommended me and helped me to get in touch with individual people via e-mail. Also, my supervisor introduced me to his friend Sandra over Facebook, who later also became one of my principle informants and guides in Colombia.

Simultaneously, I contacted via e-mail a number of Romani activists and relevant scholars. The most responsive were Dalila Gómez, Juan Carlos Gamboa and Hugo Paternina – founders of the first Romani organization, PROROM. In particular, Dalila was very generous in messages with kind words, happy to show me around once I finally arrived in Colombia. On the other hand, Sandra, my supervisor's acquaintance was also very receptive and we conversed numerous times before I reached Colombia. It is important to note that Sandra and Dalila are active members of two rival Romani organizations in Bogota – PROROM and *Unión Romaní de Colombia*.

I wrote indiscriminately to all the people who could potentially be relevant to my investigation in order to have as many contacts before getting to Colombia as I could. In this way I managed to announce my arrival to a variety of different factions within Romani organizations as well as other potentially relevant informants.

In Colombia

As is the case with all investigations, one contact always revealed another and pointed to new places to search for information. In this investigation I relied on a "snow-ball sampling" technique, which is often used to reach "hard-to-find" populations. Thus, I relied on my initial informants to connect me with subsequent individuals who might be relevant to the development of the fieldwork.

It is important to note, however, that my informants shared contacts from their own circle of interest or activity, which thus limits the view of the reality of other people who are disengaged from Romani politics. Thus, I used their networks to reach additional informants, making it difficult to get to know people outside of their scope of influence. To balance this, I tried to get to know people that were not active in politics or the associations, even though they might have been relatives of the main personalities (leaders). In this regard, such focus was most effective during my fieldwork in Bucaramanga and Girón where I made friends with a Romani family disengaged from the political activity of the region (through Esteban Acuña, a scholar studying Roma). Also, I spent a lot of time with Romani women that I met on the streets or at different events, drinking coffee or accompanying them during their fortune-telling walks around the city centre.

From the beginning it was important for me to also speak with individuals from Romani communities who remain distant and un-affiliated from the processes of Romani ethnic mobilization. My objective was not only to unravel the dynamics of ethnic mobilization – how agency (collective and individual) is

activated for a collective purpose of a community – but also to understand the dynamics of disengagement and demobilization. As explained in the previous chapter ("Theoretical Considerations"), I understand ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process, in which Romani actors also interact and target their own communities. In order to validate this assumption and understand the relationship between the actors of Romani ethnic mobilization and their constituencies, it was thus necessary to speak with those who remain outside of the circle of activism.

Upon arrival I also began to contact all the relevant public institution bodies previously identified as important for my work. Surprisingly, they were more responsive than I could have suspected and, with exception of a number of cases, I received positive responses and agreements to meet.

What should be noted is the fact that the majority of the closest contacts and relationships which I made with Roma, were limited to women. The men were not so eager to respond and meet, probably due to the cultural codes of conduct which organize the Romani community according to gender and age.

Furthermore, I wanted to familiarize myself with the general and popular perception about Roma in Colombia – hence, interviews and conversations with people (taxi drivers, neighbours, journalists, etc.) were conducted. Additionally, I searched for contacts with other ethnic minorities and their leaders – in order to have an outlook on how these dynamics are taking place among Afro-Colombians or Indigenous communities in Colombia.

Follow-up

In as much as possible, I have tried to stay in contact with a number of my key informants in Colombia, mostly through e-mail and Facebook, and occasionally through Skype conversations. The objective of continuing these relationships was to remain up-to-date on the developments taking place in Colombia after I left the country. Also very helpful in this process is the continuing relationship and conversation with Esteban Acuña, who has been conducting research on Colombian Roma since 2007 and is now drafting his PhD thesis which draws from his years-long research. Esteban has travelled back to Colombia a number of times since I left the country in 2013 and has continued to conduct fieldwork. Esteban was kind enough to share with me his findings and provide me with important information regarding the developments in Colombia.

3.5 Data analysis and triangulation

3.5.a. Data analysis: theoretical-analytical model

In the previous chapter, "Theoretical Considerations," based on an examination of the relevant scholarship on ethnic mobilization, I propose an alternative model, which on the one hand, dissects ethnic mobilization into separate components, and on the other hand, synthesizes and incorporates elements from different theoretical approaches under a common framework. Recapitulating, I propose to differentiate between the following elements:

COMPONENT	GUIDING QUESTIONS	RELATED CONCEPTS
WHO	What are the vehicles of ethnic mobilization?	• Mobilizing structures • Agency
WHOM	Who is the target of mobilization? Who is mobilized and who is not?	• Collective identity frames
WHY/ WHAT FOR	What are the aims of mobilization? What are we mobilizing for?	• Collective interest frames
HOW	What strategies are employed to pursue these goals?	• Performances • Tactical repertoires
WHEN	When does ethnic mobilization emerge? What factors condition changes in ethnic mobilization?	• Political opportunities structure

Table 3. Theoretical model: components, guiding questions and related concepts

In this model, each component is conceptualized in relation to concrete theoretical approaches, which I defined and described in detail in the previous chapter. This theoretical model has consequently been adopted as an analytical model.

The theoretical framework established allowed me to identify macro-variables around which the data was organized, and subsequently analysed; namely: "who", "whom", "what for/why", "how" and "when". The concepts associated with these variables are defined, operationalized and discussed in detail in relation to different corresponding theoretical frameworks in the chapter "Theoretical Considerations". It should be noted that in the process of analysis, the theoretical propositions have been relevant as guidelines which informed the organization and examination of data. However, the theoretical framework has not been conceived as rigid, also due to the inter-disciplinary approach I have adopted. Rather, I preferred to use the theoretical propositions as flexible guidelines which allow me to organize the collected data into different sets of variables. Contrary to variable-oriented research, which is theory-centred, I adopt the case-oriented research method, which is "very much an evidence-based strategy" and whose key feature is its flexibility in approach to evidence (Ragin, 2014:53). It is for this reason that the process of fieldwork, data collection and initial data analysis further informed the theoretical propositions and lead to the expansion of variables in order to account for the empirical findings from the field.

More specifically, each component has been conceived as a macro-variable ("general code"), around which specific data has been organized and coded. Subsequently, a list of variables ("specific codes") has been associated to each macro-variable, along with a number of indicators. Below is the table which schematically presents the variables/ codes adopted.

MACRO- VARIABLE/ "GENERAL CODES" CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC VARIABLES	INDICATORS
"WHO"	• Formal and informal structures • Individuals • NGOs • Micro-mobilization • Political parties • Networks • Churches	• Context and dynamic of the emergence of actors • Type of structure (legal status, size, character, profile and scope) • Classification with regards to ethnicity (of entities and individuals involved) • Classification and overall number of actors; diversification of actors • Membership and type of connection to the community (presence) • Leadership and composition patterns • Level of consolidation and/ or fragmentation • Relationship to each other (conflict, collaboration etc.) • Internal democracy and decision-making • Grassroots perspectives (representativeness and legitimacy)
"WHOM"	• Constituencies • Adherents • Supporters • Allies • Opponents	• Specification of frame(s) of collective identity • "Public expression of self" narratives • Diversification of frames • Competing frames • Collective identity formation • Political dimension of ethnicity • Boundary framing • Adversarial framing • Identity deployment • Identity correspondence • Target audience • Traces of "strategic essentialism" • "Whom" as: who the Roma are (ascribed) • "Whom" as: who we are as Roma (self-narrative) • "Whom" as: who we want to mobilize (motivational framing) • Grassroots perspective
"WHAT FOR AND WHY"	• Objectives and goals • Reasons for mobilizing (Rationale) • Claims and demands • Problems and solutions	• Specification and typology of collective interest frame (cultural, political, legislative etc.) • Diagnostic frames • Prognostic frames • Injustice frames • Diversification of frames • Relationship to collective identity frame • Frame alignment process

	• Discourses	• Frame resonance • Motivational framing • Reactive frames • Proactive frames • Representation vs. representativeness • Grassroots perspective
"HOW"	• Strategies • Repertoires • Protest • Lobbying and advocacy • Political interaction • Public events • Legal tools • Knowledge production	• Legal channels of participation • Representation • Political interaction patterns • Service provision • Type of activities • Audiences and targets • Diversification of strategies • Alliance-building • Tactical repertoires • Bi-directional repertoires (external and internal) • Level of alignment between aims and action • Grassroots perspective
"WHEN"	• "Windows of opportunity" • Political environment • Stable and unstable properties of political system • National cleavages • Shifts in political alliances	• Type of political system and institutional make-up • Level of openness of institutional structures • Political landscape (parties, allies, groups of contention etc.) • Political will (towards minority struggles) • Social composition (focus on cultural diversity) • Legal status of minorities and policy-treatment (legal framework) • Historical context • Status of Roma • Funding scheme • International developments (transnational POS) • Turning points and breakthroughs • "Logic of appropriateness" • Significant shifts and changes

Table 4. Analytical model: macro-variables (general coding categories), variables and indicators

What should be noted is that the relationship between these variables is dynamic, inter-related and inter-dependent. Consequently, it is difficult to analyse these variables independently. Rather, they have been examined in relationship to each other, exploring the dynamics and dependencies which the distinct variables hold to each other, as a relationship of constant interplay. Additionally, it should be noted that the delineation of these components is done for analytical purposes; however, in practice these distinct elements are closely intertwined with each other.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the "when" variable has been treated differently than the other ones and through the process of data analysis has emerged as the extraneous variable. More specifically, the "when" - was related to the external factors, or broadly speaking, the environment in which the Romani ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves – and as such was treated as a transversal variable. Despite its name, the "when" variable is not restricted only to the *dimension of time*, but also, to the same extent, to the *dimension of place*. Thus, the "when" should also be regarded as the extraneous variable, referring to the external context or the environment in which the ethnic mobilization takes place.

In my understanding, the "when" variable, associated with POS factors, influences the other components of ethnic mobilization. More concretely, a specific moment in time and space - or the emergence of a specific "window of opportunity" - conditions the type of articulated interests, might influence the discourse of collective identity or may result in adopting different strategies. For the analysis, it is thus important to identify shifts and changes in different components of ethnic mobilization, assessing them vis-à-vis concrete external developments of POS in that specific context. Schematically, the table below explains these different dimensions.

	DESCRIPTION	**WHEN**	**DIMENSION**
WHO	TYPE OF ACTOR	Influence on type of mobilizing structures	- Emergence - Evolution - Changes
WHOM	COLLECTIVE IDENTITY FRAME	Influence on collective identity frames	Changes in frames
WHY/WHAT FOR	RATIONALE AND INTEREST FRAME	Influence on collective interest frames	Changes in frames
HOW	STRATEGIES AND REPERTOIRES	Influence on choice of strategies of collective action	Changes and shifts

Table 5. Dimensions of variables

Nonetheless, the process of analysis revealed that it is not only the "when" variable which exerts influence on other variables and accounts for their changes. Initial analysis signalled that this process is bi-directional. While POS factors influence changes, modifications and adaptations of the remaining components of ethnic mobilization – which can be assessed separately (for example, how did the collective interest frame change) and globally (how did ethnic mobilization patterns transform), effective ethnic mobilization also affects the external environment, potentially leading to its alteration. For example, effective lobbying for a specific policy might lead to achieving legislative changes, consequently, altering the legislative framework applicable and further widening the scope of political opportunities. Nonetheless, the "when" variable associated with POS factors, proved to be the variable which needs to be included transversally, in order to account for changes and shifts in the remaining components. Subsequently, effective adaptation of the remaining elements to POS factors may be analysed, examining whether the process lead to the alteration of the "when" variable. The table below schematically presents the dynamic relationship between these different components.

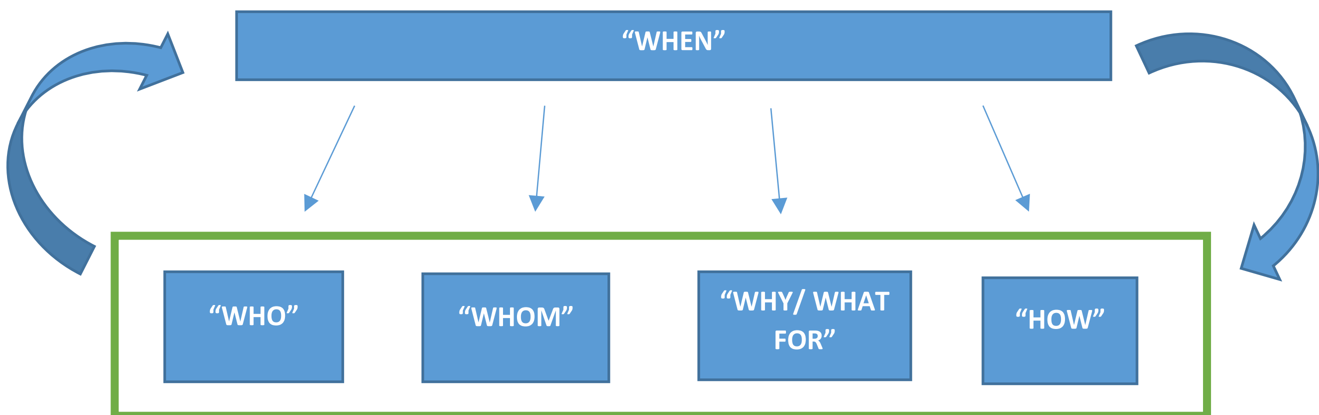


Figure 3. Schematic figure of the dynamic relationship between the variables

Consequently, throughout the investigation, and especially during the process of analysis, it was essential to adopt a dynamic and dialectic perspective of the variables in order to acknowledge the mutual interplay and relationship of inter-dependency between them. After all, the studied phenomenon – ethnic mobilization – is not a stable, durable and fixed one, but rather is characterized by constant evolution, adaptation and transformation over time. The analysis methodology was adjusted in order to reflect this dynamic property of ethnic mobilization, in order to provide a more in-depth perspective.

Finally, it should be noted that I incorporated the gender variable as a transversal theme, which has been taken into consideration in the analysis of the different sets of categories/ variables defined in the model.

Procedure of analysis

In-the-field analysis was an important component of preliminary analysis of the data gathered. Taking notes, making observations, recording answers, is a process through which the researcher constantly reports his understanding of what is being observed, making sense of what is happening (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999). In this initial phase of analysis, through inscription, description and transcription (LeCompte and Schensul 2013), I was able to organize the data, dividing it into coherent sets of items and themes; it also allowed me to identify initial patterns and dynamics between the different sets of data gathered. Deductively, the data has been initially organized around the basic conceptual frames and questions that informed the research design in the first place.

Subsequently, I engaged in post-fieldwork analysis. I began by organizing and cataloguing the data, supported by Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software Atlas.ti. Such software is helpful for organizing data using codes, which enable the analysis of the collected data by finding patterns, relationships between codes and unravelling the meaning of different sets of codes in relation to each other. The process of coding data, supported by Atlas.ti, facilitated the process of analysis. Pieces of information were coded and linked to variables and various theoretical propositions, in order to discover patterns,

relationships and dependencies. I started by arranging pieces of data around macro-variables ("general coding") and variables associated with specific codes.

This process of analysis can be regarded as "recursive," reflecting the dynamic and cyclical process of analysis of ethnographic data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013:65). I associated pieces of data with specific components of my theoretical-analytical model; however, through this process of associating data (coding), the list of relevant codes was modified and consequently the model has been repeatedly revisited, amplified and fine-tuned to incorporate additional pieces of data or account for the emerging patterns and themes observed.

Furthermore, throughout the data analysis process, I adapted the method of triangulation (Yin 2009; Flick 2009) in order to contrast evidence and data coming from different sources and to provide more depth and complexity to my research analysis. The process of coding facilitated the process of triangulation by analysing and contrasting pieces of data coming from different sources, collected using different techniques, within the same code; it also allowed more depth by analysing concepts from various theoretical standpoints.

On the one hand, I engaged in data triangulation, by using different sources of information and contrasting them with each other (Guion, Diehl, and McDonald 2002; Flick 2009). In fact, in as much as possible, I tried to diversify the sources of knowledge and types of data in search of reliable analysis and conclusions. For example, for a piece of data I obtained through an in-depth interview, I tried to contrast it with other interviews with different categories of informants as well as with relevant secondary sources (if available) such as academic studies, reports, policy-papers, media reports, websites, press-releases etc. On the other hand, I also engaged, when possible, in methodological triangulation defined as "the use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods to study" (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2002:2). I combined different qualitative methods of data collection and techniques, such as interviews, observations, focus groups, document analysis etc. The data gathered using these different techniques was later analysed and contrasted, bearing in mind the source of data and the technique by which it was obtained.

Furthermore, the inter-disciplinary approach enabled me to study my units of analysis from different standpoints, thus engaging in what is often regarded as theory triangulation (Flick 2009). Denzin defines this method as "approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind...Various theoretical points of view could be placed side by side to assess their utility and power" (Denzin 1989, pp. 239-240; quoted in Flick, 2009: 444).

Thus, it should be noted that triangulation has been invoked not only as a data analysis strategy but has also been incorporated into the research design and data collection.

Finally, the process of incorporating triangulation methods into the data analysis may lead to three types of results: converging results, complementary results and contradictions (Flick, 2009:451). In the process of analysis, I tried to look for different types of results, searching for patterns and schemes between variables, and with regards to different sets of units of observation. The appearance of

similarities and differences, and at times contradictions, opened up additional layers of analysis which required an inductive insight into the theoretical propositions adopted initially.

3.5.b. Limitations and shortcomings

Despite the careful research design, fieldwork and data analysis, there are some evident limitations of this dissertation which should be born in mind.

An evident difficulty, foreseen in advance and acknowledged in the research design, is the challenge of maintaining an internal balance to the research. This has been made especially evident in the process of data collection and fieldwork. On the one hand, the existence of and access to relevant data is different in each country, due to existing legal frameworks (for example, with regards to national censuses and the collection of ethnic data, considered unconstitutional in Spain). On the other hand, the extensiveness of both academic scholarship and policy-related documents and texts varies considerably between each country. In Spain, secondary academic literature on Roma is much more abundant than in Colombia, where academic engagement with Romani communities can be witnessed only in the past two decades and is still limited to a handful of authors. The depth of analysis as well as the existence of previous research is different for each case, and obviously affects the scope of consulted references in this dissertation. Furthermore, the engagement of public administration with Romani communities in each country is also different – in Spain, hundreds of Roma-related laws have been passed throughout the past five centuries, allowing for a historical analysis of the development of Roma-related policies and the shifting approaches to Roma by the State administration. On the contrary, in Colombia, it is only since the early 2000s that the State administration has begun to show an interest in the Romani communities. Consequently, the proportions as well as the type of data gathered and analysed for each country is different and asymmetrical.

Secondly, there is an evident lack of balance with regards to the duration of fieldwork in both countries. The fieldwork conducted physically in Colombia lasted for 3 months. In Spain, on the other hand, the fieldwork lasted much longer; additionally, living in Spain for over 6 years and working professionally with Romani organizations allowed me to gain much more insight. Consequently, the depth of knowledge, networks of contacts and informants, extensiveness of collaborations and level of analysis are different for each country. Furthermore, the process of follow-up has also been distinct in each case – I have not had the opportunity to return to Colombia after the period of fieldwork conducted in 2013; the updating of information was done only through personal contacts and conversations with a limited number of informants. On the other hand, I have travelled numerous times to Spain over the course of the duration of this PhD and can consider myself to be up-to-date with the relevant developments with regards to Roma taking place in the country.

Thirdly, the extensiveness of units of analysis – the Romani associative movements in each country – also vary considerably, in size, proliferation and historical scope. Arguably, the trajectories of evolution of both associative movements are different, and have also developed divergently, due to diverse social, political, cultural, structural and historical contexts.

Finally, there is a lack of balance in terms of the gender of my informants, especially in the case of Colombia. As a woman of Romani origin, I have established much closer relationships with women, which have transformed over time into friendships with some of them. I also accompanied women to meetings or spent time with them in private and/or informal settings to a much greater extent than the time I spent with Romani men. Accessing and establishing relationships with Romani women was much easier, whereas establishing similar relationships with men is, in certain communities and settings, perceived as inappropriate or suspicious. All of this has naturally also affected the course of the research and affected the type of information I collected.

4. SETTING THE SCENE: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY POLICIES AND THE ROMANI ASSOCIATIVE MOVEMENT

Prior to presenting the empirical findings from both case-study countries – Spain and Colombia - with regards to the phenomenon of Romani activism, it is important to first "set the scene", that is, to situate the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization in a broader context.

Firstly, it should be acknowledged that public policies repeatedly shape the social reality in which we live by creating and re-defining actors, shaping discourses and ideologies, establishing the dynamics of the governance of citizens and the channels of interaction. The emerging scholarship on "anthropology of policy" (Shore & Durão 2010; Shore & Wright 1997) also unravels how public policies actively "create new categories of individuals to be governed" (Wedel, Shore, Feldman, & Lathrop, 2005:30). Secondly, no public policies are born in a vacuum but rather respond to general tendencies and ideologies which circulate not only at the national level but also internationally. Scholarship on social movements demonstrates that the processes of globalization have affected the way in which social movements work (Maiba 2004; Oberschall 1996; J. Smith 2007; Kriesi 2007) and how public policies are developed.

Bearing in mind these initial considerations, the objective of this section is to provide a description of the broader social, political, historical, cultural, legislative and economic contexts in which Romani ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves. Drawing from scholarship and recent literature on the Roma, I aim to draw a comprehensive picture of the environment which conditions the dynamics of Romani ethnic mobilization. In doing so, I provide a critical analysis of the socio-political and policy approaches to the Roma as a community, or to the so-called "Romani issues", from a regional/ continental perspective; analysis of the country-specific contexts will be assessed in the corresponding chapters on Spain and Colombia.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first analyses the evolution of the Romani issue in Europe, pointing to shifting approaches in the policy discourses and policy treatment of the Roma, and their implications for Roma and pro-Roma civil society. In the second section, I analyse the context in Latin America with regards to the Roma, pointing to their socio-political invisibility and the importance of the emergence of ethnic movements among other minority groups in the continent. The final section reflects on the implications of these diverse contexts and approaches towards the Roma in both regions and poses questions which will guide the comparative analysis.

4.1 The Roma in Europe. Shifting context

4.1.a. Evolution of the Romani issues in Europe – towards a Roma category *sui generis*

At the European level, the mutual dependencies and interplay between European developments and national politics is especially evident. The principle of supremacy of EU law over the national legislatures becomes an important tool which exerts pressure on the Member States and the political impact of international governmental organizations (IGOs) can be easily traced. Therefore, in order to

understand the emergence of the Romani issue as a policy category, it is important to analyse the wider, international context, as well as the role of intergovernmental organizations. The issue of minority rights protection and human rights is a field in which the dynamics of the international-domestic interplay are made significantly visible. Numerous scholars have devoted their attention to the question of the internationalization of minority rights and its impact on domestic policies (Schöpflin 2000; Sadurski 2004), pointing to the importance of these dynamics, especially in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. For the Roma, the interplay between international actors and domestic policies has been decisive.

The Roma are a trans-national ethnic minority, which has been present in the European continent for at least 600 years[9]. Over the centuries, their fate has been marked by persecutions, exclusion and social rejection, forced expulsions, slavery and pogroms, reaching its peak during the 20th century when Roma throughout Europe fell victim to Nazi Germany in what is regarded as the *Porrajmos* (or *Samudaripen)* or the Roma Genocide. Nonetheless, modern European democracies, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War, granted Roma full citizenship status. That means, at least formally on paper, that the Roma are citizens of the countries in which they reside in the same capacity as any other citizen of the majority, protected by the rights enshrined in national constitutions. Despite this formal status as citizens, in practice the Roma remained (and continue to be) the most disenfranchised, socially, economically and politically marginalized and excluded, and commonly segregated community, which deprives them of the capacity to enjoy their full citizenship rights. Furthermore, widespread, deeply-rooted and socially acceptable discrimination and racism (including institutional) against the Roma (today regarded as anti-Gypsyism) works to keep members of the Romani community on the margin of contemporary societies, creating obstacles to their social, economic and political integration in their capacity as citizens of modern nation-states. This is the background, which regrettably in many aspects continues to be true today, in the context of which Roma targeted policies emerged and in which Romani ethnic mobilization surfaced, in search of social justice for their communities.

More specifically, there are different views as regards to what prompted the interest in the Roma that has resulted in policy programs targeting this population in Europe. Some see it as an outcome of Roma migration: after the end of WWII some Roma migrated westward, raising concerns among the majority and politicians and prompting policy responses (for example: Matras 2013). Others may argue that the numerous human rights violations against the Roma led intergovernmental organizations responsible for human rights standards to scrutinize the Roma's situation more closely (for example: Vermeersch

[9] It is believed that the Roma entered the European continent at the beginning of the 14th century, although some scholars argue that Roma presence in Europe might date back as far as the 11th century. In "*The Life of Saint George of Athos*" (1009-1065), written by his disciple George Hucesmonazoni around year 1068, for the first time the term *ADISINCANI* appears. *ADISINCANI* is a byzantine word used to refer to a heretic sect, commonly associated with the Roma minority. *ADISINCANI* is the source of a number of contemporary words used in reference to the Roma – the Turkish *ÇIGENE*, Italian *ZINGARI*, French *TSIGANES* or German *ZIGEUNER*. Whether this document is in fact mentioning the Roma, it still a matter of discussion among scholars. (Mirga & Mróz, 1994)

2006). While in the first situation, governments were mobilized to find a response to Romani migrations, in the latter, Romani activists worked to raise interest in the Roma among national governments and international organizations. This can be clearly traced to the actions of Sinti and Roma Holocaust survivors in the new Germany in the ‘60s and early ‘70s (seeking recognition of the Roma genocide and its racist nature), to the efforts of English Gypsies and Travellers in the late ‘60s (ensuring caravan site rights) or the actions of Romani leaders and organizations in former communist countries (often perceived as subversive and countered by communist regimes).

Intergovernmental organizations have been a natural focal point, within which various concerns regarding this population have been raised. The Council of Europe, the United Nations[10] or the OSCE (starting with the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, which led eventually to the establishment of the OSCE) have addressed the Roma through sets of recommendations directed to their member countries’ governments since the late ’60s. Specific mandates of these organizations enabled them to play significant roles during various periods, especially after the 1989 transition. Following on from their specific mandates, they have developed their own programs and activities targeting the Roma and have produced a large body of recommendations and commitments to ensure the Roma’s equality and non-discrimination and to promote their social and economic integration. They have encouraged, facilitated and supported the design and adoption of governmental programs for Roma integration.

By analysing the development of the Romani issue in major intergovernmental organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE) and, most notably, the European Union (EU), one may trace how Roma-related policies have evolved from a general, non-discrimination, minority and human rights protection approach towards the centralist, ethnic-based and targeted approach of the current EU Roma Framework[11].

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

With the fall of the Berlin Wall on the one hand, and with the radicalization of the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia on the other, different international bodies became increasingly aware of the importance of minority rights’ protection as a prerequisite for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. The OSCE was first in creating political instruments for the protection and monitoring of the treatment of minorities among its member states, including the Roma[12], through the creation of the High

[10]The Roma situation has been scrutinized for example by the UN Human Right Committee (for ICCPR), CERD for ICERD and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for ICESCR). Within the UN, General Recommendation 27 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on “Discrimination against Roma”[10] set out a number of measures to be followed by States. The UNHCR has been strongly involved in Roma IDPs and refugees’ issues as a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Balkan wars.

[11] For a detailed overview: Marcia Rooker “The International Supervision of Protection of Romani People in Europe” (2002), Mijmegen University Press

[12] As early as 1990, the “particular problems of Roma” were recognized by the CSCE Copenhagen document. Later, a Human Dimension Seminar on Roma and Sinti took place in Warsaw in 1994, followed by the Budapest Summit Decision to establish the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues within the ODIHR in the same year. At the same time, with the Balkan wars that had erupted, the OSCE Field Missions in post-crisis areas increasingly

Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in 1992. Initially, the first major report on the Roma in the OSCE area was produced by HCNM in 1993[13]. By 1994, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) was established under the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), changing the institutional placement of Roma issues within the OSCE from the national minorities approach towards the human rights dimension. This development is significant – it seems that the Roma issue does not fit under the competencies of the HCNM mandate, as the Roma are not a national minority, nor might their ill-treatment result in cross-border or interstate conflicts, and as such, they need to be treated under the competencies of a general human-rights approach. As stated by Vermeersch: "minority groups have never been a specific focus of ODIHR, and no minority issue, beside that of the Roma, has ever led to the establishment of a separate institution within ODIHR. Arguably this shows the tendency of the OSCE to separate the issue of the Roma from other minority issues, and put it in a human rights-related context, as opposed to a context of ethnic conflict prevention"[14] (Vermeersch 2006:188).

This shift was based on a profound conviction that prejudice and discrimination are at the core of the Roma's everyday existence, and that a "negative attitude toward Roma seems to be a common denominator throughout Europe.[15]" As stated in a CPRSI newsletter: "When we speak about Romani communities, we are speaking of communities who have had little ability to defend themselves, and who are being harshly singled out and victimized by society.[16]" This opinion, commonly accepted within the framework of OSCE activity, justified the need for a *special* attention towards Roma, creating a policy category of its own kind.

This approach made way for the creation of the "Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area". The Plan, ratified by OSCE member states in 2003 is the first international

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dealt with Roma issues there. At the OSCE Istanbul Summit the idea of an action plan on Roma and Sinti as a tool to be used by the ODIHR Contact Point in assisting participating states was put forward.

[13] "Roma (Gypsies) in the CSCE Region", Report of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials, Prague, CSCE Communication No. 240 of 14 September 1993. A more comprehensive "Report on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Region" was published in September 1999.

[14] In fact, the OSCE ODIHR has been addressing concerns of all minority groups, including the Roma, if these could lead to conflict. Such a danger was foreseen after the fall of communism in many places in Europe (as demonstrated by a number of reports on the Roma from this period, like those of Human Rights Watch). There was therefore no such thing as human rights as opposed to ethnic conflict prevention: the OSCE operated within a comprehensive human dimension concept of security in which the Roma were placed. The "Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area", ratified by Ministerial Council in Maastricht in 2003, is operating with anti-discrimination language and perspective, and therefore, it remains heavily human rights oriented, not minority-rights oriented.

[15] http://www.osce.org/odihr/17798

[16] Ibidem.

and intergovernmental comprehensive action plan which aims at improving the situation of the Roma through coordinated efforts. This policy seeks to alleviate the situation suffered by the Roma in different key areas such as education, housing or employment, guiding its members through a series of recommendations to follow. Additionally, the Plan established the principle framework of Roma participation and "Roma ownership" under the motto "For Roma, with Roma" stating that: "The guiding principle in the efforts of participating States and relevant OSCE institutions should be that each policy and implementation strategy should be elaborated and implemented with the active participation of Roma and Sinti communities." (Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area MC.Dec.03/3: 3). This principle set a guiding standard for the elaboration and implementation of all Roma-related policies, both internationally, as well as in the domestic context. The impact of this principle can be traced in all the policies drafted subsequently.

Although the OSCE Action Plan should be regarded as a milestone in international Roma-related policies, it must be understood as a politically binding document which demonstrates the will to improve the situation of the Roma and Sinti communities. However, the OSCE does not dispose of legal mechanisms to exercise pressure or control over the level of fulfilment of this policy by its member states. As demonstrated in the Report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan, political commitment is crucial for the effectiveness of the initiative "and it is sometimes missing (…) at the national and local levels" *(*Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, 2008: 14). The same report also points out the limited impact of the undertaken actions: "In spite of the rather large number of international and national Roma related initiatives, these have not alleviated, in proportion to the resources invested, the continuing social and economic inequalities, marginalization, racism, and discrimination experienced by Roma and Sinti.*"* *(*Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, 2008: 7).

The effort of tackling the deeply-rooted marginalization faced by the Romani community from an international and comprehensive Roma-only approach marked a trend for future Roma-related policies. Although the success of the OSCE Action Plan is uneven among the different states, the implementation report revealed a series of shortcomings which should serve as a lesson to other international bodies and institutions as well as to the national governments which translate the plan into actions.

Council of Europe (CoE)

A similar shift in policy approach can be observed at the heart of the Council of Europe. The explicit interest of the CoE in minority rights and protection also took a decisive turn in the mid-1990's, leading to the adoption of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992 and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995. Although, the 1995 Framework does not specifically name the Roma among the protected communities, the 1992 Language Charter does explicitly list the Romani language among those which fall under the

competencies of the Charter[17]. Therefore, initially the CoE placed the Roma issue in the same framework as other minority groups. However, simultaneously, from within the CoE there were impulses to pay the Roma special attention. In 1993 the Parliamentary Assembly passed Recommendation 1203 "On Gypsies in Europe", which laid the bases for future Roma-specific targeting at the Council of Europe. The Recommendation reads: "A special place among the minorities is reserved for Gypsies. Living scattered all over Europe, not having a country to call their own, they are a true European minority, but one that does not fit into the definitions of national or linguistic minorities.[18]"

The Recommendation additionally makes reference to "language and music or trades and crafts" and states that "as one of the very few non-territorial minorities in Europe, Gypsies need special protection". Institutional consensus on the need for "special protection" for the Roma led to the creation of different political tools which would enforce and monitor the implementation of the political commitment of its member states. Eventually, in 1994, the CoE established a mandate for a Coordinator of Activities on Roma, Gypsies and Travelers and in 1995 created the Specialist Group on Roma/ Gypsies (MG-S-Rom[19]), which was "the only expert body in the Council of Europe dealing with the situation of a separate ethnic group" (Vermeersch 2006:194). Since then, a number of bodies of the Council of Europe (ECRI, Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers) have adopted numerous resolutions and recommendations on the Roma[20], most notably the 2010 "Strasbourg Declaration on Roma"[21]. Placing an issue of one ethnic minority – the Roma – transversally across the Council of Europe, was unprecedented – no other minority has enjoyed similar *sui generis* treatment as the Roma.

European Union (EU)

Arguably, the biggest influence in shaping the international approach towards the Roma, and with it affecting the domestic policies in this regard, has been the result of European Union politics in the post-communist era.

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17 http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeDeclarations.asp?NT=148&CM=8&DF=23/01/05&CL=ENG&VL=1

18 http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta93/erec1203.htm

19 In 2011, following a ministerial decision, the MG-S-Rom has been upgraded to a new, intergovernmental body Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma (CAHROM), responsible directly to the Committee of Ministers.

20 http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma-related-texts

21 In 2010, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjorn Jagland, convened a High Level Meeting on Roma, calling for a fresh, more constructive and efficient set of measures. The meeting led to the adoption of the "Strasbourg Declaration on Roma" (CM(2010)133), which proposed a number of specific measures and programs (such as the CoE flagship project ROMED) and led to the re-organization of resources in a transversal manner. https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1691607.

Initially, the Romani issue was not treated as a separate matter under the EU agenda. Rather, the Roma as citizens and as a cultural minority, fell under a variety of legal and political instruments of human rights protection and non-discrimination principles. With the prospective EU enlargement, the EU begun to pressure candidate countries by introducing minority rights protection, including the Roma, through the so-called "Copenhagen criteria". The "Copenhagen criteria" were meant to be a political tool which would incline potential Members to align their national legislature with EU law. The introduction of the minority protection principle among the conditionalities of the pre-accession process is surprising "because minority protection as such lies outside the scope of the *aquis communautaire*" (Kochenov, 2008:3). Initially, the subject of the Roma within the context of the "Copenhagen criteria" was not among the priorities. However, with the publication of the annual country Regular Reports, Roma issues gradually became a central reference point for the pre-accession countries. A comparative study of the Regular Report 1998-2002 reveals that: "In the first Reports on Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, (…), the Roma are the only minority issue commented on at all, despite the fact that there are numerically greater minority groups in these countries" (Sasse, 2005:7).

With the harsh criticism of the fulfilment of the political criteria by the pre-accession countries, it quickly became clear that the subject of Roma treatment would be central for their progress towards accession. The introduction of the protection of minorities as a conditionality criterion has generally been evaluated positively as it put the Roma on the EU agenda and gave it unprecedented political importance. However, this conditionality also generated debate over its effectiveness (Vermeersch 2006; Kochenov 2008; Sasse 2005). On the one hand, the Regular Reports urged the states to take action. However, it did *not* set benchmarks, indicators or legal tools for the pre-accession states to follow, making it difficult for them to fulfil the already established criteria. Additionally, this conditionality inevitably presents an internal paradox: "an all too powerful principle of EU enlargement law is not at all important internally" (Kochenov, 2008:20). As minority rights protection is not *per se* a competence of the EU, the fulfilment of this criterion is not required of its older members. However, the biggest controversy revolves around framing the Roma issue as a separate topic that requires special treatment: "Though formally implemented, this measure has done little to change perceptions or policy outcomes. It has, however, separated 'Roma issues' from mainstream policy-making, reinforces marginalization and contributes to a growing frustration among the office holders, Roma activists and the wider Roma community" (Sasse, 2005:10). Other scholars have also acknowledged that "this line of thinking matches the argument that the problems Roma are faced with are related to cultural difference and thus to the mere presence of the Roma, and are therefore neither the responsibility nor the problem of the majority communities" (Vermeersch, 2006: 200). Despite these arguments, this line of thinking and the "special" frame for Roma-related policies has gradually become the principle approach towards these issues from within the European Union.

Simultaneously with these developments, the EC became gradually more interested in the subject of the Roma. In 1996 the Commission released the paper "The Roma – a Truly European People" (European Commission 1996), which emphasized the responsibility of the European institutions in this

regard. In 1999, the European Union adopted "Guiding Principles for the improvement of Romani communities in Candidate Countries. Consequently, the EU institutions referred more systematically to the Roma issue, obliging candidate countries to improve the overall situation of this community.

Following the 2004 EU enlargement, European institutions increasingly turned their attention towards this minority[22], searching for policy responses which would go beyond national approaches. With the completion of the fifth enlargement wave of the EU (2007), the Roma shifted from being an item of external relations towards a key priority of internal EU policies (Sobotka and Vermeersch 2012; Vermeersch 2012). In 2008, following the conclusions of the European Council of December 2007, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on "A European strategy on the Roma" (P6_TA(2008)035) calling for the development of a "European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion aimed at providing policy coherence at EU level". It wasn't until April 2011, however, that the European Commission adapted an "EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020" (COM2011)173), calling on Members States to establish or revise national Roma-targeted policies, aiming at improving the situation of Romani EU citizens.

It should be noted that these policies, recommendations and resolutions, issued by various intergovernmental organizations, were not developed independently from each other, but rather followed a similar trend, and influenced each other mutually. The development of the EU Roma Framework was influenced not only by the much older 2003 "OSCE Action Plan" but also by "the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015[23]" – similarities can be easily drawn in approaches (based on comprehensive and targeted policies, although not independently from mainstream policies; the principle of participation) as well as in the key areas of action (education, housing, health, employment). Furthermore, it should be noted that the emergence of the EU Roma Framework also reflects broader changes in EU policy priorities and their formulations: the emergence of a "social inclusion" paradigm (Sobotka and Vermeersch 2012) on the one hand, and a "wider reorientation of the European Union, in which the primarily economic language of European integration is moderated by a shift towards viewing economic growth and social cohesion as mutually conditioning and sustaining" (Goodwin and Buijs 2013:2041), part of the "Europe 2020 Strategy" agenda, on the other.

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[22] The European Parliament issued several resolutions on the Roma (in 2005, 2006, 2008); the Integrated Roma Platform was established in 2007. The European Council adopted conclusions (in 2007 and 2008) which acknowledged the need for a Europe-wide response to Romani problems. In 2008, the First European Roma Summit was held in Brussels. In 2009, the "10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion were adopted. During the same period, a number of studies were conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA).

[23] "The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" was an unprecedented international initiative – a political commitment that brought together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as Romani civil society. Formally established in February 2005 in Sofia, it brought together the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain (Slovenia, the United States, Norway and Moldova had observer status) in a joint effort to eradicate discrimination and "close the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society". The Initiative was formally closed in 2015. http://www.romadecade.org/about-the-decade-decade-in-brief

4.2 The Romani issue in the current European context[24]

4.2.a. "The Roma issue" in the spotlight

Arguably, never before has the so-called "Roma issue" (Legros and Rossetto 2011) been so much in the spotlight. Today, the Roma are visible in almost all spheres of public life: the Roma issue is high on political agendas, both at the EU level and nationally, and became an increasingly relevant topic in public and social debates, especially prior to elections. At the same time, the Roma are perceptibly more present in the press and TV, and in academia.

This increased visibility is due to a number of contextual factors and developments (Vermeersch 2013). Rövid, for example, argues that "[a]t least five factors contributed to the emergence of the 'Roma issue' on a European and global level: (1) fear of Roma immigration; (2) transnational advocacy; (3) inadequacy of the minority rights regime; (4) the changing role of the EU; and (5) the continuing struggle for transnational recognition and self-determination" (Rövid 2011:55). Thus, the process of EU expansion and incorporation of Central and Easter European countries in which most Roma in Europe live was decisive (Kóczé and Rövid 2012; Vermeersch 2013). More recently, the incorporation of new member states into the Schengen area and the increased intra-European mobility of Roma from East to West became the subject of heated public debates (Matras 2013; Matras 2015), often resulting in public outcry[25].

The controversies surrounding the forced evictions and deportations of Roma in France or Italy, the *de facto* visibility of Romani beggars in the streets of major European cities, from Madrid and Rome to Stockholm, the ungrounded claims of "Roma being run by mafia" (Credi 2015) or prevalent reports of Roma child-trafficking (Guy 2015), increasingly point to Roma as a problematic and security-related issue which requires coordinated and assertive responses. On the other hand, across Europe societies are swinging right as populist, nationalistic and increasingly radical parties are gaining political ground. The far-right parties have already formed a coalition in the European Parliament (A. J. Rubin 2015), eager to push their anti-immigration and nationalistic agendas also on the EU level. Many European countries have become increasingly hostile towards newcomers or historical "others" (signs of increased anti-Semitic statements have been reported in numerous countries, most recently in Hungary and Bulgaria); in other countries the hostility translates into the expansion of full-fledged neo-Nazi movements (Capon 2015) (such as Pegida in Germany or Jobbik in Hungary). As societies radicalize and shift towards the radical right, Guy points out that: "mainstream politicians frequently tap into the

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[24] Some parts of this chapter have been published in the article 'Be Young, Be Roma'. Modern Roma youth activism in the current panorama of Romani affairs" in: "The New Roma Activism in the New Europe" (ed. Sam Beck and Anna Ivasiuc), Berghahn Books (forthcoming)

[25] Like in the case of the UK, where politicians predicted an influx of Romani migrants from Bulgaria and Romania after the opening of the borders in 2014. http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/roma-reality-check-uk In some cases, citizens claimed that "blood will be split" unless the police act. http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/482347/There-will-be-blood-say-victims-of-Roma-terror

ugly phenomenon of racial hatred in order to win votes, cynically exploiting the space created by the racist discourse of extremists"(Guy 2015). In the current circumstances, discrimination against Roma intensifies as they become targets of racially motivated attacks – reports of hate crimes, hate speech, police brutality, ethnic violence and even murders proliferate across Europe[26]. The alarming situation of Romani communities in Europe has also made international headlines.

The rise of Romani issues onto a high level of political relevance is also the result of decades of Romani activism, which strived to bring to the attention of governments and majority societies the deplorable situation of Roma communities, building a sense of urgency and mobilizing the authorities to react. Consequently, some of these developments, prompted by assertive advocacy by Romani activists and other interest groups, eventually led to the formulation of pan-European policy responses.

As Romani issues become consolidated as Europe's topic on political agendas, accompanied by significant financial support allocated to Roma-related actions and projects, the type and number of stakeholders involved in Romani affairs expands considerably, often resulting in tensions and direct competition among them. This chapter of the dissertation aims to shed some light on the current state of Romani affairs, focusing on the arena of Romani affairs as a field of interaction between diverse types of stakeholders.

4.2.b. Policy shift – opportunities for civil society

The paradigm shift in Roma-related policies in international agendas and the establishment of Roma-targeted policies, most notably the EU Roma Framework, opened up a "window of opportunity" for civil society actors.

Opportunities for participation

There seems to be a consensus that effective implementation of Roma policies needs to be accompanied by the active involvement of civil society actors, especially of Roma CSOs (civil society organizations). The OSCE was first in defining the importance of direct Roma involvement, through the motto of "For Roma, with Roma" of the OSCE Action Plan. The EU embraced this principle, laid out in the "10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion" (principle 9 "Involvement of civil society" and principle 10 "Active participation of the Roma"), which became an important component of the EU Roma Framework and of overall policy-making on Roma issues. The EU has devised a number of tools, mechanisms and forums to create spaces for dialogue and cooperation with civil society actors (for example, the EU Roma Summits or the European Platform for Roma Inclusion); on a national level, the Member States were also obliged to put in place similar mechanisms of consultation and involvement of CSOs, especially those of the Roma. The principle of the active involvement of civil society is not a unique development, and is not exclusively embraced in the case of Roma policies. Rather, it follows a general trend in governance, often regarded as "a deliberative turn" in democracy (Goodin 2008). In political theory it is argued that the active involvement and participation of diverse social sectors in

[26] See, for example: *Amnesty International* (*2014*) 'We Ask for Justice': Europe's Failure to Protect *Roma* from Racist *Violence*, *Amnesty International Report, April.*

the public domain through a dense, interconnected system of associations – or "networks of engagement" (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993) - is a fundamental component of healthy democracies. Nonetheless, it should be noted that "participation" is often a taken-for-granted concept and one which has become a popular buzzword, overly used and uncritically applied not only in public policies but often in research as well. Anthropologists, among others, have developed a compelling criticism of "participation" as a buzzword, exposing and problematizing dynamics such as tokenism and instrumentalization of participation (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Cornwall 2004; Pares, Bonet-Marti, and Marti-Costa 2011; Frideres 1992); this criticism has also been extended to the concept of "empowerment" which, like "participation", has also become a popular buzzword of the last decade, ambiguously understood and practiced (Ivasiuc 2014).

Since the early 2000s, the EU has embraced the "deliberative democracy" discourse in order to make up for the perceived "democracy deficit" within the EU. In 2001, the EC published the "White Paper on European Governance", emphasizing the need to reinforce a "culture of consultation and dialogue in the EU. (…) in order to provide opportunities for input" to diverse interest groups (EC 2001:16); in 2002 the European Commission followed this up with a set of guidelines which would guarantee a more efficient "deliberative turn". Over the last decade, the involvement of civil society (and a range of other stakeholders), also in the framework of the ever-expanding open method of coordination (OMC), have become a common practice in EU policy-making (Steffek 2015). This "deliberative turn" is relevant for Roma policies as it brought non-State actors, especially Roma CSOs, back into the spotlight (Acton & Ryder, 2013).

Funding opportunities

The "deliberative turn" in European policy-making, and more specifically the explicit inclusion of civil society actors in Roma-related policymaking, has another paramount implication – funding. The "10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion" clearly recommend that "non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social partners, academics/ researchers and Roma communities themselves (…) should actively participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects" ("Vademecum. The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion" 2012). This involvement translates into the availability of funding which is accessible to key stakeholders in Roma-related policies. And the amounts at stake are considerable: already during the pre-accession period, the EU PHARE programme dedicated over 77,000,000€ to Roma projects in accession and candidate countries (Commission 2004: 15). Other data says that between 2000 and 2006 the EU spent "€275m on projects specifically geared to Roma inclusion and a further €1bn - on disadvantaged groups in general, including Roma" (European Commission 2008). Furthermore, with the launching of the EU Roma Platform, the European Commission indicated that "up to € 26.5 billion of EU funding is currently programmed [2007-2013] to support Member States' efforts in the field of social inclusion, including to support efforts to help the Roma[27]." During the negotiations of the new programming period 2014-

[27] "For the European Social Fund, € 9.6 billion have been allocated in the period 2007-2013 for measures targeting socio-economic inclusion of disadvantaged people – among them marginalised Roma – and €172 million have been explicitly allocated for actions aiming at integrating the Roma. In the case of the European Regional

2020, Roma inclusion for the first time was high on the European agenda and "this is reflected in the regulations for the Structural Funds – the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund – which open up new funding opportunities[28]".

Naturally, a vast portion of the funding available for Roma inclusion is administered by and directed to public authorities (including municipalities). Nonetheless, a portion of funding is available to non-state actors. According to D'Agostino: "In the last years, the EU has directly (via calls for proposals) or indirectly (through the Structural Funds) funded several projects and civic organisations promoting and enhancing the integration of the Roma community at the local level. This 'financial commitment' has been further emphasized by the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 regulations, according to which Member States shall allocate an appropriate amount of European Social Fund resources to capacity building for nongovernmental organisations, in particular in the fields of social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities. In regard to Roma integration, the thematic ex-ante conditionalities in the Common Provisions for the EU's Cohesion Policy clearly assert that 'a national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework [has to be] designed, implemented and monitored in close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities' "(D'Agostino, 2014:2).

4.2.c. Diversification of the field - Romani civil society and pro-Roma involvement

The gradual crystallization of the Roma issue in international and domestic policies since 1990s, and the financial resources assigned to them, has greatly influenced the panorama of civil society actors involved in Roma-related affairs. Consequently, the past few decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the Romani civil society sector, along with a diversification of the actors involved in Romani issues, ranging from pro-Roma organizations, development agencies and charitable organizations to scholars and experts.

Romani activism

For the Roma, the first signs of ethnic mobilisation can be traced back to the 1920s (Klímová-Alexander 2007b; Marushiakova and Popov 2005), and since then, Romani ethno-nationalism has progressed, passing through various stages of development (Gheorghe and Liégeois 1995). Over the last few years the number of Romani organizations has increased significantly, from West to East. In Spain, for example, during the '90s, Romani organizations begun to grow considerably in number, leading to an "associative boom" (Méndez López 2005; San Román 1994b; San Román 1999); details of this process will be described in the chapter on Spain in this dissertation. On the other hand, following the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, civil society has bloomed, including among the Roma; a process which some scholars refer to as the "NGO boom"(Marushiakova and Popov 2005) or "Roma awakening" (McGarry 2012). The availability of funding (especially private funding, for example from

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Development Fund (ERDF), more than € 16.8 billion are planned for social infrastructure". An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, COM (2011) 173/4, Brussels, p.9, note 37

[28] http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_toolkit2014_20_en.pdf More details are provided on the EU website: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-funding/index_en.htm

the Open Society Foundations, and the involvement of foreign agencies, humanitarian aid and intergovernmental organizations) supported this growth, convinced of the necessity of building-up a Roma civil society sector capable of securing a "Romani voice"[29] as stakeholders (Kóczé 2012a; Trehan and Sigona 2010; van Baar 2011b). Awareness of the ethno-political dimension of Romani identities has translated into a variety of different mobilising structures – hundreds of Romani organisations and NGOs, Romani political parties, media and civic initiatives can be found virtually everywhere Roma live. However, the organizations of civil society (especially as NGOs) became the principal organizational structures which represent their collective interests and claims (Vermeersch 2006; Rostas 2012; Trehan and Sigona 2010; Marushiakova and Popov 2005; McGarry 2012).

In this period, Romani activism has been undergoing substantial changes, evolving towards a more diversified, creative, modern, competitive one, and this being achieved while struggling with a number of enduring challenges: of internal fragmentation, legitimacy of leadership and representation, transparency and accountability, donor dependency, competition, co-optation; politicization, or sometimes difficult relations with its own constituencies or grass-root communities (Guy, 2013; Kóczé & Rövid, 2012; Kóczé, 2012b; McGarry, 2012; Mirga & Gheorghe, 2001; Rostas, 2012). Consolidation and strategic alignment among Romani organizations continues to be a challenge – lack of coordination is a sign of further fragmentation rather than of sustainable growth of the so-called Romani movement.

Pro-Roma/ non-Roma actors

During the same period, the arena of Romani affairs became greatly diversified. Kóczé notes that: "in the post-communist countries, the NGO-boom conjured with the economic neo-liberalizations, which influenced the development of NGOs. This trend was characterised by the phenomenon that, besides a small number of Roma intellectuals and activists (members of the Roma elite), there was a large number of experts and developers who got involved in Roma issues by providing consultancy or performing pro-Roma NGO developmental work" (Kóczé 2012:16).

Simultaneously with the proliferation of Romani civil society, other actors became increasingly involved in Romani issues as well: pro-Roma organizations[30], charitable organizations and development agencies across Europe emerged as stakeholders in Romani policies as project executioners, service-providers or, in many cases, as voices representing Romani interests. Despite the

[29] It is important to clarify that from an anthropological standpoint, the concept of a "Romani voice" is a problematic one and one which should be assessed critically. Rather than a "Romani voice", we should speak of "Romani voices", as evidently there is not one, representative Romani entity which can claim to be "the voice". Furthermore, the question of a "Romani voice" overly used in scholarship, public policies and institutional discourses, relates to the challenging reality of the representativeness and legitimacy of those structures which claim to be "the Romani voice". Here I only point out this unravelling discussion; it will be developed and analysed in detail vis-à-vis the most recent and relevant scholarship in the discussion chapter of this dissertation.

[30] The differentiation between Roma and pro-Roma organizations refers to the status of Romani people themselves in leadership positions of those entities. Romani organizations are normally considered as those who have more than 50% of Roma in their leadership structures (Board and Executive management).

fact that both types of organizations - Roma and pro-Roma - are included under the label of "CSOs" in European policy-making, D'Agostino argues that "some substantial differences can be detected in terms of organisations' proximity to the local communities and level of expertise and professionalization": "While Roma grassroots organisations are closer to the local and most disadvantaged Roma communities, pro-Roma international and national CSOs are more professionalized and experienced in managing Roma inclusion-oriented projects. As the collaboration between the two types is not systematic, these differences frequently lead to significant discrepancies between the assessment of the needs at the local level and the policy interventions identified for their satisfaction."(D'Agostino, 2014:2)

The availability of financial resources, which accompanies the increasing relevance and visibility of Romani affairs, attracts new actors to become involved in Romani issues, even those who had no previous history of involvement with the Roma. A study conducted by UNDP on the use of the European Social Fund in Slovakia, for example, found: "an increasing amount of organizations specializing in 'writing projects' with no previous experience of working with Roma related issues. If the projects were granted, many of these organizations received not only a financial amount, but frequently transformed into operating in the advising area" (Hurrle et al. 2012: 83). Involvement of such non-profit organization became a wide-spread phenomenon, driven by financial opportunities and responding to Europe's declared commitment to Roma inclusion.

Moreover, the rising demand for expertise and knowledge on Roma issues, especially among intergovernmental organizations, governmental agencies and policy-makers, heightens the influence of "experts on Roma" and, especially, those associated with academia. The role of "experts", however, has often been regarded as ambiguous or problematic. Latour (2011) notes that "the expert was never a coherent figure: neither a researcher, nor a political representative, nor an activist, nor an administrator in charge of the protocol of the experiment, but playing a bit all of those roles at once without being able to fulfil any of them satisfactorily" (Latour, 2011:7). Okely, with regards to Romani affairs, further argues that the very term "expert" refers to a certain category of power related to a glorified notion "of detached knowledge and political neutrality" and that it "also presumes that other lay people, including ordinary members of an ethnic group are not themselves expert witnesses" (Okely 2003: 234). The need for expert knowledge and input has also translated into the increasing popularity of academic/ scholarly involvement in Roma-related issues (Ryder 2015).

Arguably, the multiplication of actors involved in Romani affairs helped to channel Romani claims, mount pressure and provide political leverage, which ultimately lead to the crystallization of pan-European policy responses. Nonetheless, this diversification of actors involved in Romani-related policies has had important consequences for the field of Romani issues. A number of scholars have denounced the "NGOization of human rights" (Trehan 2009) or the emergence of the so-called "Gypsy industry" (Marushiakova and Popov 2005), with its profound implications for the Romani communities. A general critique of this dynamic draws from literature regarding the "Third World" development industry, pointing to similarities with the interventions of Western countries in Latin America (Kóczé 2012a), Asia and Africa, among others. From this perspective, it is argued that "development experts

are misusing the concept of 'human development', and instead of increasing choices and creating opportunities and more freedoms for the socially excluded groups, they are increasing their control over financial resources and misusing their powerful positions" (Kóczé 2012:17). It is worth noting that anthropologists have provided an essential critique of the "development" industry. Anthropology of Development and/or Development Anthropology (represented by such schoalrs as Escobar, Mosse, Gow, Ferguson) have contributed to these debates by providing rich ethnographic evidence of the development interventions and its socio-political effects in the context of the neoliberal order. Mosse argues that anthropology provides a way "of examining the dilemmas of power and knowledge, sometimes generating, along with development counterparts (agency staff, campaign organizations, or members of communities), reflective awareness of the relational context of thought and action through collaborative research for organizational learning" (Mosse 2013:238)[31]. With regards to Roma, some scholars provide a critique of the "Roma development industry". For example, Surdu demonstrates how Romani identities have been framed through scholarly and expert knowledge, often producing frames which tend to reinforce existing stereotypes (Surdu 2014). Furthermore, Rövid argues that the case of pro-Roma involvement reveals power-relations in which "solidarity can easily turn into hegemony" (Rövid 2011a:385). The issue of legitimacy and representativeness has been raised numerous times by scholars in the face of the multiplication of actors and voices. Today, more than ever before, McGarry's question "Who speaks for the Roma?" (2012) becomes increasingly more relevant.

4.2.d. Romani issues as a site of tension

The rising number of non-Romani actors that are becoming involved in Romani issues makes this area more competitive also for Romani civil society. Consequently, the arena of Romani affairs is increasingly becoming a site of tension and competition between Roma and pro-/non-Roma actors.

Competition for resources

Firstly, a challenge lies in the competition for resources with often more professional and skilled non-Roma actors. Romani organizations, especially smaller grassroots entities, frequently face numerous difficulties in accessing EU funds. According to D'Agostino "Roma grassroots organisations have recurrently contested the position of the EU as a donor and the distribution of the funds allocated to Roma integration-related activities. The difficult access to and excessive bureaucratization of the EU funding mechanisms tend to facilitate global pro-Roma CSOs thus disadvantaging smaller Roma organisations operating at the grassroots" (D'Agostino, 2014:2). Consequently, the pro-Roma

[31] Mosse further argues that: "The anthropological critique of projects and bureaucratic power has had to give way to ethnographies of the loss of state power in the government of development; to its dispersal to NGOs, donors, social entrepreneurs, and private-sector providers (Li 2005); to state withdrawal and reliance on informal institutions (e.g., in rural Uganda; see Jones 2009); to the hollowing of the official state (in India), surrounded by powerful brokers, contractors, and crooks who constitute a shadow state run for private benefit (Harriss-White 2003); and to the centrality of informal 'social structures of accumulation' (caste, gender, and religion) in regulating both markets and the state (Harriss-White 2003)." (Mosse 2013:236)

organizations often become dominant actors and the principle beneficiaries of funding destined for Roma inclusion.

Besides pro-Roma organizations which have relevant expertise in the field of Roma inclusion, other unexperienced actors become attracted to the issue of Roma inclusion and also apply for funding, often successfully. While they may be experts in the administrative side of project application and realization, their expertise in Roma issues is questionable. The UNDP 2012 report on the use of the European Social Fund in Slovakia documents this phenomenon and points to its potentially negative consequences: "While this form of specialization might help to minimize administrative difficulties, it seems unlikely that this type of recipient of the grant is well-disposed to realize the project in the very specific environment of the Roma community, or indeed to achieve interventions with long-lasting results" (Hurrle et al. 2012:11). The same study argues that such "commercial contractors (…) consume considerable sums" for their services and their involvement is "often accompanied by a suspicion that the mediating site, frequently associated with powerful non-Roma mediating institutions, are benefiting from the projects more than the local Roma"(Hurrle et al. 2012:72).

According to D'Agostino, this dynamic leads to two interrelated consequences: "on the one hand, the establishment of elite networks of pro-Roma CSOs, and, on the other hand, the subsequent weakening of Roma grassroots organisations" (D'Agostino, 2014:3). Furthermore, the struggle for funding, often a question of the very survival of existing Romani organizations, also alters the role and character of Romani entities. As the arena of Romani affairs becomes denser and more populated by other stakeholders, Romani organizations are pushed to enter the competition for funding alongside non-Romani actors and on the same terms. Consequently, Romani organizations are increasingly more dependent on EU and other donors' agendas, driven by existing financial opportunities rather than by a strategic vision or the articulated interests of their constituencies. This brings increasing criticism and discontent with current Romani civil society which "became a society of professional service delivery NGOs, which mainly concentrate on grant application and report writing, instead of mobilizing communities and developing a participatory democracy with the involvement of the Roma community"(Kóczé 2012:15); Romani organizations are also more accountable to the donors than to their local communities (Rostas 2009:166). The struggle for grants also affects the relationship which Romani organizations establish with each other – as the field becomes increasingly more competitive and resources are limited, the Romani organizations necessarily enter into competition also with each other – this often results in tensions, even rivalry, among Romani organizations, hinders the potential for consolidation and strategic alignment of Romani actors, and ultimately weakens the potential leverage of Romani civil society as a whole.

Legitimacy and influence

Secondly, a challenge lies, not only in the competition for resources with often more professional and skilled non-Roma actors, but also in maintaining a role as a respected and influential "voice" in Romani-related issues vis-à-vis other voices.

Romani civil society has been increasingly criticized for being an elite-driven endeavour, lacking legitimacy, increasingly detached from grassroots communities and without any mandate of representativeness (Kóczé 2012a; Trehan and Sigona 2010; McGarry 2012). Internal fragmentation, the existence of overlapping structures which claim representation of the Roma (pan-European but also on a national level) and occasional in-fighting among the Romani actors themselves only magnify the impression of the lack of a legitimate Romani partner. Rostas notes that "as there is no such partner entrusted by Roma themselves, the issue of who participates is a critical dilemma for policy-makers and for the policy-making process. The legitimacy and degree of representation of Roma by the NGOs will always come up, as there is no Roma membership-based mass organisation governed by democratic rules" (Rostas, 2012:6). As evidence mounts of the impossibility of finding a legitimate and representative Romani stakeholder, policy-makers increasingly turn to more reliable and professional partners in search of expertise and policy advice, such as professional pro-Roma organizations or independent experts: "They were often perceived by donors as more reliable, due to their qualified staff as well as their administrative capacity to implement projects and programmes. Many such organisations co-opted Roma in their staff, and they had influence in shaping the policy discourse on Roma. But the involvement of Roma in the setting of their strategies and priorities was marginal at best" (Rostas, 2012:5).

Despite claims of securing "Romani participation", this principle is often fulfilled only symbolically through what can be coined as "rituals of participation" or tokenistic involvement of Roma. This dynamic has been denounced most notably in the framework of the EU Roma Platform[32] and over the years has become a constant theme. In 2014, following the Third EU Roma Summit held in Brussels in April, the European Roma Grassroots Organization (ERGO) denounced the lack of Romani involvement arguing that "this high political event, however, is not organized with neither for Roma". ERGO further stressed that "their deepest concern is that the European Commission does value the role and expertise of Roma and Roma NGOs to take a key role in the policy process"[33]. Nonetheless, and despite repeated complaints regarding the lack of participation of Romani actors, the arena of Romani affairs continues to be dominated and shaped by non-Roma stakeholders. It seems that for the EC this phenomenon is not perceived as problematic – in a written response to ERGO the EC clearly stated that "t*he fact that in [Roma] debates the majority of formal speakers are not Roma is certainly an* **advantage***, and a major one"* [letter DG JUST, Directorate Anti-Discrimination, April 29th 2013][34]". Despite the undeniable experience and expertise which non-Roma stakeholders (such as pro-Roma NGOs or non-Roma experts) possess, among Roma their involvement is often problematized. Speaking

[32] Acton and Ryder note that "there have been growing complaints that the Roma Platforms are dominated by the European Commission, are hierarchical and tightly controlled leaving little space for Roma civil society to express its aspirations, report on progress in their home countries and, where needed, articulate frustrations (Rostas and Ryder, 2012)"(Acton & Ryder, 2013:7).

[33] http://www.ergonetwork.org/ergo-network/news/129/000000/European-Roma-Summit/

[34] Ibid.

of mainstream organizations, Rostas points out that "there are often objections among Roma to the work of these organisations, questioning their commitment to improve the situation, as they were often seen as the 'gypsy industry', exploiting the opportunities and funding allocated for Roma projects for their own benefit"(Rostas, 2012:5). On a national level, the struggle for a dominant voice in Romani-related affairs between Roma and non-Roma actors is also present. More recently, Renouard (2014) described these tensions with regards to Roma and pro-Roma mobilizations in Italy and Finland.

It should be noted that this often antagonistic relationship between Roma and non-Roma actors goes beyond political activism. The tensions between "self-proclaimed" Romani voices and expert (often regarded as more objective and skilled) voices has also made its way into the world of academia (Ryder 2015; Bogdán et al. 2015; Bogdán, Ryder, and Taba 2015; Vajda 2015; E. Brooks 2015; Kóczé 2015). Like in the case of Romani participation in policy-making, "critics have argued that Romani Studies has also not done enough to facilitate Roma communities to have 'voice' and promote recognition and resources for innovative and participatory research approaches" (Ryder, 2015:13). In the framework of debates surrounding the elections to the Steering Committee to the European Academic Network on Romani Studies (EANRS), and most recently in the context of discussions surrounding the European Roma Institute (ERI), there have been fierce debates regarding the legitimacy of Roma and non-Roma voices in the field of knowledge-production. In this debate about the status of Romani scholars, too often has ethnic background been juxtaposed with academic merit, as if these two were mutually exclusive. This clash is often perceived as a collision of competing paradigms – namely that of scientism and critical research (Ryder 2015); it is a dispute over academic vs non-academic notions of "knowledge". After all, academic research tends to claim authority over other sources of knowledge or other fields of knowledge-production. Rigney notes that "the notion that science is 'authoritative', 'neutral' and 'universal' privileges science. It gives science the status of a standard measure against which all other 'realities' may be evaluated and judged to be either 'rational' or otherwise" (Rigney, 2001:3). On the other hand, Ryder (2015) rightfully dismantles the notion of value-free and detached research. Indeed, "research is not an innocent distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999:5). Beyond disputes of an academic nature, these tensions should also be regarded as a power struggle of sorts in which the *status quo* is questioned by emerging Romani scholarship and the salience of the Critical Romani Studies approach (Mirga-Kruszelnicka 2015). More specifically, with regards to Romani Studies, some scholars are wary of scientism (Ryder 2015) or have denounced scientific racism (Acton, 2016) within Romani Studies, which increasingly signals the need for a critical revision of the body of knowledge produced on the Roma or the very foundations on which Romani Studies as a discipline has been based. Furthermore, as an object of academic inquiry, Romani people have seldom taken an active role in shaping academic knowledge about themselves. Today however, this situation is gradually shifting: the increasing numbers of Romani university students and Romani scholars pursuing academic careers is bound to provoke a deeper reflection regarding Romani Studies, challenging the existing relationship between the researcher and the researched in relation to Roma. It is a process

which signals the emergence of 'subaltern'[35] scholarship driven by scholars of Romani background, in which "the 'colonised' and the 'marginal' speak back to the 'centre'" (Rigney, 2001:7), resembling similar processes among other "subaltern" groups (for example with the development of Indigenous scholarship, Critical Latino Studies or Black Feminist thought) .

The emergence of Romani scholarship and of Critical Romani Studies is a process in which the legacy of Romani Studies developed over the decades is confronted, leading to a gradual revision of the existing body of knowledge on Roma, exposing its limitations, incongruences and, occasionally, scientific racism. It draws strongly on theoretical approaches and paradigms seldom used with regards to Roma in the past, such as post-colonialism, critical race theory, critical whiteness theory, feminism or intersectionality, among numerous others.

4.3 Roma in Latin America. Understanding the context

4.3.a. "The Roma issue" as a European issue – evidence from an academic standpoint

As argued in the previous section, in Europe in recent years the "Roma issue" has become a subject of great political interest (nationally and internationally), as a result of different social and political processes (such as the enlargement of the EU and the Schengen area), described in the previous section. Evidence of the alarming situation of the "largest ethnic minority in the Old Continent" - poverty, discrimination, marginalization and exclusion from mainstream society, together with the growing visibility of different sectors of civil society, have contributed to a repositioning of this issue towards an affair of growing importance in political agendas. However, the political and media debates on the situation of the Romani population have largely been limited to Europe. Furthermore, the "Roma issue" is generally understood as "a European problem," forgetting that the Roma can be defined by their exceptionally comprehensive and diverse character. Historically, the Romani community has been populating different places of the world, settling in North America, South America, North Africa, the Middle East or Australia.

This trend of limiting the perspective on Roma issues to the European context can also be detected in the world of academic research. It should be noted that the development of so-called Romani Studies has been limited to a European scope for many decades (for example, the Gypsy Lore Society, considered the most important institution that promotes the development of the discipline, was founded in 1888 in Great Britain). Although in many Latin American countries there is an increasing interest among researchers in examining Romani communities, their research often remains outside of the mainstream currents of Romani Studies, which traditionally focuses on Europe. Furthermore, there are very few academic papers that focus on addressing the Roma issue from a comparative perspective that goes beyond the Old Continent (for example, Bereményi, 2007; Klímová-Alexander,

[35] The term "subaltern" was coined by Antonio Gramsci. The concept has been developed further in the works of Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, among others. The concept of the "subaltern" has been especially developed in postcolonial theory studies but is increasingly used in diverse academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, art history, literary criticism, among others.

2007). Given this dynamic, the development of Romani Studies has been restricted by its limited focus on local, national or European realities, without the potential of addressing research on Roma communities in all of its breadth of diverse geopolitical, historical and social contexts, including those reaching beyond the European one. This gap in the academic body of knowledge might be an interesting field of research that is still undeveloped. From the point of view of an early career scholar, it seems that Romani Studies is somewhat limited – geographically, methodically, and paradigmatically - and lacking the necessary plurality of approaches, which is so enriching for the development of scientific disciplines. If we take as an example the Annual Gypsy Lore Society Conferences, arguably the most important annual academic event in Romani Studies, the picture becomes clear. During the Gypsy Lore Society Annual Conference of 2014, which took place in Bratislava[36], out of 103 papers presented during the conference, only five reached in their scope beyond continental Europe (papers on the Roma in the US, Brazil, Brazil/Canada, Algeria/Iraq and Egypt). The vast majority of papers revolved around the classical themes of anthropology (rituals, identities, religions, music and other cultural expressions), linguistics or historical research. The other portion dealt with state policy on Roma, or within the area where public policy and academic research intersect. Eight papers were comparative (or quasi-comparative, including data gathered in more than 1 country). In the following year, 2015, out of 79 papers presented during the conference, only three reflected on the situation of Romani communities outside of Europe; all of them with regards to American Roma[37]. In 2016, the GLS Annual Conference, 74 papers were presented. Out of them, 9 papers dealt with Romani communities outside of Europe, some of them exploring the Romani migrants outside of the EU (In the US and Canada); other papers dealt with Romani communities in the US, India, Kurdistan and Mexico[38]. Nonetheless, it should be noted that increasingly, Romani scholarship is emerging outside of Europe, not uncommonly prompted by the salience of processes of self-visibilization among Romani communities in Australia, Latin America (most notably in Brazil and Colombia) and in North America (with important nuclei of Romani knowledge production in the USA at the University of Texas and New York University).

There are also limitations with regards to scholarship on Romani ethnic mobilization. In recent years, there have been many excellent academic books and dissertations published that describe and analyse the process of ethnic mobilization of the Roma, some examined from the comparative perspective (Barany 2002b; McGarry 2012; Rövid 2011; van Baar 2011b; Vermeersch 2006). However, most of the existing scholarship on this subject has been geographically limited - to Europe. The analysis of the existing literature leads us to understand that the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization is framed in purely European dynamics. Nonetheless, in countries of North America (most notably in Canada) and

[36] Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Romani Studies 2014, Bratislava, Slovakia. Information about the Conference available at: https://sites.google.com/site/glsproceedings/home/about-the-conference (accessed: 28 June 2015).

[37] https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwFvqsBgQJK1UDlMVENiemJVVDQ/view

[38] https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwFvqsBgQJK1dDNwSElkVDBPaVE/view

in South America in recent years, Romani communities have been building their own organisational processes (mostly through civil society structures) in order to make themselves visible and to be recognized as integral parts of the national, cultural and ethnic panorama (especially in Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and Chile). These processes of ethnic mobilization are relatively younger[39] and less mature than in the European case, however, in several countries the Romani actors have achieved some institutional milestones. Furthermore, Romani leaders have promoted an initiative of pan-American collaboration through SKOKRA (Council of Rom Organizations and *Kumpeniyi* of the Americas). The context of the political changes over the last decades, on the one hand, and the struggle of indigenous people on the other hand, have had a major impact on the process of emergence of ethnic mobilization among Romani communities of the so-called New Continent. However, these processes have still not been sufficiently analysed by researchers - to date, there are very few academic papers or reports describing these events in Latin America (Acuña 2011; Acuña 2008; Lozano Uribe 2005; H. Paternina 2014; Bernal 2003). Comparative analysis of a transcontinental character on the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization of the Roma has not yet become a visible trend in Romani Studies. In this sense, the research I am developing as part of this dissertation can be considered innovative and aims to contribute to the debate on the ethnic mobilization of Roma specifically, and from a broader perspective, the global debate about this social phenomenon.

4.3.b. Ethnic mobilization in the Latin American context

The fact that Latin American countries can be defined by their pluri-cultural, multi-ethnic and heterogeneous character is not surprising – the existence of a multitude of different indigenous people, afro-descendant people as well as the diverse nationalities, religions and ethnicities of those who came to populate the New Continent is a well-known fact. Nonetheless, recognition of the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of Latin-American nations was a gradual process which took time to crystallize. After all, for centuries, the existence of diverse cultures and people was denied, marginalized and invisibilized. Arguably, this process is still ongoing, often marked by revolts, protests and even armed conflict (as was the case, for example, in Mexico during the Zapatista Uprising in 1994).

The process of colonization of Latin America and the subsequent construction of post-independence governments envisioned the creation of mono-ethnic nations (Vogt, 2012:7). The diverse cultures, ethnicities and races were assumed to melt into a unique, all-encompassing “mestizo race”, creating a new national identity for the diverse Latin American countries (Arocha Rodríguez 2005; Arocha Rodríguez 1989; Bonilla 2003; Vogt 2012). According to Vogt, under this approach: “civilized nation-states could only be built if the racially inferior non-white components were dissolved into this new cosmic race” (Vogt, 2012:7). While the mestizo race emerged over time, facilitated through diverse historical, legislative, and even educational processes, Latin American countries continue to be marked by strong social divisions along the lines of ethnicity and race, in which the white race continued to be perceived as superior, while indigenous and afro-descendant people are largely excluded,

[39] Nonetheless, it should be noted that some claim that the first Romani organisation set up in the Americas was the *E Tsoxa e Lili* association, founded in 1920 in the United States (Bernal 2003).

discriminated against and marginalized in all spheres of public and economic life. Some claim, with regards to Latin American nation-states, that a system of ethno-class, which some refer to as “social races” has emerged.

The process of gradual recognition of indigenous rights came with the emergence of *indigenismo* as a political ideology in several countries of Latin America, which emphasizes the relationship between nation-States and indigenous people and/or communities (Engle 2010). In 1940, the First Indigenous Inter-American Congress took place in Mexico, positioning *indigenismo* as the main official ideology of Latin-American states (C. Sánchez 1999).[40]

Nonetheless, the establishment of indigenous policies under the *indigenismo* paradigm was not without numerous flaws (C. Sánchez 1999)[41]. Scholars, and most notably anthropologists, such as Guillermo Bonfil, have opposed the *indigenismo* approach since the early 1970s, and proposed diverse alternatives to the dominant *indigenismo* political ideology (for example: Bonfil Batalla, 1987).

Nonetheless, since the 1960s, indigenous groups, and subsequently afro-descendant people, began to organize civically and politically, claiming equal rights and treatment, acknowledgement and inclusion, and often, rights to self-determination; the objectives generally have aimed at creating or modifying legal frameworks (both constitutional and through establishing specific policies), which would guarantee the respect for minority rights. This process has taken on speed across the region over the last few decades. Vogt argues that “While ethnicity was long of little importance, the last decades have seen an increasing ethnicization of the region’s politics: the political mobilization of indigenous and Afro-Latino groups both in the realms of civil society and of party politics.” (Vogt, 2012:2)

In their collective struggle, both in the realms of national politics and internationally, the indigenous and afro-descendant mobilization has used diverse strategies to obtain recognition of their rights. One

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[40] According to Dr. Andrés Medina, professor of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and an expert in the history of indigenous movements: “Here begins a process - not only in Mexico, but Continentally - in 1940 the First Latin American Indigenous Congress was held, coordinating all indigenous policies of the continent. Practically this conference is heavily influenced by the United States and Mexico. Some South American countries were involved and participated, but without a clear commitment. […] And this marks the beginning of the process of expansion from which Latin America benefits because a lot of anthropologists are brought over from the United States to train anthropologists and participate in the indigenous policies. There is talk of an applied anthropology. […] This is very important because they bring and involve anthropologists in this process. And they are well aware of the national situation, have studied indigenous communities, have an idea of what is indigenous culture and then begins the process of creating programs for the benefit of indigenous population.” [interview with Dr. Andrés Medina]

[41] In an interview, Dr. Consuela Sánchez, professor of the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) in Mexico, and expert on indigenous movements, argues that: “That indigenous policy that was designed, proposed integration through education policies. For example, aimed not at recognizing own forms of government but at imposing the municipality. Leading to dissolution of forms of self-government and imposing the state government structure of the nation. The other [strategy] is through education. In the search for castellization of indigenous peoples and with this that they assume the values, customs, the dominant ideas.” [interview with Dr. Consuelo Sánchez]

of the important objectives of the indigenous struggles was the attribution of the status of a people, and its recognition and inclusion semantically, in the legislative texts and general political discourse.[42]

International organizations, and most notably, the United Nations, have had an important role in advocating and mounting pressure on the international community and national governments to grant recognition of minority rights. In 1989, the International Labour Organization of the UN established specific regulatory legislation, which has become an important legal basis for the collective struggles of indigenous, afro-descendant, and eventually of Roma, peoples –ILO Convention 169, "Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention". Furthermore, the issue of the rights of indigenous and afro-descendant peoples have also begun to be included in the most notable international events hosted by international organizations, such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994), the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (CMR, Durban, 2001) and follow-up processes to these summits as well as in the Millennium Declaration (New York, 2000). Eventually, these developments led to the establishment of the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" adopted on 13 September 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly (CEPAL 2009). The declaration is a major milestone for indigenous movements. According to Coates: "[it] should be seen as the culmination of generations-long efforts by Indigenous organizations to get international attention, to secure recognition for their aspirations, and to generate support for their political agendas."(Coates 2013)

Mounting international pressure and recognition of indigenous rights, as well as proliferating indigenous and afro-descendant movements in Latin American countries have also advanced the process of greater acknowledgement and inclusion of their rights in national legal frameworks. According to the 2009 CEPAL report: "Both indigenous and African descent and other ethnic groups have a growing political leadership which claims the exercise of their rights, and are undergoing a process of revitalization of their identities and strengthen their organizations. This has resulted in a higher legal and constitutional recognition in many countries, such as multi-ethnic and multicultural societies"(CEPAL, 2009:52).

This progress can also be traced, for example, by the inclusion of minority-identities in national censuses in Latin American countries. According to the same report: "In the round of censuses 2000,

[42] Dr. Consuelo Sánchez briefly explained this process of a semantic shift and its importance: "Now, they are called indigenous peoples because this has to do with a demand for indigenous peoples. The State of Mexico and Latin America in general the trend was denominate them as 'population'. The States did not even want to recognize them as ethnic minorities. Partly as a discussion of a trend within anthropology and linked to leftist orientation, it was suggested that the people were peoples due to the knowledge of their collective character, as collective entities. And recognizing them as 'a people' had a political consequence, because the definition of what is considered as a people have the right to self-determination. That was an [indigenous] claim to be recognized as 'a people'. So this has finally been accepted that communities are requiring rights and there is discussion. Now, 'communities', is a way of saying 'the people' and 'a people' consists of several communities." [interview with Dr. Consuelo Sánchez]

there was a breakthrough in this regard, since 17 of 19 countries incorporated questions for identifying the indigenous population and/or of African descent in the census questionnaire” (CEPAL, 2009:5).

In conclusion, the emergence and consolidation of indigenous and Afro-descendant movements as political actors and civic agents constitutes one of the most remarkable phenomena of Latin American democracies. The intensification of ethnic mobilization processes can be witnessed also through the ethnicization of civil society and electoral politics, and the increasing importance of ethnic claims in national and international political agendas (Vogt 2012). The process of consolidation also allowed for the emergence of ethnic/minority groups as important political cleavages[43], which continue to reshape the political scene in most Latin American countries.

The development of indigenous and Afro-descendant ethnic movements and the gradual acknowledgement of their rights, both in the international arena as well as in the context of Latin American Nation-States, was relevant for the emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization in some of these countries. The indigenous movements paved the way for other minority identities to emerge in the context of the politics of identity across the region, including the Roma. It provided an important reference point as well as the know-how as to what strategies and discourses may most effectively lead to recognition of other minorities’ rights, using the acknowledgement of indigenous people as a precedence which opens up similar possibilities to other ethnic groups.

Furthermore, Klimová-Alexander argues that Romani and indigenous people share many similarities with regards to: “their (extra)legal status as encapsulated nations, dispersed settlement pattern, social and cultural characteristics, forms of political organization, historical and current treatments by majority societies that resulted in severe alienation, problems faced and political demands made towards both states and international organizations” (Klímová-Alexander, 2007b:396).

Both groups represent a unique category of population, different from that of national minorities, which requires a *sui generis* legal treatment in international and national realms. Both of these groups are also considered diasporas, dispersed across a multitude of distinct countries (what Klimová-Alexander calls the “dispersed settlement pattern”); citizens of different countries and at the same time part of a perceived trans-national community. Both categories –Roma and indigenous – bring together very diverse groups of people, who speak diverse languages and/or dialects and self-denominate within smaller sub-categories of communities; nonetheless, they remain connected by shared grievances, objectives and ideas and, especially in the case of Roma, are part of an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). Additionally, both communities suffer from severe alienation, marginalization and exclusion from the majority societies among which they live (Klímová-Alexander 2007b).

[43] By political cleavage I mean the division of voters into voting blocks. Political cleavages are national, religious, ethnic or linguistic divisions affecting electoral politics and formation of political alliances.

Indeed, the 2010 CEPAL report also highlights the Roma in the contexts of similar problems to indigenous and afro-descendant communities. According to the report: "in Latin America indigenous, Afro-descendants, Roma people, etc. often are characterized by being in a social and economic periphery, showing greater and more widespread poverty and less recognition for exercise of their rights in all areas" (CEPAL, 2009:49).

The emergence of processes of ethnic mobilization among diverse minority groups in Latin America – most notably of indigenous and afro-descendant people – as well as their gradual accommodation in the context of national legislative frameworks (in some cases safeguarded by constitutional provisions) and the recognition of their rights and the granting of special status, produced a favourable conjuncture for other emerging minority struggles to be included under the same paradigm of the politics of cultural diversity. In some cases, such as in Colombia, this shifting political context contributed to the process of ethnic revival among minorities, or a type of "re-indigenization" (Borda 2009) as a result of the expansion of minority rights, and arguably, may be a result of increasing self-awareness among members of ethnic minorities, and a sign of "re-ethnicization". Some announced the emergence of an "ethno-boom" (Arocha Rodríguez 2005).

Roma in Latin America

The history of the presence of Roma in the Americas dates back several centuries. According to some, the first Roma arrived as crew with the third voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1478, these were: Anthony of Egypt Catherine of Egypt, Macías of Egypt and Mary of Egypt, from the Iberian Peninsula (Gómez Alfaro 1982). Bernal argues that "the presence of Roma groups, brought to the Americas with the first days of colonization, is undeniable" (Maronese & Tchileva, 2005:98). From then on, and in different waves of migration and historical periods, the Roma began arriving from different European countries to the American territories, often escaping persecutions (Gamboa, Gómez, & Paternina, 2002; Bernal, 2002; Muskus, 2012; Peeters Grietens, 2004). Nonetheless, it is difficult to reconstruct the exact moments and routes of migration of Roma from Europe to Latin America over the centuries; indeed, historical research on the presence[44] of Roma in various Latin American regions is still under-developed (Baroco Galvéz, n.d.; Baroco Galvéz 2014; Sabino Lazar 2014; Muskus 2012; Armendáriz and Kwick 2009; Pacheco 2009; Garay 1987). According to Ian Hancock, the early Romani arrivals rather than being voluntary, were imposed as a measure of deportation by European Monarchs: "During the colonial period, western European nations dealt with their 'Gypsy problem' by transporting them in large numbers overseas; the Spanish shipped Gypsies to their American colonies (including Spanish Louisiana) as part of their *solución americana;* the French sent numbers to the Antilles, and the Scots, English, and Dutch to North America and the Caribbean. Cromwell shipped Romanichal Gypsies (i.e. Gypsies from Britain) as slaves to the southern plantations; there is documentation of Gypsies being

[44] Despite the fact that it is only in the past two decades that researchers in Latin America have increasingly turned their gaze towards the Romani communities, there are also investigations which are much older. Fotta and Fotta, for example, argue that the beginnings of Brazilian Romani Studies can be traced back to the mid-19th century (Ferrari and Fotta 2014).

owned by freed black slaves in Jamaica, and in both Cuba and Louisiana today there are Afro-Romani populations resulting from intermarriage between freed African and Gypsy slaves" (Hancock 2010).

The 19th and 20th centuries were a time of voluntary migration - many Roma arrived in the American territories escaping persecution: a large wave of Romani migration dates back to the mid-19th century, after slavery was abolished in 1864 in Wallachia; another wave of migration is associated with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 (Hancock 2010; Bernal 2003). The wave of migration of Roma from Hungary was significant and numerous; some argue that it is for this reason that the Roma are commonly known and referred to in Latin America as "*húngaros*" – Hungarians (Armendáriz García 2003).

The lack of historical accounts of Romani migration and presence in the territories of New Spain is due to a number of reasons: on the one hand due to the invisibility of the Roma imposed by the Spanish Crown[45] but also a strategy of self-invisibilization adapted by the Roma as a means of protection against persecution (Baroco Galvéz 2014; Lagunas 2010a). The Romani migrants thus used different strategies to enter the territories of New Spain unseen (illegally) or unrecognizable (under different names; also the Archives reflect nationality and not ethnicity).

There are two interrelated consequences of this history of arrival of diverse Romani groups at different historical moments over the centuries: 1) the scattered presence of Roma across the Americas and 2) internal fragmentation and diversity.

On the one hand, today, the Roma are scattered across almost all the countries of the Americas (although with a limited presence in Central America) – however, there is no reliable data available on the actual number of Roma in the Americas, since in most countries the census doesn't include Roma as a variable (Torbágyi 2003), although with some exceptions (Colombia, Brazil, Canada).

According to different scholars and the available (public) data, the largest populations of Roma can be found in Brazil - approximately one million (Guia de Politicas Publicas para Povos Ciganos, 2013), Argentina – 300.000 (Observatorio de las Colectividades, Buenos Aires City) and the United States - one million (Hancock 2010). Data on Canada varies between the official census information – in 2011, 5,255 Roma – and the unofficial estimates, which indicate a Romani population of over 110,000 Roma (Izsák 2015). There are reportedly around 15,000-20,000 Roma in Chile, around 5,000 in Ecuador, 5,000 in Uruguay and 8,000 in Colombia (Bernal 2003); there are also Romani communities in other countries of Latin and South America, but there is no reliable data regarding their number. The number of Roma in Mexico remains a mystery; nonetheless, Romani activists and scholars argue that Mexico might be host to one of the largest Romani populations in the whole region (Bernal 2003; Armendáriz García 2003). Some researchers estimate that the overall Romani population in both Americas may exceed 4

[45] Between 1499 and 1812, the Spanish Crown passed approximately 459 laws (*las Pragmáticas*) which forbade the Roma the use of the language, attire, and maintenance of their distinct culture and traditions (Baroco Galvéz and Lagunas 2014). One of the laws, imposed by Philip IV in 1633, forbade the use of the word "*gitanos*", leading to the disappearance of any direct reference to Roma from historical accounts (Baroco Galvéz 2014).

million (Bernal 2003). These estimations, however, vary depending on the source. In a recently published report by the UN, it is argued that: "Despite the lack of official census data, a 1991 study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization estimated the Roma population in the region to be approximately 1,500,000. Recent government data indicates a population of over half a million Roma in Brazil" (Izsák, 2015:4).

On the other hand, the fact that the Roma arrived at different historical moments proceeding from different European countries, and thus belonging to diverse Romani communities and groups, the contemporary Romani population in Latin America can be characterized by its immense diversity. According to Bernal, the different groups which arrived in Latin American countries since the 19th century were: "the Kalderasha (from Russia, Sweden, France, Serbia and Moldavia), the Machwaya (from Serbia), the Lovaria (from Hungary, Germany, Russia), the Rom Xoraxane (mainly from Serbia, becoming Christians once in the New World upon arriving in the 1900s), the Boyash (from Rumania, Serbia), the Sinti, and once again, but this time voluntarily, the Spanish and Portuguese Kalé who had never stopped arriving. In recent times, during the 1990s, escaping from communism but especially, the poverty and the racism of the new regimes of Eastern Europe and wars, have arrived many Rumanian, Serbian, Bulgarian Rom and so on" (Bernal, 2003:4).

What is noteworthy, is the immense diversity in terms of countries of origin (nationalities) and Romani groups, within specific Latin American nations. Contrary to European countries, where the presence of specific Romani sub-groups is also related to specific European territories, regions or even countries (although his dynamic is changing due to the intra-European migration of recent years), in Latin America we may find the presence of very different Romani sub-groups, which arrived in different historical periods. The table below presents an example from Argentina, which illustrates this internal diversity in the context of one Latin American nation-state.

Nonetheless, the reader should note that such internal diversity with regard to present Romani groups characterizes most Latin American countries, although to a lesser extent Colombia, as will be shown in the chapter on Colombia in this dissertation. Furthermore, beyond the intra-group heterogeneity, there is a great plurality regarding the lifestyle, occupation, educational level, level of conservatism regarding Romani traditions, knowledge and use of the *Romanes* language etc. It should be noted that there are still diverse itinerant or nomadic Romani groups in countries such as Mexico or Brazil (Armendáriz García 2001; Armendáriz and Kwick 2009; Maronese and Tchileva 2005) or semi-itinerant groups, which travel extensively as part of their economic activity, like in the case of Colombia (Gómez Baos 2011).

The internal diversity of Romani communities within the context of nation-states also affects the internal cohesion and consolidation of the groups. Despite diverse histories and countries of origins, most groups which speak *Romanes* tend to maintain strong ties of mutual acknowledgement and solidarity. Similar groups also inter-marry, work together and maintain close contacts. According to Bernal: "It is also important to note that most of the groups existing in the Americas are related among themselves by kindred or origin, and also due the permanent contact they have nowadays, which is

also extended to other similar groups, e.g.: between Kalderasha and Machwaya, Lovaria and Kalderasha, Kalderasha and Xoraxane, Kalderasha and Boyasha, and so on” (Bernal, 2003:4).

On the other hand, however, the non-*Romanes* speaking groups, and especially the *Caló* Roma of Spanish or Portuguese origin, tend to maintain contacts within the limits of these groups; they rarely collaborate or inter-marry with Romani groups. In fact, there is a visible level of distance between Romani groups and the *Caló* Roma, which rarely recognize each other as belonging to the same ethnic minority.

However, despite such a large presence of Roma in different parts of the Americas, this issue has not aroused much interest among scholars on the one hand, and the public administration on the other. Faced with this state of affairs, many researchers have proclaimed the invisibility of the Roma (Baroco Galvéz 2014; Lagunas 2010a; Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002) or have described them as "hidden Americans" (Hancock 2010; Sutherland 1975). The invisible status of the Roma in the Americas has been documented in several countries. With regards to Mexico, for example, David Lagunas writes: “invisibility has been a strategy employed by communities to this inauspicious national context and is explained as an adaptive logic for maintaining a separate identity and culture” (Lagunas, 2010:4).

ROMA IN ARGENTINA. AN OVERVIEW:

- **Caló Roma**. Proceeding from Spain, the first families arrived in the late-19th century; consecutive migrations took place in the early-20th century (Maronese & Tchileva, 2005:61) after the First and Second World War, and later on during the period of the dictatorship of General Franco in Spain. Numerous Caló families arrived in the '50s, '60s and '70s (Pacheco 2009). The Caló Roma self-divides into Argentinian Caló (for their historical presence in Argentina) and Spanish Caló (who arrived from Spain in the second half of the 20th century) ("Comunidades Gitanas Y Pueblos Rom. Discriminación Y Hostigamiento" 2005).
  - **Argentinian Caló** work in the construction business (often as owners, employing non-Roma) and in wholesaling. They speak Spanish (with an Argentinian accent) and the Caló language, which is conserved better than in Spain.
  - **Spanish Caló** work in commerce (especially textiles) and inartistic performance (flamenco). They often refer to themselves as *Gitanos flamencos* (Carrizo-Reimann 2011), marking their distinctiveness from other Roma groups.
  - Both groups are quite conservative regarding their traditions and reject marriages outside their ethnicity, presenting a strong tendency towards endogamy. Curiously, it is argued that both Caló groups maintain a weak relationship with each other (Maronese & Tchileva, 2005:105).
- **Kalderash Roma**. Proceeding from different countries: Greece (arrived around 1890) and Serbia; Moldova (arrived around 1900 and 1920); Russia (arrived in the late-19th century and in a second wave around the 1920s). Most of these groups are Romani-speaking and subdivide according to place of origin (Greek Kalderash, Russian Kalderash etc.). Among Romani-speaking groups, there are also some **Xoraxane Roma** (mainly from Serbia; unlike their European relatives, they are not Muslim but catholic(Bernal, n.d.:23)) and **Lovara Roma**(proceeding mainly from Hungary, Germany and Russia). Also, the presence of a few **Sinti Roma** families have been reported (Bernal 2005). Moldavian Kalderash Roma is the most numerous diaspora (Carrizo-Reimann 2011). Kalderash Roma are quite conservative towards their Romani traditions, maintaining most of the rituals (connected to marriage, birth etc.), conserving the Romani language, traditional clothing (women) and the numerous rules of the *Romanipen*. They are generally well-off economically (some families are very rich). Many families work in commerce (especially used cars, metals, copper-smithery and hydraulics as independent traders or providing external services). In the automotive business, Kalderash Roma have established an extensive business network and work closely together across the country. Kalderash Roma maintain the traditional institution of imparting justice and conflict mediation – the Kris Romani.
- **Boyash/ Ludar Roma**. Proceeding from Romania and Serbia, they arrived in Argentina in the late-19th century. They do not speak Romani, but archaic Romanian (although over time this is being increasingly substituted by Spanish. By the Kalderash Roma they are considered less traditional and strict towards Romani customs (marrying more frequently outside of their ethnicity). They are not as well-situated economically as Kalderash Roma and are typically not involved in traditional trades.
- As of 2000, a number of Romanian Roma families begun to arrive in Argentina. Little is known regarding this wave of migration; nonetheless it seems that with the Argentinean economic crisis, most of them left the country. During their presence in Argentina they were very socially visible as they dedicated themselves mostly to begging in the streets. Furthermore, there is a high level of cross-country mobility of Roma from other countries of Latin America (especially Chile and Brazil) to Argentina.

With regards to other Romani communities in Latin American countries, other scholars also claim that Roma invisibility occurs, both through a process of institutional and social invisibilization, as well as a self-imposed invisibility, which is seen as a mechanism of protection and ethnic resistance (Gamboa Martínez, Paternina Espinosa, and Gómez 2000; H. A. Paternina, Gamboa Martínez, and Gómez Baos 2010; Baroco Galvéz and Lagunas 2014; Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002; Muskus 2012; Palacio Sánchez 2007a; Hancock 2007). The same dynamic applies to the other countries of the American continent, including the United States. With regards to American Romani communities, Gropper and Miller argue that: "The rule against sharing information about themselves with outsiders persists. Fear of mistreatment and a scapegoat mentality underlie the people's reluctance to admit they are Gypsy" (Gropper & Miller, 2001:104).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that since the late 1990s and most notably in the decade of the 2000s, the Roma in some countries have increasingly engaged in the process of self-visibilization, claiming recognition of their existence and rights in the context of the nation-states in which they live. It is in recent years, and with the increasing proliferation of processes of self-visibilization of the Roma themselves, regarded as an expression of ethnic mobilization, that this topic has managed to raise a certain academic interest – since the 2000s, an increasing number of academic papers, monographs and studies can be found dedicated to addressing "the Roma issue".

Although reportedly, the first Romani organization in the Americas was set up in the 1920s in the United States, it wasn't until the 1980s that Romani ethnic mobilization was starting to emerge (Bernal 2003). In 1987 the first Romani organization was established in Brazil (*Centro de Estudios Ciganos*); the initiative was subsequently taken to Argentina where gradually a group of Roma begun to organize, first informally (as *Narodo Romano* in 1989) and later through establishing a formal organization (Bernal 2003). In the early 2000s the same leaders decided to re-establish a Romani NGO, this time under the name of the Roma Cultural Identity Association in Argentina (*Asociación Identidad Cultural Romani en Argentina, AICRA*), which was officially registered in CIOBA in September 2000. In the late 1990s, Roma in Colombia begun to organize, establishing the first Romani organization in 1999 and another one in 2000. In 2000, a Romani association in Ecuador – *Asorom* – was also established (Bernal 2003). Currently, there is only but a handful of Romani organizations in Latin American countries.

The leaders of these first Romani organizations began to communicate and collaborate between the countries, leading to the creation of a pan-American Roma initiative – SKOKRA. Prior to the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001, which was attended by a number of prominent Romani leaders from around the world, a number of Romani organizations in the Americas decided to create an informal network/ platform to coordinate their common collective struggles. They met in 2001 in Quito, Ecuador, drafted the so-called Quito Declaration entitled "The Other Sons of Pacha Mama (Mother Earth): Declaration of the Roma People of the Americas" and founded SKOKRA (*Saveto Katar le Organizatsi ay Kumpeniyi Rromane anda´l Americhi*), Council of Roma Organizations and *Kumpanyi* in the Americas. The declaration was signed by representatives of Romani organizations from Colombia, Argentina, Canada, United States, Chile and Ecuador and can be considered a first step

in gaining visibility of the Romani people in the Americas and presenting coherently their collective claims. Additionally, the authors of the declaration demand the right to self-determination, autonomy and self-government of the Roma, and reject the term "ethnic minority", opting for the denomination "peoples". Furthermore, despite the evident fragmentation and lack of consolidation of diverse Romani groups, even in the context of the same country, the Quito Declaration also proclaims Romani unity "beyond the group cohesion between the distinct Romani Kumpanias in the Americas" (Tchileva 2004).

The overall objectives of Romani ethnic mobilization in Latin America were based on the conviction that their presence and existence remains invisible and marginalized. According to Tchileva: "When the cultural and ethnic diversity of the American continent is discussed, however, the existence of Roma as an ethnic group is systematically ignored" (Tchileva 2004). Therefore, the main efforts concentrate on the process of increasing visibility. According to Armendariz: "In America the issue of visibility is understood as a struggle for the kumpeniyi Roma to be taken into account by the State in which they live, so that its members are recognized as citizens with full rights, while belonging to a distinct people. The Roma in America are working to be recognized in public policies for their contribution to the history, culture, art and economy of the societies in which they are established. They are described as ethnic minorities or 'local communities' while their specific fight is for recognition to participate, as a people, in discussing issues that concern them (funding, education policy, health, housing, construction democracy , etc.)" (Armendáriz García 2016).

Armendariz further argues that Romani ethnic mobilization in Latin America draws from the indigenous movements. He argues that indigenous and Romani organizations share common approaches by "seeking recognition of their customs and cultural traditions, but are demanding a very deep and very old cultural heritage not related to the territory, and therefore more difficult to reference or equate with the approaches of indigenous peoples in America. At the same time, while they [Roma] are struggling for the right for control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property, they demand respect for their internal diversity. They are not interested in an approach that requires them to homogenize in order to be recognized" (Armendáriz García 2016).

It should be noted that the Roma from Latin America remained largely detached from the developments and achievements of the Romani associative movement in Europe. Despite the fact that there were some attempts at bringing together a world-wide Romani activism in the years after the World War II, most notably in the 1960s, they remained largely fruitless. Klímová-Alexander documents the attempts of the World Gypsy Community (WGC) at bringing together Romani communities from across the world; an attempt at what she refers to as "Romani Political Zionism", which was a failure (Klímová-Alexander 2007a). There were also other attempts, pursued by Romani organizations, most notably the International Romani Union (IRU), at re-joining Romani communities from across the world, at least discursively, through a "Declaration of Nation", which was passed during the Fifth Romani Congress in Prague in 2000 (ibid.).

A breakthrough in establishing a joint dialogue between Roma across continents, and which contributed significantly to the increased visibility of Latin American Roma, was the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) in Durban. The conference was attended by 50 Romani leaders and activists from across the world, including a delegation of Latin-American Roma. The conference was a major milestone for the Romani cause – through the organization of a thematic session on the Roma as well as the inclusion of specific recommendations (part 1, article 68 and part 2 articles 39-44 of the Declaration) dedicated to the Romani communities across the globe, it galvanised the visibility of the struggle for Romani rights recognition. For the Romani delegation, the objectives were not restricted to gaining recognition and mobilizing solidarity with the Romani cause; it also aimed at building dialogue across the world. Goodwin argues that, "Other objectives of the delegation included meeting and befriending Romani groups from other parts of the world - as well as representatives of other oppressed groups from around the world - with the aim of initiating future cooperation within the Romani movement to further the Romani cause" (M. Goodwin 2001).

In a joint statement issued by the Spanish *Unión Romaní*, the Romani activists claimed unity and that they belonged to one Romani nation, whose members can be found across the world. The statement specifically denounced the use of different names when speaking of diverse Romani communities: "When someone speaks of us, they would allude to [different terms such as] the gypsy people, romà, romanies, gitano, sinti or nomads as if they were different people linked by common problems (…).The Gypsies from all over the world are making a great effort so that the society contemplates and accepts us as a single people, integrated of more than twelve million people who live fundamentally in Europe (10 millions) and in America (2 million and a half). We are bearers of a common history in their origins and of an identical culture in the fundamental thing. (…) Finally, we want to make notice how the gypsy ONGs, present in this World Conference against the Racism, use all the same terminology to be identified. "European ROMA Rights Center", of Hungary; "Union ROMANI", of Spain; "Proceso Organizativo del Pueblo ROM", of Colombia; "Pueblo ROM", of Ecuador; "ROM Star Organization", "ROMA Students Association" and "RROMA Center for Public Policies Aven amentza", last three of Rumania; and "Romano Lil, ROMA Community and Advocacy Center", as well as "Western Canadian ROMANI Alliance", both of Canada." (Unión Romaní 2001).

In fact, the Durban conference was among the few exceptions within which the issue of Roma was framed and perceived as a global issue, not restricted exclusively to the limits of the European continent. As argued by Klimová-Alexander: "With the exception of the Declaration of Nation, which is the only global Romani political manifesto and claims made by Latin American Romani activists (mostly within the WCAR framework), all Romani claims have a strong European focus—either on the European Union (EU) or the Council of Europe, which is not that surprising given that the majority of the world's Romani population lives in Europe" (Klímová-Alexander, 2007b:403).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the United Nations (UN) has been the only intergovernmental institution within which the issues of Roma are treated as a global one. In the recently published

"Comprehensive study of the human rights situation of Roma worldwide, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism", produced by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák, a global lens with regards to Roma issues is applied: "it is important to note that Roma have dispersed worldwide. […]The Special Rapporteur on minority issues has therefore taken the opportunity to report on the severe socioeconomic marginalization that Roma experience worldwide" (Izsák, 2015: 3-4).

Despite some advancements, the issue of Romani populations in Latin America still remains at the margins of the dominant debates regarding the Romani issue, both in the countries in which they live and in the context of global or regional international debates. Even though in 2001 some Romani activists and public intellectuals were already arguing that the Roma are, in fact, a global and not just European population (Mirga & Gheorghe, 2001), this perspective still remains marginal. The presence and situation of Romani communities in Latin America remains a little known-fact and continues to be under-researched. Despite the declared objectives of Latin-American Romani leaders of "constructing a global Romani nation" (Bernal 2002), the process of American and European Romani activists engaging remains anecdotal, sporadic and restricted to a handful of individuals.

4.4 Comparing Romani issues in Latin-American and European contexts

4.4.a. The "Romani issue" in Europe and Latin America: Comparable cases?

According to McAdam et al. (1996), the development of a theoretical approach to studies on social movements can be characterized as innately comparative, as it has been developed based on a constant dialogue between national scholars, based on national case-studies. It is, in fact, this comparative approach which allows broader conclusions to be drawn about the dynamics, and their underlying factors, of social movements and ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, scholarship on political opportunities structure (POS) provides a perspective which allows us to account for the diverse external factors which condition collective action, both with regards to national developments as well as the international contexts which inevitably influence domestic environments.

Taking into consideration scholarship on social movements and ethnic mobilization, the underlying assumption of this dissertation is that in order to understand, contextualize and critically assess country-specific cases of Romani ethnic mobilization, it is important to situate them within a broader context of regional/ continental developments. Consequently, in order to develop a comparative analysis of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia, it also necessary to compare broader contexts which determine and influence their development. Arguably, the comparison of broader contextual factors might account for some of the differences and similarities with regards to ethnic mobilization in both countries. Furthermore, it allows us to analyse the extent to which these broader regional contexts affect domestic developments on the one hand, and influence ethnic mobilization patterns on the other, and to evaluate which factors bear most significance on these processes.

Part of this dissertation, thus aims to "compare contexts", that is to understand the broader dynamics of regional policies, political approaches and discourses which are relevant for the case-specific

analysis of ethnic mobilization from a comparative perspective. In order to do so, a number of key questions are guiding the analysis:

- How can we characterize the policy approaches to Roma in Europe and Latin America?
- How does the size of a Romani population, their visibility and status vis-à-vis social composition in the context of minority treatment affect the development of distinct policy approaches to Roma?
- To what extent are these approaches reflected in national political and policy approaches to Roma?
- What is the role of intergovernmental structures in the development of regional approaches to the Roma and their importance for domestic developments?
- What explains the difference in policy treatment of Roma and their importance in political agendas?
- Can we identify historical factors which condition these different approaches to Roma?
- Can we identify turning points which account for changes in treatment of the "Roma issue"?
- Are there common articulated issues or problems which affect Romani communities in both regions and which public policies try to alleviate?
- Do the different contextual factors in both regions account for the differences in the dynamics of Romani ethnic mobilization in both case-study countries? And what are the similarities?
- How do the diverse statuses, compositions, and histories of Romani communities in both regions affect the potential for collective action among Roma?
- What are the different "political opportunities" which influence the growth and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries?
- What is the role and relevance of international Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries in the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia?
- Have there been instances of cross-continental collaboration among Romani leaders and organizations, and if so, what has been their role in the development of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries?

4.5 Comparing contexts: Romani issues in Latin-America and Europe from a comparative perspective

4.5.a. The "Romani issue" in Europe and Latin America

As mentioned previously, the Latin American and European contexts with regard to Roma, and Romani ethnic mobilization specifically, represent very different cases, which provide for distinct socio-political environments in which Romani ethnic mobilization in the case study countries (Spain and Colombia) takes place. The table below summarizes some of the main features, relevant for the analysis of the comparative study of Romani ethnic mobilization.

Table 7. Comparative Table: The Roma in Latin America and Europe

	EUROPE	LATIN AMERICA
ESTIMATED SIZE OF POPULATION	12 MILLION	4 MILLION (including North America)
RELEVANCE OF ROMA ISSUES IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AGENDAS/DEBATES	High political relevance. Political issue in most countries (EU and outside of EU)	Lack of visibility, Roma are not an issue in political and social debates
INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS (ROMA EXPLICIT)	Council of Europe (CoE) Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) European Union (EU) United Nations (UN)	United Nations (especially the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Convention 169)
LEGAL STATUS	Recognised by most countries formally as ethnic/cultural minorities Recognized on European level – various international institutions, in the frame of their mandates	Recognized formally in Colombia and Brazil only
MILESTONES IN ROMA-RELATED ISSUES (INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)	2011 EU Roma Framework CoE "Strasbourg Declaration" OSCE 2003 Action Plan	No Roma-specific regional level milestones
POLICY ACTORS	National governments EU OSCE CoE Private donors (such as the OSF) Roma and pro-Roma civil society Experts	National governments UN Roma and pro-Roma civil society
POLICY TOOLS	National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) in all EU counties Roma-specific action plans Targeted policies Mainstream policies	Citizen status in most countries Mainstream policies as citizens (in Colombia and Brazil targeted Roma policies)
POLICY APPROACH	Roma issue as a socio-economic issue Securitization	Roma issue as an issue of cultural diversity

	Crime-related Problematization of Roma identity Ethnicization of Romani problems	Visibility and folklorization of Roma Discrimination
REGIONAL SITUATION	NRIS, context of EU and CoE Involvement of supra-national structures which shape national policies	No Pan-American State-sponsored initiatives, little involvement of governmental supra-national actors
DISCRIMINATION	Most discriminated against ethnic group in Europe (Fundamental Rights Agency 2011; Izsák 2015)	Little information available but discrimination has been reported (Izsák 2015)

Based on an analysis of my empirical findings, I argue that there are a number of relevant elements, which should be taken into consideration in order to understand better the socio-political, historical, cultural and legal contexts in which Romani organizations and activists operate. These factors are determinant for understanding the specific findings of both case studies.

In the context of Europe, Roma constitute the largest ethnic minority, which in recent years has received considerable attention, becoming an important item on political agendas, both in nation-States and internationally. The socio-economic marginalization and exclusion, historical and contemporary experiences of discrimination, persecution and hate which Romani communities in Europe experience, contributed to the building up of a sense of urgency, mobilizing governments and the international community to search for coordinated and comprehensive responses. Additionally, the context of EU enlargement and the subsequent intra-European mobility of Roma from East to West further contributed to this process. Roma, as the largest ethnic minority, in part due to its generally deplorable socio-economic standing, are also the most visible minority group, seemingly perceived by majority societies as different, foreign, “other” (Kligman 2001; Surdu 2015). Despite the fact that Roma have been part of the European cultural panorama for centuries, they continue to be rejected, alienated and stigmatized as a group. The status of Roma as an alien group, as eternal “others”, is the foundation of historically shaped and sustained anti-Gypsyism (End 2015). The Romani identity has been problematized and stigmatized (van Baar 2011b). The very existence of special policies on Roma (such as the National Roma Integration Strategies) leads to *othering* of Roma, emphasising the perceived ethnic and citizen-status difference between Roma and non-Roma. The Romani ethnic identity acquired a political dimension, but a stigmatising one - associating ethnicity with marginalisation, poverty and discrimination. In consequence, the Roma are treated and often inexplicitly defined as a socio-economically deprived group, identified by its vulnerability, social exclusion and marginalisation, rather than as a viable and complex ethnic minority (A. Bereményi & Mirga, 2012). Increasingly, especially in the current context of rising populism and extremism in Europe, the discourses on Roma lead to the “securitization” of the Roma issue, framing the Roma as

"abnormal citizens" or as a "societal threat" (van Baar 2014; van Baar 2011a; Carrera 2014; Bărbulescu 2012; Picker and Roccheggiani 2014).

Furthermore, scholarship on Roma in part has also contributed to sustaining some of the negative views and perceptions regarding the European Roma. As Mihai Surdu's research suggests (Surdu 2015), for example, academic and expert writing on Roma has greatly contributed to shaping the negative image of Roma, concentrating on deficiencies, limitations and a panorama of socio-economic problems. Surdu, through an in-depth analysis of the textual and visual content of the most influential (most cited) sources of knowledge on Roma (such as reports of the World Bank), accurately demonstrates how Roma have been classified through academic research and consequently that "Roma identity tends to be recognized by the strength of the stereotypes related to it" (Surdu 2014).

The Latin-American context, on the other hand, is different. First of all, in the cultural and ethnic panorama of cultural diversity across Latin America, the Roma are only a marginal group, one among many, a minority among minorities. The size of the Romani population in the respective countries tends to be very small, with the exception of Brazil, which has the largest Romani population in Latin America. The relatively small size of the Romani population, as well as the processes of invisibility (both imposed as well as self-imposed) contribute to the fact that the Roma are not considered a relevant item on national political agendas, or are not present in major public and social debates. Furthermore, although reportedly, Roma in Latin American countries are often also facing difficult socio-economic conditions (Izsák 2015), unlike in Europe, they are not the most impoverished, marginalized and excluded community. The problems which indigenous and afro-descendant people in Latin America face are far worse than those of the Roma. The presence of Romani communities in corresponding nation-States also do not pose a threat of ethnic conflict and are not considered potentially destabilizing for the societies, democracies or even communities among which they live. In the case of Latin American societies, other minority groups, most notably indigenous and afro-descendant people, represent major ethnic cleavages, which have to be accommodated and attended, also politically.

Furthermore, there is another relevant element which should be taken into account. Latin-American countries tend to be socially stratified based on the colour of skin and ethno-racial ascriptions. Roma, in this context, are often seen as "white" citizens of European background (Bereményi, 2007:64), making them less susceptible to racial discrimination. Their physical appearance, resembling more European traits, as well as the self-invisibilization process allows them to effectively hide their ethnic origin and blend into the societies among which they live. According to Bereményi: "we can say, therefore, that, on the contrary to the European countries, the Roma have not been presented as a 'major social problem', but rather have remained unknown or simply [have been considered] as 'strange' neighbours, surrounded by an air of estrangement." (Bereményi, 2007:64)

Despite this, in popular perceptions and social imagery, Roma are associated with a number of deviant traits and negative stereotypes, resembling closely the features of anti-Gypsyism in Europe. According to Izsák's report: "Although anti-Gypsyism is originally a European term, the discrimination it embodies manifests itself in a variety of ways across regions. In Latin America, discrimination against Roma was

imported with European migration, and negative stereotypes remain present today, with reports that many Roma do not speak Romani in public for fear of discrimination or reprisal." (Izsák, 2015:5)

Consequently, Roma have reported having experienced discrimination also in Latin America (Izsák 2015; Maronese and Tchileva 2005; Bernal 2003; Gómez Baos 2011; Mouratian 2014). For example, in Argentina data shows that Roma are a community which is most rejected by Argentinean society (Adaszko and Lia Kornblit 2007) – almost 70% of Argentinean youth rejects the Roma (only 17% reported to have a favourable attitude towards Roma). According to a recently published report by INADI (Pedro Mouratian, 2014:50), the Roma are the community with highest level of social rejection (oscillating between 53-81% of respondents). In Brazil, there were concerns "about the widespread occurrence of offences of discrimination against Roma in Brazil, including racist crimes" (Izsák, 2015:5).

Nonetheless, the situation of Roma in Latin America, in terms of experienced discrimination, is relatively better in comparison to Europe. Carrizo-Reimann argues that: "Like the indigenous communities and other immigrants, from the beginning the Gitanos were considered unwanted guests, but despite this they found that the situation in America was better and safer than the organized persecution and discrimination in Europe". (Carrizo-Reimann, 2011:167)

With regard to Roma in Colombia, Gamboa, Gómez and Paternina emphasize that although the Roma may not necessarily be victims of discrimination of the sorts which European Roma face, they continue to be victims of a different type of discrimination: "in our country, the Roma do not suffer from the appalling discrimination to which they are subject in all European countries, but despite this they are victims of an indifference from the Gadye (non-Roma), which does not stop it being a refined expression of discrimination and racism." (Gamboa, Gómez, & Paternina, 2002:262)

Recapitulating, the situation of Romani communities in both regions of the world – Europe and Latin America – present distinct features, which determine different collective objectives and the use of diverse strategies to pursue them. Consequently, the treatment of "the Romani issue", its social and political relevance, nationally and regionally, represents different approaches. The development of the "Romani issue" in both regions, especially in terms of policy framing and public discourses, display distinct features.

In Europe, "Romani issues" have been principally framed in the context of their deplorable socio-economic situation. Although the policy framing is generally considered to follow a human rights- and/or minority rights-based approach (Sobotka and Vermeersch 2012; Vermeersch 2006; Trehan and Sigona 2010; Uzunova 2010), the way in which Romani issues translate into policies and policy interventions rather points to treating the Roma principally in terms of a socio-economic dimension (M. Goodwin and Buijs 2013; van Baar 2011b; Medda-Windischer 2011). As mentioned previously, Romani issues are treated as socio-economic ones; Roma problems become ethnicized and the Romani identity becomes problematized. Rather than treating Roma as a viable and valuable ethnic group, it is associated with a marginalized status in which poverty becomes another attribute of "Romani culture".

In Latin America, on the contrary – the Romani issues, if treated at all through policy approaches, are rather perceived strictly in terms of a broad framework of cultural diversity. The context of the indigenous rights struggle, although also having a socio-economic dimension, has a strong component of claims of self-determination and cultural heritage preservation. As will be argued in the subsequent section, following the example of the indigenous communities and other ethnic groups in the country, the Roma undertook a process of visibilization with the objective of becoming an officially recognized minority group enjoying similar benefits to other ethnic communities. The analysis of the discourse of Romani organizations and leaders in Colombia, for example, resembles the approach of the indigenous communities. Many elements of this discourse revolve around cultural or folk aspects – unlike in Europe, the Roma in Colombia speak about Roma cosmology, legends and myths, traditional knowledge and relationship with Nature, magic as a form of resistance, ritual impurity, etc. Also, elements such as the concept of neo-nomadism or “nomadism as a state of mind” are being introduced into the political discourse of the Roma. In this sense we can observe the folklorification of both discourses, as well as of the policies themselves. The importance of being visibly different is thus made evident through aesthetics (traditional clothing predominantly, especially for public or political events), by speaking publicly in *Romanes*, by evoking stereotypical elements of identity such as nomadism, fortune-telling, or “Roma principles” such as “be a permanent tool of peace”, “have the lucidity of knowing how to wait”, “to have as a motto ‘be happy’”. Such elements dominate the discourse and impose ethnicization on the movement itself. This approach contrasts strongly with the Romani discourses in Europe, which are based mostly on equality, citizenship and human rights issues.

4.5.b. Romani communities and the potential for collective action

The review of the situation and treatment of the “Roma issue” in both Latin America and Europe is not solely a result of contextual factors, geo-political processes and distinct histories. Romani agency, especially in Europe, has had an important role in shaping the approaches to Roma.

The history of Romani ethnic mobilization dates back several decades. The first signs of ethnic mobilization can be traced back to the 1920s (Klímová-Alexander 2007b; Marushiakova and Popov 2005), and since then Romani ethno-nationalism has progressed, passing through various stages of development (Gheorghe and Liégeois 1995). As explained previously, today the Romani ethnic mobilization has become a major phenomenon, which has proliferated and expanded significantly across all of the European continent. Despite the enormous internal diversity of Romani communities, identities and cultures in European countries, the Romani activists and leaders were able to forge a common collective front, targeting especially intergovernmental bodies and organizations, in search of support for the plight of the Roma. Despite the vast internal diversity of Romani communities in Europe, the common experiences, shared grievances and collective aims were able to overcome the internal divisions between Romani groups.

In this process, arguably the experiences of the *Porrajmos*, the Roma Holocaust during World War II, became an important element of a constructed discourse of shared history upon which the collective pan-European Romani identity could be built (Kapralski 2012; van Baar 2011b). In fact, it is in the context of the post-WW II struggle for recognition of the Roma Holocaust that the Romani ethnic

movement emerged (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., and Trojański 2015; Kapralski 2012)[46]. The issue of the Roma Holocaust, has also become a recurrent theme of World Romani Congresses, especially those in 1981 in Gottingen (Germany) and in 1990 in Serock (Poland). The commonly shared history of the experienced horrors of the genocide became a unifying element on which this collective pan-Romani identity was constructed, especially in the context of the so-called international Romani movement. It should be noted, nonetheless, that the Holocaust-remembrance discourse was especially rooted in countries affected by WWII directly; in Spain this narrative emerged much later.

Furthermore, in national contexts, the Roma were able to construct national-level ethnic mobilization, targeting their corresponding governments through collective action. Although in the context of European nation-states there is also a significant level of internal diversity of Romani communities (in terms of class, lifestyle, level of education, etc.), the level of fragmentation is much less evident than in the context of Latin America. The context of shared national histories of Roma, which for most Romani groups date back many centuries, allowed for the creation of national Romani identities – those of Romanian Roma, Polish Roma, Spanish Roma, etc. The context of intra-European Romani migration to an extent alters this pattern - increasingly in countries, especially of Western Europe, immigrant Roma have also become part of the landscape of Romani communities within those countries; however, the immigrant Roma tend to retain their national identities as well, and are identified also by their country of origin, by the autochthonous Romani groups as well. Nonetheless, the need to advocate for the rights of Roma in national contexts facilitated the process of forging a common ground of action. This process is not without its flaws; after all, the level of consolidation of Romani actors and communities varies depending on the country, but the contention does not concern belonging to different Romani sub-groups but is rather about leadership, the accountability of leaders or the ideology they represent.

On the other hand, the case of Latin America in the context of Romani groups is much different. Due to the fact that diverse Romani communities, originating from different places, arrived in Latin American countries in different waves of migration and at different historical moments, contributes to an evident level of internal fragmentation of Romani groups in the context of Latin-American nation-States. Factors such as country of origin, religion practiced, Romani sub-group affiliation and moment of arrival, among others, become determinant for the level of integration within the host Latin-American society, on the one hand, and the level of consolidation and solidarity with other Romani groups populating the corresponding country. All of this contributes to a great internal fragmentation of Romani groups within a specific geo-political territory; the Roma tend to build diverse hierarchies, relationships (through kinship but also economic collaboration) between different Romani groups, depending on the context of each country. The question of knowledge of *Romanes* becomes one of

[46] Since the 60s, Roma and Sinti organizations in Germany begun to struggle for official recognition of the Romani Genocide and, over time, this plight became an important aim of Romani ethnic mobilization across Europe, and especially, in the countries where Romani communities have experienced the Porrajmos directly (Andrzej Mirga 2005; Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., and Trojański 2015; Kapralski 2012; van Baar 2011b).

the principal elements which determine the potential for inter-group solidarity among Roma. This internal fragmentation effectively hinders the capacity for common action, becoming an obstacle for the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization.

Furthermore, the context of pan-American Romani activism, resembling the international Romani activism in Europe, has also not crystallized completely. Despite the emergence of SKOKRA, which in itself should be considered a major achievement, the effective functioning of this structure is hindered by a lack of resources, which would support sustainable cooperation on the continental level. Consequently, SKOKRA remains a virtual network rather than a well-functioning organization; it relies on a handful of Romani activists who meet sporadically and maintain limited, although continuous communication with each other. SKOKRA did not manage to become a recognizable and powerful actor which would represent a capacity of political leverage or advocacy for international-level objectives with regard to Roma in Latin America. This also weakens their potential for building solid bridges of communication and collaboration, as well as strategic collective action, between European and Latin American/American Romani activist movements. Beyond pan-American activism of Roma, restricted to a handful of organizations and Romani leaders, the potential for building a unified pan-American solidarity has yet to be constructed.

In this context, an additional comment should be made. Despite the fact that in an overall perspective, the Romani ethnic mobilization in Latin American countries still has not proliferated and remains under-developed in comparison to Europe, there is another channel of communication, collaboration and coordination across Romani communities, not only in the pan-American perspective but also globally. That is the role played by Romani Evangelical Churches in Latin America and in Europe (Cantón Delgado & Gil Tébar, 2011; Cantón Delgado, 2010, 2013, 2014; Carrizo-Reimann, 2011; Margaret Greenfields, 2013; Méndez, 2005; Muskus, 2012; PODOLINSKÁ & HRUSTIČ, 2011; Ripka, 2007). In some cases, these religious institutions become the backbone of the community, which in some cases not only go in parallel with traditional social organization structures, but tend to replace them. Romani Evangelical Churches function through extensive networks of collaboration across countries, regions and continents, often organizing visits and exchanges between pastors. The interviews with Romani pastors revealed that they maintain close contacts with other congregations in numerous countries (of Latin America and the world). Romani churches often exchange pastors or organize field visits of pastors to other countries. They also periodically organize large-scale events of Evangelical Congregations, which can expect thousands of participants. Despite the evident potential which religious structures possess, so far, with limited exceptions, there has been little engagement in activism or service provision on behalf of such religious leaders. The interviews with some Romani pastors revealed their reluctance to join political struggles – the vast majority of them prefer to limit themselves to their role as spiritual leaders. In those cases where some religious entities form organizations and become political/social stakeholders (as in Spain), there has been a lot of positive impact.

Finally, a relevant element which differentiates the continents – Europe and Latin America – and which proves to be determinant for the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization, is the

question of available resources and existing opportunities. In Europe, there is a vast panorama of diverse stakeholders involved in the arena of Romani issues, as was explained previously. The visibility of the Romani issue and the emergence of Roma-targeted policies create opportunities for Romani organizations, as well as other actors involved in Romani issues – opportunities for funding and opportunities for participation. Romani actors thus become relevant stakeholders, interlocutors and executors of diverse efforts aiming at the improvement of the situation of Roma in Europe. The availability of resources also becomes an incentive for action and involvement; consequently, the growth and expansion of Romani associative structures throughout Europe is still ongoing.

In contrast, the situation of Roma in Latin America with regard to such incentives and opportunities for action is quite different. Contrary to the European context, there are no earmarked funds dedicated to Roma inclusion in the context of Latin America, with the exception of those countries where policies on Roma have been created, such as in Colombia and Brazil. In those countries in fact, a growth in Romani ethnic mobilization has been recorded. In other places, however, Romani organizations may apply for funding from various public administration sources. Nonetheless, the fact that the Roma remain a low priority, makes it more difficult for them to apply on a competitive basis. Furthermore, there are no supra-national structures in the context of the Americas that provide funding for Romani organizations. Likewise, and contrary to Europe, there are no private donors who might invest and support the growth of Romani ethnic mobilization. Funding provided by both types of donors has been recorded but remains isolated and sporadic. For Romani activists and organizations in Latin America, the challenge lies in positioning the Roma as a relevant and visible community, and advocating for funds directed at supporting Romani ethnic mobilization. It is also a question of having an entrepreneurial attitude on behalf of those Romani actors, which requires them to fundraise extensively, attracting potential donors and supporters.

5. ROMANI ETHNIC MOBILIZATION IN SPAIN

5.1. Preliminary remarks. Presentation of the field

This chapter draws from multiple experiences of being engaged in Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain as an activist, employed staff and collaborator and from my diverse research experiences since 2008. As explained in the chapter “methodology”, different experiences have informed the development of this PhD dissertation. Specific field-work, restricted to the data collection process for this thesis has been conducted in numerous phases since 2012. Nonetheless, in this chapter I draw from information gathered over the years and within the framework of different investigation projects.

Data presented here was collected during fieldwork over the years, mostly from primary sources (especially interviews conducted), as well as secondary literature produced by scholars (such as thesis or academic articles), press articles, blogs and websites or documents produced by different organs of public administration. The secondary sources served me to contrast some of the data I collected myself during fieldwork as well as to fill the gaps of information I have not be able to retrieve personally during fieldwork.

As explained in the section “methodology and fieldwork”, prior to conducting research, I identified desired target groups which would serve as my informants. The table below lists the profile of informants with whom I conducted interviews, the type of interviews conducted, relationship established with them and their relevance for the fieldwork conducted. These interviews represent a backbone of this chapter and quotes and excerpts from these interviews and introduced throughout the text. It should be noted this is not an exhaustive list of all my informants. Rather, I included the coded list of informants which appear throughout this chapter.

