

Redistribution, Recognition or Representation?
EU Roma Integration Policies as a Test for Social Justice.
A Comparative Study of Italy and Spain.

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Abstract

The present work is a comparative study that aims at better understanding the integration measures targeted at Roma minorities in Western Europe. An analysis of the cases of Italy and of Spain allows for delving into multiple and layered mechanisms of ‘othering’ minorities, which have to do with issues that are both cultural (who gets to be a ‘national’ minority), economic (if integration is interpreted as the antonym of socio-economic marginalization) and political (including whether migrant communities should be included in the same integration framework as non migrant ones).

The research has at its core a social justice framework and adopts a critical discourse analysis as a methodology of choice, examining legislative documents as well as first hand data, through interviews with policy makers. Stemming from the question of which identity framework used in addressing Roma integration has proven more effective, and for whom, I carried out a comparative study of the policy frameworks adopted by Italy and Spain as a way to make a more general contribution to understanding injustices that have multiple causes. The PhD research builds upon Nancy Fraser’s theoretical framework and it applies to the case of Roma integration the dialectical relationship between different typologies of injustices: cultural injustice (that requires recognition), socio-economic injustice (that requires redistribution) and political injustice (that requires representation). The methodology employed is a triangulation between policy mapping, critical frame analysis and interpretative interviews, drawing upon Carol Bacchi’s “What’s the Problem Represented to be?” approach. As a result, the dissertation is structured in five main chapters: the first chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis, the second chapter outlines the methodology employed and the background of the case studies, the third chapter tackles the problematic of recognition, the fourth chapter addresses the issue of redistribution, and the fifth chapter the matter of representation.

The main contribution of this work to our understanding of integration is that it explores how the underlying assumptions of policy-makers about what constitutes a policy problem shape the way in which they promote policy solutions. These policy solutions, in turn, hold the potential of converting the minority ‘to be integrated’ into the problem itself, rather than tackling the structural exclusionary mechanisms which continue to produce and reproduce the status quo.

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All errors are my own.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a comparative political analysis that evaluates policies aiming to integrate Roma minorities in Italy and Spain. The research has at its core a social justice framework and adopts a critical discourse analysis as a methodology of choice, examining legislative documents as well as first hand data (interviews with policy makers). The question that the investigation starts with is a fairly basic one: how do ethnically targeted-integration measures work in countries in which the category of ‘race’ is repudiated? More specifically, what can be said to constitute ‘successful’ integration for Roma minorities in Europe?

Parallel to debates on social cohesion and migrant integration, Roma integration in Europe has over the past decade become a field of research in its own right, yet one that has mostly been studied separately from wider dynamics of social justice, migration regimes, growing inequalities and minority governance.

The need to overcome such ‘splendid isolation’ (Willems 1997; Yıldız and Genova 2017) is however increasingly being acknowledged. In 2017 alone, two of the most well known journals that publish research on identity and diversity—*Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *Social Identities*—have each published a Special Issue on Roma mobility in the European Union. In the past few years, the European Union has funded a number of research projects investigating topics such as the motivations and experiences of intra-EU Roma migrants (MigRom. The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe), the positionality of Roma individuals in Europe along different dimensions of citizenship (InviCitRom. Invisible Edges of Citizenship: Re-Addressing the position of Romani Minorities in Europe), and promoted an interface between academic researchers and political decision makers aimed at producing evidence-based data that could help develop empirically-informed Roma inclusive policies (European Academic Network on Romani Studies). The present research, as part of a Marie Curie Initial Training Network project on integration and migration policies (Integrim. Integration and international migration: pathways and integration policies), was indeed made possible precisely by the fact that the topic of Roma integration in Europe was deemed fit to contribute to the scholarly debate on European identity and cultural integration.

Such increase in academic recognition of, and attention towards, this specific minority acknowledges that Roma migration and integration are pivotal to wider issues revolving around European citizenship, the surge in populist and xenophobic parties and to discourses around European identity and the so-called ‘migrant crisis’.¹ As Yildiz and De Genova argued in a recent Special Issue on Roma mobility in the European Union:

“[t]here can be no adequate investigation into the very meanings of ‘Europeanness’ or the politics of ‘European’ identity in the presumably wider field of European studies that does not situate these questions of Roma racialisation and subjugation at its centre.” (Yıldız and Genova 2017)

Indeed, Europe’s freedom of movement is highly dependent upon how ‘problematic’ the migrant groups are considered to be, both in terms of cultural diversity (presented as an ‘issue’ that requires special accommodation practices, such as the Roma encampments policy in Italy) and of socio-economic status (the alleged threat to the welfare state).

