ROMA WOMEN'S VOICES AND SILENCES ON UNJUST POWER REGIMES[1]

Enikő Vincze

Introduction: paper overview

My paper aims at offering a general idea about how major problems encountered by marginalized Roma women in their everyday life were transformed or not into political subject in the context of the European Union, with special references to the example of Romania.[2] In terms of empirical material, the analysis is based on my research conducted on Roma women's access to reproductive health and rights interpreted as a phenomenon of social exclusion (Magyari-Vincze 2006), as an issue shaped by the politically and ideologically driven policies (Magyari-Vincze 2009) and as a matter of everyday negotiations between "culture" and "rights" or of the social life of rights in the context of particular power regimes (Vincze 2010). But it also relies on my recent investigations about Roma marginalization,[3] and moreover on experiences gained from activist work.

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[1] Paper presented at the 20th International Conference of Europeanists organized by the Council for European Studies, Amsterdam, 25-27 June 2013: *Crises and contingency: states of (in)stability* Panel: *Romani activism, challenged democracies, contentious politics.*

[2] A descriptive overview on Roma women's activism responding to human rights violations is offered by Issue nr 4 of the *Roma Rights* quarterly published by the European Roma Rights Centre in 2006, entitled *Romani Women's Rights Movement* that, among others, it presents snapshots on the issue from 16 countries. In the same year, two researchers from Romania published their results about the status of Romani women in Romania (Surdu and Surdu, 2006). A few years earlier OSCE was reporting on Roma women's access to public healthcare.

[3] *Spatialization and racialization of exclusion. The social and cultural formation of 'Gypsy ghettos' in Romania in a European context* (2011-2014), supported by the program IDEI of the Romanian National Research Plan, www.sparex-ro.eu; *Faces and Causes of Marginalization of the Roma in Local Settings: Hungary – Romania – Serbia,* a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme Bratislava Regional Center, the Roma Initiatives Office and the Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma program of the Open Society Foundations, and the Central European University/Center for Policy Studies, research carried out by the Research Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Desiré Foundation from Cluj, Romania, and Belgrade University, Serbia (October 2012 – June 2014), http://www.desire-ro.eu/?attachment_id=531

In a first step the paper observes that both the ethno-cultural and socio-economic paradigm of European Roma politics, for different reasons, but practiced a gender-neutrality, which actually functioned as gender blindness. In the front of this, female activists voicing Roma women's experiences had and have to fight with a major challenge: turning taboo or silenced issues into respected and relevant topics of the Roma movement.

In its second chapter, the paper recalls the first moments of Roma women's representation and participation on the European policy agenda observing the major ideas around which they were articulated, but as well as the beginnings of health mediation created in Romania. The latter empowered Roma women from local communities to increase the access of their disadvantaged fellows to public healthcare.

The third chapter of the paper notices how the current European framework for Roma policies is framing Roma women's issues in the language of economic arguments for Roma inclusion. In addition, it highlights the proposals of some female activists from Romania by which they intended to participate on the revision of the national Roma inclusion strategy.

Last, but not least, in the fourth chapter I am going to scrutinize on some of the particularities of how Roma women are affected by advanced marginality or by living in multiply deprived territories, observing that these are neglected by current politics and policy measures.

In the fifth chapter, by making use of some ideas developed in the Roma participation literature, and in the feminist intersectionality theories, the paper formulates a diagnosis about the causes and manifestations of the current de-politicization of socio-economic aspects of Roma marginalization.

Eventually, in its conclusions, my analysis argues about the (potential) transformation of Roma women (activists) into political actors and about the need for re-politicizing poverty intersected with other (gendered and racialized) forms of marginalization. In this matter, my analytical frame is also based on the approaches within anthropology of policy, according to which policies are not neutral instruments for solving problems, but are forms of power that "organize society and structure the ways people perceive themselves and their opportunities" and are having a contribution "to empower some people and silence others" (Shore and Write 1997:7). In this sense one should identify and challenge – both in research and social activism – the political

convictions underlying particular policies that address marginalized Roma (women) or the absence of other policies rooted in specific views about the causes and remedies of (intersectional) marginalization. By this, ultimately he/she might contribute to a Roma politics addressing how – while shaping and sustaining each other –classism, racism and sexism create and maintain socio-economic and cultural systems that dispossess poor Roma of opportunity structures to control their means of living, bodies or representation.

