Transferability of Successful Educational Actions of the Roma Women to the plural European Contexts

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Acknowledgments

"Rosita, con la educación puedes cambiar el mundo".
-Blanca Cisneros

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Abstract

The Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen (DKM) was at the centre of this academic investigation. The association is based in Barcelona, Catalonia and their approach to engaging with Roma women and advocating for gender equality using Successful Educational Actions, and understanding, if their methodology could have a positive impact on Roma women from other EU countries, was at the core of this thesis. The goal of my research was twofold: to identify the DKM's methodology and to understand if this egalitarian methodology was transferable to other contexts and allowed the "other women" to participate in dialogic conversations where Romani feminist discourse was at the centre. In this instance, I selected five different European countries that each had an established Roma population and worked alongside organisations and other grassroots Roma women, and I attempted to discern the exclusionary practices that Roma women and youth face in those countries. After better understanding those barriers, the application of the DKM methodology was inserted and then an analysis of the outcomes of applying the dialogic methodology took place.

This thesis has outlined the gaps that exist within Feminist and Roma Studies in relation to the inclusion of grassroots Roma women and girls and highlights the ability that the community has to approach their problems from an intersectional perspective, identify the barriers that impede their active participation and also identified the transformation many of the participants experienced as a result of applying the DKM's methodology to their living and working environment. Employing Communicative Methodology facilitated my working alongside the participants, resulting in this academic study to directly reflect their voices. In summary, the women and organisations interviewed, are helping to construct a narrative that is tackling covert and overt racism.

PART 1 METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are approximately ten to twelve million Roma living in Europe today and the history of the kaleidoscope of groups that fall under the term Roma is debated throughout various social, academic, political and artistic circles. Disputing their history and discussing the merits or demerits of the fluid terms used throughout history is beyond the scope of this work. What is central is the discussion of identity, the *Roma Women's Movement* and the manner in which Roma are included in academic studies that are evidence-based. Disenfranchised communities are oftentimes left out of academic spaces and their social realities are generally interpreted by researchers and/or other professionals. Academic studies have not always considered the voice of the Roma women and excluded this vulnerable group from entering into an honest conversation with the institutions that are leading projects and in positions of power. Exclusionist research on the Roma has basically been conducted using two approaches: ethnocentrism and relativism (Aiello, Mondejar & Pulido, 2013). These methods have maintained the traditional exclusionary power structures which exist within most of academia. However, there has been a dialogic shift informing several dimensions of society's life (R. Flecha, Gómez, & Puigvert, 2003) which in turn affects the way research is carried out. This turn has instigated a series of changes within the scientific world, and feminism is one of the many areas that has also been transformed.

Feminism can be comprised of social and political movements and aims to achieve equality of the sexes. Feminism is often divided into three waves and the first wave in the 19th and 20th century advocated for political equality. The second wave is often divided in the 1960s and 1970s which pushed for legal and professional equality. And the third wave has had a focus on social equality and feminist theory emerged from these feminist three movements and manifested itself in a series of disciplines. *Dialogic Feminism* was first considered by Lídia

Puigvert (2001) and situates itself in the third wave, which extends from the 1990s to present. Puigvert's concept of "the other women" is underpinned by other sociologists like Habermas, Castells, Giddens, Beck, Freire and Flecha, among others, and is grounded in *Dialogic Learning* de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, (2005) identified "the other women" as non-academic women who were silenced and have remained outside of the spaces for public debate about women" (2005, xi). It was the first time that feminist theory included the voices of the "other women" marking a shift in the feminist discourse.

Moreover, not only feminist theory and academic spaces were transformed by this novel concept, but also social spheres adapted this way of thinking and working. Among those was the Roma Association of Women *Drom Kotar Mestipen* ("A road for freedom") which was created in 1999 by a group of Roma women and non-Roma women of different ages, academic backgrounds, professional profiles and socio-economic levels who pursued a common objective: to struggle for the equality and non-discrimination of the Roma women by promoting their participation in educational, social and cultural spaces. This Roma women's association was among the first to consider the voices of "the other women" and created dialogic spaces where women from various backgrounds could come and participate and be active agents of change in their social, cultural, familial, political and educational environments. This thesis is grounded in the *Dialogic Feminist* work of Beck-Gernsheim, Butler and Puigvert (2003), de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Arocá (2005) and is informed by Gómez, Puigvert and Flecha's (2011) Communicative Methodologies (CM). CM is a methodological response to the dialogic turn of societies and science, which employs a continuous and egalitarian dialogue between the researchers and the people involved in the work. This approach allows for the voices of the research subjects to enter into honest and deep discussions which in turn has an impact on the data collected and encourages new

understandings and scientific knowledge. CM lends itself to working closely with "the other women" and will inform this academic investigation.

The thesis is divided into three parts: part one includes this introduction and personal motivation; part two is the theoretical framework; part three presents the data and results of the investigation, and the work ends with a conclusion. The theoretical framework consists of three chapters each of which sets the stage for the results section. In Chapter 2: *Anti-Gypsyism and Romaphobia: Fractured Identities and Current Roma Realities Romaphobia* and *Anti-Gypsyism* is discussed and the manner which these concepts have affected political, social and cultural environments is closely unpicked. The misinformation and erroneous information that has circulated and ill-informed several current institutional and political infrastructures that are now in place in the European Union are explored. Chapter 3*: Background of Dialogic Feminism and Intersectionality: the "Other Women"* explores feminist discourse and pinpoints how academic elite have often excluded women that are from diverse backgrounds. The chapter makes a case for opening feminism to include what Puigvert (2001) would class as the "other women". The theoretical inclusion of these women marks a shift in research and grassroots activities, in particular discussing the case of the Romani Women's Association the Drom Kotar Mestipen. The chapter further explores how intersectionality must be considered when discussing Roma women within social, cultural and political environments. An outline of key Civil Society Actors and NGOs that treat Roma women topics is also woven into the section. The last part in the theoretical framework, Chapter 4: *Vulnerability, Resistance and Social Transformation: The Roma Women's Movement* focuses on the Roma Movement and the Roma Women's Movement and how identity plays out in each. The chapter specifically focuses on how vulnerability is produced, distributed and reproduced when Roma women are discussed and the manner which social movement and activism plays out within Roma Studies. Activism and the Romani Rights Movement is closely referenced and used to frame the work

of the Romani Women's Association, the Drom Kotar Mestipen based in Barcelona, Catalonia. Part three will see the results that were underpinned by CM and facilitated the knowledge production scientific evidence that identified exclusionary and transformative elements that impeded and or supported the Other women to become active agents of transformation. The final section ends with a conclusion that summarises this academic investigation.

Personal Motivation

Writing from the perspective as a Roma woman who was born into a life of poverty and to a mother who is considered to be a member of "the other women" it is important to situate myself within the discourse and this work. While I aim to bring forward the voices of "other women" from the grassroots community, I also must highlight that I am writing from an insider's perspective and have an innate understanding of the need to document and write this thesis. Having grown up in a disadvantaged community I became aware of multiculturalism and was constantly surrounded by issues of race, class and ethnic tensions. This reflection of being a member of a disenfranchised group to becoming part of academic circles that promote and actively defend the rights of human beings, affords me an opportunity to identify with both groups personally and to be part of this *Romani Feminist Movement* that this thesis aims to analyse and contribute to.

It is also important to mention that my personal relationship with activism and working at a grassroots level started when I was quite young. Having seen the manner which people treated my family, in particular my mother, for being an uneducated woman from an ethnic background that is highly marginalised, was transformative. As a young person, I learned the imbalances that exist and the lack of empathy that is afforded to people that have lower or no formal academic training. Also, having attended the Independent school, Francis W. Parker School (Chicago, IL, USA) which is built off of John Dewey's teaching principles, activism was a foundational experience of that educational environment. At the time, I was unaware of

the seeds that were being planted and the dialogic community that was being created within that learning environment. Upon reflection, I now see that those experiences, coupled with my social and economic reality of witnessing the treatment my mother often faced because of prejudices and financial and socially disadvantaged circumstances, this all shaped my activist spirit, nature and academic interests. Having studied education and dance, in particular curriculum and instruction, there was a natural interest to better understand teaching methods and designing of curriculums that related to marginalised communities. Having tried to navigate an academic circle, attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA) and then later the University of Albuquerque- New Mexico (USA), I struggled to "fit in" for several reasons. One of the key reasons is that I had no role models in those spaces and my references became key professors that encouraged and supported me to find my own artistic and academic voice and to not allow being first generation to be a hindrance. In those spaces, one of the main lessons I learned was that few Roma women were writing about Roma history and that the gaps in my own understanding about the Roma community were not reflections of my inadequacy, but were directly linked to the lack of information that existed within academic and social environments. Learning to navigate the academic "elite" circles was not without its challenges but my mother's commitment to me not only attending but completing university was instrumental. Her love and visionary spirit were the guiding force behind my successful completion of university, both at an undergraduate and Master's level. Fast forward a few years, my decision to live in Barcelona, Spain allowed me an opportunity to connect with the Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (DKM).

My relationship with the DKM began with the "1st International Congress of Roma Women: The Other Women" in 2010. Having recently moved to Barcelona, Catalonia in early September 2010, I decided to try to find an organisation in the city where I could possibly volunteer and get involved. I made a list of several organisations to visit and also had

researched professors and researchers treating the topic of Roma Studies and Roma women, prior to moving to Barcelona, Catalonia. In that desk-based research I encountered the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All[1] (CREA) and its various key figures. Among those was Prof. Ramón Flecha and Dr. Teresa Sordé i Martí. Having watched their videos online and also read their printed materials, I decided that I would aim to contact them. However, my main goal was to do some practical hands-on activities and to meet people face-to-face. Having a list in hand, I decided after a week of moving to the city that I would go and meet these organisations and their staff and introduce myself. The DKM was the first on my list, and at the time its office was located in the city centre of Barcelona. It is important to note that this idea of meeting people face to face and to "look them in the eyes" is honouring a family tradition that my mother passed on to me. She felt it was important to be able to speak with people and to give them "your word". In the spirit of honouring this way of being I opted to not use technology to contact these organisations and individuals and travelled to each place not knowing what I would encounter. It should be noted that I was accompanied by my now husband who encouraged me to not only honour this family tradition but who helped me take the first steps and ring the DKM's doorbell. I was painfully scared and shy and was afraid of what I would encounter but was determined to meet this Roma women's organisation. After thirty minutes of crippling fear I decided to ring the bell and walk up to the DKM's headquarters. Upon ringing the bell, I was greeted by a warm group of women who were busy working. There were Roma and non-Roma women moving in and out of the several rooms and I was then presented with the flyer and information of the "1st International Roma Women's Congress: The Other Women" which would take place in 10 days time. Having handed them my CV and them noticing that I was Roma and also a graduate of the UW-Madison University

[1] CREA: http://crea.ub.edu/index/about/

system, they invited me to participate and attend the Congress free of charge. The DKM staff and volunteers were generous and supportive from day one. I attended the first congress and was astonished by the work and the number of Roma women in attendance. Later in this manuscript I will go into details of the 2010 Congress. However, at this junction I would like to reflect on the powerful first impression of witnessing 300 Roma women from grassroots communities gathered, debating, sharing and dialoguing about issues that mattered to them. Experiencing this first hand was transformative and inspiring.

This thesis will contextualise the DKM's working methodology, document its impact and make a claim for the transferability of the DKM's methodology. At the core, I will demonstrate that the DKM's methodology is not only including "the other women" but is transferable and can have successful results in diverse settings throughout the European Union.

Research Design and Methodology

The research instruments that were implemented throughout the life of the thesis travelled across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries. As society is experiencing a dialogic turn thinking critically and in a more egalitarian manner is essential to responding to the varying needs of communities. Communicative Methodology (CM) is centered on intersubjectivity and grounded in egalitarian dialogue where consensus is essential. The methodology was created by Jesus Gómez ("Pato") and developed by the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All, (CREA) which is based in Barcelona, Catalonia. CREA was founded in 1991 by Prof. Ramón Flecha who has an extensive history and is a leader in Sociology and whose scientific contributions have led to transform several social, cultural, scientific and political arenas. Gómez, Racionero & Sordé (2010) suggest that CM "assumes a communicative critical conception of reality, and in this sense, there are some characteristics that differentiate it from the objectivist, constructivist and socio-critical conceptions" (2010, p.19). CM does not label the individuals as victims or reflections of the structural systems

surrounding that individual or community. Rather, CM sees people as subjects capable of transformation and of reshaping their lives and history. Further into this section I expand on the techniques that the methodology employs. However, at this juncture I want to emphasise its impact and mention a few major international research projects that have been underpinned by CM. Among those are the Workaló (2001–2004) a Research and Technological Development (RTD) project that forms part of the Fifth European Union Framework Programme; or INCLUD-ED (2006–2011), which is an Integrated Project of the Sixth Framework Programme and which had international social, political as well as scientific impact. Further in this section I expand on the INCLUD-ED project and discuss the importance and relevance of the project. CM has also been recognised by the highest-ranking journals such as Harvard Educational Review Journal, Qualitative Inquiry, and International Review of Qualitative Research and other key publishers such as Routledge, MIT Press, and SAGE among many others. Furthermore, CM was introduced in the 1st International Congress of Quality Inquiry (May 2005) and in 2010 there was a roundtable dedicated to CM; both events took place at the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign (USA).

CM underpinned this academic investigation. The methodology has been used by leading researchers and modelled by projects that have been grounded in evidence-based methodologies.

> Scientifically published and recognised, the communicative methodology accounts for both the scientific and social aspects of research. In research conducted using the communicative methodology, knowledge is constructed through dialogue between researchers and end-users, who are not traditionally included in the research process. Researchers contribute knowledge form the scientific community, which is contrasted with social actors' interpretation of their life experiences and common sense. This methodology creates optimal conditions to realise intersubjective relationships necessary for both researchers and social agents to share their knowledge and identify actions that overcome exclusionary elements. (Flecha and the INCLUD-ED consortium., 2015, p. 9)

CM uses data collection processes that align with its methodological goal which is to transform and foster social change. The communicative approach includes three techniques which are

outlined as i) communicative daily life stories ii) communicative focus groups and iii) communicative observations. There is a reflective and shared process of meaning-making that emerges through the use of these techniques. Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha (2011) posit the techniques are geared towards change which allow the researchers and the agents to interpret the information jointly. Also, researchers are not removed from the data, but are active agents during the fieldwork period too. This dialogic setup leads to a series of reflections between all involved. In the same article by Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha (2011) there is detailed information on the three techniques that are referenced above. A general overview of three pillars of the methodology suggests that Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS) is a dialogue between the researcher and the social actor that is not intended to reconstruct an autobiography but rather elicit reflective narratives of their life and situation. Communicative Focus Groups (CFG) include between 6-8 individuals whom already have an existing relationship, also known as a 'natural group', and may know one another from another context. The researcher plays a very specific role within CFG as they are responsible for presenting scientific knowledge to the group and to facilitate a reflective discussion where the group can interpret the issue collaboratively. CFG requires that the researcher have a "second turn" to revisit the findings and are given the opportunity to double check the data and to reach a final consensus. The final element of CM is the Communicative Observations (CO) where the researcher participates in observing a situation but also shares with the participants the 'meaning and interpretation of their actions' (Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011).

This thesis is a large-scale project that lends itself to quantitative and qualitative research methods where interviews, focus groups and paper questionnaires were employed. For many of the participants their involvement in NGOs is limited and communities are filled with personal stories and people's testimonies of transformation. Focus groups of 3-8 people, which consisted of both Roma and non-Roma women, were organised. This allowed for the

women to have the time and the space to calmly reflect and share. CM is appropriate as it permits the participants to delve deeper into the work and obtain a broader understanding of the individual's values and perceptions and encouraged them to offer their Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS). "Dialogic research shows that it is precisely by drawing on people's capacity to interpret their own reality and to create culture that research provides deep and critical insights and is able to detect the most relevant social problems." (Gómez, Racionero & Sordé, 2010, p.25). In order to establish these egalitarian spaces, careful consideration was placed on the type of language that was used when in the data collection process. Using language that was closer to their experiences allowed me to obtain information that reflected their realities and encouraged communicative discussion groups. The organisations and the Roma communities were involved in developing the questionnaires and scripts that were used throughout the data collection process. During the analysis stage, the Roma women and youth were also involved in the dialogic process of reflecting on what emerged. Their input and insight were essential in the final findings of the work. The coding and analysing of data used two dimensions: exclusionary and transformative. The exclusionary was tied to identifying barriers and discriminative practices that have impeded the Roma women's participation. The methodology also allowed for the detection of the limitations of the environments the women are part of in their everyday lives. CM lends itself to semi-structured interviews, focus groups in several countries and observations of the women in their environments. "The communicative perspective includes the contributions of objectivists and constructivist orientations but emphasizes the process of critical reflections and self-reflection and self-reflection and intersubjectivity" (Flecha and INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015, p.10). CM is a key tool which leads to social and political transformation. The need for CM is twofold as it identifies barriers faced by the participants but also allows the individual to offer direct solutions to the researcher. The decentralising of power is necessary as it provides a more

realistic reflection of the plural society that currently exists outside of scientific spaces. As Touraine, Wieviorka and Flecha (2004) argue, through the objectification of the Roma, privilege is maintained by the researcher and the inferior and superior dynamic continues to exist. In the same volume the authors analysed CM and highlight its relevance when including the voices of cultural groups in social research. Through CM a shift occurs which allows for a horizontal, egalitarian discussion to take place thus encouraging a counter-narrative to take shape. The decision to underpin scientific research through CM is not trivial and has a direct impact on the type of qualitative and quantitative data collected, thus leading to greater social and political impact. Since CM "seeks to transcend traditional theoretical dualisms in social sciences, such as structure/individual, subject/object and relativism/universalism" (Flecha and INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015, p.10) and does so through using a set of principles. Those ingredients include seeing that language and action are universal and that individuals can be agents of social transformation. In addition to the above-mentioned points, communicative and dialogic knowledge and spaces must take precedence over hierarchical structures. Cultural intelligence of all subjects can be incorporated in research projects and its design, through the use of dialogical knowledge (Diez-Palomar, Pitanga & Cifuentes, 2013) which is instigated through the use of CM.

A range of resources have been consulted before carrying out field work and a series of meetings among my thesis director and the thesis stakeholders took place in preparing the various documents used to carry out the interviews and the writing of the various chapters. Whilst several environments will be sensitive to different, local conditions, the University of Barcelona's ethical standards were complied with at all times. All interviewees received a Participant Information Sheet and were required to sign an Informed Consent Form as a mandatory precondition for their involvement in any activity. The forms used were preapproved by University of Barcelona's ethics approval process. Gaining ethical approval

ensures that I am proceeding responsibly with due care for the participants and the storage of data that was produced as part of the data capture process. Whilst it is not possible to anonymise the audio recordings, any recordings that are made as part of the research process will be for internal analysis and reference only, to assist in the research process so will not enter the public domain without prior permission being specifically sought from the participant. All audio recordings were retained securely on double encrypted systems and no personal or sensitive personal data of the participants was stored.

Bias and Validity

Researchers can use multiple layers of data collection to foster deeper understandings. This layering can put forth a more rounded picture as it includes verbal, technical and pictorial representations of the work and realities being uncovered and included in the research collection process. Pease (2010) reflects that qualitative researchers write themselves into their texts and through this inclusion of the self can one acknowledge the place and privilege of the researcher and also allow it to become an active component of the methodology. Pease further argues that via the weaving in of the researcher's "positionality" is a way to not reproduce and describe "the other" but rather find a balance and more neutral point of view. Positioning oneself within the research is essential and in an effort honour and ensure transparency I must recognise my own biases and the validity of the way I am conducting this research. My personal involvement in the DKM as a volunteer since October 2010 has allowed me to have direct contact to the informants for this study and this includes Roma and non-Roma women and girls, and DKM staff and volunteers. Being an active member and volunteer with the DKM has given me access to archival documentation as well as to understanding the association's structure and day-to-day activities. While this direct link has opened up several personal opportunities and afforded me access to a number of different materials and a deeper understanding of the nuanced approach of the DKM's methodology, as a sociologist, an

academic and a member of the Roma community, I have always maintained the highest ethical standards and emulated what Flecha and Soler (2014) would deem as carrying out research which informs knowledge, with a focus to contribute to the direct improvement of communities. Precisely because of my place within the Roma community and also because I have the privilege to sit within academic circles that can implement research activity that is driven by CELS and CM, I ensured that transparency and ethically sound research was carried out at every juncture of this research investigation. As Vargas and Gómez (2003) have mentioned, there can be a tendency for research when done on Roma, to be underpinned by racist and biased perspectives. Employing CM ensures that any biases are revealed and challenged, and my commitment to realising intersubjective dialogue with the Roma women and the several organisations involved in the data collection process, maintains that ethnocentric and relativist approaches are not embedded in this work. It is also valuable to reflect that given my position as a member of the community who comes from a disadvantaged and impoverished background, but who has fortunately had a mother who pushed for me to receive higher education degrees and who supported me regardless of the institutional, cultural and societal barriers placed along my journey, that insistence and resilience has allowed me to arrive to this position where I could carry out this academic investigation. This personal background and position could be seen as a biased perspective when interviewing women who are affected by the double discrimination that exists as they might see me as someone who can not relate to their realities. Rather than allow this to be a barrier, my ability to sit within academic circles has been honestly presented and I have shared that position of existing in liminal spaces which has been acknowledged by all involved parties. The reality that I have come from a disadvantaged background and also now sit within academic institutions has not been received as a negative but rather, highly applauded and welcomed by many of the women interviewed. Indeed, my ability to relate to the Roma women and girls has afforded me a level

of trust and understanding but at every point I have reminded the informants that their voices are central to this work and they are the ones directing the academic study. Through the use of CM, the production of knowledge is moving away from knowledge silos and collectively discovering embodied and emotional connections that are evidence-based.

Research Questions

This thesis focuses on the role of "the other women" in particular Roma women, and uses as a starting point the Roma Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen's (DKM) II International Roma Women's Congress (March 2018) to highlight the positive transformation the organisation is having on a local, national and international level. The thesis identifies the gaps within the scientific community and underpins its work in Communicative Methodology that is evidenced-based.

With this academic investigation I set out to explore the following Motivating Question:

Is the DKM's working methodology transferrable from Catalonia, Spain to plural European contexts?

In my pursuit of this question, I deliberately refrain from working on a macro level and instead carry out a micro level study based on specific organisations. More precisely, my investigation consists of detailed studies of five local organisations located in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Moldova and the United Kingdom. These local organisations focus on Roma women in their host countries and have adopted the methodology of DKM and engaged in the DKM activities.

Objectives

With this academic investigation I set out three main objectives that were the driving force of this work:

- Objective 1: Analyse the DKM's working methodology and identify its fundamental features

- Objective 2: Discuss the DKM's methodology and build a narrative around the need to transfer the DKM's working model to other European contexts and analyse the transferability of these traits to other contexts
- Objective 3: Contextualise elements of the DKM within the Dialogic Feminist discourse.

Factors that motivated the selection of the topic were directly tied to the personal motivation as well as my academic curiosity and awareness of the gaps within discourse. The Table below outlines the units of analysis. In the appendix a series of documents which offer detailed information of the data collected, including samples of the questionnaires, scripts that were devised and anonymous participant profiles.

Table 1. Research Questions- Units of Analysis

Objectives:	**Specifics of Objectives:**	**Unit of Analysis**	**Work performed and level of analysis:**
Objective 1:	Analyse the DKM's working methodology and identify its fundamental features	DKM Association members, DKM Association founding members	-Interviews with 7 DKM members
Objective 2:	Discuss the DKM's methodology and build a narrative around the need to transfer the DKM's working model to other European contexts and analyse the transferability of these traits to other contexts	Romani Women, associations in Europe	8 Focus Groups 10 CELS 20 Questionnaires
Objective 3:	Contextualise elements of the DKM within the Dialogic Feminist discourse.	Romani women and Associations	3 Focus Groups 5 CELS 20 Questionnaires

1.0 Literature Review

Traditional stereotypes and racialized misconceptions of Roma women dominate popular discourse. Accurate narratives of the Roma community are not circulated widely and the plural voices and personal experiences are often tucked away and masked by erroneous images and misinformation. Aidan McGarry in his book *Romaphobia* (2017) uncovers causes of racism towards Roma and moves away from detailing the manifestation of the ideology. He goes on to offer positive and constructive ways to combat the grim reality of Romaphobia. Aidan's 2010 book "Who Speaks for the Roma?" looks at political representation of the Roma community and attempts to understand the vicious cycle of under representation. Rather than prescribe mechanisms to rectify this perceived injustice McGarry attempts to advance research and understanding of this situation through highlighting the various ways that Roma organise. His book looks closely at political arenas and institutions where the Roma have organised and also outlines the alternative platforms that have been used to create hubs of solidarity and networks with Civic Society Actors as well as Non-Governmental Organisations. Recently, sociologist and feminist Geetha Marcus published *Gypsy and Traveller Girls Silence, Agency and Power (*2019), which presents the untold stories of "Gypsy and Traveller girls living in Scotland". The study invites the reader to reflect on the experiences of these communities and questions if there are similarities between other socially excluded groups. Her reflection is important and timely and her line of inquiry is possible due to the groundwork laid by decades of activists, academics, feminists and other members of the Roma community, exploring these questions. Angéla Kóczé, Violetta Zentai, Jelena Jovanović and Enikő Vincze (2019) published *The Romani Women's Movement struggles and debates in Central and Eastern Europe.* The volume is rich in its content and its ability to pull together Roma women activists, academics,

feminists, anthropologists, sociologists and directors of NGOs and grassroots organisations. The book is part of the Routledge Research in Gender and Society series and has an intersectional perspective. The editor's very first sentence summarises the pioneering work and refocuses the gender discourse in relation to the Romani Women's Movement.

> The origins of this volume goes back a long way. Many of the authors started to work together in the middle of the 1990's following the fall of the Berlin Wall. AS activists or supports, they engaged in building spaces, platforms and conversations that contributed to Romani women's local and transnational mobilization in Central and Eastern Europe. (Kóczé, Zentai, Jovanović & Vincze., 2019, p.1)

Within the volume the authors use Romani feminism as a way to challenge multiple forms of discrimination, oppression and advance which reflect and analyse the social movement of the community. Maria Emilia Aiello in her doctoral dissertation "Romani Women Taking the Lead for Social Transformation The case of the Roma Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen" (Aiello, 2016) also explored solidarity networks among the Roma Women's community, using the Drom Kotar Mestipen as a case study. Other key women writing about the Roma Women's Movement from a gender perspective include Biţu & Vincze, (2012) Ethel Brooks (2012), and Alexandra Oprea with her 2005 and 2012 writings. To better understand the *Roma Women's Movement* a clear link between feminism must be drawn and for this reason, this Literature Review will frame work considering information produced by Roma women, feminists and Roma studies authors. It will also include relevant projects that offer insight into the *Roma Women's Movement.*

In 1999, at the Open Society Institute Forum on Romani issues Romani feminist, activist and leader Nicoleta Biţu was asked "Why Roma Women" to which her answer was the Roma Women's Initiative (RWI). Debra L. Schulz (2012) discusses the RWI as a model of intersectional feminist practice led by Romani women in collaboration with non-Romani feminists. The RWI's stated mission was to promote the human rights of Romani women by empowering Romani women activists in Central and Eastern Europe. Schultz also situates "Romani women's activism" and outlines the struggles faced by Romani women and the

creative strategies they devise to tackle them. She emphasizes the power that accrues from the strong multinational, multigenerational networks that Romani women have formed over the past decade to fight the multiple modes of discrimination that permeate every area of life.

Romani women are the links between the private and the public domains and are central figures within the family structure (Silverman, 1996). The role of the Roma woman is crucial and "the other women" (Puigvert, 2001) is at the crux of this thesis. The focus on *Dialogic Feminism* provides an opportunity to deepen studies on "the other women" which was first introduced by Puigvert in 2001 and further developed by Beck-Gernsheim, Butler, Puigvert (2001) allowing for a key shift in feminist discourse. De Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Arocá's *The Inclusion of the other women* (2005) was a rigorous theoretical analysis of feminist thought while documenting testimonies of "the other women" grounded in dialogical educational perspectives. Research has a significant role to play in not only highlighting policy and scientific inadequacy but in also putting forth strategies which advance the inclusion of Roma Women and "the other women". Ethel Brooks (2012) draws attention to the ambiguous relationship between the appropriation of Roma culture and the racist backdrop that non-Roma often work from. She claims that Romani feminism creates possibilities to displace the traditional structures of power that exist between Roma and non-Roma researchers.

The scientific community has started to identify the value of including the Roma community, in particular Roma women, with projects like Brudila Callí (2002-2003), Callí Butipen (2003-2004) and Workaló (2001-2004). The Workaló project led to the institutional recognition of Roma by the European Union (Aiello, Mondejar & Pulido, 2013) and on November 21, 2001 the Roma were internationally recognised by unanimous vote by the Catalan government (Munte, Serradell & Sordé, 2011). Flecha, Gómez and Puigvert's (2011) Communicative Methodology underpinned the INCLUD-ED project (2006-2011), the largest study on school education within the Framework Program of Research of the European Union.

Through this egalitarian dialogue the project was able to collect the demands and concerns of various educational actors, which have later been brought into dialogue with the findings in regard to Successful Educational Actions (SEA). This mode of working ensures that the most vulnerable communities, like the Roma, can engage and contribute to the creation of knowledge that lends itself to finding solutions to the social and political problems that the community faces. Through this process the solutions can come from within the community and lead to real change and have the capacity to transform society.

Bițu and Vincze (2012) identified that the main topics around which Roma feminist discourse has developed include forced sterilization, early marriages, prostitution, human trafficking and begging. Roma women suffer from marginalisation in education (segregation) and housing (evictions and poor-quality housing or ghettos) and very high unemployment rates and few participate in political processes. Women are the most vulnerable, as they experience first-hand all these circumstances early on and Melgar, Larena, Ruiz & Rammel (2011) claim that education can enable members of society's most vulnerable groups to overcome the risk of poverty and exclusion. Sordé-Martí (2006) has suggested that as Roma women develop these dialogic relations in schools, they move from being dismissed to becoming the driving force behind change.

Projects like INCLUD-ED were multinational and had an international impact but there is still a case to be made for extending the work that has occurred within Spain to several other European contexts. Romani families are transnational and can embrace several nation-states (Silverman, 2012). Carol Silverman focussed on Macedonian Muslim Roma women in New York City, NY (USA) and documented how education is a tool for agency and power mitigating the patriarchal foundation of Balkan Society. She also looked at issues of race and identity and made the link between the Roma and the Caribbean and the African American families. This aligns with Margareta Matache and cultural theorists Cornel West's 2018 talk

Alone Together: Strength and Solidarity between the Roma and African American Communities (2018) which is part of Harvard FXB an innovative research and capacity-strengthening Roma program based in the United States. Matache's *Introduction: Roma in a time of paradigm shift and chaos* is part of a recent Special Issue which sits next to Andrew Ryder and Marius Taba's contribution of examining Roma within a social Europe. The pair explore notions of securitisation and xenophobic visions in society. Matache has been a leader at both a grassroots level but also within several national and international contexts. *Realizing Roma Rights* by Matache, Bhabha and Mirga (2017) is a key book which offers Roma Studies a deep understanding of the human rights dimensions affecting the Roma community. The volume brings forward an analysis of the European political developments and outlines the manner that different bodies treating the Roma topic have engaged, or not, with the issues. Daróczi, Kóczé, Jovanović, Cemlyn, Vajda & Kurtić (2018) explore key aspirations, challenges and achievements of Romani women's activism through in-depth interviews with four leading activists in different European countries, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom. While Roma Studies scholarship is continuously growing what is essential to this investigation is exploring the intersections of dialogic feminism, Roma women and social transformation within specific environments. As the goals of my research is to identify the values of the Roma Women in 5 specific locations of the European Union, and to highlight the networks of solidarity that make *Romani Feminism* possible, these cross-national examples serve as references for future discussions.

1.1 Scientific Gaps

This thesis identifies the gaps within the scientific community and is underpinned by Communicative Methodology (CM) that is evidence-based. This work has considered the positional and reflexivity of both Roma and non-Roma researchers and has critically examined the intersections of Roma and non-Roma community members and researchers. For the last

two decades, European institutions, civil societies, academic research centres and government organisations have been focussed more on the Roma community. There has been an interest in the Roma's language, traditions, historical knowledge, everyday behaviour and lifestyle with an end goal of better understanding the community, with an interest to foster social cohesion between the Roma and mainstream society. At the time of writing this thesis, Europe finds itself in a tense situation where countries are holding on to traditions and values and there is a direct conflict with welcoming those of the complex patchwork of non-European and/or minority communities. Roma within this discourse are often targeted and identified as sources of strain.

> For the last two decades, European institutions have equated Roma with uneducated, unskilled, unemployed and poor. This part of the Roma population fits the negative stereotypes held by the majority population. European initiatives targeting the social inclusion of Roma have focused exclusively on this part of the Roma population. No European awareness campaign has ever targeted successfully integrated Roma, or the even larger group of ethnically-mixed Roma. (Nicolae & Slavik, 2006, p.2)

The Roma community is Europe's largest ethnic minority, with an estimate of 10 to 12 million Roma (European Commission, 2012)[2]. As more people move from country to country within the European Union, the question of identity surfaces and European identity becomes challenged and forced to reinvent itself and adapt to a changing environment. Europe's identity has always been manifold; hence (additional) minority groups should not pose a threat to its social and cultural cohesion. This is however not necessarily the case in a contemporary cultural climate increasingly ruled by fear and blame. Social cohesion and inclusion of communities becomes more important and an analysis of understanding how best to erase these divisions and find and/or implement solutions that lead to more democratic societies is a must.

While this study is not directly analysing the role that culture plays within the Roma community, cultural elements are an important component that must be considered. Culture is

2 For more information: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_en.asp

a term that is complex and has been defined by artists, anthropologists, linguists, sociologists and many other social scientists in a variety of ways. Culture may represent a group of people's beliefs, practices as well as their material artefacts. Society is directly tied to social structures, frameworks and the organisation of the individuals that share those beliefs and practices and each one is reliant on the other and forms a symbiotic relationship. Jürgen Habermas in his *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) uses the word 'culture' to refer to "[…] the stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding about the world (209). Where for Judith Lynne Hanna suggests "culture is a dynamic ever- changing phenomenon encompassing the values, beliefs, attitudes, and learned behaviour shared by a group" (Hanna, 1990, p.116). Indeed, there are nuances from culture to culture and different ethnic groups and countries rarely have cultural universals. Puigvert (2001) states that culture is not static. Knowledge about cultures can be self-made and ethnocentrism plays a major factor in the divisions among members of different ethnicities, races and religious groups. As sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) described, ethnocentrism includes the belief that one's own culture is better than others. Social sciences, in particular Race Studies and Cultural Studies, closely discuss the idea of "other", and Jean–Francois Staszak when discussing the phenomenon posits that "othering" consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups: them and us" (2008, p. 2). He goes on to say that such labelling is largely based on stereotypes and simplistic constructs of people. Racial "otherness" dominates mainstream media and society continues to use historically prejudiced assumptions when analysing actions, behaviours and visuals of minority communities. Some academic works and projects also underpin their investigations from the ethnocentric perspective. An alternative mode of inquiry and investigation is necessary when discussing the Roma community because meta-narratives that exist are misrepresenting the community. This thesis engaged with this racial othering and the

lack of representations and sought opportunities to co-create evidence-based work and outputs that are more accurate of the realities of the Roma community.

An analysis of methodological tools and approaches within scientific studies is important to consider so that the assumptions and values of the research team are clearly outlined. In 2017 Michael Stewart questioned the positionality of who is speaking for whom and directed this question to the Romani Studies community.

Fremlova (2018) claimed that:

> Romani Studies, a subject field which, until very recently, has been dominated by non-Romani (white), middle-class, often heterosexual, cis male scholars, provides an example of such orthodoxy – something that Stewart himself partially admits – thus raising a series of questions regarding researcher's positionality and reflexivity. (Fremlova, 2018, p.100)

The need to query the historically constructed stereotypical and essentialised narratives of the Roma community is important to bring into this context. In an effort to do so, I will point to what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 68) termed "reflexive sociology" as they outline the main tenets of research positionality and reflexivity in their work *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Reflexive Sociology is relevant to this research to avoid homogenizing and essentialising Roma ethnicity and identity, which allows for a deeper discussion of positionality and in exploring the insider/outsider dichotomy through the circumventing and dissolving of these dichotomies. The positionality of a researcher refers to where they are situated within the social and academic environment in relation to power, and as Fremlova (2018) suggests "positionality reflects the ontological and epistemological values and worldviews into which the researcher – the main orchestrator of collecting, collating, analysing, and interpreting data" (2018, p. 101). And in the same article Fremlova continues to suggest that researchers bring in their own values, beliefs and views which are framed by the wider socio-cultural contexts and social systems. Jim Thomas (2003) suggested that a more reflective style of thinking about the relationship between knowledge production, research

methods and practices, hierarchies and power dynamics within wider social constructs is necessary. Fremlova (2018) argues that the relationship between positionality and reflexivity is not only an "organic one" but an ongoing process where the researcher attempts to reflexively situate themselves within the work. Flecha and the INCLUD-ED Consortium, (2015) call on a de-centering of the researcher and underpin their thinking in Habermas' theory of (1984) "communicative action" which argues that through the removal of hierarchies knowledge provided is based on the input and arguments by the social agents rather than academic, social or political positions. Habermas posits that all humans have the capacity for language and action. The collective construction of understanding and meaning based on dialogue with all participating is the premise of dialogic gatherings which "demonopolizes the expert" (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994) and builds on cultural intelligence (Racionero & Valls, 2007). Jekatyerina Dunajeva examined how educational policies affect Roma identity formation and her fields of research are Roma, identity politics, minority integration, among others. Dunajeva exclaims that there is a need to bridge the gap between theory and practice, academia and public policy, and consequently seeks to explore policy-relevant questions that include the communities themselves.

> The challenges of conducting fieldwork with vulnerable and marginalized groups persist. Including informants in the process of knowledge-production and understanding the impact of power hierarchies between the researcher and informant are of central importance but often researchers fail to do this. It is also essential to recognize the power dynamics between the researcher and researched group(s). (Dunajeva, 2018, p.127)

To further explicate the concepts raised in this section, I return to the needs of why CM was necessary for this thesis. CM was built through a process of intense theoretical debate involving the CREA research community and practical field research which allowed it to evolve and to take shape. "Research projects such as *Basic skills of the adult population in Spain. Map, causes and solutions* (1992-1996), and applied research like *Participation and non-*

*participation in adult education in Spain, Catalonia and Galicia (*1994-1997) were the starting point in the use of the communicative methodology" (Gómez, Racionero & Sordé., 2010, p. 24). CM breaks with the stereotypical meta-narrative that minority groups are incapable or uninterested in participating in academic activities. In fact, research shows that those employing CM with their work with cultural minority groups, in particular those that have little or no formal education can make significant contributions to research ranging from the design to the analysis and dissemination of main findings (Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011). The way in which particular communities express their identity and sense of belonging, their histories, shared memories and experiences, values and social structures is of upmost importance and CM allows for the Roma to communicate their ideas and solutions to the academic channels. There is a rich resource of knowledge that is largely currently absent from major academic environments, in particular, Feminism. However, working with the Roma, in specifically Roma women and youth, the data produced aims to offer Roma Studies and Feminist Studies more accurate material that is reflecting diverse cultural expressions and values, thus encourage a cultural ecosystem that enhances social cohesion and furthering Roma Studies and the field of Sociology.

Romani Women's Feminism and Gender Perspective

Feminism and its relationship to Roma women has traditionally not considered them nor been an appropriate framework to critically incorporate their voices. Alexandra Oprea, a Romani lawyer and essayist, has noted that Roma have historically been denied the right to project their own stories and has written on the importance of narratives and having autonomy to accurately share work that is grounded in reality. She has also written about the exclusion of Roma women from mainstream feminist and antiracist discourses in Europe. Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999b) showcased some of the historical burdens that are present in feminism and set out the performative and transformative power of gender expressions that

are liberated from the binary normativity based on the dichotomy of masculine-feminine (de Botton, Puigvert, Sánchez-Arocá, 2005). The "other women" have traditionally been kept outside of political, scientific, economic, social and cultural spaces and in particular, decision-making arenas. This is particularly true for the Roma women who fall under the "other women" category. There is a gap within the scientific community that needs closer investigations and a focus on Romani women's feminism that includes the plurality of voices that exist within our democratic society. Literature identifies that there is a difference between theory and practice within feminist thought and Romani women feminists offer an alternative way of including the "other women". Since Roma women are the main protagonists of their lives and social circumstances and through dialogic spaces are transforming their realities, (Sánchez, Yuste, de Botton and Kostic, 2013) it is important to ensure that these voices are included and shaping feminist discourse. Biţu and Vincze (2012) claimed that feminism—if it is to be capable of transcending ethnic boundaries— must support minority women in their efforts to deconstruct both nationalist/racist regimes and patriarchal gender orders within and outside minority communities. The DKM since its inception in 1999, has been pushing for a feminism that includes all women and that is removed from the *elite*[3]. The DKM has pushed for plural and diverse participation and is considered to be an innovative experience and way of working that contributes to *Dialogic Feminism*. The need to focus on the transferability of the DKM's working model is timely and important to deepening the discourse on gender equality and Roma women's feminism as well as contributing to the dialogic shift that society has been experiencing.

The Institute for European Studies published a policy brief in May 2016 which highlights that in April 2011 the European Commission (EC) adopted a Communication for

3 "Feminism of the elite is understood as one constructed solely by university women. Synonyms include: academic feminism and feminism of some." (de Botton, Puigvert, Sánchez-Arocá, 25)

the establishment of an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 which is also known as the EU Roma Framework. At its core, the Framework requires that all Member States not only design but implement appropriate national strategies for improving the situation of its Roma. In its inception the strategy did not consider gender but it paved a path for the topic and in consecutive years, the President of the European Parliament asked the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) to provide an analysis of the results of the 2011 Roma Pilot Survey disaggregated by gender (D'Agostino, 2016). The analysis showed that "the situation of Roma women in core areas of social life, such as education, employment and health (was) worse in comparison to that of Roma men" (FRA, 2013, p. 1). This social reality that is reflected in the political situation, highlights the urgency to find alternative ways of identifying solutions that remedy such inequalities highlighted by the EU and other governmental institutions. Research that is evidence-based and that includes the most vulnerable, is essential. Working horizontally is important as all individuals have abilities to contribute to identifying the barriers and finding solutions to overcome those challenges. Departing from this point, the thesis will employ CM which allows for a communicative paradigm which enables disenfranchised communities, like that of the Roma women, to work closely together with researchers and facilitate a process of creation of scientific knowledge. As Gómez, Latorre, Sánchez & Flecha (2006) explain that Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS) enhance the data collection process and CM identifies transformative and exclusionary dimensions which has also been recognised by the scientific community (Flecha & Soler-Gallart, 2013). Therefore, my academic investigation will closely explore dialogic feminism, the Roma Women's Movement and the manner which the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen fosters egalitarian conversations and activities. I will employ CM to underpin this research and will work closely with Roma women from a grassroots level to ensure their voices are included in the research and that they have an

opportunity to reflect on the data being produced and to contribute directly to the academic production and knowledge that is being created. The next section of this thesis is the theoretical framework which will underpin the rationale and centre the crux of my argument.