During the years immediately following the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements, migration (or rather the expectation of, and preoccupation about, migration) of impoverished Roma from Central and Eastern European countries to wealthier European Member States triggered measures towards Roma on behalf of many EU-15 countries. These measures, in turn, compelled European institutions to develop guidelines for the inclusion of Roma, defined as a general ethnic category². Already in the mid-nineties, a small group within the European Commission had attempted to bring the issue of widespread discrimination against Romani individuals and groups to the forefront of the discussion. An internal exchange within European Commission officers in 1996 reads:

“[Y]ou know that I have been working rather hard at raising awareness inside the Commission and also on a wider front about the situation of the Roma particularly in central and eastern Europe but elsewhere too. Largely through my instigation, the Parliament is hosting a round table this 12th July and Nicolae Gheorghe will be interviewed by *Europe Today*. The problem is how to continue the work especially after I am gone. Whilst it is true that a number of individuals like

¹ In October 2016 the Council of Europe published a document outlining how the increased number of asylum seekers and refugees arriving to Europe have been affecting the situation of the Roma. See <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2947279&SelectionMode=1&DocId=2385346&Usage=2>

² The EU for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted in 2011 by the European Commission employs the term “Roma” the same way as it did in the 2010 Commission Staff Working Document ‘Roma in Europe: the Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion’: “as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not” (SEC(2010)400).

myself [...] have taken a close interest in this and been extremely supportive, I don't think we can go on working informally without backing from a political level. Indeed 'my' informal working group has been the subject of some mild criticism from colleagues. [...] It is my view, rightly or wrongly, that this issue is a potential time bomb and that, in its own way, is a form of treatment for these people, which is at times blatant and intolerable racism. When it comes to accession negotiations, it may prove to be a stumbling block if it is not addressed now.”
(Extract of email sent on 9 July 1996, provided by the author)

While such warnings did not translate into any major political action on behalf of European institutions in the 1990s, the presence of considerable Roma minorities in central and eastern European countries did indeed prove to be a heated topic of discussion one decade later. As a European Commission desk officer and member of the EU Roma Task Force commented on the creation of the EU Roma Integration Strategy: “The tension was already high with Italy and Maroni³ even before the French evictions and repatriations of 2010⁴. As to the 2004 enlargement countries, they didn't even want to see the problem: as a matter of fact, they actually preferred for Roma to migrate westwards.” (Email exchange, my translation from Italian, 17 April 2017).

By 2010, the ongoing so-called 'nomad emergency' decrees adopted by Italy and the repatriations of Romanian Roma by France had pushed the issue of Roma integration high on the European agenda, more than any poverty level or continued 'internal' discrimination suffered by Roma individuals or communities could have done. As Iulius Rostas, a Romanian Roma scholar and Chair of Romani Studies at the Central European University in Budapest put it: “That's the irony of it. Roma were put on the agenda because of migration, but migration isn't dealt with in the [European Roma Integration] strategy.” (Bíró, Gheorghe, and Kovats 2013, 176).

Is it, therefore, the social and economic disadvantage in which many Roma find themselves that triggered the unprecedented alarm, followed by EU-sanctioned measures in 2010-2011? Or does the hostility toward Roma migrants have more to do with cultural differences? Should different integration policies be adopted for national and migrant Roma? What are the criteria for the

³ Roberto Maroni, an Italian politician currently the President of Lombardy, was one of the founders of the political party *Lega Nord* (Northern League). He held the office of Minister of the Interior under the first Berlusconi cabinet (1994-1995) and again after the 2008 electoral victory of the center-right coalition led by Berlusconi, when a 'nomad emergency' was declared.