1. <u>Gender-neutral or gender-blind Roma politics in Europe</u>

The post-communist history of Romani politics is marked, among others, by a division between the ethno-cultural and the social paradigm defined and used by different individuals and groups at local, national and European level. Nowadays this division becomes more and more tensioned, as followers of ethno-culturalism are blaming the socio-economically oriented activists for the failures of the social inclusion policies. They assert that despite of the measures taken in the past twenty years under the heading of inclusion, today the majority of ethnic Roma continue living in poverty and the majority population is more and more ready to blame Roma for undeservingly receiving too much "social assistance". Ethno-culturally oriented elites insist that instead of the victimizing discourse and practice demanding redistribution and of the claims for universal human rights, one should better focus on cultural recognition, assuming accountability for one's own destiny, and acquiring respect and dignity.

As known, at least since the 1970s ethnic politics informed the efforts of Roma nation-building, which – in the absence of an "own nation-state" – aimed at creating a sense of ethnic solidarity and pride based on Romani language and on the set of traditions framed under Romanipen, while demanding the recognition of cultural and linguistic rights. On the other hand, envisaged under the umbrella of social Europe and of claiming socio-economic rights, the socially oriented politics focused people's attention on exclusion, marginalization and poverty. Ethnic discrimination and racism were more or less emphasized by both types of politics, however – depending on the political ideologies in which they got framed – were stressed to different degrees.

For quite a long time, gender awareness was not characterizing Roma politics in none of its forms. In the context of ethno-cultural paradigm Romni were conceived as naturally bearing the role of reproducing and nurturing the 'nation' (*neam*, *națiune*) both in biological and cultural sense, but were not recognized as political subjects. The socio-economic paradigm was not better either in terms of addressing Roma women's status in the community or in the broader society: their particular needs and interests and experiences were shadowed by the seemingly gender-neutral effects of poverty and social exclusion on Roma communities. One may say that for a long period of time, Roma women's public voices were silenced under the shade of "Culture"/identity politics or "Society"/social inclusion policies, blind towards internal divisions and towards gendered and racialized class hierarchies between Roma and non-Roma.

Ironically, for example in Romania, Roma women's status within their own communities was addressed first by the (otherwise patriarchal) mainstream public discourse in a false feminist tone, which seemingly was deeply concerned about their subordination to community norms regarding early marriage and childbirth. **This was and remained a challenge that nowadays Roma feminists are faced with: protecting women's and children's rights within their own communities while deconstructing the way in which such mainstream positions are reproducing convictions according to which Roma are an inferior race performing pre-modern/primitive practices of life** (Bițu and Morteanu 2010)**.**

2. <u>The appearance of Romani women around the European policy-making table</u>

The Europenization trend towards Roma started at the beginning of the 1990s. The concept of Roma/Gypsy as a "European" issue was formally acknowledged in 1993, when a Resolution of the Council of Europe declared Gypsies to be "a true European minority", as far as they were identified in almost every European country, totaling a population of 7 to 9 million, or even 12 million according to other estimations. Later during the 1990s "the Roma problem" was about being associated with East European countries, amongst them, most importantly, with Romania whose accession to the European Union was conditioned among others by "finding a solution to this issue".

The rights based Roma discourse started to explore the gender dimension of racial discrimination and Romani women's situation at the end of the 1990s, when the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies of the Council of Europe decided at its 7th meeting in Strasbourg (29-30 March 1999) to request a consultant to prepare an introductory report on *The Situation of Roma/Gypsy Women in Europe*. The report framed the problem in terms of **how Romni are experiencing the conflicts between traditional culture and modern society, and between acting for cultural rights on the behalf of their groups and women's rights as universal human rights.** Around those times, the Network Women Program of the Open Society Institute started to also show interest towards Roma women and launched the Roma Women's Initiative program. As a result, some young women activists ended up working within international women's agencies, others were getting positions within international women's networks while keeping their local institutional affiliations, and again others entered into national Roma organizations while being also involved into gender-related programs or even separate NGOs dealing with women-specific issues.[4]

Altogether, one may conclude that during those times **Roma women's voice in the public sphere was mediated by international or European organizations supporting the creation of different forms of Roma women's representation**. Out of these, in Romania the **institution of health mediation** (initiated as early as 1993) proved being the most successful one at grassroots level.[5] This was due to the fact that at the same time it aimed improving the access of marginalized Roma to public healthcare and it targeted Romani women's empowerment. The Roma health mediator, conceived as a public position for women, was trying to put into practice