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWEE	PROFILE OF THE RESPONDANT	RELEVANCE OF RESPONDANT FOR RESEARCH	TYPE OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
ES_1 (woman)	president of a local Romani organization working with youth, involved internationally, member of numerous umbrella organizations and consultative bodies. Age: 30+	insight into relevant Romani developments, including Romani women and youth issues. Close relationship as a collaborator and a friend.	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_2 (man)	ex-board member of FAGIC, coordinator of Politics and Media. Involved in municipal politics. Creator of *Integrupo* and *Coordinadora*. Senior Romani leader. Age: 50+	critical insight into Romani associative movement over the years. Was one of my 'bosses' at FAGIC. Up-close observation of daily work of Romani leaders	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years

ES_3 (man)	president of Unión Romani, ex-EP and MEP. Senior and educated Romani leader. Age: 70+	critical insight into Romani associative movement over the years. Historical and political perspective. One of the most important Romani personalities in Spain. Cordial relationship and numerous meetings and conversations over many years	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_4 (man)	member of PSC political party, ex-vice-president of PIPG, president of a Romani NGO. Currently new board member of FAGIC. Age: 40+	insight into politics and the working of Romani ethnic mobilization	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_5 (man)	educated Romani senior activist, board member of local organizations and or federations. Currently, staff of *Consorci de la Mina.* Age: 50+	Critical and educated view into the Romani associative movement. Was one of my 'bosses' during my work at FAGIC	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_6 (woman)	Romani filmmaker, politician, candidate for Mayor in Sevilla. Romani woman activist. Age: 40+	perspective of politics and Romani women issues	informal interview recorded through field-notes
ES_7 (man)	ex-president of FAGIC, currently president of a local Romani organization. Senior Romani leader. Age: 60+	critical insight into Romani associative movement over the years. Was one of my 'bosses' at FAGIC. Up-close observation of daily work of Romani leaders	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_8 (man)	president of *Unió d´Vendedors Ambulants,* member of *Coordinadora dels Merxants.*Age: 50+	Insight into the working of *Coordinadora*. Perspective of alliances and working with Romani organizations	Recorded interview
ES_9 (man)	Romani pastor, ex-president *Coordinadora dels Merxants*; Board member of FACCAT, mediator. Age: 40+	Insight into the work of *Coordinadora*, Evangelical structures (Churches and cultural NGOs)	Recorded interview
ES_10 (man)	pastor of a local Romani Evangelical Church, president of a local Romani organization. Senior Romani leader. Age: 70+	perspective of the work of a Romani pastor and his involvement in the Romani associative movement	Formal interview recorded through field-notes
ES_11 (man)	Romani political scientist, ex-employee of FSG, involved in international Romani affairs, ex-Spanish delegate of ECRI at the CoE. Age: 50+	Close relationship and collaboration developed over many years. An informed and critical insight into the Romani associative movement, in Spain and abroad	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years

ES_12 (woman)	deputy director for social programs. Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, secretary to the State Council for the Roma. Age: 50+	Perspective of the public administration on working for and with the Romani communities in Spain	Recorded interview
ES_13 (man)	ex-director of FSG, non-Roma, high-level expert on Roma, a very influential figure. Age: 50+	Historical perspective of pro-Romani structures; evaluation of policies and policy-approaches	Recorded interview
ES_14 (woman)	program officer at RIO, a Spanish educated Romani woman, involved in work with women. Age: 30+	perspective of a donor. Insight on Romani women activism in Spain and abroad. Cordial and friendly relationship	numerous informal interviews, recorded through field-notes
ES_15 (woman)	non-Roma program officer at KAMIRA. Age: 30+	Perspective of a Romani women organization	informal interviews, recorded through field-notes
ES_16 (man)	Romani member of the Valencian parliament, involved in Romani activism. Senior Romani leader. Age: 60+	institutional and CSO perspective on Romani affairs	formal interview, recorded through field-notes
ES_17 (woman)	Romani PhD student of sociology, daughter of a Romani pastor. Age: 30+	Perspective of a young and educated Romani woman, un-involved in Romani activism	Formal interview recorded through field-notes
ES_18 (man)	Romani activist, founder of FERYP, author of a prominent Romani blog. LGBT activist. Age: 30+	Perspective into LGBT and Romani youth movements. Critical with Romani associative movement. Cordial relationship	numerous formal and informal interviews recorded through field-notes
ES_19 (man)	Romani youth activist, uneducated, actively involved internationally. Active member of ternYpe and other Romani organizations. Age: 20+	Perspective into Romani youth activism, in Spain and abroad. Critical perspective into Romani associative movement in Spain. A close friend.	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years, questionnaires and focus groups
ES_20 (woman)	ex-Board member of FAGIC, responsible for the area of women. A Romani women of respect, involved in diverse Romani associations. Age: 60+	insight into Romani associative movement over the years, especially with regards to women. Was one of my 'bosses' at FAGIC. Up-close observation of daily work of Romani leaders	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_21 (woman)	educated Romani woman, ex-employee of a Romani federation. During a time, we worked together. Age: 30+	critical perspective into Romani associative movement, especially with regards to women and youth	numerous informal interviews, daily relationship, written questionnaire

ES_22 (woman)	Romani woman leader, actively involved in Romani associations, president of *Voces Gitanas.* Age: 40+	Critical perspective of many years into Romani women associative movement, involved in numerous consultative bodies. Cordial relationship	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_23 (woman)	Romani woman leader, actively involved in the work of diverse Romani associations, most notably Romani women associations. Age: 40+	Critical perspective of many years into Romani women associative movement, involved in numerous consultative bodies. Cordial relationship	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_24 (man)	educated Romani man, during a short period involved in a Romani youth organization. Generally, dis-engaged. Age: 30+	We were part of the same Romani youth organization. Perspective of a generally un-involved young Roma	numerous informal interviews, written questionnaire
ES_25 (woman)	prominent Romani women leader, involved in Romani women organizations and federation as board member. Educated Romani woman. Age: 40+	perspective into Romani women activism and Romani feminism	recorded interview, numerous informal conversations
ES_26 (woman)	Romani woman activist, involved in Romani associations and a Romani women federation. Involved in politics and workers’ commissions. Age: 30+	perspective into Romani women activism and Romani feminism	informal conversations, recorded through field-notes
ES_27 (woman)	young Romani woman activist, member of *Voces Gitanas.*Age: 20+	Romani women and Romani youth perspective. Friendly relationship	numerous informal interviews, recorded through field-notes
ES_28 (woman)	young Romani university student, staff member of a Romani federation, member of *Voces Gitanas.*Age: 20+	Romani women and Romani youth perspective. Friendly relationship. During a time, we worked together in the same organization	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years, questionnaires and focus groups
ES_29 (man)	young educated Romani man, graduate from CEU, involved in Romani youth activism and think tanks. Age: 30+	informed perspective of Romani youth activism and Romani political involvement. Collaborator	numerous informal interviews recorded through field-notes. Written questionnaire
ES_30 (man)	Senior Romani leader, president of a local Romani NGO, board-member of Romani federation. Age: 50+	historical perspective into Romani associative movement	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years

ES_31 (man)	Senior Romani leader, ex-president of FAGIC, board member and president of diverse structures. Employed by the local government to coordinate Romani-targeted initiatives. Age: 60+	critical perspective into Romani associative movement and politics. Perspective from within public administration	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_32 (woman)	Romani woman activist, president of a local Romani organisation. Age: 50+	perspective into Romani women activism and Romani feminism	numerous interviews, formal and informal, some of them recorded, conducted over many years
ES_33 (man)	a cosmopolitan pan-European Roma, who is directly connected to high decision making structures at a European level, trainer, and consultant. Initiator of Agora Roma. Age: 30+	informed perspective of Romani youth activism and Romani associative movement, in Spain and abroad	informal interviews, recorded through field-notes
ES_34 (man)	educated young Romani man, involve din activist. Staff of a Romani federation. Age: 20+	perspective of Romani youth activism and working from within a large Romani NGO. During a time, we worked together in the same organization	numerous informal interviews recorded through field-notes. Written questionnaire
ES_35 (man)	Young Romani man, gradually becoming involved in Romani youth activism. Age: 20+	Romani youth perspective	informal interview, recorded through field-notes. Written questionnaire
ES_36 (woman)	Young Romani woman, staff of a Romani organization. Age: 30+	perspective into Romani associative movement	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_37 (man)	Senior Romani leader, initiator of a Romani political party, closely involved in Romani associative movement. Age: 50+	critical historical perspective into Romani associative movement. Political involvement of Roma	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_38 (man)	ex-board member of FAGIC. Catalan Romani leader, president of a local Romani organization. Age: 60+	critical insight into Romani associative movement over the years. Was one of my 'bosses' at FAGIC. Up-close observation of daily work of Romani leaders	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_39 (man)	Senior Romani leader, president of a local Romani NGO. Age: 70+	Historical perspective of Romani associative movement	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion

ES_40 (man)	ex-board member of FAGIC. Involved in academic work. Age: 50+	critical insight into Romani associative movement over the years. Was one of my 'bosses' at FAGIC. Up-close observation of daily work of Romani leaders	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_41 (woman)	Romani woman activist, president of a Romani women association. Wife of ES_38. Age: 50+	Romani woman perspective	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_42 (man)	senior Romani leader, president of a local Romani organization. Age: 60+	Senior Romani leader perspective, historical perspective	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_43 (woman)	Romani woman, involved in the work of a women organization and Romani feminism. Age: 30+	Romani woman perspective	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_44 (woman)	Romani woman, long-time staff member of a Romani federation, member of *Voces Gitanas.*Age: 30+	perspective of a Romani women, from within of a large Romani NGO. Personally a friend. We worked together over many years in the same Romani NGO	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years
ES_45 (man)	senior Romani leader, Catalan Romani leader, president of a local Romani NGO. Age: 70+	historical perspective on Romani associative movement	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_46 (man)	senior Romani leader, Catalan Romani leader, president of a local Romani NGO. Age: 70+	historical perspective on Romani associative movement	Formal recorded interviews and informal discussion
ES_47 (man)	young Romani teenager, disengaged from the associative movement. Age: 20	Young un-involved Roma	informal conversations and a written questionnaire
ES_48 (man)	young Romani activist, president of a local youth association, involved in international projects. Age: 30+	Romani youth perspective. A friend and a collaborator	numerous interviews, formal and informal, conducted over many years, questionnaires and focus groups

Table 8. Coded list of informants in Spain

It should be noted that some of the interviews were audio-recorded which allowed me to transcribe them later on. Nonetheless, numerous interviews were not recorded; in those cases, I kept a journal, which includes detailed notes from each one of those conversations and meetings. There are various reasons why in numerous cases I only rely on my journal and not on the audio-recorded interviews. On the one hand, and especially in the case of interviews conducted with Romani informants, the use of an audio-recorder affects the type of responses I received – the formality associated with audio-recordings made some of my informants uncomfortable and led them to respond in an official, “politically correct” matter (H. J. Rubin and Rubin 2011; Eduardo Restrepo 1992). Much more “off-the-

record" information was provided to me when the voice-recorder was turned off – the respondents felt more conformable; such context provided for an informal space for discussion in an atmosphere of intimacy and trust. In fact, I conducted numerous interviews with the same respondents – recorded and informal, which were noted down only in my journal. The answers given by the same person in both types of settings were complementary to each other and allowed me to gain greater insight into the dynamics and relationships which take place "behind the scene". The guarantee of anonymity of the use of the interviews in many cases was not enough to make my interviewees feel that they can speak openly, especially around controversial issues. Furthermore, it should be noted that in numerous cases while conducting formal interviews with representatives of public administration, my interlocutors after conducting the formal, recorded interviews gave me a lot of essential information "off-the-record". In fact, in some cases my interviewees themselves asked me to turn off the recorder so that they can give me unofficial information, relevant for my research.

On the other hand, numerous interviews were conducted in very informal settings – during lunches, going shopping or sharing a coffee, going for a walk together or simply with people I encountered and with whom I shared a conversation. On many such casual and informal occasions, I was able to retrieve essential information used in this chapter; in such context the use of a recorder would be inappropriate.

Over the years, and specifically, during the period of research conducted specifically for this PhD thesis, I also attended a number of events – such as meetings with public administration, cultural fairs, congresses and conferences, during which Romani community members and representatives participated. In some instances, I have also participated as a speaker. These events were generally not recorded but they became an important source of information. Extensive notes were taken during all of those events which have also fed into this chapter. Such occasions also provided me with unique opportunities to see the interaction of the Romani representatives with each other, with the public and with other ethnic groups. All of these observations have also informed this chapter and are mentioned throughout the text.

Finally, it should be noted that throughout this chapter I frequently quote articles, publications, position papers, website articles and briefs written and published by members of Romani organizations, leaders and public intellectuals. I also use quotes from interviews conducted with Romani leaders that have appeared in the press, transcribe fragments of public interventions and quote information posted online, for example on social media platforms such as Facebook. I treat these sources as objects of analysis mainly because they provide specific examples of narratives and discourses crafted by Romani actors themselves and are essential for analysis described throughout this chapter.

5.2. Introduction

COUNTRY	KINGDOM OF SPAIN
POPULATION	46.512.199[47]
POLITICAL SYSTEM	Constitutional monarchy
ETHNIC COMPOSITION[48]	89.1 % Spaniards 10.1 % Foreigners[49] (4.677.059) 1.72 – 2.10 % Roma (estimates)
MINORITY LEGAL STATUS	Spanish Constitution (1978) defines Spanish people as citizens of the Kingdom of Spain, disregarding of national, religious, linguistic or ethnic identification. The preamble (art.2) recognizes "peoples and nationalities of Spain" and their respective cultures, languages, traditions and institutions. Spain denies the existence of national minorities in the country.
SIZE OF ROMANI POPULATION	800.000-970.000 Roma[50]
DISTRIBUTION	Distributed across the country. According to estimations, between 37-53% of Roma in Spain live in Andalusia, followed by Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid autonomous regions (Laparra Navarro 2011).

[47]Estimates for 2014. (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas 2015). Latest census data from 2011: 46,815,916.

[48] The concept of ethnicity and, in fact, nationalities in Spain is problematic. Collecting ethnic data is unconstitutional in Spain. Therefore, statistics only refer to citizen and non-citizen status. The minority (cultural, ethnic or religious) status, with an expectation of *Gitanos*, who are considered a historic ethnic minority in Spain, is related conceptually to immigration.

[49] Biggest number of immigrants in Spain: Romania (15.6%) and Morocco (15.4%).

[50] There are no reliable data regarding the size of Romani population in Spain. Various sources provide estimates, which range between 700.000 and 1.000.000 Roma. However, in relative terms, Spain is considered a country with second biggest population of Roma in the EU, after Romania. The most "realistic" estimate, according to Laparra are those presented above (Laparra Navarro 2011). Nonetheless, it should be noted that Romani leaders numerous times challenge the statistic regarding the number of Roma in Spain. Some claim that the estimates remain the same for the past few decades, which seems unrealistic if we consider the rate of population growth.

COMPOSITION	Spanish *Gitanos*[51] as well as Romani migrants[52] from various countries of Central and Eastern Europe
LEGAL STATUS	Formally, the Roma are not recognized as an ethnic, national or cultural minority. However, numerous acts of institutional historical recognition have been passed, both on regional and national levels (see annex).

Table 9. Spain – basic information

5.2.a. Diversity and minority treatment

In fact, the very concepts of ethnicity and nationality in Spain is problematic; a result of Spanish history and numerous independence struggles (most notably in the Basque Region and more recently in Catalonia). The Spanish Constitution of 1978 speaks of "peoples and nationalities", purposely avoiding the term "nation", cautious of nationalist, or even separatist movements in the country. While the constitution "recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed and the solidarity among them all" (Preamble, section 2), it is unconstitutional for a nationality or a region to declare itself a "nation". In a similar spirit, Spanish constitution defines Spaniards in terms of their citizen status, disregarding of ethnicity and nationality, nonetheless it acknowledges this diversity in the preamble by ensuring protection of "people of Spain in the exercise of human rights, of their culture and traditions, languages and institutions" (Preamble). Under such legal arrangement, the concept of national, ethnic or cultural minority has not been relevant in Spanish legal system. The lack of specific minority provisions in Spanish legal system is surprising, especially considering the factual linguistic, national, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the Spanish society (Vieytez 2014). Nonetheless, in 1995[53] Spain ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, facing the challenge of accommodating international provisions in the context of Spanish legal system with regards to minorities. As argued by scholars, the transposition of the Framework Convention in Spain has been limited and restrictive – Spain has explicitly denied the existence of national minorities in Spain (Vieytez 2008)[54]. In practice, however, Spain has only adapted dispositions from the Convention to the Roma (Vieytez, 2014:65), although

[51] The term Gitano (Spanish word for Gypsies) is used here to refer to Spanish Romani communities (also known as *Caló*) in order to contextualize the described group.

[52] There is not reliable data regarding the number of Romani immigrates in Spain (Teresa Sordé 2010; Tarnovsch 2012). The vast majority of these immigrants come from Romania and Bulgaria. The National Roma Integration Strategies estimates the size of immigrant Romani population to aprox. 50.000 (Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014). On the other hand, in 2003 Dietz argued that there were aprox. 40.000 migrant Roma in Spain (Dietz 2003). It is likely that the size of Romani immigrant population is in fact higher than the estimates.

[53] https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1998-1369

[54] http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_1st_Com_Spain_en.pdf

"the Spanish authorities have provided clarification on their official position in this regard, stating that the Spanish Romani community does not constitute a national minority"[55]. The ambiguous status and the apparent difficulty of transposing the Framework Convention in Spain has been underlined by scholars (Vieytez 2008; Vieytez 2014; Avila 2000; Vega 2014).

Furthermore, as the constitution and policy practice disregards of cultural diversity with regards to national minorities (in contrast to those countries, which recognize minority status explicitly), the issues related to cultural diversity are connected and treated through the prism of immigration. Despite the fact that the Constitution recognizes the existence of plural cultures, traditions and languages, minority (cultural, ethnic or religious) status, with an exception of Roma, who are considered a historic ethnic minority in Spain (although not recognized legally as such), is related conceptually to immigration.

5.2.b. Roma in Spain – a brief historic overview

The history of Roma in Spain dates back almost 600 years. Some scholars argue that the Roma first appeared in Spain around 1415, although, the first historic document which indisputably makes reference to the Roma dates back to 1425 (Leblon 1987; San Román 1994b; Gómez Alfaro 2009; Sánchez Ortega and Caro Baroja 1977; Sánchez Ortega 1994). Upon their arrival the Roma were initially welcomed, and received letters of safe conduct granting their passage. This situation, however, didn´t last very long – the turn of the century marked a radical change in approach towards the Roma. In 1499 the first Pragmatic (*Pragmática*) was passed by the Catholic Monarchs simultaneously by kings of Castille and Aragón that ordered all Roma to abandon the nomadic lifestyle, settle down, acquire a profession and serve a local lord (San Román 1994b). This decree follows the general politics initiated by the Catholic Monarchs during the last decade of the XV century. It is then that the forced conversions to Catholicism were imposed on all Jews (1492), Moors (1592) and other non-Catholic communities under the threat of forced expulsions from the Spanish territories. These laws formed part of the Spanish Inquisition, formally introduced in the Kingdom of Castille in 1478 and later spread through the entire Spanish territory, marking the beginning of the era of witch-hunt and persecutions. Gómez Alfaro argues that between 1499 and 1783, more than 250 decrees and orders targeting Roma were issued, and "the account of such documents demonstrates a radical demonizing rejection, resulting in the best case in a policy committed to the dissolution of Roma as a distinct group" (Gómez Alfaro, 2009:13). As argued by Dietz, since their arrival until present times, the Roma were often perceived by the Spanish nation-State as an "enemy within" (Dietz 2005). Throughout the centuries, the Roma were persecuted, imprisoned (for example, the Great Gypsy Round-up of 1749), and expulsed; also the use of the language, traditional clothing or trade were officially forbidden to Roma. The last Pragmatic of

[55] Council of Europe: Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: Opinion on Spain, 27 November 2003, ACFC/INF/OP/I(2004)004, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4edf515c2.html [accessed 28 September 2015]

the Catholic Monarchs of 1783 granted the Roma citizenship[56] but forbidden the Roma to maintain their distinct culture and traditions (continuing with clearly assimilationist efforts); in fact, among other measures, using the term "Roma" (*Gitano*) was forbidden in any context (Gómez Alfaro 2009). This legislation remained in force throughout XIX century. During the industrial era the Roma remained suspicious (for example, in 1844 *Guardia Civil* established its first corpse responsible for surveillance of Romani communities (Gómez Alfaro 2009)), but it was a period relatively more peaceful. Nonetheless, the gradual industrialization of the country made Romani services and traditional occupations obsolete, pushing Roma further to the margins of society.

The fate of the Roma during the Spanish Civil War and the post-war period remains largely unknown – only in the past few years have the scholars (Martín Sánchez 2006; Martín Sánchez 2000), Romani intellectuals and organizations[57] themselves begun the recuperate this chapter of Romani history. During the period of dictatorship of General Franco the Roma remained invisibilized in policy-making – Buezas calls it the ethnic indifference phase; rather, the repressive politics towards the Roma continued (Buezas 1985). Among other measures, the use of *Caló* was strictly forbidden (since 1941 all non-Castillian languages were forbidden) and was considered a "jargon of criminals". Furthermore, the Guardia Civil since 1943 is given strict orders to guard, control and survey Romani communities. Nonetheless, the specific data on repressive measures against Roma are still largely unknown – in 2003 the Archives of the Guardia Civil were still not open to public (Dietz 2003) and currently there are no available historical investigation which provides more light on this historical period and the Roma.

Once Spain entered the period of democratic transitions, centuries of persecution, repressions, marginalization and forced assimilation have borne its toll on Romani communities. As the biggest minority in Spain, the Roma were significantly behind the majority society in basically all keys areas of life. The dramatic socio-economic situation, relocation of Roma from shanty-towns to low-quality housing estates throughout the country, their social marginalization and evident exclusion became a major policy challenge, which required coordinated responses.

Policies for Roma

In Spain, the efforts to attend the challenges faced by Romani communities through projects and activities have its origin in the religious institutions, especially of the Catholic Church. As of 1950's, the Catholic Church begun working with the Romani communities, combining evangelization with social care programs (Llopis 2003). During the 1960's and 1970's the different informal groups of priests begun to take a more institutional form, crystallizing into local Church-related Roma Offices

[56] Also the 1812 Spanish Constitution confirmed the citizen-status of Roma, but upheld the prohibition of manifesting Romani identity (through language, clothing and other visible features).

[57] For example: http://www.historiadeltiempopresente.com/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=664:eusebiolibro&catid=29:libros&Itemid=56 or http://www.fagic.org/quehacemos/proyectos/locales/218-recuperando-la-memoria-historica-del-pueblo-gitano

(*Secretariados Gitanos*), which attended the problems of the Romani communities mostly through providing services and charity work. The general approach was based on a consensus that the Roma are an excluded and marginalized community and their special needs require special attention and separate services. It is then that the image of "Roma as poor, defenceless and socially marginalized individuals, in need of religion, alienated and without collective potential" (Montoya, 1987:55) begun to be the preliminary opinion and intellectual justification for the service-like/ welfare-oriented (*assitentalist*) and paternalistic approach in Romani policies in Spain. The targeted and sectorial approach towards Roma and the welfare-based methodology (rather than "empowerment" approach[58]) shaped the future Roma-related policies.

Since the transition towards democracy, the welfare of Romani citizens was recognized to be government's responsibility. The universal welfare system was also inclusive of Romani population, nonetheless, early-on the administration recognized the need to particularize universal policies in order to better attend the specific needs of the Roma. Thus, administration, both regional and national, aware of the alarming situation of the vast majority of Romani citizens, began to draft programs for their inclusion. In 1978, an Inter-ministerial Commission was created to study the problems affecting the Romani community, significantly under the Ministry of Culture. The gradual interest of governmental institutions with the fate of their Romani citizens gradually lead to the creation of the first National Plan for the Roma Development (*Plan de Desarrollo Gitano*), approved by the Spanish Parliament in 1985[59] simultaneously with the creation of the Office for the Roma issues. It should be noted that the approval of 1985 parliamentary proposal for creating this plan came after a famous speech made by Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, then member of the Parliament (Dietz 2003). In it, Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia argued that the rights of Romani people were still not respected enough in Spanish democracy. He argued:

> "But the truth is that the democracy of this country, the freedom in this country which has made possible to everyone and each one of us that we can legitimately defend our own political and ideological options, that the democracy which has definitely brought to Spain major and optimal forms of participation of all citizens, so that justice […] is transformed into participative reality for all citizens, has still not arrived for the Romani people. For the Romani people, lamentably, the constitution in some instances is nothing more than empty words.

[58] In recent years, "empowerment" became a popular buzz-word, not only in public policies but also in the academia. Ultimately, the term refers to the concept of power, understood not only as dominance but also as capability (Ivasiuc 2014). In my understanding, the conept of empowerment relates closely to the concept of agency, in which empowering approach (dimension or action) is one which triggers an "expansion of agency" (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007) or "expansion of capabilities" (Sen 2003). An excellent study of the practice of "empowerment" among Romani communities can be found in: Ivasiuc, 2014.

[59] Approved by the Spanish Parliament on October 3rd 1985.

> Empty words because the rights that correspond to us as Spanish citizens are violated when this fundamental and for us sacred condition of dignity of human beings is not respected."[60]

The plan was published in 1988 as Program of Roma Development (*Programa de Desarrollo Gitano*), becoming the first integrated multi-sectorial program promoting equal opportunities and inclusion of Roma in Spain. The creation of a specific institutional body responsible for the Roma issues was a conscious effort to bring more coherence and coordination to the diverse actions and activities implemented at different levels of public administration. In 1989 a specific budget was assigned to regional governments for the Romani population[61]. Since the end of 1980's, the central government has given an impulse to drafting of different action plans[62], creation of coordinating and consultative bodies (both governmental and non-governmental). According to Méndez, the analysis of these policies (between 1985 and 2003) reveals a series of general characteristics (Méndez, 2005):

- The principle of collaboration with the regional and local administration, not only financially but also in terms of coordination and project management. Between 1989 and *2002*, the Ministry of Social Welfare has destined almost 42,000,000 € and the local governments have spent over 30.000.000 € in Roma related programs and activities (Méndez, 2005).
- Financial and technical cooperation with NGOs working with the *Gitano* communities (such as the Red Cross, *Secretariados Gitanos* etc.). The annual average expenditure between 1989-2002 was the almost 30,000,000 € for the non-Romani NGOs
- Ministerial and interdepartmental coordination of programs. Nonetheless, although the majority of plans and programs for the Roma declare their interdepartmental character, it is difficult to evaluate the real impact of this principle.
- The involvement and direct participation of *Gitano* in institutional organs and consultative bodies

Since the mid-80s, and over the next decades, a number of general, sectorial and specific policies have been approved and implemented a different levels of governmental administration, which have been

[60] The video of the 1985 speech can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOnUDKG5nDA

[61] Dietz further clarifies: "In the course of the step-by-step federalization of Spain, during the nineties the regional governments start participating in the *gitano* integration measures. Since 1994, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs signs framework-agreements with several Autonomous Communities in order to co-finance social welfare programmes, both general ones and specific ones for the regionally present *gitano* population. These regionally specific "Projects of Integral Social Intervention for the Attendance, Prevention of Marginalization and Integration of the *Gitano* People" are part of the broader, integral programme, then renamed as the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Gitano."* (Dietz, 2003:61)

[62] Also the autonomous regional governments were encouraged to attend the needs of the Romani community through specific regional action plans. This is important as numerous competencies in key areas were transmitted from the central government to regional administration. The first such Regional Plan was the Andalusian Integral Plan for the Romani Community (PICGA), approved in 1997 (Bereményi and Mirga 2012).

accompanied by parallel efforts of Roma and non-Roma civil society, aiming at bringing an improvement to Spanish Romani communities. In this regard it is important to differentiate between three overlapping levels of interventions which target Romani people:

- Universal policies of the Spanish welfare state system, especially sectorial policies in the fields of health, education, housing and social services which are available for all Spanish citizens, but have also had a significant impact on the situation of Roma
- Specific policies, plans and programs targeting Roma, implemented both at the national level (such as the 1989 Roma Development Program and the National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020), as well as at the level of autonomous communities (such as the regional plans for Roma in Catalonia, Andalusia, Navarra, Extremadura or the Basque Country)
- Specific projects and interventions of the civil society, both Roma and pro-Roma of diverse scope and profile

In an interview with a high-level official at the Ministry Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality in Madrid, responsible for coordinating Roma-targeted strategies, described this historic panorama of policy approaches to Roma in the following way:

> "Here in Spain, what has significantly improved the situation of the Roma is the democratic and legal system that comes with the Spanish Constitution of 1978, that there is a strict article that says there are no differences [in treatment] based on gender or ethnicity, culture ... the Roma who have lived here since the fifteenth century. There have been different times when Roma have been legislatively abused by the system but since the Constitution, in the law appears equality, and they become citizens with full rights as any other Spanish living in the territory. With the establishment and development of the state of welfare, especially in health and health care because later other [themes] have been introduced, to have these guaranteed rights they have accessed standardized systems. Although they had the guarantee of basic rights, their situation was not the same as the general population. The indices according to sociological or research studies that have been developed (there is no official census data) show that there is still a gap in access to these standardized resources [which are accessible] for most of the population. In the eighties there was a policy claim that we had to do positive policies to reduce the differences. It was when the specific policy was established called 'Programa del Desarrollo Gitano'. (…). This Roma program is twofold; the axis of the collaboration of public administrations to specifically address the problems of the Roma people, led by social services. And the other is, collaboration with Romani organizations, so that they also work in collaboration with public administrations." [recorded interview, ES_12]

With regards to policies in Spain, according to administrative officials, we can differentiate a three-fold approach:

- Human rights, equality and non-discrimination
- Access to basic services
- Recognition

The overview of past and existing policies also reflects these statements. There are three broad axis of interventions of policies which target Roma: 1) the socio-economic interventions (four key areas of the National Roma Integration Strategies, namely housing, education, employment and health; this includes both access to basic services on universal welfare state as well as Roma-specific measures; 2) culture (mainly through funding cultural activities) and cultural recognition; 3) non-discrimination (a component recently introduced within the framework of the Spanish NRIS); also relates to human rights and equality. It should be noted, however, that the main focus of both past and currently existing policies for Roma is placed on socio-economic dimension and the overall improvement of the socio-economic situation of Romani communities in Spain.

According to Dietz, "contemporary Spanish social policy seems to evolve around three different, but closely inter-related axes of policy-making, which combine and re-distribute traditional competences in both integration and welfare programmes: (a) the axis of centralism vs. federalization, (b) the axis of statism vs. privatization and (c) the axis of universalism vs. multiculturalization" (Dietz, 2003:58). These axes can also be clearly traced in the case of types of policies targeting Roma which oscillate between mainstream vs. targeted measures, national policy-frameworks and programmes vs. regional competencies and regional-specific plans, and between interventions of the State administration vs. interventions implemented by non-State actors.

On the one hand, central government establishes a common institutional framework, most significantly through the National Roma Strategy. Also of great importance is the role of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, which coordinates the major policy-plans (currently the National Roma Strategy 2012-2020) on Roma as well as provides grants from IRPF taxes for Roma inclusion, the second most important source of income for Romani organizations. On the other hand, however, the competencies in key areas of life (and pillars of Roma strategies), namely health, education, housing and employment, as well as social services, fall under the competencies of the governments of the autonomous communities to varying degree (in cases of education or healthcare, the competency is exclusively of regional governments).

Additionally, according to Spanish constitution all citizens are equal before the law, making explicit targeted measures difficult to establish and implement, especially given that Roma are not officially recognized as a minority in Spain. This constitutes a challenge in finding a balance between the universal welfare system, which benefits Romani citizens equally as all other citizens, and targeted "positive measures" crafted specifically for the Roma through national and regional integrated plans. In practice, there is a difficulty in implementing such "affirmative actions" for Roma – some departments, for example of Employment and Housing, rejected implementation of Roma-only measures as they are perceived as unconstitutional (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012) – to compensate for these institutional obstacles, interventions in these areas are typically those of training, assistance or mediation or ones which target other sectors of population for example those "in risk of social exclusion".

Finally, it should be noted that the implementation of policies and Roma-specific measures increasingly is transferred from levels of national/ regional governments to level of local administration, and most

importantly, non-State actors – non-governmental organizations and charity entities. Despite the fact that the management and control over Romani policies must remain under the control of the public administration, "there are huge possibilities of sub-contracting and out-sourcing a broad range of activities included in the integrated activities" (Dietz, 2003:63), making these non-state actors not only relevant lobbying groups but also important intermediaries for the government on both national and regional levels. Consequently, since the early 90s, a vast part of the measures covered by regional and national plans for Roma are in fact sub-contracted, and thus implemented, by non-State actors.

In this regard, another important obstacle to successful implementation of Romani policies, especially with regards to monitoring and evaluation, is the lack of data on Roma. Under Spanish law, collecting ethnic data is unconstitutional[63] – this is why general data on Roma in Spain is based on estimates rather than specific, evidence-based data. This shortcoming has been called to attention repeatedly by diverse actors (Open Society Foundations 2005). Romani activists themselves argue how the use of estimates and incorrect presentation of data oftentimes distortions the reality with regards to the situation of Roma (Flores 2016).

With regards to Roma integration policies ,"a strong continuity of assistentialist and paternalist attitudes is prevailing both inside old church organizations and the new government agencies" (Dietz, 2003:56).These dynamics and specific welfare approach towards the Roma marks the Romani policies not only at the national level but also regionally (Bereményi and Mirga 2012). Under this approach the Roma are perceived as beneficiaries of programs and services rather than protagonists of these policies, reinforcing the passive and demanding attitude of the Romani community instead of promoting active and responsible participation of Roma, both individually as well as of the Romani organizations. Nonetheless, it should be noted that at the level of political discourse, the question of Romani participation is present and is oftentimes defined as a key criteria in policy-design and implementation of regional plans and strategies (Bereményi and Mirga 2012). Rather, it is the contradiction between the rhetoric of participation and its lack in practice which is characteristic.

On the margin of this discussion, it is important to underline the role and influence of a concrete non-State actor for the development of Romani policies in Spain; namely, that of *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG). FSG was born out of *Secretariados Gitanos,* mentioned previously, and transformed into a foundation in 2001. Over the years, and continuously until today, FSG remains the most influential entity involved in Romani issues in Spain; and with considerable influence on the European level as well. On the one hand, FSG is the main source of information about the situation of Roma in Spain, used and relied on even by public administration bodies (Laparra Navarro 2011). On the other hand, FSG participates and has significant influence over the processes of preparation, drafting and design of policies for Roma to a much greater degree than any other actor, even Romani NGOs. The processes which accompanied the establishment of National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain (NRIS) is

[63] According to the ORGANIC LAW 15/1999 of 13 December on the Protection of Personal Data, Spanish legislation prohibits data collection on race and ethnicity.

exemplary of this influence. The significance of FSG can also be illustrated by the fact that it coordinates and implements, along with 4 other NGOs in Spain, the Multiregional Operational Programme (OP) on their own, without calling a tender; it is the only such instance in Europe that a pro-Roma entity manages the OP independently. FSG sustains, defending its dominant role in managing funds, that in the past there was no network of Romani NGOs capable of executing major Roma-targeted projects and funds with efficiency and high quality. Furthermore, FSG is also the main beneficiary of regional and municipal funding for Roma-targeted action, receiving more funds than any other Romani organization in the country. The current panorama can be described as a situation of striking lack of balance with regards to the distribution of funding for Roma, as well as with regards to knowledge production on Roma, in which one entity holds a dominant position, and in some cases, a monopoly.

Situation of Roma today

Arguably, the socio-economic situation of Roma in Spain is relatively better than in other countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. For this reason, Spain has often been lauded as the "model of Roma inclusion" (Daley & Minder, 2010; Mirga & Maya, 2014).

Fresno defines 5 key aspects which were determinant for this progress of Romani communities in Spain: 1) democratization after Franco; 2) EU accession; 3) improved welfare programs; 4) targeted measures at local and regional level; 5)civil society on the side of Roma (Fresno 2010). Other factors as demographic changes or the economic boom between late 1990s and 2006 have also contributed to these changes (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012b; Mirga & Maya, 2014; Santiago, 2012b). Despite these advancements, however, the Roma in Spain continue to be well behind non-Roma population in all of the key areas (housing, education, health, political participation, employment). And Roma continue to be the most discriminated and despised community in Spain (Laparra Navarro et al. 2013).

Table 10. Data on Romani population in Spain in key areas (Laparra Navarro 2007; Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat 2015)

Category		% of population
Gender	Male	50.5%
	Female	59.5%
Education	Primary education	45%
	Secondary education	10%
	Tertiary education	2%
	Literacy	93%
Employment	Employment	28%
	Informal work	57%

	Unemployment	57%
	Long-term employment	30%
Health	Infant mortality rate	7.7%
	Life expectancy	72.8
Socio-economic situation	At risk of poverty	72%
	Absolute poverty	38%

Roma can be considered a relatively young community, especially in comparison to the majority population which currently is experiencing an important demographic decline. In Spain, almost 60% of the entire Romani population is aged between 1 and 29 (for majority population it is approximately 35%)(Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014), and "around a third are aged below 16 years" (Laparra, 2007).

Furthermore, the relevant socio-economic progress of Romani communities, due to the number of factors described above, also contributes to the greater internal stratification and diversification within the Romani community. During the period of economic boom, the economically relieved and socially integrated class of Roma was steadily growing, even though there were noticeable differences and gaps between "middle class Roma" vis-à-vis their non-Roma neighbours, and the levels of social exclusion remained significantly high[64]. As one Romani politician explained:

> "In the Romani community there are a lot of different strata, layer of population. There are more integrated Roma, more progressive, which can abandon some cultural traits in order to be more updated to the present-day times. But then, there are Roma who are very poor, marginalized – they live more stuck in the past, they have more backward mentality." [ES_16, recorded interview]

[64] Already in 2003, Dietz noted that: "Beside this small 'elite' of musicians, artists, successful retailers and other often tourism-related occupations, the emerging *gitano* middle classes are also made up of the first teachers, social workers and other civil servants of *gitano* origin. Since the sixties and seventies, but above all since the transition to democracy education has been of decisive importance as a new way of gaining access to the public sector of the majority society's labour market. Per se, the above analysed internal diversification and stratification of the Spanish *gitano* population does not prevent this tendency towards exclusion. Although there is still an ethnic gap perceivable between 'middle class *payos*' and 'middle class *gitanos*', a gap acknowledged by both sides, a new and quickly broadening gap between 'lower class' and 'middle class' families appear among *gitanos*. An important part of the emerging *gitano* middle classes, whose economic success is the result of access to public education and civil service occupations, are related at least in their origins to the Protestant Church. Thus, the promise of social mobility and access to the middle classes through individually successful education and training is another factor which contributes to the rapid growth of this phenomenon of conversion." (Dietz, 2003:36)

Ana Giménez Adelantado, in an document presented before the Commission of Social Policies at the Congress of Deputies in May 1999 argues that:

> "There are other groups of Roma. More than it seems, but they are in another context. They are the integrated Roma.(…). They accessed to a decent job or they managed to have a productive business. They have a standard housing. Their children were incorporated into the labor system. They have access to all social and cultural resources. They are integrated Roma. Their culture is an added value for them and they participate easily in social and political dynamics of its environment. They are full citizens. But. also, they are the invisible Roma to the vast majority. Between these two extremes, segregation and integration, we can find a huge variety of situations. Sociopolitical reality of Roma is very diverse." (Giménez Adelantado 1999:44)

Currently, as a consequence of the economic crisis many Romani families' status ascendance flinched (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013a). As recent data suggest, Roma are disproportionately affected by the economic crisis: "In the case of the Roma population, while the overall levels of social exclusion have remained stable at very high levels (around 70 % in 2013), the share of those affected by severe exclusion has more than doubled since 2007 up to 54.4 %." (European Commission, 2016:60)

Although, in policy-making, media coverage and frequently even scholarship on Roma, the language of generalizations applies – speaking of "the Romani communities" as if they were a homogeneous entity (Bereményi and Mirga 2012; J. de D. L. López et al. 2014) – it is important to acknowledge than the Romani communities in Spain are extremely plural and diverse. Intersecting factors such as class, gender, level of completed education, profession, sexual orientation, familial language, rural or urban context of housing, among others, all play an essential role in further diversifying the Romani community internally.

Immigrant Roma in Spain

It is important to underline that apart from *Gitanos* in Spain, the population of immigrant Roma originating from countries of Central and Eastern Europe has been growing steadily in the past decade. Studies show that the majority of immigrant Roma arrive to Spain from Bulgaria and Romania. This phenomenon has taken on speed especially since 2002 (when visa requirements were lifted) and again since 2007 when both countries have joined the EU, although immigration from these countries extends back to the early 1990s (Pajares Alonso 2006; Juan Francisco Gamella 2008; Vincle 2006; Peeters Grietens 2005; Beluschi Fabeni 2013; Piemontese et al. 2013). Back in the 1990s, the immigrants were mainly asylum seekers; since the EU accession, Romani migrants exercise their right of freedom of movement as EU citizens. Gamella further clarifies the various phases of Romani westwards migrations to Spain (Francisco Gamella 2008).

The arrival of Romani migrants to Spain should be understood in the context of general immigration flow to Spain (Pajares Alonso 2006) and through the prism of Romani westward migration, specifically. On the one hand, the migration phenomenon to Spain from countries of the East has, according to

Pajares (2006), Peeters (2005) and Beluschi (2013), has occurred in three distinct phases: 1) until mid-80s, it was mostly limited to requests for asylum; 2) 1986-1999 saw the beginnings and growth of economically motivated migratory flows; 3) since 2000s Spain has become a destination country for immigrants seeking economic opportunity. According to 2009 data, 20% of total immigrant population is composed of Eastern Europeans, with Romanians being the vast majority (14,02%). On the other hand, there is a general agreement regarding the phenomenon of international Romani migrations from countries of the East, to countries of the West (especially, Italy, France and Spain)(Juan Francisco Gamella 2008; Teresa Sordé 2010; Juan Francisco Gamella, Beluschi Fabeni, and Gómez Oehler 2014).

It is difficult to quantify the exact number of Romani migrants, “given that they are included in the large contingents of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens temporarily or permanently residing in Spain, and due to the lack of registries that record the ethnic origin of foreign nationals in Spain” (Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014). According to Lungo Drom, there are between 5,900 – 7,100 immigrant Roma in the “Mediterranean arch” alone (Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia and Seville), out of which 90% are Romanian nationals (Lungo Drom 2008). Dietz argued in 2005 that there were 40,000 Roma “during the nineties, have been immigrating into Spain and who dwell in shanty-towns mainly in the outskirts of Madrid” (Dietz, 2005:4). On the other hand, the Spanish government claims that “based on the information available from NGOs that assist foreign Romani people it can be ascertained that their presence throughout Spain may amount to the figure of 50,000. (Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014)”. On the other hand, Laparra and Macías estimate that the estimate of Romanian Roma in Spain could make up around 75,000 people (Laparra & Macías, 2009).

Although in relative terms, the number of Romani migrants in Spain is not as significant as in cases of other nationals (Romanian, Bulgarian but also Latin-American migrants), their presence is quite visible and highly problematized in the public imagery; “generally associated with mafias, anti-social behaviour and crime” (Laparra & Macías, 2009).

5.3. Analysis of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain

5.3.a. Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain – a short introduction

For the Roma, the turning point for the ethnic awakening and political mobilization has been the period of transition towards democracy. After the death of general Franco and with the gradual democratization of the country, Roma faced the unprecedented opportunity of becoming active political subjects, discovering the potential of ethno-politics[65].

Democracy gave the Roma equal legal status as Spanish citizens, consecrated in the 1978 Constitution, and created a political opportunity to vocalize their interests through “the right of the citizens to

[65] Dietz argues that: “While before 1975 any kind of civil society activity was restricted to the hierarchy of the catholic Church and to the monopolized *Falange* movement, in the course of the democratization process and the elaboration of the Spanish Constitution a boom in self-organization, neighbourhood associations and political party activism prevailed, which also included some *gitano* organizations.” (Dietz, 2003:75)

associate" (article 22.1). Despite the fact that freedom to associate has already been granted in the period during dictatorship ("Law of Associations" 191/1964)[66], for political reasons the associative movement begun to flourish in years following the democratic transition.

The birth of Romani associative movement in Spain is directly related to the philanthropic work of the Catholic church on the one hand, and to the establishment of the Evangelistic Church on the other (Méndez López 2005; San Román 1999; Giménez Adelantado 2008; Cantón Delgado 2013; Cantón Delgado 2001). As stated by Teresa San Román: "The Romani social movement emerges, ultimately, as a new understanding of the relationship between Roma and their environment, which builds a discourse on religious grounds (hallelujah and Catholic) and political bases that are mixed with religion." Tomas Carlos Buezas (1985, 1993), with regards to state's treatment of Roma, relevant for the Romani associative movement in Spain, establishes a timeline, delineating 4 distinct phases:

- 1st phase: 1940 – 1963 ethnic indifference and repression
- 2nd phase: 1964 – 1976 pioneer charitable involvement of the Catholic Church
- 3rd phase: 1977 – 1984 democracy, associative movement and conflicts
- 4th phase: 1985 - …. Institutionalization of associative movement with collaboration of the State

In this context it is important to highlight that the pro-Roma Church-sponsored associative movement preceded the Romani associative movement. The charitable involvement of the Catholic Church began years earlier than the schematic timeline of Beuzas suggests; in 1958 Pope Puis XII established statutes for "moral and social assistance for the nomads" (García, 1999; Méndez, 2005). Since, then and especially in Spain, the Church begun its work with Romani communities which eventually led to the creation of Church-related organizations, the so-called "Diocesan Secretariats for the Roma" (*Secretariado Diocesal Pro-Gitano*) – first in Barcelona in 1966 and a National Secretariat of Roma Apostolate[67], in 1968[68] (Llopis 2003). Giménez Adelantado argues that "Already from the beggining, what would be the fundamental elements of current organizational system are start to be drawn. The religious figures led the organiations together with a small group of Roma linked to the Church and with a socioeconomic and educational levels above average of the Romani population, and in this sense, mariginal." (Giménez Adelantado 2008:9)

The first genuinely Romani and independent (not Church-related) associations can be traced back to the 1970s. In Madrid, the first laic Romani organizations were funded already by the end of 1960s

[66] https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1964-21491

[67] This institution later evolved into *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG), obtaining status of a foundation in 2001.

[68] For a more detailed outline on the involvement of the Catholic Church consult Méndez, (2005) and San Román (1999, 1994).

(*Asociación Desarrollo Gitano*[69] and *Unión de Jóvenes Gitanos*). According to Méndez, these organizations were connected to anti-Franco movement and were clearly anticlerical (Méndez, 2005: 56). As of the '70s, in the context of general social awakening related to weakening of Franco regime, diverse Romani organizations were starting to appear including a number of organizations with national scope of activity: most notably, *la Asociación de Desarrollo Gitano* and *la Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana*, both established in 1972 (and formally registered in 1979). From that moment on, a steady increase of number of Romani associations can be observed throughout the country. With gradual development of Roma-related policies, its corresponding funds and the increased consciousness of benefits of associative activism by the Romani leaders, the Romani NGOs experienced a rapid expansion in number.

The proliferation of associations as a form of civic participation after the period of democratic transition has become common not only among the Romani population but among the Spanish citizens in general (Pérez Díaz and López Novo 2003); a phenomenon referred to as "global solidarity boom" (Salamon 1994). In fact, civil society in Spain begun to appear already prior to death of General Franco – the weakening of the regime and especially the context of 1973 global petrol crisis, which resulted in high unemployment and social strife, contributed to the gradual emergence of the so-called associations of neighbours (*asociaciones de vecinos*) of the movement of neighbours (*movimiento vicinal*) (Quintana and León 2008). According to a senior Romani leader:

> "numerous associations of neighbours emerged especially during the period of economic crisis of 1973. Some Roma were also part of this local movement. These entities have been very influential on the local level for the gradual emergence of Romani associations as well" [recorded interview, field-notes, ES_30].

In fact, many of such local entities offered help and supported birth of local Romani entities (Mirga, 2011a:47). Also, the appearance of first federations supported this expansion. One of my informants explained this process of growth of Romani associations in Catalonia:

> "When the FAGIC was created in 1991 by Manuel Heredia, the people saw that in order to have access and have a say, to be able to fight, develop projects, find employment, fight for housing, it must be done through an association. From an NGO. This association, once created, had support from the Federation, and you could say: 'I need this, I need that'. And this was caused this boom. As Catalonia is so big, and there are a lot of towns, and there are Roma all over, well everyone with their own thing. Everyone is trying to fight from their own town or their own district, in order to fulfil with the objectives". [recorded interview, ES_38]

As of the 90´s, the Romani organizations began to grow considerably in number, leading to an "associative boom". It is estimated that in 1987, there were 141 Romani organizations registered in

[69] According to Méndez, this organization was already active in 1968, however, according to the ministerial registries, it was inscribed in 1972.

Spain (Ibarra 2007); between 1997 and 2004 the number of Romani associations grew from 200 to around 400 (Méndez, 2005). A similar process can be seen in Spain among the general population where a considerable growth in number of associations can be traced – in 1990, 113,065 associations were registered, and 5 years later that number has doubled to reach 206.363 (Fundación Encuentro 1996)[70]. According to some studies, there were as many as 362,654 non-profit entities registered in Spain by 2002 (Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero 2008). Nonetheless, the conjuncture was favourable for the third-sector to grow and flourish, since the post-Franco period. According to an expert in Romani issues and an ex-executive director of FSG:

> "the Spaniards have an 'associative' seed; in contrast to CEE countries where the process of civil society growth was rather top-down, in Spain the civil society is very grassroots, linked to communities and local associations of neighbours" [recorded interview, ES_13].

Today it is difficult to estimate the exact number of Romani organizations in Spain, as there is no data or even estimations beyond the work of Méndez in 2005. A search through the Register of Associations of the Ministry of Interior points to 1.198 Romani associations registered throughout the country[71]. The number of registered Romani NGOs can in fact be greater as many organizations adopt various names without specifically referring to key-words used in the search (using, for example, words in *Romanes* or *Caló*, for example Yag Bari). Furthermore, through such a search it is difficult to evaluate which of these organizations are, in fact, Romani entities (often pro-Roma organizations adapt similar names to those used by Romani NGOs, for example *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* or *Asociación Enseñantes con Gitanos*). Finally, the registries do not inform whether these entities still exist and operate in the field – given the high mortality rate of such entities it is possible that a portion of those organizations listed ceased to exist[72]. In fact, interviews with Romani organizations and their leaders revealed that an important portion of these organizations are inoperative, and commonly refer to these as "*organizaciones fantasmas*" – "ghost organizations". A leader of a regional federation explained that they are conscious of this existing problem and want to take actions to close such entities:

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[70] Data shows, however, that Spain is a country with moderate levels of citizen participation in associations – varying between 31.5% (mean for years between 1977 – 2002; membership of adults in associations(Fernandes 2012)) and 49% (1999 – 2002; "any type of involvement" in NGOs (Montero, Font, and Torcal 2006)).

[71] The search engine of the Ministry of Interior: https://sede.mir.gob.es/nfrontal/webasocia.html The key-words used in the search: "gitano" – 236; "gitana" – 803; "kalo" – 30; "kali" – 17; "gitanes" – 34; "gitans" – 3; "romani" – 75. All lists have been carefully reviewed to avoid duplication of the count and to exclude those results which did not correspond to the search. Nonetheless, it should be noted that such search is orientative and may be inexact.

[72] "The existence of different types of administrative registers and the decentralization of the State (and with it the existence of different regional registers) provides us with ample data regarding registration of organizations but not those who unregister" (Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero 2008).

> “There are always people who don’t deserve to be in an association. Because they do things that the shouldn’t do. This is why we are all observing, watching, and then we take it over to the Federation, indicating that this association does not work. It is a ghost association and we can’t count on it, we have to unsubscribe it. And that’s how we do, we work with all the associations, and that which doesn’t work, we try to make it retire.” [recorded interview, ES_39]

Another way of quantifying the number of Romani organizations in Spain is through the structures of federations. Currently, there are 14 regional federations[73] in Spain and two national confederations (*Unión Romaní* and *Platform Khetane*). The biggest regional federation – in Catalonia – has 93 federated associations (according to data provided by staff in 2015); *Unión Romaní* claims 94 federated associations “and over 18.800 members”; the Federation of Cultural Cristian Association of Andalucía (FACCA) gathers over “170 congregations(…)which have formed their corresponding associations and registered them formally” (Cantón Delgado 2013). Adding up the data provided by these entities themselves regarding their federated organizations, the number of such associated organizations adds up to 480[74]. Nonetheless, this calculation is bound to show only a part of the picture – evidently, there are numerous Romani organizations which choose to be independent and are not federated under any umbrella structure. For example, there are about 140 Romani organizations registered in Catalonia region[75], but over 90 are federated under FAGIC; the other ones choose to remain independent from this umbrella structure. Furthermore, there are organizations who are both members of regional federations as well as of *Unión Romaní*.

Nonetheless, as these data suggest, the Romani associative movement has grown exceptionally throughout the past decades, and an unprecedented expansion of Romani organization can be noted especially in the past 10 years (from 2004 – 2015, the number of Romani organizations have grown from an estimated 400 to an estimated of almost 1,200).

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[73] 2 in Valencia (31 + 20), 1 in Catalonia (93 + there used to be another one, Agrupacio), 2 in Extremadura (?), 1 in Aragon (25), 1 in Navarra (11), 1 in Castilla y Leon (11), 1 in Castilla la Mancha (13), 1 in Cantabria (3), 2 Romani women’s federations (20 + 9), 1 federation of Christian Romani associations (170), 1 in Madrid (? of national scope).

[74] It should be noted that not all federations shared information regarding size, number of members and entities (4 organizations have not responded to the inquiry). Furthermore, it should be noted that some organizations federated under *Unión Romaní* are also federated to their regional federations so there is an inevitable overlap.

[75] The search engine of the Catalan Ministry of Justice: http://justicia.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/guia_d_entitats/ The key-word “gitan” gives 150 results. However, out of these 15 organizations are representing the “ball de gitanes”, a traditional dance developed in XVII century, typical in Catalonia and Valencia regions, and inspired in traditional Romani dances. Furthermore, the search engine found 1 foundation and 2 national asociations of Roma registered in Catalonia. Furthermore, it should be noted that data from the Catalan registry and the one given by FAGIC (the biggest Romani federation) do not coincide – which raises the question where the federated organizations were registered, or whether, in fact, they formally exist. It also maybe that the search engine is not updated or has flows in the numerical analysis of the entities.

The pattern of growth of Romani civil society (but also for the non-Roma civil society in Spain) has been greatly influenced by the development of Spanish legal system and the paradigm of governance.

On the one hand, the gradual process of decentralization, development of autonomous politics and the expansion of their competencies (to regional and local levels of administration), shifted the focus of NGOs towards the local level, resulting in two interrelated processes: the proliferation of local organization and the increasing detachment and autonomy of these entities from the national scope (Méndez, 2005).

On the other hand, it is important to underline the shifting role which civil society plays with regards to public administration, especially in the context of the expanding welfare system (Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero 2013; Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero 2008). Salamon argues that this can be considered a global trend in which non-profit organizations increasingly become "mediating" entities between the society and the state: "the relationship between government and the non-profit sector has been characterized more by cooperation than conflict, as government has turned extensively to the non-profit sector to assist it in meeting human needs" (Salamon 1994). In Spain, during the period of consolidation of the welfare system in the 1980s, the limitation of the State to attend augmenting citizens demands became increasingly more evident. This lead to a gradual crystallization of the need for pluralistic governance in providing services and increased responsibility and role of civil society in this regard. Ultimately, it also altered the role of the civil society itself – from a more vindictive role in voicing demands and challenging the state, towards providing services (Marbán Gallego, n.d.; Rodríguez Cabrero 2005; Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero 2008). Recent study by FOSSA argues that: "From 1993 to the beginning of the crisis, the TSAS [third sector social action organizations] begin a process of increasing consolidation and institutionalization, and not without internal tensions as a result of transition from advocacy model towards a service-provision model in which organizations were internally facing a triple problematic regarding its orientation as advocacy and/or service entities, between dependency or independence from the State, and finally, between professionalism and / or volunteerism." (Cabrero, 2014:372). Naturally, this has important implications in terms of funding, and State dependency – according to data, between 53% - 57% of funding of social action associations depends on public funding (Marbán Gallego, n.d.).

These developments can be traced in case of Romani (and pro-Roma) associative movement: "growth of the third sector and the ineffectiveness of state institutions, or the derivation and abdication of responsibilities towards organizations also lead to facilitate participation and give a central role to associations, including Roma" (Méndez, 2005:60). In this process, increasing funding for Romani organizations became an essential incentive for the birth of Romani associations - according to *Unión Romaní*,:

> "the politics of grants have accelerated significantly the birth of associations" (Unió Romani 1994).

Finally, it should be highlighted that the dynamic and phenomenon of growth of Romani associative movement has been accompanied by a parallel process of proliferation of the pro-Roma civil society

(ranging from NGOs and foundations, to charitable organizations and research centres). Currently, there is no quantitative data available regarding the number of non-Roma agents, nonetheless their involvement and expansion, especially in terms of public policy consultations and provision of services to Romani communities, is a fact. A similar phenomenon, often regarded as the "pro-Roma microcosm" (Angéla Kóczé & Rövid, 2012), can be traced throughout Europe (Kóczé & Rövid, 2012).

5.3.b. Panorama of Romani ethnic mobilization – actors and structures

It was late 2007 and I had just arrived to Barcelona for my Erasmus exchange at the University of Barcelona (UB). I had planned to take the opportunity of a year-long stay in Barcelona as part of my M.A. degree in Comparative Studies of Civilizations to conduct research among Romani communities in Spain – I wanted to write my M.A. thesis about Roma. Since my arrival I have sought for ways of getting in contact with Romani organizations which could guide me and bring me closer to the community. I have sent out e-mails to entities I found online (among them *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*, which appeared on top of my google searches); I have also sent out e-mails to scholars from local universities who I knew were researching issues related to Romani populations. Initially, there were not many responses to my inquiries. But I was lucky. Eventually, in February 2008, I was offered to work as an assistant to an investigation commissioned by the Catalan Government (*Generalitat*) which aimed at reconstructing the history of the Romani associative movement in Catalonia. Dr. Teresa Sordé i Martí, the project coordinator, entrusted me the conduction of interviews with Romani leaders and organizations across the region – I was provided with a list of names, contact details and the interview script. For me, this was a unique opportunity – it enabled me to map-out Romani organizations and leaders across the region, learn about their historical development and evolution and their underlying dynamics and to travel extensively across Catalonia to meet the key personalities of the Romani associative movement in person.

From the very beginning, I was surprised by the level of proliferation and extensiveness of Romani associative structures. It seemed that everywhere I went, even in small Catalan localities and towns, there was a local Romani entity. They were also closely connected between them – on the one hand, through umbrella structures (I met leaders of two Romani federations in Catalonia), which brought together most of the entities, and on the other hand, through extensive kinship ties among Romani families, which in some cases overlapped across organizations in different localities. I also noticed the diversity of different types of actors – although most local entities were small and limited to a handful of engaged individuals, there were also a number of big Romani organizations (most notably the federations) employing numerous staff, a political party, a foundation, cultural entities working to promote Romani arts and culture through organizing festivals. From the interviews I conducted, I also observed some of the pitfalls and challenges of Romani associative movement as a whole – on the one hand, the solidarity among the entities, and on the other hand, rivalry and competition between leaders; clearly articulated division between Romani entities and pro-Roma organizations; the declared ambition of "doing a lot for the people" and the reality of being able to do just a little bit; the daily struggles to maintain funding and the political game of negotiating additional funds. In April 2008, I was offered a job at the Federation of Romani Associations in Catalonia (FAGIC), where I finally stayed

for 5 years working as a European project coordinator. Working at FAGIC, gave me even more opportunities to observe the Romani associative movement from within and to witness the *modus operandi* not only of a large federation, but also of its members. Overtime, I understood the complex relationship between organizations and its leaders in Catalonia, but also their connections on national level, their relationships with public administration bodies of different levels and the dynamic of interaction with Romani constituencies. All of these experiences, which are reflected in this chapter, have been feeding my curiosity to understand this multi-dimensional social phenomenon and to learn more about it, but also from it. In this section, I try to describe this broad panorama of Romani ethic mobilization, by focusing on and analysing Romani actors involved.

There are various ways in which actors, structures and stakeholders involved in the arena of Romani affairs in Spain can be defined. Gunther Dietz in his analysis of the State policies on Roma in Spain defined 4 different sets of actors which are influencing the Romani agenda, at instances working jointly but “often competing with each other or even duplicating programmes, projects and services” (Dietz 2005):

1) Institutions and organizations linked to the Catholic Church, considered “the oldest and still most experienced kind of actor”
2) Governmental actors, which “appear first as a mere supplement of, but now already as a competitor for the NGOs working with Gitano beneficiaries”
3) Protestant Pentacostal churches considered “a rather new but very successful actor” which emerged “from below in the most marginalised urban and semi-urban Gitano neighbourhoods”
4) Gitano movement, emancipated from non-Roma dominated organizations and/ or structures, which becomes a “completely new ‘ethnic intelligentsia’ “

On the other hand, Humberto García distinguishes 3 types of actors, according to their composition and their stance on Roma associative movement (in: Méndez, 2005):

1) Entities which “believe that the movement needs to be under tutelage of non-Roma and/or Roma professionals. This opinion is very extended and frequent especially in the non-Roma world, according to which Roma associations will never work” unless they are guided by non-Roma and/or Roma professionals
2) Entities which subscribe under the stance that Romani associations needs to be constituted by Roma themselves. This stance is more frequent among the Roma, “due to attitudes of distrust and consequences of centuries of exclusion and attempts of forced integration”
3) An intercultural stance of inclusive entities which brings together Roma and non-Roma (as well as men and women, adults and youth).

Unión Romaní, already in 1994, defined the panorama of Romani associative movement as a “cohabitation of difference”, describing the existing types of actors:

> "There are pro-Roma with shortage of Roma who participate in the decision-making, and from its philanthropic approach help to survive; there are Romani organizations which yet have not achieved to let their objectives be known beyond the narrow limits of more or less numerous families; there are federations, born in the lee of the autonomies, trying delimitate an exclusive territory of action or objectives ; there are associations of women who, from the justice of their objectives, struggle to prove that any double discrimination carries with it a double reason to fight it; and, finally, there are Romani organizations with exciting but individual goals" (Unió Romani, 1994:32).

In the same year, Pedro Aguilera, Romani activist and intellectual, was defining the Romani associative movement, with regards to Roma-lead associations specifically, differentiating between "active associations" and "poster associations" (*asociaciones de cartel*) (Aguilera 1994). According to Aguilera, "active associations" are those which have a broad participative spirit, search for resources beyond the available governmental grants, have developed an elevated consciousness to share ideas and programs, overcoming closed and impermeable hierarchical structures (Aguilera 1994). On the other hand, the "poster associations" can be characterized by common traits:

- Organizations based on strong family ties, in which members of the board often belong to the same family
- Impossible to access such associations through democratic processes
- Often have short life-span. Generally, do not survive if the founder or founders leave the entity or if the public funding ceases. They also lack strategic planning which makes them more vulnerable
- Links with other associations is null and typically are not maintained beyond the activities already funded by grants.

Although much of these typologies and descriptions were developed over a decade ago, much of it still holds true today. Since then, the panorama of Romani affairs in Spain has expanded and diversified, becoming a field densely populated by various actors and structures. The table below summarizes the diverse type of existing actors which can be identified as key stakeholders of the Roma-related affairs in Spain.

ACTORS AND STRUCTURES	
ROMANI NGOS	Associations Federations (regional and national) Foundations (for example *Pere Closa*)
TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES	Not institutionalized (with the exception of *Consell d'Ancians*)
PRO-ROMA ACTORS	*Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) Pro-Roma NGOs and foundations Educational entities
ROMANI POLITICAL PARTIES	*Partido Nacionalista Caló* (PNaC)

	Alianza Romani (ARO)
OTHER	Evangelical Church Networks (formal and informal) Think Tank (for example Agora Roma) Public Foundations (*Instituto de Cultura Gitana*)
GOVERNMENTAL BODIES	Consultative bodies (municipal, regional and national) *Intrgrupo* (in Catalonia)

Table 11. Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain – actors and structures

The division along ethnic lines – differentiating among Roma and non-Roma/ pro-Roma actors - continues to be an important variable which conditions the type of interaction and profile of these entities. Furthermore, the arena of Romani-affairs has become increasingly more plural and heterogeneous, including diverse actors ranging from associations (Roma and non-Roma), parties, religious institutions, networks, think tanks and governmental/ state-sponsored structures. Other stakeholders such as experts and scholars, universities, cultural institutions and artists increasingly become influential actors. This section analyses these diverse structures and actors, paying special attention to those which are created and lead by Roma themselves (although a section on non-Roma agency and structure is also included).

“The associations are the only thing we have...”

As it was mentioned earlier, the first Roma-lead structures, which represent collective claims on behalf of the Roma – mainly Roma NGOs – date back to early ‘70s and have its origin in the activity of Catholic Church. Over time, the Romani civil society sector grew in size and number and became widespread throughout the country – currently there are Romani organizations in every Autonomous Community in Spain.

Romani organizations – primarily through associations - became the most common formal structure which represents Romani interests in public spheres. On the other hand, the Romani associations are the most visible and structured mechanism of collective mobilization within the Romani movement. Considering the fact that the Roma are still nearly absent in the mainstream politics, both as politicians of the mainstream political parties as well as representatives of ethnic-based political parties, the only structure which articulates the interests of the Romani population is the Romani associative movement. One of my Romani informants argued:

> “The associations are the only thing we have. We don’t have anything else. The only representation is the local Romani association…This is the only element that enables the participation in public life.” [recorded interview, ES_7]

To an extent, it seems that Romani organizations are well-rooted in the community: data from a study conducted in Barcelona in 2000 suggests that between 38.01-39% of Roma declare to belong to some

type of NGO (for Badalona 21% declared participation; over 50% of Roma do not participate in any type of association (Garriga 2003; Garriga 2000). Data from 2006 also confirms these findings – in Catalonia region, 51.57% of Roma do not participate in any Romani NGO (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006). In Galicia, a study revealed higher levels of no-participation, around 79% in 2002 (Méndez, 2005:66). The available data also shows that the Roma who participate in civil society would rather do so in Romani NGOs than any other type of structure – across regions, based on available data, the level of Romani participation in non-Roma NGOs does not exceed 5% (Méndez, 2005). Nonetheless, the majority of Roma do not participate in any organization at all (Unió Romani 1994; Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006). It should also be noted that the level of civic engagement increases proportionally among those considered to be part of the "middle class Roma", that is, those considered "integrated" and with higher levels of education (Méndez, 2005:64). Finally, it is argued that "the rate of citizen participation is lower amongst Gitanos than in the population as a whole" (Laparra & Macías, 2009:233).

These organizations vary in terms of size, scope of activity, profile and type of activity. From the subsequent analysis the pro-Roma organizations are excluded.

ROMANI NGOS	
COMPOSITION	• Roma-lead • Pro-Roma • Mixed
SCOPE OF ACTIVITY	• Local/ municipal • Regional • National
SIZE (IN TERMS OF MEMBERS AND STAFF)	• Small (less than 5) • Medium (between 5 – 15) • Big (more than 15)
PROFILE	• General • Cultural • Evangelical • Sectorial (youth, women etc.) • Thematic (peddler sellers, musicians, sports etc.)
TYPE OF STRUCTURE	• Association • Federation • Foundation • Network (formal and informal)

Table 12. Romani NGOs in Spain: typology

The vast majority of NGOs are small local associations (Abajo and Carrasco 2004) established by a handful of likeminded Romani individuals. The vast majority of Romani organizations are relatively small in size – are founded at least by three individuals (as stipulated by the law 1/2002 from 22 of

March) and have a limited number of collaborators. They operate on local and regional level rather than on national level - majority of entities are inscribed in regional registries, which allows them to apply for funding from regional or municipal governments. Typically, they don't have an office nor employ staff; they also generally lack websites (some of them have Facebook profiles) and there is a limited knowledge regarding their activity, if they engage in any type of activity at all. These organizations often join umbrella structures on regional levels, which provide them with know-how, technical and legal assistance, channels for participation and, not uncommonly, funding. There are much less organisations which operate on a national scope and are registered in Madrid. Furthermore, they often work in isolation from other non-Roma organizations, professional associations or political parties (Open Society Institute 2002), however, they generally tend to search for contacts with local public administration.

The fact that such small Romani organizations of local scope dominate the panorama of Romani associative movement has its logic and reasons. On the one hand, the creation of associations is relatively easy in Spain – only 3 individuals are needed to constitute a new entity, and the costs of inscribing associations into official registries are relatively low or are free of charge altogether[76]. On the other hand, the choice of setting up local, rather than national organizations, is also related to the decentralization of Spanish administration and the competency of Autonomous governments in numerous key areas – local governments, especially municipalities, are more accessible to Roma and in some cases they also provide grants to their local entities.

In fact, governments themselves encouraged setting up of local Romani organizations. One senior Roma leader in Catalonia explained the process of creation of Romani organization in the period of late 80s and early 90s:

> "Juan de Dios begun to contact us and told us that we should start creating Romani organizations, he explained to us how to do it, in what way, he sent us a model statutes of NGOs and this is how it begun. Then we were accompanied by [Francisco Rodriguez] from the Department of the Generalitat and me and him started to travel around Catalan provinces in order to 'promote associative structures/ civil society', to encourage people to set up Roma organizations throughout Catalonia. Later on a number of us created FAGIC." [recorded interview, ES_31]

Governments also fostered the expansion of Romani civil society through targeted policies, such as the regional plans for the Romani people. For example, the evaluation of the 6 years of the Comprehensive Plan for the Gitano Population in Catalonia (PIPG) found that: "PIPG has not only given support to Gitano NGOs, but it has also actively assisted the birth of several Gitano organisations. This process is

[76] In case of registering associations of national scope in Madrid, there are costs related to the procedure of inscription; they are relatively low: http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/tasas/asociaciones The costs in Autonomous Communities vary depending on their corresponding regulations; in some cases, like in the Basque Country, inscribing association in regional registries is free of charge.

problematized by some, as it is interpreted as a top-down action in which public administrations intervened in the "natural" internal dynamics of the Gitano groups and individuals, creating loyalty that weakens vindicative and mobilising potential" (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012b:147).

Furthermore, it should be noted that a vast part of local Romani organizations is set up thanks to help, support and guidance of other, already existing Romani organizations and leaders. For example, in Catalonia, the Federation of Roma Associations (FAGIC) encouraged Roma to set up local Romani associations. The rationale was based on the conviction that each municipality where Roma live should have their own local structure which would represent Romani interests, mediate between the community and the local authorities and become a platform for communicating and interacting with other Romani entities across the region[77].

In this spirit, Roma begun to set up their local entities and consequently, FAGIC grew to become the most numerous Romani regional federation in Spain. It was quite common that the newly established entities were given model ready-made statutes, which would facilitate their process of constitution. In fact, as one board member of FAGIC explained:

> "Later on, other associations came to copy our Statues. And even, years later, I saw some people that came to copy our model of statutes. So they looked at the Statues, saw its content and then they realized that basically the only thing that you have to do is to change the name of the association". [recorded interview, ES_5]

In the case of FAGIC, the new entities were also given legal and technical assistance in the process by the staff or Board members of the entity. This dynamic is not uncommon nor is it limited to Catalonia only. Existing Romani associations, and especially the regional federations, provided help and guidance in setting up new entities, often providing a template of the statutes and explaining step-by-step the process of constitution. One of my Romani informants recalls:

> "At the time when we were founding the association, we had a lot of help from the Federation [of Roma Associations in Catalonia, FAGIC]. They explained to us and taught us how it all works, they helped us to start. Naturally, at that moment we didn't know anything. So they taught us how to work. And now we discover ourselves how to functions and I think that we are gradually doing much better. We keep on learning." [recorded interview, ES_41]

As a result, as argued by a scholar, many entities "have emerged as a copy of already existing ones, and to that extent they have also copied statutes and initial objectives, even though their forms of development may be quite different" (Méndez, 2005:67).

[77] It should be noted that some view this activity more problematically – as a strategy to provide political backing to the existing Executive Board – member organizations vote in the General Assembly which selects Board members for 4-year term. Creating new association under tutelage of concrete Board members also established loyalty ties with those specific members.

Given this dynamic, it should not be surprising that there are numerous organizations which have a short life-span or have numerous periods of inactivity. That is not to say that all local Romani organizations which are founded in this way are destined to have a short life-cycle – however, the development of such entities is mainly dependent on the profile of people which manage them, their ambition, capacity and knowledge. Furthermore, the short life-cycle of a portion of small local Roma entities is also determined by the existing funding or lack thereof. Some argue that it is directly the fault of governmental funding, which is not sustainable long-term, hindering the potential and gradual development of such small-scale entities[78].

In this regard, the interviews revealed the existence of "poster associations" or what some of my interviewees regard as so-called "ghost associations" (*orgnizaciones fantasmas*). One prominent Romani leader even argued that:

> "up to 80% of organizations are 'ghost entities' – they exist only because they are registered but they don't do anything." [recorded interview, field-notes, ES_3]

In another interview, a representative of a large Romani federation argued:

> "There are many Romani associations that exist by name but don't have contents. What keeps on growing is the number on the list of Romani associations that exist in Catalonia. But from among 97 Romani associations, start to observe whether they have a minimum level of functionality, and within its functioning, the quality of their work, and then the level of implication of the community…you will be left with almost none." [recorded interview, ES_23]

It also should be noted that there is a general lack of membership-based organizations. Typically, Romani NGOs are set up by a group of individuals and, consequently, these organizations lack constituent basis or legitimacy given by communities. Federations count with membership of their member entities, however they also cannot claim constituency, as organizations do not include mechanisms of community consultation or involvement. The only Romani organizations which claims membership is *Unión Romaní*, which beyond its member organizations, also counts with 18,000 members (Unión Romaní, 2014). However, as revealed in an interview:

> "only about 200 pay their quota". [interview field-notes, ES_3]

Lack of membership-based organizations is a major handicap of the overall Romani associative movement – they represent Romani interests but not the communities. Given the multiplicity of voices and the occasional in-fighting between organizations and leaders, representativeness and, in fact, legitimacy of these entities can be easily questioned. Lack of mechanisms which ensure accountability

[78] Dietz argues that: "The huge number of small *gitano* associations, which are often reported to be just 'coming and going' according to the funding practices by their governmental counterparts, seems at least in part to be the result of a rather chaotic practice of governments, who distribute and disperse the funding of *gitano* integration measures not by criteria of priority or maturity, but of highest 'risk distribution' in their rates of failure." (Dietz, 2003:91)

of organizations and leaders to a broader constituency of Romani communities, further hampers their ability to unquestionably "represent the Roma". This problem has been witnessed in Spain but can also be traced across Europe.

Lastly, it should be acknowledged that over the last few years the Romani organizations increasingly diversified. In the past the vast majority of organizations were set up as "voices of the community", without a clear agenda or a specific profile, aiming at representing their local communities rather than attending to specific needs. Increasingly over the past few years, however, new type of Romani organizations – more specialized and with better-defined objectives - begun to appear. Various types of sectorial organizations (such as those of university graduates, women – of diverse profiles, youth organizations, LGBT), thematic organizations (cultural, religious, occupational, educational) or issue-based organizations (such as those protecting the rights of peddler sellers) were created. Additionally, new type of structures emerged – such as the newly created Agora Roma, aspiring to become the first Romani Think Tank in Spain, various sports clubs or the recently established network of Romani university students CampusRom.

Leadership and composition patterns

Different theoretical frameworks on ethnic mobilization point to the important role of leaders in shaping group identity and interests as well as determining the strategies and resources used in collective action. The type and quality of the leadership is an essential variable which determines the success of the mobilization, especially from the standpoint of competition perspective, which focuses on "the entrepreneurial role of ethnic politics: how the mobilization of ethnic groups in collective action is effected by leaders who pursue a political enterprise" (Vermeersch, 2006: 36). Leadership is a key ingredient determining the potential success or failure of a collective struggle for change. After all, it is the leaders who define the problems around which to mobilise, who imagine achievable goals and propose strategies to pursue them. Groups striving for social change need credible leaders who represent the collective claims of their people and often act as indispensable intermediaries between their community and those in positions of power (Mirga, 2015). For social movements to flourish it is necessary to recruit, develop, train and nurture leadership at all levels (Ganz 2010), leadership that seeks legitimacy from the community and is able to mobilise its resources for common action.

For this reason, it is important to analyse the patterns of political/ civic leadership in the Romani associative movement in the context of traditional leadership, or more specifically, the interplay between traditional community leaders, civic leadership and other, such as the salient religious leadership with regards to Romani community.

Romani community, as many other European societies, is based on hierarchical relations, organized, among other factors, around age and gender, in which the elder men are traditionally power holders and the highest authority (Fraser, 1995; Mirga & Gheorghe, 2001; Mirga & Mróz, 1994) and social structure of communities is typically based on extended family ties. In Spain, Romani elders of authority and respect are often referred to as 'uncles' (*tíos;* Romani women of respect are referred to as *tías*, aunts) and play a fundamental role within the community, as guardians of Romani traditions

and as mediators or peacemakers during conflicts and quarrels. Regarding the traditional authority of older men, with regard to Catalan Roma, which also applies to other Romani communities throughout Spain, Lagunas writes: "The political power does not rely on armed violence, nor any institutional specialization, but on the personal qualities of an individual, the *onclo* [meaning "uncle" in Catalan*]*, whose qualities are used for community service. With no coercive competition, it is his generosity, but fundamentally his speech and his capacity to conciliate that turn him into a prestigious and famous individual, where society grants him the condition of a man of respect" (Lagunas, 2002: 40). The important role of elders also determines the status of the younger generation, established as a vertical, hierarchical one. For example, in a written questionnaire among young Roma, to the question of "what is the status and role of youth in Romani communities" many of the answers reflected this, for example:

> "To follow the advice of the Elders every day." [written questionnaire, ES_47]
>
> "To follow the word of the Elder People and try to adapt more to the present day society". [written questionnaire, ES_48]

Other young informants also reflected the fact that this role also depends on gender. One young Romani university graduate argued:

> "Depending on gender, the role is one or another. Theoretically, young Romani men have a say and their opinion is taken into consideration as they are the future people that will have to carry the weight of maintaining and protecting the family. The women, on the other hand, have less freedom to act and their role is reduced to taking care of the family. But in practice, when the family is formed, the typical duties of men such as supporting the family economically, many times the women play an essential role, in some occasions even superior to men." [written questionnaire, ES_34]

In this regard it is important to acknowledge the different meaning of "elder" members of the community than in the majority societies. Due to the lower life expectancy among the Romani population, individuals over 50 years old can be considered as "elders", especially in terms of their social role within the communities. According to studies, only 19% of the Romani population is over 45 years old (compared to 39% among the general non-Roma population) (Laparra, 2007). Other data demonstrates that only 9% of the Romani population is over 54 years old (for non-Roma population 27% of the population is over 54 years old) (Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014).

With regards to the Romani associative movement, the leadership often draws from the traditional power ascribed to the older members of the community, especially men (Méndez López 2005; Bereményi and Mirga 2012; San Román 1994a). Some scholars also argue that the organizational structures of Romani organizations often reproduces the extended family ties or that "political Romani organization is structured through kinship ties" (Méndez, 2005:63). Abajo & Carrasco argue that: "Moreover, many of the Romani associations have generally relied in the existing social bonds, that is,

in kinship and extended family, to be established and developed, at least in its early stages." (Abajo & Carrasco, 2004:59)

According to Amador Vázquez, for example, *"*the political organization of the Roma is structured through groups of relatives and the authority falls especially in the older men" (quoted in: Méndez, 2005:63). Under this approach, the community structure is directly reflected in the associative structures, as demonstrated in the table below:

Community structure	**Associative structure**
Older men	President
Extended family	Executive Board
Nuclear family	Members

Table 13. Structures of Romani political organizations according to Amador Vazquez

Vázquez's hypothesis is oversimplified and based on false generalizations; it overshadows complexity and richness of Romani associative movement as a whole, nevertheless, there are cases of Romani organizations which, to an extent, reflect community structures in the associations, that is that the kinship ties determine roles within civic structures as well. This schematic description also wrongly assumes that the traditional authority or leadership position of community members translates directly into authority and leadership within associative structures. In reality the patterns of community – civic/associative leadership and overlapping of both roles are much more complex and fluid. Furthermore, rather than overlap of traditional and civic leadership, more commonly the language of dichotomies is applied, differentiating between traditional community leaders and self-appointed, civic and political leaders (Mirga & Gheorghe, 2001; Mirga, 2015; Project on Ethnic Relations, 2001).

Nonetheless, the analysis of composition of Romani associations, federations and consultative bodies clearly demonstrates the dominant role of older men. The analysis of composition of Romani associations federated under FAGIC, for example, shows that in majority of cases the presidency is given to men above 50 years old (Mirga, 2014). Although the composition of their Executive Boards is diverse and may include women or youth, the presidency is given to older men. Those who hold current leadership in the Romani movement are either Catalan Roma, representing generally well-integrated communities which live in the Catalan territory for some centuries (Lagunas 2002) or non-Catalan leaders from communities of Roma which originate from other Autonomous regions and arrived in Catalonia within the last 50 years. These two types of Romani communities may have slight differences (language, districts which they inhabit, in some cases also marriage rituals etc.), however, generally their leaders share the same characteristics. A number of them can be regarded as "natural leaders" who enjoy respect and some authority in their communities. However, great majority of them are self-appointed and have gained some recognition and respect among their local communities

through pro-active and vindictive attitude, entrepreneurship, demonstrating skill and self-initiative. Most of them do not possess higher education (some of them have not completed formal education at all[79]) and many of them are self-employed as peddler sellers[80], considered as a typical Romani occupation in Spain. Many of these leaders are considerably well-off and combine their advocacy work in NGOs with peddler selling or other economic activity. Most of the current leaders can also be considered traditional or conservative – the usually encourage Roma-only marriages which follow a traditional ritual, actively participate in their local Evangelistic church and safeguard Romani values and conventions.

If we look at diverse structures beyond the case of Catalonia, we find similar pattern of leadership in which the dominant role is played by senior Romani leaders, mostly men. This is the case of majority of regional federations as well as the State Council for the Roma in Spain. Data also suggests higher levels of participation and involvement in civil society of older members of the community – according to Laparra, the highest levels of no participation are among the youth (21-25 years old), followed by adults (31-40 years old) (Laparra, 2007).

Some younger leaders have questioned this status quo, referring to it as "*gerontocracia*" – the rule of elders. For example, during the electoral campaign to the Board of one regional Romani federation in 2013, a group of younger Romani leaders have built their campaign around this slogan, challenging the leadership of older, authoritarian and incapacitated leaders, and promoting a generational change within the federation's Board structures. The campaign proved successful and the younger leaders are now the Executive Board of the federation. One of the leaders, elected to the new board argued:

> "What we have now is '*gerontocracia'* – the rule of the old. And this is the situation: the current associative movement is driven by old people, authoritarian, who have very little capacity. (…) The Romani associative movement doesn't provide opportunities to the young people who are more prepared. The old leaders are afraid of the new generation." [interview field-notes, ES_4]

On the other hand, it should be noted that drawing clear-cut divisions between types of leaders – religious, traditional, civic, political – is not always evident or applicable. Increasingly, the leadership becomes complex, pluralistic and fluid. The Romani leadership patterns have diversified beyond the language of dichotomies, common in the past, which was delineating clearly between diverse levels and forms of leadership; a trend also present in the European context (Mirga, 2015). In the context of Spain, we can increasingly identify leaders who play diverse roles in different moments in time, or simultaneously, combining roles as religious leaders, politicians, leaders of local NGOs, or traditional

[79] According to studies, among Roma of 45 years or older 37,4% are analphabets and 54.8% are without any formal education (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2005b).

[80] Peddler selling (*venta ambulante*) is generally considered as one of the principal Romani occupation in Spain. According to some studies, 34.2% are peddler sellers (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2005a). Other studies estimate that between 50-80% of Roma in Spain are either peddler sellers, copper recyclers or season workers (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006).

community leaders. One evident example is the emergence of religious leaders (mostly as pastors) as civic leaders, through involvement in NGOs and Roma-related politics. For example, one Romani man in Catalonia is at the same time a local pastor, president of a Federation of Roma Evangelical Associations and a president of an interest-based initiative which aims at defending rights of peddler sellers in the region. Such examples are not uncommon. Furthermore, individual leaders of NGOs also enter the world of mainstream politics, combining their role as politicians and civic leaders. In this regard another interesting example is the institutionalization of a traditional Council of Elders (*Consejo de Ancianos*) as an NGO and an advisory body to FAGIC. The authority of the Council of Elders (formal and "traditional", customary) is undeniable, nonetheless, sometimes its members themselves fall under the authority of religious leaders. For example, in an interview with a Romani pastor:

> "J: I am thirty-nine years old. Fix cases such as brawls between families. I fix it and on behalf of the other family another pastor.
>
> A: So you come to fulfil the same function as the Council of Elders?
>
> J: Of course. And part of the Council of Elders, I am their pastor in the Church of the Good Shepherd. (…) Sometimes they have called me for my knowledge and representation." [recorded interview, ES_9]

Additionally, it should be noted that there still continues to be a great "diversity among styles and approaches of Romani leaders" (Open Society Institute 2002; San Román 1999) – today, as over a decade ago, there is no unique archetype of a Romani political/ civic leaders. I would argue, that the spectrum of diversity which leadership entails has expanded considerably in the last decade, especially with the salience of a younger generation of Romani activists.

While the leadership is often given to elder leaders and is vastly dominated by men, the composition of Executive Boards as well as the entire entities is much more diversified. The executive positions are often occupied by younger leaders, women; is also more diversified ethnically, in some cases including non-Roma in the Boards. Without a doubt, however, there is a clear lack of gender balance within Romani entities – much more men participate in leadership/executive positions than women. The same refers to younger leaders – while they often are invited to the Boards they commonly remain a minority among the older/ senior leaders.

In numerous interviews, the question of weak structures behind Romani leaders was underlined. One senior Romani leader argued that:

> "Romani organizations are sustained on leaders, individual personalities but a movement can't be sustained/ founded on leaders. The leaders have feet of clay but they are essential, necessary." [interview field-notes, ES_3].

A young Romani activist voiced a similar opinion. He argued that:

> "we have constructed a movement and associations on individuals without creating structures. This is why we remain fragmented – the construction of a Roma collective political subject is still missing, still needs to be constructed." [interview field-notes, ES_29]

Lack of structures behind existing associations also explained the limited life-span of some NGOs – many of such structures don't survive beyond their leader. One senior Romani leader argued in an interview:

> "Before we were around 100 people [in the association]. But what happens is that there is a lot of elderly who have been passing away and the youth is not very interested." [recorded interview, ES_42]

Oftentimes, the leadership (especially presidency) of Romani organizations is seen as a "life-time position" which has an ongoing mandate, disregarding of the procedures stipulated by the statutes. This points to the lack of internal democracy within Romani entities – even if elections are convoked to select a New Board (in order to comply with statutes), the Boards are automatically re-elected, especially in the case of smaller Romani entities. This further emphasizes the individualism within Romani associative movement (Méndez, 2005) and contributes to the perception of Romani associations as "properties of its leaders". This dynamic, not uncommon among other non-Romani civil society structures, hinders to rootedness of Romani organizations within its communities, and distances the civic structures from its constituencies.

In terms of composition of Romani associations with regards to ethnicity, the vast majority of those which are considered "genuine" Romani associations are dominated by Romani members of the Board; there are much fewer organizations of mixed composition which would include both Roma and non-Roma in the ranks of executive management. However, non-Roma are often included among the staff or as volunteers[81].

Romani organizations also establish networks of collaborators and contributors, among them commonly non-Roma students, scholars and activists who engage in the work of these entities. They are not, however, included among the Board members and formally have limited capacity in shaping these organizations. Nonetheless, in practice the role of such non-Roma collaborators and advisors results in significant influence and guidance for Romani organizations. Oftentimes such collaboration is born from research projects. Non-Roma students or scholars, seeking access to Romani informants during fieldwork, contact local (most proximate or most significant) Romani organizations. Over time, they build relationships with representatives of these Romani entities, who become their guides and entry-point to the field of research. These relationships are often based on mutual exchange and

[81] Indeed, Dietz called the attention to the fact that: "most of them agree that *payo* volunteers and activists are important not only as 'allies' in their struggle for recognition, but also as sources of intercultural knowledge and competence, which will contribute to the empowerment of *gitano* organizations inside the *payo* majority society." (Dietz, 2003:85)

mutual benefit: the closer such students/ scholars are to the organization, the closer they are to the field of research; Romani organizations benefit from such external involvement by taking advantage of diverse scope of competencies and resources of their collaborators. Not uncommonly these relationships build for the use of specific research interest transform into durable relationship of collaboration.

Romani women leadership and involvement: “the silk revolution”

It is worth writing an entire thesis exclusively dedicated to Romani women’s movements in Spain. In the past years the Romani women have created a branch of the associative movement of their own, often including feminist agendas, and have been developing dynamically. Much has been written in recent years regarding this topic, most notably by Teresa Sordé (2006), Carmen Méndez (2005) and Ana Giménez Adelantado (1998, 2008). Instead of writing extensively here regarding the Romani women’s participation, this section will outline the most important elements which are essential to understanding the panorama of Romani associative movement in Spain.

It is often repeated that the Romani women suffer triple discrimination (due to gender, ethnicity and class) and are often in evident disadvantage not only *vis-à-vis* non-Romani women but also *vis-à-vis* Romani men, for example in the context of education (Caselles Pérez 2008; Aguilera Ávila 2015; Grañeras 2012). Paradoxically, it is important, nonetheless, to underline that it is Romani women who succeed in tertiary education[82] (Santiago, & Maya, 2012; Santiago, 2012b). However, feminist agendas did not include the perspective of Romani women specifically (Fernández, 2005; Maya Ovalle, 2006b); the men-dominated Romani associative movement also didn’t provide the necessary space for dialogue, involvement and collaboration among Romani women. As pointed out by a scholar*:* “The situation of Romani women was at a strong moment of change, in a constant debate about their disadvantaged situation in comparison to men and other non-Roma women, alienated from the areas of knowledge/education, and not represented by the general Romani movement nor by the women’s movement. They were not taken into consideration by the first ones and where unknown to the second ones.” (Méndez, 2005)

For this reason, Romani women themselves gradually begun to forge a movement of its own, in order to attend the specific needs of Romani women and create a safe space for empowerment and self-organization. One young Romani woman explained her understanding of this process:

> "[Why the phenomenon of women in the associative world?] Because they have realized that it is a necessity. Because they have realized that it's enough to be less included in society. That being a minority ethnic group there are many problems. There is a lot of racism, there are many problems in society, you want a job and cannot get any (...). I think they have realized, both women and men, there is a need for change for the Romani people. It has been a

[82] Beatriz Carrillo, president of a prominent Romani women´s organization, in an interview argues that „80% of Roma university students are women”. http://sevilla.abc.es/20111017/sevilla/sevi-ochenta-ciento-universitarios-gitanos-201110162237.html

> revolution. In the associative world there have to be associations of Roma women." [recorded interview, ES_36]

Although there were individual Romani women involved in Romani associations or in other spheres of civic and political life since the 70s (Gervás, n.d.; Giménez Adelantado 2008), it wasn't until 1989 that the first Romani women association in Spain was created (*Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas Romi*; established in Granada), "with the objective of improving our [Romani women] situation and to have more prominence" Fernández, 2005). As declared by the founder and president of *Romi*, Mª Dolores Fernández Fernández, the association was born "with strength but also fear towards the attitude of men, who finally resulted to be comprehensive" to the emancipation of Romani women leaders. In early 1990s, Romani women were rarely engaged beyond the life of their extended families and communities, Romani women students or professionals were still quite rare, thus, to an extent, the salience of a group of Romani women in the associative world was, to some, a surprise. One of my informants, a Romani woman activist, spoke about her personal involvement:

> "Now, in truth the decision to devote myself to this was mine and it had cost me. Because, for example, in my family, those who spoke about the subject where always men. No one ever related me to the associative movement. And the surprise was when I linked up with the associative world." [recorded interview, ES_22]

The informal networks among Romani women, not uncommonly through kinship ties, helped the Romani women to organize and disseminate the idea of their active involvement. One older Romani women activist explained:

> "The association is born in 1991. It was a group of young Romani women. These women already lived the Romani movement from the inside. And they wanted to create an association and do something for the Romani people, to do projects and activities. And this is how it started. They told me about their idea, their initiative. And I joined." [recorded interview, ES_32]

The founder of the first Romani women association also writes about the importance of support of elder women in the community to undertake a Romani women struggle:

> "the support of elder women was decisive; became a motor for *Romi* to propose more daring and revolutionary challenges, such as family planning, delay the age of girls who get married or education" (Fernández, 2015).

Soon after the creation of *Romi*, the organizations begun to organize annual Romani Women Seminars in Granada (the first one took place in 1991), which gathered large numbers of Romani men and women to discuss together the collective work towards the improvement and empowerment of Romani women. These meetings resulted in creation of other Romani women organizations in different localities across Spain (Gervás, n.d.; Mª Dolores Fernández Fernández 2005; Maya Ovalle 2007b; Giménez Adelantado 2008). Slowly, since the 1990s the Romani women movement has taken

on speed, proliferating across the country (currently there are Romani women organizations in every Autonomous Community) and consolidating through numerous federations and networks.

The emergence of Romani women movement was not without internal tensions and difficulties, also within the Romani associative world, dominated in vast majority by men. Ana Giménez Adelantado, a Romani scholar and activist, shared her impressions regarding what she regards as a "metamorphosis" in Romani associationism, a "silent revolution" (1998, 2008). She recalls the impressions and reactions of Romani (men) leaders to the gradual emergence of Romani women leadership. She writes:

> "In the first place we speak of marginal women and marginalized from the Romani group at the same time. (…) They are women who do not participate in the most conservative values and traditions of Romani culture – especially those which threaten the dignity of a person – and they are excluded. In this sense they are marginalized. But they are also marginalized because they are excluded from the Roma and non-Roma mechanisms of power. This marginalization of Romani women is promoted by more conservative Romani groups which re based around men-led Romani organizations and especially some Romani leaders. (…) Both groups [conservative Romani leaders and Romani Evangelical Churches] see the Romani women organizations as a danger and, in a way, a threat of political and moral counter-power." (Giménez Adelantado 2008:13)

The salience of Romani women organizations and their agenda also had another direct impact within the Romani associative movement:

> "Romani organizations run by men begun to present projects for Romani women of their organizations – they were eligible for funding – and slowly Romani women begun to enter Executive Boards of the associations run by men, although [this process] is not totally accomplished" (Fernández, 2005).

The Romani women movement in Spain was born through acknowledgement of diversity and plurality of Romani communities, and the need to reflect this diversity also in the agenda of organizations which work for Roma or which aim to represent interests of the community. As stated by one Romani woman activist the idea of diversity:

> "has been useful to discover a different and compatible model to live gypsyhood as women committed to our times, to the circumstances surrounding us, and to the fight to give value to our image and identity inside and outside our ethnic group."(Muñoz, 2014:82).

In fact, as noted by Ana Giménez:

> "Romani women organizations are 'at the edge of various knives': at the same time in the cultural, social, political and probably other spheres. (…) On the one hand, they move between two cultures: the Roma and the non-Roma. This situation generates a constant reflection and reinvention of culture, of the values and strategies of all types which they manage. On their agility, capacity of synthesis and their capacity of metamorphosis depends their capacity to

> generate new models of the meaning of being a ‘good Romani woman’. To the extent that this metamorphosis is successful and they construct an adaptive model, a self-made woman, they will transform into positive role models and other women, directly or indirectly, will learn and apprehend form them. This re-invention of culture necessarily has to include to think and think over many things: morality, marriage, family, sexuality, associationism, tradition, ethics…. among other”. (Giménez Adelantado 2008:14)

In this process of what Giménez Adelantado calls the “methamorphosis”, the Romani women organizations and leaders embraced the concept of feminism critically, adapting the “white feminism” approach to values and traditions of Romani communities, giving way to the establishment of “Romani feminism”. Rather than a revolution, this process is more of a gradual consciousness-building, both among women and men. As stated by one Romani women leader:

> “we Romani women have decided to lead a silent fight for an improve quality of life, a silk revolution —not a loud one, but a respectful and considerate one—, thus fitting it into a rhythm compatible with intragroup relations.” (Muñoz, 2014:83)

They also argue that their feminism is a “dialogical feminism” and:

> “consolidates itself as an inclusive movement where all of us have a place. It is a feminism that seeks equality from their own identity, equality of differences” (“Conclusions about the Dream” 2010).

In one of my interviews with a Romani activist, she argued:

> “The Romani feminism is different from the non-Romani feminism. The approach to gender equality is different, from the standpoint of the Romani way of thinking, it’s not like the non-Romani feminism. For example, we are not agreeing to the method of working of some organizations, for example, Drom Kotar Mestipen, to exclude the men. We want to include the men”. [interview field-notes, ES_26]

Today, the Romani women movement continues to flourish – although there is no available data regarding the number of Romani women organizations in Spain, the pace of growth is visible through expansion of Romani women federations. Despite these positive development, the undeniable recognition of the Romani women agenda and their increasing presence and visibility in social, civic and political spheres, the panorama of Romani associative movement continues to be dominated by men, although, according to Laparra, the differences in participation levels depending on gender are minimal (Laparra, 2011; Laparra, 2007). In numerical terms, the participation of Romani women increases, also in general Romani associations (that is not sectorial ones dedicated exclusively to Romani women), as members of the Boards or collaborators. However, rarely is there gender balance in such structures – rather, individual women form part of the Boards, dominated heavily by men. Their participation is valuable as they provide a point of view of women and introduce a gender dimension in debates and decisions of the organizations, but it should also be noted that the weight of assigned cultural gender roles plays a role (Maya Ovalle 2007b). As explained by a senior Romani women leader:

> "On the one hand, I was the first woman inside of the Executive Board of the federation, and the rest were men, men older than you, and with an important baggage of experience in the associative movement. So you also had to position yourself, always thinking very well the things that you are going to say. Inside the Romani culture there are certain ways, some codes of conduct, both for men and for women." [recorded interview, ES_20]

Curiously, what is noticeable is the inclusion of Romani women as paid staff in Romani associations.

Given the difficulty to permeate the existing Romani associations of general profile, which are dominated by men in their vast majority, groups of Romani women often choose to create their own structures, sensitive to the gender issue and open to dialogue regarding topics of specific interest to women. Comparatively, there are more Romani women associations which are mixed – including Roma and non-Roma women in their Boards – than in those organizations which are created and run by Romani men. Romani women organizations are also more skilful in searching for allies and supporters beyond the Romani community, and especially at re-connecting the struggle of Romani women with other social movements and agendas. This is especially evident in the context of fight against domestic violence towards women, in which numerous Romani women organizations have been participating actively.

Romani women organizations, however, are not homogeneous. There are diverse profiles, depending especially on the educational level of those women who engage in civil society struggles. Considering the fact that the vast majority of Roma who access university education are women (Laparra, Fernández, Hernández, Salinas, & Tsolakis, 2013:11), numerous Romani women organizations include well-educated women which affects their discourse and capacity of action. At the same time, the number of Romani grassroots local associations, funded and lead by Romani women (irrespectively of their educative level or profession) are continuously growing in number.

On the other hand, there are also competing narratives regarding what "Romani feminism" actually is, to what extent should it draw from non-Romani feminism, or to what extent men should be involved in Romani women agenda (Vacas 2005). There have been claims and criticism regarding claimed fragmentation of Romani associative structures along gender lines, referring to those initiatives which tend to exclude men from participating; criticism which was also common in the European level when Romani women rights movement emerged (Maya Ovalle 2007a). One of my Romani women informants rejected this thesis:

> "We have never believed, and we still do not believe in the movement divided by gender. I mean, the Romani associations and the Romani women's associations. I think that is one of the biggest errors." [recorded interview, ES_23]

There are also diverse strategies of activating Romani women's potential in the associative structures:

> "As an alternative strategy for their participation, the Romani women have developed 3 ways that are parallel to the strategy adapted by the non-Roma women. These are the following: the creation of area of women in the mixed associations; the participation through specific

> Romani women’s associations; and the presence of Romani women in women’s associations, where the gender solidarity and inter/ethnic relations are established.” (Surt.org 2015)

The diverse approach to “Romani feminism” or more, broadly, to the ways of working on gender issues through the Romani associative movement at times collide and clash, generating tension not only among Romani women and men leaders but also among Romani women themselves. An example of this is the controversy which arouse in the context of the “1st International Congress of Romani Women” organized in Barcelona in October 2010. This event, organized by Drom Kotar Mestipen Romani women organization, gathered more than 300 Romani women for a 3-day event. During the first day, a limited number of acknowledged Romani men leaders were invited to join, but later on were politely asked to leave the venue in order to provide a women-only space to the participants. This decision of excluding the Romani men was criticized not only by some men leaders but also by numerous Romani women, who felt that these discussions regarding gender should be made in dialogue with men as well.

This controversy revealed a fundamental difference between different Romani women organization and the diverse approaches to working with gender-sensitive issues: either as exclusive space (women-only) or as inclusive spaces where both men and women build gender-awareness together. I remember my surprise when speaking with one prominent Romani woman activist, who explained to me the risk of driving a process of self-emancipation of Romani women, without critically assessing the cost of such process. She explained:

> “I lead some young girls into a professional carrier, they have a great relationship with the world, working a high standard jobs, but now they are 23 years old and come to me and say: ‘what have you done to me? I can’t get married. I can’t find a Roma who would want me. And I want to get married with a Roma, but I can’t find a Roma who is educated like me. Who has the same modern point of view on gender, women.’ This is why I say that we shouldn’t be working only with women. You have to work with both.” [recorded interview, ES_22]

Other informants also underlined the increasing necessity of working with Romani men to fight collectively for gender equality. A younger Romani woman activist argued:

> “I think that the improvement in the situation of the Romani community has been greatly activated by the women. But I also believe that man and women should advance together, because if not the men are going to lag behind. The transformation of a people has to go together…I wish that the Romani men and women could dialogue in equality about, for example, the education of their children.” [recorded interview, ES_43]

Nonetheless, other entities engage in building exclusive spaces where Romani women can speak openly about issues important to them, without having to deal with roles and modes of conduct they feel the Romani culture assign to them.

As the Romani women movement in Spain develops, it also increasingly expands to include discourses and discuss topics before treated marginally or considered too “taboo”. For example, the question of

LGBT individuals within Romani communities has been generally invisible and has been treated marginally in Romani ethic mobilization. Over the last few years, however, some Romani women organizations, which can be considered as more progressive, begun to speak about the question of homosexuality and the Romani culture, by including voices of, for example, Romani lesbians[83]. One such "progressive" Romani women organization is the *Asociación Gitanas Feministas por la Diversidad* (AGFD, Association of Romani Feminists for Diversity)[84]. This organization, created in 2013, as the very name suggests, works to promote diversity for and through Romani communities. They argue:

> "We are diverse because we form part of this Romani heterogeneity that some try to hide, of different communities, religions, sexual orientations and disciplines."[85]

AGFD commonly advocate for recognition of the plurality of being Roma, also by extending their actions to support and give voice to Roma LGBT individuals. Through their diversity discourse they challenge not only the stereotypical imagery associated with Romani culture (heterosexual and patriarchal) but also disrupt the dominant narratives crafted by men-dominated Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain. They also engage critically with the topic of "white feminism" through reflecting on what it means "to be a Roma in the feminist movement and to be a feminist in Romani culture"[86].

In conclusion, Romani women activism continues to grow and develop dynamically. Some senior Romani leaders even acknowledge that

> "associative movement of Romani women are doing it better [than men], they managed to accomplish more and in a shorter period of time" [interview, field-notes, ES_31]

Another senior (man) leader added that:

> "since there are women in the associations, there is a lot of richness and a lot of progress; they are working day by day without claiming prominence. But the women should start to occupy more positions and have more leadership." [interview field-notes, ES_30]

Despite these voices, Romani women still are in a situation of a relative disadvantage to Romani men, especially in terms of numbers; continue to be under-represented in Romani organizations, women's organizations and governmental institutions (Maya Ovalle 2007b); gender balance within Romani associations is still a task to accomplish. Some Romani women even claim that this disadvantage goes beyond visibility but also affects finances:

[83] http://www.gonzoo.com/zoom/story/ser-lesbiana-tambien-es-de-gitanas-2294/

[84] http://www.gitanasfeministasporladiversidad.com

[85] http://www.gitanasfeministasporladiversidad.com/quienes-somos

[86] https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=656227921196779&id=293492244137017

> "the administration helps us economically, but not all associations of [Romani] women. We still receive less funds than other non-Roma women associations and less than other Romani associations." (Fernández, 2005)

Finally, it should be highlighted that the emergence of Romani women organizations in Spain and their dynamic development was a novelty of its time. The first Romani women organizations were pioneers also on the European level: for example, Kamira, the first national federation of Romani women organizations in Spain, funded in 1999, was also the first such organization in Europe ("The Situation of Roma in Spain," 2002: 356). In international context, there were several Romani women who were active and fought for visualising the specific struggles of Romani women; Romani women's organizations didn't appear until late 1990s; in Spain Romani women movement emerged earlier and with more energy than in other European countries (Jovanović, Kóczé, and Balogh 2015). Furthermore, arguably the dynamic development of Romani women leaders and agenda also contributed to greater visibility of Romani women issues and influenced growth of Romani women movement internationally. In 1994 a First Romani Congress of the European Union took place in Seville which, among others, highlighted the need to attend specifically the Romani women needs and interests (Wilson 1995; Giménez Adelantado 2008). On that occasion, a group of 29 Romani women from 7 countries issued a joint conclusions regarding the specific problems of Romani women and their possible solutions ("Jornada 'Dona Gitana: Un Espai Per A La Participació'" 2002). These conclusions for the first time brought specific attention to the Romani women agenda on international level and were influential both for the Spanish context as well as for the European aperture for Romani women issues. Spanish Romani and pro-Romani women organizations were also part of important international developments. Especially, *Drom Kotar Mestipen* joined the International Romani Women Network (IRWN), created in 2003 and together organized a 3rd International Roma Women's Conference and their First World Congress held in Granada in 2011.

A "change of guard"? Romani youth activism[87]

When speaking about Romani youth, it is easy to fall into generalizations. As a means of simplification, I refer to "Romani youth" as a specific sector of Romani population (up to the age of 30), however, it should be born in mind mind that this group is not a homogeneous entity, but one which intersects with many other variables (social class, gender, ethnicity etc.) The profile of my youth informants, to whom this section is dedicated, is very diverse, however, a generalized characterization can be drawn: a) Youth coming from traditional Romani families, who grew up in typical "Romani districts" (often poor marginalised working class neighbourhoods), in great majority of cases have completed only the basic level of compulsory education (or dropped out), frequently engage in economic activity of their family (such as selling); b) Young educated, in some cases coming from mixed marriages and relatively comfortable economic background. They maintain strong identification with Romani culture and the community, and are compromised with living in accordance with standards of Romani culture (like traditional marriage). They maintain friendship ties with non-Roma peers and often continue with their

[87] Some section of this chapter have already been published in (Anna Mirga 2014).

education; c) Young educated elite, often coming from mixed marriages and who grew up outside of the community. Greatly influenced by the non-Roma culture, they identify with their ethnic background but reject some of the conservative elements of Romani culture, by making a more or less counscious strategic selection. They often have the complex of being "not enough Roma"[88].

Roma can be considered a relatively young community, especially in comparison to the majority population which currently is experiencing an important demographic decline. In Spain, almost 60% of the entire Romani population is aged between 1 and 29 (for majority population it is approximately 35%)(Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014), and "around a third are aged below 16 years" (Laparra, 2007). In many aspects, the situation of the Romani youth varies greatly from that of their non-Roma peers. Considering that the majority of Romani population in Spain are in fact young adults, it is not surprising that the youth plays an important role in the economic activity of their families – many teenagers very early begin to help out in the family business. When their non-Roma peers dedicate their time to education or leisure, the Romani youth embraces adult responsibilities. This also implies that the Romani teenagers begin an adult life much earlier: the average age for Roma marriage is between 17-18 for girls and 20-21 for boys (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006) and soon after they have children of their own. These developments also affect their educational trajectories. The Romani teens abandon school much earlier than their non-Roma peers. Although in Spain it is anti-constitutional to determine ethnicity of citizens, including in school, there are some estimated data which demonstrates the low level of education among the Roma youth: 43% of Roma between 16-24 have completed the obligatory education (until 16 years old) while 43.1% have begun the obligatory secondary school but were not able to complete it (Laparra, 2007). Also, the number of Romani university graduates are below the Spanish average, but also well below these estimates for Roma in majority of EU countries (Fundamental Rights Agency 2012). The generally low level of education makes the Romani youth a particularly vulnerable group on the labour market. The data from 2002 estimates that 50.28% of girls and 20% of boys between 16 and 30 are unemployed (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006). While looking into data on Romani youth, it is impossible to underestimate the intersection of ethnicity and gender variables – in majority of indicators, the Romani young women are considerably below the statistical results for men (Fundamental Rights Agency 2013). Carrasco and Abajo demonstrate that with regards to educational trajectories, the gender inequality is an evident and transversal variable: "Romani families are at a crossroads situation: with regards to the role of men and women (to opt for equality between both genders, or, on the contrary, herald as "cultural" and idiosyncratic and "reason for pride" for women to play a role limited to taking care of the household and children); with regards to school enrolment (take an active stance in schooling their children and their educational continuity, or, instead, conform with a brief schooling period, arguing that they are not well accepted, that they will be equally discriminated against in the labour market

[88] Nonetheless, the reader should note, that the vast majority of young Roma who are engaged in one way or another in ethnic mobilization, tend to fall under the last two groups, rather than the first one. Furthermore, the vast majority of my interlocutors are concentrated in Barcelona metropolitan area, which is also an additional, relevant factor.

with or without academic credentials, or that "it´s not their thing"), and with regards to cultural change (go for additive inclusion, or, conversely, understand that – given the labelling which they are subject of – the only viable option is seclusion in the proper group)"(Abajo & Carrasco, 2004:3). These considerations are relevant when speaking about Romani youth and their engagement in ethnic mobilization too – as in most European societies, for the Romani communities the main variables which organize status and inequality, are in fact age and gender (Carrasco & Bereményi, 2011). This gender variable inevitably affects patterns of civic engagement among Romani youth, likewise to the intersection of age variables with social class.

Disregarding of different personal trajectories of individual young Romani people, they all share a common characteristic which differentiates them from the older generation. Although the statistics on schooling of Romani pupils are lower than the average for non-Roma students, it also demonstrate an important difference with the previous generation of Romani adults, which in their great majority have not completed any level of education at all (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006). The fact that majority of Roma up to the age of 12 and almost half of Romani teenagers up to the age of 16 have been schooled creates a new dimension for development of the Romani community as such. This essential difference between the contemporary youth and the older generation leads to inter-generational conflicts (as in the case of majority societies too). For Bourdieu, the inter-generational relationships are potentially conflicting as each generation is developed in its own *habitus* "which have been produced by different modes of generation, that is, by conditions of existence which, in imposing different definitions of the impossible, the possible and the probable, cause one group to experience as natural or reasonable practices or aspirations which another group finds unthinkable or scandalous, and vice versa" (Bourdieu 1977). The context of today´s world, marked by rapid social, cultural and technological changes creates even greater discrepancies between each generation´s *habitus*. According to Beck (U. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2007) the process of globalization has contributed to a change in the scale of values and "has opened a deep fissure which affects also and precisely the generational relationships" (U. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2007). Nonetheless, the youth condition is inherently transitory (Rossi 2009). The shape of future societies, and in fact of Romani community, lie on the shoulders of those who currently represent the youth. Some of my young informants recognized and embraced this responsibility. In the words of a young Romani woman:

> "The Romani youth knows that they have to take up the responsibility to overcome the historic inequality and discrimination from which the Romani community suffered and still suffers. The Romani youth is conscious that they are the Roma of today and tomorrow…I think that the Romani youth also has a strong feeling that they are responsible for the survival of the culture…The Romani youth is conscious of the problem of maintaining the Romani identity and as they feel proud of being Roma, they will avoid that their culture will be assimilated by the majority." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

They also often declare that they are better prepared than the previous generation:

> "For me [the participation of youth in the associative movement] is very important because young Romani men and women have an idea of the politics more in tune with the spirit of democracy and human rights than previous generations, at least in Spain, whose thinking is, more linked to bureaucratic procedures." [written questionnaire, ES_29]

Furthermore, the process of redefinition of cultural values, the hybridization of Romani identity (Tremlett 2009) and transformation of lifestyles of Romani youngsters may be seen as a major threat by the older generation, as the very continuity of Romani culture are potentially "at risk". For example, an older Romani leader spoke to me very critically about the Romani youth, arguing that not only are they disengaged from the social struggle but they are increasingly losing their values:

> "And now even more, because the youth that we have, and I'm tired of this, the youth doesn't want to do anything. They are tired or they go to sell [peddling]. They don't want to work for the Romani community. Only if they need something, for a moment…But to establish something, they don't want to…The youth today is horrible. Because they have too much freedom. The TV is demon. But the respect towards the elderly is automatic. This is something sacred to us." [recorded interview, ES_42]

This perceived "threat", however, constitutes a major transformative force, marking new pathways for future development of Romani community as such, thanks to increased competencies and resources that the Romani young people possess. One young Romani informant argued:

> "I think that the ambitions of Roma now are greater than those of the previous generation, in the same way as it occurred in non-Roma households. But it is not a cultural change but an individual adaptation to present times" [written questionnaire, ES_35]

Another young Roma explained:

> "The Romani culture has evolved a lot in the past years, and today we see a lot of Roma studying and working in disciplines which were inaccessible before. This transformation, in reality is due to the "rebellion" of the youth to live a different lifestyle and for different reasons than the parents." [written questionnaire, ES_24]

Nonetheless, the challenges of this "rebellion", in the words of my informant, represents a difficult process of re-defining the concept of "Romani-hood" and to finding integrity and internal balance in negotiating different identities and roles. One young Romani informant has explained this to me convincingly:

> "The Romani society in Spain is paradoxically champion of modernity and guardians of the ancestral traditions at the same time…The Romani youth is facing a challenge of defining itself." [written questionnaire, ES_19]

In Spain, the focus on Romani youth as a specific target group of policies and NGO activities as well as a sector of population with certain agency potential can be witnessed quite early on, especially in comparison to other European countries. On the one hand, the youth has been a major focus point of

policies through importance given to the field of education and the subsequent projects and programs of public administration and civil society. These can be traced back to pre-democracy times, as early as 1960s when inclusion of Romani pupils in the educational system became a major objective of public administration. On the other hand, Romani youth was also given certain visibility through activities and events organized by Romani civil society. A most visible example of this is the 1997 1st European Congress of Romani Youth held in Barcelona, a first such large-scale event of this kind hosted in Europe. The event gathered around 300 young Roma from across Europe in order to discuss a variety of topics related to Roma rights and activism, and to involve younger Romani generation in these debates.

With regard to Romani youth participation in existing major Romani associations it can be noted that Romani youth remain a major target for Romani NGOs as beneficiaries of various (capacity-building, professional training, education and leisure activities, etc.). Paradoxically, however, the direct participation of youth in defining the activities offered by well-established Romani associations is very limited, as they are rarely involved in the decision-making process of such organizations. Apart from the service-provision aspect of Romani NGO´s work, Romani youth are often less visible in other areas of activity such as advocacy or political participation and consultation. The youth, in a way, serves to justify the very existence of Romani associations (funding often goes for youth-targeted projects[89]) but the shift towards active and direct participation of young Romani people is still slow. The youth is *instrumentalized* by associations – as r*aison d'être* of Romani NGOs - but at the same time the youth *instrumentalizes* the associations too – they participate directly (as beneficiaries) only pragmatically in order to learn new skills or receive certification of completed courses. Beyond that, their direct participation is ostentatiously insignificant (or non-existent). It can be, therefore, concluded that in Catalonia but also in other areas of Spain, the participation of young Roma in the social and civic activity of their local NGOs, not only as active agents but also as volunteers or beneficiaries of projects implemented by associations, is strikingly low. In fact, according to Laparra, the levels of no participation of Roma are highest among the youth between 21 and 25 years old, followed by adults between 31 and 40 years old (Laparra, 2011; Laparra, 2007).

In general terms, there is a certain level of distrust by young Roma towards their local Romani organizations and its senior leadership, which was expressed numerous times in interviews. Many of the young Romani activists with whom I spoke coincided in saying that they do not feel represented by the current structures of Romani ethnic mobilization. For example, one Romani woman, a university student, now involved in Romani associations:

> "A: Personally, do you feel identified and represented by the current associative movement (and its leaders? Why?

[89] This reflects a major shift in Roma-related policies in Catalonia and throughout Europe, where the youth has become the principal target group of international institution such as the EU institutions, the Council of Europe or the OSCE.

> N: With the majority I don't feel identified because we don't share the same type of thinking" [written questionnaire, ES_28]

Another young Romani woman, also a university student, argued:

> "The genuinely Romani youth associations, they do represent [the youth] but those that are more general, they don't, precisely because they lack awareness of these interests [of youth]. The same happen with the associations of women and disabled people, or immigrants. Always these associations will work more to achieve interests of women, disabled or immigrants than those which don't share these deficits or interests directly or personally." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

Another young Roma, a university student disengaged from associations, pointed to the fact that Romani NGOs don't know how to approach the youth:

> "I can't say that the Romani youth is represented by Romani NGOs. Also, because the associative movement doesn't take advantage of spaces so important as universities to get to know themselves" [written questionnaire, ES_29]

Furthermore, the youth often doesn't see possibilities for their direct involvement, dominated in vast majority by older Romani leaders, and lack a space for themselves in the structures of well-established Romani organizations, especially those run by senior leadership. One young educated Roma argued:

> "[I don't feel represented] at all. They don't take into consideration the youth at all and if they completed education, even less. And if in the struggle to demystify the negative stereotypes about the Romani culture you don't support your positive role-models that exist and the knowledge that they possess, then you are throwing rocks on your own roof and this is what usually happens with the current associative movement." [written questionnaire, ES_24]

Occasionally, individual Romani youth are invited to participate in boards of local organizations, under the mentorship and guidance of older leaders. In such cases Romani youth gain direct access to Romani structures of power, although seldom are they acknowledged as equal partners. In the words of one young Roma:

> "the Romani youth, in great, majority, is rather influenced by what elders can say about them, be it parents, grandparents or uncles, and this influences a lot the real freedom of thought or action of the proper youth" [written questionnaire, ES_24]

Consequently, the obedience to the elders imposed upon young Roma often creates an obstacle to youth participation on equal terms. The authority of elders determines the relationship between youth and adults as hierarchical rather than based on equal power-sharing (and this holds true not only for Romani communities but also as general condition of adult-youth relationships). Furthermore, my interlocutors often claimed that they do not feel identified or represented by their local organizations

or the vast part of their leaders[90]. But they do perceive that the present-day Romani youth may lead a process of renewal of the associative movement:

> "I think that currently we find ourselves in a process of inflection of the Romani associative movement. A lot of things are starting to be solved although there is still a long way to go. One of the problems is that the Romani associations are seen as a source of income and not as a tool to vindicate. But the strong point is the new generation, their ideas which are more in accord with the present times." [written questionnaire, ES_34]

For this reason, one emerging pattern of Romani youth participation demonstrates that rather than joining the already establishing Romani NGOs (as members, volunteers or members of the board), the youngsters prefer to establish their own, new youth organizations. In such structures the youth possess the ownership of their own organizational process, sharing decision-making power among members of the Executive Boards, in most cases composed of only young Romani people. The objectives, scope of activities and level of engagement in public policies may vary, however, all of these newly funded organizations share a common characteristic, namely the will of the youth to transform from passive subjects to becoming active agents who play important roles in their communities.

These new organizations face the challenge of positioning themselves *vis-à-vis* the already existing structures of power, mostly concentrated around bigger federations. In the way the new young leaders relate to the current leadership, two different possibilities are available. On the one hand, these youth-lead organizations may choose to adapt to already existing associative structures, by joining the umbrella organizations, a step that the new young leaders seldom take. On the other hand, the vast number of youngsters who are reluctant to join the mainstream Romani associative movement, prefer being independent from their predecessors and engage in activities autonomously. These organizations rarely federate under larger umbrella organizations, and if so, they seek support from international Romani youth organizations, like TernYpe international Roma Youth Network. These entities often search for council in non-Roma institutions (such as the regional Youth Council) or gain experience aboard, from other Romani youth organizations. In those cases, they adapt new, innovative strategies of collaboration (greater international participation, openness to collaborate with non-Romani youth organizations) and determine a modern philosophy of Romani lifestyle and values. Such organizations are generally founded by young Roma with higher education and establish new, innovative strategies of collective action and are under strong influence of other European Romani youth leaders. The impact of the environment in which young educated Roma interact also influences the type of initiatives set up by young Roma. For example, recently in 2016 in Barcelona, a group of young educated Romani university students set up a network of Romani university students

[90] Among the reasons for not feeling identified with the existing Romani organizations, the youth pointed to: limited representativeness, relatively small success and efficiency, divided leadership, incompetent organizations, lack of clear strategic objectives, lack of mass support, unclear motivation for getting engaged. It is interesting to note that these elements, enumerated by the youth (but also some adult Romani leaders) have also been identified by scholars (Barany 2002a; Trehan and Sigona 2010; van Baar 2011b; McGarry 2012)

CampusRom[91], in order to provide support to current or future Romani university students. Promoted by a University of Barcelona (UB) research centre experienced in investigating Roma-related topics (to which numerous initiators of the network belong to) and well-connected to the open structure of the Integral Plan for Roma People in Catalonia (PIPG), CampusRom aims at bringing together Romani university students and inspiring others to seek higher education degrees.

It should be also noted that as young Roma increasingly self-organize through youth organizations and initiatives, they also challenge the dominant narratives or strategies, and introduce innovative components (Mirga, 2014; Mirga-Kruszelnicka, n.d.). For example, in 2015 a group of young Romani activists, some with international experience, founded Agora Roma[92], which aims at becoming, as the name suggest, a first Romani think tank capable of shaping public opinion. Although the initiative cannot be yet considered a think tank, the very aim of developing initiatives in this direction is a novelty in itself.

I was invited to the networking meeting organized by Agora, which sought to bring together young Roma of diverse backgrounds and discuss the creation of the think tank. One of the initiators of Agora, a young and educated Roma, argued:

> "The way we see it, Agora is not a Romani NGO. We will not do projects of interventions or service-provision. Our objective is to create a structure of influence, capable of generating opinion and public debate. " [field-notes, ES_33]

As Romani youth emerge as active leaders of their own structures, they are increasingly being recognized as relevant stakeholders and conquer spaces previously unavailable to them, and of greater political influence. For example, structures of consultative bodies, such as the State Council for the Roma, the Municipal Council for Roma in Barcelona or the Working Groups of the Integrated Plan for Roma People in Catalonia, increasingly includes young Romani leaders. Over the past five years, corresponding to a similar process taking place in Europe, both internationally and in national contexts, young Roma increasingly join spaces which previously were almost exclusively dominated by senior Romani leaders. The potential, skills and training of younger leaders is acknowledged and embraced. As young Romani increasingly demand their place but also demonstrate their capacities and potential, the Romani associative movement needs to accommodate these younger leaders and, consequently, share the spaces of leadership and visibility. In this way, the Romani associative movement rejuvenises and facilities the gradual generational "change of guard". The relevant spaces of political involvement too attain to these changes and become more inclusive for younger leaders.

Nonetheless, despite these positive and evident developments, in proportional terms, Romani youth still remains under-represented. Although the number of Romani youth associations continues to grow, they are till a minority in the panorama of the Romani associative movement. For example, in

[91] http://campusrom.es.tl/

[92] http://www.agoraroma.org/

2014, FAGIC federated 74 Romani associations[93]. Out of these organizations, 12 are Romani women´s organization and 9 are registered as Romani youth organizations (1 of these is young Romani women association) and are relatively new as majority of them have been created in the past several years. It is noteworthy, however, that the federated Romani youth associations are led by Romani individuals of between 30 and 40 years old, so their condition as "youth" is arguable. For this reason, they are not youth leaders *per se*, but rather adults who target the youth explicitly in their activities and thus are excluded from referring to them as young Romani leaders. The remaining 54 federated associations are led by Romani men over 50 years old. The composition of the Executive Boards is diverse and may include women or youth, however, the presidency and ultimate leadership are given to older men (Mirga, 2014).

Without a doubt, Romani youth activism, in Spain but also across Europe, is emerging as a new facet of Romani activism: the young leaders create their own separate structures, being increasingly recognized as active stakeholders who aim at representing the youth sector of the Romani population. However, it is important to ask: to what extent is this new? Or, more specifically, how different are the young Romani leaders from their predecessors? It is still early to evaluate the Romani youth activism, in order to convincingly provide an answer against a perspective in time, taking into consideration their accomplishments and internal development. There are some Romani activists who view the emerging Romani youth activism as a sign of positive change. One Romani activist involved in Romani youth activism wrote on his Facebook account in 2015, after another successful Roma youth meeting:

> "There is a movement of renewal among Romani youth that excites me…new wisdom and new talents emerge after a storm, of rain of more than 20 years of immobility and old formulas seasoned in colonialism, of attempts of fossilization, of wanting to transform us into a window dressing of victimization and folklorism, of being used by *gadje* and clientelists…Enough! Revolution Starting Now!" [Facebook of ES_18, November 10, 2015]

Nonetheless, and despite such strong statement, some young Romani organizations replicate the same dynamics that can be traced in Romani association founded by the older generation: lack of membership, structures sustained on a handful of leaders, organizations which are driven by self-crafted discourses rather than concrete action. It is yet to be seen to what extent these young Romani organization will be able to attract and make space for their future successors.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Romani youth is also very diverse and that not all of the current youngsters are progressive and want to advance with the times. One Romani leader, working with youth, shed some light on this:

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[93] According to the information available on the website of FAGIC. In fact, based on data provided by FAGIC's staff, there are 93 federated associations (data for 2015). The discrepancy between the official information available on the website and the number given by the staff is due to a number of reasons, among them the irregular legal status of some of the federated associations and lengthy process of formal approval of membership.

> “You know there is this phenomenon of second generation of immigrants that radicalize their identity. Like it happens in France with the Arabic youth that suddenly get angry that their mothers don’t wear the vail. The same thing happens with some Romani youth. They search for references of the ‘Romani way’, of ‘gitaneidad’ in different places. This explains the popularity of programs such as ‘Palabra del Gitano’ among some young Roma. There is also some regression – they get married younger than previously. They also interiorize the stereotypes as a definition of their own culture.” [interview field-notes, ES_18]

Despite promising perspectives, numerous challenges and risks lie ahead of the Romani youth movement. The pitfalls of existing Romani civil society also affect Romani youth organizations and their interaction with their environment. Furthermore, the youth condition is inherently transitory (Rossi 2009): as the youth leaders mature, how will the “Romani youth movement” mature along with them? As they grow up, will they stay true to their values, which guide them today? Will they remain accountable, and if so, to whom? How will they position themselves *vis-à-vis* existing Romani organizations and the non-Roma stakeholders? How will they overcome existing tensions, rivalry and competition in order to search for the much-needed consolidation and strategic alignment? As the Romani youth organizations, networks and activists evolve dynamically, these questions represent some of the challenges which lie ahead.

Romani political parties vs. Roma in political parties

In Spain, ethnic political parties are not a viable strategy to represent political interests of minority groups – the national electoral law[94] is based on territorial division into 52 provinces, and the system of allocating seats uses the so-called D’Hondt method (a highest-average method for allocating seats in party-proportional representation). Ultimately, the law benefits large political parties but for smaller actors it’s very difficult to pass the 3% electoral threshold. Under current legislation, the possibility of an electoral success of a Romani political party is virtually impossible.

Despite this, there are past experiences of Roma forming ethnic political parties. *Partido Nacionalista Caló* (Roma Nationalistic Party, PNCA) was formed in 1999 as a political party of national scope. Funded by Maríano Fernández, along with other 18 founding members in Barcelona, it declared itself as a party representing political rights of all Roma in Spain. As declared by its founder, the creation of the party was greatly influenced by the Evangelical Church. The PNCA participated in the general national elections in 2000 and in 2004, with marginal results (in 2000 PNCA received 1331 votes; in 2004 only 757)[95]. PNCA also presented some candidates in municipal elections in 2007 and 2011, without success.

In 2004, another Romani political party was formed by Agustín Vega in Badajoz, *Partido Alianza Romani* (Party Roma Alliance, ARO), also set up as a national political party. The main aim of this political formation was to represent Romani communities in the political arena, and to push for recognition of

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[94] http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/lo5-1985.html

[95] http://es.partidos-politicos.wikia.com/wiki/Partido_Nacionalista_Cal%C3%B3

Romani people in the Spanish Constitution, as well as to adopt a Law on Ethnic Minorities or a Statute of the Romani People (*Estatuto del Pueblo Gitano*) – a legislation which would explicitly recognize Roma as a historical ethnic minority in Spain and grant them special rights (Vega Cortés 2004). ARO planned to present their candidates during the municipal and regional elections of 2007, without success.

Both parties remained marginal to the mainstream political currents and in fact, to Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain; today these parties ceased to function although they are still formally inscribed into the registries of the Ministry of Interior. Furthermore, it should be noted that, according to Aguilera, 95% of Romani politicians have some link with Romani associations or Romani platforms (Aguilera 2000).

A different strategy of political representation of Romani interests is through mainstream political parties, or more specifically, through politicians of Romani background who join these formations. However, the participation of Roma in mainstream political parties has also been very small. According to some data, it is estimated that between 1978-2003 a total of 40 Romani representatives were candidates in political elections throughout Spain, out of which two candidates in regional elections, 1 in national elections, and the remaining candidates in municipal elections (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006: 272); and only but a handful were successfully elected.

Among them, is Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia. Born in Cadiz in 1942, he was a member of Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) and a first Roma in Spain elected as a member of the Spanish Parliament (1977-1986). In 1986-1999 Mr. Ramirez Heredia was a first Romani member of the European Parliament. Simultaneously to his political career, Mr. Ramirez Heredia was actively engaged in the Romani international movement, participating in the First Romani Congress in 1971, becoming one of the founding members of International Romani Union (1971) and president and founder of Spanish *Unión Romaní* in 1986. For his outstanding merits he was given a title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the University of Cadiz in 2008.