⁴ In 2009 and 2010 the French government repatriated thousands of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma as part of a campaign aimed at the eviction of Roma from alleged illegal camps. The evictions and expulsions of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma nationals by France during the summer of 2010 and the reaction by Viviane Reding, then Vice-President of the European Commission, are generally seen as one of the triggers for a debate on Roma integration at the EU level. For more information, see (Kóczé 2017; Doytcheva 2015; Carrera 2013).

comparisons we have to make? Should we deal with Roma migration and integration on their own, or should we address them within wider structures? And again, what can be said to constitute ‘successful’ integration?

I first began thinking about these issues—how integration policies for Roma in Europe can best be understood, compared, assessed and evaluated—in 2012, not from a scholarly perspective but a policy one. At that time the European Commission was engaged in assessing the national strategies for Roma integration that Member States had developed as a response to the 2011 Communication “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”⁵. I had just joined the policy coordination department at the Directorate General for Regional Policies, and the case of Roma integration was a steep learning curve to make sense of the internal workings of the Commission, as well as of the structural funds and the territorial politics of EU cohesion policy.

In 2012, the fact that all Member States had presented a National Roma Integration Strategy or a corresponding set of policy measures within their broader inclusion policies (European Commission DG JUST 2012a) was seen as a victory in and on itself, and Roma inclusion seemed to be gaining momentum at national levels as well. The EU integration strategy was the result of a joint political effort on behalf of the European Commission and of the European Parliament, but also of concerted talks with each Member State, and it was seen as laying the foundation for addressing the overrepresentation of Roma amongst marginalized and excluded citizens in ways other than the evictions, the securitization measures and the repatriations adopted by France and Italy in the previous years.

However, the Roma integration strategies that were presented by different Member States to the European Commission comprised such a diverse range of understandings of what kind of problem was to be addressed, how, and by whom, that I wondered whether the indicators we used to assess them were enough to capture the scope and aims of the policies. In the absence of a shared definition of what integration meant, and of who the Roma to be integrated were, the margin for interpretation on behalf of the States was, and still is, extremely large.

⁵COM(2011) 173 final. Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173&from=EN>

Stemming from these considerations, the present research aims to contribute to understanding the relevance of Roma classifiers, and of the policies of racialization that have been developed based on them, by comparing the representation(s) that the governments of Italy—one of the most problematic cases—and Spain—the country that I was instructed to look at as a positive model for Roma integration during the NRIS assessment—hold (and make) about the ‘Roma’. Equally relevant as the different interpretation of ‘who the Roma are’ are also the different interpretations about the ‘integration’ concept, as well as of the policy level in which the ‘Roma problem’ is situated.

Building upon Nancy Fraser’s theory of justice and on Carol Bacchi’s framing methodology, I make the argument that the Roma minority in Europe represents a particularly compelling case of Nancy Fraser’s redistribution-recognition dilemma, as a bivalent collectivity that faces both economic disadvantage and cultural stereotype, and that an analysis of the policy frames used in conceptualizing both the Roma and their ‘integration’ through Carol Bacchi’s *What’s the Problem Represented to Be?* (WPR) approach can help explain some of the underlying assumptions of Roma-targeted integration policies.

I thereby apply to the case of the Roma integration policies Fraser’s dialectical relationship between three different typologies of injustices: cultural injustice (that requires recognition), socio-economic injustice (that requires redistribution) and political injustice (that requires representation).

The thesis is consequently structured in five main chapters: the first chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis; the second chapter outlines the methodology employed and the background of the case studies; the third chapter tackles the problematic of recognition (or who the Roma are represented to be); the fourth chapter addresses the issue of redistribution (or what integration is represented to be); and the fifth chapter the matter of representation (or who is allowed to participate in these definitional processes, and how).

This comparative study of the policy frameworks adopted by Italy and Spain contributes to and challenges existing scholarly discussions about Roma identity politics and integration policies. It also offers a new perspective on the normative claims about Roma minorities as belonging within a ‘deficit’ or ‘marginalized’ paradigm (either in cultural or socio-economic terms), which

effectively constructs *them* as a policy problem, rather than the regimes of inequality upon which our societies are built on, and of which Roma citizens are part and parcel of.