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[4] Fragments from the **Roundtable discussion: Romani women and civic activism** critically reveal past moments of women's organizing, but as well as plans for the future (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX-llnSAL4I). The event took place at the conference „*Roma women for equal opportunities* organized in Timişoara, Romania, between 30 June – 2 July 2011 within the project „Equality through difference. Roma women's access to the labor market", with the participation of Letiţia Mark (AFT, Timişoara); Crina Morteanu (ERSTE Foundation, Bucharest); Carmen Gheorghe (E-Romnia, Bucharest); Rosemary Kostic Cisneros and Montserrat Sanchez Aroca (Drom Kotar Mestipen, Barcelona); Teodora Krumova (Center Amalipe, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria); Sebihana Skenderovska (National Roma Centrum, Kumanovo, Republic of Macedonia); Violetta Zentai (CEU CPS Budapest Hungary) and others.

[5] Evaluations of this initiative are to be found in Schaaf, 2005; Wamsiedel, Vincze and Ionescu 2012.

the ideal of **balancing between mothering as a traditional role highly respected within Romani communities and between taking care of the relationship between Roma groups/families and larger local communities where they belonged to**. At the same time health mediators were supposed to tackle one of the most sensitive issues of an ethnic minority faced with racial discrimination. They had to figure out **how Romni might make use of their reproductive rights without becoming victims of racist fertility control and without being blamed by their own families/communities about not fulfilling the sacred duties they were supposed having in terms of childbirth**.

3. Forms of gender awareness in current Roma inclusion policies

The shift from defining Roma as a "trans-national European minority" to conceiving them as a "European social problem" was about happening at the turn of the century, and it was consecrated for good with launching, in 2011, the European framework for Roma inclusion strategies. The latter had a great role in situating issues of Roma poverty and social exclusion in-between the responsibilities of the European Union and the Member States, and it aimed at raising the awareness of all stakeholders about the gaps between Roma and the non-Roma population in all domains of life. Despite of these achievements, this framework strategy pushed to the back stage of Roma policies the realities of human rights violations, ethnic discrimination and racism, and left no room for recognition politics or for addressing the relationship between this and social inclusion policies. It defined arguments for Roma inclusion in terms of the economic benefits that this might bring to European societies as a whole, stating:

> "*Addressing the situation of Roma in terms of employment, poverty and education will contribute to progress towards Europe 2020 employment, social inclusion and education targets*" (p.4).

This strategy makes some explicit references to **Roma women**, but within the same discursive frame. They **are mentioned in the context of the reduced employment and the increased school abandonment rates among Roma, and as well as in that of problematic access to quality health care, but the promotion of gender equality is not conceptualized here in**

terms of women's rights or social justice and multiple discrimination is not addressed either.

As far as the Romanian National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma is concerned, it considered the "gender dimension" of the addressed problems not under the targeted four sectorial chapters, but amongst the ten basic principles assumed by this policy document. Under the "principle of equal opportunities and gender awareness", the Strategy declares:

> "*The Governmental Strategy dedicated to the inclusion of Roma minority considers the central role of women belonging to Roma minority as **they have an important role within families and the minority itself.** The strategy aims at **improving their educational level and employment rate**, but as well as their involvement into children's education and other activities that **assures the wellbeing of families, family cohesion and the development of next generations**"* (p. 9).

Approached in May 2012 by the European Commission to revise its strategy with a document that was not making references to Roma women or to the gender dimension of Roma marginalization, the Romanian government, through its National Agency for Roma, collected some proposals for revision from civil society organizations by the end of May 2013. The proposals coming from women's groups were focusing on **violence against women** and **health** issues. Regarding the latter, proposals were highlighting **the dramatic situation of Roma women in terms of life expectancy** (placed at the age of 60, it is 13 years lower than the life expectancy of non-Roma women, and it is one year lower than the life expectancy of Roma men), or in terms of **maternal mortality rate** (0.62% in case of Roma, compared to 0.04% in case of majority women). Besides their causes entrenched in community norms regarding gender relations and women's body and sexuality, these problems are rooted in the structural disadvantages that Roma women are faced with, such as the lack of health insurance and the discriminatory practices of the healthcare providers. Connected to violence, activists mentioned that the phenomenon of **violence against Roma women is still invisible in Romania**, however some small-scale qualitative researches and informal observations made at grassroots level during activist work offered us alarming hints about how **Roma women, under conditions of poverty and marginalization, become victims of trafficking, prostitution and physical violence.** Consequently, they proposed the elaboration of a system of identifying such cases,

offering special assistance to victims, running educational programs and campaigns, and most importantly **introducing an intersectional approach towards policies preventing and eliminating violence against women**.