Here, it is important to underline the important role of Juan de Dios in generating motivation among other Roma to join not only politics but also the Romani associative movement. One older Romani leader explained:

> "And it was then [after the death of Franco] that the Socialist Party won the democratic elections, and there was a first Romani delegate in the Parliament, Juan de Dios Ramírez. This Roma came to Sabadell for an electoral meeting of the campaign. So the socialists from here called us and said: 'look, there is this Roma who is organizing a meeting'. And so we went. And then Juan de Dios met with us, and talked for a while with us, the young Roma who were there. And he said that now is the time to create Romani organizations, that we should organize ourselves in associations. So then we started to talk around the districts, because here there are Roma in all the districts. We went all around to pass on the message given to us, that we were now living in democracy, that we should create organizations, and that this was very positive, because the people would unite before the administration, in order to force the

> administration to listen to these demands that we were making as Roma and also Spanish citizens. So we found the association and in 1983 we started to work". [recorded interview, ES_31]

Ramírez Heredia remains today the only Romani candidate who was successfully elected to the National Congress on PSOE list (the Senate - the upper house of the bicameral Parliament). In 2011, Silvia Heredia Martin was elected to the Congress of Deputies (the lower house of the Parliament) from PP. Only two other Romani candidates were elected to regional Congresses – Manuel Bustamante in Valencia (in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2013; PP) and Francisco Saavedra in Extremadura (in 2003 and 2007, PSOE). Currently, only Bustamante and Heredia Martin remain in office – there are no other Roma in regional or national parliaments.

These numbers remain very modest. It is significant that in places such as Andalusia, where it is estimated that up to 50% of all Spanish Roma reside (Laparra Navarro 2011), there has never been a Romani candidate elected. Some argue that this is due to the way Romani candidates are treated by political parties – they are being included to "attract the Roma vote" but at the same time they are placed low on the electoral lists, with little chance of being elected. One Romani leader explained his frustration over this treatment:

> "Unfortunately, I have to say that many Roma have an impression that the political parties love us. They love us during the period of elections. But when the elections are over, it seems that they love us a little less. Of course, this causes in the Romani community a certain feeling of rejection, or inhibition to say the least." [recorded interview, ES_3]

Another senior Romani leader also explained his disapproval of the way in which political parties treat the Roma, especially when little importance is given to Romani candidates on the electoral lists:

> "I discriminate the political parties for the little participation that they give us on the electoral lists. I would like that that there would be Roma in Partit Socialista de Catalunya, another one in Partido Popular, I would be in Convergencia I Unio. In other words, form their perspective the question that we acquire an ideological colour doesn't impede us from being Roma. Thus, the Roma have to participate massively in the municipal elections, and more so for the Roma who stand out, that are educated, I recommend them to join political parties. Because it is there where we can open the doors and sail our ship to the port. The associations are good for today but misery for tomorrow." [recorded interview, ES_31]

In the context of municipal elections, Romani candidates have greater chances of succeeding in the electoral race. On the other hand, it should be noted that changes in political makeup of the country of the past few years, namely the salience of parties such as *Podemos*, or small municipal alliances (such as Popular Unity Candidacy known as CUP in Catalonia), which challenge the dominant bipartisanship in Spain, has opened up a window of opportunities to Romani candidates as well. During 2015 municipal elections, it is estimated that at least 61 Romani candidates were presented as candidates, and 6 of them in leadings positions on the lists (Santos and Andrades 2015); 26 of them

appear as candidates in recently created parties, many of them linked to *Podemos*. Out of them 10 candidates were successfully elected, 6 from electoral lists of parties of popular unity[96]. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the upcoming national elections, there are also Romani candidates on the electoral lists, some of them in key positions on the lists. For example, *Podemos* has chosen a Romani feminist and the president of local Romani women's association, María José Jiménez, as the number one on their list in Salamanca (Riveiro 2015) – Salamanca counts with 4 congressmen to the Congress of Deputies.

Non-Roma agency and structures. Spanish "pro-Roma microcosm"

Historically, the non-Roma agencies and institutions' involvement with Romani communities, even under Franco dictatorship, preceded Romani ethnic mobilization. Dietz argues that: "Before the appearance of these *gitano* associations and self-organizations, however, pro-*gitano* activities and *gitano* political participation have been limited during decades - from the sixties until the eighties, approximately - to *payo* organizations and institutions." (Dietz, 2003:77). One young and educated Romani woman described the importance of emergence of first Romani associations:

> "At the beginning, there were the organizations, the pro-Roma organizations, between 1958 and 1970. And with the 70's there were the Romani organizations where the members of the Executive Board were Roma. It is known that in order for a culture to change and evolve, it is the people that need to make the decision because it is them that really know their interests and needs. This is why the change in the associative movement of the 70's was so important." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

Without a doubt, the involvement of non-Roma, both individuals and institutions of diverse profile, has played an important role for the birth and development of Romani associative structures as they provided important spaces for participation and Roma activism, as well as guidance and mentorship.

On the one hand, it is important to acknowledge the important role of scholars and "experts" on Roma who not only helped to shape the body of knowledge about Romani communities, help to design policy responses, shape discourses but also did so with a strong personal engagement and commitment to the Romani struggles. For example, Teresa San Roman, a key scholar in Romani Studies, which shaped the knowledge about Romani communities since the 60s and developed pioneer studies, was closely involved in the work of pro-Roma initiatives (most notably in *Secretariados Gitanos*) and developed close ties of friendship and collaboration with numerous Romani leaders and organizations. Through applied anthropology approach she provided significant input to shaping discourses on Roma, which were subsequently influential for the narratives crafted by Romani leaders.

In Catalonia, of comparable influence, was Carmen Garriga, a scholar, social worker and advisor to public institutions and numerous Romani associations. On the occasion of her death in 2014, UR published an obituary stating that:

[96] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2015/noti2015-06-03.htm

> "Beloved by the Catalan Romani community, her articles and research are essential to know the history and evolution of the Romani people in our country in recent decades […]. Carmen has left us, but is not gone forever because her figure will be between us and her name engraved in indelible letters, in the eternal history of the Romani people."[97]

Both of these figures, who for their work received numerous prizes and honourable mentions by Romani organizations, have been influential and provided significant guidance and council to Romani leaders over the past decades.

In fact, a whole generation of first Romani leaders were trained in non-Roma associational life and the first Romani associations emerged with a strong "confessional bias" (Dietz 2003). However, as the Romani associative movement has emancipated from its past guardians, patrons or promoters, the leadership, influence and a dominant voice in what concerns the Roma increasingly is demanded to belong to the Romani people themselves. According to Juan de Dios:

> "There was a time in which without the noble and selfless help of so many people committed to our people, we wouldn't be able to accomplish anything. Especially during the Franco dictatorship, it was the Church that extended us a hand or sheltered from persecution and, sometimes, even from prison. But times have changed. In this debate today, at the beginning of the century, it seems logical that the leadership should be held exclusively by Roma. After all, the fate of the Romani people will be one that is wanted by its members and not one that is intended to be imposed us from the outside, by those who are motivated by partisan or pseudo-intellectual interests." (Ramírez-Heredia 2005)

However, as numerous evidence shows, this is not yet the case and the premise of Romani leadership is still often challenged. According to Dietz (Dietz 2005) but also others, the organizations linked to Catholic Church are still viewed as the most experienced kind of actors, which dominate the arena of Romani affairs in Spain; in fact, most non-Roma organizations involved with Roma are directly or indirectly related to the Catholic Church. There are fewer non-Roma organizations which emerged independently from the Catholic Church, mostly as NGOs, such as *Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana* or *Asociación Enseñantes con Gitanos* (Dietz 2003).

As already signalled earlier, the most visible example which demonstrates the influence of such actors is, of course, the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG)[98]. FSG is the biggest and most influential pro-Roma organization in the country, which receives annually more funding destined for "Roma inclusion" from the State, including central state budget and regional and local budget (through annual calls for tenders) than any other Romani organization or federation in the country (the FSG annual budget is aprox. 20,000,000 euros vs. the biggest Romani organizations such as UR, have a budget of around

[97] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2014/noti2014-10-27b.htm

[98] Second most important non-Roma institution involved in Romani-related integration interventions, also in terms of financial investment it consumes is *Cartias Española*.

2,000,000); FSG is also the main consumer of European Social Funds (ESF) on Roma[99]. While FSG is recognized by the authorities and also by the international community as an effective pro-Roma organization, thanks to a number of projects self-assessed as successful, it is often criticized by the Spanish Romani CSOs for its focus on service-provision rather than empowerment, its inability to employ Roma in higher ranks of management and its weakness in criticizing the State. Numerous Romani CSOs in Spain have complained that the State is favouring FSG by providing it with more public funding, instead of creating opportunities to Romani grassroots entities to grow and expand further. Oftentimes, Romani leaders also question the legitimacy of such organizations, FSG and other pro-Roma entities, arguing that they are not representative of the Roma. For example, a Romani woman activist argued:

> "On the other hand, I would distinguish the non-religious associations that have Romani names but are directed and carried by the non-Roma. And there are associations that have Romani names but internally do not represent anything of the Roma. Maybe there is some Roma in those organizations, but they do not have the same capacity of decision-making, for example *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) or *Presencia Gitana*. There are even some Roma that instead of *Presencia Gitana* they call it *Ausencia Gitana*[100]…In this type of a movement what I fear most is that if I think that the Roma themselves that are in the associations do not have the capacity to speak in the name of the whole Romani community, imagine the same in case of a non-Roma." [recorded interview, ES_23]

From a perspective of some Romani leaders, the FSG, as well as other pro-Roma entities are more interested in maintaining the *status quo* rather than changing it substantially, because the vulnerable situation of Roma justifies their very existence. In the words of one Romani leader:

> "If I live from the Coca-Cola, I have to create a necessity for someone to be thirsty and present to him the Coca-Cola as an element that will satisfy this thirst. It is the same with the pro-Roma organizations. They present the Romani community as the receptors of social policies, and they maintain it in such a way perpetually because if not they will find themselves out of business. And also, these associations are politically very influential… These people do not attend anything but their own interest, which is to maintain their multi-millionaire budget." [recorded interview, ES_2]

This led to numerous tensions and a de facto division and dichotomization in Romani-related affairs – pro-Roma FSG and other Romani organizations seldom work together and until 2014, no common

[99] The annual budget of FSG is around 20,000,000 euros. Almost 85% of its funding comes from public authorities - most of this funding comes from the European Social Fund (42%), government funding (public funds, Spanish grants from the Personal Income Tax: IRPF - 17%), regional and local grants coming from 14 regional governments and 64 city councils agreements (24%).

[100]This statement is a play-on-words. „Presencia" in Spanish means „presence" and „ausencia" means "absence", thus referring to the absence of Roma in this organization.

national project has ever been implemented by FSG and other Romani organizations[101]. Today, the FSG remains the biggest, most influential actor involved in Romani affairs in Spain, and increasingly marks their presence internationally. While their professional capacity is undeniable, still other actors question whether such organizations as FSG should retain the most authoritative voice and dominant position in Romani affairs in Spain (or in fact, anywhere else). Speaking of such types of actors, Dietz argues that “despite their focus on Gitano beneficiaries and their struggle for multiculturalising the arena of service provision, they still often fail to integrate Gitanos into their organisations and their personnel. Professional experience and an assitentialist legacy are thus combined inside this kind of actor” (Dietz 2005). In one of my interviews, a senior and influential Romani leader claimed assertively that the dominant role and monopoly of FSG has to be challenged. He argued:

> “The objective, not always direct or explicit, of our work is our fight against FSG. We can’t allow that those who are most influential with the power-holders and who claim to represent us are some Catholic non-Roma! The work that they do is good but this is more an ideological question. We will never emancipate if they will continue deciding about us, the Roma. We, the Roma, we need to be in leadership!” [interview field-notes, ES_3]

The frequent perception that non-Roma entities are more influential and treated as more reliable oftentimes leads to frustration and multiplies tension between Roma and pro-Roma entities. For example, in a press release in 2011 issued by UR after a high-level governmental meeting it was argued:

> “The Senate Commission through audiences has justly listened to professionals and pro-Roma organizations, however, it has not listened to the Roma professionals and organizations. How is it possible that Senate Commission has drafted a report on Roma without speaking to those directly affected?”[102]

The rivalry between pro-Roma organizations, especially the FSG, and Romani organizations is well-known also to public administration. A high level officer in Ministry responsible for coordination of Roma-policies in Madrid stated that:

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[101] In 2014, Open Society Foundations Initiatives for Europe has funded a project coordinated by FSG and Khetane (co-federation of Romani regional organizations in Spain). It should be noted that the collaboration in the framework of this project is often presented as a breakthrough in collaboration between FSG and Romani organizations. On the occasion of implementing one of the seminar of the project, a press release was published which underlined the importance of this collaboration: “It began with the intervention of Antonio Vazquez, secretary of the Platform for Romani associations Khetané, and Isidro Rodriguez, director of the FSG, who concurred that this project is a great opportunity for collaboration for organizations working with the Roma community. The need to combat negative social image and prejudice against the Romani population in the media is a cause shared by all and this project will enable them to join forces and build bridges with the media. Both stressed the idea that this project is the beginning of a more stable cooperation between all organizations.” https://plataformakhetane.wordpress.com/

[102] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/noti2011-06-20.htm

> "the conflict between FSG and Roma organizations is fastidious; there should be a common goal." [recorded interview, ES_12]

From the point of view of the Romani organizations, the Roma should play a dominant role and become principle actors, which influence the policy-making on Roma; according to them the Roma should be masters of their own fate, and not non-Roma enterprises. In a key document "Foundations of Roma Thought, Today", written and adopted by the member associations of UR in 1994, it is argued:

> "There are also pro-Roma organizations, composed of people of good will who are not Roma and who have helped to improve the life conditions of our people. La Unión Romani, recognizes their efforts carried out although it believes that the future of Romani people has to be in the hands of the Romani people" (Unió Romani, 1994:34).

Under such rationale, the dichotomy along ethnic lines is inevitable. However, from a point of view of public administration:

> "FSG is doing it really well, they justify their projects really well, so we promote those who are doing it well". [recorded interview, ES_12]

It is worthy underlining here the wording used, namely that of "justification". In fact, this reflects the overall rationale and the excessive bureaucratization of project management – while "justifying projects really well", the question of outcome or impact remain unmentioned.

These premises are based on the conviction that FSG is a more reliable and professional partner, while some Romani organizations are not:

> "there are Romani organizations which are good and others who are very unprofessional, present projects which are very poorly drafted." [recorded interview, ES_12]

Consequently:

> "there is a need to prioritize things. If there are good organizations, who are doing a good job, they should be promoted. The same happens with other sectors, not only Roma…small entities are destined to die." [recorded interview, ES_12]

In fact, Dietz argues that "warnings are constantly issued against a too close collaboration with *gitano* associations. They are presented as not professionalized enough, not reliable as intermediaries and potentially corrupt" and "according to the governmental agencies, their *gitano* counterparts run their associations as if they were their own 'family businesses' " (Dietz, 2003:76)[103].

[103] In the same source Dietz further argues that:" Paradoxically, the state agencies, on the contrary, tend to criticize the new generation of *gitano* activists precisely for not being *payo* enough! It is mostly the internal functioning of the *gitano* self-organizations which is criticized for its lack of transparency in relation to decision-making, the highly personalized distribution of functions and the supposedly clientelist use of external funds."

The interpretation of the current status quo by pro-Roma actors goes along the same lines as that of public administration. According to a high-level staff member of FSG:

> "The tensions with Romani organizations comes from the fact that Romani organization don't grow and develop, and FSG does. FSG manages the resources with quality and impact, which many Roma initiatives lack. The administration should promote and capacitate Romani organizations but they also have to make effective investments. FSG does it well, while there are evidences of bad spending and poor management of Romani NGOs." [recorded interview, ES_13]

Here, it is worthy to acknowledge the self-reported and self-perpetuated argument of the "quality and impact" of FSG initiatives; to date, there is a lack of external evaluations which would measure the impact of these diverse projects.

The tensions between FSG and Romani organizations also are caused by the way in which this organization operates, especially in their context of territorial expansion. One senior Romani politicians explained that:

> "when FSG came to Valencia to establish their office there, they didn't consult with anyone, didn't speak to Romani organizations. They have a lot of money, they co-opted staff from FAGA to work for them…there is a bad relationship between FSG and Roma organizations in Valencia, they don't work together" [interview field-notes, ES_16]

It should also be noted that while the FSG is the biggest and most visible example of the existing "pro-Roma microcosm" (Kóczé & Rövid, 2012), it is not the only pro-Roma entity which works for Roma inclusion. The existing funds dedicated for Roma inclusion, both secured by the public administration as well as by the EU, continues to attract new actors to the field. This is not surprising as Spain declares to provide one of the biggest budgets for Roma policies among other European countries – in fact, according to the OSCE Report on the Implementation of "Action Plan for the Roma", Spain declared to have invested the biggest amount for Roma inclusion out of all the other OSCE Member States (since 2008, 148 million euros) (ODIHR 2013). The same report argued that apart from the national budget devoted to Roma, Spain has also declared that over 100 million euro in EU funds went to partner organizations working on Roma issues during that same period (ibid.: 86). As part of the Roma Development Program, launched in 1989, between 1995 and 2009, in the stream managed by the public administrations, the expenditure reached 106,599,770 Euro until 2008 (Santiago 2012a). Nonetheless, what should be noted is that over 75% of this budget was spent in staff (ibid.).These impressive amounts have been managed through public administration bodies as well as municipalities, but a significant portion of these funds was also managed civil society organizations, and especially by non-Roma entities. The availability of funding becomes an important incentive for diverse social actors to dedicate their attention to Roma inclusion efforts, and consequently, acquire and channel part of this budget. For this reason, at the moment there are a variety of actors which become stakeholders of the panorama of Romani affairs as experts, consultants, intermediaries or executioners. These actors range from individual scholars and experts to universities or research

centres, from charitable foundations to religious institutions, from small NGOs to big foundations or development agencies. This dynamic of expansion of pro-Roma civil society is evident in Spain but can also be traced across Europe (Hurrle, Ivanov, Grill, Kling, & Skobla, 2012; Kóczé & Rövid, 2012).

Finally, it is worth to mention that there is a number of organizations of mixed character, which aim at positioning themselves as Romani entities, but which are significantly driven by non-Roma people. A good example is the organization *Drom Kotar Mestipen*, which has been created in 1999 by a group of non-Roma scholars and a handful of Romani women. Originating from academic engagement with Romani communities, it led to establishment of collaboration ties between scholars and their informants and over time, lead to the creation of this entity, focusing on the work with Romani women. Romani women have been traditionally placed in the role of presidents of the organizations; the Board is composed on Roma and non-Romani women (mostly from academic circles). The influence of non-Roma contributors to the organization is significant and can be traced by the discourses and the management capacity (successful application and management of competitive tenders, also of EU funding), which are much more superior than those of grassroots, organic Romani women organizations active in the field. Through the non-Roma involvement, the organization also established very close ties with academic research centres and research projects, mostly in issues related to Romani women and education.

“El culto”: The Importance of the Romani Evangelical Church

It is impossible to analyse the process of birth of the Romani associative movement in Spain without acknowledging the important role of the Evangelical Church (so-called “*culto*”, the cult, the worship). As argued by Teresa San Roman, “in the context of the 60’s, the Pentecostal movement and the Romani associations movement, arise almost simultaneously” (San Román 1999). Indeed, the Evangelical movement spread rapidly among the Roma. The first Roma Evangelical Church was created in 1968 in Balaguer (Cantón Delgado 2014) and over time Evangelical faith expanded rapidly throughout the country. According to available data in 1978, 91% of the Romani population declared to be Catholic, in 1980 the number lowered to 81%. Over the next twenty years, the Evangelical movement developed dynamically as more Roma conversed: in 2000 55,7% of Roma declared themselves as belonging to the Evangelistic Church, in 2003 already 72,3% of the Romani population declared Evangelical; also the number of Romani Evangelical Churches rose from 50 in 1973 to 800 in 1999 (Méndez, 2005:122). Today there are over 1,300 Romani Evangelical Churches and over 6,500 Roma pastors throughout the country (Cantón Delgado 2014).

One of my informants in an interview explained this process of growth:

> "In the 60's there were 5 Spanish Roma[104] who went to France to work. And then there was a gadjo (non-Roma), called Le Cossec. And this Le Cossec thought “why won’t I tell these 5 Roma

[104] In fact, it was six Romani preachers and one non-Roma, who came back to Spain in 1965. Five of these men worked in Catalonia and Castilla regions and two of them went to Sevilla, where they funded their own churches. These men funded in 1969 the Philadephic Church of Spain (*Iglesia de Filadelfia de España*). Manuela Cantón

> that they take with them the word of God. And this Le Cossec shared with these men the Pentecostal-evangelist knowledge. (...) Once he instructed these Roma, these 5 men came back to Spain and started talking [about evangelism], first with their families. At first, the Romani communities were very hostile. The Romani population is very conservative ... There were even cases of towns and localities where the Roma went to look for these men with sticks and knives, saying “get out of here, here you cannot be! ". So, in the 60’s there was a very small group [of evangelists]. There was a widespread rejection of these people. (...) But in the 80’s there is a big crisis within the Romani population because the world begins to change. (...) So who occupies this gap? The Evangelistic Church. It is a social centre, place where the Roma spend time, where Roma boys and girls can look at each other, where marriages emerge, where friends are made, where you eat dinner at night. There is a network that is beginning to build around this evangelical movement. So in the 80’s and 90’s there is boom in which all the Roma, their brothers and sisters and such join. So everybody ends up in the [Pentecostal] movement.” [recorded interview, ES_30]

Evangelical Churches emerged from below, especially in marginalized Romani neighbourhoods. According to Dietz, “this movement has been particularly active among the impoverished, but upward-striving and entrepreneurial sectors of the Gitano neighbourhoods and polígonos, high-density residential units for low-income families.” These churches have combined the re-evangelization activities with “an active agenda of bottom-up community services”, and have “very effective in empowering marginalised Gitano families and in re-vitalising community life in highly conflictive circumstances” (Dietz 2005). Unlike the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Churches are also more inclusive to Roma providing opportunities for Roma to become pastors or Church leaders.

The emergence of Evangelical Churches has had important impact on the communities, and provided an alternative to the traditional patters of community organization and leadership. According to Delgado (Cantón Delgado and Gil Tébar 2011), there has been two major forces which have challenged the traditional system of leadership and authority among Romani communities: 1) the emergence of the associative movement (and the salience of civic leaders); and 2) the emergence of Evangelical movement (and the salience of religious leaders).

Although both movements emerged in the same point in time, the Romani Evangelical Churches and the evangelical movement developed differently than the Romani associative movement. The Romani associative movement can be characterized by its significant dependency from the State administration (especially in terms of public funding); the Evangelical movement, on the other hand, emerged independently from the state, developing its own patterns of leadership, economic sustainability and management, independent from State funding and public affairs (Cantón Delgado & Gil Tébar, 2011; Laparra, 2007). However, Méndez points to the fact that with the increasing

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Delgado, “Creencias protestantes, estrategias gitanas. El evangelism de las Iglesias de Filadelfia en el Sur de Espana”, http://rdtp.revistas.csic.es/index.php/rdtp/article/download/155/156

proliferation of religious associations (parallel and linked to Romani Churches), the Romani evangelical movement is slowly entering the same dynamic as the Romani associative movement, increasingly relying on State funding and becoming service-providing entities (Méndez, 2005:152).

Initially, Romani Evangelical Churches operated independently from Romani associative movement, serving solely the purpose of spiritual community leadership and service. With time, however, some Romani churches begun to establish religious associations, formally registered, which allowed them to access public funding. A senior Romani leader explained:

> "At the beginning the Churches were not preoccupied with mundane life, they thought: 'God is the solution'. But now increasingly there are pastors that quote different parts of the Bible which, for example, motivates people to work. There are some pastors who are not only spiritual leaders but also social and political. They started to create associations to have a NIF and be able to apply for funding for the churches and their activities. There is no other entity in Spain that has the level of mobilization capacity and impact in the community as the Evangelical Churches. We need to learn how to use this potential." [interview field-notes, ES_3]

Another, Romani woman activist argued:

> "On the one hand there is the Romani associative movement that is born out of the Evangelistic church. And this after some years have changed, as before the organizations existed exclusively as religious ones, and now many of them transform into cultural associations." [recorded interview, ES_23]

Since 2001 in Andalusia, and later on in Catalonia, the Romani evangelical associative movement begins to crystallize through the Federation of Cultural Christian Association in Andalusia (FACCA), and in Catalonia through FACCAT (later caller Agape) defined as the "social arm" of the Evangelical Church (Cantón Delgado 2014). FACCA is a federation of ethno-political and religious character which gather all Churches which decided to create parallel associations, in order to foster spaces of socio-political engagement and to obtain public funding destined indirectly to the Romani Evangelical Churches. Over time, FACCA became an important stakeholder in Romani affairs – in 2010 they managed a budget of over 2.000.000 euros (Cantón Delgado and Gil Tébar 2011); FACCA is also a member of the State Council for the Roma. Proliferation of Romani Evangelical Churches as well as their parallel associations is also a result of the extensive network through which these Churches operate, facilitating the exchange of information, know-how and ideas. In this context it should be also underlined that the Evangelical movement is considered a global one and indeed functions through networks which go beyond local or even national spectrum. For Roma, the existence of such religious networks facilitates dialogue and collaboration on a global level, most significantly with their Latin American counter-parts, through programs of pastors' exchanges, missionary visits or large-scale congregation events which can gather thousands of people in one venue.

The salience of religious associations has important implications. On the one hand, the Romani pastors enjoy a significant level of authority and leadership in their communities; they also become more legitimate and "trustworthy" representatives, in the eyes of their community as well as in communication with public administration (as mentioned in some of the interviews with public officials). Another of my informants, a pastor and a leader of an NGO, explained that his association is seen as more credible, especially due to his involvement as a pastor:

> "J: We are an entity [registered] as an association. I in a year and a half, 2005-2006 I got up to a level of any entity working for twenty-five years. With town councils, the *Generalitat*, the Provincial Council (*Diputació*) ...
>
> A: And can it be that associations sometimes have a bad reputation among the people and the administration?
>
> J: Yes, it is. Not only among the people but also with the administration.
>
> A: Is it that because it is a religious entity and for the people involved that it might create more credibility in the administration?
>
> J: A lot. Because if until today we are still signing the agreement (*convenio*) [of collaboration] is for the credibility not only of the entity but also of the person who manages, which in this case is me." [recorded interview, ES_9]

One Romani woman leader explained why the Evangelical Church is more representative than NGOs:

> "Because the Evangelistic church is an organization of the community. For this reason, it is possible to work in a much more organized way. This type of a movement has a much greater capacity to convoke people than any other Romani organization. Because this movement convokes entire Churches. Something which the rest of Romani organizations cannot do. I think that it is an organization much more representative of the whole community." [recorded interview, ES_23]

The Romani organizations also have a greater mobilization potential of their constituencies – fellow brothers in faith. One young Romani activist argued:

> "This is for evident, for example, when an NGO organizes an intercultural conference and 30 Roma participate and when the Church organizes meeting, 700 Roma attend. The reason is that if you want the Roma to participate more, you need to make them participate in the entire process and not just treat them as beneficiaries of specific proposals/ projects." [written questionnaire, ES_19]

Indeed, a Romani pastor I interviewed argued:

> "It is an important issue, but the entity that has more ability to convoke [people] is the Evangelic Church. There's no one else. I've done events at the *Palau Sant Jordi* in Barcelona, a musical theatre, for nine thousand people. In 'Cotxeres' de Sants I brought together fifteen

> hundred women. There is no other association that has brought to many women in a year." [recorded interview, ES_9]

Through regular religious services the pastors maintain close contact and intimate relationship with its congregation; the Churches also become increasingly important spaces of interaction, dialogue and integration among the community members. In fact, as stated by one prominent Romani leader:

> "The Churches are the only actors which have a capacity for massive mobilization. If the pastors say so, they follow like sheep." [interview field-notes, ES_2]

In numerous interviews, it was underlined that the Evangelical Church has a much stronger presence in the community than the organizations. Some mentioned that the Romani ethnic mobilization actors should learn from the methods of the Evangelical Church in order to have more impact in the community, In the words of a senior Romani leader:

> "There are different types of organizations, that are of religious nature, that have the virtue of uniting more the Romani community, the religious community. In modern times that has been this certain tendency to unite around churches…And the civil Romani organizations have to do the same thing as the religious associations. Try to convoke a greater number of people, creating sufficient network that has a capacity to resolve the problems among ourselves." [recorded interview, ES_7]

Furthermore, the Evangelical Churches operate through an organized network – the National Assembly of the Evangelical Church, which maintains communication with all the congregations across the country (Cantón Delgado 2013). Regarding participation, some studies imply that the Roma are more inclined to participate in religious organizations rather than in social and cultural ones – a study developed in Murcia points argues that among those Roma who declared to have participated in some organization, 45,09% participated in religious organizations (Laparra, 2007:209). What is important to emphasize is the fact that the Evangelical movement aims at creating "new transversal structures which goes beyond traditional kinship groups" (San Román 1999) and which are capable of mobilizing resources and public attention.

The mobilization capacity of FACCA, and of the Evangelical movement in general, has been made visible especially in the context of the disappearance and death of Mari Luz Cortés, a 5-years old Romani girl, murdered in 2008. During the period in which Mari Luz has gone missing, and later on once the body of the girl was found and during the subsequent investigation and trials, FACCA played an essential role in mobilizing public protests, collecting signatures and generating unprecedented public attention. The father of the girl, Juan José Cortés, a pastor of the Evangelical Church himself, became a public figure and received massive media visibility, also due to subsequent controversies. Such immense visibility and media presence was made possible thanks to the extended network of Evangelical Churches, and the public presence of Roma and non-Roma who repeatedly manifested in public. Another example of effective mass mobilization of Roma through active involvement of the Evangelical

Church and Evangelical pastors are the activities of *Coordinadora dels Merxants* (Platform of Peddler Sellers), discussed in detail in the section "how" ("protest").

The incentive to form religious associations lies in the potential of gaining significant economic advantages through access to public funding – in order to do so, Churches need to register as associations in order to be eligible. The public funding typically is channelled through the religious NGOs directly to the Church, often to fund equipment, organizes biblical schools or other thematic courses (such as computer literacy, tutoring classes etc.). With relation to FACCA, the scholars describe the main areas of activity, which are funded by public grants: educational activities; trainings to improve employment opportunities; preventive (especially with regards to drug abuse); religious, such as theological trainings for future pastors; political; media and journalism; music; and especially the intermediary role between the community and the State authorities (Cantón Delgado and Gil Tébar 2011). FACCA is active in many fields, also thanks to their size and financial support of the State; the activities of smaller religious associations are much more modest, and is mainly limited to educational and cultural activities; in parallel to the religious ones. In an interview with a Romani pastor in Catalonia, member of the Agape federation which brings together 45 Christian cultural associations in the region, explained the process and motivation behind creating religious, cultural associations:

> "In 2005, approximately, Christian Cultural Association of Catalonia Agape, which is legally registered with the Justice Department was established. Outside Catalonia it is known as FACCAT [*Federación de Asociaciones Culturales Cristianas de Cataluña*]. We convinced them to set up their associations, cultural Christian [associations] above all, so that somehow we could work with the administration, as the administration had no ties with the Church. To separate the Church. The town hall does not want to have direct links with the Church for whatever reason. So constitute Christian entities which are the ones that somehow work more in the social field. Not in the political arena, for the Church is apolitical does not do favours to any party. The only thing that is done in the organization is working in the social sphere in every way; it was managed to do training courses, computer courses, courses for women, of associative movement, of pedicure and manicure ... There have been a lot courses for the issue of women. We have formed some mediators, always with the collaboration of the city council, the Provincial Council or the *Generalitat*." [recorded interview, ES_9]

The decision of setting up such parallel organizations, however, depends on the very pastor which runs the Church – his interest, ambition and capacity. It should be noted, however, that not all Evangelical Churches are interested in joining arms with the Romani associative movement. Some evangelical organizations intentionally choose to remain independent from public administration and politics of Romani civil society, as the example of on Evangelical Church in Jeréz de la Frontera demonstrates (Cantón Delgado 2014). Some pastors perceive the involvement of Churches in politics negatively; claiming that some pastors became "managers of public resources" instead of "shepherds of souls" (Cantón Delgado and Gil Tébar 2011). There is also evidence of tension arising from existence of overlapping structures of power and authority – of the federations of evangelical associations (such as FACCA) and of the congregations, especially of the National Assembly of the Evangelical Church (Cantón Delgado 2014; Cantón Delgado 2013).

However, the creation of stable links of collaboration between Churches and Romani associative movement, and activation of Church's potential and resources, especially in terms of the mobilization capacity, remain a challenge. The interviews detected a certain degree of distrust towards associations. One young Romani woman, closely involved in the work of her local Church argued:

> "there is not much trust towards the NGOs. It is known that they have money but it never reaches the community, we don't know who they are and what they do. (…) In the Church we don't mix the law of God with the law of men, we don't mix faith with politics." [interview field-notes, ES_17]

She further explained that there is:

> "a bit of distrust towards all the initiatives which come from outside of the church, like those of the administration or NGOs. (…) If its proposed from within, as something which is generated by the community's needs, it would be much easier to engage Romani pastors." [interview field-notes, ES_17]

Finally, it should be mentioned that evangelical associations (created in parallel to their corresponding Churches) often join laic umbrella organizations of the Romani associative movement, such as the regional federations. In some cases, the individual evangelical organizations may join more than one structure, being members of a laic regional federation and a regional federation of evangelical associations (like FACCA) at the same time. In this context, the religious associations become important actors of the general Roma associative movement in Spain, and their scope of activity is not limited to spiritual affairs but also those which refer to more "mundane" matters. A good example of this is the *Coordinadora dels Merxants* (Platform of Peddler Sellers), created by Roma and non-Roma organizations, FACCAT Catalonia and organizations of the peddler sellers (more on this in the section "how"). A Romani Evangelical pastor, president of FACCAT Catalonia and a peddler seller himself, was elected president. As Evangelical organizations join forces with the Romani associative movement and increasingly engage politically and socially, the boundary between laic and religious associations, as well as religious and civic leaders becomes blurred and fluid.

Between fragmentation and consolidation

Repeatedly, throughout the fieldwork in Spain over the years, one was a recurrent theme – that of fragmentation, in-fighting and lack of unity among Romani actors. In most of the interviews, disregarding of age, gender or type of involvement, I was constantly signalled that the Romani associative movement remains internally fractured. For example, one older Romani leader, when asked what he would like to change in the Romani associative movement responded:

> "I would like to see more union, more unity. Roma being more unified. This is what we are trying to achieve. Because there are more things that unite us than divide us. These are the objectives, and the objectives are common, are the same". [recorded interview, ES_38]

Indeed, as the Romani associative movement proliferated and expanded throughout the country, the number of Romani organizations steadily increased. This resulted in a number of important challenges

– tensions and competition over funding, leadership and authority, territory and influence as well as increasing atomization and fragmentation of the Romani associative movement.

On the one hand, Romani actors multiplied in the context of one specific territorial unit such as municipality or a region. For example, in Reus (Catalonia) there are reportedly 1,289 Roma (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006:48), however, there are at least 5 Romani organizations registered in the city; in Tortosa (Catalonia) there are reportedly 494 Roma (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006:48), and at least 3 Romani associations; Badalona (Catalonia) has over 3.000 Roma and 10 registered associations.[105] One Romani interviewee illustrates this situation:

> "There is an important town in Spain where the Roma live very well. There are around 40 Romani families there. And they created a Romani association. And the members of this associations got into a fight and "well, I will create my own organization'. And those who started the fight created another association. But then, those from the new association also got into a fight. They separated and those who left said: 'well, we create another association'. And so on…In this town there are 4 Romani associations. And 40 Romani families. This atomization is division and a waste." [recorded interview, ES_3]

On the other hand, Romani organizations proliferated especially in and around big cities – in Barcelona province, for example, there are at least 78 Romani associations (78 counted through the official registry, 68 federated in FAGIC).

Additionally, the process of expansion of the Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain was often in quantity and not in quality – numerous local associations were created, some of which remain inactive and exist on paper, and not in practice. This adds an additional level to the analysis of the process of consolidation, towards sustainable growth.

As the number of Romani actors grew, some degree of coordination and consolidation was required, especially on behalf of the State administration, which increasingly had to deal with multiple voices, claims and demands. One Romani activist argued:

> "We have to draft and agree on an internal ideological document which will determine how should the Romani associations work. Those who do not work, throw them out, penalize them. And those who work, award them. What we cannot tolerate is all the *chiringuitos*[106] that are being created. Although there might be few Romani associations, give them the rules, the know-how. Because you have to keep in mind that there are a lot of Romani associations that collide with each other." [recorded interview, ES_31]

[105] The numerical data may not be exact as explained in the study (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006).

[106] *Chiringuito* in Spanish means a small shop or an open air restaurant. In this context, the term refers to the NGOs that are seen as business like, rather than non-profit organizations.

It must be noted that the process of consolidation took on a regional rather than national shape. The choice of forming regional rather than national federations had its logic – Spain is a highly decentralized country, in which 17 Autonomous Communities enjoy a varying degree of autonomy. In practice, the competence in key areas such as education, culture, civil and administrative law, social welfare and others is granted exclusively to Autonomous governments. In practice, Romani organizations interact to a much greater degree with regional governments than with the central government, and their potential of political leverage lies in ability to successfully lobby the corresponding regional structures of power. Furthermore, numerous autonomous communities (such as Catalonia, Andalusia or Basque Country) have established their regional interdepartmental plans targeting Roma (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012), which directly affect the situation of communities within that region. As Romani organizations grew in number and state policies for the Roma expanded, the public administration increasingly sought partners, which would assist the governments in their implementation. Thus, the Romani organizations, encouraged by the administration, begun to agglutinate in federations, claiming greater representativeness and monopolizing the channels for partnership with the public administration bodies.

Such is the case of the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia (FAGIC), funded in 1991 by 17 Romani associations. This initiative was encouraged by the government, which sought a unified voice and unique representativeness of the Romani population in the region. Today the FAGIC counts with over 80 associations and can be considered the most powerful Romani organization in the region. A similar case has been reported in Andalusia, where the government (more specifically the Secretary for the Roma Community, *Secretaría para la Comunidad Gitana*, created in 1985) promoted the creation of the *Centro Sociocultural Gitano* [Roma Sociocultural Centre] in 1989 (Junta de Andalucía 2015) and the *Federación de Asociaciones Romaníes de Andalucía* (FARA) [Federation of the Roma Andalusian Association] in 1988 (Martínez 2001). FARA was created in order to consolidate Romani actors under one umbrella body; it was funded by 16 Romani associations and in 2001 it already counted with over 50 member entities (Martínez 2001). Its mission was to manage the grants awarded by the National Government as well to advice the Regional Administration on the 'Roma issues' - since 1989 for the execution of the successful *Programa de Apoyo a la Escolarización Infantil Gitana* [Schooling Program for Roma Children] on behalf of the Regional Government (Junta de Andalucía 2012)[107].

State administration promoted, and consequently funded, the establishment of unified platforms which agglutinate diverse Romani organizations under one umbrella body. As one high level State official declared:

[107] It should be noted, however, that FARA ceased to exist, some 10 years after its creation, surrounded by scandals. Over ten people, including public administration staff (Ministerial level and Andaluz Government), bankers and members of the Board of FARA were arrested on the charges of mismanagement of public funds, diversion of over 300 million Spanish pesetas (some 1.800.000 euros) and laundering of money (Martínez 2001; *El País* 2001).

> "we provide incentives to Romani organizations to self-organize and federate in order to have more power and representativeness. From the perspective of the Ministry, we don't provide grants to small entities with small-scale, local projects; rather, we provide grants to actions with a broader scope, through federations" [recorded interview, ES_12]

This dynamic contributed, in part, to seeking a more unified and coordinated action by Romani actors. However, this could at times lead to a certain politicization of Romani agenda, with far-reaching consequences. The case of Catalonia region exemplifies this dynamic. Although a Federation of Roma Associations (FAGIC) was already created in 1991 and was successfully operating since its creation, another federation was created in 2004 – *l'Agrupació pel Desenvolupament del Poble Gitano dels Països Catalans*, AGIPCAT [Group for the Development of Roma People in Catalan Lands]. AGIPCAT brought together a number of Romani Catalan organizations, with a clear Catalan agenda, emphasizing the cultural difference of Catalan Roma from the non-Catalan Roma communities. The creation of AGIPCAT was influenced by the so-called "tripartite government" (a coalition of Catalan-Nationalistic parties, which governed Catalonia between 2003-2010), who sought to reinforce the Catalan identity of its population, including its historic minorities. In one of the interview, a Romani leader explained with relation to the creation of PIPG:

> "The Catalans! The integral plan and [diagnostic] study have prioritized much the topic of *Català* when the Roma are not defined by the Catalan, in any case by the *Romanes*, instead of Catalan if we have to define the language ... and Roma are culturally and the representation in Catalonia of Roma is very, very varied from Extremadura, Andalusia, Catalonia, Murcia ... (…)
>
> M: And a question, why you said that much focus was on the part of the Catalan you think it is due to political influence?
>
> J: Yes, obviously yes. Very clearly! Because it was *Esquerra Republicana* and '*parlar català'* theme was the clear element, and do not look further. And I have said, I have said this (…) That does not represent me because a Roma speaks Catalan! You can speak Catalan, that is very good, you speak Spanish, that is very good...but in any case, if we talk about representation of language, talk to me in *Romanes* language that is representing us, of 12 or 14 million in the world. So that was the priority." [recorded interview, ES_40]

During the fieldwork some interviews revealed that AGIPCAT was being favoured by the government, through funds and visibility (off-the-record). This lead to tensions between Catalan Romani organizations and Romani organizations which represented Romani people in Catalonia, and occasional rivalry between both sets of actors. One of the leaders of FAGIC, notably a non-Catalan Roma argued:

> "There is a big internal breach between Catalan and Castilian Roma. The Catalan think of themselves as *señoritos* [patrons], they think they are better. And for the Roma of non-Catalan origin they call us '*peluts'* [literally: 'hairy', in Catalan]. They create these divisions. And they don't feel identified by the leaders of FAGIC." [interview field-notes, ES_7]

This is oftentimes reflected by the dynamic of collaboration and solidarity, which in some cases follows the regional division. For example, one Catalan Romani leader emphasized that they principally maintain a network of collaboration among Catalan Roma organizations:

> “We, Catalans, we always had a lot of contact with each other. And with other associations as well, because of all the meetings and such…But contacts with others outside of Catalonia we don’t have.” [recorded interview, ES_42]

Curiously, some of my interlocutors argued that such division was in fact artificial, and the borderline or division between Catalan and non-Catalan Roma was not evident in the past. One Romani woman described how among the Roma in Catalonia the question of regional identity is debated:

> “If you were born in Catalonia, you are Catalan. I work in an environment of women that their parents came from Almería and...and nobody questions their *catalanidad*, Catalan identity. But for us they do, because we come from Andalusian origin (…). And this happens in the rest of the population of Catalonia. This division is not done well. If you really have been for 60 years here in Spain and your parents were immigrants, no one questions your Catalan identity. But for a Roma, yes, they question it.” [recorded interview, ES_22]

Currently, both federations, which operate within the same territory, exist and collaborate, however, both maintain different agendas.

Existence of parallel umbrella bodies within one region is not limited to the case of Catalonia. In fact, around the country there are examples of existing parallel and overlapping federations – such is the case of Valencia and Extremadura.

The strategy of consolidating through regional federations has significant advantages, not only for public administration, but also for the Romani associations. The regional federations often channel public funding through its centralized structures and distributes smaller grants to local Romani organizations (for example apply to Central Government in Madrid on behalf of their member associations). Through its constant and regular dialogue with public administration, they are also able to communicate with more actors, informing member organizations of existing opportunities for funding, involvement and participation. Consolidation is also important because it brings together a variety of actors with diverse agendas – such as Romani women’s organisations, Romani youth organizations, Romani Evangelical associations (in some cases even associations of non-Spanish Roma) – under one umbrella body. On the other hand, however, Romani federations play a dominant role and exercise big influence on their member associations – hence the choice of numerous entities to remain independent and autonomous, in spite of significant advantages of being federated. As federations at times also distribute funds, they necessarily enter into power relationships with their own members. In fact, the interviews revealed that sometimes the pressure and influence of federations over their members is excessive. One senior Romani leader argued that:

> “the decisions and the leadership of the Board [of the federation] should come from the associations, but it doesn’t happen that way. The Board functions independently; it’s a pyramidal structure, very hierarchical.” [recorded interview, ES_30]

Others are even more bold in their criticism, claiming that federations, instead of becoming structures which facilitate empowerment and participation, in reality do the opposite. One Romani woman leader states that:

> “the federations are silencing our voice.” [interview field-notes, ES_1]

According to her, the federations outrun their local associations - often substitute them in contact with local municipal powers, instead enabling the corresponding local organizations to enter directly into dialogue with local administration. There is evidence that some federations consume and execute projects, which, in principle, could be implemented by corresponding local organizations, and not the “headquarters” of the federations.

Furthermore, it should be noted that regional federations rely heavily on the local government funding. Often, federations sign partnership contracts with regional administration to implement policies or provide services to the community – and these grants are often significant[108]. Such financial dependency on public funds, while positive in the sense of shared management and implementation of Roma-related policies, also significantly undermines the independency of these federations, their capacity to criticize, keep the government accountable and/or become a watchdog entity. Additionally, regional federations are oftentimes responsible for channelling the funds to their member entities. For example, in the case of Ministerial funding coming from IRPF taxes, regional federations submit joint proposals on behalf of their members for a number of individual projects and actions to be implemented locally. Thus, the federations are in charge of funding for their member organizations, which may be used as a form of exercising power and control over its members.

While the process of consolidation of Romani actors on a regional level became widespread and remains a common practice, the same cannot be said about consolidation on a national scale. For over two decades, there was only one Romani national umbrella organization in Spain – *Unión Romaní* (UR), funded in 1986. There were other Romani organizations which claimed to operate on a national scale, however, only *Unión Romaní* was a federation, which brought together member organizations (Llopis 2003). UR, as a national federation, claims 94 federated associations “and over 18,800 members” (Unión Romaní, 2014) and is the biggest Roma organization in the country, also in terms of revenue (during 2014, its budget was over 2,000,000 euros). Despite that, by other Romani organizations it was

[108] For example, FAGIC signs pluri-annual contracts of collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Family of the Catalan government (*Generalitat*). For the years 2012-2014 they received 262.000 € http://www.gencat.cat/benestarsocialifamilia/convenis/trimestre3/0042_14_2012.pdf . Other departments also signed such contracts, for example, the Department of Justice of *Generalitat* (42.679 € in 2014, 46.370 € in 2015) or the Housing Agency (26.000 €).

often perceived as representative of only a part of the Romani associative movement[109], without the legitimacy attributed to the regional federations. For this reason, UR is perceived as one among many Romani stakeholders, interacting on equal footing with regional federations.

In fact, as argued by Llopis, for a number of years there was a certain tension and competition between regional federations and national Roma and pro-Roma entities: “The presence within the same field of regional-character entities and other national-scope entities has led to clashes between the two models, based on an understanding on behalf of the regional organizations that the task in that territory corresponds to the people who live there, without having to rely on organizations which are away from reality [of territories] where we are living.” (Llopis, 2003:41)

These tensions were solved thanks to creating a so-called *Foro*, a space hosted and moderated by Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, in which diverse actors – Roma and pro-Roma, regional and national organizations were able to interact and accord budgetary lines and their distribution (Llopis 2003). The *Foro* later became the State Council for Romani People in Spain (*Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano en España*); formally, this continues to be the only space in which UR, regional federations and other actors interact regularly. This consultative body, created by Royal Decree 891/2005 in 2005, brings together Roma and pro-Roma organizations and representatives of State Administration, providing an institutional framework for collaboration and dialogue between the State and the civil society working for Romani communities. Although the very creation of this consultative body is undeniably a step forward and provided a framework for collaboration and dialogue also between Romani actors themselves, it is strongly dependent on the State, and in fact, is led by State administration. This was the only platform which brought together Roma (and pro-Roma) actors on regular basis and fostered communication and collaboration between this actors, on a national scale. For a longer time, there was no other framework within which the Romani organization could strategize together *prior* to the meetings of the State Council for the Roma and coordinate their actions (although as stated by the members of the Council, they usually meet a day before the formal meeting in order to coordinate). One of my Romani interviewees, voiced his concern over this division of power on the national level:

> “And now we have a problem. It’s just that we all want to have the leadership. We could see clearly that all the different organs that we have created, the State Council for the Roma, Institute of Roma Culture, Advisory Council in Catalonia, Union Romani, they are 4 or 5 distinct powers. That in the end we are not united in the defence of our people, we are more for the division. This is a great deficit that we have today.” [recorded interview, ES_37]

[109] In fact, over the past few years, there has been a number of complaints of “some Romani organizations” (the data online doesn’t include names of individuals or organizations) over the alleged fraud, lack of transparency and nepotism. http://www.plataformacdt.info/las-asociaciones-gitanas-se-revolucionan-contra-la-union-romani/ According to some sources, the charges were presented by an ex-employee of UR. http://sevilla.abc.es/sevilla/20140717/sevi-denuncia-union-romani-201407162131.html Currently, these accusations are under investigation.

Another effort at consolidating Romani actors on the national level was the creation of platforms around specific claims and objectives. Such is the example of the Platform for the Statute of Romani People Rompien (*Plataforma por el Estatuto del Pueblo Gitano Romipen (gitanidad*)), created in 2000 (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013b). The Platform, which emitted a number of manifests and public announcements, brought together different actors Romani which shared the interest of establishing a Statute of Romani people in Spain, as a State legal framework regulating their formal status. This initiative, however, was not durable and sustainable and consequently didn't succeed in generating functional consolidating structure.

Increasingly, the need to create a more representative and independent body, which would consolidate regional structures on a national scale, became evident. Finally, such organization was created in September 2012 under the name *Plataforma Khetane*. Funded by regional federations and associations (currently *Khetane* has 14 members), it claims to represent 110 Roma associations (through its federated structures) from all over the country. Surprisingly, UR rejected joining this initiative, claiming that:

> "It's a parallel and overlapping structure, as there already is a national organization in Spain since 1986." [interview field-notes, ES_3]

As declared by its founders, the creation of *Khetane* responds to a deeper reflection regarding the limited efficiency of Romani organizations in terms of political leverage, the lack of coordination and strategic alignment between actors and levels of activity (national and regional) and the need to unite the already highly fragmented Romani associative movement. In its Statutes, *Khetane* founder define their mission:

> "[to] strengthen internal and external coordination of the Romani associative movement in the Spanish State through the complementarity of actions and representation before the public administration and other social agents" (art.5) (Plataforma Khetane 2015)

It's vision is to become:

> "a representative platform of all Romani associations in the Spanish state, coordinated with other platforms, and uniting the diversity of the movement in a common project, recognized as a partner for public administrations and other social agents, able to lead the development and the structuring of the Romani associative movement" (art.6)

However, some interviews revealed a different incentive for setting up *Khetane*. According to one of my informants, there were rumours that the IRPF funding for Roma inclusion will change its operational principle – from financing to regional entities through Autonomous Communities, to a more centralized system of financing on a national level. Such change would alter the principle of eligibility for requesting funding and place the regional entities, especially the federations, in a greater disadvantage. According to my informant, this was the real motivation behind setting up *Khetane* in the first place, in order to secure the ability to channel IRPF funding. Finally, these rumours turned out to be untrue as the IRPF system remained unchanged.

Nonetheless, whatever the reason behind establishing *Khetane*, the creation of such a body, capable of improving the coordination and strategic alignment of Romani actors, and ultimately increasing their perceived legitimacy and political leverage, is a positive development. However, it is yet to be seen to what extent *Khetane* will operate effectively.

Despite the unprecedented expansion of Romani associations and the numerous initiatives aiming at unification and consolidation of these structures, several problematic issues need to be highlighted. The outstanding growth in number of the Romani NGOs is not necessarily translated into a greater qualitative capacity or increased impact or efficiency, but rather may point to the fragmentation and diffusion of collective interests (Veermersch, 2006:103). The internal diversity of Romani communities (in terms of regional belonging, social and economic status, level of conservatism etc.) leads to an internal breach within the associative structures. This phenomenon is not solely a problem of the Romani mobilization but can also be traced throughout Europe. As confirmed by Gheorghe & Andrzej Mirga (2001:10): “the division is one of the reasons for the proliferation of Romani organizations in recent years and for their competing claims to legitimacy”.

Despite the increasing efforts to consolidate the multiple Romani actors, this process is still going on. In 2005, Méndez argued that “we cannot say that the multiple associations have agreed on some collective objectives. There is no common objective for the People, only for a municipality, for a family, for a patrigroup, and always limited by grants” (Méndez, 2005:67). Ten years later, the process of limited consolidation is still challenging, and the Romani associative movement continues to be fragmented and divided. Not only the growth in number but also the increasing diversification of different types of actors involved contribute to this fragmentation. One Romani leader explains this field of interaction based on a specific case of one municipality:

> “For example here, in Sabadell, now there comes *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*, who are priests, and install 4 priests without counting with the local Roma. All right. And then the Evangelic Church comes and creates FACCAT[110], and they create an association and they also install themselves in Sabadell. And this is what happens. That a traditional Romani organization, ours, now has to divide its strength.” [recorded interview, ES_31]

The expansion and diversification of actors becomes an ever-present challenge to be addressed, especially by Romani leaders themselves. The promise lies in the gradual process of self-reflection among Romani actors and leaders, and the realization of the need to further consolidate and unite Romani actors for common purpose and strategic action.

5.3.c. Unpacking collective identity frames

The “whom” variable ultimately refers to the collective identity frame crafted by the NGOs and its leaders for the use of ethnic mobilization; these collective identity frames are constructed through

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[110] *Federación de Asociaciones Culturales Cristianas de Cataluña* (FACCAT), member organiation of FACCA, based in Andalusia.

discourses and narratives which articulate who “we are as a group”. However, what should be noted is that the “whom” variable is complex and multi-level. The interpretation of this variable bears with it diverse aspects, which interplay mutually with each other:

1) “Whom” as a frame of “who are the Roma”, crafted by diverse (mainly) non-Roma actors as well as governments, through targeted policies and in social and public discourse.
2) “Whom” as a frame of “who we are” as a group, crafted by leaders, associations and other Romani actors. Is influenced by the frame “who are the Roma” but at the same time aims at influencing this frame, in order to provide a counter-narrative. This frame is commonly used in public discourse and targets external agents, as well as the majority society. Rather than “who we aim at mobilizing” this frame refers to “who we are representing”.
3) “Whom” as the frame of “who we aim at mobilizing”. This frame, essential in the process of ethnic mobilization, is crafted by Romani leaders and organizations, and aims at mobilizing constituencies – the Roma – towards greater engagement. This frame is directed within, towards the Romani community, but is also influenced by the previous frames.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the “whom” variable there is a discursive/ rhetoric level and a practical/ functional level. Not always the narrative of “whom” translates coherently into the level of practice; the differentiation between the level of discourse and practice (and between discourses in different settings) bears with it ambiguities, and even contradictions. Some of these ambiguities will be unpacked in this section, for example, with regards to the contradiction in the level of discourse and level of practice with regards to the immigrant Roma in Spain.

“Who are the Roma”: Exogenous discourses

In Spain, the status of Roma from a legal point of view is somewhat ambiguous. As it was underlined earlier, the Roma are not recognized officially as a cultural, ethnic or national minority or as “one of the peoples of Spain” – from a legal point of view the Roma are citizens in the same capacity as all other citizens of Spain. Thus, for years, the legal framework did not offer legal – or explicit – protection of Romani identity, culture, language, traditions as part of minority rights protection established in other countries.

There were attempts on behalf of the Roma to establish acts of political and institutional recognition of Roma as a minority in Spain (Open Society Institute 2002). Most notably, in 2006, a specific seminar on “Institutional recognition of Romani community in Spain” was organized in Madrid with an objective of stimulating an institutional debate regarding the possibilities of legal recognition of the Romani community on a national level. Despite numerous acts of institutional recognition of Roma, both by Autonomous Communities as well as by the central government in Madrid, the Roma until today are not legally recognized as an ethnic minority.

Due to specific legal constellation regarding treatment of minorities in Spain, the Roma are rather acknowledged as a minority through policies which target them as a group. The very establishment of Roma-specific programs and policies, as well as the National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain (2012-

2020), inexplicitly recognizes their existence as a separate group. That's why in order to understand "who the Roma are" from an institutional and governmental perspective, it is important to analyse those policies and programs which target the Roma as a group.

As it was explained previously, the institutional engagement with Romani communities has its origins in the 1950s in the work of the Catholic Church, and later on in the 1960s and 1970s through Church-related Roma Offices (*Secretariados Gitanos*). These *Secretariados* attended the problems of the Romani communities mostly from a social welfare-oriented perspective, and based on the conviction that the Roma – as socially and economically marginalized group – needs special attention and help. The difficult socio-economic situation of majority of Roma in Spain obliged the governmental institutions to develop specific programs which aimed at attending needs and deficits of Romani citizens, hence the establishment of first governmental institutions, committees and programs since the late 1970s. What should be noted in this context is the fact that since the first institutional engagement with the Romani population on behalf of public administration, the Roma were viewed, and treated, as a vulnerable and marginalized community; the public administration acknowledged the existing problems suffered by the Romani community without recognizing Romani identity and culture (this can be well traced in the very names of these interventions – such as the 1978 "Inter-departmental Commission for studying the *problems* which affect Romani community").

Such treatment – and consequently, policy approach – towards Roma in Spain is historically rooted. It should be noted that the first ethnographic inquiries, like those produced by Teresa San Román, were conducted to the demand of public administration and had concrete impact in subsequent policy formulations. In those early studies, the image of marginalized Roma was established, building a sense of urgency that requires concrete action. It is also worthy to note that these investigations were conducted in a historic moment when poverty and especially, the serious housing problems, affected a wider sector of the non-Roma population as well as the Roma in large cities. If we examine some of the studies and reports about Roma developed in the 70s and the 80s by scholars, pro-Roma organizations (most notably the *Secretariados Gitanos*) and public institutions, even the mere analysis of their table of content illustrates the underlying assumptions associated with Roma. For example, a 1978 sociological study conducted by the Institute of Applied Sociology in Madrid and commissioned by *Asociación Secretariado General Gitano*, among the most exhaustive of its time, includes only data related to broadly understood socio-economic situation of Roma (chapters on demography, family structure, housing, employment, education, legal situation, health, religious practice, image in the press and majority society perceptions). Not one section was dedicated to questions related to culture, history, traditions or ethnicity; in fact, nowhere will we find a definition or description of who in fact are the Roma – this interpretation can be drawn implicitly from the characterization of the object of study.

Since then, the general approach of governmental engagement with the Roma was based on a consensus that the Roma are an excluded and marginalized community and their special needs require special attention and partly separate services; principally approaching the Romani community

problematic from a perspective of normalization. This institutional approach is important as it provides an interpretation of the Romani community, inexplicitly defined as a vulnerable and marginalized group rather than as a viable ethnic and cultural minority, whose socio-economic situation is a consequence of complex historical and institutional circumstances rather than an attribute of a "culture". This is also a conclusion of one evaluation study of the Comprehensive Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia: "The creation of a special status for the Romani communities, and the specific focus on the socio-economic problems suffered by this community, runs a risk of reinforcing the negative stereotypes already predominant among the non-Roma majority. An underlying risk in welfare-services-based policies responding to Roma-specific necessities is that it may confirm the image of poor, dependent, socially marginalized communities, seen as a burden for the domestic social welfare system and incapable of resolving their problems from within the already existing social services." (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012:42)

The Report on the situation of Roma in Spain by the Open Society Institute in 2002 also offered the same conclusions arguing that the Romani issues are placed "exclusively within the social sphere, and it reinforces the public perception of Roma/ Gitanos as a socially marginalized group" (Open Society Institute, 2002: 354). In fact, the Romani leaders often criticized existing plans (including the national policy towards the Roma), viewing them "as a scheme for delivering social assistance rather than a strategic plan to protect and promote their rights and identity" (Open Society Institute 2002). For example, Ana Giménez Adelantado, a Romani scholar, in an document presented before the Commission of Social Policies at the Congress of Deputies in May 1999, argues:

> "The Roma are surrounded by polemics and 'problems'. Scientific and social polemics in which the Roma are contemplated as a problem. Problems and Roma always go hand in hand and at times they become synonyms." (Giménez Adelantado 1999:43)

The recently published study on Roma housing in Spain (López et al. 2014), also demonstrates how policy interventions targeting Roma, supported by "diagnostic studies", have inexplicitly framed the Romani population as deficient, gregarious subjects in need of protection. The language used in policy and academic inquiries results in a stereotypical portrayal of Roma; and "although the use of ethnonym is avoided, and a careful use is made of these expression that could be considered 'racist' or 'discriminating', the diagnose of the housing condition of the Gitano in the selected territories is based on the understanding of poverty as a specific 'culture'."(López et al. 2014) The authors rightfully conclude that "the definition of the 'problem' is part of the problem"[111]. The above mentioned study is an excellent example which illustrates the ambiguities of the definition of Roma as a target group, and the interplay between socio-economic and cultural dimensions attributed to this definition. This dynamic, in which scholarly and institutional writing on Roma implicitly supports negative and stereotypical portrayal of Roma, is a phenomenon traceable across Europe (Surdu 2014).

[111] "Palabras que excluyen. Recommendations", http://weproject.unice.fr/publication/recommendations-palabras-que-excluyen-spain

Furthermore, the engagement of public administration with the Romani issues through policies, strategies and plans, as well as in public discourse, leads to another interrelated aspect – that of homogenizing Roma. This can also be traced through analysis of policy documents on Roma (Bereményi and Mirga 2012;. López et al. 2014). The Catalan Plans, for example, refer to "the *Gitano* people" in general, which is an "equivalent to the term Roma in the European area" (Generalitat de Catalunya 2008: 18, 266). In fact, policy document on Roma employ a variety of terms, often as synonyms; they are commonly used arbitrarily (López et al., 2014:48):

Pueblo gitano	Gitano people
Comunidad gitana	Gitano community
Etnia gitana / cultura gitana	Gitano ethnic group/ gitano culture
Colectivo gitano	Gitano collective
Familias gitanas	Gitano families
Población gitana	Gitano population

Table 14. Terms used to refer to Roma in policy documents (López et al., 2014)

What is important to highlight is the fact that all of these terms are applied to the whole Romani population, treated as a unique and homogeneous entity. The use of such homogenizing terms is disregarding towards the different segments, sectors and the internal diversity of the *Gitano* communities in Spain. Although the National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020 acknowledges in its preamble that "in terms of the social situation, the Roma profile is heterogeneous and diverse; it is a common error to associate a given ethnic group to situations of material deprivation, social exclusion or self-exclusion" (Ministerio de Sanidad Política Social e Igualdad 2014), such pluralistic perception of Romani population in Spain rarely permeates into the public discourse.

Finally, it should be mentioned that policy documents on Roma often make reference to their historic presence in Spain, implicitly recognizing Roma as a historical minority. Remarks regarding Romani culture and identity are also oftentimes included in policy texts. Despite the fact that this is positive as it re-connects Romani people in the historical imagery of the Spanish population, the treatment of Roma to issues through the optic of exclusion and marginalization, only reinforces the interpretation of Roma's socio-economic situation as a characteristic element, or in extreme cases, as an attribute of a minority "culture".

It should be noted, nonetheless, that some institutional efforts to account for the lack of action aimed at cultural promotion and protection were also implemented in past years. Most notably, the Institute of Romani Culture (*Instituto de Cultura Gitana*) was created as a public foundation promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport in 2007. The mission of the Institute is to meet:

> "the legitimate aspirations of the Spanish Roma to achieve the full enjoyment of citizenship while fully respecting their cultural identity."[112]

This shift represent an attempt at finding a balance in institutional treatment towards the Roma, embracing not only "politics of redistribution" but more importantly "politics of recognition" (N. Fraser 2003). Thus, the dominant institutional discourse on Roma adopts not only language of problems related to marginalization and exclusion but also that of cultural contribution and a sense of common belonging as part of the Spanish society (notably, the motto of the Institute is "Spain is also Roma"):

> "the Institute of Romani Culture aims to achieve recognition of the contributions of Roma to the common cultural heritage and to value Roma as one of the central threads of the Spanish culture."[113]

"Who we are": Roma self-narratives

The influence of exogenous narrative of "being Roma", both those crafted by scholarship as well as by public policies targeting Roma, has been significant for shaping public opinion on Roma but also for the development of Romani self-narratives. Some Roma have been critical of these exogenous frames and underlined the importance of Roma having a dominant voice in shaping the narrative of who they are. For example, with regards to academic scholarship on Roma, already in 1994, assertive voices have appeared, advocating for Roma taking control over the crafted definitions:

> "Already between us there are Romani men and women with appropriate education to give opinions with scientific knowledge about our reality. The very concepts of 'emic and 'ethic' of culture, which until now where reserved for 'gadjo' researchers of cultural anthropology, are terms which some Romani men and women handle with ease in their writings. And it is necessary that these Romani men and women give authorized responses to the questions of how to adequately describe the culture in its totality, making the necessary distinction between mental and behavioural elements of its components." (Unió Romani, 1994:11)

According to some leaders, it is also important to challenge the ignorance of the majority society about the Roma, to craft narratives which explained what being a Roma really means. One of my informants, a senior Romani leader argued:

> "The greatest problem that I see is the ignorance. In the country we live in, there are people who are now my friends and who now have a great understanding of the concept of Roma, but before, due to ignorance, they had little understanding. Thus, we have to do dissemination, even programs, that will explain who the Roma is, what being a Roma means." [recorded interview, ES_38]

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[112] http://www.institutoculturagitana.es/inicio.php

[113] Ibid.

With regards to how Romani leaders craft the frame of "who we are" as a group, two inter-related elements can be distinguished, which commonly are intertwined in the Romani narratives: 1) cultural distinctiveness and ethnic identity and 2) historical inequality and discrimination.

It should be noted that the narratives of "who we are" crafted by Romani leaders and organizations appeared with the birth of Romani associative structures, that is, *after* the first program and interventions for Roma were created. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the perception of Romani populations' deficits, needs and problems has also greatly permeated the frames crafter by Romani leaders.

While the Romani actors underline the problems suffered by Romani community and emphasize the historic discrimination and persecution, they employ these elements as a *raison d'être* of the associations, which justify the need to become stakeholders in Romani affairs. We will see this process more clearly in the next section "what/why". What is important in this context is the fact that the Romani leaders commonly make reference to the inequality suffered by Romani communities, echoing the narratives of policy documents, legal texts, scholarship as well as public discourse. This narrative is commonly regarded as a "victimist discourse" in which Roma emphasize their status of victims of historical injustice – a long history of discrimination and persecutions. This victimism has often been denounced as counter-productive and stigmatizing, especially by younger Romani leaders (SOS Racismo 2000; Ministerio de Educación 2008). The case study of Romani youth participation in Catalonia showed that numerous young Romani leaders search for a new "frame" for their social and civic participation, shifting away from the victimist discourse towards a more positive approach (Mirga, 2012, 2014). Some part of Romani youth activists seek identity that builds around 'affirmative' elements like ethnic pride rather than negative one like victimization perspective. For example, a young educated Romani actives argued in a publication with regards to the Romani movement:

> "We need to stop being the victims and start being the judge and the jury. We need to start evaluating all that is happening around us and condemn attitudes that don't get us on the right track. And when I say to condemn, I refer to ourselves, not to look for the guilty outside, because that would continue to be victimization." ("What Roma Can Do," 2012:15)

This dynamic is also traceable across Europe with regards to the Romani youth mobilization. In view of a young non-Roma activist: "The question remains open how a movement can offer an identity and interest frame, which can overcome a "stigmatized" identity and "self-stigmatization", in order to empower Roma and non-Roma to recognize the root causes of social exclusion; thus, to establish an empowering mind-set that not Roma are the problem, but their marginalization and stigmatization in society". (Mack, 2012:29)

The victimization discourse can also have another dimension – that of positioning Roma between the axis of assimilation and cultural distinction. A senior Romani leader, on the occasion of commemorating "the Great Round-up" posted a note on his Facebook profile which ended with a clear distinction of what choices the Roma are forced to take:

> “In short, we, the Roma are a society, markedly stigmatized, with no representation in the institutions, powerless, hove to favourable winds in ‘acculturating’ intervention programs and always under the persistent threat of assimilation or expulsion. Or it is to cease to be Roma or it is that ‘they are the ones who discriminate’. Or we are to live under pre-established parameters or it is that we don’t know how to co-exist. Or we are like everyone else or we stop being what we are. Something has changed in the ‘Roma issue’. But not much. Don’t you think?” [Facebook of ES_2, 30 July 2015]

Beyond those elements related to socio-economic situation, marginalization and discrimination, the discourse about Romani people crafted by Romani leaders themselves is much more rooted in cultural and historic elements. Gunther Dietz identified common elements – such as cultural traits and characteristics – which differentiate Romani population from the non-Roma; these elements represent an emic perception of Roma “ethnic markers” (Dietz 2003):

- “a shared, although often weak "collective memory" of a common origin, a traveller tradition and a particular language;
- a social structure based on - mostly dispersed - patrilineal lineages - the so-called *razas* – [literally: races] which encompass about three to four generations and which for daily interaction are represented by localizable extended - mostly patrilocal - families settling together and sharing social, ritual and economic activities;
- a sense of localized territoriality, which ascribes rights and obligations to particular families and kin groups and which traditionally avoids day-to-day interaction with *contrarios*, i.e. antagonistic lineages or sub-lineages, thus conforming localized kin communities;
- an according tendency to combine the nuclear family as the main residence unit with the neighbourhood as settlement unit for the extended family;
- the continuous insistence on and expansion of kin relations through fictional kinship - i.g. using kin terminology among equals - and through ritual kinship, the so-called *compadrazgo* ties between godparents;
- a status and customary law system characterized by the authority endowed by age - elder *tíos* as spokespersons and decision-makers -, by gender - the sharp distinction between male versus female activities, rights and obligations - and by the subsequently hierarchical organization of age groups;
- the notion of "honour" as the nuclear concept of traditional morality and customary law, from which strong notions of "respect", on the one hand, and mutual solidarity and reciprocity, on the other hand, are developed;
- a strong sexual division not only of labour, but also of codes of conduct, in which the woman plays a crucial role as "bearer" and "warrant" of a family's "honour";
- an emphasis on certain *rites de passage* which mark the life cycle and which are considered to be ethnically distinctive with regard to the non-gypsy population;

- and a belief system which emphasizes strong kin relations with the ancestors and which derives particular norms and taboos from the cult of the ancestors."

Indeed, some of these elements permeate directly into the narratives crafted by Romani leaders in the context of Romani associative movement. When analysing the discourses (in public and through written speeches, articles etc.) as well as the information provided by websites of Romani organizations or their publications, there is a number of common elements which can characterize the frame of "whom" presented by Romani actors themselves:

- Common Indian origin and routes of migration
- Historical presence in Spain (often making reference to specific dates and places) and history of Roma in Spain (special references to *Pragmáticas* of Catholic Monarchs)
- International Romani symbols such as the flag, language, International Romani Day
- Romani culture and intangible cultural heritage (especially flamenco, recognized as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010)
- Romani traditions (values, respect towards elders, pride, solidarity, honour etc.)

Oftentimes, these elements are romanticized and idealized by Romani leaders themselves, especially with regards to Romani traditional values such as respect, honour and solidarity.

These narratives of "who the Roma are" by emphasizing in historical and cultural aspects provide a counter-balance to the policy discourse dominated by the socio-economic approach. Frequently, the Roma underline the historical presence of Roma in Spain, of approximately 600 years, demonstrating that Roma are as much part of the Spanish nation as their non-Roma fellow citizens. For example, throughout 2016 diverse activities and celebrations are being organized with the occasion of celebrating the 600 years of presence of Romani people in Catalonia (1415-2015). The proposal of commemorating the arrival of Romani people was elaborated by the Roma Advisory Council of PIPG in Catalonia and was subsequently welcomed by the Catalan Government. In a statement:

> "the Government of Catalonia considers that the celebrations of 2016 of the 600th anniversary of the entry of the Romani people in Catalonia is an exceptional opportunity to recognize and promote the values and contribution of Roma culture as part of Catalan culture."[114]

While making reference to history, Roma often re-claim historical justice and recognition of persecutions Roma suffered over various centuries. It is important to mention in this context that in the past few years a new tendency of recognizing and commemorating such acts of attempted genocide and persecutions of Roma have been evolving across the country. In 2016, two memorial plaques commemorating the victims of the so-called "Great Round-up" (*Gran Redada*, 30 of July, 1749)

[114] http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits_tematics/accio_comunitaria_i_voluntariat/accio_comunitaria/poble-gitano/600-anys-del-poble-gitano-a-catalunya/commemoracio-dels-600-anys-de-larribada-del-poble-gitano-a-catalunya-/

were installed in two Catalan cities (Pineda del Mar[115] and Lloret del Mar[116]) – an initiative organized by local Romani organizations and supported by corresponding local authorities[117]; similar initiatives took place across the country. As the date (30 of July) is only days apart from the 2nd of August, considered the International Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, the commemorating acts of both events – *Porrajmos* and of the "Great Round-up" are organized jointly, as in the case of 2016, when a National Remembrance Act was organized in Madrid[118].

Oftentimes, the Roma also underline the contributions of Romani culture and traditions in Spanish and Catalan culture, especially in the fields of music and dance (*flamenco, rumba catalana*). Additionally, however, these cultural elements are often intertwined with citizenship dimension, underlying that the need to cultivate, promote and protect Romani culture is an essential right of Roma as citizens. The example of "Basis of Romani Thought" published by *Unión Romaní* in 1994 is a good example of this narrative:

> "To be Roma is to feel Roma, to be part of a system of values that permeates the whole body and that conditions external perception based on an ancient culture. The struggle of the Romani community to enjoy fully their rights as citizens has multiple aspects, which range from the demand that we are respected and accepted as we are, carriers of this ancient culture and owners of our own collective destiny, to most urgent claims, which refer to the conquest of indispensable means to live with dignity." (Unió Romani, 1994:13)

The use of cultural and historical features in these narratives also serves to uphold the frame based on cultural distinctiveness. In fact, the vast majority of Romani organizations and leaders embrace an ethno-centrist discourse. This, of course, serves the purpose of ethnic mobilization, in which "groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity" (Olzak 2001). Therefore, emphasis in common cultural elements becomes a key aspect which differentiates Romani actors from other stakeholders, and provides a basis to claim greater ownership and representativeness in Romani affairs vis-à-vis other actors. As stated by one senior Romani leader in an interview:

> "In my humble opinion, all the Romani organizations should make a common effort so that all the resources destined for the Romani community would be managed and worked with by the Roma themselves in our country, because the impression that I have is that some pro-Roma organizations are the ones that represent our cause, and thus, all the Romani organizations

[115] http://www.fagic.org/ca/comunicacio/noticies/615-2015-07-17-07-40-51

[116] http://www.novaradiolloret.org/lloret-commemora-aquest-dissabte-gran-redada-antigitana-1749/

[117] The initiative was already proposed in 2014 by Romani leaders, searching for ways to commemorate this "attempted Holocaust in Spain", as it is often described by Romani activists. http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2014/noti2014-07-22.htm

[118] https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/117131.html

> should recuperate this sense of being Roma and this solidarity that was represented by our grandfathers." (Rondón 2003)

This approach is based on the belief that the Romani associative movement should be constituted and lead exclusively by the Roma themselves. This opinion, referred to as *cultural isolation* (García González 1999) is commonly encountered among the Romani leaders and the Romani community in general, however, "this attitude not only impedes the intended equality with any other Spanish citizen, but frequently generates the strengthening of the traditional stereotypes about the Roma" (García González 1999). He further argues that: "the progressive 'ethnicization' that has been given in the Romani associations in the last 15 or 20 years , has not promoted the social inclusion of Roma as much as could have done since reaffirming differences too often ignores what unites us, [and] runs the risk of falling into segregationist postures of new type" (García González, 2003:107).

Spanish Romani organizations and their leaders tend to subscribed to the pan-European discourse of Romani identity, echoing the achievements of the World Romani Congresses and following the narrative crafted by the International Romani Union. This is of no surprise and should be attributed, at least in part, to the figure of Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia. Ramírez Heredia is a founder, and was a vice-president, of the International Romani Union, constituted during the First World Romani Congress in 1971. As a member of the Spanish Congress since 1977 he became an influential spokesperson on behalf of the Romani community, both towards the majority non-Roma society as well as for the Romani community. Ramírez-Heredia became a spokesperson and an "ambassador" of Romani issues, loyal to the achievements of the International Romani Union, and enthusiastic about connecting the Spanish Romani population with its European counter-parts. Furthermore, it should be also noted that in the seventies, the Romani ethnic mobilization was almost completely non-existent in Spain and specific self-narrative and Romani claims-making still represented a certain void. The international developments of Romani activists, most notably since the World Romani Congresses, has had a significant impact in the development of Romani discourses in Spain which made reference to the existence of common Romani identity. Especially, since the creation of Spanish branch of IRU in 1986 (*Unión Romaní Española*), this pan-European narrative of Roma ethno-genesis has been promoted in Spain. Dietz argues that: "The flag, the symbol and even the anthem of the transnational Roma movement have step-by-step been incorporated by several *gitano* associations, whose identity horizon originally had been much more localist or regionalist, through the UR campaigning and conscience-raising activities." (Dietz, 2003:106)

High-visibility events of international scope organized in Spain in early 1990s, most notably the 1994 1st Roma Congress of the European Union as well as 1997 1st European Congress of Romani Youth contributed significantly to promotion of the pan-European dimension of Romani ethnicity, both towards the general public through media attention it received, as well as among the Romani population in Spain.

Currently, while the vast majority of Romani organizations and leaders symbolically and rhetorically embrace the pan-European discourse of Romani identity (Roma as a trans-national minority) –

celebrate the 8th of April, identify with the Romani flag – but also condemn acts of violence and discrimination against Roma across Europe, this is rarely applied in practice when it comes to Romani migrants in Spain. Romani organizations often repeat the information about Roma living in all countries of Europe and their common and collectively shared Indian origin and historical fate, however, discursively the emphasis is placed on the history and presence of Roma in Spain, as a distinct sub-group of the Romani people. Rarely, will we find discourses which embrace Romani migrants living in Spanish territory – information about their presence and history, their countries of origin, or their current situation in Spain is largely missing.

When inquiring about this in my interviews, I have oftentimes heard affirmations of seeing the immigrant Roma "as our brothers" but it rarely has translated into specific action. Additionally, arguably this sentiment is often declared publicly but it does not represent the real sentiments of the people. One of my interviewees, a senior Romani leader argued:

> "There were no attempts at bringing the immigrant Roma with the Calós. The real perception is different. In reality there is a lot of antagonism between the native and immigrant Roma." [interview field-notes, ES_2]

A Romani leader argued:

> "you can work together, the problem is, we must be clear that the problems we have as Romani associations is mainly the language, eh ... then also the barriers that comes from knowing that we are Roma but we are not culturally ... I mean, I I am Catalan, for example, and have nothing to do with a Romanian Roma, right? Eh ... it is a different culture, and then also the structures, right?" [recorded interview, ES_4]

There are, however, some instances when this has happened in the past, for example with Portuguese Roma in Spain. One of my informants, an older Romani leader, argued that the current situation – of increasing presence of Romanian Roma – reminisce of those instances in the past:

> "There were more than 1000 Roma from Portugal, other Spanish, some from Hungary that lived in Cerdanyola. They were already there for some time, and they were living in barracks. So we organized a group of people and we went to manifest in front of the City Hall with these banners, saying: 'the Roma are also human'. So we hung these banners on the door of the City Hall and next to the national highway and we argued that the Roma have to live in better conditions, that there is not justice…We have to understand that these Romanian Roma that come here now are Roma just like us, they are our brothers. And if they steal now, we were also stealing during the times of Franco…They have no other option, no other option is offered to them. (…) We can't and we shouldn't say that you are from one place and he is from another place. We are all Roma. We don't have borders and our land is the one where we live. The Roma we are all Roma and such divisions can't exist among our people." [recorded interview, ES_31]

Nonetheless, in the current context, the non-Spanish Roma remain largely invisible[119] and unattended by the collective frame of "Roma", even though, their belonging to the same ethnic group is rhetorically acknowledged. The increasing flow of Roma from Central and Eastern countries becomes a challenge for Romani organizations and their leaders – whether their activities (but also narratives) should include those newcomers and, if so, to what extent? Some scholars argue (Sordé Martí et al. 2012; T. Sordé et al. 2014) that immigrant and native Roma have successfully build alliances, especially among the women. Although some instances of such collaboration can be identified, they remain anecdotal and sporadic. Contrary to these authors, I would claim that there is an evident contradiction in the level of rhetoric promoted (notably the pan-European Romani ethnicity discourse) and the level of practice.

On a discursive level, but also in public campaigns and speeches, the Spanish Roma should accommodate or take a position in the face of this new reality. For the moment, however, the Romani actors are reluctant to embrace Romani immigrants and acknowledge them officially, especially in the framework of their own activities and programs; they also have not addressed their arrival in any meaningful way or undertaken a role of representing interests and rights of migrant Roma. In fact, there is a visible level of distrust and distance between both Spanish and foreign Roma – although they may perceive themselves as part of one European Roma diaspora on a discursive level of "imagined communities" and symbolically, in practice the autochthon Roma tend to ignore, and at times reject, the immigrant Roma; the contacts between Spanish and migrant Roma are very limited, and Spanish Romani organizations failed to include the newcomer Roma in any significant way. One of my informant, a Romani woman activist articulated this contradictions:

> "What 's going on? Well, really the Romani organizations here only want to act on the issue of indigenous Roma. We are leaving the Roma from the East forgotten and this hurts us because it also divides as a people and if you really want to sell unique, Roma flag, we want to sell the same language, we want to sell the same identity... it is incompatible working apart." [recorded interview, ES_22]

The rhetoric of pan-European Romani identity, therefore, is challenged by the evident lack of solidarity between Spanish and foreign Roma. The inability to communicate through a common language, evident cultural differences and stigmatization of migrant Roma in Spain in public and media discourses can also be considered significant factors which contribute to this mutual distance and lack of solidarity. According to Laparra and Macías, the reaction of national Roma is even at instances hostile towards the newcomers: "In some of the discourse generated by Gitanos, there is even a xenophobic undertone when referring to foreign Roma, not unlike other reactions of Spanish society

[119] It is worth noting that the immigration of Romani people to Spain dates back many decades. Historically, there has been an important in-flow of Portuguese Roma as well as Roma from CEE countries. Many of them, second or third generation of migrants, are now considered "Spanish Roma" and have successfully integrated among the native Romani communities, although their foreign national background is often remembered and mentioned. This topic remains largely under-studied and invisible, both in scholarship as well as in the context of discourses of Romani ethnic mobilization.

at large when dealing with this influx of immigrants. From the perspective of Gitanos, the arrival of Easter Roma, who are often very marginal and heavily stigmatized, can be considered as a threat that can jeopardize the improvements that Gitanos have experienced in regards to living conditions and integration (or acceptance, at least).” (Laparra & Macías, 2009:239).

In this regard, I would argue that, generally speaking, the Romani associative movement positions itself publicly against all acts of racism against Roma, against all instances of anti-gypsyism, disregarding whether the injustice is committed against native or immigrant Roma. That was the case, for example, when People’s Party (PP) run a (successful) municipal electoral campaign in 2010 in Badalona on anti-Roma discourse, targeting explicitly Romani migrants. The leaflets and posters which accompanied the campaign and featured picture of immigrant Roma caused quite a controversy and made its way to the press. Romani organizations (especially UR and FAGIC) responded assertively against the campaign; FAGIC along with other entities even denounced Albiol, the PP candidate, in court (Cortés 2016). Thus, publicly, Romani entities crafted a narrative of solidarity and support towards the Romani migrants. Nonetheless, as I tried to examine subsequently, these voices of solidarity and support have not been translated into direct contact between Romani organizations and the immigrant Roma in that locality – no bridges of direct communication, support or help were created. The principle of solidarity was broadly promoted in public discourse, without being *de facto* practiced.

Furthermore, the incoherence between the discursive/rhetoric and practice level is especially surprising if we take under consideration the increasing contacts and collaboration between Spanish Romani entities and those from other European countries, a process which has been visibly increasing over the last few years. The ongoing collaboration and dialogue with Roma from other groups, however, has not provided an impulse to engaging with Romani migrants in Spain.

On the other hand, while rhetorically Romani political discourses tend to embrace references to international dimension of Romani identity (through symbols and historical references), at the same time there is a certain level of regional identification which becomes incorporated into these narratives. The regional identification (such as Catalan Roma, Andalusian Roma etc.) and differentiation between Roma from different regions has its logic rooted in Spanish political system. As it was explained earlier, minority cultures and “nationalities” in Spain can only be acknowledged in relation to specific and definable territory, that is the autonomous regions (article 143.2 of the Constitution). The chance for cultural recognition of Roma is greater and legally achievable in the context of these territories, rather than nationally – and in fact, has been achieved in a number of places (such as Catalonia, Andalusia, Aragón). Therefore, Roma oftentimes underline their specific status within that territory (as Roma) and as part of that regional culture (as, for example, Catalan Roma). This level of regional identification of Roma is also beneficial for those regions - after all “the Gitanos have had an important symbolic role in the rhetorical construction of both national and regional identities” (J. de D. L. López et al. 2014). For example, Andalusia has been defending the concept of historical uniqueness of the region in order to justify the demands for greater political autonomy. In this process, the *Gitano* culture has been identified as one of Andalusian distinct features: “one of the strategies adopted by the Andalusian ethnopolitics has been to provide a

differentiated picture of 'what is the Andalusian' respect to 'what is Spanish'. This operation has been mainly carried out using three types of 'cultural resources': (1) the 'festive legacy', especially symbolized by the Holy Week (Easter); (2) the 'gitano legacy', which is strongly linked to the flamenco music; and (3) the 'morisco legacy', which relates to an alleged ancient Andalusian multiculturalism." (López et al., 2014:16).

In Catalonia, Catalan Roma frequently underline their distinctiveness and their identification with the region and its people. In connection to the campaign for Catalan independence, numerous Romani leaders declared themselves publicly as supporters of the "yes" vote, manifesting themselves as supporters of Catalan independence. One of the founders of FAGIC, Antonio Salazar, frequently underlined that "the Roma want independence", a declaration which was circulated massively in the media[120]. In the media reports, it was argued that FAGIC, as a representative Romani organization in the region, supports the pro-independence parties and are mobilizing the community to vote. The declaration caused quite a turmoil among some Romani leaders, members of FAGIC, who are non-Catalan Roma living in the region. The declarations also questioned the apolitical nature of the entity. In an interview with the staff members of FAGIC in November 2014, I was told "off-the-record" that:

> "Last week there was an article in la *Vanguardia* newspaper in which Antonio Salazar declared that FAGIC and the Roma 'are independentists'. The article caused a lot of problems. In the end, we had to do a press statement saying that we are apolitical and that we don't support any political party." [interview field-notes, ES_44]

Addressing the Romani community? Discourse of collective identity vs. the constituencies

While the frame "who we are" serves more the purpose of increasing visibility of a more authentic (as coming from the Roma themselves) narrative about the Romani population, in order to counter-balance the excessive socio-economic approach of policies and the dominant stereotypes and prejudice towards the Roma, and ultimately, targets the discursive space outside of the Romani community (targeting institutions and majority society, primarily), the frame "who we want to mobilize" is directed more towards within the community itself, and should serve to provide greater support and participation of the Romani constituency. The underlying question here is: who is mobilized? And, contrary, who is not mobilized and for what reasons? A similar question was raised during interviews, most notably by one senior Romani leader:

> "to what extent did we manage to make the Romani grassroots feel identified (with the Roma movement)?" [interview field-notes, ES_3]

[120] http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/lleida/20141106/54418955141/asociaciones-gitanas-catalunya-9n.html ; http://www.lasvocesdelpueblo.com/federacion-gitana-de-cataluna-pide-movilizarse-para-exigir-lo-que-queremos-independencia-de-cataluna/ ; http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/lleida/20160517/401848132810/antonio-salazar-lleida-primer-museo-gitano-europa.html

In fact, the inability to mobilize Roma beyond providing them with services, has numerous times been outlined as a major weakness of the Romani associative movement (Méndez, 2005). This section will provide some insight into the level to which the narratives crafted by Romani leaders resonate with their constituencies.

Fragmentation within the associative movement, incipient criticism towards leaders and organizations, as well as the limited constituent basis and their direct involvement and participation may point to shortcomings in this regard.

In a controversial article, José Heredia Moreno, a Romani sociologist, defined the limitations of the Romani associative movement and its discourse (Heredia Moreno 2010). According to him, "we have been hearing the same thing for the past 20 years" and the discourse of Romani leaders is repetitive, superficial and outdated. He writes:

> "This 'hearing the same' by the audience and this 'saying the same' from the stands, in my opinion, basically consists of two types of speeches, the 'culturalist' and the 'purely technical'". (Moreno, 2010:10)

According to him, on the one hand the Romani leaders tend to misuses the concept of "culture" with two interrelated, and negative consequences. Firstly, it is a "pre-modern discourse which abuses the term 'culture' to defend a kind of traditionalism of a monolithic, exclusive 'lost paradise' which is increasingly distant from the varied existences of Spanish Roma" (ibid.:11). And secondly, the references to culture which draw from anthropology (often "wrongly chosen and misused") help to eradicate the many differences between Roma "in favour of a difference that separates the Roma from everyone else" and is often incompatible with notions of citizenship and democracy (ibid.). These antiquated discourses rooted in essentialist perspective of culture, are outdated and do not reflect the pluralistic reality of the Romani people; they are also potentially dangerous in as much as they may lead to excessive separation (hence, segregation) of Roma from the rest of the society. On the other hand, the "purely technical" discourse draws strongly from social sciences and policies, echoing its jargon, semantic, priorities and approaches. It becomes an adapted discourse of public administration and scholarship, which, in itself, is tainted by "sophisticated paternalism, in which any Roma is treated, in the best case, as a 'native informant', and at worst as an 'managed' [object]" (ibid).

In his concluding remarks, Moreno argues that "the Romani associative movement doesn't count with an efficient discourse capable of mobilizing its representative basis – the Roma" and calls for a critical reflection and a renewal of the discourses of Romani associations and their leaders, in order to re-connect with the reality they claim to represent. According to him, there is a need for a "spectrum of discourses":

> "These discourses can be elaborated from very diverse instances, but they will not work without efficient mechanisms of debate and consensus in the centre of which are the non-associated Roma. Otherwise, we will continue to suffer from self-referential discourses,

> detached from reality to which they pretend to correspond, and useful uniquely for the spurious interests of an impotent oligarchy." (Heredia Moreno, 2010:13)

Indeed, many of the interviews, both with Romani leaders as well as non-associated Roma, echoes some of the criticism raised by Heredia Moreno, but also by others scholars and thinkers (Méndez, 2005; Oleaque, 2003). One of younger Romani leaders in Catalonia argued:

> "The Romani discourse is empty, it lacks content. (…) We need to begin to construct a discourse that is coherent and concrete, that has more vision. (…)" [interview field-notes, ES_4]

More concretely, on the one hand, there is a general perception that the discourses of some Romani associations has not changed or evolved in time – rather, there is a level of "learned discourses" which are repeated incessantly, and over time, become superficial and ineffective. Lack of a critical reflection and a careful analysis, which would transform these discourses into significant frames with a potential for mobilizing Roma in a greater degree are often the root-causes of this stagnation. Consequently, many of the non-associated Roma tend to view the associations and their leaders with a certain level of distrust and distance. As stated by one non-associated Roma:

> "We have some associations that live anchored in the 70's and 80's, where the people have not qualified to be able to work and access the grants…And what happens? The Roma live stuck in the past, in the Romani movement, they want key things for our people but don't have the tools to empower them." [recorded interview, ES_22]

The discourses of Romani associations and leaders are perceived as being detached from the every-day reality, and as a result, do not reflect the interests, opinions and preoccupations of Romani grassroots. Furthermore, the associations provide limited channels for direct participation and involvement of the community and rarely remain accountable to the people they claim to represent. One senior Romani leader argues:

> "I say it again that the Romani associative movement is created but with not comprehensive interests. And so all of you know, we will not fool ourselves, that everyone will 'move the ember to his sardine' and goes collecting, that is to say, I have a grant of 4, and two market stands so I pull ahead and if there is a fight or something I go, right? But the Romani people don't have any idea, there are no boards [of the associations] as there should be, etc." [recorded interview, ES_31]

One young Romani student, disengaged form the Romani associations, argued strongly that Romani NGOs remain distanced from the communities, and consequently, Romani constituencies have no idea about their work:

> "The truth I do not feel represented because they do not do a good job of communication to reach more people and because they function as management offices and not as a movement representing a group of population, that is, there is no participatory process in which Roma can feel represented by someone in whom we have previously deposited our trust. The

> association functions as a bureaucratic machine about which the majority of Roma in Spain know nothing. Especially, the biggest problem is that there is no transparency on ways to access representative positions: I think in this sense that Romani associations are undemocratic." [written questionnaire, ES_29]

One of my informants, a non-Roma working with Romani street vendors in Catalonia argued:

> "The NGOs don't bring with them the people. The people don't know about the associative movement. 99% of the Roma who came to my office didn't even know what FAGIC was." [recorded interview, ES_8]

Some see this as the main reason why many Roma view associations with distrust and, consequently, do not participate.

> "I think that we should change everything in relation to the participation. We complain that there is no participation but then we don't inform about what we do. We talk about implication but we don't leave the door open, in terms of the organization, functionality." [recorded interview, ES_23]

This comment points to the major shortcoming of Romani associations and their leaders with regards to narratives – while Romani actors craft narratives for the public, targeting institutions, policy-makers and the majority-society, they rarely construct narratives which target the community itself. Commonly, Romani leaders engage with the public outside of the Romani community, preoccupied about the need to justify the increasing commitment with Romani affairs or to challenge prevailing stereotypes or prejudices. But there are few spaces and occasions where the Romani leaders engage with the community itself, beyond those who are already part of the associative movement through projects, associations or initiatives. Romani leaders assume the existence of a collectively shared identity – after all, the Romani ethnicity is a lived every-day reality and Roma *know* they are part of the same ethnic group. Nonetheless, the leaders don't construct frames of what Mary Bernstein calls "identity for empowerment" (Bernstein 2008). She writes: "content of identity for empowerment is critically important for social movements because it affects who is mobilized and what issues are deemed valid and pursued" (ibid., 293). In case of Romani associative movement in Spain, however, the importance of addressing the community itself through powerful discourses and narratives, with an objective of mobilizing greater support and participation, is left unattended. In an interview with an ex-board member of a large Romani federation, I was told:

> "Yes, we recognize that when we were there, as a board, we were not so much focused on mobilizing the people. Because it is very difficult; they are not interested. And we had other priorities." [interview field-notes, ES_7]

In fact, there are very limited occasions or spaces where the Romani leaders interact and can address issues of common relevance together with their constituency. The Romani leaders tend to speak *about* the Roma to those outside of the community (institutions or societies) but rarely speak *to* its own community. Public events and celebrations (in the framework of festivals or commemorations) are the

rare occasions when un-affiliated Romani population participate and can witness first-hand the working of Romani associations; oftentimes, it is such occasions when Romani leaders address their own community in discourses. Such limited occasions of interaction with Roma who are not yet associated or involved in any way in the associative movement, are the celebrations of the International Roma Day, 8th of April[121]. These annual celebrations, hosted across Spain by Romani associations, are the few venues in which Romani leaders can *address the community*, and may articulate common grievances, ideas and hopes. For example, a Romani leader spoke of the importance of maintaining Romani ownership of the celebrations of 8th of April. He argued:

> "So I want to tell the Romani associations and federations and all the Roma who are not part of them, that you never allow anyone handling this day as if it was not ours. We the Romani men and women are the protagonists of this day and no one else, and it is ourselves who must create manifests and read them, and demand all that we have the rights to, and we are the hosts of this day."[122]

Typically, the celebrations of 8th of April have an institutional component, and a celebration which takes place on river banks. Members of the Romani community, those un-involved in the daily activities of Romani associations are invited to join and not uncommonly they are provided transport to participate in such events; oftentimes, there is also a joint dinner or barbecue to which the participants are invited. Romani community members are, unlike other events, the audience which can be addressed actively. Such discourses which have the Romani communities as its main audience are of immeasurable importance as they have a potential of activating the agency of individuals and communities for a common cause: "Through public narrative, social movement leaders—and participants—can move to action by mobilizing sources of motivation, constructing new shared individual and collective identities, and finding the courage to act." (Ganz, 2010:527)

Nonetheless, a critical look on these celebrations show that although the un-involved Roma are participating, rarely are the discourses pronounced to them specifically. A review of a number of discourses[123] pronounced by Romani leaders on the events of 8th of April typically make reference to the current situation, emphasizing existing discrimination and lack of equal opportunities, but also taking stock of the advances made and goals to pursue in the future. These occasions give an opportunity to un-affiliated Roma to participate and to hear discourses – or the underlying rationale – of work of Romani ethnic mobilization actors. Even if such discourses do not include a "call for arms"

[121] To a lesser extent also the annual commemoration acts of the Memorial Day of Victims of the Holocaust (27th of January) and Roma Holocaust Memorial Day (2nd of August). Other events, such as festivals or cultural celebrations may also provide a relevant venue.

[122] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2016/noti2016-03-21f.htm

[123] Many of them are available online. For example, the website of FAGIC includes media reports of annual 8th of April celebrations, including the text of discourses, videos and photos. For example, 2015 report is available here: http://fagic.org/es/quehacemos/eventos/587-8-dabril-dia-internacional-del-poble-gitano-2015

component pronounced to them specifically, it represents a chance of involving Romani constituency although sporadically and superficially.

It is much more rare that organizations create spaces of dialogue with their constituencies that aim explicitly at sharing information, renewing social commitment with those whose interest they represent and build mechanisms of shared ownership and accountability to the community. Nonetheless, such events also do take place. For example, a Romani association *Kale Dor Kayiko* from the Basque country, organizes "family gatherings" (*acto familiar*) which serve as informal community assemblies to discuss common issues and mobilize non-associated community members to join the association. In an e-mail they argue:

> "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
> After these past difficult years for 3rd Sector Entities, we first want to publicly renew our commitment as a Romani association with the future of our people; secondly, to share new ideas, services and projects we are developing to ensure that future and also why not give the opportunity to join us our "car" and support us so that we can develop all the good ideas we have." [e-mail communication, 21.06.2016]

Implicitly, the Romani community is often perceived by its leaders as a passive mass of disengaged individuals who are unable to engage themselves, and who are more concerned about their everyday struggles than a greater collective good of the Romani people. The Romani leaders need to speak for the Romani communities and represent their interests because the communities themselves are unable to do so. Some of my informants argued that there is no civic consciousness among their Romani constituencies:

> "My dream is that the people themselves have this total and absolute consciousness of what they want. The people should think: 'what can I do for my association so that it will common and individual benefit.' I wish that the people would have the capacity to reflect more. That they would dictate the association. The consciousness, so they would participate more in the public life and have the consciousness of what they want and where they want to go." [recorded interview, ES_30]

Consequently, the community is not viewed as a sources of potential for change and of power which needs to be activated. This contributes to the perpetual disengagement of a part of Romani individuals, who feel ignored and unmotivated.

Others, however, acknowledge that the lack of engagement of Romani community members is partly the fault of the leaders themselves:

> "I have this dream which moves me and which can be realistic. The thing is that first of all we have to be honest with our people. Until now we haven't been honest. Demonstrate to our people, and the [Evangelist] Church has demonstrated it, that the Romani associations are

> working for the benefit of the Romani people, that there are no other interests.” [recorded interview, ES_31]

This is magnified also by the type the fact that Romani leaders craft narratives for the audiences *outside* of the community. In their narratives, leaders speak about the Romani people in a rather homogeneous way, using generalizing terms such as “the Romani people” or “the Romani community”. In narratives crafted for the audience of policy-makers especially, which become strategic frames in political advocacy efforts, the leaders often centre their discourses around claims, justified by the inequalities, marginalization and discrimination against Roma. A type of a discourse which has been described earlier as “victimist” becomes a strategic choice in order to legitimize claims for policy interventions or financial investments into the Roma inclusion initiatives. This “public expression of self” (McDonald 2002), which although unintentionally, often itself becomes a generalized portrayal of Romani people, is frequently challenged by the community. Some, echoing argument laid out by Heredia Moreno, see that some of these discourses are outdated and do not reflect the plurality of Romani lifestyles, experiences and points of view. The younger generation is especially critical of this and oftentimes claim that they don’t feel represented or identified by the existing Romani associations:

> “The associations do not reflect the interests of the Roma, and this is made obvious by the scarce participation of Romani youth in the associative movement. It is easy to involve a determined type of a Roma that is searching for courses or work, and that is interested and ambitious, but the reality is that the great majority of young Roma do not feel represented nor supported [by the associations].” [written questionnaire, ES_19]

A high-level non-Roma expert on Roma argued that this is also a result of an outdated narrative, which doesn’t correspond to the increasing diversification and plurality of Romani communities today:

> “The Romani leaders need to change their discourse, their narrative. The movement doesn’t attract youth, who now are living a different life, different mentality… the Roma are realizing their own heterogeneity… all of this should be reflected in the process of renewal of the Romani associative movement.” [recorded interview, ES_13]

Undoubtedly, however, this process of “renewal” is ongoing for some time, especially thanks to the salience of Romani youth and Romani women movement in Spain, who successfully question dominant, and simplistic narratives of the main Romani organizations, in favour of a more balanced and diversified narrative. In 2005, Dietz wrote: “The growing internal diversity of the Spanish gitano community in terms of social class, region, gender and religion must be recognized by all actors. The frequent criticism directed against the pan-Roma movement as a mere ‘elite phenomenon’ of the new ethnic intelligentzija over-simplifies the political and cultural potential of contemporary Roma ethno-genesis. Only in the last months, several bottom-up organisations and coalitions have been created to channel an articulate the interests of the young and highly educated gitanos. Innovative Initiatives such as the *Asociación de Mujeres Universitaras Romís Andaluzas* (Amuradi) and the *Asociación de Universitarios Gitanos Españoles* (AUGE) are not reducible to merely ‘ethnicized’ expressions of ‘hidden class interests’, but symbolize the ‘coming out’ of a new generation of gitanos, who combine

an ethnic consciousness vis-a -vis the payo world with peer-group interests with regard to the elderly gitanos." (Dietz 2005)

Ten years later, his reflections still hold true. Since then, the type of narratives, as well as type of Romani actors which have emerged in the arena of Romani affairs, have diversified greatly. The increasing internal diversity of Romani communities and the salience of heterogeneous actors also leads the existence of competing narratives and claims. That is quite visible with regards to the Romani women associations. The objectives and interests of Romani women initiatives tend to concentrate on gender equality, emancipation and increasing participation. On the other hand, however, some other actors (notably men of older generation) occasionally oppose. For example, one of my informants, a senior pastor and a leader of a local NGO argues:

> "The man is the one who decides. The role of women is for her to take care of the education of her children. (…) In fact, some NGOs failed because they saw themselves overflowing with some women. And how will a young Romani girl of 25 years old, like you, challenge and impose to an old man like me. These women speak a different language. (…) We have a woman in our board but she has to act according to our traditions." [recorded interview, ES_10]

On the other hand, especially, Roma of younger generations create their own frames, based on their experiences and perspectives. One young Romani activist and scholar argued that:

> "the Romani intellectuals don't identify with the discourse of Romani associations." [interview field-notes, ES_14]

According to her, the Romani discourses don't reflect the opinions of an increasingly growing number of educated Roma in Spain. That's why these young educated Roma often opt for creating their own platforms and initiatives, which correspond better to their more critical perspectives. Some of these initiatives lead by young Roma as Agora Roma[124] (proposed as a think tank, recently created in 2015) or platforms such as *El Desván del Museo*[125] (The Attic of the Museum) become spaces which generate and channel a different narrative. Some of these new actors often tackle "taboo" issues or previously invisible sectors of the Romani population. Most notably, the gradual salience and increasingly visibility of Roma LGBT initiatives and associations, such as *Ververipen*, can be treated as a sign of change. A founder of this initiative explained in an interview:

> "*Ververipen* first started as a secret group on Facebook to bring together Romani LGBT people from different places. Then we decided to bring it to public. This process was something very emotional. These people needed a group of mutual support." [interview field-notes, ES_18]

One Romani LGBT leader argues that:

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[124] http://www.agoraroma.org/

[125] http://www.eldesvandelmuseo.com/

> "LGBT Romani activists already exist. Anyway, we have a very reductionist trend with Romani people, especially in Spain, as if there were no Romani people outside of our territory or did not have their own lives and movements". (Arencón 2015)

In this process, these activists do not only claim LGBT rights; rather they aim at promoting a more diverse and plural narrative of Romani-hood, that appreciates the difference rather than homogenizes the Roma people. One Romani LGBT activists stated that:

> "I have my way of being a Roma and my way of being gay. What's more, I claim that identities are very diverse and that typecasting people by how they identify is to miss out what is most beautiful of them: their personality". (Arencón 2015)

The director of Institute of Romani Culture in Spain further comments that: "We intend to not standardize the Romani culture; on the contrary, show its breadth and its broad spectrum and diversity." (Arencón 2015) The efforts of Roma LGBT activists are bringing positive results, and their discourse on diversity and plurality begins to permeate to mainstream discourses of the Romani associations, also among its senior leadership (ibid.).

The gradual emergence of diverse and plural frames poses a challenge to establishing a unique mobilizing frame which would become a potential force for empowerment and mobilization of Romani basis. Will it ever be possible to establish a unique, broad identity frame to mobilize all Roma? According to one high-level expert on Roma:

> "The Roma are as plural and heterogeneous as the very society in which they live in. They will never feel represented by one actor" [recorded interview, ES_13]

In this regard, an establishment of a unique narrative seems illusionary. What is more evident, and increasingly become a dominant tone in the Romani narratives, especially those which emerged in the past few years, is that the narrative of Roma-hood should be a broad, all-encompassing frame, which accept plurality over a generalized image of the Romani people. Provided such a frame will be broad enough to accommodate existing diversity of Romani communities around issues of ample collective interests, the potential of mobilizing constituencies may be increased.

Finally, another dimension should be incorporated into these considerations, namely that of mixed ethnic background. It is well known, although considerably under-studied, that there is a considerable proportion of mixed marriages – among Roma and non-Roma (although it should be noted that more commonly Romani men marry non-Roma women than vice versa). In fact, as argued by one of my informants, a Romani woman from Andalusia:

> "The Romani community is very mixed and it always has been. Many times the non-Roma man who get married to Roma even seem to be 'more Roma', there are more visible. In Andalusia no one is analysing the percentage of blood you have." [interview field-notes, ES_6]

Another of my informants, a non-Roma expert, closely involved in the work of FSG, argued:

> "This is what I saw, functions, works well – we are moving towards a plural society and the Roma live mixed with the non-Roma. In León in 1983 there were two Roma married with non-Romani women. And now, I was there during the summer, and all of the elders had children or grand-children with mixed marriages. In 1983 we wouldn't imagine this!" [recorded interview, ES_13]

There are numerous Romani leaders who themselves are of mixed background and even more those who have married outside of their group. Furthermore, numerous young Romani activists are themselves of mixed background. To what extent do these discourse of ethnic distinctiveness resonate with them? How is this diversity of realities – of mixed ethnic background – is incorporated and reflected in discourses crafted by Romani leaders? This aspect is generally marginalized and invisible in public discourse or even in the context of informal exchanges and discussions among Romani leaders.

5.3.d. "The objectives are to fight for our people…" Articulated objective and aims of mobilization

One of my Romani informants, a senior Romani leader, when asked what are the objectives of his association answered:

> "The objectives are to fight for our people, fight against school absenteeism, help to find employment, support the Romani women, the youth. In general, all the objectives of all the associations are to fight for our people". [recorded interview, ES_38]

But what does that really mean? And how much does this broad definition of "fighting for our people" is reflected in the work of other Romani entities?

The variables "what/why" should be understood as frames of "what is the objective of mobilization" or "what are we fighting for" – this is the frame of collective interests. It provides an overview of the list of articulated grievances which become driving forces and principle collective claims for mobilization. There are the underlying motivations which are at the heart of ethnic mobilization.

Both "why" and "what" variables are inter-related and inseparable as they are two faces of the same coin. These frames of collective interests can be differentiated between two levels, as suggested by Benford and Snow (2000), into "diagnostic frames" and "prognostic frames". In this case, therefore, the "diagnostic frame" is the "why" – the identification of a problem, the underlying reasons which justify activism; and the "prognostic frame" is the "what (for)" – which provides ideas for what is required, or claims which, if fulfilled, will enable an improvement of the situation. Both levels are more easily delineated in theory than in practice; often both "what" and "why" are intertwined and mixed together.

According to Méndez, "we cannot say that the multiple associations have agreed on some common objectives. There is no common objective for the *people*, but for a locality, a family, a patriarchal group, and always cut down by the grants" (Méndez, 2005). While it may be true that the diverse Romani

actors have not *agreed* on common objectives, the analysis of their stated aims can be grouped around a number of similar issues, which oftentimes overlap and are inter-related with each other. Furthermore, and contrary to what is claimed by Méndez, in some instances or for some concrete goals, Romani organizations have managed to unite forces, as will be shown in this section.

By analysing statutes of Romani associations, their mission statements and discourses I try to define, characterize and analyse the diverse scope of objectives articulated by Romani actors of ethnic mobilization. For this purpose, numerous documents, especially statutes, were analysed. Below is a sample of declared objectives: I include 5 different types of Romani organizations in order to reflect the heterogeneity of Romani organizations present in Spain, namely: national-scope organization, regional federation, regional sectorial federation, local cultural association and local sectorial association (with international outreach)[126]. The table below shows the declared objectives of each of those organizations as written in their statutes and/or websites; the wording and order is maintained as in original.

Table 15. Articulated objectives of Romani NGOs

NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANIZATION	**SECTORIAL FEDERATION (WOMEN)**	**REGIONAL FEDERATION**	**LOCAL CULTURAL ORGNIZATION**	**LOCAL SECTORIAL ORGANIZATION (YOUTH) WITH INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH**
• The social and cultural promotion of the Romani people in order to achieve equality with the majority society, as well as the defence and adapting their customs and traditions in modern times • The promotion and help to each and every one of the Associations of the organization and collaboration with all public and private entities in which specific actions	• Promoting social inclusion to achieve real equality of rights and duties, while promoting the maintenance and the uses of customs of the Romani community • Being an organ of support among women's associations on issues related to the Romani people, in solidarity with the rest of the Roma world • Encourage participation in the	• Encompass all Roma associations in Catalonia to strengthen the Roma representativeness, develop a common line of action and support member associations • Take the role of sole interlocutor with the Regional Government, Local Government and Central Government regarding intervention plans with the Roma • Ensure that the actions of the	• To promote and maintain a space of co-existence and public spirit (*civismo*) • To defend the recognition of equality within multicultural majority society • To work for the diffusion and promotion of Romani culture • To defend the most important values of Romani culture	• Create spaces for young people to be active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, self-organization and participation. We believe in joint efforts for the establishment of mutual trust and respect between young Roma and non-Roma. • Contribute with our effort and resources to the fight against racism, xenophobia and marginalization

[126] I include a description of the type of actor but not its name, since the statutes are generally not publicly accessible. Each description belongs to a specific, existing NGO and maintains the original wording and order.

contemplated by the Romani people • The study, promotion and maintenance of Romani culture, language, history and customs. • The strengthening of international relations with Romani associations around the world, exchanging experiences and projects with them. • The elimination of all forms of racism or marginalization to achieve the goals of justice, pluralism and freedom so clear to Romani people	association of Romani women • To be spokesman to society and public administration of the main lines for the general coordination of actions • Non- profit, not linked to any political party and have no religious beliefs • Ensure that the affiliated associations have the skills necessary to participate effectively in the process carried out and thus achieve a more equitable conditions.	authorities respect the interests of Roma • To promote activities and initiatives to promote coexistence between Roma and non-Roma in Catalan society • Defend, promote and protect the rights, language, history and culture of the Romani people. • Encourage civic participation in Romani neighbourhoods by providing support to various associations and Romani organizations, encouraging, in this way, the associative network. This creates a mechanism of involvement of Romani people to build their own future • Intervene with any xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes towards the Romani community.		faced by members of ethnic and cultural minorities living in Spain. • Promote the participation of young Roma in all social spheres. • To provide elements of reflection that allow young Roma decide the validity of certain aspects of their culture in the society. • Assess the contribution of Roma to Catalan, Spanish and European cultures in the context of intercultural dialogue. • To support other organizations that work in defence of human rights.

As seen from the example above, there are numerous elements which coincide in all or most of the statutes in the sample, namely:

- "Cultural promotion", recognition and defence
- Participation ("enable participation", "create spaces for participation")
- Representation ("to be spokesman")

- Fight against racism (or "promote a space of co-existence")
- Social inclusion ("achieve equality")

Additionally, for the umbrella organizations (federations – regional and national) the objectives also include assistance and help offered to member entities. In consulted documents (such as the statues) of other Romani NGOs most of these elements are also present, although not necessarily all of these components are present or articulated explicitly.

Analysing these declared objective, for analytical purposes, I group them into four broader axes, namely:

- <u>Representation and participation</u>
  - These objectives refer to the role of Romani associations as "spokesman" representing Romani interests and as a tool which guarantees a "Romani voice" – in contacts with public administration but also as a space which enables active civic participation of Romani individuals
- <u>Equality and social justice</u>
  - These objectives refer to the scope of action which guarantees the respect of rights guaranteed to Roma as citizens, through equal opportunities or access to public services. The point of departure is the citizen status and the fulfilment of objectives regarded in public policies as "social integration", targeting principally the socio-economic disadvantaged situation of Roma
- <u>Anti-Discrimination</u>
  - These objectives principally target the existing racism, prejudices and stereotypes against Romani people. They may include both proactive and preventive objectives (such as countering stereotypes by creating positive narratives) and reactive objectives (such as intervening in cases of discrimination)
- <u>Cultural recognition and promotion</u>
  - These objectives refer to the scope of visibilizing, promoting, protecting and maintaining broadly understood "Romani culture". They refer to fostering cultural distinctiveness, contributing to development and cultivation of distinct Romani ethnic identity

Some of the goals – or these "collective interest frames" - can be defined as separate objectives, other are complementary and inseparable interests, but at times, an existence of competing approaches can also be identified.

Another way of understanding the scope of activity – and their underlying objectives – is through an inquiry into the classification of registered Romani associations. The registries of (regional and national) associations require the entities to define their character (sports club, cultural association, religious association etc.), scope of work and action (minority integration, women, etc.). The classification mode is different depending on the regional government. Nonetheless, with regards to

Romani association, in broader terms, the declared profiles of associations can also be grouped into three main types:

- Social assistance associations – namely those, which among its objectives aim at alleviating the socio-economic grievances of Romani communities
- Promotion and defence of rights – namely those, who assume the role of defending the rights of Romani people
- Cultural associations – namely those, which aim at promoting, fostering and sustaining Romani arts, culture and traditions

Nonetheless, it is more common than not that associations, beyond their declared profile, work around numerous issues and are involved in all broader areas, simultaneously or in different moments in time. In fact, as seen from the above sample, Romani associations tend to define their objectives broadly and do not commit to pursuing only one type of objectives (for example only to anti-discrimination). Furthermore, this division can be considered nominal as all of these are closely intertwined – cultural preservation can be considered a basic right while socio-economic marginality can be treated as a result of rights violation or a consequence of historical and present-day discrimination. This especially refers to bigger organizations or federations, which tend to work around all of these issues at the same time.

In this context it should be also underlined that the combination of a diverse set of objectives, and indeed of diverse approaches, can at times be counter-productive or potentially risky. Mixing up socio-economic approaches with cultural distinctiveness may at times lead to misinterpretations regarding the real root-causes of the problems. Demonstrating the vast panorama of problems suffered by the Roma may lead to assume that they are inherent or characteristic of Romani communities and are part of a certain "Romani culture". This is quite evident in the context of education ("Romani culture as incompatible with formal schooling" (Abajo and Carrasco 2004)) or in common public opinion that "the Roma do not want to integrate" (Buezas 1990; Pastor 2009). Romani leaders themselves at time contribute to this interpretation indirectly and unconsciously, by juxtaposing education of Roma with the risk of "*apayamiento*" (becoming like non-Roma) or by arguing that through the gradual process of integration Roma are abandoning their culture and traditions. Objectives of Romani associations often reflect this, for example when arguing for the "normalization of Romani community" (*Asociación de Promoción Gtiana de Burgos*). That is why it is of increasing importance that the Romani leaders frame the question of Romani *problematique* in the context of wider social phenomenon such as social inequality, institutional discrimination or unequal opportunities, providing a more intersectional perspective of impact of class, gender and ethnicity on the specific situation of Romani population. In one of the interviews, this was clearly highlighted:

> "I think that the associative movement has to change. The associative movement in the XXI century needs to attend more global problems." [recorded interview, ES_11]

Some organizations differentiate between two parallel sets of objectives – those which target the majority society and those which target the Romani community specifically, as for example the case of

Asociación Gitana "Camelamos adiquerar"[127]. This local association in its statutes define two parallel sets of objectives:

> "To cooperate in all possible ways directly and indirectly, in the personal, material, social and cultural evolution of Guipuzcoan Roma and to provide social assistance and care to disadvantaged people. To carry out this purpose, the Association intends to carry out its activities in two ways:
>
> A) Towards society in general, creating a more positive image of the Romani community among the majority, which promotes acceptance and proper coexistence, requiring intervention of entities and public and private bodies, competent and specialized that match the objectives of the Association.
>
> B) Towards the Romani community, promoting its evolution to achieve real equality of rights and duties with other citizens."

However, more often than not, Romani organizations combine both sets of objectives, without providing a specific and differentiated focus depending on the type of target group, whether Roma or non-Roma population.

It should also be acknowledged that these three broader areas of activity correspond to the three axis of interventions and policies which target Roma, accessed both through Roma-specific plans and strategies as well as through mainstream funding schemes and policies:

> 1) Socio-economic interventions (four key areas of the National Roma Integration Strategies, namely housing, education, employment and health; biggest focus of policies for Roma). For example, the PIPG 2009-2013 defines 13 specific measures for the strategic line of "social action and citizenship", among them facilitating access to social series or to subsidize projects of community mediation.
>
> 2) Recognition (mainly through funding cultural activities and acts of institutional recognition, listed in the annex). For example, the Spanish government acknowl3dged the importance of protecting and promoting Romani culture through the creation of the Institute of Romani Culture (formally approved through a decree in 2005).
>
> 3) Non-discrimination (the component of non-discrimination was introduced as a transversal objective within the framework of the Spanish NRIS. For example, for 2014, 18 measures were planned and implemented specifically in this field).

Therefore, it should be of no surprise that the aims articulated by Romani associations oftentimes are dependant from existing or emerging opportunities, especially with what regards public funding. This is especially evident when analysing how the broader frames of collective interests are translated into

[127] http://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/contenidos/asociacion/asg021451990/es_def/index.shtml

specific activates and projects of the Romani NGOs, which will be discussed in the following section “how”.

These broad axis of objectives remain valid over time – the Romani associations today still provide claims based on these broad areas, as they did decades ago. After all, the socio-economic inequality still is an evident fact, discrimination continues to be part of everyday lives of the Roma and cultural demands remain valid. Nonetheless, one of my Romani informants claimed:

> “The objectives are different. This is the progress. A lot of very good things were done in the past, and now we are doing very good things and we hope that in the future as well.” [recorded interview, ES_38]

I would argue that my informant refers to specific objectives – and their implementation through concrete action – rather than broad objectives of social equality or non-discrimination. What has changed is how these objectives are articulated and how they adapt to emerging opportunities or become timely with regards to other developments. Arguably, there is a constant interplay between public policies and institutional circumstances; external, international developments and articulated demands of the Romani associations. Skilful adaptation of Romani leaders to these shifting contexts becomes a determinant factor for the potential success of these articulated frames (more in the section “when”). For this reason, it is important also to acknowledge the dynamic dimension of the frames of collective interests – while the broad aims remain the same, their articulation as well as incorporation of new discursive elements becomes evident. For example, although the importance of employment opportunities, and especially with what regard the market (peddler sellers) in Spain has always been present, with the transposition of a European directive (so-called “Bolkenstein directive”) which regulates the markets, Romani associations quickly reflected the ways in which the new legislation negatively affects Romani people. This process will be described in detail in the section “when”. Likewise, the question of economic crisis, which disproportionally affected Romani people, has also become an important element of Romani public discourses. In an interview, a senior Romani leader argued that the crisis has a serious impact also on the Romani associative movement; he argued:

> “Right now, with the crisis, the situation is much worse. There is significantly less money for Romani NGOs. Some Romani organizations died and don’t exist anymore because of this.” [interview field-notes, ES_7]

The question of the impact of economic crisis has been also frequently mentioned in public discourses or statements. For example, in 2010, a president of a Romani federation has been publishing extensively about the crisis and its impact on Roma, calling on the implementation of European commitments with the Romani people.

> “But the economic crisis has also contributed to worsening of the Romani drama with the strengthening of xenophobic parties, having spread further excluding postulates within a number of politicians and rulers. Paradoxically, this has been particularly alarming in the context of the ‘European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion’ a year after the Summit of

> Cordoba, where specific commitments for the inclusion of the European Romani community were acquired."[128]

As the policies develop, so do the associations. With the gradual inclusion of elements such as gender dimension of public policies or specific focus on youth, these elements are also incorporated into the discourses of the Romani associations. For example, in one interview with a Romani activist, I was told why it is important to focus more explicitly on youth though specific actions:

> "The youth should be much more participative and the majority of actions [of the movement] should be focused on youth, because the youth is the change in power. It really depends on the youth to determine whether the image of the Romani culture will change a little, a lot or at all." [written questionnaire, ES_24]

This is also tractable regarding the language used in policy-making on Roma and how it is adopted by the Romani associations– for example, as educational interventions became among the pillars of Roma-targeted policies, the question of "fighting against absenteeism" or "improving school performance" (*rendimiento escolar*) became commonly articulated explicitly among the objectives of Romani organizations. The jargon of policies as well as popular buzz-words of policy-making (for example the ever-popular concepts of participation and "empowerment") are too included in Romani discourses.

What should be acknowledged in this context, however, is that although the Romani associations tend to respond and reflect trends in Roma policy-making as well as echo existing or emerging opportunities with what regards funding, they may not always respond to the changing realities, or rather, choose which changes they want to respond to. For example, when analysing the objectives of Romani associations what is striking is the almost absolute lack of aims which include immigrant Roma in Spain. The raising number of Romani migrants is evident and receives increasing attention both by the media as well as by public institutions. One could assume that Romani associations would too respond to this new social reality and would turn their gaze to the question of Romani migrants. In reality, however, the vast part of Romani organizations (with scarce exceptions[129]) ignore the phenomenon of Romani migration to Spain, and exclude Romani migrants from their own collective struggle.

Additionally, the articulation of specific set of objectives is often reactive rather than strategic. Rarely do Romani leaders reflect on emerging opportunities or shifting political landscapes strategically, assessing the viability and timeliness of specific claims. This process is oftentimes intuitive and responsive to specific developments, such as in the case of seeking more respectful media reporting on Roma (see sub-section "discrimination") or protesting against racist remarks or behaviours. To an

[128] http://www.gypsyworld.org/index.php/es/multimedia/documentos/1194-editorial-la-hora-de-la-verdad

[129] One of the few projects which work with Romani migrants is the "exchange between women" project of Romani women organization Drom Kotar Mestipen. http://dromkotar.org/es/?page_id=66

extent, the very response of Romani associations to individual cases of hate speech or stereotypical reporting provide relevant visibility and thus makes these responses timely.

On the other hand, however, this process of strategic alignment of interests is slowly emerging, especially with regards to political processes and elections. In 2015, in the context of municipal and general elections held in Spain, some Romani organizations and leaders strived for greater inclusion of Romani candidates and Romani agenda, with diverse results (numerous Romani association, for example FAKALI[130], KAMIRA and UR issued press releases and statements). Some of these published press statements are very critical of the result. For example, FAKALI, issued a bitter statement following the elections in 2016:

> "After nearly 40 years of democracy it was reasonable to expect that the most appropriate and fair for treatment of Romani population would have evolved positively with the inclusion of Romani men and women on electoral lists, achieving the necessary and fair momentum in spaces of participation and decision-making. So we find no explanation or justification for the continued denying of entry of Romani men and women in the parliaments. And not because it is prohibited, but because the dominant ethnic majority ignores the basis of citizenship by reinforcing the idea of "what is not recognized is not valued, and what is not valued, rejected".[131]

It should be noted that increasingly such statements are also making its way to majority media[132]. In fact, the very fact that these attempts received media coverage demonstrates the ability of some leaders and organizations to stimulate public debate and generate visibility around these claims.

Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that although the broad frames of collective interests are generally similar among the vast majority of Romani organizations (as in operating in the broad axis described above), the way they are articulated or how they are transposed into specific aims, vary depending on the type of actor. Increasingly, especially among the recently founded organizations, there is a tendency for more specific, specialized objectives of concrete sectors of the Romani population (youth, women, students, LGBT etc.). Visible differences can be traced depending on the size of the organization and their scope of activity, as well as depending on their leadership with regards to age, gender and level of education.

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[130] For example, FAKALI, prior to the General Elections in Spain in 2016, made an analysis of what each of the political parties declares with regards to the Romani people: http://www.fakali.org/91-fakali/424-el-pueblo-gitano-en-el-26j

[131] http://www.fakali.org/91-fakali/425-el-pueblo-gitano-en-el-26j-2

[132] For example: http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/12/11/actualidad/1449846936_944848.html , http://www.elconfidencial.com/elecciones-generales/2015-12-17/los-politicos-escuchan-a-gais-e-inmigrantes-pero-a-los-gitanos-nos-ignoran_1122091/ , http://www.vice.com/es/read/candidata-gitana-y-feminista-de-podemos-008

For example, Romani women organizations have developed a specific set of objectives and demands which position the question of gender equality at the centre. Carmen Méndez argued, based on a comparison of various Romani associations created in different localities and points in time, that the general and specific objectives of these entities are not different from each other at all (Méndez, 2005). They also operate in broader areas of equality and justice, socio-economic amelioration or non-discrimination, but do so from the perspective of Romani women; these objectives also tend to be much more specific than in the case of the vague frames of collective interests of the general Romani associations. Furthermore, it is important to underline that among the objectives, Romani women organizations tend to include those which are targeted towards within the Romani community rather than the external majority society or public administration. Such aims demonstrate the willingness of Romani women organizations to work with women from their communities and to challenge the dominant position of men by creating spaces of participation for Romani women within their communities, for example “to activate participation of women within the Romani community”, to “demand the presence of Romani women in all organs and associations which are dedicated to contribute to the development of our people”, “to promote participation of Romani women in the associative movement”.

Romani women activists are also skilfully reconnecting their struggle to that of majority society, arguing that the sexism and machismo are as much part of Roma culture as they are of the majority society culture:

> “it’s not that it’s part of our culture, it’s that we live in societies where patriarchate is still existing, and the struggle of women is still to fight for that equality. Logically, machismo exists in the Romani culture because we have lived in the same society” (Beatriz Carrillo, FAKALI).[133]

By re-connecting objectives of Romani women associations with other collective struggles of women in general, Romani women activists also join forces with other women initiatives. A most visible example of this is the fight against violence against women. For example, FAKALI, among many other Romani women organizations joined forces in the national manifestation against gender violence which took place on the 7th of November 2015. In their statement, they argued that:

> “The reality makes clear that, as much as the media insist repeatedly and unethically to proclaim stereotypes and prejudices alluding to the ethnicity of the victims or executioners, domestic violence knows no ethnicity, age, religion or socioeconomic status. It affects women universally.”[134]

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[133] https://www.facebook.com/fakaligitanas/videos/571688022984937/ Con motivo de la inminente conmemoración del Día de la Comunidad Gitana en Andalucía (22 de noviembre), el programa Solidarios de RTVA / Canal Sur Andalucíanos dedica un reportaje que destaca los actuales retos de las mujeres gitanas: "Luchamos para que nuestra voz sea cada día más fuerte y sobretodo para que seamos visibles".

[134] http://www.fakali.org/91-fakali/403-fakali-contra-la-violencia-machista

Through such statements, Romani women organizations fulfil a two-fold objective: on the one hand, they reconnect the struggle of Romani women to those of women in general in the context of the majority society, and on the other hand they deconstruct stereotypes associated to Romani culture. Romani women movement, in Spain but also in European context, have employed the concept of intersectionality, which enables them to explore the interplay between diverse aspects of identity, especially the dimensions of gender and ethnicity. Of this process, scholars write: "By using intersectionality approach, Romani women respond to the limitations of 'ethnicity' but also to the limitations of 'gender' as the exclusive categories of interest to them. Intersectionality is the approach that has helped more people become reflective to the hybrid structures of inequalities Romani women face." (Jovanović, Kóczé, and Balogh 2015)

Most progressive Romani entities go beyond the issues of gender to incorporate additional dimensions of identity. For example, the Association of Romani Women for Diversity (AGFD) on the occasion of participating in Gay Pride Parade in Alicante in 2016, coined a motto which was repeated numerous times, and was published extensively on their Facebook profile:

> "My sexual identity doesn't detract from my cultural identity." *(Mi identidad sexual no resta mi identidad cultural).*

They further published on their profile:

> "(…) After all this imagine that these people besides being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender are Romani people. Discrimination against Romani people who are homosexual leads to destruction. It is not enough to have no territory, to be persecuted, colonized, exploited, exterminated, pushed to live in segregated neighbourhoods, studying in substandard schools; They also have to reconcile with all the problems involved in this 'machista', patriarchal and homophobic society, by belonging to the collective of LGTBI." [28 June 2016 AGFB, Facebook]

This example illustrates how this rhetoric process facilitates the construction of narratives which invoke these diverse identity dimensions and re-connect their struggle with others, without restricting themselves only to their ethnicity.