As Salman Rushdie wrote on race relations in the United Kingdom and on the so-called problem of integration of minoritized groups:

“You talk about the Race Problem, the Immigration Problem, all sorts of problems. If you are liberal, you say that black people have problems. If you aren’t, you say they are the problem. But the members of the new colony have only one real problem, and that problem is white people...Racism, of course, is not our problem. It’s yours. We simply suffer from the effects of your problem.” (Rushdie 1982)

While there are important differences between (and within) Roma minorities in contemporary Italy and Spain and black people in the United Kingdom of the eighties, the issue of framing the problem as one of the majority, rather than of the minorities, remains painstakingly relevant. In keeping with this approach that sees as a pressing necessity the investigation of what ‘European identity’ is understood to be by policy-makers, and how categories of exclusion from such ‘Europeanness’ are constructed (Yıldız and Genova 2017), the present research does not claim to advance any novel finding about the nature, character or identity of Roma minorities. Rather, I believe it exposes some of the dynamics through which categories of inclusion and exclusion are produced and maintained, thus contributing to rethinking European societies and identities through an exploration of “our problem”, that is to say, racism.

This research is the result of four years of work, during which I have been fortunate to be able to present elements of it to colleagues at conferences, receive feedback, and engage in wider debates on ethnicity, multiculturalism, Roma integration and migration regimes. Some have resulted in parts of this thesis being published, albeit not always in the same form as they are presented here. Chapter 3 has turned into an article for *International Migration* as part of a special issue on ‘The Changing Face of Migration: Future Challenges for Societies’ edited by Karin Amit and Dvora Blum; chapter 4 will be published as a chapter in a volume titled *Managing Regimes of Dis-Integration* edited by Reinhard Schweitzer and Sophie Hinger; some sections of chapter 2 can be found in a *Migration Letters* article co-authored with Stefano Piemontese (‘Roma’ migration in the EU: the case of Spain between ‘old’ and ‘new’ minorities) and in part of a special issue on Identity and Cultural Integration in *The Age of Human Rights Journal* (Cultural institutions as a Combat Sport. Reflections on the European Roma Institute).

The research questions and departing considerations contained in chapter 1 have informed an article published in *Policy & Politics* as part of a special issue on superdiversity edited by Jenny Phillimore, Nando Sigona and Katharine Tonkiss, and lay at the core of *Constructing Roma Migrants: European Narratives and Local Governance*, a book co-edited with Stefano Piemontese which attempts to look at these issues from a critical perspective, questioning the conceptualization of ‘problems’ we produce.

CHAPTER 1

Framing the EU Roma integration strategies

1.1 Introduction

The academic discourse on Roma identity, which spills over into the Roma integration debate regarding the policies and the protection and promotion of minority rights, is divided in two main strands: Roma identity is conceptualized in the scientific literature either in terms of ethno-cultural diversity from the majority population⁶ or of socio-economic marginalization and vulnerability. When it comes to policy-making, however, these two frames have often been conflated by generating the ‘culturalization’ and ‘ethnicization’ of poverty and of social exclusion, which in turn has led to integration policies founded upon strongly loaded concepts of group differentiation.

Stemming from these considerations, in this chapter I introduce the debate on Roma integration, make the case for its relevance and urgency as a topic of academic inquiry, and outline the existing main strands of scholarship in order to illustrate the gap in which to situate the present work. An introduction to the academic debate leads to an outline and rationale of the theoretical framework, terminology and definitional issues, which are followed by the main research questions and hypothesis.

Building upon Nancy Fraser’s theory of justice and on Carol Bacchi’s framing methodology, this chapter examines the concepts of cultural and class ‘identity’ and of ‘integration’ as they have been used as categories of analyses in the scholarship on Romani studies. I make the argument that the Roma minority in Europe represents a particularly compelling case of Nancy Fraser’s redistribution-recognition dilemma, as a bivalent collectivity that faces both economic disadvantage and cultural stereotype, and that an analysis of the policy frames used in conceptualizing Roma integration through Carol Bacchi’s *What’s the Problem Represented to Be?* approach can help explain many of the challenges and weaknesses of targeted policies.

⁶ Either in its essentialist versions—which can take the forms of ethnocentrism or of exoticism—or in the versions that highlight the internal diversity of the various Romani groups, but still maintain a marked clear division between Roma-Gadje as (Matras 2013; Tremlett 2014).