4. Lack of adequate policy responses to problems of marginalized Roma (women)

The current economic crisis and the ways in which the Romanian state continues imposing austerity measures for "solving" it, reinforce both social inequalities resulted from post-communist economic restructuring and current neoliberal regimes, and manifestations of racism and populism directed against impoverished Roma.

If one looks to the map of Romania, he/she may observe that many compact Roma communities live in rural areas where economic activity is reduced to subsistence economy; or in small towns where work disappeared due to the collapse of industries on which, before 1990, their urbanization was based; or in poor neighborhoods of big cities that are usually located in polluted environments, and socially isolated and culturally stigmatized urban areas. The formation of such vicinities is the result of manifold mechanisms, including policies of local development that create spatial divisions within the localities trying to exclude and to make invisible their unwanted and scapegoated elements, such as impoverished Roma. The inhabitants of such spaces are affected by multiple (including housing) deprivations, are having access only to precarious informal labor or to underpaid jobs in the formal economy, are having low expectancies and reduced financial possibilities regarding school participation, and, generally speaking, are endangered by various insecurities (from the lack of identity and property documents, through the lack of health insurance, to the difficulties of survival from one day to another).[6] Above all these, they are blamed for being poor, or for being socially assisted in an undeserving manner, and most importantly for being the inferior race who likes living under such conditions and who should be separated by the majority population in schools, jobs, residential areas. **Roma women are pushed to the margins by the whole socio-economic**

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[6] Causes and aspects of the spatialization and racialization of Roma exclusion are revealed by my recent investigations based on fieldwork conducted in five big cities (www.sparex-ro.eu), respectively in 5 small cities and 20 villages (http://www.desire-ro.eu/?cat=6) from Romania.

system as members of their dispossessed class and under these conditions of severe poverty are making tremendous efforts to fulfill the household and motherhood-related duties allocated to them by a domestic patriarchal regime. These private and public socio-economic orders eventually exhaust their bodies and endanger their life (as statistics on Roma women's life expectancy shows). Simultaneously, their sexuality is expropriated from two directions: on the one side they are viewed as bearing the obligation for the biological reproduction of their own ethnic group, and on the other hand they become targets of racist fertility control and un-dignifying discourses according to which they give birth to children with less value than majority mother's children (as practices of sterilization or discourses on Roma and non-Roma fertility demonstrate).

Furthermore: if advanced marginality[7] characterized by the multitude of dispossessions mentioned above happens in a socially and spatially segregated and ghettoized area that makes impossible the access of inhabitants to any form of social and legal protection, in time it might produce internal mechanisms of exploitation.[8] Those people who, under these conditions, are having access to any source of "welfare" (such as electricity, or running water, or relations with authorities, or connections with humanitarian aid-distributors) might dominate the most vulnerable individuals of the group by creating circles of redistributive dependency between themselves and the latter. Exploitation happening in such encapsulated spaces reproduced in time takes different forms: financial (as it is in the case of usury); material (like in the case of selling the scarce goods to those in need on a higher price than they actually cost); sexual (as it is the case of women's forced prostitution); human (like in the case of children sent for begging); economic (as it is in the case of forced labor). **These are instances when the disempowerment**

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[7] I am using this term after after Waquant (2008), describing the new form of social exclusion and expulsion in neoliberal regimes, which does not stem from economic crises or underdevelopment, but it is rather the resultant of economic restructuring and its unequal economic effects on the lowest faction of workers and subordinated ethnic categories. The specific advanced urban marginality that emerges in full-blown and global neoliberal economic and politic context has to be distinguished from former forms of urban poverty, which has been a characteristic feature of earlier stages of capitalism and, we may add, of late socialism in Romania.