In this context, it is important to underline that unlike the examples of Romani women organizations described above, in general the Romani associations in Spain rarely pursue the strategy of framing Roma-specific claims with broader interests of the majority society. In fact, Romani organizations and their leaders rarely connect their specific demands and interests with more general social trends, but rather tend to define their struggle exclusively around ethnicity. Thus, the strategy of so-called "frame alignment process" is rarely pursued (Benford & Snow, 2000:624). In this regard, Romani women organizations have become pioneers in championing the frame-alignment, by re-connecting their struggles with that of other women. In recent years, this strategy became to transcend to other relatively recent initiatives, especially those of young Roma or sectoral initiatives such as the LGBT.

Finally, it should be noted that as the Romani actors multiply and increasingly diversify, following more specific agendas or sectorial interests, inevitably there are competing or event opposing frames and

narratives. While Romani activists and organizations may share a broader set of objectives (such as equality, non-discrimination or cultural recognition) they may not always agree on specifics ways in which these objectives should be accomplished. Some differences can be traced depending on the leadership profile of those articulate these objectives, especially with regards to gender, age and educational level. The question of gender issues, and more specifically, the discourses of Romani women organization were already recalled previously. It is worth highlighting the internal division with regards to how gender equality should be pursued among different types of Romani women organizations.

In Spain, a similar process of critical reflection is also taken place among numerous Romani youth initiatives. Beyond the emerging Romani youth associative movement in Spain, which oftentimes challenges the dominant narratives of the older generations, some points of disagreement can also be traced among other sectorial Romani movements, especially some women and LGBT initiatives.

Representation as a rationale for ethnic mobilization

According to Méndez (2005) the only common trait of all associations is their role as “valid intermediaries between the grassroots and the administration”. Indeed, all of the associations are created with the broader objective of “representing Romani interests” as numerous organizations declare, or more specifically, representing the interests of their members or associations. Some Romani organizations rather than declaring such broad role tend to represent interests of specific sectors of the Romani population, such as women, youth or LGBT individuals. For example:

> “Facilitate dialogue of Romani associative movement with public administration, social organizations and the general population.” (Objectives, *Federación Gaz Kalo de Navarra*)

> “Transmit the problems and necessities of the Romani People.” (Objectives, *Asociación Promoción Gitana de Burgos*)

> “To be a spokesman, to society in general and to administration, of the priorities to be carried out with the objective to coordinate general actions.” (Specific objectives, FAKALI)

The very *raison d’être* of associations has been and continues to be the conviction that Romani population remain under-represented in virtually all spheres of public and social life. In the words of one Romani leader:

> “The real democracy is when everybody participates and everyone is represented. The whole Spanish society is represented. But us, the Roma, we don’t even have that.” [recorded interview, ES_7]

The associations, thus, become the necessary organizational vehicle which is capable of representing collective interests and claims of the Roma and became a viable vehicle which facilitates participation. In numerous interviews, especially with Roma involved in civil society, the question of the important role of Romani NGOs was often argued:

> "We know the associations as an element of participation but also as a backbone of the entire Romani population. We don't have town halls, we don't have our own administration, we don't have anything that fundaments the Romani population. For this reason, I think that the Romani associations can be authentically useful, as useful tools. The establish the bridge of communication." [recorded interview, ES_2]

Others claimed that the Romani associations are a necessary step towards reaching greater levels of participation and representation, also in mainstream institutions. In words of Pedro Aguilera:

> "As the Roma reach this real equality of opportunities, we will be able to use other means to channel our interests. Until then, the associations will be indispensable always when the Roma will continue on the levels of poverty, analphabetism, unemployment tec. For the moment, the associations need to act as lobby so that the claims of our people will not be forgotten". (Aguilera 2000)

Aparicio (2011) wrote about changes which scholarship on minority/ immigrant associations have experienced over the last few decades. She argues that in the 1990s scholars mostly viewed the role of immigrant associations as service-providers. It was later on that scholarship begun to acknowledge the civic participation dimension. According to him, the political integration and representation of minority groups is carried out by associations and that it has positive impact on the process of inclusion of those minorities (Aparicio, 2011:14). Indeed, Aparicio's writing also applies to the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain.

When we analyse the process of birth and development of Romani associations we can quickly conclude that not only did the scholarship on minority associations shifted – it is rather that the role of these associations shifted over time as well. Not only do the associations become useful structures through which the administration can channel services to the community, and assist the State in implementing policies for Roma – they, more importantly, become structures which legitimize and channel collective claims of Roma in the first place. Many of the first Romani associations were born through community action or civic engagement of Romani individuals in response to specific needs or incidents in those local communities, as will be demonstrated in the final section of this chapter.

Their birth was generated not necessarily only thanks to emerging opportunities but due to very concrete grievances experienced by those populations. Over time, however, Romani associations shifted their role to that of representation, assuming the role as mediators rather than community-organizers. Already in 1999, Teresa San Román argued that the Romani associations "quickly abandoned community action, and settled instead for achieving mediating function between political and administrative institutions, on the one hand, and the marginalized Roma on the other" (San Román 1999). Since then, Romani associations have managed to strengthen their role as legitimate and recognized stakeholders, which represent the "Romani interests" or the "Romani people". Currently, the overwhelming majority of Romani associations, whether local organizations or umbrella-bodies such as federations, state among their objectives or missions that of "representation"; "representing interests of the Romani community"; or "being the voice of the community" is also commonly included

in the associations' statutes. Although, interestingly, some organizations declare that they do not represent the people but rather its own members. For example, a leader of a national Romani NGO argued:

> "We do not pretend to represent the Romani people. We represent our member associations". [interview field-notes, ES_3]

Of course, representation is a tricky thing, especially when we evaluate the "representativeness" of those who claim the role of representatives. John Gaventa brought to the attention the need to analyse whose voices are heard (Gaventa 2004) and consequently, whose voices are being silenced or ignored. Scholarship on Roma has numerous times dealt with the question of representativeness, or lack thereof, in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization (Vermeersch 2006; McGarry 2012; van Baar 2011b; Tremlett 2009; Andrzej Mirga and Gheorghe 2001; Barany 2002b; Barany 2002a; Kovats 2003). Beyond providing a deeper discussion into the reasons of this situation or the very nuances of representation and representativeness, it is worth to highlight here that the dynamics described above by scholars with regards to Roma across Europe, to a great extent equally apply to the case of Spain.

Two problematic questions with regards to the role of associations as "representatives of the people" should be highlighted.

On the one hand, as associations increasingly tend to focus on representation, it necessarily marginalizes their function as entities capable of mobilizing and empowering its communities. It also marginalizes the role of community members in their local associations since the NGOs don't need community members' approval or support in order to become intermediaries between the State and the Romani population. Thus, associations become a site of representation instead of space for participation. This clearly shows that rather than mobilizing constituencies (internal mobilization, towards within) associations focus on their representative role, mobilizing externally.

On the other hand, the status of associations as representatives is legitimized by its interlocutors – the decision-makers and public authorities. Those in power determine which of the actors are treated as legitimate interlocutors and are acknowledged as representative of the community. One of prominent Romani leaders argued that the question of assumed representativeness of associations and "representative" bodies can be easily questioned. He argued:

> "We have a State Council of the Roma People, no doubt very necessary, worthy of the progress of the aspects pursued, but from our point of view lacks rootedness in the legitimacy of the Roma who are there to actually be true representatives, to where representation can be achieved, of those who claim to represent." [recorded interview, ES_3]

In this process, the State power chooses its own interlocutors, even though they might not always be enjoying the same level of acknowledgment on behalf of their own communities. One of my interlocutors, a Romani woman leader signalled this clearly:

> "Within the Romani organizations, at least the Romani organizations that I know, there are very few who are not working inside the association as the Executive Board or as brother/sister of the Executive Board. I mean, that there are maintaining a job position. So, two important factors come together. The need of such person to maintain their job position and on the other hand the need of the administrations to maintain their interlocutor. And the interlocutor are these associated people, not the Romani community." [recorded interview, ES_23]

It has also been pointed out numerous times, that the administration instrumentalizes the Romani associative movement actors in order to legitimize their own actions and programs (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006; Laparra, 2007). As no Romani actor is attributed a democratic mandate of representation, their status of legitimate interlocutors becomes determined by the relationship which these actors hold with the administration, from a top-down dynamic. This process is often problematized, both by scholars and activists, recognizing the phenomenon of tokenism, instrumentalization and donor dependency, among others. These problems are noticeable as much in Spain as across Europe, and are not limited exclusively to the case of Roma (Aparicio, 2011; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Laparra, 2007; Rostas, 2009, 2012; Trehan & Sigona, 2010).

Equality and justice

Without a doubt, the most important objective of the vast majority of Romani associations is that of working for improving the situation of Romani communities. The main premise is that of evident disadvantages that Romani people have vis-à-vis non-Romani citizens, in both what concerns their socio-economic situation as well as access to equal opportunities and fulfilment of their citizenship. Among stated objectives of Romani associations, we can find similar aims such as "integral promotion in all levels, social, cultural and human of the Romani people, in order to achieve equality of rights and obligations" (Fakali) or "legitimate participation of Roma in the process of design and development of interventions destined to improve the life conditions of Romani community in areas of employment health, education and housing" (Marantha). Clearly, the Romani associations perceive themselves as actors who on the one hand provide information regarding what is needed for their Romani communities, and on the other, become facilitators and implementers in providing specific services to their communities.

The socio-economic approach of numerous Romani associations is a logical one for three reasons: on the one hand, the evident disadvantage of Romani communities in comparison to non-Roma part of the population makes these efforts justified and needed. On the other hand, this approach is a result of historical focus on social assistance of State institutions as well as other non-Roma actors (such as charity or Church). Indeed, the first policy interventions on Romani targeted the socio-economic marginalization of Roma, rather than focused on question of cultural identity and its preservation, or on responding to the evident discrimination of Roma. The social assistance approach (*assistencialismo*) also permeated to the Romani organization and influenced their approach of working with their own communities, through attending specific needs in key areas of life. In this regard, the availability of funding for social assistance projects and interventions became determinant. Finally, what is relevant is the fact that the State itself cannot execute "Roma projects" – most department cannot assign

specific help based on ethnic background as it goes against the principles of non-discrimination (even if it is positive discrimination); after all, equality is consecrated in the Spanish constitution and thus equal treatment principle applies to all sectors of the society. For this reason, the State structures uses civil society organizations as executioners of Roma-specific projects through public procurement to non-State actors.

This broad aims related to equality and social justice have three inter-related levels: 1) socio-economic rights; 2) citizenship; 3) participation.

On the one hand, a lot of Romani organizations register as entities of "social character". They position themselves as viable mediators between institutions of public services and welfare (such as social services) and their communities. They generally define their objectives as organizations who focus on the socio-economic inequality suffered by the Roma and become vehicles which assist the State in providing responses to these needs. For example:

> "The need to define and implement social development projects for the whole population of the territory was - and still is the main reason for the existence of the association" (Mission statement, *Asociación Gitana Anaquerando*)

> "The Mission of FAGA is to contribute to the comprehensive promotion of Romani people, improving education and the social and employment opportunities of Romani women and youth" (FAGA mission statement)

> "Our mission is to achieve comprehensive promotion of Romani community of all ages towards reaching their full normalization." (Mission statement *Asociación Gitana de Burgos*)

Oftentimes, Romani organizations also adapt a specialized and sectorial profile, concentrating commonly on issues related to women, education and employment. For example:

> "Promote training of Romani women and their inclusion and participation in society". (Objectives, *AMURADI*)

> "The main objectives of the Pere Closa Private Foundation are the education and development of the Romani community in Catalonia to ensure that the largest possible number of young Roma people have the chance to enjoy the same educational opportunities at the rest of the population." (Objectives, *Fundación Pere Closa*)

What is relevant, in this context, is the fact that in order to guarantee improvement in the socio-economic standing of Romani communities, the existing universal welfare system is, in fact, insufficient. Romani organizations often demonstrate the unequal access to existing opportunities, which hinders the effectiveness of these policies. Under this approach, Romani organizations have been increasingly seeking granting of "special rights" or "special measures" which would make up for the unequal opportunities. It is for this reason that the universal social services have been gradually undergoing a process of "multiculturalization" through crafting more tailor-made measures, especially since the 1990s (Dietz 2003). And in the implementation of these tailor-made measures, Romani NGOs

have significant role, as they assure that these measures reach out Romani beneficiaries (and not other non-Roma beneficiaries). Romani NGOs themselves often declare that they know best what is needed for the Romani community and that they safeguard the interests of the community. For example:

> "Through this program and the Romani people who worked on it, we have been having first-hand access to know the social reality of the Romani community in Gipuzkoa and, likewise, we have been developing proposals with the aim of improving this reality." (Objectives, *La Asociación Gitana por el Futuro de Gipuzkoa*)

> "Ensure that the actions of the authorities respect the interests of Roma." (Objectives, FAGIC)

This relates closely to the second component of the broader aims of Romani associations, namely the question of citizenship. Romani organizations often state that although Roma are nominally recognized as equal citizens, in reality their status is that of "second class citizens" (Castaño & Martínez, 1997:965). For example, in a speech delivered by Ana Giménez Adelantado, to the Commission of Social Policies at the Congress of Deputies in May 1999, she argued:

> "Spanish Roma face a situation of socio-political and cultural disadvantage in comparison to other citizens. This disadvantage has its roots in the history of persecution and forced assimilation they have lived through, and draws on the negative social images that the rest of society has about Roma, coupled with secular prejudices and persistent stereotypes (…)." (Giménez Adelantado 1999:44)

For example, one Romani association links its objectives ("improvement of quality of life of the Romani people") with lack of access to basic rights and enjoyment of citizenship:

> "The Romani Association UNGA has as its main goal the improvement of quality of life of Roma in Asturias. (…) We believe that improving the quality of life does not mean or should mean a loss of cultural identity. Rather, we think we need to achieve that most Roma of Asturias can obtain the status of citizenship, understanding that today many of us, for many reasons do not enjoy the rights and duties that belong to us as members of the community." (Philosophy, *La Asociación Gitana UNGA*)

Even today, Romani leaders often claim that they feel as "second class citizens" (Varón 2015) as affirmed by one young Romani intellectual:

> "While officially the Romani citizens are theoretically full citizens (the Romani community in Spain fortunately, is not recognized as a minority), the reality is quite different." (Flores 2015)

Eradication of problems suffered by the Romani community and citizenship are thus linked and intertwined, like for example in the mission statement of this Romani NGO:

> "[The general objective is to provide] comprehensive care to all members of the collective intervening with all its deficiencies areas. The A.P.G.R. advocates for an intercultural society

> where Roma freely and fully exercise their citizenship and add their contributions to the enrichment of universal culture." (Objectives, *Asociación de Promoción Gitana en La Rioja*)

Romani organisations often describe the situation of exclusion as something which violates the citizen rights of the Roma and as something which is generated and sustained systematically. For example:

> "UNGA analyses the exclusion as a reality that is understood from a particular social context in which driving forces of different types lead social dynamics to situations that create such exclusion. We disagree, therefore, with those positions that exclusion is a dependent fact which arise mainly from the characteristics of individuals or groups." (Philosophy, UNGA)

Some Romani NGOs frame this discourse of exclusion more broadly, stating that the fight for equality and justice of Roma is a way of making the whole societies more just and free. For example, in a manifest issued by FAKALI on the occasion of 8th of April 2016:

> "From the FAKALI we call on citizens and public authorities to join us and us not only to defend the Roma cause but to make our societies more free, democratic and fair. The Romani community is not going to conform or is going to resign. We do not want charity, but justice, which means fighting side by side against racism and inequality that corrodes and rots the entrails of our societies."[135]

Therefore, under this approach, Romani associations aim at contributing to the work of uplifting Romani citizens towards real social equality. Providing funding and establishing targeted measures for Roma becomes an essential element which will help the Roma to enjoy fully their rights as citizens, alongside measures which aim at diminishing social distance and discrimination against the Roma. This rationale justifies the existence of "specialized measures" for Roma and the claims for special "Roma dimension" in all services of the welfare system of the Spanish State. Commonly in public discourses, on occasion of public events, conferences or seminars, the question of inequality of Romani citizens becomes an axis of the interventions, and is oftentimes linked to existing discrimination.

For example, on the occasion of celebrating the International Roma Day in 2014, the president of FAGIC delivered a speech in the Catalan Parliament, in which he argued:

> "Despite these advances, the Roma of Catalonia still face barriers that hinder which are obstacles for our development as full citizens. A majority suffer systematically discriminatory attacks, thousands of families are below the poverty line and the reality of our history is unknown to large sections of our society. We still have a long way to ending discrimination, also for social improvements that are so necessary; still we must remember that we are not starting from scratch and in Catalonia we have the necessary tools to move forward."[136]

[135] http://www.fakali.org/91-fakali/416-manifiesto-8-de-abril-dia-internacional-del-pueblo-gitano

[136] http://www.fagic.org/es/comunicacion/noticias/504-8-daabril-dia-internacional-poble-gitano

Likewise, it 2016, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination Racial Discrimination (21 of March), the president of KAMIRA, Carmen Santiago, issued a press statement, in which it was argued:

> "The rejection of the Romani population sadly remains easily detectable. Roma have more difficulties than the rest when it comes to finding a job, go to public services, access to housing...and in recent years, we see a surge of violence and hostility towards the Romani population, referred to as anti-Gypsyism."[137]

This emphasis on inequality of citizenship becomes at the same time a call to action, justifying the incessant need to work towards the improvement of status of Romani population in Spain.

The unequal citizenship or existence of barriers which effectively impede the Roma to enjoy their citizenship status fully also have another dimension, namely that which relates to participation or lack thereof. There seems to be a broad consensus not only among Roma but also among public institutions, scholars and other social actors, that the Roma remain under-represented in basically all spheres of public life (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012). This under-representation is also a consequence of their socio-economic vulnerability as well as of existing discrimination, among other factors (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006). For this reason, the demands of securing Romani participation, especially in the context of political or policy-processes become generally widespread among Romani associations. We may find among a large number of Romani associations objectives such as "promote participation of Roma"; framed in broad terms or specifically, towards some sectors of Romani population such as women and youth. For example:

> "Broaden the participation of Romani youth and enhance social networks, to be agents of change and social transformation without compromising their cultural identity." (Objectives, AMURADI)

> "Encourage participation of Romani women in the associative movement". (Objectives, FAKALI)

> "Boost the participation of the users in their own promotion". (Objectives, *Asociación Gitana de Navarra "La Majarí"*)

> "Educating in rights and duties, encouraging public participation in community activities". (Objectives, *Asociación de Promoción Gitana de Burgos*)

> "Enhance the participation of women as the value of Romani culture in the governing bodies of the federation and decision -making, facilitating overcoming inequalities. Encourage the participation of youth in the governing bodies of the federation." (Objectives, *Federación Gaz Kalo de Navarra*)

[137] http://federacionkamira.es/comunicado-de-la-federacion-kamira-con-motivo-del-dia-internacional-de-la-eliminacion-de-la-discriminacion-racial/

It should be noted that discursively participation is closely intertwined with other objectives of Romani associations. However, from the perspective of institutional approach, participation is defined and framed as separate set of objectives. For example, the National Roma Strategy in Spain 2012-2020 established separate measures in the areas of equal opportunities, participation, citizenship, social inclusion and institutional cooperation. Most of the regional strategies for Roma inclusion also define participation as a separate objective with its own corresponding measures.

Finally, it should be highlighted that the broad objectives of Romani associations in the sphere of “equality and justice” are based on the premise of general under-development and vast range of socio-economic problems which Romani communities in Spain face. While this is true of many Romani communities across the country, it ignores the fact that numerous Romani families and entire communities are, in fact, integrated as full-members of the Spanish economically relieved working class. The discourse of “Romani marginalization and exclusion” is not appealing to those sectors of the Romani population, and significantly leaves the collective interests of the Romani socially and economically integrated class unattended and under-represented.

Non-discrimination

The question of discrimination – both historically and currently – continues to be a major problem in the every-day lives of Roma in Spain. And consequently, is among the main objectives and driving forces of Romani associative movement. According to one publication: “Breaking stereotypes of the majority population about the Romani community has been one of the main objectives of all those men and women, Romani people, who for years were involved in one way or another in associations.” (Fundación Privada Ujaranza, 2008:140)

Indeed, we commonly find objectives related to non-discrimination, articulated by Romani NGOs, framed in a variety of ways. For example:

> “We also aim to improve the social image of the Romani people by overcoming negative stereotypes that still affect and limit the collective and individual development of Romani citizens of Valencia.” (Objectives, *FAGA*)
>
> “And raise awareness about the situation of much of the Spanish Roma and situations of discrimination, racism and xenophobia suffered by Roma in the rest of Europe.” (Objectives, *AMURADI*)
>
> “The elimination of all forms of racism or marginalization to achieve the goals of justice, pluralism and freedom so clear to Romani people.” (Objectives, *Unión Romani*)
>
> “Defend civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Roma and combat stereotypes and social prejudices.” (*Federación Gaz Kalo de Navarra*)

Even though Spain has been applauded by the international community for its involvement and commitment to Roma inclusions, in coverages on the situation of Roma, the question of prevailing discrimination is often omitted or ignored.

The legal framework on anti-discrimination in Spain is relatively new and has its roots in the Equality Directives of the EU (2000/43 and 2000/78) which has been transposed in Spain as of the 2000’s. Institutional developments such as the creation of Council for Equal Treatment created in 2003, the Comprehensive Strategy against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance adopted in 2011 or the Network for Assisting Victims of Discrimination created in 2010, are all relatively new. Despite these developments and the increasing awareness of existing discrimination, in part thanks to campaigns launched by government and civil society, with what regards the Roma little has changed.

According to diverse sources, “the available information continues to demonstrate that the manifestations of the worst perceptions and negative stereotypes by the Spanish society are directed towards the Romani community” (Laparra Navarro et al. 2013). Selected data of various sources demonstrate the deep-rooted prejudice and the lived discrimination of Roma in Spain:

- 40% of population would be disturbed to have a Romani neighbour (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2005)
- 25.3 % would not allow their children to attend school with Roma (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2005)
- Roma are also victims of policy profiling – according to data Roma are 10 times more likely to be stopped by police (De Miguel 2013)
- 52% of Spaniards have little or no sympathy towards the Roma (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2007)

Furthermore, diverse studies produced by civil society, like the annual reports of FSG on “Discrimination and the Romani Community” or the annual reports on *Unión Romaní* on “Journalists against Racism?”[138], published since 1995, provide a clear picture of the discrimination suffered by Romani communities basically in all spheres of life. There have also been cases of aggressions and violence against Roma, like the one which took place in Estepa (Andalusia) (Caballero 2014) or in Castellar (Jaen) (Unió Romani 2014) in 2014 where neighbours assaulted and burned down a number of Romani homes. It should also be noted that when it comes to Romani migrants in Spain, the public perceptions are oftentimes even worse than towards Spanish Roma (Araico and Chávez 2012). The table below present the comparative table of experiences of discrimination by the Romani people in Spain over the course of 2010 and 2011 (Laparra et al., 2013:45):

[138] http://www.unionromani.org/perios_in.htm

Table 1. Proportion of Roma who have experienced some of the situations described and identify them as being on grounds of race or ethnicity

	2010		2011	
Experiences of discrimination	**%**	**Difference***	**%**	**Difference***
House owners would not rent the house to them	30	+2	28	+7
They were asked for their identification document in the street	37	=	34	-2
Their suitcase, purse or merchandise was inspected without reason	37	+13	29	+6
They were rejected in a job interview	45	+18	43	+16
They were not allowed into a nightclub, a bar, a restaurant, a movie theatre or a store	33	+12	19	+7
They felt looked down on in shops and other businesses	49	+22	46	+20
They received taunts, insults or harassment from other children	26	+3	11	-4
They received bad treatment by health services	19	+12	8	+3

Table 16. Experiences of discrimination in 2010 and 2011 (Laparra et al., 2013:45)

What should be noted here are two relevant aspects of this situation. Firstly, discrimination against Roma is not limited to cases of individual acts of racism or hate directed towards the Roma; rather, is embedded deeply into the public institutions, which some regard as “institutional discrimination” (Laparra et al., 2013:48). Secondly, the negative attitudes towards the Roma are engrained socially into public perceptions, and historically over centuries, and are legitimized and strengthened by media as well as public institutions. This is confirmed by numerous studies which show that Roma are associate with negative stereotypes such as thieves, swindlers and “bad people” (Araico and Chávez 2012).

Two examples are important to bring into attention regarding this dynamic in Spain, also because they represent two important cases which demonstrate the efforts of Romani associations to fight against stereotypes and discrimination and which have been, over the last few years, at the core of collective interests of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain.

With regards the media coverage, reports[139] have been demonstrating for years that Roma are among the worst portrayed communities in Spain – often in media coverage, especially related to crime, ethnicity is exposed, implicitly reinforcing the connection between Romani ethnicity and illegal activity. This dynamic, along with sensational reporting on Roma, has been for years documented and challenged by Romani associations, with various results. We will see this in more detail in the next section “how”. However, the biggest waves of protests came with the appearance of controversial para-documentaries: “My big fat Gypsy wedding”, emitted in Britain since 2010 (in Spain by Antena 3), and the subsequent original Spanish para-documentaries which follow a similar format as the British

[139] *Unión Romani* has been publishing reports since 1995, monitoring the treatment and portrayal of Roma in the Spanish press and TV (Series: *¿Periodistas contra el racismo? La prensa española ante el pueblo gitano*.) Since 2000, FSG has been also publishing periodic bulletins “*Los Gitanos en la Prensa*” which also monitor the treatment of Roma in the Spanish press.

program – "Palabra del Gitano[140]" (Cuatro) and "Los Gypsy Kings"[141] (Cuatro). Other programs such as "Anclados"[142] (Telecinco) and "Callejeros"[143](Cuatro) have also been denounced for perpetuating a negative, stereotypical and derogatory portrayal of Romani people. These programs sparked outrage among most Romani entities, which issued public communications in which they denounce and condemn the shows. The State Council for the Roma issued yet another statement against these types of programs, in this case of "Los Gypsy Kings", in February 2016, expressing their condemnation and pointing to serious consequences:

> "On behalf of NGOs are part of the State Council of the Roma People we can only reiterate, with certain weariness, our revulsion at this kind of initiatives the use of frivolous and morbid way of portraying the already maligned social image of our people and especially Romani women. These practices contribute to the solidification of stereotypes, prejudices and worst collective feelings toward hundreds of thousands of ordinary people, flesh and blood, struggling to get ahead like the others: the Roma. We have repeated many times, when emissions of this type appear, whose intention is to offer sensational *carnaza* to the public at large regardless of the consequences, all our work for decades of overcoming the walls erected by the racist hatred, becomes useless."[144]

With regards to negative perceptions on Roma legitimized institutionally, it is important to mention the controversies surrounding the Royal Spanish Linguistic Academy (*Real Academia de la Lengua Española, RAE*), which edits the dictionary of Spanish language. Its 23rd edition, among the definitions of "gitano" (Roma), included the word "*trapacero*" (swindler), considered highly pejorative. The publication of the 23rd edition of dictionary sparked controversies and outrage, especially on behalf of the Roma themselves; it also generated a lot of public and media attention[145]. The stubborn attitude of RAE of insisting on maintaining this definition lead to an avalanche of protests; numerus organizations as well as federations and consultative organs have issued public communications denouncing RAE. We will see this example in more details in the next section.

The fact that the Roma are defined through such pejorative associations can be considered a legacy of the centuries-long history of institutionalization of Roma as "enemies within". Dietz argues that: "Historically, state-run policies and *payo* majority attitudes converge in projecting on the *gitano* population their 'internal enemy' status, which merges the ethnic, social, economic, legal and even epidemiologic 'other' into a solid entity, officially defined already in 1734 as 'born thieves' and still in

[140] http://www.cuatro.com/palabra-de-gitano/

[141] http://www.cuatro.com/losgipsykings/

[142] http://www.telecinco.es/anclados/

[143] http://www.cuatro.com/callejeros/

[144] https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/114997.html

[145] https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/dossieres/108716.html

1989 (!) stigmatized in a school dictionary as 'a race of vagabonds extended throughout Europe' " (Dietz, 2003:23).

These two, most recent examples only demonstrate that Romani citizens not only suffer discrimination but also don't feel treated and accepted as Spaniards in its full right (Cortés 2015). In fact, in my interviews, the question of discrimination often surfaced, although framed in different ways by different informants. One of my informants, a young Romani woman and a university student argued:

> "I believe that discrimination is the worst epidemic of the century, it is the cause of poverty, marginalization, lack of training and qualifications, ghettoization and a long list of social inequalities that generate the risk for any ethnicity, culture or group. Therefore, for me this is the biggest problem. So that the work of associations, foundations, federations, NGOs, is very important to eradicate discrimination totally and is imperatively necessary that there are civil organizations that fight against it." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

Another one of my interviewees, a senior Romani leader argued:

> "In this country what is practiced is what I call the racism of indifference. Which is one of the worst types of racism. They never considered us, bore us in mind. They only consider you for dancing and singing. Because this is the only thing that the Roma are good for." [recorded interview, ES_5]

A Romani politician also argued:

> "Today I feel more discriminated than before, in the past. In the past, it was bad and difficult for everyone. Now it is good for everyone expect the Roma. So we are disadvantaged and discriminated." [recorded interview, ES_37]

I would argue that the objectives of Romani associations connected to discrimination are two-fold. On the one hand, there are *reactionary objectives* – those, which respond to cases of discrimination and racism, through strategic litigation, providing legal assistance or organizing campaigns of protest or petition-writing; also through providing data and information regarding cases of discrimination and racism. They can also be considered as "injustice frames", which identify the Roma as victims of a given injustice and "amplify their victimization" (Benford and Snow 2000). On the other hand, there are *the preventive objectives*, which rather than tackling discrimination by denouncing it, concentrate on generating counter-narratives which may diminish the level of discrimination against Roma by providing positive and affirmative discourses. They tend to concentrate on visibility, by show-casting positive aspect of Romani arts and culture, or by simply providing positive images and examples regarding Roma in Spain. We will see in the next section "how" what strategies are used to pursue these objectives.

As part of the preventive objectives, which aim at providing counter-narratives to the mainly stereotypical and often derogatory portrayal of Roma, the focus is often placed on plural and heterogeneous narratives. This approach is based on the conviction that it is necessary to de-construct

the homogenizing and stereotypical imagery associated with Roma by replacing it with narratives of Roma internal diversity as a community. This pluralistic approach of "visibilizing the invisible" is especially evident with regards to initiatives of Romani youth, as well as women and LGBT; Romani professionals, especially those with higher degrees often become relevant faces of these narratives. This approach is well described by one Romani youth association, which states that:

> "Our goal is to achieve that this invisibility that society marks us with for breaking stereotype schemes is flanked, we want that glass wall of the majority society to know that there are Roma beyond the typical stereotype that relates us to folklore, among others. We have contributed to many cultural aspects and we have also boarded the train of the XXI Century. [so that they do] Not continue to make us invisible. As did the painter Paul Klee [say], we must make the invisible visible." (Real Rom 2014)

Cultural Recognition

Recognition, with what regards to culture and traditions is among the major issues around which Romani organizations mobilize. Recuperating, documenting and visibilizing the historical presence of Roma in the context of Spanish history has also been articulated, as, for example, in the case of commemorating the "Great Round-up", which was mentioned previously. Recognition, both formal and explicit through institutional declarations, as well as symbolic through its promotion, development and cultivation, is included among the collective interests of Romani associations, and explicitly as objectives and aims of the vast majority of Romani actors. In fact, the question of cultural recognition and promotion becomes a premise of consensus among Romani organizations, beyond disputes and existing fragmentation. For example, in the context of Catalonia, Romani leaders often underlined the question of recognition of Romani identity in Catalan Statutes as a major common objective:

> "Above all, the consensus among all the Romani associations to include the Romani identity in the Catalan Statues…I believe that this is the key in order to see changes, as to how to work in the association, in what way to organize common actions." [recorded interview, ES_11]

More about this specific objective, and how it is articulated also in the context of the State politics, will be described further on in this section.

Indeed, when analysing statutes and articulated objectives of Romani NGOs, we will find the specific references to Romani culture, framed in a variety of ways. For example:

> "To disseminate and bring into the public sphere of the whole society the Romani cultural heritage, promoting the knowledge of their values, roots and customs as inspiration to the Andalusian cultural heritage." (Objectives, AMURADI)

> "To recover, conserve and protect Romani culture in order to contribute, along with others, to the enrichment and coexistence in an increasingly plural, inclusive and free of social exclusion and discrimination society". (Objectives, *Federación Gaz Kalo de Navarra*)

> “[With regards to] Romani Culture a) Retain the values of Romani culture; b) Promote studies on these values; c) To disseminate their knowledge to the rest of society as positive contribution of the Romani people; D) Promote studies on the history of Roma in Euskadi and in Spain; e) To hold conferences on aspects of Roma culture; f) To promote the publication of studies on Roma issues; g) Create a bibliographic and documentation centre on Roma issues; h) Convene literary courses on Roma issues.” (Objectives, *Asociación gitana "Camelamos Adiquerar")*
>
> “To work for the diffusion and promotion of Romani culture. To defend the most important values of Romani culture” (Objectives, *Centro Cultural Gitano de la Mina*)
>
> “Pere Closa Private Foundation also want to disseminate the singular characteristics of the Romani culture as a unique culture that enriches everyone, and to foster respect for all its different manifestations: language, customs, crafts, values and literature. The culture of our people has been persecuted and annihilated for centuries, and even today we continue to suffer from persecution. Also, for the vast majority of people it is still an unknown culture. For all these reasons it needs the institutional support it deserves and the support of society as a whole.” (Objectives, *Fundación Pere Closa*)

The question of culture has become one of the driving forces behind Romani ethnic mobilization. In fact, efforts to promote Romani culture and history can be traced quite early on in the context of Romani ethnic mobilization – for example, already in 1993 a first National Congress “Roma in History and Culture” was hosted in Granada; Days of Romani Culture were organized for the first time by the Cultural Andalusian Centre in 1990. The efforts of focusing on Romani arts and culture were also timely: on a national level, already in 1982 the Ministry of Culture established norms for providing grants for projects of socio-cultural promotion for minorities (22 of March 1982, BOE-A-1982-9415); on the international scope Spain has ratified the European Minority Language Charter in 1992.

To an extent it may be considered as a process of “re-ethnification” or “ethnic revival” of Romani social struggles. While the premises of first Romani organizations were based more on claims for equality and social inclusion, over time these became complemented by increasing salience of cultural claims. In this process, Roma increasingly re-claim and re-affirm their cultural values and their own cultural distinctiveness, as a tool of self-empowerment but also as a strategy in countering negative stereotypes and existing prejudice. According to Abajo & Carrasco, this can be even traced by the very names of associations. They write: “It is interesting to observe the changes in the names of the associations in time, explicitly appealing to the 'promotion', 'development' or similar in a first phase, and recovering more assertive names from the point of view of identity and ethnic and always in Caló, in more recent times.” (Abajo & Carrasco, 2004:64)

The salience of cultural claims, on the one hand, has its roots in preoccupations of many of the Romani leaders of older generation that the process of “inclusion” or “integration” may lead to “assimilation” and inevitably to abandonment of cultural traditions and lifestyles, especially with regards to

education or occupation in mainstream labour market, a process which some Romani leaders refer to as *apayamiento* (becoming non-Roma). For example, one senior Romani leader argued that:

> "It is the family that conserves the Romani identity. And the adults need to explain to their children that being a Roma is compatible with the society we have today…Because the values are being forgotten. Today we teach our youth that there is one behaviour inside and another behaviour for the outside [of the community]. But it's not about the behaviour. It's about the values. The rest of the society is losing them and we are losing them as well…" [recorded interview, ES_5]

Re-claiming and visibilizng cultural heritage also helps to strengthen group ethnic identity and provides concrete references and content to the ambiguous term on "Romani culture". One of my informants, a Romani woman leader argued:

> "I think what we need are more cultural resources. That will reinforce culture and identity (…) Because the culture will not work itself. The culture is what is difficult to maintain. But identity remains. What happens is that we need to see how this identity evolves. (...) The issue is to see what is the condition of this culture. If 90 % of Roma live in a slum, if it is mixed with marginality, if mixes with other more problematic aspects, it will become of our culture? This is the danger. The danger is that it becomes subculture." [recorded interview, ES_22]

Another one of my informants, a senior Romani leader argued in the same spirit:

> "Now we are a people that is losing its identity. And we are learning the non-Roma subculture, the periphery. (…) We have lost the Romano *Caló* and we learned the *quinqui* language of the streets, el *quinquillero*. This is a loss of values. (…) Thus we are not going towards evolution. We are in involution, towards the non-Roma subculture." [recorded interview, ES_30]

As the Romani society increasingly diversifies (in terms of class, occupation, lifestyle, level of education, etc.) and Romani-hood becomes more plural and heterogeneous, cultural claims become a symbolic common point of reference around which Roma collectively can organize. The cultural claims also become relevant and attractive for that sector of Romani communities which are already integrated in the Spanish middle-class.

Reclaiming of culture and history also works towards establishing counter-narratives to those which are dominant among the majority society. Moving away from generalizing, stereotypical and often pejorative imagery associated with Roma - on the one hand associated with poverty and marginalization, and on the other hand, ethicising these social problems as inherent to being Roma - focusing on arts, culture and history position Roma in a more favourable light. As one senior non-Roma expert on Roma claimed, the importance of cultural approach, especially with regards to the need for institutional recognition of Roma:

> "is a question of dignification, is a question of self-esteem, is a question which allows to pass definitely to speak about the Roma issue and not about the problems of marginalized Roma

> which affect only a part of Roma, it allows to acknowledge that the politics of Roma or politics with Roma go beyond social policies" (Transcript of intervention, published by Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2006:73).

The increasing visibility of cultural objectives and demands is also related to another development – the proliferation of Romani Evangelical Churches. As it was described earlier, Romani Evangelical Churches increasingly establish their local associations, and the vast majority of these entities is registered as cultural associations, rather than ones which engage in socio-political spaces.

On the other hand, this process is also highly political. A good example of this is the claims and efforts regarding the language, *Caló* (or later on also of *Romanes*). It is curious because, apart from some exceptions, most Roma in Spain don't speak *Romanes* and have forgotten to a great extent the use of *Caló* (Gamella, Fernández, Nieto, & Adiego Lajara, 2011) . The claims regarding the language are those of recuperation of a language almost forgotten rather than efforts of promoting and visibilizing a language that is still commonly in use. These claims naturally have a symbolic dimension – after all, language is a strong uniting force for ethnic group identities. The process of recuperation of the *Caló* language, as well as of *Romanes* in the last decade, also work to re-connect Spanish Roma with other Romani communities across Europe as a pan-European ethnic minority. However, the specific political and legal context of Spain with regards to minorities and "nationalities" recognized by the Constitution, give these Romani claims a deeply political dimension. The recognition of a language is a basic element for recognizing cultural identities, as in the case of Catalonia or Galicia. Of equal importance is the increasing efforts of reclaiming historical justice and demanding recognition of the history of Roma in Spain. The expansion of political waves of regional nationalism, rooted in distinct history, culture and language, has also influenced the Romani associative movement's agenda. In the struggle for political recognition of Roma as a minority, and through it access to differentiated status and minority rights, the question of recognition of the language becomes key.

The focus on Romani culture often becomes a conscious strategic choice of Romani leaders in Spain. While the question of socio-economic problems and discrimination has been widely acknowledge by Spanish State and have been attended through policies and interventions, the questions of recognition, participation and cultural promotion have not received similar attention (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2006). In fact, the efforts of public authorities with regards the Roma is oriented much more towards "politics of redistribution" rather than "politics of recognition" (N. Fraser 2003). The inadequate attainment of Romani cultural preservation and promotion has been repeatedly acknowledged by the Council of Europe with regards to the application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities[146] since 2000. In response to the Council of Europe repeated criticism in this regard, Spain has been increasingly supporting cultural projects, acts of recognition (most notably the proposition of no-law of the Congress of the Deputies from 27th September 2005)

[146] http://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/country-specific-monitoring#Spain

as well as institutions, most notably with the creation of the Institute of Roma Culture, authorised in 2005 (*Fundación Instituto de Cultura Gitana*).

Nonetheless, on national level Roma in Spain are still not recognized officially as an ethnic, national or cultural minority, a fact which still becomes a major point on the agenda of Romani associations, although it should be underlined that not all Romani activists agree with this approach (Flores 2015). It should be noted, however, that some regions in their own Statutes recognize or make explicit mention to the Romani "minority". For example, the Autonomic Statute of Aragón (2007), makes mention to ethnic minorities, especially the Romani minority. More specifically, in the section "welfare and social cohesion" (art. 23.2):

> "The Aragon public institutions will promote the necessary conditions for the integration of ethnic minorities, and especially, of the Romani community"[147].

It should be emphasized, that the recognition of an "ethic minority" is included in the section of welfare, rather than in the chapters related to culture (art. 13 or art.22). This example clearly shows how the institutional framing of Roma is conceptually restricted to socio-economic questions of "integration", even with regards to ethnic minority rights recognition.

Despite the regional/ autonomic acts of formal recognition of minority status of Roma, this has still not crystallized at the level of the State. In fact, the struggle for official recognition of Roma as a cultural minority in Spain has been a major focus of some Romani organizations in Spain since the 1990s, most notably in 1998 when a group of Romani leaders called for re-interpretation of the Spanish Constitution with regards to Roma (Dietz 2003). *Unión Romaní* has been among the most energetic actors in this process. In 1999 Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia wrote:

> "The autonomy of the Roma is to be understood not in the political and territorial sense with the Autonomous Communities in Spain, but in a new concept to frame the rights of all peoples to maintain, protect and develop their cultural identity, in a concrete and effective way, by the principle of democratic election of the representative bodies. It is simply a question of cultural values of the Roma are recognized, respected, protected and disseminated through institutions and resources, on an equality with the rest of the cultures that exist in the Spanish State." (Unión Romaní, 1999)

This passage exemplifies the way the cultural rights of Roma and their recognition have been framed as similar to the status which other distinct cultural identities have been treated in the Spanish State. It also demonstrates why the salience of cultural claims and objective has been so relevant not only symbolically, but more importantly as part of a greater political agenda of the Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain. On the other hand, in 2000, the Platform for the Statute of Romani People *Romipen* (*Plataforma por el Estatuto del Pueblo Gitano Romipen (gitanidad*)) was created, which lobbied for the creation of the Statue of Romani people in Spain which re-claims the persecuted

[147] https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-8444

Romani identities and cultures and obliges the state to provide adequate legal responses by creating a legal framework for cultural protection and promotion of Romani communities[148]. More specifically, the *Romipen Platform* adopted the so-called "Toledo Manifest" insisting that the authorities:

> "recognize the Roma as a people and adopts 'the Statutes of Cultural Autonomy" which should include at least:
>
> 1. Recognition of Romani language,
> 2. A Council of Assembly of Romani representation elected democratically which would safeguard Romani participation in social and political structures as well as the protection of our rights,
> 3. An Institute of Romani Culture,
> 4. A legal framework and financial and technical assistance in order to create solid Roma press, radio and television". (Zoon, 2003:18)

Other Romani organizations, have also demanded cultural recognition of the Romani people in different moments in time. Even though this objective has not been met, the topic of "Romani Statutes" reappears frequently. For example, in an interview one Romani leader argued:

> "And create a Roma Assembly, and determine the rules of who has the right to vote, who is going to vote and who won't, and establish a basis for who could govern and we democratically would choose our representatives, national, regional, provincial, for the period of 2 years, but democratically. This would accomplish our great aim of saying to the non-Roma: 'look, we want the same status as the Basques, Aragonian, we are all equal'. It is true that we don't have a territory, but culturally, we have our own history, we have our culture. We want our own statue, we don't want a territorial status, we want a cultural status. And the first step that we have to do, with what we can begin, is to create a democratic assembly, that will be responsible for the development, and has cultural competencies." [recorded interview, ES_37]

The salience of cultural claims echoes the conviction that promoting Romani culture will facilitate the process of integration of Roma as well as help diminish the prevalent negative stereotypes; a point underlined, for example, by the Council of Europe[149]. Paradoxically, however, despite the existing body of recommendations and reports issued by international bodies such as the Council of Europe with regards to Romani culture, they are rarely incorporated in the demands made by Romani associations in Spain; they remain un-used in advocacy campaigns or public discourses. The only exception is *Unión Romaní* who through its international engagement regarding the Roma, has been consistently making

[148] https://www.gitanos.org/upload/72/17/09_noticias.pdf

[149] This point has been made numerous times in the reports of the Council of Europe regarding the application of the Framework Convention in Spain. For example, Resolution ResCMN(2004)11 states that: "Special attention should be given to promoting Roma culture, language and traditions, in order to facilitate a better integration and participation of Roma in Spanish society."

efforts to re-connect the specific claims of Roma in Spain to the developments which take place in Europe.

Finally, it is also important to acknowledge a dynamic perspective of what types of specific aims are made and how they evolve over time, especially with regards to external developments both in the contexts of Spanish politics as well as European Roma-related developments. This can be well-traced with relation to the efforts of promoting, recognizing and visibilising the history of Roma. This process will be described in more detail in the section "when".

Collective interests? Grassroots perspective and contention

The question to what extent the objectives of Romani associations reflects the articulated needs and interests of their community rather than responds to the agenda of State administration and its assigned budget has been a problematic one.

Frames of collective interests are not given and self-evident – they need to be consciously articulated by the leaders in a way which is appealing to the constituency and responsive to their collective grievances, and on the other hand, which generates a sense of urgency mobilizing the authorities (or other actors) to respond to these interests. A skilful framing of collective interests also has a motivational dimension – the so-called "motivational framing" (Benford and Snow 2000) becomes a strategy for acquiring new members, mobilizing adherents and their resources for collective action.

In case of Romani ethnic mobilization, however, the conscious use of collective interests as a tool for mobilizing collective response through action has been quite limited. Despite the fact that the broad objectives of Romani associations, as well as their specific aims, respond to the situation of numerous Romani communities, they are not always perceived as such by the members of the community. One young Romani man argued:

> "I don't feel identified [with Romani NGOs], I acknowledge and value enormously the beginnings of the Romani associative movement, but I understand that in the present the interests and initiatives of majority of associations not only are outside of 'Roma' topic but that the majority even at times oppose to the consensus of what majority of Roma think and feel. This happens especially in everything that concerns culture and not in the social sphere where the work of NGOs is broadly recognized." [written questionnaire, ES_19]

It has already been pointed to the growing distrust, even rejection, of some Romani NGOs by their local communities. Oftentimes, those Roma who remain outside of the circle of Romani associations and don't participate whatsoever, do not feel represented by their local leaders. This is especially made evident by the limited capacity for mobilization of Romani associations as well as lack of accountability, transparency and direct involvement of Romani constituency in their local entities. Although the majority of Romani associations claim to be grassroots, they often rely on the extended family structures or limited circle of collaborators rather than on community support. In the words of a young Romani woman:

> "I would say that there are two types of Romani organizations. There are those who do more than they could do personally and economically because they have this social implication and the conviction that you can change things without money, changing mentalities and doing voluntary work. And then there are those who take advantage of the associations as a method of subsistence, having a non-profit organization but in reality persons or their relatives have profit, creating a proper Roma bourgeoisie." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

Interviews with non-associated Roma often demonstrate this lack of trust towards Romani associations (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006; Mirga, 2011a). One young Romani woman argued:

> "Many organizations are created as a sources of income for their founders and the people doesn't have a lot of trust in them. But it is not a vision of the entire associative movement; there are people from make an effort to acquire funding and manages it as it should be." [written questionnaire, ES_28]

Some Romani leaders, conscious of these problems, see different reason which casued the distance between associations and the people. A board member of a Romani federation argued:

> "The people think that associations are like a different type of administration. They think that associations will resolve all of their problems as if the NGOs were administration and had power. This misunderstanding of the function of Romani NGOs creates disenchantment and distrust towards them." [interview field-notes, ES_7]

Some see Romani associations as representative of their own interests rather than those of the community ("I don't see clear waters, they go to protect their own interests. I don't trust them" (Fundació Pere Tarrés 2006)) or as being detached from the grassroots and their local realities:

> "Really, if you look at the crème de la crème of the Romani [associative] world, it has nothing to do with the Roma who move around on the basis, below, let's be realistic. So we should say what is up here that's good, but we also have to say what is down below, because if not, the help will never reach those down below." [recorded interview, ES_22]

It is quite common to hear among the non-associated Roma that Romani organizations became a "modus vivendi" for their leaders and staff and abandoned the contentious role of the civil society. One senior Romani politician stated that:

> "Roma associative movement is weak because it became a 'modus vivendi'." [interview field-notes, ES_16]

Curiously, the phrase "modus vivendi" is used repeatedly which also points to the fact that this criticism is both acknowledged and adopted.

Others are also critical of the Romani associative movement, arguing that misuse of funds and power by some individual leaders has led to the negative perception of the associative world by the communities. One senior Romani activist argued:

> "What is regrettable is that there are honest Romani men and women, who do all that they can with the resources they have, that have clear ideas, and in terms of their capacity and resources they do it great. But because [of the misconduct] of others, who do the opposite, the honest ones are also discredited." [recorded interview, ES_5]

Some also declare that the Romani associations adapt a "learned discourse" which remains unchanged over the years, without acknowledging the diversity and plurality not only of Romani communities but also of their interests and points of view. One young Romani women, staff member of a Romani NGO, stated that:

> "As a woman, and on the personal level, I would feel identified with an associative movement that would be mixed, intercultural and intergenerational, and which would give priority to the grassroots problems." [written questionnaire, ES_21]

This also reflects the discussion regarding the frame of collective identity, namely the difficulty of establishing unique over-arching narratives which would respond and reflect the needs and approaches of the heterogeneous Romani population. Nonetheless, it should be noted that increasingly Romani entities acknowledge this diversity and respond to it through new, more specialized and sectorial organizations (women, LGBT, youth, peddler sellers etc.).

On the other hand, some informants claimed that the Romani associations are responding to existing funding opportunities and priorities defined by public authorities rather than to specific needs and interests of their local population. One young Roma argued:

> "At the beginning the associative movement was destined to fight against the negative stereotypes that exist about the Romani culture through work managed by the people of the community and they had economic support, but today, it has transformed into a career centre where the work and the aim is not the most important, the importance lies with the remuneration and the real impact of the work managed is not taken into consideration." [written questionnaire, ES_24]

These comments were made especially regarding the services which some Romani organizations provide to their members, which are often provided without prior consultation with their potential beneficiaries. One associated Romani women claimed that:

> "This is what we are doing – justifying our work done wrong by blaming the people… We are giving them training courses which do not interest them, that are not needed, we are giving them this possibility of training that they don't want." [recorded interview, ES_22]

Such statements reflect the limited direct involvement of non-associated members of the community in the local associations. Under this optic, some claim that Romani organizations rather than reflecting the specific grievances of the population, they respond the priorities and agenda of public institutions (both power-holders and grants-makers). It is perceived that the claims that are made rather reflect what can be accomplished from a perception of public administration and not what should be asked

for. A young Romani activist, involved in international Romani movement, wrote bluntly about this dynamic in relation to his criticism of the Decade of Roma Inclusion:

> "They have forgotten their role as social actors and have developed and adapted the needs of the Romani community to the priorities set by the European Commission, and therefore the government of Spain. If the Government and Europe say they work in these areas,[it is] because the needs are tailored to the political priorities, rather than the opposite." (Flores 2015)[150]

Some individuals, even those involved in activism, prefer to distance themselves from dominant structures of Romani ethnic mobilization, which are viewed, under this optic, as instrumental to public institutions as servants and partners and not as institutions whose role is to challenge the State institutions and to hold them accountable.

Nonetheless, others argued that in the work of their associations they do meet the demands of the people. One of my informants claimed that the objective of his associations change because they times are different. He explained that his association searches for ways to accommodate these emerging needs and interests:

> "The needs are different because the society changes. Now they want more activities with the informatics or mobile phones. We adapt our activities because if you don't adapt, it's better that you close the association…Here everyone has a say. You want classes of aerobic – I find you the classes of aerobic. You want a project for food handlers, we look for it. They ask for the activities; I don't just make them up." [recorded interview, ES_32]

On the other hand, scholarship suggests that the role of the Romani associations as advocacy or watchdogs entities can be questioned (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012; Laparra, 2007; Méndez, 2005; Mirga, 2011a; Moreno, 2010; Open Society Institute, 2002). In Spain, many Romani organizations, especially those entities which lack capacity to attract private or European funds, rely almost exclusively on funding from public administration (municipalities, regional administration, IRPF accessed through federations); specific data will be presented in the next section. What is important in this context, however, is that it is frequently argued that excessive dependency on governmental funding leads to the so-called dependency trap (Kóczé, 2012a); consequently, such entities loose its vindictive and lobbying capacities. As pointed out by a Romani journalist, J.M. Oleaque:

> "The Romani movement has forgotten about the complaints because it lives off of public grants… On the one hand, one influential part of the movement clearly sticks to the ruling political party, and on the other hand the politicians understand that they can maintain and entire community quite by giving resources to some of its members." (Oleaque 2003)

[150] Off-the-record I spoke with the author of this article and he confirmed to me, with even more assertiveness, his opinion voiced here. I refer to this blog, which is of public access, rather than my field-notes (the information shared with me was off-the-record and much less detailed than in what is clearly articulated here).

In my interviews, this question was oftentimes mentioned although I have rarely heard it being discussed openly among different Romani leaders. In one of my interviews, an informant – a Romani woman activists – argued that confronting your benefactors (in this case the administration) is tricky:

> "An association can't just be an entity that manages the grants from the administration. It has to be an entity which can really develop social, cultural projects. And then there is the whole terrain of vindications, complaints, and this is left on the margins. Or there are very few Romani associations that dare to take it a little further. Because, of course, if you do it against the administration, you are throwing rocks on the roof that gives you the grants." [recorded interview, ES_23]

The dependency of Romani actors on public funding creates complicated relationship of dependency, "thus restricting their ability to channel the collective claims and to build a strategy and narrative independent of political power" (Laparra, 2007). This phenomenon is also present throughout Europe and has been well-documented by scholars (Guy, 2013; Kóczé & Trehan, 2011; McGarry, 2012; Morell, 2015; Rostas, 2009, 2012; Trehan & Sigona, 2010; Trehan, 2001).

It should be noted, however, that not all entities have to deal with the above described problems – some more dynamic NGOs have managed to escape the "dependency trap" by diversifying sources of funding, combining national and foreign private funding, EU funds with public administration grants. Those organizations which have the capacity, resources and contacts – mostly larger entities which employ more and better qualified staff, although with numerous exceptions – have had more facility in reaching out and attracting different sources of funding.

5.3.e. From aims to action. Strategies of Romani ethnic mobilization

In order to achieve collective goals established by Romani organizations and their leaders, these actors employ a complex set of strategies through which these goals are pursued – these strategies of collective action are what I regard as the "how" variable. The "how" variable responds to a broader question of "what do the associations do", referring mainly to the activities and actions organized by the Romani organizations themselves. To the question of trying to define in broader terms the scope of activity of Romani associations, one of my Romani informants provided a comprehensive answer:

> "The associative movement of the 21st century is a movement which works in 3 main, different directions: providing services, intervening within the Romani community, but above all as the interlocutor of the public administration and public actors. If you stay only in the area of social services, we become a consultant, we are a social enterprise. If we only stay connected with the Romani community, because of our conviction and such, then we are a value, we are something that generates trust in the community, establishes union and such, which is tremendously important. And if we only do lobby, then this is what we are, a lobby which only wants to do lobby. But for the moment, and this is the reality, we don't have one Romani movement but various Romani movements, within one social movement. If we unite all these

areas of action, then we will have a social movement, a new social movement. " [recorded interview, ES_11]

In this context, it is important to bear in mind that the overwhelming portion of actions implemented by Romani organizations counts on some type of funding – much more seldom are actions organized by Romani organizations self-financed or independent from any type of funding. These actions are restricted entirely to protest activities or to producing self-generated public statements (through blog posts, public releases, opinion pieces etc.). Therefore, it should be considered that the choice of activities and actions implemented by Romani organizations is restricted by the funding available and necessarily reflects the priorities established by donors. This was clearly explained in an interview with a high-level representative of a ministry in Madrid responsible for coordinating NRIS. By using an example of tenders for health-related projects, she argued that the priorities defined a priori by the public administration need to be fulfilled in order to receive the grant:

> "There is a call for proposals and there we decide priorities in health, health prevention, the whole issue of health education, vaccination ... Because there are many Romani organizations working a lot in health. In Catalonia for example there is an entity that works hard on health, also in Asturias. So they go to houses [of Roma] and they [remind] not to forget about vaccination, and the issue of prevention of women. These priorities are marked in the call, this is what they have to comply with." [recorded interview, ES_12]

To an extent, the scope of actions of Romani organizations is shaped by funding opportunities rather than by self-defined collective interest frames. Or rather, those interests need to be accommodated in the framework of priorities established by donors. Furthermore, it should be considered that the majority of funding for Romani organizations comes from public institutions (local, regional or State administration), especially in the case of smaller entities which lack capacity to compete for private or European funding. It is more seldom that Romani actors obtain private funding (mainly through foundations established by private companies such as bank "la Caixa" or philanthropic foundations such as the Open Society Foundation) or access EU funds (through calls for proposals, tenders, EU framework projects). It should be noted, however, that most bigger Romani organizations (federations, UR, Romani women organizations/ networks such as FAKALI or KAMIRA) have access, or have had access to both Spanish private donors and European funding. The table below shows financial balance of chosen organizations representing different profiles of entities; the table shows the percentage of public funding in the overall budget of the entities.

Table 17. Financial balance of different profiles of Romani NGOs

TYPE OF ENTITY	YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET	SOURCES OF FUNDING	PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC FUNDING
NATIONAL FEDERATION	2013	2,384,649€	• IRPF • Ministries	Approx. 82 %

			• Regional Governments • Town Halls • Private donors • EU funding	
REGIONAL FEDERATION	2010	703,879€	• IRPF • Ministry • Regional government • Town Halls • Private Donors • EU funding	Approx. 75 %
SECTORIAL FEDERATION (women)	2014	211,666€	• IRPF • Ministry • Other public institution • EU funding	Approx. 89 %

This dynamic of donor-dependency, described briefly in the previous sections, creates a problematic relationship between the organizations and the State and becomes a channel through which State administration can exercise power and control over the organizations (Laparra Navarro 2011; Dietz 2003). One of my informants, a senior Romani expert, involved in Romani associative movement in personal capacity, argued:

> "The people [involved in the NGOs] are very manipulated and the government is very smart. They know how to co-opt the leaders so that they complain less. The politicians are not interested in integration but in the social peace. And so the Romani leaders allowed themselves to be easily manipulated, especially since they have so little preparation." [interview field-notes, ES_11]

A Romani leader, board member of a federation, argued:

> "Sure, for example, when the Roma have criticized but the in the meeting they voted positively in a subtle way because they did not want to look bad in front of [a representative of public administration] in case that reverberated in the grant." [recorded interview, ES_40]

Another senior Romani leader argued:

> "To make friends with the politicians in exchange for a grant, an office or a project is the first major error of the Romani associative movement. It changed the nature of Romani associations. Now they are no more a pressure group, a lobby." [recorded interview, ES_30]

A Romani woman activist, president of Romani women entity argues:

> "Well, this is my personal opinion. They [public administration] have their clientele, it's like buying some consensus of Roma, because then organizations are closely linked to the organs of political power." [recorded interview, ES_25]

This problem, signalled by scholars, has also occasionally emerged during fieldwork. One stark example occurred when I was still working in a Romani organization, conducting the evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia (PIPG) in Catalonia. During that investigation, at times I had to often ask uncomfortable questions to some representatives of public administration in order to contrast findings or discuss contradictions and shortcomings of this policy. After one such interview with a high-level representative of administration, when the audio-recorder was already turned off, I was told: "Well, let's see how the evaluation will go and we'll see about your funding for next year…" [field-notes]. This was said jokingly but I was very surprised. When I then asked what this meant, my interviewee quickly clarified that "depending on the evaluation we will see about the continuity of this policy and consequently about the funding, since the organization also receiving funding from the PIPG" [field-notes]. The statement was meant to be said light-heartedly, but the message was clear: if the evaluation will be too harsh on the implementing government, there might be repercussions with regards to funding.

Nonetheless, it should also be considered that the priorities, action plans and strategies established by State administration, which are reflected in the funding available to Romani actors, also count with an input from Romani stakeholders. There are diverse strategies employed by Roma to exercise political pressure over public authorities through bottom-up lobbying, in order to influence and negotiate the priorities established by State bodies and institutions, and consequently influence funding opportunities. Therefore, two types (or stages) of strategies of collective action can be differentiated:

1) Political interaction – a process of a political dialogue and relationship between Romani actors and the State through established channels of participation. Political interaction to an extent influences or shapes public policies, and consequently the available funding scheme. This process will be described in more detail in the following section "political interaction".
2) Activities – broadly speaking, the scope of actions, activities or events implemented by Romani actors financed by donors (mostly public administration).

Ideally, the process of political interaction through negotiations with public administration should result in adaptation of available funding opportunities in order to reflect the grievances, needs and collective interests of the Romani community. In reality, however, this process is much more complex and problematized. Arguably, the shifting of scope of funding opportunities available to Romani organizations to a greater extent is affected by other external factors such as ruling political party and its ideology, economic situation of the country (especially in the context of economic crisis in Spain), macro-politics regarding citizenship, multiculturalism and immigration, among other, as well as international developments (especially those regarding Roma in the context of intergovernmental organizations, most notably the EU). Furthermore, the capacity of political pressure exercised by Romani actors is often limited and superficial. The Romani voices in political processes are one among

many – apart from Romani stakeholders, other agents exercise significant influence in shaping policies and interventions on Roma, especially, pro-Roma entities, independent experts on Roma and scholars.

On the other hand, the scope of "activities" relates to the broad spectrum of different actions implemented and organized by Romani organizations. A number of scholars have provided an overview of this broad range of activity. For example, Carrasco and Abajo claim that: "[A good part of Romani organizations] conduct mainly five types of actions: a) perform social assistance (in those associations which have a social worker) ; b) apply for grants (local and regional administration, occasionally State funding or the ESF [European Social Fund]) to implement small programs and activities aimed at specific sectors (young people, women), related to the area of vocational training to promote employment, with the training of intercultural mediators, etc .;c) organize cultural weeks and events (lectures, exhibitions, festivals), which vindicate a dignified image of Roma culture ; d) collaborate with the Compensatory Education Program, school support, tutoring , etc .; e) conduce specific social demands affecting Roma." (Abajo & Carrasco, 2004:63). Dietz, on the other hand, argues that the organizations working with Romani communities "develop either as single-issue organizations specifically committed to *gitano* affairs or as a multi-sectoral movement covering basically social services and support activities for three different beneficiaries: *gitano* populations, migrant communities and development cooperation" (Dietz, 2003:87).

While these descriptions are correct they are also incomplete. The type of activities of Romani organizations in Spain is much broader and diversified, and includes actions which fulfil different objectives, targeting different audiences and/or beneficiaries. Based on gathered data, I differentiate between the following types of activities; they will be discussed in detail throughout this section:

- Service provision:
    - Targeting the Romani communities through services ranging from legal assistance; trainings, workshops and courses; activities targeting specific sectors of Roma population (youth, children, women, etc.) or specific topics (education, leisure, sports etc.); social integration projects etc.
    - Services offered to public administration or state institutions or bodies, for example through mediation and conflict resolution, or by providing relevant information and feedback to localized actions implemented by specific state institutions (for example social services). Services are also offered to universities and research centres by becoming relevant sources of information and expertise.
- Organization of events, ranging from seminars, workshops and conferences, to cultural festivals, exhibitions and lectures, celebrations of the International Romani Day or other significant dates.
- Information/ knowledge production, publication and dissemination through reports, studies, news, public releases, blog articles etc.
- Public awareness-raising campaigns
- Protests and petitions

- Advocacy and political representation

It should be considered that organizations represent different scopes of activity, ranging from community-based activities, to municipal, regional, national and international spheres or the mix of them.

We can also group types of activities depending on the type of objectives they aim to fulfil. If we take as a basis the three broader axis of objectives described in the section "what and why" (excluding the "representation" which will be discussed separately), we can develop a following schematic description:

Table 18. Schematic description of type of objectives and activity of Romani NGOs

TYPE OF OBJECTIVES	TYPE OF ACTION/ACTIVITY
EQUALITY AND JUSTICE	• Broad spectrum of service provision • Political lobby and advocacy • Production of information through reports, articles, policy papers, occasionally shadow reporting etc.
DISCRIMINATION	• Protests and petitions • Services such as legal counselling; occasionally legal action and strategic litigation • Production of information (reports, studies) as well as public statements, letters of protest • Training on anti-discrimination, production of manuals and guides • Generating counter-narratives (through public campaigns, festivals, exhibitions, events, media articles etc.) • Differentiation between reactionary and preventive objectives and their corresponding actions
CULTURAL RECOGNITION	• Organization of events, festivals, conferences, lectures and celebrations (such as International Romani Day) • Publication of books, articles, journals etc. • Production of public campaigns, exhibitions, documentaries about Romani culture • Political lobby

As seen through this diagram, different objectives can be met through a variety of different type of actions and activities. Likewise, a specific type of action or activity can serve multiple objectives as is the case of organization of cultural events (work to generate counter-narratives against discrimination as well as work towards cultural recognition) or production and publication of information (which becomes a strategy used to pursue a diverse scope of objectives). Since different types of actions can

fulfil diverse objectives, the subsequent sections will elaborate on type of action/activity rather than by assigning a type of action to a type of objectives.

The type of activities in which individual Romani organizations are engaged with or through which they pursue their objectives, vary depending on a number of factors. First of all, the size of the organization and its managing capacity become determinant. Bigger organizations, and especially the federations, typically have a higher capacity to acquire and channel funds, employ more staff members and consequently can engage in a broader range of activities. They also typically manage bigger budgets – frequently such organizations not only compete for funding based on competitive open calls but also sign multi-annual partnership agreements (so-called *convenios de colaboración*) with diverse public administration bodies, agencies or departments of their corresponding regional governments. Federations also count with an additional level of activity, namely, those which target their member organizations by providing them with information, technical assistance and counselling.

Smaller organizations, especially those created locally, typically have a much modest scope of activities, generally limited to service-provision and organization of small-scale events. They are typically restrained by the funding provided to them by local, municipal or regional administration; much more seldom can they acquire funding from State administration. The limited access of small organisations to State funding is due to the scheme of financing offered by the Central government. The central government in Madrid finances Roma inclusion projects through the so-called IRPF scheme. IRPF (Personal Income Tax allocation) allows to earmark 0,7% of the tax for "social interest purposes" or for "church"[151]. Since 1989, the IRPF fund allows to subsidize programs for Roma inclusion, implemented by non-State actors. Currently, the IRPF subsidies represent a major financing scheme and a principle source of funding for Romani organizations – for 2015, 7,716,732.12€ have been assigned to Roma social inclusion projects[152]. It should be noted, however, that this amount is not destined exclusively to Romani organizations but aims to finance projects which target the Romani community. Consequently, in 2015, 3,930,618€ was assigned to pro-Roma organizations (among them, 2,789,987€ to *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (36,2%) and 489,111€ to Caritas); therefore 51% of the IRPF funds for Roma inclusion is managed by pro-Roma organizations. The IRPF scheme benefits bigger entities, making it difficult for smaller Romani organizations to be eligible for funding from this program. As a solution, Romani federations channel this funding allocation and distribute it among its member organizations who presented a project proposal through their corresponding federation.

Limited know-how and technical capacity, as well as lack of employed staff or even office premises of a vast portion of small Romani organizations become a barrier for these entities to become competitive in the struggle for subsidies through open calls, both those launched by the public administration as

[151] In 2013, through IRPF 0,7% taxation, over 285 million euros were collected for "social purposes" while around 248 million were collected for Church. http://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2015-04-12/quien-recibe-el-dinero-del-0-7-de-la-renta_757081/

[152] http://www.unionromani.org/downloads/noti2016-01-05.pdf

well as private donors. One senior Romani leader argued that the lack of knowledge and professional capacity is what impedes effective work of most local Romani entities; he argued:

> "Because the problem of the Roma is that when you go to the administration they give you an application form and say: 'fill it in'. And more than a half doesn't know how to fill it in, this application form for the projects and then submit it. These are the things that make our work much more complicated." [recorded interview, ES_45]

Another Romani leader of a small NGO explained the obstacles they face, and especially the contradictions of the funding available. He argued:

> "What we need is for the administration to support us. That the administrations know what we want to do and they help us. But they should make it everything much easier. Because, for example, if I ask for a grant, I need an office, but of course, I can't pay the office rent with the grant…I also understand that the things are limited. But we need a little bit more in order to manage our projects, pay the rent." [recorded interview, ES_38]

Consequently, local Romani organizations rely on small-scale funding of municipal and regional governments, which is often granted short-term and lack sustainability and continuity in time. One Romani woman leader of an NGO argued:

> "Above all, in terms of the staff we depend a lot on the 6-months government grants, and when that is over, well, the work so that we can continue is voluntary, so I think we basically need the subsidies for that. To give continuity and guarantee the actions that work." [recorded interview, ES_43]

These obstacles often result in numerous periods of inactivity of an important number of local Romani organizations.

Secondly, the type of activities implemented by Romani actors also depends on the profile of individuals which compose these organizations. Factors such as level of formal education, occupation and/or professional experience, social capital (also in terms of density of networks and collaborations), entrepreneurship, level of personal commitment, among others, become determinant elements which condition the profile and type of activities implemented by these organizations. The "human factor" in these organizations is key in order to understand why some NGOs (even small organizations) become successful and remain active over longer periods of time while others remain marginal and have a short life-span. There are numerous examples of small Romani organizations, working in a limited geographical scope, but which participate in European projects, organize events and workshops, elaborate didactical materials and provide diverse types of services; such as *Nakeramos* in Barcelona or *Amuradi* (*Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas Universitarias de Andalucía*) in Andalusia. The knowledge, entrepreneurship and network of contacts and collaborations of individuals composing those entities determine their success. Nonetheless, more Romani NGOS struggle with a number of difficulties and shortcomings. During my interviews lack of capacity was oftentimes raised as a problem my informants. For example, in an interview, one Romani woman leader argues that improving

qualifications and capacities of individuals involved in Romani ethnic mobilization is necessary to improve the efficiency of their work:

> "I ask for professional training for all the people that work in the associative world. Continuous training. Because those who work in the social sector need to be trained continuously. Because you know what happens, the people that work in the associations often have a lot to give, have a big potential, but they are poorly trained." [recorded interview, ES_22]

The obstacles faced by Romani organizations, especially the small entities, is accessing funding and implementing projects often leads to frustration and may result in dis-engagement from ethnic mobilization work altogether. One Romani leader argued:

> "Now it has improved. But at the beginning it was very difficult. When you start, you are a bird that doesn't know how to fly…You want to eat the whole world when you start, but you can't. It is very difficult. And if you don't have a grant and do not have resources to do it, you feel excluded. You lose your motivation. And you get burn out." [recorded interview, ES_45]

Finally, more often than not, Romani organizations are involved in a number of different type of activities, ranging from service-provision to organization of events, production and dissemination of information. Level of specialization is less common and typically is restricted to sectorial organizations (such as women, youth) or to bigger entities which maintain a specialized area of activity (for example *Unión Romaní* which is engaged in research and publication of a number of products such as periodic newspapers, research reports and journals).

Political interaction – advocacy and political representation

Beyond specific activities and types of actions implemented by Romani organizations, which will be discussed further, the main role of performed by Romani actors is that of representation of interests of Romani communities. Romani organizations become vehicles through which Roma exercise their right to political participation and which are recognized as "valid intermediaries between the grassroots and the administration" (Méndez, 2005).

Angéla Kóczé argues that "civil society organisations offer a space for a broadly defined political activism" and that "civil society is an extension of the collective politics that influence and transform formal political participation" (Kóczé, 2012). Political participation can be understood as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly, by affecting the making or implementation of public policy, or indirectly, by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2009:21). Indeed, Romani organizations become those vehicles through which Romani participation can be secured (through formal, established channels of participation) or conduced.

In order to evaluate the active political participation of Romani associations it is useful to analyse in what type of activities and forms of participation they are involved in. Aparicio (2011:16), speaking of political participation of immigrant associations, provides a table which classifies the possible forms of action in the sphere of political participation:

Table 19. Political participation: type of action and form of acting (Aparicio 2011: 16)

Type of action	Form of acting
Pressure on authorities	*Traditional lobby* *Mobilizing protest* *Confronting protest* *Electoral participation*
Contacts and collaboration with social agents	*Political parties, syndicates* *Media* *New movements (ex. Ecology)* *Human Rights Associations*
Presence in mechanisms of decision-making	*National* *Regional/ Autonomous Communities* *Municipal*

With regards to Romani political participation, if analysed through the prism of Aparicio's table, I would conclude that the major channel of political participation in that of "presence in mechanisms of decision-making", although mostly through non-binding recommendations rather than real political power.

As early as in mid-1980's, the governmental administration begun to set up consultative bodies which would secure participation of Romani agents along with other relevant stakeholders, important for the implementation of public policies and plans, and occasionally to resolve conflicts involving local Romani communities. First such consultative committee was set up in Sevilla in 1984 (Roma Municipal Council in Sevilla), which served to facilitate and institutionalize the dialogue between Romani actors and the municipality (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013b). Gradually, other type of consultative bodies and committees were set up on local (municipal), regional and national levels. Furthermore, sectorial consultative bodies or committees were set up as working groups focusing on specific topics (such as Roma working groups on health issues) or as cross-sectorial working groups created under specific departments which would bring together diverse agents and stakeholders, among them Roma.

For example, in the context of Catalonia, Romani stakeholders participate or are members of the following bodies and agencies, which are linked or directly belong to public authorities:

- Roma-specific consultative bodies:

  - Municipal Roma Council in Barcelona (approved initially and created in 1998[153]) and similar municipal structures such as the Table of Roma Inclusion in Reus created in 2013 (*La Taula per la inclusió del poble gitano*)
  - Advisory Board of the Roma Population of the "Integral Plan for the Roma Population in Catalonia", which counts with plenary, executive committee and thematic working groups
  - State Council for the Roma in Spain (which counts with Catalan members)
  - Intergroup for the Romani People ("Intergrup del Poble Gitano" created in 2011), a parliamentary working group on Roma which counts with representatives of all political parties present in the Catalan Parliament and delegated representatives of Roma civil society
- Other consultative bodies and committees (non Roma-specific) which count with Romani participation:
  - Audio-visual Council in Catalonia (*Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña (CAC))*
  - Council of Associations in Barcelona *(Consejo de Asociaciones de Barcelona)*
  - National Catalan Youth Council (*Consell Nacional de la Joventut de Catalunya*)

Large entities have the broadest spectrum of participation in such bodies. For example, FAGIC as a regional federation and an umbrella body bringing together numerous local Romani entities from across Catalonia, has a seat in all (except for the Youth Council) of the listed above consultative bodies. Smaller entities, have a more limited scope of participation but can still access municipal and regional structures. For example, *Nakeramos* association, a local Romani association working with youth, which notably has been active internationally (as a member of the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network), participates in the Municipal Council as well as forms part of the Assembly of the Advisory Board of PIPG; however, they have no access to the State Council for the Romani people. As a member organization of FAGIC and of UR, *Nakeramos* is "represented" as well in the national-level advisory council. The existence of umbrella bodies, thus, is thought to be a bridge of communication between the State-level developments and policies (also through the State Council for the Roma) and the local, grassroots entities. Nonetheless, their direct involvement and participation, not via umbrella bodies, is restricted.

Additionally, beyond those specific consultative bodies listed above, there is a vast number of working groups, periodic meetings, formal and informal networks hosted and/or promoted by public administration bodies, ranging from local town halls, through social services agencies to departments of the *Generalitat*, which provide a space for dialogue and participation between state administration and non-State actors, among them Roma.

[153] http://www.diba.cat/cido/NSCIDO.asp?m=1&s=2&ss=1&id=73430

The example of Catalonia is representative also of the rest of the country, where a similar dynamic of creating formal spaces of participation and dialogue has become a common practice and different levels of state administration (municipal, regional, national).

The most important of such consultative bodies is without a doubt the State Council for the Roma People (*Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano, CEPG*[154]), created by a Royal Decree 891/2005 in 2005. This committee institutionalizes collaboration and dialogue between representatives of National State Administration and Romani civil society (currently 20 member organizations, including pro-Roma organizations; appointed through an open call launched by the Ministry). The creation of this consultative body should be considered a significant achievement, however, there is a number of shortcomings regarding its functioning and operational capacity: this organ has no real decision-making power and is narrowly limited to providing assistance and recommendations to policy-makers. Additionally, the participation is very much limited to the formal participation of appointed (and self-appointed) Romani leaders of local NGOs, whose representativeness can be easily questioned. Thus, specific sectors of the population remain under-represented and the non-formal participation is not considered eligible under these institutional dynamics of participation (Laparra Navarro et al. 2013). The representatives of CEPG has at times been challenged by Romani organizations who are not part of the Council. For example, on the occasion of renovation of the CEPG, based on criteria and procedures established in the decree, a Romani federation has been very critical of the result; arguing that the same people and organisations are “perpetuated” and that the very process of renovation was a mere façade. In a statement published on their website, the president of the organization argues:

> “The expected renewal of the State Council of the Roma People perpetuating once again, even knowing those who have governed and led, that the Council does not deserve acceptance by a large part of the Romani community in Spain, offers very poor expectations for regeneration and work with the Romani people as a whole.
>
> Surely the current government does not even have a clear understanding of what has been happening in this regard, but of course, we will do whatever is necessary to convey that it cannot maintain nor the mechanisms, nor people who so far have regulated and directed all matters concerning the Romani people. Including regulation and control of the State Council of the Roma itself.
>
> In Spain there are many people and very serious Romani organizations that are only interested in the daily work and the dignity of our people, individuals and organizations fleeing vested interests and waiting, like us, a real change of direction with the new orientation required by Brussels to the EU states with regard to their inclusion plans aimed at Romani people. (…)
>
> So this renewal is not only unacceptable, but is also a real insult to our people, and that keeps a situation that came "bleeding" from long ago, being that we are now entering a new political era where the voice of Roma in Europe has a special place. Therefore, is it a paradox that the

[154] http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/consejoEstGitano.htm

> renewal of the State Council of the Roma People again ignored the many voices of those who day after day are ‘leaving the skin’ for our people.”[155]

Therefore, the principle channel of interaction between Romani agents and the public administration is done through so-called “invited spaces”. According to Cornwall: “‘invited spaces’, a label that serves to convey the origin of many intermediary institutions as government-provided, whether in response to popular demand, donor pressure or shifts in policy (Brock et al. 2001). Some are more transient in character: policy moments where public space is opened up for deliberation or communication, before being closed again as authorities return to business as usual. Other “invited spaces” are more durable, often taking the shape of regularised institutions modelled on enduring templates such as the welter of co-management committees and user groups that have proliferated in the wake of sector reforms.” (Cornwall, 2004:2).

In case of Roma in Spain, those “invited spaces” emerged through a series of inter-related factors such as the “deliberative turn” in European democracies (Goodin 2008; Steffek 2015) and the emergence and consolidation of Roma-targeted policies, among others (Bereményi and Mirga 2012). But rather than transient, temporary spaces they became durable institutions, which secure Romani voices and participation in political affairs.

The structures of participation and dialogue created and established by public administration, like the consultative committees listed above, are useful channels which secure dialogue and direct involvement in decision-making processes. These type of structures, however, can also be tools through which public administration takes control over participation: “Local, regional or central administrations search for efficiency, control of expenses, and long-term sustainability of projects, as well as legitimacy of their policies. In order to attain this, public administrations seek the support of different segments of the society, especially of those that usually do not have access to public or formal spaces of participation.[…], administration often instrumentalises participation in search of interlocutors and to assure social and political control of participation.” (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012:32). In fact, one of my informants argued:

> “What happens how is that the people driving the Romani associative movement are generally very little prepared, lack capacity and are ignorant. The politicians take advantage of this bad preparations and ignorance. It is much easier to manipulate the leaders.” [interview field-notes, ES_4]

Another senior Romani leader and a pastor of a local Romani church argued:

> “The Town Hall uses the Roma to then justify itself. Yes, we are being used.” [recorded interview, ES_10]

[155] Signed by José Alfredo Maya Maya, president of *Federación Maranatha de Asociaciones Gitanas:* http://www.gypsyworld.org/index.php/es/multimedia/documentos/1418-editorial-iconsejo-estatal-gitano

One senior Romani leader, who has occupied important position in the government, spoke about the dynamic in which public administration "buys" Romani representatives by providing them with small grants and in such a way makes sure that they support governmental actions instead of criticizing it. He argued:

> "Let's see, the Romani people participated, some Romani organizations were moved [to participate] as always – by the money. So I will buy you and you shut up." [recorded interview, ES_31]

It should be noted that in such structures there is a limited number of organizations which form part of these committees. The establishment of close relationships between a limited number of Romani actors and public administration actors is a double-edge sword – on the one hand it becomes a channel for continuous dialogue and collaboration, but on the other hand becomes a site of favouritism and dependence, which effectively hinders the independency of those actors (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012; Laparra, 2007; Rostas, 2012). The same informant also argued that at times they fell "threatened":

> "What is unacceptable is that they threaten us. They tell us to go up or to go down. But tomorrow we will not be happy. *Más vale una vez amarillo que cien colorados*[156]." [recorded interview, ES_31]

This dynamic, not limited exclusively to the case of Roma, but rather a phenomenon deeply engrained into civil society – state administration relationship in Spain, is also a visible characteristic noticeable for more than two decades. As San Román rightfully observed in 1999: "[..] a golden opportunity for the administration to have a convenient interlocutor, creating the impression of representativeness and democratic dialogue, and allowing [the administration] not to speak with anybody else and avoid social and political responsibilities related to Roma. If Romani NGOs and not the administration are the entities responsible for distributing resources within the Roma community (houses, grants, social welfare, etc.), then not only that [but] all the failures, conflicts and protests are also the responsibility of Roma." (San Román 1999)

On the other hand, the establishment of such channels of participation and direct involvement often serves to legitimize policies rather than to provide real opportunities for their influence. It has been numerous times underlined both by existing scholarship and during the interviews, that such consultative committees provide an illusion of influence – typically, these consultative bodies are limited to their consultative status; the recommendations issued by such bodies are non-binding and members of these committees have no real decision-making power. One senior Romani leader stated with clarity:

> "Without a doubt, there is a lack of political instruments where the Roma can have the last word... Today we don't have this possibility. The Roma is below, proposes actions, patches, but

[156] "Más vale ponerse una vez colora(d)o que ciento amarillo "is a Spanish idiom which means to act firmly, be assertive and that it is better to act firmly in the face of difficulties than to be sorry later on.

> not even at the moment of saying, deciding on the priorities of which programs should be implemented and which not. We don't have a say." [recorded interview, ES_7]

As the principle of Roma involvement has been consecrated as a *sine qua non* of Roma policy-making, establishment of such bodies becomes a requirement, but also one which legitimizes policy-making process without necessarily becoming a tool for meaningful and quality participation (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012). For example, one of my Romani informants argued that:

> "We do what we are permitted to do, nothing more. Not what we want to do. Because we are mere consultative subjects, nothing more. We can't do more. Because we could do more things, because we have the capacity and we are motivated. But, my friend: 'you are an advisory, and I ask you when I want to ask you. This is the reality." [recorded interview, ES_2]

Some published reports also show the lack of meaningful participation in the framework of such consultative structures. For example, data shows that the involvement of the State Council for the Roma in drafting and approving policies (most notably the National Roma Strategies) has been scarce; the 2012 Civil Society Monitoring report argues that "due to the timing, it was not possible to discuss the Strategy within the framework of the meetings of the State Council of the Roma People and, thus, the Strategy was not formally approved by this Council" (Laparra et al., 2013:37).

It is also important to analyse the quality of participation in those consultative bodies. Some of my informants underlined that lack of capacities and knowledge effectively impedes them from being able to participate fully and to effectively conduce political processes, especially in contact with public administration. In one interview it was argued:

> "We always say that the contact with the administration is bad. But it's also our fault. Because we don't have education, we have no preparation. So of course, they can't give you a job if you're not prepared." [recorded interview, ES_42]

Finally, such structures of formal spaces of participation also become rigid and exclusive, making it difficult to secure the voice of those actors who are not officially part of these committees (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012). One report, when speaking of the State Council for the Roma clearly states that "there is no proper channel to allow the participation (even if it is indirectly) of organizations which are not members of the Council" (Laparra et al., 2013:38). This commentary equally applies to similar structures on municipal and regional level, where chosen/ appointed members of the consultative committees monopolize formal channels of political participation and consequently silence or marginalize the voice of those Romani actors who are not part of these bodies. The obstacles are even greater for individuals – un-associated Roma – who have no possibility of being part of such consultative structures. In an interview with a senior Romani leader it was argued:

> "A: I wanted to ask, if a Roma, which for example is not in any organization, but is very active, is interested the Romani people but does not want to join [any organization], could he get in [the Advisory Council]?

> H: He could not enter.
>
> M: He would have to be a member of an entity, is not it?
>
> H: He could not get in, but well, I say again, beyond being a representative of an entity, have in mind that not many people that are in the Council, there are many more associations and always there had been the same [people] with them [the same organizations]. Imagine that the decree says that every two years there must be a change and, well, there are eight [representatives] and no one changed, no one yet. So therefore, well sorry, ye there was a change but not because he was bound by the decree, the second vice president, but because there have been problems.” [recorded interview, ES_31]

Beyond these formal bodies, Romani actors also exercise political pressure and/ or influence through establishing networks of collaboration and building relationships with politicians and a broad spectrum of non-State agents. On the one hand, Romani organizations, even small local entities, typically enter into a dialogue with their corresponding representatives of local public administration – both those appointed politically or elected to office, as well as with public officers and staff. These relationships are built over time mostly through meetings in which specific grievances, problems or interests are presented and negotiated. Oftentimes, such contacts are also built with different state agencies such as social services or housing agencies, which search for mediation, help and guidance in local Romani communities which these entities can offer. At times, such agencies themselves search for Romani interlocutors, hoping for support and mediation on behalf of Romani actors. These relationships, especially those which reflect specific programs implemented or attend very concrete and tangible needs and solutions, may also lead to establishing partnerships between Romani entities and the public administration, providing funding for service-provision to sub-contracted Romani actors.

For example, in the municipality in Barcelona, there have been cases of uncivil behaviour, frequent travelling without a valid ticket and occasional incidents which were taken place in the public transportation of the city. At some point, the TBS (the municipal agency responsible for public transport in trams) got in touch with FAGIC seeking help. It was envisioned to provide community mediators which will travel on public transport and work to alleviate the identified problems. As a result, a pilot measure was introduced in 2011, in which two Romani mediators were contracted[157]. The partnership was subsequently extended in 2012. Such examples are numerous, especially with regards to mediation. Similar initiatives have been mapped out throughout Spain in different areas such as education, health, housing or justice system.

On the other hand, increasingly Roma establish ties with other social agents, locally and on regional and national levels: joining formal and informal networks around specific issues or services; collaborating in common events and celebrations; building relationships with scholars, research centres or associations. All of these forms of building collaboration ties with non-Roma civil society may help to build greater political leverage not only to Romani claims but also to causes of general

[157] http://fagic.org/es/comunicacion/noticias/292-mediadores-en-el-tbs

interest and can serve as a useful learning experience. The practice of building such ties beyond Roma-only issues is increasingly visible especially among Romani women’s and youth organizations, and by bigger Romani entities such as national-scope organizations and federations. Nonetheless, small local entities at times also establish such ties of collaboration or merge working with the Roma as part of non-Roma local entities.

For example, a Romani leader, ex-president of Romani federation argued that he has increasingly started to work with a local Associations of Neighbours:

> “I still have my local Romani NGO in Viladecans. We don’t have the office anymore because we didn’t receive enough funding to maintain it. But I am working a lot with the Association of Neighbours. We have a very good relationship with the neighbours of the district, I am respected and everyone knows me. And now even the local administration sees me as a more credible leader, more serious one since I am working with the neighbours.” [recorded interview, ES_7]

Service provision

Service-provision constitutes the core of all Romani organization’s operational activity or, as stated by a senior expert on Roma:

> “the main objective of the associative movement is to provide services.” [recorded interview, ES_13]

As it was mentioned earlier, during the process of consolidation of Spanish welfare system, the implementation of policies and Roma-specific measures increasingly was transferred from levels of national/ regional governments to level of local administration, and most importantly, towards the non-State actors – non-governmental organizations and charity entities. Consequently, a vast part of the measures covered by regional and national plans for Roma are in fact sub-contracted, and thus implemented, by non-State actors. This phenomenon of shared implementation of social measures between public administration structures and civil society is not unique for the case of Roma but rather exposes a more general trend in Spain. Thus, the service provision represents a fundamental and biggest source of funding to Romani organizations.

The services provided by Romani organizations can be differentiated between the target groups they serve or between the direct beneficiaries of the service provided. In the vast majority of cases the declared direct target and beneficiaries of services are the Romani communities which organizations serve. In fact, many organizations include the service-provision in their statutes as specific objectives or among the declared actions adopted to pursue general objectives of the organizations. For example:

> “To provide services of information and permanent counselling in the development of activities of intervention and community promotion”. (Objectives, *Asociación De Mujeres Gitanas Y Payas "Romi Bidean*")

> “To provide services of common interest which are inquired for by the members”. (Objectives, *Asociación Gitana De Gipuzkoa Kamelamos Adiquerar*)
>
> “Optimize, update and energize the work of Romani associative movement, the quality and transparency of its programs, services and actions, as an instrument of promotion and social normalization.” (Objectives, *Federación Gaz Kalo de Navarra*)
>
> “The defence of common interests, provision of human and technical services to its members.” (Objectives, FECOGEX *Federación La Conciencia Gitana De Extremadura*)

As seen from these examples, the question of service-provision is articulated and framed in a variety of ways. Some organizations, rather than define services for “the community” they provide services “to their members”; this is especially the case of umbrella organizations.

However, Romani actors also offer their services to non-Roma stakeholders such as local municipalities, social services, universities or the media. For example, some organizations define in their objectives the assistance to public administration bodies and other entities in the formulation of their actions targeting Roma:

> “Cooperate with other institutions and public and private entities in whatever actions aimed at promoting civic, labour, cultural, health-related and religious, integration, development and coexistence of the poorest families (Roma and non-Roma) in our territorial scope, and the creation of social services, programs and projects needed for development.” (Objectives*, La Asociación Gitana Anaquerando*)
>
> “Provide the Public Administration with tools necessary for their approach and implementation of policies that support the development of Andalusian Romani women”. (Objectives, FAKALI)

In this case, the ultimate target beneficiaries are also the Romani communities although indirectly – after all, those services serve to ultimately benefit the Romani population in their process of inclusion. The differentiation between both types of services is more easily defined in theory than in practice – oftentimes the services include both components.

The type of services provided by Romani organizations to Romani constituency is wide-ranging: they can be provided through a plethora of diverse activities offered to Romani population such as trainings, workshops and courses; activities targeting specific sectors of Romani population (youth, children, women etc.) or specific topics (education, leisure, sports etc.). At times, Romani organization also provide material subsistence to poorest families; for example, *la Asociación de Promoción Gitana en La Rioja* every 3 months distributes food packages to approximately 800 Romani families[158]. The services can also be provided through legal and administrative assistance to Roma, through mediation, by providing information or legal guidance and representation. To an extent, these services can also be offered indirectly – for example, by providing information on social assistance possibilities or

[158] https://asociaciondepromociongitanarioja.wordpress.com/accion-social/

mechanisms of denouncing acts of discrimination provided through websites, bulletins or newsletters or in the premises of the organization. These services are typically thematic or sectorial (or both) – serving specifically defined target groups such as women or youth or concentrating on specific areas of work such as education, employment, health or housing – and reflect the donor entity’s priorities and agenda. The type of service and its scope are determined by the type of funding entity (corresponding to specific thematic areas) and its level of activity (municipal, regional, national). Below is a sample of different types of services provided to Romani people, with indication of the area of intervention and the type of funding entity:

Table 20. Types of services provided – thematic area, funding entity and implementing entity

THEMATIC AREA	**FUNDING ENTITIY**	**TYPE OF ENTITIY**	**IMPLEMENTING ENTITIY**	**MEASURE**
EDUCATION	*Diputación de Alicante*	Public	Regional Federation	Prevention and education inclusion of minors of Romani ethnicity
EDUCATION	*Caixa Pro Infancia*	Private	Local entity	Educational reinforcement of the minors, supporting their academic development in the school context.
WOMEN	*Obra Social "La Caixa"*	Private	Local entity	Social intervention and improving the quality of life of Romani community in Cantabria
WOMEN	*IRPF*	Public	Federation of women	Empleakali VIII. Supporting employment of Romani women
HEALTH	*Institute of Public Health and Labour of Navarra*	Public	Regional Federation	Tobacco consumption: Prevent our children from starting in the consumption of tobacco. Getting young people who are starting to smoke leave this consumption as soon as possible. Helping youth and adult smokers to quit smoking.
HEALTH	*Consejería de Salud y Servicios Sanitarios.*	Public	Local Organization	Is a specialized program for the Romani community that present health problems, substance abuse, risk or social exclusion. Our overall goal is to reduce health inequalities of Asturian Romani community
SOCIAL	*Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa*	Public	Regional Federation	Social intervention program with Romani families

SOCIAL	*Consejería de Servicios Sociales. Gobierno de La Rioja*	Public	Local Organization	Outreach program or area of social and community promotion
JUSTICE	*la Fundación Caja de Burgos y la Obra Social de La Caixa*	Private	Local Organization	Artistic workshops and seminars in prisons
JUSTICE	*IRPF*	Public	Regional Federation	Social and labour training in prisons
HOUSING	*IRPF*	Public	Local Organization	Family interventions in housing
HOUSING	*ADIGSA*	Public	Regional Federation	Social and community mediation in housing

On the other hand, Romani organizations provided services to non-Roma stakeholders such as social services, public administration agencies or institutions (such as schools, hospitals, public transport companies). These services are mainly restricted to mediation and /or conflict resolution or to provision of relevant information and feedback to localized actions implemented by specific state institutions (for example social services). Naturally, these also serve Romani communities but they do so indirectly – the Roma are ultimate beneficiaries by receiving improved and better-tailored services on behalf of these institutions, nonetheless, the direct service is offered to the institutions and not the Romani population. In the same spirit, Romani organizations become an important source of information and expertise regarding their communities; they often become "gate-keepers" to those who wish to enter communities for example to conduct research or write a reportage on Roma. In such cases, Romani organizations also offer services to universities, research centres or journalists by becoming relevant sources of information and expertise and by becoming "entry-points" or "guides" for those external to the community.

The way all services are provided also depend on the type of funding scheme – they can be either project-based and are granted typically on competitive basis through open calls from proposals for a specific amount of time or can be implemented in the framework of multi-annual, periodic and/or long-term partnership agreements (so-called *convenios de colaboración*). Alternatively, services which consist in conflict-resolution or sporadic information-provision are granted on demand. In this context, what is important to underline is the core funding for service-provision is financed by public administration (ranging from municipal to national).

Consulting annual financial reports[159] of Romani organizations helps to illustrate this. As an example, I refer to the budget of *Unión Romaní* for 2014 (available online[160]) in order to demonstrate the importance of service-provision and, consequently, the role of public funding for Roma organizations. Based on data available for 2014, we can conclude that 90,5% of all funding was dedicated to some type of services offered to the population – either through trainings, seminars, leisure activities, support of volunteerism, mediation, compensatory education classes and summer schools. What is more important, however, is that out of over 2,000,000 € budget, only about 50,000 € represent private or foreign funding (2,41% of all funding). The rest of over 97% of funding comes from public funds of different level of administration. In contrast if we compare with budget of Kamira Federation for 2013[161], arguably one of the most internationally active Romani organizations in Spain, over 81% of their budget comes from public funding (different levels of administration), while the remaining 19% comes from foreign donors (OSF, OSCE, Council of Europe). Kamira also declares that "80% of their activity is project management, 60% socio-economic inclusion (*inserción socioeducativa*) and 50% counselling"[162]; which in great capacity represent different types of service-provision.

Nonetheless, there are organizations which successfully diversify their funding, for example through private funding or by accessing EU funds. A good example is *Fundación Pere Closa*, working in the field of education, which provides diverse services to Romani students and families as well as to schools. Over the years, they have developed a strong portfolio, methodology and expertise in working for improving educational achievements of Romani pupils. The range of services and activities implemented by this entity is financed by different sources, both public and private. Part of their activities are financed exclusively by Foundation "La Caixa" (especially their program "Pro Infancia"); they have also successfully implemented/ participated in the implementation of several EU projects in education.

Despite such positive examples, lack of financial diversity in difficult in fund-raising are evident problems not only among Romani associations but with regards to Spanish civil society. For Romani organizations, especially small local entities, access to private funding (Spanish or foreign foundations or business) becomes oftentimes out of reach; furthermore, the access to EU funds is also limited (with

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[159] It should be underlined that the majority of Romani organizations do not comply with the principle of transparency and does not provide access to annual reports (both narrative and financial). If they provide any information at all, they normally elaborate on the activities implemented throughout that corresponding year, without sharing financial balance sheets. In order not to reveal information gathered during fieldwork but which was not disclosed for public use, I refer to *Unión Romaní* and Kamira since it is among the few organizations which provide access to this information publicly (online).

[160] http://www.unionromani.org/downloads/URmemo2014.pdf

[161] http://federacionkamira.es/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MEMORIA-KAMIRA-2013.pdf

[162] http://federacionkamira.es/quienes-somos/

some notable exceptions) to a handful of bigger, better connected Romani organizations with international outreach and networks.

Focus on service-provision has also another important dimension, namely that of employment. Services, especially those which require long-term involvement through mediation or counselling, but also oftentimes short-term projects, create unique opportunities to create jobs for Roma, both those associated as well as those who are not actively involved in the work of the entity. In fact, if we look at expenditure categories of budgets of Romani associations we can easily conclude that a vast part of the funds is allocated to provide salaries for those involved in these service-provision activities. For example, in the case of *Unión Romaní* budget for 2014, 54% of the budget goes to salaries. This should be of no surprise – after all, if we analyse the expenditure declared by public administration bodies for Roma inclusion, as much as 75% goes to salaries of staff (Santiago 2012a)[163]. Some Roma assess this critically, arguing as was mentioned earlier, that Romani organization work to maintain jobs to their members and/or their families, rather than concentrate or producing positive impact in the community. In the words of one young educated Roma:

> “I think that the first Romani associations created have helped a lot, but then more associations were created for occupational and economic reasons, rather than to help the Romani culture. This is where they harmed the culture more than helped it.” [written questionnaire, ES_24]

Financial dependency quite understandably affects the capacity of Romani actors to become watchdogs – interviews revealed that Romani leaders are aware of potential repercussion which may arise from critical and confrontational attitude towards the public administration. It’s better to maintain friendly relationships with governmental officials – after all the very existence of Romani organizations depends on grants awarded by them. One Romani leader argued:

> “Yes, but we manipulated by them always, there is not once, not one when we are… When a politician, I think, is, must be, at the service of the people ... to serve the people. But in the end, with the Roma, as we are not well informed, as we do not know how it works, and so they tell us 'here is a candy', our eyes light up and you're done, and this is how they have us.” [recorded interview, ES_4]

This dynamic is considered by some as a way of exercising control over the associations and of institutionalization of assistentialist attitude and approach towards working with Roma. Laparra argues that public administration to a certain extent establishes instrumental relationships with Romani associations, and especially, establishes a patron-client relationship with its leaders (*relaciones clientelistas*): “legitimation of associations and their leaders was based on their ability to raise funds from the public administration resulting in deepening of its political dependence, thus restricting their

[163] For example, a 2007 evaluation report of the implementation of the Romani Development Plan (*Plan de Desarrollo Gitano*), argues that 71,78% of all the funds were spent in salaries (Ministerio de Educación Política Social y Deporte 2007). The same report also highlights that out of 574 staff members involved, only 135 were Roma (23,5%).

ability to channel the demands of the group and to build a strategy and a discourse independent of political power." (Laparra, 2007:208).[164]

Furthermore, the focus on provision of services also pre-determines the type and dynamic of the relationship between Romani organizations and their constituencies. Arguably, it reproduces the assistentialist approach of State-civil society relationship, resulting in establishing patron-client relationships between Romani organizations and their communities. Laparra argues that: "the powers that the administration granted occasionally to some organizations for the distribution of goods and services (jobs, scholarships, housing), significantly conditioned the relationship with the constituency: access to the resources of the Roma was conditioned by the relationship of belonging and cordiality maintain with the association and especially their leaders." (Laparra, 2007:207).[165]

According to one dis-engaged Romani university student:

> "The point for me is that NGOs provide some important services to the Romani population, but [these services] do not really involve a process of empowerment or opening opportunities. That is, I see that Romani association are focused on welfare and do not offer real possibilities for Roma, and by that I mean do a job for political lobbying for funds for quality employment and training. (Education policies focus only in elementary schools, but not on the job training)." [written questionnaire, ES_29]

As a consequence, Romani associations interact with their constituencies mainly through services they offer. Although service provision is necessary as it oftentimes responds to specific needs and interests of the community, it doesn't work towards involving the communities actively in the work of the organizations nor does it create participatory dynamics. Targeting the constituency by providing them with services doesn't substitute the process of mobilizing internally towards greater active engagement of community members. Rather, the constituencies as perceived and treated as passive beneficiaries – the potential agency of entire communities or their individual members is not appreciated or activated. Providing services cultivates passive and claimant attitude of the community

[164] Dietz (2003:65) further argued that: "Although the trend towards sub-contracting has evidently increased civil society and *gitano* participation in the implementation of pro-*gitano* social welfare policy, doubts are raised in relation to issues such as the persistence of old paternalist and charity attitudes, which are merely 'privatized' and transferred from the state to the NGO sector. The particularization of public policy through non-governmental actors may be duplicating certain social services, distinguishing between 'generalist' - for *payos* and *gitanos* alike - and 'ethnic' service delivery, sometimes for the very same activities and domains, such as professional training and labour market integration."

[165] In similar spirit, Teresa San Román writes: "…there came a moment when the mere existence of the [Roma] associations was depending exclusively on the administration, which put them in a position against the population which they should serve, and then, another moment, which is far from being over, when the relations with the State and the access to benefits of the most marginalized Roma depend on their relations with these NGOs, which is not good for the former or for the latter." (San Román 1999).

members and is absent of empowering and activating dimension. An interview with a leader of a Romani organizations illustrates this:

> "I think that the big problem is that we still don't understand what an association really is. We come with demands to the associations, when an association is a place to work[…]. Sometimes you see the association as another administration. Something that we are not. I am a person that should contribute with something to the association, because the association looks for a benefit of the whole community. This is a concept of the association." [recorded interview, ES_30]

This dynamic is also very much present across Europe with regards to the Romani associative movement (Kóczé, 2012b). Writing of similar dynamics in case of Romani NGOs, Rostas argues that such focus on service-provision creates a vertical relationship, not a horizontal one, and does not encourage cooperation and reciprocity, undermining the potential mobilizatory power of Romani organizations (Rostas 2009). Indeed also the interview revealed that the excessive focus on service provision of Romani associations as well as the patron-client relationship which these entities often establish with their communities, significantly diminishes their credibility and capacity to mobilize mass support of the constituencies. One interview with a senior non-Roma expert on Roma argues that:

> "in Spain, the level subsistence is greater than in countries of the East, as there is regular funding from the State and lack of external sources of funding. This results in dependency [of Romani associations] and [their] limited capacity to criticize, so consequently there is limited potential of political activism with such level of dependency from the state." [recorded interview, ES_13]

Protests

In social movement literature, the topic of protest bears special relevance. Taylor argues that the use of protest is a distinctive feature of social movements (Koopmans 2007; Kriesi, Soule, and Snow 2007). Stroschein argues that: "Protest is an informal avenue through which minorities may push for particular policies, while majorities have a luxury of relying on formal democratic institutions. Protests thus becomes a useful vehicle through which minority desires might be addressed in democracies. […] Second, the evidence shows frequent government responses to minority protests. Thus, protest is not simply a means of expressing ethnic identity, but is rather a strategic, pragmatic activity." (Stroschein, 2012:69). On the other hand, Strijbis argues that those forms of ethnic mobilization which are not institutionalized through parliamentary systems (such as political parties) but are conducted through more or less organized ethnic social movements, take "the form of ethnic protest – a nonconventional form of political mobilization" (Strijbis, 2012:36).

Despite the fact that relevant research on ethnic mobilization and social movements places protest at its core, in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain it can be argued that the use of this strategy has been quite limited. Regarding the use of protest among the Romani associative movement, I would

differentiate between: 1) strategic protest as a tool for influencing political change; and 2) reactive protests, spontaneously sparked by events or other developments.

The use of protest is a pragmatic and tactical decision which may become an effective strategy to exercise pressure in support of specific collective claims. Demands such as affirmative action, specific budget allocations, or legislative changes can all be supported through mass mobilization of constituencies through protest actions. Nonetheless, research suggests that the strategic use of protests to provide leverage to specific, well-articulated demands has been quite limited and anecdotal. It is surprising, for example, that when one flagship project of "School Promotion", created through the PIPG in Catalonia, suffered serious financial cuts and consequently lefts schools with Romani children under-attained and understaffed (Llevot & Bernad, 2016; Bereményi & Carrasco, 2015), and a number of Romani school promotors and mediators unemployed, protest was not used to demonstrate opposition against these governmental decisions. Neither did the communities manifest to demand attention or provision of specific services or infrastructure to enhance educational achievements of their children[166].

Although the use of protest as a tool for exercising political pressure towards collective goals is rare, it is not non-existent. In fact, there are examples of strategic (and effective) use of protest in order to demand legislative changes are the actions coordinated by *Coordinadora dels Merxants* (Platform of Peddler Sellers). *Coordinadora* is a joint platform, funded in Catalonia in 2010, which brings together Roma and non-Roma merchants (peddler sellers; *vendedores ambulantes*) and organizations under a collective aim of defending the rights of merchants in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia where it was funded. The organization, led by a Romani pastor and with a secretariat managed by FAGIC, is an exceptional example of effective interest-based initiatives, which goes beyond Roma-specific claims but rather brings together individuals and organizations, independently from their ethnicity, under a common aim. A Romani pastor, leader of the initiative explained:

> "In *Coordinadora* Romani associations of Catalonia were brought together and they called us as FACA and I went with my representative and with a group of Elders. They met also with the 'non-Roma' which are associations of street vendors. It was considered that we the power of convening [people] so among all it was decided that I was the president. (…) We are with the issues of the 'Bolkenstein law', I was at the table of the Parliament which was established by the law (…). And now we have presented to the Government, they that can create a desk at the level of Provincial Council and the federation of municipalities to regulate the markets rates and taxes. Well, there we are fighting for our people, most of them are street vendors so that they have their decent work and are not marginalized." [recorded interview, ES_9]

[166] It should be noted that the "school promotors" were recuperated through different sources of funding. EU funding (through EU projects), private funding (such as "Pro Infancia" program of La Caixa), as well as public funding through municipalities helped to recover the project.

Some argue that the factor of success of *Coordinadora* lays in its inter-ethnic approach to common problems. One of my informants, a non-Roma working losely with peddler sellers and part of the *Coordinadora* structures argued:

> "If *Coordinadora* would be only of Romani people, it wouldn't be so good, so effective. It's really important that it's not only of Roma but of non-Roma as well. It gives the whole initiative more leverage, more capacity for pressure. (…) We should see *Coordinadora* not as something of Romani people but of peddler sellers. This dialogue is very good." [recorded interview, ES_8]

The *Coordinadora* was created to fight against the transposition of the so-called "Bolkestein directive" (Services in the Internal Market Directive 2006/123/EC) which directly affects the rights and obligations of merchants/ peddler sellers (considered among the typically occupations for Roma in Spain). *Coordinadora* aimed to defend the rights of peddler sellers affected by the legislative changes related to the transposition process, and engaged in a variety of repertoires in order to oppose and lobby for a different type of regulations: through meetings with town hall and governmental representatives, politicians, private business as well as protest and petitions, the *Coordinadora* was able to influence significant modifications of the law in benefit of the peddler sellers. An example of the efficiency of their action is a massive protest convoked for 12 of September 2011 in front of the main representative building of the *Generalitat* (government in Catalonia) in order to oppose against yet another legislative change affecting merchants. Rumours run across political elites about the massive scope of the mobilization – through Evangelical Churches' involvement, not only merchants but also their families from across the region were announced to attend the protest. Fearing such massive attendance, the government prior to the protests announced to meet part of the manifests' demands and convoked a working meeting in order to find a common compromise to the problems. As recalled by its president, a Romani pastor:

> "The FACCAT has the authority to speak to the church, no one else. When Generalitat saw that the Roma ni people united to do manifestation, everything stopped [the legislative changes]. And now again we are doing the same with the issue of fees." [recorded interview, ES_9]

Nonetheless, despite this example, such use of strategic protest remains rare. This also may be due to the limited mobilizing capacity of Romani associations and their leaders which was explained in previous sections. The Romani associative movement is weak in terms of the capacity to mobilize constituency; and is much weaker in comparison to the capacity to convoke which Romani Evangelical Churches enjoy.

On the other hand, however, reactionary protest actions are quite common as spontaneous, collective responses to perceived acts of injustice such as discrimination, violence and crime. Massive waves of protest on behalf of Roma have been witnessed across Spain, as a response to cases of outrageous injustices or tragedies. This was the cases with regards to the disappearance and death of Mari Luz Cortés, a 5-years old Romani girl, murdered in 2008. Another, more recent example, is the case of

Mara Fernández Vargas, a Romani new-born baby, taken form a Barcelona hospital by social services workers dressed as nurses, only a few hours after birth[167]. The case sparked outrage on led to massive responses on behalf of the Romani population – through social media campaigns (during the first 8 hours of the petition, over 8,000 signed) protests were convoked in front of the hospital and social services premises, which were attended by numerous families; Romani associations and their local leaders also stepped in to mediate in the conflict, leading to a happy-end.

Both cases, however, share the same characteristic, namely that they are mainly spontaneous responses to cases of injustice where communities mobilized and self-organized independently from associations, or with their marginal involvement, at least during the first phase of protest actions. However, it should be noted that reactive use of protest at times is also coordinated and convoked by Romani organizations and their leaders. Such was the case of protests against actions of French and Italian governments when Romani migrants were being deported. The repeated violation of rights of Romani migrants across Europe numerous times brought representatives of Romani civil society in Spain to manifest. On such occasions, the turn-up is frequently low, and limited to Romani leaders and collaborators of organizations; such manifests convoked by Romani organization do not convoke massive responses among un-associated Romani people. These protests at times generate occasional coordinated responses against discrimination of Roma everywhere, including Spain, like in the case of 1 of September of 2012 protests, convoked in Madrid and major cities across Spain. As their organizers argued:

> "September 1 Gitano is an open movement, not protected, in which all citizens committed to the cause of human rights can make our voices heard for equality of Roma, social promotion and the free exercise of their rights." (Tellez 2012)

Among the most massive responses in this regard were those sparked in 2013 by the case of Leonarda Dibrani, a 15-year-old Romani girl from Kosovo who was arrested on a school bus during a school field trip and later deported along with her family back to Kosovo. The incident generated high media attention and a lot of criticism towards actions of the French government. Romani organizations in Spain too presented their criticism and convoked a number of protest actions across the country[168]; with different turn-out rate but which generated some media attention. The Romani organizations also issued a joint statement under the slogan "Europe is also Roma!" (*Europa también es gitana*). These protests came amidst scandals surrounding forced evictions of Romani immigrants in France, and other European countries. In a statement, signatories of various Romani organizations argued:

> "We, the Romani society, refuse to remain victims of racist and xenophobic governments! (…) EUROPE IS ALSO ROMA! We want to publicly express our absolute and strong rejection of

[167] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2015/noti2015-03-30c.htm

[168] http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1960957/0/; https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/102443.html#.UmpiSwSv9q0.twitter

> discriminatory policies dictated by the different governments of the European Union. (…) The French government has come to reach such a high level of political mediocrity, which takes inhumane measures against the Roma and immigrant population. Attacking the Romani children, as is the scandal unleashed after learning of the arrest and deportation of Leonarda, a minor that in the middle of a school activity was forced by the police to get off the bus while traveling with her classmates. With these facts the systematic violation of rights, institutional racism and xenophobia that is driving the French Socialist government against Romani communities and immigration becomes evident."[169]

The most impressive wave of protests in recent history of Romani activism, combined with sophisticated social-media campaigns, political lobbying and awareness raising, was triggered by controversies surrounding the Royal Spanish Linguistic Academy (*Real Academia de la Lengua Espanola, RAE*), which edits the dictionary of Spanish language. Its 23rd edition, among the definitions of "gitano" (Roma), included the word "*trapacero*" (swindler), considered highly pejorative. The publication of the 23rd edition of dictionary sparked controversies and outrage, especially on behalf of the Roma themselves; it also generated a lot of public and media attention. Throughout 2015, a number of coordinated campaigns and actions of Roma and pro-Roma civil society were organized in order to pressure RAE to change its definition. Curiously, the most successful among these campaigns was one coordinated by FSG, which produced a compelling TV spot ("Noy Soy trapacer@"[170]) and popularized the hashtag #yonosoytrapacero/ #yonosoytrapacera ("I'm not a swindler"). A week after its publication, the video received over a million views in Facebook and more than 600.000 views on Youtube[171]; it also quickly permeated the social media with Romani people across Spain (and even aboard) posting photos of themselves holding a paper with "yo no soy trapacero/a" slogan. The campaign was accompanied by a significant amount of press releases, public statements (among them by the State Council for the Roma[172]), manifestations and protests organized by different Roma and pro-Roma organizations. These actions brought a lot of public attention and public support towards the cause, also by non-Roma part of the population; in instances even public officials and governments criticized RAE for such discriminatory definition[173]. Since 2013 the Ombudsman has also been working the case after numerous complaints against RAE presented. Months of intensive campaigning brought relative success and finally in late 2015 RAE agreed to maintain the definition, but clarify that the term

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[169] http://gazkalo.org/2013/10/manifiesto-europa-tambien-es-gitana/

[170] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN3ENYmSeBY

[171] https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/111180.html

[172] http://www.fakali.org/91-fakali/400-comunicado-de-las-oeneges-del-consejo-estatal-del-pueblo-gitano-y-la-direccion-del-instituto-de-cultura-gitana

[173] For example, Malaga City Town Hall produced a public statement criticizing RAE and urging it to change the pejorative definition of Roma: http://www.laopiniondemalaga.es/malaga/2015/04/20/andalucia-malaga--ayuntamiento-insta/759716.html

"swindler" although used in public speech is a discriminatory and pejorative term (Defensor del Pueblo 2015).

The success of campaigns against RAE as well as massive responses and mobilization also on behalf of Romani communities and non-associated sector of Romani population, typically unengaged in civic actions and campaigns, should also be attributed to the past record of significant efforts against discriminatory and pejorative portrayal of Roma. As explained in previous sections, since 2010 a number of controversial TV shows were emitted in Spanish TV, which presented Roma in a stereotypical, simplistic and often highly negative light. These shows triggered a lot of responses but also an internal discussion, not only of Romani organizations and leaders but also among generally unengaged Romani population – numerous complaints to corresponding bodies and agencies (such as the Ombudsman office), petitions, public statement as well as simple messages of protest emitted via personal blogs, social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter) as well as manifestations and protests have already taken place since 2010. The experience of campaigning against these TV shows was valuable and over time helped to shift the strategy from writing directly to the show producers to acts of public condemnation. In fact, one staff member of a Romani NGO argued:

> "With time we realised that sending out letters to the producers doesn't work. Making statements of public condemnation and denouncing them publicly in public acts works much better." [interview field-notes, ES_15]

Furthermore, she also underlined the importance of reaching out to non-Roma civil society in order to generate greater public support:

> "It is also really important to use non-Roma NGOs. For example, we work with *Xarxa Anti-Rumors*. (…) They produce a lot of materials and thanks to our presence they begin to introduce a 'Roma' dimension in their work. They work as multipliers and give more visibility to our cause." [interview field-notes, ES_15]

Additionally, as a counter-balance to these strategies, Romani organizations begun to promote more balanced discourses and images of Roma through campaigns, exhibitions, publications as well as through collaborating with local media and/ or journalists of major press outlets[174]. Some initiatives, such as short, crowd-funded documentaries produced by Roma "Gitanos con Palabra[175]" ("Roma with a Say"), or campaigns such as "Gitanízate"[176], constructed affirmative narratives based on ethnic pride,

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[174] For example: http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/09/27/eps/1380289607_942207.html; http://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/enclave_rural/gitano_0_277872927.html

[175] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifbcSbz-PuU ; http://www.verkami.com/projects/6106-gitanos-con-palabra

[176] http://gitanizate.com/index.php/home "Gitanízate" is a sophisticated word-play which is an opposing term to the common *apayamiento* (a process of becoming like a non-Roma/ *payo*), and means "make yourself Roma".

which not only work to challenge the negativ3 stereotypes on Roma but also work to improve the self-esteem of Romani people.

Visibility against discrimination - tools and strategies

As it was argued earlier, discrimination is identified by Romani leaders and activists as an evident every-day reality of Romani people and main obstacle for Roma to fully enjoy their rights as citizens. It was argued in the section "why" that the objectives of Romani associations connected to discrimination are two-fold:

1. *Reactionary objectives* – those, which respond to cases of discrimination and racism, through strategic litigation, providing legal assistance or organizing campaigns of protest or petition-writing; also through providing data and information regarding cases of discrimination and racism.
2. *Preventive objectives*, which rather than tackling discrimination by denouncing it, concentrate on generating counter-narratives which may diminish the level of discrimination against Roma by providing positive and affirmative discourses. They tend to concentrate on visibility, by show-casting positive aspect of Romani arts and culture, or by simply providing positive images and examples regarding Roma in Spain.

The type of activities which correspond to these objectives tend to target principally the greater non-Roma society in an attempt to challenge prevailing and negative stereotypes. Many of them work to serve and benefit Romani population directly, however, the main target of these actions is the majority non-Roma population. Likewise, these actions also tend to target state institutions in order to generate an institutional response and support of the fight against discrimination of Roma.

With regards to reactionary objectives, the activities which accompany these objectives are typically ones which respond to specific cases of perceived discrimination. Ethnic violence and tensions, hate speech, instances of institutional discrimination or evident cases of discrimination of Roma all trigger diverse type of responses, ranging from legal actions (provision of legal counselling, legal representation of victims, help in administrative processes during denouncing of specific cases) to public campaigns aiming at raising awareness and generating public opinion pressure (through press releases and conferences, petitions, manifests, letters of protests etc.). Legal actions are undertaken by a limited number of Romani actors, mostly by bigger federations which count with specialized staff and oftentimes grants which finance legal counselling and advice. Smaller organizations typically don't have such capacity and transfer such cases to friendly organizations of federations which provide such service. Romani organizations also intervene in cases of conflicts and tensions which arise in contexts of specific localities or institutions, acting as mediators and intermediaries between the community (or concrete families/ individuals which are parties in the conflict) and the other parties (whether in the case of neighbourhood fights between families or quarrels in the context of a local school or hospital). In such cases oftentimes the conflicting sides are divided along ethnic lines, namely

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As part of the campaigns they have even composed a song full of empowering messages of self-love and solidarity among Roma: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YaAl0YCJk4

mediating between Romani community, family or individual and non-Roma parties (personal or institutional). If the conflicts arise between Romani counterparts, the so-called *Consejo de Ancianos* or Council of Elders intervenes. In this context it is worth mentioning that in Catalonia, such traditional institutions have been institutionalized as a formal association and supported by public grants which cover the expenses of interventions of elderly members of the community who mediate in case of conflicts (Mirga, 2011b).

Romani organizations are also important sources of information. On the one hand, they serve as news outlets – informing about specific cases through their websites and social media pages (Facebook and Twitter), e-mailing lists, as well as through newsletters and bulletins – and reaching out to diverse audiences, among them to their local Romani communities. In this context, especially the salience of internet and social media as main communication tools magnify the potential outreach of Romani organizations. Arguably, Facebook becomes a main tool which allows to multiple news and information and reach out to those Romani community members who are typically unengaged in Romani associations, and at the same time, multiplies and mobilizes responses. Romani community members often join social media campaigns which protests against the discriminatory TV programs such as “Palabra del Gitano” or “Los Gypsy Kings” or during the controversies surrounding RAE definition of Roma. The photos of Roma holding messages (often around the same hashtag or with a unique slogan) spread quickly through the internet and are multiplied through networks of extended family members and friends[177]. Facebook and Twitter also disseminate calls for signature of petitions or calls for participation in protests. On the other hand, Romani organizations become important actors which produce information regarding cases of discrimination, oftentimes through periodic reports. Nonetheless, while the role of Romani organizations as multipliers of news through online tools is available and assumed by an important part of Romani actors, the role of producing information is restricted to a limited number of Romani actors which count with knowledge, expertise, means and funding to produce such reports. Among them, one of the most important Romani actor is *Unión Romaní* which produces regular reports on discrimination against Roma, among other publications[178]. Other Romani NGOs also engage occasionally in production of such reports (for example FAKALI or KAMIRA). It should be underlined, however, that the main actors which produces periodic reports, also those regarding the discrimination of Roma, is the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano (*FSG).

With regards to “preventive objectives” these activities and actions rather than tackling discrimination by denouncing it, concentrate on generating counter-narratives which may diminish the level of discrimination against Roma by providing positive and affirmative discourses. These type of activities tend to concentrate on visibility, by show-casting positive aspect of Romani arts and culture, or by

[177] Such strategies of generating public support and visibility are increasingly more popular, not only in Spain but also across Europe. Most recently, a wave of such responses was generated when a video recorded with a mobile phone of a Romani minor being beat up by a Bulgarian teen was released online. Across Europe, people posted photos with a hashtag #Romaareequal in response, part of a solidarity campaign launched by the ERRC. The campaign was accompanied by a corresponding legal action leading to a court ruling: http://www.errc.org/blog/bulgarian-judge-rules-for-mitko-in-landmark-case-a-bitter-sweet-victory/116?platform=hootsuite

[178] http://www.unionromani.org/publicaciones_es.htm

simply providing positive images and examples regarding Roma in Spain. The strategies which fall under the type of "preventive" activities in this regard are diverse and wide-ranging.

On the one hand, the activities which aim at dignifying Romani culture and providing a self-narrated discourse of who the Roma are, are grouped around events, especially cultural events, festivals, seminars and wide-range of celebrations. One example of such events are the annual celebrations of the 8th of April, the International Roma Day, which are celebrated widely across Spain since 2002 (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013b) and count with numerous ceremonies, celebrations and events organized around this theme; they also receive a lot of media attention due to institutional embrace which these celebrations often receive (for example but putting up Romani Flag for this day on the Town Hall buildings, or by inviting Roma to regional and national parliaments). These annual celebrations count with a number of shared elements in most places where the celebrations take place, including the singing of the Romani anthem "Gelem, Gelem", the ceremony by the river[179] and the omnipresent Romani flag. These celebrations should be considered an example of "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) which with each year become more widely acknowledged, both by the Roma and by the majority population. Furthermore, Romani NGOs organize cultural and artistic festivals, competitions, cultural conferences and seminars which all aim at showcasing the Romani culture.

On the other hand, Romani NGOs become entities which generate and produce cultural content – for example by creating thematic exhibitions, producing documentaries and movies, organizing cultural events (concerts, theatrical plays, dance spectacles etc.) and publishing (documents, articles, books etc.). The list of such type of cultural content is enormous and diverse, both in terms of quality, scope, approach and means. The production of such content is often used strategically as elements of public campaigns to consciously generate counter-narratives to those dominant among the majority (as examples presented in the sub-chapter on "protests").

The use of culture as a pretext to denounce injustice and generate visibility around the situation of Roma, and at the same time promote a dignified image of state-of-the-art artistic productions has a long history in case of Romani movement in Spain. An excellent example of the use of culture to challenge the current status quo of Romani people is the famous theatrical play produced by Romani poet and teacher, José Heredia Maya, and famous Romani dancer a choreographer, Mario Maya, in 1976 titled "Camelamos Naquerar" (*We want to talk*). According to José Heredia Moreno (2013):

> "In very few moments in the history of theatre a play has turned into an instrument of socio-political action at the service of the dignity of a people. Very rarely a scenic work has had the

[179] One of the elements is the celebration "known as 'River Ceremony', in which the Roma around the world gather at the river banks to hold together the offering of flowers where women throw flower petals to water as symbol of freedom and the exodus experienced by the Roma over a thousand years ago. The offering of candles where men put candles in memory of the victims in rivers that suffered the consequences of hatred and xenophobic and racist attacks and in memory of our ancestors, especially the half million Gypsies killed during the Holocaust" (FAGIC 2016). The "River Ceremony" is also celebrated in different countries by Romani communities, especially since the 2000s (Marsh and Strand 2006; Mari Carmen Carrillo Losada 2014).

> opportunity to build the foundations of a social movement that exceeds the boundaries of theatre, becoming a collective cry for justice and freedom by hundreds of thousands of people”. (Heredia Moreno 2013)

This theatre performance whose premier took place still under Franco´s dictatorship became a milestone for Romani associative movement, which awakened political consciousness among Roma but also generated discussions regarding the situation of Roma among the political elites and the general public (Asociación de Enseñantes con Gitanos 2010; Quintanilla Azzarelli 2016).

As part of the preventive actions, Romani organizations often try to influence the type of narratives and images which are presented in the mainstream media, both in TV and press. Some initiatives aim at promoting Roma-constructed narratives, which use cultural activities in order to challenge the existing stereotypical image of Roma (for example: (Ortuño 2016). As it is often difficult to permeate mainstream media directly, Romani organizations themselves generate such content and circulate it through their networks using social media and websites as primary tools for generating visibility.

Alliances and cooperation across movements

Building alliances is an important strategic choice for social movement leaders which contributes to maximizing the potential of political lobbying and leverage; after all, “a set of actors with similar goals strengthen their position when coordinating their activities or even joining forces” (Rucht 2007: 202). However, among Roma, building alliances is still rarely a tactical choice.

Both through objectives established by Romani NGOs and their leaders as well as in actions these organizations undertake, the social struggle tends to be restrictively framed and limited to Roma only. Problems suffered by Romani communities tend to be viewed as restricted by ethnicity and have been rarely framed in the context of greater social problems or bridged with other social movements and struggles.

Nonetheless, this trend has been gradually shifting towards a more inclusive perception of the specific situation of Romani communities in the context of broader socio-economic dynamics in Spain. On the one hand this gradual shift towards cooperation across social movements has been triggered and facilitated by State institutions. A number of consultative bodies around social affairs have been created by different levels of public administration, which bring together civil society actors representing diverse sectors, groups and interests, including Romani representatives. For example, in 2005 the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality created a State Council of Social Action NGOs[180] which brings together a variety of civil society actors, ranging from Roma, LGBT, Church-related institutions like Caritas, and others. The same Ministry also created The Council for the Promotion of Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination of persons for reasons of racial or ethnic

[180] http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/ongVoluntariado/consejos.htm

origin[181], which also counts with Romani representation. Similar consultative bodies and councils have been created by different bodies of public administration and on different levels of power (municipal, regional and national). These spaces created by the State facilitate regular collaboration and dialogue between Romani actors[182] and other civil society organizations. On the other hand, commemorations and cultural meetings also create such spaces of dialogue across groups, sectors and social interests. A good example of this are the annual commemorations of the 27th of January, the International Day in Memory of the Victims of Holocaust, which are usually preceded by a number of organizational meetings and working groups. Such occasions also provide an opportunity to establish links of collaboration and solidarity across different social struggles.

Already in 2003, when the trend to establish such thematic consultative bodies was expanding, Dietz noted that: "As part of the broader NGO movement, *gitano* associations have been able to reach and use new platforms such as the Consultative Commission of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Coordinating Body of Spanish NGOs in order to establish new alliances with other movements. Consequently, the anti-racist and pro-immigrant organizations are currently important partners in several local and regional projects." (Dietz, 2003:93)

On the other hand, independent networks and federations which bring together civil society social action organizations also facilitate the exchange and collaboration between Romani organizations and other entities, forging a common front for lobby and advocacy around collectively shared goals. Organizations such as *Plataforma de ONGs de Acción Social* (Platform of Social Action NGOs), *SOS Racismo* or anti-racist coalitions such as *Unitat Contra el Feixisme i el Racisme* (Unity against Fascism and Racism) create spaces of long-term collaboration and dialogue, which increasingly result in a conscious and strategic "frame alignment" process among diverse social actors, including the Roma (Benford and Snow 2000). Numerous other initiatives, such as *Movimiento contra la Intolerancia* (Movement against intolerance) or *Consejo de Víctimas de delitos de Odio y Discriminación* (Council for Victims of Hate Crime and Discrimination, COVIDOD) promote collaboration across movements and social struggles, at the same time generating public support also for Roma-specific claims.