PART 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Anti-Gypsyism & Romaphobia, Fractured Identities and Current Roma Realities

2.1 Chapter Overview

The terms Roma and Travellers is a highly charged pair of words. Throughout this writing I will be using these terms but will align my usage with that of Council of Europe's definition which encompasses the wide diversity of the groups including Roma, Sinti/Manush, Cale, Kale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari, Balkan Egyptians, the Dom, Lom and Abdal and Travellers. The image that surrounds the Roma community is one that is full with contrasting opinions. Despite the European Union's efforts, it is evident social behaviours, prejudices, stereotypes and cultural views continue to exert a negative overtone when the Roma community is discussed. The Roma people have had an exposure to multiple influences which has perpetuated the derogatory overtones attached to the group. The reason for such a plethora of opinions when it comes to the historical facts of who the Roma are and where they come from, arises from their past customs of oral traditions. They were an unlettered people who did not document their history and traditions in the Western way that historians do today. They based their traditions, customs, culture, as well as their exchanges with others, on verbal accounts. This is slowly changing as Roma and non-Roma scholars are internationally appearing and beginning to document what once was solely an oral folklore. Within the last one hundred and fifty years there have been waves of academic works which have attempted to fill in the blanks of Roma history, but oftentimes these are underpinned by romanticised, ethnocentric or racist ideologies. Indeed, there is an academic shift aiming to include the Romani community within academic investigations, yet this is a relatively new way of

working. In this chapter, I will discuss Roma history in broad terms, frame how their identity has been constructed and discuss the negative effects this has on the Romani community. Throughout the chapter I will explore how Roma identity is developed and also misconstrued, which leads to what is today known as *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia.* Further in this section, I will delve into defining these two notions and highlight how they affect Roma identity and are directly linked with politics and perceptions by non-Roma. The chapter will end with a discussion on the political frameworks that are in place and an analysis on the theoretical and practical implications these structures have on the lives of the Roma with a special focus on Roma women. *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* have tangible effects on modern day society and I will identify concrete examples where these notions have manifested themselves and affected Roma women and children.

2.2 Romani History

The Romani (plural Romanies or Roma), also known in other languages as '*Gypsy*' in English, '*Cingene*' in Turkish, '*Tsigane*' in French, '*Gitanos*' in Spanish, are often classified as one group and branded as living in other countries but not wanting to necessarily integrate. This negative perception and the several labels that are used to describe the Romani people offers insight into why the community are seen as having multiple identities. Roma scholar Ian Hancock, who is also a political activist and linguist, is well published and has analysed the Romani people through not only Romani linguistics but also through history, anthropology and genetics. Hancock claims that Romani people did not descend from the lower-caste Indians but rather from Indian prisoners-of-war and he points to the Indic words which are linked to military origin and to the Banjara oral legend (2000). Hancock has extensively published on the historical trajectory of the community and also analysed the various ways the Romani people are portrayed throughout history. According to Hancock, the group of people could best be known for their two identities "their own actual Romani identity and the one that is familiar

to most non-Romanies and which is reflected by those many other names" (Hancock, 2007, p.xvii). Romani is the politically correct term that is desired by most historians, but "the word 'Gypsy' continues to be used, and the transition to 'Roma(nies) is a slow one" (Hancock, 2007, p.xviii). Csepeli and Simon (2004) argue that while there is indeed a Roma nation it is not one homogenous group but rather highly diversified groups which adhere to multiple cultural and religious traditions. The complexity of terms and variety of adjectives used to describe the Romani culture, represents the difficulty in recounting the origin of the people. Although, many Roma communities prefer to be called Roma, Romany or Romani, there is a collective who believe that they, as a community, form a nation of multiple backgrounds. "Romani people see themselves belonging to a diverse nation of Romani people, who, although dispersed throughout the world, share similar historical, cultural, and linguistic ties which set them apart as a nation of people" (Smith, 1997, p.244). There are several non-Roma writers that are contributing to Roma Studies and a key theorist is Aidan McGarry, who self identifies as a political scientist with sociological leaning, his research focusses on political representation and participation of minority and marginalised communities. His writing has focused primarily on Roma across Central and Eastern Europe but also looks at identity, social movements and collective identity. With his 2014 publication *Romaphobia: The Last acceptable Racism in Europe* there was an exploration between identity, belonging and racism. Similarly, Roma scholars Andrej Mirga and Nicolae Gheorghe in the 1997 policy paper "The Roma in the Twenty-first Century" also contributed a vast amount of literature to the intense debate and contentious search to effectively respond to deeply rooted problems both within the Romani communities and majority populations. Researchers like McGarry (2014) and Mirga and Gheorghe (1997, p. 22) cautiously warn of the danger of representing the Roma as a stateless nation as it fuels the image of Roma as not constitutive of the dominant society and not full citizens of their States. As is highlighted, this is contested territory and the framing of the

community as a 'nationless people' or as an 'umbrella nation' carries with it a number of implications that can be further debated.

In the 1970s the International Romani Union (IRU) aimed to unite Roma across several national borders and hoped to foster solidarity. According to the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) the International Romani Union (IRU), is the oldest and most-established international representative body of Roma and was founded in 1977 as the successor organisation to the Comité International Rom (CIR), founded in 1971. The IRU has an informal consultative status with UNESCO. The IRU has been active and campaigning for a more just Europe to recognise the Roma as the largest ethnic minority in Europe and has defended their rights and advocated for their representation in several political, social and cultural platforms. However, since the IRU's existence there has been a debate if to anchor the Roma as an ethnic minority or national minority; both reflect more of a symbolic weight which reveals more about the socio-political contexts of the times. These divisions between cultures are not always self-regulated. Oftentimes, identity is affected by the information circulating outside the specific community, rather than what is solely in it. For example, sometimes a Roma is perceived by the non-Roma as inferior and this opinion exists because of the moulds established by the non-Roma. Sadly, these norms and modes of thinking still remain in place in several social, political and educational arenas. Many of the images of the Roma are a result of a much bigger structure, which could be analysed using Edward Said's concept of Orientalism[4]. Said's work highlights the assumptions made by various paradigms of thought, which use stereotypes to steer discourse in a certain direction. These models divide rather than describe or examine the issue, and this way of seeing has often been used to identify the Roma community, which is a

4 Orientalism- "As depicted in Said's Orientalism, the West created a dichotomy of the West versus the East, and attributed specific characteristics to each, including civilized versus barbaric, advanced versus backward, virtue versus vice, rational versus irrational, and knower versus known." (Askew, 131)

heterogeneous group of people. The next section offers a closer look at the multiple layers of Roma identity and how this leads to a fractured identity that is vulnerable to being manipulated and misconstrued by political leaders and formal institutions.

2.2.1 Roma Identity and Historical Perceptions

Historical accounts of the Roma have depicted them as a wandering people without a homeland. Acton and Klimova (2001) claim that Roma are a nation without a territory and dispersed not only throughout Europe but the world. These ideas of homeland or kin-state relationships are important to factor in as they influence the age-old stereotypes of nomadism that has been accepted as a marker of cultural identity for the Roma community. However, the Romani diaspora itself is the result of systematic racialization, for it is known that their nomadic status is not a cultural feature per se, but rather the result of fear and the need to flee from persecution and expulsion (Lucassen et al., 1998; Matras, 2002; Okely, 1983). Although Roma are traced back to India, many host countries view them as homeless beings who have migrated to their land. This story of the wandering people has aroused a curiosity within many scholars, activists, students, artists, and especially Europeans. The Roma have lived within the European Union for centuries. Roma migration flows and mobility within the EU boundaries have posed a series of challenges to particular states and to supranational institutions (Sordé, Serradell, Puigvert & Munté, 2014). This is important to highlight, as it will influence our discussion of *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* later in this chapter. The dynamics of a people, their culture and their relationship within political institutions are difficult to describe in one or two chapters. Jean- Pierre Liégeois' term *mosaic* lends itself to this discussion to depict the Roma and their unique history. Liégeois believes that if one wants to discuss the entire Roma population, culture, and its people, a series of books and anthologies needs to be written by a collective rather than by one person. I would agree and expand by adding that the Roma community from multiple grassroots communities must be active contributors to the series as

their voices are not only vital to include, but essential. The community has the capacity to decipher what is needed and can actively contribute to finding solutions to those complex social and political problems. I have discussed this in the methodology section which is underpinned by *Communicative Methodology*. The crux of this thesis is staking a claim that Roma women from the grassroots have the capacity to be active agents. The analysis of the data collection will further illustrate this point. Returning to Liégeois, indeed he is correct when he says the community is diverse and argues that the similarities and differences between the branches of the Roma community are endless.

The Roma community is in constant flux and although there seem to be many character traits that follow the Roma and their historical background, what makes them unique is that they are a people without a homeland. The fact that they are a landless community, who live within several countries, creates a mystic yet unsettled demeanour, which causes them to be perceived as a "homeless" people living off others. Liégeois' *mosaic* can define why they are a group of people with a complex history.

> The world's Gypsy populations form a mosaic of small diverse groups. Two essential considerations follow. First, a mosaic is a whole whose component features are linked to one another. The whole is structured by these links that run through it. The Gypsy populations can be considered as forming an organized whole even though its structure is not rigid, but ever-changing. Over and above the variety, a meaningful configuration still remains. Second, each component of the whole has its own special features, which make it appears, when viewed in isolation, quite different form every other component of the mosaic: its texture is special, and its substance may be too. No description of the parts, and the analysis of any particular part cannot be generalized as a whole. At the same time, the parts, while essential to the composition of the whole, acquire their importance and their raison d'etre only in the framework of the whole that holds them together. (Liégeois, 2005, pp.49-50)

The migration of the Roma from India to Spain resulted in centuries of persecution. This complex history polarized communities and created a tension between the Roma and non-Roma. The forced expulsions coupled with acts of slavery and cruel treatment, enabled the nomadic tendencies of the Roma nation. The culture, over the course of time, became sedentary

in some countries, yet in those communities were still denied their basic human rights. This mentality nourishes Said's foundation of *Latent Orientalism*[5]. By the non-Roma anchoring themselves as the norm and the Roma as the individual outside that model, reinforces what Said would argue is the institution of Orientalism. This mindset affects how non-Roma perceive Roma, and as a result influences Roma identity.

> Judith Okely argues that for the house-dwelling population [g]ypsies are seen as 'closer to nature' and 'wild and free'. Lloyd in a similar vein, has argued that 'travellers' occupy a profoundly symbolic role representing a lack of order, non-conformity and a freedom from the everyday rules of life which apply in the non-traveling world'. (Sandland, 1996, p.391)

Although the construction of identity seems to be independent from how other groups perceive them, as Sandland highlights, the impressions of the non-Roma towards the Roma affects how discourse and identity are formed. The construction of identity is not always voluntary, although there are active and flexible components that go into the formation of that identity. The identity of a Roma is vital to understanding who they are as a people historically, as well as within a contemporary context.

In modern day Europe, the Eurobarometer on Discrimination and Social Inequalities (European Commission, 2012) showed that ethnicity has been a key factor in widespread discrimination within the EU. The Roma are autonomous groups who have a history of experiencing hostility, endured centuries of expulsion and forced movement, while maintaining a high degree of economic adaptability. The identity of the Roma is difficult to describe because they are a group of diverse communities with different needs and have a range of capabilities, living in a wide variety of different geographical, social, political and cultural

5 Latent Orientalism - is the unconscious, untouchable certainty about what the Orient is. Its basic content is static and unanimous. The Orient is seen as a separate, eccentric, backward, silently different, sensual, and passive. It has a tendency towards despotism and away from progress. It displays feminine penetrability and supine malleability. Its progress and value are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, the West, so it is always the Other, the conquerable, and the inferior.
(online, http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html)

environments. Throughout history, there has been a gross simplification of their rather complex system. The Roma collective is filled with subgroups and there are several elements that feed into the identity of the Roma, the collective visions of a shared origin and traditions which may reflect geographical locations. There may be a shared memory but the Roma past is diverse, debated and discussed in a number of arenas.

The perception of Roma in all of Europe has been a negative one. Throughout history Roma have been labelled as vagabonds and grouped with the outcasts of society. "For most of the five and half centuries that Gypsies have been in Europe, they have been lumped together with vagabonds and vagrants, in laws and commentaries alike" (Liégeois, 2005, p.102). They have primarily been viewed as a threat to society because of the unique components that make up the Roma mosaic. These distinctive elements have kept Roma communities on the outskirts of society. Beginning in the sixteenth century up until the eighteenth century, those threats were deeply embedded in the European mentality.

> They continued to be viewed as criminals simply because of their position in society and, on top of that the special racial prejudices remained, together with religious hostility towards what was seen as their heathenish practices and sorcery. More generally they suffered from the tide of repression that was rising everywhere against vagabondage and the 'sturdy beggar'. The authorities could not come to terms with rootless and master less men, with no fixed domicile and useless as workforce: in their eyes, that status was in itself an aberration, at odds with the established order, and had to be put right by coercion and pressure of the gyves. (Fraser, 2005, p.129)

Those fears developed from the lack of information that existed on the Roma, as well as the perceptions that have followed them for centuries. Historically, most groups or communities received their knowledge of the Roma from fictional literature and media rather than the Roma themselves. This encouraged an exaggerated idea of who the Roma were which left a negative impression on the non-Roma community. These images and opinions were so deeply entrenched that people failed to see the Roma for who they were. The superficial ideas that circulated about the Roma and the preconceived notions that the non-Roma had of them,

affected the way future generations treated the community. Those opinions have not been positive and have reinforced a negative image that continues to exist today and perpetuates the racism and hatred that the community receives in twenty-first century Europe. Nomadic tendencies, along, with work exchanges, and political regulations feed this negative impression. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have been commonly constructed as suspicious, socio-culturally inferior, disordered, chaotic and even dangerous because of their customary mobilities (e.g. Powell, 2008; Shubin, 2010; Vanderbeck, 2005). Multitudinous representations of the Roma which sees them as nomads, migrants, underclass, poor, backwards, marginal, among many other derogatory names, continues and encourages the separation between Roma and non-Roma and makes invisible boundaries which are maintained and sustained in several ways.

The negative representations of Roma are more than a historical artefact and are prevalent in modern day society. McGarry (2014) highlights that there is a role that academics play with developing and/or sustaining the image and ideas of who the Roma are and must take care not to essentialise or sensationalise the community. He also suggests that the Roma have a fluid identity and that they do not have 'formal' representation in terms of voice and presence in public life which suggests that they are unable to challenge dominant understandings and stereotypes held by the majority. The inability to object and publicly reject the erroneous images that exist does not allow the Roma to easily reclaim how their identities are defined. Thus, the Roma mosaic exists but as a fractured identity where people do not see the wholeness of the community. While this has certainly started to change with initiatives like the International Romani Union[6], the European Roma Right Centre[7], the Decade for Roma Inclusion, among several other examples that could be listed, there is still much work to be

6 IRU: https://iromaniunion.org/index.php/en/

7 ERRC: http://www.errc.org/

done. Further into this writing these institutions will be described and I will specify the roles they play within the larger Roma Movement.

These negative representations are not only markers that reflect a past that is grounded in racist and discriminative realities but these relics remain and circulate in political, social and academic discourses. This is extremely dangerous as the implications reinforce that the Roma are different and justifies what Ljujic, Vedder and Dekker (2012) identify as the integrated threat theory[8], which suggests that social psychological mechanisms underlying outgroup prejudice involve perceived threat and its antecedents. In the results section I will offer more positive examples and solutions that have been carried out which highlight the counter-narratives that are being constructed by the Roma community members themselves in partnership with academic, NGOs and political institutions. Yet, it is important to weave into this section that identity is fluid and the potential fear that Roma *pose* fits into maintaining the marginalisation that is sustained by racist agendas.

2.3 Anti-Gypsyism and Romaphobia

Race, ethnicity and nationality are social constructs that serve several agendas and are terms that are researched and used in a variety of ways. Clark, Anderson, Clark and Williams define racism as "the beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation" (1999, p.805). Racism exists at multiple levels, including interpersonal, environmental, institutional and cultural (Harrell 2000; Jones 1997, 2000; Krieger 1999). There are macro and micro ways that racism manifests itself and it can play out in overt or covert fashions. Ramón Flecha (1999) distinguishes between two types of racism: *modern racism* and *postmodern racism*. The latter suggests that ethnicities and races are neither inferior nor

8 Integrated threat theory- brings together group conflict theory (Sherif, 1966) and Symbolic Racism theory (Kinder & Sear, 1981), which was later unified by Stefan & Stefan (1996). This excerpt is pulled from Ljujic et al. 2012 article which used integrated threat theory to examine Serbian adolescents' attitudes towards the Roma.

superior; they are merely different. *Postmodern racism* is a lens through which we can understand the social segregation of the Roma community. Oftentimes the effects of racism lead to the marginalisation of ethnic minorities which reflects the social actors and infrastructures that are in place. While public institutions aim to ensure the social integration of individuals in accordance with what are acceptable societal values (Dinca and Luches, 2018) when racialized agendas negatively frame the politics and the manner which laws are made and implemented, social exclusion becomes a reality for the most vulnerable. McGarry suggests that "marginalization is a by-product of state-making and nation-building" (2017, p.5). Brondolo and colleagues identify that:

> [S]ocial exclusion includes a variety of different interactions in which individuals are excluded from social interactions, rejected, or ignored because of their ethnicity or race. Stigmatization can include both verbal and non-verbal behaviour directed at the targeted individual that communicates a message that demeans the targeted person. (2012, p.3)

Claire & Denis suggest that "while past scholarship emphasized overtly racist attitudes and policies, contemporary sociology considers racism as individual- and group-level processes and structures that are implicated in the reproduction of racial inequality in diffuse and often subtle ways" (2015, p.1). Consequently, the minority groups being affected by racism have to develop coping strategies and establish a number of racism-related survival responses which permit them to respond to the social and political situation which often leads to exclusion. The Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority, is a community that has found several coping strategies to effectively survive the covert and overt racism.

Such levels of social exclusion and marginalisation breed divisions between the Roma and non-Roma. This separation has become a marker of identity that prohibits inclusion of the Roma and as Gheorghe (1997) suggests that "Roma occupy an inferior social position as an excluded minority group due to the negative representations of Roma identity especially in Eastern Europe, where words like Tzigan, Zingaro, Ziguener always carried a stigma of

inferiority" (p.158). Racism and ethnic discrimination can encompass a wide range of acts including social exclusion, workplace discrimination, stigmatization, and physical threat and harassment (Brondolo et al. 2005a; Contrada et al. 2001). Covert and overt racism exists within the European Union and anti-Roma attitudes affect the manner which laws are made, interpreted and carried out.

Blatant and latent racism has not only affected social and political arenas but academic ones as well. Social actors and social forces have affected the way that researchers discuss Roma and anti-Roma sentiments. Previously *Anti-Gypsyism* was commonly used as a generic term for a broad set of negative feelings, stereotypes and discriminatory practices against the Roma (Hancock, 1987; Petrova 2003). However, there is a need to find a better definition which does not reflect the pejorative meaning of the word "Gypsy". To mark this shift in discourse McGarry (2017) offers the term *Romaphobia* which is hatred or fear of those individuals perceived as being Roma, Gypsy, Traveller and involves the negative ascription of group identity and can result in marginalization, persecution and violence. *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* manifests in racism and both notions are grounded in fear which is no different than Islamophobia and anti-Semitic behaviours. Within the European Union it is an accepted norm to denigrate Roma. Roma are often vilified and while there have been legally sanctioned forms of discrimination against Roma which have receded, there is still a massive inequality and segregation taking place. Member States' policies and the politicians and systems in place rarely challenge *Romaphobia* which is directly linked to the way nationalism is used within political and social spheres. For this writing, I will use Anderson's (1983) definition of Nationalism as a type of in-group identification that is primarily centered on affiliation with a nation, which may reflect a strong attachment to or a desire for a nation-state. Romaphobic statements are often part of the political discourse and such ideas are entrenched in a number of mainstream publicly consumed discourses. Laws are man-made and when at the roots lie

Anti-Gypsy and Romaphobic beliefs, the repercussions are dangerous leading to fear, which breeds hate. This hate is fuelled by political parties that push racialised agendas that frame the Roma as the perennial outsider community.

2.3.1 Fractured Identities within Populist and Nationalist agendas

Roma identity is not homogenous yet Anti-Gypsy and Romaphobic rhetoric allows politicians and institutions that are built on racist agendas to benefit from fixing the community's identity and packaging them as one whole. Bundling a community and branding and criminalising that identity prohibits the diversity within the community to be recognised and makes the Roma vulnerable to this overt racism. "Societal representation of Roma maintains a relationship which is based on control, oppression and exclusion and maintains symbolic and physical boundaries between Roma and the majority" (McGarry, 2017, p.761). Within the community there is a fluidity that is not regularly recognized by the society. Angéla Kóczé, (2009) brings to our attention that intersectionality of marginalisation and the Romani community can help us better understand that the Roma often exists within a liminal space. Her astute observation reminds us that the Roma identity is fluid and in constant flux. Yet mainstream media and politicians maintain stereotypes and the racialised definitions which "fix" the identity of the Roma, so that they can maintain certain discourses. Sordé, Serradell, Puigvert and Munté (2013) look closely into defining racialised discourses on Romani immigrant women stating that the first is ethnocentric which relies on the idea that Romani culture is less advanced or even underdeveloped. The second discourse is derived from relativism which denotes that Roma poverty and their lack of access to education opportunities are simply manifestations of their cultural difference. Such discourses permeate mainstream notions of the Roma and these uncontested discourses become accepted truths which are extremely dangerous as they perpetuate the cycles of violence that are important to maintaining the insider/outsider dichotomy. *Romaphobia* places an emphasis on how non-Roma construct

Roma as a particular identity group, distinct from the majority (McGarry, 2017) and Barany (2001) suggests that the Roma are the 'quintessential strangers' in Europe. Mayall (2004) writes that the Roma community has self-ascribed and determined who they are and who they are not, while non-Roma with racialised agendas prefer to maintain the negative stereotypes of the community which allow for the grouping of the community, as outsiders. The argument that the Roma community are outsiders and prefer to live isolated and removed from society is age old and is currently being used to push Nationalist and populist politics.

Populism has brought out extreme views and Grabbe and Groot (2014, p.34) write that "the core logic of populist politics, mistrust for elites, cynicism about political institutions and demands for the exclusion of new comers, is spreading." There is an erosion of traditions that represents the European Union which has led to many Right-wing populists not only running but winning office within the EU. Examples of those parties include the National Rally in France, the League in Italy and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands. The 2014 elections in Europe highlight this shift in thinking and the majority of populations' voting behaviour reflects that indeed there is a desire to elect a party they can "identify" with. In addition to the racist rhetoric that motivates populist voters, the global economy plays a key role in the current economic crisis that the EU finds itself in. However, rather than politicians directly making the link between failing infrastructures and laws, populists blame and suggest that the suffering economy is a result of minority groups, migration and elite.

> Xenophobic populists have tapped into these fears and resentments. They do not offer policy solutions or clear options, but they channel frustration and hopelessness into hostility towards both elites and minorities. It is much easier to pin the blame on politicians and those on the margins of society- especially Roma, migrants and Muslims- than the faceless forces of the global economy. (Grabbe & Groot, 2014 p. 37)

As the Roma are the largest ethnic minority within Europe and categorised by populist politicians as a threat to their country, the community becomes shock absorbers for failing policies that are not only created, but reinforced by ill-informed politicians.

Nationalism and radical right populist parties are carefully crafting Roma identity and packaging it to fit their agendas. They define who the Roma are and are relying on age-old racist stereotypes. Through fixing Roma identity as being a community that doesn't want to integrate and prefers to be on the outskirts of mainstream society, who adhere to different value systems than those of the majority, allows for covert and overt racism to exist. This racism affects the social, cultural and political realities of the Roma community. For the remaining part of this chapter I will go into more detail of how this racialised discourse manifests itself in the European Union, giving concrete examples of the cases where justice was ignored and human rights were exploited. This framing of the current reality of the majority of the Roma population will highlight that Roma are vulnerable, the manner these fractured identities lead to isolation and marginalisation, and how major European institutions are attempting to challenge and provide solutions.

Cultural diversity can lead to ethno-cultural polarisation which can be seen as a threat, thus producing a backlash from the dominant majority. Through this process nationalism serves as a framework to help citizens feel "safer" and in control of their environments. Ljujic, Vedder and Dekker (2012) argue that "threat" or feelings of being threatened (Brewer, 1999) is mediated between Nationalism and *Romaphobia*. Nationalism is an antecedent of a perceived threat of the Roma community to mainstream majority and since Roma are politically weak (Sigona, 2005), they are unable to defend themselves against Nationalist agendas that vilify them and make blanket statements framing the community as beggars, thieves and unsociable people. Nationalism feeds into Romaphobic and racially charged agendas and the negative ascriptions of the individual, are then attributed to the group because of the groundwork that has already been laid by certain racist institutions. This established and accepted relationship which vilifies a group and is underpinned by racist beliefs slides into Nationalist rhetoric that EU countries are adopting. These feelings of threat by nationals are likely to be triggered by

the "visibility" of the Roma (Ljujic, Vedder and Dekker, 2012). Packaging them as a homogenous group makes it easier to hate and therefore ignore and/or violate their human rights. And the historical realities that we outlined at the beginning of this chapter are clearly an integral component which effects the modern representations. The Roma's fractured identities coupled with the polarisation of the community make them an extremely vulnerable ethnic group which are subject to exclusion and marginalisation.

2.4 Current State of the Roma Situation

2.4.1 FRA Roma Report and snapshots into Roma realities

The FRA 2018 report examines the latest phenomenon of *Anti-Gypsyism* and its effects on Roma inclusion efforts. In 2011, the European Council endorsed the European Commission's proposal for an EU framework for National Integration strategies up to 2020. The hope was that the proposal would not only require at national level a call for equal access of human rights but that this would be implemented at local and regional levels as well. The 2018 FRA report has identified key findings and provides opinions that are based on robust evidence collected. It was outlined that discrimination, harassment and hate crimes are key factors of exclusion.

> The data indicate that the most heinous forms of anti- Gypsyism, hate-motivated crime and harassment, continue to hamper Roma inclusion. The results of the EU-MIDIS II survey, conducted in 2016, are worrying. They show that, despite several years of inclusion efforts, on average, one out of three Roma surveyed had experienced some form of harassment – either offensive or threatening comments in person, threats of violence in person, offensive gestures or inappropriate staring, offensive or threatening e-mails or text messages, or offensive comments about them online. (FRA 2018, p.11)

The FRA 2018 report lays a foundation for understanding *Anti-Gypsyism* in its current state within several EU Member States. It clearly identifies the effects of *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* and focusses on key areas such as education, employment and living standards as well as health and housing. Racism and xenophobia are key drivers of *Anti-Gypsyism* and mistrust and a fear of the "other" is also an important element to consider. *Anti-Gypsyism*

manifests itself in a number of ways and is played out through discrimination, hate crimes, and harassment which can lead to greater marginalisation and exclusion. Dinca and Luches (2018) argue that the universal principle of social intervention is to make society accessible to any person regardless of the individual's characteristics and abilities. They claim that "through the institutions, the State has at its disposal the means and resources to improve social inclusion" (2018, p.2). These historical disadvantages are still prevalent in modern day Western society and the social realities that the Roma find themselves in are used to reinforce the stereotypes that are often ingrained in mainstream society. This results in a form of resentment by the non-Roma towards the Roma which justifies the cyclical nature of *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia.*

A symptom of *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* is poverty. The FRA found that poverty is both an outcome and a driver of exclusion in education, employment, health and housing. A target of the EU2020 "Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" is to lift 20 million people out of the vulnerable position of poverty "addressing poverty among Roma would be an important contribution to meeting this target. The data analysed in this report shows that the EU Member States are still far from coming even close to that target with respect to their Roma citizens" (2018, p.12). While these figures are concerning and helps contextualise the serious violations of the rights of Roma, especially in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as these have been the focus of the European community in the past five-to-six years (Mihalache, n.d). Mihalache suggests that Central and Eastern European Members States are vulnerable and these Member States are a recent focus of the European Union. The FRA (2009) reported that with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union a trend emerged of underprivileged migrants, many of these of Roma origin, initiated mobility to wealthier parts of the EU in the hope of finding refuge from discriminatory and exclusionary practices in their home countries. And while the Member States are by law required to guarantee equal treatment to those residing in their territories, these rights have been challenged

which has led to vulnerable groups of Roma within EU countries suffering and becoming socially excluded. Jack Greenberg (2010) reminds us that many Roma live in Roma neighbourhoods in town and cities along the edges of somewhat 'gypsified' enormous estates. "Roma shantytown 'neighbourhoods' are gradually increasing in size. All cities and towns of any size in Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have at least one" (2010, p. 932).

Marginalisation is endemic of the failing systems in the Member States. Politicians and individuals in positions of power that are responsible for the implementation of the laws and in maintaining that human rights are not violated, are not following through, thus leading to a negative reality. Many factors contribute to this condition, among the key points are lack of education, few employment opportunities and racism. In several European Union countries, *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* are palpable and hindering that the Roma community be active participants in their societies. There are a host of underlying factors that must be considered within the multiplicity of the several European countries to better understand how and why *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* permeate society. What will follow will be snapshots into specific situations and social realities within five European Union Member States.

The 2006 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study concluded: "The Roma more than anyone else lost out in the transition to the market economy in the countries of Central and South Eastern Europe[9]". Abdikeeva and Covaci (2017) found that Roma health is worse than health of the majority of populations or other ethnic minorities groups. While their focus was on Macedonia they claim that the 'situation is similar in many other European countries where Roma have faced systemic exclusion and poor health conditions' (2017, p.102). In Bulgaria, Racheva (2018) reminds us that according to official data from the Ministry of Education (MES) 2004 almost 15,000 children left school, nearly all of them being

9 See United Nations Dev. Programme, supra note 16, at 25-26.

Roma. Tijkidjiev et al, (2009) also suggest that a similar situation exists within other European Member States, with high numbers of Roma children dropping out in Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. In Serbia, the country took the Decade Presidency in 2008 which allowed them to implement the National Action Plan for Roma inclusion. As an aim, the Plan stated that it hoped for the eradication of discriminative education and other racially motivated crimes. Within the Czech Republic "a survey conducted annually in the Czech Republic on the Czech public's attitudes towards national minorities in the country in 2017 found that 76% of the population older than 15 years old "dislikes" or "strongly dislikes" Roma. Unlike in Slovakia, the survey showed a slight improvement in attitudes towards Roma between 2013 and 2017" (FRA, 2018, p.18). In Greece, the Roma are spread throughout the country and the "community faces persistent inequalities in all aspects of life, including access to education of Roma children, the right to housing and to other basic social goods, let alone the excessive exercise of police violence" (CAHROM, 2015, p. 7). As is clearly seen with these brief descriptions of the current situation in several EU countries, there is a reality that is recognisably disenfranchising the Roma community. This is not a passing trend but a tendency which plays out in modern day society in a variety of ways.

A key objective for the Council of Europe (CoE) has been to help contribute to the full inclusion of Roma and Travellers in their local communities. The CoE has developed the 'Strasbourg Declaration on Roma 2016-2019' and through its thematic Action Plan has three main objectives: i) to tackle anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes more effectively; ii) to demonstrate innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable; iii) to promote innovative models for local-level solutions. Within that Plan there is a focus on the most vulnerable which the CoE identifies as Roma women and girls, and aims to empower Roma and Traveller women. While *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* have a place in affecting the social realities of the entire Roma community, the Plan outlined that Roma

women need to be a key target of their future work. With this in mind, we will look specifically at the social realities of Roma women and children in Europe.

2.4.2 Roma Women within social and political spaces

Populism and nationalism have not only impacted the Roma but has isolated Roma women and pushed them further into social exclusion and isolation. Roma women and girls have the potentiality to experience multiple discrimination and these violations of the rights of Romani women have remained unaddressed for a long time (Mihalache, n.d). The CoE's 'Gender Equality Action' sat within the framework of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 and through it held a number of events and produced several reports and White Papers that were focused on gender equality. The CoE's International Roma Women's Review Conferences and the CAHROM[10] thematic report on empowering Roma women and gender mainstreaming in national Roma integration strategies, set the groundwork for Roma women's issues to be considered within CoE platforms.

Political European Institutions like the European Union, CoE and CAHROM have as a focus the achievement of gender equality and invest in the protection of human rights of all humans. Recently there has been more focus placed on ensuring that Roma women and children are respected and that their voices are included in the laws that govern democratic societies. To this extent a number of organisations, like the CoE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

10 The Ad Hoc Committee of Expert on Roma Issues (CAHROM), Advisory Council on Youth, and their respective secretariats has been established and maintained on issues related to Roma, young Roma people and the Roma Youth Action Plan. The Committee has taken youth matters as transversal matter into their work programme and they would be continuously looking at issues of young Roma people within the committee's activities and discussions. https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/cahrom

(ODIHR)[11], CAHROM, International Roma Women's Network (IRWN)[12] and the European Union have all vowed to create dedicated committees and units that have a gender aspect to their work. These institutions are not meant to serve as an exhaustive list of organisations and platforms that are considering Roma women and streamlining gender equality, but rather are important to our conversation in framing the political landscape that directly feeds into our discussion within this chapter. Also, when I mention Roma women I will use the definition as used by the Council of Europe[13] to help frame the discussion of Roma women within the political sphere and how this directly affects the social realities of the Roma women. The ODIHR cooperates with the gender section of the OSCE's special representative for human trafficking. In addition to the Council of Europe for Gender Equality 2018-2023 promotes the empowerment of Roma and Traveller women in all spheres, covering a range of topics directly related to the community.

Romani women and girls are often excluded from consultation and decision-making processes on legislation, policies and programmes, in particular those that are directly linked to their own lives. Gender mainstreaming and Roma women and girls' empowerment are key to achieving gender equality while also strengthening the societies which they live in.

11 Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODIHR) assists the OSCE participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments, including commitments related to human rights, non-discrimination, democratization and rule of law.
https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/office-for-democratic-institutions-and-human-rights-of-the-organization-for-security-and-cooperation-in-europe-osce/odihr-

12 IRWN in March 2003, Roma women activists from 18 European countries launched the International Roma Women's Network (IRWN) to lobby governments for better living conditions and to fight for Roma women's rights. Increasing the visibility of and respect for Roma women's culture is an additional aim. The network, which includes Roma, Sinti, Gypsies, and Travellers from West, Central, and Eastern Europe, seeks not to represent all of Europe's Roma women, but only those who wish to join.
http://www.comminit.com/health_rights_media/content/international-roma-womens-network-irwn-europe

13 Romani women is a generic term used to cover all diverse groups of women that associate with the plight of Romani women, such as women belonging to Sinti, Manush, Kale, Dom, Lom, Gypsies, Travellers, Yenish, Beash, Ashkali, Egyptians, and other related groups.

However, this is often overlooked as policies focus on reacting to current inequalities and discrimination rather than on a preventative work. I will delve into this discussion later on in the Results section, but for now it is relevant as it offers insight into some of the progress that has been made within the European Union. Policies and practice are also at odds as they often don't go hand-in-hand. There needs to be a three-way conversation between policy making, implementation and prevention. The Decade for Roma Inclusion has supported Roma women and girls but the policies and designs have viewed them as a group that is subservient or living within restrictive environments. There is a shift which shows that indeed Roma women have been and are active agents of change, where policy-makers, and thinktanks need to value this position so that laws can reflect this reality and their voices. One example is the *Phenjalipe* Informal Platform which stands for "Sisterhood". Phenjalipe was born out of the 2013 Conference in Helsinki "The Strategy for the Advancement of Romani Women and Girls (2014-2020)" which was a response to the needs expressed by Romani women activists and civil society, human rights institutions and professionals working on gender equality and Romani women's issues, governments and policy makers. The present strategy is the result of consultations with members of the Phenjalipe Informal Platform, civil society, governments and international organisations, with a view to preparing a reference document on the situation of Romani women and girls at European and international level for all relevant stakeholders working on Roma, gender equality, social inclusion and human rights protection. Phenjalipe recognises "the multiple discrimination that Roma women face stating that Romani women across Europe face the additional burden of racism as well as gender discrimination, which push them to the margins of society" (Council of Europe Strategy on the advancement of Romani Women and Girls, (n.d., p.1). The strategy also suggests that there is a positive ascending trend in the gender relations between Romani women and men yet there is a long way to go for Roma women to feel and be autonomous. This point will be further analysed in

the Results section when the Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma women's congresses and activities are discussed.

2.4.3 Social Realities of the Roma Women

The Roma women's realities and the fractured identity that has been referenced earlier in this chapter are apparent in a series of examples that I will outline in the section that follows. Roma women suffer a series of discriminatory practices at meta levels but these are also played out in meso and micro levels. The resolution of the European Parliament on the situation of Roma women on the 1st of June 2006 brought attention to the multiple levels of discrimination experienced by Roma women (Sobotka & Vermeersch, 2012). The community is vulnerable to the ignorance of the majority and are forced to find solutions to rectify the number of injustices that they encounter. Some of these injustices are challenged through solidarity and working closely with academic investigators, a topic I will discuss in Chapter Four when looking closely at the Roma women's movement, and others rely on the advocacy groups that have been established like the ERRC and several of the CoE's programmes.

The CoE organized a series of Conferences of Romani Women in several European metropoles. These conferences were important and reflected that institutions are understanding the importance of gender mainstreaming. These events also included leading NGO representatives as well as other key people from the Roma women's activist and intellectual circles. The series of conferences aim to raise awareness about serious obstacles that Roma and Traveller women face. They are vital events and integral to reshaping the landscape. However, it is important to note that these conferences differed from the two that have been organised by the Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (DKM) which took place in 2010 and in 2018, as the pair were built on Roma women from a grassroots level. In the DKM congresses the Roma women from grassroots took the focus and shaped the content, format and mobilised Roma women from various corners of Europe. This will later be discussed in

Chapter Five when the DKM's methodology and impact is analysed in the Results section. Within this macro-European context, the participants from the 2013 4th International Conference held in Helsinki, Finland expressed an overall concern that Romani women are generally excluded from spaces outlining the following: social, economic and political life because of discrimination and their poor level of education or relevant training, gender stereotypes and traditional roles, lack of security of tenure, segregation in housing and education and lack of power resources. They also pointed to the extreme poverty and social exclusion experienced by Romani women and girls across European countries. Their experience is substantively different to that of Romani men and non-Romani women. They face the additional burden or racism as well as gender discrimination, which push Romani women to the margins of society. In the 2019 conference, again held in Espoo, Finland in March 2019, the conference had a focus on access to justice and rights for Roma and Traveller and to assess the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019). Among the achievement it is recommended that CM/Rec (2017)10[14] suggests that Member States improve access to justice for Roma and Travellers throughout Europe.

Romani women face intersectional discrimination that affects several aspects of the Roma women's community and population. As there are several broader efforts in place outlined by the above-mentioned institutes there are also specific situations where Roma women's rights have been violated. Albert and Szilvasi (2017) reviewed domestic and international activism which focused on justice for Romani and other women harmed by coercive, forced, and involuntary sterilisation in the former Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic. They outline that human rights have been infringed upon in the name of public health, which have left human rights advocates to challenge these violations on the female

[14] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=090000168075f2aa

body. As these cases have increased in number in the last years, one result of that advocacy is the global expansion and strengthening of informed consent policy. The principle of informed consent in medicine was introduced by the 1947 Nuremberg Code and has been referenced since then, including the 2005 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights and the 2011 International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) Guidelines[15]. This notion of informed choice and consent are technically to have become mandatory and irreplaceable of contraceptive sterilisation, but what research has outlined is that this is not the case.

> Such violations have included the denial of health services, including for pregnant women; provision of substandard care; negligent treatment; requirement of illegal payments for services that are free; extortion of bribes; confiscation of identity documents and false imprisonment for failure to pay hospital fees; verbal and physical assaults; violations of specific patients' rights (for example, to medical information and informed consent); and racial discrimination (Abdikeeva & Covaci, p.102).

There has been a history of marginalised women and children being subjected to forced sterilisation. This practice has taken place throughout the world and is a sad reality in Europe. Discrimination and racism is at the core of the practice and the systemic failings that leave vulnerable women at the mercy of the State and denies them their basic human rights. Women who have been subjected to forced or coerced sterilisations have approached courts in their countries and have argued that it is their right to have a family and to receive care which is free from discrimination. Patel (2017) claims that the courts misunderstanding of the nature of forced and coerced sterilisation as targeting women specifically because they are from population groups deemed unworthy of procreation, will thus result in a failure to eradicate the practice. This lack of comprehension leaves some ethnic minorities, like the Roma, at a disadvantage as they are unable to challenge cases where sterilisation has taken place. The

15 UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. 2005 http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/bioethics/bioethics-and-human-rights/ Available at FIGO, Guidelines for Female Contraceptive Sterilisation. 2011

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) guarantees women the right to adequate services for maternal health and protects a woman's right to reproductive choice under article 16. CEDAW defines discrimination against women under Article 1 as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (CEDAW report, online, n.d., p.2). CEDAW was instrumental in supporting a Roma woman who was coerced into sterilisation in which a Hungarian doctor violated her rights. The case *AS v Hungary*[16] found that the Roma woman was not informed and was unable to give full consent at the time of treatment. The doctor misused his privilege and position of power and unlawfully carried out the act.

> AS was rushed to the hospital while pregnant with heavy bleeding. At the hospital, the doctor found that AS would need a caesarian section to remove her baby as the baby was dead. She signed a consent form while on the operating table for her caesarian section and for sterilization. The consent for the sterilization was handwritten by the doctor. The CEDAW Committee found that the coerced sterilization violated AS's right to health, among other rights. In particular, the CEDAW Committee found that AS had a right to 'specific information on sterilization and alternative procedures for family planning in order to guard against such an intervention being carried out without her having made a fully informed choice.' (Patel, 2017, p 4)

There are several other examples where Roma women have been targeted simply for their ethnic identity. In another case *VC v Slovakia*[17] which was tried with the support of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) a judge publicly recognised that the coerce sterilisation carried out against the Roma woman was not an isolated incident but rather a systemic problem that needed more attention.

16 AS v Hungary more info on the case can be found here: Communication No. 4/2004.CEDAW/C/36/D/4/2004. 2006. Available at: https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/CEDAW_Committee_Decision_0.pdf.

17 VC v Slovakia. No. 18968/07. 2011.

> The fact that there are other cases of this kind pending before the Court reinforces my personal conviction that the sterilizations performed on Roma women were not of an accidental nature, but relics of a long-standing attitude towards the Roma minority in Slovakia. To my mind, the applicant was "marked out" and observed as a patient who had to be sterilized just because of her origin, since it was obvious that there were no medically relevant reasons for sterilizing her." Judge Ljiljana Mijovic (Patel, 2017, p.8)

Coerced and forced sterilisation is a discriminatory practice which is often justified by the State and those carrying out the practice as a service to the public. This mentality stems from the negative perceptions that follow Roma women which sees them as less than ideal members of society to procreate. The States and the courts are obliged to further investigate such cases but their failing to do so reflects their unwillingness to engage and face the underpinning issues. Once a court finds that the sterilisation is due to discriminatory practices, it can change the issue from one of a few bad incidents to one requiring structural reform (Patel, 2017). Yet this structural reform is slow and requires a series of legal and social frameworks to unite to ratify this practice.

Another social reality affecting Romani women is the phenomenon of human trafficking within Europe and abroad. The Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings based on thirteen country evaluation reports which was published November 2012 by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) identified key areas which need to be considered. Among them were the need to raise awareness and understanding of the Roma community and to also make the Roma aware of their rights so they are better placed to defend and demand protection from exploitation. Preventative measures were also outlined but one of the key findings that the ERRC and PiN (2011) research confirmed is that Roma are trafficked for various purposes, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, organ trafficking, illegal adoption and begging. Romani women and children are the most affected and represented regardless of the purpose

of trafficking[18]. While I am not suggesting that trafficking only affects Roma women and children, as it also includes Roma men and non-Roma, trafficking is not linked solely to sexual exploitation but also includes labour, debt bondage and child marriages.

> The vulnerability factors identified in this study are closely linked to those commonly as- associated with non-Romani trafficked persons. In other words, there is no unique "Roma vulnerability factor," and no indication that trafficking is a "cultural practice" of Roma. The research reveals that Roma are highly vulnerable to trafficking due to structural forms of ethnic and gender discrimination, poverty and social exclusion which result in low educational achievement, high levels of unemployment, usury, growing up in state care, domestic violence affecting predominantly women and children and substance abuse. (ERRC and PiN, 2011, p.12)

While trafficking can in theory affect anyone, there are certain points that can lead to an individual or a group of people finding themselves in a vulnerable situation. Among some of the push factors identified, those listed include low educational levels and poverty and a denial of basic human rights, and these problems are prevalent in many Romani communities across Europe. Gender and ethnic discrimination were also found to be important vulnerability factors.