1.2 The debate on Roma integration

The Romani population in Europe has been the object, over the past five centuries, of a variety of policies ranging from assimilation to cooperation, from segregation to extermination⁷, from slavery⁸ to, more recently, strategies of ‘inclusion’ and ‘integration’ into mainstream (majority) societies.

Most of the estimated 10-12 million European Roma⁹ live in Central and Eastern Europe, where since the nineties they are officially recognized as a national minority in most countries but are often still marginalized and discriminated against (European Commission 2010a; Council of Europe 2002; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - UNDP 2012a). Albeit in smaller numbers, Roma communities have also been part of the local history and politics of virtually all Western European countries, where they are generally not recognized as a national minority¹⁰. What is shared across the multiple, diverse and scattered European Romani groups is a common linguistic heritage and a history and presence of widespread discrimination (Liégeois 2007; Hancock 2002).

Despite their long historical presence in Europe the Roma population started to be perceived as a European ‘issue’ over the past few decades, with an increase in both policy and scholarly interest in occasion of the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements. The accession to the European Union eased the internal migration of any EU citizen from Eastern towards Western Europe and triggered the emergence of a new discourse, which has given Roma minorities an unprecedented visibility. Such discourses see the ‘normal’ predicaments associated with migrant integration mixed with the preoccupation of Western European countries towards a minority that is perceived as presenting special challenges in terms of cultural and social integration, to the point of being portrayed as a “menace” (Stewart 2012). Some authors have interpreted Western Europe’s

⁷ The Porajmos or Samudaripen (the Romani Holocaust during World War II) was only recently officially recognized as genocide by European states—in 1982 by Western Germany—and entered into textbook accounts of the Holocaust. See Weiss-Wendt (2013) among others.

⁸ Abolished in Romania in 1856.

⁹ The question of “counting Roma” has been receiving growing attention. The Council of Europe’s estimates of the Roma population have been generally taken as the standard reference for European policies, but some scholars have recently challenged the reliability of these figures (Matras 2014; Matras 2015a; Messing 2014a; Surdu 2016).

¹⁰ Exceptions in Western and Northern Europe are Austria, Germany, Norway and Sweden, where the Roma are recognized as a national minority. In the UK, according to the 1976 Race Relation Act, the Roma were considered as a racial group, but that legislation was replaced by the Equality Act of 2010, in which no explicit ethnic group is mentioned.

exclusion and expulsion of Roma Eastern European migrants as a symptomatic paradox of European identity: it “reflects a construct of European identity which views the Roma as outsiders who have no legitimate claim to the bundle of rights given to the true European citizens” (O’Nions 2011, 361). This is striking, especially because it has been in these same recent times¹¹ that European institutions have declared the Roma a ‘true European minority’¹² and that Roma culture and traditions have been recognized and embraced officially as a contribution to European identity (Liégeois 2007; Council of Europe 1993; Soros and Thorbjørn 2015). The departing point of this research is therefore that a study of the Roma integration frameworks and policies adopted by Italy and Spain in response to the expected influx of Eastern European citizens of Roma ethnicity, and of the assumptions that underpin such policies, can represent a good litmus test to evaluate Europe’s ability and willingness to translate the principles of solidarity and cultural diversity into practice.

1.2.1 Relevance of the topic

Social cohesion, migrant integration and Roma inclusion have featured prominently and increasingly in national and European research and policy agendas over the past decades, and continue to represent one of the most pressing priorities identified by European institutions (Council of Europe 2016c; European Commission 2016; Council of Europe 2016d; European Commission 2015). Within the far-ranging debates on integration, Roma integration has become a field of policy in its own right, yet one that has mostly been addressed in isolation from wider

¹¹Starting with the end of the cold war. The increased relevance and attention given to the Roma as a minority is in line with a period marked by a more general trend in favour of the protection of cultural and ethnic minorities. See, for instance, the treaties on minority rights at both a European and international level that were created and signed in the 1990s (the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Strasbourg, 5.XI.1992; the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted in New York 18 December 1992, GA resolution 47/135; the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, CETS No.: 157, entered into force 1/2/1998).