Romani organizations occasionally do not only subscribe to broader initiatives established by others (such as the anti-racist movements) but at times also become pioneers who initiate campaigns beneficial to broader sectors of population, and not exclusively Roma. An excellent example of such efforts is the Federation of Romani Women Associations KAMIRA, who initiated a public campaign to

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[181] http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/igualdadOportunidades/noDiscriminacion/consejo.htm

[182] It should be noted that in both committees mentioned, the only Romani member is Unión Romaní; FSG also participate as a pro-Roma organization. Both organizations, due to its institutional recognition, size, scope and expertise have monopolized spaces of Romani participation in the context of national consultative bodies. It should be noted, however, that on municipal and regional levels, other Romani organizations have also begun to participate in similar consultative bodies and platforms.

encourage the creation at a national level of free legal service for victims of discrimination and hate crimes[183]. The rationale behind this campaign, as described by KAMIRA is the following:

> "The reason that has prompted the Federation to carry out this initiative is none other than to combat effectively the continuing and disturbing increase in discriminatory and racist demonstrations and acts that the Romani people suffer as much as many other minorities or groups, which in the face of majority society of rule of law, such as Spain, are left without proper legal response." (ibid.)

The impact of these collaboration for Romani associative movement in Spain is diverse and depends on the type of Romani actor and/or leaders. Not all Romani organizations embrace inter-ethnic or interest-based collaborations or simply lack understanding of strategic use of such alliances. However, increasingly we can observe establishment of alliances around specific issues and themes in which Romani actors become not only partners, but oftentimes main actors. Romani women organizations have championed this strategy and have advanced significantly in building alliances and collaboration among Romani women and other women-oriented initiatives. An example of this is the already-mentioned social movement against violence against women, which organized a nation-wide march on the 7th of November 2015; Romani women organizations have been among the participants and promoters of this campaign. A number of well-established Romani women organizations such as FAKALI, Alborea or KAMIRA, as well as newly-created organizations such *as Asociación Gitanas Feministas por la Diversidad* (Association Romani Feminists for Diversity) have been creating strong networks of collaboration and mutual support as part of broader women's movement in Spain. The use of intersectional approaches by Romani women organizations enables them to easily draw lines of solidarity and collaboration with other social struggles, not rigidly restricted to Romani women's issues. Such structures of collaboration often facilitate the establishment of a common front of collective interests, which translates into policy proposals and policy advocacy, as in the case of demands regarding cuts in governmental spending on Politics of Equality in Spain (Plataforma CEDAW Sombra 2014).

The use of intersectionality which transcends to both discursive level and action, can also be observed among Romani LGBT initiatives, which although still remain somewhat marginal to the mainstream Romani associative movement, begun to be increasingly noticeable and relevant. One such organization which activates Romani LGBT individuals and fosters inter-ethnic alliances of LGBT from diverse communities is the Association *Ververipen, Rroms por la Diversidad* (Roma for Diversity). *Ververipen* embraces a universal approach, one which exceeds ethnic, gender, class or national identities and boundaries:

> "We are a group of limited number and we believe that dividing ourselves in the struggle to create feminists, LGBTIQ, immigrant organizations ... does not help but make us weaker when

[183] http://noprejuicios.com/creacion-de-un-turno-especifico-de-justicia-gratuita-ante-delitos-de-odio-y-discriminacion/

> the ultimate goal of all this is the same, fight for respect for diversity, all diversity, from an intersectional view." (Blog 2013)

For their work, *Ververipen* received in 2013 an Honourable Mention by the National Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals (Blog 2013). Furthermore, Roma also participate in Gay Pride parades, especially the one in 2015, where Romani-LGBT (a flag which combines the Romani national flag with rainbow colours) flags were visible.

In this context it is important to underline, that while Romani actors increasingly forge common goals and build alliances with other civil society actors, whether around collective shared issues, or based on intersectional identities of class, gender, ethnicity etc. what is striking is the obvious marginality of alliances with non-Spanish Roma. It was already mentioned that immigrant Roma are treated marginally by majority of Romani actors, both in terms of "whom" and "what" variables. Consequently, also in the sphere of action, Romani migrants remain largely excluded. Only but a handful of Romain organizations provide services or counselling to non-Spanish Roma (for example the strongly university-driven *Drom Kotar Mestipen* or *Unión Romaní*). Initiatives which aim at attending and representing immigrant Romani communities are dominated by non-Roma actors. For example, the Network Observatory of Romani Population from Eastern Europe in Catalonia *Romest*[184] is composed of public administration entities, pro-Roma organizations and social service associations – only 1 Romani NGO (significantly an organization funded by Eastern European Roma) is part of the network.

5.3.f. Impact of "political opportunities structure" on Romani ethnic mobilization. Emergence, evolution and adoption and the role of international developments

Movements emerge and evolve in connection to a variety of external, contextual factors – political, legal, historical, social and cultural environments and shifts within those have important consequences for the movements as well. Scholars, drawing heavily from theories of political opportunity structure, argue that these shifts generate "windows of opportunity" enabling new possibilities for collective action (Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Meyer and Minkoff 2004). That's why in the analysis of ethnic mobilization it is important to adapt a dynamic perspective (changes over time) and a dialectical one (interaction and interplay between diverse external and internal factors). Such major historical developments as the transition to democracy (especially with the Constitution of 1978), becoming a member of the European Union (in 1986) and the economic crisis, among others, have all had significant impact in the Romani associative movement.

This dynamic and dialectic character can be traced by analysing the discourses, narratives and articulated claims of Romani leaders and organizations and legislative, institutional and policy developments; taking into consideration how they emerge and when. These also have to be analysed in a broader context of international developments (especially legal developments such as establishment of policies, recommendations and strategies) and general European trends which shape the national environment. Arguably there is a constant interplay between Roma-articulated claims,

[184] http://www.romest.cat/

national responses (through policies and legislation) and international developments. This is not a linear or circular process, which can be explained schematically. Rather, a complex set of factors related both to the broadly understood environment as well as the character of collective action merges in specific moments in time, generating concrete responses or producing specific outcomes. After all, "the structure of political opportunities is now more a product of the interactions of the movement with its environment rather than a simple reflection of changes occurring elsewhere" (McAdam, 1996:13).

This sub-chapter will provide some insight into those dynamic, looking specifically into the emergence of Romani activism, the interplay between international developments and national context of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, as well examples of how Romani actors adapt to emerging opportunities.

Emergence of Romani activism and birth of Romani associations

Romani ethnic activism doesn't emerge in a vacuum but rather is a result of interplay and complexity of diverse set of factors. Analysing why and when Romani activism emerges and how it evolves over time provides greater understanding of the dynamic of ethnic activism in general. A historical perspective of this process vis-à-vis the overall environment in which activism emerges are essential.

Carrasco (2007) provides an analytical framework which helps to analyse the dynamic behind the emergence of associations and their development over time. She argues that associations should be analysed bearing in mind motivations, and whether participation in them: "1) responds to a particular problem of the local community; 2) responds to emerging structures in the mainstream civil society; 3) responds to emerging structures addressed to a particular segment of the society (for example, an ethnic group) in order to resolve a problem that bothers mainstream society or the public administration." (Silvia Carrasco 2007:33)

From a historical perspective we may see how the way in which individual Romani organizations emerge has changed over time. Arguably, Romani associative movement in Spain as a whole has passed through all three stages – the motivation for setting up Romani organizations changed in response to the shifting socio-political context in Spain.

The first Romani associations emerged as entities of the first profile, in response to particular problems of the community. The individual behind these entities were often driven by a specific and acute grievance of their local community and the association became a viable tool which enabled response to these problems. An interview with one Romani leaders exemplifies this well:

> "There were these streams and many Roma were there [living]. And the conditions were very bad. So I went there frequently, because naturally, something called you. And you see some barefoot children, and gigantic rats that were all around, some huge snakes. This was some 20 years ago. And so I said [to the others]: 'we have to do something!' Of course, they had their shacks there, that they have constructed, next to it they placed the metal scraps that they collected…And when a storm came or a flood, we were all very worried… And there was this project with this professor from Badalona and we said to her that we want to create a project for Mataró and Maresme, where there are shacks and people live in horrible condition. And

> this professor helped us to draft a wonderful project. So we presented it to the Council of Mataró. And they said: 'wow, this is what we were looking for! But we didn't know how to do it. This is perfect!' And they passed it to *Generalitat*. And from there we started to build houses for the Roma and we put the children to schools… I knew, that the only way to help these Roma from the streams was to have power with the government and the *Generalitat* and the municipality. And to create an association." [recorded interview, ES_39]

In some cases, coordinated action of informal group of local Romani preceded the creation of formal associations. For example, one local Basque Romani association declares that:

> "The forerunners started their first moves in 1971 when they tried to help the Roma living in barracks on the land now occupied Lakuabizkarra.[185]"

These genuinely grassroots initiatives lead to the formalization of first Romani associations. In this process, as it was argued earlier, the role of other agents such as non-Roma local organizations and individuals (often scholars conducting fieldwork) and religious institutions (especially of the Catholic Church) was significant and determinant.

With the transition to democracy and the gradual development of the civil society sector in Spain, emerging opportunities became a relevant incentive for Roma to create their own formal structures. In the post-Franco era, Romani associations begun to emerge as a response to the incipient civil society, echoing the emerging structures of the mainstream civil society (type 2 in Carrasco's framework). The role of local non-Roma associations, commonly known as associations of neighbours (*asociaciones de vecinos*) especially those which emerged in vicinity of Romani districts, or directly in those districts where Romani communities lived, was essential as it provided a specific example of what the associations are for, what they do and how they operate. Individual Roma were sometimes involved in these non-Roma local associations as member or founders. For example, one senior leader of a Romani association in Catalonia recalls:

> "There was a neighbourhood movement. In this Association of Neighbours there was a group of some Roma. Among them there was my father, my uncles, people that I know and that I am related to. So when they came here, they shared this spirit of unity. Until then the associations were created only around the church and the military. So we were the first[186] association in

[185] http://www.gaolacho.com/quehacemos.html

[186] This statement appears to be somewhat exaggerated or might refer to Catalonia, and not the entire State. It seems that there were another Romani organizations that were born earlier, namely*: La Asociación de Desarrollo Gitano*, founded in 1977 by Roma and non-Roma members; *La Asociación Nacional de Presencia Gitana*, founded in 1972 by Roma and non-Roma members; *La Asociación Española de Integración Gitana*, founded in Madrid in 1977. However, it is difficult to determine the level of independence from Catholic institutions or other non-Roma lead institutions. It can be assumed that this commentary refers to the first geniunely Romani grassroots organization. "Segundas jornadas de studio sobre servicios sociales para la comunidad gitana", Asociación Secretariado General Gitano, Madrid 1988, p.62

> Spain that was created by the Roma. This was in 1978. This organization was born even before the Spanish Constitution. The Constitution was born in December and we were born in April". [recorded interview, ES_30]

Gradually some Roma realized that the model of non-Roma associations can be copied and applied to Roma communities and that such formal structures could be very beneficial for the collective struggle for Romani rights. One older Romani leaders remembers this process:

> "Because in the 70's the non-Roma organizations were funding Associations of Neighbours in order to unite forces against the dictatorship. Later the Roma, these Romani men from the cultural centre copied that same model… We understood that we could use the same mechanisms of the Associations of Neighbours of the non-Roma, through the vindication and meetings with the politicians and political leaders, at the municipal level or not." [recorded interview, ES_5]

As the mainstream civil society developed and spread, so did the Romani associations. Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia became one of the most prominent promotors of this idea, and his very existence as a politician and a public figure became an incentive for others to use possibilities offered by democracy and become actively engaged. One older Romani leader recalls:

> "I entered the Romani movement as the majority of the others. Looking at Juan de Dios in the Parliament, we saw that it was possible, that we had the same rights as Catalans, Basques, Aragoneses, and that we, the Roma could also have our own platform of power and have the right, as any other people, to vindicate. This was the moment. So, seeing Juan de Dios from when I was a child, well I felt I see a light in the tunnel: 'look, this needs to be done, we can make it happen'". [recorded interview, ES_37]

Existing Romani associations also extended their help and know-how to informal groups of Roma who also wanted to become engaged in their local communities through civil society work. For example, one older Romani leader from Catalonia recalls how they helped out other Roma to create their own entities in the region:

> "We are the mother of numerous Romani associations that were created through us, in Vilanova, in Reus, in Mataró, in Portal, in Sants, in many places. We were the mother that said: 'come on, do this because it is good for every district'. We have worked a lot so that other Roma could have the same thing as us [Romani association]. We are one of the first Romani associations." [recorded interview, ES_46]

In that period, numerous Romani association were also created as a response to concrete local problems, but gradually the motivation transformed from "resolving a specific problem of the community" towards more vague objectives of "fighting for our people" or "doing something to

improve the situation”. This process was also supported explicitly by public administration, who fostered Romani NGOs and destined funding for the promotion and expansion of the Romani associative movement (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012; Dietz, 2003).

With the formalization of Roma-targeted policies and plans (both on the regional level and nationally) as well as increasing role of civil society sector in the process of implementation of these policies as sub-contractors of public administration, numerous associations passed to be created as type 3 in Carrasco’s framework, responding to Roma-specific scope of opportunities. Emerging opportunities for funding and participation offered by the State became an important incentive for the creation of Romani organizations. Indeed, some interviewees denounced this dynamic, arguing that the Romani associative movement became a “career option” and consequently some people are drawn to activism opportunistically. Others also pointed to the fact that as a consequence of this unprecedented expansion of Romani associations, numerous people without preparation, moral commitment or vision are joining the Romani associative movement. One Romani activist was very critical of this dynamic:

> “I think that you cannot create associations because one person wants to have his own association but doesn’t have a smallest idea of what an association is and what it serves for. And simply copies what the other association is doing. ‘Well, you have a grant for implementing this activity, well I want it too’. “[recorded interview, ES_5]

Arguably, we can observe that the growth in number of Romani associations is proportional to the expansion of Roma-targeted policies and their corresponding budgets. In fact, it is in the period of the last two decades, as of the 1990s, that the Romani associative movement experienced a significant “boom”. This period of expansion corresponds to the period of economic growth in Spain (between 1995 and 2007) and the rapid development of Roma-targeted plans, projects and interventions. In part, this growth of Romani civil society is also due to growing awareness and political consciousness, existing networks (both through kinship as well as in the scope of civil society), however, without a doubt emerging opportunities with regards to Roma-related policy-making was among the primary incentives. This can be observed by the changes in general objectives and scope of action of Romani associations over time – currently the vast portion of Romani NGOs positions themselves as service-provision entities, which support public administration in the process of implementation of existing Romani measures. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the role which public policies and plans for Romani played in generating a dynamic in which associations are created as a response to existing opportunities and resources and which define among its goals the exploitation of these resources (model 3 of Carrasco’s framework). Arguably, at the current moment the “Roma associations are getting further from the struggles defined by specific problems of the community” (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012:34). Some Romani leaders acknowledge this major weakness of the Romani associative movement. In the words of Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia:

> “The democratic opening, raising educational levels and especially subsidy policies have accelerated significantly the birth of associations, many of which do not meet the objectives of the real struggle for the Roma issue.” (Ramírez-Heredia 2005)

International developments

Arguably, international developments have had important implications for the process of emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, its objectives, actions and discourses. The emergence of pan-European policies targeting Roma as well as the salience of international Romani ethnic mobilization have influenced the domestic ethnic mobilization patters in Spain.

On the one hand, it was already described in the chapter “setting the picture” how the Romani issue has emerged as a political item *sui generis*. The fact that Spain is part of European supranational organizations and structures, most notably the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) determines the way in which Spanish government deals with Roma, especially in the sphere of public policies.

On the other hand, over the past decades, and especially after 1989, we can observe the salience of what some regard as the “international Romani movement”. Romani actors increasingly become acknowledged as stakeholders and partners in Roma-related policy-making and are relevant advocacy and lobbying agents. The transnational Romani movement operates through a complex web of networks and international organizations; and there is a constant interplay between national context of Romani activism and transnational arena. Milestones of Romani activism, especially in the context of World Romani Congresses or the emergence of transnational Romani organizations, such as the International Romani Union (IRU), European Roma and Traveller Forum (ERTF), International Roma Women Network (IRWN) or Federation of European Roma Young People (FERYP), have influenced the discourse, strategies and objectives of Romani actors also in the national contexts.

When it comes to Spanish Romani associative movement, Spanish Romani organizations have been paradoxically both pioneers in embracing milestones of international Romani movement as well as have been largely absent from it. The important historical factor in this context is the figure of Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia and the creation of Spanish Romani Union (*Unión Romaní*) in 1986. As it was mentioned earlier, Ramírez Heredia as a founder of IRU and a member of the Spanish Congress and later of a Member of European Parliament (MEP), became a spokesperson and an “ambassador” of Romani issues, loyal to the achievements of the International Romani Union, and enthusiastic about re-connecting the Spanish Romani population with its European counter-parts. The symbolic achievements of IRU, namely the flag, the anthem and celebrations of the 8th of April (International Roma Day) have found a fertile ground in Spain, and today are inseparably connected to a Spanish Romani identity. Since quite early (IRU established the 8th of April as the International Romani Day in 2000), Romani organizations in Spain, and especially *Unión Romaní*, promote the celebration of this date, fostering the re-connection of Spanish Roma with their European counterparts. In 2004, on the occasion of the 2nd celebrations of the 8th of April, *Unión Romaní* argued in a press release:

> “For some years now, Roma from around the world gather on the banks of the rivers on April 8 to celebrate their day. It serves to commemorate the anniversary of the Congress but also to remind of the Roma exodus and our ancestors. Now we, the Catalan Roma, also want to do so, with a clear will to join together with our relatives around the world and with our fellow Catalan citizens.” (Unión Romaní, 2004)

The ethno-genesis discourse promoted by IRU, as well as the narrative of an international pan-European Romani nation have also been embraced in Spain and became an accepted and proliferated narrative; associated symbols, especially the Romani flag, are also increasingly more visible and known, even among un-associated Roma. This process has accelerated significantly in the last 10 years, especially with the salience of internet as a main tool to communicate and disseminate information among Roma. Furthermore, these celebrations also increasingly generate media attention – in 2016, most of the Spanish leading newspapers, TV and radio channels published news on the celebrations of 8th of April contributing to visibilizing this event among the general public. It should be noted that a number of pioneer and/or historic pan-European events were also organized in Spain, among them the First Romani Congress of the European Union (1994, Seville), First European Congress of the Roma Youth (1997, Barcelona), First International Congress of Romani Women (2010, Barcelona), European Roma Summit (Córdoba, 2010).

At the same time, however, Romani organizations and activists have been largely absent from the international Romani movement and have been limited to only but a handful of individuals. Especially after 1989 and with the process of expansion of the EU, the international Romani movement has been dominated by Romani activists coming in great majority from countries of Central and Eastern Europe; Spanish representatives’ participation was often anecdotal or absent altogether. Even in early 2000s, Spanish Romani organizations and leaders did not participate in international conferences, seminars, trainings and meetings. Over the years, the Romani associative movement in Spain was developing independently from the debates which were taking place in the international contexts. The language (both lack of knowledge of *Romanes* and English) has been the principal barrier which excluded Romani activists from the international developments. This trend slowly begun to change as of mid-2000s – with the emergence of a greater number of Romani youth activists, more prominent in languages and with international ambitions, Spanish Romani organizations begun to participate more widely in the international arena. Gradually, some Romani NGOs begun to apply for membership in international organizations and networks such as European Roma Information Office (ERIO) or European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and begun to participate in EU-funded projects as project partners. It should be noted, however, that this participation is limited to a small group of Romani organizations, mainly to those operating nationally (such as UR) or big federations which typically operate in large cities (Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Seville etc.), are easily accessible to central public institutions and research centres, count with funding and professional staff which facilitates their international involvement. This is also true of the Romani women’s movement – although individual Romani women activists and organizations have been actively part of important international developments, the presence and wider collaboration between Spanish Romani actors and their counterparts abroad remains limited. Smaller and local Romani NGOs are largely excluded from these international debates, although there are exceptions (for example *Nakeramos* or *Yag Bari* organizations, significantly both Romani youth organizations). Alternatively, a number of Romani activists, in their vast majority youth activists, participate in personal capacity but not as representatives of Romani organizations.

In this context, the salience and increasing visibility of Romani youth initiatives has played an important role in mobilizing greater participation, involvement and collaboration between Roma from Spain and other European countries. A number of large Romani youth exchanges took place in Spain, most

notably the First European Roma Youth Summit[187] (Córdoba, 2010) and First Roma Youth Festival “Primavera Kalo”[188] (Barcelona, 2011), both organized by the TernYpe International Roma Youth Network member entities, and brought together Spanish Romani youth and their peers from different European countries. In this regard, the role of international Roma youth networks deserves special attention as entities which mobilized greater participation of Spanish Romani youth. Both, FERYP and ternYpe have provided opportunities for individual Spanish Romani youngsters to get involved internationally and bring the knowledge gained at home back to Spain. Especially, ternYpe has influenced significantly the development of youth activism in Spain. Their strategy of bringing together regularly (at least twice a year) large groups of Romani youth from across Europe, and emphasis in active participation and self-organization provided opportunities for large groups of Spanish youth to travel, network and collaborate across countries. One young Romani activist, closely involved in ternYpe’s work described his experience:

> “Unlike other youth movements, I think the key to success of TernYpe - International Roma Youth Network lies in the continuity and training of young people through a process of mobilization and empowerment. Precisely in what other movements and NGOs fail is in the lack of long-term treatment with the young, when just what we need is young Roma to slowly learn to trust and believe in our own abilities.” (“What Roma Can Do”, 2011:11)

TernYpe counts with Spanish member organizations and individual members, who act as facilitators and multipliers in the Spanish context.

I was personally involved in the work of ternYpe in Spain and participated and helped to organize the above-mentioned events which took place in Barcelona and Córdoba. Through my personal involvement in the Romani youth organization Ternikalo XXI (also as a co-founder), I was a witness of the process of evolution of youth activism in Spain and their interaction with international developments. I observed first-hand the impact which youth activism has had on individual participants and how their gradual involvement has become a life-changing path.

A good example is that of Vicente Rodríguez, an extraordinary Romani teen from a small town near Valencia. I first met him in Córdoba; a school drop-out at the age of twelve who worked at the market and has never been involved previously in the Romani ethnic mobilization. Córdoba meeting for him became a turning point, which pushed him on the path of Romani activism; from then on, he became increasingly involved in Romani youth associative movement, both in Spain and internationally:

> “So far I have participated in seminars in Israel, Poland, Slovakia, Germany, Italy and Spain of course. I have also given lectures to various cultural workshops on topics as diverse as the Roma genocide during World War II, the Internet and networks society, the American graphic novel, the relationship between cinema and Roma etc. I have also published several articles in

[187] http://www.ternype.eu/european-roma-youth-summit

[188] http://romayouth.com/first-roma-youth-festival-%E2%80%9Cprimavera-kalo%E2%80%9D ; http://romayouth.com/primavera-kal%C3%B3-2011-festival

> German and Spanish, and I made 3 documentaries and a short, all this in just over a year and a half!” (“What Roma Can Do”, 2011:11)

Since then Vicente has continued his active engagement in the struggle for justice of Romani people, becoming an important personality of Romani youth activism. His work has lead him to be included in the Forbes “30 under 30”, becoming a first Roma in the history of Forbes to be included in this prestigious list[189].

Likewise, the youth exchanges organized around the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, organized by ternYpe (taking place annually since 2010) have also had significant impact – the 2014 Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative brought over 1000 young Roma and non-Roma for a 5-day event, among them a group of over 70 from Spain. The previous edition of the event, which took place in 2013 and brought around 450 participants, also counted with a Spanish Romani delegation. This commemorative events organized around the 2nd of August, Day of Remembrance of the Roma Genocide, for many young participants became a life-changing experience and one which influenced their work trajectory (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., and Trojański 2015). One of the Spanish participants of these commemorations in Auschwitz, the above-mentioned Vicente Rodríguez in the following way described his first visit to the camp:

> “I was 23 years old the first time I entered the doors of Auschwitz camp, and I remember the calm that invaded me, as if the time slowed down as I was entering the metal doors of Auschwitz 1. I remember I separated myself from the bigger group of visitors and observed everything as if I was out of my body, understanding the clear message of that place, understanding for the first time the effect of all this on the Roma as a people, I understood the power of persecution and history in my own life, and that shaped my way of understanding everything.” (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., & Trojański, 2015:235)

Young Romani women, members of *Voces Gitanas* organization, who also participated in these commemorations, in a documentary movie they describe the experience as “a journey which has changed their lives"[190]. In an interview with members of the organization, they reflected this experience very well. The president of the organization argued:

> “This trip to Cracow and Auschwitz had a huge impact! For some it was life-changing. And it provokes different types of reflections and thoughts. How did the discourse of the girls change after this trip! And it has an impact on the families: now everyone wants to travel there. The parents are more aware, and they want that their kids discover their history.” [interview field-notes, ES_22]

One of the young girls, participants of the trip told me in an interview:

> “For me, this trip has changed my life! I’m a different person now, after it. My way of thinking. Now I am more motivated, mobilized, I have a more vindictive discourse, more awareness. I

[189] http://www.forbes.com/30-under-30-europe-2016/policy/#3a798b223e79

[190] “Samudaripen. L’Holocaust oblidat” Veus Gitanes. https://ca.goteo.org/project/holocausto-gitano

> have more connection and understanding with the Roma from all over the world. And now everyone wants to go! At the beginning they were laughing at me that I will go there, but now they want to be part of this experience." [interview field-notes, ES_27]

The increasing visibility of Romani youth activism and their specific focus on Holocaust commemoration, arguably also influenced the salience of historical memory and justice claims by Romani actors as well as greater attention of intergovernmental organizations to Holocaust commemoration, both internationally and in Spain specifically. This increasing visibility also translated into greater interest of donors to economically support initiatives which aim at historical commemorations and research. Some scholars see this as an evidence of governmentalization of Holocaust remembrance, and a shift in EU treatment of Roma, towards "governing through cultural and memorial practices, rather than predominantly through social policies and human and minority rights" (van Baar, 2011: 1).

This phenomenon can be well-traced in Spain. In mid-2000 historical memory and commemorations did not receive a lot of attention by Romani organizations in Spain. Despite the fact that the journal *I Tchatchipen* (edited by *Unión Romaní)* featured articles about the Roma Holocaust since 1995 (numbers 10, 12, 14, 18, 52, 55), as well as other sources (Journal "Gitanos", edited by *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*; number 14, 2002 dedicated to the Roma Genocide or special edition of *Cuadernos de análisis: Movimiento contra la intolerancia* on Roma Genocide was published in 2004 (Ibarra 2004)), the topic of Roma Holocaust remained marginal in discourses of Romani associations. With the establishment of the International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust by the United Nations in 2005 (27th of January) and the proliferation of the celebrations of 8th of April, International Romani Day (celebrated in Spain since 2002), the references to the Roma Holocaust start to appear, although sporadically. In fact, the first exhibition dedicated to the Holocaust memory in Spain was created in 2009 in Catalonia[191]. With each year, the knowledge about the terrors experienced by Roma during the Second World War begun to proliferate and be incorporated into discourses of Romani leaders and organizations. In fact, the question of the Roma Holocaust is oftentimes invoked in order to denounce present-day discrimination and persecutions and to claim justice. For example, in a discourse on the occasion of the International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust in 2009, president of FAGIC made a discourse making explicitly this point:

> "'Without memory, the human being comes into a solitude of silence and indifference. He who does not remember who loses his humanity', said Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Probably because of this, the lack of a historical memory, known, widespread and recognized by cultural institutions, policies, etc., is why Roma have been treated so inhumanely. Unfortunately for the Roma, the persecution continues with painful dark similarities." [excerpt of the speech, Palau de la *Generalitat*, 27 of January 2009]

Currently, the topic of the Roma Holocaust has gained a lot of visibility and has become a central element of a constructed historical narrative in Spain, even though the Spanish Roma were largely absent from these historic events. It is surprising that the Holocaust discourse became so wide-spread

[191] http://www.fagic.org/quehacemos/proyectos/locales/150-exposicion-porrajmos

in discourses of Spanish Romani organizations, even though it is a non-shared part of their history. In some discourses, it is claimed that recovering and reconstructing a self-narrative of a history, universally shared by Romani across Europe (even if "imagined" as in the case of Spanish Roma) is a way of dignifying the Roma as a people. In an opening of a seminar where the documentary movie "Samudaripen. L'Holocaust oblidat" was presented, Francisca Perona, president of the Romani women organization *Voces Gitanas* which produced the movie, she argued:

> "The main objective was to dignify our history and dignify our past. In *Voces Gitanas* we are very aware that the past of the Romani people is invisible. It is a past that not even many of the Roma today know or they are not aware of it. (...) Through history we do not only dignify the history of a people, but also help to reflect on the present-day and helps to build a much more dignified future."[192]

The role of Spanish young Roma, in this context, is also important as they have also contributed through a variety of actions to the proliferation of knowledge about The Holocaust.

In this context it is important to underline that the concept of "Roma history", not only in Spain but also internationally, has become a mobilizing concept, which works to reinforce a sense of collective pan-European Romani identity and increasingly shapes political objectives and agendas. Remembrance of the past, thus, becomes a rationale for claiming present-day recognition. In the words of Vicente Rodríguez:

> "And if just the last of us are standing on the edge of extinction to remember the past and claim for recognition, victory will be granted, because remembrance is a more powerful tool of resistance than any atomic weapon." (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., & Trojański, 2015:235)

Romani actors construct a narrative of shared identity rooted in history but also create a self-articulated historical narrative, creating symbols, infusing specific historical events with particular meaning (as in the case of Romani Resistance) and recuperating historical personalities treated as heroes and role models of a collectively shared history. In words of Nicolás Jiménez, organizations who promote, recuperate and re-claim Romani history is important to:

> "vindicate the historical memory of Roma in order to have it valued and so that never again someone has to suffer for his/her identity."[193]

It is significant that as the topic of Roma Holocaust, in connection with building a collective, self-articulated narrative of Roma history, and more broadly, of reclaiming historical justice and recognition, other historical events, more relevant for Spanish Roma, also become incorporated into Romani discourses and claims-making. Members of Voces Gitanos, who produced the documentary movie about the Roma Holocaust mentioned previously explained:

[192] https://vimeo.com/155418313

[193] http://www.diarioinformacion.com/opinion/2016/07/30/homenaje-victimas-gran-redada/1790769.html

> "The idea with the documentary movie is to investigate the history of Roma. In the wake of this movie, we want to investigate the history of Roma in Spain. To focus on Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, we are starting to make interview with our elders to find out about it. The interviews are conducted by the youth. (…) The Holocaust documentary follows the young girls in their trip to Cracow. It is a way of connecting the international developments and the national context." [interview field-notes, ES_22]

The process of re-discovering the history of Roma in Spain is especially relevant with regards to the practice of commemoration. Ten years ago there were no commemorations of such important historical events as the *Gran Redada* of 1749 (Gómez Alfaro 1993) or the entrance of Roma into Spanish territory (according to historical archives, the first documented entrance of Roma into Spain took place on 12th of January 1425). Surprisingly, Romani organizations also didn't claim visibility of such historical events, relevant for history of Roma in Spain, although they are generally known and well-documented, thanks to the work of historians such as Gómez Alfaro. Nonetheless, as school curricula do not include information on the history of Roma in Spain, the knowledge of these events still is not a widely-known historical fact and is not part of the general historical narrative in Spain. Catalan Parliament in 2007 also passed a historical resolution of great symbolic importance, affirming and acknowledging "that Romani people residing in the Spanish State, and specifically in Catalonia, have been a victim of a historic and continued genocide"[194]. A number of other legal texts, resolutions and recommendations, adapted nationally or regionally, have noted the existence of historical persecutions of Roma and recognized the responsibility of the State to promote and protect Romani culture, identity and history (like the no law proposal of the government from 27th of September 2005).

Currently, a number of commemorative events are held around significant dates of the Spanish Roma history (especially of *Gran Redada*), although they still receive less attention that the Roma Holocaust commemorations. On the other hand, the knowledge of relatively recent events in Spanish Roma history such as the Civil War or the Franco dictatorship, is still scarce and fragmented; re-claiming and visibilizing recent Roma history was, until relatively recent, also not on the agenda of Romani organizations. But as the Roma begun to recognize the Roma Genocide of Easter European Roma, they also begun to wonder about their most recent history in Spain, leading to first Roma-lead projects of recuperating historical memory through personal testimonies, interviews, exhibitions and documentaries[195] One of my informants, a Romani woman leader who numerous times participated in the Auschwitz commemorations and was responsible for the Spanish participants argued:

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[194] http://www.parlament.cat/document/bopc/50876.pdf

[195] For example, in 2007 *Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas Romí* developed a project "La Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica del Pueblo Gitano" which resulted in production of a CD which gathers personal testimonies of Roma during the Civil War and under Franco regime (Fundación Privada Ujaranza 2008). Also, the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia produced a documentary film „ Vurma: recuperant la memòria històrica del poble gitano a Catalunya" (Recuperating historical memory of Romani people in Catalonia) in 2012, which tells the recent history of Roma, especially focusing on the period of the civil war and Franco dictatorship. A similar concept of documentary, but referring to the Basque Country, was developed by *Asociación Gitana para el Futuro de Gipuzkoa* (AGIFUGI) – the documentary "Memoria gitana. Guerra Civil y dictadura en Euskal Herria" (Roma memory. Civil War and Dictatorship in the Basque Country) was produced in 2013.

> "These trips to Cracow and Auschwitz are very good. The people are very impacted by what they saw and learned and they want to keep on travelling. Those that were there shared their experiences with others – and now much more people want to go there as well. (…) From these experiences around WWII, other ideas were born, other Roma 'historic initiatives'. For example, now there are these ideas about the 'Days of Hispanity' celebrations in Granada. These are also the days of the Pragmatics, when they expelled Roma and Moriscos. So there are people who now want to visibilize this history and do something in Granada." [interview field-notes, ES_1]

In this context, the academic, historical research preceded activism in re-claiming Roma history. Nonetheless, in recent years a number of important historical books were also published by Romani associations, most notably by the Roma Women Association Romí (La Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas ROMI, 2009; Padilla & Fernández, 2010). Greater attention towards historical events and historical projects we are observing currently is partially a result of the growing historical consciousness which comes with the increasing visibility and proliferation of knowledge regarding the Roma Genocide. But availability of funding is another factor which may be contributing to this growing interests of Romani organizations in historical past – especially with regards to the Roma Holocaust, numerous organizations and institutions support projects aiming at education, commemoration and remembrance of the Roma Genocide. This international trend, visible through the increasing number of projects, initiatives and materials produced around the Roma Genocide (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña C., and Trojański 2015), are bound to also influence the Spanish context.

Finally, and despite growing presence of Romani activists and organizations in international arena, in absolute terms this participation is still marginal although increasing. An evidence of this is also the scarce use of EU funds by Romani organizations. The *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) remains the main consumer of EU funds for Roma inclusion; universities and research centres as well as a number of development and social assistance civil society organizations also successfully apply for EU funds. Only a limited number of Romani organizations, mainly those which employ professional staff and have established networks of international collaborators, have the capacity to engage in EU-funded projects. The impact of these projects of international scope plays an important role in shaping the Romani associative movement nationally – they provide opportunities for Spanish Roma to engage with international Romani community through international events and conferences, as well as exchange programs taking place in Spain and abroad. These organizations play an important role in connecting Spanish Roma with international Romani movement as well as provide relevant information regarding significant Roma-related developments in the international arena. *Unión Romaní's* work in this regard is especially important as they are the main media outlet which translates important news, policy-papers and events into Spanish, allowing greater audience to be updated. Other Romani organizations also engage in such information-dissemination; pro-Roma organizations, most notably the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) also provides such input.

Providing information regarding international developments oftentimes becomes an incentive for action locally, as was the case during the expulsions of Roma from Italy and France, the case of the so-

called "blue-eye Angel Maria", or through reporting of numerous cases of hate crime against Roma across Europe (France, Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, etc.). Many of these developments generated diverse types of response on behalf of Romani organizations and leaders, ranging from issuing letters of support or condemnation, petition-writing or manifestations. Circulating of such type of information regarding the situation of Roma beyond Spain, and especially Spanish responses to those instances, work up to connect Spanish Roma with their counterparts abroad and contributes to building a sense of pan-European Romani identity, a sense of common problems and fate, and inevitably a sense of collective struggle.

Adapting to emerging opportunities

Undoubtedly, political changes in Spain have had important impact in the Romani civil society, and their potential success in terms of achieving defined and articulated goals. It was already described how the transition to democracy following the death of Franco has generated a momentum for Romani civil society; likewise, the evolution of the Spanish civil society in the context of consolidating welfare system has influenced the shape and direction of Romani civil society.

Broader shifts in understanding the role of civil society structures for the well-functioning of liberal democracies, have also impacted in the Romani civil society, opening a new "window of opportunities". Since early 2000s, the EU has embraced the "deliberative democracy" discourse in order to make up for the perceived "democracy deficit" within the EU[196]. This "deliberative turn" (Goodin 2008) is relevant for Roma policies as it brought non-State actors, especially Romani CSOs, back into the spotlight (T. Acton and Ryder 2013). This general trend in European governance has also been embraced in Spain. For example, in Catalonia, the tripartite coalitions government (2003-2010) fostered and practiced the dynamics of participatory democracy through deliberations and "invited spaces" (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012). Arguably, the practice of deliberation with regard to Romani communities in political processes can be traced as early as mid-1980s – after all, the first consultative committees which brought together Romani representatives were already set up in 1984 (Municipal Advisory Roma Council in Seville). Nonetheless, the salience of method of deliberation institutionalized the principle of participation of Roma in policy-processes as a condition *sine que non*, both in Europe but also locally. This is a significant development as it established formal and durable channels of participation between Romani representatives and political and administrative stakeholders, with a potential of securing Romani voices in matters which affect them directly. Although, the strategy of participation through "invited spaces" is not without its flaws, shortcoming and potential dangers as was argued earlier, in a historical perspective, it should be seen as a positive development.

[196] In 2001, the EC published the "White Paper on European Governance", emphasizing the need to reinforce "culture of consultation and dialogue in the EU. (…) in order to provide opportunities for input" to diverse interest groups (EC 2001:16); in 2002 the European Commission followed up with a set of guidelines which would guarantee a more efficient "deliberative turn"[196]. Over the last decade, involvement of civil society (and a range of other stakeholders), also in the framework of the ever-expanding open method of coordination (OMC), have become a common practice in EU policy-making[196]. http://www.e-ir.info/2014/03/21/civil-society-participation-and-deliberative-democracy-in-the-european-union/

On the other hand, the political changes with regards to ruling political parties have also had important consequences for Romani civil society – the ideology and priorities of a given ruling party affect the policy-directions and are echoed in the Romani civil society. It is not a coincidence that during the political rule of Spanish socialist parties (PSOE, between 1982-1996 and 2004-2011) Roma-specific policies have emerged and flourished, as the budget assigned to them has multiplied considerably. The focus on social policies and expanding welfare created favourable conditions for the expansion of Romani civil society too. The Roma issue was an articulated and visible item on the socialist agenda, and one which was backed up by institutional (although oftentimes merely symbolic) action and considerable investment. Likewise, the period of economic boom (between 1995-2008) which accompanied the PSOE 2004-2011 government has contributed to generating favourable conditions for promoting governmental commitments with the Roma. It is in that period that important policy-developments regarding Roma took place and a number of symbolic and visible initiatives were undertaken (such as the establishment of the State Council for the Roma in 2005 or the launching of the Institute of Romani Culture in Madrid in 2007). In those years, Romani regional plans were also emerging, along with their corresponding democratic structures of participation, securing the channel of interaction and input of Romani actors. PSOE government was also keen on promoting its commitment with the Roma issue abroad, self-applauding its pioneer initiatives and outstanding successes with regards to the progress of the Roma inclusion project (although without acknowledging the structural factors, rather than Roma policies, which contributed to the relative improvement of the situation of Roma in Spain) (Mirga & Maya, 2014; Santiago, 2012a). With the entry of Spain into the period of recession and the economic crisis since the early 2009, many of these applauded improvements with regard to Roma socio-economic standing, were challenged or went backwards altogether (Carrasco and Bereményi 2015; Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013a).

The impact of the ruling party on Romani issues and the Romani civil society can also be traced in the context of regional autonomous governments. In many ways, the question of regional policies is more relevant than the national context – after all, the competencies in most of the key areas of Roma policies and interventions are exclusively or at least in part in the hands of the regional governments. Also, on this level, the ideology and priorities of ruling parties have an impact on Roma. A good example of this dynamic is the Catalan "tripartite government" which ruled between 2003-2010, with a leftist, and Catalan (nationalistic) agenda. As a leftist government, it promoted the deliberative democracy approach establishing mechanisms of participation and dialogue with civil society stakeholders, created a number of inter-departmental Catalan plans, targeting specific sectors of the population (among the Integral Plan for the Roma in Catalonia) and expanded the social welfare system (in terms of investment and programs) (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012; Brugué, 2010). On the other hand, as a nationalistic government, it sought to uplift and promote Catalan-specific identities and realities, among them that of Catalan Roma. It was already mentioned how this government promoted Romani Catalan organizations with clear Catalan agenda, by fostering the creation in 2004 of *l'Agrupació Pel Desenvolupament del Poble Gitano dels Països Catalans*, AGIPCAT [Group for the Development of Roma People in Catalan Lands]; which some perceive as a process of further fragmentation of the Romani associative movement in Catalonia. For example, a Romani woman activist argued:

> "I think that really it was the politicians who have created a division between the Roma of Catalan and Caló origin. They have created it with their policies to civilize more some than others, because it suited them strategically because calumny could said 'so you can see that in Catalonia we have not been racist (…) They all began to use it and those who were not Catalans were left aside. And I tell you, they were left aside. And they did not see really that two bands were generated. They generated a division. It was generated by politicians, but impacted in us, it was a division between Catalan and non-Catalan Roma. And it affected the categorizations too ... who is non-Catalan and Catalan Roma?" [recorded interview, ES_22]

On the other hand, however, this government promoted the establishment in 2005 of new Catalan Statute of Autonomy, which in its 2006 reform, included a Roma-specific provision (article 42.7 of the reform of the Statutes, Ley Orgánica 6/2006). In this context, the "tripartite government" continued with the policy-direction towards Roma of their predecessor CiU (conservative nationalistic) government, which also as part of their Catalan-nationalistic agenda sought to promote the Romani identity and culture as integral part of Catalonia. After all, it was under the CiU rule that the Catalan Parliament passed the historic resolution 1046/VI, which:

> "1. Recognizes the identity of the Romani people and the value of their culture as a guarantee of the historic reality of this people. 2. Calls on the Government to take the necessary steps to contribute to promoting the recognition of the Romani culture and its value for Catalan society."[197]

These important symbolical acts of institutional recognition of Roma became important tools for Romani leaders to claim their transposition into specific action; it provided political leverage as well as institutional frame for establishing of specific Roma-policies, which begun to crystallize since 2003, leading to the creation of the Integral Plan for the Roma in Catalonia (PIPG) (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012).

Processes of electoral politics, and shifts within those, are especially effective generators of "windows of political opportunities" in the context of elections. Despite the fact that in some parts of Spain Roma are an important political constituency (for example Andalusia), their involvement in mainstream political parties as politicians is very low: it is estimated that between 1978-2003 a total of 40 Romani representatives were candidates in political elections throughout Spain (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2006: 272). On the other hand, during the period of electoral campaigns, mainstream political parties often target the potential Romani voter through specific electoral promises. Nonetheless, numerous interviews revealed that:

> "the politicians remember about the Romani vote only before the elections, but rarely are those electoral promises fulfilled". [interview field-notes, ES_2]

Already in 1980, there were voices that Romani votes are seduced and exploited during the electoral campaigns (Cáritas Española 1980); and it seems that over the decades this dynamic has not changed

[197] http://www.parlament.cat/document/nom/06b240.pdf

considerably. Prior to 2015 municipal and regional elections, Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia issued a public statement calling on Roma to vote and calling on political parties to remember about their Romani constituencies, arguing that:

> "we are tired of seeing how some political parties ignore us and sometimes they deceive us. They promise us everything at election time and then they forget their commitments." (Ramírez-Heredia 2015)

Indeed, the Romani communities did not manage to build a solid political front which would provide the Romani constituency with enough political leverage to become a decisive vote during electoral processes, both as politicians themselves and as voting communities. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the shifting political panorama in Spain, with the emergence of new parties such as *Podemos*, or small municipal alliances (such as Popular Unity Candidacy known as CUP in Catalonia), opened new opportunities for Roma to have greater political input. For example, the growing legitimation of a highly participative democracy made that *Barcelona en Comú* gathered minority groups for consultation prior to setting up its electoral program in 2015. Roma engaged more actively than before in the electoral race - during 2015 municipal elections, for example, it is estimated that at least 61 Roma were presented as candidates, and 6 of them in leadings positions on the lists (Santos and Andrades 2015); 26 of them appear as candidates in recently created parties, many of them linked to *Podemos*. Out of them 10 candidates were successfully elected, 6 from electoral lists of parties of popular unity[198]. Current political developments continue to present "windows of opportunity" to Romani leaders and organizations, and it is yet to be seen whether the re-making of political scene in Spain will generate coordinated, well-articulated, timely and strategic responses on behalf of the Romani civil society, galvanizing the potential voting power of the Romani constituency.

Using opportunities: strategic or reactive?

As stakeholders and "intermediaries" between Romani communities and the administration, Romani organizations play an essential role as implementing entities, mainly through services. As it was already argued, Romani NGOs are generally driven by funding opportunities, adjusting to the priorities and agendas of the funding agencies, mainly public administration. Ability to attract funds is a question of survival for Romani organizations, therefore, effective fundraising becomes an essential skill which guarantees their existence. Previous chapter regarding strategies ("how") explained in detail this process.

What is interesting to highlight, however, is the fact that not all funding opportunities are identified, recognized or taken into consideration. One such example is the question of immigration and the plethora of funding opportunities related to this issue. A number of regional and national immigration strategies exist, which aim to provide responses to the immigrant population which has been continuously arriving to Spain since the 1990s. As part of these structures, grants are made available for assisting the process of integration of immigrants, which are also available to civil society organizations. Taking into consideration the fact that as part of the wave of immigration, a significant

[198] http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2015/noti2015-06-03.htm

number of immigrant Roma have arrived in Spain, it is surprising to see that Romani organizations ignore funding opportunities available for assisting the integration of Romani newcomers. The phenomenon of Romani migration represents an emerging opportunity for civil society actors to become engaged and facilitate this process. Nonetheless, Romani organizations seldom adapt to this emerging opportunity – there is only but a handful of Romani organizations which apply for funding for immigration, aiming at working with immigrant Romani communities (among them, *Unión Romaní* and *Drom Kotar Mestipen*). Instead, this field is occupied by non-Roma professional actors (such as Vincle) or pro-Roma agencies (such as FSG), which cooperate with public administration bodies to attend the needs and problems of immigrant Romani population.

Identifying emerging opportunities and establishing well-defined objectives and strategies to pursue those are conditioning factors which determine the potential success of collective action. Nonetheless, it seems that in the case of Romani associative movement it is rather a type of concrete developments which generate concrete reactions on behalf of the associations and their leaders. In fact, one senior Romani leader argued:

> "We, the Roma, but also the Spanish society, we are reactive. We only get mobilized when someone 'puts a shoe on our heads'. We are very selfish and we only think about our nearest environment." [interview field-notes, ES_7]

The examples of RAE and the struggle for removing of discriminatory definition form the dictionary or the reaction against the stereotypical portrayal of Roma in the media shows such as "Palabra del Gitano" or "Los Gypsy Kings" are good examples of how specific instances of perceived injustice and discrimination become motors for coordinated action of Romani stakeholders. Petition-writing, protests or social media campaigns represent spontaneous responses of Romani organizations and communities which at the same time generate a lot of media attention, with potential to galvanize public support to the Romani protests. Nonetheless, it seems that only in the past few years did the Romani NGOs begin to shift from reactive approach (spontaneous protests against concrete developments) to a more strategic approach of seeking more holistic and integral responses. The actions undertaken by some organizations, for example the KAMIRA campaign to establish a free-of-charge legal assistance for victims of discrimination, or the establishment of strategic partnerships with legal councils (for example FAKALI Romani Women federation) or media councils (for example, Federation of Roma Association in Catalonia) represent a more strategic approach to recurrent problems, which uses building alliances with potentially influential agents (like the councils mentioned) and a more long-term approach, which may provide legal and structural responses.

Romani organizations seldom articulate well-defined goals related to concrete policy-changes (which emerge as part of policy processes, for example, during the establishment or reform of a specific law) or advocacy campaigns which aim at re-making of specific institutional, legal or political frameworks. Such actions tend to be goal-oriented and time-specific and have a potential of significant impact, as they may set a precedent (for example through strategic litigation), modify a concrete legal provision (policy-oriented advocacy) or build strategic partnerships (through establishing broad alignments). The example of *Coordinadora dels Merxants* mentioned earlier, is a good example of how goal-oriented, timely and strategic action can have positive impact. Nonetheless, such examples rather than treated as a rule tend to be an exception. Currently, a number of actors, most notably Romani women's

organizations and youth-led initiatives, began to forge this new ground. The potential of greater proliferation of strategic rather than reactive approach of Romani associations may signal a qualitative change of Romani associative movement in Spain, traced of which can already be witnessed.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented empirical findings with regards to the Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain. In order to reflect on the key elements of ethnic mobilization outlined in the chapter on theoretical considerations – the type of mobilizing structures, frames of collective identity and interests, strategies of collective action and the importance of political opportunities - I described and contextualized my empirical data.

I found that Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain is mainly driven by civil society actors, especially by associations. The birth of first genuinely Romani entities was preceded by involvement of religious and pro-Romani entities which worked to alleviate problems of the Romani community. Since the democratic transition Romani organizations emerged and expanded dynamically across the country. The proliferation and growth of number of Romani associations has led to internal fragmentation in which consolidation became an important step; this process is facilitated by the creation of federations (especially on regional scope but also sectorial, for example of women), national-level organizations (such as Unión Romani) and networks. Furthermore, currently the field of Romani affairs is a densely populated arena, in which plethora of diverse actors – Roma (principally NGOs but also foundations, political parties and networks) and pro-Roma (associations, foundations, scholars and experts) – interact with each other and shape political and policy approaches to Roma. Structures of Romani ethnic mobilization are increasingly more heterogeneous, also in terms of leadership patterns, especially with salience and dynamic development of Romani women and Romani youth activism. Nonetheless, most Romani NGOs lack strong constituency, as most are not structured as membership-organizations, and are excessively sustained on their leaders and Board members.

While analysing collective identity frames, I found that different types of discourses overlap and influence each other mutually – namely, the exogenous discourses shaped directly or indirectly via scholarship and policies and the self-narratives crafted by Romani leaders constructed as the "public expression of self". The self-narratives crafted by Romani leaders tend to rely strongly on reified cultural traits (cultural distinctiveness) but also incorporate elements regarding socio-economic and political standing of Roma, as well as the question of historic and present-day discrimination. I identified contradictions in these narratives, especially regarding the pan-European Romani identity frames and lack of inclusion of immigrant Spanish Roma. I also argued that the discourses crafted by Romani leaders are usually deployed externally (towards the State administration or society in general) and not internally. I showed the level of identity correspondence between discourses of organizations and constituencies, pointing to a certain distance which un-affiliated Roma feel towards Romani NGOs.

With regards to collective interest frames, I would argue that the question of representation remains the main rationale for existence of Romani NGOs; as such, they are conceptualized as intermediaries and voices representing the community. Nonetheless, I problematized the question of

representativeness, discussing to what extent Romani NGOs are indeed representative and legitimate. I distinguished three major axis of collective interests pursued by Romani organizations, namely: equality and justice, non-discrimination and cultural recognition. I provided examples how these interests are articulated and framed and how they are intertwined with each other. I also analysed to what extent these objectives, articulated by Romani organization, tend to reflect the real grievances, needs and interests of Romani communities.

Strategies employed by Romani actors to pursue these articulated objectives rely on different types of activities and actions. I differentiated between broadly understood political action, which remains the principal modus operandi of Romani organizations, disregarding of size or scope. Furthermore, I also demonstrated that service-provision becomes the main scheme of activity (as well as the principal source of funding). Organizing events, activities and generation of content, knowledge and information about Roma are constitutes an important bloc of activity of Romani organizations. I showed that protest and alliances-building still remain marginal strategic action, although also examples where shows where these tactics were pursued, often successfully.

Finally, I also showed how the frame of "political opportunities" has been determinant for the process of emergence and evolution of Romani associative movement in Spain. To justify this argument, I provided evidence of the process of birth of Romani actors, facilitated by external factors (democratic transition, legal frameworks, funding). I also demonstrated and discussed how international developments have been influencing the evolution and changes within Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain. Finally, I also discussed the process of adaptation of Romani actors to external factors.

These findings, presented in this section, will be discussed and evaluated in the concluding chapter ("discussion") from a comparative perspective, assessing them vis-à-vis existing scholarship on ethnic mobilization.

6. ROMANI ETHNIC MOBILIZATION IN COLOMBIA

6.1. Preliminary remarks. Presentation of the field

The fieldwork in Colombia lasted between May 1st, 2013 and July 31st, 2013. The base of activity was established in the capital – Bogota - due to the proximity of relevant institutions, governmental bodies, universities, etc. Additionally, the only two formally registered Romani organizations are established in the capital and are the main relevant interlocutors shaping the public policies and discourse on Roma.

Throughout this chapter I draw from the data collected during fieldwork, mostly from primary sources (especially interviews conducted), as well as secondary literature produced by scholars (such as theses or academic articles), press articles, blogs and websites or documents produced by different organs of public administration. The secondary sources served to contrast some of the data I collected myself during fieldwork as well as to fill the gaps in information which I have not be able to retrieve personally during my stay in Colombia, or afterwards during the period of follow-up.

The table below lists the profile of informants with whom I conducted interviews, the type of interviews conducted, the relationship established with them, and their relevance for the fieldwork conducted. These interviews represent the backbone of this chapter and quotes. Excerpts from these interviews are introduced throughout the text.

Table 21. Coded list of informants in Colombia

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWEE	PROFILE OF THE RESPONDANT	RELEVANCE OF RESPONDANT FOR RESEARCH	TYPE OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
COL_1 (woman)	Romani activist with higher education, member of PROROM, one of the most active Romani representatives in Colombia. Age: 30+	Insight into most relevant developments (policy level and ethnic mobilization); historic perspective. Knowledge of people, places and events as an actor who has been actively engaged in these processes. One of my closest informants	Formal recorded and numerous informal interviews and discussions; communication online and via e-mail

COL_2 (man)	Founder of PROROM, scholar on Roma issues. Age: 50+	Historical perspectives of the birth of Romani ethnic mobilization, of PROROM. Assessment of current developments from the perspective of a person who is not involved anymore	Phone interview
COL_3	Family of COL_1	More personal narratives; level of involvement not only of visible members but also of their families. Their perspectives on Romani ethnic mobilization and inter-generational dialogue	Family visit, informal discussions
COL_4 (man)	Roma, works at the Secretariat of Ethnic Issues at the Municipal District Office. Age: 20+	Nephew of COL_1. A young Roma, now actively involved in ethnic mobilization, especially through PROROM. Works at the Municipality. Youth perspective on current developments	Informal conversations and interviews, recorded through field-notes
COL_5 (man)	Member of Embera-Chamí indigenous people from Risaralda. Indigenous representative (*Referente Indígena*), works at the Secretariat of Ethnic Issues at the Municipal District Office. Age: 30+	Inter-ethnic context: comparative perspective on ethnic movements and their relationship with Roma. Assessment of public administration and policies for minorities	Formal interview, recorded through field-notes

COL_6 (man)	Indigenous dancer and artist, has a foundation which works with indigenous youth in the Amazon. Age: 40+	Inter-ethnic perspective; grassroots perspective of working in a local NGO; assessment of public policies and current situation	A friend of my room-mate. A Common visitor where I lived - mostly casual conversations in informal settings
COL_7 (man)	Legal representative of PROROM, Romani activist. Age: 50+	Actively engaged representative of PROROM. Insight into most relevant developments	Interviews conducted in person; recorded through field-notes
COL_8 (woman)	Single Romani woman, member of Unión Romaní of Colombia. Age: 30+	Among the most actively engaged members of URC. Main performer during inter-cultural events (singer and musician). One of my closest informants.	Numerous interviews, mostly recorded through field-notes. Communication also via Facebook chat
COL_9 (woman)	Non-Roma legal representative of Unión Romaní de Colombia. Age: 40+	Non-Roma representative of URC. Insight into developments of URC and public policies in general	Various meetings, one formal interview; recorded through field-notes
COL_10 (man)	Director of the Office for Ethnic Issues at the District Office. Age: 40+	He is personally a representative of an ethnic minority himself, with an activist background. Insight into public policies and relationship with Roma	Recorded interview

COL_11 (man)	Scholar, conducted various investigations among Roma in Colombia, field work and MA thesis with PROROM. Currently working on his PhD, drawing from fieldwork conducted in Colombia. Age: 30+	Historical perspectives of Roma-related developments in Colombia (has conducted fieldwork since late 2007). Academic and ethnographic perspective of these developments over the years. Personal friend and collaborator in other settings (Romani youth activism and conferences); one of the main informants (shares data and observations with me) and a person with whom I am able to contrast my data	Numerous interviews conducted online and in person, from 2012 until now. Personal communication via e-mail
COL_12 (woman)	Director of CREARC, lawyer. Age: 40+	During the years 2005-2012 she was a close collaborator and consultant for PROROM.	Recorded interview
COL_13 (woman)	Assistant director of the Sustainable Territorial Development Directorate, National Planning Department. Age: 40+	Institutional perspective on working with Roma; insight into the legal framework relevant for Roma and Roma-specific legislation	Recorded interview
COL_14 (woman)	Romani woman from Bucaramanga (Santander), with higher education, married to a non-Roma. Was actively engaged for a period of time in activism. Disengaged after some problems with local	Perspective on activism from the point of view of a local *kumpania*. Gender perspective – was among my principle informants.	Not recorded interviews and conversations

	Romani leaders. Age: 30+		
COL_15 (man)	Roma with higher education, cousin of COL_1, married to a non-Roma, founder of PROROM, works at Secretaria de Gobierno, Dirección de Asuntos Etnicos, Referente Rom. Age: 30+	Historical perspective on the beginning of the process of ethnic mobilization and the history of PROROM. Assessment of current situation from the perspective of one of the most active agents	Recorded interviews and also recorded through field-notes
COL_16 (woman)	Roma officer at IDPAC, active member and performer with URC. Age: 30+	Perspective of a young Roma activist, engaged with URC. She also works at a public institution.	recorded through field-notes
COL_17 (men)	2 experts and PhD scholars on ethnic movements in Colombia, part of the journalistic project "Actualidad étnica"	Inter-ethnic perspective of processes of ethnic mobilization in Colombia; critical historical perspective of progress and limitations of current situation with regards to ethnic minorities	Recorded interview conducted with both at the same time
COL_18 (man)	Managing Director of Ethnicities, IDPAC. Age: 40+	Himself a member of an ethnic group and with activist background. Perspective of public administration as well as of an "ex-activist". Inter-ethnic perspective and assessment of working with Romani communities.	Recorded interview

COL_19 (woman)	Romani woman, sister of the legal representative of *kumpania* from Medellin, pastor of the Evangelical church. Age: 50+	Insight into local community dynamics, especially with regards to gender. Role of the Evangelical Church at the intersection with ethnic mobilization of Roma.	Interview recorded through field-notes
COL_20 (woman)	Journalist, master's thesis about Roma in Medellin. Age: 20+	She has conducted fieldwork with Roma in Medellin and has also written a number of press articles about them. Perspective of a non-Roma scholar entering the topic.	Formal interview, recorded through field-notes
COL_21	Family of COL_14	Grassroots perspective of un-affiliated Roma	Informal conversations, family visit
COL_22 (men)	2 representatives of *Fundación Nexos Municipales*	Inter-ethnic perspective on working with cultural diversity and ethnic groups	Formal interview, recorded with both of them at the same time
COL_23 (man)	General Manager of *Convenio 838 (2012) las redes distritales.* Age: 30+	Institutional perspective of the manager who coordinates networking between ethnic groups in district capital. Inter-ethnic perspective	Recorded interview
COL_24 (woman)	Young Roma from Bucaramanga, sister of COL_14, who works in Bogota as a tour guide. Married and divorced from a Romani man. Age: 20+	Perspective of a young un-affiliated Romani woman	Informal discussions
COL_25 (man)	Colombian dancer and teacher of flamenco in Bogota; lived and worked with Roma communities also in	Perspective from the standpoint of the arts. Comparative view of Roma in Colombia vs Roma in other countries	Formal interview

	Spain and Argentina. Age: 30+		
COL_26 (women)	Romani women from Bucaramanga, un-involved in Romani ethnic mobilization.	Grassroots perspectives of un-affiliated Roma	Informal conversations, phone calls
COL_27 (woman)	Public officer responsible for coordinating work related to Roma at the Ministry of Education. Age: 40+	Institutional perspective on working with Roma; insight into the legal framework relevant to Roma and Roma-specific legislation	Recorded interview
COL_28 (woman)	Coordinator of Roma Affairs at the Ministry of Interior. Age: 30+	Member of the Afro community herself, she has been coordinating work with Roma on behalf of the Ministry of Interior. Has deep insight into the dynamics from an institutional perspective.	Recorded interview
COL_29 (woman)	*Asociación Mutual para el desarrollo integral de la afro-colombianidad y el empresialismo* (AMDAE). Age: 50+	Afro leader and member of an Afro NGO. Perspective of ethnic mobilization dynamics among afro groups as well as insight into collaboration with Roma.	Recorded interview
COL_30 (man)	PhD, Director of Research Group "Relaciones interétnicas y minorías culturales". Age: 50+	Academic perspective	Recorded interview
COL_31 (man)	Romani man. Legal representative of	Perspective of a local Romani leader, insight	Phone conversations and informal

	kumpania in Medellin (Envigado). Age: 50+	into the work of legal representatives	discussions during meetings of the National Table for Dialogue
COL_32 (man)	PhD, Director of the Department for Roma, Indigenous and Minorities' Affairs at the Ministry of Interior. Age: 50+	Institutional perspective on working with Roma; insight into the legal framework relevant to Roma and Roma-specific legislation. The highest-level representative for Roma Affairs. Some Roma call him "our godfather"	Recorded interview; various informal discussions
COL_33 (man)	Ex-president of ONIC 1993-98, member of Kuna indigenous group. Age: 40+	Ethnic mobilization of indigenous groups in Colombia; legislative developments and progress made (and limitations) over the years. Perspective of inter-ethnic collaboration and relationship with Roma	Formal interview, recorded through field-notes
COL_34 (man)	PhD, Director of "Populations" (minority cultures) at the Ministry of Culture. Age: 40+	Institutional perspective on working with Roma; insight into the legal framework relevant for Roma and Roma-specific legislation	Recorded interview
COL_35 (woman)	Coordinator of native languages at the Ministry of Culture. Age: 40+	Institutional perspective on working with Roma; insight into the legal framework relevant to Roma and Roma-specific legislation	Recorded interview

COL_36 (woman)	Undergraduate student of biology. Research on relationship of Roma with astrology. Working on the teaching material for ethno-education. Age: 20+	Academic perspective	Recorded interview
COL_37 (women)	Various key members of URC organizations, including the legal representatives	More personalized narratives; level of involvement not only of visible members but also of their families. Their perspectives on Romani ethnic mobilization and inter-generational dialogue	Family visit and a formal interview, recorded through field-notes
COL_38 (man)	Anthropologist, PhD research in Colombia with Romani communities. Age: 40+	As a researcher who has conducted fieldwork in Colombia earlier, he has helped me to understand the context even prior to the trip. He also knows most of my contacts and has been very helpful in contrasting data and findings throughout the process.	Numerous conversations and discussions
COL_39 (man)	PhD, Colombian scholar, founder of PROROM, currently professor at *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.* Age: 50+	Historical perspectives on the birth of Romani ethnic mobilization, of PROROM. Assessment of current developments from the perspective of a person who is not involved anymore	Phone conversations, communication via e-mail and one in-person interview conducted
COL_40 (woman)	Current legal representative of Unión Romani de Colombia, Romani woman of respect. Age: 60+	Insight into the work of the URC; perspective on the community and gender perspective from the older generation.	Recorded through field-notes

COL_41 (woman)	Daughter of COL_40. Active member of Unión Romani de Colombia. Age: 40+	Insight into the work of the URC; perspective on the community and gender perspective.	Recorded through field-notes
COL_42 (man)	Legal representative of *kumpania* in Bucaramanga. Age: 50+	Perspective of a local Romani leader, insight into the work of legal representatives	Informal conversations during meetings of the National Table for Dialogue

It should be noted that some of the interviews were audio-recorded which allowed me to transcribe them later on. Nonetheless, numerous interviews were not recorded; in those cases, I kept a journal, which includes detailed notes from each one of those conversations and meetings. There are various reasons why in numerous cases I only rely on my journal and not on the audio-recorded interviews. On the one hand, and especially in the case of interviews conducted with Romani informants, the use of an audio-recorder affects the type of responses I received – the formality associated with audio-recordings made some of my informants uncomfortable and led them to respond in an official, “politically correct” manner (H. J. Rubin and Rubin 2011; Eduardo Restrepo 1992). Much more “off-the-record” information was provided to me when the voice-recorder was turned off – the respondents felt more comfortable; such context provided for an informal space for discussion in an atmosphere of intimacy and trust. In fact, I conducted numerous interviews with the same respondents – both recorded and informal, which were noted down only in my journal. The answers given by the same person in both types of settings were complementary to each other and allowed me to gain greater insight into the dynamics and relationships which take place “behind the scene”. The guarantee of anonymity in the use of the interviews in many cases was not enough to make my interviewees feel that they could speak openly, especially about controversial issues. Furthermore, it should be noted that in numerous cases, while conducting formal interviews with representatives of public administration, my interlocutors after conducting the formal, recorded interviews gave me a lot of essential information “off-the-record”. In fact, in some cases the interviewees themselves asked me to turn off the recorder so that they could give me unofficial information, relevant to my research.

In addition, numerous interviews were conducted in very informal settings – during lunches, going shopping or sharing a coffee, going for a walk together or simply with people I encountered and with whom I shared a conversation. On many such casual and informal occasions, I was able to retrieve essential information used in this chapter; in such contexts the use of a recorder would have been inappropriate.

I also attended a number of events – such as meetings with public administration, cultural fairs, congresses and conferences, during which Romani community members and representatives participated. These events were generally not recorded but they became an important source of

information. Extensive notes were taken during all of these events which have also fed into this chapter. Such occasions also provided me with unique opportunities to see the interaction of the Roma representatives with each other, with the public and with other ethnic groups. All of these observations have also informed this chapter and are mentioned throughout the text. Below is the list of attended events:

Table 22. List of attended events in Bogota

NAME OF THE EVENT	TYPE OF EVENT	TYPE OF ROMA PARTICIPATION	PLACE OF THE EVENT	DATE
1ER CONGRESO DISTRITAL INTERETNICO	Inter-ethnic congress, leaders of all ethnic minorities in the district of Bogota: Afro, Raizales, Palenqueros, IndÍgenas and Rom	Representatives of Romani organizations of PROROM and URC participated in the discussions; there were also presentations of traditional dances and music, also by Roma	USME	25.05.2013
Foro Unidad y Diversidad. Red de Comunicación Interétnica de Bogotá	Leaders of 5 ethnic communities of Bogota, public representatives and scholars	Romani representatives participated; COL_1 on behalf of PROROM gave a speech. I was invited as an expert to give a presentation about Roma in Europe and their networks	Auditorio de ONIC	1.06.2013
Socialización de avances de programa "Fortalecimiento de la investigación sobre movimientos sociales en la diversidad y Diálogo intercultural" UNAC	*Universidad Nacional de Colombia*, "Inter-ethnic relations and minority cultures" Research Group	Presentation of findings of a project conducted by the research centre. No Roma were present	UNAC - UNIJUS	6.06.2013
Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito	"Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos" is an academic course organized by Municipal Secretariat of the Bogota Town Hall and the *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas*	COL_1 gave a presentation on Romani culture, traditions and lifestyle. The event was attended by numerous members of Romani community, including representatives of both organizations, PROROM and URC	Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas	8.06.2013

Taller de INNPULSA y Ministerio de Comercio	Workshop by INNPULSA and Ministry of Commerce for the Roma; workshop for Roma about micro-credits, financial institutions etc.	The workshop had two sessions (one in the afternoon and one in the morning) organized separately for both organizations - one for PROROM and one for URC	Ministry of Commerce	17.06.2013
Capacitación de proyectos - Sistema General de Regalías. Mesa Nacional de Diálogo	Discussion and a workshop organized in the framework of the periodic meeting of the National Table for Dialogue (*Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*).	The meeting was attended by legal representatives of all *Kumpeñy*, except Sabana Larga, as well as both Roma organizations. Representatives of different organs of public administration as well as of International Organization for Migration (IOM) were also present	Hotel Tequedama, Bogota	26.06.2013

For the duration of the fieldwork, I resided in Bogota from May 1st 2013 until 31st of July 2013. However, during that period I also conducted a number of field-trips to different places in Colombia to gain a perspective on the situation outside of the capital city:

- From 19.06.2013 to 22.06.2013 I was in Medellin, visiting the Roma *kumpania* in Envigado
- From 22.06.2013 to 24.06.2016 I was in Cali
- From 26.06.2013 to 30.06.2013 I was travelling through the region of Santander, visiting Girón and Bucaramanga
- I also visited Cartagena and Baranquilla but was unable to conduct interviews with Roma there

Finally, it should be noted that throughout this chapter I also frequently quote articles, publications, position papers and briefs written and published by members of Romani organizations, most notably of PROROM which has been the most prolific in terms of publishing influential material on Roma in Colombia.[199]

[199] Some of these sources are written by non-Roma who were at the time members of PROROM. Nonetheless, once they withdrew from being active members of the organization, they continued to publish articles which were inspired by their first-hand experiences from the past. In such cases, however, I treat these sources as secondary sources which are not anymore part of the discourses and narratives shaped by Roma themselves, which helps me to contrast the data I gathered myself.

6.2. Introduction

COUNTRY	REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA
POPULATION	48,014,026[200]
POLITICAL SYSTEM	Presidential representative democracy
ETHNIC COMPOSITION[201]	37% white 49% mestizo 10,5% Black (Mulato, Afro-Colombian and Palenquero) 3,4% Indigenous 0,1% Raizal 0,012% Roma
MINORITY LEGAL STATUS	Constitution of 1991 recognizes that Colombia is a multi-ethnic (art.7) and multi-linguistic (art.10) State[202]. Based on Constitutional provisions, ethnic and cultural minorities have the right to self-determination and self-organization.
SIZE OF ROMANI POPULATION	4 857 (0,012% of the population)[203]
DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROMANI POPULATION	Dispersed throughout the country. Biggest concentration in departments: Atlantic (40.7%); Bolivar (18.8%) and Bogota (11%)[204]
COMPOSITION OF THE ROMANI POPULATION	Relatively homogeneous (self-identify as Kalderash Roma)

[200] Estimation for 2015 (http://www.dane.gov.co/reloj/reloj_animado.php).

[201] According to last census DANE 2005. It should be noted that this refers to the officially recognized ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, there are numerous national, cultural, linguistic and ethnic minorities which are not recognized by the Colombian State; therefore, this data doesn't reflect their presence in the official census.

[202] Furthermore, Law 21 of 1991 in which Colombia ratifies Convention 169 from 1989 ("Indigenous and Tribal People Convention") of the International Labour Organization, obliges Colombia to adapt their national legislation accordingly in order to respond to the needs of their ethnic and cultural minorities.

[203] Data of the last census DANE 2005.

[204] It is important to note that the statistical data does not adequately reflect the distribution of Roma. PROROM point to the traditional mobility of Roma (throughout the country and cross-country)(Gómez Baos 2011). Additionally, according to the data it seems that the number of Roma in the Atlantic is in fact very small, and the largest Romani groups can be found in the Departments of Santander and Santander del Norte.

LEGAL STATUS OF THE ROMANI POPULATION	Recognized through numerous legal acts, most importantly through Decree 2957 (2010)

Table 23. Colombia – basic information

6.2.a Setting the scene

Colombia - the third most populous country in Latin America (after Brazil and Mexico) – is often defined by paradoxes. On the one hand, Colombia is described as a country of relative political stability, arguing that it has one of the longest-functioning democracies in Latin America (Hudson 2010). Unlike its neighbouring countries, it has not been repeatedly torn by *coups d'état*[205], violent dictatorships or authoritarian regimes. Ever since its creation as an independent republic in 1886, Colombia has enjoyed relatively regular and fair elections and promoted respect for political and civil rights (Hudson 2010). Nonetheless, the argument about the "relative stability" of Colombian democracy should not overshadow the history of existing armed struggles (Mejía, Uribe, and Melo 1998). After a period of relative peace, since the 1960s Colombia has been torn by internal violence. Continuous insurgency, paramilitarism, terrorism and narco-terrorism, along with criminality, political scandals and political violence have brought Colombia to the verge of collapse.

Colombia is also a highly fragmented country, with strong social, economic and political polarization, marked economic inequalities, and considerable regional disparities. The social inequalities, violence, corruption and narco-terrorism of the 1980s resulted in increasing social unrest and a crisis of governability. The assassination of three presidential candidates in 1989 educed popular demand for political reforms, giving way to constitutional reform (Cárdenas, Junguito, & Mónica Pachón, 2006:10). Eventually, the Seventh Ballot movement (*movimiento de la séptima papeleta*) succeeded in pushing for constitutional reforms, through the establishment of a National Constituent Assembly (*Asamblea de Constituyentes*) (Cárdenas, Junguito, and Mónica Pachón 2006). The new constitution was meant to become a tool to overcome institutional, social and political divisions within a country ripped apart by violence. It envisioned the establishment of modern, democratic institutions based on the principles of greater democratic participation and the rule of law, as well as mechanisms for human rights protection. The National Constituent Assembly was meant to be inclusive, representative and participatory. Through nation-wide elections, seventy delegates were chosen in order to represent diverse social groups and interests, including politicians of different political strands, ex-guerrillas, indigenous leaders, representatives of business and civil society, peasants, academics and clerics. As a result, a new Constitution was adopted on July 6th 1991[206] and included a number of important innovations and reforms, such as the creation of the Constitutional Court and the Attorney General,

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[205] *Coups d'état* have taken place in Colombia only 3 times over the period of its history, in 1830, 1854 and in 1953.

[206] http://www.procuraduria.gov.co/guiamp/media/file/Macroproceso%20Disciplinario/Constitucion_Politica_de_Colombia.htm

principles of decentralization and a complete ban on presidential re-election[207]. The most important changes, however, were made regarding civil, economic and social rights. The Constitution of 1991 introduced a catalogue of Fundamental Rights, set up the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and a mechanism of tutelage which allows citizens to request action for the protection of their fundamental rights. Furthermore, it enshrined the principles of gender equality and freedom of religion, and recognized the plurality and ethnic diversity of Colombian society.

The period of great violence and the subsequent peace processes also placed the question of minorities' protection and rights, especially of the indigenous peoples, at the heart of the discussions regarding the new constitutional provisions of the Colombian state. A Colombian scholar and journalist specializing in ethnic movements in Colombia argues:

> "The continent had already gone through several phases of military dictatorship, but here in Colombia, despite this complex and radicalized... A very complex situation in terms of human rights, that does not happen because of the existence of a military dictatorship. This makes Colombia an ambiguous country. So, it can be deeply repressive despite theoretically having a constitutional and democratic mandate. Therefore, this situation requires profound changes to be made, because things are out of control. Colombia is beginning to be declared by all international bodies as a nonviable country. And it is a nonviable country because it cannot handle the existence of illegal armed groups, cannot handle the institutional organization, there is an absolute violation of the rights of trade unions, of the indigenous ...And I mean this is when they start killing the indigenous." [COL_17, recorded interview]

In fact, the indigenous and afro-descendant people were among the principal civilian victims of the armed conflict, targeted by all of the armed groups. This is what also contributed to visibilizing the dramatic situation of the indigenous people in the context of Colombia's armed conflict, and demanded a response from the authorities to protect them:

> "there is a very strong emphasis on demonstrating that violent armed groups advancing on African and indigenous territories was what sparked the whole reaction of these peoples to safeguard their rights. The paramilitary advance on these territories made these populations visible [which were there] before the conflict and this was brought up with the international human rights bodies, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which forced the Colombian government pay attention to these territories and create a framework for the protection of these populations. Cultural rights are closely related in our political context with human rights." [COL_17, recorded interview]

Ultimately, in the new Constitution, the question of minority rights protection became institutionalized, giving way to important legal changes concerning minorities. In fact, with regards to

[207] This has changed under the government of Álvaro Uribe, who successfully sought a Congressional amendment in 2004 of the Colombian Constitution which allowed for presidential re-election.

minority rights protection, the Colombian constitution is considered to be among the most advanced in the context of the region:

> "The Colombian constitution, created in this context that was conjectural and everything you want, is the most revolutionary, the most progressive, the most extraordinary thing in the world. What country without armed conflict, which has no guerrillas, which has no paramilitaries, which has no drug trafficking, which has no united social movement, which was already the situation throughout this America ... is going to create a constitution simply to grant a number of rights which no other country has granted?" [COL_17, recorded interview]

Historically, Colombia has always been a multi-ethnic state: autochthonous indigenous people, various groups of African descent, immigrants of European background as well as the Roma have been present in the territory of today's Colombia for centuries. However, it was not until the '90s that this diversity became recognized institutionally and legally. In the past, the Colombian national identity and culture has been generally projected by making reference to white and mestizo cultures, disregarding the existing diversity and plurality. In 1989, Arocha Rodriguez argued that: "so far, the law has required that people give up their identity and speak Spanish; that they are Christian, believe in the same epic of the Conquest, Colony, Independence and affirm themselves to be of the same 'race'." (Arocha Rodriguez, 1989:15)

A Colombian scholar, an expert in ethnic movements in Colombia, further argues that the assumption of the mestizo construction of Colombian societies marginalized all other identities, especially the minority ethnic identities. He argues:

> "Under the idea that there is a great mixture through miscegenation [*mesitzaje*], they have hidden realities such as those of the Romani people, *Raizal*, specific ethnic minorities. Black people who they wanted to be seen only through their existence in the black territories, but were not seen as a reality in urban centres, universities, social movements, etc. The lack of a clear pursuit of emerging [and existing] difference causes everything to be seen through the prism of cultural, political, national miscegenation [*mestizaje*]... hiding the cultural contribution of each people to the national reality." [COL_17, recorded interview]

The recognition of Colombia as a multi-ethnic country in the Constitution of 1991 (art.7)[208], created frameworks for minority protection and the promotion of diversity, such as indigenous jurisdiction (art. 246), political and territorial autonomy (art. 286, 287, 288, 290, 321, 329, 330), special electoral constituencies for the Senate (art. 171) and Chamber of Representatives (art. 176), linguistic rights (art.10) and educational rights (art. 68). Consequently, in the matter of minority and ethnic rights, Colombia is argued to have the most progressive legal and constitutional frameworks in all of Latin America, and is often posed as an example for other countries of the region (Bonilla 2003). The

[208] Literally, Article 7 of the Colombian Constitution states: "The State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation".

ratification in 1991 of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (“Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention”) and its incorporation into national legal frameworks further advanced the legal rights of minorities. What was before considered as “cultural backwardness”, became now “cultural diversity”, worthy of protection and promotion as part of country’s richness and heritage (Borda 2009) . Without a doubt, the reformulation of the Colombian Constitution in terms of minority rights and cultural diversity is the result of the ethnic activism and political engagement of indigenous leaders: “if policies towards ethnic groups of the Colombian state have changed, it is due to the organization, struggle and resistance of indigenous people” (Juancarlos Gamboa Martínez, 1993:44).

The successful and explicit incorporation of indigenous rights in the 1991 Constitution, gave an impulse to other ethnic minorities in the country to demand similar treatment. Consequently, throughout Colombia, one can witness a type of ethnic revival among minorities, or a type of “re-indigenization” (Borda 2009) as a result of the expansion of minority rights:

> “And so, the re-ethnicization process is beginning to occur in Colombia. What does this mean? Here, the indigenous people, so that they won’t get killed became peasants [*campesinos*] and secondly, since the ’50s and in the following decades, during the period of the Violence, being camouflaged peasants, indigenous camouflaged peasants, they are forced to move to big cities and create large ghettos of a population which is said to be peasant, but their customs are indigenous. Then this entire vindicating framework emerges that among other things acknowledges territory, culture, autonomy, self-government. As a result, a lot of peoples [indigenous and other cultural minorities] that were being lost and forgotten are beginning to be re-discovered.” [COL_17, recorded interview]

Curiously, the 2005 Census found that the population of ethnic groups had increased significantly since the previous census in 1993 (Hudson 2010). This increase may be due to the refined methodology applied for the 2005 Census but also may be a result of increasing self-awareness among members of ethnic minorities, and a sign of the “re-ethnicization” in Colombia or what Arocha refers to as the “ethno-boom” (Arocha Rodríguez 2005).

Nonetheless, the Constituent Assembly was not an entirely inclusive one; other ethnic minorities were excluded and consequently did not enjoy the same benefits as the indigenous people (Arocha Rodríguez 1989; Arocha Rodríguez 1992). In fact, Arocha argues elsewhere that: “Since 1985, social movements in favour of multiculturalism were extended, encompassing people of African descent, gender minorities and those of religion. In such a way, they contributed significantly to the constitutional reform of 1991.” (Arocha Rodríguez 2005)

The inclusion of minority-rights provisions as well as the explicit mention of indigenous peoples and indigenous rights, motivated coordinated responses by other groups, who were significantly less organized politically than the indigenous: Afro-descendant groups, *Raizales*, *Palenqueros,* as well as Roma, engaged in their own processes of ethnic mobilization with the objective of gaining visibility and consequently, institutional recognition under the same legal framework as the indigenous people. In this case it is worth noting that the processes of self-organization and representation of collective

claims through a process of ethnic mobilization is especially evident when looking into the case of Colombia. The indigenous peoples have been organized under a common ethnic movement for many decades – and it is thanks to these struggles that their claims were incorporated into the 1991 Constitution. The case of Afro-descendants presents an interesting asymmetry –Afro-descendant people in Colombia are much more numerous than the indigenous communities. However, due to the lack or weakness of internal organization and maturity of the socio-political mobilization, their demands were not incorporated into the Constitution (the Afro-descendant people are only mentioned briefly in Provisional Article 55 of the Constitution of 1991.)

Despite the fact that scholars, activists and politicians remain reticent in their evaluation of the translation of constitutional provisions into specific policies (tensions between cultural diversity and cultural unity, (Bonilla 2003) or difficulties of determining who can in fact be considered as a member of an ethnic group (Borda 2009),[209] the Colombian approach towards minority treatment – based on the recognition of diversity, differential approach (*enfoque diferencial)* and affirmative action – is still considered today as among the most advanced in the continent.

The policy developments regarding ethnic minorities should be understood in the broader context of the Colombian Peace Process (Fisas 2010; *Agencia de Noticias UN* 2013; Chará 2011). In the framework of this process, the Colombian government aims at strengthening democratic institutions and practices, participatory governance and social cohesion. As part of these efforts, the government promotes not only ethnic groups separately, but also an inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration between them. In recent years, a great number of inter-ethnic initiatives have been established by the government (events, festivals, conferences, networks, projects) and it also provides spaces for inter-ethnic collaboration (like the establishment of inter-ethnic roundtables at municipal and regional levels). In the framework of Colombian multiculturalism, such inter-ethnic collaboration is also seen as a way of generating greater social cohesion, and consequently supporting the sustainability of the Peace Process. Furthermore, the Constitution, which helped to advance the process of decentralization as well as creating the *Regalías*[210] system which is then re-invested in human development projects (among others), creates an additional and abundant source of funding. This situation has created a favourable climate for human development projects, contributing to the rapid growth of the civil society sector, especially of NGOs. All of these developments are important to the process of Romani ethnic mobilization and are factors which allow us to contextualise the environment under which this mobilization is taking place.

[209] Or for example: (Torres 2013; Diana Bocarejo 2011).

[210] *Regalías* is a system of royalties coming from non-renewable natural resources and industry production. Royalties are assigned to territorial public entities are an important source of municipal funding (Bonet and Urrego 2014) .

6.2.b. Roma in Colombia

Until relatively recently, Romani people have not been the subject of academic inquiry or a target of public policies; the Roma themselves also preferred to remain socially invisible (Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002; Lagunas 2010a; Baroco Galvéz and Lagunas 2014). This is why it is difficult to say exactly when the first Romani people arrived in what today is Colombia. It is also difficult to reconstruct the history of Romani migration and mobility throughout the continent. Historically, it is argued by historians that the first Roma arrived in Latin America in the third trip of Christopher Columbus (H. Paternina 2014; Muskus 2012; Sabino Lazar 2014; Lagunas 2010a; Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002). From then on – in different waves of migration and proceeding from various European countries (and consequently belonging to different Romani groups) – the Romani people began to mark their presence in different countries of Latin America. A number of academic and non-academic texts chart the different waves of migration in an effort to re-construct their historical journeys (Gamboa Martínez 1993; Gómez Baos 2011; Acuña 2011; Lozano Uribe 2005; Gamboa Martínez, Paternina Espinosa, and Gómez 2000; H. Paternina 2014). Bereményi (Bereményi, 2007:61) rightfully points out the fact that the need to recuperate the history of Roma in Colombia was not only guided by academic curiosity or the need to reconstruct historical memory, but also had a clear political agenda – to demonstrate the historical presence of Romani people as "autochthonous" of Colombia (that is, before the consolidation of Colombia as an independent state). In the process of reconstruction of Romani history in Colombia, scholars mainly used oral histories due to the lack of historical materials which have documented the presence of Romani people in Colombia. It is argued that the current population of Roma in Colombia dates back to the mid-19th century, and originates from Russia, Germany and/or Greece (Bereményi 2007) as well as Serbia, Spain and France (Peeters Grietens 2004; Acuña 2011).

The Roma in Colombia are a very small community. The first national census which included Romani ethnicity as a variable dates to 2005, according to which there are 4,857 Roma (0.012% of the population). Nonetheless, the representativeness of this data is often questioned. On the one hand, Roma point to the high mobility rate among Roma, which causes fluctuations in the number of Romani citizens in Colombia (mostly due to cross-country mobility). Romani leaders, consulted during of the meetings of the legal representatives of the *kumpeñy* agreed that:

> "we have to bear in mind our itinerancy, our nomadism… We go to Venezuela, to Ecuador to sell, today we are 5,000, tomorrow maybe 10,000, and the day after maybe we will be 2,000" [legal representatives during the discussion meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*]

The question of the incorrect results of the 2005 DANE census was also raised by a high-level official at the Bogota Town Hall and a member of the Afro-Colombian community. Seemingly, the incorrect statistical data gathered during the census is not limited to Roma only, but has also been noted for other ethnic minorities:

> "The census doesn't reflect the reality of the Afro-Colombian people – according to the estimates we are more than 12 million and the census shows only 4 million Afro-Colombians." [COL_10, recorded interview]

The representatives of public administration declared themselves during the interviews to be conscious of this problem. Arguably, the discrepancies between the estimated and census data is not free from political influences and bias; and is part of a "numbers game" in which the estimated and official data are used to pursue political agendas.

On the other hand, Roma themselves make clear that the real number of Roma is in fact much lower – according to the census, the highest number of Roma can be found in the department of Atlántico, where in fact there are very few Romani families. The interviews revealed that many people who are not Roma, declared themselves in the census as belonging to this minority. Some argued that this is due to a lack of knowledge of who Roma are – the stereotypes associated with Roma, such as nomadism, a specific life-style and mentality, caused some individuals to identify with imagined "Roma culture," ignorant of the fact that Roma are an ethnic minority, to which one has to be born into (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:173). The example of the Atlantic Coast is illustrative. According to DANE 2005, there are 4,867 Roma in Colombia, the majority of them living in Atlántico (40.7%). The interviews however, reveal something different. A Romani leader from PROROM was the first to mention that the numbers are not correct – according to her, the number in reality is much lower (between 2000 and 3000). Nonetheless, they do not intend to "correct" the DANE census because it benefits them to present higher population numbers. Later on, this was confirmed by other interlocutors. One Romani activist working at a public administration body explained to me that the surprising results in DANE are due to the general ignorance of people:

> "in Atlántico a lot of people self-declared Roma… In turns out that people don´t understand that Roma is an ethnic group – they see it as an ideology, a philosophy or a lifestyle. A lot of people identify with the imagery of a Roma (free, travellers etc.) and they declared themselves as Roma in the census". [COL_16, Interview]

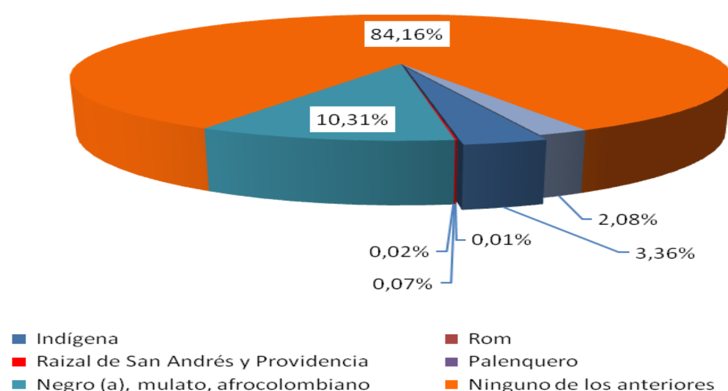

Figure 4. Data on ethnic groups in Colombia. DANE, Censo General 2005-Información básica. Calculated by: Ana Dalila Gómez Baos (PRORROM)

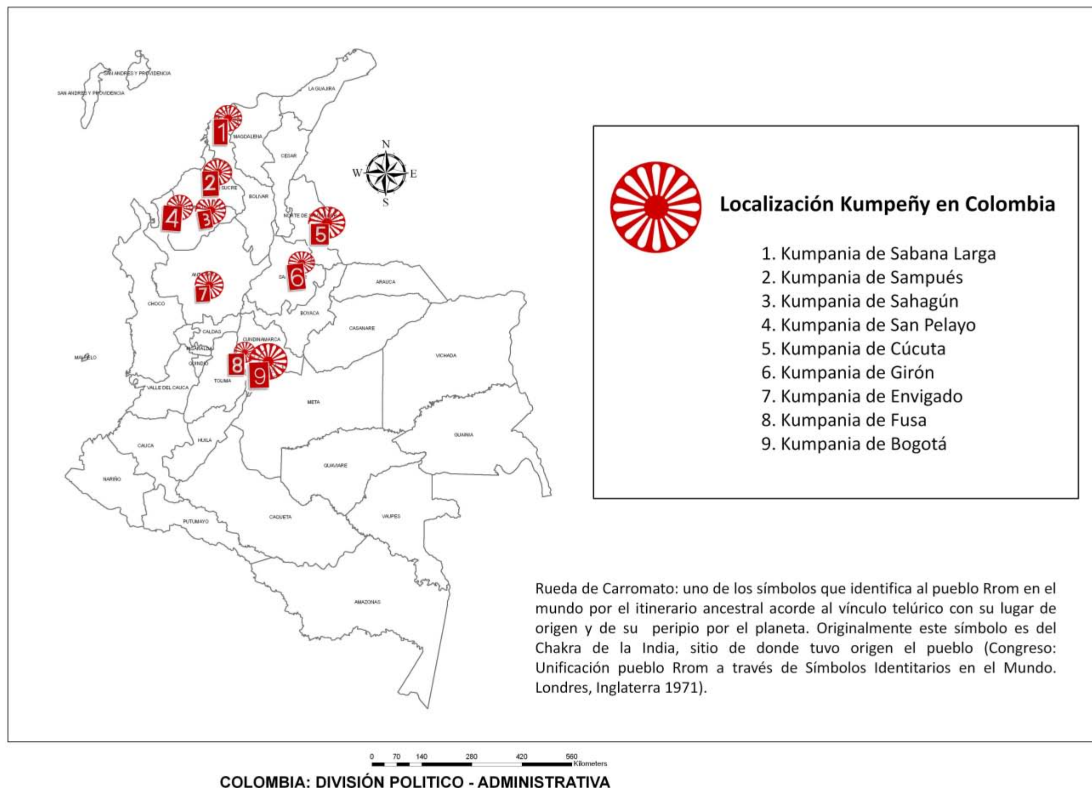

Figure 5. Map of distribution of *kumpeñy* in Colombia.(Gómez Baos, 2010:35) . Note: This map does not include *kumpeñy* in Pasto and Tolima[211].

The population of Roma in Colombia can be considered relatively homogeneous in terms of belonging to specific Romani macro-groups. Unlike other Latin American countries, where different Romani groups live alongside each other (for example, *Caló* Roma of Spanish or Portuguese descent, *Ludar/ Rudari* Roma, *Manushe* etc.), in Colombia the majority of Roma are of *Kalderash* descent (Gómez Baos, 2011:22), although some scholars argue that there are also some families of Ludar / Boyash descent (H. A. Paternina, Gamboa Martínez, and Gómez Baos 2010)[212]. The Romani language is preserved (Deman 2002; Rodríguez 2010) and is considered as one of the most important pillars of Romani identity, a type of identity marker. According to Rodriguez: “At present and in all cases there are no monolinguals among the Colombian Roma, all are bilingual in Romanes and Castilian [Spanish]; and

[211] The number and location of *kumpeñy* varies over time due to high mobility among Romani groups. The Decree 2957 (2010) recognizes 10 *kumpeñy* and acknowledges that these may change over time. Currently, there are 10 kumpeñy: Cúcuta (Norte de Santander), Girón (Santander), Envigado (Antioquia), San Pelayo and Sahagún (Córdoba), Sampués (Sucre), Sabana Larga (Atlántico), Pasto (Nariño), Ataco-Ibagué (Tolima, reconocida por el Ministerio n17/10/2011) and Bogotá (2 kumpeñy).

[212] However, during my travels I haven´t met any person who would declare themselves *Boyash* and their presence in the country, if any, has been generally ignored.

some – of the oldest [members of the community] - are competent in one or several European languages, a proof of their mobility." (Rodríguez 2010)

Nonetheless, during fieldwork it was revealed that in fact not all Roma are bilingual; and the language is used to a lesser extent among the younger generation. In fact, according to DANE 2005, 76.9% of Roma in Colombia declared that they use the Romani language (Gómez Baos, 2011:28).

Romani communities are organized around *vitzas*[213] (patrilineal clans) and *kumpeñy* (local family networks). There are a number of different *vitzas* in Colombia (the names of which correspond to the names of male ancestors). However, throughout the years Roma have abandoned their original surnames and adapted more Spanish-sounding ones, such as: Mendoza, Cristo, Gómez, Méndez, Romero, although some families also maintain original last names such as Bolochock. Roma communities are hierarchically organized based on age and gender.

Historically, Roma have lived a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle (Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002). In the past few decades, however, the majority of Roma have settled down; according to Gamboa and Paternina:

> "Between 1969 and 1973 the Roma in Colombia abandoned the tents and camps to settle down in homes in urban neighbourhoods, thus giving a qualitatively different shift to their particular lifestyle." (Paternina & Gamboa, 1999:167)

Paternina and Gamboa further clarify that the relatively rapid process of sedentarization of Roma in Colombia during the 1970s was a consequence of rapid changes within the Colombian society. They defined the following elements which contributed to this process:

- "acceleration of urbanization throughout the country,
- establishment and expansion of the national road infrastructure,
- strengthening and development of the labour movement,
- mass migration from the countryside to the cities with the corresponding struggle for urban space,
- expansion of means of transport,
- emergence of violence in the cities
- the development of important folk movements" (Paternina & Gamboa, 1999:166)

The armed conflict and the rise of violence has had a significant impact on the lives of Roma, pushing them to seek refuge and abandon their previous lifestyle (Gómez Baos 2011; Bimbay 2011). Currently, the vast majority of Romani families have settled down, living in rented houses or on their own property; there is only one *kumpania* the majority of whose members still live in traditional tents

[213] Meaning according to ROMLEX: vica n f-e/-a- 1. tribe, clan 2. lineage 3. Generation. http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/lex.cgi?st=vic&rev=n&cl1=rmyk&cl2=en&fi=&pm=in&ic=y&im=y&wc=

(*Kumpania* Pasto) (Peeters Grietens 2004). Nonetheless, numerous Roma still practice geographical mobility as part of their economic activity (travelling throughout the country and between Colombia and neighbouring countries) or because of "family reasons" – according to data, 64.7% of Roma declared this reason as the main cause for changing their place of residence (Gómez Baos 2011). On the one hand, with regards to economic activity, Gómez Baos argues:

> "Given the basic characteristics of the economy of Roma people, which is based on the exercise of autonomous trades that do not create dependence on third parties, nomadism helps the survival of its economy, since it allows greater flexibility in adapting to market demands. So patri-family groups can travel to markets and fairs or engage in some economic activities that provide comparative seasonal advantages."(Gómez Baos, 2011:92)

Likewise, Angie Palacio recalls an interview with a Roma from Envigado (a district in Medellin) who explains this economic nomadism clearly: "Since we do not like working for other people, but independently, it pushes us to travel when the market in an area becomes saturated. If today I go to a village and sell five horses to four or five clients that I have, I run out of work there. What should I do? Go to sell them elsewhere." (Palacio, 2007:9)

On the other hand, maintaining family bonds across geographical borders constitutes a highly relevant element of Romani culture. In fact, Roma reify their nomadism, arguing that:

> "The Romani people are par excellence a nomadic people and have configured their identity consciousness based on structural itinerancy". (Gómez Baos, 2011:91)

The Roma in Colombia live mainly in and around big cities, and tend to live in close proximity to each other within same districts or in neighbouring districts. Currently, there are 10 *kumpeñy*, distributed in different departments in Colombia.

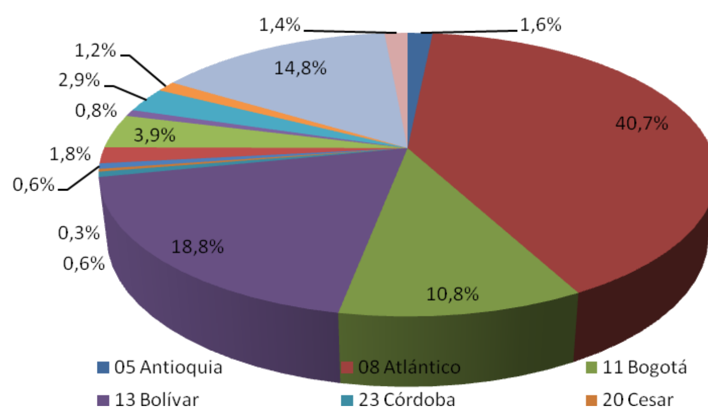

Figure 6. Distribution of *kumpeñy* in Colombia.DANE, Censo General 2005 - Información Básica -.Calculated by: Ana Dalila Gómez Baos (PRORROM), pg. 43

The majority of Roma are self-employed, or part of family businesses – their main occupation is commerce (peddler selling, often working with leather and shoes), working with metal (as crafts and industrially), occupations which are considered as traditional among Romani men. Nonetheless, there are those who also take up temporary employment not considered as traditional: for example, there are some individuals employed by public administration, others who work in non-Roma-owned businesses as employees (Bereményi 2007). Women typically work as fortune-tellers (*drabarel*) – the only occupation that is traditionally allowed among Romani women on their own (Bereményi, 2007:334), and they also accompany their husbands in their trade activities. With regards to the fortune-telling, however, it should be noted that the Evangelical Church is against these practices and advocates that Romani women cease this form of traditional occupation. Nonetheless, despite the rootedness of the Evangelical movement and its impact on the Romani community in Colombia, fortune-telling is still widely practiced by Romani women.

Generally, the Roma in Colombia commonly describe themselves as a traditional community, underlying the fact that they keep to a Romani system of values and a lifestyle they consider as traditional. The elements underlined as traditional are the following:

- Traditional forms of social organization – through *vitzas* (patrilineal clans) and *kumpeñy* (local family networks); strong family ties
- Social stratification according to age and gender
- Use of *Romanes* (Romani language)
- Existence of traditional forms of leadership (such as *Sere Romengue*) and *Romani Kriss*
- Strong ethno-centrism, tendency towards endogamy regarding inter-ethnic marriages[214]
- Maintenance of traditional codes of conduct, referred to by Colombian Roma as *zakono* or *Rromanipen* (also the presence of rules regarding *marime*)
- Historical and self-declared nomadism (physical and metaphorical)
- Practice of traditional crafts and occupations
- Conservation of Romani rituals, especially those regarding marriage (to a lesser extent those related to the rituals of mourning)

Patrick Willimas, in his 1982 study of Kalderash Roma in Paris outlined elements which characterize “a community”:

- “circulation of information
- Customs and rituals which are celebrated together
- Shared system of values
- Same activities according to gender

[214] Roma declare that they are against marriages outside of their ethnic group. In reality, marriages between Romani men and non-Roma women are quite popular. However, marriages between Romani women and non-Romani men are strongly opposed and socially rejected (although individual cases have also been identified).

- Existence of kinship ties (70% endogamic)” (Williams 1982)

This description of Kaderash Roma from over three decades ago also applies to the case of Roma in Colombia.

The perceived traditionalism of Roma in Colombia has some negative consequences.

The traditional rigid social organization in terms of age and gender creates unequal opportunities for Roma women, especially when it comes to activism or economic independence (employment beyond the traditional occupation).

With regards to Romani women, interviews revealed that they generally accept the role attributed to them culturally, as they say, as “guardians of the tradition”: they are expected to cultivate Romani traditions, conserve the language and teach it to children, maintain the traditional dress-code (in numerous communities, women are expected to wear long skirts) and behave “as respected Romani women do”. However, in numerous interviews, the women complained about their status and the excessive control enforced over women, especially in terms of independence and economic activity. For example, a Romani woman pastor from Envigado argued that:

> “Here women are not okay, they are like servants, their freedom is limited and they are almost enslaved”. [COL_19, field-notes]

Another young Roma woman argued that “the environment for Roma is a bit difficult – there is a lot of pressure put on the women” [COL_24, field-notes]. In Bucaramanga, when I spent some time with Romani women, one of the younger Romani women complained about the situation of Romani women:

> “how I would love to have a business, or work, but I can’t because my husband doesn’t let me… here the women don’t have a voice, they have to be in the house with the kids” [COL_26, field-notes].

The participation of Romani women with regards to the Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia will be discussed later on in this chapter.

According to available data, the Roma are among the groups with the lowest level of school attendance – only 28.9% of Roma claimed to have attended educational institutions (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:253). Nonetheless, Romani children between the age of 3-11 have higher levels of school attendance, although the drop-out rate is high beyond the age of 12; this rate is higher among girls (Bereményi, 2007; Paternina Espinosa, 2014). Consequently, no more than 20 Roma have reached higher education institutions (Gómez Baos, 2011:63).

Category		% of population
Gender	Male	53.4%

	Female	47.58%
Level of literacy	Male	94%
	Female	93.7%
Productive- economic activity	House work	14.3%
	Retired, pensioner or annuitant	3.1%
	Incapable of working	1.3%
	Searched for a job for the first time	0.7%
	Worked in the previous week	46.7%
Child labour	5 - 9 years	2.3%
	10 – 14 years	3.3%
	15 – 19 years	27.1%
School attendance		28.9%

Table 24. Basic data on Roma in Colombia. DANE, Censo general 2005, Información básica Colombia. Calculations: Ana Dalila Gómez Baos.

The low level of school attendance among Colombian Roma is a result of numerous factors. Bereményi in his dissertation discusses extensively Roma expectations and perceptions with regards to schooling as well as the school environment and the approach to Romani pupils (2007). On the other hand, one of my informants argues that all this should be analysed with regards to the broader context of the quality of the Colombian education system and the opportunities of the labour market:

> "The educational quality of schools where they [Roma pupils] could go is not the best (several young people I know could not enter universities even wanting to) and the country has a high unemployment rate, along with one of the worst laws on the continent in terms of workers' rights. The perspectives for many young people only improved through family connections that led to improved access to education and employment (there are a couple of examples among Russian Roma and on the Coast), or through the ethnic movement (Dalila's family is also a good example). For many young [Roma] people (especially for men) the truth is that dropping out of school to hone their skills in industry or in sales may not be an illogical or negative choice." [COL_11, personal communication]

Furthermore, some data shows, based on studies and testimonies collected, that Romani communities often face socio-economic difficulties. For example, a study into the Roma community living in Bogota argues that: "The vast majority of the Roma population living in Bogota, D.C., show high levels of poverty and unmet basic needs, presenting living standards that are far below national averages. In

this context we must alleviate this situation of growing pauperization which is having a negative impact on the cultural identity of the Roma people.” [215]

Roma in Colombia – images and perceptions among the majority

For centuries, Roma in Colombia remained invisible from mainstream historical narratives or public or political debates (both through processes of invisibilization and self-imposed invisibility). This is how Roma organizations explain the reasons for this historic invisibility:

> “But why is it that the historical references to the Roma in Latin America and in Colombia are very few and sometimes almost non-existent? This situation has two reasons. The first is that, given the relentless persecution that we the Roma were victims of in Spain (and Europe), the rulers made strenuous efforts to make even our own ethnonym disappear. There are several references in Spain, which show that the Crown, in its integrationist and assimilationist zeal, specifically prohibited the use of the name Gypsies or even Egyptians. On the other hand, it was logical that if there were specific prohibitions by the Spanish Crown on the Roma entering and remaining in the American colonies, we had no alternative but to take refuge in invisibility. That is, we were never going to say that we were Roma, but on the other hand we were not going to allow our identity values to disappear, not only because it ensured our survival as a distinct group, but because in certain areas and villages, away from the colonial power, the fact of us being Roma could possibly be very useful for the exercise of our daily and traditional economic activities.” (PROROM & ASOROM, 2000:67)

Consequently, the Roma remained absent from official historical discourses or from minority-related policy-making. Nonetheless, it should be underlined that they did not remain completely invisible from social consciousness. Interviews reveal that in regions where Roma are more numerous, such as Cúcuta, the majority society is well aware of their presence. After all, the very inclusion of the character of Melquiades in the famous novel “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel García Márquez is evidence of the historical presence and acknowledgment of Roma in Colombia (PROROM 2005b).

While in Colombia, I always tried to engage in conversation about Roma with non-Roma people, completely unrelated to the topic (such as taxi drivers, roommates or simply with strangers that I met on some occasions). In general terms, knowledge about Roma is very limited –people hardly realize that there is a Romani ethnic group which is now recognized by the State. The majority of non-Roma have not had much direct contact with Roma themselves – the images associated with Roma are based on those limited encounters, such as with Roma fortune-tellers or the occasionally appearing and then disappearing nomadic Romani families, which were a common sight until the period of settlement in the 1970s (Acuña, 2008; Bereményi, 2007). Some people recall images of Roma – especially of Romani women who told fortunes- on the streets but often this reflection is accompanied by a comment: “you used to see a lot of Roma women on the streets but not anymore”. This comment may refer to the fact

[215] Consultoría PNUD contrato SUB0201240006. Folleto producto del contrato Secretaria de Gobierno y Alianza entre Pueblos. Septiembre 2004

that a great number of Roma have converted to Evangelicalism and this religion forbids fortune-telling (nonetheless, many women still continue to engage in this occupation); the gradual sedentarization of Roma also contributed to their "disappearance". Most people also recall things they had heard during their childhood, (*"si no te vas a comportar, vendrá un gitano a llevarte" [if you don't behave, the Gypsies will come and take you away]),* but few people have actually had any personal contact with the Romani community. For example, a high-level official from the Ministry of Culture recalls:

> "I'm from the Caribbean region. If I go to the Caribbean to look at [the dynamic of] social control, the children were told: 'if you don't behave, the Gypsies will take you in the wagon'. So ... you had to be good so that the Gypsies wouldn't take you into one of those wagons you could see passing. But this preconception doesn't end with the preconceptions [about the Roma]." [COL_34, recorded interview]

Similar anecdotes were shared with me by various interlocutors across Colombia. It is also striking how the same type of stereotypes and legends associated with Roma exist both in Latin American countries and in Europe. After all, the opinion that "the Roma steal children" is among the oldest stereotypes associated with Roma. Arguably, these preconceptions were imported to Latin America with European migration (Izsák 2015).

The self-imposed invisibility is often described as a process of ethnic resistance and protection against discrimination (H. Paternina 2014; Gamboa Martínez 2004b; Lagunas 2010a; Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002; H. A. Paternina, Gamboa Martínez, and Gómez Baos 2010; Bustamante Cardona 2012). Due to this historical invisibility, and the small size of the Romani community, the popular knowledge among the majority population regarding Roma is based on stereotypes (Acuña 2008). Generally, the popular image of the Roma among the non-Roma population is very superficial and stereotypical: Roma as nomads, possessing secret magical knowledge, mysterious people from faraway lands… The stereotypes are mainly based on a romanticized image of Roma-Gypsies, although some negative connotations are sometimes associated to this image (such as Roma as thieves, swindlers etc.[216]).

The attitude towards the Roma is not marked by hatred or disgust but rather by ignorance or curiosity. The Roma in Colombia are not objects of ethnic discrimination to a similar degree as in Europe; there have been no reported cases of ethnic violence or hate crimes against Roma. However, irregular dwelling situations have created conflict throughout their lifetimes, as often recalled by adult Roma (Bereményi 2007). It is important to note, however, that the Roma have also suffered during the period of internal violence due to the activity of paramilitary groups and narco-trafficking (Bimbay 2011).

With regards to Roma in Colombia, Paternina and Gamboa emphasize that although the Roma may not necessarily be victims of discrimination of the sort which European Roma face, they continue to be victims of a different type of discrimination:

[216] In 2011, for example, PROROM denounced the stereotypical and negative portrayal of Roma in a TV program (Programa Séptimo Día). (PROROM, n.d.)

> "in our country, the Roma do not suffer from the appalling discrimination to which they are subject in all European countries, but despite this they are victims of an indifference from the Gadye (non-Roma), which does not stop it being a refined expression of discrimination and racism." (H. A. Paternina and Gamboa 1999)

Furthermore, it should be considered that Colombia, like many other Latin-American countries, is socially stratified based on the colour of skin and ethno-racial ascriptions. Roma, in this context, are often seen as "white" citizens of European background (Bereményi, 2007:64), making them less susceptible to racial discrimination. Nonetheless, Bereményi also cites cases of discrimination in previous decades. In fact, the majority of my Romani informants stated that they do not feel discriminated against in Colombia. One Romani leader stated that:

> "Here there is no discrimination…I have never felt discriminated against. We are the racists here. Here [in Colombia] there is more discrimination based on social class and money than based on race." [COL_15 recorded interview]

In a similar spirit, an elderly Romani woman from a small *kumpania* in Medellin argued that:

> "Here the people love us, there is no discrimination." [COL_19, field-notes]

Curiously, there is a strong contrast between the self-perceived discrimination (by Roma themselves) and the way this situation is perceived externally. I spoke with a non-Roma journalist who during her years as a student conducted field-work in Medellin with the same Roma *kumpania* with which I spoke. In the interview, she described her experience when she was researching the Roma and the neighbourhood where they lived for her university thesis. She said that generally the Roma were perceived by the neighbours,

> "through a lot of negative stereotypes, that they are loud, untidy, deceiving and filthy" [COL_20, field-notes].

Nonetheless, there is a level of self-perceived discrimination and prejudice against Roma. In some interviews it was underlined that the situation of Roma living in large cities in relatively small communities such as Bogota or Medellin is much different to the situation of Roma living in larger communities (like in Cúcuta) or the Roma living in the traditional tents in *kumpania* Pasto. In the case of Cúcuta, some recalled occasional conflicts between the Roma and non-Roma, while the members of the Pasto community complained that numerous times people were throwing rocks on their tents. Arguably, these occasional tensions and conflicts are a direct result of existing negative stereotypes.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in political and public speeches, Romani leaders denounce existing discrimination and prejudice against Roma, although mainly regarding the stereotypical imagery associated with Roma, rather than hate crimes or evident cases of discrimination. One prominent Romani leader argues:

> "Negatives stereotypes exist and the media deepen the negative [image] …and this is discrimination. There is also the folklorization of identity, of all people ... and we are not just feathers!" [COL_1, field-notes]

According to some of my informants, the Roma also experience a type of institutional discrimination, which is often related to a lack of visibility and recognition of their cultural difference as a community. Jaime Muñoz points out: "In many areas Roma are perceived with a greater degree of rejection by the rest of the public and social agents, who fail to gauge the significance of their traditions and cultural features. This cultural distance has affected them more than the rest of the community because, although the formal parameters were built for the inclusion of social groups in the district policies through affirmative actions to reduce negative discrimination, they have not succeeded in reducing the stigma of people and groups that are recognized as Roma. There are many prejudices about this human group of nomadic tradition have been woven into the historical-cultural imagination, and from the social, ethical, aesthetic and anthropological standpoint". (García, 2013:19)

Furthermore, it is also important to acknowledge that in Colombia racism based on race and ethnicity is still common, which especially affects the indigenous and afro-descendant people (Observatorio de Discriminación Racial (ODR), (ONIC), and Juristas 2009). This was echoed in one of the interviews with a senior ministerial representative, who argued that racism in Colombia, despite claims of political correctness, is still deeply-rooted and is expressed in a variety of even subliminal ways:

> "there is still a lot of racism - social division exists based on race and ethnicity. In certain social circles, if a good boy decides to marry a black girl, the Grandma will get a heart attack." [COL_32, recorded interview]

One of my informants, a Colombian scholar researching the ethnic minorities' movement in the country, also argued that racism is still widely encountered in Colombia, but that it is so deeply embedded into Colombian society and its structures that it is often not acknowledged. In his interview he argues:

> "but here is a syndrome of invisibility of racism. In the sense that it is so embedded in the system of Colombian society it is not seen as a common everyday phenomenon. But it is already established in the way relationships are built in Colombian society. So here racism could go unnoticed if you come to Colombia and watch the streets. If you watch the people. And they say "No, here there is no racism, no discrimination here." It is embedded in the way Colombian society is structured and the way 'the other' is perceived. In everyday relationships you can see it but it's not observed. It exists but is not made visible. It is not as scandalous as elsewhere in the world. It is so curious that here racism has been discovered in the clubs, when they don't let you in. And then apparently it only exists in these places. It is really in the way the country is organized, in how the institutions are built, how it excludes certain sectors of the population. It is also a structural racism because it has to do with the economic condition of these people." [COL_17, recorded interview]

6.3. Analysis of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia

6.3.a. Romani ethnic mobilization – a short introduction

Before the 1990s little had been known about Roma in Colombia: both the media and academia rarely took Roma as their subject of inquiry. Roma themselves preferred their invisible status, and remained on the margins of social and political debates of the country. The Roma did not represent a serious political or social issue, which explains why Roma have not been recognized as an ethnic minority nor have they been a target of policies until relatively recent. It was not until the process of Roma visibilization began, accompanied by various claims for recognition and special rights that the public administration, as well as scholars and the broader majority society, began to turn their attention to the Colombian Roma. Eventually, the small size of the community and especially the lack of territorial claims on behalf of Roma (until relatively recently, formally in 2011) facilitated the process of recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority.

Prior to the 1990s there are no signs of Romani ethnic mobilization – no events aiming at "visibilization of Roma", no political involvement, no collective claims on behalf of this ethnic group. With the constitutional reforms of 1991, and the legal changes in the treatment of ethnic minorities, the Roma found themselves facing a new political panorama – one which promotes cultural diversity and creates a number of minority-specific opportunities and benefits. The beginning of ethnic mobilization among Roma can be traced back to the 1990s and was initiated by two historians – Juan Carlos Gamboa and Hugo Paternina (H. Paternina 2014). According to numerous sources, these two scholars, who were involved previously with indigenous ethnic mobilization, approached the Romani community, explaining that the new constitution created a framework of political opportunities for ethnic minorities which could be highly beneficial for Roma in Colombia (Lozano Uribe 2005). This marks the beginning of the process of a gradual socio-political involvement and ethnic activism among Roma, since 1997 (Acuña 2008).

The first association, PROROM (*Proceso Organizativo del Pueblo Rom (Gitano) de Colombia*), was created in 1998, founded by a group of young Roma together with non-Roma advisors: Juan Carlos Gamboa, Hugo Paternina and Jairo Grisales Vallejo, the husband of a Romani woman from the *kumpania* in Bogota, who later became, for a brief period of time, the vice-coordinator of PROROM. The non-Roma advisors were the driving force of the process; the association was created out of their initiative. The dissertation of Paternina narrates his process in extensive detail, describing the process which led to the creation of PROROM, its internal crises and changes in composition and leadership over the years (2014). For this reason, the entire history of this process will not be re-counted in much detail as extensive work has been already published.

According to the interviews with those who later became the leaders and spokespersons of PROROM, prior to the involvement of Gamboa and Paternina, the Romani community had no ambitions or even consciousness of bringing the Roma issue to the public and policy spheres. With the change in the Colombian constitution in 1991, which recognized the multi-ethnic composition of the society and granted special rights and benefits to indigenous groups, other minorities followed. Thanks to Gamboa

and Paternina, a handful of future Romani leaders gradually understood the historic opportunity which the Romani community was facing. It was thanks to these two scholars that the organizational process began – they contacted Romani communities in Cúcuta and convinced them of the potential the new constitution brings to the Roma in Colombia. Both, Paternina and Gamboa, had a great deal of experience of working with the indigenous movement, and brought the lessons learned and the methodology to the Roma. They recruited two young Roma as future leaders – a Romani man, a university student, and his cousin, a young Romani woman, also a university student. The two of them were meant to lead the struggle and be the “face” of the organization. Although this process is documented in detail in the thesis by Paternina (H. Paternina 2014), as well as a number of other texts (Lozano Uribe 2005; Gómez Baos 2011; H. A. Paternina, Gamboa Martínez, and Gómez Baos 2010), in this context, what is important is that there are no discrepancies between the way this process is documented and what the interviews revealed. For example, one of the Romani founders recounts the beginnings of PROROM:

> “It all started like this. I was a law student, was in third year at the Industrial University of Santander. (…) One day, two historians from Bogota came, who were friends and who were already working with the issues of ethnic groups. One is called Juan Carlos Gamboa and the other Hugo Paternina. They said they were trying to speak with the Roma. I told them that there was no problem, that Roma are very reluctant but I'm very open. I was told there was going to be a congress of anthropology at the National University, which was in the course of 1997. ‘We want to make a presentation to the congress to draw attention to the Roma issue, the ethnic issue’. To me, that was fine, there were already thoughts hovering over my head. We wrote it and brought it to the congress, but before our presentation there was a presentation by an Austrian lawyer and doctor who dealt with the issue of indigenous ethnic groups and oil companies. (…) I heard his speech and when he finished, he was there to hear mine. We explained the Romani issue, how we arrived there, theories about the origin of Roma ... then he came and he told me it was very interesting, and then gave me a book which he said would be of use to me. I took it and put it in my backpack and went to Bogota, which was where I was studying. When I was on the plane and had already read my magazine, I decided to read that book. It was Convention 169 of the ILO. It said for ‘independent tribal people’ and it seemed to be very like with the Romani people. I went back to contact this guy and we made a proposal that, in Colombia, the Roma would be recognized as an ethnic group. At this time in Colombia there were only indigenous, Afro-descendants and Raizales. Fortunately, at this time, there was a trusted person, Juan Carlos, within the Ministry, working as a consultant. We presented all the documents and requests, and the Ministry, after two years, in 1999 took a resolution. The 022, which recognizes the Romani people as an ethnic group.” [COL_15, recorded interview]

Later on they involved his cousing, a young Romani woman, in the work of PROROM:

> “Already in 1999 I said to them, ‘I have a cousin who is from Bogotá and has studied’. I went to talk to her but at first she didn’t want to know anything about [working with] Roma. She

> didn't have a skirt at home. We got to get the skirt by talking to their parents, who apparently had been out of work at the time. So we started working, I was the general coordinator and she was in charge of the issue of education and employment." [COL_15, recorded interview]

She adds:

> "The process started in the years 1997-1998-1999 from the idea of two friends, Juan Carlos Gamboa and Alejandro Paternina, who were always worried about the issue of the Roma. They remembered in their childhood, at some point in their lives, the Romani presence here in Colombia. When they came to the villages ... This whole issue was something they liked a lot and they had worked with indigenous and 'Afro' towns and villages... They continued their task of looking for Roma in this country, initially found the *kumpania* of Girón, they met my cousin and then they sought for me." [COL_1, recorded interview]

The main objective of PROROM was to increase the visibility of Roma throughout the country as an ethnic minority, which should be protected and promoted by the State, enjoying the same treatment as other minorities in the country (H. Paternina 2014). Gamboa and Paternina helped to produce a number of texts (academic and otherwise) which would help the Roma validate their request. Until then, Roma remained largely invisible also in academic scholarship, thus generating new, authoritative knowledge, as a justification of the Roma's historical existence in the country, became a tactical step. Their efforts in raising awareness about Roma history and culture quickly bore fruit: by 1999, resolution 022[217] was passed by the Ministry of Interior, Ethnic Directorate Division, which recognized PROROM as "an association of traditional authorities of the Romani people" and granted the extension of constitutional rights to Roma in symmetry with those enjoyed by other minorities in the country. Since then, 32 institutional agreements have been approved, among them a number of other Roma-specific decrees and public policy documents. Below is a summary of the most important legal documents targeting Roma:

- Document no. 0864 of February 20, 1998 issued by the Ministry of Interior, by which it recognizes that a) Convention 169 of International Labour Organization also applies to Roma as they are an ethnic minority "with clear traditional tribal social organization"; b) Roma pre-existed in Colombia prior to the establishment of the Colombian republic and the same legislation applies to Roma as to other ethnic groups; c) it is necessary that States undertake necessary actions to bring the Roma out of invisibility and guarantee a special treatment of their collective rights
- Circular 1629 of October 2, 2003 issued by the Ministry of the Interior to the mayors and Governors: "Request for implementation of measures and special actions for the protection of the population belonging to the Roma (Gypsy)"
- Decree 200 of 2003, Article 1 states: "Objectives: The Ministry of Interior and Justice will have the following objectives: (...) Numeral 9: Support policy design and implementation in their

[217] Resolución 022, del 2 de setiembre de 1999.

competence in relation to the issues and rights of ethnic groups". As set out in paragraph 9 of Article 16 it is a function of the Office of Ethnicities to monitor Romani people's organizations

- Agreement 0273 of 2004, issued by the National Board of Health and Social Security in which Roma are included under the subsidized health insurance as an ethnic group, based on the census list endorsed by PROROM and traditional authorities
- The Roma have been also explicitly mentioned in four National Development Plans *(Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* 1998-2002, 2002-2006, 2006-2010, 2010-2014)
- Incorporation of Roma into the national census (2005)
- Decree 2957 of August 6, 2010 "For comprehensive protection of the Romani ethnic group in Colombia". This is the most important regulatory framework for Roma, which entails comprehensive protection of the rights of Romani citizens nationally. The decree includes a definition of who is Roma; recognizes and registers *kumpeñy* (which acquire legal personality as representative bodies); recognizes the existence of a Romani system of justice (*Romani Kriss*); gives Roma freedom of movement around the country due to its nomadic traditions; recognizes Roma as a national ethnic minority and appreciates its contributions; establishes the National Dialogue Table (*Mesa Nacional de Diálogo).*
- Law 1381of 2010, "Law for protection of languages", explicitly mentions Romani languages (*Romani ćhib*)
- Presidential Directive 01 of 2010 "Guarantee of Fundamental Right to previous consultations with ethnic national groups", mentions Roma explicitly
- Decree 582 of 2011, "Which adopts Public District Policy for Roma in Capital District"
- Decree 4634 of 2011 "which dictates measures of assistance attention, integral reparation and restitution of land for victims belonging to Romani minority"

Over time, the Roma skilfully engaged politically in order to extend their rights and push for the establishment of Roma-specific public policies and provisions. PROROM became the first and until now, the most influential Romani organization. Nonetheless, in the 2000s new structures and actors emerged, resulting in a plurality of voices.

Today, all legislation created for ethnic minorities also applies to Roma. As stated by an official of the Ministry of Interior responsible for Roma issues:

> "The Romani population is considered in Colombia as an ethnic group, and as such they have particular and specific rights. In Colombia there are three ethnic groups: indigenous peoples, the Roma people and Afro-Colombian, Raizal and black communities." [COL_28, recorded interview]

Furthermore, a number of affirmative action measures have been introduced in order to respond to specific needs of this community. Currently, as stated by the Ministry of Interior, there are 32 agreements, decrees or legislations approved for the Romani people [interview]. Among these, the

most important is Decree 2957 of August 6, 2010 "For the comprehensive protection of the Romani ethnic group in Colombia". According to a Ministry of Interior official:

> "But an important source of work with the Romani people was the consultation process in the drafting of Decree 2957 of 2010. Decree 2957 of 2010 is the regulatory framework for the comprehensive protection of the Romani people. That decree was discussed with *kumpeñy* and organizations registered in Colombia. So the decree was discussed and finally approved on Aug. 6, 2010, as this regulatory framework. This policy framework has important aspects (…). It is something fundamental and important, because the state recognizes the Romani people, Roma as an ethnic group, as a group that has contributed in the construction of the Colombian state, and assigns countless functions to the Interior Ministry in the regulatory framework. What are the functions assigned to them by the Ministry of the Interior? It assigns the function of recording *kumpeñy* that are settled in the country. We make those registrations." [COL_28, recorded interview]

The Decree represents an important normative framework which becomes the basis for any further claims made on behalf of Roma. Nonetheless, despite its historic importance, there are some who question its efficiency as a public policy framework:

> "In the legislative era we are in currently, Decree 2957of 2010 is a declaration of rights that doesn't specify anything. What is needed is a Roma law and that everything is enforceable. Because, what use is having the right to education if you do not have the space [to do it in]?" [COL_12, recorded interview]

One of the Romani founders of PROROM also argues the same thing, speaking with regards to the *Romani Kriss* and the right to practice their own system of justice. As long as the *Kriss* is recognized by the 2010 decree and not by a law, it does not have the same legal status as in the case of indigenous law, for example. Upgrading the provisions granted by Decree 2957 of 2010 to the status of a Law remains a major objective of Roma organizations in Colombia:

> "With regards to Kriss, in the decree we were not able to do it, because the decree has less power than a law. So what we have to do is to establish a law for the recognition of this right [to Romani Kriss] which is constitutional, and for constitutional rights, the framework status of a law applies and not the framework of the Decree." [COL_1, recorded interview]

Through formally established channels of participation, the Roma are included in policy-making processes through consultations and periodic meetings. A number of Romani individuals are employed in public administration institutions (at the time of research 5 Roma were employed in different regional and national institutions). The Ministry of Interior also established a Directorate for

Indigenous, Roma and Minorities Affairs[218]; other public institutions employ or had employed Roma consultants in the past.

The Directorate for Indigenous, Roma and Minorities Affairs, established under the Ministry of Interior (Article 5 of Decree 4530 from 2008) is worth mentioning as an important structure. On the one hand, the placement of Romani issues together with those of the Indigenous is significant – symbolically it makes the status of Romani communities equal with those of Indigenous people, who were the first in obtaining recognition of their rights and attribution of specific rights and provisions. On the other hand, however, the directorate deals with "other minorities": according to their mission statement, they also deal with "sexual minorities", mainly LGBT issues. The role of this Directorate is to:

> "Promote recognition of ethnic (indigenous and Roma) and sexual diversity (LGBTI population) and the exercise of their rights."[219]

Indeed, it is curious how ethnic rights and sexual diversities have been grouped together under one institutional body.

All of these accomplishments should be seen as the result of successful ethnic mobilization of Roma in Colombia, which was possible not only due to skilful leaders and non-Roma advisors/promoters but also, and to a significant degree, thanks to favourable political conditions. The next section will provide a more in-depth analysis of the process of ethnic mobilization among Roma in Colombia.

6.3.b. Representative structures? NGOs vs. "traditional social organization structures"

Table 25. Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia – actors and structures

ROMANI NGOS	**PROROM** **UNIÓN ROMANÍ DE COLOMBIA (URC)**
TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES	***Kumpeñy*** (10 officially recognized; 2 seek recognition – in Buga and Kumpania Le Lumnia katar Le Rom in Bogota)
PRO-ROMA NGOS	CREARC

[218] https://www.mininterior.gov.co/mision/direccion-de-asuntos-indigenas-rom-y-minorias

[219] http://www.mininterior.gov.co/mision/direccion-de-asuntos-indigenas-rom-y-minorias/funciones-de-la-direccion-de-asuntos-indigenas-rom-y-minorias

ROMANI PARTIES	No Romani ethnic party exists. Dalila Gómez has been a candidate from *Polo Democrático Alternativo* in 2006 elections to Senate[220]
OTHER	Evangelical Churches SKOKRA

As mentioned in the previous section, Romani ethnic mobilization emerged as a response to the shifting political context with regards to ethnic minorities' rights. The first Romani organization which advocated for institutional recognition and inclusion of Roma under the same legislative frameworks as other minorities was PROROM, founded by two scholars and two Romani leaders. The increasing visibility and relative success of PROROM's actions resulted in the multiplication of diverse mobilising structures.

Representation through non-governmental organizations

Currently, there are two Romani organizations: the already mentioned PROROM, established in 1999 and *Unión Romaní de Colombia* (URC). Both organizations were created consecutively; significantly, the second one was created in opposition to the first (Camilo & Cardona, 2010:106).