Ramón Flecha and the INCLUD-ED Consortium (2015) pinpoint that many children in Europe are suffering from school failure and early school leaving which subsequently, places them at risk of being excluded from areas such as employment, health, housing, and political participation. Within the educational arena Roma exclusion occurs as early as preschool and gets progressively worse with age. Depending on the European country, there can be varying degrees of exclusion and segregation. These topics have been closely studied by Marushiakova and Popov (2013), the Brudila Callí Project (2000–2003), the Fundamental Rights Agency (2011), INCLUD-ED Project (2006-2011) among many others. Sordé (2006) looked closely at Roma women and girls within educational environments and found that in Catalonia, Spain more than 80% of the Roma youth were early school leavers and when the gender breakdown

18 ERRC and PiN, *Breaking the Silence. Trafficking in Romani Communities*, March 2011. Report available at: http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/breaking-the-silence-19-march-2011.pdf

was analysed it highlighted that Roma girls were more recurrent. The Roma Education Fund (REF) has been monitoring Roma children's realities within several European Member States since its inception in 2005. REF was created in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005 and has as a mission to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. Key findings from the monitor reports suggest that Segregated "Roma schools" located in or near the segregated Roma neighbourhoods are the largest system of segregated schooling of Roma children. This is a common practice which leads to their greater exclusion later in life. The social reality that young Roma children, in particular Roma girls receive at a young age, gives shape to negative feedback loops which are built on racist ideologies. This point will be further expanded in Chapter 3 when the discussion on *Dialogic Roma Feminism* is expanded on.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The aforementioned cases offer concrete examples where Romani people have been disenfranchised in Europe. In light of these snapshots into historical and current European discourse what becomes evident is that the Roma community and in particular, Roma women and children, have been placed in a position of being subordinate to dominant culture. Flecha (1999) has argued that postmodern racism is deeply embedded in society. Talpaş (2015) considered that Romani women have been invisible in the public life suggesting that this leaves Roma women susceptible to romanticised and racist images and portrayals of the community to be passed on over time. The collective consciousness has taken these false misrepresentations as truths and have fed into the fractured identity that is currently palpable within the European Union. The Roma community is a heterogenous community that is rarely recognised for its diversity. It is grouped and criminalised and this clustering results in a fractured identity. To remedy and eradicate this racialised compartmentalisation that politicians and social actors use to push their agendas, what is needed are counter-narratives and positive

examples which are coming from the community. These positive references can be found within the Roma community and exist in several European Member States. A closer look at what this Romani women's feminism is and how it has evolved is important to situate within the majority's consciousness. This will allow the 'wholeness' of the Roma women's community, returning to Liégeois' term of the *Mosaic,* to be accurately reflected within several social, cultural and political spaces. *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia* are symptoms of the fractured identity that has been created by those in power and the relativist structures. Foucault (1978a) argues that modern European States and invasive population control policies have been interlinked since the eighteenth century. Albert and Szilvasi (2017) have used Foucault's theory of "bio power" to underpin their research that looks at sterilisation among the Romani community. Foucault's work on "disciplinary power" argues that the State organises human multiplicities in a productive manner so that they fit the State's objectives. The human body is an object of "disciplinary power" and Foucault's work and analysis on European policies is in line with the poignant reality of modern day twenty-first century Europe. Through this lens we can better understand the advancement of *Anti-Gypsyism* and *Romaphobia.* Yet we mustn't forget that Roma are closely affected by postmodern racism which plays out in overt and covert fashions.

Cornel West is a theorist that transcends academic boundaries whose work lends itself to a variety of disciplines. West explores *Humanistic Scholarship* and praxis and his intellectual connections transcend disciplinary boundaries and offer insight into the social realities of our times. Johnson (2003) suggests that West criticizes some philosophers for their hypocritical stands of professing to be leaders and pioneers of society who assert to speak on humanity, yet they sometimes articulate racism and bigotry usually associated with ignorance. These pioneers and "champions of knowledge" are trained to be critical and reflective to issues, yet the racist position of such philosophers is dangerous to society and embeds itself in other areas of

modern-day society. Philosophers help shape the public policies and sustain the White supremacist ethos, culture, and superstructure that are responsible for the social injustice experienced by people of color (Johnson, 2003). The white supremacist ethos that Johnson and West identify as being active agents that affect social and political structures within the United States, focusing on how these are played out in relation to African Americans, I would like to apply this logic to the Roma community within Europe. Using this premise that the leaders and highly trained thinkers of Europe are grounding their beliefs in racist ideologies can help reflect on the biased, xenophobic and intolerant beliefs that are shaping European politics. How can a society be whole, functioning, respectful and creating inclusive spaces where dialogue is possible if the individuals in positions of powers are underpinning their beliefs in hate and bigotry? It is virtually impossible to achieve inclusion if the politics at work (e.g. laws, governing bodies and researchers) are basing their principles and are guided by racialised discourses and viewing the Roma through a lens which frames them as criminals, villains, leeches and a number of other derogatory terms. Johnson claims that "from a moral point of view, a society is unjust if, among other things, both the mechanism that it establishes to administer the distribution of benefits and burdens and the very distribution itself disadvantage some of its members" (2003, p. 3). Foucault, West, Flecha, McGarry and several others have helped us better understand the structures at play that are negatively impacting the lives of the Roma community.

In summary, this chapter has outlined the political, social and cultural stage that has ill-informed current infrastructures that are now in place in the European Union. Counter-narratives are antidotes to the erroneous images that exist while communal solidarity is at the forefront of facing these false representations that exist. There are several platforms and units within major political institutions that are considering Roma and Roma women's issues. However, every report referenced in this chapter highlights that there is still a gap between

strategic and practical implementation of laws and work to do at a ground level. Roma women at a base level are suffering multiple discriminations which has and continues to push them to the margins of society. Being deprived of their basic human rights is for them to overcome these realities and the intersections between the Roma women, mainstream society and the institutions that govern functioning democratic societies are failing our Roma women. In the next chapter, I will explore how Romani women's *Dialogic Feminism*, solidarity networks and grassroots activism all foster solution building and reconciliation between the several accounts circulating around the Romani community.

3.0 Background of Dialogic Feminism and Intersectionality: The "other women"

3.1 Chapter Overview

With the shift from a post-industrial society to an information society, the 1970s mark a change not only in society but within the social sciences, where the latter rejects a paradigm and language which belongs to business and tech, and begins to base its studies on different social phenomena (Flecha, Gómez, Puigvert., 2001). Sociologist Manuel Castells (2010) looked closely at the shift from an industrial society to an information society and claims this started in the 1970s. This *Network Society* suggests that networks are central rather than individuals and heavily relies on the flow of information from technology. The information society shifted paradigms around who holds the power, challenging the notion that those who hold information are in control. As information became readily available and accessible this de-centring marked a transformation and forced several disciplines to rethink how they are structured and the manner which their information is received, interpreted, distributed and communicated. This impact was manifold and as Flecha, Gómez & Puigvert (2001) claim sociology is part of humanity's self-awareness which also underwent a transformation. While this change did not secure equality in societies it did open up new contexts where it was possible to overcome, decrease or even shed light on some of the worst inequalities at the time.

Among those fields that also began a transformation was feminism. The discipline underwent a major revolution with key feminist figures demanding that all members of society are able to contribute to and actively shape the discourse that directly affects them. This chapter will closely look at the third wave of feminist discourse and analyse the evolution of the period, focussing on the theoretical inclusion of Puigvert's (2001) notion of the "other women" and how this led to a practical shift in research and grassroots activities. Intersectionality and its relationship to Romani women will be woven into various aspects of this writing. Academic environments and language in relation to dialogic feminism and Freire's notion of *love* will also be treated. The chapter will briefly look at the "other women" within political environments, as well as Civil Society Actors and Non-Governmental Organisations. This writing will conclude with a descriptive summary of the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen, its activities and its relationship to the "other women".

3.2 Feminism, Gender and Modernity

Social conflict and social movements are interconnected to feminism and modernity. Modernity forced people to reflect on their traditional practices and customs and the effects of industrialisation, urbanisation, and political democracy brought with it a break and distancing from the traditional family structure and way of living. For Ron Eyerman modernity "referred to a world constructed anew through the active and conscious intervention of actors and the new sense of self that such active intervention and responsibility entailed" (1992, p. 37). This expression of subjectivity was closely lined with social interaction and new forms of political identity. As modernity transformed society, order and norms, belief systems came to exist in new ways. Sociologist and feminist scholar Lídia Puigvert (2001) identifies the values of modernity as equality, freedom and solidarity and suggests that the feminist movements demonstrate women's capacity to organise and claim our obvious rights.

Modernity brought with it a series of values and ideals that drew attention to women but these were underpinned by a privileged group of people that served as *representatives* to speak *for* women. Those spokespeople, who were primarily academics, excluded voices that formed part of society. These *other voices* were not considered until the "second modernity" which Puigvert also labels as a "dialogic modernity", which stresses that all women are members of society and have the capacity to reason, reflect and construct what is social, rejecting "essentialism" (Puigvert, 2001). Snyder (2008) also sees that postmodernism and feminism accommodate an array of identity positions, at least theoretically.

An analysis from the gender perspective is important to include in this writing as it is intertwined with politics, research, modernity and feminist discourses. Women have multiple identities and the notion that identity is coherent is a cultural construction that is currently being challenged. Yoke-Lian Lee (2010) raises key points that feed into our discussion of gender politics and suggests that mainstream academic scholarship tends to exclude gender and its conceptualisations, yet there has been a shift in the last two decades. The question of knowledge production and women being active agents in that relationship is dealt with in Ann Tickner's (1992; 2001) works where she writes that feminists should think of knowledge production as a social construction, formed mostly by men, that is 'variable across time, place, and culture'. Lee (2010) affirms that a "gender analysis enables us to understand how 'man' and 'woman' are not categorically separated, independent entities, but rather are mutually constituted and interdependent" (p.4). While gender is not our focus in this writing, it is important to understand the politics of gender as feminist epistemology is capable of transforming the dominant concepts of knowledge-making and redefining the binaries that have existed between what is feminine and what is masculine.

When feminism is examined, gender is an obvious element to focus on as it is relevant to our understanding of feminist discourse. Judith Butler in *Social Transformations* suggests

that gender is “the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but it may also be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized” (2001, p.19). Gender has been a contested subject area and for this writing I will use it to better understand *dialogic feminism* and how it plays out in feminist movements. Notions don’t exist in isolation and rather than separating knowledge and power there is a nexus of how these dynamics are linked to gender. There are norms that govern gender and violence, and oftentimes these can be expressed through public platforms in a variety of ways. Butler returns to Foucault’s discussion on power, the body and the identifying and tracking of “the complex interplay between what replicates the same process and what transforms it” (2001, p.12). To look at feminism, gender must enter our discussion as there is a reality of how it is made, performed, constructed and manipulated within public and private environments. There is an intangible way of seeing gender that has been internalised and plays out in specific environments, which also is tied to patriarchy. Patriarchy, which is seen as a whole system of male power over women, has been contested by feminists in a number of different ways. Mary Beard, a feminist and social critic, has looked closely at “gendered speaking” and the traditions of this practice and claims that today’s modern society still finds itself using a shadow of this *classical* world way of seeing. Beard describes this Greco-Roman tradition as a practice of silencing women in public speech and in public spaces. Beard (2017) maintains that women, even when not silenced have to pay a very high price to be heard, and that it is not easy to fit women into a structure that is already coded as male and so the structure needs to be changed. Beard’s pontificating on the politics that emerge when a woman wants to publicly speak and the difficulties in doing so, lends itself to reflecting on the challenges that the Romani woman may face when wanting to be heard within a public domain. Her suggestion that we need to think “more fundamentally about the rules of our rhetorical operations” (p.40) needs to also be pushed further, as I would suggest looking carefully at our cultural assumptions

about ethnic minorities and women whom sit outside of academic settings. Oftentimes, gender binaries exist and this construction has traditionally excluded several women from society, and/or has been inflexible and primarily existed within academic and political settings. Puigvert's reflection of including the "other women" grounds this chapter's discussion on feminist thought and the gaps that exist within the discipline and how this affects Romani women and the feminist movements. With the rest of this chapter, I explore feminist discourse and the way that this notion is embodied, performed, theorised, politicised and reimagined while linked to Romani women.

3.3 Feminism: A Brief Overview

Throughout history there are a number of extraordinary examples of women who were courageous and talented and whom chose to stand up to the status quo and to question and promote ideals that were opposing subordinate conditions of women. These are visible in history yet it was during the early nineteenth and twentieth century that the first wave of feminism took shape. The second and third waves, as feminism is typically divided into three waves, could be divided into the 1960s-1980s and third following 1990s-2000s. Emancipation was at the core of the three feminist movements yet once a certain level of freedom was achieved there were plateaus which required members from within the movements to question the future directions. Within each wave there were cultural, social and global shifts that helped shape the periods.

The first wave of feminism focused primarily on gaining political power, which included the right to vote. Different countries granted women this right at and it was a period that used the political agendas to expand issues concerning sexual, reproductive and economic matters. The second wave of feminism could be defined as being a bit strict in its views and be seen as anti-male, anti-sex, anti-femininity and anti-fun (Snyder, 2008). Snyder goes on to quote Naomi Wolf's description of second-wavers as 'victim feminism' who portray it as

‘sexually judgmental, even anti-sexual and judgmental of other women’s sexuality and appearance and even ‘self-righteous’ (Wolf, 2006, pp.14-15). While these may be gross generalisations and even caricatures of the movement, Snyder says that it is inaccurate and reductionist as the wave played a key role in setting up a platform for the third wave. This final period, which is where our main discussion will ground itself in, can be classed as more inclusive as “it respects not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion and economic standing but also makes allowances for different identities within a single person” (Heywood, 2006, p.xx). Third wave feminism includes life stories and narratives of people which can demonstrate the gaps between the binaries of dominant discourse and the social realities of women’s lives. There is a shift between the waves that goes from the unified and all women have a shared experience, to coalition thinking, which allows for multiple identities and ways of protesting and instigating change and living out one’s feminism. Heywood (2006) suggests that there is a destabilising of fixed definition of gender and unitary notions of ‘woman’ (pp.257-258) yet it doesn't actually deal with the conundrum of essentialism and feminist academics speaking on behalf of all women. While post-modernism and third wave feminism accommodated an array of identity positions, at least theoretically, there were gaps which excluded many women from feminist spaces and discourse. Those that primarily took up or spoke for the majority were those who were highly educated individuals who became “spokespeople” for the masses. These protagonists could be seen as the *elite* which sit within very specific environments. “Feminism of the elite is understood as one constructed solely by university women. Synonyms include: academic feminism and feminism of some.” (de Botton, Puigvert, and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p.25) Furthermore, this theoretical hijacking of feminism was organised around activities in the West and primarily led by elite white women.

> Kimberly Springer argues, the entire wave metaphor is organized around the activities of white women, overlooking the activist work of black women that

> preceded and followed so-called waves (Springer, 2006, pp. 33-34). Finally, third wave feminism focuses almost exclusively on American feminism, often prioritizing issues that at best do not resonate internationally and at worst undermine the possibility of transnational coalitions. (Snyder, 2008, p.192)

Feminism was not exclusive to the United States, as there was a uniquely British school of feminism known as *Revolutionary Feminism*, which was founded in 1977. It was a strand that was critiqued from its inception as it was accused of splitting the British Women's Liberation Movement and of alienating feminists through a perceived insistence on political lesbianism and separatism, and for being responsible for "man-hating" (McKay, 2014). The British strand of *Revolutionary Feminism* was described similar to the US's *Radical Feminism* as both strands "emphasized the importance of autonomous women-only space and organising, focused much of their theory on Violence Against Women (VAW) and identified this as a keystone in women's oppression" (McKay, 2014, p.97). This point on women-only spaces will resurface when we discuss the Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women's Association later in the chapter.

3.3.1 Intersectionality, Feminism and Academic Environments

Feminism may be seen as a need from the past yet it is a part of the future and something that one must understand from an intersectional perspective. Intersectionality is important to consider as feminism did not and still does not exist in isolation. Rather, as feminism in the West took centerstage its neo-colonial thinking set the tone for many cultural practices (Hooks, 2000). Bell Hooks goes on to suggest that neo-colonial paternalism influenced feminist thinking in the United States and feminist women in the West are still struggling to decolonise feminist thinking and practice so that these issues can be addressed in a manner that does not reinscribe Western imperialism. This perspective is important to consider as feminism did not exist solely in the West as there were several movements taking place globally. There is a *global feminism* which aims to end sexism, exploitation and oppression and this global feminism must include all women, in particular those "other women" whom are not the

privileged-class of academics and/or white women who swiftly declared ownership of the movement. This idea of a 'global sisterhood', since its inception in the 1970s, was a paradigm which essentialised identities of womanhood and shared gender oppression (Koczé, Zentali, Jovanović, Magyari-Vincze, 2018). However, this "global feminist discourse was highly criticised by Black women, women of colour and other 'third –world feminists' who challenged the societal system that privileges middle-class, white 'Western women" (2018, p.3).

Bell Hooks has been a pivotal figure in theorising and writing about feminism, the Black Feminist movement as well as the female in relation to politics and social dynamics. Hooks (2000) defines feminism as a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression and focuses on sexist thinking and action as the problem, whether that be perpetuated by male or females, child or adult. This definition removes blame from the male and allows it to be applicable to all members of societies and debunks the idea that the all-female spaces and the feminist movement would necessarily be "an environment where patriarchy and sexist thinking would be absent" (2000, p.2). Feminists and the discipline evolved as the thinking within the resistance also pushed boundaries. One of the revolutionary insights of the 1970s was by Charlotte Bunch and Nancy Myron who published a collection of essays in *Class and Feminism* (1974) which confronted the way that women exploited other women, and they drew attention to the intersections between race, class and sex. Hooks considers feminist politics and suggests that "ironically, revolutionary feminist thinking was most accepted and embraced in academic circles. In those circles the production of revolutionary feminist theory progressed, but more often than not that theory was not made available to the public" (2000, p.5). As Hooks and other feminists have claimed, feminist literature was mainly by academics, and particularly from a very specific profile, writing for and about women without actually including all women from various parts of society. To better understand this perspective, I turn to education analyst Jeni Hart (2006) conducted an analysis

of three Journals and investigated the academic literature in the field, using gender and feminist lenses. The three journals that she used to underpin her research were The Journal of Higher Education (JHE), The Review of Higher Education (RHE) and Research in Higher Education (ResHE). Her findings were grounded in Whelan's (1995) terms where she divided the feminist literature in the journals into several categories: Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Left Feminism and Psychoanalytic Feminism. While this study was limited to three journals and is dated now, its relevance is that the sub-categories reflect the nuances found in feminist discourse and literature (Hart, 2006), which is useful to see how feminism can be classified and considered by those early feminist writers and thinkers. While I am not exploring the details of the history of feminism for this writing I am stating that the *elite* often produced information that omitted and/or did not consider the "other women" until the third wave.

Academic environments have theorised and produced information that has opened up a space where dialogue and social transformation which reflects all women from society are included. However, this was not a norm until the third wave of feminism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with her article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) challenged the tenets of 'Western Feminism'. Spivak argued that the subaltern voice will always be misrepresented and therefore doomed to preserve the colonial hierarchy (Koczé et al., 2018). This colonial hierarchy that is relevant to our discussion of feminism is directly linked to the concept of *intersectionality.* Intersectionality was coined by the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. She suggested that women experience oppression in varying configurations which differ in intensity. These cultural patterns of oppression are not individual categories (e.g. race, class, gender, ability, sexuality and ethnicity) but are interacting and "determine unique situations of discrimination where different grounds cannot be separated and no ground is prevailing" (D'Agostino, 2015, p.95). In 1991, Crenshaw made a distinction between structural and political intersectionality and since its inception, intersectionality has extended to several other studies. In *The Romani*

Women's Movement: Struggles, debates in Central and Eastern Europe , Koczé and colleagues argue that the concept of intersectionality lends itself to the analysis of the current Romani women's situation and many authors interrogate how it can be used for Romani feminism (Oprea and Silverman, 2018). Angéla Koczé has been pushing for feminist discourse to recognise the interconnectedness of the oppression that Romani women face and in her 2009 influential report *Missing Intersectionality* she coins "intersectional discrimination" and suggests that "the analysis begins from the proposal that the social position of Romani women as a group is shaped by the interaction of (at least) ethnic, gender, and class inequalities" (Koczé, 2009, p.13). Other authors have considered intersectionality in Romani Women's Feminism (Alexandra Oprea 2004, 2005) and Enikő Vincze (2005).

> …different differences (gender, ethnicity, age, class) are interconnected in the production of social positions and lived experiences, and made [me] to understand that 'in order to assert a solidarity based on commonalities between women, it is not necessary to assert that all women are, or have to be, the same'. (Moore 1988, p.198 in Vincze, 2005)

Vincze also envisioned a feminism which empowered "muted groups" through reaffirming social value of equality through differences.

Another pioneer who felt that feminism could do better and be more inclusive, instigated a feminism that was dialogic and relevant to the changing society, was Lídia Puigvert. Puigvert envisioned a discourse that would bring forward the voices of those women who are often excluded and removed from the feminist conversation. Puigvert's *Dialogic Feminism* is seen as a feminism that reflects all women and disrupts the notion that only an elite group of women hold a truth. Puigvert (2001) defined the "other women" as those whom have been left out of discourses and feminist struggles because they are not academics or they belong to cultural minorities.

> The feminist movement has not reflected the voices and interests of non-academic women, resulting in the lack of identification that this participant alludes to. Even those feminists who are in favour of a radicalized democracy and opening up spaces for public debate, continue to have a traditionally

> academic perspective in their social struggle. When they set out to democratize they only think of women who are already in their movements. (de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p.28)

The subverting of foundational stories and the voices of the women from the community, the "other women", is the focus of this section as I hope to show that dialogic feminism is reconfiguring notions of power and challenging accepted and unaccepted discourses which are transforming societies. Through dialogic feminism, intersectionality within the Romani Women's Movement is explored and better understood.

3.3.2 Dialogic Feminism

While feminism opened up new possibilities and fought for emancipation and won several struggles, there were unexplained areas that needed closer consideration. Dialogic feminism filled a void and demanded that a plurality of voices be considered and included. Dialogic feminism has an end goal which aims to unite the efforts of all women from different educational levels, ethnicities and social classes while attempting to overcome the inequalities that women face. Diverse identities and experiences have to be reflected within academic, political and social spaces as this is a more accurate reflection of the plural society we live in. Common practice is to exclude ethnic and minority communities from decision making processes, in particular academic, social and political discussions. Traditionally, grassroots women have been distanced from entering into dialogue with those in decision-making positions. Relegating communities to second place and encouraging them to be in the shadows rather than treating them like active agents of change, has been the accepted norm for centuries. However, *dialogic feminism* breaks with this practice and encourages dialogue through the creation of egalitarian spaces and engaging with women from all backgrounds. These spaces serve as markers of reflection where the individuals share and are listened to while problem-solving and addressing current social changes and influencing transformation.

> Dialogic feminism is profoundly transformative, given that it demands and secures egalitarian social conditions that allow for dialogue to take place. This dialogue can be practiced only when we, as subjects, assume the social and personal responsibilities that our reflections and actions imply, and when we are open to changing our theoretical positions according to valid arguments. (Puigvert in Beck-Gersheim, Butler & Puigvert, 2001, p.100)

Dialogic feminism is transformative and as Puigvert reaffirms, academia does not have exclusive capacity to direct, articulate, represent and offer what may be seen as 'valid' proposals for overcoming specific social problems. Rather, dialogic feminism creates an agility in academia which has the ability to cross boundaries and to be inclusive of all voices. Diversity in these spaces are honoured and encouraged and this is key to creating more socially inclusive, functioning societies that allow for plurality of voices, thoughts, lifestyles and opinions to coexist. Homogenous societies can be dangerous to democracy. Puigvert (2001) reminds us that cultures are not static and that the challenge for a culturally diverse society is to not only consider social and cultural but also gender aspects. "The challenge of the multicultural society therefore consists not only in respect for and recognition of cultural diversity, but also in the generating more egalitarian gender relations in experiences of diversity" (Puigvert, 2001, p. 49). Without the including and rethinking of gender it is difficult to achieve an egalitarian society that includes the "other women". The central statement of *dialogic feminism* is to avoid there being one voice and to celebrate the dynamic voices of society through egalitarian environments which is not dismissive of gender.

Academia can be seen as a space where experts in specific topics are situated and often considered the best placed to steer conversations that direct the future. It is assumed that these academics hold knowledge that has been acquired via specific routes and validated via qualifications that seal their ability to direct. These stamps of approval are given to these individuals and their values are often the esteemed which direct and steer society's thinking and influence the direction that things should take. This minority of individuals end up

speaking for the majority without consulting the masses. This hierarchical structure is important to understand and also to challenge as it is detrimental to honouring the plurality of society. Without attempting to recentralise the power structure to a more horizontal and egalitarian dynamic, the voices of the many will always be excluded. This exclusion has serious ramifications that hinder the minority to contribute and be active agents of change. *Dialogic feminism* is a solution to this way of working as it "proposes to academics, a minority of women, to stop feeling like they are the exclusive owners of feminist knowledge and to share this space with the critical contributions that the 'other women' are already developing. This will imply an enrichening process." (Puigvert, 2001, p. 56). Opening up feminism to consider individuals whom are often outside of these academic, political and social institutions is a valuable resource and an important voice to bring into the conversation. Kruckenberg (2010) suggests that the intersections of power, politics, gender and subordination are played out in several public and personal spaces and are the source of Romani Women's activism. There is an urgency for plurality to exist with feminism and within society. As outlined in chapter two where I made a case for allowing for a more fluid Roma identity to exist and be celebrated, *dialogic feminism* distances itself from 'exclusionary inertias' and 'hegemonic barriers that traditional modernity imposes' (Puigvert, 2001). It allows for the individual to take the reigns of the boundaries that carve out identity and opens up a potentiality to redefine and allow a new identity to emerge. The egalitarian spaces look closely at what mutual knowledge can be generated and the process enables the genesis of binary thought to be challenged. A loosening and a redefining of boundaries encourages the "other voices" to interject and an "unknown" knowledge to emerge. This integrating of and including all voices brings forward a new way of organising and instigating change. The life stories and experiences of Romani women and girls falls into several categories of intersectionality that are not always considered. Matache (2018) suggests that "race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, nation, ethnicity are relational

but not many - whether Romani activists, non-Roma feminists, or activists voicing stories of other oppressed groups have embraced an intersectional approach" (p. xvi). If we consider and allow for the voices of the "other women" to come forward and be included in spaces of debate which influence change, then the intersectionality of oppressive institutions can be challenged and eradicated.

3.3.3 Dialogic Feminism and Transformation

The transformative potential of technologies and information can help us better understand the lived experiences of people and also examine power structures that are in place. The inclusion of the "other women" allows for an opportunity for feminist discourse to be de-monopolised. When trying to better understand if dialogic feminism is possible, it is important to use real life situations and conversations as examples. At its inception, the inclusion of the "other women" was not only novel but it also received a strong reaction from other feminists. Among those that were receptive to this idea, was the renowned feminist thinker, Judith Butler. Butler is known for her work in philosophy and gender and has influenced political, philosophy, ethics and feminist, queer and literary theory. Butler and Puigvert engaged in a public conversation with Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim in their publication *Women and Social Transformatio*n in 2001. With this major publication, these leading academics brought attention to the topic of women, feminism and social transformation in a candid conversation that openly shared their positions. This public conversation and their forthright reflections offered an alternative to reimagining feminism. Butler was invited to Barcelona, Catalonia in 2001 to attend a conference "Women and Social transformation" and she publicly stated that "the best kind of dialogue is that which offers the possibility for each participant to be transformed through the process itself. Indeed, why would I have come to Barcelona if I did not want the chance to be transformed by what I encounter here?" (Butler, 2001, p.82). This public reflection and questioning was brave as it showcased a vulnerability which is also

powerful and poignant. Butler goes on to publicly state that to "question the subject", in this case feminism, is not to do away with it but to deepen and reflect on its current form. While this public questioning does run the risk of being seen as a negative criticism she defends that it allows the field to reflect and grow and rethink our sources of knowledge.

In the methods section I described the need to underpin this work with Communicative Methodology (CM). CM allows for academics to enter into dialogue with its participants. CM facilitates transformative and reflective conversations which is central to dialogic feminism. Nick Wilson is a researcher in cultural development promoting cultural opportunities, solidarity and looking at ecologies that foster connectedness. Wilson (2010) called for research that was *socially creative* which suggests that creativity comes into being through the interactivity between people and also between people and landscapes/or objects and its environment. Wilson has written extensively on cultural democracy and also advocates for embedding everyday culture and creativity into university contexts.

> Wilson's social creativity provides ways of thinking about research that cause pauses. These include pauses to consider the production of knowledge, and to move away from knowledge silos, either disciplinary or indeed academic. Social creativity requires researchers to question, rethink and evaluate their own and others' embodied emotional connections and responses to specific social conditions, practices, discourse and imaginaries- we are called to dialogue and reflexivity. (Bryant, 2015, p.2)

This question of democratising knowledge and reflecting on how the communities can inform the research, thus having a real impact on societies, is relevant to this discussion. *Dialogic feminism* at its core demands that other women be included in feminist thought and to shape the direction of the field. This mutual collaboration and egalitarian way of working is a reflective practice that involves participants and researchers as co-workers in the research process (Finlay, 2002). This is relevant to this discussion as I have been making a case to decentralise academics as repositories of knowledge, and rather work side by side with the "other women".

Returning to the dialogue between Beck-Gersheim, Butler and Puigvert in 2001 in Barcelona, this conference marked a turning point in the social movement and feminist discourse as it defended the voice of not only the Roma women but of all "other women". These leading feminist thinkers publicly reflected and demanded and took a stand alongside "other women" leading to a global transformation that recognised the need to actively reflect and engage with society's individuals regardless of their political, social or academic background. Dialogic feminism is malleable as it is influenced by a plurality of voices, perspectives and experiences. As a result of this pliability there is a liminality that can occur which encourages reflective praxis in both public and private spheres. As Butler, Puigvert and Beck-Gersheim (2001) publicly debated, reflected and were transformed by the act of engaging in and considering dialogic feminism in a very public environment, the section that follows will look at examples of dialogic feminism within public and private spheres.

3.4 Reflection and Liminality- Public and private spaces and their consideration of "other women"

Reflecting on power structures and how it plays out in public and private spheres is an important aspect to consider while looking closely at feminism. For the sake of this writing, I will label academia as a public space which can be a form of civic duty that is comprised and performed by a group of educated individuals. This is not to infer that non-academics cannot enter this academic space, it is simply to clarify how I am defining academia in relation to dialogic feminism. In the methods section, I looked closely at CM and highlighted how CM lends itself to enhancing academic environments through the inclusion of non-academics and individuals from society. For the section that follows, I will claim that academia has to allow itself to be unfastened and accessible, especially if it wants to engage with vulnerable communities and bring forth social impact.

3.4.1 Academic Environments and the "Other Women"

Cultural studies and education professor Henry Giroux looked at the politics of education and has written on neo-liberalism, critical pedagogy and encouraged new theoretical and political tools for addressing how knowledge resistance and power can be analysed. His work has brought attention to a number of cultural spheres, including schools and the way that vulnerable groups in particular young people access education. Giroux over the course of his thirty plus years career has advocated for the need for schools to have critical pedagogy.

Attempting to transform academia into an egalitarian space which includes the plural voice of society takes time and requires several willing participants and may be difficult to accomplish. One example of a critical academic who pushed for educational environments to reflect the multiplicity of society and use tools that can foster democratic societies and thinking was world-renowned Paulo Freire. Freire influenced several social disciplines, practitioners and theorists for over twenty-five years and in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) he claimed that pedagogy is a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens while expanding and deepening their participation in democratic societies (Giroux, 2010). He adopted a dialectical approach towards understanding the world and drew on ideas from Hegel and Marx, among many others (Roberts, 1998). Roberts goes on to claim that for Freire the act of *knowing* can be seen as a form of *praxis*, implying both a reflective and an active component that is constantly changing and evolving. This Freirean view can apply to our discussion of feminism as he argued that education can be spaces of transformation where critical thinking, self-reflection and imagination are working together to emancipate individuals from oppressive societies. Therefore, if academia and educational institutions, like schools, colleges and universities are supposed to be critical and reflective, then feminism also has the potentiality

to embrace dialogical methods. Giroux (2010) argues that universities are moving away from egalitarian modes of being and learning.

> Universities are now largely defined through the corporate demand that they provide the skills, knowledge, and credentials to build a workforce that will enable the United States to compete and maintain its role as the major global economic and military power. Consequently, there is little interest in understanding the pedagogical foundation of higher education as a deeply civic, political, and moral practice – that is, pedagogy as a practice for freedom. (Giroux 2010, p. 715)

While Giroux's insightful observations are specific to the United States what this illustrates is that there is a crisis of authority and repression of critical thought which is dangerous. A shifting of power needs to take place not only in academic settings but in public and private fields. Dialogic feminism allows for critical praxis to occur and attempts to not only understand how power works through the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge within particular institutional contexts but goes further, as it aims to establish academics and non-academics as informed subjects and social agents. These arenas of knowledge, like academia, are often highjacked by individuals who use language to dominate the production of knowledge.

There is a hierarchy that emerges through the use of spoken and written language which establishes arenas of knowledge. Language has the ability to domesticate and this hierarchical structure effects behaviours and can be a tool used to exclude those whom cannot *speak* the academic jargon. Mixing of the personal and private within the academic sphere is not common practice and this combining, has a negative connotation which leads academia to distance itself from the personal and focusing on the research that is produced by the educated elite. This tension highlights the role that language plays and how beliefs that theoretical debates can only be initiated and sustained by those highly educated persons, are maintained.

> The 'other women' were not taken into account because the biased assumptions dictated that *they* have nothing to say, and they do not know how to maintain a theoretical debate: they would immediately turn to mixing their private and

> personal lives and would end up making quackery" (de Botton, Puigvert, Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p. 28).

Noam Chomsky is considered the founder of modern linguistics and is one of the most cited scholars in modern history. Chomsky introduced the "Chomsky hierarchy" (1956), generative grammar and the concept of universal grammar, which underlies all human speech and is based on the innate structure of the mind and brain. He has transformed the field of linguistics and influenced several other fields. Chomsky has always been critical of the divisions made between language of the intellectuals and those non-intellectuals. In a conversation with Olson and Faigley in 1991 he commented on "intellectuals" and criticised the manner which language is filtered and the distinctions made between those academics and non-academics.

> He claims that intellectuals are 'ideological managers,' complicit in controlling 'the organized flow of information' because intellectuals are by definition those who have 'passed through various gates and filters' in order to become 'cultural managers.' In effect, 'the whole educational system involves a good deal of filtering towards submissiveness and obedience.' By definition, those who are subversive or independent minded are not called intellectuals but 'wackos.' In fact, Chomsky is quite critical of the distinction established between intellectuals—those in the universities—and non-intellectuals" (Olson and Faigley, 1991, p. 3).

Similar to Chomsky, Freire also commented on the repositories of knowledge and reflected that the dreams of the "poor" were always dreamt for them by distant others who were removed from the daily struggles of the working class (McLaren, 1999). Both Chomsky and Freire observed how language was used within power structures and could be organised in a way that socially excluded people. Again, in the conversation with Olson and Faigley, Chomsky suggested, "that actual language use tends to maintain structures of authority and domination" (Olson and Faigley 1991, p.2). Chomsky's critique of language and its association with being a form of gatekeeper is relevant to our discussion of the "other women". Habermas (1984) emphasised that all subjects are capable of marrying language and action. Habermas "defends the need to orient dialogue towards equality and reject the imposition of orders" (de Botton,

Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p.13) and he was an advocate of allowing individuals from any background to express themselves using the language available to them. However, Roma, in particular Romani women, have often been stereotyped as being too fragmented to represent (Stroschein, 2002) and to speak for themselves. Feminist discourse has often situated itself in a position of "concerned" for Roma women, which suggests that we are incapable of doing and being active agents ourselves. This reinforcing of the weak or a woman that requires saving and help, highlights the need to stake a claim and demand that *Dialogic feminism* and the "other women" be heard. As de Botton, Puigvert, and Sánchez-Aroca (2005) illustrated that working collectively and making encounters more participatory and egalitarian bridges academic environments with society and has the ability to transform both the public and private spaces.

Motivation, agreements and reflective spaces are important to understand how feminist discourse can embrace the "other women" in relation to love and the struggle for democracy. Transforming academia may feel counterintuitive to the work of the traditional academic. How is it that feminism, political and social frameworks can embrace this egalitarian way of working? Freire's concept of the power of *love* in relation to transformation might help challenge the intersectional oppressive institutions that Roma women face. Freire closely examined the stigma around love and re-contexualised it so that love was an instigator of dialogue and transformation.

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible Subjects and cannot exist in a relation of domination. Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause-the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental: as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. (Freire, 1993b, pp.70-71)

He often discussed fear in relation to revolutions and fell back on his definition of love and saw that "false consciousness" diminished social agency (Darder, 2011). In Chapter Four, when I examine vulnerability in relation to the Romani Women's Movement, I will revisit this point. For the moment, it is to illustrate that love has a transformative energy and is a way to challenge power structures. As Lena de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca suggest "love, the pure relationship, balance, communicative power, hope- these concepts are present in the new social discourses and place social practice at the centre of transformations" (2005, p.95). The ability for love to ground social revolutions and be an active agent of change is influential. As Jesús Gómez stated in *Radical Love* (2015):

> [L]ove is not associated with instinct or solely limited to the conscience. It expands horizons to intersubjectivity, ensuring that freedom and dreams share dialogues. It demonstrates that what occurs in the private and seems to be personal is a direct consequence of societal changes. (Gómez, 2015, p.37)

This is key as love can be seen as a personal emotion that is often associated with private spaces. As Freire and de Botton and colleagues defend, love can exist in public environments and transform both the public and private, thus blurring of where the public and private begin and end.

3.4.2 Political Spaces and the "Other Women"

Power tensions emerge from being constrained and when examining what areas of life tend to typically disenfranchise or empower people, political institutions are a focal point. Thus far, we have discussed the manner which dialogic feminism has been a transformative agent within academic environments, yet it also has a place within political infrastructures. This next section will illustrate the potential that comes out of involving Roma within political environments highlighting successful and unsuccessful examples. I will also stress the importance for intersectionality to be taken into account when looking at political institutions.

The European Union (EU) has played a key role in shaping the way Roma issues have played out in public and particularly political domains. While no official data exists, 'there are

numerous European studies, reports and resolutions that provide corroborated information and urge Member States to step up their work with Roma" (IPRC Report 2014, p.8). During the period of formulation of Roma issues, the EU has evolved as they have addressed human rights violations (Sobotka, 2011).

> The Roma issue has gained increasing relevance on the European agenda over recent years, especially in policies related to social integration and promoting equal treatment. The European Commission has established a new framework for action with the Roma based on the European Agenda 2020 and the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, which urges governments to draw up and implement actions in the following areas: education, employment, housing and health. (IPRC Report 2014, p. 4)

Sobotka (2011) goes on to highlight that with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and then the Treaty of Amsterdam[19] (1997) which enabled European institutions to take measures to combat discrimination based on ethnic origin, was a step which allowed them to focus on the Roma.

> The adoption of the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC in June 2000 was a significant step towards prohibition of racial discrimination in the areas of employment, education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services in all EU member states. … This has been particularly significant for Roma, since many EU countries have improved their anti-discrimination legislation, and access to justice for victims of discrimination have become available through newly set up equality bodies which have dealt with cases concerning discrimination of Roma. (Sobotka, 2011, p. 239)

There have been several instruments and mechanisms which have been set up within a number of Member States which aim to bring together a variety of key stakeholders to the table. Those parties may include Civil Society Actors, politicians, activists, among others. An example of such a platform is the Integrated Plan for the Roma in Catalonia (IPRC)[20]. In addition to

19 Treaty on European Union, 29 July 1992, 1992 O.J. (C 191) [hereinafter Maastricht Treaty]; Treaty of Amsterdam Amending the Treaty on European Union, The Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Related Acts, 10 Nov. 1997, 1997 O.J. (C 340) [hereinafter Treaty of Amsterdam].

20 Integrated Plan for the Roma in Catalonia: The project assists participating economies to organize annual discussions on Roma integration policies involving relevant public officials, local level officials, Roma civil society and other relevant stakeholders. These forums are designated to review progress by presenting

platforms coming from within the EU institution there are also independent EU bodies that provide EU Member States and its institutions with evidence-based advice on several key issues. One such example is the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) "which has anchored Roma as a priority within its work programmes and provided policy makers with relevant data and conclusions as well as opinions on how to address the human rights violations of Roma in the EU" (Sobotka, 2011, p. 240). While there have been a number of shifts towards and a willingness to ensure that Roma are socially included, there is a disconnect between efforts and positive and sustainable results.

To remedy the disconnect between the Roma and the political environments, local, national and European wide applications need to work with the various actors at every stage. Huggan and Law (2012) claim that *policy dialogue* and deliberate and participatory processes, for example, consultation, deliberate polling, collaborative planning, hosting and stakeholder engagements, are some of the techniques that can allow for Roma and non-Roma to work closely. Such policy dialogue between the numerous actors and the utilising of several platforms like the European Platform for Roma inclusion forum for debate among other EU institutions, is important. They suggest regional and local authorities need to be drawn in to closer dialogue as this *policy dialogue* seems to suggest that horizontal approaches allow for more positive impact having the desired outcomes of social integration; rather than the top down style of working and policy-making which has been shown not to lead to any significant and sustainable change. One example of a political institution that has taken on this approach of working with the Roma community and allowing their voices to direct the work of the political institution is the Catalan Government with their Integrated Plan for the Roma in Catalonia (IPRC).

governments' and civil society's monitoring reports. More information can be found here: (https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/subactivities/4/national-platforms)

> To meet the challenge of improving the social impact of our policies, we have specified four core themes that are set out in the introduction to the Plan: 1) involvement of Roma in the design, implementation and assessment of the Plan; 2) consistency with the recommendations and requests in policies being carried out at the European, national and Catalan level for the Roma; 3) use of research which has demonstrated successful outcomes in improving the lives of the Roma as an indispensable source of information for designing actions; 4) close partnership with local authorities and other departments in this Government. (IPRC Report, 2014, p. 4)

The IPRC which is currently in its fourth iteration can be divided into the following categories: (2005-2008) (2009-2013) (2014-2016) (2017-2020). In early 2005 the Catalan political framework concerning the Roma in Catalonia took an important turn and set up an infrastructure which very clearly outlined its willingness and commitment to working alongside the Roma. The IPRC carefully considered its partnerships and aligned itself with NGOs working at a grassroots level and research institutions that rely on evidence and social services that are committed to raising the profile of the community. Through various iterations of the programme, the IPRC "is now a benchmark for other countries in the European Union as a successful action in the political sphere which has led to measures with proven social impact" (IPRC Report, 2014, pp.12-13). As has been outlined above, the IPRC is comprised of four key themes which have allowed it to be a successful reference for other Members States.

The IPRC has an Advisory Board which is comprised of several key stakeholders, among those is the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen's (DKM) acting president, Ana Contreras. The DKM is an example of a Romani Women's Association who is comprised of the "other women" and who works at a grassroots level. Later in this writing, I will delve into who the DKM are as an Association and how they engage with the "other women". In this section, I will simply highlight that the DKM is an active and vital role of the Catalan Government's IPRC. The Advisory Board has encouraged the IPRC to work closely with Romani women and to consider several issues that affect the community. This close partnership with local Associations that are comprised of and work closely with the Roma

community at a grassroots level, is vital to its success in treating issues that directly impact its members. The Advisory Board advises and makes recommendations to the Catalan Government to fight inequality and discrimination against Roma women and raises awareness of other topics. The IPRC has taken on these recommendations and aligned them with evidence-based research which has allowed for progress and change.