[8] In this context, the European Roma Rights Center documented in a few countries the sensitive issue of trafficking in Romani Communities (ERRC 2011).

of marginalized women is multiplied and (re)produced by the interaction between several forms of subordination. And these are the state of affairs, which would necessitate complex intersectional interventions sustained during long periods of time, including the empowerment of right-holders, territorial desegregation, the assurance of adequate and affordable housing, creation of job opportunities, or briefly put, a complex human, social and infrastructural development program with the special assistance of the most vulnerable.

But unfortunately **the Romanian state was not willing and/or capable to elaborate and implement intersectional policies which could have acted on severe cases of social inequality and marginalization produced at the juncture of class oppression, patriarchy and racism as intersecting forms of social and cultural domination.** Eventually it is to be observed that during times when public policies are focusing on cutting welfare budgets, and when the state is preoccupied with justifying why it should support the 'free market' and the privatization of all spheres of life, and why it should stop being a force of development and welfare, it is more than idealistic to believe that it will act in such a role in what regards Roma inclusion policies.

5. <u>The ongoing de-politicization of socio-economic (Roma) issues</u>

Instead of fulfilling its social role, especially during the past five years the Romanian state tried transposing its inclusion and human rights related accountabilities to the civil society organizations. It pretended that the huge social problems that a big part of the population is faced with are a kind of accident or are the outcomes of individual failures of adapting to the market economy and might be handled, at the best, with a project-based approach. Moreover, it contributed to the de-politicization of Roma marginalization and anti-Roma racism, and transformed these issues into seemingly politically neutral policy matters. Many scholars observe that this is a more general trend characterizing the field of European Roma politics and policies. Van Baar for example states that nowadays "primary political problems tend to be removed from the domain of political discourse and reformulated in the 'objective' and 'neutral' language of expertise, policy-making and science" (van Baar, 2011, p. 13).

At their turn, mainly since the European structural funds became available in this country, the Romanian Roma organizations seemed to be ready to transform themselves into service providers and to compete among each other on the market of euro-funded projects. But obviously, these organizations could not solve the structural problems faced by marginalized Roma communities, such as socio-spatial segregation, lack of adequate and affordable houses, lack of decent jobs that might assure stepping out of poverty, or eliminating institutional obstacles of participation on the societal life and the underlying anti-Gypsy racism. Instead they are under the risk of being transformed into bureaucratic machineries reporting target group indicators and sustaining themselves financially, among others trying to survive the shortcomings resulted from the inadequate national management of the EU-funds related operational programs. Enforced by the types of project calls, NGOs were offering series of vocational courses under the conditions of a labor market that does not demand labor force, they started running social economy programs in the absence of a law for social economy, or they focused on facilitating school participation of individual children without having control on the institutional mechanisms causing school abandonment and mistrust in the educational system. Eventually, these civil society organizations lost their credibility in front of Roma communities that they were supposed serving, while the creation of new grassroots organizations became almost impossible. **The NGOization of the Roma movement (Rostas 2009, Sigona and Trehan 2009) and the financialization of these NGOs structurally reduced a lot the potential of institutionalized civil society to sustain solidarity, and through it to put political pressure on the state in terms of respecting human rights (including socio-economic rights) through appropriate development programs or in order to act responsibly in front of (Roma) marginalization becoming a mass phenomenon**.

Under these conditions, one may expect that the structurally induced marginalization of Roma will continue intersecting with the production of new narratives of belonging and redefining the boundaries of the 'nation' by the political elites (Sigona and Trehan, 2009). Consequently, **Roma women will not only persist suffering the effects of economic marginalization and are not only going to be placed in the category of undeserving citizens alongside with Roma men, but – due to their reproductive and maternal roles – they will be perceived and controlled more and more strongly as symbols of ethno-cultural boundaries and embodiments of**

racialized differences. Despite of their particular experiences of oppression, though experiencing intersectional discrimination for example due to deportations/repatriations from West European countries and/or due to forced evictions happening within Romanian localities, Romani women usually perceive or voice their problems in more ethnic and social, and less in gender terms. Furthermore, Roma women, at local level, seem ready to join activism organized around ethno-social matters, and do not really expect solidarity from mainstream women organizations. On the other hand the latter, for example while addressing the issue of violence against women, define violence in the framework of reducing differences between women and men to sexual difference, and are not concerned with the particular effects on Roma women of the violence suffered by them as members of communities stigmatized due to their ethnic background and becoming victims of violent physical attacks or of racist hate speech.[9] Moreover, forms of violence endured by Roma women within their own communities (among them domestic violence and trafficking) are considered by them as "natural" elements of their life, or as events around which they should remain silent for several reasons. Under these circumstances, **Roma women's voices on unjust power regimes with many faces are having reduced chances to be heard and eventually to be transformed into political factors of policy-making and social change. But** even if they are not visible/hearable for a large public and they do not address the structural issues of the ethno-culturally or socially oriented politics, **this does not mean that they do not act as powerful women solving "small issues" of everyday life (from childcare under precarious conditions, through providing income for the family, to emotionally managing situations of forced evictions).**