In the process of establishing both organizations, the role of non-Roma scholars and collaborators was significant. As mentioned earlier, the birth of the first Romani organization - PROROM – was a direct result of the involvement of two scholars, who mobilized a small group of Roma to become actively engaged in political mobilization, taking advantage of the favourable conditions for minority-rights recognition during the 1990s. Prior to their engagement, the Roma lacked political subjectivity and did not articulate any political claims. The process of the birth of the second Romani organization – the Unión Romaní de Colombia (URC) – was also influenced by a non-Roma scholar, who helped to formulate the political interests of this association. One of my informants explains this process in the following way:

> “In Colombia the Roma did not exist and the Roma were invented by an anthropologist named Juan Carlos Gamboa. And with Juan Carlos Gamboa another scholar named Luis Fajardo and then they invented their existence - not because they did not exist, but because what they did is generate the political recognition and involve two organizations – of the Roma. [The emergence of] PROROM was a process closely linked to the experience of Juan Carlos Gamboa and Romani Union linked to the experiences of Luis Fajardo. The Romani Unión engaged from the point of view of the cultural tradition of Romani people. The other, (PROROM) embraced a point of view more of raising demands, which is the impact of the work done by Juan Carlos Gamboa.” [COL_17, recorded interview]

The three scholars – Juan Carlos Gamboa, Hugo Paternina and Luis Alfonso Fajardo – collaborated previously in their work with indigenous communities in Colombia and in a number of diverse

[220] http://www.dalilaGómez.blogspot.com/

initiatives and projects. According to Paternina, Luis Alfonso Fajardo was co-opted into the group of advisers who contributed to the process of the visibilization of the Romani community in Colombia from the middle of 1999. Nonetheless, a rift emerged among the advisors and also within the PROROM organization. In fact, Paternina acknowledges: "Perhaps the rift that was present within PROROM began to take shape first in the group of advisers and then spread to the Rrom." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:789)

As documented by Paternina, the first crisis in PROROM was related to the figure of Jairo Grisales Vallejo, a non-Roma who became the vice-coordinator of PROROM during its first year of existence (H. Paternina 2014). This crisis within PROROM led to changes in the leadership of the organization and an internal rupture which led to the creation of another Romani organization – Unión Romani de Colombia (URC), of which Jairo Grisales became the first legal representative (ibid, 794).

URC was created in 2000, and acquired formal status through Ministry of Interior Registry # 087 (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:185). After some years of activity, the organization was closed down and, according to interviews, was later re-opened by new people in 2007-2008: a non-Romani woman became the legal representative, supported by Lupe Gómez, an older, highly respected woman of the *kumpania*. There are discrepancies with regards to the exact date of the change of leadership – according to some sources, until 2009 the role of legal representation of the URC was taken by Julieta de Gómez[221].The fact that a non-Romani woman became the legal representative of a Romani organization was controversial and highly contested, especially by representatives of PROROM, leading to a worsening of the relationship between the organizations. A member of PROROM argued:

> "we cannot have a good relationship with Unión Romaní because this *Gadji* has denounced us for fraud and other things. She is a *Gadji* who claims to represent Roma and she should not be trusted". [COL_1, field-notes]

It should be noted that both organizations have experienced numerous moments of internal crisis, leading to changes in internal structure, in legal representatives, and in the compositions of their boards.

Both organizations have been established formally and acquired legal status, recognizing them as representative bodies of the Romani minority by the Ministry of Interior. These entities for some time have been the only formal entities representing Romani interests, giving them exclusive access to policy-making processes and a shared monopoly on the representation of Roma. Both organizations represent two different Romani *kumpeñy* in Bogota city, and are generally divided along family/clan lines (*vitza*). Nonetheless, it should be noted that there is a considerable overlap of kinship ties across families and organizations. Despite the fact that URC is generally associated with the Cristo family, Cristo family members are, or at some point in time have been, also active in PROROM; after all, the

[221] http://gitanosencolombia.blogspot.com/

web of kinship ties of the community is tightly knit, and in reality both “separate” *kumpeñy* are in fact inter-related to some extent.

Both organizations also represent different profiles and approaches. PROROM is more focused on political advocacy, and has established more links with Romani organizations abroad, while URC acts more on the local level and emphasizes cultural activities and projects rather than politics. According to Paternina: “The trajectory of both organizations and leaderships has allowed them to have different experiences and developments, especially because, while the Romani Union has focused its action only in the Bogota kumpania, PROROM has a national vocation and a strong presence in the international and dialogue spaces with the pan- Roma world movement.” (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:799)

It should be noted, that over time, PROROM indeed began to act as a type of “umbrella organization”, claiming representativeness as a type of “national organization”, due to its important role in the institutionalization of *kumpeñy* (more in the section on consolidation). Nonetheless, currently their self-proclaimed status as an “umbrella” organization has been contested.

Both organizations are relatively small and count on a small circle of collaborators and members, and in both cases also on non-Roma collaborators. Neither one has an office or employs staff; neither has a website (but they do have a Facebook page; in both cases their FB profiles remain largely inactive). The organizations maintain relationships with various bodies of public administration. Beyond their status as representative organizations which engage in dialogue with public administration, their work is limited to the sporadic implementation of specific projects, funded by the Colombian public administration.

It is significant that both organizations, now with a considerable history of existence, were founded and are active in the capital city. Thus, their interaction with public administration is restricted to either central government structures or municipal public administration. The capital city provides more opportunities to become engaged through formal channels of participation – mainly through input provided to public administration with regards to Roma.

Beyond these two organizations, two other foundations were planned to be set up, again only in the context of the capital city of Bogota: *Fundación Romano Ilo* and *Fundación Gitanos de Bogotá*. To my knowledge, the process of constitution of both foundations have begun, nonetheless, rather than being relevant mobilizing structures, their impact is claimed to be marginal and incidental. The setting up of two additional Romani structures is a curiosity in the context of existing structures of Romani representation in Colombia. Promoters of both organizations have already been active in Romani ethic mobilizations, as members of existing Romani organizations and, in case of one of them, as an ex-employee of public administration working for Roma. The plan to set up two additional structures leads to further fragmentation and atomization of structures of Romani political representation. This raises questions: what is the reason behind creating yet more Romani organizations, especially considering the small size of the Romani population in Bogota? Is there a specific niche that these organizations what to fill or in fact, can fill, or is it a duplication of structures, roles and objectives? Can such structures potentially be successful, especially given the limited resources for such activity?

Struggles over representation: the conflict

According to Paternina: "The relationship between PROROM and Unión Romaní de Colombia is of little cordiality and minimum cooperation." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:799)

In fact, the relationship between both organizations has had a turbulent past, marked by periods of strong rivalry and open conflict, and other periods of collaboration and constructive dialogue.

Both Romani organizations were created consecutively and from the beginning, have acted in opposition to each other (Camilo and Cardona 2010). According to one of my informants, a member of PROROM:

> "[URC was born] in 2000. It was born because a lot of people here in Bogota were against [PROROM]. First, because we didn't know each other well and people always go with malice if you are stealing the money. Some people had a meeting and they created this organization, Unión Romaní of Colombia in 2000. They work here in Bogota." [COL_15, recorded interview]

The antagonism between both organizations is well-documented (especially in the dissertation of Paternina), and has been acknowledged as a major shortcoming by the public administration representatives and staff. Already in 2001, in the framework of a project funded by the Ministry of Culture, it was envisioned to create space of dialogue between both Romani organizations in order to consolidate competing agents. Camilo and Cardona, quoting a document written by Gómez Baos, provide evidence of various actions undertaken in 2001 to alleviate the conflict: "It should be noted that this project allowed the creation of spaces for dialogue and encounter that ended an internal division in the kumpania of Bogota, D.C. which originated a year and a half ago due to the emergence of another Romani organization called Romani Union of Colombia. In this regard the decision was to legally liquidate this organization, it is not for others to say, that it did not have much legitimacy and had not done any relevant activities, and [in order to] strengthen PROROM with more a formal and active involvement of the kumpania of Bogotá, DC, through the formation of a committee linked to the structure of the organization." (Camilo & Cardona, 2010: 106)

This document, written by a member of PROROM, in itself demonstrates the mutual negative relationship, arguing that URC in any case "did not have much legitimacy". As far as I could learn, the project didn't bring the planned results – both organizations remained in existence (although URC with a period of inactivity) and the rivalry remained.

During the period when the field-work was being conducted, the relationship between both organizations was turbulent, marked by mutual accusations of fraud, manipulation of public funds, dishonesty – some of these accusations lead to legal action in court. The conflict was so deeply-rooted that it is difficult to understand the real cause of the disagreement. It is also difficult to identify the conflictual agents – depending on my interlocutor and the relationship they have with either one of the organizations, the other was also seen as contributing to the deterioration of the relationship. With external interlocutors (third parties to the conflict such as public administration officers), there was also no evident conclusion. Seemingly, both organizations contribute to the mutual rivalry. According

to the testimonies, the conflict worsened considerably during the period when a non-Roma was the legal representative of the URC organization. According to a member of PROROM, the conflicting element which aggravates the relationship between both organizations is the legal representative. During an interview, a member of PROROM argued that:

> "this *Gadji* has a very bad influence on the members of Romani Union of Colombia" [COL_1, field-notes].

In fact, the question of "purity" of Roma ethnicity with regards to Romani representation has become a constant theme and one of the main arguments used to discredit the representativeness of both organizations at different points in time. Both organizations have had periods of significant influence from non-Roma advisors and collaborators, and occasionally these advisors undertook important roles of legal representation or spokespersons. According to Paternina: "Thus, access to positions of representation before state entities, competition for small project grants from public entities, linking Romani staff in institutional positions with the group ad hoc for the implementation of some projects and political positions that the two organizations have taken have undoubtedly introduced a competition at times about the 'Roma purity' of the leadership and which organization best represents and defends the interests of Roma." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:800)

Calling on "ethnic purity" with regards to Romani representation has become an element invoked continuously among Romani leaders. As such, it instrumentalizes ethnicity as a legitimizing argument which justifies leadership, even monopoly, over Romani rights representation in Colombia. Beyond discrediting non-Roma leadership and participation in Romani organizations, as was the case at different points in time, at times the argument of "ethnic purity" is also invoked with regards to existing Romani leaders. It was striking to hear numerous times during interviews that some visible leader "in reality is not a Roma" or is "only half Roma", or is "not enough Roma" (meaning that such person is not following a perceived traditional lifestyle or values). Such statements were not uncommon and have been articulated by representatives of both organizations; they further contribute to the spreading of rumours to mutually discredit or question the leadership of either one of the organizations.

Furthermore, despite the fact that members of both organizations are related to each other by various kinship ties, during the period of field-work the antagonism between both organizations was very strong. Nonetheless, it is essential to underline that this conflict is generally peripheral to life within the *kumpania* – the conflict exists between the organizations and its leadership, although with ramifications for its members (H. Paternina 2014). Despite the disagreement, the relationship between the individual representatives and families which are part of the conflict is maintained and especially when celebrating marriages, or in cases of illness or death, the communication, solidarity and support is rebuilt.

The conflict escalated to such a level, that at the time when the fieldwork was being conducted, the organizations would at times refuse to participate in the same events or meetings if the representatives of the other organization were present. For example, the INNOVA training session,

held with the objective of presenting funding opportunities for small business, had to be organized twice (in the morning a session for PROROM, and in the afternoon the exact same session for URC – the URC session gathered around 5 people, PROROM didn´t attend).

This conflict has begun to negatively affect the collaboration between Roma and the governmental institutions; this is acknowledged by some of the Romani leaders. One of them argues:

> "The conflict between both organizations is serious and is beginning to damage the dialogue with the government". [COL_15, field-notes]

For example, as a result of internal disputes, some Roma-specific positions within the institutions were closed. The Ministry of Culture had for some time employed Romani representatives as coordinators of their Roma-related activities and programs. After strong protests on behalf of the other organization, the position was finally closed. As commented by a high-level official of the Ministry:

> "There was one person hired before by the Ministry of Culture but there were problems and conflicts with the other organization. We have hired several Roma, but that has been a source of conflict ... So we decided, after the experience of hiring one or hiring another, to work with all [*kumpeñy*], divide the budget into ten (…) Finally it was decided not to have any Romani representative [*referente Rom*] to avoid conflicts... There are two organizations that affect the work and implementation – [so for example, when organizing events in Bogota], all funds are divided into two, for example 2 events are organized... " [COL_34, recorded interview]

Similarly, in IDPAC (Institute of Participation and Community Action) one Romani woman was contracted. After protests her position was continuously closed and re-opened. When the fieldwork was being conducted, she was no longer employed.

This situation leads to absurdities where the same event is organized twice in order to accommodate both organizations separately or that funds are dividing equally for both organizations. For example, in the framework of the celebration of the 8th April, International Roma Day, the organizations did not cooperate; according to one member of URC:

> "Now the ministry divides the money – one part for us, and one part for them" [COL_8, field-notes]

This also affects the potential for collaboration between Roma and other minorities (for example in the framework of inter-ethnic events) as it is difficult to find a legitimate Romani partner. Consulted representatives of public administration were all aware of this and have several times voiced their frustration. Nonetheless, it seems that to an extent, the conflict has been overcome, some months after I left Colombia. According to one of my informants, who has been in Colombia months since I left:

> “As I told you, this has been changing. Especially after CREARC made demands on the legal representatives, they got together and started to work together, recognizing the expertise and contacts of Dalila to help them overcome their problems”. [COL_11, personal communication]

Some of my interviewees argued that the existing conflict, which significantly affects the efficacy of governmental work with the Roma, is in fact used as an excuse to further delay the fulfilment of governmental obligations (more on the conflict, including excerpts from interviews with Roma themselves is included later on in this chapter)… Paternina argues that the conflict between both organizations:“(…) resulted in mutual disqualifications and in many cases certain state officials have used these disagreements to delay the implementation of a policy or to try to create convenient favouritism towards one sector over another.” (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:800)

Apart from these two organizations, which remain strongly divided and maintain weak links of collaboration with each other, as was mentioned earlier, there are two other structures planned to be set up. The current situation leads to further atomization of the Romani mobilization, especially in the capital city which has a population of approximately 550 Roma – the multiplicity of actors, divergent claims and mutual rivalry weaken the capacity of Romani actors to engage in consultations, push for further legal provisions and further advance Romani policies, both in Bogota as well as nationally.

Kumpeñy[222] - representation through “traditional social structures”

As mentioned previously, Roma in Colombia are organized territorially through *kumpeñy*. This is a traditional social structure, ascribed to a specific territory, created by a network of two or more *vitzas* (clans) and based on the principle of family ties (patrilineal and with a strong tendency towards patri-locality). The *kumpeñy* are defined as follows:

> “The kumpeñy (kumpania in singular) are generally called by the cities where they are located or, if not located in the city, by the name of the most important nearby city where they are located. The kumpania, simply, could be defined as the set of patri-families belonging either to the same vitsa (or lineage), or different vitsi (plural of vitsa) that have established alliances with each other primarily through intermarriage, and whose interaction and endogenous relationships generate, in fact, a space on which the Sere Romengue establish their jurisdiction.” (Gómez Baos, 2011:35)

Decree 2957 (2010), on the other hand, defines the *kumpeñy* as follows:

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[222] Meaning according to ROMLEX: kumpaňa n f-e/-a- 1. company 2. suite 3. Family; kumpania n f-e/-a- 1. company 2. suite 3. Family. http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/lex.cgi?st=kumpany&rev=n&cl1=rmyk&cl2=en&fi=&pm=in&ic=y&im=y&wc=

Throughout this chapter I use spelling as used in Colombia. It is important to underline, nonetheless, that there is no unique spelling for these words and a variety of different versions are used in documents written by Roma, policy documents and academic texts. Thus I adapt, in order to be consistent, the spelling “*kumpania*” (singular) and “*kumpeñy*” (plural). In quotes I maintain the original spelling used.

> "Kumpania (plural Kumpañy): The set of family groups, patrilineally configured (patri-groups) that, based on alliances of various kinds, choose to share spaces to live near or to itinerate together. In Colombia, they are generally located at specific sites in urban centres, major and intermediate cities of the country". (art. 4.2.a of the Decree 2957 (2010))

The number, size and location of *kumpeñy* varies over time, due to the high mobility of Romani groups (within Colombia and between countries), often referred to by Roma as "neonomadism". In fact, Decree 2957 (2010), which regulates their status, acknowledges that their size and location may change over time. Currently, there are 10 *kumpeñy*: Cúcuta (Norte de Santander), Girón (Santander), Envigado (Antioquia), San Pelayo and Sahagún (Córdoba), Sampués (Sucre), Sabana Larga (Atlántico), Pasto (Nariño), Ataco-Ibagué (Tolima, recognized by the Ministry on 17/10/2011) and Bogotá (2 *kumpeñy*).

The case of Bogota is special, as according to the PROROM information, there are various *kumpeñy* in the capital. The representation of these families is through the 2 existing organizations – PROROM and *Unión Romaní de Colombia*. Jaime Muñoz clarifies: "The territorial presence of the Roma in the capital is in Western Bogota localities and mainly in Kennedy, Bosa and Engativa. According to the estimate of one of the factions of the Romani representation consulted for this study, there are 58 families. Another significant section of families, which belongs to the PROROM group (30 people according to the consultations), are located in Puente Aranda. It is important to note that the first localities [mentioned] are dominated by the part of population clustered around the Romani Union, one of two organizations between which the Romani population is currently divided." (Muñoz García, 2013:22)

Furthermore, the question of the size and number of existing *kumpeñy* is not free from controversies and problems. The case of the Atlantic Coast is a good example of the discrepancies and inconsistencies in data with regards to *kumpeñy*, their location and size. According to DANE 2005, there are 4,867 Roma in Colombia, the majority of them living on the Atlantic coast (40.7%). It has already been explained previously that the number and distribution of Roma based on the 2005 census is flawed and incorrect. The only recognized *kumpania* in the Atlantic department is Sabana Larga *kumpania*, which also is the only one which has a woman as a legal representative among all the *kumpeñy*. Some of my Romani interlocutors claimed that:

> "they are more integrated (less traditional), they don´t speak Romanes 'but they feel Roma' an it´s a very small group". [COL_3, field-notes]

Some other interlocutors, especially legal representatives of other *kumpeñy*, however, regarded this *kumpania* with disrespect; some legal representatives even said that "they were not Roma", arguing that "they registered 1,500 Roma in Barranquilla and there are none!". In the meeting organized by the Ministry which gathered together all the representatives, the only ones not to attend were the representatives from Sabana Larga, and unfortunately during the period of my fieldwork I was unable to meet with these representatives to check this information personally.

These traditional social structures have become formally, institutionally recognized by the Ministry of Interior (Decree 2957 (2010)) and have been registered ("authorized/validated"); they acquire a fiscal number, similar to an NGO or an association, which allows the *kumpeñy* to apply for public funding. An officer at the Ministry of Interior responsible for coordinating the work with Roma described the process of registering the first *kumpeñy* after the approval of the Decree 2957 in 2010:

> "We went to each of the *kumpania*. In addition to informing them about the decree, we started giving a little legal advice, because some requirements for registration are necessary. And we started the legal advice so that in the context of their customs they could formulate its rules of procedure and could be registered with the Ministry of Interior. And indeed the *kumpeñy* are registered and the representatives of the *kumpeñy* are registered.
>
> A *kumpania*, according to the decree, is a group of families who settle in a specific place. True? That is what the decree defines as a *kumpania*. What's going on? The Ministry of the Interior should identify whether there really is a *kumpania*, if they really are Roma ... because anyone can come and say 'Man, we are Roma.' But you have to identify whether or whether not they exist. And so the *kumpeñy* and its representative are registered". [COL_28, recorded interview]

Thus, the traditional *kumpania* acquired a legal personality, functioning as a formal legal entity. The same Decree lists the names of the recognized *kumpeñy* (10), delineates the procedure for elections of official legal representatives and the registration of each *kumpania* under national law. The fact that traditional structures of social organization and leadership have become officially registered and acquired formally recognized status is not only the case for Roma. This follows a trend in Colombia, in which the law recognises the traditional social structures of leadership of ethnic minorities. Consequently, traditional leaders (*cabildos*) of indigenous people as well as other similar structures of leadership and authority among other minorities have also been recognized and registered by the Ministry of Interior.

Thus, the recognition of traditional institutions of authority had been accomplished by various ethnic groups before the Roma. The process of acquiring a similar treatment of traditional authorities in the case of Roma has been initiated by PROROM. According to a Romani founder of PROROM, in the beginning, the *kumpeñy* were not interested in becoming legally recognized entities:

> "A: At first, when this whole process started, what was the dynamic with *kumpeñy*? Did they want to participate or were they closed [to the process]?
>
> V: Nothing, [they were] closed. Those who wanted to were those of Girón because I worked there. To convince a community, you need to be there, talking and letting people see the example. You cannot come every two months and ask how they are. I lived with them. They saw in me the example and what was going on. They began to realize that studying was not bad and I did not change, I was different in many ways, but I did not stop being a Roma. That motivated people." [COL_15, recorded interview]

Some argued that the *kumpeñy* are "Dalila's children" – as this Romani activist of Bogota has been most active in pursuing this policy goal and consulted with local *kumpeñy*. This allowed PROROM to strengthen their ties across the country and improve their status as a nation-wide and representative organization. In fact, it is possible to see the institutionalization of *kumpeñy* as a process of building power and legitimacy. According to a Romani leader:

> "The original *kumpeñy* are the ones in Girón, Cúcuta and Bogota…later, other *kumpeñy* are registered even if there are only 3 people (or 3 families of the same *vitza*). In order to have power and the support of the people, other *kumpeñy* were created – they received help to be registered, and to have more support and to legitimize the power and representativeness [of PROROM]. Now there are many small *kumpeñy,* but it's a joke [because] the people are not prepared…Now the *kumpeñy* want to become independent from PROROM and there is more fragmentation." [COL_15, recorded interview]

The fact that traditional Romani authorities become recognized as agents and active participants in policy-making is without precedence across the world. It suddenly changes the traditional leaders into active stakeholders in Roma-related policies. The status of such leaders is somewhat ambiguous – it combines traditional social leadership with civic and political leadership; while both roles and competencies may overlap, they are not the same.

The institutional acknowledgement of the traditional social structure of Romani communities can be seen as a very positive development – the legal representatives of each *kumpania* are invited regularly for meetings as part of National Table of Dialogue (*Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*), provide their input to policy-related processes and have the capacity to represent local needs and interests in the capital city. They are also validated as relevant actors at a regional or municipal level, by the power of national decrees.

Nonetheless, there are numerous controversies surrounding this process.

Although, without a doubt *kumpeñy* have existed as a form of social organization of Romani communities based on alliances among families, some question to what extent the process of their registration and their territorial institutionalization reflects the reality of Romani families. One of my informants argues:

> "I think the territorial organization of *kumpeñy* is a state invention. The 'traditional' aspect was precisely the family groups, and the term '*kumpania'* is really fluid and adapts to many different contexts. In my experience these state creations do not correspond to the reality of families, but to administrative needs." [COL_11 personal communication]

Indeed, based on existing practice, especially with regards to indigenous groups and their form of social organization, the state administration needed to establish a framework in which their Romani interlocutors could be attributed representativeness. The Romani activists and leaders who advocated for the institutional recognition of *kumpeñy* also saw the benefit in registering their local *kumpania* as interlocutors, in order to secure power and participation of Roma also on the local level.

Furthermore, the question of the figure of "legal representative" is also problematic. There is an inherent contradiction in this process – on the one hand, the State administration recognizes the "traditional leadership" of Romani communities, but on the other, requires a democratic process for the selection of the legal representatives, which does not necessarily correspond to the existing traditional leadership within each *kumpania*. One of my informants also argues that:

> "I don't think that the figure of 'legal representative' corresponds directly with 'traditional authorities' and even less a conceptualization of territory [of jurisdiction of the *kumpania*]." [COL_11, personal communication]

One of the non-Roma advisors of one of the organizations also argues that:

> "the leaders were invented by the state with the creation of the figure of 'legal representative' but they didn't create mechanisms of control. Now there are conflicts within the communities over money, due to lack of understanding of the project-implementation dynamics". [COL_12, recorded interview]

Another Romani activist of one of the organizations was also critical of the negative consequences of establishing legal representatives. She argued that:

> "The legal representatives are a circle of people who only safeguard their own interests and those of a small group of people. The things don't reach the people of the *kumpeñy* …and also they are male chauvinist!" [COL_8, field-notes]

Paternina in his dissertation also points to the potentially conflicting situation of having several "authorities" operate within a given *kumpania*. He argues: "This type of representation in relations with the state is allowing the emergence of other 'authorities' within the group, which have access to resources and mobility, which is not the case with the other members of the group. The access to these resources through institutional representation can generate legitimate competencies that if not well managed could become triggers of serious conflicts. In a society not accustomed to accepting leadership beyond that of Rrom Sero – the head of the household - or of the Sere Romengue when resolving conflicts through the Kriss, these new forms of 'authority' and representation could be the cause of serious disagreements." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:926)

Additionally, the validation of the *kumpeñy* by the Ministry of Interior transfers the power to determine which community/ group are, in fact, a *kumpeñy* and which are not to a governmental institution. This leads to many problems. Consequently, the process of acknowledging the existence and registering *kumpeñy* is not free from tensions, and is, to an extent, subjected to bias. The process becomes highly politicized, in which the registration of a *kumpania* is not done simply based on existing objective criteria, but is part of a complex process of aligning the political agendas and interests of those who seek recognition as a *kumpania* with those who grant such recognition – on the one hand, other Roma *kumpeñy*, and on the other, the public administration structures. As a result, there are very small *kumpania* and others which exist, but are not granted such recognition.

For example, the *kumpania* in Envigado is extremely small, and it seems almost absurd to have representation for such a small sector of the population[223]. In case of Envigado, my informant argued that during the process of registration:

> "in Envigado, they put the names of the non-Roma members of the family, like the wife of my brother, and then their relatives too so that there would be more Roma in this *kumpania*…". [COL_19, field-notes]

On the other hand, during my fieldwork, there was one Roma *kumpania* (in Buga, Valle del Cauca) which had no legal representation – during the meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo (*26-28 June 2013), organized by the Ministry of Interior, two women (mother and daughter) representing the Buga community asked to be inscribed in the official list created by the Ministry. They are two families - 8 people - and they claimed that they didn´t feel represented by the current leadership (the other *kumpania* in the region is the Tolima). During the meeting, they repeatedly stated that "on the local level, our rights have not been respected". After discussion among the present legal representatives of other *kumpeñy*, their request was denied. They justified the decision based on the fact that the community was very small. The participating representatives argued: "Does it make sense to register a *kumpanyi* of 8 people? This is not a *kumpania* for us". According to Decree 2957 (2010) those *kumpeñy* who do not have a legal representation should join one that is already formally recognized. Thus, based on the decision taken during the meeting, the Buga *kumpania* should join the *kumpania* of Tolima.

During research, there was a case of another *kumpania* seeking recognition, curiously in Bogota. A new *kumpania,* which called itself "Le Lumnia katar le Rom," sought the counsel of a non-Roma advisor who had participated in the Romani organisational process in Colombia in the past but was now considered a *persona non grata* by most of the Romani leaders and organizations. On their behalf, a formal request was sent to the Ministry, seeking institutional recognition of this kumpania, composed of two families (8 people, members of both major families in Bogota, Cristo and *Gómez*). A website was set up for this *kumpania*[224] and a number of e-mails were sent over the Roma Virtual Network, asking for international support for their request. Nevertheless, despite these efforts, the official decision also rejected their request and urged this *kumpania* to join one of the two organizations in Bogota to have the representation they seek. The case of Bogota is special – numerous families, and arguably

[223] There is a clear lack of consistency regarding the number of individuals which compose the *kumpania*. On the one hand, several informants argued that the Envigado *kumpania* is the smallest registered *kumpania*. It is interesting to note, however, that the Roma in Envigado claim to be much more numerous – in a recent News broadcast (regional TV news, 16 April 2013), the Roma claim to be 10 families (around 50 people). The discrepancy in numbers on the one hand is justified by the "neonomadism" and the high mobility rate of Romani families. On the other hand, however, it is evident that the data is manipulated by Romani representatives themselves in order to seek recognition and funding for their local *kumpania*.

[224] http://kumpanyelumniakatarlerom.blogspot.com/

kumpeñy, live in the capital. However, their representation is implemented through two organizations, and not, as in the case of other regions, through *kumpeñy* legal representatives.

Consequently, these two communities (in Buga and Bogota) remain without legal representation and access into policy-making. The decision as to which groups are or are not considered a *kumpania* at any time seems arbitrary – there are some officially recognized *kumpania* which have less than 20 people, as the case of the *kumpania* in Envigado.

Secondly, the procedure imposed by the government for registering *kumpeñy* is also flawed. On the one hand the government recognizes traditional authorities, but on the other hand it requires a democratic election of legal representatives (evidence of such voting needs to be presented to the Ministry along with the proposal for registration). There are also no mechanisms which determine the procedure for such elections – i.e. who can vote, who can be elected or re-elected, and for how long. The lack of clear standards has led to some irregularities in voting and elections. In some *kumpeñy* the members claimed that they didn’t know about the voting; in other places the women were excluded from voting. One of the Romani leaders argued that:

> “The Decree which regulates the *kumpeñy* and the legal representatives is defective, for example it still doesn’t consider the processes of replacement of the representatives.” [COL_1, recorded interview]

Decree 2957 (2010) is ambiguous in the criteria which it establishes for the election of the legal representatives. Article 8 states that:

> “The Ministry of the Interior and Justice create the registry of Kumpañy of the country, and of the elected representatives and members of each one of them, according to the internal procedure which will be established for the election of the representatives to state institutions.”

The question of “internal procedures” is then left open, to be decided by each of the *kumpania* individually. According to a high level official at the Ministry of Interior, with regards to the internal processes of decision-making surrounding the election of the legal representative:

> “There is a [recognition] of self-government. We are totally respectful. [If not] we would be imposing an occidental regime, we would impose voting.” [COL_32, recorded interview]

He further argues during the interview that the internal dynamics of the community have to be respected, even if at times it may contradict the values of, as he says a “Western regime”. He argues:

> "When we go to the territories, they organize *Romani Kriss*, assemblies and everyone is present. Undoubtedly. But while there is a part having to deal with the ways of the government, for the consultations we contract participation and consultation takes place with the presence of officials, we must understand that not everyone can speak among them. If the elders are present ... others cannot speak, women cannot be alone with men ... So there is a dynamic of its own which makes it difficult to have all information permeate to all layers of

> gender, to all arteries of those communities. Because during the assemblies of the Elders, they say who sits and it would be disrespectful to the culture for young people to have to have a seat at this time. Or they do not allow the women to talk and it would be disrespectful to put a woman to speak above a patriarch. So with this we must be careful." [COL_32, recorded interview]

Nonetheless, a record of the voting procedure, including the internal rules of procedure and signatures of those who attended the voting are required.

The legal representatives often become the gate-keepers for the community - they are the only intermediaries between the community and the government (but also for scholars, the media etc.). An anecdote from my fieldwork illustrates their role as the “gate-keepers” of the community.

I had an unpleasant conversation with a legal representative in Envigado (Medellin). I called him (after an introduction by another Romani leader) in order to present my investigation and expressed my wish to travel to visit him and conduct an interview. In the telephone conversation he was rude and in the end said that he didn’t want to meet and had no time. Through a different channel, I contacted his sister in Envigiado. Later on I travelled to Medellin and spoke to a number of people. Following this, I met this legal representative in Bogota during the meeting of *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* – in front of everybody he challenged me and complained that “I went behind his back and without his approval” and asked, “what do I want from them?” [field-notes]. I explained in detail what am I doing and why, and the participants supported my investigation. Later on, I also spoke with another legal representative of Bucaramanga (Girón). He explained to me that it wouldn´t be good if I went alone to speak with whom I wanted – he had to be my contact and guide and tell me who to speak to in the *kumpania*:

> “I will be your guide to let you speak with people you want to speak to. I am very careful that inadequate people don’t enter to speak with whom they want – this is what the legal representatives are for” [field-notes].

Despite that, I had a trip to Bucaramanga due in the upcoming days, during which this legal representative was still in Bogota. Despite his “warning” I went on my own (with another informants as my contacts) and “spoke to whom I wanted”. After that he never challenged me personally, but I received rumours from various people that he was very unhappy about my behaviour as he had explicitly told me not to go.

They are the formal link and the contact point and have almost complete control and monopoly over the relationship between the *kumpeñy* and the world outside of it. Additionally, they are the filter to direct participation of other members of the *kumpania*. An official at the Ministry of Interior, which coordinates the registration process stated that:

> “for the meetings or workshops which are organized by the Ministry, the only channel to summon the people to participate is the legal representative – and they choose whom they want to invite.” [COL_28, recorded interview]

No mechanisms of accountability towards the communities have been put in place. There are also no mechanisms which guarantee that the legal representatives communicate and consult with their constituencies. In fact, evidence of the contrary was found. According to a Romani woman from Envigado:

> "We don´t know anything about the politics... (the legal representative) doesn´t share any of the information with us. He steals all the money – if there is any money for some project, it all ends up in his pocket. There are no meetings… Once, Dalila and Sandro [representatives of PROROM] came to Envigado and they had a meeting. But we weren´t invited and they never told us what was it for. There were never any events and we don´t have any direct contact with the local government." [COL_19, field-notes]

For example, there was an event organized in Envigado, but my informants' lack of knowledge about it demonstrates the lack of constituency-based activity, directed towards the community. She adds:

> "but the fault is with the government: they know that the legal representative takes all the money and doesn't do anything, but they don't care and don't react". [COL_19, recorded interview]

There is a lack of clear procedures in the dynamic of competencies or the relationship between the legal representatives and the *kumpeñy* which they aim to represent – in some places it was reported that the local communities have no knowledge about existing policies, opportunities or the very objective of representatives' visits to Bogota. This sparks numerous rumours and in some places increases distrust between the community and their legal representatives, dividing the community from within. Similar things were also reported in Bucaramanga, where I met a number of women and accompanied them during their fortune-telling sessions in the city centre. They told me that there are rumours that their legal representative and others are receiving money. Furthermore, they argued:

> "we haven't seen any benefits from their work; there are no projects and they don't do anything. We are family with the legal representative but we don't trust him because he never shares any information with the others." [COL_26, field-notes]

Nonetheless, they admitted to benefiting from the agreement for the State to cover the social security insurance for all the Roma. They asked me stay in touch with them and provide them with information regarding resources, opportunities for projects (especially in business) and other things. We stayed in touch over the phone and I helped them to contact the local town hall directly (but always "in secret" so that the legal representative would not find out.

Although the government has received some complaints about this, they remain inactive – they are not allowed to get involved with the internal dynamics of minority groups. A high level state official explains:

> "If I tell you that all the information reaches everyone, it would not be completely accurate information. Of course, we try to make the information reach most of them and with the

> authorities and representatives we seek to have this concept understood, to ensure that all representatives have the same vocation for community service, openness to everyone, for the benefit of everyone and not to use it for personal influence at any time ... it's a question that I believe I could not answer affirmatively. But I also think that these judgments are not up to me." [COL_32, recorded interview]

In fact, one of my informants comments:

> "I would add that the government 'has disallowed themselves' to get involved. It is important to keep in mind that in general these governmental institutions are run by the 'law of the minimum necessary'. There has never been a systematic rapprochement [to all the communities] on behalf of the state, maybe with the exception of the Entity for Victims (*Unidad de Victimas*)" [COL_11, personal communication]

Furthermore, the legal representatives often may, in fact, be individuals of great authority and status within their communities, but frequently they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to provide quality input for policy-related processes. This has been voiced numerous times by the legal representatives themselves, who argued that they lack the necessary skills to be able to benefit from the opportunities created for them by the state (inability to write project proposals, lack of management skills, etc.). As a result, the government has planned to delegate its officials to visit each *kumpania* and train and assist them in writing projects and applying for funding. In reality, the government has sub-contracted NGOs (such as *Fundación Tierra* and recently also the OIM) to implement the training among the *kumpeñy*.

Composition and leadership patterns

With regards to both NGOs created in Colombia – PROROM and URC - neither of them are membership-based bodies. They are constituted by a limited number of people, a small circle of activists who regularly engage in activities. There are a limited number of people who maintain dialogue with public administration entities, regularly attend meetings and participate in consultations. Beyond that, there is a broader circle of participating individuals who do not necessarily engage actively in policy-making processes and consultations, but who participate in activities which are organized, for example during festivals or intercultural events. Both organizations have also experienced changes in the internal composition of their executive bodies (especially regarding their legal representatives). Nonetheless, a number of key influential people have remained the same for years.

Curiously, both organizations have followed a similar pattern in which participation of non-Roma scholars have been of key importance.

PROROM was originally founded by two scholars – today both of them have distanced themselves from the organization. I spoke to both Juan Carlos Gamboa (although we never met in person – he lived in Barranquilla – but I conducted interviews with him over the phone and we stayed in touch by email) and Hugo Paternina (I have been corresponding and chatting with him online and then we met in

Madrid). They both confirmed to me more or less the same version of the birth and initial process of the organization. Gamboa was disenchanted with the results and for this reason distanced himself from the PROROM. He said that particular leaders see the organizations as a business. According to him, the process got somewhat corrupt in the sense that the motivation is too often the money and personal recognition, and not the real advancement of the Romani community. In any case, he was satisfied with what they have accomplished together – to advance from complete invisibility of the Romani population in Colombia to a series of acts of institutional recognition. Hugo Paternina was even more critical about the way in which PROROM has evolved. Paternina explains:

> "The rupture within PROROM occurred after a fight between us, not among the Roma. Our link with the Roma was voluntary, free ... The final frictions and my disappointment with the process is [caused by] the mercantilization – the Roma see it as a business. Let them be paid [for their work] but at least provide input! But not even that! This type of commercial motivation was not seen in the case of the ONIC (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia), for example. It is disappointing". [COL_39, field-notes]

URC, on the other hand, has given the status of legal representative to a non-Roma. In fact, when URC was first created in 2000, the legal representation was given to a non-Roma scholar, privately the husband of a Romani woman. When URC was re-activated in 2007-2008, the legal representation was again given to a non-Romani advisor, this time a woman. This development, in both cases, was highly criticized by other Roma (organizations and *kumpeñy*) and contributed to the worsening of the relationship between both organizations. After some internal disputes, it now seems that this non-Roma advisor has been removed from her position – COL_40, a Romani elderly woman of respect within the community now became the legal representative. Following this move, from what I have heard after I left Colombia, the relationship between both organizations is now gradually improving and is more cordial than before.

In the case of PROROM, the figure of legal representative has always been taken up by men. At the present moment, the legal representative of PROROM is Sandro Cristo. Sandro was recruited to substitute Venecer Gómez as the legal representative after he decided to leave the organization. My informant recalls:

> "So then they began to create fissures, but to me that people get worn out seems very natural. I could spend a lifetime being the representative of the organization implementing the project for which 'I gave blood'. Because people who had gone into the project did not want to do their job because they wanted money, it did not work. And a circle of power was formed and I decided not to belong to this. So at some point I came to Bogota. We met at the home of Dalila, Sandro and his wife, another person and I, and I made a document where I gave the organization away. A lot of people did not like that and I was berated a lot because I was elected popularly [by the people to be the representative]. And I gave the organization to someone in a meeting. Dalila then handed it to Sandro." [COL_15, recorded interview]

Sandro is a relative of other members of PROROM, who has been engaged in PROROM activity since the first years of its existence and a respected man. He doesn´t speak very good *Romanes* but is respected by different *kumpeñy* in Colombia. He doesn´t participate much directly in the policy-making processes – in the majority of meetings and events which I have attended, Sandro never appeared (even during the meeting of *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*). According to one of my informants:

> "In reality Sandro intervenes little in the things of PROROM but he is the link between all the regional *kumpanyi* and Bogota". [COL_11, personal communication]

In fact, Esteban in his M.A. Thesis (Acuña 2011) describes the work done by Sandro and the importance of his status as a recognized leader for the work of PROROM.

Romani women's participation

In PROROM, apart from Sandro who is the legal representative of this organization, another prominent leader who has been active for many years in this organization is Ana Dalila Gómez Baos. Dalila is an independent Romani woman and one of the few Romani women in Colombia who has a university education. In her short biography she writes:

> "Roma from the *Mijháis* clan. Breaking several cultural paradigms within a strictly patriarchal culture, for several years she has been actively leading the claims of [Romani] people. She is an Industrial Engineer, specialized in Management and Urban Planning and Regional Development."[225]

To me it was quite surprising to discover that she was among the most prominent and visible leaders of the Romani community, which claims to be very protective of their women and in which women should not be participating in politics, at least that is what I was told by the majority of Romani men whom I met. I asked what it was it like when she began and whether it was difficult for her. She briefly described the problems she faced over the years:

> "Of course it was [difficult]. Because even the advisors didn't have confidence in me. Juan Carlos suddenly gave more support to the subject of men. So I was one more person there, let's say as an accessory. But over time and with the whole development, it had already been shown a little more that the issue, whether I'm a woman or not, the [important things are] the capabilities of a person, beyond the gender, because basically the fight goes one way, which is to defend the rights and draw attention to the Romani people. At first, this was not believed because I was a woman. My father has had various *Romani Kriss* made by the elders: why his daughter was like this? That brought many problems and many times my father told me to get out of this [working in PROROM]. But that was something educational as well. (…) Now [they] ask for support, technical advice, they call me from the oldest to the youngest. (…) People are

[225] http://www.dalilagomez.blogspot.com/

> always contacting me for guidance in political terms and in actions that will improve their standard of living." [COL_1, recorded interview]

Dalila became internationally recognised for her candidacy in the Senate Elections in 2006 in Colombia; she was the first Romani person to ever stand in elections to public office in Colombia, a fact which has not escaped the attention of Romani leaders across the world. She stood in elections as a representative of the *Polo Democratico Alternativo* political party; a party which PROROM contributed to creating (H. Paternina 2014). She was not elected; nonetheless the campaign was a very conscious step towards greater visibilization of Romani people on the national level. The campaign included a mix of stereotypical images – Dalila appears in traditional Romani clothes and in her speeches, and especially in her blog created specifically for this occasion, she often calls upon elements of traditional Romani culture. Also, the slogan of the campaign – "We don't only read the future from the lines in your palms. We build it from our experience" – clearly makes reference to the stereotypical imagery of Romani fortune tellers. On the other hand, however, her candidacy broke many stereotypes regarding the subordinate position of Romani women; it also contributed to the visibilization of Romani communities in Colombia and challenged the ignorance of the mainstream society regarding them. As one of the former non-Roma advisors of PROROM argues:

> "It was very interesting because it was an exercise of "visibility" of the Romani people. Because they started calling from news stations and [the news] came out in the press. First the concept that people saw was as if Roma were the 'clowns' [mascots] of the elections. But then came another newspaper article, which explained a bit how the Roma live, then it seemed to me a very valuable exercise. She got a thousand and something votes, but people voted for her from different parts of the country. To me that is an achievement, because it was a campaign without resources, but she was launched by the democratic people who gave her a confidence vote. That was like work that is not seen much, but it made Roma visible." [COL_12, recorded interview]

Furthermore, it was also an important lesson in democratic practice for the Romani population. Paternina writes: "The fact that the Rromni in question had made the decision to jump into the Senate in a difficult period of high political tension marked a milestone in the history of Rrom in Colombia and in the Americas. In this space this fact was unknown. (…). All this tells us that something very silently had begun to change within Rrom society." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:901)

Dalila is a very skilled politician who has mastered the arts of the political game – she knew how to speak in public and make an impressive speech and she had knowledge of the legal norms and jargon which helped her to impress others, especially in governmental institutions. When I met her during my fieldwork, she was working in public administration bodies and was among the most active Romani personalities of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia.

The proactive role of Dalila as a Romani leader and the visibility she enjoyed publicly and among the Roma *kumpeñy* was symptomatic of a gradual opening of the Romani ethnic mobilization structures to Romani women, at least in the case of Bogota. Paternina, with regards to the 2006 electoral

campaign: "This situation showed that, within the subordinate role that Romani women have traditionally been attributed, a result of the predominance of patri-lineality and patri-locality in the socio-political configuration of Romani society, a small but active group of women had also emerged that in the midst of many difficulties had developed intellectually and now are contributing to the development of an initiative like PRORROM." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:901)

Indeed, in the case of Bogota, Romani women have played active roles as agents and civic leaders. In the case of URC, as well, Romani women have occupied the key positions and have been the most visible Romani representatives, participating in the meetings and political consultations. In fact, during my fieldwork, the representation of URC was run almost exclusively by Romani women, and only occasionally did Romani men also accompany them to the meetings. Some of these women are single and relatively young, although the current legal representative, an elderly woman of respect, always accompanied them.

COL_40, the current legal representative of URC, is among the most active women in Bogota. She is an elderly woman who enjoys respect among her own *kumpania* and throughout the country. However, as has been pointed out to me by various informants, COL_40 has also had some problems with legal representatives. Her daughter says:

> "As a *Phuri Romni* [Elderly Woman] she makes the legal representatives look bad because at times during meetings she calls them liars and makes them shut up." [COL_41, field-notes]

COL_40 confirms this testimony. She argues:

> "I have had a lot of problems with some of the [legal representatives] because I would explain the things to them [that they need to understand], at times I would make them shut up, but they don't understand…" [COL_40, field-notes]

In fact, after one of the meetings of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* which I attended, she took advantage of her social status as a respected woman to silence some legal representatives and challenge what they were saying. After the meeting, one of the representatives was very angry: "how will a woman silence men!" [field-notes]. Nonetheless, and despite these occasional disagreements, she is spoken to and treated with a lot of respect, due to her status as a *Phuri Romni*; a respected elderly woman.

The situation in Bogota with regards to Romani women's participation contrasts very much with the pattern of leadership of the *kumpeñy*, where the dominant role of men prevails. As the *kumpeñy* reflect traditional structures of leadership and authority, it is not surprising that all the legal representatives (with the exception of Sabana Larga) are men. The vast majority of them are older men with a respected status in the community. In some cases, young Roma with some degree of formal education have been elected as representatives or "assistants" of the representatives. Curiously, the majority of them, although quite traditional, are married to non-Romani women.

The lack of women's participation and representation in the *kumpeñy* has been acknowledged by some Romani women themselves. In order to seek greater involvement of Romani women, some time ago the Department of Health conceived a special working session on health issues and Romani women. A letter was sent to all *kumpeñy* to nominate women to attend a meeting in Bogota. In response, the legal representatives issued a letter stating that for "cultural reasons" the women could not participate in the meeting. They argued that "it is bad for a woman´s reputation to be sat at a table with strange non-Roma men, and leave their households unattended". [COL_8, field-notes]

A Romani woman further clarified, that:

> "according to them [the legal representatives] it is not seen favourably for a Romani woman to sit at a non-Roma table, and even less if she speaks up." [COL_14, field-notes]

This version was also confirmed by an administrative officer working with the Roma at the Ministry of Interior. She argued that although they are well aware of this problem, they cannot intervene as it is seen as "an internal matter of the community". She explained:

> "so the door [to participation of Romani women] is closed; we cannot do anything. The problem is that the Ministry has to safeguard the culture and not impose new elements. For this reason, anything that is declared 'contrary to culture' cannot be done. If women made a statement that they did want to participate and that it is not contrary to their culture, then we could do something. But who will face the consequences? The same goes with the representatives. They are elected by the people; the Ministry cannot intervene in that or require changes even though they (the elected legal representatives) are bad. Here we have a legal framework of autonomy and self-determination of peoples." [COL_28, recorded interview]

The situation with regards to gender exemplifies a broader challenge in Colombian legislation, which affects Roma but also other ethnic minorities. Namely that of finding an internal balance between individual human rights and the collective rights of ethnic minorities, recognized and protected by the state. A high-level official at the Ministry of Interior explains this issue with regards to Romani women's discussions:

> "Gender equality, for example. Respect for a different culture has to lead us to allow them to make decisions regarding this type of handling of their own culture. That is what we know as a weighting of legal rights. At a certain point they may think ... man, the rights of women, but suddenly to enact Western women's rights, it could lead to the end of the structure of the Romani people. So you have to be very careful and need to work with them and that they themselves go with their own cultural adaptations, to the extent that their ways, their uses, their lifestyle allow it and this dynamic guarantees that these will be the decisions of the people and not come from foreign views. There must be mutual learning and citizenship. It is not an easy topic.

> In Colombia there is an issue that is handled a lot by the Constitutional Court, in terms of rights violations. So what, at a given point in time, is determined is: between two rights, which right predominates? So what predominates - the collective point of view of Roma or the individual point of view? The right to culture and the survival of culture prevails or the interests of gender equality prevails? All these are elements that have to be weighed at any given time." [COL_32, recorded interview]

This situation, and the monopoly over participation exercised by the legal representatives evidently hinders the possibility of women becoming actively engaged, and consequently, to reflect, articulate and attend to the needs and interests of Romani women. One example from Bucaramanga illustrates this problem very well.

In 2012, a young Romani woman (COL_14), a member of the *kumpania* in Girón, thought about the possibility of creating a project for Romani women (a sewing business and training). She gathered a number of women, explained the idea and sought their support. The other Romani women loved the idea – at one meeting they even signed a letter which nominated COL_14 as the representative of women's issues of the *kumpania* (*vocera de la mujer*) and she started to organize the project. Independently, she sought help and support from the local Town Hall. Shortly before the project was about to start, the men found out – specifically, the legal representative of the *kumpania* in Bucaramanga – and a big conflict broke out. According to my interlocutor and the initiator of this women's project, the men spoke with their women (wives, sisters, daughters) and forbade them to speak to and support COL_14. Intimidated by this situation when confronted, not one woman who had previously supported the idea spoke up to defend her, despite the fact that she had the letter of support signed by these women. In the end, the project was never implemented, despite the fact that the necessary funding had already been secured. According to the initiator of this entire initiative:

> "it was revealed that any project has to come directly from the representative…but what is the legitimacy of the legal representatives? If there are no women…Additionally, the process of voting for legal representatives is doubtful – in any case, only men can vote and not all of them." [COL_14, field-notes]

In this context, it is evident that the situation locally, in the *kumpania*, with regards to women's participation is different than in the context of the capital city. This is especially ironic when compared to the situation in Bogota – where women are among the most active leaders and most influential actors, and in fact, sit at the policy table much more frequently. This contradiction is not seen as problematic to some legal representatives of *kumpania* – those women who already participate are accepted, but no new women representatives are allowed. According to one male leader of PROROM:

> "The legal representatives want to prohibit the participation of women. Those who are already active – OK, but no other women will be accepted to become involved. They use the cultural excuse that the women are 'untouchables'…But these conflicts with regards to gender are not about culture but about power." [COL_15, recorded interview]

Thus, some interpretations of this situation point to the fact that it is not so much about cultural codes of behaviour imposed on women but rather it is a sign of a power struggle, where the men want to maintain their exclusive control over the *kumpeñy*. It is also a struggle over control of identity or the identity frame, in which Romani men of the *kumpeñy* seek monopoly and dominance.

Nonetheless, the fact that in the capital city there are already a number of visible Romani women leaders and activists, is without a doubt a sign of gradual change, and surely influences other women locally to demand a place for their own participation, and more specifically, more attention placed towards gender issues. One Romani woman leader from PROROM, when asked about the Romani ethnic mobilization with regards to gender issues argued that:

> “a moment will come when we, the women, will revolutionize the Romani world!” [COL_1, field-notes]

In fact, it is further argued that the very appearance of PROROM has had a positive impact on Romani women as a space which also encourages their participation: “This has allowed women to feel freer to express their opinions, an attitude which before was not very well received within the community as the Romani culture is of patriarchal character in which power and authority belongs to men. In this way women have proven to be a sector that was motivated by concerns about the future of new generations, promoting and leading many of the actions aiming to generate greater welfare for Roma.” (Lozano Uribe, 2005:102)

Speaking with a Romani woman from PROROM about the question of gender she argued:

> “What I have done up to now is to situate the Romani people as a people, regardless of the dynamics of gender and regardless of what is seen across all peoples and cultures and the majority society that women are weaker. From the point of view that women will situate and revolutionize the Romani people. In this sense, there will come a time when women will be given the whole highway. And I'm a person that when I put my mind to something, I do it. I have always wanted to create an organization of Romani women. […] Then the fact that I will make a Romani [women’s] organization will be the starting point, to start and visibilize in terms of women's rights. This is something I have to do. I do not know when, but it will happen. So far, what we been working on is the issue of the rights of the people as such, regardless of whether they are men, women, children…” [COL_1, recorded interview]

Non-Roma agency

Since the beginning of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia, non-Roma individuals have had a significant influence and role, both in the process of the emergence of the first Romani mobilizing structures as well as in shaping the political agenda and crafting a strategy for action. In fact, the very emergence of ethnic mobilization in Colombia was a direct result of the involvement of non-Roma scholars.

In both organizations – PROROM and URC – the role of non-Roma consultants/ advisors has been essential, as explained previously. At different points in time, the involvement of such individuals has

been more or less direct – it has already been mentioned that URC has given its legal representation to non-Roma advisors; the first legal representative was a non-Roma scholar, and when the organization was reactivated, again the legal representation was taken up by a non-Romani advisor.

PROROM too has established such a relationship with different individuals. As was mentioned earlier, two non-Roma historians played an essential role in setting up PROROM and contributed significantly to the achievements of this organization in its first years of existence. After the two founders of PROROM disengaged from the organization in 2005, another individual, the founder of CREARC (*Corporación para el Análisis, la Investigación, la Educación para la Paz y Resolución de Conflictos*[226]) became actively engaged as a member, collaborator and legal advisor of PROROM. This foundation was created in 2000 and provides mediation, investigation, training, and legal assistance services in defence of fundamental rights and in support of the Peace Process.

Between 2005-2012 this institution had been providing legal assistance to PROROM. The assistance of CREARC was especially relevant in advising them on the use of the so-called right of petition (*derecho de petición*) as a legal resource in advancing Romani claims, using the existing jurisprudence which applies to other ethnic minorities in Colombia, or to react against perceived discriminatory practices. CREARC also played a key role in advocating for the recognition of *Kriss Romani* as a separate and distinct legal system, which should be recognised by the state (Bustamante Cardona 2012; P. R. Sánchez 2009). According to the founder of CREARC:

> "Our own system of justice is recognized by the Colombian Constitution of 1991 – it's a total revolution at the State level!" [COL_12, recorded interview]

Indeed, Article 246 of the 1991 Colombian Constitution recognizes indigenous jurisdiction and thus sets a precedence for other minorities to claim recognition of their own system of justice, which applies to situations within each community. Convention 169 of the ILO also provides legal bases for the recognition of *Kriss Romani*. Eventually, the explicit recognition of Romani system of justice was included in Decree 2957 of 2010 (title II, art. 4), although due its recognition status of a Decree and not a Law (as in the case of indigenous people) its de facto application is limited.

After some internal disputes and strong arguments, some of which ended up in court, this collaboration ended. CREARC and its leadership are currently considered by most Romani leaders as *persona non grata* in the community. Nonetheless, CREARC continues to work with Roma, now collaborating closely with Roma in a *kumpania*[227].

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[226] http://crearc.blogspot.com/

[227] CREARC was involved in the creation of the newest *kumpania* in Bogota – Kumpania Lumnia katar el Rom and has served as their spokesman in the struggle for their formal recognition. Other Romani leaders perceive this as highly problematic and conflictual – according to them, CREARC's involvement leads to further atomization of the Romani groups in Colombia.

It should be noted, however, that at the moment, the involvement of non-Roma individuals in both organizations as well as in the *kumpeñy*, has significantly decreased. In the last decade, Romani ethnic mobilization has been marked by the guidance and assistance of a number of non-Roma scholars, advisors and assistance; their work and contribution has certainly contributed to advancing the process of visibilization of Roma in Colombia. Nonetheless, these collaborations in most cases ended with disputes between Roma and non-Roma members. Furthermore, the perceived excessive role and visibility of such non-Roma advisors, especially those who occupied leadership roles, such as legal representatives of organisations, lead to the deterioration of the relationship between Romani organizations and *kumpeñy*.

The involvement of non-Roma assistants/ counsellors plays a key role in the success of ethnic mobilization of Roma in Colombia. These individuals possess the necessary knowledge and know-how, provide legal assistance, help to identify relevant policy opportunities and advise the Romani representatives on the pursuit of these political goals. These individuals, with previous experience in the ethnic mobilization of other minorities in Colombia, understand the dynamics of policy-making, have direct contacts with relevant public administration bodies and speak the jargon of policy-making. The knowledge possessed by these individuals has been transferred to Romani leaders in order to train them and provide grounding for their gradual independence. The involvement of non-Roma individuals, especially scholars, also helps to legitimize the claims presented by the Roma, providing an image of objectivity and academic evidence. Involvement of scholars contributes to the “epistemic visibility” of Roma in Colombia, and its embeddedness in cultural, social and historical contexts; the dissertation of Hugo Paternina (2014) is a good example of such an exercise. It should be noted that following the increased visibility and recognition of the Romani people in Colombia, the academic world also began to concentrate on and study this community. The Roma issue was largely invisible also in the academic world up to this point in time. With the new political trends based on cultural difference, ethnic diversity and affirmative action since early 1990s, the academic world also gradually developed an interest in the Romani community. In any case, it should be noted that the vast majority of academic knowledge about the Roma is produced by non-Roma scholars. Any Romani production of academic quality has been carried out with the participation of non-Roma scholars; often Romani activists appear as co-authors of articles and academic papers.

Despite these positive elements, their involvement should not be seen uncritically. Some conflicts among Roma arose because of the excessive visibility and involvement of non-Roma individuals. It should be considered that some of the non-Roma advisors who have been influential in Romani ethnic mobilization processes at different points in time have their own agendas and interests, which may overshadow the genuine interests and needs of Roma themselves. Also, some public administration representatives acknowledge this phenomenon, which is not exclusive to Roma but is present among other minorities, too. For example, a high-level official at the Ministry of Culture argued that:

> “There are people who are not Roma that are influencing the Roma. As if trying to become bridges to institutions and others. This is hurting [the process] and is generating conflict. This in itself is a problem. And this happens to all [ethnic] groups and others. And we are conscious

> of it. And we always try to keep [the dialogue] with them and not with their advisers. But this [non-Roma] person, you know very well, has a high capacity for influence and I think it will not be good for the Roma.” [COL_34, recorded interview]

From such a perspective it is argued that there are an increasing number of non-Roma involved who have great influence over the Romani leaders – instead of providing opportunities for the direct participation of community members, these individuals aim at becoming a bridge of communication between the community and the administration, undertaking the role of intermediaries and speaking “for the Roma” instead of enabling the Roma to speak for themselves.

Other structures

At the moment there are no Romani ethnic political parties. Because of the small size of the Romani population in Colombia, the Roma are marginal in terms of a distinctive electorate and therefore it is most likely their civic participation will not transform into formal political structures of representation such as political parties. The only possibility of entering formal politics is on behalf of a mainstream political party. In history, such an opportunity has occurred only once, when Dalila Gómez became a Candidate for the Senate in the 2006 National Elections (on behalf of the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* political party). Due to the limited electoral power of the Roma, and a low place on the list (29th position), Dalila was not elected to Senate. Dalila herself revealed that she had no illusions about her success in the elections – rather, this was an important exercise in political and social visibility of Roma in Colombia, a tactical step in providing more strength and visibility to Romani claims.

Evangelical Churches

Another structure with the potential of becoming an important platform for ethnic mobilization is the Evangelical Church. The vast majority of Roma have converted to the Evangelical Church (some also belong to the Jehovah Witnesses) – a number of Romani pastors are currently being trained; there is also one recognized Romani woman pastor in Envigado (Antioquia). It should be noted that there are a number of different Evangelical Churches attended by Colombian Roma. At least in Bogota there is a strong distinction between those who attend “non-Roma churches” (meaning those lead and attended by non-Roma, in which the religious services are conducted in Spanish) and the “Roma Churches”, in which religious services are conducted by Roma and in *Romanes*; those Romani churches maintain strong contacts of collaboration with other Romani Churches across the continent.

The Evangelical Church plays an important role in bringing the community together, as a place of regular meetings in which issues of common interest are discussed. In the framework of Evangelical Churches, engagements and marriages are celebrated, new community members are introduced (such as the new-born children) and the deceased are remembered. On the other hand, however, the Evangelical Churches are dividing *vitzas* into sub-units depending on the religious community they belong to.

The Romani Evangelical Churches also boast extensive networks of collaboration across cities, regions, countries and even continents, making it the largest formal structure among Roma. Although the Church is concerned exclusively with its spiritual duties, it is also an important platform for exchange

and cooperation across countries. In Colombia, the religious leaders are not interested in socio-political struggles and thus remain marginal for ethnic mobilization at the moment. However, it should be considered that in some other countries, the Church has also become an active mobilizing force, and occasionally has become involved in socio-political issues. The presence and impact of the Church among the Roma and its potential relevance for ethnic mobilization should not be overlooked.

SKOKRA

Prior to the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001, which was attended by a number of prominent Romani leaders from around the world, a number of Romani organizations in the Americas decided to create an informal network/ platform to coordinate their common collective struggles. They met in Quito, Ecuador, drafted the so-called Quito Declaration entitled "The Other Sons of Pacha Mama (Mother Earth): Declaration of the Roma People of the Americas" and founded SKOKRA (*Saveto Katar le Organizatsi ay Kumpeniyi Rromane anda´l Americhi*), Council of Roma Organizations and Kumpanyi in the Americas. The declaration was signed by representatives of Romani organizations from Colombia, Argentina, Canada, United States, Chile and Ecuador and can be considered a first step in gaining visibility of the Romani people in the Americas and presenting coherently their collective claims. One of the founders of SKOKRA and a member of PROROM recounts:

> "The process of SKOKRA was a process that was done in 2000. Many American organizations were brought together to make a common front against all aversion, discrimination and violation of the rights of the Romani people in the American context. So we did and we met. We made a very nice statement, and took it to the third world conference against racism. We printed and distributed it among the European Roma and it was a good example of the process." [COL_1, recorded interview]

The declaration lays out a number of very specific demands to national governments as well as international bodies, civil society and other "Peoples of America". The tone and content of this declaration draws clear inspiration from the indigenous movement of the region and differs from the claims and demands voiced by Roma in Europe. The declaration´s reference to *Pacha Mama* (Mother Earth, drawn from the Inca mythology) links the situation of Roma to the status of the Indigenous minorities, aiming for similar provisions and status that the natives gained as a result of their years-long struggle. Additionally, the authors of the declaration demand the right to self-determination, autonomy and self-government for the Roma, reject the term "ethnic minority", opting instead for the denomination "peoples", demand guarantees to make the nomad lifestyle sustainable in time and calls for solidarity and help from the indigenous and afro-descendant peoples of the Americas.

Following the conference, the SKOKRA members met again in San Luis Potosi, Mexico in 2005, in the First Congress of Roma People of the Americas, which was attended by new members of the network from Mexico and Brazil. Despite the great expectations of this Congress, the meeting counted fewer participants and, according to the interviews conducted, was marked by internal difficulties regarding

financing and coordination. Despite that, the participants managed to issue a Declaration of all the members, similar in content to the Quito Declaration.

Since the meeting in Mexico in 2005, SKOKRA members have not met during the subsequent decade. According to one of my informants:

> "Also, we don't have the resources to be able to meet. There was an attempt in Mexico in San Luis Potosi. (…) But it's a question of resources to be able to advance, to be able to meet and talk. Now I would like to plan an American meeting. To see how we can advance together in many things." [COL_1, recorded interview]

The years following the Mexico Congress were marked by internal disputes between individual leaders. An additional problem was the lack of funding which would enable periodic working meetings and sustainable collaboration. Today, SKOKRA is largely inactive and exists solely as an informal, virtual network. The members still collaborate and communicate online. However, the network itself has not managed to exercise effective leverage in order to advocate for the demands voiced in the declarations. Although today the network is lacking strength, a great potential lies in the individual organizations themselves and in the underlying approach of working on Roma issues from a continental perspective. Some members of SKOKRA met again recently in September of 2015, when Rita Izsak, Special Rapporteur on minority issues at the United Nations organized a meeting of Roma from the Americas in Brasilia, Brazil. The meeting was envisioned as a one-day workshop, bringing together Romani activists from different countries of the American continent as a follow-up to the global report on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide (Izsák 2015). The workshop objectives were:

> "· To discuss issues of common concern regarding the human rights of Roma in the region
> · To provide an update on recent legislative and policy developments that are of concern to Roma, and the impact of these developments on the rights of Roma across the countries concerned.
> · To increase Roma activists' capacity to interact with other Roma communities, and with relevant national, regional and international human rights mechanisms.
> · To discuss messages and opportunities for joint advocacy or synergies in advocacy." [personal communication with organizers]

The meeting was attended by the Romani Organizations of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Canada. During the meeting, the representatives "spoke about Racism, discrimination, Education and the future of the Romani People in the Region and Worldwide, as a Unique Global Nation" (Bernal 2015). They also "emphasized before the United Nations, and the Special rapporteur the necessity that ILO Convention No. 169 be applied in relation to the Romani People, this international instrument states:

Elements of tribal peoples include:	Elements of indigenous peoples include:
Traditional life styles; Culture and way of life different from the other segments of the national population, e.g. in their ways of making a living, language, customs, etc.; and Own social organization and traditional customs and laws.	Traditional life styles; Culture and way of life different from the other segments of the national population, e.g. in their ways of making a living, language, customs, etc.; Own social organization and political institutions; and Living in historical continuity in a certain area, or before others "invaded" or came to the area.

Table 26. ILO Convention No. 169. Elements of tribal and indigenous peoples

Also we called upon the United Nations to urge the governments in the region to include policies for the Romani People, those countries which do not have them yet" (ibid.)

The meeting in Brasilia in 2015 created an opportunity for the members of SKOKRA to meet in person and to re-affirm their wish to continue working together, in accordance with the 2001 Manifesto. The conclusions from the meeting demonstrate that the direction and objectives of SKOKRA have remained unchanged for over a decade, but the lack of funding and assertive advocacy strategy maintain SKOKRA more as a symbol of unity rather than as a viably active and relevant policy actor. Nonetheless, the very existence of such an initiative also helps to provide visibility to the Romani struggles in Latin America, and in Colombia, specifically.

PROROM and especially COL_1 was very involved in the entire process from its beginning; she participated in all the meetings and has engaged actively in communication with SKOKRA's members over the years. The interviews with her and other members of SKOKRA shed some light on the level of collaboration between Roma on the inter-American and/ or international level, which still remains limited to online communication.

Consolidation of actors

Despite the fact that the Romani population in Colombia is rather small and statistically insignificant, there are multiple actors and structures. During the period of fieldwork, two other foundations were planned to be set up in Bogota. Rather than a sign of growth and positive expansion, the current situation is a sign of internal fragmentation and increasing atomization of Romani mobilizing structures. A representative of one of the Ministries argued:

> "The difference is that it is not the same to create so many organizations in a wider population as here in such a small group. For instance, the indigenous population is a very large population, and they are located in regions that are completely different in culture in each region. Roma are a very small population and if disintegrated, they end up defending the rights of a family. They have to be more united, because the African population are ten million, there are different organizations and that is understandable. But in such a small population it is more

> important to strengthen organizational issues, where they start to understand what they are beginning to organize”. [COL_13, recorded interview]

The multiplicity of actors, divergent claims and mutual rivalry weakens the capacity of Romani actors to engage in consultations, push for further legal provisions and further advance Romani policies. The existing conflicts and rivalries, which were mentioned previously, effectively hinder the political leverage of Romani actors. Interviews with representatives of public administration revealed that they are very conscious of existing tensions among Romani actors and pointed out that it created problems in implementing policies and projects which target the Romani community. For example, a high level official at the Ministry of Interior, responsible for working with Roma, argues that:

> “there is a consensus among Indians so the claims are the same. With Roma there are beginning to be problems: the atomization of their own movement – they are starting to have problems and conflicts stemming from the very benefits that the government attracts. But it is the Roma themselves who have to solve their internal forms of organization and representation. The government cannot interfere with this." [COL_32, recorded interview]

Some representatives of public administration also complained that at times during the meetings, the Romani representatives have used these spaces to attack and discredit each other publicly; they distasted such attacks and argued that “dirty clothes should be washed at home”. According to one informant, a manager of ethnic minorities at IDPAC *(Instituto Distrital de la Participación y Acción Comunal*):

> “other ethnic groups are also marked by internal fighting and conflicts, but in public they try to send a message of greater consensus in order to be more effective and obtain greater benefits for the entire community.” [COL_18, recorded interview]

The lack of consolidation among Roma is made evident especially considering the fact that currently no platform exists which would bring together all of these actors, in order to resolve internal disputes, develop a common agenda and collective goals, establish a shared vision and a singular narrative. The only occasion when all actors meet is during the meetings of *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*, convened and organized by the Ministry of Interior. But these occasions are not frequent and leave little space for discussing internal matters of the Romani ethnic mobilization. In principle, as argued by my Romani interlocutors, the Romani community and different *kumpeñy* are tightly inter-related through various links such as kinship ties and business, and stay in constant contact with each other. Furthermore, they argue that the Roma have their own internal system of resolving conflicts and mediating, through *Sere Romengues* and through *Kriss Romani*. Nonetheless, while these traditional institutions may work in conflicts regarding internal matters of the community (family disputes, breaking of Romani codes of *zakono* etc.) they do not prove very effective in enforcing greater unity and strategic alignment of Romani actors with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization. Consequently, the divisions and lack of tactical consensus among Romani actors continue to persist. According to some of my interlocutors, such a situation is favourable for the government – while Roma remain fragmented, advancing the fulfilment of Romani claims extends in time. According to a manager of ethnic minorities at IDPAC:

> “sometimes the administration benefits from this game [of disputes, conflicts]. They give each of them just a little bit [of resources]. If, on the contrary, they managed to unite forces and mobilize and then they would become a bigger problem.” [COL_18, recorded interview]

Therefore, with the increasing number of actors, the mobilization is further atomized and fractured. Furthermore, there is evidence (Gamboa Martínez 2004b) of multiple tensions which the process of ethnic mobilization has generated (between organizations, between organizations and *kumpeñyi*, between leaders and the community). Gamboa writes:

> “The process of visibilization of Roma people of Colombia has not been without difficulties. On the one hand, the work done by PROROM has arisen few conflicts and tensions within the kumpeniyi and some family groups who continue to value more the threats and risks than the benefits and opportunities that the organizational process can bring and open our claim of ethnicity.”(Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:53)

It is also important to underline that the current structures of representation of Romani claims are top-down – they are not a result of grassroots mobilization of Roma but are a result of the shifting political context and the emergence of political opportunities:

> “This has made the visibilization of the Roma a process built from the top down, that is from a small ‘enlightened elite’ which has tried to sensitize the rest of the community, which due its strong cultural identity and the logic with which it has traditionally been relating to majority society, occasionally shows resistance against the actions taken by PROROM, despite the fact that in principle they support them as they represent a benefit for the Roma.” (Gómez Baos, 2011:111)

The State itself, through the current policy framework, searched for, institutionalized and legitimized their interlocutors. The State recognized (“validated”) traditional authorities among Roma and at the same time expanded their scope of competencies and altered their traditional role, positioning them as political actors. This top-down dynamic has often encountered resistance, even rejection, on behalf of some Roma, especially by traditional authorities[228] (Lozano Uribe 2005; Gómez Baos 2011). Gamboa further argues that, in fact:

> “more difficulties were encountered not in the work done with the State, which in fact were numerous, but most of all, they were encountered inside of the kumpanyi.” (Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:53)

[228] Although it now seems, that ever since the traditional authorities have been recognized and provided a space for participation and input in policy-making processes, these voices of resistance have become much more sporadic.

6.3.c. Shaping public self-narratives of Romani ethnicity: collective identity frames

For many years, the Roma in Colombia had not been officially considered an ethnic minority. In fact, as explained earlier, although the Roma historically existed as a distinct group, their presence was not acknowledged institutionally and/or officially. With the new approach towards ethnic and cultural diversity and the gradual recognition of ethnic minorities by the Colombian state, a favourable conjuncture emerged which provided an opportunity for the Roma to acquire the status of a formally recognised ethnic minority. The emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia is directly connected to their demands for formal recognition as an ethnic group - Romani leaders, accompanied by non-Roma scholars had to provide evidence that Roma, in fact, are an ethnic group, thus shaping the definition of a Romani collective identity, articulated and presented to the outside world. Gamboa argues that in 1998, when the process of seeking institutional recognition of the Roma began, the State institutions had no knowledge about them, their history and culture. He argues:

> “As expected, the answers provided by government institutions showed that there was a total ignorance in the Colombian State regarding the Romani people of Colombia, since among other things, these public institutions expressed that did not have any information.” (Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:2)

Therefore, it was seen necessary to provide detailed information regarding the Roma in Colombia and to commence a dialogue between Romani representatives and different governmental institutions. The favourable political environment with regards to ethnic minorities’ recognition at that time, allowed for the claims for recognition of the Roma to be considered positively. In fact, it was already in 1998 that the General Directorate of Indigenous Affairs issued a favourable opinion with regards to Romani demands; in a document issued on 20th February 1998 it argued that:

> “(I) the 1989 Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization, ILO, ‘Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries’ applies to the Roma people of Colombia, as they are a people with a distinct traditional tribal social organization, (II) that the Rom people of Colombia, because of their pre-existence to the formation of the Republic, are also a Colombian ethnic group and as such should be protected by existing legislation for ethnic groups, and (III) it is necessary that, to keep a positive symmetry, required legislative developments to be made for the Romani people of Colombia so that they come out of invisibility and specifically that their collective rights are ensured.” (*Oficio DGAI No. 0864 del 20 de febrero de 1998*)

This institutional communication became a first step in the process of the institutionalization of the Roma as an ethnic minority and the development of Roma-specific provisions and legislation. From the very beginning the government had presented a positive approach towards the Roma, favourable to extending the existing legislation for ethnic minorities to the Roma.

Nonetheless, the transposition of existing legislation, based on the principle of “positive symmetry” required reliable information based on which such institutional provisions could be drafted. In this

process, detailed information about the origin of Roma, their historical presence in the American continent and in Colombia specifically, their cultural values and codes of conduct, language, justice system (*Romani Kriss*) and other ethnic markers have been emphasized and framed as distinct traits of Romani ethnicity. Since the late 1990s PROROM has become the main source of information, which created narratives with regards to “who the Roma are”. With the support of non-Roma advisors, PROROM produced an immense quantity of papers, articles, positions papers and other documents, which would subsequently serve as a basis for the drawing up of institutional documents and legislation. This process was especially intense between 1998-2002 in which Paternina, Gamboa, Dalila Gómez and Venecer Gómez were the principle authors.

Furthermore, in this process, the role of the legislative framework of ILO Convection 169 is of paramount importance. After all, it is within this framework that the Directorate issued a favourable opinion which granted Roma symmetrical rights to those granted to other ethnic minorities in Colombia. Dalila Gómez argues:

> “ILO Convention 169 constitutes the only legal precedent to which the Romani people can go to assert their rights as an ethnic group in Colombia and Latin America, which gives them the legal tools to ensure their survival.” (Gómez Baos, 2011:104)

Convention 169 of the ILO became the legal foundation based on which Roma claim their rights. A former non-Roma advisor of one of the organizations explains:

> “Because afros and indigenous peoples have a structural advantage with the Constitution of ’91, in which they are explicitly recognized, they have the indigenous and Afro laws which is Law 70/93. And there is a judicature expressly dedicated to the indigenous jurisdiction to which references are made. But the Roma are not named in the Constitution, they can only refer to the references of the plural and cultural [character of Colombian nation]. And the source of law is Convention 169 of the ILO. And Article 94 of the Constitution, which is the chapter on ‘constitutionality’ which says that international treaties are part of domestic law.” [COL_12, recorded interview]

Consequently, PROROM used the framework of the Convention as the foundation of their demands for recognition as an ethnic minority. Convention 169 states that:

> “tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.” (Article 1.1.a)

Therefore, one of the aims was to demonstrate the distinct social, cultural and economic features of the Romani people in Colombia in order to emphasize their unique character as a “tribal people”. On the other hand, the criterion of self-identification as a minority group is also a necessary feature:

> "Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply." (Article 2)

ILO Convention 169 determined the language and type of framing which would enable the Roma to realize their demands. It also provided a legal reference based on which the explicit recognition of the collective rights of Roma could be grounded. ILO Convention 169 also gave priority to the groups' own sense of difference, the criteria of self-identification and self-definition; the Roma themselves should provide the essential information of who they are, what elements define them and what their culture is like. In this way, the process of external labelling through the exogenous voices of state administrators, experts and even, to an extent of scholars, was minimized. Since the Roma as a community were invisible to the State institutions – they were not a target group of any policies and were not considered a major social, cultural or political issue – there were no prior framings regarding the Roma as a people, other than the existing popular perceptions and imagery among the majority society. In fact:

> "That imaginary about Roma, full of prejudices, myths and falsehoods needs to be reversed with appropriate actions that may dignify the history and culture of this ancient people." (*Oficio DGAI No. 0864 del 20 de febrero de 1998*; page 6)

Therefore, a certain vacuum of knowledge existed, which could be filled with information shaped and provided by Romani organizatons themselves.

These narratives, which provide detailed information about Romani culture, history, values and lifestyles, have been later incorporated and "validated" by the power of institutional decrees. The most important of these, which establishes the criteria which distinguishes the Roma as an ethnic group and creates a normative framework for comprehensive protection of the Romani people, is Decree 2957 (2010). In this Decree, Article 4 establishes specific definitions of the Romani ethnic group:

1. "Cultural identity
2. Socio-political institutions
    a. Kumpania
    b. Kriss [the Council of Elders]
    c. Kriss Romani [as a proper system of justice]
    d. Sere Romengue [men of respect "which has the authority of a particular patri-group of extended family"]
    e. Nomadism
    f. Romani or Romanes [the language]"

On closer inspection, this decree identifies the following essential elements of the Roma as an ethnic group:

- One is Roma by patrilineal descent
- Recognizes the authority of men of prestige and respect (*Sere Romengue*)
- Common origin (from India)

- Nomadism (not only physical displacement but also as mentality, "above all a way of seeing the world")
- Own system of Justice (*Kriss Romani*)
- Common language (*Romanes*)
- Own traditional social organization (*kumpanyi* and *vitza*)
- Respect for complex system of values and beliefs (*zakono* or *Romanipen*)
- "special sense of aesthetics leading to strong attachment to individual and collective freedom"

Such a way of framing Romani ethnic identity has been established based on the input provided by Romani leaders. The process of establishing this legal framework was lengthy and based on extended consultations with Romani leaders and representatives. According to a representative of the Ministry of Interior who participated in this process:

> "the decree was consulted with the *kumpeñy* and the registered organizations in Colombia…So, the Decree was consulted and drafted, and finally it was approved on 6th August 2010" [COL_28, recorded interview]

In other documents and speeches produced by Roma (especially by PROROM), these elements always coincide. Roma are also described as "tribal people" and part of an international diaspora, emphasizing their status as a "global nation" which originates from India. The Roma are framed based principally on cultural elements, emphasizing their status as a unique group (presented as belonging to the Kalderash macro-group), which share a common language and a common understanding of their identity. Nonetheless, alongside the cultural elements, the question of kinship ties as a distinctive feature of great importance for the construction of Romani identity was also emphasized:

> "One is Rrom or Gitano by patrilineal descent, which allows the location of a person in a particular kinship group, basically configured around the authority emanating from a man of prestige and knowledge, which in turn, through different alliances, links other kinship groups, which all share, among other things, the idea of a common origin, a nomad tradition, a language, a legal system, the Rromani kriss, some authorities, a social organization, respect for a complex system of values and beliefs, a special sense of aesthetics that leads to a strong attachment to individual and collective freedom, [all of] which define ethnic boundaries which distinguish them from other ethnic groups." (Decree 2957 (2010) Article 4.1)

Nonetheless, it should be noted that this description also simplifies the observed reality in which the kinship ties to the community and across different *kumpeñy* may vary, as will be observed later in this chapter.

The fact that the Roma sought recognition as an ethnic minority in symmetry with other ethnic minorities already recognized institutionally, and that the main international legal framework drew form ILO Convention 169, determined the emphasis on strictly cultural elements. This contrasts strongly with the European contexts, where the Romani identity has been politicized and stigmatized and often has been framed in relation to the difficult socio-economic situation and exclusion faced by

Roma in Europe; the role of experts, scholars and policy-makers has been dominant in shaping these narratives. In contrast, in Colombia, the Roma as a group has been strictly defined in terms of self-established cultural criteria and not socio-economic status.

In such an interpretation there is little margin for plurality – rather, the Roma are presented as a unique, homogeneous minority. In fact, this also reflects the legislative approach to culture (cultural diversity, ethnic minorities) in Colombia, dominated by an essentialist perception of culture (Rossbach de Olmos 2011; Vera Lugo 2006). One informant argued that:

> "Several critics of the constitution notice that an essentialist idea of 'culture' predominates, which is not in line with developments in social sciences since the 50 's and 60's." [COL_11, personal communication]

Indeed, as argued by some scholars with regards to the legislative identity framing of indigenous groups (Vera Lugo 2006) and afro-descendant people in Colombia (Rossbach de Olmos 2011), these categories are founded on "radical 'othership', exoticism and cultural essentialism" (Lugo, 2006:206). Arguably, legislative framing of Roma in the Colombian context also reflects these tendencies and is based on an essentializing conceptualization of Roma. Nonetheless, it seems that rather than being imposed (as arguably is the case for indigenous and Afro-Colombians) this tendency towards essentialism is self-articulated by Roma themselves. These narratives, I would argue, reflect the application of "strategic essentialism": "a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (Spivak & Landry, 1996: 214).

Such a frame of collective identity presents the Roma as a rather homogeneous group. Despite the fact that Roma in Colombia generally consider themselves as a traditional community, with a strong attachment to traditional values and norms, there is, naturally, a level of diversity of compliance towards these norms. It should be noted that the level of perceived traditionalism, as well as life-style and kinship relations, varies between each *kumpania* (the *Kumpania* of Sabana Larga is considered the least traditional, while the *kumpeñy* in Girón and Cúcuta are the most strict in terms of traditional norms). There are also important differences regarding location (rural or urban), age, gender, religion or level of education. Furthermore, it should be considered that although Roma create narratives which emphasize their attachment to "Romani traditions", these should also not be seen as a stable property. After all, the arrival of Evangelism to Colombia and the gradual process of Roma conversion has also had an impact on Romani lifestyles and inevitably alters the perception of what can be considered as "traditional" or which elements of those traditions are desired or prohibited in the context of Evangelism (for example, the fact that Evangelism prohibits fortune-telling or the practice of mourning known as *pomana*). The level of impact of Evangelism on practiced "Roma traditions" also varies between families, depending on their attachment and application of religious norms in their daily lives.

The emphasis on cultural elements is not accidental and can be considered a strategic choice. On the one hand, it draws from the language used by other ethnic minorities recognized in Colombia – hence, references to the tribal character of Roma, worldview (*cosmovisión*), common descent, traditional

authorities and justice system. On the other hand, the emphasis on elements such as nomadism or legal norms (*Kriss Romani*) provides a basis for issuing claims which can be met under existing legal frameworks or for establishing new legislation which would comply with Romani norms and values.

The process of negotiating unique elements which define who the Roma are was not free from internal tensions. The most contentious issues related to the status of children born from mixed marriages. While there was no problem with considering as Roma those children born of a Romani man and a non-Romani woman (principle of patrilineal descent), the children born from a Romani woman and a non-Roma man were initially proposed to be excluded by the legal representatives of *kumpeñy*. This discriminatory status conferred on non-Romani fatherhood was claimed to be justified by Roma cultural norms. This proposal made by legal representatives (men) was strongly opposed by Romani women of Romani organizations. A PROROM member recounts these discussions:

> "Let's see, this proposal was made by someone who wanted to contradict me when I proposed that. Besides, there were some girls whose mother was a Roma and the father *Gadjo*, and the whole world came after me. But basically, politically for Roma this is not correct. Anyway because there will always be a kind of discrimination against people who are not Roma. For example, some people in Sabana Larga are not Roma because the father is *Gadjo*. Additionally, there is a large degree of erosion and that, for the old and for the Roma world is part of the problem. It is allegedly contaminating the Roma, because if this were otherwise, the marriage of a Roma father and a *Gadjo* mother there would be no problem, because it supposedly is 'patrilineal' and 'patrilocal' ". [COL_1, recorded interview]

After weeks of negotiations, it was finally agreed that all children born from one Romani parent can be considered Roma. In the end, this was also included in Decree 2957 (2010):

> "Without prejudice to patrilineal descent, the sons and daughters of a Romni woman and gadzho father (not Roma) living in kumpeñy will be considered as Rrom [Roma]." (Article 4.1)

The fact that the principle of descent of Romani identity was consecrated by the Decree to be inclusive of mixed marriages of both types (with non-Roma mother or non-Roma father), doesn't mean that the same recognition is granted in daily life within *kumpeñy*. In fact, numerous examples where collected during fieldwork in which children of a Romani woman and a non-Roma father were excluded from the community and were not considered to be Roma. Interviews with Romani men, especially with legal representatives, revealed that in most cases they don't consider such people to be Roma. Furthermore, Bustamante argues that marriages can be considered a way to gain or lose Romani identity (Bustamante Cardona 2012). Indeed, Romani women, if they choose to marry a non-Roma, are often sanctioned by their community. According to Bustamante Cardona: "By contrast a Romani woman can only marry a man belonging to the Romani people. To disobey such an arrangement of Romani Kriss and to marry a non-Roma man, the sanction established for the mere occurrence of such event is to lose her Romni [Romani woman] quality." (Bustamante Cardona, 2012:53)

Others also document such events, in which Romani women were excluded from the community because they married a non-Roma (Palacio Sánchez 2007b). In fact, it is often claimed that marriages between Romani women and non-Roma men are forbidden, but exceptions are accepted as well:

> "It is not accepted that a Romani woman marries a Gadjo and if she does, it is a shame for the community and she is expelled from the family (this is something that happened a lot in the past, but lately there is more possibility for a Gadjo man to be accepted if he is ready to assume the [Romani] traditions.[229]"

Thus, contrary cases were also found in which mixed marriages of Romani women with non-Romani men were accepted and their children were also considered to be Roma. A Romani women member of PROROM also argues:

> "Regardless of all those 'Mum and Dad' discussions, sometimes I think it's important in different terms. But for me it is also important in the context of the customs. Because I know people who have a Romani mother and a Romani father and have no idea of the Romani [lifestyle, traditions]. So, it is a set of elements that come together to talk in terms of [being] Roma. It is not only the blood." [COL_1, recorded interview]

Therefore, despite encountering often strict rules and corresponding statements with regards to the required endogamy of Romani women, the application of these rules, and ultimately, the type of relationship through kinship ties within *kumpeñy* and across *kumpeñy* varies.

Corresponding frames? Public self-narratives of ethnicity and the Romani community

While the frame of "who we are as a group" has been established, this narrative refers more to *who is being represented* rather than *who we are aiming to mobilize*. All relevant actors (leaders, organizations) are concerned with representation of their local Romani communities – and are oriented towards the external world outside of these communities, such as public institutions, academia, the media or the general public of the mainstream society. As was explained earlier, Romani leaders and activists create frames which focus primarily on cultural elements that distinguish the Roma from other social groups in Colombia. The use of "strategic essentialism" tends to provide a cultural and folkloristic image of Roma, in which Romani cultural elements are reified and oftentimes exaggerated. Some Roma are critical of these excessively folkloristic narratives. One Romani leader argues:

> "[She] sells a story about Roma that is not true… we seem like elves, free… it is very mythological but has little to do with reality and can be harmful because it does not reflect the reality of the culture, the problems that exist." [COL_15, field-notes]

Furthermore, such narratives are providing a homogenizing image of who the Romani people are, disregarding the existing internal diversity of Romani individuals, families or communities. These

[229] http://gitanosencolombia.blogspot.com/

narratives leave no room for a plurality of diverse expressions of Romani identities and lifestyles. While they may work effectively in the context of political activism, it may also potentially have negative effects on the life of Roma within the *kumpeñy*. These discourses, crafted predominantly for the external public and authorities, also have an impact within. Institutionalization of defining features and cultural elements, as in the case of Decree 2957 (2010), imposes and reifies norms and cultural traits within the community itself. Rather than reflecting the existing plurality and diversity of Romani lifestyles and identities, certain norms are reified and institutionalized as defining elements. As in the case of controversial debates regarding Romani women's participation in public spaces, which was described earlier, institutionalization of an essentialist perspective of "Romani identity and culture" may also lead to imposing rules and behaviours which tend to be more varied and flexible in reality. In the case of Romani women's participation, the legal representatives effectively hindered the participation of Romani women by invoking "Romani culture". A limited group of individuals have a monopoly on framing cultural discourses and legitimizing those as "acceptable" or not within the context of Romani life, disregarding whether those statements are true as fixed or flexible attributes. The community itself has no control over these statements which may, as in the case of women's participation, have a legitimizing effect and impose codes and behaviours which may have a negative impact for some sectors of the Romani population.

Such essentialist discourses and their institutionalization also provide a rather static view of culture and identity. It provides an impression of Romani culture as something given, fixed and stable, in which the status of "ancient traditions" is reified. The discourse crafted by Romani leaders, which have been institutionalized by the power of decrees, establishes a historical frame emphasizing the continuity and permanence of Romani traditions. Nonetheless, the reality of every-day life of Romani communities is much more complex and the shape and form of "Romani traditions and culture" varies, depending on various factors explained previously. Scholarship, though not exempt from essentialism, has long abandoned a reductionist perspective on culture (Geertz 1973), arguing that cultures as such are living organisms and evolve over time. The institutionalization of cultural traits, however, as in the case of Colombia, imposes them as something fixed and creates a framework against which "authenticity" of being Roma can be evaluated.

Furthermore, Romani activists and legal representatives act as public communicators, intermediaries and interlocutors, aiming to represent collective claims and interests in public and political spheres. In this process, they concentrate on targeting the external public, whether the majority society or State officials and institutions. However, little attention has been focused within – working towards the community, or aiming at mobilization of members of the community towards greater participation. Lozano Uribe argues that "Finally it is important to note that while PROROM has been concerned with advocacy and community awareness regarding certain advantages that the contact with the different State institutions and with the majority society can generate, as an organization it has focused most of its management efforts on work towards the outside, that is, to make the Roma visible before various government agencies whose activity somehow relates to the Romani people. Such an approach led the

organization to at times work too autonomously from the community, a fact that has led to misunderstandings and tensions" (Lozano Uribe, 2005:50).

Indeed, it seems that the Romani community is not the target of the work of Romani organisations and its leaders. They are the *raison d'être* of their existence, which justifies their activity and advocacy directed at State institutions. But the community itself is not envisioned to possess potential agency. They are perceived as passive, direct and/or indirect beneficiaries of their work but no attention is placed on empowering or emancipatory dynamics. Such an approach towards the community becomes a strong demobilizing force, which impedes others from joining the ethnic mobilization process as active participants. A Romani founder of PROROM explained this dynamic very well:

> "Very hard work was done towards the outside. But I always insisted on doing harder work on the inside, which could not be done. First, because to do that work many resources are required which we never had. It is [work to] change the ways of a whole community, and it is very difficult. We missed the more inwards work, and now I intend to do that and it is beginning to work, and new people are emerging. It was the first sign that we are not doing the job well. For ten years there were no new people. And this is a sign that you are doing it wrong. That there are circles of power and closed control that do not allow you to participate. For example, my strategy is my attitude to people. Many people from universities are getting close to this process. I had a discourse for them: you can approach the process and collaborate. We're not going to demand anything in return, you just help us. That was the discourse. But other [discourses] were generated and many people turned away because they said that the circle of power was very strong, there is a lot of jealousy. So many people moved away from the process because it does not hold together." [COL_15, recorded interview]

6.3.d. Searching for a "symmetry of rights". Objectives and aims of Romani ethnic mobilization

The Romani ethnic mobilization has been greatly influenced by other ethnic minorities in shaping their narratives, defining objectives and voicing their claims. Arguably, the blueprint for ethnic mobilization has been inspired by the indigenous movement. In fact, Dalila Gómez argues that the Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia is:

> "a struggle that has drunk the ferment of other struggles given by other peoples and cultures in Colombia, which have been intended to build a country where the principle of equality and cultural difference do not remain in open confrontation as has been the case until now." (Gómez Baos, 2011:11).

The indigenous struggle for rights in Colombia has a long history and has enabled the legal reforms granted by the Constitution of 1991. This influence, traceable also among other minority groups, is visible in the very objectives and language used in voicing collective claims by Romani leaders as well. A member of PROROM further clarifies:

> "Indigenous and black struggles have been an incentive for the Romani struggle in this country. There have been those strategic alliances that have allowed us to move towards a rights framework." [COL_1, recorded interview]

Rationale for ethnic mobilization

The engagement of Roma in socio-political affairs was sparked by a shifting political context which provided a new legal framework for the treatment of ethnic minorities in the country. The realization that Roma are, in fact, part of the diverse cultural panorama in Colombia, and can thus opt for differential treatment and minority-specific benefits, became a driving force behind their activism. While the new Constitution was being debated and later on approved in 1991, the Roma, were completely absent from the public debates which accompanied the National Constituent Assembly. It was years later, and thanks to the involvement of a small group of non-Roma supporters, that the Roma realized that the shifting political context created a favourable conjuncture for minority-rights recognition, which could be beneficial to the Colombian Romani community. Dalila Gómez says it was at that time that they:

> "realized that the Political System of Colombia from the National Constituent Assembly and the subsequent Constitution of 1991, created a series of political opportunities which guarantee, through constitutional articles, important ethnic and cultural rights to significant sectors of existing ethnic minorities in the country" (Gómez Baos, 2011:10).

This development was crucial for PROROM, the first Romani organization, which capitalized on existing opportunities:

> "to demand from the State and the Government recognition of the Roma as an ethnic group, and particularly that they were an important part of cultural and ethnic diversity in Colombia, and have made important contributions to the construction of this diffuse national identity" (ibid.).

Thus, it was not due to particular grievances or problems suffered by the Roma in Colombia, nor was it sparked by concrete occurrences such as violence or experienced racism. Rather, the realization that Roma were excluded from policies, which at that moment were crystallizing to attend to specific needs of ethnic minorities, granting them recognition or minority-provisions, and which the Roma, in principle, could also benefit from. The involvement of non-Roma supporters was key in explaining the significance of those developments, and helping them to realize the emerging opportunities. Gamboa argues that:

> "and this is how, knowing intimately the significant achievements that the 1991 Constitution established with regard to respect for and protection of ethnic and cultural diversity of the country and the recognition of collective rights for ethnic groups, they realized the abrupt asymmetry between the constitutional and legal achievements obtained by indigenous, Afro-descendants, and Raizal people and the enormous legal vacuum in the protection of the ethnic and cultural integrity of Romani people of Colombia." (Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:2)

This gradual realization of a handful of Roma who maintained a close relationship with non-Roma supporters, was projected more broadly among members of the *kumpania* in Girón thanks to a specific development which occurred in that same period. A regional newspaper "Vanguardia Liberal" published a short article on 27th December 1997 entitled "Tiempos de Gitanas" (*Times of Romani women)* which included clearly racist comments regarding Romani women (Gamboa Martínez, Paternina Espinosa, and Gómez 2000; Gamboa Martínez 2004b; H. Paternina 2014; Gómez Baos 2011). The article caused outrage among the *kumpania* and shortly after its publication, the *Shere Roma* of the *kumpania* issued a letter of protest to the editor of the newspaper and to the Division for Ethnic Affairs of the Ombudsman, which intervened in support of the Romani protest. The action immediately brought results – days after, the newspaper issued a clarification note and printed the letter of protest sent to them by the *kumpania* (H. Paternina 2014; Gamboa Martínez, Paternina Espinosa, and Gómez 2000). The success of this intervention – both the support received by the Ombudsman's office as well as the positive response of the local newspaper – motivated the Roma to become active. They realized their own agency, understanding that collective and coordinated action could bring desired results.

Drawing from the experiences of other ethnic minorities in Colombia, based on the existing legal frameworks and provisions, the Roma engaged in a collective struggle to demand "symmetry" with rights which were already granted to other ethnic groups. Arguably, therefore, the choice of frames of collective action were not so much based on concrete needs and problems, detectable but unattended by the State, by rather by the possibilities of what could be accomplished under existing legal frameworks. In an interview, looking back, a member of PROROM summarized their objectives during the first years of its existence:

> "From the beginning we started to work on public policy issues, it was initially visibilization towards the majority society and to state entities. Later we did a process of presence [participation] in the institutions, in the media such as television and the press. Also in academic areas and participation in local, national and international scenes. We also took the Constitution of 1991 which allowed us to move in the rights frame. And Convention 169 [of ILO], which basically allows the public consultation of ethnic groups in this country." [COL_1, recorded interview]

We will now look into this process in more detail.

Against invisibility – the struggle for recognition

In order to become recognized institutionally and seek "symmetry of rights", the first step was to engage in a robust campaign for recognition of their historical existence. After all, "it's not the same to be invisible as to not exist[230]". The existence of Roma needed to be acknowledged in the first place, in order to proceed with the collective demands regarding specific rights or provisions. As was explained in previous chapters, the Roma remained in a space of "invisibility" - imposed but also self-

[230] http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/el-pueblo-rom-colombia/63243-3

imposed as a “strategy of ethnic resistance”(Gamboa, Gómez, and Paternina 2002) – thus the process of “visibilization” became the principle task of the Romani actors.

Ever since the beginning of the first Romani organization, the leaders voiced their concerns over the historical invisibility of this community, often referred to as discriminatory. In numerous sources we can find assertions like: “historically we have been excluded”. In fact, according to PROROM, one of their major objectives was the struggle to regain visibility. Gómez Baos writes:

> “In Colombia, one of the first interests of PROROM has been working for visibility, as the Roma have always remained in the memory of inhabitants of the remotest municipalities, who always have something to remember when they [the Roma] arrived in their caravans with their contagious joy and surrounded by mystery wanting to keep secret their most suspicious traditions and customs.” (Gómez Baos, 2011:103)

The Roma provided evidence to demonstrate that “they have been in Colombia since before the Republic existed”. This, in fact, was among the key strategic priorities for the initial years of Romani ethnic mobilization. One informant argues:

> “I would say this is key to the Colombian context, a country that doesn’t think of itself as a country of migrants. The efforts of Juan Carlos and Hugo have been especially designed to search for documents about the presence of the Roma back in colonial times, while no attempt was made (apart from some videos) to really communicate the history of families still living in Colombia.” [COL_11, personal communication]

A good example of such narratives of emphasizing the historical presence of Roma even prior to the creation of the Colombian republic, is the intervention on behalf of PROROM to the Special Rapporteur of the UN in 2003:

> “Although we, the Roma, have lived in Colombia since colonial times, that is before the current Republic was shaped, until very recently, in the best cases, we were considered as strangers, newcomers and foreigners. Our immeasurable contributions to the process of configuring the ‘Colombian nationality’ have never been taken into account and, conversely, have been silenced and deliberately thrown into the limbo of oblivion. This means that in Colombia the official history of the Romani people has no place, is not mentioned anywhere, it's as if it never existed.” (PROROM 2003)

In these narratives, Roma emphasize their status as a people (rarely using the term “community”; other minorities also refer to themselves as “a people”), underlining their different and unique status as a separate cultural group:

> “contrary to our desire to be considered as a people, many government institutions persist in the idea of placing us under the ambiguous category of "ethnic minority", which aim to recognize only individualistic rights targeted to "persons belonging to ethnic minorities" and ignore the customary collective and economic rights of our people.” (PROROM 2003)

The first efforts, thus, were centred around finding evidence which would prove the existence of Roma in Colombia, prior to its consolidation as a Republic. This process was not without numerous difficulties. Gamboa et al argued:

> "About the arrival of Roma in Colombia the written sources are almost non-existent. In this sense documents, elusive as they may be, which would indicate the date and the routes of arrival of the first Romani groups to our country, were not found. This situation of the absence of documental sources obstructs enormously the reconstruction of the trajectory of Roma in Colombia and obliges to turn almost exclusively to oral tradition." (Gamboa et al., 2002:255)

Indeed, the role of non-Roma advisors in the first years of existence of PROROM, most notably of Paternina and Gamboa, was crucial for this process. Their input as historians and scholars, helped to provide authoritative narratives regarding the Roma in Colombia. Esteban Acuña mentions that:

> "With the help of historians Juan Carlos Gamboa […] and Hugo Alejandro Paternina […] we have been finding, through searching between files and ethno-history, references to a set of communities to which the Colombian historians had not been paying a lot of attention. Following the reflections on ethnicity, these works are not only reinterpretations of history from documents seen differently, they are also a way of demonstrating the permanence of the Romani people in Colombia so they can claim the status that belongs to them. But above all, they give meaning (remembering Eriksen) to a new way of being Gitano in this country, now connected with activists of their own people and other ethnic groups elsewhere in the world, and in direct relation to the political and public". (Acuña, 2008:169)

In the early years, especially between 1998-2003 a lot of articles (some academic ones) as well as papers, and documents were generated by PROROM with the objective of providing sources of information about Colombian Roma. In this process, not only historical documents or scholarship served to provide evidence of Romani existence. Curiously, also literary works served as a source of evidence, which legitimized Romani claims for recognising their existence. PROROM activists most notably used the literary work of Gabriel García Márquez and his novel "One Hundred Years of Solitude". This book in itself is among the seminal works of Colombian cultural heritage; according to McMurray, it is often read as a metaphoric, critical interpretation of Colombian history (McMurray 1969). PROROM used many excerpts of the book in which numerous references to Romani people are made as evidence of their historic presence in Colombian territory. They write:

> "Their presence in our territory is recreated beautifully in the pages of the most famous novel by a twentieth century Colombian , 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' , in which this work will be supported to indicate the constant, although 'invisible' presence of Romani people in our country." (PROROM, 2005a:10)

In the PROROM publication "Pueblo Rom de Colombia" the chapters are interlaced with excerpts from the book which serve as an illustration of Romani cultural heritage, lifestyles and traditions. The personality of Melquíades became an important symbol in the struggle for recognizing Roma's

existence – numerous publications issued by PROROM make reference to this fictional figure (PROROM 2005b; Gómez Baos 2002).

The struggle for increased (political, legal and epistemic) visibility was a strategic objective of utmost importance – unless Roma were recognized as a minority, they would not be granted any rights as a specific group. In this process of gaining visibility:

> “the Roma undoubtedly have combined a series of symbolic , political, social resources of diverse character that have allowed them to be included in different state norms”. (Gómez Baos, 2011:10)

Although now the Roma have been recognized as an ethnic minority, and thus can enjoy special rights, the question of visibility still remains important. The question of visibility is used pragmatically and strategically in relation to various legislative processes, allowing the Roma to expose (visibilize) concrete cultural or social elements which enables them to be included under new legislative processes, as was the case with the Law of the Land or Law on Victims. Thus, the “visibilization discourse” is still present as a narrative which allows the Roma to be “visibilized” in different public policies, or in other words, allowing the “Roma issue” to transcend to other legislation such as the National Plans of Development.

Cultural preservation and protection

In an interview a member of PROROM often underlined the importance of cultural preservation, as one of the objectives of their struggle. She argued:

> “Today, globalization, the globalization [*mundialización*] of the economy looks for individualistic, consumerist, selfish beings and you can already see a dynamic of homogenisation of cultures where they will propose a unique [form of] being, to eat the same food, look and dress the same ... So what is the struggle of the peoples? Precisely to survive in terms of the sustainability of their cultures over time. When the door is more open, there are things to be closed, because otherwise we will disappear. And the richness of the world is precisely in the differences of thought, cultures ... That's what keeps us in the continuing and every-day struggle, in terms of the framework of collective rights, to build housing with relevance in the context of the differential approach and customs, to validate the *Romani Kriss,* we have our Roma law. Precisely in order to survive in a world that is very hostile to our people.” [COL_1, recorded interview]

By the power of the Colombian constitution (art.7), the State has the obligation to protect and promote its cultural diversity. Already in its first year of existence, PROROM’s leaders had urged the Colombian State to undertake actions to protect and promote Romani culture. Venecer Gómez writes:

> “The gradual loss of features of our culture is associated with the economic crisis being experienced by most Romani families. The historical management that our people have given to their different artistic expressions, lifestyles and customs, ways of thinking and acting, today

> faces a dramatic extinction, lacking the means and resources of all kinds to organize the different events and traditional festivities that are inherent in our culture.
>
> This situation has been going on for a long time and today we hope, with the support and the institutions of the Colombian State responsible for ensuring the preservation of the traditions of the Colombian ethnic groups, that the formal processes of designing research and cultural revitalization will begin." (Gómez 1999)

Thus, similar to other ethnic minorities and using the existing legislation, the Roma also seek the fulfilment of their constitutional rights. Dalila Gómez writes:

> "One of the great purposes of PROROM is the constant pursuit of respect and guarantees for the survival of their cultural identity and their identity elements that constitute it as people, as well as better conditions of life according to their own worldview without the pressure to assimilate into mainstream society." (Gómez Baos, 2011:102)

The Constitution of 1991 and the subsequent legal acts, provide minorities with special rights, especially and explicitly concerning their culture. The State leaves an important degree of autonomy and self-determination concerning minority cultures, traditions and practices. Everything that can be considered as part of cultural tradition or cultural heritage falls, therefore, under the exclusive control of the minorities and the State is obliged to accommodate these special cultural traits in specific legislation. The articulation of these specific cultural rights by and for other minorities becomes a roadmap for Romani leaders in seeking institutional and formal recognition of cultural practices. Thus, the Roma seek symmetrical rights with those granted to other minorities and in articulating specific cultural demands they often seek inspiration from the already existing legislation of other ethnic groups.

To justify these claims, Roma construct frames of their own culture, often adapting the language/vocabulary to that used in current legislation with regards to other ethnic groups. This is why often, in documents published by Romani organizations, we may find references to "intangible heritage" (*patrimonio intangible*) or "traditional knowledge" (*conocimientos tradicionales*); references to Mother Earth (*Pacha Mama*) or to a special relationship with Nature (and its elements: water, fire, earth, air "[…] which in general is the magic of love" (Gómez Baos, 2011:74). Even elements often associated with negative stereotypes, such as fortune-telling or mystical/ magical knowledge are accommodated as part of the diversity of Romani cultural practices ("magic as a form of resistance" (PROROM 2005a); as traditional knowledge). Those cultural elements which are difficult to capture "objectively" (unlike language, customs and rituals) are presented as part of "Roma mentality or Roma spirituality" – intangible elements of Romani culture which are equally difficult to question. This leaves a margin of flexibility for crafting compelling frames of Romani culture which later on can be used as evidence in voicing specific claims for concrete cultural rights. Such narratives of Romani culture are reminiscent of strategic essentialism and are an example of how skilfully cultural narratives are used to obtain specific – and tangible – rights. As a result, Roma today enjoy a number of specific rights –

both through specific Roma-targeted legislation as well as by explicit inclusion of Roma in general legislation for ethnic minorities.

Through collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, PROROM has been leading the process of identifying and articulating the elements of the intangible heritage of the Roma. A result of this work is a publication, "Identification and recommendations for protecting the intangible heritage of Romani people in Colombia", published by the Ministry of Culture in 2009. In another of their publications, they argue:

> "In principle the intangible cultural heritage of the Romani people is contemplated from the same worldview and represents the relationships established with their natural environment and their practices and customs that are experienced in everyday life, including multiple relationships built with the stars, plants, strength of will, with time, the here and now, the power of words, spiritual and mental strength, all encapsulated in their customary practices." (Gómez Baos, 2011:77)

The process of identifying and articulating the elements which compose "Roma intangible heritage" leads to a more schematic description of those elements. Below is the graphic presentation of those elements which appeared in one of the publications of the Ministry of Culture.:

Figure 7. Intangible Romani heritage.(Gómez Baos, 2009:77)

There are also a number of other studies commissioned by the Ministry of Culture (Padilla Vega 2011; Arbelaez 2010), which aim at reviewing the current state of Romani culture and providing recommendations on how to provide the institutional tools to promote and protect Romani cultural heritage. Scholarship on Roma in Colombia has also been strongly influenced by these cultural narratives. It should be noted in this context that the most active members of Romani organizations have been greatly influential in shaping these narratives, which permeate, or often are directly included, in scholarship and policy making on Roma with regards to culture.

Such framing of Romani culture and the process of building up evidence and pressure to seek further cultural recognition is done with clear political objectives. In 2010, some sources reported that the Roma were seeking recognition of their culture as a national heritage of Colombia (Cifuentes 2010). In an article, it is argued: "[it] is a first step towards a true state recognition to ensure the permanence of Romani culture as national heritage. This constant search, rather than [being] overshadowed by the difficulties encountered in the presentation of the project to be recognized as heritage, has become a future achievement of the Romani people [which is] increasingly visible in Colombia." (Cifuentes 2010)

This process, which began with the first Romani organizations, most notably PROROM, has led to the crystallization, based on demonstrated needs and demands, of more concrete areas of action with regards to culture. The Ministry of Culture has been directly influenced by these discourses of Romani organizations and leaders. In a public presentation, the Ministry of Culture outlined the principles of their public cultural policy for the Roma[231]. This policy reflects specific demands made by Roma regarding their cultural preservation (some of these demands have already been granted, entirely or partially) which are:

- Recognition and strengthening of the identity of Roma laws (*zakono*)
- Protection and promotion of Romani language
- Strengthening of ethno-educational programs
- Consolidation of Roma history
- Recognition of Roma traditional authorities
- Programs and large-scale campaigns for awareness-raising
- Protection of Romani heritage
- Participation and inclusion of Romani culture and identity in public spaces
- Preservation and exchange of traditional knowledge

These priorities, articulated by Romani organizations and leaders, and incorporated into action plans of the Ministry of Culture, are reflected through a variety of specific actions which aim at attending to

231 http://www.mincultura.gov.co/areas/poblaciones/publicaciones/Documents/Cartilla%20Pol%C3%ADtica%20Cultura%20para%20el%20Pueblo%20Gitano.pdf

these demands and contributing to the preservation and promotion of Romani culture, outlined in detail in the same document.

It is important to note that the claims regarding cultural preservation and promotion, and the cultural narratives crafted by Romani leaders, are detached from the human rights discourse or from socio-economic demands. This contrasts strongly with European Romani activism, in which cultural or identity-related demands are overshadowed by socio-economic demands.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the articulation of these cultural demands is greatly influenced by the work of PROROM, not only of its current members by also, significantly, by the non-Roma original founders of PROROM. After all, this organization has been the most active entity in shaping the discourses on Romani culture and identity. In accordance with the legislative framework in Colombia, namely the one regarding the right to self-determination, these self-proclaimed Romani discourses translate directly into legislation and institutional engagement through programs and projects. These discourses are neither contested nor contrasted with scholarship or opposing Romani voices – those Romani representative structures which are seen as legitimate by public institutions, have an almost exclusive monopoly over these narratives, and consequently, over the way in which political and institutional priorities with regards to Roma are shaped.

Finally, similarly to the frame of collective identity, these cultural discourses are strongly essentialist, ethicized and as such, strongly homogenizing. The frame of "Romani culture", especially through its legitimization through policy-making and existing legislation on Roma, reifies Romani cultural elements and builds an image which, to an extent, corresponds to the popular romanticized stereotypes associated with Roma (magic, freedom, "the sense of here and now" etc.). It is a process which legitimizes the myths and popular images associated with Roma, over-emphasizing and romanticizing cultural elements as "traditional". It is also a process which leaves little room for plurality and diversity of lifestyles and perspectives within Romani communities – as was argued earlier, in contrast to the homogenizing frames crafted by Romani leaders, this internal diversity can actually be observed among different Romani families and communities.

Granting of special rights

According to institutional documents, the State is obliged to: "promote and strengthen the differential approach and affirmative actions that contribute to the recognition and respect for cultural identity and cultural integrity of ethnic groups and rural and urban local communities, social appreciation of their cultural expressions, and the removal of barriers that prevent individuals and communities from accessing and enjoying the assets and property of their culture"(*Compendio de Políticas Culturales*, 2010:373).

The use of differential approach and affirmative action as a strategy for accommodating minority rights, opens up opportunities for demanding special, minority-specific provisions. Consequently, special provisions are not only granted with regards to culture *per se* (such as material and immaterial culture, crafts, arts, music etc.) but permeates other policy sectors, such as education, health, housing, or justice. This has important implications for how public policies for Roma are being shaped. The need

to protect Romani culture and heritage translates into other specific policies, always respecting the principle of affirmative action and differential approach. Consequently, different Ministries are obliged to provide specific provisions for Roma, in accordance with their field of competence (Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Social Protection). This logic enabled the granting of Roma-specific provisions in concrete policy areas, for example in recognition of *Romani Kriss*[232] or the granting of subsidized access to the General Social Security System to all Roma (by the power of Decree 2957 (2010)). This special treatment through differential approach had been already imposed by Decree 1957 (2010). However, its transposition to specific policies is still an on-going process. In fact, one of the principle claims made currently refers to transposing this decree to the status of a legal norm, enabling the implementation of Roma-specific public policies in accordance with Romani culture and lifestyles.

Among some of the specific demands which have been articulated with clarity by the Romani activists is the exemption of Roma from military service (argued to be contrary to Romani culture and beliefs). This had already been framed as a specific objective of Romani activism in 1998. Venecer Gómez argues:

> "Traditionally the Romani people have been and always will be a peaceful people. Never in the history of the Roma of Colombia has there been an armed confrontation, and we believe that today we will not go against our age-old traditions of peace and nonviolence. That is why we are against the members of our people being enrolled in the ranks of armies of any kind." (Gómez 1999)

In accordance with Ruling C-370 of 2002 of the Constitutional Court regarding the extension of the legal symmetry of rights granted to indigenous communities, the Roma also demand exemption from military service. Currently only indigenous people are exempt from military service (art. 27, Law 48 from 1993). In several documents produced by Romani organizations, most notably by PROROM, the cultural reasons are given which justify the need for establishing such law for Roma, arguing that:

> "The Śere Romengue or traditional authorities, exercising their special jurisdiction or Kriss Rromaní in practice have created a special law that has led tacitly and implicitly to be considered by the gadjo society (non-Roma) that Romani men are culturally forbidden to participate in the armed forces and, of course, and needless to say, much less illegal armed groups." (Gómez Baos, 2011:88)

[232] The indigenous were granted this right by the power of the Constitution (Chapter V, art. 246, 247 and 248). It is important to note, however, that *Kriss Romani*, despite its recognition, has not been incorporated or validated as a sub-juridical system. Rather, the practice of *Kriss* continues as part of Romani traditions, but there is still a legal void which would regulate this as part of Colombian legal system (Cardona 2010).

In similar spirit, and based on cultural discourses, the Roma demand special provisions with regards to housing, and more specifically, access to subsided social protection housing[233]. Again, these demands were articulated in the first years of Romani activism in Colombia. Venecer Gómez argued in 1998:

> “Formerly Romani families had an active nomadism [nomadic lifestyle], and went roaming the country without any problem, installing awnings [tents] in our towns where they arrived, providing many services without purchasing land or housing. It was a time when violence did not touch the Rom and there was no sense of the insecurity that we are currently experiencing, which has forced us to change our awnings [tents] for permanent housing, which involves a number of new costs: leases, public services, property taxes ... which we were not used to and which hurt our fragile economy, and which does not allow us in most cases to have an acceptable standard of living. This awareness that the Roma have acquired as a result of current social conditions – violence, insecurity, precariousness of life, economic crisis ... - raises the need to acquire housing, but with the disadvantage of its difficult access.” (Gómez 1999)

These demands have also been framed with regards to cultural traditions (the practice of nomadism) and with regards to armed conflict and violence, which has effectively altered Romani traditions and thus, its consequences need to be attended by the State. It is argued that the Roma were “sedentarized” as a consequence of social circumstances related especially to the armed conflict – thus it is an imposition which alters the “traditional” Romani culture, and not a choice made by the Roma willingly to become sedentary (Sentence C-359/13 of 2013 of the Constitutional Court).

Other specific demands have also been articulated in the areas of health care (among them the social security coverage granted to Roma in 2010), education and employment (emphasizing the cultural aspect of “informal economy” (Gómez 1999; Gómez Baos 2011)). For example, with regards to education, a Romani representative of PROROM explained what it means that they want education “the Roma way”. In an interview, she argued:

> “In that sense, I think that the issue of education is so important and so vital for Roma.... What happens is that we want a relevant education, an education that marks, which has Romani culture as a reference. Not education that teaches you how to act the *Gadjo* way, although this is also useful to me because it helps to deal with an intercultural environment. Besides that, social groups are dynamic. The Romani people have a great capacity to adapt; for this reason, the culture has survived more than ten centuries. I think education is something that is owed to us and we need Romani professionals, teachers ... Everything from the framework of customs, in terms of the need to ask ourselves and rethink what is important. And in this country we are seeing something like an awakening. Here there are children who finish high

[233] Legally this right was granted in 2013 thanks to the Ruling of Constitutional Court C-359 of 2013: “Declare enforceable Articles 13 and 28, partial, of Law 1537 of 2012, on the understanding that the prioritization criteria for access to housing projects of social interest and priority interest must also take into account the people Roma or *Gitano* and island communities [*Raizal*], as ethnic and cultural groups in the nation.”

> school, complete primary, who want to enter university. Because it gives them a chance to open to a world where there are more possibilities than if they cannot read or write. But it also poses the challenge of remaining what we are. In the end it is about what we want to do because if not, we will all be *Gadje*.” [COL_1, recorded interview]

In searching for recognition of Roma-specific rights, the question of nomadism has been of utmost importance. Nomadism is framed as an essential cultural characteristic – related to specific types of economic activity, as a lifestyle based on increased mobility (for example, for “family reasons” (Gómez Baos 2011)), as a special relationship with territory, as a mind-set and a mentality (referred to discursively by some Romani activists as “neo-nomadism”). Nomadic lifestyle (although today rarely practiced in the same way as in the past) is used as a justification for specific provisions in education, health and housing.

According to data, 35.2% of the Romani population changed their place of residence in the past 5 years (Gómez Baos, 2011:95), evidence of a high mobility rate but not necessarily of nomadism. Nonetheless, Romani organizations demand recognition of this lifestyle (included in Decree 2957 (2010)), the granting of specific rights regarding free circulation (cross-country circulation also proposed), establishment of campsites and other guarantees which will enable cultivation of this lifestyle. It should be noted, however, that the ownership of property among Roma may also contribute to the reduction of frequency of the mobility described above.

The emphasis on nomadism is not in contradiction with the claims for recognition of a territorial character of the *kumpeñy*, or maintaining a special relationship with territory. The Roma also provide their input and articulate specific demands regarding the land, its ownership and use. For example, the Roma have expressed demands for the inclusion of Roma in the Law of Territory and Rural Development (debated during the period of conducting fieldwork) and other provisions regarding the territorial character of Roma. During the years 1999-2001, when the first proposal of the Law of Territory and Rural Development (LOOT) was discussed, the Roma initially were left out of the discussions and proposals. PROROM negotiated the incorporation of explicit mention of Roma as “mobile territorial divisions”. It was argued that:

> “[…] it is argued that the vision of territorial planning is enriched by forms and contents specific to nomadic peoples, and therefore it was proposed that the kumpeñy were considered as mobile territorial divisions of the Republic and its traditional authorities and institutions, Sere Rromengue and Romani Kriss , are recognized as special public entities with jurisdiction in the territorial scope of their respective kumpeñy.” (Gómez Baos, 2011:95)

In the end, the law was not approved and the discussion regarding new legislation has been re-initiated numerous times since 2001. The Roma again advocated for recognition of Romani *kumpeñy* as territorial units of special character. Under this approach:

> “The central approach wielded by PROROM is that kumpeñy are nothing more than the sui generis expressions of Roma territoriality and therefore must be taken into account as areas

> of special treatment at the time of implementing policies, programs, projects and actions of spatial organization and planning in the municipalities where they are located." (ibid: 96)

The incorporation of the demands of Roma with regards to the use of the land has been a challenge for the State to incorporate accordingly. Paternina notes: "At some point the State will have to come to recognize through a democratic land use law that the kumpaniyi should be recognized as Public Territorial Entities of Special Character. And this with all the legal, symbolic and political implications that a decision of this nature entails." (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:771)

Furthermore, the argument of nomadic lifestyle was also used when the Law of Victims was being negotiated – arguing that Roma too have been victims of the period of violence and of forced displacement in Colombia. For example, a 2011 article written by an alias of PROROM, describes in detail a number of cases of intimidation, repression and murders of members of the Romani community which had taken place since the 1980s (Bimbay 2011). It is argued that:

> "Due to the armed conflict, in territories where Roma exercised their traditional economic activities, due to fear – either derived from objective or subjective factors - they no longer circulate or do not do it with the same frequency and intensity as before. This situation has been taken by some kumpanyi as a kind of confinement that prevents mobility [and] that has negatively affected their economic activities and has led to levels of insecurity never seen before. Paradoxically while the number of displaced people in the country has grown significantly for some time now, the Roma who by nature move from one place to another, are not able to do as they once did." (Bimbay, 2011:37)

Claims regarding the recognition of the Romani victims of the armed conflict had already been articulated by PROROM in 2006, when submitting a written communication to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin on the occasion of his mission to Colombia. Providing evidence of crimes and human rights violations against Roma during the armed conflict became part of the political agenda, arguing that the Roma should also be embraced by the Law of Victims, and should be provided collective reparations (a right which has been granted to Roma by Decree 4634 (2011)).

What is interesting, and contrasts with the policy approach to Roma in Europe, is that in Colombia there is an absence of citizen-specific claims. Rather, citizenship in Colombia applies differently to ethnic minorities – after all, the right to differential treatment is in fact a fundamental right of every citizen. Hence the absence of claims for "equal rights" (as in the case of Europe) – the Roma in Colombia claim differentiated rights, created in accordance to their own cultural traits. Also, the question of discrimination is of secondary importance – it is often mentioned in documents produced by PROROM and others, arguing that Roma are also subjected to discrimination (institutional and social). However, without a doubt, Roma are not among those sectors of the population which are most strongly stigmatized socially. Interviews also revealed that Roma rarely have faced discrimination (described previously in the section "Roma in Colombia – images and perceptions").

A grassroots perspective

It should be noted that there are a limited number of people who make claims on behalf of Colombian Roma. The main actors, who shape and frame these collective demands are Romani organizations, and to a lesser extent, the legal representatives of the *kumpeñy*[234]. The most vocal, especially in policy-making processes is PROROM, although URC often contributes with quality input to these processes. On the other hand, the legal representatives, less familiar with policy-making or current political debates, are quite influenced by the Romani organizations in Bogota, often echoing their claims. The demands made by the legal representatives of the *kumpeñy* refer more to local realities and specific needs (as they themselves have argued: “each *kumpania* has different needs”). They are also the “guardians” of tradition – when negotiating policies, they are most vocal in protecting what they regard as “the Romani culture”, or ensuring that the policies are adapted to Romani lifestyle (lifestyles). For example, when presenting demands regarding housing during a meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* in Bogota, some legal representatives specified:

> “but we want the housing our way, for example one city district just for ourselves so that we can live altogether”. [COL_42, field-notes]]

What about those Roma who are not part of any formal representative structure? Such individuals remain largely silenced as they have no mechanisms for direct input into legislative processes – after all, their legal representatives are the ones who should – based on the logic of the State - channel any grassroots claims. Indeed, it should be noted that those who attend meetings with the public administration and negotiate policies and plans which target entire Romani communities, are a handful of elected (in the case of *kumpeñy*) and self-appointed (in the case of the organizations) individuals. The vast majority of members of the Romani community have no access to these policy-making processes and their voice is never heard. The question of the representativeness of these individuals, as was discussed earlier, can be questioned and there were about concerns whether the real interests of the community (or its diverse sectors) are indeed represented.

I spoke mostly with Romani women in different *kumpeñy* and asked them about what, in their opinion, were the most urgent needs which should be addressed. The answers often coincided, and referred specifically to a gender dimension: among the most important demands were housing (especially for single mothers or widows), employment (work and business for women, other than the traditional fortune-telling) and women-specific programs so that they can become more independent (projects, education, political participation). The importance of women-focused programs is not surprising – after all, the *kumpeñy* are dominated and represented by men, who treat the gender dimension marginally, or even as a threat to “traditional Romani values”. It was explained earlier (in the section “who”) how Romani women have tried to gain access to the dynamics of participation, in order to

[234] It should be noted that this analytical distinction is not easily traced in practice. After all, the two Romani organizations are also representatives of *kumpeñy* in Bogota.

reflect the specific interests of Romani women from the *kumpeñy* This, however, has been blocked by the men-dominated *kumpeñy*

There were some individuals who, despite the monopoly over participation and representation of the *kumpeñy* and the organizations, struggled to create their own areas of activity. One young Romani woman in Bucaramanga, among the few with a higher education, was involved for some time, trying to organize local community projects for Romani women. However, her pro-active and independent attitude resulted in numerous conflicts with the local legal representatives which have also affected her family; consequently, she had to cease her own activities and was forbidden to organize anything independently from the legal representatives' approval. She argued:

> "So it was seen that the projects have to come directly from the representative… but what is the legitimacy of the legal representatives? If there are no women there…and the process of voting for representatives is dubious? In any case only men can vote and not even all of them!" [COL_14, field-notes]

She became disenchanted with the whole process and has had a difficult relationship with some members of the *kumpeñy* ever since. According to another informant who witnessed the evolution of this whole issue, part of the responsibility for this dynamic should be assumed by the State. He argues:

> "When I was at the National Table for Dialogue it was remarkable that there was no interest whatsoever in a real approach to families [in creating any proximity with the families], and of course there are no resources for something like that, only for specific projects without any continuity. I tell you that I was the only observer during the months I was there... Since then Yesenia has chosen not to continue with her projects before getting sick, the institutions were happy that she solved their problems, but nobody would get 'their hands dirty' for her. And her family was already suffering the consequences of conflicts within the community in Girón." [COL_11, personal communication]

The case of my informant (COL_14) mentioned above served as an example to all the other members of the community – and as a warning. Engaging independently in civic or political action, without consulting with the legal representative and without his approval, was not welcome. And the consequences of questioning this hierarchy of representation are felt not only by the person not complying to these "unwritten rules," but also by the family members. This effectively blocked the pathway to community members' participation and active engagement beyond the already established and formalized structures of the *kumpeñy*.

The lack of direct community engagement in the work of the *kumpeñy* and organizations, beyond the individuals and often a small family circle which compose these formal structures, demonstrates the general rationale of their approach – speaking in the name of the community and community representation. Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia is aimed at taking advantage of existing opportunities, with assumed collective benefit to Romani community members, but not so much at community engagement or empowerment. The articulated objectives are imposed by Romani

representatives and are not built through a bottom-up process. Naturally, the representatives are part of the Romani communities or *kumpeñy* in which they live, nonetheless, their perception of what is needed may not necessarily represent the demands of all of members of the communities or its diverse sectors (such as women, youth etc.). Evidently, the Romani actors in Colombia engage in a process of mobilizing externally but not of mobilizing within. According to one member of a Romani organization:

> "There are two processes – internal and external. The external process, towards the outside, was very successful, there is a lot of visibility and a lot of political achievements. But the internal process never took place. The people don't know what this [political] process consists of, don't identify with it…it is a process of a small group of people and has little impact within the population. It was not done correctly – it necessary to do work towards the inside." [COL_15, recorded interview]

The dynamic of a lack of community engagement creates a visible level of distrust and suspicion among those members of the community who are not directly involved in the policy-making process, or are not part of the formal structures of representation. It has already been explained in the section "*kumpeñy*" how the lack of a dynamic of community engagement and the lack of accountability of leaders towards its constituencies affect their relationship and oftentimes leads to rumours and potentially to internal conflicts.

6.3.e. Strategies of collective action: "invited spaces", public presence and alliances

The Roma, alike other ethnic minorities, have at their disposal a variety of different institutional tools which can be used to pursue their collective goals. Romani leaders and organizations also adapt a number of different strategies which help to effectively reach collective goals.

Institutional tools and provision of special rights

Participation and Consultation

The legislative framework in Colombia creates a number of formal channels through which Roma, and other minorities, can voice their claims and seek fulfilment of their demands. As part of the principles of participative democracy and decentralization, the government created a number of different sectorial, territorial, demographic, and thematic consultative bodies and spaces. It was mentioned above that the Ministry of Interior has created a consultative inter-departmental body for Roma – *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* (National Table for Dialogue) – which is attended by representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Justice, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development and the Ministry of Culture, as well as legal representatives of *kumpeñy* and Romani organizations. A representative of the Ministry of Interior, responsible for working with the Roma, described this structure in the following way:

> "You know that these are spaces for dialogue. Just as the Indigenous peoples have a permanent round table, the Roma have their national dialogue commission. Article 8 of Decree 2957 regulates the national dialogue commission, as the space of dialogue between the national government and the Romani people. It has a specific purpose, functional dialogue to

improve the living conditions of the Roma. This commission was set up for the first time in December 2010. It is composed of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Territorial Development, which at the time was the Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Culture, and representatives of the *kumpeñy* and their legally constituted organizations. With the national dialogue commission, all issues of public policies for the Romani people are discussed. And in that space we have done the following: Every time there is an administrative or legislative measure of national scope directly affecting the Romani people, the head of the Colombian State is obliged to proceed with the consultation. And you know that it has a double connotation: ensuring Romani people's participation and it also guarantees the physical and cultural survival of the Romani people." [COL_28, recorded interview]

Other "invited spaces" (Cornwall 2004) also exist – a number of inter-ethnic local or regional round tables were created, in which Roma also participate. Other ministries or governmental bodies consult, on a long-term or ad hoc basis, with ethnic minorities or Roma specifically. These spaces of participation create an opportunity for direct interaction between Romani representatives and public administration, and are often forums where key decisions are being negotiated and agreed upon. Existing legislation which creates such spaces of participation is seen favourably by most of the Roma involved in these processes. According to a Romani woman who is part of URC:

> "Here we are invited! We didn't have to break down the doors – here spaces of participation were created and there is a lot of political will." [COL_8, field-notes]

Furthermore, the government is obliged to consult with ethnic minorities on projects and policies which may affect the cultural and territorial integrity of these groups. This is often done in relation to large institutional projects related to infrastructure, business or the extraction of natural resources. Currently the law on Previous Consultation is being debated and awaits approval[235], however, a number of other decrees and rulings of the Constitutional Court have enabled the implementation of such consultations[236], and it is now a common practice[237]. The Roma have used this right many times, while negotiating new legislative proposals[238].