Political participation of Roma in Europe has been looked at closely by Tremlett and McGarry (2013) and there have been other moments where Roma have been invited to take part of political infrastructures and think-tanks. As has been outlined in Chapter Two there are European wide initiatives and programmes that work alongside Roma and Romani women but there is no one formula which ensures social integration as the Roma are a heterogeneous community with varying needs. The IPRC is ongoing and constantly working to improve its results and expand their impact and reach. There are other examples of political institutions that have included the Roma community yet have been unsuccessful in producing desired outcomes. As Marinaro and Daniele (2014) have observed in Italy with the "'Mayor's Delegate for Roma Plan" which was created by the right-wing municipal government in Rome from 2008-2013, Roma were invited to participate and advise the Italian government and make their voices heard. This novel space for political participation in Italy, in theory appeared to be a remarkable step in opening up direct dialogue with Roma, in particular as this right-wing administration elected in Rome was led by a former fascist, Gianni Alemanno. Such a pragmatic position to engage with "urban groups" was to deflect criticism of his politics (Marinaro and Daniele, 2014) and so the intent was more a strategic move. The Mayor's Delegate for Roma Plan ultimately failed for various reasons and the authors claim that some of the blame was due in part to internal conflicts within the Roma community, the insincerity of the government and their contradictory actions and forcing "tokenism" within the Roma community.

> We can conclude that the period of political participation and visibility a novelty that Alemanno's administration introduced and took credit for generate any evolution in their conditions, since the policy of demolishing settlements and relocating Roma to isolated mega-camps continued unabated. …Ultimately, the leaders' tendency to act monopolistically and maintain their own privileged channels of mediation with those in power resulted in the spaces for debate being reduced to a conflict over economic strategies. Roma's political participation thus served to manage and perpetuate the status quo. Their strategies repeated similar dynamics that the main non-Roma NGOs previously engaged in. Roma and non-Roma organisations therefore found selves competing over public funds under Alemanno's administration; this mined any hope that they could have formed coalitions in order to benefit past experiences and wider networks of influence. …Rome's policy approach did not enable political participation beyond tokenism. (Marinaro and Daniele 2014, pp.788-789).

What this case study highlights is that practice and theory need to align and there must be transparency, commitment and a genuine interest to socially transform political, social and public spaces. On paper it appeared that the Italian municipality of Rome was engaging with and working for the diverse Roma community residing in the city. However, on a ground level there was another reality evolving which in the end impeded any real progress.

3.4.3 Intersectionality within Political Environments

There is growing awareness and research stating that although policy alone cannot transform society, it does have an important yet not fully understood role in the creation of more just and equitable societies (Bryant et al., 2011; Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011; Ingram & Schneider, 2006; Stone, 2001). As has been discussed earlier, the intersectionality of oppressive institutions has not been totally considered by the EU as their approach to inequalities still tends to be multiple rather than intersectional (D'Agostino, 2015). D'Agostino has explored groups, in particular Romani women, who find themselves at a crossroad of several axes of oppression. Her dissertation *Romani women in European Politics: Exploring multi-layered political spaces for intersectional policies and mobilisations* addressed the role and position of intersectional marginalised groups in contemporary European politics and explored if political spaces foster or inhibit intersectional policies and mobilisation. Her

interests in European policy-making, Europeanisation, Intersectionality and Roma rights has pushed and contributed to literature that considers political intersectionality and the Europeanisation of social movements. According to D'Agostino there has been a shift in policy documents and the language used. More relevant to our discussion here, with terms like "visibility", "explicitness" and "recognition" being mainstreamed into policy thinking when discussing Romani women, has taken place. The explicit use of "intersectional discrimination" is still not fully understood and part of political discourse. Promoting and affirming intersectionality has not occurred at a political level and is slowly starting to be considered in a number of environments. Combating intersectional discrimination is not without its challenges and while the European Parliament has made some progress in tackling intersectional oppression there is still a lack of intersectional thinking that is taking place alongside discussions of Roma women. "Within the Roma community, women are among the major victims of intersectional inequalities: ethnic and class-based discriminations are aggravated by gender-based discrimination" (D'Agostino, 2015, p.100). Policy machineries are not considering the implications of not thinking intersectionally, and if they are, it appears that it may be from a theoretical perspective and not a practical one. Hankivsky and colleagues (2014) claim that in order to develop a more explicit and user-friendly method and understanding of intersectionality, there needs to be a practical approach which demonstrates how drawing on theory is able to build on and improve equity focused tools and political systems.

Intersectional inclusion may improve the quality of gender equality policies and has a double merit: to emphasise what and who is missing from the design process and highlighting the added value or working with Civil Society Actors (D'Agostino, 2015). This point of including Civil Society Actors (CSAs) and local entities who work with target beneficiary CSAs are playing an important role in relation to policy development. "With increasing

formulation of the Roma issue on the agendas of EU accession states, some former civil society actors have gained positions within public administration at national, regional or local level" (Sobotka 2011, p.238). The question about mainstreaming Roma as a strategy to get the attention and to ensure that all Member States are complying with the laws and addressing the situation of the Roma, is not novel and has been debated for years. The need to involve civil society and active participation of the Roma is a key to instigating change and transformation.

At this juncture in our discussion, intersectionality has brought forward the point that political environments are considering the "other women" as it is works closely with several key players that are connected and engaged with local Roma communities and environments. As the IPRC have found in working with the "other women" that:

> Roma women, are leading the social transformation that the Roma people are doing in recent years. They are the generators of very deep changes in the path to equality and the fight for the rights of Roma people. They are the stars of the struggle for education, and claim worthy work in this society. (IPRC, 2005, p.207)

This relationship between the IPRC and DKM will be expanded when solidarity networks and Roma women's activism is discussed in a later chapter. In particular, with the analysis of the DKM's Congresses (2010, 2018) both held in Barcelona, Catalonia as they were organised and funded by the IPRC's office.

3.5 The "Other Women" in Grassroots Spaces:

In Chapter Four, I will deepen the discussion on Roma women and social movements, howbeit at this point the chapter begs the point to focus on the "other women" within grassroots spaces. Thus far the discussion on intersectionality has primarily taken place within the political domain, yet a focus on the intersectional inquiry on the grassroots community has not happened. Romanian Roma activist and scholar Margarete Matache has had a career focused on Roma rights, agency, participation and also, anti-Roma racism and segregation. Matache (2018) has argued that "during war and peace, in countries that may be dictorial, transnational

or democratic, a basic reality persists: racism, classism, sexism, and other interrelated factors have made it possible to objectify, dehumanize, and threaten the bodies of Romani women" (p. xvi). Oprea (2004) claims that an intersectional analysis of social problems must be performed from the bottom up, looking at the experiences of those who are multi-burdened, such as poor Romani women. Grassroots organisations have a role to play and as Smith and Stirling (2017) argue there is "always innovative activity at grassroots level operating beneath the radar of economic and scientific institutions" (p.5). In the "Ground Up Grassroots Organizations Making Social Change" by Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2006), the pair suggest that grassroots social-change organisations are a critical resource for movement building as they are sites for engagement and can create networks across issues and communities. They further claim that grassroots organisations promote "home-grown" leadership among those disadvantaged and contribute to shared understanding of the problems of inequality and injustice that often plague vulnerable communities. They conclude by stating that NGOs offer a public space for the dialogue needed to identify common principles which challenge oppressive institutions. Organising at a grassroots level has the potential to bring the voices of the "other women" forward. As Gómez, Latorre, Sánchez & Flecha (2006) explained that Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS) enhance the data collection process and these personal stories impact the outcomes bringing voices from the community forward. These personal life stories are important to bring into the public domain. Organisations that work towards inclusive societies like Civil Society Actors and Non-Governmental Organisations are instrumental and have the capacity to blur the two spaces.

3.5.1 Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations

Advocacy, litigation and grassroots work does play a crucial role in analysing, supporting and changing the current situation of the Roma community, in particular Romani women and their immediate circles. There are several types of non-governmental institutions

and organisations that may be recognised as important players in the formulation, design, and application of development strategies. Civil Society Actors (CSAs) and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) are interconnected as CSAs can be comprised of researchers, NGOs, thinktanks, academic thinkers as well as activists and other members of society. Both have been working diligently on human rights issues as they pertain to Roma populations (Abdikeeva and Covaci, 2017) and active in steering discourse to reflect the voices at a grassroots level. CSAs and NGOs have evolved since the 1990s constantly adjusting their campaigns and fine-tuning their advocacy strategies. Eva Sobotka has produced research that links agency, networks and institutional co-operation between Member States, Civil Societies and human rights statutory bodies. Her work has focussed on international relations and analysing human and fundamental rights. Sobotka's 2011 article "Influence of Civil Society Actors on Formulation of Roma Issues within the EU Framework" reflects on the Roma movement and she quotes Nicolae Gheorghe, a Roma activist and academic. Gheorghe, one of the founding fathers of the CSAs human rights activism (Sobotka, 2011), pushed for the Council of Europe and the OSCE to monitor mechanisms against racism and intolerance within Europe. Pertinent to this section his presence and activism role pressured several organisations to consider Roma rights. While several organisations defined what that activism would look like, Sobotka offers a glimpse into one example. In the early days of this grassroots level Roma activism, several organisations adopted different approaches.

> The most visible transnational human rights advocacy organisations in this period were Human Rights Watch, European Roma Rights Centre, Amnesty International, Minority Rights Group, Save the Children Fund and the Open Society Institute. Often these organisations would form alliances with domestic Roma rights focused NGOs, applying the "name and shame" strategy, pointing out human rights deficiencies and governments' failure to adequately respond to their criticism. (Sobotka, 2011, p.242)

Sobotka's point on the 'name and shame' approach was not universal and there were other organisations that took different plans of action. The Open Society Institute[21] (OSI) pursued funding projects that aimed to generate examples which could influence policy makers and direct their mandates and future work. Amnesty International[22] concentrated on disseminating information and shedding a light on police brutality, while the European Roma Information Office[23] (ERIO) focused on circulating information to and on behalf of Roma European wide. While these organisations are larger, established institutions that have over a decade of work researching the Roma and human rights relationship, there have also been smaller organisations that are part of this narrative. CSAs both at local, regional, national and international levels have contributed to bringing attention to the Roma community. CSAs have encouraged policy shifts and directed the thematic focus of larger organisations and oftentimes broker between transnational institutions.

Antonio Donini has published widely on humanitarian policy and practice issues and has an extensive background of working in areas of volatile contexts. In 2008 his definition of *Humanitarianism* said that it is "an ideology, a movement, a profession and a compassionate endeavour to provide assistance and protection to populations at risk" (p. 30). Mertz and Timmer have analysed the possible conundrum some NGOs may find themselves in. The

21 Open Society Institute: The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people. In particular they have a the Roma Initiatives Office (RIO) which works with Roma advocates, organizations, and communities to achieve Roma rights at European, national, and local levels. The RIO works to achieve equal opportunities, combat segregation, and challenge all forms of discrimination faced by Roma. In addition, it facilitates dialogue, exchange, and collaboration across the Open Society Foundations to coordinate efforts, increase knowledge, and enhance the impact of Roma-related grant making and advocacy. (https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/roma-initiatives-office)

22 Amnesty International: Is a global movement which fights for human rights of all citizens of the world. (https://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/)

23 ERIO: The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) is an international advocacy organisation that promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues by providing factual and in-depth information on a range of policy issues to European Union institutions, Roma civil organisations, governmental authorities and intergovernmental bodies. (http://www.erionet.eu/)

relationship between humanitarian work and NGOs is sometimes contested because they are seen to rely on a "needy subject" which means that in some instances "NGOs are influential in constructing and constricting the identities of the people they seek to aid" (Timmer, 2010, p.266). NGOs are often classified as doing work that States and government bodies are unable to take on. Since NGOs have the capacity to work at a grassroots level and reach the 'vulnerable' groups and populations, there is a tremendous burden placed on them (Morell, 2018). However, some argue that NGOs cannot be sustainable if they disregard or fail to adapt to reigning hegemonic discourses emerging from funding and governmental agencies (Harvey, 2005; Kamat 2002, 2014). Consideration that NGOs must strive to gain recognition for their work from a variety of entities, including not only funding agencies and government officials, but also media outlets, their intended target beneficiaries, individuals with a vested interest in their work, and the public (Timmer, 2010), is also important to consider. There is a position taken by some anthropologists which see that NGOs are a double-edged sword as they may act to serve and instigate change but then run the fear of imposing structural and external agendas onto the communities they are claiming to work with and for.

> Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been lauded as prime movers behind positive social change. Increasingly, however, anthropologists and others have critiqued NGOs for acting as handmaidens to liberalism or as an arm of the state. On the one hand, they promise the possibility of linking local marginalized populations with local, regional, national, and international structures of power. On the other hand, NGOs may harm the populations they purport to serve - due to their uneasy relationships with the state, regulatory agencies, and social networks that provide legitimacy, as well as to the dilemmas posed by their own ongoing sustainability. (Mertz and Timmer, 2010, p. 171)

Timmer (2010) flags that NGOs are themselves having to promote images that perpetuate negative stereotypes of a 'minority' population which may depict them as desperate, poverty stricken and needy. Timmer cautions that such language may homogenise a heterogeneous group, which may lead to the misrepresentation of the group thus allowing for racist ideologies to reiterate a similar message. Sobotka (2011) also suggests that CSAs have influenced the

reiteration of Roma issues as subject of human rights concern and systematically campaigned for an EU-wide political and human rights focused policy response.

NGOs may be caught in the double binds created by "global and local funding sources, governmental regimes, and manifestations of liberalism; they all too often lose touch with their stated goals or with the people the aim to serve" (Moretz and Timmer, 2010, p.174). In 2010, Timmer conducted a study over the course of 18 months where she analysed the Hungarian NGOs that were attempting to make an educational intervention in the lives of Roma youth. What was observed was that all of the organisations were "dependent on European Union Funding" and "EU compatible" and "fit in with existing policy competencies and political priorities" (2010, p. 267). Timmer goes on to reflect that several NGOs find themselves in having to paint narratives which position the Roma as "deserving of aid" and as being victims of discrimination. A leading organisation that has been criticised for contributing to the Roma/non-Roma divide is the European Roma Rights Centre as they have been seen to portray the Roma as helpless victims and rarely offer any success stories (Timmer, 2010). This is problematic as they are knowledge producers of reports, journals, litigation, advocacy and policy development whom are called upon by the United Nations or the European Commission. While they have also been seen as important leaders in the field of Roma advocacy and have produced and accomplished a number of positive advancements for the community, this perspective must also be noted. Moreover, there are some instances where there is a focus on the "Roma problem" within Europe which many argue limits the scope and impedes progress. A former ERRC employee at a conference titled "Educational Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe and Roma Inclusion" held in April 2007 suggested that what is needed is a reframing which does not focus on one minority community but rather "a dialogue that needs to be taking place, whose focus should be on building an equitable society for all" (Timmer, 2010, p. 271). This point which removes the focus on one group and places the work back on all members of

society, insinuating that we all play a role in making society just, aligns with Puigvert's and the other feminists who embraced the concept of the "other women". Through the inclusion of all the voices of the "other women" there is a shift which encourages and leads to a more egalitarian society. Timmer's 2010 survey and findings may have taken place within one Member State but it is still an important reflection to take into consideration as I discuss the role that CSAs and NGOs play within larger oppressive structures and institutions. Especially as there is a narrative that suggests that many activists and Roma are not seizing opportunities to promote best practices and positive examples of success stories, and those who build accounts place focus on the negative rather than the positive. This point will return when I discuss the Drom Kotar Mestipen Roma Women's Association and the "1st and 2nd International Congress: the 'Other Women' " Congresses held in 2010 and 2018. The DKM's work and the two successful congresses focused on the "other women" and included successful stories and best practice examples that are scientifically sound and evidence-based.

When policies are struggling to reach desired results and marginalised people are moving further away from participating actively in society, this isolation requires specialist work. NGOs play an important role in softening the pressure and can bridge and weave the removed back into the centre (Graabe and Groot, 2014). However, as was mentioned there can be instances where NGOs and CSAs may lose sight of the community and the people they aim to work alongside with, due to the cycle of funding schemes and the monopoly of project-based work (Timmer, 2010). Yet, there is a way to ensure that the work is sustainable and indeed focused on reflecting the voice of the key stakeholders. Working to ensure that Roma are not framed as a problem but rather active agents of society is at the crux of my argument. Observing the paradox that may emerge between CSAs/NGOs and the Roma community is relevant, hence my reflection on the tensions that may emerge around the work of NGOs and CSAs.

Language and behaviour often sustain contradictions. As Timmer (2010) has

highlighted that the language used by some NGOs may position the Roma community in a "needy" light promoting a narrative of a community that is unable to organize and be autonomous. This language feeds a paradox which places the NGO as an instrument to support the Roma yet stating that there is a need that requires this specialist attention that can primarily be dealt with by organisations like NGOs and CSAs (Timmer, 2010). Such paradoxical situations may produce tension as the NGOs work is seen as momentarily reducing anxiety but then potentially maintaining a contradiction

> By suppressing the relatedness of contradictions and maintaining the false appearance of order, defences may temporarily reduce anxiety. But suppressing one side of a polarity intensifies pressure from the other. The result is a strange loop. In attempting to reduce the tensions, actors' defensive behaviours initially produce positive effects but eventually foster opposite, unintended consequences that intensify the underlying tension. (Lewis, 2000, p.763)

As has been seen, a paradox can begin to form as institutions that push for humanitarian agendas tirelessly work to secure funding for projects that are meant to lift the Roma community, but some paint a picture of the Roma as needy which thus supports the fragmented identity. Reconciling this paradox is possible if NGOs and CSAs work at being aware of such tensions and paradoxes. Working to ensure that Roma are not framed as a problem but rather active agents of society is at the crux of my argument and an antidote to the above-mentioned loop. What follows is a discussion of the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen which is an example of an NGO that works closely with CSAs and political entities both nationally and internationally, and is underpinned by Communicative Methodology and creates dialogic spaces for the "other women". The work of the DKM brings those grassroots voices forward. The DKM initiates a loop of bringing the CELS from the personal domain to the public sphere.

3.6 "Other women" and the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen

3.6.1 Historical Background

The Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (DKM), which means "A road for freedom" in Romanes, was created in 1999 by a group of Romani and non-Romani women of different ages, academic backgrounds, professional profiles and socio-economic levels. They pursued a common objective: to struggle for the equality and non-discrimination of the Romani women by promoting their participation in educational, social and cultural spaces. The DKM is working directly with women whom can be labelled as the "other women" and who are often times excluded from several *elite* spaces among those academic environments and political public spaces. The DKM is a novel space comprised of diverse groups of women that come together to challenge oppressive institutions and racist ideologies but not through an analysis of injustices but rather grounded in solutions that are evidence-based. Since the DKM works closely with the Community[24] of Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA) at the University of Barcelona and is also an active member of the IPRC Advisory Board, their work is directly linked with problem-solving and best practice at several levels. The DKM has a zero tolerance for gender violence and positions itself with the victim and this value is reflected in their activities.

Drom Kotar Mestipen founding-members defined the following objectives of the Association:

- To work for achieving the equality and the non-discrimination among Romani women and men within the Roma community.

[24] CREA Research Centre See: http://crea.ub.edu/index/about/ CREA was born in the University of Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) with the aim of generating a scientific research that was able to identify theories and practices that overcome inequalities and to train professionals of the maximum excellence in teaching and research, stemming from different ethnic groups, genders, ages and social classes. Back then, CREA achieved its first challenge: to create a centre which was open, diverse, interdisciplinary and ethical.

- To overcome the double discrimination that suffer Romani women (based on gender and on ethnicity) as well as racism and sexism that generates it.
- To collaborate with other associations and organizations that struggle for achieving equality based on the respect and the promotion of the own differences.
- To foster and enabling egalitarian access of Romani women and girls to all educational, social and labour spaces as a way of fostering the equality of rights, opportunities, and results among all cultures.
- To promote the image of the Romani Woman as the one who transmits and encourages the Roma cultural identity.

In April 2016, Maria Emilia Aiello completed her doctoral dissertation *Romani Women Taking the Lead for Social Transformation: The case of the Roma Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen* in the field of sociology. This is a significant contribution to the discipline and feminist discourse as it documents the organisation's history, methodology and was written by an active member of the DKM. Aiello's (2016) findings are directly linked to our conversation on dialogic feminism and underpin a major part of this last section. Her work traces the Association's major contribution to the Romani Women's Movement and to dialogic feminism.

The DKM was the first Romani women's association of Catalonia and was a space where Roma and non-Romani women could work together.

> What united them were the relations of solidarity and friendship they had already created due to sharing some of their daily spaces: some of them were work colleagues; some of them knew each other from an adult education school in which one was the teacher and the other the student, and also, the relationship established through other organizations that supported DKM creation. In this sense, in 1999 two organizations committed with the social inclusion of the Roma and working from very different fields supported the creation of DKM: the private foundation Ujaranza[25] and CREA Research Centre[26]. (Aiello, 2016,

[25] Ujaranza was constituted by Roma and non-Roma people and aimed at promoting the social transformation of ethnic minorities through dialogue and the development of the identity

[26] CREA Community of Researchers of Excellent for All, was founded in 1991.

p. 143)

It is important to note that while the organisation is a women's only organisation, there are both Roma and non-Roma men supporting the organisation's activities, both at its inception and in its current state. Both men and women, either Roma or not, are involved in the several educational and research centres mentioned above which are active in promoting and establishing egalitarian societies for all. This is an important point as it directly opposes the thinking that there is a "Roma issue" or a "women's only" issues that needs to be dealt with by a specific group. Rather, this model suggests that the promotion of a just and equal society is the responsibility of everyone.

3.6.2 Internal Structure

The DKM works at a grassroots level and its current location is noteworthy, as it is based in a predominantly Roma neighbourhood (Bon Pastor) in Barcelona, Catalonia. The organisation is also sharing a physical space with the Federation of Cultural and Adult Education Associations (FACEPA) which is made up of participants (adult learners) in adult education and cultural initiatives in the Spanish region of Catalonia. FACEPA "is an umbrella organization of Catalan associations in which many 'other women' participate" (de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p.45). The DKM aligns itself with organisations and individuals who embrace dialogic feminism and whom offer spaces for the "other women" to contribute and be part of active projects. The DKM's internal structure is rare as it is run primarily by volunteers whom are dedicated to the association's objectives and whom are not "living off" of the monetary gains that an organisation may have from carrying out humanitarian work. It is an association that works at a grassroots level directly with its key beneficiaries.

> DKM distinguishes from what is known in international literature as Paid Staff Non-profit Organizations (PSNPOs) (Smith, 2000) as it is mainly run by volunteers. In relation to its internal structure, DKM fits the majority of

> characteristics of the definition of a "grassroots association" (GA) provided by Smith (2000, p. 804): "locally based, significantly autonomous, volunteer-run, formal non-profit (third sector, civil society) groups that manifest substantial voluntary altruism as groups and use the associational form of organization and, thus, have official membership of volunteers who perform most, and often all, of the work/activity done in and by these non-profits." (Aiello, 2016 p. 150)

Aiello's point on the volunteers raises the questions of membership and how the division of labour is carried out and who delegates the work load. There are two paid staff members who carry out reporting and administrative tasks while also applying and securing funding for those future positions. The DKM relies on a network of solidarity, which will be further discussed in the next chapter when I delve into networks, vulnerable groups and solidarity as pillars of the Romani Women's Movement. However, in this instance it is to reiterate that the DKM is built and thrives off of volunteers who believe in the association's tenets. These same volunteers may also be considered "members" of the DKM as there is no clear definition.

> … not a fixed definition neither a set of established formal criteria to meet in order to consider that one woman is member or not of DKM. Members of DKM are those Romani and non-Romani women who agree and believe in the association's objectives and get involved in its activities in order to achieve them, attending in a regularly basis to the assemblies. It worth explaining here that DKM do not has a clear distinction between those women who are "members" of the association, and those other who are "participants" of their activities. (Aiello, 2016, p.145)

In summary, the DKM relies on a network of volunteers, both male and female, to work closely with Romani women. The activities and DKM's involvement in a number of political, social, academic and public spaces will now be briefly described.

3.6.3 Activities

The DKM develops different types of activities and is involved in several local, national and international platforms. The DKM offers a space where social and cultural exclusion is challenged through the participation of Romani women and girls in various spaces. These can range from local meetings and gatherings, to international events where these Romani women and girls are the main protagonists. The NGO has been active in organising working sessions,

congresses, symposiums, trainings, workshops and 'Roma Student Meetings' also known as "Encounters". These "Encounters" are "periodic meetings of Romani girls, adolescents and adult women who are students in different educational levels with the objective of creating a network of solidarity of emancipating objectives" (de Botton, Puigvert, Sánchez-Aroca., 2005, pp.130-131). There are two ways that one may divide the work that the DKM carries out: those structural that occur regularly and then those that are project based, relying on external funding such as the EU's Erasmus + funding schemes or other similar funding bodies. The three main activities consist of i) the Encounters of Roma Student meetings, ii) the official training courses of monitors and, iii) the International Roma Women's Congresses. What follows is a brief overview of the above-mentioned main activities.

3.6.4 Encounters of Roma Student Meetings

One of the main activities of the DKM are the Encounters of Roma student meetings. On November 30th, 2001, the DKM organised a workshop "Roma Women of Barcelona of the XXI century" in which more than seventy people participated. The workshop which has also been labelled a symposium, was a step forward towards an inclusive and egalitarian feminism (de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005) and created a space for dialogue and reflection about the needs of Romani women from the twenty-first century. The thematic topics discussed included education, the labour market, health and social participation. The key point of this event rests in that the Romani women were dealing with these issues in a public space and determining where they want to go and how they want to get there (Jiménez, Miquel, Redondo, Vargas, 2004). This was the precedent and the most similar event to what would later be the "Encounters of Roma Students of Catalonia". The first meeting of Catalan Roma Students was held in L'Hospitalet in 2000 with only two participants, a Roma girl and her mother. It was in the following year during the celebration of the meeting in Badalona where the girls and Roma women asked the DKM to support an encounter in their neighbourhood, as they felt isolated

and alone. The DKM supported that meeting and the consecutive ones, but it is important to highlight that the local Romani women are the ones that organise the events, from mobilising the women of their community and the thematic content to ensuring catering and childcare for the sessions is available. The DKM's role is to guide and help facilitate aspects of the meetings but the Roma women and girls themselves are the active agents instigating and directing the sessions.

> Regarding the structure of the Romani students' meeting, the event is organized around a selected topic, which has been decided among DKM members and discussed with local organizers, thus, at the beginning of the meeting, there is the presentation of the topic ("the problem"), after that, there is a round-table of experiences with Romani girls and women who have studied in the past, are studying and are what in DKM call "positive role models". And after that, participants are divided in workshops: in each workshop is discussed some of the topics previously debated. At the end, for concluding with the event, there are collected all the conclusions of the workshops and united in a general conclusions of the meeting. (Aiello, 2016, p. 154)

Since 2001, seventeen Catalan Roma Student Meetings-Encounters have been held: L'Hospitalet (Barcelona, 2000); the neighborhood Besós (Barcelona, March 2003), Terrassa (November, 2004), Viladecans (November, 2005), Montcada (2005); the neighborhood of Gràcia (Barcelona, May 2006); La Mina (Barcelona, November 2006), Lleida (January, 2007); Sant Roc (Barcelona, 2007); Sant Cosme, the Prat de Llobregat (January 2009); Reus (June 2009); Badia del Vallés (October 2011); the Bon Pastor neighborhood (Barcelona, October 2012); Campclar (Tarragona, June 2013); Figueres (Girona, October 2014); Terrasa (November 2015). These Encounters feature the Roma women organising and discussing issues that matter, are important and relevant to them. The sessions celebrate the role models and positive success stories and facilitates problem-solving together, moving past the problems and collectively finding solutions. Their effective, intuitive and systematic way of carrying out the Encounters is embedded in the ethos of the DKM's activities.

3.6.5 Official course of monitors of children and youth leisure activities

The second main activity of the Association is the Official course of monitors of children and youth leisure activities. The course has been recognised by the *Generalitat of Catalunya*[27] and is free to all women. The duration of the course includes a total of 308 hours (158 hours theoretical and 150 practical hours) and is entirely voluntary. To date the DKM has organised 8 editions and has supported more than 73 Roma women to obtain the official certification that allows them to work as monitors in school canteens. Such a validation system was born from the Roma women organising and discussing their needs. This was fed back to the Catalan Government which then designed, with the Roma women, the course and implemented the accreditation system.

It is also important to find ways to validate the Roma women's skills and foster ways to ensure they can enter the labour market. For this reason, the goal of the course is twofold: the labour inclusion of the Romani women that do not hold academic qualifications; the inclusion of Roma women in various cultural and learning environments.

> The "Course of Monitors" on the other hand, is a training approved by the Generalitat de Catalunya that is contributing, on the one hand, to the labor insertion of Roma women (in previous editions it achieved an occupation of 70% in the midst of an economic crisis) and, on the other hand, the incorporation of Roma in schools. In this sense, the figure of the Roma woman from the community involved in the school canteen and the extracurricular activities is a very positive element in the identification of the Centers and the insertion of the Roma families. In addition, the school transmits the message that Roma identity and their cultural codes are included in the educational spaces and thus contribute to the process of formation of children. (Garcia-Espinel, 2015, p.837)

The idea of organising these formations arose from the need for many Roma women to be able to take official courses that would facilitate their entry into the labour market, especially those whom do not hold official academic qualifications. Garcia-Espinel (2015) highlights the importance of the presence of Roma women and families in educational spaces and the need

27 Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government) https://web.gencat.cat/ca/inici/

to ensure that Roma women and youth are visible and involved in their children's schools and leisure centres. Thus, these courses allow for the Roma women to find work within the schools, have a presence within those key spaces and include them in the labour market.

The DKM has aimed to ensure that the educational profile of the participating Roma women in the validation systems is not an obstacle for them to complete and obtain official accreditation. The DKM offers the necessary resources and support to accompany the women so that they can successfully complete the official evaluations. It is relevant to note that these women could be labelled the "other women" as most have never written anything similar to an academic work or piece of writing. It is essential that individualised monitoring be carried out and the DKM offers support and assists the women by addressing their concerns, solving any matters arising, as well as dealing with any technical doubts during the writing of the required final report.

3.6.7 International Roma Women's Congresses

The third activity the DKM association includes is the planning of Roma Women's Congresses where the grassroots community members take the lead. These differ from the Encounters as they are major events that have an international reach and strive to have a global impact. In 2010 the DKM organised the "1st International Congress of Roma Women: the 'Other Women' ". This was a Romani woman led Congress organised by the association on October 8-10, 2010, held in Barcelona, Spain. The event welcomed 303 Romani women from 15 countries: Spain, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, France, The Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, England, Italy, Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, and Ukraine who came together in order to dialogue and debate about the difficulties they faced and how to approach them finding common solutions. The focus was not on the problems but rather on the solutions which have and continue to lead to social changes in their communities and beyond. The Congress was structured in three main topics: education, labour market and feminism, dedicating one

day for each topic. During the last day, the Congress focused on the "Romani feminism of 21st century" where Nicoleta Bițu and Montse Sánchez-Aroca introduced Romani feminism that promotes and celebrates solidarity among all the Romani women. At the Congress there was a roundtable of experiences called "Challenges for today, opportunities for tomorrow". In this table four Romani women participated who explained their different experiences working from a dialogic feminism perspective and the paths and approaches they were taking to working to overcome gender violence, to reconcile their family life with their professional training, how they conceived themselves as agents of change of their own families and of the broader Roma community. At the end of the session on Romani feminism the closure of the Congress took place, which consisted in the reading of two documents that collected the main issues that have been debated throughout the three days during all the sessions. These two documents are known as the "Congress' Conclusions" and the "Romani Declaration of Barcelona" and are publicly available on the DKM website[28]. The documents are also included in the appendix of this writing as well as referenced in the Results section. . The conclusions were presented by three Romani women, a young student from Navarra, Spain; a middle-age woman from Portugal, and an adult woman from Seville, Spain. One of the conclusions was regarding education, in which all women agreed on, and also that mothers and grandmothers can study. A woman said, *"my dream is that in the next congress I come with a folder and I will be able to read to you what I will have written down".* This first Congress paved the way for the "2nd International Roma Women's Congress", which took place in March 2018, again in Barcelona, Spain and was supported by the Catalan Government's IPRC. The second Congress is fundamental to this research and so will claim its own space in the Results section. For this

[28] DKM Conclusions and Declaration can be found on their website: http://dromkotar.org/international-congresses/

chapter, it is simply foregrounded to illustrate that the "other women" continue to be active in several social, political and cultural spaces and are integral to the DKM's activities.

3.6.8 Project-based Examples

The DKM has since its inception participated in several competitive calls at national and international levels. Some of the topics explored in those projects cover a range of thematic content and include the promotion of the education of Roma women through the validation of formal and non-formal competencies to encourage their social and labour inclusion, or the promotion of Successful Educational Actions (SEA) to overcome educational barriers for the Roma population of all ages. Specifically, SEA are based on scientific evidence and improve achievement and foster social cohesion. SEA are directly linked to the INCLUD-ED project which achieved social impact according to the criteria set out by the Social Impact Open Repository[29] (SIOR), initiated by the European Commission. SEA are based on dialogic approaches of learning and teaching and are aimed to transform any environment and context. Directly embedded in SEA is the belief that all students-individuals are capable of having academic achievement and through the involvement of families and the community in the educational trajectory and decision-making processes, meaning is created and the individual's cultural intelligence is respected and informs the conversation.

The work carried out in some of the European projects has been coordinated by the DKM and has been recognised by the European Commission through different awards such as

[29] SIOR (Social Impact Open Repository) is an open access repository to display, share and store the social impact of research results. Achieving impact is a growing demand from society to science and to scientists, but this information had not yet been systematically gathered and registered. SIOR is the first open access worldwide registry on social impact, a non-profit initiative to enhance scientific research with social impact. (http://sior.ub.edu)

Gold Award Grundtvig, Success Story or Good Practice examples. More detailed information on the projects can be found on the association's website[30].

The DKM has collaborated on several academic projects which includes the DKM and Roma women, with projects like Brudila Callí (2002-2003), Callí Butipen (2003-2004) and Workaló (2001-2004). The Workaló project led to the institutional recognition of Roma by the European Union (Aiello, Mondejar & Pulido, 2013) and on November 21, 2001 the Roma were internationally recognised by unanimous vote of the Catalan Government (Munte, Serradell & Sordé, 2011). The CREA Research Centre has and continues to promote dialogic feminism and creates spaces where the "other women" can contribute to academic projects. The CREA Research Centre ran the INCLUD-ED Project[31] (2006-2011) which has had several impacts and played a key role in informing scientific contributions that advanced knowledge of overcoming inequalities and was underpinned by CM. The DKM contributes to academic spaces and is integrated in a number of environments that furthers the discourse on gender studies, equality, agency and Roma feminism.

3.6.9 DKM's Involvement at grassroots, national and international level

The DKM sits on a number of platforms and directly informs and advises academic projects and boards that may be locally, nationally or European-based. At the Catalan level, the "DKM participates as an invited association by the Barcelona City Council in the meetings for the Local Council of the Roma People (Consell Municipal del Poble Gitano). The collaboration of the DKM with the City Council started as early as the association's origin" (Aiello, 2016, p.158). As noted in a previous section the DKM is on the Catalan Government's Advisory Board for the IPRC. It also participates on the Board for the Diversity in Audiovisuals

30 DKM projects information online: http://dromkotar.org/projects/

31 INCLUD-ED Project: http://creaub.info/included/

(Mesa per a la Diversitat en l'Audiovisual), which brings people from various backgrounds who represent different cultures with the end goal of fostering an exchange of knowledge, respect and coexistence for people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. And finally, the DKM is involved in the Unitarian Platform against the Gender Violence[32] (Plataforma Unitària contra les Violències de Gènere) which was founded in 2002 to respond to the need to make visible gender violence and demand actions through citizen mobilisation. The platform is made up of 121 entities which have partner status and a large team of people (volunteers, professionals, among others) from all of Catalonia.

At a national level, the DKM sits on KAMIRA[33] which is a Federation of Associations of Romani Women. Since its beginnings in 1999, KAMIRA has been creating networks of Romani women and have carried out a number of no-hate campaigns and have actively encouraged the participation of Roma women from several backgrounds. KAMIRA has been involved in projects that aid the advancement of Roma women on several fronts dealing with thematic content from education to health and wellbeing, and in 2018 published an App called SOS KAMIRA[34] where people can denounce hate crimes. They also produce a number of resources which treat gender violence and trafficking in human beings.

At a European and global level, the DKM has been an active member of several platforms that are directly related to Roma women and/or gender violence. The DKM is an active member of the European Women's Lobby[35] since 2010 in which it has been invited to participate in several conferences, which range from human rights to gender violence. The

[32] https://www.violenciadegenere.org/

[33] KAMIRA Association: http://federacionkamira.es/quienes-somos/
[34] SOS KAMIRA App: http://federacionkamira.es/presentada-la-app-sos-kamira-para-la-tramitacion-de-denuncias-de-odio/
[35] European Women's Lobby See: https://www.womenlobby.org/

DKM was also part of the International Romani Women's Network[36] (IRWN), which brought together Roma women activists from 18 different European countries. IRWN was launched in March 2003 and lobbied governments for better living conditions and to fight for Roma women's rights. The network included Roma, Sinti, Gypsies, and Travellers from West, Central and Eastern Europe. IRWN will be further discussed in the next chapter as it plays a key role in the Roma Women's Movement. The final platform that the DKM sits on is the EU Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human beings[37], whose aim is to eradicate human trafficking and labour and sexual exploitation in Europe and abroad. The platform is a space for discussion, knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and linking organisations providing services and assistance to victims. This European platform aims to ensure sustainable and regular dialogue amongst civil society organisations working to address and prevent the trafficking of human beings. The DKM has been part of this platform since its inception and has been instrumental in providing feedback, drafting rapporteur reports, networking and assisting the regular meetings. More importantly, the DKM has ensured that the voices of those women at a grassroots level are always part of these international meetings.

In summary, the DKM fights for and creates through its dialogic activities, egalitarian spaces for the active participation of Romani women from all socio-economic and academic backgrounds. The "other women" are the main protagonists and are the ones participating in and transforming the several educational, social, political and cultural spaces. Through direct support and contact with the Catalan Government, as well as other political institutions the DKM is able to advocate and highlight the personal wants, hopes and dreams of the "other women" while engaging in public debates and activities. The DKM is a threshold for "other

[36] International Roma Women's Network See: http://www.comminit.com/health_rights_media/content/international-roma-womens-network-irwn-europe
[37] EU Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/media-outreach-els/eu-civil-society-e-platform_en

women" where they can oscillate between the public and private domains. The DKM recognises intersectionality as it aims to fight the oppressive institutions noting the interconnectedness of race, class, gender and ethnic discrimination.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to advance feminist dialogue by critically examining existing approaches to feminism, including the theoretical and practical utility, and in the process, highlighting what important issues it fails to adequately confront in relation to all women. Within the third wave of feminism the concept of the "other women" was introduced and supported by key feminist figures who reflected on and publicly defended the need for the "other women" to hold a space within several academic and public spaces. Transformation and the need to consider intersectionality in relation to Romani women was also discussed. Throughout this chapter, I offered an overview on intersectionality and why the theory of intersectionality and the "other women" hold so much promise in constructing an improved method for reflecting on feminist discourse. Examining intersectionality can generate the knowledge necessary for achieving more inclusive, just, effective and efficient political policies. Arguably, intersectionality and consideration of the "other women" can significantly advance the operationalisation of equity in a number of public and private environments.

As Puigvert claimed there was a dialogic modernity which took place and led to a "feminism of differences" which may also be known as *Dialogic Feminism*. Information societies are important to the work which was discussed in this chapter as it lends itself to better understanding a dialogic framework and the relationship between the two. The information society shifts paradigms and notions around who holds the power (Flecha, Gómez and Puigvert, 2001). It is essential that dominant groups and infrastructures in place not impede the work and the transformation that dialogic work can instigate. There is a potentiality with

dialogic approaches that has been closely explored and researched by Flecha (2001) and with Puigvert (2001) which is evidenced-based. As de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, (2005) have argued "all women have the right to express and defend their opinions, to reflect and to argue their experiences, to build new meanings, deepening jointly in democratic values and in processes of equality they demand" (p.88). Dialogic Feminism can enter academic, political and civil environments which allow for the personal stories to come forward. These personal narratives allow for the "other women" to speak and to be heard within these *elite* environments.

The politics of inclusion and feminism is at a turning point. Butler, Puigvert and Beck-Gersheim (2001) had an open and transformative conversation in an intimate fashion which instigated a change in discourse to be able to dialogue on feminism on an international platform. Butler, Puigvert and Beck-Gersheim's candid reflective process documented in an academic work is powerful and vulnerable. It models the process they are hoping academics, communities and members of society will model. The premise that all women have the capacity to dialogue and be transformative within their circles references Habermas and Chomsky's claim that language has the potential to trigger and transform, and that we can all be active agents of change despite our educational background. Freire and Chomsky brought attention to the use of language as a way to decentralise power and they aimed to create a paradigm shift where more egalitarian language was employed. This egalitarian way of working is constructive and allows for the "other women" to speak their realities. Elite language and academic qualifications are irrelevant as dialogic feminism defends the point that all women have the capacity to speak for themselves and claim their future. This ability to speak from your own personal experience is at odds with the elite institutions but as Habermas, Chomsky and others have defended, those personal stories and voices carry as much weight as academics and other feminist thinkers.

Feminism has to run across literacy, cultures and reach across social and educational classes. Without this interconnected, reflective, egalitarian approach the ability for society to transform is not possible. Dialogic feminism enters into this conversation and considers the voice of all. Dialogic feminism allows for stories and narratives to come forward and to highlight the voices of the "other women" while honouring a more democratic way of living and creating knowledge. Identity is also reimagined through dialogic feminism and a more accurate reflection of the fluidity of the Roma woman's identity. An attempt to better understand the relationship between gender, feminism and social transformations was at the core of this chapter. Social transformations and feminism were not inclusive of all voices until the third wave of feminism and Puigvert's concept of the "other women" was novel and pushed to have those excluded voices take centre stage and to direct feminist discourse in an egalitarian way. With this chapter, I interrogated the need for and the way which the "other women" are vital for social transformation to occur in a number of sectors. Inclusive societies require that binaries are eradicated and divisions are blurred. Puigvert's work on feminist thought has a political impact that shouldn't be ignored and this line of inquiry is important to our discussion of Roma women's feminism. The place that the feminist movement takes up is not frivolous nor insignificant and underpins the Roma Women's Movement within the larger body of feminist work.

Dialogic feminism has the potential to be an antidote to oppressive frameworks and is a point of departure when thinking about Roma women, advocacy work, CSAs, NGOs and the interconnected relationship with these institutions. As was highlighted through the work of the DKM, this association offers an opportunity for the "other women" to engage and build projects that are directly impacting their future. The DKM is a support system for Roma women to not only build a community where they can self-organise but is an association that encourages Roma women to be active agents of change. Through this way of working

alongside the “other women”, academic, political, social and cultural spaces are transformed. As highlighted in the section where the IPRC was described the impact that was attained through working with the “other women” is relevant and important. The IPRC in their 2014 report claimed that they are a benchmark for other Member States and has developed a sustainable methodology that has the ability to be transferred to other scenarios. The work with the CREA Research Centre has also been instrumental in advocating for academic spaces to include the Roma women from grassroots levels. They have not only theorised and based those academic findings on evidence but have led by example and included them in their own projects. Examples of those national and European projects are Brudila Callí (2002-2003), Callí Butipen (2003-2004), Workaló (2001-2004) and the INCLUD-ED Project (2006-2011). Through this work they have been able to highlight the importance, significance and rigor that takes place working alongside the “other women”. In the next chapter, I will go further into social movements, the Roma Movement and look closely at the Romani Women’s Movement.

4.0 Vulnerability, Resistance and Social Transformation: The Roma Women’s Movement

4.1 Chapter Overview

Communities and the individuals that make up those communities are able to socially transform organisations, public institutions and have an effect on social and cultural spaces. In the last chapter we looked closely at feminism and started unpacking gender through the lens of dialogic feminism. With this chapter, I aim to examine self-identification, offer a brief overview of the Roma Movement, the Roma Women’s Movement (RWM) and pinpoint how identity plays out and forms part of the larger movement. This chapter discusses the way vulnerability is produced, distributed and reproduced and what that life cycle may look like and if labels of vulnerability enhances or detracts from the RWM I will also define vulnerability and the way vulnerability affects the manner the Roma community is framed and how this plays out in reality.