¹² See the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE Recommendation 1203 *on Gypsies in Europe* (1993):

1. One of the aims of the Council of Europe is to promote the emergence of a *genuine European cultural identity*. Europe harbours many different cultures, all of them, including the many minority cultures, enriching and contributing to the cultural diversity of Europe.
2. *A special place among the minorities is reserved for Gypsies*. Living scattered all over Europe, not having a country to call their own, *they are a true European minority*, but one that does not fit into the definitions of national or linguistic minorities.
3. As a non-territorial minority, *Gypsies greatly contribute to the cultural diversity of Europe*. In different parts of Europe they contribute in different ways, be it by language and music or by their trades and crafts. [...]

dynamics of migration and integration regimes, growing inequalities and minority governance. In light of the recent EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (2012) and the political and economic capital that European institutions have invested in promoting the rights and living conditions of Europe's largest ethnic minority, this research aims at advancing the study of Roma-targeted policies as a possibly helpful bridge between the fields of social justice and diversity management.

Against the surge of populist politics in European narratives on migration and the tendencies to represent social and political conflicts as cultural issues (Mokre 2013), the way in which sensitive issues such as Roma migration and integration are politically framed is crucial to shaping civil society's attitude.

The end of the Cold War and the gradual EU Eastward enlargement coincided with an increased visibility of the Roma minority in the media and in European politics, namely with the formal recognition of 'Roma people' as a transnational minority by the Council of Europe in 1993 and later with the creation of specific 'Roma-targeted' policies at a European level—the Decade for Roma Inclusion in 2005, the creation of an integrated EU Roma platform in 2008, and the communication on the Roma National Integration Strategies framework adopted by the European Commission in 2011. The 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements, in particular, raised concerns that significant numbers of European citizens of Roma ethnicity would migrate to EU-15 countries. As O'Nions stated in 2011, when a European strategy for Roma integration had just been approved, "[t]he issue of Roma inequality has been on the EU agenda for some considerable time yet this may be the first time that the scale of inequality has been apparent to politicians in the West. Free movement and residence rights have facilitated Roma migration to Western Europe and this has meant that it is no longer possible to view the issue as the responsibility of CEE States" (O'Nions 2011, 387).

This, in turn, has meant that there has been the need for policy-makers and administrators to define whom the Roma are, and frame their presence and status in legal and policy terms. Thus the question of the identification and identity framing is an important starting point to understand the wider debate on Roma integration, and to address the policies linked to this debate. Yet, this debate also and crucially raises the many inconsistencies regarding the objectives being pursued under the cloak of integration. The terms 'Roma' and 'integration' have become closely

interlinked and the ways in which both terms are employed are consequential to the shaping of policies aimed at fostering a more inclusive society. As the 2010 communication by the European Commission titled *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe* stated: “[t]he overall objective is an inclusive society, not a new form of ethnic segregation: any progress which can be achieved in the area of Roma inclusion represents progress too in the inclusion of all ethnic minorities in the EU and vice-versa.” (European Commission 2010a).

Reflecting on the target population and on the content of the Roma integration policies can help us make sense of three themes that have gained relevance in the past decade, namely the need to fit the Roma into general matters of cultural diversity management, and how to do so (Tremlett 2014); the relationship between ethnic traits and the concepts of marginalization and vulnerability (Ahmet 2015; Goodwin 2009); and the normalization of anti-Roma narratives which, while they have always existed, are increasingly and successfully being used in political campaigns in Western liberal European countries¹³ and are far from being exploited only by the far right¹⁴ (Stewart 2012; McGarry 2017; Agarin 2014).

As has been pointed out by some (but still very few) authors, unraveling the different facets and dimensions of how, and to what extent, policies and legislations that at first sight ‘only’ foster or hinder the ‘right to identity’ of minorities (cultural rights) have repercussions on the de facto social and economic inclusion of said minorities, or the other way around (how de facto socio-economic exclusion affects the access to cultural rights) is a key element in making sense of intersectional discrimination and/or empowerment for Romani groups and individuals (Henrad 2004; Nando Sigona 2005; N. Sigona and Treheran 2009; Tremlett 2014; Goodwin 2009).