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[235] http://util.socioambiental.org/inst/esp/consulta_previa/sites/util.socioambiental.org.inst.esp.consulta_previa/files/PROYECTO%20DE%20LEY%20DE%20CONSULTA%20PREVIA_Colombia.pdf

[236] Relevant decrees and rulings which regulate, to some extent, the right to Previous Consultation: Decree 2893 (2011), Decree 2613 (2013), Decree 1320 (1998), Article 7 of Convention 169 of the ILO, jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court SU-039 (1997) and numerous other rulings. The Right to Previous Consultation is considered a Fundamental Right.

[237] https://www.mininterior.gov.co/mision/direccion-de-consulta-previa/procesos-de-consulta-previa

[238] For example, https://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/gobierno-y-pueblo-gitano-protocolizaran-consulta-previa-para-la-aplicacion-de-la-ley-de-tierras-y-desarrollo-rural

Nonetheless, these "invited spaces" of participation should not be viewed uncritically. According to one of my informants:

> "There is a very broad regulation for participation…but the State is not prepared – they want participation but don't know in what way this participation should happen. Now we have participation to legitimize the processes – there is a process of socialization but no participation in the processes of implementation. Furthermore, the participation is sectorial and sometimes it becomes too fragmented. Now we have committees for everything! It is the 'politics of incidental participation' – yes, there is participation but to agree, draft it and implement it together and comply with all that was agreed is a long process." [COL_22, recorded interview]

The commitment to ensuring participative processes on behalf of the State is often more visible in existing regulation than in reality. For example, with regards to the National Table for Dialogue, my informant argues that although according to the decree all Ministries have to participate actively in the meetings, this is not always the case. He argues that:

> "the commitment of other ministries to participate is only on paper, but in practice in the great majority of cases the will for these consultations is only bureaucratic" [COL_11, personal communication]

Indeed, during the first meeting of the National Table for Dialogue there was a lot of interest and curiosity on behalf of other ministries. One high level representative of the Ministry of Culture recalls:

> "At the first meeting there was some 70 people! The public officers didn't even know that the Roma existed in Colombia!" [COL_34, recorded interview]

But the subsequent meetings didn't enjoy such a level of attendance, which has decreased significantly over the years.

Others complained with regards to the functioning of this space of participation that the National Table for Dialogue is only for show, but lacks political leverage and true commitment, not only of the State administration but also of the Romani representatives. One non-Roma advisor argued:

> "there is no discipline from the State – there are only few meetings organized, and they don't submit minutes. As the State lacks seriousness, so do the Romani representatives – they leave the meetings for a smoke whenever they like, they don't attend the meetings if they don't get paid, they fight over lunch." [COL_12, recorded interview]

The spaces of participation are a significant achievement with regards to existing legislation, nonetheless, they are not always spaces of meaningful participation. First of all, these spaces of participation are created to involve individuals in a process of consultation but not necessarily in the decision-making processes. According to my informant, involved in work with ethnic groups at the district level of Bogota:

> "For the government to participate is to convene. For us to participate serves to strengthen and capacitate social capital." [COL_23, recorded interview]

In many cases participation becomes tokenistic, instrumental and part of the process of legitimizing policies, regulations and political decisions. The National Table for Dialogue is a space for consultation but not one of decision-making and the demands or recommendations of Romani representatives are not binding.

On the other hand, the participation of Roma is not always meaningful or informed, and the quality of that participation can be questioned. Numerous times the preparation and training of the vast majority of legal representatives was questioned. Furthermore, others criticize that their involvement is purely opportunistic and done for all the wrong reasons. One Romani member of a Romani organization argued:

> "Here the people think that associations are a business. The people from the *kumpeñy* don't know about the [political] process or don't understand it. A lot of people think that it's a business to make money, they don't understand the dynamic of project management…The legal representatives do not have the preparation and capabilities to contribute or to execute projects...but the government also doesn't expect them to!" [COL_15, recorded interview]

Nonetheless, it should be noted that some Romani representatives have acquired the necessary knowledge and know-how of policy-making processes through participation in such "invited spaces". These occasions have served as hands-on training, allowing some Romani representatives to become more capable, informed and effective political actors.

Finally, the mercantile approach to participation of some legal representatives was also raised by members of the government. Off-the-record, a staff member of the Ministry of Interior argued:

> "Another problem is that this turned into a business – due to having the wrong motivation. The legal representatives want to seek economic benefits. Many of them don't have the capacity to draft project proposals, and some are not even interested in it. But the ministry cannot get involved in this. A similar thing is happening with the indigenous movement – the question of money and treating this like a business…" [COL_28, off-the-record interview]

Tutelage

An additional tool of great relevance which allows for a rapid advancement of Roma rights is the mechanism of tutelage, introduced by the 1991 Constitution in article 86 (and formalized by Decree 2591 (1991)), which is considered a Fundamental Right. Tutelage may be used when an individual or a collective feel they have been "violated or threatened by the action or omission of any public authority". Tutelage becomes an effective tool to demand inclusion or fulfilment of the constitutional rights of citizens, or sectors of population such as ethnic minorities.

The Roma have been very skilful in applying the mechanism of tutelage in order to advance their collective rights. In fact, a vast portion of the provisions, rights and recognitions for Roma are a result

of tutelage. Some of the most important political advancements have been accomplished through this process: recognition of Roma and application of Convention 169 of ILO (DGAI 0864 of 1998), recognition of *Kriss Romani* (DGGN 20025 of 1998), recognition of PROROM and other provisions (Resolution 022 of 1999), recognition of URC (Resolution 087 of 2000), inclusion of Roma under subsidized social security system (Agreement 273 (2004). Legal ruling of the Constitutional Court C-370 of 2002 establishes legal positive symmetry of rights granted to indigenous communities to be extended to all other ethnic minorities, providing Roma with additional grounds for extension of explicit rights for Roma. Tutelage has been used recently due to the legal omission of Roma and *Raizal* communities in Law 1537 (2012) on access to social protection housing of vulnerable groups. Ruling of the Constitutional Court C-359 of 2013 grants the extension of these rights to the omitted groups – Roma and *Raizal*.

It should be noted that the relative success in applying these legal tools – especially of strategic litigation – has been accomplished thanks to the involvement of non-Romani legal advisors, familiar with legal jargon and procedures, who cooperate (or have cooperated) with Romani organizations. In the first years of PROROM's existence, the use of tutelage and strategic litigation was carried out almost entirely by non-Roma advisors, who acted on behalf of Roma. Over time, however, Romani members of PROROM learned the intricacies of legal jargon and legal procedures from their non-Roma advisors. At the moment, most of tutelage is done by PROROM, especially by Dalila Gómez who has mastered the know-how of juridical procedures.

Searching for visibility

As was mentioned earlier, one of the strategic objectives of Romani activism in Colombia is the search for visibility. Even though Roma have been recognized through a number of legal instruments, visibility is still essential. Increased visibility translates into expanding Roma-specific rights but also contributes to greater social recognition of Romani culture and identity, important for targeting general ignorance and misconceptions regarding Roma, as was explained in the section "what and why".

One of the key achievements of the Romani ethnic mobilization with regards to visibilization and recognition, which became a strategic point of reference to be able to claim further provisions was the inclusion of a Roma variable in the national census (for the first time in 2005). In fact, when I asked some of my interlocutors which achievement they consider to be among the most important, many mention the census. For example, a member of PROROM agued:

> "The most important has to do with the Roma variable in the census. When populations are not in the census, they do not exist. And you cannot guide policy processes or implementation or formulation." [COL_1, recorded interview]

The inclusion of Roma in the census subsequently became a point of reference for claiming further rights.

Nonetheless, this search for visibility is mainly articulated through Romani cultural expression in public spaces. Roma actively participate in cultural fairs and festivals, give lectures at local universities or

during congresses, and are open and proactive in their relationship with the media. The search for visibility is also accomplished and promoted in the framework of inter-ethnic collaboration, strongly embraced and generously sponsored by the state. I participated in a number of such events, more specifically in the First Inter-Ethnic Congress in Bogota (*Primer Congreso Distrital Interétnico*), Unity and Diversity Forum, Network of Inter-Ethnic Communication in Bogota (*Foro Unidad y Diversidad, Red de Comunicación Interétnica de Bogotá*) and a seminar of the Chair of the Ethnic Affairs of Bogota (*Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito*)[239]; photographs from these events are attached in the annex. Such events gather representatives of all recognized ethnic groups in Colombia, creating a space to showcase their own cultures and traditions and enabling exchange and interaction between them (more in the subsequent section "inter-ethnic collaboration").

On such occasions as the events I attended, (inter-ethnic fairs and congresses, public festivals, events around the "exchange of traditional knowledge," etc.) Roma exhibit their cultural difference ostentatiously, as other minorities also do – always dressed in traditional clothes (even though women may wear trousers on daily basis), speaking *Romanes* among themselves and in public, expressively speaking about Romani identity and culture. Romani culture is expressed through traditional clothes, Romani music and dance, and Romani language; elements such as collective Indian origin, being part of a trans-national diaspora or traditional nomadism (also commonly "nomadism as a state of mind") are recurrent themes in public speeches. The use of such cultural elements copies a similar pattern of expression of other ethnic groups. Indigenous people, *Raizal* or *Palenquero* people also present their culture during such events by dressing up in traditional clothes, performing traditional music and dances or emphasizing in their own languages. Commonly, traditional crafts and products are presented and sold. Such festivities use folklore as the defining manifestation of diverse ethnic cultures; an increasing trend leading to mercantilization or commodification of ethnicity. According to my informant:

> "This has led, generally, to a type of mercantilization of ethnicity, or what some refer to as "ethno-boom" and has permeated various aspects of State funding [for ethnic groups]. More frequently there are "ethnic markets" and the State funding is aimed at "ethnic industries" promoting entrepreneurship." [COL_11, personal communication]

Participation in such inter-ethnic meetings is strategic – it provides grounds for the same treatment of Roma as other ethnic minorities, supporting the argument for granting Roma symmetrical rights to those provided to other ethnic groups in Colombia. Indeed, Roma and non-Roma activists gathered around PROROM have repeatedly underlined that the process of visibilization draws strongly from

[239] *Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito* is an academic degree financed by the Bogota municipality and run by the *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas*. It is aimed at providing additional training to public officials, staff, police and ethnic leaders and representatives, in order to provide quality information with regards to ethnic minorities. Representatives of various ethnic groups are also lecturers, providing first-hand information about their cultures and traditions. More information here: https://www.udistrital.edu.co/novedades/particularNews.php?Type=N&idNovedad=4448

previous ethnic movements; and the accomplishments made with regards to Roma recognition are also due to the road paved earlier by others, especially the indigenous people. In fact, one of the founders of PROROM argued:

> "From the beginning PROROM raised the need to link the specific demands of Romani people of Colombia, to the social demands of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and Raizal and other social sectors of the country. In this context, PROROM has always publicly expressed that the organizational work currently being conducted by the Rom people of Colombia is heir to the historical struggles carried out mainly by indigenous peoples." (Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:24)

Generating visibility is also implemented around symbolic dates, such as International Roma Day, the 8th April[240]. The Ministry of Interior and Justice in Decree 2957 (2010) recognizes this day and commits to its celebration. Since 2001 Romani organizations and *kumpeñy* have organized events around this date, both locally and in the capital of Bogota, which are generally attended by government representatives and the media. During such events, Roma sometimes organize a traditional type of festivity called *pakiv*[241] to which representatives of public administration are invited; Romani dishes are prepared (such as *saviako* or *sarmi*), often traditional Romani music and dances are performed; nonetheless, it should be noted that *pakiv* is also organized on other occasions attended by political representatives.

Celebrations of International Roma Day are generally organized as public events, which include cultural programs (showcasing Romani craftsmanship and art, dance and music, fortune-telling) and a number of speeches (by representatives of public administration and Romani communities). There were also years in which theatre performances, combined with music and dances were also staged (Esteban Acuña documents in detail the preparations for the 2008 performances (Acuña 2008)). The largest events are organized in Bogota and are becoming bigger each year. For example, in 2016, the Ministry of Interior organized a celebration of International Roma Day in the main city square (Plaza Bolivar); the celebration included a performance of the Romani anthem "Gelem Gelem" by Romani musicians, a concert of Romani music, a showcase of Romani dances, construction of tents (some of which resemble traditional Romani tents), display of Romani crafts and unveiling of a commemorative plaque[242]. Commonly, representatives of various levels of public administration issue press releases on the occasion of the 8th April, voicing their support and appreciation of the Romani people as part of the cultural panorama of the country. I was not able to attend any of the 8th April celebrations in person

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[240] More details about the process of institutionalizing the 8th April can be found in works by Esteban Acuña (Acuña 2008).

[241] pakiv n f-a/-ja 1. honour, esteem, respect 2. reverence 3. feast; http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/lex.cgi?st=PAKIV&rev=n&cl1=rmyk&cl2=en&fi=&pm=in&ic=y&im=y&wc=

[242] http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/mininterior-conmemorara-en-bogota-el-dia-internacional-del-pueblo-rom-o-gitano

– I arrived in Colombia a month later. Nonetheless, these celebrations are well documented by some of my Romani informants, who publish extensive photos of these events, allowing one to follow the type of celebration and participation (both of members of the Romani community as well as the non-Roma public).

Another way of countering the historical and social invisibility of Roma is accomplished through generating knowledge about or increasing the epistemic visibility of Roma. Romani organizations, especially PROROM, are very proactive in this regard. An impressive number of publications, reports, statements, evaluations, policy briefs have been produced by PROROM and their collaborators over the years. These publications are of diverse nature and are used for different purposes. On the one hand, there are a number of publications which aim at preserving and promoting Romani traditions, for example Romani oral history: such as Roma fairy-tales, legends and myths (*Le Paramìci le Rromenge Kai Besen Akana and-o Bogotá,* published in 2008[243]*)* or children's bed-time songs and stories (*Tiki, Tiki, Tai*, published in 2011)[244]. Nonetheless, most of the publications produced and written by PROROM are designed as strategic reference points for policy-making. Reports (some which include sociological or statistical information and are based on fieldwork), policy briefs or position papers and public statements commonly provide self-produced knowledge about the Roma, with regards to their situation and the needs of the community. They draw heavily from cultural discourses (Romani traditional lifestyle, history, traditional occupations) but rather than only providing ethnographic or historic information, they provide a description of the Romani standpoint with regards to relevant issues of public policy-making and legislation, such as health and schooling, cultural diversity measures or with regards to specific legislation being discussed (for example, the Law of the Land or the Law of the Victims).

In this context it is also important to note that the most intense period of publication efforts can be found during the first years of the Romani ethnic mobilization process, especially between 1999 and 2002. Naturally, PROROM has continuously published materials, reports, and articles, among others, since its creation, but the frequency of published materials per year has been gradually decreasing. This is arguably due to two reasons. On the one hand, the first years of the Romani ethnic mobilization process required efforts to challenge the general ignorance of the very existence of Romani communities in Colombia – thus, it was necessary to provide relevant data regarding Romani identity, history, culture and lifestyles. On the other hand, it should also be noted that PROROM was founded not only by Roma but also by two non-Roma academics who helped to produce publishable content on Roma and traceably have had an important amount of influence on how this information on Roma is shaped and framed. Numerous texts from the first years of PROROM's existence have various authors (including at least one Romani person); some have been drafted exclusively by non-Roma

[243] PROROM. Historias contadas por miembros de la Kumpania de Bogotá. *Fortalecimiento y Recuperación de la Tradición Oral de la Kumpania de Bogotá a través de cuentos, mitos, leyendas y música.* Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá. Bogotá. 2008

[244] http://maguare.gov.co/leeresmicuento/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/tiki-tiki-tai.pdf

authors, members of PROROM, especially by Juan Carlos Gamboa. As the original founders of PROROM gradually withdrew from the organization over the years, Dalila Gómez remained the only author in PROROM who continues to write and publish on Roma, shaping institutional and, directly and indirectly, academic knowledge on Roma.

Finally, academic investigation is also widely promoted and Roma are open to any scholars interested in advancing knowledge about Romani culture and identity. In fact, following the increased visibility and recognition of the Romani people in Colombia, the academic world also began to study this community. It is important to note that this process is framed in the context of “re-ethnification” (or ethnic revival) after the new Colombian constitution was established in 1991, in which research on ethnic groups became increasingly popular. The Roma issue was virtually invisible also in the academic world up to this point in time. With the new political trends based on cultural difference, ethnic diversity and affirmative action, and with the emergence of the ethnic mobilization of Roma in Colombia, the academic world also acquired an interest in the Romani community. In any case, it should be noted that the vast majority of the knowledge produced about Roma is done by non-Roma scholars – only a handful of Roma in Colombia have completed university degrees. Any Romani production of academic quality has been done with the participation of non-Roma scholars[245]. As a result, over the past decade, an unprecedented number of academic investigations, theses and articles have been produced and published (an overview of the most relevant academic papers on Roma is included in the PROROM publication “Haciendo el camino al andar” from 2011). This is also a conscious strategy – producing authoritative knowledge about Roma not only helps to overcome the historic invisibility but also provides evidence and legitimizes all Romani collective claims.

Despite the fact that the Roma I met are generally open to collaborating with researchers and scholars, there is a detectable level of distrust towards them and consequently, an expectation of being able to

[245] I saw first-hand what this process of collaboration between scholars and Roma looks like. Once, when I visited the home of a member of PROROM in the Parque Bolivar district I was invited to meet a group of university students who were doing a project with a museum and wanted to consult with the family on the topics to cover. She wanted me to participate too, so the meeting combined both things. First I met with the family alone, and then the students joined us after some time. The hosts where very hospitable and had a lot of curiosity towards me and my family back in Poland. They served the typical *chaio* (tea) and asked a lot of questions. When I said that my husband was not a Roma, the men from the family were upset and critical of my decision. But I said that my father accepted him and thus I had my family’s approval. They responded that in Colombia this is not typical, and if you ran away with a non-Roma, the community would not accept it. The oldest man of the family spoke about his work and the community in Colombia – his discourse was very much about being a “true Roma” and holding on to the traditions. He didn´t make many comments about his work in PROROM or the involvement of members of his family in the organization. When the students came, they were also invited to the tea and some biscuits and were evidently excited about being in a Romani household for the first time. They wanted to know how to design an exhibition about Roma and what type of things they should exhibit there. The representative of PROROM was dominant in the discussion. Her discourse was very romantic and ethicized – speaking about the traditional occupations, for example with metal and other types of crafts, she spoke about nomadism and “neo-nomadism” (nomadism as a state of mind), the traditional Roma values, *Romani Kriss* and other things. Nothing about the modernity of contemporary Roma – rather a mystical and mysterious image of the Roma today.

have control and influence over the final product of such collaboration. I was told by various members of both organizations PROROM and URC various stories of bad experiences with scholars and researchers who produced “awful” theses (which were considered not to be in line with the narrative promoted by the Roma themselves or were reinforcing stereotypes) or in which the scholars never got back to the community to contrast their findings. Following these experiences from the past, the Roma who engage in collaboration with the academic world become gatekeepers and guides and are cautious of what type of information is given and shared for academic purposes.

Activities

The majority of the effort of Romani activism in Colombia is oriented towards the outside – targeting principally governmental institutions, but also, to a lesser extent, the media, academia and the general non-Roma public. Emphasis is put on presenting Romani culture, as mentioned earlier, especially through public events sponsored by the State – music festivals, dance performances, concerts which take place regularly, especially in the capital city. A lot of grants have been also given to Romani organizations for such culture-related activities, such as producing a CD with Romani music or publishing books. Curiously, very few projects have been implemented beyond these cultural issues. A nation-wide educational project was approved some time ago, but due to problems with implementation the grant was withdrawn and the project was never fully implemented. I have also heard about a project for women’s entrepreneurship, which was overtaken by Romani men instead. Nonetheless, it seems that most energy is dedicated to those projects and activities which serve to showcase Romani culture and identity, rather than to working towards the community. The grants attributed to such activities are generally small, corresponding to the managing capacity of its leaders and often reflecting the interests of the organizations rather than those of the community. It also demonstrates the limited capacity of leaders and representatives to draft and negotiate financial support of substantial and large-scale projects and activities, which would possibly attend to the detectable needs of the community in different areas of life. In fact, one of my informants argues that:

> “This corresponds both to the lack of training of community leaders who are limited to doing projects that small organizations can handle (and correspond to their own interests), and to the lack of political will of the Colombian state. Working with the community in other ways involves a constant effort, as well as initiatives for negotiation, conciliation and resource allocation that would change the comfortable situation that has continued for almost 15 years. Small outlays of money, tickets, and little ‘cultural’ projects also reproduce the status quo and put families in a situation of dependence that the Ministry loves”. [COL_11, personal correspondence]

This, in fact, has been identified as one of the major shortcomings of Romani activism in Colombia. The lack of attention towards the local community, both through specific activities, providing specific services or merely through communicating on a regular basis with the local community, occasionally generates distrust towards the leaders, who are perceived as “doing business” instead of attending to more concrete local needs. The local communities, especially those individuals who rarely participate in activism, have very little knowledge about current developments regarding Roma-related policies,

events or existing opportunities (as was mentioned in previous sections). The leaders of the *kumpeñy* or organizations have not established any dynamics of communication aimed at shaping greater awareness regarding the socio-political situation of their community – any communication is done informally; rarely are there meetings aiming at communicating information to the entire *kumpeñy*. In fact, Gamboa recognizes this limitation and already in 2004 writes:

> "It is noteworthy that since its creation, PROROM has sought to work out processes of sensitization and awareness within the different kumpeniyi and Romani family groups, while making efforts to bolster the "Roma question" in public institutions and in the so-called civil society in the country. In that sense it has always wanted to work simultaneously with both scenarios, that is inside and outside, but sometimes it has not been possible so it was necessary to favour one over the other, depending on the circumstances encountered. The distance between the work demonstrated in these two scenarios --internal and external-- is due to the times and methods of work that were not synchronized and articulated. It is clear that decision-making and the search for consensus within family groups and Romani kumpeniyi, and dialogue and negotiation with the Colombian State correspond to different dynamics. That is why the challenge PROROM has in the immediate future is to achieve harmonization of these two dynamics of organizational work, which necessarily involves adequate attendance to real and concrete expectations that the Romani people are building, while continuing the dynamics of dialogue and negotiation with the Colombian State." (Gamboa Martínez, 2004b:80)

In terms of specific activities, one can notice different profiles of engagement between both organizations and between organizations and the *kumpeñy*. It seems that, to some extent during the period of conducting fieldwork, both opposing organizations have acquired a different profile of activism, despite the fact that they jointly participate in policy-making and are both present in activities, projects and events sponsored by the public administration.

PROROM is without a doubt the most vocal in terms of advocacy, political representation and direct involvement with the public authorities. They more frequently publish statements or position papers regarding current political debates, advances with tutelage or strategic litigation. At the time of conducting fieldwork, this activity was centred around, and limited to, Dalila Gómez – herself a public official in one of the ministries, with a long history of political engagement and with a wide network of personal and politically relevant contacts. Through the network of personal contacts established with various institutions and officials of the public administration, Dalila channels lobbying efforts, negotiating directly with the relevant actors within the government.

URC, on the other hand, is the most visible organization in terms of cultural activities – they are the ones who perform on stage during festivals and cultural fairs, and create and record Romani music. The group organized around URC is much more numerous, gathering Romani youth and engaging them actively as performers. It seems that it also reflects the specificity of the community around which URC is organized – Marsella, the neighbourhood of Bogota where most of URC's members live is populous

and well consolidated around the Evangelical Church "Camino al Cielo" run there by a Romani pastor. The Marsella community participates in the activities of the Church, where music is an important element of the religious services and in the framework of which Romani youth are trained in music and rehearse regularly. This also reinforces the consolidation of the Romani music groups such as *Kale Jakha*. Apart from musical groups (in which the lead singer is also an active member of URC) there are also groups of dancers, including a significant number of young Romani girls and women. The URC also participate in policy-making processes and, during the period of fieldwork, always attended meetings organized by the public authorities; they are also influential players in this regard. Nonetheless, it seems that they are less vocal, or at least less visible, in terms of formulating and shaping policies.

Therefore, despite the conflict between both entities, or maybe because of it, each organisation has crafted their own niche or field of competence. This, at least is the picture that emerged during the months I was in Colombia conducting fieldwork. Nonetheless it seems that it has not always been like this: an overview of the past activities of both organizations as well as information provided by its leaders show that PROROM in the past has also been very active in cultural activities (coordinating cultural events, publishing books, performing) while URC has also been actively engaged in shaping public policies through drafting proposals and negotiating. Interviews with one of my informants, who has been a witness of these developments over the years, also suggests that such profiling of both organizations has not been always true:

> "It is interesting to see how during the events which marked the history of the [Romani ethnic] movement, such as the presentation in the Media Torta Public Stage [in 2007][246] or the celebrations of 8th April in Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Theatre [in 2008][247], it was PROROM that coordinated everything. This different profile of organizations that you describe is a recent tendency, more or less since 2010. As I told you, I think that this will change again, now that the two organizations are again talking to each other, we will see what will happen…" [COL_11, personal communication]

It might be concluded, therefore, although neither of the two organizations has confirmed this clearly, that the division of work between both organizations was a direct result of the conflicts between them. It was also stated before that even different institutions of public administration often provide parallel and equal funding to both organizations as they refuse to work together (as was the case during the period I was there). In these circumstances it seems logical to aim at complementarity of activities rather than a direct overlap and duplication. This dynamic might have changed since I left, as suggested by one of my informants who has been following up on developments in this regard (COL_11). Also, another informant from URC (COL_8) in an online conversation in 2015 confirmed to me that the relationships with PROROM have improved a lot.

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[246] http://crearc.blogspot.com/2007/08/presentacin-pueblo-rom-de-bogot-en-la.html

[247] http://crearc.blogspot.com/2008/03/da-internacional-del-pueblo-rrom.html

As for the *kumpeñy*, until recently, and with some exceptions, they rarely engaged or organized activities themselves. During the meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* that I attended, I was able to speak directly to all of the legal representatives (excluding Sabana Larga *kumpeñy* who did not attend) and to inquire into the relationship they have with the public administration. The discussion was an informal conversation had during lunchtime. According to their testimonies, a very small number of projects have been implemented in some *kumpeñy*; some also claimed to have a very weak or non-existent relationship with local authorities. Some *kumpeñy* like Sampués or Envigado claimed to have a good relationship with local administration, however, they have not engaged in any projects so far. When asked why they have not been implementing projects despite existing opportunities, the legal representatives agreed that their limitation in implementing lies in a general lack of knowledge of how to draft project proposals. According to the legal representatives, this complaint has been highlighted various times in the past, and also resurfaced during the formal meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* with political representatives. The Colombian government acknowledged this limitation and sought ways to alleviate this situation. In fact, it was during that meeting of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo* which I attended, that the Ministry of Interior and Justice committed to an innovative idea – as mentioned previously, it promised to send a public official to each of the *kumpania* for a few days in order to train the legal representatives in drafting project proposals and assist them in creating a first project proposal together. After I left Colombia in 2013, I tried to follow up to see whether the Ministry had fulfilled its promise. One informant shared with me his observations:

> "This in practice didn't have any major impact. While I was there I attended various consecutive meetings of the *Mesa Nacional de Diálogo,* at the beginning and in the middle of 2014. And you could notice the lack of will from the Ministry, which limited itself to convening meetings to sign documents and had the legal representatives waiting for days for a meeting which never took place. And there were also week-long workshops to "formulate projects" that never resolved or lead to anything." [COL_11, personal communication]

In order to attend to the evident difficulty in drafting projects by the members of the *kumpeñy*, the Ministry of Culture went even further. Acknowledging the limited capacity to write project proposals, the Ministry permitted the sending of project proposals via homemade videos, in which Roma can describe what they would like to do and what type of help they will need from the Ministry. A representative of the Ministry of Culture explained:

> "M.: As there are technical difficulties in sitting in front of a computer and filling out the application form, we have accepted a decision, of which I feel very proud, that the Roma can submit applications by video-recordings.
>
> A: That's spectacular ...
>
> M : It is great. It's the best thing we have done.
>
> A : And how is that working?

> M : Wonderfully. Everyone gets cute and lovely and is filmed and greets me in the video, and greets the management, the minister ... And then: 'we want to work on the issue of the [*Romanes*] language'. They call it " school" [*escuelita*]. 'We want to start a school about Roma issues for children so that they do not lose their identity and speak Romany'. And they are in the room of the house and you can see all the Romani aesthetic views and it's the best. To me this great because it appears as the correlation of affirmative action policy and differential approach, which is not that Roma adapt to the institution but that we adapt ourselves to the reality". [COL_34, recorded interview]

Inter-ethnic collaboration

Inter-ethnic collaboration is important for advancing collective claims and extending bridges across ethnic movements. The State promotes such inter-ethnic collaboration and creates numerous spaces in which different ethnic minorities can interact and collaborate. Establishing alliances around concrete issues of common interest is an effective strategy – on some occasions different minorities engage in collective efforts to advance collective rights.

During the fieldwork, in parallel with my work with Roma, I was also searching for contacts with Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. My aim was not to conduct comprehensive ethnographical research but rather to compare some of the dynamics and processes regarding the ethnic mobilization of Roma with other groups. My supposition was that in terms of discourse and legal tools, there will be some proximity between all the ethnic movements – in any case the scope of political opportunities was the same. I wanted to identify whether different ethnic groups have come up with different dynamics or alternative ideas, I was curious whether their organizations shared similar problems and challenges as Romani organizations, and whether there have been any contacts or collaboration between these different ethnic groups.

During the different inter-ethnic events which I have attended, I had the opportunity to get to know better both the dynamics and collaboration between various ethnic groups as well as the different parallel processes of each group.

The collaboration between ethnic groups is promoted by the government itself, on different levels of administration. Inter-ethnic collaboration is framed to be part of the peace-building process in the country, necessary for social wellbeing and overall social cohesion. Furthermore, in the context of the capital city and the ongoing armed conflict, a lot of refugees from conflict areas came to Bogota, most of them belonging to some ethnic group. In response to the challenges and consequences of the armed conflict, the State as well as different levels of public administration created various institutions, mechanisms and networks in order to also build cohesion through inter-ethnic collaboration and partnership. According to one informant, an Afro-Colombian activist, the director of the Office for Ethnic Issues at the Bogota Town Hall:

> "the Department of Ethnic Affairs [at the Municipal government of Bogota] was created in the framework of the Peace Process – the conflict pushed a lot of displaced people towards the capital of Bogota. It is a new problem for the city." [COL_10, recorded interview]

Furthermore, inter-ethnic meetings (*Mesas interétnicas*) are created and organized (some as ad hoc consultative groups, others as more consolidated and formal groups which meet periodically), by different levels of administration, but especially on the local level. They provide a space for inter-ethnic exchange and collaboration and, most importantly, represent a space of dialogue between power-holders and ethnic groups.

As mentioned previously, I attended a number of such meetings, which brought together representatives of different ethnic groups, including the Roma, and public administration representatives.

In the First Inter-Ethnic Congress, which I attended (25th May 2013 in Usme), there was very weak representation by the government (which was noted and complained about by the organizers), however, up to 800 people from different communities attended. The small participation of government reflects the reality – the participants have claimed that the discourse is more of a political statement than a real collaboration and implication in ethnic affairs. On the other hand, there is a level of collaboration between different ethnic peoples in Colombia – words such as "solidarity" or "brotherhood" were mentioned all the time. During the opening speeches, one of the organizers stated:

> "We are an ethnic nation! We are not some people here and some people there – we are an ethnic nation and we are calling on the government to recognize us as such!" [field-notes]

Despite words and speeches which evoked unity, solidarity and inter-ethnic collaboration, the alignment of interests was, by principle, restricted primarily to the limits of each ethnic group. That same meeting ended up in a heated argument (some of the participants walked out of the venue) between the indigenous and Afro groups. In this context, the Congress was seen as a failure because it did not reach any type of common consensus for a joint declaration, which was the objective of the meeting. After that meeting, one informant told me:

> "inter-ethnic collaboration is very difficult. There are even conflicts and problems within each ethnic group; like the Afro people have internal problems and other ethnic groups as well. So it is difficult to work even within the same group, let alone across groups." [COL_10, recorded interview]

On the same topic another informant argued:

> "The indigenous don't want to be with the Black community… together but not mixed up. Still there were no efforts to unite the ethnic groups". [COL_22, recorded interview]

One of my informants, an Afro-Colombian leader, brought some interesting focus points to my view, which later on reappeared as themes in conversations with others. She argued that in reality government policies and politics aim to divide and not unite people and ethnic groups:

> "The politics is making us weaker. There is no will to comply with the approved policies. The state has permeated their interests into the organizational processes ... we have very good

> legislation but that does not materialize - because there is no real political will […]. We must break with the concept of divisions - the government divides us, separates us more and more... For example, the government requires us to only work with the Afro community... the institutions know clearly how to increasingly separate us." [COL_29, recorded interview]

Indeed, while the State provides a lot of spaces for inter-ethnic exchange, rather than funding sustainable and long-term collaboration, the efforts concentrate more on showcasing the ethnic diversity of each of the groups, separately but in one venue.

There are, however, some positive examples. For some time, in 2000, there was a temporary organization or an alliance called the Temporary Union of the Peoples (*Unión Temporal Entre Pueblos*) which was formed by the *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (ONIC), *Consultiva de Comunidades Negras* and PROROM. The objective of the collaboration was to create a TV production series, aimed at giving more visibility to cultural diversity in Colombia. Despite the fact that the alliance existed only during the period of producing the TV series, the collaboration was important for Roma and provided hands-on knowledge about the ethnic mobilization processes of other ethnic groups in Colombia. The Roma, especially PROROM but also *Unión Romaní de Colombia* were inspired greatly by the tone of the discourse, the legal framework used, the narrative of cultural preservation (or "*etnocidio*"). In the words of a Romani member of PROROM:

> "it is thanks to other ethnic people that we established links, a network of friendship and collaboration; thanks to them we were able to visibilize ourselves." [COL_1, field-notes]

There were occasions when strategic alliances between Roma and other minorities, most notably with indigenous organizations, were established (Gamboa Martínez 2004a). Such interaction has been highly beneficial especially for Roma themselves – it gave them the possibility to participate in meetings and congresses, but most importantly, served as hands-on training regarding strategies towards recognition of collective rights. Arguably, such inter-ethnic collective efforts can become a powerful advocacy tool – it embraces collective claims shared by different people, and strengthens mutual support and collaboration as allies in the same common struggle. Unfortunately, the Romani collaboration in this regard has been rather sporadic; nonetheless, it should also be considered an effective strategy of ethnic mobilization. One informant, when asked about the collaboration with Roma argued:

> "We tried to get ourselves closer to the Roma, to have a closer relationship but it was not possible…. It's because they are a very closed community!" [COL_29, recorded interview]

Indeed, a representative of the Ministry of Planning who works with Roma also argued that the Roma don't like to mix with others and would rather have Roma-exclusive targeted actions. Speaking of training courses they organized, she explained:

> "Both with [Roma] adults and young people we have had some difficulty, because they are a little reluctant to mix in with other cultures. Because they believe they will acquire bad habits, and it almost goes against Roma laws. Then you are in this negotiation process about whether

> there should be courses exclusively for Roma or whether they should be integrated into the courses previously created which are open to the rest of the population. But in principle, what you want is the preservation of culture, making the training required adapt to its full potential and to requests they make. Because, previously there were courses opened that were not exactly what people wanted and this generated a lot of desertion and resources were lost." [COL_13, recorded interview]

Indeed, there is a lot of interaction in state-provided spaces, where the Roma meet and work together with other ethnic groups (workshops, consultative meetings, working sessions etc.). During such meetings words of solidarity and brotherhood are often expressed, however, these are not followed up with specific actions, common projects or shared responsibilities. A key member of PROROM (COL_1), for example, has a range of contacts among the indigenous or Afro-Colombian groups (and some friendships), but they tend to consult each other or work together only where the institutional circumstances require it (for example when negotiating a new provision regarding the use of ethnic languages). I asked her about her experiences of collaboration and support from other ethnic groups. She pointed not so much to direct support or involvement, but rather to broader support of the Romani struggle. She argued:

> "D: There have been those strategic alliances that have allowed us to move towards a rights framework.
>
> A: What was this collaboration? Were you counting on some help from indigenous leaders or Afros?
>
> D: No. Not so much help but rather no rejection. That is, they did not oppose what we wanted to do. Personally I have been encouraged to move on, and they recognize us as a people, as something different because we are like many indigenous peoples – we maintain the language, the customs. For example, we could have an analogy with the *wayú* people, who are a people that live on the peninsula of Guajira. They have their own system of justice which is the *pütchipü.* We have here a traditional oral justice and basically older men are those who exercise justice. Then there is the issue of dowry - they give dowry, and we too. Even on the issue of clothing [we are alike]." [COL_1, recorded interview]

6.4.f. "Political opportunities" and the question of timing. Salience, adoption and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization

Romani activists and their collaborators in Colombia have been very skilful in recognizing the appearance of political opportunities, capitalizing on the existing political conjuncture and in adapting their claims, narratives, and activities to these salient opportunities.

Emergence of Romani activism

As was mentioned earlier, the very appearance of Romani activism is a result of shifting political contexts – the realization that the rights granted to other minorities can in fact be extended to Roma has become the driving force behind Romani activism. It should be noted that what might have sparked

this mobilization was not only the recognition and inclusion of indigenous rights in the newly established Constitution in 1991. Rather, it was the increased struggle and visibility of other ethnic groups, most notably of the Afro-Colombian minority, that have provided the grounds to Romani claims as well.

Initially, the Afro-Colombian claims had been excluded from the National Constituent Assembly, which resulted in mobilization, protests and the occupation of the Embassy of Haiti in Bogota in May 1991. The strong opposition against the exclusion of Afro-Colombian claims in the first draft on the new Constitution resulted in the inclusion of Provisional Article 55 which foresaw the recognition and establishment of special policies for Black Colombians. Law 70 was finally approved in 1993, later on extended by Decree 1745 in 1995. It should be noted, however, that the Afro-Colombian population is not a homogeneous group; 4 different sub-groups can be defined: the Black community of the Pacific, the Black urban community, the *Raizales* and the *Palenqueros*. These last two have claimed their distinctiveness from the general Afro-Colombian community – in fact both *Palenqueros* and *Raizales* speak different languages, have different national histories, and have a number of other distinctive cultural features. As a result of Afro-Colombian mobilization in the mid-’90s, these two groups have also emerged in separate processes, claiming explicit recognition and a separate ethnic minority status from the Afro-Colombians. In fact, Cano Schütz (Cano Schütz 2005) claims that the *Raizal* discourse and the very use of the term in public spheres emerged as a consequence of mobilization around the 1991 Constitution. The salience of ethnic mobilization of the *Palenquero* community can be traced to the same historical period (Hernández Rubén 2014). This multiplication of ethnic struggles in Colombia facilitated the emergence of Romani activism as well. One informant also adds that:

> “Maybe even more influential was the atomization of the indigenous groups in Colombia. Each group engaged in their own processes, distancing themselves from the generalization [imposed by] the Assembly (which was necessary in the beginning, but definitely was not a reflection of every-day reality).” [COL_11, personal communication]

An understanding of the existing national ethnic divisions, as well as the strategic crafting of narratives for Romani recognition, positioning them alongside other minority groups, maximized the potential for success of Romani ethnic activism, too. Historically, Romani ethnic activism should be understood as part of the implosion of ethnic mobilization processes, a phenomenon of “re-ethnification” or ethnic revival of minority identities, as part of the process of re-construction of Colombia as a multicultural and plural nation state.

Nonetheless, the realization or recognition of emerging opportunities by Roma themselves did not take place automatically when these opportunities appeared. In fact, both Juan Carlos Gamboa and Hugo Paternina – arguably, the fathers of the first Romani organization – explained that they had tried to approach the Romani community even during the process of the Constituent Assembly and convince them to engage in a process of political participation and increased visibility, in order to also be taken into account in the then-forming new Colombian State. Back then, around 1991, both of them received negative responses – the Roma to whom they spoke were not interested and/ or did not see any

benefit to it. It was only in 1997, as was explained previously, that the Roma from Bucaramanga approached them, motivated by a discriminatory and offensive article about Roma published in the local press. This marked the beginning of the process leading up to the creation of PROROM.

The emergence of PROROM as a first Romani organization raised the level of consciousness of the expanding political opportunities for ethnic minorities. With the realization that the circumstances were favourable for expanding the existing legal framework to embrace other minorities, the number of actors of Romani mobilization multiplied. Shortly after PROROM was founded, URC emerged in opposition to the first organization.

Adapting to emerging opportunities

I would argue that overall, Romani activism in Colombia has been shaped by the constant adaptation to shifting political contexts, current political debates and emerging political opportunities. The strategic choices made by Romani leaders regarding their collective demands and claims have been greatly influenced by this understanding of the surrounding political environment and policy-making life-cycles – it is not entirely based on a strategic vision of what should be accomplished but rather by what is feasible, and most importantly, timely. This is one of the strongest factors which explain the relative success of Romani ethnic mobilization. By understanding policy processes and providing input to current political debates, the Roma skilfully adapted their narratives and provided evidence which would legitimize their claims.

We can observe this process of adapting narratives by analysing the publications and public statements produced by PROROM. Over the years, PROROM and its collaborators have published widely and produced a number of important studies, evaluations, diagnostics, statements, policy recommendations, etc. The most productive period in this regard was the years after the constitution of the organization (1998-2001). In 2002 alone, 12 publications were produced. In these first years of Romani activism, a number of important legal provisions were granted. Year 2002 also marks the election of President Uribe, a period (until 2006) of relative legal strengthening with regards to Romani demands (Paternina Espinosa, 2014:840). In general, the publication of texts and press statements has often been strategically aligned with the current legislation being discussed, in order to provide input from a Romani perspective and at the same time provide evidence that Roma, are indeed eligible for provisions granted by that specific legislation.

A good example of this process relates to legislation regarding the reparations made to victims of the armed conflict (Law 1448 of 2011). Prior to 2011, little information can be found regarding the violence and forced displacement suffered by Roma in Colombia (although claims regarding the recognition of the Romani victims of the armed conflict had already been articulated by PROROM in 2006, submitting a written communication to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin on his mission to Colombia). This issue had been briefly mentioned previously in the 2005 publication ("*Pueblo Rom en Colombia*") but had not been emphasized widely until the discussions regarding this legislation took place. In the 2009 "Ethnographic guide to Roma", there is no mention of this issue. In 2010, newly elected President Santos engaged in

the fulfilment in one of his presidential promises – the establishment of a legal framework for victims of the armed conflict. Romani organizations began to highlight this issue – a whole chapter on armed conflict and the Roma is included in the 2010 publication (Gómez Baos 2010), while another article was published explicitly on this in the *I Tchatchipen* journal (Bimbay 2011). Since then, the narrative of Roma as victims of the armed conflict has become wide-spread[248]. Thanks to lobbying efforts for the inclusion of Roma in the framework of Law 1448 of 2011, Decree 4634 of 2011 was approved "Whereby the measures of assistance, care, comprehensive reparation and land restitution are issued to victims belong to the Rrom or Gitano people.[249]" Beyond providing assistance, care and right to reparation and restitution, the decree also emphasizes the legality of nomadism:

> "Article 43. Right to free movement. For the reason that the Romani people has historically developed its ethnic consciousness from nomadism, whether real or symbolic, and that this right has been affected differentially during the armed conflict, the right of the Romani people is reiterated and its members individually considered, to freedom of movement throughout the national territory, except for legal limitations."

The text of the Decree embraces most of the claims made by Roma in documents produced earlier and includes a broad range of provisions, attributions and guarantees.

A similar dynamic can be found currently, where the Law of the Land and Rural Development is being negotiated. Although Roma have claimed their special character and understanding of territoriality, the discussions regarding this aspect became salient on two occasions - where the LOOT (*Ley Orgánica de Ordenamiento Territorial)* was being discussed in the late-'90s, and again reformulated in 2011, and when the current Law of the Land was being discussed. On these occasions Roma sought ways of providing input, in order to include an explicit mention of the Romani population. Also, extensive production of publications and statements accompanied this process. The government announced consultations regarding this legislation with Romani representatives[250] (in accordance with the principle of *Consultas Previas*); a year earlier PROROM published a paper "Romani people and the project of the Law of the Land" in 2012. I asked a member of PROROM about this process and about their claims with regards to the Law of the Land. She argued:

> "A: What about the issue of the Law of the Land? Now this is an issue that is being negotiated, what is there to claim?

[248] For example, in the 2014 BBC article on Roma: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/12/141209_colombia_gitanos_rrom_conflicto_aw

[249] http://www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=44972

[250] https://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/gobierno-y-pueblo-gitano-protocolizaran-consulta-previa-para-la-aplicacion-de-la-ley-de-tierras-y-desarrollo-rural

> D: What are our claims? Well, basically we are included there although we do not claim territory because everyone knows that we Roma more around everywhere. But if they are going to give me land I will accept it.
>
> A: But you are not claiming the right to land, or are you?
>
> D: We are included within the law. And if they give us [the land] then we will welcome it, as when you get a gift that you do not expect. Then we can have territories to strengthen the culture, to improve living conditions in terms of income, and all these things. Roma can set up some companies, in agricultural terms ..." [COL_1, recorded interview]

This process of adaptation is logical, especially when Colombian legislation provides grounds for formal consultations. What is important to underline, however, is the flexibility and skill with which such input is provided. On occasions when the collective interests of different ethnic minorities converge, often the efforts are shared by various groups. This has been the case when negotiating the National Development Plans (multi-annual national plans, which have included Roma explicitly ever since 1999), when often indigenous organizations, and those of other minorities where helpful in advancing Romani claims (Gamboa Martínez 2004b). These strategic alliances and mutual collaborations have been of great importance.

It should be underlined that the process of effectively adapting to emerging opportunities is greatly influenced by the presence of non-Roma advisors and supporters. This was especially the case in the first years of existence of PROROM – the previous experience of non-Roma members Paternina and Gamboa especially with the process of ethnic mobilization of indigenous communities provided a concrete roadmap of the type of discourse and strategy needed in order to provide Roma with symmetrical rights.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there are recurrent claims which are being repeated over time. Despite the fact Romani leaders have made tremendous progress in terms of advancing the collective rights of Roma, at least legally, at times the institutional recognition and inclusion in legal documents is more symbolic than real – often the explicit mention of Roma in concrete legislation does not necessarily translate into specific actions or the implementation of specific Roma-targeted projects.

Finally, in order to understand the collective claims of Roma, their framing and timing, and especially the relative success of these demands, one factor is essential – that of political will. The Roma in Colombia know how to capitalize on existing political conjunctures and the overall favourable political conditions; however, the state itself often provides these opportunities by explicitly inviting Roma, as well as other minorities, to provide input.

Nonetheless, not all existing or emerging opportunities have been used effectively by the Roma. Through the process of ethnic mobilization, Romani actors managed to position themselves successfully as one of the recognized ethnic minorities in the country, leading to a series of political and legislative provisions and rights. Their status as a recognized ethnic minority as well as the abundant legislation created for them, gives the Roma a broad framework for action, in which existing

legislation may require to be transposed into concrete projects, initiatives and activities targeting Roma, as required by the law. As explained previously, Roma managed to do so in a number of cases. But there are also experiences which, due to Roma's own mismanagement, lead to the closing up of certain opportunities.

One such example is the national project from the Ministry of Education approved in 2011. The project was envisioned to be implemented in all the *kumpeñy* across the country and was the first large national-scale project implemented for Roma in Colombia. Nonetheless, due to the internal rivalries between Romani organizations and other Roma and non-Roma actors involved, the project had to be abandoned, with a considerable amount of money mismanaged and wasted. During the period of fieldwork, much was being said about this concrete project by different people I spoke with. However, it was impossible to uncover the actual process which lead to this – each person I spoke with had their own version of the story, in which other counterparts were accused of fraud, mismanagement and a combative attitude. What is clear, however, is that this experience led to the worsening of the relationship between organizations and the *kumpeñy*, as well as affecting the credibility of Romani representatives in their relationship with the Ministry of Education.

Another element, mentioned numerous times previously, is the question of in-fighting between Romani representatives and their organizations, witnessed during the period of conducting fieldwork. It has already been mentioned how these rivalries led to the closing down of numerous Roma-specific positions in different institutions of public administration. Also, the division of funding between the two organizations, which was taking place during the period of fieldwork, effectively hinders the capacity to generate successful and meaningful actions with the potential of having a positive impact on the community or on mainstream society in general.

Both of these aspects – the controversies surrounding the management of projects, as well as conflicts between Romani actors – also act as a strongly demobilizing force for those Roma who would like to become actively engaged in the process of ethnic mobilization. According to a Roma previously involved with PROROM:

> "The problem is that the strategy needs to change because the communities without their organizations do not open up. They do not bring in more people, and young people are not going to stick to their organizations. (…)[People] are sick and tired of fights, power struggles. And they [the organizations] do not give spaces to the dynamics of young people, who are very useful; they prefer to stick with communities [instead of getting involved]." [COL_15, recorded interview]

The co-optation of channels of communication with public administration and the excessive control of the legal representatives further pushes potential Roma away from active engagement. Furthermore, the credibility and seriousness of Romani actors is also hindered by these problems and may lead to the closing of opportunities which previously could be open to Roma.

The lack of training and know-how in acquiring public funds – expressed numerous times especially by the legal representatives of the *kumpeñy* – also affects the capacity to effectively use existing opportunities. There are only a handful of Romani representatives with the capacities and knowledge of the policy-making process, with the capability to draft convincing projects and with the contacts to be able to directly negotiate funds at different levels of public administration. Both organizations – URC and PROROM – have counted on the expertise and assistance of non-Roma advisors. With their gradual withdraw from both of them, the overall capacity of the organization diminishes. Some members of both of these entities learned a lot from their advisors, and are able to act on their own as representatives who effectively acquire public funding, especially those associated (currently or in the past) with PROROM. In an interview, a representative of PROROM spoke of this challenge:

> "For example, I do not want to fall into egotism, but basically we have done things here because I have a little more understanding of the *Gadjo* point of view, either cultural or academic. Because I know the laws from here to there. Elderly people coming rely heavily on me, and sometimes I feel very bad, because there are things that slip through my hands. But if there were more people who could contribute to that, it would be different." [COL_1, recorded interview]

With the recognition by the State of the need for the assistance of public officials in the process of drafting projects in the *kumpeñy*, it is possible that over time, the legal representatives as well as representatives of both organizations will acquire the skills necessary to effectively acquire and implement projects.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented empirical findings with regards to the Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia. In order to reflect on the key elements of ethnic mobilization outlined in the chapter on theoretical considerations – the type of mobilizing structures, frames of collective identity and interests, strategies of collective action and the importance of political opportunities - I have described and contextualized my empirical findings.

I found that Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia is driven by two types of mobilizing structures – Romani NGOs and *kumpeñy*. For both types of structures, a limited number of individuals are involved and the level of direct participation of communities is rather low. The role of non-Roma agency has been significant in the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia. Furthermore, despite the limited number of Romani actors, consolidation has been a challenging process and, in fact, the perceived excessive involvement of non-Romani individuals has been, at times, a point of contention.

Romani ethnic mobilization has been driven by emerging political opportunities, in which the process of self-visibilization remained the single most important objective of Romani collective action. Formal recognition of Romani people as an ethnic minority represented a strategic objective in the first years of Romani ethnic mobilization. Once this status was granted, the translation of existing legislation on ethnic minorities into specific policies and actions became the major aim of mobilization. The frame of

collective identity developed as a public self-narrative was adapted to the existing political framework, emphasizing the cultural distinctiveness of Roma and their historical presence in Colombia, as a basis for their recognition as an ethnic minority and other subsequent provisions. These frames, developed principally by Romani actors (although not without a significant influence from non-Roma advisors), are rather homogenizing and essentializing, providing a rather static narrative of Romani culture and ethnicity. The emphasis on the ethnic minority status of Roma determines the scope of objectives of Romani mobilization: the search for "symmetric rights", like those grated to other ethnic minorities; visibility and cultural preservation and protection.

The strategies of Romani ethnic mobilization, employed to pursue collective aims and objectives, are based principally on political interaction through "invited spaces" and through various types of legal tools available to interest groups. Public presence and visibility, through activities and events, is also among the most common types of action; these are mainly targeted towards the outside – the majority non-Roma society - while attention towards activities designed to attend to and directly involve Romani communities is mostly absent. Instances of inter-ethnic collaboration have also been described: although rather sporadic, they have been effective in fulfilling Romani demands.

I have also demonstrated how the emerging political opportunities mobilized action from Romani actors, shaping political objectives and demands. The very emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization is linked to a specific political conjuncture, which created a favourable environment for ethnic struggles and activated the process of self-visibilization among Roma. I also found that diverse external political factors, connected to policy-making processes and legislation, have also influenced the evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization, especially with regards to specifically articulated collective demands. I argue that the frame of political opportunities leads to adaptation of Romani actors' strategies, in order to maximize the potential success of collective action.

These findings, presented in this section, will be discussed and evaluated in the concluding chapter ("discussion") from a comparative perspective, assessing them vis-à-vis existing scholarship on ethnic mobilization.

7. ROMANI ETHNIC MOBILIZATION FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: DISCUSSION

Based on empirical evidence gathered through fieldwork in Spain and Colombia, this chapter aims at reflecting critically on the findings from both case studies from a comparative perspective. The objective of this chapter is threefold:

1) To discuss the empirical findings from both case studies from a comparative perspective, identifying similarities, synergies and differences, as well as their causes. A comparative analysis enables the identification of broader dynamics and patterns with regard to Romani ethnic mobilization
2) To critically assess and contrast these findings from a theoretical standpoint
3) To identify possible contributions and to provide an additional body of knowledge to the study of ethnic mobilization.

Before discussing the findings, a few initial comments are necessary. Clearly, both countries analysed in this dissertation represent significantly different contexts. As was expounded in the chapter “Setting the Scene”, the historical, political, social and cultural contexts of both regions – Europe and Latin America – as well as the status of the so-called “Romani issue”, are significantly diverse. Naturally, this also permeates into the level of nation-states in both regions, influencing the treatment of Romani communities in the case study countries as well as the process of evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in both settings.

Furthermore, Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries represents different stages of development and extension. The size of the Romani population (in absolute terms and proportionally to the non-Romani population), their histories in both countries, the presence and treatment of Roma in public policies, among numerous other factors, have given rise to different processes of evolution of ethnic mobilization of Roma in Spain and in Colombia. Additionally, the extension, proliferation and size of the Romani associative movement in each country differ considerably. In Spain, the history of Romani ethnic mobilization is a few decades older and the number of actors involved in these struggles is much greater; after all, the size of Romani population in Spain is evidently bigger and dispersed across the country. Consequently, the Romani ethnic mobilization is much more diverse and plural, involving a multiplicity of Romani actors who receive significant financial support from public and private donors. On the other hand, the Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia is younger and numerically much more limited to only a handful of actors. Again, the size of the Romani population in this context is determinant for the number of “mobilizing structures” involved.

A comparative approach, however, allows to gain more insight and understanding into the dynamics of ethnic mobilization. More specifically, the comparison of empirical data allows to comprehend processes and dynamics of ethnic mobilization as such, providing in-depth analysis into actors, constituencies, objectives and strategies and the relationship which they hold with each other. The analysis of Romani ethnic mobilization specifically provides rich empirical evidence, not only for

understanding the process of ethnic mobilization of Romani communities, but more broadly, looking into the dynamics, processes and the very nature of ethnic mobilization as such.

This concluding chapter is divided into two sub-sections. In the first section, I concentrate on developing a comparative perspective on the findings from both countries, analysing differences and similarities against the backdrop of theoretical assumptions embraced initially; this section follows the analytical model developed. In this section, I critically assess the empirical findings and discuss their relevance vis-à-vis the theoretical framework I developed. In the final section of the chapter, I discuss my contributions to the field with regard to understanding ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process. Based on my empirical findings, I critically discuss the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries, pointing to the multi-directional dynamic and its relevance for understanding the process of ethnic mobilization in general.

7.1 Comparing cases – Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia from a comparative perspective

7.1.a. "WHO" – Understanding the actors

According to the relevant theoretical literature, ethnic mobilization requires some degree of organization and institutionalization; after all, groups engage in collective struggles, not based on individual claims, but through a number of formal and informal vehicles or "mobilizing structures" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Kriesi 1996; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2009; Kriesi, Soule, and Snow 2007). These structures become recognized actors who engage in direct interaction with constituencies, targeted authorities and potential allies; they become the "spokesmen" who articulate and represent collective grievances and aims on behalf of the community and set the agenda for pursuing these collective goals. According to the relevant literature, mobilizing structures are "those collective vehicles, formal and informal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al., 1996:3); activist networks, NGOs, political parties, but also religious institutions, private clubs, businesses or trade unions can become such vehicles of collective action.

Based on empirical evidence, how are these theoretical considerations reflected in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization? Are there specific types of mobilizing structures adopted as vehicles of collective action among Roma? Are there traceable differences and similarities, and if so, what are they due to? Can Romani associative actors be considered as "social movement organizations" as defined in the relevant literature? How can we assess the diversity (or lack thereof) of Romani vehicles of collective action? What are the patterns of leadership within Romani structures of mobilization, and especially with regard to gender and age? Analysing the globality of Romani actors, what is their relationship with each other? Is the emerging plurality of structures an asset or a challenge? How is the emergence of multiple "Romani voices" dealt with by Romani leaders themselves?

The research conducted in Spain and Colombia demonstrated that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the dominant type of mobilizing structures are non-governmental organizations, registered and formally constituted as associations, operating on diverse levels and pursuing a wide

range of objectives and aims. However, there are visible differences between both countries – while in Spain the Roma organize almost exclusively through associations, in Colombia structures of traditional organization (*kumpeñy*) were also recognized as formal entities representing Romani communities alongside existing NGOs. In practice, the *kumpeñy* operate as NGOs as well (they have a fiscal identification number, a legal personality and can apply for grants), although their process of constitution and internal procedures differ from those of NGOs (they do not have Boards, etc.). These differences are not due to the diverse forms of social organization within Romani communities in both countries, but rather due to the formal legal status of Romani communities and corresponding legal frameworks applicable to them (in Colombia the Roma are recognized as an ethnic minority, while in Spain, Roma are not formally recognized as an ethnic minority). The political and legal context in which ethnic mobilization of Roma takes place is determinant for the choice of mobilizing structures adopted to pursue collective goals. The details of this process are explained in the following section ("when").

With regard to the types of vehicles of collective action used in Romani ethnic mobilization, what is striking is the absence or marginality of what scholars regard as "micro-mobilizations" (McCarthy 1996). "Micro-mobilizations" are units which possess the potential for generating mobilization and collective action, which operate alongside formal organizational structures; family-units, friendship networks or informal groups play a relevant role as "micro-mobilization", especially for recruiting new members and generating grassroots support. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in both case studies, however, the role of such units of "micro-mobilization" is minimal – they operate within the context of Romani communities independently from the Romani associative movement, without providing input to the goals and objectives articulated by the formal structures, represented principally by NGOs. Rather, the ethnic mobilization is driven and dominated by formal organizations (or the formal side of the movement) without seeking links to potential "micro-mobilization" units existing on the grassroots level. Nonetheless, it should be noted that such "micro-mobilizations" do exist and often precede the constitution of new entities (such as Romani associations), which are commonly created because their members feel that existing formal structures represent their interests insufficiently or inadequately; this is especially the case with newly constituted Romani youth or women's organizations in Spain. The birth of new entities typically stems from such micro-level mobilizations (family units, friendship networks etc.) but until they are formally established and begin to operate within the arena of Romani affairs, they are not considered as stakeholders, neither by other Romani actors nor by the State institutions.

The proliferation of structures of civil society, mainly through NGO-type organizations, should also be seen as evidence of the inability of Romani interest groups to influence political processes through formal politics, for example through Romani political parties or Romani politicians in mainstream political parties. As a consequence, structures outside of the realm of formal politics – the NGOs - become the only viable vehicles which can feed into policy-making processes through secured mechanisms of consultation and the involvement of civil society actors. Some scholars argue that this is a process characteristic of new social movements and more broadly, of the emergence of a new type of governance, especially in Europe (Della Porta 2001). Evidence shows that the weakening of political

parties and the salience of more complex forms of governance have made way for a practice in which social movements and/or interest groups are given space for participation and resources by the state, moving away from contention towards co-option and co-operation (ibid.). The expansion of the practice of "deliberative democracy", especially in Europe but also in some countries of Latin America, provides additional background to further understand these developments.

Taking into consideration these findings, what then, is the character of mobilizing structures in the broad context of ethnic mobilization? How can the Romani mobilizing structures be defined and characterized? The literature on social movements, and more specifically, social movement organization structures, provides a useful theoretical framework for assessing the character of the ethnic mobilization mobilizing structures. The typology offered by Hanspeter Kriesi (1996) is a useful point of departure for these reflections and one which has become an influential reference for developing typologies of social movement organizations. The model below is developed taking into consideration the level of participation of the constituency and the orientation of organizations, whether directed towards constituencies or authorities.

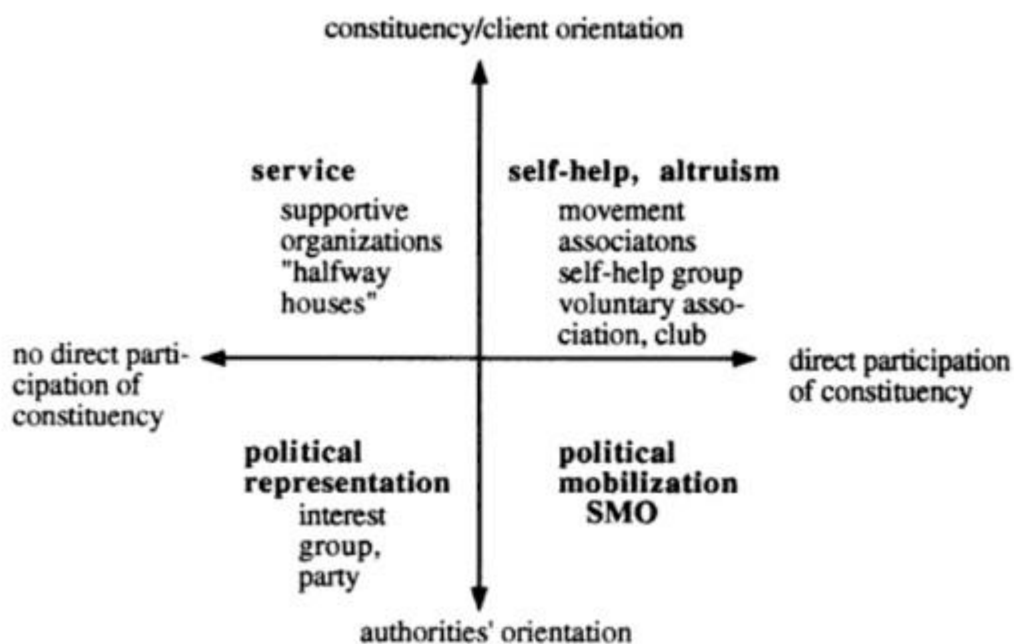

Figure 7.1. Typology of movement-related organizations.

Figure 8. Typology of movement-related organizations.(Kriesi, 1996:153)

When analysing the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries against this theoretical model, we may conclude that Romani mobilizing structures are limited as social movement

organizations (SMOs)[251]. According to the literature, SMOs are characterized by two criteria: 1) they mobilize their constituencies for collective action; 2) they do so with a political goal (Kriesi, 1996:152). As demonstrated in previous chapters, in both settings Romani organizations tend to focus only to a limited extent on direct mobilization of constituencies. Rather, their role is centred on political representation (although not through formal politics as suggested by Kriesi's model) and on service provision. Instead of characterizing Romani mobilizing structures through a one type of profile, as suggested by Kreisi's model, many Romani organizations tend to fulfil various roles at the same time: as representative organizations, as service-providing entities and as self-help groups (or service-providing organizations with direct outreach and participation of the constituency). This is significantly more present in the case of Spain, where Romani mobilizing structures have proliferated and multiplied, becoming important service-providing stakeholders. Kriesi's model, thus, seems inadequate to fully define Romani mobilizing structures. Rather than an "either/or" model suggested by Kriesi, it seems that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the mobilizing structures can be better defined as a type of "hybrid organizations" (Minkoff 2002; Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005; S. R. Smith 2014).

Since the early 2000s we can notice an increase in scholarship on the so-called "hybrid organizations" or "hybrid multi-purpose organizations", which are characterized by four interrelated attributes:

> "(a) they set out as their mission to uphold and promote cultural values that are typically at variant with dominant and institutionalized values;
>
> (b) they offer services to members and the public that express their distinct values, using the services as a model and catalyst for social change;
>
> (c) in addition to their instrumental goals, they aim to meet the expressive and social identity needs of their members by promoting a collective identity; and
>
> (d) they evolve into hybrid organizations by having multiple purposes—combining to various degrees goals of value change, service provision and mutual-aid." (Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2006:97)

The advantage of this theoretical model lies in the conceptualization of organizations on the interstices of diverse theoretical models and traditions, combining scholarship on social movements, civil society and third sector literature. For the case of describing Romani ethnic mobilization (or what I refer to as the Romani associative movement), which likewise is conceptually located at the intersection of different theoretical models (most notably the theory of social movements and the literature on civil society), the model of "hybrid forms" corresponds much better to the reality observed during

[251] It should be noted that the concept of "social movement organizations" has been challenged by numerous scholars (such as Burstein, 1998), arguing that it is difficult to distinguish SMOs from "interest groups"; she then proposed the use of "interest organizations" as a broader term which refers to this type of structure. The disagreements with regard to terminology reveal the lack of consensus with regard to the nature and conceptualization of social movements as such (Diani 2012).

fieldwork. The emergence of such hybrid structures also reflects the shifting relationship between social movements and the State, moving from contention towards accommodating such actors in the context of deliberation, co-ordination and partnership with the State (Minkoff 2002).

Finally, it should be noted that the Romani ethnic mobilization is not constituted by one actor but rather is formed of a multiplicity of diverse actors, operating on different levels and through variety of means and strategies. It is thus important to analyse the mobilizing structures, not as independent, isolated entities, but rather in their relationship to each other and their role within the overall process of ethnic mobilization. In Spain, numerous “hybrid organizations” have evolved in the context of Romani ethnic mobilization, but not all actors in the field of Romani ethnic mobilization can be characterized as such. Other structures of Romani ethnic mobilization do not provide any services at all and limit themselves to representative or advocacy functions. On the other hand, the case of Colombia is significantly different – Romani mobilizing structures operate almost exclusively as representing voices and advocates, but not as service providers, and thus can be conceptualized through Kieresi’s model described above rather than described as “hybrid forms”.

Furthermore, mobilizing structures are not stable entities, but dynamic ones, which evolve and transform over time. The structures, forms of action and types of goals of different mobilizing structures are in a relationship of interaction and mutual influence with each other (Willems and Jegers 2012). Although decisions regarding structure, goals, and forms of action are made separately by different entities at different levels within a movement (Hensmans 2003), they are made in relation to each other and to the evolution of the broad frame of ethnic mobilization. Thus, in order to assess, not only the individual mobilizing structures, but also the overall continuum of ethnic mobilization, it is important to acknowledge the inherent dynamism of social movements, as well as the heterogeneity of the actors involved (Willems and Jegers 2012; Benford and Snow 2000).

Leadership and structures

Different theoretical frameworks on ethnic mobilization point to the important role of leaders in shaping group identity and interests, as well as determining the strategies and resources used in collective action; the type and quality of leadership are determinant for the potential success of the mobilization (Ganz 2010; Vermeersch 2006; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2009). Groups striving for social change need credible leaders who represent the collective claims of their people and often act as indispensable intermediaries between their community and those in positions of power (Anna Mirga 2015). Furthermore, some research suggests that organizations with more skilled and committed leaders have higher levels of political presence (Han et al. 2011).

The concept of community “is based on the idea of members complying with a particular, sometimes quite rigid, set of norms” (Belton, 2009:7) which determines the context in which individuals act. The Romani community, like many other European societies, is based on hierarchical relations organized, among other factors, around age and gender, in which the elder men are traditionally power holders and the highest authority (A. Fraser 1995). In fact, the interviews revealed that when asked to define the key elements of Romani identity, the respondents always mentioned the principle of respect

towards the elders (known as *Phuriphen* among *Romanes* speaking communities) as essential. Scholars also argue that traditionally, in the majority of Romani communities, the elders hold power (Andrzej Mirga and Gheorghe 2001; Andrzej Mirga and Mróz 1994; Project on Ethnic Relations 2001) and the social structure of communities is typically based on extended family ties. It should be noted, however, that research drawing from ethnography increasingly challenges the archaic or simplistic view of Romani social organizations, especially in urban contexts (Lagunas 2002; Lagunas 2010b).

Nonetheless, when analysing the patterns of leadership in both countries, the dominant position of older men within Romani organizations becomes evident. Research in Spain and Colombia shows that Romani mobilizing structures are heavily dominated by men, especially in the Boards and higher levels of organizational governance; and as legal representatives of the *kumpeñy*. Furthermore, in many places we can trace the continuity of what can be considered a traditional form of Romani leadership and its direct involvement in policy-making; in Colombia through *kumpeñy*, and in Spain, through associations such as *Associació per a la Convivència i Civisme del Poble Gitano* in Catalonia, which formalizes the traditional Council of Elders (*Consejo de Ancianos*). At the same, time, however, Romani women have also played a significant role as leaders of Romani organizations, although their role and status in both case studies has been problematized.

With regard to the leadership patterns in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, it is important to make some additional points. When speaking about Romani ethnic mobilisation and its existing leadership patterns, typically the language of dichotomies is applied both in academic literature (Andrzej Mirga and Gheorghe 2001) and colloquially. Under this logic, traditional leadership is opposed to the Romani intelligentsia or elites, elected representatives are contrasted with appointed or self-appointed leaders, and political leaders are juxtaposed with activists from the third sector. Romani leaders are divided into subcategories such as modern or traditional, educated or uneducated, senior or youth leaders (Anna Mirga 2015).

Nonetheless, when looking into the evidence gathered during fieldwork, it seems that Romani leadership is much more complex, pluralistic, fluid and intertwined; drawing a clear-cut typology is challenging. In Colombia, although the legal representatives of *kumpeñy* are assumed to represent traditional structures of organization (and thus reflect traditional leadership), the evidence gathered during fieldwork clearly shows that the reality within the communities is different; often the individuals assuming the role of legal representatives are not those who enjoy the greatest respect and authority within each *kumpania*. In Spain we see different types of leadership in which informal community power or authority does not necessarily overlap with leadership (presidency) over local associations. The salience of religious leadership within Spanish Romani communities adds an additional layer to the analysis of leadership and authority among Roma.

Furthermore, over time, Romani leadership has diversified greatly and new patterns of community leadership have emerged outside of the political and NGO spectrum and beyond the so-called traditional leadership. Consequently, the patterns of leadership have become much more complex and may include a combination of different social roles and positions, with various degrees of overlapping

between them (social, political, “traditional”, religious). Especially in Spain, we increasingly see a diversification of leadership profiles in Romani ethnic mobilization, most notably with the salience of women’s and youth organizations. As was described in the previous chapter, Romani women’s, and more recently, Romani youth organizations have emerged as distinct branches of Romani ethnic mobilization, which articulate a separate identity as organizations representing specific sectors of the Romani population, and their distinct collective interests. The salience of Romani women’s and youth organizations inevitably challenges the dominant role and leadership of Romani men, contributing to further pluralizing patterns of Romani ethnic mobilization leadership and authority. In Colombia, since the moment of emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization, individual Romani women (some of them relatively young) have emerged as leaders and public personalities, also challenging traditional patterns of authority. Nonetheless, their direct involvement has not yet translated into building structures of women or youth representation; their active involvement can be rather seen as the “exception to the rule”.

The increasing diversification of different levels of authority and leadership is yet another proof of the limitations of the co-called culturalist perspective on ethnic mobilization. This approach, strongly rooted in primordialism, argues that ethnic mobilization is a natural reflection of a group’s internal and culturally determined structures of power and thus determines the pattern of ethnic mobilization (for example: Harrison & Huntington, 2000). Empirical data suggests that while internal structures of community leadership and authority are relevant variables in studying ethnic mobilization among Roma, they do not explain nor determine the shape and structures of leadership in the processes of ethnic mobilization. The Political Process perspective (PPP) seems to be a more comprehensive theoretical framework, which accounts for other variables, such as the political, legislative and social environment in which groups operate and in which ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves.

The data gathered in both countries strikingly show that most vehicles of Romani mobilization lack strong structures behind Romani leadership. Romani organizations are often sustained by their leaders, commonly becoming “one man shows”, which results in a short life-span of many local grassroots Romani organizations, especially in Spain. Often, the leadership (especially the presidency) of Romani organizations is seen as a “life-time position” which has an ongoing mandate, disregarding the procedures stipulated by the statutes, thus pointing to weak internal democracy within organizations. This further emphasizes the individualism within the Romani associative movement and contributes to the perception of Romani associations as “the properties of its leaders”; this has been traced both in the case of Spain and Colombia. This dynamic, not uncommon among other non-Roma civil society structures, hinders the rootedness of Romani organizations within its communities, and distances the civic structures from their constituencies. There is also a general lack of membership-based organizations, which further hinders accountability and the ownership of local communities towards their leaders and organizations which claim to represent them. Arguably, the lack of membership-based organizations is among the factors which contribute to weak structures build around Romani entities. These findings further demonstrate the limited capacity of Romani mobilizing

structures to act as social movement organizations (SMOs). Rather than focussing on mobilizing communities, they act as representatives of Romani collective interests.

Multiple voices in Romani ethnic mobilization

The fieldwork conducted in both countries points to a limited diversity of mobilizing structures in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization. The Romani ethnic mobilization is largely limited to associations (NGOs, whether supposedly reflecting traditional structures of organization, or as third sector entities) while other civil society forms such as trade unions, informal civic groups, as well as cooperatives, charities, think-tanks, cultural foundations, social enterprises or academia are largely absent or marginal.

The lack of heterogeneity in "mobilizing structures" is especially obvious in Colombia, with a small number of entities (NGOs and *kumpeñy*) operating in a very similar way. The internal dynamics established in Colombia lead to control over the possibility of creating new entities (restraints on *kumpeñy*) and consequently give a monopoly to existing structures, restricting the potential plurality of actors, discourses and claims.

On the other hand, the level of internal plurality of mobilizing structures in Spain is much greater. Firstly, although the panorama of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain is dominated by NGO-type structures, there are also different types of vehicles which have emerged over time, such as political parties, foundations (for example *Fundació Pere Closa*) and even entities aspiring to become think-tanks (the newly established *Agora Roma*). There are also a significant number of individual agents, such as politicians, scholars, journalists or artists of Romani background who, to varying degrees, participate or are involved in the broad struggles of the Romani ethnic mobilization; some of them may be part of NGOs but commonly they are also individuals acting in their own personal capacity. Secondly, the internal diversity among NGO-like mobilizing structures is also significant: they vary in size and geographical scope (local, regional, national), thematic scope (artistic and cultural, political, leisure and sports, even religious), and sectorial approach (Romani women, youth, peddler sellers, etc.). This increasing heterogeneity contributes to a pluralization of discourses, narratives, strategies of action and areas of activity.

Some scholars argue that internal plurality within movements is a positive thing. For example, Jo Freeman, a leading scholar and activist in the women's movement in the US argues that: "While too much heterogeneity creates problems for organizations, it is not bad for movements. Historically, American movements have thrived best when they were highly pluralistic, with each group within them having a solid identity and distinct style of approach. (…) It is often necessary and valuable for different groups to play different roles, with pressure coming from one and conciliation from another, without any having to be directly responsible for the actions of any others. Thus, different groups are better off having their own organizations which can deal with their own particular needs, without having to secure approval from everyone else." (Freeman 1978)

Indeed, the increasingly heterogeneous character of the Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain can be assessed positively – it more adequately reflects the internal diversity of Romani communities and can

better tailor its narratives and discourses to the needs and interests of the heterogeneous Romani population. It works to counter the stereotypical portrayal of Romani culture and communities by providing images and narratives in concert with diverse Romani lifestyles; on the other hand, it contributes to better representation and articulation of the opinions and concerns of those sectors of Romani population who were in the past unattended to, such as those of the Romani LGBT community or Romani feminists. Furthermore, the increasing plurality may also be a sign of a degree of maturity and of cross-fertilization of consciousness about certain civic and/or political issues among members of the Roma community.

On the other hand, however, the increasing plurality of voices within Romani ethnic mobilization structures poses a challenge to the overall struggle: it often leads to internal disputes and the existence of competing or opposing narratives and/or claims. The multiplicity of voices at times results in a cacophony rather than a coordinated chorus. The proliferation and growing diversity of Romani actors requires a greater degree of consolidation and coordination between them in order to capitalize on their collective leverage and advocacy potential as part of the same struggle. In order to avoid an overlap of structures and competencies which often ignite tensions between actors, it is necessary to pursue some degree of specialization.

Furthermore, beyond the Romani mobilizing structures there are additional voices which are also vocal in the arena of Romani affairs, either within the field of ethnic mobilization or in parallel with it. On the one hand, there are the Romani Evangelical Churches, which both in Spain and in Colombia play an important role as entities which exercise some degree of authority and contribute to building internal cohesion within Romani communities. Romani Evangelical Churches have maintained themselves on the margin of Romani ethnic mobilization; nonetheless, and especially in Spain, in some cases they have also build parallel civic structures and became active stakeholders alongside the NGOs. These religious structures pose a great potential for the Romani ethnic mobilization – especially thanks to their rootedness in the community and their capacity to mobilize a different type of resources. However, it seems clear that Romani civic leaders often underestimate the potential of religious congregations for the Romani ethnic mobilization and seldom look for ways to activate religious leaders.

On the other hand, alongside Romani mobilizing structures, there is a multiplicity (especially in Spain) of non-Roma actors which operate within the same field of Romani affairs, acting as influential and dominant voices with regard to Romani issues, mostly notably before the State administration. They are powerful entities which produce public discourses, influence public policy processes and shape the agenda on Romani-related issues. Such non-Roma actors add an additional layer to the heterogeneous and plural voices involved in Romani affairs, with direct and indirect implications for the evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization.

Between fragmentation and consolidation

Given the diversity of actors it is important to analyse these actors in a broader frame of ethnic mobilization (Willems and Jegers 2012); after all, it is the ethnic mobilization that should be considered

the unit of analysis and not the individual actors which compose it. Thus, when speaking about the Romani associative movement in each country, it is important to look into the relationship which these organizations have with each other. A proliferation of Romani NGOs does not necessarily point to the maturity of a Romani associative movement, but may often be a sign of internal fragmentation (Vermeersch 2006). As the number of mobilizing structures in the movement grows, a process of consolidation may be necessary in order to avoid internal atomization and diffusion of interests and claims voiced by different actors. The level of maturity of an ethnic movement can therefore be "measured," not only by its proliferation, but more importantly, by the degree of internal cohesion and the existence of common goals or actions, which consolidate the diverse actors of the Romani ethnic movement.

Ganesh and Stohl (2014), relying on previous research (Shumate, Fulk, & Monge, 2005) argue that there are two dimensions to the relationship between organizations acting in the same field: symbiosis and commensalism. The main variable in this model is the level of competition for resources between the actors. Thus, symbiosis describes cooperative relationships between organizations that do not compete for the same resources while commensalism is a relationship in which organizations can potentially compete with each other for the same funding. They further argue that the scholarship is still weak in conceptualizing the relationship and instances of conflict and contention within organizations of social movements or between them (Ganesh and Stohl 2014).

In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the entities composing the movement are inevitably in a commensal relationship to each other – acting within the same field and in competition with each other for limited, mostly State-provided resources. This competition at times leads to rivalry and internal tensions, not only between the Roma and non-Roma actors, but also among the Romani actors themselves. The existence of these tensions is yet another argument for the need for consolidation in order to overcome instances of conflicts, but also to avoid duplication and overlap of areas of activity and action.

The empirical data from both countries shows that consolidation is a challenging process. There is a traceable level of internal fragmentation, rivalry and at times, especially in Colombia, periodic open conflict. Romani actors are often in competition with each other over funding, dominant voice, leadership or territory. The fact that the State legitimizes some leaders over others, fosters dissent and internal rivalry. The internal conflicts and tension between some Romani stakeholders is acknowledged by representatives of public administration that have been interviewed during fieldwork. They have often raised this issue, pointing to various consequences which such in-fighting has for the process of consultation and implementation. Fragmentation of the Romani associative movement, and most notably the occasional rivalries, damage the reputation of Romani actors as reliable and legitimate partners, not only in the eyes of the State but also in their relationship with their constituencies. Furthermore, fragmentation leads to a diffusion of collective interests and the existence of divergent, even competing, claims, undermining their collective capacity for joint action. The multiple Romani actors in each territory often lack strategic alignment in terms of defining specific goals, crafting collective messages and engaging in common action, especially on a national scale.

In the face of this challenge, often the State administration itself provides impulses to initiate consolidation processes, especially in Spain. Consolidation on a regional level takes place through the process of setting up federations or umbrella organizations; or through setting up formal and informal networks. Such a strategy is highly effective as it provides greater leverage in targeting the state, as well as allowing for more coordinated action and strategic alignment. It also often provides an image of greater representativeness and/or legitimacy to such structures. Spain is a good example where regional federations have been set up since the early 1990s.

Nonetheless, this form of consolidation is often not sufficient and has numerous flaws, as was shown in the chapter on Spain. There is an evident problem of overlapping structures existing, which interact in the same territory – in Spain, for example, there are two Romani federations in the Valencia region, two Romani federations in the Extremadura region, and in the Catalonia region there used to be two federations as well. In Colombia there is also an evident overlap of both the NGOs which work and operate in the same territory, and arguably represent one *kumpeñy* in the capital city.

According to Jo Freeman, conflicts within social movements can be productive. She argues that “Conflict is necessary and valuable, as it is the means by which we debate our ideas, resolve our differences, test our theories, and come to conclusions” (Freeman 1978). This is certainly true when there are spaces which provide opportunities for debating and resolving conflicts. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, however, such venues which provide spaces of interaction between diverse Romani actors are few, especially on the national level. In fact, in both countries there is a clear lack of a platform or initiatives which aim at aligning diverse Romani actors and which would serve as spaces of critical reflection and strategic alignment of causes, discourses and action, especially on a national level. In both countries, such spaces of dialogue between the most relevant Romani actors have been sponsored by the State itself – in Spain, in the framework of the State Council for the Roma and in Colombia as part of the National Table for Dialogue. Nonetheless, these structures are governmental consultative bodies and as such, lack the necessary independence and autonomy of action. In Spain, an independent confederation, gathering regional Romani federations from across the country was established only recently, in 2013 (*Plataforma Khetane*) and its effectiveness as a platform for joint action has yet to be seen.

The challenges stemming from fragmentation are multiple and have been commented in detail in both case study chapters. Scholars on social movements and ethnic mobilization agree that internal conflicts weaken the movement’s potential and its eventual outcomes (Kriesi, Soule, and Snow 2007; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2009; Freeman 1978); the empirical evidence of this dissertation tends to confirm this assertion. One additional comment is of importance. Gheorghe & Andrzej Mirga (2001), speaking of the European Romani ethnic movement argue that “division is one of the reasons for the proliferation of Romani organizations in recent years and for their competing claims to legitimacy”. Indeed, the internal conflict among Romani leaders challenges their credibility and legitimacy also in the face of the community, discrediting them as valuable and representative actors. Dissatisfaction with some of the existing structures pushes potential adherents away from them – rather than joining existing organizations, many may choose to form their own, parallel structures or disengage from

ethnic mobilization altogether. This dynamic perpetuates the creation of new mobilizing structures, leading to further atomization and fragmentation.

While the lack of structures which foster strategic alignment of Romani actors on a long-term basis is evident, it should be noted that Romani actors frequently join forces spontaneously when reacting to specific developments. Cases of violence, rampant discrimination and hate speech often activate coordinated responses among Romani actors – more often than not through informal personal communication between the actors. Such cases have been mapped out especially in Spain, where joint action often takes the shape of protests and/or campaigns.

Findings in a nutshell and theoretical contributions

Recapitulating, I argue that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the mobilizing structures are limited to structures outside of the realm of formal politics and that NGOs (whether associations or formally registered structures of what is perceived as “traditional social organization”) become the most common type of formal vehicle of collective action. The proliferation of NGOs and the traceable differences among them in both countries, are determined by the political and legal context in which ethnic mobilization of Roma takes place. Romani “mobilizing structures” cannot be defined as types of “social movement organizations” (Kriesi 1996); the concept of “hybrid organizations” (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005; Minkoff 2002) may be more adequate to characterize Romani mobilizing structures, especially in the case of Spain. What is striking is the marginality of what scholars regard as “micro-mobilizations”; the ethnic mobilization is driven and dominated rather by formal organizations (or the formal side of the movement) without seeking links to potential “micro-mobilization” units existing on the grassroots level.

This section also analysed the patterns of Romani leadership, providing arguments of its increasing plurality and fluid character. The salience of Romani women and Romani youth leaders increasingly challenges the dominant position of older Romani men within the Romani associative movement. Furthermore, it was argued that Romani mobilizing structures are driven by its leaders and not by potential membership; in fact, Romani organizations lack strong structures of active adherents.

Finally, this section gave evidence of the emergence of increasingly more heterogeneous entities with regard to type of structures, objectives and leadership patterns, which leads to an increasing plurality of diverse Romani voices. The expanding plurality may be a sign of maturity and development of Romani activism as it increasingly reflects the *de facto* diversity of Romani communities. Nonetheless, the proliferation, growth in number and expanding heterogeneity of diverse structures is also a sign of fragmentation in which internal consolidation becomes an urgent challenge to face.

In conclusion, my findings with what regards Romani ethnic mobilization in both case studies, its comparison and analysis, allows me to formulate some theoretical reflections regarding ethnic mobilization as such. When examining the role and character of mobilizing structures, and its importance for ethnic mobilization, available scholarship tends to provide fixed typologies to define and characterize individual vehicles of collective action. Based on my research I argue, however, that

rather than providing typologies for concrete actors, treating them as independent, isolated entities, it is much more relevant to conceive ethic mobilization as a field of networks and interactions, thus examining the relationship of mobilizing structures to each other. Typologies, like those provide by Kriesi (1996), remain rigid and do not sufficiently reflect the place of the concrete actor analysed within the broader web of ethnic mobilization. Conversely, I conclude that mobilizing structures are not stable entities, but dynamic ones, which evolve and transform over time; the character of mobilizing structures is oftentimes hybrid and fluid and undergoes transformations in a process of constant adaptation to external and internal circumstances.

Furthermore, scholarship is scarce in formulating convincing conceptualization of the process of emergence of ethnic mobilization or the forces which influence its birth. How is ethnic mobilization generated in the first place? My findings suggest that the role of non-Romani agency has been determinant and in some instances preceded emergence of genuinely Romani-driven ethnic mobilization. I would argue, thus, that it is important to appreciate and further examine the external forces, exogenous to the population (ethnic group) which mobilization claims to represent in the first place, and their capacity to generate instances of ethnic mobilization. My evidence may put into question the assumption that in the process of ethnic mobilization "groups organize in pursue of collective interests" leading to deduce that this process is organic and self-generated, especially in the moment of emergence.

Additionally, I argue that political and legal context in which ethnic mobilization is born determines the choice of mobilizing structures, echoing similar conclusions made by some scholars. While the choice of types of mobilizing structures is influenced externally to a great extent, the process of evolution of ethnic mobilization is much more complex and dependent on variety of factors, many of them internal to ethnic mobilization itself. Scholarship is weak in conceptualizing instances of internal conflict and contention among mobilizing structures. My findings suggest that territoriality and specialization are two factors which may provide insight into these occurrences. Likewise, the type and quality of leadership is determinant for ethnic mobilization and its mobilizing structures. However, leadership patterns should be analysed contextually, looking into how roles are fluid and negotiated, and how different types of leadership overlap with each other. It is, likewise, important to examine not only the role of "micro-mobilizations" but also asses how individual agency can be generative of collective action; an aspect still not sufficiently emphasized in scholarship on ethnic mobilization.

Finally, I conclude that in the face of diverse approaches to ethnic mobilization, outlined in initial theoretical considerations, I suggest that my findings support Political Process perspective (PPP) model, distancing other competing theoretical models are partial and insufficient to effectively explain the role of mobilizing structures in ethnic mobilization.

7.1.b. "WHOM" – The collective identity frame vs. the constituency

Ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize constituencies for collective action. In this process, the role of framing is essential – it allows one to delineate and distinguish the "self" from "others", building a sense of a collective identity (Flesher Fominaya 2010; Benford and Snow 2000;

Hunt and Benford 2004; McDonald 2002; Olzak 2006; Vermeersch 2011; D. Snow 2001; Melucci 1996). Ethnicity can be a powerful mobilizing tool but needs to be activated by crafting compelling frames of collectively shared identity. Such frames, constructed for the use of ethnic mobilization, are referred to by Mary Bernstein as “identity for empowerment” (Bernstein 2008; Bernstein 1997). These narratives of “who we are” are a “public expression of self” (McDonald 2002) and need to be skilfully crafted by leaders in order to encompass multiple individual identities, which intersect with diverse identity markers existing alongside ethnic ones. These frames of collective identity commonly become, not only a “public expression of self,” but also a political one, in which the group transforms into a politically relevant subject or acquires political subjectivity.

In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, what discourses or narratives convey such collective identity frames? Towards whom and with what objectives are these narratives crafted? How are these frames of “public expression of self” shaped and by whom? How is the collective identity frame influenced by external factors, such as legal frameworks or policy-approaches? Furthermore, based on these findings, what contributions to the field can be made regarding the role of collective identity frames for ethnic mobilization? Is collective identity a pre-requisite or a product of ethnic mobilization?

In order to answer these questions, which guide the comparative analysis, what should be noted is that the “whom” variable is complex and multi-level. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the interpretation of this variable carries with it diverse aspects, which interplay mutually with each other, enabling us to distinguish three analytical layers:

4) “Whom” as a frame of “who are the Roma”, crafted by various (mainly) non-Roma actors as well as governments, through targeted policies and in social and public discourse. This layer resonates with Snow’s definition of “social identities” (2001).
5) “Whom” as a frame of “who we are” as a group, crafted by leaders, associations and other Romani actors. It is influenced by the frame “who are the Roma” but at the same time aims at influencing this frame, in order to provide a counter-narrative. This frame is commonly used in public discourse and targets external agents, as well as the majority society. Rather than “who we aim at mobilizing” this frame refers to “who we are representing”.
6) “Whom” as the frame of “who we aim at mobilizing”. This frame, essential to the process of ethnic mobilization, is crafted by Romani leaders and organizations, and aims at mobilizing constituencies – the Roma – towards greater engagement. This frame is directed internally, towards the Romani community, but is also influenced by the previous frames.

The first layer (1) refers to a process in which the group, in this case the Roma, are already attributed a social and a politically relevant collective identity, defined, not through a process of self-articulation, but by being treated as a separate and distinct policy target. This was the case in Spain where the acknowledgement of Roma as a policy target group preceded the processes of Romani ethnic mobilization. In Colombia, on the contrary, it was not until the Roma began to articulate their collective claims that they started to be recognized as a distinct political group and eventually, a target for public policies.

"Whom" as the "public expression of self"

The second layer (2) refers to the way in which Roma themselves construct this "public expression of self" in a process of acquiring political subjectivity.

Firstly, there are some noticeable differences between the way in which the "who we are" frame is constructed in Spain and in Colombia. While in Spain emphasis is being put on questions of citizenship and racial equality, the claims for "equal opportunities" and to fully enjoy citizen's rights, in Colombia there is a tendency to construct discourses which emphasize cultural difference and differential treatment. The choice of these frames in both settings is strategic and is determined by the legal frameworks available to Romani communities in both countries. In Spain, Roma are not formally recognized as an ethnic minority and thus, from a legal point of view, the Roma are citizens in the same capacity as all other citizens of Spain; nonetheless, it should be noted that a distinct Romani ethnic identity is acknowledged formally in a number of ways (such as acts of institutional recognition or specific policies). For years, the legal frameworks did not offer legal – or explicit – protection of Romani identity, culture, language or traditions as part of minority rights protection as established in other countries; the emergence of national and regional strategies, nonetheless, currently provide items related to Romani identity and culture. Due to the specific legal constellation regarding the treatment of minorities in Spain, the Roma are rather acknowledged as a minority through policies which target them as a group, and these efforts stem from the supposition of uplifting the disadvantaged Romani population to remove the barriers which impede their access to full rights and opportunities. The first layer of identity frame (1), crafted through public policies resonates and to an extent is reflected in the narratives constructed by Romani activists themselves. Nonetheless, parallel efforts are pursued by the Romani ethnic mobilization to challenge a stigmatized identity frame and to acknowledge and eventually recognize the distinct and culturally valuable Romani ethnic identity, thus moving away from a socio-economic logic of "inclusion" towards a logic of cultural recognition. In this process, Romani discourses re-incorporate ideas of cultural distinctiveness and ethnic affirmation and reinforce the binary opposition between "us" – the Roma and "them" – the non-Roma majority society. These changes should also be situated in broader discussions regarding the diverse approaches towards minority treatment, ranging from assimilation, to integration and multiculturalism and/or interculturalism (Taylor 1994; Kymlicka 1995). Arguably in Spain, over the years, following the policy approaches introduced by institutions of the European Union, the language of social integration has become the dominant terminology embraced in policy discourses (Carrasco 2007); others bring arguments of "splintered multiculturalism" in Spain (Bonal and Rambla 2003). The emergence of public debates and advancing policy approaches towards the treatment of minorities are echoed in specific policy approaches towards Roma, on the one hand, and are incorporated and reflected in Romani discourses and demands, on the other.

On the other hand, in Colombia, ethnic minorities are formally recognized and are guaranteed special and differential treatment by the Constitution. The emphasis on cultural difference, distinct identity and culture is strategic in order to underline the institutional need to protect the Romani ethnic group

and provide them with differential rights and benefits, symmetrical to those attributed to other ethnic groups in the country.

This difference between both countries resonates with the argument of Mary Bernstein regrading what she calls “identity deployment” or “identity as strategy” (Bernstein 1997; Bernstein and Olsen 2009). Bernstein argues that under different conditions, groups may choose to construct identities which either celebrate the similarities or underline the differences (“celebrate or suppress difference”) with the majority. Expressions of identity are deployed at the collective level as a strategy for pursuing specific goals; in fact, “identity deployment” and goals and strategies are closely intertwined with each other. Bernstein further argues that: “Identity deployment can be examined at both the individual and collective level along a continuum from education to critique. ‘Identity for critique’ confronts the values, categories, and practices of the dominant culture. ‘Identity for education’ challenges the dominant culture’s perception of the minority or is used strategically to gain legitimacy by playing on uncontroversial themes.” (Bernstein & Olsen, 2009:872). Activists and leaders can simultaneously deploy different types of identity, underlining sameness and difference, depending on the audience and venue, the place and context and the type of interaction. I would add that identity deployment is as much influenced by these factors as by the broad socio-political context and the type of specific goals pursued. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, both types of identity deployment – “identity for critique” and “identity for education” – can be traced. On the one hand, Romani ethnic mobilization denounces discrimination and inequality (social and institutional); at the same time, discourses aim at educating majority societies and deconstructing stereotypes and stigmas associated with the Roma. These frames, as argued by Bernstein and others, are as much a strategy as a goal.

Secondly, collective identity is not something given; although it may have strong overlaps with other levels of identity (social and individual), it needs to be formulated and expressed (D. Snow 2001; D. A. Snow and McAdam 2000). In this process, Romani activists and leaders construct discourses and narratives which articulate these collective identity frames. Both case studies suggest that in the case of Roma ethnic mobilization, the discourses constructed 1) evoke common elements of Romani identity and culture, but in doing so they 2) employ rather homogenising frames.

Indeed, as suggested by Olzak (2001), ethnic mobilization is a process in which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity. In both countries, Romani activists and leaders craft frames of collective identity which are based on a number of shared cultural elements, such as common origin in India, Romani values and traditions and language (to a different degree in Spain than in Colombia). There are a number of cultural elements which overlap in the discourses analysed in both countries; nonetheless, there are also some traceable differences. In Colombia, collective Romani ethnic identity reflects the issues, themes and even the language which is used in the case of other ethnic minorities in the country, reflecting the legal frameworks applicable to them. This is why in Colombia we find references to their tribal character (notably the influence of ILO Convention 169), the importance of language, traditional authorities and legal systems or worldview (*cosmovisión*) and nomadism. These narratives are also exemplary of “strategic essentialism” in which positivist essentialism is used strategically “in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak & Landry, 1996: 214). In contrast, these

elements are absent in discourses constructed by Romani people in Spain, which more frequently make references to so-called "injustice frames" (Benford and Snow 2000), the centuries-long history in Spain or Romani artistic production (music and dance). Interestingly, in both cases, Romani collective identity is manifested and expressed through similar symbols such as the Romani flag or the Romani anthem, which proves the importance of networks and the impact that international developments have for national contexts. On the discursive level, Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and in Colombia embraces the narrative of a transnational Romani identity or of Roma as a "stateless nation". Nonetheless, there is also a traceable level of discrepancy between the rhetoric proposed by leaders and activists and the level of practice, which manifests itself through a limited level of collaboration and dialogue with immigrant Romani communities (in Spain) or the lack of recognition of non-*Romanes* speaking individuals as belonging to the same community (in Colombia).

Furthermore, by evoking cultural elements in discourses of collective identity, the Roma are commonly presented as a homogeneous group. The constitutive elements of frames of collective identity rooted in cultural narratives (such as "Romani culture", "Romani traditions" or "traditional Romani values") are seen as static, universally embraced and practiced and historically stable properties. In reality, however, Romani communities are incredibly diverse and plural; Romani lifestyles, values and traditions vary even in the context of single family units. Additionally, individual Romani identities intersect with a plethora of other variables or identity dimensions such as gender, class, sexual orientation and profession, among numerous others. Roma of mixed decent (Roma and non-Roma) display even more complex assemblages of identity on a personal level.

Frames of collective identity in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries tend not to respond to this plurality and heterogeneity of Romani lifestyles and realities. Weakness of "identity correspondence" (D. A. Snow and McAdam 2000) – the linkage or alignment of collective and personal identities – may hinder the resonance of collective frames used for the needs of ethnic mobilization and undermine its potential for empowerment. Furthermore, the imposition of collective identity frames which assume homogeneity and internal cohesion tends to reify identity, implying a dominant discourse of authenticity about what "being a Roma" means. Nancy Fraser rightfully notes that by "stressing the need to elaborate and display an authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity, it puts moral pressure on individual members to conform to a given group culture" (N. Fraser 2000). These dominant public discourses may consequently discourage critical or dissident counter-narratives. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that in Spain other voices are increasingly emerging which challenge the static view of the collective frame of "who are the Roma" by introducing more plural representations of Romani collective identity. Most notably, Roma LGBT, Romani feminists and some young Romani activists, are introducing more diversified narratives into the public discourse, adding new dimensions to the collective identity frames articulated by Romani activists and leaders. The salience and gradual proliferation of these diversified and more plural discourses may eventually lead to the shift in dominant collective identity frames in Spain, by evoking different elements of the multiple identities of the Romani constituency.

With regard to these reflections, it should be noted that ethnic identities are not stable and static, but evolve and shift over time. Likewise, the process of identity framing for the use of ethnic mobilization is also a dynamic process – the content and markers of identity evolve over time, frames of identity shift, becoming more or less exclusive, boundaries separating "us" from "others" are redrawn and may become more or less rigid (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2009; Oliver 2013). The dynamic character of the identity framing process is influenced by the development of the ethnic mobilization itself – frames of collective interests, evolution of mobilizing structures, narratives crafted by leaders and the very context of the external environment in which these take place, affect the way in which collective identity is framed and articulated. In fact, some scholars argue that identity, interests and structures intersect and are in constant interdependent relationship with each other (Bernstein 2008). Likewise, Oliver argues that: "Mobilization happens through social networks and social networks are changed in the process of mobilization; identities shape mobilization and mobilization changes identities; political and organizational structures constrain mobilization and mobilization changes political and organizational structures." (Oliver, 2013:235)

These debates have lead to a major conceptual discussion among scholars regarding the very nature of ethnic identity in the context of social movements or ethnic mobilization. Some claim that collective identity is a prerequisite for ethnic mobilization (Barany 2002b); others argue that collective identity is rather a product of mobilization and that ethnic groups are "made" through the process of framing by activists and leaders (Nagel 1997). More recent scholarship maintains that ethnic identity can be analysed both "as a precursor and as a consequence of mobilization" (Olzak, 2006:38) or that identity may well be used not only as a strategy for empowerment but also as a goal (Bernstein 2008).

Based on the empirical evidence gathered during fieldwork, I would argue that while ethnic identity is a precursor of mobilization (in that its existence precedes mobilization), the political collective ethnic identity is simultaneously a goal and a consequence of mobilization. On the one hand, the existence of Roma as an ethnic group, which shares a number of characteristics and a distinct identity is an undebated fact. The history of Romani populations in both case study countries clearly shows that not only have the Roma been acknowledged as a distinct cultural group, but that the Roma themselves uphold, maintain and manifest a distinct ethnic identity. Nonetheless, in the process of ethnic mobilization, ethnic identity becomes activated as a resource for mobilization by acquiring a political dimension (Veredas 2004). The collective Romani political identity, this "public expression of self" is constructed and made through the process of framing; the Roma become a group which collectively acquires political subjectivity. The content of personal Romani identity and collective Romani identity overlap to a significant degree; nonetheless, there are also new elements which are articulated by collective identity frames, and which shape the content of personal identities. Consequently, there is a constant interplay between personal, individual identities and the collective identity frames – while "identity for empowerment" draws from elements of personal identities, it also shapes personal identities by introducing new elements which reinforce not only the collective identity, but also the personal one by constructing new perceptions of ethnicity (Roma as a transnational identity) and symbols (Romani flag).

"Whom" and the potential for collective agency

The third analytical layer of identity (3), refers to the way in which collective identity frames bear a potential for collective action. According to Snow, "Embedded within the shared sense of 'we' is a corresponding sense of 'collective agency'. This latter sense, which is the action component of collective identity, not only suggests the possibility of collective action in pursuit of common interests, but even invites such action" (Snow, 2001:3). From this perspective, a frame of collective identity is not only a product of mobilization, but is also generative of a sense of collective agency. Snow argues that the collective, "shared 'sense of we' is animating and mobilizing cognitively, emotionally, and sometimes even morally. The shared perceptions and feelings of a common cause, threat, or fate that constitute the shared 'sense of we' motivate people to act together in the name of, or for the sake of, the interests of the collectivity, thus generating the previously mentioned sense of collective agency" (ibid. 4). Under this logic, an appropriate frame of collective identity should not only serve the purpose of projecting "a public expression of self" – which ultimately provides the function of public and political representation of the group – but should also activate collective agency, by mobilizing constituencies and adherents. However, the empirical evidence gathered during fieldwork does not seem to confirm this hypothesis. In analysing the level of social practice with regard to Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain and Colombia, this dissertation aimed at answering the question: Who is being mobilized? And who is not mobilized and why? Based on my findings, it seems that the frame of collective identity does not resonate with the constituencies to a degree which enables the activation of their agency.

In Spain, there were numerous voices which claimed that the discourses of Romani activists and leaders were stuck in the past and detached from everyday realities and have not evolved to embrace the motivations, needs and interests of the constituency. Furthermore, the dominance of rather homogenizing frames does not respond to the increasingly heterogeneous Romani population. In Colombia, on the other hand, the data suggests that collective frames are constructed solely for pursuing political objectives, which do not require the mass mobilization of constituencies. The monopoly over participation by a limited number of Romani actors also impedes the possibility of the emergence of new actors which would articulate the interests of Romani communities, or its different sectors, in a more inclusive way.

Collective identity frames need to be performed and expressed; "Discourse, clothing, culture, and behavioural symbols help activists to perform certain types of identities" (Bernstein & Olsen, 2009:873). In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, it seems that the way collective identity is performed by its leaders and activists does not resonate sufficiently with the constituencies. The salience of new actors, especially in Spain, that challenge the dominant discourses of Romani ethnic mobilization and introduce elements which better respond to the plurality of Romani communities and lifestyles, may help to improve the level of "identity correspondence". Some scholars claim that the level of organizational diversification "determines the ability of a social movement to target multiple

audiences simultaneously" (Olzak and Ryo 2007). As the type of "mobilizing structures" among Roma, especially in Spain, increasingly diversify, the potential for a constituent basis may also expand.

Furthermore, the major weakness of Romani collective identity frames lies in the fact that these articulated discourses are directed towards the outside – targeting the State and the majority societies – and to a much lesser extent address the constituencies. Commonly, Romani leaders engage with the public outside of the Romani community, preoccupied about the need to justify the increasing commitment to Romani affairs or to challenge prevailing stereotypes or prejudices. But there are limited occasions in which the discourses are consciously articulated with the objective of building a greater sense of participation, support and direct engagement of Romani communities.

It can be concluded that implicitly, in both cases, the community is not viewed as a resource; the collective agency of Romani communities is underappreciated and is not perceived as something which needs to be activated. Indeed, it seems that the Romani community is not the target of the work of Romani organisations and its leaders. They are the *raison d'être* of their existence, which justifies their activity and advocacy directed at State institutions. But the community itself is not envisioned to possess potential agency. They are perceived as passive, direct and/or indirect beneficiaries of their work but no attention is placed on empowering or emancipatory dynamics. This contributes to the perpetual disengagement of a part of the Romani community, who feel ignored and unmotivated and this results in a relatively low level of identification of communities with the representative "mobilizing structures". What is missing, thus, is the "motivational framing", which Benford and Snow understand as the "final core framing task, [which] provides a 'call to arms' or a rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action" (Benford & Snow, 2000:617).

These findings point to a major question with regard to the nature of ethnic mobilization. Scholars argue that ultimately mobilization is about mobilizing constituencies – but in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, it seems that rather than mobilizing constituencies, the activists address resources coming from sources outside of the Romani community. Numerous Romani mobilizing structures are in fact more preoccupied with their representative role, *in the name of the constituencies*, without caring about their direct participation and involvement. Thus, in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the collective identity frames do not pursue the goal of mobilizing constituencies, understood as the building blocks of the movement, but rather are constructed for pursuing political objectives. These findings seems to support the arguments of Edelman that "almost always it's a small minority that participate in the movement who claims to represent their interests, and maybe even more importantly, it's a small minority that feels identified with the movement" (Edelman, 2003:1).

Findings in a nutshell and theoretical contributions

Recapitulating, I argue that in order to understand the Romani collective identity frame, it is important to acknowledge that the complex and multi-level analytical layers which compose it influence each other mutually, namely: "who the Roma are", "who we are", "who we want to mobilize". I provide evidence of traceable differences between Spain and Colombia in the way the "public expression of

self" is framed and articulated. While in Spain emphasis is being put on questions of citizenship and racial equality, the claims to have "equal opportunities" and fully enjoy citizen rights, in Colombia there is a tendency to construct discourses which emphasize cultural difference and differential treatment. The choice of these frames in both settings is strategic and is determined by the legal frameworks available to Romani communities in both countries, echoing Bernstein's concept of "identity deployment" or "identity as a strategy".

Both case studies suggest that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the discourses constructed 1) evoke common elements of Romani identity and culture, but in doing so they 2) employ rather homogenising frames. Consequently, discourses of the "public expression of self" tend not to respond to the *de facto* internal heterogeneity of Romani communities, weakening the "identity correspondence" (D. A. Snow and McAdam 2000). There is also a traceable level of discrepancy between the rhetoric proposed by leaders and activists, and the level of practice. Nonetheless, the increasing salience of other, more plural and diversified voices should be noted, especially due to the increasing participation of Romani women's and Romani youth activisms, who introduce more heterogeneous narratives of collective identity.

Furthermore, I argue that in the case of Roma, while ethnic identity is a precursor of mobilization (in that its existence precedes mobilization), the political collective ethnic identity – one which is deployed externally and acquires socio-political relevance - is simultaneously a goal and a consequence of mobilization. There are some traceable differences between Spain and Colombia with what regards the contents of such "identity as a strategy" (Bernstein 2008), nonetheless, in both cases, collective identity frames are constructed and framed in such a way as to serve political goals of ethnic mobilization.

Finally, I analyse the "collective agency" dimension embedded in the collective identity frames, assessing to what extent frames of collective identity are generative of collective agency. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, I argue that the way collective identity is performed by its leaders and activists, does not resonate sufficiently with the constituencies. I conclude that the major weakness of Romani collective identity frames lies in the fact that these articulated discourses are directed towards the outside – targeting the State and the majority societies – and to a much lesser extent address the constituencies. In both cases, the community is not viewed as a resource; the collective agency of Romani communities is underappreciated and is not perceived as something which needs to be activated. The community is the *raison d'être* of the associations, which justifies their activity and advocacy directed at State institutions, but is not envisioned to possess potential agency. In other words, Romani "mobilizing structures" assume the role of representatives rather than focussing on mobilizing constituencies. Thus, the "motivational framing" (Benford & Snow, 2000) is missing. It should be noted, nonetheless, that in Spain the capacity to reach and interact directly with Romani constituencies is much greater than in Colombia, for example, through services. New types of actors in Spain, which deploy more diversified discourses and propose alternative ways of interacting with Romani constituencies, in some instances are capable of generating collective agency.

Based on my findings about Romani ethnic mobilization, there are a number of elements which are noteworthy in what regards theoretical formulations of collective identity frames. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the multiple dimensions of frames of collective identity. Examined through narratives and discourses, they should be analysed contextually, taking into consideration the type of actor, the space and time, the way and purpose for which these frames were deployed. More importantly, it is essential to identify who shapes these narratives as not necessarily collective identity frames are self-generated and independent from external influences. It should be also noted that different types of actors may deploy different types of identity frames, which may be complementary, but can also be competing and opposing. Furthermore, collective identity frames are oftentimes constructed consciously and may change depending on audience or venue, or may simply change over time; these findings support most recent theoretical contributions (Bernstein 2008; Susan Olzak 2006). These frames typically go beyond individual identities, and are crafted as "public expressions of self" in which the group, collectively, transforms into a politically relevant subject or acquires political subjectivity.

In acknowledging the multiple dimensions of collective identity frames, it is also important to assess their role. Based on my findings, I argue that collective identity frames serve diverse purposes in different moments in time or simultaneously – they can be a precursor or a consequence or ethnic mobilization, or can be both; they can be a strategy (as in generative of action) or can be a goal in itself (for shaping or re-assembling the content of collective identity frames). I found no support for argument that ethnic mobilization can be "generative" of collective identities of ethnic groups or that "groups are made through political action". Rather, ethnic mobilization may lead to salience or transformation of socially visibly, externally articulated and politically relevant collective identity of ethnic groups or may discursively re-draw ethnic boundaries; but prior existence of ethnic groups is undeniable. Additionally, in the process of ethnic mobilization, ethnic identity becomes activated as a resource for mobilization by acquiring a political dimension (Veredas 2004) and to an extent, may influence the content of individual, personal identities.

Finally, I assessed to what extent collective identity frames are generative of "collective agency". I argue that the "identity correspondence" (or the level of overlap between personal and collective identities), the type of actors who craft and deploy these frames (their perceived legitimacy, authenticity or representativeness), as well as the way in which these frames are expressed (venue, audience and adaptation to it) are all relevant factors which determine the capacity of collective identity frames to effectively generate agency. Furthermore, it is essential to analyse whether these frames are deployed to "mobilize constituencies" and their multiple resources, or rather, are directed at generating responses from targets outside of the constituent basis itself. In this sense, it is important to analyse ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process as trace how collective identity frames shift depending on the direction and target of mobilization.

7.1.c. "WHY AND WHAT FOR" – Objectives and aims as collective interest frames

Along with collective identity frames, collective interest frames are equally important ingredients of ethnic mobilization. Frames of collective interests should be understood as frames of "what is the

objective of mobilization" or "what are we fighting for" – they are a way of interpreting or constructing the meaning of reality by identifying problems and solutions and articulating them. They provide an overview of the list of articulated grievances, which become driving forces and the principle collective claims for mobilization. They are the underlying motivations which are at the heart of ethnic mobilization. Both "why" and "what" variables are inter-related and inseparable since they are two sides of the same coin. These frames of collective interests can be differentiated between two levels, as suggested by Benford and Snow (2000), into "diagnostic frames" and "prognostic frames". In this case, therefore, the "diagnostic frame" is the "why" – the identification of a problem, the underlying reasons which justify activism; and the "prognostic frame" is the "what (for)" – which provides ideas for what is required, or claims which, if fulfilled, will enable an improvement of the situation. Both levels are more easily delineated in theory than in practice; often both "what" and "why" are intertwined and mixed together.

In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, what types of collective interests frames are deployed? Why do the Roma need to mobilize in the first place, and what type of objectives do they pursue? What are the similarities and differences and what are they caused by? Can we differentiate between different types of "diagnostic frames" and "prognostic frames"? What is the relationship between the frames of collective interests and collective identity? Do these frames, crafted by Romani leaders, resonate with the constituencies and correspond to their own assessment of reality?

The underlying element of the "why" variable responds to the question of "why are we mobilizing in the first place" or "why is the mobilization necessary". In both case study countries, the fundamental conviction is that of participation or that of "having a voice"; it is assumed that self-representation is a first step in building effective responses to the collective problems suffered by the Romani community. Nancy Fraser refers to this as "parity of participation", seen as a requisite of social justice (N. Fraser 1996). These discourses which justify the need to mobilize in the first place, also work to build up narratives which justify the existence of Romani associations as vehicles of collective action. After all, leaders and activists must effectively choose mobilizing structures and successfully frame them as usable and appropriate (McCarthy 1996). The very *raison d'être* of associations has been and continues to be the conviction that the Romani population remains under-represented in virtually all spheres of public and social life. The associations thus become the necessary organizational vehicles which are capable of representing the collective interests and claims of the Roma and which fulfil the role of valid intermediaries between the grassroots and the State powers. Not only do the associations become useful structures through which the administration can channel services to the community and assist the State in implementing policies for Roma – they, more importantly, become structures which legitimize and channel the collective claims of Roma in the first place. Broadly interpreted and diversely practiced representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives.

The concrete frames of collective interests are not constructed in a vacuum, but understandably respond to specific contexts by both interpreting the reality of the collective group in terms of

problems, but at the same time by establishing possible solutions, in accordance with what is deemed feasible and effective for pursuing these specific goals under concrete socio-economic, political and legal conditions. As such they are both "reactive" and "proactive"; Fuchs argues that "each social movement is reactive in the sense that it reacts to strains and protests against the existence of certain social structures, but each is also proactive in the sense that it wants to transform society and holds certain values and goals that shall guide these transformation processes" (Fuchs, 2006:114).

It is thus not surprising that the types of frames of collective interests – or the goals pursued – differ in each country. In fact, there are some noticeable differences in the collective frames established by Romani organizations in Spain and in Colombia. Arguably, these differences can be expanded to represent the underlying approaches towards dealing with the Romani-related issues characteristic of each region. These differences are due to the divergent external contexts or conditions, but also to the different formal (but also social, economic and historical) status which the Romani population has in each country.

On the one hand, in Colombia the collective interests frames are built with the objective of increasing the social and political visibility of Roma in order to obtain symmetrical and differential rights as a means to meet specific cultural demands (such as cultural preservation, promoting and protecting Romani culture as a heritage). Thus, institutional and official recognition and a gradual transposition of this recognition into Roma-specific rights and claims is the cornerstone of collective interests. The question of discrimination is also an item on the agenda but to a much lesser degree than in the case of European Romani mobilization. The use of so-called "injustice frames" (Benford and Snow 2000) is quite limited in the case of Colombian Romani ethnic mobilization – instead, cultural preservation associated with the politics of recognition (Taylor 1994) is the main centrepiece of the collective interests frames. It should be further noted that in Colombia, the objectives are mainly shaped by salient political opportunities (for example when a new legislation is being negotiated). A strong reference point is provided by other ethnic minorities and their treatment – by seeking symmetrical rights with other ethnic groups. Thus, the objectives emerge as realistic, feasible solutions of what can be accomplished with regard to the rights and benefits of other minorities in the country.

In Spain, on the other hand, Roma principally seek fulfilment of their citizenship, through equal opportunities, non-discrimination and recognition. Under the specific legal framework in Spain, Roma cannot claim differential rights, which would be deemed as unconstitutional; the lack of formal recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority also excludes them from the frameworks of minority rights protection established, for example, by the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the fact that the Roma are a marginalized, excluded and disadvantaged community and experience discrimination in virtually all areas of life and social practice, gives priority to those frames of collective interests which respond to these problems, which are perceived as the most urgent. Thus, in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, more emphasis is placed on human rights and equal citizenship discourses. Roma are granted the same status as other Spanish citizens, however, numerous reasons position them in a situation of disadvantage vis-à-vis non-Romani citizens. Consequently, in Spain, the use of "injustice frames" predominates. Nonetheless, by concentrating on Roma marginalization and exclusion (indeed

the most urgent problems), it implicitly links Roma to problems, and problematizes Romani ethnic identity. Indeed, Benford and Snow argue that the way in which movements identify “victims” of a given injustice “amplifies their victimization” (Benford and Snow 2000). Such diagnostic framings which stem from an “injustice” approach direct attention to the identification and attribution of blame and responsibility for the injustices experienced by the group. While for Roma, the responsibility is associated with the social treatment of Roma by the majority societies and with the State, strong discriminatory discourses are also present which argue that the Roma, or more specifically, Romani culture is partially to blame for their social and economic disadvantage, or for the discrimination they experience. Issues such as poverty, criminality or low school attainment are ethnicized, instead of viewing them in a broader scope of social phenomena (van Baar 2011a; van Baar 2014). Furthermore, in Spain, the Roma collective interest frames are influenced by the development of public policies on Roma; we can link the type of collective interests articulated by Roma to the priorities established by the State administration through the strategies and policies for Roma. Thus, while they may be articulated as a response to urgent problems, emergency situations or acts of discrimination or rights-violation, they are often shaped as feasible and realistic by already existing policy approaches and the opportunities associated with them (more related to funding opportunities, priorities established by grants or donors, rather than by emerging political opportunities).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that in parallel with “injustice frames”, Romani activists and leaders also increasingly articulate collective interest frames related to cultural preservation, protection and promotion. In fact, under the rationale of “seeking fulfilment of citizenship” is also the right to cultural preservation. In other words, equality (as citizens) also means freedom to maintain, promote and develop one’s own culture and identity. While the premises of the first Romani organizations were based more on claims for equality and social inclusion, over time these became complemented by the increasing salience of cultural claims. In this process, Roma increasingly re-claim and re-affirm their cultural values and their own cultural distinctiveness as a tool of self-empowerment, but also as a strategy for countering negative stereotypes and existing prejudice. It should be also underlined that re-claiming and visibilizng cultural heritage also helps to strengthen group ethnic identity and provides concrete references and content to the ambiguous term “Romani culture”. The focus on Romani culture often becomes a conscious strategic choice of Romani leaders in Spain. While the question of socio-economic problems and discrimination has been widely acknowledged by the Spanish State and has been addressed through policies and interventions, the questions of recognition, participation and cultural promotion have not received similar attention. In fact, the efforts of public authorities with regard to the Roma is oriented much more towards “the politics of redistribution” rather than “the politics of recognition” (N. Fraser 2003; N. Fraser 2000; N. Fraser 1995). The efforts of Romani actors to shift this institutional approach towards questions of “the politics of recognition”, moves the paradigm of Romani ethnic mobilization towards a framework in which the politics of recognition and redistribution mutually complement and reinforce each other. This resonates well with the work of Nancy Fraser who argues “that justice today requires both redistribution and recognition, as neither alone is sufficient” (N. Fraser, 1996:5).

Evidence gathered in both countries demonstrates that most of the claims articulated by Romani activists and leaders are "Roma-specific"; Romani organizations and their leaders rarely connect their specific demands and interests with more general social trends, but rather tend to define their struggle exclusively around ethnicity. Thus, the strategy of so-called "frame alignment process" is rarely pursued (Benford & Snow, 2000:624). There is also a limited use of interest-based initiatives and claims, inter-ethnic claims or general mainstream claims – Roma seldom frame their interests towards the struggles of other sectors of population, enabling the alignment of collective frames beyond Roma-specific interests. The lack of use of these strategies considerably lowers the potential for establishing strategic alliances and partnerships across movements and diverse interest groups, hindering the political and social leverage of pursuing common goals with benefits for Roma communities. In this regard, nonetheless, Romani women's organizations in Spain have become pioneers in championing frame alignment, by connecting their struggles with that of other women. In recent years, this strategy has begun to spread to other relatively recent initiatives, especially those of young Roma or sectorial initiatives, such as LGBT.

Finally, it should be noted that collective identity frames and collective interests frames are closely intertwined. The specific interpretation of reality laid out through a collective interest frame may become a part of a group's collective identity. In fact, Melucci defines collective identity "as a process in which the actors produce common cognitive frameworks that enable them to assess the environment and to calculate the costs and benefits of the action" (Melucci, 1988:343), making identity and interests frames inseparable and mutually reinforcing. Cultural narratives of collective interests and identity are powerful and influential discourses, which enhance the possibility of "identity correspondence" by mutually reinforcing personal and collective identities.

Taking into consideration these findings and reflections, it is important to ask: how these frames of collective interests resonate with the constituency of the broad Romani population? Speaking of Romani ethnic mobilization in Europe, McGarry claims that "Roma politics is ineffective in articulating the interests of the Romani community" (McGarry, 2012:37). My findings from both countries also confirm that the question as to what extent the objectives of Romani associations reflect the articulated needs and interests of their community, rather than respond to the agenda of the State administration and its assigned budget, has been a problematic one. Nonetheless, my research highlights issues of questionable representativeness and the lack of accountability towards the constituent basis. After all, the question of efficiency and effectiveness of articulated interests needs to be evaluated differently – in terms of the achievements and success which these claims have had in being fulfilled by the State, and in terms of their objective positive impact on the Romani population. During my fieldwork I tried to assess not only the discourses of collective interests crafted by Romani leaders and activists, but also to detect the level of their resonance or the degree to which un-associated and uninvolved Romani individuals (which I refer to as the grassroots perspective) feel identified with them. Based on my research, I can conclude that there is a detectable level of detachment of Romani mobilizing structures from their constituencies; a lack of transparency in their work, the lack of dynamics of direct community involvement or accountability contribute to viewing

Romani associations with a certain degree of distrust. Consequently, despite the fact that the broad objectives of Romani associations, as well as their specific aims, respond to the situation of numerous Romani communities, they are not always perceived as such by the members of the community. Often, those Roma who remain outside of the circle of Romani associations and do not participate whatsoever, do not feel represented by their local leaders. Grassroots communities do not possess ownership of the process of ethnic mobilization; often unassociated Romani individuals feel that the Romani actors represent their own self-interests rather than those of the community. These findings reveal that the question of the resonance of collective interests frames is not only about their content or articulation but often about the process through which these are communicated to the constituency. Narratives considered as "motivational framing" are not enough in themselves to be a "call to arms" for collective action. The process of communicating these frames may at times be more relevant than the frames themselves.

Furthermore, the fact that Romani mobilizing structures typically operate within a limited range of collective interests frames further affects their potential for resonance with the community. Nonetheless, as in the case of the variable "whom", there is a growing and detectable diversity of existing interest frames, which respond to the ideas, grievances and needs of different sectors of the heterogeneous of Romani population such as Romani women, Romani youth, Romani university students or Romani LGBT community members. Evidence in Spain shows that the scope of collective interest narratives is gradually increasing, by adapting to specific needs of different sectors of Romani community. Arguably, such "sepcialized" collective interest frames crafted by and for specific sectors of Romani population, have been more effective in attracting attention and generating a sense of ownership and identification with the Romani actros which employ such narratives.

Findings in a nutshell and theoretical contributions

Recapitulating, I argue that in both case study countries, the underscoring rationale is that of participation or that of "having a voice"; it is assumed that self-representation is a first step in building effective responses to the collective problems suffered by the Romani community, echoing Fraser's arguments that "parity of participation" is seen as a requisite of social justice (N. Fraser 1996). Thus, broadly interpreted and diversely practiced representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives.

In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the concrete frames of collective interests are not constructed in a vacuum, but understandably respond to the specific contexts of both what the most urgent problems are, and what might represent the most feasible solutions. As such, they are both "reactive" and "proactive", supporting Fuchs's findings regarding social movement dynamics (2006). It is thus not surprising that the type of frame of collective interests – or the goals pursued – differ in each country. While in Colombia the use of so-called "injustice frames" (Benford and Snow 2000) is limited, opting more for demands for cultural preservation associated with the politics of recognition (Taylor 1994), in Spain, Roma instead embrace "injustice frames" related to human rights and equal citizenship discourses. Nonetheless, a gradual shift towards cultural demands and discourses has been

noted in Spain: Roma increasingly re-claim and re-affirm their cultural values and their own cultural distinctiveness as a tool of self-empowerment, but also as a strategy for countering negative stereotypes and existing prejudice. The efforts of Romani actors to shift the institutional approach towards questions of "politics of recognition", moves the paradigm of Romani ethnic mobilization towards a framework in which the politics of recognition and redistribution mutually complement and reinforce each other (N. Fraser 2003; N. Fraser 2000; N. Fraser 1995).

Furthermore, I argue that in both countries the objectives are shaped to a significant degree by salient political opportunities and/or policy approaches; we can link the type of collective interests articulated by Roma to the priorities established by the State administration through strategies and policies for Roma. Thus, while they may be articulated as a response to urgent problems, emergency situations or acts of discrimination or rights-violation, they are often shaped as feasible and realistic by already existing policy approaches and the opportunities associated with them.

Additionally, evidence gathered in both countries demonstrates that most of the claims articulated by Romani activists and leaders are "Roma-specific"; Romani organizations and their leaders rarely connect their specific demands and interests with more general social trends, but rather tend to define their struggle exclusively around ethnicity. Thus, the strategy of so-called "frame alignment process" is rarely pursued (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Finally, I assess to what extent these frames of collective interest correspond and align with the perceptions of the Romani community. In this regard, my findings from both countries highlight issues of questionable representativeness and lack of accountability towards the constituent basis, which hinders the level of frame correspondence. I can conclude that there is a detectable level of detachment of Romani mobilizing structures from their constituencies. Grassroots communities do not possess ownership of the process of ethnic mobilization; often unassociated Romani individuals feel that the Romani actors represent their own self-interests rather than those of the community. These findings reveal that the question of the resonance of collective interests frames is not only about their content or articulation but often about the process through which these are communicated to the constituency. Narratives considered as "motivational framing" are not enough in themselves to be a "call to arms" for collective action. The process of communicating these frames may at times be more relevant than the frames themselves.

In relation to theoretical reflections regarding collective interest frames, my findings point to a number of noteworthy observations. Firstly, I conclude that although conceptually collective identity and collective interest frames are separated and typically discussed independently, in practice they are closely intertwined, and not uncommonly, indivisible. It is for this reason that assessing collective identity frames can provide more depth when being examined in relation to identify frames. Furthermore, collective interest frame, like collective identity frames, should be analysed contextually, taking into consideration the type of actor, the space and time, the way and purpose for which these frames were deployed. Collective interest frames are also responsive to the context and are constantly adopted to the dynamic and shifting external environment.

Furthermore, in discussing collective interest frames, it is possible to analyse them by distinguishing two conceptual layers: "why" – the underlying rationale, broader logic behind the need to engage in ethnic mobilization in the first place; and "what for" – the specific, dynamic, adaptable objectives of ethnic mobilization. My findings suggest that while the underlying rationale of ethnic mobilization ("why") remains the same for all cases, namely, to become a structure of representation (justifying the very reason of mobilizing structures' existence), the specific objectives ("what for") is much more varied, depending on the type of actor which engages in ethnic mobilization. In other words, while the broader collective interest frames of ethnic mobilization – understood as the sum of actors involved in it – may pursue similar goals (securing representation and "having a voice"), the concrete interest frames of separate, individual actors involved in ethnic mobilization may vary to a significant degree. Such distinction of dimensions of collective interest frames is viable, as it provides more insight into the process through which mobilizing structures justify their existence as usable and necessary, and at the same time allows to understand in what way and why competing, divergent or opposing interest frames come to existence in the framework of the same social struggle.