There are metanarratives that have taken place which filter into the manner which self-identification and Roma representation plays out. Notions of solidarity are relevant and begs the question to consider if solidarity denies difference? If we are making a case that the Roma community is heterogenous, varied and resides in diverse environments, then does the attempt to paint a picture of solidarity and unity undo all of this work? Solidarity and the RWM doesn't omit information or aim to conceal but rather enhances what is part of the Roma community and celebrates its heterogenous nature and multiplicity of voices. Aidan McGarry's (2010) book argues that acknowledging the value and contribution of the Romani community creates a rich and textured society. He seeks to closely analyse how the Roma organise themselves in public and what are the structures that support or impede this organising. Aidan suggests that collectively Roma are a transnational minority and that individually they are citizens of nation states. This point is relevant to our discussion and the impact that takes place when individuals organise across communities, autonomies and borders. Alexandra Oprea (2004), Roma feminist and activist, has argued that an analysis of social problems must be performed from the bottom up and "the marginalization of Romani women is a consequence of the exclusivist feminist and antiracist politics in European political spheres (2004, p. 29). Working from a grassroots perspective is a shift from the burgeoning model which has focussed on developing a select few Roma. According to Kerieva McCormick "Romani feminism has the potential to be an audible voice regarding embodiment, racialisation, sexuality, and subjectivity (McCormick, 2017, p.104) and through the opening up of these discussions, the vulnerability of the Roma women and the oppressive institutions, their realities become exposed. Further into this chapter, I will outline the Roma Movement and the Roma women's movement.

The Roma community has organised in a number of ways and built on mechanisms that have either been born organically, from the ground up or via outside actors encouraging a change. According to Kwadrans (2017) "The Romani community has been subject to social

transformations as a result of the Gypsy elite's concerted attempts to create a homogenous Romani identity" (Kwadrans, p.51). While there may be "elites", to use Kwadrans term, these elites were not alone in their fight for social justice. A brief discussion of "Roma elites" will take place later in the chapter. Our focal point remains in highlighting that the grassroots Roma community were and continue to be active agents in ensuring that social transformation takes place at several levels. Our discussion will include a brief overview of social transformations and the different ways that movements shape themselves. A focus on vulnerability and its relationship to feminism and the Roma community will add to the discussion of transnational feminism that is part of the RWM. Capturing the often excluded and invisible voices and ensuring that their voices count is central to the vulnerability paradigm which helps us reorient what justice is and how we address people's needs and their capabilities and abilities.

There is an unexplored potential with vulnerability and social movements. Vulnerability can reorient several systems and can exacerbate critical situations and cultural tensions. Rescuing the "weak" and vulnerable becomes a component and thus victimisation comes into the conversation. Vulnerability can exacerbate violence and tension and analysing this in tandem to agency and social transformation, allows us to have a better understanding and a more rounded view of the situation. The RWM reflects the applied nature of this idea, of transforming vulnerability into agency and witnessing the social shifts that take place as a result of this stance. The RWM is theoretical as well as a combination of tangible and intangible work. Romani scholarship and discourse must align with dialogic feminism if we want to better understand these theoretical, tangible and intangible components. Vulnerability and feminism at first glance can seem to be at odds with one another as vulnerability may appear to "rob agency" (Bulter, Gambetti and Sabsay, 2016). However, the act of being in a vulnerable position allows for an opportunity to be socially active and engage in actions that lead to social transformation. Vulnerable spaces allow for agency as they have the potential to turn what is

seen as a weakness or injustice into a source of strength, and a guiding compass to push for change. In Chapter Two, I looked at *Romaphobia* and *Anti-Gypsyism* and the way that a fractured identity comes into the negative projections of the Roma community. Roma women and children can be labelled for their vulnerable situation and we saw that the focus may never move past that discourse. Through dialogic feminism the Roma women and children are revealing and transforming their situations into positive situations and reframing that fractured identity. Angéla Kóczé and colleagues (2018) suggest relocating Romani women from the periphery of academic exchanges to the centre of debates and social discussions, as there is a great deal of information to learn from the Roma women's movement. There are few authors who observe and comment on Romani gender politics and those that are tend to be Romani women. "Critical social sciences and oppressed are keen to dwell on invisible, weak and oppressed in society and in political power relations (Kóczé et al., 2018, p.1). Roma women are building and contributing to inclusive human rights systems through consistently fighting hatred, racism, sexism, violence against women, educational segregation, poverty and social exclusion. They have been paving a way for a discourse which sees them and their voices included. As has been discussed, dialogic feminism lends itself to celebrating these voices and making the intangible tangible and part of the larger discourse. There is a strength that can emerge from being vulnerable and parts of this chapter will illustrate how Romani women have turned their vulnerable status and used those labels as an impetus for social transformation, while also offering insight into the intersectionality of the Roma women's precarious situation. Resilience enters our discussion as I look at the macro level of systems and the way that they affect Roma women. A focus on the micro level of self-identification and how agency is carried out at individual levels is also included in this chapter.

4.2 Vulnerability and Roma Women

Vulnerability should be considered in relation to a range of fields and objects, infrastructures and policies which are interconnected and dependant on one another. Understanding why looking at the intersectionality of differing factors and the manner which they play out and exist within their context is vital to pushing the research and the discourse on vulnerability, agency and Roma women. This point of inquiry deserves more attention and has not been fully explored until recently. Poucki and Bryan (2014) who focus on globalisation and the intersections between politics, economics and cultural forces stress that "victimization is not one-size-fits all and not evenly shared within each community" (Poucki & Bryan, 2014, p. 147). As the Roma are a heterogenous community that develop their autonomy in differing ways their vulnerability might also be seen from various perspectives. Vulnerability in relation to politics is not often considered but Judith Butler and Alasdair MacIntyre are political theorists whom are the exception (Knight, 2013). Amber Knight offers a brief state of the art on vulnerability in relation to politics and suggests that the concept of vulnerability is not novel and has been discussed by philosopher Thomas Hobbes among others.

> Increasingly, however, there has been a growing interest in vulnerability in contemporary theorizing on academic subjects as diverse as public health, climate and geographical studies, security studies, and public policy. Although few contemporary political theorists have directly tackled the concept, several scholars in related disciplines have recently advanced vulnerability as a lens through which researchers can think about a range of political issues, including human rights, (in)equality, the relationship between the biological human body and the social environment, and the state's obligation to ensure the well-being of its citizens. (Knight, 2013, p. 16)

This concept of vulnerability has the potential to inform social sciences and the humanities. Vulnerability studies explores political frameworks and sheds light on the intersectionality of injustices. Vulnerability may be seen and felt by any member of society at any given point but it has the potential to affect certain communities in a more intense way. "While human vulnerability is a shared condition, it is not shared equally in a context of inequality. Political,

social, and economic institutions are designed to respond to some people's vulnerabilities better than others, so risk and exposure is manifested in uneven ways" (Knight, 2013, p. 18). In 2016, Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay published an edited volume entitled *Vulnerability in Resistance* where they offer a theoretically ambitious collection which treat a variety of topics linked to human rights, activism and feminism which are considered via the resistance and vulnerability lenses. "We would like to reconceptualise the discussion of vulnerability in such a way that it links with paternalism or even with discourses of victimisation and are critically ameliorated, precisely to make room for an analysis of the role of vulnerability in strategies of resistance" (Butler, Gambetti & Sabsay, p. 6). Rethinking vulnerability and the dominant conceptions of the term, which sees the vulnerable as victims or passive is being challenged by socially disadvantaged groups, and the Roma women are an example of this point. Vulnerability, resistance and social transformation can be interconnected and rather than presuppose the idea that paternalism is the site of agency, reframing this conception and stating that vulnerability is actually an active motivator for agency reflects the Roma women's movement and its players.

Human rights activist and Romani feminist and activist Alexandra Oprea (2004) has advocated for an analyses of social problems and has insisted that these issues be examined from the bottom up through looking at experiences of those who are marginalized and multi-burdened. She has argued that "race, class and gender dynamics place Romani women in a precarious position" (Oprea, 2004, p. 33). Oftentimes Roma women are seen as a vulnerable community which are placed in a subordinate position to others in society. "The existing evidence suggests that ethnic minority and especially Roma women are the most vulnerable to multiple discrimination and present higher risks of social exclusion and poverty than the women of the native population and minority men." (Corsi, Crepaldi, Samek, Boccagni, Vasilescu, 2010, p. 5). Judith Butler (2016) suggests that there is something risky and true in

claiming that women and socially disadvantaged women are vulnerable. If looking specifically at Roma women, there is research that shows the in-depth intersectional discrimination that the community faces and can be classified in the following way: for being Roma, women, socially-economically disadvantaged persons, and for being people with low educational levels (Sordé, Serradell, Puigvert, & Munte, 2013, Hancock, 2008; Sordé Martí, Munté, Contreras, & Prieto-Flores, 2012). Also, in the case of Roma children and youth, previous studies have pointed out the special exclusion of this vulnerable group, as young people and for being Roma (European Parliament, 2015; Greenberg, 2010; Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). However, what Butler and others are suggesting is that one's vulnerable and precarious situations don't have to be seen as negatives. Vulnerability is not a sign of weakness and can be a community's greatest strength. Having the courage to be present and be seen when one has no control over the outcome, is powerful and transformative. The RWM is a great example of this point where their precarious situations are turned into spaces for transformation. Citizens whom are in vulnerable and precarious environments may be disadvantaged by political systems that resent spending social resources to accommodate their needs. Moreover, in the previous chapter I framed dialogic feminism and highlighted how that the concept pushes for all members of society to be seen as equal parts of society, which can therefore reshape the manner which citizens in society are seen and labelled. Butler's corpus of work has touched on several topics and precarity and precariousness is a common theme. Knight suggests that Butler "makes a heuristic distinction between precariousness and precarity, emphasizing that by definition human vulnerability is affected by power relations. While human lives are universally vulnerable, precariousness is not distributed equally and is therefore experienced in particular ways" (Knight, 2013, p. 16) Exposing the precariousness of human life might also highlight the interconnectedness and interdependency that we have with our environments and with one another. Through understanding the vulnerability of a community and their precarious

circumstances, might also offer insight into what motivates someone to become an activist or to organise and push for social change. Seemingly the reasons are varied and will range depending on the social, political, cultural, religious and ethnic background. One's ideologies can be instigators motivating individuals and as Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert (2001) suggest there are several ways into the world and there needn't be one way but rather an appreciation of several ways of doing transformative work. To better understand the reasons why the Roma, and in particular Roma women, have chosen to organise and are continuing to push for change, social movements through a general framework must be touched on.

4.3 Social Movements- a brief overview

Social movements can have lasting changes in society and require organisation, leadership and resources. The resources mustn't necessarily be monetary and can take a variety of forms such as people's time and effort, among others. Movements can respond to various needs of the actors, the political, social and environmental situations and the focus and end goal of the social movement itself. There are a number of different types of social movements and several categories have been created to help better understand and organise them, as there is no single or standard typology of how to define a social movement. Researchers may employ a variety of research instruments to attempt to define the several dimensions of the movement and may aim to question if social movements have a beginning, middle and an end. Scholars might also focus on the fact that a social movement may be ongoing and that the actors evoke a change or shift in thinking without being able to fully understand the outputs of that change. Social movements can affect not only those directly implicated in the movement but can extend beyond its initial scope. The affects that a social movement can have on those not involved, for example, the press and individuals outside of the cause, should also be considered.

There are life cycles to movements that allow researchers to better understand the cause and effects that a movement may have within an environment. There are different types of

social movements and theories and one academic who has focussed on social movements is Joshua Atkinson, whose research illustrates the ways in which activists utilised alternative media constructs contexts for resistance.

> Serious and rigorous academic study of social movements began in the 1950s with the work of Leland Griffin, who conceptualized 'historical movements; as attempts to create or abolish institutions in society through the art of rhetoric. The early years of social movement research were shaped by the debates that raged between Communication scholars, most notable rhetoricians such as Leland Griffin and Malcolm Sillars, and social scientists in the fields of Sociology and Social Psychology. (Atkinson, 2010, p.3)

Sociologists Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (2006) claim that just as "organizational characteristics of social movements vary, there is no single model accounting for organizational changes (De della Porta & Diani, 2006, p.150). American sociologist Herbert Blumer (1951) suggested that there were four stages to a social movement "social ferment," "popular excitement," "formalization," and "institutionalization" and he classified social movements into *general* and *specific* categories and suggested that general movements would involve a change of values across society, for example as seen with the women's movement; and the second type of movement is specific which is focussed, such as the reproductive rights or abortion movement. Jonathan Christiansen (2009), an independent scholar whose research focuses on social movements, cultural resistance and political discourse, suggested that the four stages could be divided in the following way: emergence, coalescence, bureaucratization, and decline. Nevertheless, there are several models and the aim of this section is not to generate a typology for social movements but rather to offer a global understanding to some generic elements that can underpin the thinking around social movements, highlighting some key figures that are relevant to our discussion on Roma women's rights and the movement.

Movements have a form of organisation and a degree of temporal continuity in which the goals and objectives of the movement are articulated, either via an organisation or the actors themselves. This process can exist over a period of time and can live within non-institutional

actions such as protests or institutional actions such as voting rights. When looking historically at sociologists that argued for "ordinary" people to participate in social movements, sociologist Charles Tilly claimed that "a social movement is not a group, a quasi-group, or a group- like composite, but a complex form of social interactions" (Tilly, 1993-1994, p. 5). More specifically, Tilly saw that social movements led to democratisation and outlined three components that were necessary: i) Campaigns ii) Repertoire and iii) Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment (WUNC) displays. More clearly, for Tilly a campaign needed to be present and a sustained public effort. Repertoire could be defined as public demonstrations, public statements and work with coalitions and associations. WUNC display stands for Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment to themselves or their constituencies. These three components were a major vehicle of Tilly's understanding of social movements and in his own words, in the 2004 publication *Social Movements 1768-2004* he outlined the elements as such:

> "As it developed in the West after 1750, the social movement emerged from an innovative, consequential synthesis of three elements:
> 1. a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (let us call it a campaign);
> 2. employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering (call the variable ensemble of performances the social movement repertoire); and
> 3. participants' concerted public representations of WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies (call them WUNC displays)." (Tilly, 2004, pp.3-4)

Tilly's understanding of what social movements are seems quite prescriptive and is linked to democratisation. In considering the future of social movements Tilly (2004) argued that any social movement, despite its scale, would benefit humanity and more precisely "the broad availability of social movements signals the presence of democratic institutions and usually promotes their functioning. It provides a crucial channel for groups, categories, and issues that

currently have no voice in a regime's routine politics to acquire visible places in public politics" (Tilly, 2004, pp. 157-158).

Anthropologist David Aberle is another important figure who provided four typologies for social movements and his contributions are significant to consider. Doug McAdam and David A. Snow's (2010) collection of *Readings on Social Movements* describes in great length the four classifications and identify Aberle's typologies in the following way: alternative, redemptive, reformative and revolutionary. *Alternative movements* are focussed on self-improvement and limited to specific changes to individual beliefs and behaviour. *Redemptive movements* are tied to meaning seeking and the goal is to provoke inner change of spiritual growth in individuals. Reformative movements change something specific about the structure and aims to bring forward a more egalitarian relationship. Denton Morrison developed *Relative deprivation theory* (RDT) and sought to understand why people join social movements. He argued that people joined a social movement because they were not receiving what was fair and just. RDT is grounded in thinking that people deserve better or want to address an injustice and this is widely employed in the social movement literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Yet there can be a disconnect between those that join and those that take forward the movement. It may be seen that the most affected stand the most to lose and therefore are unable to be on the front line and actively instigating the change. There have been historical examples where the most deprived and the most affected became the actors of change and redirected the future. The relative deprivation theory implies that there is an inability to consume the resources and refers to a group of people who feel deprived of something. Joan Neff Gurney and Kathleen J. Tierney (1982) described relative deprivation theory in relation to social movements and offered a critical perspective on the intersection of the two.

> Beginning in the 1960s a number of social movement (SM) scholars used the RD concept in both theoretical and empirical work. This emphasis peaked late in that decade, with numerous published studies linking urban civil disturbances to various objective and subjective deprivations. In contrast with that period,

> which emphasized social psychological aspects of movements, like RD, the decade of the 1970s has been marked by an increasing concern with SM organization (cf. Oberschall, 1973, 1978; Gamson, 1975; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977). Currently, attempts to link the emergence and growth of movements to widespread feelings of deprivation appear to have given way to analyses which emphasize the contribution of social solidarity to movement mobilization (Tilly, 1978; Traugott 1978) and the ways movements function as organizations, recruiting members and mobilizing other resources to achieve collective ends. (Gurney and Tierney, 1982, p.34)

When examining the literature on social movements it is not common practice to use "relative deprivation explicitly or implicitly as a central variable in the explanation of social movements, and thus also to explain the processes of social change that are engendered by social movements" (Morrison, 1971, p. 675). *Resource mobilization theory* approaches movements from a different angle and removes the focus on the individuals and focuses on the factors that support or hinder the action from taking place. Understanding that resources have a major role to play in the way that social movements realise themselves and the group of people organising may require money, materials, access to media, a strong universal base and a leader to unite the members and convince others to organise.

Movements can mark a form of before and after, and can instigate a change in either a system, its actors, society or other social, cultural and political arenas. In the 1980s Michael McGee claimed that scholars placed too much of a focus on social movements as a "phenomenon" and neglected to see the "meaning" of a social movement. He maintained that examining how social movements existed was central and focussing on who studies them and why they are studied is also important. McGee has argued that social movements should not be the premise for beginning research but rather a "carefully considered and well-argued inference" (McGee, 2001, p. 133). Joshua D. Atkinson (2010), whose research focusses on illustrating the ways in which activists utilise alternative media to construct contexts for communicative resistance, states that according to McGee, attention was placed on the individuals within the movements and not the meanings and actions that took place outside of

the actual movement. Movements and social changes are seen as synonymous but they are quite different. Movements can lead to change and sustained social change can lead to a social movement but it is important to make a distinction between the two. Theorist Leland Griffin started looking at social movements in the early 1950s but returned to his definition and "instead of conceptualising a social movement as a cycle marked by historical events, Griffin claimed that movements serve a dialectical function in society as they allow for debate about policies and institutions" (Atkinson, 2010, p. 5). This dialectical function of social movements will return when we look closely at the RWM.

Activism is a wide and multifaceted concept that is used in a variety of disciplines and in particular social movements. Activism plays a central role in democracy and Atkinson (2017) and Stephan Lucas (1980) suggest that "social movements and activism are integral to the different social and political discourses that effectively shape communities and culture" (Atkinson, 2017, p. 5). This synergistic relationship between the two ideas surfaces when looking closely at the RWM and in an effort to contextualise the movement a better understanding of *collective behaviour* and *social action* is needed. Social movements were seen as phenomenon and collective behaviour was the essence of that movement. Atkinson states that "social movements are constructed from the collective actions of people or organizations that have come together in order to build an alternative understanding about those issues" (Atkinson, 2017, p. 13). Ideological assumptions and frameworks have evolved over time and social movements may be planned and have concentrated group action that may bring formal and informal activists together to articulate ideas of change. Social movements may offer a space where there is a collective identity where a group of people may feel part of a larger group or organisation. Power imbalances are a major part of social movements as there is a disconnect between the majority and those organising in an effort to affect some form of change. The redistribution of social resources and the act of full citizenship and redefining

social values and the desire to deconstruct hierarchies, may also be central to a social movement.

Up to this point we have seen that social movements have developed and evolved over time and can be described in a number of differing ways. Blumer (1969) suggested that social movements were lacking form and had an element of being poorly organised with a degree of spontaneity. Resource mobilization theorists have suggested that "movements are extensions of institutionalized actions and focus on a movement's attempt to reform the predominant social structure" (Hannigan, 1985, p. 438). Within the French School of thought social movements shift gears and what is known as the *New Social Movement* concept begins to take shape. Leading figures arise as French sociologists offer different perspectives based on the political, social and cultural environments. The notable Alain Touraine's 1978 book entitled *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements,* asserts that social movements are denouncing the traditional thinking that linked social movements with institutions. This world-renowned sociologist claimed that *sociology of action* "marked a breakdown with the previous traditions in the study of social movements. For Touraine the social movement is not created by the opposition, rather by a process of subjectivation" (Aiello, 2016, p. 35). Another key sociologist that falls under this category of a *New Social Movement* and influenced by Touraine, is Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells whose research focusses on the information society, communication and globalisation. In Manuel Castells' trilogy *The Power of Identity: The Information Age* (Castells, 2009), he saw that social movements were spaces of *cultural communes* which were directly affected by the information age and a *network society*. With the trilogy he does not aim to "present a formal, systematic theory of society, it proposes new concepts and a new theoretical perspective to understand the trends that characterize the structure and dynamics of our societies in the world of the twenty-first century" (Castells, 2009, p.xix). For him social changes are equally as striking as the technological and economical

processes of transformation that take place in those domains.

> The "action theory" of Alain Touraine and Manuel Castells' theory of urban movements together constitutes a social movement paradigm which differs significantly from both the traditional collective behaviour explanation and the newer resource mobilization model. (Hannigan, 1985, p. 435)

Another key figure is Alberto Melucci who published *Nomads of the Present* (1989) where he defined a model of *collective identity* which was based on his studies of social movements of the 1980s. He too was influenced by Touraine's ideas of "collective action" and built on ideas of collective identity suggesting that the notion was malleable, shared and interactive while it is produced by several individuals or groups. For Melucci "movements 'speak before': they announce what is taking shape even before its direction and content has become clear. This phenomenon-oriented approach has largely become the primary view of social movements held within contemporary Western society" (Atkinson, 2017, p.17). Aiello postulates that according to Melucci "a social movement can be considered an individual and collective reappropriation of the meaning of the action that is at stake in the forms of collective involvement, and this is what makes the very experience of change in the present a condition for creating a different future" (Aiello, 2016, p. 31).

As is apparent, there is a vast amount of literature available which very closely dissects the specific movements outlined above. Returning to the RWM I recall sociologists David Snow and Doug McAdam's (2010) point that a social movement has a degree of continuity and development and its actors help develop the course and character of the social movement. Thus, a social movement may include a number of actors and have a variety of outputs that instigate change or lead to transformational shifts. The RWM has had a degree of longevity and has allowed Roma women, this disenfranchised community, to gather and to construct a social movement that is comprised of activists, researchers, community members, political figures, NGOs and civil society actors. László Fosztó is a social anthropologist and ethnographer who has contributed a vast amount of literature to Roma studies. His work has

ranged from studying religious and ritual revitalisation in Transylvania during a post-socialist period and recently has focussed on Roma migration and socioeconomic inclusion. In his chapter *Encounters at the Margins: Activism and research in Romani Studies in post-socialist Romania"* (2018) Fosztó claims that Roma activism is best understood as part of and a function of civil society. He suggests that Roma activists should "put the state back into the equation and investigate the dynamic interactions between activists, representatives of state, academics, and society at large" (Fosztó, 2018, p. 66). Fosztó also warns that Romani activism cannot be observed within a single State, even though there are particularities observable to each localised community, since the actions are connected to other sites and are situated within a larger Romani Movement and narrative of activism. Using Fosztó's approach, at this juncture I aim to return to the Roma Movement and look at ways the community has organised and how activism has evolved within the larger Roma Social Movement.

4.4 Activism and the Romani Rights Movement

Social Movements lead to many dramatic changes in society and scholars have invested time in trying to better understand their birth and development, the participants and its lifecycle. As previously mentioned Leland Griffin studied how activist groups can serve a dialectical function in society and looked at how issues are debated and policies are explored in a more democratic fashion. "For Griffin, activism is an important component for a vibrant democracy, as the debates between activists who sought change and their counterparts who sought to protect the status quo often brought a plethora of information to the citizenry" (Atkinson, 2017, p. 6). The shared ideas can be the impetus for the actors to come together but understanding the impact and the effectiveness of that activism, is difficult to measure. In 2010, Andrews, Ganz, Baggetta, Han and Lim set out to understand why some civic associations are more effective than others and used a multidimensional framework to assess the different entities. They looked specifically at public recognition, member engagement and leader development

and what they found was that engaging committed activists who build work independently, have 'strong programmatic activity' and build organisational capacity, end up achieving effective outcomes. The authors also bring attention to where focus has been placed when analysing movements, suggesting that broadening the focus would benefit Movement studies.

> Movement scholars have developed increasingly sophisticated analyses of the ways that movements shape institutional change. But they have paid insufficient attention to the internal mobilization of voluntary effort, the structure of decision making, and the role of leadership. We thus extend recent attention to the policy impact of movements to a broader examination of organizational effectiveness at developing leaders, mobilizing participation, and gaining recognition in the public arena. (Kenneth T. Andrews, Marshall Ganz, Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han and Chaeyoon Lim, 2010, p.1193)

Andrews and colleagues argue that political contexts and the availability of human and financial resources are important but what is vital to effective mobilisation is leadership and organisational factors.

People need to be central to the changes happening at local, regional, national and international levels. The nuances and lived experiences are an integral component that unites people and allows them to find their common bonds and relate to one another. Listening to each other and allowing spaces for the often silenced to take centre stage, is important to the Roma movement and has been an integral part of the movement's development and process. Asymmetry in power relations can encourage civil and social movements to be part of the knowledge production processes which can influence systems that control political and social structures. Political theorist Huub van Baar has focussed on the Roma community and argued for interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches for examining issues of concern to Roma communities and the social, economic and political challenges they face. He reminds us that the phrase "knowledge is power" is a post structuralist expression that highlights the importance of knowledge acquisition for achieving and negotiating power politics. This point is central to my argument which states that actors of social movements must be involved in the

decision-making processes. van Baar (2013) has argued that activists and various discourses, strategies, techniques and expertise travel across "disjunctive circuits" and coalitions which are a productive source for developing new kinds of policy. *Travelling activism*, according to van Baar (2013), disrupts mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation and is built off of the process of doing, and trial and error.

Activists movements' rely on several types of actors and are inclusive of a number of individuals. Sam Beck and Ana Ivasiuc's *Roma Activism: Reimagining Power and Knowledge*, aims to directly engage with the contradictions of past and contemporary forms of activism in relation to the Romani Rights Movement. The editors argue that bridging reflexivity and practice allows for *reflexivity as practice* within what they call "Romani activism" and academic knowledge production spaces. The book collates a number of authors that "explore ambiguous legacies and contradictions of certain forms of activism, as well as of certain ways of conducting research, framing it, or aiming at transposing research into policy" (Beck and Ivasiuc, 2018, p. 8). Rather than neatly organising Romani activism into a coherent and/or chronological manner, the volume opens up the questions around Romani activism and disrupts discourse and pulls in ideas that sit at the margins of Romani activism studies. van Bar (2018) asserts that the "Europeanization" of the Roma community has enabled some "Roma activists engaged in governmental boards, advocacy groups, activist networks and grassroots movements- to become critical players in the public and political debates about their status" (van Bar, 2018, p. 26). The inclusion of the Roma community in these spaces is an important component and as Renouard (2013) suggests "activists are very interested in how the Roma are labelled because official depictions constitute the symbolic spaces in which the Roma are able to propose new discourse and new claims" (Renouard, 2013, p. 124). Allowing the community to propose new solutions and become part of the problem-solving is essential. This echoes the work that was highlighted in chapter three when the Integrated Plan of Catalonia's

Advisory Board was discussed. Including Roma NGOs, Civil Society Actors as well as Roma leaders from the community, was a major part of the Advisory Board's framework and allowed for changes to take place at both local and national levels. Lazlo Fosztó (2018) has claimed that there should be a *shared responsibility* between the Roma and non-Roma working together to find a solution to the several tensions and injustices that exist. In his chapter *Encounters at the Margin* (2018) Fosztó offers two case studies which speak to his engagement with Roma related activism. One case in particular highlights a pro-Roma protest which was organised in Mierurea Ciuc (Hungary) where fifty to sixty people marched on the streets with non-violent protest banners. The banners had such messages as "Harghita above everything, above justice and human rights!?" (Fosztó, 2018, p.73) and Fosztó suggests that the protest was misunderstood and seen as a provocation, where its intention was to demonstrate and protest against human rights violations. Those that witnessed the protest saw it as an anti-Hungarian event. Roma sociologist Nicolae Gheorghe and Gergő Pulay were both in attendance and experienced the tensions first hand. Immediately after the event they produced an *Analysis report of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary and Romania* (2009) where they argued that the interpretations of the demonstrations mustn't be neglected but rather encouraged and openly brought into the conversation and candidly considered within the wider discussion. Gheorghe and Pulay, rather than divide and compartmentalise what occurred at the demonstrations into binaries, decided to arrange future discussions and used this idea of "shared responsibility" and allowed it to become "the catalyst and headline for a meeting convened later that summer" (Fosztó, 2018, p. 74). This example illustrates how members from the Roma community reframed a tense situation and used the reality of a situation to organise a workshop which invited several Roma organisations and activists as well as other non-Roma to sit down and dialogue about the tense realities experienced by the Roma. Their constructive, flexible and

inclusive approach is an example of their "shared responsibility" concept and willingness to allow actual events to feed into Roma activism and guide their thinking.

The Romani Rights Movement (RRM), may also be known as the Romani Movement, exists in a liminal space where different disciplines and discourses situate it in a variety of ways. Adina Schneeweis specialises in international communication, race, ethnicity and visual representations of communities within the press. Her research focus on the Roma in European press and within activist movements has contributed to the discourse on RRM. She has looked closely at NGO advocacy discourses for Roma rights, power, gender and ethnic spaces and also at the RRM. Schneeweis (2013) has claimed that the RRM has not received enough public and scholarly attention compared to other social movements.

> Advocacy for Roma rights has received thin public and scholarly attention when compared to other social movements, for various reasons that include the non-threatening display of resistance and public dissent, the absence of visible political mass movement, or of a threat to national and territorial integrity, and most evidently the lack of media attention to its cause. (Schneeweis, 2013, p.150).

van Baar (2013) has defined the Romani Movement to include "a large number of scholars who analyse and publish on Roma-related topics have been involved – as experts, advisors, monitors, consultants, mediators or activists" (van Baar, 2013, p.198). Several scholars whom have crossed the abovementioned categories would include Andrej Mirga, Nicolae Gheorge, Ian Hancock, among others. There are several entry points into the Roma Rights Movement and sociologist Emilia Aiello, whom focussed on promoting the Roma women's social movement has described the RRM in the following way.

> One of the ways to delve into the origins of the RRM is by locating the first Romani organizations that emerged for the struggle of the "Roma issue" under a clear international approach, something well-documented by the Romani scholars (Hancock, 2002; Matras, 1998; Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997). As Ian Hancock explains (2002), the Romani people have organized themselves to struggle for the betterment of their living conditions and the end of oppression exerted among them by feudal states first, and the nation-states later, at least since mid-18th century. (Aiello, 2016, p.57)

The RRM is an ongoing fight and the long, hard-fought series of campaigns which includes both setbacks and victories, is developing on a daily basis. This ongoing movement should include both Roma and non-Roma engaging to find constructive solutions, but this is still not the norm. McGarry (2010) has brought attention to who can "legitimately" represent and articulate the needs of the Roma. He highlights that there are tactics and repositories that have been developed by different networks, and suggests that through the development of NGOs, CSAs and other platforms there is an increased involvement of the Roma.

In 2019 the RomArchive[38] launched its digital archive which included narratives told by the Roma themselves. The resource is accessible via an online platform and focusses on countering stereotypes and prejudices with facts that are underpinned by evidence-based research. The archive is not a comprehensive platform of all things Roma related but is an entry point into the multifaceted community. The RomArchive encourages users to explore several collections and to engage with material that is academically sound. Within the RomArchive the Civil Rights Movement section closely documents selected local examples which illustrate the progress the last two generations of Roma activists and community leaders have made. While the RomArchive has been designed and curated by Roma leaders, the Archive has attracted a lot of attention that raises questions around identity politics. Indeed, digital archives like the RomArchive which includes work and writing by Roma is valid but Timmer (2010) warns that one must be careful of the narrative that is built and how it exists within the wider discourse. McGarry (2010), Mirga and Gheorghe (1997), and Barany (1998), all reflect that the effectiveness of a movement relies on a number of factors ranging from the organisational

38 RomArchive: https://www.romarchive.eu/en/
The RomArchive collection contains items from ten archive sections: Visual Art, Dance, Film, Flamenco, Theatre & Drama, Literature, Music, Romani Civil Rights Movement, Politics of Photography and Voices of the Victims. Focusing on self-representation, the objects have been collected from private collections, museums, archives and libraries around the world. It is important to note that I was part of the Dance team and also contributed writing to the archive and supported the curatorial work and several of the activities.

components to the leadership and the actions of the State. Social movements can be held together by ethnicity but it is merely a starting point. The RRM has not been seen as a threat to stability (Vermeersch, 2006, Schneeweis 2013) and political spheres have not fully acknowledged the RRM and taken it serious enough. This is a valuable point and as I move into discussing Roma Civic Emancipation and framing its historical trajectory and relevance to Roma Women and the broader RRM, the political identity of the Roma also comes into this analysis.

4.5 Roma Civic Emancipation and Identity

Roma issues have become controversial topics in European discourse, especially academia and political groups. Despite the last two decades seeing an increase in funnelling resources towards the Romani community, there are still gaps in the history and in the way that information is disseminated. *Roma Civic Emancipation* seems like a modern construct that is directly tied to Roma nationalism and the 1970s movement which involved several Roma activists, leaders and organisations, but new research is beginning to show that this is not the case. Marushkova and Popov have worked in the Roma Studies field for over three decades and published widely on Roma in Bulgaria, the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe. Their major publications have included the first monographs on Roma history and ethnography of Roma in Bulgaria (1997) and Roma in the Ottoman Empire (2000). Marushokova has also looked closely at Roma folklore and oral histories. “The ‘real’ beginning of the Roma movement for civil emancipation is often connected with the First World Roma Congress held in London in 1971” (Marushkova and Popov, 2017, p. 7) However, Marushkova and Popov (2017) argue that there were micro silos of activist work that instigated the larger movement. The authors suggest that the Nineteenth-century Balkans, within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire were instigators of change within their own environments. During the Ottoman Empire the Roma were full-fledged subjects of the Sultan and since the fifteenth century had civil rights

which is a stark difference to Roma in Central and Western Europe. Marushkova and Popov further explore civic emancipation in Bulgaria in the early 1900s and reference the "Gypsy Conference" of 1901 held in Vidin. A key figure in this work was Dr Marko Markov (1891-1939) who was a known for his eccentricity, intelligence and ability to speak multiple languages. In 1906 there was another Congress which was born out of a reaction to a petition which demanded equal rights for the Roma. The petition was presented to the chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly and as it went unnoticed a decision was taken that Congresses were necessary to convene the voices of the community and to demand that they be heard.

> The congress attended by 50 delegates, representatives of Roma Communities from various towns in the country-…took place in the San Stefano restaurant in Sofia on the 19th of December in 1905. Those unable to attend congress in person sent telegrams to the congress. (Marushkova and Popov, 2017, p.15)

Another important part of this story is the First Roma organisation that was recorded in Bulgaria in the 20th century. This phenomenon ushered in a new way of seeing the Roma as they started participating in public spaces. The first historical source which officially registers the organisation is again in Vidin. The organisation's priorities were focussed around citizenship and status but this must be observed within the context of the times where communities were classified according to their ethnicity within the new Bulgarian state. Marushkova and Popov go on to discuss the organisations that were created during the two World Wars: 1919 (Sofia, Bulgaria), 1926 (Fagras, Romania), 1927-1930 (Former Yugoslavia), 1929 (Czechoslovak Republic). The authors claim that the ideas of civic emancipation of the Roma are born in southeast Europe and realised in a number of different ways. They suggest that the Roma activists of the time were not interested in an "all encompassing" activism which is quite different from today's modern discourse. With such organisations like the Open Society Foundation and the ERRC, among many others discussed in previous chapters, the networks of today may be seen as more open and take into

consideration the European and international components, where the Roma movement during the inter-war period was more focussed on a local level and their individual contexts.

The work of NGOs within Roma Civic emancipation is instrumental in disseminating information and ensuring that it reaches its key stakeholders, which may vary depending on the NGO's focus. McGarry (2017) suggests that NGOs are often thresholds between a problem and a solution. According to him they extend beyond the remit of social services and or government/State and the NGO is able to serve as a threshold and "fill gaps where the state has failed, providing much needed services and community support" (McGarry, 2017, p. 165). Networks allow for transfers of ideas and are a means to build and strengthen solidarity efforts, movements and encourage the involvement of grassroots communities. The work of the NGO or CSA within Roma Civic Emancipation also implicates identity. Organisational characteristics of activist groups and events frame a narrative that influences identity and impacts the work involved in the construction, maintenance and renegotiation of collective identity in social movements. Since the work of the activist does not occur within a vacuum and is influenced by a number of environmental factors as well as internal and external components, identity work within social movements enters this conversation. Rachel Einwohner, Jo Reger and Daniel Myers in 2008 curated *Identity Work, Sameness, and Difference in Social Movements*, a volume which explored precisely these questions of collective identity. Einwohner, Reger and Myers (2008) suggest that the *activist environment* is a "set of social, cultural and historical factors surrounding and shaping social movement activity" (p. 8) and offer specific examples at the macro, meso and micro level. One example of an accomplished Roma woman who references the activist environment, is Margareta Matache who is part of Harvard University's FXB Center for Health and Human Rights[39] team, where she directs their Roma programme. Reflecting on her time in activist environments, she

[39] https://fxb.harvard.edu/

says that they "taught me about our ancestors, some of whom on my mother's side may have been slaves, and so I am trying to document that now," (Matache, online, 2017). In the same interview Matache discusses how these challenges, such as segregated schools and racism used to dissuade her but now are active motivators. She references her time of working at a grassroots level in Romania with the NGO Romani CRISS[40], as a period where they took a stand against cases of Anti-Roma racism and documented countless cases of Romani rights violations which were later ruled upon by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and included reports from Amnesty International, the U.S. Department among many other institutions. "In 2006, we assisted the community in the town of Apalina, after the police used violence against 37 Roma, including elders. Based on a complaint filed by Romani CRISS, the ECHR condemned the way the Romanian government had conducted the investigation and awarded the victims €192,000 in damages," (2017) she explains. Matache's reflections illustrate what McGarry (online, 2017) might define as an NGO being a "threshold" for a community where the political and social institutions have failed a community. Matache references that activist environment as a time that helped shape and taught her about that Romani history which influenced her activism work. Activism and identity can be closely linked for some communities and this next section looks at Roma identity within political environments.

4.6 Roma Identity and Political Environments

40 Romani CRISS: http://www.romanicriss.org/ Romani CRISS is a non-governmental organization established on April 4th, 1993, which defends and promotes the rights of Roma in Romania by providing legal assistance in cases of abuse and works to combat and prevent racial discrimination against Roma in all areas of public life, including the fields of education, employment, housing and health.

Since the 1990s discussions about strategies for addressing the Roma injustices and social realities have occurred within political environments. Andrej Mirga (2017) has looked closely at Roma policy in Europe and discussed the results and some of the challenges that have taken place in relation to the community. According to Mirga, European policy makers, scholars, experts, NGOs and Roma representatives have engaged in discussions about strategies. In 1992 the Treaty of Maastricht allowed for the Freedom of movement for residences and persons from the EU, and at the time of writing this thesis, the EU is a space of free mobility. Due to this political framework, identity finds itself interloped into the rhetoric of Free movement within Europe. McGarry (2017) suggests that free movement did not "create" Romaphobia but has provided opportunities for the Roma community to be entangled in media and political rhetoric. He also suggests that Free movement in the EU was supposed to encourage a more fluid identity with less attachments placed on space and State but what has been observed is that some people are fixed to nationalist agendas, and Romaphobia plays out in these environments. Representation is deep, layered, complex and can be ambiguous and may be "wrought with fissures" (Schneeweis, 2013). Constructs of the Roma identity can highlight a tension that emerges and a paradox becomes visible. On one hand NGOs may advocate that the Roma are a cohesive ethnicity but a Stateless and diverse community that in many ways encourages an ambiguous image. The Roma community in some instances is depicted as being homogenous and a "victim" and/or romanticised. In a previous chapter, I discussed the negative and stereotypical images that have been used to describe the Roma community. Revisiting the discourse around Roma identity is relevant to this section because "European NGOs have worked to shape a Romani identity, around the construct 'Roma', to use as basis for lobbying and to build solidarity around the cause for rights" (Schneeweis, 2013, p. 151). At this point, it seems important to reflect on the 1971 First World Roma Congress held near London which was organised by the World Council of Churches and the Government

of India. In 1971 Donald Kenrick published an article on the event and mentioned that the Congress was attended by twenty-three representatives from nine nations including the former Czechoslovakia, Finland, Norway, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Spain and the former Yugoslavia. There were also individuals from Belgium, Canada, India and the United States of America. There were several sub-commissions that were created to look closely at social affairs, education, war crimes, language and culture. Another key point of the Congress was the use of the term "Roma" and the turn towards using this word rather than 'Gypsy' or other variants.

> The usage of the word 'Roma' as a political overarching name was first advocated by interest organisations in Western Europe at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Activists from different countries started to adjust their claims to each other and agreed in 1971 on a common platform called the World Roma Congress (WRC) that was aimed inter alia at changing dominant thinking about the people these activists wanted to represent. The first WRC later served as a direct inspiration for the goal orientation of international mobilising structures like the International Roma Union (IRU) and the Roma National Congress (RNC). One of the ideas which was kept from the 1970s was the replacement of negative sounding terms like 'gypsies' or 'tsiganes' with 'Roma'. (Vermeesch, 2001, p.3)

This main outcome shaped the Roma movement and its future, especially within political environments. At the Congress, the "Gelem, Gelem" was adopted and became the Roma national anthem. The Roma flag was also promoted as the national emblem and this 1971 Congress was a landmark event and pushed a certain narrative forward which affected how social, cultural and political spheres discussed and included the Romani people. From this point onwards, the message to the world was that the community was active, organised and demanding recognition as a people where human rights were no longer violated. After 1971 there were eight more Congresses that were held in 1978 in Switzerland, 1981 in Germany, 1990 in Poland, 2000 in Czech Republic, 2004 in Italy, 2008 in Croatia, 2013 in Romania and 2015 in Latvia. Each Congress had a variety of delegates and welcomed dozens of representatives from a number of countries. The fourth Congress was another major event

because at this event it was decided that April 8th would become International Roma Day. Since 1990, the 8th of April is celebrated throughout the world and Roma from all walks of life honour the day in a variety of ways. The events were instrumental in fighting for improvements of civil rights and education, and in preservation and promotion of the Roma culture, language and its history. The Congresses may be conceived in the spirit of alliance building and seen as a beginning of the Roma Movement, but as Marushkova and Popov suggest, the Roma Emancipation and the movement itself started before the 1971 Congress. What is certain is that the Congresses had a political impact that shaped the identity of the Roma and sent a clear message that the Roma were a group of people that united to fight for their human rights. Peter Vermeersch is an academic whose research focusses on minority politics, nationalism, democratisation and restorative justice. In his first book on Roma entitled *The Romani Movement* (2007) Vermeersch examines the attempts by Roma in Central and Eastern Europe to form a political movement which can influence domestic and international politics. He explores how the activists and politicians from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia play out their activism. Vermeersch has been a leading force within the field of Roma Studies and written a great deal on transnational Roma activism and how this lives out in political environments. He has also focussed on Roma identity and the various ways which this is constructed and maintained in a number of environments. In 2011 he wrote *Roma Identity and Ethnic Mobilisation in Central European Politics*. He suggests that when studying the mutual relationship between ethnic identity formation and collective mobilisation, it is helpful to focus on three key aspects. He identifies the first as seeing ethnic mobilisation as a form of "cognitive praxis" where "ethnic movement actors are 'signifying agents' who attempt to promote new understandings and interpretations of their ethnic identity" (Vermeersch, 2011, p. 5). The second he suggests, is that ethnic identity could be seen as a "semantic category" that is realised through articulation and the manner which that identity is described. Language is a key

component to shaping the manner which that identity plays out. And the third, he claims sits outside of the movement's actors and their actions.