The assumption here is that a minority is not necessarily in need of protection or accommodation simply based on the fact of being numerically inferior to the majority in a given society. As cases like the apartheid in South Africa or patriarchy illustrate, inequalities of standing, of power, or of

¹³ This is not to say that there are not deeply rooted, institutionalized expressions of antiziganism in Central and Eastern Europe—on the contrary, there has been a rising tide of anti-Roma discourse, often pervasive in official political party-parley and electoral campaigns since the beginning of the 90s, which have contributed to fomenting hate-crimes. But according to the 2014 Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on “the State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe” it seems that the situation in some Western European has become in recent years particularly alarming. This fact is striking given that there is no correlation between the percentage of Roma and the hostility of the majority population: for instance Italy appears to be the most unfavorable to Roma minorities, which constitute approximately the 0,2% of the overall population (Stokes 2015).

¹⁴ On the idea of “reasonable anti-Gypsism”, see van Baar (2014), (Agarin 2014) and (Faso 2008).

esteem can operate independently from the size of the groups (Capotorti et al. 1997; Anderson 2015).

On the Roma, it has been written that “the situation of gypsies in Europe is exceptional because their homeland is everywhere and nowhere” (Kymlicka and Cohen-Almagor 2000).

The relevance of Roma migration, however, and of the policies (both European and national) that have been developed in response to it, is not that the Roma are a unique minority because of non-territoriality or otherwise. Nor is the focus of this research the Roma minority (or minorities) *per se*. Rather, it is the representation that policy-makers hold (and make) about the Roma that seems worthwhile of being analyzed in depth. Following Carol Bacchi’s “What’s the Problem Represented to Be?” approach, “this way of thinking differently challenges the all-too-common tendency to describe policy makers as ‘problem solvers’, as if ‘problems’ sit outside the policy process, waiting to be addressed and ‘fixed’. By contrast a *What’s the Problem is Represented to Be?* approach recommends ‘working backwards’ from concrete proposals to reveal what is represented to be the ‘problem’ within those proposals” (Bacchi 2009, 3).

Because Roma integration policies represent a case that combines so many different layers and potential causes for inequality (migration, ethnicity, culture, social-economic status, language) it holds the potential of being a useful lens for understanding how majority-minority power relations work (not necessarily nor exclusively related to Europe’s Roma minority), and how different types of inequalities can be addressed and redressed. In other words, by understanding the ways in which policy-makers think of the Roma in old EU member states we can at least begin to explain the kind of issue these policies intend to solve and what kind of comparisons we can make. And since all policies are problematizing activities which contain implicit problem representations, investigating what kind of problems representations are at work in different countries can also help clarify if and how European and national identities play out in practice.

1.2.2 Possible approaches to a complex issue

In order to analyze the ways in which Roma inclusion in contemporary Europe has been framed as an issue and how it translates into policies, some context is needed regarding the existing

scholarship on this topic. The purpose of this section is to review the basic conceptual debates in Romani studies and trace how knowledge production on this subject has developed and evolved over the years. While the sheer volume of literature produced on this topic, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early nineties, poses a challenge, the present selective focus aims at outlining the most influential strands. By doing so I show how the scholarship on Romani Studies has widened significantly in scope over the past decade from a mainly linguistic and anthropological approach to incorporate academic disciplines such as antidiscrimination, migration research, citizenship studies, and political science. The latter is loosely where the present research can be situated and aims at making a contribution, as will be articulated in the following section.

The anthropological and linguistic strands

Anthropology and linguistics have been the disciplines that have so far contributed the most to setting the stage in terms of scientific knowledge production and academic state of the art in Romani Studies. The study of Romani customs and traditions, and of the Romani language(s) has contributed greatly to the understanding of important aspects of the culture of Romani communities, and to their relations with majority populations.

The first international association of scholars dedicated exclusively to Romani Studies was the Gypsy Lore Society, founded in the United Kingdom in 1888, which has served as a cornerstone for situating the study of Romani culture as a subject worthy of investigation in the academic world-map.