Finally, my findings point to the relationship between "frame alignment process" and the potential for establishing strategic alliances. More specifically, the capacity to craft collective interest frames which are broad and not group-specific, which connect specific struggle of an ethnic group with other sectors of population, allows to extend the constituency basis, potentially generating greater support among bystanders, or those who remain outside of the group. Conversely, while collective interest groups are restricted and discursively linked to specific ethnic group (or when collective identity and interest frames are closely aligned), the potential of generating political leverage or broader public support may be lessened.

7.1.d. "HOW" – Between representation, advocacy and service provision as repertoires and performances

In order to pursue collective goals encompassed and articulated through the collective interests frames, the actors (mobilizing structures, leaders and activists) need to develop strategies of collective action. Therefore, the "how" variable presents an overview of these diverse sets of collective actions, referred to in academic literature as performances or repertoires (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2009). Actors must choose the best set of tools which enable the most effective strategy to meet their objectives of collective interests.

What is important in this regard is the fact that tactical repertoires are not only directed toward the opponent – the State administration or broadly-interpreted power holders – but are also directed inwards (Kriesi, Soule, and Snow 2007; Della Porta and Diani 2009). In the same spirit, tactical repertoires may also target potential allies, with the objective of generating greater political leverage or giving support to certain cross-movement collective interests, or may be directed at bystanders (mainstream society) with the objective of changing attitudes and providing wider social and public support to Romani struggles. This dynamic reflects the very nature of ethnic mobilization, which is multi-directional. Leaders and activists must strategically choose different sets of tactical repertoires

to pursue different sets of objectives, depending on whether these objectives refer more to targeting the opponent (the State, public authorities, institutional power) or aim at mobilizing constituencies. In between these two lines of action, targeting either the State or the constituency, there is a range of different activities and actions implemented by the Romani agents, many of which serve to meet the concrete objectives of collective interests frames, and which target bystanders – the majority society. The model below schematically synthesizes the multi-directional nature of the "how" variable:

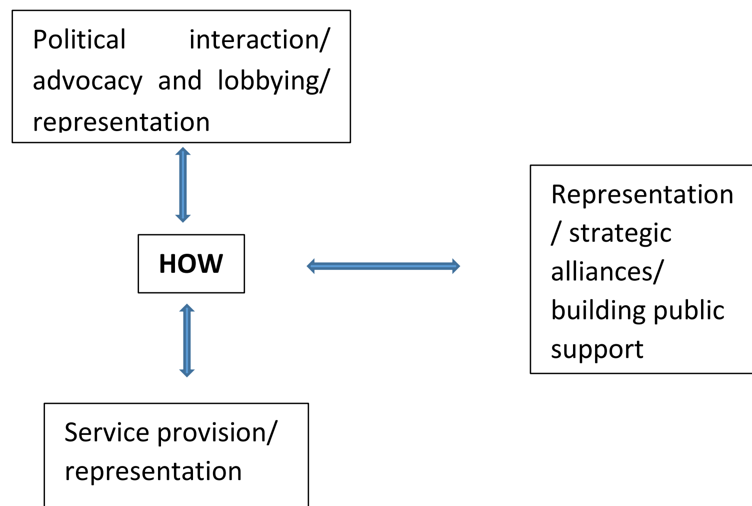

Figure 9. Schematic synthesis of multi-directional nature of "how" variable

Furthermore, in analysing the "how" dimension, it is important to bear in mind that the overwhelming majority of actions implemented by Romani organizations rely on some type of funding – much more seldom are actions organized by Romani organizations which are self-financed or independent from any type of funding. Thus, in answering the question of "what the mobilizing structures do" and "how do they do it", it is important to acknowledge the level of influence and the constraints that the funding opportunities place on determining the scope and strategies of actions.

With regard to Romani ethnic mobilization, what are the different repertoires or performances used to pursue collective goals? Are they used strategically? Does the choice of repertoires vary, depending on the target? To what extent are they influenced by the existing funding schemes? Are there differences and similarities between both countries, and if so, what are they caused by?

There are some notable differences between the *modus operandi* of Romani "mobilizing structures" in Spain and in Colombia and the spectrum of action observed. On the one hand, these differences are due to the different type of objectives pursued by Romani ethnic mobilization in each case, which require different strategies and tactical repertoires. On the other hand, however, the noticeable differences are due to the divergent practices of policy-making and governance, strategies of advocacy and lobbying, channels of communication and participation, and existing funding opportunities which influence the scope of possible action. In the end, the spectrum of repertoires belong to the power-holders because "governments and other major political actors regularly exert control over various

known performances, attempting to prescribe some, tolerate others and forbid still others" (McAdam et al., 2009:5).

Representation – being and doing

As already mentioned in the section "why/what for", the very *raison d'être* of associations has been, and continues to be, the conviction that the Romani population remain under-represented in virtually all spheres of public and social life; associations are treated as the necessary organizational vehicles which are capable of representing the collective interests and claims of the Roma and which fulfil the role of valid intermediaries between the grassroots and the State powers. Broadly interpreted and diversely practiced representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives. Thus, the rationale of action of Romani associations lies in the self-perpetuating objective of political representation and participation. The associations become the embodiment of the "public expression of self" of Romani communities; they project the collective public image of their constituencies.

The scope of action of Romani "mobilizing structures" is based on the underlying principle of their role as representatives of the broad Romani community and/or their collective interests. Thus, the objective ("why") and function or scope of activity ("how") of Romani mobilizing structures merge; hence the two-fold role of representation as "being and doing". Furthermore, the representative function of Romani associations is deployed in all directions of ethnic mobilization – these "mobilizing structures" act as representative agents simultaneously towards different sets of actors.

The role of Romani associations as legitimate and representative is based on the self-promoted discourses of those actors who claim representation; but they are also legitimized by other actors, most notably the institutions of the State, by recognizing them as partners and stakeholders. Nonetheless, it should be noted that representation and the level of *de facto* representativeness are problematic. Gaventa (2004), for example, underlines the importance of whose voices are really heard, problematizing the question of who speaks for whom and on what basis (Gaventa 2004). These discussions on the different dimensions of participation and representation (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004; Cornwall 2004) equally apply to the case of Romani ethnic mobilization. In fact, scholarship on Roma has numerous times dealt with the question of representativeness, or lack thereof, in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization (Vermeersch 2006; McGarry 2012; van Baar 2011b; Tremlett 2009; Andrzej Mirga and Gheorghe 2001; Barany 2002b; Barany 2002a; Kovats 2003; Rostas 2012; Rostas 2009; Trehan 2001; Trehan and Sigona 2010). All of these scholars have underlined the lack of democratic mandate and limited real constituency in Romani associations. McGarry (2012) has given an important dimension to the analysis of Romani representativeness. In his analysis of the question of who can legitimately represent and articulate the interests of Roma, a distinction is made between the representation of a group of people, and of a collection of interests respectively. He rightfully argues that Romani organizations articulate the socio-economic and political interests of Roma but they do not and cannot represent Roma or "that it is more appropriate to conceive representation as being of interests rather than persons" (McGarry, 2012:74). He further concludes

that "individuals cannot represent the will of others but can represent the common purposes or goals" (ibid.) or the broad interests of a group or a society. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Mirga and Gheorghe (1997), due to the lack of democratically elected bodies or officials, the term "Roma representative" is implicitly given a broad meaning and assumed legitimacy.

The scholarship on Romani ethnic mobilization and the critique of the representativeness of Romani mobilizing structures principally refers to the case of Romani ethno-politics in Europe. Nonetheless, it should be noted that these findings also find application in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia. Romani associations in Colombia deal with similar problems to those in Europe with regard to the lack of a democratic mandate or real constituency. The question of *kumpeñy*, on the other hand, is a bit more complex. *Kumpeñy* were formally recognized as stakeholders, based on the conviction that they reflect the traditional social organization of Romani communities and provide traditional Romani leadership a voice in public and political affairs. From this perspective, it could be assumed that *kumpeñy* and the figures of legal representatives do reflect a traditional scheme of representation and authority and are rooted in constituencies; it would thus seem that these formally recognized entities enjoy a high degree of legitimacy. Nonetheless, the evidence gathered during fieldwork clearly shows that the reality within the communities is different; often the individuals assuming the role of legal representative are not those who enjoy the greatest respect and authority within each *kumpania*. There were also examples of silenced voices, for example those of Romani women. These findings show that the question of representativeness and legitimacy is problematic for the various types of mobilizing structures; mechanisms of ownership and accountability to the communities are important ingredients which strengthen the degree of legitimacy and conversely, if such dynamics are not in place, the perceived degree of representativeness and legitimacy of actors by their constituency is significantly lower.

Political interaction – lobbying and advocacy

There are similarities in both case studies with regard to the role of Romani mobilizing structures as representative vehicles through which Roma collectively exercise their right to political participation, acting as valid intermediaries between the grassroots and the administration. Political participation can be understood as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly, by affecting the making or implementation of public policy, or indirectly, by influencing the selection of people who make those policies" (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2009:21). This type of political interaction, aiming at influencing policy processes, is regarded as advocacy, which Jenkins (1987) defines as "any attempt to influence the decisions of an institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest" (Jenkins, 1987:297). Indeed, Romani organizations have become those vehicles through which Romani participation can be secured (through formal, established channels of participation) or conduced in the process of political interaction.

In both case studies, rather than confrontation, Romani mobilizing structures engage in advocacy and lobbying through constructive dialogue and negotiations with public administration bodies and/or politicians. Romani actors exercise political pressure and/or influence through establishing networks of collaboration and building relationships with politicians and a broad spectrum of non-State agents;

they typically enter into a dialogue with their corresponding representatives of local public administration – both those appointed politically or elected to office, as well as with public officials and staff. These relationships are built over time mostly through meetings in which specific grievances, problems or interests are presented and negotiated. This is especially true of Spain, where even small local entities establish relationships with different bodies of local administration; in Colombia this has been traced to a lesser extent. Nonetheless, in both cases, the principle channels for advocacy efforts, which structure the dialogue between Romani agents and the public administration, are the so-called "invited spaces" (Cornwall 2004). Permanent and durable, but also *ad hoc* and temporary consultative bodies, committees and meetings have been created in both countries, through which the Roma can engage in dialogue regarding the issues affecting them, and through which negotiations take place. While these venues are typically state-sponsored and become useful channels which secure dialogue and direct involvement in decision-making processes, they can also be seen as a strategy through which the public administration exercises control and influence over participation (Bereményi and Mirga 2012). The establishment of such channels of participation and direct involvement often serves to legitimize policies rather than to provide real opportunities for their influence. Indeed, with regard to Romani ethnic mobilization in Europe, Vermeersch argues that, "The status of these advisory bodies is often not clear. Sometimes they seem more to function as representative deliberation bodies rather than as advisory bodies. Since both states and institutional organizations have emphasized that Romani representation is needed in policy deliberation, the illusion is sometimes created that experts can play the role of representatives" (Vermeersch, 2006:15). Nonetheless, this dynamic is often reversed – discourses on Romani emancipation suggest that Romani representatives can play the role of experts and fulfil that role better than non-Roma (but more professional) experts. In many cases, participation through such "invited spaces" becomes tokenistic, instrumental and part of the process of legitimizing policies, regulations and political decisions. This type of participation provides an illusion of influence – typically, such consultative bodies are limited to their consultative status; the recommendations issued by such bodies are non-binding and members of these committees have no real decision-making power. The participation of Roma is not always meaningful or informed, and the quality of that participation can be questioned. It should be noted, however, that such institutional tokenism can also guide empowering processes; through participation, Romani representatives become familiarized with policy jargon and know-how and over time "grow" into their capacitated role as experts in the field. Furthermore, such structures of formal spaces of participation become rigid and exclusive; chosen/appointed members of the consultative committees monopolize formal channels of political participation and consequently silence or marginalize the voice of those Romani actors who are not part of these bodies. The establishment of close relationships between a limited number of Romani actors and public administration actors is a double-edged sword – on the one hand it becomes a channel for continuous dialogue and collaboration, but on the other hand becomes a site of favouritism and dependence, which effectively hinders the independence of those actors.

With regard to the types of repertoires adopted by Romani mobilizing structures in both countries, what is striking is the limited use of protest. In social movement literature, the topic of protest bears special relevance; some argue that the use of protest is a distinctive feature of social movements

(Koopmans 2007; Kriesi, Soule, and Snow 2007). Protest can be a very effective tool in pursuing political goals or mounting pressure on the State to meet the demands articulated by social agents. However, the Roma in Spain and in Colombia very rarely engage in protest action. It is possible that the use of protest is not seen as a strategically preferential choice. After all, it is argued that "tactical choice reflects activists optimizing strategic opportunities in pursuit of particular claims at a particular time" (Meyer, 2004:128). Eisinger (1973), Tilly (1978) and Meyer (2004) also argue that the frequency rate of protest is directly dependent on the level of openness of the political environment. When other meaningful channels for participation, dialogue and negotiations are available, protest is less likely to emerge. Spain as well as Colombia offer numerous avenues for Romani agents to engage in collaboration and dialogue with the State, providing direct routes for political interaction. In fact, della Porta notes that this indeed may be an emerging tendency in how interest groups interact with power-holders. She notes that there is "a growth in the relationships with the institutions, relationships that are based upon collaboration and bargaining, in particular at the local level" (Porta, 2001:82).

Interaction with constituencies through service provision

At the other end of the spectrum of the "how" variable are actions which aim at targeting or interacting with the community. Here, there are some noticeable differences between the *modus operandi* of Romani mobilizing structures in Spain and in Colombia.

In Spain, service provision constitutes the core of all Romani organizations' operational activity and the main form through which Romani organizations interact with the constituency. During the process of consolidation of the Spanish welfare system, the implementation of policies and Roma-specific measures was increasingly transferred from levels of national/regional governments to the level of local administration, and most importantly, towards non-State actors – non-governmental organizations and charity entities. Consequently, the vast majority of the measures covered by regional and national plans for Roma are, in fact, sub-contracted, and thus implemented, by non-State actors. This phenomenon of shared implementation of social measures between public administration structures and civil society is not unique to the case of Romani civil society in Spain, but rather exposes a more general trend in global civil society. According to della Porta "together with forms of lobbying, a main path for social movement organizations has been towards what, with an awkward neologism, was called NGO-ism. Many movement organizations in fact developed in the direction of voluntary associations, oriented to 'practice the objective', via the supply of services, either to the members or to the reference public" (Porta, 2001:81). Minkoff defines services as "tangible goods and/or benefits, such as health care, financial aid, individual legal representation, and vocational training" (Minkoff, 2002:398).

In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, service provision represents a fundamental and the largest source of funding to Romani organizations; Romani entities combine broadly-interpreted advocacy efforts with a wide range of service provision[252]. The move towards service provision has

[252] It should be noted, however, that Romani organizations do not only engage in service provision to the constituencies: Romani actors also offer their services to non-Roma stakeholders such as social services,

been well documented and is not uncommon among other social movements and struggles; numerous organizations shift from exercising a role as community organizers towards service provision, arguing that this is the only way to survive (Brooks 2005; Minkoff 2002; Della Porta 2001). In this process, just as in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization in Spain, numerous organizations combine advocacy and service provision, leading to the emergence of so-called hybrid organizations. For example, an analysis by Minkoff (1995,2002) among women's and racial/ethnic identity organizations between 1955 and 1985 found that the growth rate of advocacy and service-advocacy organizations has been much greater than the growth of service provision-only entities; he also found that only 2% of the 975 researched organizations engage in protest. Minkoff argued that the growth of hybrid organizations is due to the fact that this dual approach (combining advocacy and service provision) "increases the legitimacy and the access to resources" of these organizations (Minkoff 2002).

In Spain, numerous mobilizing structures combine the features of social movement organizations, non-profit service organizations and volunteer-run associations, characteristic of hybrid organizations. According to the scholarship on hybrid organizations, they are defined by three characteristic elements: "(a) they seek to bring about social change, though not necessarily through protest and other non-institutional means; (b) the services they provide, such as social and educational, are a strategy for social change; (c) their internal structure is a mix of collectivist and bureaucratic elements" (Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2006:98). This description seems to adapt well to numerous Romani organizations in Spain.

While numerous authors argue that service provision may be a tool for social change (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005; Minkoff 2002), there are nonetheless ambiguities and uncertainties. Dependence on financial resources, mostly State funding, limits their potential watchdog capacity. For example, a study among non-profit human service organizations found that, "the more dependent the organizations were on funding from local authorities, the lower the level of advocacy and political activity" (Schmid, Bar, & Nirel, 2008:581). It is also a form of co-optation of social movement actors, in this case Romani organizations. Through funding destined for service provision, the State contains the potentially disruptive dimension of ethnic mobilization – instead of engaging in contention or confrontation, Romani organizations enter into partnership with the State as sub-contracted entities and clients of the State. This dynamic also leads to the establishment of a patron-client relationship between the organizations and their constituencies; Rostas argues that such a focus on service provision creates a vertical relationship, not a horizontal one, and does not encourage cooperation and reciprocity, undermining the potential mobilising power of Romani organizations (Rostas 2009). Targeting the constituency by providing them with services does not substitute for the process of mobilizing internally towards greater active engagement of community members. Instead, the constituencies are

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universities or the media, public administration agencies or institutions (such as schools, hospitals, public transport companies). These services are mainly restricted to mediation and /or conflict resolution or to the provision of relevant information and feedback to localized actions implemented by specific state institutions (for example social services).

perceived and treated as passive beneficiaries – the potential agency of entire communities or their individual members is not appreciated or activated. Providing services cultivates a passive and claimant attitude of the community members and is absent of an empowering and activating dimension. It should be further noted that there are no other structured mechanisms of interaction with the Romani constituency other than through service provision. Seldom will we find dynamics which foster community ownership through accountability of Romani organizations towards their constituencies, transparency, community dialogue or outreach. The lack of such dynamics diminishes the mobilising potential of Romani organizations as social movement organizations and frequently works to distance community members from their local entities, rather than to motivate their direct involvement.

In contrast, in Colombia the attention is focussed principally on outward-oriented action directed at the State and indirectly at the majority society. Contrary to the Spanish case, in Colombia Romani mobilizing structures do not provide services directly to their constituencies, although the result of their lobbying or political interaction may lead to producing services and collective benefits to the constituency (for example, as in the case of successful lobbying for free social security benefits). Nonetheless, the Romani organizations tend to engage directly with their communities to a very limited degree. In fact, evidence gathered during research shows that the communities lie outside of the dynamics of ethnic mobilization without interacting or participating in a meaningful and structured way. There are only limited cases or instances, both in Spain and Colombia, where Romani actors do engage in activities which build partnership with their constituencies or provide spaces for joint dialogue and collaboration.

Findings in a nutshell and theoretical contributions

Recapitulating, I argue that there are some notable differences between the *modus operandi* of Romani mobilizing structures in Spain and in Colombia and the spectrum of action observed, which respond to the different types of objectives pursued, as well as the different practices of policy-making and governance in each country.

In both countries, however, representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives; the objectives of Romani mobilizing structures ("why") simultaneously become a function or a strategy of action ("how"). Furthermore, the representative function of Romani associations is deployed in all directions of ethnic mobilization – these mobilizing structures act simultaneously as representative agents towards a diverse set of actors. In this context, I discuss and problematize the question of representativeness and legitimacy through the lens of existing scholarship on Romani ethnic mobilization. These findings show that the question of representativeness and legitimacy is problematic for various types of mobilizing structures; mechanisms of ownership and accountability to the communities are important ingredients, which strengthen the degree of legitimacy and conversely, if such dynamics are not put in place, the perceived degree of representativeness and legitimacy of the actors by their constituency is significantly lower.

Furthermore, I problematize the ways in which representation and participation is implemented, especially in the context of political interaction. Romani actors exercise political pressure and/or influence through establishing networks of collaboration and building relationships with politicians and a broad spectrum of non-State agents, through so-called "invited spaces" (Cornwall 2004). I critically assess this strategy, pointing to problematic issues such as tokenism, lack of meaningful participation and decision-making capacity, monopoly and rigidness of such spaces of interaction.

I also note with regard to the types of repertoires adopted by Romani mobilizing structures in both countries, the strikingly limited use of protest. I argue that when other meaningful channels for participation, dialogue and negotiations are available, protest is less likely to emerge.

At the other end of the spectrum of the "how" variable are actions which aim at targeting or interacting with the community. Here, there are some noticeable differences between the *modus operandi* of Romani mobilizing structures in Spain and in Colombia. I note that in Spain, service provision constitutes the core of all Romani organizations' operational activity, the main form through which Romani organizations interact with the constituency and the main source of funding. I provide evidence of the transition of numerous Romani organizations into "hybrid organizations" but at the same time challenge the assertion that service provision may be a tool for social change (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005; Minkoff 2002). I point to issues of donor dependency and control, arguing that through funding destined for service provision, the State contains the potentially disruptive dimension of ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, I conclude that targeting the constituency by providing them with services does not substitute for the process of mobilizing internally towards greater active engagement of community members. In this context, I also point to the fact that while in Spain, Romani organizations interact with their constituencies mainly through services, in Colombia in contrast, the attention is focussed principally on outward-oriented action directed at the State and indirectly at the majority society, and that Romani actors interact with their constituencies to a marginal degree.

Based on my findings with regards to Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries, I arrived at some noteworthy theoretical observations.

Firstly, the scope of collective action of mobilizing structures does not emerge in a vacuum but rather is responsive and adaptable to the range of already available strategies or *repertoires*. The means, opportunities (especially in terms of funding) and channels of interaction are pre-scribed externally to ethnic mobilization and at the same time are embraced by mobilizing structures as the repertory that is adequate to pursue concrete goals. I hypothesize that when there are multiple and diverse channels of interaction (or a range of *repertoires*) available for the use of mobilizing structures, contentious or confrontational forms of action are less likely to emerge.

Secondly, my evidence clearly pointed out that representation is the single most common principle of action of all mobilizing structures involved. I conclude that the objective ("why") and the function or scope of activity ("how") of mobilizing structures merge; hence, the two-fold role of representation as what I refer to as "being and doing". Representation is exercised in a variety of ways, among which the most important, and politically relevant, one is political interaction. My findings point to the popularity

of political interaction which is exercised through "invited spaces", and while this pre-scribed repertoire is favourable to ethnic mobilization actors, it is also not without its flaws and potential dangers.

Finally, the role of mobilizing structures and the possibility of developing typologies of mobilizing structures, need to take into consideration also the dimension of their action. The paradigm of action of mobilizing structures is not free from external influences and is highly responsive to incentives, especially economic ones. For this reason, the *modus operandi* of actors is shifting and dynamic – its transformations need to be assessed taking into consideration broader developments, and especially, factors associated with the political opportunities structure. Likewise, it is also important to acknowledge that *modus operandi* of actors of ethnic mobilization may change depending on the target and also on the type of resources available. Conscious and strategic adaptation of mobilizing structures depending on the direction of mobilization (and ultimately the target) may be determinant for the potential efficiency.

7.1.e. "WHEN" – The determinant role of timing

Emergence of ethnic mobilization

There is a general consensus among scholars that ethnic mobilization does not take place in a vacuum but rather is influenced by a number of external and contextual factors and circumstances. Thus, ethnic mobilization – the processes of its emergence and evolution over time – should not be treated as independent and isolated events but rather should be analysed in the context of broader political, historical and legislative developments. In particular, the literature informed by the political process perspective (PPP) approach, and especially by political opportunities structure (POS) theory stresses the importance of the institutional environment and other external factors against which ethnic mobilization should be evaluated. Stable and unstable properties of the political system, as well as shifts in political alliances and the political environment, among others, may all produce "windows of opportunity" which affect the dynamic process of transformation and adaptation in ethnic mobilization.

In the case of Roma, what developments and political changes have affected the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries? Can we identify turning points and breakthroughs? What shifts in nation-State politics and international developments have affected the processes of ethnic mobilization? Do all developments which may be regarded as "windows of opportunity" automatically lead to strategic adaptation and produce action? What is the importance of political opportunities for other variables of this model? What is the relationship between ethnic mobilization and the political environment in which it operates? More broadly, what contributions can be made to the field with regard to the impact of political opportunities on the development of ethnic movements?

Fieldwork data in both countries seems to support these theoretical arguments, pointing to the importance of macro-politics. In both cases analysed in this thesis – Spain and Colombia – Romani ethnic mobilization did not emerge organically, but rather as a response to the environment which

created opportunities and incentives for minority representation and participation. Nonetheless, there are traceable differences between both cases with regard to the emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization. On the one hand, in Spain, the emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization was proceeded by the emergence of the so-called "Romani issue" in state policies and the parallel involvement of pro-Romani actors, whose activity aimed at attending to the needs and problems of the Romani community. Over time, and with the transition to democracy, Roma themselves began to forge a collective movement on their own by setting up Romani associations, gradually becoming recognized stakeholders. Consolidation and expansion of civil society in Spain as well as the gradual crystallization of state policies for Roma (as well as the funding and participation opportunities which accompanied this process) contributed to the growth and proliferation of Romani civil society across the country. On the other hand, in Colombia, Romani ethnic mobilization emerged as a result of the shifting political and legislative context with regard to ethnic minorities' recognition and treatment, paving the way for providing "symmetrical rights" to Colombian Roma. Contrary to the Spanish case, however, it wasn't until the process of gradual visibilization of Romani communities in Colombian began, that the "Romani issue" became acknowledged in the spectrum of national state policies.

It seems that for both cases studies, radical changes in political systems of both countries provided "political opportunities" for Roma to engage politically through ethnic mobilization. The transition to democracy in Spain and the creation of a new legal system by adopting a new Constitution in 1991 in Colombia opened "windows of opportunities" for Roma, creating favourable conditions for ethnic mobilization to emerge through formal structures. These findings point to the profoundness of political process perspective theory with regard to ethnic mobilization, leaving competing approaches such as the culturalist perspective, reactive ethnicity perspective or resource mobilization perspective behind.

Furthermore, these external factors associated with theories of PPP not only determined the moment of emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization, but also influenced the very shape and nature of this mobilization. The choice of the type of "mobilizing vehicles" adopted to pursue the collective goals of the Romani population is determined by the very context in which they emerge. The constellation of structures and mechanisms through which citizen groups interact with the State becomes a blueprint for the Romani sector of the population to engage in collective struggles: the shape and form of civil society structures in each country, the formal and informal channels of participation and dialogue with the State, as well as legal and political practice are relevant factors which influenced the Roma in the process of formation of ethnic mobilization structures. In Spain, the previous experience of "associations of neighbours" and the gradual expansion of civil society (which some refer to as the "global solidarity boom" (Salamon 1994)) since the democratic transition, served as important reference points for Romani groups, which copied similar dynamics used by various interest groups in Spain for the purpose of Romani collective struggles. In fact, as revealed by numerous interviews, local "associations of neighbours" provided future leaders of Romani organizations with their first experiences and often supported and assisted the process of their creation. In the absence of other mechanisms of minority representation (such as ethnic political parties or minority self-governments,

etc.) the Romani associations became the only viable structures which would serve the purpose of representing the collective interests of the Romani population in Spain.

In Colombia, on the other hand, the experiences of other ethnic groups in the country, most notably of indigenous organizations as commented in my interviews, became an essential point of reference for Roma. The direct involvement and influence of non-Roma members of the first Romani organization in Colombia, PROROM is also of paramount importance – their previous experience in working with the ethnic mobilization processes of different ethnic groups in the country informed the process of Romani ethnic mobilization, based on concrete know-how of the necessary steps during its first years of existence (including the capacity building and promotion of potential Romani leaders). Additionally, the legal framework and especially the recognition of ethnic groups and the corresponding transposition into laws and policies of provisions granted by the Colombian constitution, provided a different set of opportunities for emerging Romani ethnic mobilization to those in Spain. The recognition of traditional structures of leadership of ethnic groups and the principle of self-determination, allowed for the formal recognition and *de facto* institutionalization of *kumpeñy* – as legally constituted entities representing local Romani communities throughout the country, which exist and operate alongside the Romani organizations (PROROM and URC). The type of "mobilizing structures" of Romani ethnic mobilization resembles those of other ethnic groups – for example, indigenous people in Colombia organize around NGOs and associations (for example, the biggest organization, *Organización Nacional Indigena de Colombia*, ONIC) as well as through numerous formally recognized traditional structures of leadership and representation (*cabildos*).

These findings seem to support the concept of "the logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 2006) which argues that the institutional environment also determines the strategies and preferences of the actors engaged in ethnic mobilization. In fact, this research demonstrates the role of State structures in the process of the birth and expansion of Roma ethnic mobilization, reflecting the argument of McAdam et al., that the "timing and form of social movements bear the imprint of the specific opportunities that give them life" (McAdam et al., 1996:11). In fact, the State administration, its level of openness and support for ethnic mobilization struggles in both countries have been determinant for the way in which these movements emerged and developed over time. The State itself provides numerous incentives for Romani associative movements in both countries. On the one hand, the State itself searches for Romani interlocutors and/or "intermediaries" which would be a bridge between the grassroots communities and the public administration; it also provides spaces for dialogue and opportunities for direct involvement in policy-making processes through numerous fora of consultations and discussions. By acknowledging the existence of the diverse mobilizing structures of Romani representation, the State legitimizes them as the recognized and representative actors without having to interact directly with the communities. The inclusion of Romani representation also legitimizes policy processes and serves the purpose of outsourcing part of governmental responsibility to the Romani NGO sector. On the other hand, and related to the previous point, the State provides financial incentives for Romani ethnic mobilization – through State-sponsored funding in grants and State contracts, Romani organizations become sub-contractors and service providers on behalf of the

public administration and substitute or complement the existing services provided to all citizens, regardless of ethnic background. Consequently, involvement in Romani ethnic mobilization becomes an attractive career option or a profession for many Romani individuals and leads to the further proliferation of Romani associations. It should also be noted that the consolidation of the principle of citizen participation, part of the unfolding "deliberative democracy" (Goodin 2008) discourse and practice, traceable both in Spain (Fernández 2010) and in Colombia (Barreto Mardach and Manjarres Charris 2008; Jaramillo 2012), further contributes to the growth and expansion of Romani associative structures.

These findings also support the arguments of McAdam et al. that "the structure of political opportunities is now more a product of the interactions of the movement with its environment rather than a simple reflection of changes occurring elsewhere" (McAdam et al., 1996:13). In fact, there is a constant interplay between the actors engaged in ethnic mobilization and their political environment, especially the State authorities, which remain the main target of mobilization. Effective claims-making on behalf of mobilizing structures may push the State to accommodate desired changes or provisions, further widening the scope of existing political opportunities. It is thus imperative to acknowledge the dynamic dimension of ethnic mobilization and assess it in relation to constant, but not necessarily permanent or stable changes within the macro-politics in each given context.

"When" – evolution and adaptation

Scholars agree that "movements may largely be born of environmental opportunities, but their fate is heavily shaped by their own actions" (McAdam et al., 1996:15). Indeed, the ability to seize opportunities, frame them and act on them determines the potential for success of ethnic mobilization struggles.

In both case studies we can trace the course of evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in relation to external factors which conditioned the process. Objectives, discourses and strategies shifted over time adapting to external developments associated with POS. The relative success or achievements of the efforts of Romani actors should also be assessed in the broader context of the political, social and economic environment in each country.

In Spain, the data demonstrated how policy developments, ruling parties (electoral cycles but also the political ideologies of the ruling party) and the establishment of new mechanisms of governance have influenced the development of Roma-related policies and influenced the Romani ethnic mobilization. Nonetheless, not only strictly political factors (associated with formal political processes) have been decisive – also broader social and economic developments (most notably, the periods of economic boom and the economic crisis) have been determinant. In Colombia, on the other hand, the empirical evidence points to the fact that the overall Romani activism in Colombia has been shaped through the constant adaptation to shifting political contexts, current political debates and emerging political opportunities. The strategic choices made by Romani leaders regarding collective demands and claims have been greatly influenced by this understanding of the surrounding political environment and policy-making life-cycles – it is not entirely based on a strategic vision of what should be accomplished

but rather by what is feasible, and most importantly, timely. This is one of the strongest factors which explain the relative success of Romani ethnic mobilization in Colombia. By understanding policy processes and providing input to current political debates, the Roma skilfully adapted their narratives and provided evidence which would legitimize their claims.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that not all POSs produce changes in the objectives, strategies or discourses of Romani actors. The shifts in political environment which may produce relevant political opportunities need to be acknowledged and framed as such in the first place. POSs do not translate into collective action or generate shifts in strategies automatically – they need to be recognized and articulated strategically in order to become relevant. Data from both countries presented examples of emerging POSs which have not been acknowledged, acted on or taken into consideration. The ability to acknowledge and seize emerging and timely opportunities helps to maximize the potential for success of concrete collective demands.

Furthermore, it should be also noted that shifts in objectives, strategies or discourses may not be produced by a strategic adaptation to emerging political opportunities. In many instances, these changes are reactive to concrete developments outside of the political spectrum. Cases of violence or perceived injustice, for example, at times are more powerful factors which produce the salience of collective action strategies or objectives. They often emerge as spontaneous responses to specific situations and not necessarily as strategic tactical choices. They can, however, be equally important in provoking solid responses on behalf of the State.

"When" – transnational political opportunity structure

Literature on political opportunities structure (POS), to which the variable "when" makes reference, tends to define political opportunities in terms of national-level developments related to the political environment or the properties of institutions of the State (S. Tarrow 1994; Kriesi 2004b; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; D. S. Meyer and Minkoff 2004; D. Meyer 2004; J. Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Koopmans 2007). While these are evidently essential elements, my research suggests that the political opportunities structure component of the "when" variable is not restricted to national-level developments only. On the contrary, international developments have had a significant role in shaping the political opportunities. Some scholars have paid increasing attention to the impact of international developments (Oberschall 1996; J. Smith 2007; McAdam 1996; Kriesi 2007). Maiba (2004) has argued, for example, that "for many decades the study of social movements has been approached from a state-centric perspective" (Maiba, 2004:41), concentrating on the nation-state context in which a social movement is embedded. Today, however, as the process of global integration and international interdependency has accelerated, many problems cannot be solved in the context of nation-states and consequently, "supranational institutions have gained significant political influence" (ibid.:46). This also has important implications for the way in which social movements and ethnic mobilization work – strategies, repertoires and even group collective identities emerge and operate transnationally, and this is quite visible when it comes to Romani activism, both nationally and transnationally.

Findings from both countries suggest that transnational-level political opportunities structures have had a significant influence over the process of development and evaluation of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries, having an effect on the formulation of collective interests frames as well as the frames of collective identity. The intensity and impact of these international factors is varied in different moments in time. In Spain, and with growing intensity in recent years, two interrelated factors contributed and influenced the context of the Romani associative movement: 1) the emergence of pan-European strategies, plans and recommendations; and 2) the emergence of a pan-European international Romani movement. While international developments have not played a direct role in the process of birth and expansion of Romani associative movement (caused rather by a specific domestic context), international political opportunities have been influential in shaping the scope of funding opportunities as well as in influencing the content of collective interest and identity frames. In Colombia, the supranational institutions, most notably in the framework of the United Nations, have provided important points of reference for Romani ethnic mobilization, shaping the frame of collective interests, not only in the objectives but also with regard to the wording used (notably, the references to the “tribal” character of Romani people). Simultaneously, although to a much lesser degree than in Europe, the emergence of a pan-European (transnational) Romani movement has shaped the collective identity frame; Roma in Colombia make references to the same elements of collective identity as in Europe and have adopted the use of similar symbols of “the Roma nation” such as the flag and the anthem.

The salience of transnational political opportunities structures alters the dynamics of ethnic mobilization suggested by the relevant literature. The importance of international developments creates conditions for the emergence of new allies, some of which operate beyond the scope of national politics; and creates new channels and strategies for influencing national developments, notably by exerting external pressure on the national bodies. Development of online communication and social media, fostering transnational dialogue and cooperation between Romani actors from across the world favours the diffusion and dissemination of new tactics, strategies and ideas across countries, which has a significant influence on the way Romani actors operate in their concrete, nation-bound contexts. Furthermore, the level of interaction between national Romani ethnic mobilization processes and international developments leads to the diffusion of transnational Romani collective identity frames, shaped on an international level but which become increasingly more present in national-level discourses.

“When” as a transversal, over-arching and dynamic variable

The “when” variable, associated with the political opportunities structure (POS), has been understood as 1) a dynamic variable and 2) an over-arching and transversal variable.

On the one hand, the relevant literature maintains that POS is inherently dynamic – political opportunities are defined “by both enduring and volatile features of a given political system” (McAdam et al., 1996:16). POSs are not static, but undergo shifts and changes over time; different factors condition the emergence and/or closure of political opportunities for different interest groups. Social movement (and ethnic mobilization) actors need to effectively measure constant and diverse

developments against their objectives, methods and scope of action, in order to maximize the potential for success. For this reason, in analysing the process of ethnic mobilization, it is impossible to do so convincingly without taking into consideration the unstable dimension of POS. Every development (and indeed achievement with regard to the Romani ethnic mobilization) needs to be understood in a broad and dynamic context, both in time and space.

On the other hand, the "when" variable has, from the beginning, been conceived as an over-arching variable which interacts and influences the remaining elements of this analytical model. In fact, as suggested by my findings, there is a constant interplay between the "when" variable (in space and time) and other elements. A dynamic and relational perspective is necessary in order to fully understand the process of ethnic mobilization – constantly shifting conditions of the broad political environment (as well as international developments) influence the shape, nature, strategies, discourses and the very objectives of collective action pursued by "mobilizing structures" in a given moment of time. For example, McAdam argues that "movement form would appear to be yet another variable that owes, in part, to differences in the nature of the opportunities that set movements in motion" (McAdam, 1996:29). Indeed, my own findings from Spain and Colombia suggest that the type of the mobilizing structures principally responds to the external factors associated with POS. The salience of new claims and demands and the modification of the narratives which support them, changes in collective identity frames or the introduction of new strategies of collective action can be linked to the emergence or closure of political opportunities, although not exclusively to them: the evolution of ethnic mobilization, the development of its internal strengths and weaknesses also have to be factored into the equation.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the relevant literature (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) as well as my own findings support the argument that there is a constant interplay between the structure of political opportunities and the processes of ethnic mobilization. In fact, Gamson and Meyer argue that "opportunities open the way for political action, but movements also make opportunities (Gamson & Meyer, 1996:35). McAdam further notes that a characteristic element of POS is the "typically fluid, reciprocal, unpredictable, and crucially important relationship of social movements to structures of political opportunity" (McAdam, 1996:37). Ethnic mobilization emerges within certain favourable conditions that facilitate the process; successful and effective mobilization leads to further concessions, widening the scope of available opportunities. Transformed, the structure of political opportunities acts back on the interest groups, which reformulate their objectives to further accommodate claims and demands. This process of interplay between POSs and ethnic mobilization ultimately challenges and transforms them both. This can be traced by a careful examination of changes within different elements of ethnic mobilization: Has the frame of collective interest changed? Have the strategies of action shifted? Shifts and changes should not be seen in a vacuum as independent developments but should be assessed with regard to the broader scope of political opportunities (shifts in the political environment), but also with regard to the internal dynamics of the mobilization.

Findings in a nutshell and theoretical contributions

Recapitulating, I argue that broadly-interpreted macro-politics has been determinant for the process of emergence and evolution of ethnic mobilization in both countries. In fact, the empirical evidence suggests that Romani ethnic mobilization did not emerge organically, but rather as a response to the environment, which created opportunities and incentives for minority representation and participation. Radical changes in the political systems of both countries provided "political opportunities" for Roma to engage politically through ethnic mobilization. Incentives, not uncommonly generated externally, may be responsible for emergence of ethnic mobilization in the first place.

Furthermore, these external factors associated with theories of PPP not only determined the moment of emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization, but also influenced the very shape and nature of this mobilization. The constellation of structures and mechanisms through which citizen groups interact with the State becomes a blueprint for the Romani sector of the population to engage in collective struggles: the form of *civil society* structures in each country, the formal and informal channels of participation and dialogue with the State, as well as legal and political practice are relevant factors which influenced the Roma in the process of formation of ethnic mobilization structures. These findings seem to support the concept of "the logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 2006) which argues that the institutional environment also determines the strategies and preferences of the actors engaged in ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, there is a constant interplay between the processes of ethnic mobilization and its political environment. The relative success or achievements of the efforts of Romani actors should also be assessed in a broader context of the political, social and economic environment in each country. Nonetheless, my findings suggest that not all POSs produce changes in the objectives, strategies or discourses of Romani actors.

While these are evidently essential elements, my research suggests that the political opportunities structure component of the "when" variable is not restricted to national-level developments only. On the contrary. My findings suggest that transnational-level political opportunities structures have had a significant influence over the process of development and evaluation of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries, supporting most recent findings suggested by some scholars (Oberschall 1996; J. Smith 2007; McAdam 1996; Kriesi 2007; Maiba 2004).

Based on these findings, there are a number of elements which are noteworthy in what regards theoretical formulations of the "when" variable, which I associate with broadly understood political opportunities structures (POS).

My research suggests that indeed, the "when" variable is the single most influential ingredient, which significantly influences all other elements of ethnic mobilization. In fact, numerous evidences were given to demonstrate how external factors, associated with POS, influence the mobilizing structures (their shape and type), collective identity and interest frames as well as strategies of collective action.

Furthermore, I argue that there is a constant, dynamic and mutual interplay between ethnic mobilization and political opportunities structure. In this sense, my findings go beyond the suggested "the logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 2006) which argues that the institutional environment

determines the strategies and preferences of the actors engaged in ethnic mobilization. Rather, "logic of appropriateness" should be extended to include not only "strategies and preferences" but also the scope of chosen frames. It is thus imperative to acknowledge the dynamic dimension of ethnic mobilization and assess it in relation to constant, but not necessarily permanent or stable – changes within the macro-politics in each given context. The shifts in political environment which may produce relevant political opportunities need to be acknowledged and framed as such in the first place. POS does not translate into collective action or generate shifts in strategies automatically – they need to be recognized and articulated strategically in order to become relevant.

Finally, it should be noted that this interplay is mutual – it is not only the "when" that influences all the other elements. Successful ethnic mobilization may ultimately lead to altering its environment as well, thus further advancing with political opportunities available. A dynamic and relational perspective is necessary in order to fully understand the process of ethnic mobilization – constantly shifting conditions of the broad political environment (as well as international developments) influence the shape, nature, strategies, discourses and the very objectives of the collective action pursued by mobilizing structures in a given moment of time.

In conclusion, my findings strongly support political process perspective theory with regards to ethnic mobilization, distancing competing approaches such as the culturalist perspective, reactive ethnicity perspective or resource mobilization perspective.

7.2. Ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process. Findings and contribution to the field

In order to fully understand the complex dynamics of ethnic mobilization, I propose that the multi-directional and multi-layered dimensions of ethnic mobilization processes be acknowledged. This aspect is often overlooked when analysing the effectiveness of ethnic mobilization – typically movements are evaluated based on the success of their actions and the ultimate fulfilment of the demands voiced by the collective. However, the ability to effectively mobilize the constituencies – taking advantage of the potential agency of communities themselves – may, in fact, improve the overall capacity for collective action. Furthermore, effective mobilization of strategic allies, through coordinating collective struggles across movements and interests, ultimately increases the political leverage of these struggles. The multi-directional process of ethnic mobilization is often a taken-for-granted aspect, which remains under-conceptualized in the existing scholarship. It is for this reason that I propose to dedicate more attention to the analysis of the complexities of ethnic mobilization.

In this section I propose a concluding review of this analytical model, as well as provide evidence of how these multiple directions of ethnic mobilization can be assessed, based on findings from Spain and Colombia.

Conceptualizing ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process

Ethnic mobilization is ultimately about mobilizing – resources, human capital, support – in a variety of ways. What is important to note, however, is that it is a complex process, which takes place in multiple directions. In this context, it is relevant to analyse who is being mobilised and who the target of mobilization is. Collective action typically targets the opponent such as the State or the authorities, with the objective of accomplishing shared collective interests. However, as much as these actions are directed towards the opponent they are also directed downwards – towards the constituencies. If ethnic mobilization is ultimately about the capacity to mobilize support and harness resources, it is also important to analyse in what ways the mobilization tactics are employed internally. Furthermore, effective mobilization of strategic allies, through coordinating collective struggles across movements and interests, ultimately increases the political leverage of these struggles. It may also target uninvolved bystanders, associated with mainstream society, with the objective of producing broad social change or generating public support. In fact, although traditionally social movements identified the State and its institutions as targets/opponents, most recent scholarship suggests that increasingly movements tend to target societies. Van Dyke et al., for example, argue that social movements use public protest to "shape public opinion, identities, and cultural practices and to pressure authorities in institutional arenas not directly linked to the state" (Van Dyke, Soule, & Taylor, 2004:27). Bearing this in mind, leaders must effectively choose mobilizing structures, objectives and strategies and frame them as usable and appropriate; these framings are internal – directed towards adherents and activists of the movement itself, but also external – including bystanders, opponents and authorities (McCarthy 1996).

In order to better understand these dynamics, it is important to understand how the actors who are driving the process of ethnic mobilization (in this context, mostly Romani NGOs) relate to and interact with the external world which surrounds them. We can differentiate between three types of actors with which the mobilizing structures establish and maintain diverse types of relationships:

1. Broadly-interpreted institutions and structures of power, which typically become the main targets of ethnic mobilization and towards which mobilizing structures direct their claims and demands. Often these structures are regarded as opponents (McCarthy 1996) and are associated with formal structures of power such as the State administration, public authorities, intergovernmental organizations, etc.

2. The constituency which the mobilizing structures represent and engage with. This refers to the potential adherents of the ethnic movement, in this case the broadly-interpreted Romani community.

3. Allies, which are external to the ethnic mobilization itself but who may share common objectives and collective interests and may support the ethnic mobilization in a variety of ways. Nonetheless, rather than mobilizing broadly-interpreted majority societies, the

conceptualization of allies refers to specific structures, organizations and institutions which act, or have the potential to act as stakeholders.

Schematically, this relationship can be illustrated as presented in the figure below:

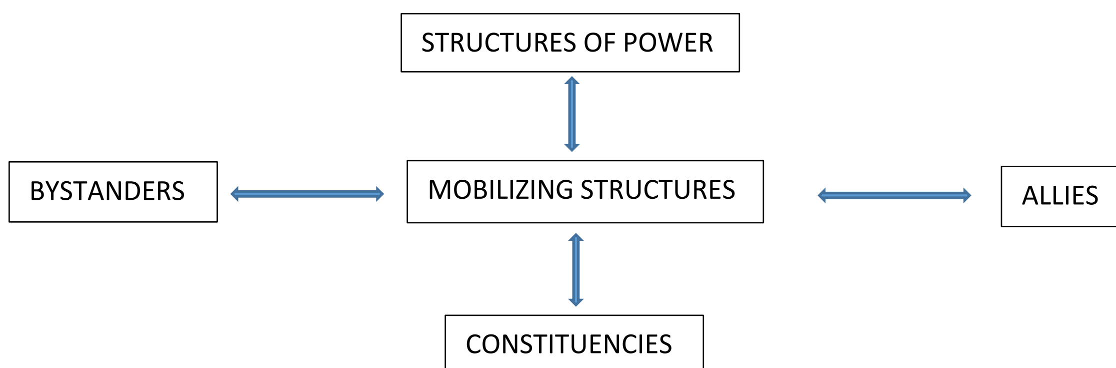

Figure 10. Schematic figure of ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process

Furthermore, the process of ethnic mobilization is multi-directional and multi-layered because the relationship which mobilizing structures establish with different set of actors (type 1,2 and 3) is also bi-directional. More specifically, there is a constant interplay between the mobilizing structures and the actors with which they engage, which mutually influences the actors involved. It is also a dynamic process which changes actively over time.

The analytical model of ethnic mobilization developed could be deployed to analyse these distinct levels of mobilization separately. In other words, we could assess which actors develop what type of narratives, with what objectives and pursued through what strategies to mobilize internally - towards the constituencies, externally upwards – targeting the opponent, and externally sideways – to mobilize potential allies or interact with bystanders.

	WHO	**WHOM**	**WHY/ WHAT FOR**	**HOW**	**WHEN**
INTERNAL MOBILIZATION					
MOBILIZATION UPWARDS					
MOBILIZATION SIDEWAYS					

Table 27. Applying the analytical model to analysing different levels of mobilization

On the other hand, however, these different levels or directions of mobilization have a considerable overlap among these different variables or ingredients of mobilization. For example, one objective can be deployed and framed to target all three levels of mobilization by all mobilizing structures; one actor can also use the same narratives to target different sets of actors. For example, the issue of discrimination can be treated as such a transversal frame. Discrimination becomes an essential element of the collective identity frame, is a *raison d'être* which justifies the need to mobilize

collectively and is one of the key objectives of ethnic mobilization; the diverse strategies described in both case studies which are used to counter existing discrimination serve simultaneously to target the opponent through lobbying and advocacy, to assist the constituencies (through services) and to target potential allies and bystanders in a broad struggle for social justice.

Nonetheless, this is often a taken-for-granted approach, overlooked not only by the actors involved in ethnic mobilization but also in the existing scholarship. Actors should acknowledge the existence of these multi-directional dimensions of ethnic mobilization in order to tailor discourses, objectives and strategies to maximize the potential effectiveness of their collective efforts. Thus, actors should craft and adapt their *modus operandi* depending on the target audience and the objectives pursued.

7.2.a. Internal Mobilization

I define mobilization downwards (or internal mobilization) as the overall sum of efforts directed at mobilizing constituencies, in this case the Romani population. It refers to the ability to empower members of the group, activate their potential and their direct involvement, fostering ownership by the constituency of the ethnic mobilization efforts and their leaders. The capacity to adapt effective repertoires internally, towards the potential constituencies and supporters of the movement is essential, since "a movement's ability to mobilize will, of course, influence its ability to achieve its goals" (Bernstein, 2008:293). Porta and Diani further underline that whichever tactic is employed to pursue collective interests, they should not only be "directed to external targets, but they also have an internal movement building dimension" (Della Porta and Diani 2009).

Nonetheless, the empirical evidence gathered in both countries suggests that the importance of mobilizing internally tends to be overlooked or underestimated by Romani leaders and activists. Little attention and limited efforts are put into working directly with the constituencies with the objective of generating further support or activating the collective (or individual) agency of the community members. Romani leaders and activists tend not to see the potential of community agency; the community is not viewed as a resource which can be useful for the overall ethnic mobilization struggle. Leaders tend to hold pessimistic views with regard to the possibility of involving the constituency. Rather, the community is perceived as passive and/or uninterested. As the Romani mobilizing structures in both countries do not establish dynamics of community participation and dialogue, lack mechanisms of accountability, often work in an un-transparent and undemocratic manner, the community has limited input and no ownership over the process of ethnic mobilization. This results in a detectable level of distrust and distance between communities and their mobilizing structures, further hindering the potential for mobilizing internally. Rather than mobilizing, we can trace dynamics of demobilization among un-involved community members, which further distances Romani communities from their representatives.

In Spain, Romani organizations tend to interact with their constituencies via providing services, replicating the dynamic of patron-client relationship which Romani organizations establish with the State administration. The community often views Romani associations as another type of public institution, which is expected to provide services and benefits but which is not "owned" collectively by

them. Instead of establishing horizontal and reciprocal relationships, which facilitate joint action and partnership, the Romani organizations tend to create vertical relationships, undermining the community's ownership. In Colombia, on the other hand, the mobilizing structures tend to interact directly even less than in Spain.

In both cases, Romani mobilizing structures are concerned with their role as representatives of the community but not as organizational forms which are built on the community's mandate. Writing about Romani ethnic mobilization, Rostas rightfully notes that "rather than mobilizing constituencies, they tend to target the authorities, and indeed, Roma organizations are more accountable to the donors than to their local communities" (Rostas 2009:166). This, as was explained previously, undermines the degree of representativeness and legitimacy of these structures. The *modus operandi* of Romani mobilizing structures shows their weakness in becoming "social movement organizations" (SMOs) which are principally concerned with mobilizing constituencies for collective action (Kriesi 1996). SMOs are crucial building blocks of mobilizing structures and of social movements as such. But in the case of Roma, the ethnic mobilization process is not driven downwards (internally) towards and by the constituencies themselves; rather, activism is driven by leaders and activists who remain unaccountable to the communities.

Ultimately, this weakens the overall ethnic mobilization efforts by challenging the legitimacy of Romani representative structures, undermining the capacity for mass support and decreasing political leverage. By not engaging in internal mobilization, Romani actors are denied access to the broad range of resources of the community and/or of the individual adherents or constituents. Resources which are potentially available but remain largely under-appreciated and unused include moral (such as legitimacy, solidarity support, sympathetic support or celebrity), cultural, socio-organizational, human (labour, experience, skills, expertise) and material resources (McCarthy & Edwards, 2007:125). This leads to the question of the type of resources that Romani ethnic mobilization relies on – whether indigenous, generated internally from within, or externally derived resources - and to what extent their source determines and constrains the scope of activity, tactics and goals. The literature suggests that externally derived resources come with a cost, namely that of losing a significant degree of autonomy, the risk of co-optation and control (Cress and Snow 1996). In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization analysed in both countries, Romani actors depend to a significant degree on governmental funding, and to a lesser extent on private donors; the use of internally derived resources is marginal or absent altogether. This fact leads to numerous problems with regard to the autonomy and watchdog capacity of Romani mobilizing structures.

7.2.b. Upward Mobilization

I define external mobilization directed upwards (or upward mobilization) as the efforts which are directed at external targets, typically associated with power-holders and the State. Often these targeted structures are regarded as opponents (McCarthy 1996) and are associated with formal structures of power, such as the State administration, public authorities, intergovernmental organizations, etc. It refers to the ability to advocate for a desired change, assuming it is the responsibility and power of the State to provide responses to the collective interests of a group.

Findings from both countries suggest that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the main target of collective action is indeed the State institutions. After all, collective action is done "for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority" (Kriesi et al., 2007:11). The rationale for such an approach is based on the conviction that in order to bring change to Romani communities, it is necessary for states and other relevant actors (mainly through pressure which intergovernmental organizations may impose on states) to respond. This strategic choice also translates into the repertoires of action adapted by Romani organizations and leaders – engaging in dialogue with public administration (on diverse levels of power, ranging from the local to the international), advocating and lobbying around specific goals and demands, providing data and evidence on the legitimacy of these claims (through reports, analysis, public statements, etc.), among others. Most energy and efforts are directed at broadly-interpreted political interaction, with the objective of seeking fulfilment of collective demands and claims by public institutions. Beyond advocacy and lobbying, which has been identified in both cases, Romani organizations establish relationships with diverse policy-actors which serve as channels of communication, but also, and more importantly, as sites of collaboration and partnership between them.

In the relevant literature, the mobilizing structures establish a relationship with the opponent which is characterized by contention, confrontation or conflict. Nonetheless, more recent scholarship points to the fact that increasingly these relationships are shifting to be based more on collaboration and bargaining (Della Porta 2001). This shift reflects a broad trend of accommodating and including interest groups in the context of the "deliberative turn" and the emergence of new frameworks of governance (Goodin 2008). Structures of power (such as State institutions) establish mechanisms through which collective claims (or broadly-interpreted contention) can be accommodated and contained, by creating channels of involvement, participation, consultation and co-ordination. Financial support given to mobilizing structures, their formal involvement in policy-making and often joint responsibility over implementation alter the relationship between the opponents (the State) and the interest groups, shifting from confrontation to partnership.

This dynamic has been traced in the case of ethnic mobilization in both countries but has also been well documented in the literature on Romani activism in Europe (Kóczé & Rövid, 2012; Kóczé, 2012; McGarry, 2012; Rostas, 2009, 2012; Sobotka & Vermeersch, 2012; Trehan & Sigona, 2010; Vermeersch, 2006). Consequently, the relationship between Romani mobilizing structures and the opponents is an ambiguous and ambivalent one. As much as the structures of power, such as the State, are treated as an adversary and a target for action, they are also perceived as partners and benefactors; as much as they are considered as opponents they also become accomplices of joint action. This ambivalent relationship has been critically assessed in the scholarship on Romani ethnic mobilization, pointing to its negative effects such as co-optation, clientelism, dependency-trap, tokenism and manipulation. Without a doubt, as States contain social struggles through diverse dynamics of co-optation, participation and funding, they exert a significant amount of control and influence over the evolution of ethnic struggles. Undeniably, the capacity for Romani mobilizing structures to be challengers and

watchdogs is visibly diminished; after all, their very survival depends on the good will of the State administration to continuously support them financially.

It should be further noted that the while the State provides opportunities for interest groups to be included, consulted and informed, it also affects the evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization internally. By involving some actors and excluding others, the State legitimizes a chosen number of interlocutors giving them a monopoly over participation. This can result in internal conflicts and disputes over claimed legitimacy, influence and control over representation. Furthermore, the establishment of close relationships between a limited number of Romani actors and public administration actors is a double-edged sword – on the one hand it becomes a channel for continuous dialogue and collaboration, but on the other hand becomes a site of favouritism and dependence, which effectively hinders the independence of those actors (Rostas 2012; Laparra Navarro 2007; Bereményi and Mirga 2012).

Finally, it is necessary to critically assess to what extent this ambivalent relationship between Romani actors and State institutions contributes to providing a real sense of power, ownership and control to Romani mobilizing structures. While building channels and mechanisms through which involvement and direct participation of Romani actors in policy affairs is secured can be seen as an advancement and the achievement of demands for securing "a Romani voice" and participation, it also has to be problematized. Evidence from my own research, but also existing scholarship confirms that often these mechanisms, rather than providing real power, provide an illusion of direct influence by Romani actors. Using the classical model of the ladder of citizen participation developed by Arnstein (1969) can be helpful in understanding the degree of *de facto* influence and power of Romani actors in matters concerning them. The ladder model is composed of 8 rungs grouped into three levels of involvement: nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power. The citizen control level is the highest one, in which power is redistributed among citizens and power-holders through various types of institutional arrangements of joint control and responsibility. Nonetheless, as suggested also by Rostas (2009) "In most cases Roma are involved through non-participatory methods or, at best, through consultation and placation[253]. No genuine form of participation of Roma, as described by Arnstein, can be observed in Europe" (Rostas 2012). Indeed, his assertion also reflects well my own findings from Spain and Colombia: while there are mechanisms of consultation and participation of some Romani actors, these dynamics are insufficient to adequately provide Romani actors with power and control. Often their inclusion and participation serves the purpose of legitimization, and instead of challenging the *status quo* it might equally contribute to its maintenance. Simultaneously, the involvement of Romani actors

[253] "Consultation gives an opportunity to citizens to express their opinions without any guarantee that they will be taken into account. Placation occurs when a few selected citizens are placed on various boards and committees, usually forming a minority in these structures, without being accountable to the community. The level of citizen placation varies depending on their capacity to define priorities and the level of community organisation." (Rostas 2012)

as partners and accomplices of the State works to shift the degree of responsibility away from the State and towards the Romani actors themselves.

7.2.c. Mobilizing across movements? Role of alliances

I define external mobilization across movements (or sideways mobilization) as actions directed at mobilizing external support by establishing alliances, generating support and joining forces with other actors (external to Romani mobilization) for the same collective goal. Typically, it is based on building strategic alliances and aligning specific collective interests with other social demands and movements. Sideways mobilization is important as it provides a greater political leverage in advocating for collective demands. After all, "a set of actors with similar goals strengthen their position when coordinating their activities or even joining forces" (Rucht 2007: 202). She further notes that "social movements as a whole or parts of them, may also form alliances with external groups, such as other movements, interest groups, political parties, elites, intellectuals, and the media" (ibid.:202-203).

Sideways mobilization can take a variety of forms; among them, it can rely on common interests (interest-based initiatives), shared grievances and problems (for example in the case of inter-ethnic initiatives) or reflect a dimension of collective identity (as in the case of movements which organize around gender and sexual orientation, for example the LGBT movements).

Alliances tend to be limited in their objectives and are time-bound; often they are temporary and goal-oriented. They are also formed by actors which want to retain their autonomy and distinctiveness (Rucht 2007), and rather than merging into one they prefer cooperation and strategic collaboration in the overlapping areas of collective interests or (similar) identities. They resemble temporary coalitions which, nonetheless, can translate into longer-term and durable relationships. In order to effectively engage in mobilization sideways it is important to identify potential allies in the first place. Curtis and Zurcher (1973), but also others (Evans 1997; Klandermans 2013), acknowledge the existence of "multi-organizational fields" which are defined as "the total possible number of organizations with which the focal organization might establish linkages" (Curtis & Zurcher, 1973:53). The supportive sector of the multi-organizational field refers to the "movement organization's alliance system, consisting of groups and organizations that support it" (Klandermans 2013). Identifying, effectively acknowledging the existence of the potential supportive sector – those actors which can potentially become mobilized sideways – and targeting them may enable the building of alliances, which can result in additional resources or help to create political opportunities. Furthermore, strategic discourses which enable alliance-building through processes of frame alignment and frame extension (D. A. Snow et al. 1986) need to deploy narratives which connect group-specific interests with the interests of other potential allies.

Findings from both case studies show that building mobilization across movements through alliances remains a rarely pursued strategy, although there were notable examples of such initiatives reported in both countries. In Colombia, inter-ethnic alliances have been established between Roma and representatives of other ethnic groups in the country. Although they were sporadic and not enduring in time, they have proved to be valuable experiences for Roma themselves – it gave them the

possibility to participate in meetings and congresses, but most importantly, served as hands-on training regarding strategies for recognition of collective rights. These inter-ethnic collective efforts can arguably be regarded as powerful advocacy tools – by embracing collective claims shared by different people, it strengthens mutual support and collaboration as allies in the same common struggle.

On the other hand, although inter-ethnic alliances have not been created, there were numerous experiences of interest-based alliances (most notably around the common issues of peddler-sellers, but also in the cases of Romani women's and Romani LGBT movements). Spanish Romani women have been especially effective in reaching out to other sectors of the societies by connecting their claims with those of others. Amplification of identity and interest frames enabled some of them to build strategic partnerships with the majority women's movement but also with minorities' women's movements. Furthermore, in the case of Spain, the inter-ethnic alliances approach can also be transposed into the relationship between Spanish Romani communities and immigrant ones. The establishment and promotion of a pan-European Romani identity frame, which stresses similarities and common identity despite the existing heterogeneity of Romani communities, provides a discursive frame which enables such cross-group collaboration. Nonetheless, as already described in previous sections, there is an evident discrepancy between this promoted rhetoric and the level of practice. Despite various explicit initiatives which aim at bridging native and immigrant Romani communities, some of which have also been introduced by pro-Roma organizations, there is still a strong division between these groups and no enduring relationship of collaboration and dialogue between them has been developed. This illustrates well that even the process of building alliances across sub-groups, remains a challenge. Discourses alone are not sufficient to produce such collaborations; rather, sustainable and long-term action should be deployed explicitly alongside the promoted narratives in order to develop such alliances.

Nonetheless, these examples remain largely marginal and anecdotal. Romani ethnic mobilization is predominantly limited to Roma-specific frames of collective identity, interests and action. As such, they remain exclusive; the ethnic boundary remains relatively rigid, making it difficult to amplify the frames to be broad enough to target potential allies. Despite this, however, the limited examples gathered during fieldwork show that this perceived rigidness does not impede alliance-building altogether. Rather, the lack of action directed at mobilizing sideways by the vast majority of Romani actors is what caused the limited use of strategic alliances in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization.

7.2.d. Contributions to the field

Beyond analysing and critically assessing the findings from both case study countries, and interpreting them against the background of existing scholarship, my objective was to arrive at broader conclusions regarding the underlying dynamics and processes of ethnic mobilization. The empirical evidence gathered in Spain and Colombia regarding Romani ethnic mobilization may be interesting in itself – after all, it contributes to the body of knowledge on Roma in both countries, and in comparison with each other. Nonetheless, my objective was not only to advance the scholarship on Romani Studies; rather, I aimed at reaching conclusions with regard to the nature of ethnic mobilization, using the case

of Roma as a tool of analysis and theoretical assessment. Having this in mind, I would like to make some final, broader conclusions with relation to the way in which, through this dissertation, I am able to make some contributions to the scholarship on ethnic mobilization.

I treat ethnic mobilization as a complex socio-political phenomenon, which should be acknowledged as a field of interaction between diverse sets of actors: 1) those involved in mobilization as agents (both formally and informally, recognizing collective, institutional forms as well as individual agency); 2) those treated as opponents of mobilization, commonly associated with the State power; 3) Allies (potential and existing); 4) bystanders. Furthermore, those actors which conduce to the process of ethnic mobilization also interact with their constituencies, in the name of whom they act and who they aim at representing; this is the underlying logic of "internal mobilization". Nonetheless, in a broader perspective, other sets of actors also interact with constituencies of the movement in a variety of ways, leading to an intricate web of interactions and networks. These relationships are multi-layered and multi-directional and develop through a constant interplay between different types of actors, who influence each other mutually. It is for this reason that they are also inherently dynamic and change over time. By treating ethnic mobilization as a field of interaction, I echo Minkoff and Clemens' argument that these relationships "shape trajectories of mobilization" (Minkoff & Clemens, 2007:157).

Secondly, I treat ethnic mobilization as a field which produces and re-produces meaning through specific frames which provide an interpretation of the socio-political realities in which ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves. These frames often differ depending on the type of actors which produce them and change over time as a consequence of ethnic mobilization. Nonetheless, these narratives become powerful tools which infuse collective action with meaning – a certain understanding of the social reality - and shape and re-shape identities (both collective and individual); they can also eventually alter public opinion, socio-cultural practices and lead to producing social and cultural change, which is as significant as political and policy change (Van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor 2004).

Such an understanding allows an analysis of the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization through the prism of actors and through discourses and narratives which encapsulate frames and meanings. It is for this reason that I treat the Romani associative movement as a unit of analysis; such an approach allows for a dynamic and relational interpretation of the process of ethnic mobilization and sheds light on how changes within ethnic mobilization are produced and why.

In the same spirit, I argue strongly that it is impossible to study ethnic mobilization as an isolated phenomenon, detached from specific contexts. After all, socio-political phenomena do not emerge and operate in a vacuum, but rather in response to the existing broad environment, which they often challenge and/or aim to transform. Thus, every expression of ethnic mobilization has to be analysed and assessed against the broad context in which it takes place. Furthermore, ethnic mobilization is not a stable process, but one which develops dynamically, undergoing changes in response to shifts in broad social, political, economic and cultural contexts. In the face of the different theoretical approaches developed in the scholarship on ethnic mobilization, the political opportunities structure theory provides the most adequate and comprehensive interpretation, reflecting the complex,

relational, reactive and dynamic character of ethnic mobilization. My findings support the POS model as the most feasible theoretical approach to studying ethnic mobilization.

The analytical model developed in this dissertation reflects all of these above-mentioned considerations. In an attempt to dissect definitions of ethnic mobilization and develop an analytical and operative tool of inquiry, I outlined five macro-variables which allowed me to gain insight into different aspects or dimensions of ethnic mobilization. I treat these macro-variables as ingredients of ethnic mobilization, which combine and mutually reinforce each other; they are the indispensable elements which compose ethnic mobilization. Nonetheless, it should be underlined that these "ingredients" have been separated conceptually for analytical purposes; in reality, these separate elements are intertwined, fluid, ever-changing and complex, and are very difficult to delimit.

In my opinion, the analytical model developed proved to be a feasible and effective tool, which allowed me to describe and illustrate the broad phenomenon of ethnic mobilization through the distinction of different elements which compose it and through analysis of the dynamic interplay which these elements establish with each other. The model proved to be viable for developing a comparative analysis, acknowledging not only the differences but also the similarities and their underlying reasons.

Finally, this dissertation aimed at contributing to the ever-growing body of knowledge on ethnic mobilization with the help of anthropology. The scholarship on ethnic mobilization has been principally developed and dominated by debates among political scientists and sociologists; an anthropological point of view has been largely marginal to these discussions. Nonetheless, I argue along with Aronoff and Kubik that "anthropologists can provide political scientists with more nuanced understanding of the range of factors or variables essential to develop context-sensitive interpretations of political phenomena" (Aronoff & Kubik, 2013:xv). Sociology and political science tend to analyse political phenomena from a macro perspective, searching for universal explanations which described broad social and political dynamics. Anthropology, on the other hand, values particularism, addressing contextual interpretations of specific stories, situations and sites. The added value of anthropology lies in its ability to reflect broad socio-political phenomena through localized, contextualized stories; or as Geertz argued, "small facts speak to large issues" (Geertz, 1973:23). Throughout this dissertation, by using specific stories, narratives and discourses, events and developments and most importantly, their interpretation through the words of their protagonists, I attempt to contrast existing theoretical assumptions on ethnic mobilization and provide broader findings regarding the nature of ethnic mobilization as such. Such an anthropological perspective, both in terms of methodological tools, as well as with regard to the way in which social phenomena are analysed, enriches the scholarship on ethnic mobilization, providing more depth but also palpability to scholarship otherwise dominated by large-N data sets, abstract descriptions and universalistic explanations.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this dissertation was to explore the nature of ethnic mobilization, its underlying dynamics, and the characteristic elements that compose it, assessing how the political environment (associated with emerging and shifting political opportunities) in which ethnic mobilization takes place influences the birth and development of ethnic movements, determining and affecting the strategies and discourses adapted. In order to do so, I developed a comparative study of Romani ethnic mobilization in two different geographical locations – Spain and Colombia.

I defined **the overall continuum of Romani activism, observed throughout the world, ranging from community actions, cultural activities, political mobilization, and protest, among others, as expressions of ethnic mobilization among Roma**.

As a means of simplification, in an attempt to overcome the existing theoretical divisions and to operationalize the concept of ethnic mobilization for analytical purposes, I proposed a slightly different approach than the one offered by available theories of ethnic mobilization. The model I developed incorporated and combined the main common features present in the majority of theories on social movements and ethnic mobilization and at the same time allowed for a detailed analysis of different components or *ingredients* of ethnic mobilization, relevant for this study.

The point of departure for this model was the popular definition of Susan Olzak (1983) on ethnic mobilization: "**ethnic mobilization is a process in which groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity (…) in pursuit of collective ends**". By dissecting this definition, I arrived at five key elements, which compose ethnic mobilization, and which I treat as macro-variables, namely: "**Who"** (actors and structures), **"Whom"** (frames of collective identity), **"Why/ What for"** (frames of collective interests), **"How"** (strategies of collective action) and **"When"** (political opportunities structures). Breaking down the concept of ethnic mobilization into these ingredients enabled a detailed analysis of relevant elements in a more transparent way, at the same time allowing for an insight into the relationships which these components establish between each other in a rather dynamic manner.

Furthermore, a major contribution of this model lies in conceptualizing ethnic mobilization as a complex, dynamic and multi-level process which takes place in **multiple directions**. This aspect has been generally overlooked by scholars of ethnic mobilization (and scholarship on social movements) which tend to conceptualize and assess ethnic mobilization by concentrating on the interaction with the targets of mobilization, commonly associated with the State. Conversely, I argue that ethnic mobilization is a process which takes place in different directions simultaneously. In order to better understand these dynamics, it is important to assess how the actors who are driving the process of ethnic mobilization (in this context, mostly Romani NGOs) relate to and interact with the external world which surrounds them. I distinguished and conceptualized three directions of ethnic mobilization, namely: internal mobilization (towards the constituencies), external sideways mobilization (targeting allies and bystanders) and external upward mobilization (targeting the opponent, mostly the State).

In other words, ethnic mobilization is a complex socio-political phenomenon, which should be acknowledged as a field of interaction between diverse sets of actors: 1) those involved in mobilization as agents (both formal and informal, recognizing collective, institutional forms as well as individual agency); 2) those treated as opponents of the mobilization, commonly associated with the State power; 3) Allies (potential and existing); 4) bystanders. Furthermore, those actors who conduct the process of ethnic mobilization also interact with their constituencies, in the name of whom they act and whom they aim to represent; this is the underlying logic of "internal mobilization". Nonetheless, in a broader perspective, other sets of actors also interact with constituencies of the movement in a variety of ways, leading to an intricate web of interactions and networks. These relationships are multi-layered and multi-directional and develop through a constant interplay between different types of actors, who influence each other mutually. These theoretical considerations were discussed in detail in the chapter "Theoretical Approach to Romani activism, ethnic mobilization and associationism".

Adopting a **comparative approach** to this research enabled me to analyse the dynamics of ethnic mobilization, drawing from empirical evidence gathered for both case studies vis-à-vis each other. More specifically, the comparison allowed me to unravel similarities and differences between both cases of Romani ethnic mobilization. Understanding the underlying causes of these similarities and differences allows to discover forces which condition the different outcome (related to contextual factors or the question of timing). Such comparison enabled me to arrive at broader and more universal conclusions with regards to the nature of ethnic mobilization and its underlying dynamics and processes, regardless of the specific population among which ethnic mobilization takes place. It would not have been possible to arrive at these theoretical contributions if it wasn't for adopting the comparative perspective.

I developed two cases-studies of Romani ethnic mobilization in two diverse contexts: in Spain and in Colombia. Chapter Three, "Methodology and Fieldwork" laid out the details of the design of data collection, the process of fieldwork and the process of data analysis, which enabled the development of both case studies. By relying on empirical data gathered during fieldwork, I provided a comprehensive illustration of the phenomenon of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries.

Prior to presenting empirical evidence from both case-studies, in the chapter four "Setting the secene**:** social and political context of contemporary policies and the Romani associative movement", I provided initial considerations with regards to the broad **socio-political contexts of Europe and Latin America** in which Romani ethnic mobilization takes place. This comparison allowed me to situate the findings from both case studies in a broad perspective and enabled me to gain insight into how multiple international forces influence the emergence, shape and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries. Additionally, such a comparison provided more insight and depth into the findings from both countries, present subsequently, and represents a reflection not only on Romani ethnic mobilization but on the policy approaches and discourses which are determinant for ethnic mobilization. I argued that there are a number of relevant elements, which should be taken into consideration in order to better understand the socio-political, historical, cultural and legal contexts in

which the mobilizing structures of mobilization operate. These dynamically changing factors are determinant for understanding the specific findings of both case studies, namely: the size of the Romani community, their visibility and social status vis-à-vis other social groups; social stratification based on colour and race; policy framing and public discourse on Roma, as well as policy approaches to Roma. On the other hand, it is important to evaluate the potential for collective action of Romani communities themselves in both regions. Factors such as the level of heterogeneity of Romani communities (also with regards to the existence of diverse Romani sub-groups), their level of mutual recognition as belonging to the same ethnic group as well as their level of internal cohesion (and/or consolidation) and the existence of a shared and/or perceived collective history become relevant. Furthermore, existence of political opportunities and incentives for collective action (also through existing resources), as well as the availability of existent channels of participation and political involvement, have also been identified as determinant factors.

Subsequently, in chapter five and six, I presented, contextualized and analysed my findings for each case-study.

In **Colombia**, I found that Romani ethnic mobilization is driven by two types of mobilizing structures – Romani NGOs and *kumpeñy*. For both types of structures, a limited number of individuals is involved and the direct participation of communities is rather scarce. Here, the role of non-Roma agency has been significant in the emergence and evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, despite the limited number of Romani actors, consolidation has been a challenging process and, in fact, the perceived excessive involvement of non-Romani individuals has been, at times, a point of disagreement. Romani ethnic mobilization has been driven by emerging political opportunities, in which the process of self-visibilization remained the single most important objective of Romani collective action, an agenda influenced by non-Roma agents. The frame of collective identity developed as a public self-narrative was adapted to the existing political framework, emphasizing the cultural distinctiveness of Roma and their historical presence in Colombia, as a basis for their recognition as an ethnic minority and other subsequent provisions. The strategies of Romani ethnic mobilization, employed to pursue collective aims and objectives, are based principally on political interaction through "invited spaces" and through various types of legal tools available to interest groups. Public presence and visibility, through activities and events, is also among the most common types of action; these are mainly targeted towards the outside – the majority non-Roma society - while attention towards activities designed to attend to and directly involve Romani communities is mostly absent. I have also demonstrated how emerging political opportunities mobilized action on behalf of Romani actors, shaping political objectives and demands. The very emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization is linked to a specific political conjuncture which created a favourable environment for ethnic struggles and activated the process of self-visibiliation among Roma. I also found that the diverse external political factors, connected to policy-processes and legislation, have also influenced the evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization, especially with regards to specifically articulated collective demands.

In **Spain**, I found that Romani ethnic mobilization is mainly driven by civil society actors, especially by associations. The birth of the first genuinely Romani entities was preceded by the involvement of religious and pro-Romani entities, which worked to alleviate the problems of the Romani community. Since the democratic transition, Romani organizations emerged and expanded dynamically across the country. The proliferation and growth in the number of Romani associations has led to internal fragmentation; consolidation continues to be a major challenge. Furthermore, currently the field of Romani affairs is a densely populated arena, in which a plethora of diverse actors – Roma (principally NGOs but also foundations, political parties and networks) and pro-Roma (associations, foundations, scholars and experts) – interact with each other and shape the political and policy approaches to Roma. The structures of Romani ethnic mobilization are increasingly more heterogeneous, also in terms of leadership patterns, especially with the salience and dynamic development of Romani women's and Romani youth activism. Nonetheless, most Romani NGOs lack a strong constituency, as most are not structured as membership organizations, and are excessively sustained by their leaders and Board members. While analysing collective identity frames, I found that different types of discourses overlap and influence each other mutually – namely, the exogenous discourses shaped directly or indirectly via scholarship and policies and the self-narratives crafted by Romani leaders constructed as the "public expression of self". The self-narratives crafted by Romani leaders tend to rely strongly on reified cultural traits (cultural distinctiveness), but also incorporate elements regarding the socio-economic and political standing of Roma, as well as the question of historical and present-day discrimination. I also argued that the discourses crafted by Romani leaders are usually deployed externally (towards the State administration or society in general) and not internally. With regards to collective interest frames, I would argue that the question of representation remains the main rationale for the existence of Romani NGOs. I also distinguished three major foci of collective interest pursued by Romani organizations, namely: equality and justice, non-discrimination and cultural recognition. I provided examples how these interests are articulated and framed and how they are intertwined with each other. The strategies employed by Romani actors to pursue these articulated objectives rely on different types of activities and actions, principally on political interaction and service provision. Finally, I also showed how the frame of "political opportunities" has been determinant for the process of emergence and evolution of the Romani associative movement in Spain.

Based on these case study findings, I subsequently engaged in the comparative analysis of both cases, described in detail in the concluding chapter "Romani ethnic mobilization from a comparative perspective: Discussion". The process of comparative data analysis, which followed the theoretical-analytical model developed, allowed me to arrive at **two major types of findings**.

Firstly, I developed a comparison of findings from both countries, analysing differences and similarities against the backdrop of theoretical assumptions embraced initially. In this section, I critically assessed my empirical findings and discussed their relevance vis-à-vis the most relevant and recent scholarship on ethnic mobilization. I analysed separately each of the five key elements (macro-variables), namely: "Who", "Whom,", "Why/What for", "How" and "When", drawing conclusions with regards to the

Romani ethnic mobilization, specifically, and the dynamics of ethnic mobilization, generally. More specifically:

- With regards to **"Who"**, I argued that in case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the mobilizing structures are limited to structures outside the realm of formal politics and that NGOs (whether associations or formally registered structures of what is perceived as "traditional social organization") become the most common type of formal vehicle for collective action. Romani "mobilizing structures" cannot be defined as types of "social movement organizations" (Kriesi 1996); the concept of "hybrid organizations" (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005; Minkoff 2002) may be more appropriate to characterize Romani mobilizing structures, especially in the case of Spain. I also analysed patterns of Romani leadership and gave evidence of the emergence of increasingly more heterogeneous entities with regards to types of structures, objectives and leadership patterns, which leads to increasing plurality of diverse Romani voices.
- With regards to the **"Whom"** variable, I argued that in order to understand the Roma collective identity frame, it is important to acknowledge that the complex and multi-level analytical layers which compose it, influence each other mutually, namely: "who the Roma are", "who we are", "who we want to mobilize". I provide evidence of traceable differences between Spain and Colombia in the way the "public expression of self" is framed and articulated. There is also a traceable level of discrepancy between the rhetoric proposed by leaders and activists and the level of practice. Furthermore, I argue, based on empirical evidence, that while ethnic identity is a precursor of mobilization (in that its existence precedes mobilization), the political collective ethnic identity is simultaneously a goal and a consequence of mobilization, supporting the most recent scholarship on the character of collective identity for ethnic mobilization (Bernstein 2008; Olzak 2006). Additionally, in the process of ethnic mobilization, ethnic identity becomes activated as a resource for mobilization by acquiring a political dimension (Veredas 2004). I also analysed the "collective agency" dimension embedded into the collective identity frames, assessing to what extent frames of collective identity are generative of collective agency. In the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, I argued that the way collective identity is expressed by its leaders and activists, does not resonate sufficiently with the constituencies.
- With regards to the **"Why/ What for"** variable, I argued that in both case study countries, the underlying conviction is that of participation or that of "having a voice"; it is assumed that self-representation is a first step in building effective responses to the collective problems suffered by the Romani community; broadly understood and diversely practiced representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives. The concrete frames of collective interests are not constructed in a vacuum but naturally are responding to the specific contexts in both cases (what are the most urgent problems and what may represent most feasible solutions); as such they are both "reactive" and "proactive" and are different in each case-study. I also argued that in both countries the

objectives are shaped to a significant degree by salient political opportunities and/ or policy approaches. Additionally, I assessed to what extent these frames of collective interest correspond and align with the perceptions of the Romani community. In this regard, my findings from both countries highlight issues of questionable representativeness and lack of accountability towards the constituent basis, which hinders the level of frame correspondence.

- With regards to **"How",** I argued that there are some notable differences between the *modus operandi* of Romani mobilizing structures in Spain and in Colombia and the spectrum of action observed, which respond to diverse types of objectives pursued, as well as divergent practices of policy-making and governance in both countries. In both countries, representation becomes the underlying rationale for ethnic mobilization, which justifies ethnic mobilization and at the same time (self-)legitimizes the associations and their leaders as the rightful representatives. I conclude that the objective ("why") and the function or scope of activity ("how") of Romani mobilizing structures merge; hence, the two-fold role of representation as "being and doing". I problematized the ways through which representation and participation is implemented, especially in the context of political interaction, mainly through so called "invited spaces" (Cornwall 2004). I critically assessed this strategy, pointing to problematic issues such as tokenism, lack of meaningful participation and decision-making capacity, monopoly and rigidness of such spaces of interaction. I also assessed the actions through which the community (constituency) is targeted and can interact with the mobilizing structures; I noted that there are some noticeable differences between the *modus operandi* of Roma mobilizing structures in Spain and in Colombia. More specifically, I pointed out that in Spain, Romani organizations interact with their constituencies mainly through services, whereas in Colombia, attention is principally focused on outward-oriented action directed at the State and indirectly at the majority society, and that Romani actors interact with their constituencies to a marginal degree.
- With regards to **"When"**, I argued that broadly understood macro-politics have been determinant for the process of the emergence and evolution of ethnic mobilization in both countries. In fact, the empirical evidence suggests that Romani ethnic mobilization did not emerge organically, but rather as a response to the environment which created opportunities and incentives for the representation and participation of minorities. Furthermore, these external factors associated with theories of PPP not only determined the moment of emergence of Romani ethnic mobilization, but also influenced the very shape and nature of this mobilization; these findings seem to support the concept of "logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 2006) which argues that the institutional environment also determines the strategies and preferences of actors engaged in ethnic mobilization. Additionally, my research suggested that the political opportunities structure component of the "when" variable is not restricted to national-level developments only; rather, the level of transnational political opportunities structures have had a significant influence on the process of development and evaluation of Romani ethnic mobilization in both countries. Finally, I proposed the

acknowledgement of the dynamic, over-arching and transversal dimensions of the “when” variable, associated with POS and the constant interplay between the “when” variable (in space and time) and other elements.

Secondly, I arrived at conclusions regarding ethnic mobilization understood as a multi-directional process. In order to fully understand the complex dynamics of ethnic mobilization, I proposed the acknowledgement of the multi-directional and multi-layered dimensions of ethnic mobilization processes. For this reason, I firstly provided a conceptualization of **ethnic mobilization as a multi-directional process**. Subsequently, I demonstrated my findings with regards to the three directions of ethnic mobilization.

With regards to **internal mobilization**, I found that the importance of mobilizing internally tends to be overlooked or underestimated by Romani leaders and activists. Little attention and limited efforts are put into working directly with the constituencies with the objective of generating further support or activating the collective (or individual) agency of the community members. Romani leaders and activists tend not to see the potential of community agency; the community is not viewed as a resource which can be useful for the overall ethnic mobilization struggle. As the Romani mobilizing structures in both countries do not establish dynamics of community participation and dialogue, lack mechanisms of accountability, often work in an un-transparent and undemocratic manner, the community has limited input and no ownership over the process of ethnic mobilization. Rather than mobilizing, we can trace dynamics of demobilization among uninvolved community members, which further distances Romani communities from their representatives. I argued that in both cases, Romani mobilizing structures are concerned with their role as representatives of the community but not as organizational forms which are built on the community’s mandate.

With regards to **upward mobilization**, findings from both countries suggested that in the case of Romani ethnic mobilization, the main target of collective action is indeed the State institutions. This choice also translates into the repertoires of action adapted by Romani organizations and leaders – engaging in dialogue with public administration (on diverse levels of power, ranging from the local to the international), advocating and lobbying around specific goals and demands, providing data and evidence on the legitimacy of these claims (through reports, analyses, public statements etc.), among others. I also found that the relationship between Romani mobilizing structures and their opponents is an ambiguous and ambivalent one. As much as the structures of power, such as the State, are treated as an adversary and a target for action, they are also perceived as partners and benefactors; as much as they are considered as opponents they also become accomplices in joint action. I also argued that the type of interaction between the State and the actors of Romani mobilization also affects the evolution of Romani ethnic mobilization internally. Finally, I also critically assessed the extent to which this ambivalent relationship between Romani actors and State institutions contributes to providing a real sense of power, ownership and control to Romani mobilizing structures.

With regards to the **sideways mobilization**, findings from both case studies showed that building mobilization across movements through alliances remains a rarely pursued strategy, although there

were notable examples of such initiatives reported in both countries. On the other hand, although inter-ethnic alliances have not been created, there were numerous experiences of interest-based alliances (most notably around the common issues of peddler-sellers, but also in the cases of Romani women's and Romani LGBT movements), most notably in Spain. Finally, I concluded that Romani ethnic mobilization is predominantly limited to Roma-specific frames of collective identity, interests and action. As such, they remain exclusive; the ethnic boundary remains relatively rigid, making it difficult to amplify the frames to be broad enough to target potential allies.

Recapitulating, I emphasize that beyond analysing and critically assessing findings from both case-study countries on Romani ethnic mobilization and interpreting them against the background of existing scholarship and the theoretical framework I developed, my objective was to arrive at broader conclusions regarding the underlying dynamics and processes of ethnic mobilization. For this purpose, I outlined three major hypotheses regarding the dynamics of ethnic mobilization.

The first hypothesis stated that:

1. *Ethnic mobilization requires a degree of organization and, consequently, is a process which is driven by diverse types of formal and informal vehicles of collective action. The* modus operandi *of these actors determines the dynamics of ethnic mobilization and ultimately determines the potential "success" of mobilization efforts.*

In synthesis, this hypothesis appears to be supported by the findings and conclusions outlined in this PhD thesis. Through the process of dissecting ethnic mobilization into ingredients and delineating the mobilizing structures, I positioned actors and structures in the focal point of research for each case-study. The separation of subsequent ingredients of ethnic mobilization allowed me to analyse the *modus operandi* of mobilizing structures with regards to their discourses and narratives (of collective identity and interest), the strategies they employ and the way in which they adapt to ever-changing conditions of environment in which they operate. I provided evidence of the role and dynamic nature of the actors which drive the process of ethnic mobilization, by assessing their activity with regards to these other ingredients. In this context, it is also important to underline that I treat ethnic mobilization as a field which produces and reproduces meaning through specific frames that provide an interpretation of the socio-political realities in which ethnic mobilization emerges and evolves; these frames often differ depending on the type of actors which produce them and change over time as a consequence of ethnic mobilization. Such understanding allows an analysis of the phenomenon of ethnic mobilization through the prism of actors and through discourses and narratives they produce, that encapsulate frames and meanings. By assessing their activity in a perspective in time, and especially vis-à-vis specific development external to them, I was able to trace the way in which actors adapt, shift and transform to better accommodate their interests or pursue specific agendas. Indeed, evidence from both cases confirmed that mobilizing structures are driving the process of ethnic mobilization, although not without frequent external influences and that their *modus operandi*, and consequently their success, is largely dependent on the type of actors and diverse types of resources they possess or access.

The second hypothesis of this PhD thesis stated that:

2. *The question of the emergence, development and transformation of ethnic mobilization is dependent on the external factors in which it takes place; these factors are associated with the structure of political opportunities (POS).*

In synthesis, this hypothesis found justification through arguments exposed throughout this thesis. As in the case of the first hypothesis, the process of dissecting ethnic mobilization into ingredients and defining the scope of indicators associated with the "whom" variable, allowed me to assess the process of ethnic mobilization through the relationship which different ingredients hold with each other. As laid out in the theoretical framework section, I assumed that the "when" variable (associated with POS) is in constant interplay with other ingredients, and that each instance of ethnic mobilization should be contextualized and examined, bearing in mind external, environmental factors. Through such process, and based on evidence gathered in both case-studies, I argue strongly that it is impossible to study ethnic mobilization as an isolated phenomenon, detached from specific contexts. I conclude that every expression of ethnic mobilization has to be analysed and assessed against the broader context in which it takes place. Furthermore, ethnic mobilization in not a stable process but one which develops dynamically, undergoing changes in response to shifts in broader social, political, economic and cultural contexts. In the face of the diverse theoretical approaches developed in the scholarship on ethnic mobilization, the political opportunities structure theory provides the most adequate and comprehensive interpretation, allowing it to reflect the complex, relational, reactive and dynamic character of ethnic mobilization. My findings support the POS model as the most feasible theoretical approach to studying ethnic mobilization.

The third hypothesis attested that:

3. *Ethnic mobilization is a multi-directional process which is directed externally ("upwards" and "sideways") and internally.*

In conclusion, this last hypothesis also appears to be upheld by the evidence gathered and discussed in this PhD thesis. The theoretical-analytical model I developed initially conceptualized the multi-directional character of ethnic mobilization. This optic was adopted during the process of data analysis. Indeed, as was explained more concretely above, for both case studies I found evidence that Romani ethnic mobilization does take place simultaneously in different directions. Instead of repeating arguments supporting this hypothesis, which have been summarized above, I would like to underline that ethnic mobilization in multiple-directions is not equally acknowledged by its actors; as in the case of existing scholarship, which pays little attention to mobilization which does not target "the opponent", mobilizing structures have also dedicated less energy to mobilizing internally or "sideways". In order to maximize the potential effectiveness of their collective efforts, actors may need to increasingly acknowledge the existence of these multi-directional dimensions of ethnic mobilization in order to tailor discourses, objectives and strategies. Thus, actors should craft and adapt their *modus operandi* depending on the target audience and the objectives pursued.

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As closing remarks, is it convenient to make some final remarks with regards the future and possible lines of research. There are a number of avenues which may be of interest, and which certainly I would like to pursue myself over the course of my academic career. Firstly, limitations of this PhD thesis can easily point to the future lines of research. Beyond refining the model I propose and contrasting critically my own findings and conclusions, I think it would be of added value to engage in more depth with Romani youth and Romani women ethnic mobilization; to take as a principal optic of research the way in which age and gender affect patterns of ethnic mobilization among Roma, identifying similarities and differences. Secondly, I strongly believe the theoretical-analytical model I proposed is feasible and adequate to study ethnic mobilization among any specific population and in any place in space in time. I would like to be able to engage further in an inter-ethnic comparative research of ethnic mobilization, meaning, to compare ethnic mobilization patterns among Roma and a different case of ethnic mobilization. The research I conducted in Latin American countries has already provided me with initial knowledge and data on ethnic mobilization among indigenous people (especially in Mexico and Colombia) and Afro-descendant communities (in Colombia). I would eagerly engage in inter-ethnic research of ethic mobilization among Romani communities and indigenous and/or Afro-descendant people in a context of one nation-State (for example Colombia) or in completely different settings altogether. Such research would allow me, on the one hand, to test and fine-tune the theoretical-analytical model I developed, and on the other hand, to contrast, confirm or question the conclusions presented in this PhD thesis. Such inter-ethnic perspective would allow to advance with scholarship on ethnic mobilization, but would also provide an important contribution to the so-called Romani Studies. Scholarship on Romani Studies tends to quote itself, to a lesser degree relying on scholarship from outside of the discipline; providing an inter-ethnic perspective might potentially be enriching to this disciple as a whole.

Finally, my hope is that this PhD thesis substantively contributes to the on-going academic debate concerning the nature of ethnic mobilization and social movements in general. The theoretical-analytical model I proposed was developed to overcome existing theoretical divisions, in search of a synergic and comprehensive model which draws from diverse disciplines and academic approaches and which, at the same time, enables a practical analysis of ethnic mobilization. I consider my key contribution to lie in the emphasis I put on understanding ethnic mobilization as a process which is multi-directional. I believe such understanding of ethnic mobilization will allow a more exhaustive and in-depth analysis, and simultaneously will shed light at the way in which effectiveness (in terms of achieving articulated goals) can be assessed. As a possible academic impact of this PhD thesis, I hope that such multi-directional and multi-level analysis of phenomenon of ethnic mobilization will further advance the scholarship and contribute to a critical discussion, challenging a more static and one-dimensional understanding of ethnic mobilization. Additionally, I aspire to generate possible academic impact in the so-called Romani Studies – the multi-disciplinary field of research which takes as its main object of research Romani communities, those who are identified or self-identify as such. On the one hand, I hope that the choice of my case-study location in a country of Latin America will generate more

academic interest in Romani communities beyond Europe, and especially in Latin American countries. Currently, the scholarship on Roma outside of the European continent is scarce, although gradually growing. I consider shifting an analytical gaze towards Romani communities beyond Europe points to a fascinating field of study and one which is significantly under-explored.

With regards to potential social impact of this PhD thesis, I hope the main beneficiaries of my findings will be those who are at the heart of this research, namely the actors of Romani ethnic mobilization themselves. Through detailed and critical analysis of their *modus operandi*, by pointing to their strengths and weaknesses, by assessing dynamics and suggesting strategies, I attempt to provoke a much-needed reflection to those who are the main drivers of social change for Romani communities, in both case-study countries and elsewhere. I hope that this investigation may become a food for thought, provoking self-criticism but also self-applause – after all, documenting decades of Romani ethnic activism contributes to shaping narratives of history in which Roma are and aspire to be active agents of change. Furthermore, I would like to see this research inspire reflections regarding the importance of alliances, of building movements across movements and of connecting people and people's struggles for collective benefits and goals. I strongly believe that building ties of solidarity across diverse interest groups and social sectors, especially those which seek equality, respect for human rights and social justice, can potentially lead to attributing more political leverage to these common objectives. And, hopefully, in such a way, contribute to building more cohesive and open societies.

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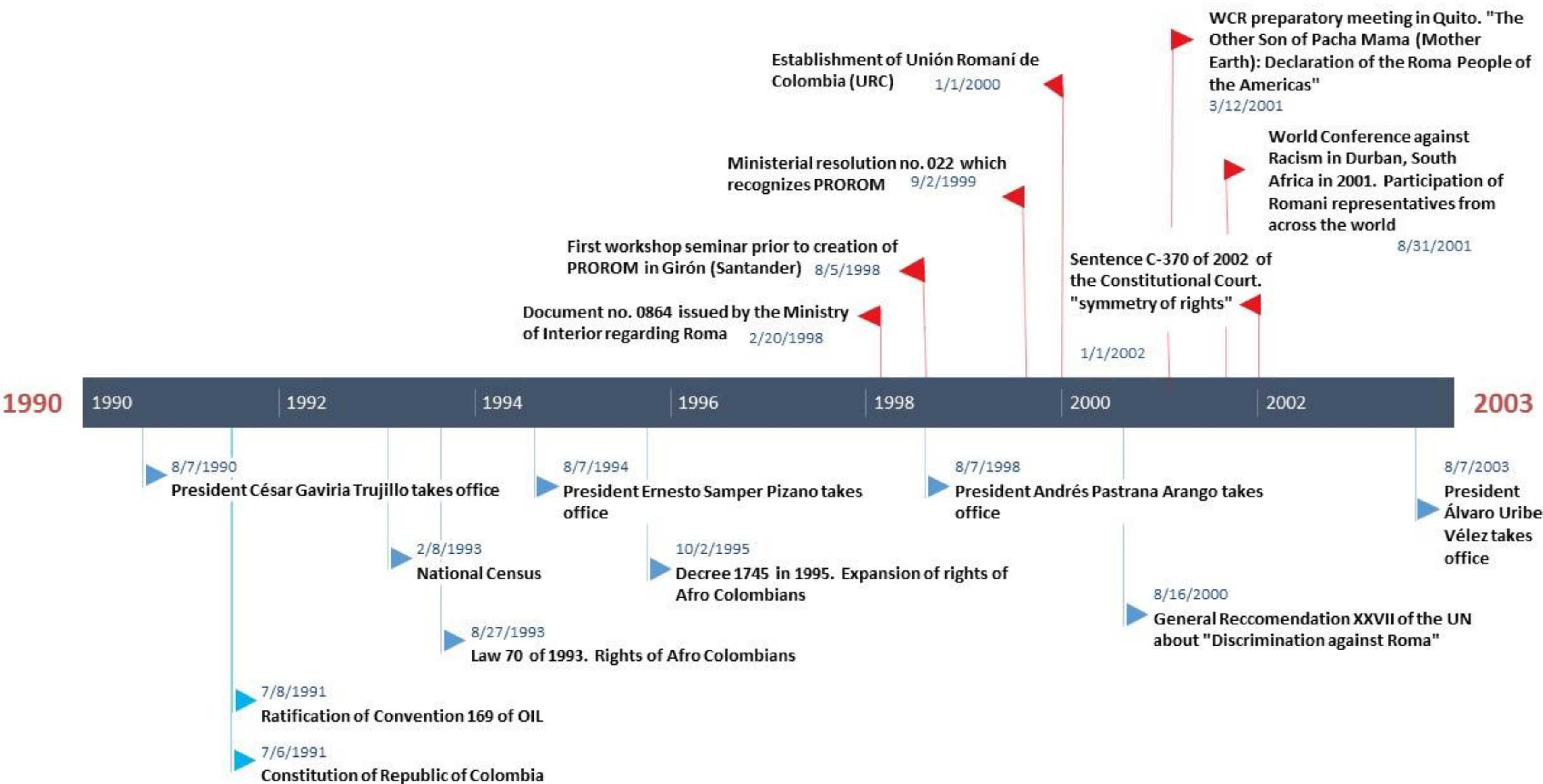
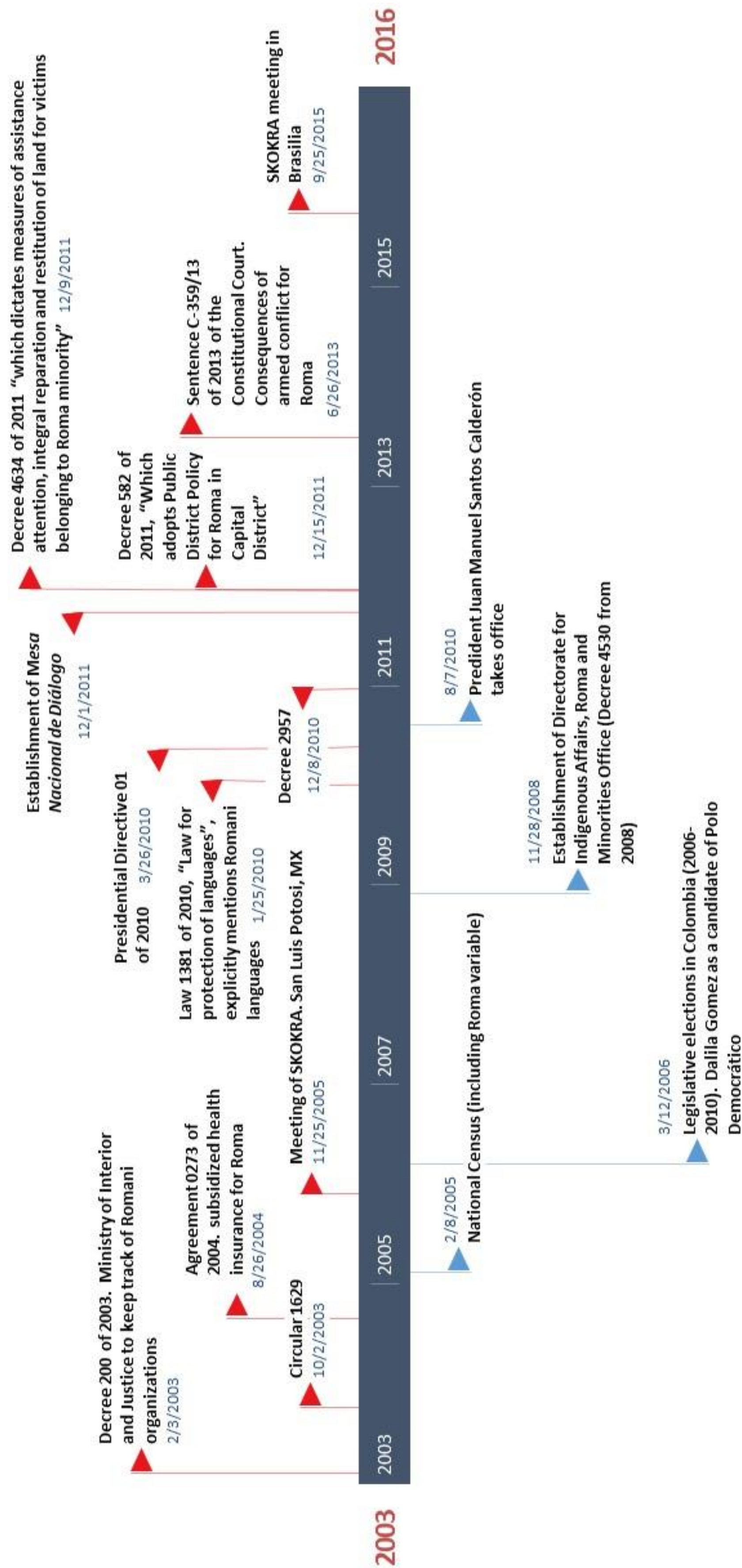
ANNEXES

TIMELINES COLOMBIA

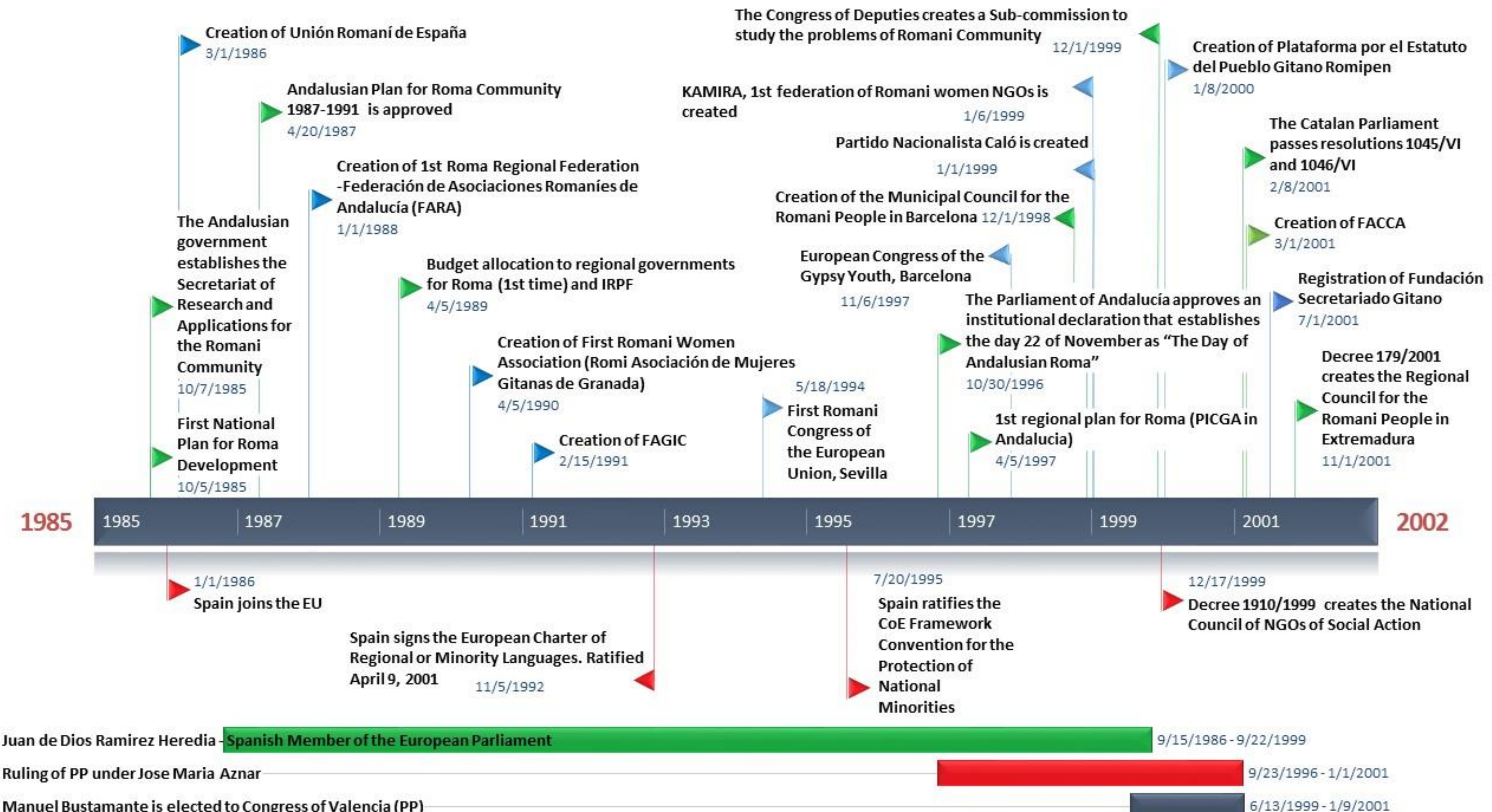
COLOMBIA 1990 - 2003

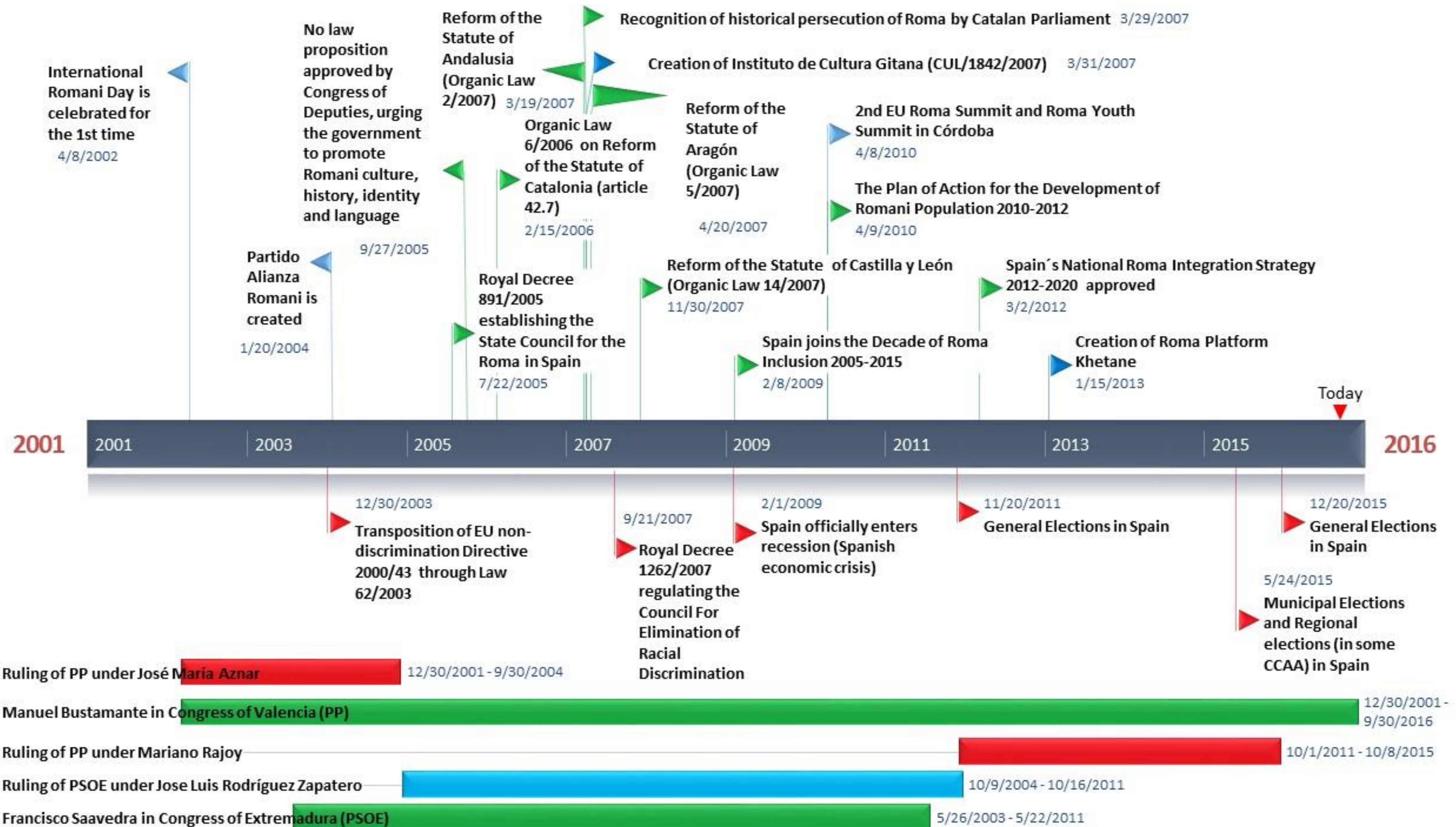



COLOMBIA 2003 - 2016
2003
2016
2003
2005
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015
Decree 200 of 2003. Ministry of Interior and Justice to keep track of Romani organizations 2/3/2003
Circular 1629 10/2/2003
Agreement 0273 of 2004. subsidized health insurance for Roma 8/26/2004
2/8/2005 National Census (including Roma variable)
Meeting of SKOKRA. San Luis Potosi, MX 11/25/2005
3/12/2006 Legislative elections in Colombia (2006-2010). Dalila Gomez as a candidate of Polo Democrático
11/28/2008 Establishment of Directorate for Indigenous Affairs, Roma and Minorities Office (Decree 4530 from 2008)
Law 1381 of 2010, "Law for protection of languages", explicitly mentions Romani languages 1/25/2010
Presidential Directive 01 of 2010 3/26/2010
8/7/2010 Predident Juan Manuel Santos Calderón takes office
Decree 2957 12/8/2010
Establishment of Mesa Nacional de Diálogo 12/1/2011
Decree 4634 of 2011 "which dictates measures of assistance attention, integral reparation and restitution of land for victims belonging to Roma minority" 12/9/2011
Decree 582 of 2011, "Which adopts Public District Policy for Roma in Capital District" 12/15/2011
Sentence C-359/13 of 2013 of the Constitutional Court. Consequences of armed conflict for Roma 6/26/2013
SKOKRA meeting in Brasilia 9/25/2015

TIMELINES SPAIN

SPAIN 1964 - 1985
1964
1996
1964
1967
1970
1973
1976
1979
1982
1985
1988
1991
1994
First Congress of the Catholic Church for the Roma (Convivencia Nacional)
2/15/1964
Creation of Secretariado Diocesal Pro-Gitano in Barcelona
2/15/1965
Creation of Secretariado Gitano (as FSG in 2001)
2/15/1967
Creation of Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana
2/1/1972
Creation of Asociación de Desarrollo Gitano y Asociación Española de Integración Gitana
1/1/1977
Creation of Asociación Gitana de la Mina (1st in Catalonia)
4/1/1978
Inter-ministerial Commission created to study problems of Romani community
10/1/1978
Premiere of "Camelamos Naquerar" in Granada
2/20/1976
Creation of Municipal Council for Roma in Sevilla
2/8/1984
First National Plan for Roma Development
10/5/1985
12/24/1964
Ley de Asociaciones 24/12/64
6/25/1973
Spain is admitted to OSCE
11/20/1975
Death of General Franco
11/24/1977
Spain joins the Council of Europe
12/29/1978
New Democratic Constitution
Juan de Dios Ramirez Heredia - Member of Spanish Parliament
9/7/1977 - 9/14/1986
Ruling of PSOE under Felipe Gonzalez
9/10/1982 - 10/26/1996


SPAIN 1985 - 2001
1985
1985
1987
1989
1991
1993
1995
1997
1999
2001
2002
Creation of Unión Romaní de España
3/1/1986
Andalusian Plan for Roma Community 1987-1991 is approved
4/20/1987
Creation of 1st Roma Regional Federation -Federación de Asociaciones Romaníes de Andalucía (FARA)
1/1/1988
The Andalusian government establishes the Secretariat of Research and Applications for the Romani Community
10/7/1985
First National Plan for Roma Development
10/5/1985
Budget allocation to regional governments for Roma (1st time) and IRPF
4/5/1989
Creation of First Romani Women Association (Romi Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas de Granada)
4/5/1990
Creation of FAGIC
2/15/1991
The Congress of Deputies creates a Sub-commission to study the problems of Romani Community
12/1/1999
KAMIRA, 1st federation of Romani women NGOs is created
1/6/1999
Partido Nacionalista Caló is created
1/1/1999
Creation of the Municipal Council for the Romani People in Barcelona 12/1/1998
European Congress of the Gypsy Youth, Barcelona
11/6/1997
5/18/1994
First Romani Congress of the European Union, Sevilla
The Parliament of Andalucía approves an institutional declaration that establishes the day 22 of November as "The Day of Andalusian Roma"
10/30/1996
1st regional plan for Roma (PICGA in Andalucia)
4/5/1997
Creation of Plataforma por el Estatuto del Pueblo Gitano Romipen
1/8/2000
The Catalan Parliament passes resolutions 1045/VI and 1046/VI
2/8/2001
Creation of FACCA
3/1/2001
Registration of Fundación Secretariado Gitano
7/1/2001
Decree 179/2001 creates the Regional Council for the Romani People in Extremadura
11/1/2001
1/1/1986
Spain joins the EU
Spain signs the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages. Ratified April 9, 2001
11/5/1992
7/20/1995
Spain ratifies the CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
12/17/1999
Decree 1910/1999 creates the National Council of NGOs of Social Action
Juan de Dios Ramirez Heredia - Spanish Member of the European Parliament
9/15/1986 - 9/22/1999
Ruling of PP under Jose Maria Aznar
9/23/1996 - 1/1/2001
Manuel Bustamante is elected to Congress of Valencia (PP)
6/13/1999 - 1/9/2001


SPAIN 2003 - 2016
International Romani Day is celebrated for the 1st time
4/8/2002
No law proposition approved by Congress of Deputies, urging the government to promote Romani culture, history, identity and language
9/27/2005
Partido Alianza Romani is created
1/20/2004
Reform of the Statute of Andalusia (Organic Law 2/2007)
3/19/2007
Recognition of historical persecution of Roma by Catalan Parliament
3/29/2007
Creation of Instituto de Cultura Gitana (CUL/1842/2007)
3/31/2007
Organic Law 6/2006 on Reform of the Statute of Catalonia (article 42.7)
2/15/2006
Reform of the Statute of Aragón (Organic Law 5/2007)
4/20/2007
2nd EU Roma Summit and Roma Youth Summit in Córdoba
4/8/2010
The Plan of Action for the Development of Romani Population 2010-2012
4/9/2010
Royal Decree 891/2005 establishing the State Council for the Roma in Spain
7/22/2005
Reform of the Statute of Castilla y León (Organic Law 14/2007)
11/30/2007
Spain´s National Roma Integration Strategy 2012-2020 approved
3/2/2012
Spain joins the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015
2/8/2009
Creation of Roma Platform Khetane
1/15/2013
Today
2001
2001
2003
2005
2007
2009
2011
2013
2015
2016
12/30/2003
Transposition of EU non-discrimination Directive 2000/43 through Law 62/2003
9/21/2007
Royal Decree 1262/2007 regulating the Council For Elimination of Racial Discrimination
2/1/2009
Spain officially enters recession (Spanish economic crisis)
11/20/2011
General Elections in Spain
12/20/2015
General Elections in Spain
5/24/2015
Municipal Elections and Regional elections (in some CCAA) in Spain
Ruling of PP under José María Aznar
12/30/2001 - 9/30/2004
Manuel Bustamante in Congress of Valencia (PP)
12/30/2001 - 9/30/2016
Ruling of PP under Mariano Rajoy
10/1/2011 - 10/8/2015
Ruling of PSOE under Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
10/9/2004 - 10/16/2011
Francisco Saavedra in Congress of Extremadura (PSOE)
5/26/2003 - 5/22/2011

CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE OF MAJOR POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTOS OF INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE ROMANI POPULATION IN SPAIN

NATIONAL LEVEL	REGIONAL/ AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY LEVEL
October 3rd, 1985 No law proposition in the Spanish Parliament about the creation of the Roma Development Plan (*Plan de Desarrollo Gitano*).	**February 14th, 1985 (*Comunidad Valenciana*)** Decree 13/1985 of the Valencian Government which creates the Commission for the Study, Development and Promotion of the Romani Community
1989 Roma Development Plan begins to be implemented. That same year the IRPF tax is also assigned to finance the Roma Development Plan.	**October 7th, 1985 (Andalucía**) The Andalusian government establishes the Secretariat of Research and Applications for the Romani Community (*Secretaría de Estudios y Aplicaciones para la Comunidad Gitana*)
December, 1999 The Congress of Deputies creates a Sub-commission to study the problems of Romani Community (*Subcomisión para el Estudio de la problemátca del pueblo gitano*). It is published in BOE (nr 520)	**April 20th, 1987 (Andalucía)** Executive Committee of Social Welfare of the Andalusian government approves the Andalusian Plan for Roma Community 1987-1991
July 22nd, 2005 The Royal Decree 891/2005 creates and regulates the State Council for the Romani People (*Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano*)	**October 24th, 1989 (Andalucía)** Socio-cultural Andalusian Romani Centre (*Centro Sociocultural Gitano Andaluz*) is created in Granada, Attached to the Ministry of Equality and Social Welfare of the Andalusian Government
September 27th, 2005 No law proposition is approved by the Congress of Deputies, urging the government to promote Romani culture, history, identity and language	**October 30th, 1996 (Andalucía)** The Parliament of Andalucía approves an institutional declaration that establishes the day 22 of November as "The Day of Andalusian Roma" (*Día de los Gitanos Andaluces*)
June 29th, 2006 The State Council for Roma in Spain in constituted (Based on the order TAS/3795/2005, of the 21st of November 2005)	**December 26th, 1996 (Andalucía)** Approval of the Integral Plan for the Romani Community in Andalusia 1997-2000 (*Plan Integral para la Comunidad Gitana de Andalucía para el periodo 1997-2000*) (BOJA nº 22, de 20 de febrero de 1997). The Plan has been extended for the years 2002-2012
March 31st, 2007 The Institute of Romani Culture (*Instituto de Cultura Gitana*) is created in Madrid (order	**December, 1998 (Catalonia)** Creation of the Municipal Council for the Romani People in Barcelona *(El Consell*

CUL/1842/2007). The constitutive meeting of the Institute takes place on 31st of May 2007	*Municipal del Poble Gitano de Barcelona, CMPGB)*
April 9th, 2010 The Plan of Action for the Development of Romani Population (*Plan de Acción para el Desarrollo de la Población Gitana*) 2010-2012 is approved by the Council of Ministers	**November, 2001 (Extremadura)** Decree 179/2001 creates the Regional Council for the Romani People at the Government of Extremadura
March 2nd, 2012 The Council of Ministers approves Spain´s National Roma Integration Strategy 2012-2020 (*Estrategia para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020*)	**December, 2001 (Catalonia)** The Catalan Parliament passes two resolutions: • Resolution 1046/VI Recognizing the identity of the Romani people and the value of its culture • Resolution 1045/VI about the elaboration of the Integral Plan for the Romani People in Catalonia
March, 2014 The Operational Plan of the National Roma Integration Strategy is approved for the years 2014-2016	**June 27th, 2002 (Madrid)** Law 4/2002 create the Table for Integration and Promotion of Romani People in the Community of Madrid *(la Mesa para la Integración y Promoción del Pueblo Gitano de la Comunidad de Madrid*)
	November 25th, 2003 (Basque Country) Decree 289/2003 creates the Council for Integral Promotion and Social Participation of Romani People in the Basque Country (*Consejo para la promoción integral y participación social del Pueblo Gitano en el País Vasco*)
	November 16th, 2004 (Basque Country) The Basque Parliament approves the creation of Plan for Integral Promotion and Social Participation of Romani People in the Basque Country for years 2004-2007. The day of 16th of November is established as the "Day of Romani People in the Basque Country" *(el Día del Pueblo Gitano de Euskal Herri).* The Plan has been extended for years 2007-2011 and 2012-2013.
	May 31st, 2005 (Catalonia) Decree 102/2005 creates the Inter-departmental Commission of the Integra Plan for the Romani People in Catalonia (PIPG) and the Advisory Council of the Romani People. The PIPG was approved formally in November 2005, for years 2005/2008; and extended for years 2009-2013 and 2014-2016.
	July 19th, 2006 (Catalonia)

	Approval of the reform of the Statute of Catalonia Autonomous Community (Organic Law 6/2006). The article 42.7 states that the public powers "have to guarantee the recognition of culture of Romani people as a safeguard of their historic reality".
	November 14th, 2006 (Extremadura) Resolution 105/VI of the Parliament of Extremadura urges the government to recognize Romani culture and its value for the society of Extremadura and to prevent and identify discriminatory practices based on ethnic or racial grounds
	December, 2006 (Galicia) The Government of Galicia elaborates an Integral Plan for the coexistence and social development of Romani People in Galicia
	March 19th, 2007 (Andalucía) Approval of the reform of the Statute of Andalusia Autonomous Community (Organic Law 2/2007). The article 10.3.31 states that one of the objectives of the Autonomous Community is "the promotion of necessary conditions for the full integration of minorities, and especially, of the full social incorporation of the Romani community".
	March 29th, 2007 (Catalonia) Catalan Parliament approves a declaration recognizing historical persecution and the Roman genocide (Tram. 401-00003/08)
	April 20th, 2007 (Aragón) Approval of the reform of the Statute of Autonomous Community of Aragón (Organic Law 5/2007). The article 23.2 states that the Aragonian public authorities promote "conditions necessary for the integration of ethnic minorities, and especially, of the Romani community"
	April 27th, 2007 (Navarra) The Government of Navarra establishes the day of 27th of April as the "Day of Romani People of Navarra"
	November 30th, 2007 (Castilla y León) Approval of the reform of the Statute of Autonomous Community of Castilla y León (Organic Law 14/2007). The article 16.23 states

	that the guiding principles of public policies are "no discrimination and the respect of diversity of the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious collectives present in Castilla y León, with special attention to the Romani community"
	2007 (Extremadura) Approval of the Plan for the Promotion and Social Participation of Romani People in Extremadura (2007-2013)
	April 8th, 2011 (Catalonia) The Intergroup for Romani People (*Intergrup del Poble Gitano*) is created in the Catalan Parliament (agreement order from 15th of March 2011)
	April 25th, 2011 (Castilla – La Mancha) The Department of Health and Social Welfare of Castilla – La Mancha publishes the order to create the Regional Council of Romani People (Diario Oficial Orden de 11/04/2011)
	May 20th, 2011 (Navarra) First Integral Treatment Plan for the Romani Population (2011-2014) is approved in Navarra (BON Nº 118, 16/06/2011)
	2012 (Basque Country) Plan for the improvement schooling of Romani pupils in the Basque Country 2012-2015
	July 9th, 2013 (Castilla – La Mancha) Castilla – La Mancha Department of Health and Social Welfare publishes the order regulating the creation of the Regional Council of Romani People (DOCM de 16 de julio de 2013). The Council is finally constituted in December 2013.
	February 25th, 2015 (La Rioja) Presentation of the First Plan for Romani People in La Rioja 2015-2018
	May 19th, 2016 (Madrid) The General Assembly of the Autonomous Community of Madrid declares the day of 24th of May as the "Day of Romani People in Madrid". On the occasion, it was also announced that the government is elaborating the Strategy of Comprehensive Treatment of Romani People in the Community of Madrid 2016-2012 (*Estrategia de Atención al Pueblo Gitano de la Comunidad de Madrid 2016-2021*)
	June 7th, 2016 (Catalonia)

	Creation of the Programme for Romani People and Social Innovation in Catalonia (*Programa del Pueblo Gitano y de la Innovación Social*) for the years 2016-2019 (ACORD GOV/77/2016, de 7 de juny)

PHOTOS FROM FIELDWORK

Picture 1. Meeting of the National Table for Dialogue (*Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*). Workshop ”Capacitación de proyectos - Sistema General de Regalías”. On the picture, members the Table, legal representatives of various *kumpeñy*, posing together with the investigator. Bogota, Colombia, 26.06.2013. (Photo: Author)

Picture 2. Meeting of the National Table for Dialogue (*Mesa Nacional de Diálogo*). Workshop: ”Capacitación de proyectos - Sistema General de Regalías”. On the picture, members the Table, legal representatives of various *kumpeñy*, listen to the trainer. Bogota, Colombia, 26.06.2013. (Photo: Author)

Picture 3. *Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito*. On the picture, the lecturers, including Dalila Gómez Baos, about to begin her presentation. Bogota, Colombia, *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas*. 8.06.2013 (Photo: Author)

Picture 4. *Cátedra de Asuntos Étnicos de Distrito*. Group exercise. Participants had to illustrate the ethnic diversity in Colombia and provide basic information about each ethic group. Bogota, Colombia, *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas*. 8.06.2013 (Photo: Author)

Photo 5. Meeting of the First Inter-ethnic Congress of the District of Bogota (*1er Congreso Distrital Interétnico*). On the picture, representatives of Romani organizations together with Afro-Colombian women leaders. Usme, Colombia. 25.05.2013 (Photo: Author)

Photo 6. Meeting of the First Inter-ethnic Congress of the District of Bogota (*1er Congreso Distrital Interétnico*). Representatives of Romani organizations are sitting in the first row. Usme, Colombia. 25.05.2013 (Photo: Author)

Photo 7. Spending time with un-associated Romani women in Bucaramanga, Colombia. 30.06.2013 (Photo: Author)

Photo 8. Home-visit of members of *Unión Romani de Colombia* organization. Bogota, Colombia. 30.07.2013 (Photo: Author)

Photo 9. European Roma Youth Summit. Romani and non-Romani youth participants manifest in front of the venue. Córdoba, Spain. 8.04.2010 (Photo: Brisilda Taco)

Photo 10. European Roma Youth Summit. On the picture, Spanish Romani leaders join the youth manifestation. Córdoba, Spain. 8.04.2010 (Photo: Brisilda Taco)

Photo 11. Members of Romani youth organization Ternikalo XXI in a meeting with representatives of the Catalan Government. Barcelona, Spain. 26.05.2011 (Photo: Gerta Xega)

Photo 12. Participants of "Primavera Kaló" meeting, organized by the Romani youth organization Ternikalo XXI. Barcelona, Spain. 28.05.2011 (Photo: Marta Padrós)

Photo 13. Meeting of the General Assembly of the Romani youth organization Ternikalo XXI. Barcelona, Spain. 15.03.2011. (Photo: Saray Borja)

Photo 14. Workshop about Romani youth activism. Among participants, there is a group of young Spanish Romani activists. Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, Cracow, Poland. 1.08.2014 (Photo: Roma React)

Photo 15. Celebration of the International Roma Day in the Catalan Parliament. 8.04.2011. (Photo: *Parlament de Catalunya*)

Photo 16. Celebration of the International Roma Day in the Catalan Parliament. Presentation of the exhibition "Com tu!" of the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia. 8.04.2011 (Photo: *Parlament de Catalunya*)

Photo 17. Leader of Romani organization during a Festival of Romani Culture “Romanistan”, organized by the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia. 30.06.2012 (Photo: FAGIC)

Photo 18. Romani woman activist during a Festival of Romani Culture “Romanistan”, organized by the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia. 30.06.2012 (Photo: FAGIC)

Photo 19. Celebration of the International Roma Day in Barcelona. Roma community members and leaders of Romani organizations during the "river ceremony". Sant Adrià de Besòs, Spain. 08.04.2012 (Photo: FAGIC)

Photo 20. Presentation of the Romani women association "Veus Gitanas". CCCB, Barcelona. 6.04.2011 (Photo: Saray Borja)

Photo 21. Networking among Roma in Barcelona. On the photo: representative of a Romani organization Nakeramos, the author, member of the Exeutive Board of FAGIC, OSCE ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (personally, the father of the author), European project coordinator at FAGIC, representative of the International Roma Youth Network ternYpe (personally, the author´s cousin). 28.04.2011 (Photo: Authora)

Photo 22. Study visit with Andrzej Mirga in La Mina district. Sant Adrià de Besòs, Spain. May, 2014 (Photo: *Consorci de la Mina*)

Photo 23. Staff members of FAGIC, including the investigator, during the celebrations of *La Mercé* in Barcelona, Spain. September 2010 (Photo: FAGIC)

Photo 24. Spanish group during the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2014. Cracow, Poland. 3.08.2014 (Photo: *Nakeramos*)