> Third, the construction of identity is not merely the result of a 'rhetoric' promulgated by ethnic movement actors. It is also a process that is conditioned by factors belonging to the historical and political environment. In other words, one can assume that the presence, salience and meaning of ethnic identity is affected by a number of factors that are not deliberately crafted by movement actors in their strategic action. (Vermeersch, 2011, p.6)

Vermeersch has outlined three very specific points that feed into the construction of Roma identity, and while he has noted these points, there are others that he elaborates on, such as the role of media and other outlets. Vermeersch goes on to suggest that politics provide a platform for "the mass mobilisation of ethnicity and can directly influence public rhetoric, legislative and administrative acts or the distribution of resources" (p. 6) and this is linked to the manner which Roma "elite" frame identity and the way policy makers shape Roma identity. Roma "elite" is a term that is often used to describe those highly educated Roma that occupy spaces of "power" like political, social and academic environments. Within Roma studies the term has popped up more and more in the literature and denotes a position of power and insinuates that there is a hierarchy amongst Roma. While I will not delve into the nuances of this work in this chapter, as I have previously made a claim that dialogic feminism aims to erase vertical frameworks and binaries and pushes for horizontal egalitarian spaces, it is important to reference and situate the 'Roma elite' term.

Sherrill Stroschein is a political scientist who examines the politics of ethnicity in democratic and democratising states, in particular democratic processes in states with mixed ethnic or religious populations. Stroschein (2002) has described two strategies that may be used by NGOs: *Network strategies* which "aim to create ties between individuals of different ethnic groups so that information and ideas might be exchanged between them" (p. 20); and *Status-Raising* which states that disenfranchised minorities, particularly the Roma, need not accept

the human-rights violations and second-class treatment they receive. Stroschien argues that NGOs attempt to facilitate such contact between elites and non-elites of different groups through seminars and workshops and articulates that this *Network Strategy* "can be facilitated between political elites of each group or between members of each group's media" (2002, p. 9) which leads to a decrease in tension and in stereotyping. Roma "elite" organise using international platforms but must negotiate the meaning of participation and the manner which knowledge formation and negotiations take place within the Romani Movement. Romani NGOs and political institutions with a Roma focus have engaged with the Roma elite and, in these spaces, there is an exchange between the Roma industry, the Roma elite and those political entities. This intersection creates a potential for there to be a knowledge exchange between several actors. There can be formal and informal channels that can be used to disseminate, share and cultivate new information and knowledge. Such transferring of information is important when framing the Roma social movement, especially when discussing political environments that directly feed into Roma identity. An organisation that should be mentioned is the US-based international non-governmental organisation the Project of Ethnic Relations (PER). The PER works closely with the Department for Interethnic Relations, Government of Romania, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR). The PER feeds into the identity construction that surrounds the Roma community, especially within political spheres and has strategically placed offices in central and south-eastern Europe. The PER sees itself as facilitating dialogue and allowing for interethnic events and the PER sponsors meetings between Roma elites and elites of other groups, thus recognising the Roma as having equal negotiation status with others. Identifying the actors, the platforms and resources used are important as Roma identity has undergone transformations "provoked by globalization, European integration, political system transformations, educational reforms and more active participation of Romani students in the

schooling process" (Kwadrans, 2017, p. 51). The interplay between context, practices, networks and political environments, shows how the increasingly visible Roma identity is influenced by the RRM and such Roma elite. van Baar claims that there is a strategic use of the temporal and established places and networks. "Romani activists are not simply passive receivers of expertise developed elsewhere. They are also active and increasingly professional developers and disseminators of knowledge and expertise" (van Baar, 2011, p.197). There may be an argument to be made that by allowing and inviting Roma elite to be part of the political spaces such as seminars and other trainings, assumes that there will be some form of increased communication amongst several groups. Yet, a focus on the elite must be balanced and as Stroschein suggests "while elite-focused approaches might be evaluated through attendance at seminars, an evaluation of non-elite focused, societal approaches requires a more nuanced, long-term observation of changes over time" (Stroschein, 2013, p. 21). She suggests that the "bottom up" leads to long term stability and through *Network Strategies*, there are ways to include those non-elites into the conversation.

With a focus on the political spheres that are directly or indirectly influencing identity and narratives, it is important to highlight the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC). It is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations and the Roma Leaders' initiative – the Alliance for the European Roma institute, and was founded on the 7th of June 2017 in Berlin, Germany. The website claims that "ERIAC exists to increase the self-esteem of Roma and to decrease negative prejudice of the majority population towards the Roma by means of arts, culture, history, and media" (online, 2019). ERIAC sees itself as a creative hub and also states that it has two main long-term goals: i) to educate and inform the non-Roma population about Roma arts and culture and to help create an understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma communities; ii) To raise awareness among European institutions, policy-makers and stakeholders about the role of

Roma arts and culture and to build up a broad partnership across Europe (and beyond) for support of Roma arts, culture and communities. While the ERIAC may appear to be a positive for the Roma community, especially in terms of encouraging narratives that are created from within the community and pushing for political presence at several European levels, the institution has been contested and opened up a debate around discourse and identity politics. Sam Beck and Ana Ivasiuc in their edited volume *Roma Activism: Reimagining Power and Knowledge* (2018) outline the current debates that have evolved as a reaction to the development of the ERIAC. Their volume treats the ERIAC as a form of activism and outlines the dangers that emerge when a (self-) image of Roma by Roma themselves places a focus on the culturalist frames which in many ways ignores the "wider political stakes and the materiality of structural racism resting rather on misdistribution than misrecognition" (Beck and Ivasiuc, 2018, p. 4). The pair also comment on the "Roma elite" and suggest that the ERIAC Roma elite have "taken" spaces to produce forms of Cultural "authenticity" which could be used to tackle socioeconomic and political exclusion. Beck and Ivasiuc outline the work of the ERIAC intellectuals and how these groups are responsible for the dimension of "knowledge production" and the messages that get sent out into the wider society. During the opening of the ERIAC in a speech by Minister of State for Europe Michael Roth at the event titled "Reinventing Roma Inclusion", Roth exclaimed that "Prejudices and discrimination often force Roma and Sinti to neglect their identity and origins. This is why projects such as ERIAC are important as it encourages Roma and Sinti in Europe not to feel ashamed, but instead to be proud of their ethnicity" (Roth speech, online, 2018). This speech was received and shared on a number of platforms and sends a very clear statement to the wider public and Roma community that celebrating the Roma ethnic and cultural identity is ever more important in this politically tense climate that attacks migrants and ethnic communities. The speech by Michael Roth raises a key question regarding Roma political representation and organisation. Why is it

that there are so few political Roma representatives that hold positions of power within policy and political arenas? Should the Roma aim to hold more political representations and speak on behalf of the community? Aidan McGarry in his 2010 book *Who Speaks for the Roma? Political Representation* attempts to understand the vicious cycle of under representation and rather than prescribe mechanisms to rectify this perceived injustice, he attempts to advance research and the understanding of this situation. McGarry (2010) claims that minority groups face structural and practical barriers and since they are transnational minorities they require a combination of domestic and broader organising structures of representation. He also goes on to suggest that minorities are forced to develop alternative organising structures of representation. Beck and Ivasiuc have openly challenged ERIAC and while the focus of this debate is not to discuss if the ERIAC's existence is constructive or deconstructive to the Roma Movement, what is relevant is that it forms a part of that Movement and opens up reflections on the manner which Roma identity exists within the wider social, political and cultural framework.

Adina Schneeweis, critical discourse analyst and communication and journalism researcher, has argued that representations are a form of discourse and the manner that a community is presented becomes part of the larger narrative. Bhababa (1994) and Schneeweis (2013) have both argued that negative perceptions are accepted forms of "discourses" that shape the way that political, social and cultural institutions react to the Roma community. In her (2013) writing, Schneeweis made links between texts and power and focused on the "who" speaks for and "who has the right" to speak on behalf of the Roma community. She analysed the manner which two major Roma NGOs in Europe contributed to Roma representations and identified six discourses were present. She also concluded that the communication representations that exist around the community are ambiguous yet strong and stakes a claim that clearer organisation and political mobilisation is needed if the Roma Movement is going

to succeed. Anne-Cecile Renouard (2014) has looked at two distinct Roma population, the communities in Finland and in Rome, and has focussed on the social and cultural significance of Roma and the *pro-Roma mobilisations* in both contexts. Renouard has articulated the way that Roma, whom supposedly have scarce and symbolic material resources, mobilise towards political and institutional actors. She has also explored citizenship discourse and the manner that this is tied to political participation and "to the ways specific or individual identities are constructed in the public domain" (Renaurd, 2014, p. 122). This echoes the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's thinking about power dynamics and the manner which society is reproduced and how the dominant classes retain their positions and power. He also described the nuances of official and institutionalised classifications and suggested that labels carry weight which have social impact and create meaning (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu's work on social impact and the production of meaning making extends to the Romani community and the way that identity is crafted from within and from outside of the community. In Chapter Two we have covered the manner that erroneous images have fed into the negative stereotypes surrounding the community, thus feeding into Anti-Gypsyism and Romaphobia. The way which external players have labelled and maintained those false representations of the communities directly impacts the political structures and larger mainstream media. However, that identity is not only debated by non-Roma but is also explored by Roma themselves. Fosztó (2018) recalls a moment when Nicolae Gheorghe in 2010, during an intense period of political tensions in Romania suggested that a workshop should be hosted and convened by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RIRNM). The event took place in January 2011 which produced a lively meeting and a useful debate. From that meeting a conclusion was made that "we need to reject the position which claims that there is a single 'correct' term for the name of an ethnic group" (Fosztó, 2018, p. 141). What Fosztó highlights is that there is an ongoing debate about the multiple identities and self-ascription happening within the community.

Earlier in the chapter I discussed the 1971 Roma Conference and the term, "Roma" which is to be used as an all-encompassing term. Allowing for self-ascription is not a focus of this writing but avoiding stigmatisation and exploring how the progress and the inclusion of reliable knowledge construction which includes its actors, is central. There is a need to align the work of the policy makers with that of the grassroots, and to be aware of the conversations happening at a ground level. What Huggan and Law (2012) suggest is that EU policy making needs to have a nuanced approach to working with local communities.

> We argue that if EU mechanisms want to be a catalyst for local social change they will need to find a delicate balance between human rights implementation and social inclusion strategies. They will also need to work towards interconnecting European, national and local policy structures, improving data collection, and better assessing the impact of measures taken in the field of education, employment, housing, and health. (Huggan and Law, 2012, p.802).

An integrated approach is needed based on several perspectives. Roma integration is not simply a matter of concern but a high priority for the European Commission. Mirga (2017) claims that the EU and EC were only marginally considering Roma issues in the late 1990's. It wasn't until the 2004 enlargement, which brought the Central European countries with vast numbers of Roma populations into the Union, that it started to develop its own policy documents and commitments. This turn marks an important moment in the Roma Movement which also coincides with another shift that includes Roma women activists, academics and leaders.

4.7 Roma Women within the Movement

The Roma Rights Movement (RRM) has various strands and exists in public spaces and engages political parties while it can also be more hidden or less visible to those outside of the movement. The importance of studying the Roma Women's Movement (RWM) is relevant to our discussion on the "other women" and dialogic feminism. The RWM includes actors from various positions in society and is comprised of academics, activists, Roma women from grassroots communities who have come together to name the actions of injustices and

offer explanations and/or solutions to remedy the tense realities of the community. As Weldon 2010 and Kóczé and colleagues (2018) suggest, "studying Romani Women's movement formations, demonstrates that social movements due to their informal and fluid nature, become apt forms of political actions for mobilizing socially and economically disadvantaged groups" (2018, p. 8). The importance of looking closely at the RWM is critical at this juncture as we explore the work of several key activists that laid the ground work for future initiatives that were focussed on Roma women.

Throughout history the Romani woman has been objectified, dehumanised, vilified and ostracised which has allowed for classism, racism and sexism to be directed towards the community. These violations of human rights that have persisted for decades even centuries, and created a disenfranchised community that has been target of multiple hate crimes. Matache in (2017) states that "from being incarcerated or killed as witches during the Middle Ages to being forcibly sterilized in the EU's Czech Republic and Slovakia, Romani Women have continuously seen their bodies become the targets of state-sponsored hatred" (Matache, 2017, p. xvi). The Roma Women's movement started to really take shape in the 1990s and Romani feminism according to Kóczé, Zentai, Jovanović and Vincze offers a way to challenge multiple forms of discrimination and oppression.

> Universal or 'global' sisterhood' has, since the 1970's become a compelling paradigm by proclaiming essentialized identities of womanhood and shared gender oppression by patriarchy. This unifying global feminist idea has been criticised by Black women, women of color, and 'Third-world feminists,' who- by doing so- have challenged the societal system that privileges middle-class, white 'Western women'. This critique has significantly shaped the conceptual language of Romani feminisms in Central and Eastern Europe. (Kóczé, Zentai, Jovanović and Vincze, 2018, p.3)

The relevance of this reflection allows us an entry point into better situating the RWM. The RWM evolved organically over the years and was not primarily built through the wider pursuit of Roma rights that was taking place within the broader Roma Movement and was born from the lack of attention to women's issues on the part of the leaders of the era. The RRM was

revolutionary and important to document but there was a discrepancy between the modes in which men were "seen" and acknowledged for their work and the manner which female counterparts were celebrated, or not. Oprea (2004) rightfully raises this point and gives an example in her writing *Re-envisioning Social Justice from the ground up: Including the experiences of Romani Women*.

> When one is asked to name renowned Romani activists the list often resembles the following: Dr Ian Hancock, William Duna, Sani Rifati, Ronald Lee, Dr Nicolae Gheorghe, Rudko Kawczinski, and so forth. Romani women are seldom to be found on such lists or on the pertinent panels assembled according to such lists. Romani women activists, such as Violeta Dumitru and Nicoleta Bițu of Romania, Angéla Kóczé of the European Roma Information Office, and Azbija Memedova and Enisa Eminova of Macedonia, have not gained as much recognition in the context of Romani politics and have not yet reached the ranks of Romani male activists despite the fact that they are involved in ground-breaking work. Romani female activists, ones who have reached comparable rank to the aforementioned male activists? (Oprea, 2004, p. 32)

Oprea continues by suggesting that when panels were curated that treated grassroots topics, Roma women who worked on gendered Romani issues were often ignored. It is important to note the year of this particular writing by Oprea (2004) which was very early on in the RWM and many of these early discussions were starting to take place. She raised critical points then that deserve attention in this modern context. Roma women and the RWM has added a new dynamic and perspective that is adding to the broader Roma studies discourse and feminist studies. Kóczé's 2009 *Missing Intersectionality* unpacked the complexity of multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination while also incorporating her own experience and those of other Romani women activists. This work opens up with a reflection from a roundtable[41] held in Cluj, Romania in June 2008, where gender was put on the table in a way that forced the participants to reflect on the dilemma of intra-differentiation and the way that they framed issues that were gender-specific, yet still important to the broader Roma movement.

[41] Roundtable organized by the Institute for Research on National Minority Issues in the framework of "Come Closer!" Summer University, July 12-19, 2008, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

> [A] young Romani woman activist stated that "gender is important in assuming [one's] Roma identity. At the same roundtable, Nicoleta Biţu, a leader of the Romani women's movement, argued that some forms of "anti-gypsy" racism affect women more than men, and that this racism is most often represented by images of Romani women and children. Such statements, however, are not uncontroversial in the least. The relevance of gender to understanding anti-Roma racism and the importance of gender for the larger Roma movement are issues of much debate, both among Romani women activists and in their interactions with Romani male leaders with other human rights activists. (Kóczé, 2009, p. 19)

The RWM includes both men and women, and Roma and non-Roma individuals and organisations. While the RWM treated gender-focussed topics, it was not a movement that was solely for women or Roma women. Nicoleta Biţu reflects that she didn't "envisage a separation of the Romani movement into men and women through organisations, my vision was to seek an equal place at decision-making tables across the Romani movement for women and other discriminated groups within, such as LGBT" (Biţu, 2018, p.32). Biţu imagined an organisation where process, debate and dialogue could happen to treat these gender related issues. Her vision eventually translated into a network known as the *Roma Women's Initiative* (RWI). The RWI was important to the RWM, especially during a period where male leaders did not fully understand and perhaps support Romani women who spoke candidly about the oppression experienced from within the community and outside of it.

4.7.1 Roma Women's Initiative

In 2018 Nicoleta Biţu and Debra Schulz contributed to the book *Romani Women's Movement* reflecting on their own contribution to the movement and took a step back to look at the Roma Women's Initiative (RWI) which was started in 1998. The RWI was a model of intersectional feminist practice led by Romani women in collaboration with non-Romani feminists. The RWI brought Nicoleta Biţu, founder of the important NGO Romani CRISS, Azbija Memedova of Macedonia, Enisa Eminova and Debra Schultz together to promote the human rights of Romani women by empowering Romani women activists in Central and Eastern Europe. These activists raised awareness of the prejudice Romani women faced from

both mainstream society and "traditional" Romani communities, challenging racism and gender inequality simultaneously (Schultz, 2012). Biţu and Schulz (2018) suggest that at the time of setting up the RWI there were several discussions around the language used and if they were trying to build a Roma women's movement or if they were simply supporting Romani women's activism. Fortunately, they didn't stay in the theoretical aspects of the work for too long and pushed forward and continued to work practically and at a ground level. Biţu and Schulz see that the broader impact the RWI was having was due primarily to the building blocks that came prior to the work from previous forerunners. "Pioneers such as Nicolae Gheorghe in policy and diplomacy, and scholar-advocates like Ian Hancock and Andrej Mirga had done much to raise awareness and develop Roma consciousness (Schultz and Biţu, 2018, p. 36). The RWI had accomplished a great deal in a rather short time frame and among a major accomplishment to highlight was the ability to organise Roma women and create spaces where they could meet and define the issues that mattered to them while also 'mainstreaming' Roma women's issues within the larger Roma Rights and human rights movements.

In 2000 the ERRC published an issue on Romani Women's Rights that was controversial as it appeared that the RWM was *fracturing* the larger Roma movement. In their later publications they openly reflect on their own progress as an organisation that is not focussed on gender issues but has in a brief period shifted from having no focus on gender issues and perspectives to now having a series of activities that focus and reflect on Romani feminism, Romani activism and the broader RWM. The RWI pushed for the ERRC to advocate for strategic litigation on Roma women's issues and to have a Roma women's rights unit which focussed on gender issues. The RWI marked a shift on a political stage. Debra Schultz says:

> The RWI helped Romani women burst onto the global women's scene in 2000. Part of the Central and Eastern European delegation to the United Nations Beijing + 5 Review, Romani women presented the first statement on Romani women's issues to the international community. Later, RWI sponsored training on public policy research enabled Romani women to present national shadow reports and to lobby the UN Committee to End Discrimination against Women.

> In 2005, Enisa Eminova gave a plenary speech at the Association for Women in Development's conference in Bangkok, introducing two thousand global feminists to Romani women's issues. (2013, p. 41)

Mirga-Kruszelnicka (2018) sees that the RWI became an important structure that provided training and promoted leadership of Romani women and also consolidated the RWM within the Central European countries and the Balkans. The work of the RWI contributed to bringing attention and focusing on gender issues that related directly to Roma women at a time when this was not the norm. The RWI and its activists realised that they could introduce people to Roma women's issues and step on to international platforms where these knowledge gaps existed. At the same time there were internal debates taking place which allowed the activists to reflect that generational differences were relevant and influencing the shape of the movement. The older generation became aware that "some older Roma women activists were not focusing on developing young Roma women's leadership. In 2002, the International Roma Women Network was set up as an organisation to combat the discrimination against Roma but not with a feminist agenda." (Biţu and Schultz, 2018, p. 37). This network became a separate branch of the RWM and is known as the International Roma Women's Network.

4.7.2 International Roma Women's Network

The International Roma Women's Network (IRWN) arose in 2002 after a meeting in Vienna, Austria at a joint-meeting organised by the Council of Europe, The Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) and the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC, which is now the FRA), and a group of Romani Women. Together they discussed the need to create an international platform. Eventually, in 2003 was the official launch date where approximately 20 European countries came together to discuss difficulties when accessing health. IRWN was not established or founded with a shared agenda and goals, and was a group of activists from several countries coming together. The International Roman Women's Network (IRWN) was launched on the World Roma Day on April 8th, 2003 and

brought Roma women from 18 different European countries together with a common goal of uniting and pushing for a more just society that recognised Roma women's rights. Its aim was to lobby governments for better conditions and to fight for Romani women's human rights (Mihalache, 2018). IRWN lobbied governments and pushed for visibility of the Roma culture to be represented in a more fair and just light. IRWN was a Network that remained independent of government and international agencies. "As IRWN did not emerge as a result of national, regional or local cooperation of already existing networks, it does not have the same impact on movement-building as other networks that arose from grassroots organising efforts" (Izsák, 2009, p.201). Rita Izsák (2009) claims that the first action of IRWN was an open letter to a forced sterilisation report produced in Slovakia. IRWN had close ties with lobbying efforts and as a result was a founding member of the European Roma and Traveller Forum[42] (ERTF) which had three delegates and part of the European Women's Lobby[43] (EWL). Lobbying and personal contacts were a major part of IRWN and Izsák (2009) also references some of the tensions between what she labels the "older generations" of those Roma leaders that were part of the network. There was a gap between the older women and the younger ones, which were seen as "more progressive" to those "more traditional" ones. She illustrates this point by retelling a story where the older generation felt that the wearing of trousers or losing virginity before marriage meant the women were "not real Roma women" (Izsák, 2009). This tension speaks to the disconnect that was part of those early conversations. Gender discussions and taboos were still in their very early stages during IRWN's inception. Schultz and Biţu (2018) also reference these tensions in their reflective piece in Kóczé and colleagues book *Romani Women's Movement* stating that the RWI "made a policy decision to invest more of the Initiative's limited resources on young women" (2018, p. 37). IRWN was an example of how

[42] ERTF: http://www.ertf.org/
[43] European Women's Lobby: https://womenlobby.org/

Romani women come up with their own discourses and are able to counter the frameworks or structures that do not include them. The work of the RWM is varied and Mirga-Kruszelnicka (2018) claims it is not "monolithic" and is comprised of diverse actors and different approaches. Dialogic feminism is inclusive of those voices and as the next section of this thesis will highlight, the Roma women whom attended the Drom Kotar Mestipen's Association's congresses and other activities who also employed dialogic feminism in their communities, fostered an immense shift in themselves or in their associations and communities. Mirga-Kruszelnicka references the DKM in her discussion in the RWM.

> …there is a parallel development of the Romani Women's movement in different European Regions is being brought back together. On the one hand, there are diverse institutional attempts, such as the "international Conference on Roma Women' sponsored by the Council of Europe, the first which took place in 2007. On the other hand, Romani women's associations themselves organise international event which bring together large numbers of Romani women activists from across Europe, such as during the 2010 'International Congress of Romani Women: the Other Women' organised in Barcelona. (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 2018, pp. 223-224).

The Congress that Mirga-Kruszelnicka is referring to is the Drom Kotar Mestipen's Congress. This omitted information is a missed opportunity as it fails to honour the hard work of a local NGO comprised of grassroots Roma women, their ability to organise a massive Congress. This point highlights how organisations that are developing and pushing boundaries and employing egalitarian methods are not always entering mainstream discourse.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Disenfranchised communities can be highly affected by the inequalities that exist within society and while Durkheim (Thompson, 2002) defended the idea that society remains relatively stable, critics of Functionalism like Italian theorist Gramsci (Bates, 1975), suggested that the theory was conducive to maintaining a cultural hegemony. At its core, Functionalist theory does not encourage individuals to be agents of change in their social environments and

maintains a status quo that can ignore the needs of the most vulnerable. Habermas (1984) states that everyone is capable of language and action and in marrying the two individuals can change their social realities. When social movements comprised of individuals and organisations focus on social or political issues, those active participants become agents of change that allow for local, national and even international shifts. Blumer (1969) and Tilly (1978) outlined a four-stage process of the life-cycle of social movements while McCarthy and Zald (1977) conceptualised resource mobilisation theory as a way to explain a movement's success in terms of its ability to acquire resources and mobilise individuals to achieve goals and take advantage of political opportunities. Ganz (2000) stated that strategic capacity is greater when the leadership team includes insiders and outsiders, strong and weak network ties, and access to diverse, yet salient, repertoires of collective action and also if an organisation conducts regular, open, authoritative deliberation, and draws resources from multiple constituencies.

Multiple discriminatory practices exist on a variety of levels and platforms and resistance translates and can be a personal resistance that happens in the private domain or a public form which aligns with a larger agenda. Individuals may put their efforts towards changing an institution and or by changing an internal unit. Schultz (2012) observed that many Roma women who were activists and pushing gender issues and topics did not see themselves as feminists. In Chapter Two I discussed the fractured identity that emerges for the Roma community and the dangers of painting a homogenous community that is also heterogeneous in its various environments. While the Roma community is diverse and has a multiplicity of voices the RWM should not be painted with a homogenous brushstroke. Even though there are instances when the community comes together and stands as a unit there is still diversity and multifaceted work that is taking place that mustn't be overlooked. Borrowing from Gayatri Spivak's (1999) notion of "cultural essentialism" which refers to ways in which subordinated social groups may temporarily suspend their differences in order to forge a collective identity

and come together in political manner. Yet, Silverman (2014) has suggested that cultural essentialism be used in a cautious manner. Throughout the 2018 publication Kóczé and colleagues analysed the RWM from an intersectional perspective. “While scholars such as Oprea and Kóczé offer multi-pronged analyses of gendered practices, too often they were framed by policy-makers as issues of ‘tradition’, as if Romani culture is uniform, static, deficient, backward and uncivilised” (Oprea and Silverman, 2018, p. 257) With this chapter we saw how identity plays out in political environments and also feeds into the development of the Roma movement and the RWM.

Being a Roma woman brings forward tensions which includes the vulnerability-resilient paradox. Roma have historically been persecuted and subjected to a number of atrocities simply for their ethnic background cultural traditions and lifestyle. As sociologists Ainhoa Flecha and Esther Oliver suggest the “Romani community has been largely unknown and invisible in our society, victims of prejudices, false romantic images and folk theories” (Flecha & Oliver, 2004, p. 9). This misinformation that circulates and becomes part of mainstream society adds to the abovementioned paradox. As Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay (2016) discuss within their *Vulnerability and Resilience* book, there is an intimate connection between resilience, vulnerability and security. Resilience is closely linked with threats and in Chapter Two I discussed how Anti-Gypsyism and attacks on the community are manifested in several ways and it is through resilience that there is a form of restoration that takes place while facing and dealing with the vulnerable situation. Being vulnerable requires the individual and the community to reflect on how they project that vulnerability. Racial politics are never far from the ethos of resilience and in this chapter, we explored the manner which a vulnerable community navigates that terrain, reshaping and rethinking the situation and transforming the critical situation of being vulnerable into resilience. Schneweeis (2013) focused on advocacy publications and concluded that there were six markers of identity that were primarily used

when describing the Roma community: i) Victim ii) Blame racism iii)Promote integration iv) Advocacy v)Process of building ethnic identity vi) resistance to majority representations. Traditionally the Roma community exists in a binary, seen as victim or actor and are either blamed and accountable or agents of change. This approach is a one-way street that oscillates on a vertical line. These vertical blame games need to be countered by egalitarian models and dialogic feminism. Tension can be relieved and alleviate the "victim" and perpetrator binary. Dialogic feminism alleviates the tension and offers an alternative and the next part of this this thesis, the Results section will offer evidence that supports this hypothesis.

PART 3 RESULTS

Chapter 5: The Roma Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen: Methodology, Transferability and Impact

5.1. Results Overview

There is a need to rebuild and establish a new feminism that includes the plurality of voices that exist in our democratic society. The feminism of the 21st century is one that is malleable and able to reflect the diversity of women and their realities. Biţu and Vincze (2012) claimed that feminism has the potential to transcend ethnic boundaries and must challenge binaries that maintain nationalist/racist regimes and patriarchal gender orders. Sánchez-Aroca, Yuste, de Botton and Kostic (2013) suggest that Roma women are the active agents and main protagonists transforming their lives through dialogic spaces. With the previous chapters I outlined a theoretical framework for the Roma Women's Movement (RWM) and the need for an organisation like the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen (DKM) to exist. The DKM occupies an important space in Europe that has positioned itself to support a number of local, national and international platforms. It has pushed for the "other women" to take centre stage and be what Habermas (1981) would identify as active agents. The Roma women sit within a space where they have transformed their vulnerability into social actions that have reached several international contexts. To better understand this statement, I will map out the results of the field work that has taken place over the course of one year and present the results of that data collection process. The chapter will remind the reader of the objectives I set out at the start of the thesis and then contextualise key events that have been linked to measuring and instrumental in transferring the DKM's methodology to plural Europe. The data collection process has been able to revisit key activities or events that the DKM has organised, as well as allowed DKM members and participants of those activities to reflect and directly feed into this academic research. Theoretically assessing the qualitative data discussions of the Roma

Women's Movement, specifically what emerged were the DKM 2010 and 2018 congresses and so, these particular events will be referenced throughout this section. The two congresses are key in better understanding the DKM's methodology and the impact the association has had not only on local, national but also on a European level. The activities and events offer a reading into the DKM's work and how that knowledge has been built upon and transferred to a variety of European contexts. Working with local citizens from a seven larger European metropoles as well as engaging people from marginalised encampments, ensured that a variety of Roma women's voices were brought to the forefront. This section will analyse the data collected and use qualitative data consisting of Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS), focus groups, interviews, and quantitative paper questionnaires completed by the Roma women and the organisations. For this data collection process, as outlined in the methodology section, I have used Communicative Methodology CM and interviewed women, held focus groups and ensured that each participant had the opportunity to review the data and amend, omit, add to or deny the usage of their data. For all of the data used in this thesis CM was used and the participants were allowed to feedback and be directly involved in the research. Consent forms and ethical clearance was gained and honoured throughout the life of the thesis. It is important that I situate myself within the data collection process. As a Roma woman and a member of the DKM, I have maintained the highest level of ethical standards at all times. Being in this double role I acknowledge the potential for slippage with collecting data, however, my prudent nature, way of conducting the field work and by employing CM prevents such a bias to influence this academic study. Indeed, my role as a Roma woman, from a mother who could be classed as a member of the "other women" and being an active agent of change for the community has afforded me a certain trust with the grassroots Roma women. They have felt safe and allowed themselves permission to be critical, candid, constructive and reflective of the academic work. This ability to identify with both the "other women" as well as sit outside

of their immediate circles has been closely reflected upon at every step of the data collection process and has been addressed with all of the participants. I will revisit this in the bias and validity section further into the writing.

We summarised in chapter 2 that there is a fractured identity which leads to covert and overt racism. This section, which showcases the results of the analysis, highlights the manner which dialogic feminism is an antidote to the covert and overt racism that exists in relation to the Roma community. With this results section, I look closely at the organising structures, frameworks and clearly identify the elements that comprise the DKM methodology highlighting how the DKM's methodology is leading to social transformation and changes in a variety of contexts. McGarry (2010) suggests that leaders of a movement set the agenda and determine the strategies of a movement. However, what CM does is decentralises precisely this way of working and allows the most vulnerable to directly steer not only what but the mode in which transformation takes place. What McGarry is highlighting is that the leaders of the movement, who may or may not be considered to be the most vulnerable, are those that influence the movement. Through the DKM activities and in particular, their congresses held in 2010 and 2018, Roma women from a number of environments from sixteen European metropoles have been allowed to meet, discuss, debate, and reconvene to analyse their problems while offering solutions, find expression and unite to achieve a goal of change and transformation in their local environments. As Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2007) suggest mobilisation and protest conditions vary depending on the social class and economic situation of the players. The DKM activities and methodology allowed for the focus of the individual and the collective transformation to play out and have an equal role at the various DKM activities and Congresses, and those varying types of transformations have fed into this academic study. Solutions coming from the Roma women themselves was vital to the work and the DKM's activities and was central to this thesis. The working groups that were part of

each congress allowed for the women to share their life stories and the work happening within their own communities. Having this egalitarian space to dialogue and to come together and share within the larger group of congress attendees is a pillar of dialogic feminism. Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2007) suggest that for vulnerable communities seeing themselves reflected back is helpful in getting people to take a "stand in society" and they suggest that "due recognition is not a mere courtesy or gesture but is their vital human need" (2007, p. 35). Chetkovich and Kunreuther's (2007) point supports the thinking that the Romani women who engaged with the DKM and employed their methodology were impacted in a positive way. This Results section will reveal that the Roma women whom employed the DKM's working methodology and participated and/or attended the congresses were able to experience some form of transformation either personally, professionally or both. Such a transformation feeds into the intersectional thinking and research that has been referenced by Spivak (1998), Kóczé (2009), Oprea (2005), Schultz (2012), and Kóczé, Zentai, Jovanovic and Magyari-Vincze (2018). The DKM methodology has grounded itself in ensuring the "other women" (Puigvert, 2001) are embedded and steering their activities which as a result situates itself in dialogic feminism.

5.2 Objectives of the thesis

Feminism has historically not been the most suitable framework to look at the contributions from the Romani women until the third wave when feminist discourse shifted and started to include a plurality of voices. In 2001 Puigvert introduced the notion of the "other women" and subsequently, deBotton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca (2005) further defined the "other women" as those non-academic women who sit outside of academia and hold places in society that exist outside of public debate. Those women who could be labelled as housewives, domestic or factory workers, the "non-elite" (deBotton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, 2005) are the main protagonists that I have chosen to focus on and include in this thesis. With a focus

on the role of the "other women" in particular Roma women, I use as a starting point the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen's (DKM) activities, ethos and in particular their first and second International Roma Women's Congresses (October 2010 and March 2018), to illustrate the transformation the organisation is instigating at various local, national and European levels. This academic investigation hones in on those Roma women who normally sit outside of political, intellectual, academic, economic, social and cultural spaces, especially those spaces that are tied to decision-making, and the "other women" are invited and included to participate in this academic investigation. The thesis identifies the gaps within the scientific community and underpins its work in CM that is evidenced-based.

With this academic investigation I set out to explore the following Motivating Question: *Is the DKM's working methodology transferrable from Catalonia, Spain to plural European contexts?*

In my pursuit of this question, I deliberately refrain from working on a macro level and instead carry out a micro level study based on specific organisations and individuals within the European Union. More precisely, my investigation consists of detailed studies of organisations located in Bulgaria Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova and the United Kingdom. These local organisations focus on Roma women in their host countries and have adopted the methodology of the Romani Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen and applied this methodology to their environments and worked alongside the most vulnerable Roma women and youth.

With this academic investigation I set out three main objectives that were the driving force of this work:

- Objective 1: Analyse the DKM's working methodology and identify its fundamental features

- Objective 2: Discuss the DKM's methodology and build a narrative around the need to transfer the DKM's working model to other European contexts and analyse the transferability of these traits to other contexts
- Objective 3: Contextualise elements of the DKM within the Dialogic Feminist discourse.

The three objectives feed into the main motivating question and in an effort to working with the Roma community, often seen as vulnerable, I have carefully considered my approach and chosen to underpin my research activity employing CM. While there may be several obstacles to working and "researching" marginalised groups which may include hierarchical paradigms, limited or no agency, vulnerable people and "perspectives of the other" (Dunjeva, 2018) as well as many other dynamics that affect the type and quality of research and data that is collected, CM is offering a paradigm shift which works alongside the communities and allows them to form part of the study and invites them to be active participants. What follows is data that has been collected employing CM and gathered with the Roma community while addressing each of the three objectives. When presenting the data for objective 1 specific elements of the DKM methodology will be described. For objective 2, I will catalogue data using two dimensions for coding and analysing data including i) exclusionary and ii) transformation groupings. Dimension i) the exclusionary, are tied to the factors that have been identified as barriers and discriminative practices and detecting the limitations within the current environments. The second ii) the transformative grouping, includes solutions which were proposed by the Roma women themselves with attention placed on the measures taken that weaken the barriers of exclusion. For objective 3, I will situate the findings within dialogic feminist discourse and link the DKM activities and events to Romani feminism. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, all ethical standards were adhered to, and anonymised and pseudonyms were used when quotes were integrated into the writing.

To summarise and to ensure there is clarity on the number of interviews, CELS, focus groups and questionnaires circulated, the objectives were clearly communicated to the participants beforehand and also when they were asked to review the information. I carried out a total of seven interviews with DKM members, a total of eight focus groups, 10 CELS, and 20 questionnaires. For objectives two and three, the information gathered within the eight focus groups, five of the focus groups also fed into objective 3. It is important to note that the focus groups were carried out with the support of an organisation that corresponds to that country. This was needed due to language barriers and trust building.

5.3 Objective 1: Analyse the DKM's working methodology and identify its fundamental features

The DKM methodology is linked to the theoretical and academic actions that are evidence-based, and the association is focused on ensuring that interventions and practices carried out under their name, are leading to successful outcomes. The DKM ensures that grassroots Roma women are given the space to dialogue and come together and hold those spaces of influence and importance and insist that the most vulnerable Roma women and girls are the main protagonists guiding the activities and ethos of the NGO. The DKM work towards equality and non-discrimination between women and men in pushing to overcome the double discrimination that many Roma women suffer. The association collaborates with groups that fight for equality and aim to make it easy for Roma women and girls to access social and cultural arenas as well as the labour market. They also work to ensure that the Roma woman's image that is transmitted to the public domain is one that reflects the plural Roma women's voices and moves away from stereotypical and romanticised folkloric perceptions that exist and are circulated regularly.

Having interviewed 7 active members of the Drom Kotar Mestipen, 4 of which were part of the founding team that started the association, it has emerged that the following points can be classed as key components of its methodology:

1) Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"
2) Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner
3) Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities
4) Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks
5) Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse

With these five key components identified I will now go into describing them in better detail.

5.3.1 Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"

Although the activities the DKM carries out on a regular basis was described in great detail in chapter 4, at this juncture it is worth reminding the reader that the association holds a series of egalitarian activities which includes: i) Encounters of Roma students meetings, labelled "trobadas", ii) Official course of monitors of children and youth leisure activities iii) Roma women's congresses iv) Project specific activities and v) involvement in grassroots, national and international activities and platforms. Emilia Aiello wrote her 2016 thesis on the DKM and closely analysed the social transformation in the context of the DKM. She divides the DKM activities into "structural" and "long-term" and says the following:

> On the one hand, specific activities that can be considered as structural to the association: organized on a regular basis and emerged at the core of DKM. On the other hand, other long-term activities that the own association considers that are working lines, that is, activities that are implemented mainly through funding that DKM obtains from participating in competitive calls, at local, national or the EU level. Among these activities are grouped all those ones derived from the EU-funded projects. (Aiello, 2016, pp.146-147)

In an effort to analyse the DKM's working methodology it is important to interview the founding and existing members of the DKM association. Some of those founding members are

still active members but others have moved on or have sadly passed away. When the current president of the DKM was asked to describe the NGO, she said that the organisation is working horizontally, alongside the Roma women and girls and following their lead. Educational activities are at the core of the DKM's working model and they employ an egalitarian working model at every step of the way.

> The DKM works with Roma women- Roma from different profiles with different life trajectories and some are mothers and others no, others are from different backgrounds but we all have the common objective of trying to find a better future via education. …It is necessary to find a solution for the Roma girls and Roma women and for this reason we organise meetings with women from 8 to 80 years old and we ask them what they need and what they want and then we organise "trobadas" (Student/Role Model meetings) and we carry out our other activities with them. (DKM president, 2019)

Another DKM founding member who is also a Roma woman, a mother and an activist within the community said that "the DKM works in a certain way and has results. …Working in a certain way has very positive results and the DKM has a lot of humility and there is also a lot of solidarity. The important thing to note is that we aren't many but together, we are here and we solve issues." (DKM participant, 2019). This participant went on to say that "one can learn from any situation and the DKM has learned from previous situations where there were conflicts or misunderstandings" (2019). The DKM member states that while there may have been difficult moments in the past, each time they [the DKM] do something they are more prudent and diligent and use those situations as teaching moments. Specifically, she says "we are not interested at all in entering into those [bickering and non-constructive] types of discussions and rather we are all about the women [grassroots Roma women] and I think that the second congress is an example that one is doing it really well." (DKM founding member, 2019). She goes on to reflect on the Second Roma women's Congress and uses that event as an example to highlight that the DKM must be working in a distinct fashion that it could

successfully bring together so many diverse Roma women from a variety of European countries.

> The diversity was visible, there were more countries, there were more Roma women, so we have to continue working like this. The Congresses are like an indicator that we have taken major action where there is a difference and it shows - I do not know who but in a tweet that said with the whole theme of Andalusia and Box, and so we are going to 'Gypsify Feminism 'and we are doing it – allowing and supporting 300+ Roma women to go is incredible. (DKM founding member, 2019)

This point on making "feminism more Roma" is at the crux of this thesis. What is essential to the DKM's methodology is dialogic feminism and ensuring that this includes Roma women from various backgrounds. This mode ensures that the most vulnerable community members are not only heard but integral to the problem-solving strategies. Dialogic feminism understands intersectionality because at its base is inclusive of multiplicity, diversity and intergenerational environments and allows multiple entry points to analyse the challenges faced by a community. The DKM members state that the association is part of the Roma women's movement and has been a force contributing to the larger Roma movement. Its activities, whether the Roma Student meetings, the canteen training courses, its EU-funded projects or its major congresses, all are underpinned by dialogic feminism and have been welcoming of inter and intra-generational modes of working. The data shows that the DKM also ensures that grassroots Roma women are always directing, leading and contributing to the several activities the organisation carries out. In a recent interview with a political leader, she recognised the importance of including the grassroots community members and said "Yes - grassroots is always the key to sustainability and it is where the real knowledge resides" (Ward, 2019). Roma are not passive but rather active agents in directing their future. They are not acquiescence but rather taking charge and finding ways to actively promote and also offer counter-narratives to the racist tendencies. The DKM's dialogic and egalitarian activities and

projects are evidence-based and grounded in scientific findings, and specifically, what emerged in the interviews with the members was the DKM's 2010 and 2018 congresses that specifically employed their methodology and were organised using this model led to transformation. The 2010 congress was structured with a focus on three main axes: education, labour market and feminism. At the time of the 2010 congress, there was no congress of this nature ever organised where the Roma women from a grassroots community were the main protagonists. The DKM's first congress brought forward women who have limited involvement with NGOs and many of the women who attended were full of personal Communicative Everyday Life Stories (CELS). These CELS existed as the impetus for social transformation and were embedded in the events leading up to and involved in the actual event.