Conclusions: the political potential of Roma women's activism

Parallel with phenomena highlighted above, it **is also to be observed that while the socio-economic aspects of Roma marginalization are more and more de-politicized** (transformed,

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[9]I could observe this discrepancy in the way in which at the 2012 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of OSCE-ODIHR (Warsaw, 24 September – 5 October 2012) the discussions within a working session dedicated to Roma/Sinti women underwent in parallel with those of the working session on the equality of opportunity between women and men, and on preventing violence against women.

at the best, into public policy issues without addressing the major systemic causes of mass impoverishment and marginalization), **there are signs in the Romanian public life that Roma women activists** – while building solidarity with non-Roma women and/or with anti-racist actions – **are becoming more and more political**. **This politicization seems happening exactly around their womanly experiences, but it has the potential to evolve towards reframing 'Roma women' as political subject in an intersectional way.** On the other hand, matters embraced by a current radical non-Roma feminist agenda (violence against women, rape, maternity, birth, or women's sexuality) framed by the principle of "the personal is political" are becoming more and more inclusive towards Roma women's experiences.

Hopefully, due to their knowledge and sensibility towards Roma socio-economic marginalization, Roma feminists have the potential to center attention on social inequalities and by this to enrich the radical non-Roma feminist agenda focusing at its turn on 'femininity'. After that point, or simultaneously, **Roma feminists might become important participants of re-politicizing poverty, social inequality and marginalization, including the re-politicization of understanding racism as a cultural system justifying and maintaining the social divisions of classes.** By doing this, they might also fill the class-gap identified in the European anti-discrimination policies by several scholars: "social class is the most prominent example of a social category that is strongly connected to inequalities, yet not currently included in the European equality agenda" (Verloo 2006: 216); "intersectionality in the case of Romani women is most often conceptualized in terms of gender and race/ethnicity. … [but] poverty and social exclusion intensify the level of discrimination experienced by Romani women. [That is why] while class may or may not be a ground for discrimination in legal terms, it is important to understand how it interrelates with other facets of social identity and thus, its role in intersectional discrimination" (Kóczé 2009: 25).

Starting from the view according to which "social divisions have organizational, intersubjective, experiential and representational forms" (Yuval-Davis 2006: 198), my paper demonstrated that Roma women's experiences of social divisions and intersecting disadvantages are perceived by themselves in a situated manner: sometimes, in some situations or in the context of some relationships they express their needs in terms of gender, other times they mostly emphasize their socio-economic status, but sometimes they make explicit the fact that they are having particular,

feminine ways of dealing with poverty or particular womanly problems arising from their social marginality and from their confrontation with racism. This proves that social divisions are not reducible to each another. Despite of this, because categories of race, class and gender are intertwined and mutually constitutive, **we have to give centrality to questions like how race is 'gendered' and how gender is 'racialized', and how both are linked to the continuities and transformations of social class, but all these need to be addressed "in particular locations and contexts"** (Yuval-Davis 2006: 200).

As far as the political intersectionality assumed by Roma women feminist is concerned, that should address sexism, racism and class exploitation, but also homophobia by acknowledging the realities of structural intersectionality (the distinction between political and structural intersectionality belongs to Crenshaw 1994). Moreover, as a conclusion, I could add that **institutionalized forms of Roma women representation (that are more or less assuming intersectional politics or policies) are having the chance to resonate with the experiential or structural forms of intersectionality if – while formulating political and policy demands – they are able assuring the participation of multiple Roma women voices in this process**. Or, differently put, if they are capable of providing Roma (women) with the power to control their means of production, reproduction and representation. But obviously, this effort in itself would not be enough for generating systemic change: for this they need alliances across gender, and across different social and ethnic groups that could generate political action enforcing national and international stakeholders to really act on the behalf of the socially and economically dispossessed classes of nowadays European societies.

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