Ignored contributions from the Roma Women from grassroots were brought into the spotlight via the DKM's 1st International Roma Women's Congress- "the Other Women". Puigvert (2001) in the *Women and Social transformations* book, co-authored with Judith Butler and Elizabeth Beck-Gersheim, suggests that "there are many women's groups and groups from different cultures that are creating spaces in which they propose to be more united not only among each other but also with all women. This egalitarian dialogue decisively strengthens all of the changes that are taking place in their contexts." (Puigvert, 2001, p.51). What the Declaration[44] and the Conclusions[45] from the 1st Congress highlights the manner which the Roma women themselves have organised and discussed, while also continuing to problem solve in an effort to tackle their precarious situations. The interviews with the DKM members and through re-reading the detailed minutes of the event 1st Congress, Roma feminism in the 21st century and the inclusion of the "other women" was integrated into that international

[44] Declarations from 1st International Roma Women's Congress- "the Other Women" can be found in the appendix.
[45] Conclusions document from 1st International Roma Women's Congress- "the Other Women" can be found I the appendix.

activity. The data shows that the 2010 congress acknowledged the challenges the Roma women face in diverse settings while exposing that vulnerability, but also problem-solving and working in an egalitarian fashion to have changes in their local environments. Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay's (2016) discussion on the manner which vulnerability has been transformed into resistance directly lends itself to framing the DKM congresses as both events were an active form of dialogic feminism (Puigvert, 2001). As Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay have discussed in their Vulnerability in Resistance volume (2016), vulnerability is often associated with passivity as "dominant conceptions of vulnerability and action presuppose the idea that paternalism is the site of agency and vulnerability as the victimization and passivity" (2016, p.1). But these conceptions must be rethought and exposure to dialogic feminism allows for the Roma women to rethink and embody resistance and agency in a modern way. The data suggests that the congresses highlight that the Roma women did not deny their vulnerability to project power but rather used that space as a site of agency to assemble, which as an outcome allowed their resistance to guide them towards transformation. For each event, the Roma women assembled and travelled from several countries and locations and their acts of engaging in dialogic feminism had a geopolitical impact on a number of environments. The work traversed several disciplines, languages, cultures and what Gambetti calls "plural and collective thinking" (2016) which reflects diversity and individuality while also being part of something larger. This plural and collective thinking impacted many of the attendees and Soraya, a French Roma woman who attended the congress in 2010 said the following:

> I know that speaking in front of all the women who were there, from the stage to the women in the audience and the companions [who had organised, who had made presentations, all that] and speaking there was very strong for me. I thought: I can do it! , and I encouraged myself. I felt more ... I don't know how to say, trust and pride in myself. You know? And then I have overcome the stress of speaking. yes ... I think it impacts a lot also to feel recognised by others. Well, I come from France and the girls later came to talk and told me "oh yes, where are you from?" Well, that feeling of being recognised and being part of a group has been super important. I was always a little in the middle: either I was from Spain but not really... or I was from France but not really ... I always had

> to justify myself a bit for everything and there [at the Congress], nobody asks you anything, you are part of the group. (French Roma participant, 2019)

Soraya touches on the impact the 1st Congress had on her and the manner which she overcame her personal fears of public speaking but also the collective acceptance from others of her mixed background and feeling part of something much larger than her. The identity labels and the ability to just come as you are being an example of dialogic feminism within the context of the DKM association.

5.3.2 Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner: both at a grassroots level and outside of the local environments

The DKM has a very clear working structure that ensures that grassroots Roma women and girls are the main protagonists of all of their activities. The association also ensures the work that occurs happens inter and intra-generationally. As the president of the DKM said in an interview, Roma women from different profiles "from the ages of 8 to 80 are welcomed to attend the DKM activities and events" (DKM president, 2019). The DKM is committed to honouring the inter and intra-generational components of the community. As several DKM members highlighted from the interviews carried out, the association aims to model the family structure and Roma family environment of the community and tries to bring in that energy and mode of working. To do this, working inter- and intra-generationally is a key component of the association's working structure. When activities are carried out, there are no separations between the youth and the elders and everyone congregates and is allowed the space and time to talk, emulating a more familial setting. This familial setting is central to the DKM activities, but there are also Roma women whom sit outside of these local gatherings. In an effort to continue to honour this inter and intra-generational model, the DKM has understood that there are some Roma women that are from the community but are also versed in entering some of the more academic and politically charged spaces. These women are important to mention and clearly identify as there are those from the grassroots and those that are from the grassroots but

whom have either accessed higher education or are experienced in entering several spaces. The DKM uses a term, *técnicas (technical women)* to define those Roma women whom have received higher education and whom are well versed in attending conferences and other similar events. These women, the *técnicas*, are valid contributors but are not seen as "grassroots" Roma women. The *técnicas* are seen as a bridge or a link to engaging the most vulnerable Roma women and serve as mediators between work carried out in some high-level spaces where grassroots members don't normally enter. The *técnicas* may also be young or older Roma women and the same principle of working inter and intragenerationally applies. To offer an example of how *técnicas* enter into the DKM's methodology and also honour the inter and intra generational elements of the familial community, I will use as a case study the preparatory work of the 2018 Roma Women's Congress. The pre-congress meeting[46] of Roma women took place in Barcelona on the 28th of January, 2017 at the Casa del Mar with the support of the Comprehensive Plan of the Roma People (CPRP) from the Generalitat of Catalonia and its key member Mr. Ramón Vilchez. At this meeting various representatives from Spain and international entities travelled to Barcelona to begin the process and launch the second congress. Through the preparatory work and discussions which included agreeing thematic topics, dates of the actual congress, the logo of the event and financial resources, an agreement to have a second congress was realised. Women of Spain, Greece, Romania, Serbia, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic and Germany were present and/or contributed their ideas and highlighted good practices in their countries. The *técnicas*, whom were comprised of older and younger members of the community, would attend the pre-congress meeting but must be accompanied by one Roma woman from the grassroots community and could only attend this event if one Roma woman from the community was able to travel. Ensuring that a *técnica* and a grassroots Roma woman were in the space honoured the DKM's methodology and

[46] Pre-Congress meeting: Agenda and details from the meeting are located in the appendices.

maintained that the conversations and thematic content discussed were relevant to the most vulnerable and excluded from the various communities. The combination of the younger or older *técnica* and the grassroot Roma woman honours the plurality of voices that exist within the heterogeneous Roma nation and also ensures that women from local areas are supported and encouraged to enter some of those social, political and cultural spaces that are often not accustomed to welcoming the Roma women. This mode of working ensures that the "other women" are always present, active and directly contributing to the planning, sessions and DKM activities and that age is not a hinderance, barrier and that the grassroots Roma women can always find a person of reference to connect with in any DKM activity.

The DKM works closely with the Roma women from the grassroots yet, it is essential to also bring to the foreground that the DKM includes both Roma and non-Roma working together. Another key component of their methodology is to ensure that Roma and non-Roma are equals and that they can work alongside one another. This is critical to highlight because the DKM's discourse suggests that Roma-led organisations should not exclude non-Roma. The DKM has been criticised at different points in its twenty years of work and at several meetings for being an association that equally shares the responsibility of Roma and non-Roma working alongside one another. As sociologist Aiello (2016) clearly articulates in her own academic investigation on the DKM, the organisation received negative criticism that was unsubstantiated.

> Besides this, working also with non-Roma people, women and men have been of major importance for the strategic development of DKM. The collaboration of Roma and non- Roma women within DKM has been often criticised within a reduced sector of the Romani Rights' Movement in Catalonia. The argument for this lied in considering that there was not a real collaboration among Roma and non-Roma women within DKM, and that power was copped by non-Romani women members of the association. However, this critique is not evidence-based: the aim of the members, no matter their ethnic background is working for the improvement of the living conditions of the Romani women, in a transparent basis and in an altruistic and voluntarily way. (Aiello, 2016, p191)

Aiello's point reflects a tension that exists in the Roma movement yet is highlighting how the DKM pushes passed the binary thought of "only Roma" can fight Roma rights". One participant when interviewed said:

> The world we live in is not about 'Gypsy" and non-"Gypsy" or any other human race. It is about humanity and in my opinion working together would be great. This would bring us even closer to each other and this way we have lots of things to learn. By interacting with us, non-Gypsy women may change their opinion about our culture. We as Gypsy can prove that we are capable of doing things the same way like non-Gypsies are- so working together will be great because this way we can share our ideas and hopefully they will change their minds and not underestimate us (Gypsies) anymore. (Romanian Roma, 2018)

Another Roma women who was interviewed said

> I think it is a great idea working with non-'Gypsy', this way we can make ourselves heard and understood, to let everyone hear and know even by word of mouth that there are Gypsies other than the stereotypes they know. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

When talking to a Romanian Roma woman living outside her country of birth and in a position where she has to work closely with non-Roma, she said the following:

> It is a crucial aspect to work with non-Roma. This will promote good practice, external support, balanced ideas, different points of views, promoting the legislation, if working together and also breaking the stereotypes. Working with non-Roma, encourages to raise awareness of our background and way of dealing with daily situations. This partnership can only bring positives. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018

As Butler (2001) in the Women and Social Transformation book suggests the genesis of binary thought must be challenged and questions how we can have looser boundaries. The DKM pushes for egalitarian societies and actively pushes for the eradication of hate, gender violence and injustices via challenging the binary thought and bringing together Roma and non-Roma to fight for an equal and just society. A key component of the DKM methodology is bringing Roma and non-Roma together to fight against the injustices and double discrimination faced by Roma women and to work in an inter and intra-generational manner that honours the Roma family structure.

5.3.3 Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities

Gómez, Munte and Sordé (2014) offer a useful history of Roma in Spain that frames the community's reality within the country but also focus on the manner which education shifted in relation to the Roma. Gómez, Munte and Sordé reference Giménez (2002) and the research related to "Puente" (bridge) schools and the segregation which took place in relation to Roma in those environments in the 1980's. Gómez and Munte expand that in the 1990's such bridge schools were disappearing yet a new form of segregation was starting to take shape, where curriculums were "adopted" for ethnic minorities, the Roma being included in that clustering. This in effect led several Roma pupils to become early school leavers, increasing the dropout rate of Romani girls. Sordé (2006) suggested that as part of the Roma Women's Movement a key point was to keep Roma girls from leaving school and to ensure that education was inclusive of all voices and accessible to Roma girls of all ages. With this backdrop it is easier to discuss the data that has emerged from the interviews carried out with the DKM members and volunteers. The activities organised by the DKM, whether the Roma student meetings, the training courses, the project-based activities and the Congresses, all incorporate *referentes*, or role models into their activities. These role models are crucial to the DKM's methodology as their presence is intended to serve as an inspiration and be a marker for the participants attending the activity. The DKM's intentions to visibly celebrate role models from the community and promote their success is fundamental as these *referentes* can positively influence and motivate others through the sharing of their testimonies. One example which illustrates the *referentes* model in practice is with the Roma Student Meetings that are carried out on a yearly basis. These Roma student meetings are held in the Roma communities, typically in a neighbourhood school or local space where the families normally congregate, and the women are directly involved in the organisational aspects and are in charge or mobilising their local families, business and community members. The DKM simply supports

the planning but the work is carried out by the women themselves and are in charge of setting the agenda to finding the speakers and the role models. A similar agenda is usually followed in these meetings with two aims: firstly, the presentation of the experiences of Roma girls and women who are studying at different levels and who are positive role models for other participants. Secondly, working groups are curated into the day where the women breakout in smaller sessions to share experiences and concerns with all participants and discuss different alternatives and propose solutions to those identified challenges. These events are spaces for Roma women and girls to engage in deep and meaningful conversations where problem solving is at the core of the discussions while reflecting on the testimonies of the role models. Having the role models in the space also allows for the other participants to directly ask them questions and probe and learn from those experiences too. The participants have first-hand accounts from the role models and this dynamic is central to instigating candid conversations and dialogical activities. One woman suggested that,

> I think it's crucial if not vital to have role models in the community. The role model. Will inspire the entire community. I dare to say, it can be seen like a pastor, mentor and. So on. The most important is that young people will see the role model's achievements and will want to become like them. They will be inspired and motivated. Women as well, often get motivated as soon as they see another person from their community succeeding. Role models in our community will make an open new opportunities, ideas and dreams. Role models are also increasing the positive image of our community and breaks the stereotypes. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

For the DKM the role models are fundamental to their activities and methodology and from that data collected it can be surmised that the use of role models has the potential to break the cycles of violence and to increase the presence of Roma girls and women in a number of a number of social, cultural and political spaces. One participant from the Second Congress mentioned that witnessing one of the *referentes* on stage describing the work they are doing in Bulgaria, inspired her to do the same in the United Kingdom, where she currently resides.

> I really liked the 'My Mum is a Teacher' programme and I am hoping tto implement it in Sheffield. What I learned, it that it's in my heart. It [the role models] refreshed what I already knew, and felt every time that when we want to improve the standard of the life of Roma, we need the women from everywhere. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018).

The DKM has over twenty years of incorporating this technique and from the interviews it is gleaned that through *referentes* encouragement of young Roma girls to stay in education through high school and university while also promoting training of Roma women and grandmothers, can lead to overcoming the social exclusion of the community.

5.3.4 Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks

McGarry 2017 looks at the notion of Roma pride and how this raises questions around solidarity and collective memory and identity. He also claims that artists, activists, theorists, researchers and grassroots Roma have to negotiate this topic and mediate ascriptions to the concept of Roma pride. Roma associations also fall under this umbrella of needing to reflect on how Roma pride and solidarity plays out for them and Aiello (2016) has asked specifically, how solidarity relations are promoted within the DKM. Her findings show that for the DKM solidarity is linked to dialogic feminism, as defined by Puigvert (2000), and is in direct conflict with post-modern relativist trends. For my research, what emerged was that through friendship, kinship, horizontal working structures and egalitarian dialogues solidarity was built, honoured and maintained at the DKM. For the association, solidarity exists in a number of different ways and through their activities they not only act out their solidarity but embody it.

> How neat would it be for other entities from outside [of Catalonia and Spain] to join our Trobadas and to be part of this event? And from those events we started thinking about the bigger Congress and took advantage of, "took advantage of in commas", the opportunities that we had to take when going outside of the country. We used those opportunities to find other like-minded organisations that were working with Roma women from grassroots but also who could work like us by bringing those Roma women together. (DKM member, 2019)

This is an example of how the DKM act out their solidarity and is constantly thinking about ways of extending and broadening their network and working from a place of support and unity

not only within Catalonia but further afield too. Soler (2017) in *Achieving Social Impact – Sociology in the Public Space* cites the DKM's methodology and ability to deeply transform both Roma and non-Roma communities. Soler references the DKM's first International Roma Women's Congress (2010) and many other DKM activities "such as the 'Roma Female Students' meetings, the work contributes to eradicating stereotypes about the Roma community, strengthening the bonds of solidarity between Roma and non-Roma women…" (2017, p. 86). Aiello, Amador-López, Munté –Pascual and Sordé –Martí (2019) also reference the DKM's activities and the manner they are tied to preserving family values, working intergenerationally and "create conditions for activating networks of solidarity" (2019, p.19). DKM activities encourage and facilitate egalitarian models of solidarity with each gathering allowing a diversity of voices and to come together to collectively consider current social issues and alternative ways to create new structures for relating, co-existing and for women that are often in the shadow to take center stage and take the lead and create more social, economic and cultural opportunities for themselves, their families and other Roma community members. A DKM member said the association is:

> …a space where equality of difference is celebrated, zero tolerance for violence. Maintaining a balance with the Roma women from the neighbourhoods and ensuring that they know they are always welcome is fundamental the DKM work and activities. The fact that the DKM is situated in the 'barrio' and in the neighbourhood where many women live, is vital. This open-door policy allows the DKM to be a space where women from all corners can walk in freely and readily come to part of the associations' activities. It [the DKM] runs in a horizontal model and [they] are not gate keepers but rather allow the Roma women to be the main protagonists. (DKM member, 2019)

As is clearly articulated, the horizontal component of the DKM's methodology exists in a number of ways and the balance between being accessible, located within an area that is central to the women and allowing them to be central to the association's work encourages solidarity.

5.3.5 Solutions that are evidenced-based and pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse

The DKM is committed to ensuring that egalitarian activities are organised but with a focus on problem-solving and moving passed victimisation narratives which paint the Roma community as passive individuals. Rather their methodology is built on dialogic feminism and highlighting that Roma women are active agents of their communities. Interviews with the DKM members referenced that employing Puigvert's terminology of the "other women" and allowing Roma feminism to play out in an inclusive and dialogic manner that references research that is "evidence based" is central to the DKM's methodology. To help frame the DKM's methodology I return the work of the INCLUD-ED consortium and Successful Educational Actions (SEA). Within the INCLUD-ED project the consortium identified that there was a difference between best practices and SEA, and that a key difference is that SEA allow for actions to be transferred to diverse settings and contexts. INCLUD-ED transferred knowledge between researchers, institutions practitioners and end-users and the project showed that by employing evidence-based work, the model of co-creating knowledge can be transferable to plural contexts. The INCLUD-ED consortium found that "educational and social initiatives are more effective when they are based on evidence. This is a primary exploration for the success of SEA: they are transferred to other contexts once they have proven effective" (INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015, p.4). The DKM activities have allowed Roma women from all walks of life to participate and be the main protagonists of those events. The Roma women's conferences and congresses that were referenced in chapter 3 by other European institutions were catered towards a very specific demographic which brought together academics, policy makers and Roma women that are versed in attending those types of events. The DKM's focus with its congresses and other projects is on those Roma women and youth that never attend and are often excluded from such conversations and events, and this profile is DKM's focus and main target of their participants. The data showed that the

DKM members ground their thinking in not only including the "other women" but also that work is underpinned by scientific evidence. In the European Report for the DKM's EU-funded "Rom-UP! The inclusion of Roma through successful quality educational experiences" project which focused on Roma women from Bulgaria, Spain, Romania, Ireland, Belgium and Greece, the association writes "[t]he Successful Educational Actions identified in the ROM UP! Project are not only based on contributions from the international scientific community but also on successful evidence to overcome school failure, early school leaving and dropout rates for Roma children. (2013, p.48). One DKM member reflecting on the early days of the DKM and describing the impact the link between the scientific evidence, the DKM and Roma feminism says:

> To witness and accompany the female and male feminists that were linked to scientific investigations and linking it to Romani feminism, this was a new area for me but very powerful as I was more 'militant' and a 'purest'. Also witnessing the DKM and women like 'Tia Emilia' who was Roma and also coming from an academic realm and using the scientific findings to link the DKM spaces and talking about feminism, and saying this could enter the DKM, this helped me rethink a lot of those early ideas. The DKM bases its work on the women but also the scientific evidence. (DKM member, 2019)

As is highlighted by this member the thread between the grassroots Roma women, the egalitarian activities and the decision to underpin work on scientific evidence represents the DKM's methodology in a succinct fashion.

5.4 Objective 2: Analysis of the DKM's methodology and the transferability of these traits to other European contexts

Objective 1 identified the DKM's methodology and what emerged from the data was the following five points: i)Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"; ii) Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner; iii) Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities; iv) Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks; v) Solutions that are evidenced-

based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse. These five points are central to framing objective 2 which will expand on the way the DKM's methodology is applied outside of the DKM and transferred to plural European contexts.

The DKM is a non-profit organisation that has been fighting for the promotion of Roma woman and her community for over two decades. The association prides itself on ensuring that the Roma woman never feels she has to compromise her identity and fights for equality and non-discrimination through the active and dialogic participation and engaging in educational, social and cultural spaces, discussions and events. The DKM fights to overcome the double discrimination suffered by Roma women based on gender and ethnicity. The DKM also stands up and fights against racism and sexism that generates this double discrimination and considers education as a preventive measure to tackle the intersectional discrimination and injustices that exist. The association collaborates with other organisations at local, national and international levels, struggling to achieve equality based on respect for and promotion of their own differences. The DKM promotes and enables equal access of Roma women and girls to all educational, social and labour spaces as a way to promote equal rights, opportunities and outcomes among all cultures. Another key component is that they promote a positive image and offer counter-narratives of the Roma woman as the transmitter and leader of Roma cultural identity. The DKM employs a dialogic philosophy that is built around creating spaces which allow the women to be instigators of change in their communities while also problem-solving and collectively finding solutions to the issues they face.

As has been stated numerous times, the DKM not only has a local footing but reaches nationally as well as has an extensive European network. The DKM is an active member of the European Women's Lobby[47], the European Commission EU Civil Society Platform against

[47] European Women's Lobby: https://womenlobby.org/

Trafficking in Human Beings[48], has been invited to a number of international conferences and symposiums to discuss their methodology and to share their best practices. An example of a conference where the association was invited to speak was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary "The Seventh Budapest Human Rights Forum" held in Budapest, Hungary (November, 2014). Another landmark event where the DKM was present was the European Commission INCLUD-ED Final Consortium- Education to achieve Social Cohesion conference held in Brussels, Belgium (December, 2011). There are many other events where the DKM has been asked to share their methodology and mode of working among European audiences and some of this information is on their website.

To get concrete data of the manner which the DKM's methodology exists and impacts the wider European context and gauge if the methodology is transferable to plural contexts, I held a series of focus groups, interviews, used questionnaires and catalogued data using two dimensions for coding and analysing. The data included exclusionary and transformation groupings, where the exclusionary information is tied to the factors that have been identified as barriers and discriminative practices and detecting the limitations within the current environments. For the transformative grouping, solutions which were proposed by the Roma women themselves, were also tracked and attention was put on the measures taken that weaken the barriers of exclusion. Gómez & Vargas (2004) suggest that the DKM emerged as a reaction to the "exclusionist approach" traditionally used on the Roma. The traditional mode of working was rejected and for this data collection process I employed the CM which, as has been highlighted by the INCLUD-ED consortium, works alongside its key stakeholders and enters into an egalitarian communicative process where critical and self-reflection are integrated.

48 EU Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Being: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/media-outreach-els/eu-civil-society-e

> The communicative perspective includes the contributions of objectivist and constructivist orientations but emphasizes the processes of critical reflection and self-reflection and intersubjectivity, in which meanings are constructed through communicative interaction among individuals, ultimately leading to agreement. The researcher contributes his or her expertise and knowledge concerning developments in the scientific community to the dialogue, contributions that are subsequently contrasted with the thoughts and experiences of social agents. (SEA Book, Flecha and consortium 2014, p.10)

Below is a table that classifies the exclusions and transformation and is linked with the five points that were classified as ingredients of the DKM methodology. For reference, those five points are:

i) Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women";

ii) Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner;

iii) Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities;

iv) Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks;

v) Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the dialogic feminism discourse.

The table below outlines the exclusionary and the transformative points identified by the women. The last column specifically outlines the DKM methodology point that served as a transformative impetus. In the section that follows I will have subsections that will titled 'Exclusion to Transformation' to correspond with the table below.

EXCLUSIONS	**TRANSFORMATIVE**	**ACTIVITIES-EVIDENCE**
Exclusion 2.1: Roma and non-Roma tensions and feelings of being unable to work with non-Roma.	Transformative 2.1: • DKM's methodology – Roma and non-Roma together and notions of solidarity	• The DKM activities • Linked to DKM methodology point iv) *Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks;* • Linked to DKM methodology point *i)Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women";*

Exclusion 2.2: No political Representation	Transformative 2.2: • Seeing politicians engage with Roma women • Roma women politicians in positions of power • Roma events that include politicians	• Engagement of politicians, in particular females, MEP Julie Ward, MEP Soraya Post, Mayor of Barcelona-Ada Colau Ballano • Linked to DKM methodology point iii) *Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities;*
Exclusion 2.3: Feminism has excluded Roma women and not considered their voices	Transformative 2.3: • Dialogic feminism and it existing in day-to-day Roma environments and contexts	• Conclusions and the way feminism is built into activities • Linked to DKM methodology point v) *Solutions that are evidenced-based-pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse.*
Exclusion 2.4: Roma women feeling isolated	Transformative 2.4: • Working inter and intragenerationally and solidarity networks	• Linked to DKM methodology point ii) *Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner;*
Exclusion 2.5: Not many Roma role models	Transformative 2.5: • Having positive examples from community	• The Romani Student Gatherings and the DKM 2010 and 2018 Congresses • Linked to DKM methodology point: iii) *Incorporating*

		Role models and "referentes" into their activities;
Exclusion 2.6: Stereotypes fuels research	Transformative 2.6: • Evidence-based and work that includes the community	• Plurality of voices at egalitarian events • Linked to DKM methodology point: *v) Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse.*

5.4.1- Exclusion to Transformation 2.1: Roma and non-Roma coming together and erasing tensions and building networks of solidarity through egalitarian activities

Tensions between Roma and non-Roma were referenced by the interviewees and it was clearly stated that working alongside non-Roma was not the norm for the Roma women and girls in their host countries. This factor was deemed an exclusion and through engaging in DKM activities and employing their methodology, there was a shift that took place. Specifically, two points from the DKM's methodology *i)Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women* and point iv) *Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks* marked a shift for the women and organisations. In one instance a Greek organisation referenced how via attending the 2018 Congress in Barcelona, Catalonia, gave them a voice at a European level and it allowed the Roma girls the chance,

> for many the first time to travel outside of Greece, to interact and engage with the Bulgarian Roma girls, and create a community. (Greek participant, 2018)

Another Hungarian participant said,

> often in my home country my family and I 'just give up'. Then we, and a lot of them ask themselves 'Why should I do this?'. (Hungarian, participant, 2018)

reflecting on the question of engaging with non-Roma and the context which they do so. From that Hungarian focus group, the participants said that they felt excluded and hardly left their

small villages. For a few, leaving to attend the DKM 2018 congress was the first time they left their small towns and even took a plane. Specifically, one Hungarian Roma woman said:

> Some other Romani women who was with me in the same organisation [in Hungary], but from middle class, they had really strong dislike saying "oh this cannot be done by non-Roma, it should be all mine'. This is not understanding, you know, how to put it to you for you to understand? So, in this Congress [referencing the 2018 DKM Congress] made me more strong to see many Romani and non-Romani together. To work together and advocate for us, and it doesn't matter your nationality. (Hungarian Roma participant, 2018)

The founder and president of the Hungarian Roma organisation reflected on the impact the DKM's methodology had on herself, defending that Roma and non-Roma can work together and also on the younger Roma girls and mentioned that it was life changing for the Hungarian Roma girls to see that many of the same issues they faced in Hungary were happening outside of their country. Witnessing this reality impacted them and was so inspiring as they wanted to make a change not only for themselves but also for other Roma women outside of their small villages in Hungary. This point of the "other women" witnessing the injustices faced by other women echoes what Butler (2001) would class as transformation happening in an unobtrusive way and not cataclysmic in its tone but rather varied and marked by a simplicity to it. She goes on to say that power emerges from being constrained and despite the challenges shifts can emerge and makes a case for the interconnectedness of power, victimisation and constraints suggesting that "agency emerges precisely from this situation of constraint and they live both at once" (2001, p.123). de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca (2005) framed solidarity in terms of the "other women" and identified that communicative skills are key to ensuring that transformation takes place.

> Exclusion and social inequalities are only some of the possible consequences of the information society. The other side of the coin is that we can break these unequal relations by using communicative skills which we all have and that the information society prioritizes. Social practices demonstrate that we have the ability to transform society into a network where solidarity neutralizes the exclusion exerted by money and bureaucratic control. (de Botton, Puigvert & Sánchez-Aroca, 2005, p.30)

With this in mind, one way which the DKM challenges power dynamics and ensures that the "other women" are included and considered are through their activities and efforts placed on establishing solidarity networks that are not only local, national but also broader. In 2004, a founding member of the DKM and still an active committee member travelled to Paris, France with CREA[49] researchers and organised a seminar with a local French community. Soraya, based in Arles, France signed up to the seminar in Paris, and was joined by her friend who was running a Roma association where Soraya was a volunteer. After attending this seminar everyone stayed in touch and in 2010, the DKM member asked Soraya to participate in the first congress organised by the DKM. The continued dialogue between the multiple parties and the two associations and individuals led to ongoing collaborations and social and transformative impact that directly affected all involved. Soraya who identifies as a Roma woman, mother, professor, an educated person and also from a Spanish and French background, reflected on her relationship with the DKM and its methodology. When asked about the DKM's dialogic philosophy and all that it carries out, from its projects and local events to its international congresses and its way of discussing problems and aiming to find solutions, she highlighted that the Roma women themselves were the key individuals guiding the work being carried out. Soraya mentioned the exclusionary models that often exist when Roma and non-Roma interact and identified that there is a discourse that suggests that Roma should follow one line of thought and another that non-Roma should follow. She also acknowledges that there is a lot that needs to change within society and within her own home country of France.

> There is too much to do…. But I believe that giving [Roma] women a voice and that they feel they are the main actors and proud of what they do and to decide,

[49] Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA):CREA was born in the University of Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) with the aim of generating a scientific research that was able to identify theories and practices that overcome inequalities and to train professionals of the maximum excellence in teaching and research, stemming from different ethnic groups, genders, ages and social classes. http://crea.ub.edu/index/

> is very important. And it is what I like in the Drom. But apart from projects, special things, things change by the example we give, how we talk, how we behave, both to change the image that the "payos" [non-Roma] have but also so that the Roma themselves see that we can be different, do studies, or work without "apayarse"[being less Roma]. That is also important and I think it is a part of this methodology and dialogical ideas. Space that gives voice to those things that are important in the day to day, are important, as important as the academic project that has the money. (French Roma participant, 2019)

As Soraya very clearly articulates, the DKM's methodology, specifically *i)Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"* gives space for the Roma women to be the main actors and to imagine a different future. The methodology is not solely linked to projects but to reflecting on how the Roma community behaves and on the examples that are given to other members of the community.

Women who participated in this study referenced the challenges they faced with engaging with non-Roma and mainstream society and discussed the exclusionary realities they encountered as a result of Anti-Gypsyism and Romaphobia. Through engaging in the DKM's activities, the Roma women saw that the DKM could rely on individuals, academics, institutions and political entities to bring their events to fruition. Specifically, planning the 2nd International Congress of Roma Women (2018) was executed with the help of a network of volunteers, the Roma women themselves, the DKM's coordination and management, as well as the collaboration and financial support of the Integral Plan of the Roma People of the Department of Social Affairs and Family of the Generalitat of Catalonia. At the same time, it is important to highlight that the cooperation of the Social Work of the Foundation "La Caixa", the Barcelona City Council, the Diputación de Barcelona, the Institut Català de les Dones, the 46 volunteers comprised of Roma and non-Roma, and all contributed to the development and execution of the logistical support, coordination and infrastructure of the 2nd Roma women's congress. The DKM could rely on previous existing networks and one Roma woman from the UK when interviewed mentioned her surprise at seeing that so many non-Roma were invested

in seeing the Roma women's congress come to life. Another Roma woman from Romania was in disbelief that

> the Catalan government would support this event try to bring so many of us [Roma women] together. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

This network of people comprised of non-Roma focusing on the "other women" and working alongside them is central to the DKM's methodology. The association is made up of Roma and non-Roma and its ethos are woven into their egalitarian activities.

5.4.2- Exclusion to Transformation 2.2: Roma women not having Political Representation and the manner which DKM challenges this exclusionary reality

The exclusionary reality for Roma women within the political domain does not go unnoticed by Roma women from the grassroots. In post conversations with the Roma women and organisations that attended the 2018 DKM Congress, five exclusionary issues emerged from that data. The Roma women felt that i) women's representation within political environments was incredibly important to them but rarely recognised by others to be meaningful and valuable ii) Roma women's presence in political environments was not known or rarely visible to mainstream media as well as grassroots communities iii) many Roma women from the grassroots community felt the political systems were not entirely open to the them iv) that both sexes that hold political representation are not interested in offering opportunities for the Roma community, the Roma nation, and that women were especially excluded and v) the governing bodies are dominated by men and not democratic. Hancock (1988) suggested that the Roma nation "is unable to unite and have a political conscience and to choose our own leaders" (p.14) and this point echoes what the Roma women were also contending. From a focus group held in Italy the following was declared:

> We, Roma automatically face barriers because we are not politically oriented, and therefore we are not even important at the time of the elections, because Roma and Sinti from Italy for various reasons do not go voting. Since we do not belong to any party, we are not automatically under any protection. (Group statement from the focus group)

Roma women create their own organising structures of representation and as McGarry (2010) has identified, the "Romani elite" have increased advocacy in international organisations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) all of which have leveraged the Roma's position within these political contexts. And while this has been successful and an important part of the Roma Women's Movement (RWM), it is the non-elite that are being asked to participate and also engage in these discussions around political representation. McGarry has advocated that "[m]arginalised minority groups ought to be adequately represented in processes of policy-making and decision-making if they are to enjoy equality and justice, meaning that they should have input into the policy-making process particularly on decisions which affect them directly" (McGarry, 2010, p. 33). This point is vital as the DKM congress included political representatives of both Roma and non-Roma politicians working together to not only engage with the Roma women directly but offer a clear message that their voices matter, count and influence their political decisions. Social work academics Håkan Johansson and Gabriella Scaramuzzino (2019), explored the role of advocacy and how internet and digital platforms are growing trends in reaching more individuals. Their research asserts that political influence and acts of political presence are intertwined. This insight is useful in framing the political presence at the DKM's second congress as both Roma and non-Roma political representatives were included at the event. The mayor of the city of Barcelona, Ada Colau Ballano, Labour Party MEP Julie Ward, were both physically present and part of the opening ceremony. Ward said in her opening speech "Working together, policy-makers and communities, we will make real the rights of all women" (Ward, 2018). There was one more female politician who had a presence at the Congress but was remotely involved and sent in her video message to the Roma women from the congress. One might consider that her virtual presence had less of an impact on the Roma participants, but as Johansson and Scaramuzzino (2019) argue, digital platforms and advocacy is effective and is fostering a new form of activism that also generates

impact.

> While face-to-face contacts with politicians, engagement in public committees, and writing reports and press releases have served as cornerstones in most organisations' portfolios, and still do, the development of the Internet and social media platforms has changed the opportunities for political influence, as well as for expressing one's positions. (Johansson and Scaramuzzino, 2019)

For the congress, Roma woman Soraya Post who is a Member of the European Parliament Swedish Feminist Initiative and part of the S&D Group was invited to the Congress but unable to attend the actual congress due to scheduling conflicts. However, she was supportive of the event and decided to participate contributing a film to be played. Her video message speech has been transcribed and is found below.

"My name is Soraya Post.

I am a mother of 4 children, a grandmother of 9 and a great-grandmother of 4 children.

I have been a human right activist for about 40 years.

In 2014, I became the first member of the European Parliament from an ideologically anti-racist and feminist party – The Feminist Initiative from Sweden so the first MEP elected on a feminist ticket.

I am the first Roma person in Sweden to stand as a candidate for a political party.

Before becoming a member of the European Parliament, I was working as a human rights strategist at the County Council of West Sweden.

I have founded the International Roma Women's Network and I am a co-founder of the European Roma and Travellers Forum.

I often say that I was born condemned. I have been deprived of my human rights since the day I was born.

I have been looked down on and judged in all areas of my life as a second-class citizen.

That is why, my dream is that every human being in the world will be able to enjoy his or her human rights fully.

I want women and men to have equal rights.

I want everyone in our society to be safe and live without fear.

I want a Europe that stands up for the respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.

I want a Europe where all these abstract concepts are made a reality.

A European society in which fundamental human rights do not only exist on paper. A European society in which democracy is secured.

I want to end the patriarchal fascism.

I want a Europe in which the UN Sustainable Development Goals are reached, thereby creating a sustainable, happy and healthy society. Where the values of our Treaties are realised and the achievements of our EU project can be enjoyed by all its citizens equally.

My dream for the Roma Community is freedom - freedom from anti-Gypsyism, discrimination and the human rights abuse that Roma have faced and are still facing across Europe.

I have been working for the rights of Roma people all my life.

I demand nothing more, but also nothing less, for the Roma people than I demand for the majority society.

I do not want Roma children to see their parents being discriminated and humiliated. I want Roma children to feel proud when they are together with their parents.

My dream is that all people are seen as and treated as first class citizens.

My dream is that Roma people will be able to enjoy their fundamental rights in the EU and fulfil their full potential, just like anybody else.

My dream is to end the Roma apartheid in the EU and in the whole world. My dream is to see more Roma politicians.

And that we Roma are proud of our culture and that we continue to carry it on as we have done for centuries despite oppression."

Recorded exclusively for the II International Roma Women's Congress, this speech is wrought with hope, vision and a belief that Roma women are agents of change. Soraya Post's political position is in and of itself a landmark reality. This deserves to be unpicked further and discussed in a detailed manner, however it is not the focus of this study. A brief mention of the symbolic significance of female Roma MEP Soraya Post holding such a major position in office is of incredible importance. In 2016, the Inter-Parliamentary Union held its first study specifically devoted to the subject of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament and found that 82% of those that participated in the study reported having experienced some form of psychological violence. While there are more studies at institutional levels looking to investigate these gender imbalances and several initiatives like the conference held in London, UK (2018)

titled “Stop Violence against Women in Politics[50]” hosted by the UK political parties, there is still a great deal of power dynamics that favour one gender over another. Gender imbalances are visible in various parts of society and I have previously mentioned the need to view these imbalances from an intersectional perspective. Political theorist Hannah Pitkin has researched issues and imbalances of gender in political and social environments and her seminal conceptualisations of political representation and the effect of focusing on this point underpins this section. The value of having political representation, in particular for a vulnerable and marginalised community like the Roma community, is incredibly important. Magda Hinojosa, Kim Fridkin and Miki Kittilson explored in their working paper “Does Women’s Political Presence Matter?” (2017) the critical influence visibility and the symbolic representation of women in political spaces holding positions of power has on other women and how valuable and highly influential to the citizens of that community their presence is for a number of reasons. Increasing women’s descriptive representation within a legislature affects citizens’ interest and engagement in the political process (Hinojosa, Fridkin & Kittilson, 2017) and by women occupying those political posts the descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation (Pitkin, 1967) is changed. According to political scientist Leslie Schwindt-Bayer there is an integrated model of women’s representation that can examine the impact the symbolic representation has on a community. She denotes “that representation is a symbol that generates emotional responses among constituents” (Schwindt-Bayer 2010, p.6). This emotional response that Schwindt-Bayer references is reflected in the data collected for this study.

The political presence at the congress was an important transformative component and eight participants in post interviews and focus groups mentioned how important it was to have those politicians there and to engage with them directly. The women also said that the fact that non-Roma

and ethical.

50 -in-politics/" https://www.wfd.org/2018/02/27/uk-political-parties-host-international-summit-on-violence-against-women-

female politicians were so genuinely interested in listening to them and their stories and realities, was critical. Three other women mentioned that seeing the film by European MP Soraya Post was inspiring and to have her as a role model, was powerful. The focus group held in Greece mentioned the relevance and influence the political representation had for them.

> Oh my God, so they had the opportunity to talk with the policy-makers- they loved that, really loved that! The fact that the city of Barcelona welcomed them, wow, it was such a welcome. All the girls said how important it is. To have a voice and to believe in yourself and to also be able to connect yourself with the policy-making because the girls they are facing obstacles. (Participants from Greece, 2019)

Another participant said that,

> Political representation is everything! Having decision makers from the Roma community will promote equality and justice. Politicians will provide an effective side of the Roma community and will enable us to have an equal and fair representation. They will provide relevant support. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

Politicians engaging with the Roma women, the community and the grassroots Roma women allows for those informal ways of thinking and seeing to come into the conversation and this can lead to "outside" the box thinking and seeing which as Chetkovich and Kunreuther (2007) suggest is possible (p.81). Moghadam and Bagheritari (2007) and Reading (2015) when discussing heritage and the gender dimension in relation to policy processes recommend that women are recruited at a national level into participating into heritage policy-making processes and help the States develop gender bench-marking criteria to ensure greater impact. This mode of working deconstructs the hierarchies and allows for decision-making to happen in a horizontal fashion. The DKM has incorporated this line of inquiry into their activities, hence the political component not only to the congresses but to all of their activities. As the DKM has advocated and underpinned all of their work in dialogic feminism, the political dimension also falls under this umbrella.

The DKM ensures that politicians, especially female politicians, are invited to their events to listen to the Roma women and in doing so, are directly addressing gender imbalances, allowing

non-Roma politicians the opportunity to engage with issues that matter to the Roma community. Vincze (2013) argues that Roma women take their personal stories and transform them into political messages which transcend beyond the Roma community. Representing Roma woman as weak and voiceless further multiples the position of inferiority in society and within political arenas. This transformative work of the DKM has encouraged Roma women to take their formal and informal structures and organise. In summary, the Roma women were positively impacted by the political presence and role models included in the DKM events.

5.4.3-Exclusion to Transformation 2.3: Feminism has traditionally excluded Roma women- Dialogic feminism and inclusion of "other women" is central to transformation

Building a narrative of the DKM's methodology is naturally integral to the Roma Movement and the RWM and was discussed within chapter four within the Theoretical Framework of this writing, when focusing on social movements and the role of grassroots communities. Feminism has traditionally excluded a plurality of voices and certainly not always considered the voice of marginalised ethnic minorities like the Roma. Puigvert (2001), de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca (2005), Beck-Gernsheim, Butler and Puigvert (2001) all defended the need for Roma women, among others, to be included in feminist discourse. Their voices are central to ensuring that gender inequalities are eradicated. From the interviews carried out and four focus groups, what has emerged are three specific themes that have been classed as exclusionary: i) Feminism has excluded Roma women and not considered their voices ii) Feminism is at odds with the values of the Roma community and iii) Feminism feels removed from the day to day reality of the Roma women. One Roma woman from Spain mentioned:

> I equate "feminism" with "machismo" and don't feel that feminism understood the " 'dia al dia' (day to day) and was for the academics, the ones that sat over there" (Spanish Roma participant, 2018).

Another Romanian Roma woman mentioned:

> I feel feminine and not like a feminist. They are different. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

Her comment suggests that the two were at odds. From the data it has emerged that feminism was a topic, ideology and a distanced academic study that did not include the Roma women and they felt they could not relate to the concept. However, through engaging with DKM activities and preparing for and/or participating specifically in the DKM congresses, the Roma women felt that Roma women's feminism was inclusive and could reflect their ideals and values. One Roma woman from France whom participated in both DKM Congresses reflected on Roma women's feminism and was very clear that the work of the RWM is very specific to Spain.

> Roma women's feminism I think is very very specific to Spain - It is a movement that is feminist but that tries above all to fight for things that Roma women suffer but not "payas" [non-Roma women]. They are actors, they want to change. In France there are some associations of Roma women (but not especially feminists) therefore, they often deal with mothers' problems, or because the men of the community have surrendered and they [the Roma women] want to continue fighting. But there is not this idea of Roma feminism.
>
> What happens in Spain in a general way, in regards to the fight against inequalities, sexist violence is a general concern, there is a will to fight in the whole country, it is spoken in the news, politicians, associations. People, in general they are mobilised.
>
> There is not so much here, there is no such awareness and stuff, and it is a shame. I do not understand how it is that in France it does not happen the same because there are the same problems but I do not know, people, women have not committed so much. Feminism was very intellectual, far from grassroots women ... although things are changing. There is a general movement of revendicating by women, and an awareness of the inequalities they suffer in all countries. And the Roma women, and the feminist Roma women have to take advantage of this moment to publicise their point of view and their specific struggles. (French Roma woman, 2019)

This is one example of a Roma woman who has worked closely with the DKM and reflected critically on feminism, dialogic feminism and witnessed the difference of what is happening in Catalonia and what is happening in her home country of France. For this writing I will call her Soraya. Her observations on the differences of how Roma feminism plays out in each country

and who has been part of feminist discourses links with Huub van Baar's (2015) suggestion that there should be a focus on less formal and informal ways of organising and forms of self-governance. Allowing for spaces to accept different ways of knowing, understanding and problem-solving, is key to the DKM methodology which is also what allows it to be transferable to other environments. Replicating the DKM model in other areas and countries requires that the grassroots community members that are directly affected and implicated in the real-world issue be part of the conversation. In a questionnaire that was circulated to Roma women from a number of European and neighbouring countries, including the United Kingdom, Macedonia, Germany and Hungary who engaged in a DKM activity, when asked "Have you seen similar events to this [2018 DKM Congress] carried out in other countries?" the 15 Roma women all said "No". In particular, the Roma woman from Macedonia who also identifies as a Roma activist said, she feels she is part of the Roma Movement but reflected on the fact that she had never seen an event like the one that the DKM organised and hosted:

> this makes me think that this type of gathering is unique. (Macedonian Roma participant, 2019)

A Hungarian Roma participant who has worked for several Roma organisations and continues to be an active agent of change in her community discussed her inability to relate to certain Roma conferences and events and reflects on participating in a DKM activity.

> At many other events, usually, we didn't even understand what they are talking about and what people are saying. You know, but here [referencing the DKM congress] we are talking about everyday issues and we are putting things on the table which concern each of us in a different way. …[I]t is hard to change everything but each of us can, simply by sitting and talking with the girl who has some problem for example, I can help. I can make a change. (Hungarian Roma Participant, 2019)

As articulated above, this participant reflect on feeling excluded and unable to relate to people at other Roma conferences or events. From the 15 questionnaires and the focus groups, it emerged that feminism was not really considering all Roma women and that equality was not really something that they had experienced.

In the theoretical framework I referenced intersectionality and the Roma Movement and Schultz and Biţu (2018) reflected that there was a need to develop Roma women leadership in Central and Eastern Europe and commented on the fact that there were few, if any, models of thinking intersectionally about race and gender that was tied to the Roma women's community. This lack of considering grassroots communities and thinking intersectionally led to a tension which both Schultz and Biţu, pioneers in Roma women's issues and in the Roma Movement in general, both identify. Their reflection constitutes an important contribution to this thesis as it offers a benchmark for situating the work of the DKM. Two DKM members interviewed also reflected on their experiences of how the DKM engaged Roma women from the grassroots and/or discussed Romani feminism. One said that she remembers at the first DKM Roma women's Congress when Nicoleta Biţu and Montse Sánchez-Aroca explained "Roma Feminism of the 21st Century" it was visceral and a raw term that many women participating at the first congress could identify with in a very easy and emotional way.

> I think it [Romani feminism] was lived a lot in the first congress, like raw meat. I don't know. When they would explain and share, and the other women share their testimonies that was very very very very raw and also wide in its reach and scope- you knew that many of the women there could feel identified to what was being shared. (DKM member, 2018)

Returning to Jekatyerina Dunajeva's (2018) literature review of methodologies and fieldwork, she acknowledges that there are academics whom have allowed informants to become "co-creators of knowledge" rather than objects of research (2018, p.128). She also contemplates the narrative that has been built around the Roma community is one that as Kóczé and Trehan (2009) claim is seeing them as "defective" (p. 59). Liegeois (2007) has suggested that Folklore has been a common thread when discussing the community and Okley (2014) has referenced that Roma are portrayed as "evoking feelings of pity" (2014, p.73). Precisely because of these types of narratives it is ever more timely to employ the Communicative Methodology and to model associations like the DKM that work horizontally with members from disenfranchised

communities. The Roma community no longer needs to be placed in a position of being done to but as Dunajeva articulates, the Roma can be co-creators of knowledge. This de-centering of the researcher and referencing Habermas' (1984) theory of communicative action, through the removal of hierarchies, the knowledge provided is based on arguments rather than the academic, social or political positions the individual holds. The critical, self and intersubjective reflections are related to how meaning is constructed and agreed upon. This communicative action reflects the DKM's methodology points *i) Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"* and v) *Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse.* The participants interviewed described how being part of the DKM working groups or attending the associations events, felt transformed by reflecting on projects that are grounded in scientific evidence and or reflecting on how feminism plays out for them in their lives. Four women clearly stated that they were not aware that they were actually living out Romani feminism in their own lives and it took attending/engaging with the DKM to observe this about themselves. One Slovakian Roma woman, now living in the UK said that she was transformed by hearing the manner that the bad experiences that many Roma women face yet they succeeded in changing their immediate conditions and also finding better educational opportunities for their children and families. She also mentioned that since cooperating with the DKM she now feels and believes that she can be part of Romani feminism and defines it as having total freedom of expression and also staking a claim that her rights matter. Another young Hungarian Roma girl suggested:

> Romani feminism was to be able to talk, discuss and argue with a man and to dislike something and to say no to some traditions. And every human rights part apply to me on the same way as it apply to others no matter what colour I have or nationality, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic situation. (Hungarian Roma youth, 2019)

A Romanian Roma woman said that feminism post DKM engagement to her means that she can support all Roma women and women from any background.

> [T]hat I care, I fight and I support any women, regardless of ethnicity. Feminism means to me that you appreciate your knowledge, your colleague, for being a women, a mum, a professional a survivor and so on. Feminism, means to me that the women, stand together for each other. (Romanian Roma participant, 2019)

These women are examples that through engagement with the DKM and their egalitarian activities and events a newfound voice emerged. These quotes serve as evidence and are reminders of the centrality and significance of including to use Puigvert's (2001) term, "the other women" in feminist discourse.

5.4.4- Exclusion to Transformation 2.4: Roma women feeling isolated- through inter and intragenerational work and Roma and non-Roma working together change occurs

The FRA report (2018) states that discrimination, harassment and hate crimes are a key factor of exclusion. "Poverty is both an outcome and a driver of exclusion in education, employment, health and housing (2018, p.12). Roma women who formed part of this research study highlighted that they felt isolated and misunderstood on a number of different levels. They identified that institutions and several public spaces didn't see them as equals and that their poverty levels often left them disenfranchised. From a focus groups held in Italy it emerged that education and the Roma camps was another important issue as in Rome, Italy the Roma community faces forced evictions on a regular and there is always tension between the political parties and the Roma families. Many women in the camps want to further their education and it is an area that needs more attention. This issue of Roma camps was also tied to having the knowledge and ability to provide proper documentation. Documentation, which according to the women providing documents and proving identity is a real concern for many of the Roma women in Italy. Many do not hold the correct documentation and so are seen as not having an "identity" and this greatly affects their daily life and inhibits their ability to look for and secure a job. Housing and living conditions that can ensure the health and balanced growth of the woman was of high priority. The women said,

> The health of my children and to not live in the so-called 'equipped villages' that only worsen the situation of our people is essential. (Roma participants based in Italy, 2018)

Another focus group, also held in Italy mentioned,

> female bodies and reproductive health, and identified that a lack of access to health services, in some cases the girls feel ashamed of having need of a support that comes from outside the family. (Roma participants based in Italy, 2018)

The same women also said that there is insufficient attention from the services that tries to understand their Roma culture. A Hungarian Roma activist who has done advocacy work for major Roma institutions commented on the importance of Roma women from various backgrounds included in the struggle for human rights. When interviewed, this Roma woman remembers a time when she first started entering those major institutions and being alongside non-Roma and entering the middle-class workforce.

> For many years, I was the only Roma woman from the poor Roma settlement with an education and stuff like that. And of course, you know with my different background, I was not from the same way like others because I was from the small village because, I was first time in Budapest, you know, I was really from the Roma settlement. I didn't even been close, to people like lawyers, researchers, you know people from this middle class and it was then I don't know how to tell you, a huge huge difference for me. To start and I was even not feeling comfortable for a while, you know there. (Hungarian Roma woman, 2019)

The class difference and discomfort she begins to touch on is a tension that many Roma from grassroots communities have referred to throughout this data collection process. There is a gap and the grassroots Roma women, for various reasons, were not always invited to be part of the key organisations and their day to day structures. In the last 10 years this has changed and in the theoretical framework of this thesis (Part 3) the gap was analysed looking closely at the institutions that have developed and focus on Roma women issues and the individuals that sit inside those space. What has emerged from the data collected for this research study is that there is a disconnect and some Roma women find it challenging to enter some environments as they do not feel they "belong" or know how to "speak the language of majority". In another

interview with a Roma woman and activist from France, she identifies another reality that is tied to the way the Roma movement plays out for her and within her local environment and country.

> There are people who have never had the opportunity to get involved in associations and then, it is like a vicious circle: There is a certain passivity that remains, they are consumers but they are not actors. And that little by little things will change but it seems to me that it will take a long time. So many years of passivity and assistance have made part of our people passive, consuming, but certainly not actors, and able to think as citizens, Roma, as being part of a larger town with its differences, its particularities but capable to unite to act and recognize itself. I am super motivated to participate in a movement that unites people beyond borders. But I also realise that this does not prevent me from getting involved in much more specific areas of France or even the Arles region (such as the life problems of traveling Roma or movements for the recognition of the internment of thousands of Roma, Manush during the 2nd world war. (French Roma participant, 2019)

She comments on the "passivity of the community" that exists and expands on the lack of there being active agents of change but also says she is motivated and can see that there are others that are active and are producing powerful work and having an impact. The question around activism and the various ways that work plays out in society is key to this writing. Dialogic feminism is a form of activism and the inclusion of several voices begins to treat the above mentioned "tensions" that arise for some Roma women, and reflects them attempting to make changes in their surrounding worlds. The point that the French Roma woman makes about passivity is understood by the DKM and this reality is not ignored and numerous of the DKM activities aim to encourage the Roma women and girls to be the active agents of change.

The exclusionary points outlined above by the Roma women highlighted the feelings of isolation and being unable to access or even enter several aspects of society. When asked if engaging with the DKM shifted any of these feelings of isolation, the data revealed that Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner was a key component that led to a substantive transformation for them. One Romanian Roma woman living in the UK said,

> It was quite challenging for the different generations to work together. Brining the different perspective and way of thinking together was great and we have a lot of good things to learn from our elders." She went on to say that by all the Roma women working inter and intra-generationally "Roma women gained courage, self-confidence and wisdom which is necessary for us to start to change what is needed. (Romanian Roma participant, 2019)

Another woman who was interviewed said that she enjoyed

> the composition of the age and education level of the women. This mixture gives a good opportunity to see and understand most of the problem faced by women and give solution based on experiences and also because of the evidence and knowledge shared. (Hungarian Roma participant, 2018)

Another Romanian Roma woman said that:

> equality is two people from two different backgrounds 'Gypsy or non-Gypsy", black or white, man or woman, doing the same tasks and receiving the same reward. And this was possible through Drom. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

These changes referenced above highlight the power of inter and intragenerational work, but also the coming together of Roma and non-Roma to find solutions to the gender-based discrimination faced by Roma women. McGarry (2017) argues that environment produces collective understandings of one's place within societies as well as a clearer view of those spaces. There is an interplay which cannot be ignored and factoring in the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma, particularly Roma women from the grassroots communities coming together and collectively problem solving, there is an opportunity to go deeper into identifying solutions that lend themselves to lasting sustainable results. The DKM works closely with Roma women and girls at a grassroots level and ensures that the most vulnerable are given spaces to be heard and to convene to find the solutions to the various challenges affecting the community. As evidenced above, when Roma and non-Roma come together and honour inter and intragenerational modes of working, the horizontal, participatory methods employed facilitate dialogic spaces and gives the floor to those Roma women and youth whom are often outside of these conversations. In the act of giving these disenfranchised women a platform that is built on dialogic feminist principles, transformation occurs.

5.4.5-Exclusion to Transformation 2.5: The lack of role models and importance of visible role models, feeling invisible- Roma girls and women as role models instigating change

Role models is a term that is often used within a number of social environments such as political, educational, as well as within business and research contexts. The term draws on two theoretical constructs: i) the concept of a role and people occupying important social positions; ii) and the concept of modelling, in terms of a matching of cognitive skills and patterns of behaviour between a person and an observing individual. Pleiss and Feldhusen (1995), suggest a role model is an individual who is perceived by others as worthy of imitation and who may or may not have personal contact with the people who see him/her as a role model. Social psychologist researcher Penelope Lockwood (2006) defines role models as "individuals who provide an example of the kind of success that one may achieve, and often also provide a template of the behaviours that are needed to achieve such success" (p. 36). David Gauntlett (2002) suggests a role model is "someone to look up to and base your character, values and aspirations on" (p. 211) and his definition is linked more with admiration and idealisation. As previously discussed, the DKM relies on role models and includes them in their egalitarian activities. Whether the Romani student meetings are being organised or the planning of congresses, role models are a key feature of the DKM methodology. The Roma girls and women that formed part of this study specifically mentioned that there were very few role models that were visible within their local environments. Concretely, a focus group held in Macedonia agreed the following:

> [T]hey felt represented as 'housewives' and were seen as 'behind the man', 'subordinate', vulnerable during conflicts and agreed that active participation in public and political life, having more positive presentation of Roma traditions and more role models of educated Roma women would all help redefine the Roma woman image. (Roma women from Macedonia, 2017)

Compiling all the data, the Roma women exclaimed that the lack of role models and 'visible' role models was a factor that fed into them feeling "hidden" or "excluded". The DKM

methodology point: iii) *Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities*; was seen to have a major impact for the Roma community that worked with the DKM. A transformational moment for one Roma woman living in the UK said that witnessing the role models and hearing them share their dreams and discussing their life impacted her the most. It made her ask herself what her own dream was and she exclaimed that:

> My dream for our future is to establish links with other Roma women and is very important and essential to me. (Romanian Roma participant, 2019)

Another Roma woman suggested that the powerful testimonies and experience helped and encouraged her to support education in her local community. A focus group with an organisation in Greece shows that the Roma youth and the staff members who attended the DKM 2018 Congress were transformed. One suggested that:

> I had a chance to meet women who have similar problems. They have given me strength to be more active in my society. I also felt that my presence helped the other girls. (Greek Roma participant, 2019)

Another Greek woman said:

> The conference helped me personally. Seeing the older and younger women [referencing the role models] being so active has given me the power not to give up on the difficulties. It also increased my sense of debt to fight against the stereotypes. (Greek Roma participant, 2019)

This change that took place at the Congress was transferred to their local environments and the Greek organisation representative suggested that the women whom attended continued their studies and positively started engaging in several other activist activities in their local environments and encouraging family members to get involved. Another Roma woman from Bulgaria also discussed how the congress and the DKM's methodology positively affected her in a number of ways.

> I got to know the life and the battle that Roma women lead, as well as the work of Drom Kotar, it was useful for my work as a moderator. When I came back I told the women's group how they live and what are the priorities of Roma women in the European Union and how the women in Spain are doing to make their voices heard. (Bulgarian Roma participant, 2019)

Another Bulgarian Roma woman suggested that all of the shared group activities at the congress, especially the "dreams" table that featured the role models, were useful and many of the techniques could be applied to their work back home. As a result of the Congresses, many Roma women from across Europe who were interviewed or participated in the focus groups also discussed training and formal structures within their local contexts, emulating what the role models had discussed and shared at the congress. Bandura (1986) posits that it is easier for individuals to learn behaviour by observing others as opposed to learning from the consequences of their own behaviour. In summary, for this group of Roma women, leadership and engaging with individuals and events where role models were integral to the event's structure, had a major transformational impact.

5.4.6- Exclusion to Transformation 2.6: Stereotypes fuel research- Evidence-based egalitarian projects and working with the "other women" counter this reality

In the theoretical framework of this thesis covert and overt racism was discussed and a case was made that highlighted the discriminatory practices that were embedded in several parts of society. Identifying and changing stereotypes is a complex issue, especially when such views are deeply rooted in mainstream society and fuel a series of Anti-Gypsy and Romaphobic behaviour. While emphasising cultural diversity and plurality are valuable in opening up discussions around stereotypes regarding the Roma, it is equally important that "knowledge is constructed through dialogue between researchers and end-users" (Flecha and the INCLUD-ED consortium, 2015, p.9) and that work is evidence-based. An EU-funded project run by five universities and research institutions entitled "Identifying evidence-based methods to effectively combat discrimination of the Roma in the changing political climate of Europe" is running from 2018-2020. The aim of the project is to identify the effects of political discourse on Anti-Gypsyism, and prosocial and antisocial action intentions toward Roma people and Travellers, and to evaluate and improve anti-

discrimination interventions. The findings of the project will be used to create a toolkit for designing interventions, and disseminate country level and integrated reports to inform local and EU level policy makers, practitioners, NGOs, academic researchers as well as the general public. This project is a recent example of a specific way of working that is aiming to use evidence-based methods. Földes and Covacim (2012) suggest that better evidence for better interventions is needed and specifically say that "systematic research and comparable data are needed to design tailored responses minimising the effects of specific barriers met by Roma women in accessing healthcare. While Földes and Covacim are focussing specifically on health, Roma and the need to evidence-based approaches within that domain, their point of reference is the same as the DKM, to underpin work with scientifically proven evidence.

From the data gathered for this study, the Roma women and youth identified that stereotypes fuel research and the general impression was that there wasn't room for them to "battle" this stereotype. One participant suggested that the conference allowed stories to be shared and real voices to be heard.

> It's different because most of the stories and good practices are from different parts of the world and are told by the first person. What better interaction and touch to the pain and the superior feeling or satisfaction with a woman who has fought the stereotype of her 'tribe' and managed to succeed despite all the difficulties. (Bulgarian Roma participant, 2018)

The CELS and focus groups mentioned that Roma women felt defeated and excluded from society and that entering certain spaces was not for all Roma. They further expanded on the point that stereotypes were ingrained in people's perceptions and that it was hard for non-Roma to see them as individuals. As an antidote to this reality the women identified that DKM methodology point: *v) Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse* was seen as tool to combat these stereotypes and lead to social transformation. The data revealed that Roma women agreed that if society, and even other Roma women witnessed projects or activities that were attached to science there would be a

shift in focus and less weight placed on the stereotype. As referenced in the results section 5.3.5 solutions that are evidenced-based and pushing dialogic feminist discourse, are embedded in DKM projects and activities. As referenced with the RomUP! Project, scientific evidence is an integral component of the DKM ethos and their events and underpins everything that they do whether at local, national or European levels. An example of how they integrate evidenced-based projects and thinking into their activities is with the 2018 congress where all of the projects that were presented at the event were based on scientific findings. Roma woman and researcher Dr Jelen Amador presented a scientifically grounded doctoral thesis that was based on CM and included egalitarian discussions between Roma and non-Roma, and allowed grassroots Roma women to contribute. The title of her thesis was " "Guerreras de Cristo". Contributions of Roma women to the social transformation from Evangelical Church of Philadelphia". Amador's thesis elaborated on how the struggle of Roma women can be better understood if research is based on scientific evidence. She stressed that by applying the above-mentioned approach and methodology a dismantling of stereotypes is challenged and the reproduction of negative images, that have been reproduced throughout history, can be changed. Amador also showed how working in this manner positively influences research from the field of education to housing and health. Another project that was mentioned at the DKM congress was the impact of the INCLUD-ED project in Portugal, involving Roma families in schools through Learning Communities. This work focused on how to prevent early school leaving and how to promote adult education among Roma women with special attention paid to involving Roma youth in their own educational trajectory. The success of this project and its ability to include families in schools to prevent the segregation of Roma children, as well as to improve coexistence and family formation, were all presented within the frame of being evidence-based and egalitarian modes of working. From the l'Escola del Mediterrani a school in Tarragona, Catalonia, a Roma woman explained how the implementation of family training,

as a Successful Educational Action, marked a turning point in the trajectory of the educational center, and also improved the family and personal life of those at the school. The dream of turning the center into a Learning Community, and therefore, implementing the Success Educational Actions, achieved the best academic and professional results. Involving the relatives of the centre produced positive impact and some of the parents involved were present at the congress sharing their testimonies.

> Since I entered my children's classrooms, I trust much more in the teachers and I bet for the education of my children" (Spanish Roma participant, 2018). And another Roma woman said "[s]ince I participate in the formation of family members, I can help my children more in their school tasks and thus improve themselves and myself. (Spanish Roma participant, 2018)

With these projects as a background the Roma women interviewed for this study mentioned that change occurred for them in their local environments. A Romanian Roma woman said that through engaging in the 2018 Congress her dreams changed and that she noticed that there was research behind the projects that showed they were valid. Specifically, she said:

> there can be projects and ways to improve education for our children and educate them in a compassioned way. (Romanian Roma participant, 2018)

Another example where a Hungarian Roma woman living in Germany found the DKM congress as a transformational event.

> I found it useful the topics and to hear their 'proper' projects which was discussed on the Congress and the plan we said we would work together in future activity. (Hungarian Roma women from Germany, 2019)

When probed further on the term "proper" she replied that the project that included Roma by working with them and that there was "evidence" to support the thinking, was new to her but felt this was a "good way". She had not seen NGOs working in this format and certainly had not seen projects that were scientifically grounded. Another theme from a focus group held in the UK suggested that seeing the mothers and grandmothers present the "evidence-based" projects from their countries and to directly hear of their experiences of being involved in the

project and in the research, was transformational. The organisation exclaimed that they would now work in this same format.

> Since the Congress we have worked to create space and opportunity for Roma women and children to enter within the towns they live in. To encourage confidence and a sense of entitlement in entering these areas and undertaking new activities. All of our work now is about empowering and building confidence in the women and ensuring that everything is done with them as the driving force. By ensuring that grassroots women lead the work that we do we believe that we will make more effective and lasting changes as evidenced by the approach at the Congress and by DKM." (UK participant translating for Slovakian Roma women at the focus group, 2019)

As is clearly stated in the above quotes, the DKM methodology has impacted and transformed Roma women, their families and organisations that work directly with the community. The transferability of these DKM traits are transferable to a number of settings and within each environment are moulded to fit the context of that situation.

5.4 Objective 3: Contextualise elements of the DKM within the Dialogic Feminist discourse

Roma feminism has been integrated into this writing and we have mentioned how the DKM has focused on the topic of the "other women" and the manner which dialogic feminism has been included in all of their activities. *Romani Feminism* is a term that is used by activists, Roma, academics, Civil society as well as political institutions. Oprea (2004) has commented on the marginalisation of Roma women within feminist spheres and McCormick (2017) has made a case that Romani Feminism is tool for transformation that can open up discussions and also advance the Roma Movement. When the MEP Julie Ward was asked about the Roma Women's Movement (RWM) and if it is different or separate from the Roma Movement, her reply reflected on gender roles and the violence experienced by women.

> Yes, I think it is. Women from any walk of life and from any ethnic group have a distinct experience as a woman and because they are women. Intersectional feminism understands this. So, a Women's Movement will always be separate from a wider emancipation movement and the Roma Women's Movement is also distinct. Perhaps it is better to describe it as different rather than separate. Of course, being Roma is the link. However, if the Roma Women's Movement did not exist it would be harder to raise issues specific to women such as violence

> against women and girls, or education for girls. (Julie Ward, MEP Labour Party, 2019)

When asked to reflect on whose voices were included in the current Roma Women's Movement she said "I could see that lots of mothers and young Roma women were involved in the Barcelona conference but older women do not seem so visible. I suspect that LGBTIQ+ Roma women are harder to reach out to and Roma women who have missed out on education will also be less likely to get involved" (Ward, 2019). Ward's point on the individuals who form part of the movement is directly linked to her personal experience as a woman and as a politician who travels to several different countries throughout the world. Ward's point on women with no formal education missing from the movement directly speaks to the exclusionary paradigms that are currently not including the Roma women. This references the need to have a multiplicity of voices always present in the movement and to carve the spaces for dialogic feminism to ensure that the most marginalised and vulnerable voices are locked into the conversations.

Ensuring that Romani Feminism includes the voices of all Roma women, especially those from diverse and grassroots communities, is linked to dialogic feminism, as it creates spaces where those women can demonstrate their capacities and come as individuals and be taken seriously. Through dialogic feminism a future can be reimagined and the strength and resilience of a community can be highlighted within society. At this juncture it is worth stating that the concept of dialogic feminism and the "other women" originated with Puigvert (2001), and was further developed by de Botton, Puigvert and Sánchez-Aroca, (2005). The work of the "other women" was instigated by the above-mentioned group of academics and resides in the DKM due to the close relationship the DKM had, and continues to have, with the scientific community. It is important to note that dialogic feminism was not solely an academic concept but corresponds to the community of women whom are often excluded from academic spaces. Since there was a close relationship between the DKM and Puigvert, de Botton, and Sánchez-

Aroca, among others, the concept was embedded in the association's ethos from its inception. The concept of the "other women" may have been instigated by the Catalan researchers but soon found allies with other Roma women activists, Roma academics and Roma feminists outside of Catalunya. Among those who resonated with dialogic feminist discourse was Nicoleta Bițu. A founding member of the DKM when discussing dialogic feminism referenced the Roma feminist pioneer, Bițu and mentioned that the DKM met her in Europe during some of the conferences and at research project meetings that were taking place. It was in those instances where the DKM started to build a relationship with her, which led to synergistic collaboration.

> Nicoleta was very special to me and when I met her in meetings I was surprised how accessible she was. We built a working relationship with her and I saw that Nicoleta's way of working was very much in our line of working. This excited me! …I admired this woman for years and then I met her and she was right there, she was so accessible and down to earth and visionary. (DKM member, 2019)

Bițu has been an advocate for dialogic feminism and ensuring that all voices are included in the Roma Women's Movement. Bițu has been a part of DKM congresses and supported the association in a number of ways. At the 2010 congress, Bițu and Sánchez-Aroca presented at a roundtable entitled *Romani Feminism of the 21st Century* where dialogic feminism principles underpinned the conversation. A historical account of Roma feminism, from a dialogical standpoint, to the current Roma Women's Movement was discussed. Their interventions highlighted that dialogical feminism promotes solidarity among all Roma women and includes all their voices, allowing for an equality of differences to enter into the discourse. Their presentations and evidence-based examples of how dialogic feminism can exist in Roma communities was further exemplified via four Roma women who participated and narrated their different experiences, yet all being centered on the way that dialogical feminism played out in their environments and communities. Each intervention illustrated how they are working to overcome gender violence, to reconcile family life with their professional training, and the

multiple ways that they motivate themselves and their immediate families and circles to be agents of change. One DKM member referenced the moment and said

> that it reflected the DKM's principles with the association not being about one but about the multiplicity of voices and celebrating these voices. (DKM member, 2019)

The associations ability to relay Romani feminism to Roma women from diverse backgrounds in a malleable and inclusive manner, stressing that egalitarian modes of working, thinking and relating to one another is possible and leads to solidarity, problem-solving and change, is at the core of dialogic feminist discourse.

The DKM has grounded Romani feminism in dialogic feminist ideology. All of the participants interviewed and/or who participated in the focus groups held in the numerous countries, were all asked what *Romani Feminism* meant to them and to offer one example. While there were several quotes that would simply be too much to insert directly into this document, after analysing the data the themes that emerged and the definitions provided by the Roma women are below:

- Education was a foundational component that allowed for Roma feminism to play out
- The use of successful stories was integral to reflecting "real" Romani Feminism
- Dialogic entry point is essential to ensuring Roma feminism is expanded on
- Having role models and using successful stories to highlight impact and "real-world" changes
- Dialogic working groups allow for a variety of opinions and to see how equality plays out for other Roma women and how other communities define the term
- Roma feminism is linked with the freedom to be able to share with your local community

- More events that allow Roma women to congregate and be together and for central authorities and political representatives to be invited to hear the voices of the grassroots communities
- Empathy was important and feminism was not only an issue to be dealt with by Roma women but involved both men and women

The data reflects that the overall feeling is that the DKM activities, in particular the congresses not only discussed and presented Romani Feminism to the participants but allowed them to live out and embody that experience.

Another example which contextualises the DKM's commitment to honouring dialogic feminism is with the 2018 Roma Women's congress. More than 80 percent of the participating Roma women represented the "other women" without academic training, most of whom had never been in a knowledge construction space like the one of the congress. Women travelled from several European metropoles and in some cases for more than 12 hours, to be able to attend this important meeting. There were women from several small villages, some of whom had never flown before, making the journey and boarding busses, trains and planes. Women of every age group were at the Congress. There were young children and babies to elders that were 80+ years of age, whom had never left their remote villages and countries. This is important considering that this was one of the main objectives of the 2nd congress ensuring that the "other women" had the opportunity to share their experiences, their opinions, to contribute new ideas and alternatives that improve not only their lives, but also that of their families and communities.

Dialogic feminism focuses on the importance of empowering ordinary women to make their communities stronger, equal and dialogical. Democratising those spaces and allowing women to be drivers of their lives and in their local community, is foundational to the DKM activities and in particular to the congress participants. CELS captured the importance of

hearing stories and reflecting on how critical it was to see role models and for there to be highly educated Roma women discussing their professional and personal experiences. Two terms that emerged from the data analysis were "Roma elite" and "local inspirations" and the interviewees felt that the "local" references were as important as the political and professional Roma "elite" faces that were part of the Roma Women's Movement. Congress or other DKM activities. One Roma woman said, referencing the 2018 Congress and Romani feminism:

> It was different because we had a mixture of young and old women, educated and non-educated from 10 countries. This made the Congress special and in the same time challenging. DKM have managed to overcome any challenges with success and really did their best to bring together so many voices and share their views, feelings and dreams for their family. (Romanian Roma woman, 2019)

Another French Roma women who has worked closely with the DKM for several years and in a number of ways and been involved in several of the DKM activities, reflected on the first and second congress and speaks to the impact each event had on her and on her community.

> I saw that it was possible, it was the first time I heard about such a thing and then I also saw the strength that it was to be together among Roma women. I had not become so aware of this, and it also impacted me because I became aware of the diversity that was among us. We were very different and at the same time there were many things that brought us together. I want to say that, to see women who have struggled so much in their daily lives, others who studied, or who were university women, or in official positions, jobs with many responsibilities…. Well, all this I had not experienced before and I think that is what impacted me the most- it is to realise that it was possible. (French Roma woman, 2019)

This comment highlights the impact the dialogic feminism had on the Roma women and identifies the changes and the transformation several underwent. Dialogic feminism reinforces ideas of solidarity and through the DKM egalitarian activities, this point also surfaced.

> It appears that there were younger Roma women at this second one [Congress] than the first one, and that made me very happy, that there would be more mothers, young mothers, and that made me very happy. I thought that perhaps there was something that had evolved – perhaps an impact from the first Congress, the fact that there were so many young girls there in the second.

> What I really liked is also this, to put in contact the French women who were going to participate with the organisers of the Drom, it was also for me, also a way to help and participate a little in an active way to the organisation of the Congress.
>
> For example, the women who came from France had a very specific situation than the others- because they were Travellers, who lived in a caravan and all this. Yes, I realised there were issues that can only be ... how to say? They are very specific problems to a group, according to ethnicity, or by place or way of life. And we would have to take it into account to be stronger together, fighting for what is common to all, but also helping each "group" in their specific struggles. (French Roma participant, 2019)

The DKM facilitates several conversations and helps Roma women better understand their own success as well as the struggles of the other women. This mode of working is anchored in dialogic feminism and their events and activities are markers of reflection which reference the different challenges of several of the varying Roma groups. A core principle of dialogic feminism is transforming barriers into solutions and the data shows that the DKM supports women to overcome injustices and find solutions to their issues. The congresses and other DKM activities celebrate the diversity and strength of the Roma women and orchestrate the knowledge exchange and transfer of agency from people who have learned to better understand their realities and move towards guiding others from their local communities to push through the struggles and become positive role models. This mode of working is classes as dialogic feminism and reflects Habermas' (1984) theory of communicative action. The DKM activities refuse to focus on the failing systems and institutions and rather weave in science-based solutions and problem-solving skills to recognise the exclusionary obstacles.

> I found really powerful, new and useful to have more than 400 Roma women from all around the word who was confident to share good experience and sad moment of their life. All of them came with different background and life experience and education level, all who I talk and meet empower me with their enthusiastic commitment. (Hungarian Roma women in Germany, 2019)

The five organisations that were interviewed all said that they or the women who attended the 2018 congress felt encouraged to think about Romani Feminism and ensure that they are working in a dialogic feminist manner. One participant suggested,

> that she thinks about frameworks and considers how she manoeuvres and works through the existing systems but now wanting to make it more 'Gypsy'. (Romanian Roma woman, 2019)

The data shows that the Roma women were more reflective of their current realities and found inspiration in hearing others talk about gender equality and Romani feminism. One woman said,

> I believe that every person has rights and that gender should not be a defining factor in constructing a social identity as well as being discriminated against. The voice of every woman should be heard! (Moldovan Roma woman, 2019)

Other women when asked about equality and if they better understand the concept and how this plays out in their daily life post the 2018 DKM congress, two women replied in very distinct ways. One explained,

> that it is neither the people around them or the institutions that discriminate against them but that people in this world and all should have the same basic human rights and it is up to everyone to ensure that this is carried out. (Roma woman from Macedonia, 2019)

Another said,

> I think I have realised the right way to understand gender equality. (Roma woman from Germany, 2019)

The women who attended the congress and engaged with the DKM's methodology referenced their expectations and the outcomes were surprisingly changed by preparing for the congress and applying the DKM's methodology to their local environment. Several of the organisations and the women interviewed said that working alongside the DKM, preparing for the congress and attending the actual event developed them, influenced their thinking and mode of working

and also saw value in working with other Roma women in a dialogical feminist manner. Engaging in dialogic feminist conversations and employing the DKM's methodology to their immediate situations helped them reflect on their responsibilities as a Roma woman, citizens, as well as activists. One young girl from Greece was asked if her expectations changed after the congress and she said

> Yes, my expectations have changed when I saw 300+ Roma women from all over Europe. I was grateful that if there is will, everything can be done, that a Roma woman can do it all. Their organisation [the DKM] was very organised and coordinated. (Roma woman participant from Greece, 2018)

A Hungarian Roma woman said that within her local environment she now believes that bringing Roma women together to discuss their problems and to collectively find a solution is the only way she plans to work in the future.

> Yes, we had meeting with different group of girls and women in the school and work place and shared all the program, experiences from the Congress. I think we must came together more often in any burden topic and share our experience with the aim of helping to find solutions and reach positive change. We will do this now. (Hungarian participant, 2019).

The Hungarian organisation also described the that the event allowed the women from Hungary to see that they are not alone and that several women from across Europe face many of the same issues.

> They had the opportunity to see that yes, the problems are the same, so we must act together by organising activities and interacting with people from other countries. (Roma Hungarian participant, 2019)

From the focus groups held in Bulgaria one woman exclaimed,

> the congress changed my life in a professional way. (Roma Bulgarian participant, 2019)

While another said,

> I believe more in the fact that the Roma woman can be educated, successful, happy and equal. I work harder in this direction and I feel more useful. (Bulgarian Roma participant, 2019)

This statement about feeling more "useful" references the dialogic transformation that several Roma women went through. When asked to pinpoint moments in the congress that facilitated those opportunities to engage, reflect and transform, many women mentioned the working groups. The working groups and the structure of those discussion spaces was crucial to going deeper into identifying the exclusionary and the transformative examples. Many suggested that the participatory nature and the dialogical components which celebrated the women from 16 different countries where they could all interact and equally be present, was very positive. One participant from Slovakia living in the UK described the impact the congress has had on her and discussed the manner the DKM has transformed her working and professional life back in the UK.

> Since the Congress we have worked to create spaces and opportunity for Roma women and children to enter new places within the towns that they live in. To encourage confidence and a sense of entitlement in entering these areas and undertaking new activities. All our work is about empowering and building confidence in the women and ensuring that everything is done with them as the driving force. By ensuring that grassroots women lead the work that we do we believe that we will make more effective and lasting changes as evidenced by the approach of the Congress. (Participant, 2019)

Overcoming social exclusion using education as a main engine of change was agreed by the majority of those that participated in this study. One participant living in the United Kingdom reflected on her dreams that emerged as a result of the Congress.

> A dream I would like to accomplish in the future is to be. An encouragement for the other girls in my community and say to them to persevere in education; to understand that there is plenty of time for marriage and family after we finish our education. … People don't have much faith in a better future and way of living in our communities unless they find a way to earn money and fast. I would like them to understand that everything starts with education, hard work and then they will earn money. (UK based Slovak Roma participant, 2019)

Improving their lives of their families was of upmost importance to the Roma women who were interviewed.

CONCLUSION:

The promotion of feminist scholarship that is fortified by practice, underpinned by scientific evidence and inclusive of the "other women" was at the centre of this thesis. This work outlined the gaps that exist within feminist and Roma Studies in relation to the inclusion of grassroots Roma women and girls, and highlights the ability that the community has to approach their problems from an intersectional perspective. An important element to this writing was to ensure that the study reflected the Roma women's voices and their contributions. The women and organisations interviewed helped to construct a narrative that argues for an understanding of them as "other women" and demanding recognition that they are active agents of change. Throughout the study the Roma women interviewed demanded that their human rights be respected and honoured, and recent scholarship by female Roma academics has demarcated that intersectionality is essential to analysing political, social and academic spheres.

As an academic and an activist alike, I reflected on my positionality and documented my own departing point to foster and articulate how I am viewing and writing about the Roma community, particularly Roma women. It is important to stress that the Communicative Methodology (CM) was employed throughout the life of the project which allowed any biases to be challenged and omitted. Due to the way CM is structured end-users are included at every stage of the academic investigation, particularly the reviewing of the results, as this ensures that the data reflects their voices and opinions. This mode of working ensures that there is a consensus between the researcher and the participants and the knowledge production process is co-created. This thesis has allowed Roma women from the grassroots community, Roma women's NGOs and politicians to directly help shape this academic study. Specifically, the "other women" have been central to the work from inception to the very end and have been

involved at every stage of the process. Through the use of CM, I was able to address my key research question and explore the three objectives.

Focusing on the Roma Women's Association Drom Kotar Mestipen and using it to ground this academic investigation is novel and incredibly important to the overall discussions around Feminism, Roma Women's Movements, intersectionality and activism. Rarely are the most discriminated and most vulnerable invited to be an integral component of an academic study. The trend is that marginalised communities are brought into a study and knowledge is extracted from them and then the researcher moves on. This work was done alongside them and included them at every stage of the process. They were active contributors and co-creators of knowledge that is scientifically sound and grounded in ethical standards. CM allowed the participants to be active contributors and also ensured that any biases were identified and my validity as a researcher and member of the community were always reflected upon and challenged.

The thesis was divided into three sections. Part one included the introduction and methodology. Part two consisted of the theoretical framework which was comprised of three chapters. In the theoretical framework, three chapters were written which wove in historical and modern understandings of the Roma community, placing a particular focus on the Roma women and civil society actors. Particularly, I have focused on the Roma Women's Movement, feminist scholarship and the manner in which grassroots Roma women are included and seen as the instigators of change. Challenging systemic racism, sexism, and classism that exists in relation to the Roma community was fundamental to this academic work, and in each chapter, I reflected on the current academic discourse and then framed this in relation to grassroots Roma women. The importance of countering the essentialist myth that circulates the Roma, in particular, the Roma women, was at the crux of the investigation. Part three presented the results that emerged from the data. Specifically, what was found was i) a clear outline of the

DKM methodology; ii) the grassroots Roma women in Bulgaria, Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and the United Kingdom see themselves as active agents of change and now self-identify as Roma activists and feminists; iii) the DKM methodology is actively furthering the Dialogic discourse.

Looking at the results for Objective 1: *Analyse the DKM's working methodology and identify its fundamental features*, the interviewing of founding and current DKM members led to defining the DKM's methodology as:

1) Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects: Inclusion of the "other women"
2) Roma and non-Roma working together in an inter and intra-generational manner
3) Incorporating Role models and "referentes" into their activities
4) Horizontal structure and way of working- linked to solidarity networks
5) Solutions that are evidenced-based- pushing the Dialogic feminism discourse

For the DKM education is a tool for transformation and they have openly claimed that within educational environments, Successful Educational Actions (SEA) are incorporated into their projects. SEA focus on i) improving attainment for all the students within educational environments, particularly focusing on disadvantaged learners; ii) Improving coexistence and developing democratic and inclusive learning environments; iii) Improve participation of families and the local community to the learner's trajectory; iv) Improve social cohesion by encouraging dialogue and cooperation among a variety of educational stakeholders. SEA do have a focus on educational environments and while this thesis was not grounded in following learners within a traditional education system, it did observe Roma women and youth discuss education, both the barriers and the transformative aspects, and their willingness to return to school. At the DKM events and activities the Roma referenced the transformation experienced by witnessing and engaging with other Roma women role models and individuals who have been educated.

Looking at the results for Objective 2: *Discuss the DKM's methodology and build a narrative around the need to transfer the DKM's working model to other European contexts and analyse the transferability of these traits to other contexts*, it was found that grassroots Roma women and those organisations that employed the DKM methodology and/or participated in DKM activities were positively transformed and see themselves contributing to the Roma Women's Movement. Objective 2 results were divided into six subsections that were classed "Exclusion to Transformation" where each was catalogued using two dimensions for coding and analysing and included pinpointing exclusionary factors that have been identified as barriers and discriminative practices, and detecting the limitations within the Roma women's current environments that keep them from actively participating.

Exclusion to Transformation 2.1 identified as an exclusion the tensions between Roma and non-Roma and being unable to work together. As a transformative element the data determined that the two components of the DKM methodology that led to a change for the women were: i) DKM's horizontal structure and way of encouraging solidarity and its ability to bring together Roma and non-Roma and; ii) Carrying out egalitarian activities and projects and the inclusion of the "other women". *Exclusion to Transformation 2.2* identified that Roma women had no political representation and as transformative elements the Roma women claimed that there were three transformative components: i) seeing at DKM activities politicians engage with Roma women, ii) witnessing Roma women politicians in positions of power, and iii) Roma events that include politicians which listen to the Roma women and interact with them in an equal manner. *Exclusion to Transformation 2.3* clearly found that feminism has excluded Roma women and not considered their voices. The investigation pinpointed that dialogic feminism and it existing in local Roma environments and contexts are essential to the community knowing they are heard. *Exclusion to Transformation 2.4* identified as a barrier that some Roma women feel isolated but concluded that the DKM methodology that facilitates the inter and

intragenerational components of the community while also building solidarity networks, led to transformation. *Exclusion to Transformation 2.5* identified that the Roma women interviewed felt that there are not many Roma role models (*referentes*) and that through having positive examples from the community lead to positive changes, and was important to their personal transformation. The data showed that the DKM Roma student meetings (*trobadas*) and the use of incorporating role models into activities led to an impactful, beneficial change. For the final subpoint, *Exclusion to Transformation 2.6*, the data identified that Roma women interviewed felt that stereotypes fuel research and that an essentialist approach is often applied to academic investigations. As a counter element to these barriers, the women suggested that the DKM methodology of including plural voices and ensuring the academic investigations are grounded in evidence-based work, leads to transformation. Objective 3 which was to *Contextualise elements of the DKM within the Dialogic Feminist discourse* was closely unpicked and the data revealed that diverse, grassroots communities identify with dialogic feminism, as it creates spaces where these "other women" can demonstrate their capacities and come as individuals and be taken seriously. Schroter suggests that "it is typical for societies to have discourse about minorities in which minorities themselves are hardly ever heard" Schroter (2013, p.4). And Mirza (2015) also posits that the dominant culture often manipulates the history and experiences that are shared with mainstream society. This section of my investigation highlights that Roma women are capable of problem-solving and transforming themselves, their immediate circles as well as their broader community.

At the crux of my thesis is a focus on Dialogic feminism and the celebration of a multiplicity of dynamic voices that reflect a plural society through egalitarian environments that is not dismissive of gender. Dialogic feminism is transformative and as Puigvert (2001) affirms, academia does not have the exclusive capacity to direct, articulate, represent and offer what may be seen as 'valid' proposals for overcoming specific social problems. Rather,

dialogic feminism creates an agility in academia which has the ability to cross boundaries and to be inclusive of all voices. Diversity in these spaces are honoured and encouraged and this is key to creating more socially inclusive environments that allow for a plurality of voices, thoughts, lifestyles and opinions to coexist. Puigvert (2001) reminds us that cultures are not static and that the challenge for a culturally diverse society is to not only consider social and cultural but also gender aspects. Without the including and rethinking of gender it is difficult to achieve an egalitarian society that includes the "other women" and dialogic feminism.

As a next step, it would be interesting to explore how Romani Studies might actively take on employing CM to conduct their academic investigations and also to explore how Puigvert's notion of "other women" can feed into thinking other vulnerable communities from differing ethnic backgrounds. Could the combination of the "other women" from a non-Roma background but employing the DKM methodology lead to personal and social transformation? The data collected for this academic investigation showed that the political presence carried a symbolic importance for the Roma women from a grassroots community and touches on gender politics and that legitimacy that women in politics and the political representations are important to grassroots communities. Could this point be further explored and how might this research question feed into *Romani Feminism*?

In summary, feminism and its relationship to Roma women have historically not been the most suitable to include the "other women". Women have historically been outside political, intellectual, higher education, economic and social and cultural spaces and in particular decision-making arenas. This is a major problem and my thesis identifies that there is a difference between theory and practice in feminist thought. Due to this disconnect, dialogic feminism and intersectional thinking have been used to help better understand and ensure that egalitarian spaces are created which include diverse Roma women and girls from various socio-economic, demographic backgrounds. This investigation has shown that the voices of the

“other women” can influence political, social, cultural and academic environments and transform them to be inclusive of these voices and their experiences. The DKM has been since its inception pushing for feminism. that includes all women and that is removed from the “elite” recognising that all women have. The ability to speak for themselves and offer concrete solutions to the issues that matter to them. These abilities might not be valued in the same way but dialogic feminism lifts the “other women” and pushes for equality allowing their voices to be heard. The combination of dialogic feminism and employing CCM techniques has facilitated that the DKM’s activities and approach be examined and measured the outcomes. The results show that the DKM’s Successful Educational Actions can be transferred to plural European environments.

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