Luc de Heusch's *À la découverte des Tsiganes: Une expedition de reconnaissance* (1966), Jan Yoors' *The Gypsies* (1967), Fredrick Barth's (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference* (1969) and Farnham Rehfisch's *Gypsies, tinkers, and other travellers* (1975) laid important theoretical foundations for an analysis of cultural differences and of Romani-Gadje relations (De Heusch 1966; Yoors 1967; Barth 1969; Rehfisch 1975). Building upon these pioneering efforts, contemporary authors have contributed significantly a great deal to expanding knowledge on Romani heritage, language and internal cultural diversity, in order to understand the impact that the development of the nation-state model had on these minorities, as

well as researching historical patterns of discrimination and racism. P.G. Blasco has written extensively on the Romani social organization, on family structure and on the sense of masculinity-femininity in Romani communities; Ian Hancock and Yaron Matras have addressed the scarcity of theoretical work on Romani language, origins and identity by developing a sophisticated historical account of Romani linguistics. The volume *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities: Contextual, Constructed and Contested* by Marsh and Strand problematizes the role and responsibility of Romani Studies scholars, while Leo Lucassen has focused on how states created a category called “the gypsy” (Zigeuner) as something that does not come from the Roma themselves, but is rather created from outside the communities (etic, not emic¹⁵) (Blasco 2002; Hancock 2002; Lucassen 1998; Marsh and Strand 2002). Carol Silverman has written extensively on Romani cultural heritage and the phenomenon of ‘Gypsy’ music in relation to issues of appropriation; attempts to de-essentialize Romani culture and to provide a focus for the major debates on the concept of ‘Romanipen’ in ways that deconstruct a view of the Roma as one homogeneous minority have been made by Leonardo Piasere, Thomas Acton, Adrian Marsh and Nicolae Gheorghe (possibly the most prominent Romani intellectual to date), amongst others (Acton and Gheorghe 2001; Mayall 2004; Piasere 1999; Gheorghe and Acton 1995; Gheorghe and Mirga 1997).

Such strands of research, while they have helped challenge long-held assumptions and stereotypes about the Roma, have however at times also contributed to fostering a sense of alterity, by studying and treating ‘Roma’ as if their cultural distinctiveness as ‘others’ from the majority population were their most important characteristic.

The sociological and historical strands

Most of the contributions on the history of the Roma have come, when not from anthropologists, from either sociologists or scholars hailing from Holocaust studies.

French sociologist Jean-Pierre Liégeois founded in 1979 the ‘Centre de recherche tsigane’ under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Paris V, where he was joined by David Mayall

¹⁵ Originated in anthropology and linguistics in the 50s (introduced by Kenneth Pike in 1954), an ‘emic’ account is provided by a person within the culture which is the object of study, while an ‘etic’ account is an analysis and/or description of the culture/behavior provided by an ‘outsider.’

and a mixed group of sociologists and historians focusing on Roma Studies. With the volumes *Roma, Tsiganes, Voyageurs* (1994), *Roma in Europe* (2007) and *The Council of Europe and Roma: 40 years of action* (2012), all published by the Council of Europe, Liégeois has written a ‘history of the Roma’ which sets an impressive standard in both detail and length, and which has made it, if not into the mainstream national history text books of the European States, at least into the social imaginary of Europe’s bureaucracy and high politics, contributing to a public European narrative that has started to acknowledge Roma as a European minority that deserves recognition (Liégeois 1994; Liégeois 2007; Liégeois 2012).

Anton Weiss-Wendt, Luca Bravi and more recently Ari Joskowitz have shed light on the asymmetrical entanglements of Jewish and Romani accounts of Nazi genocide, bridging Holocaust history and memory studies.

A historical and sociological approach might help us understand how the question of self-determination and stateless nationalism emerged from within the Roma movement. It also contributes also and how the wide heterogeneity between these very diverse minorities—that are referred to by modern European institutions under the umbrella term of ‘Roma’¹⁶—have made it extremely difficult to make general claims or to rally Romani grassroots support under one common banner. It however does not provide a coherent framework to address the conceptual and practical inconsistencies in Roma identity politics nor does it solve the problem of both defining who the Roma are neither for European policy purposes, nor of how are they supposed to ‘integrate’, leaving unanswered a significant incongruity.

The human rights and antidiscrimination strands

The fact that Romani communities are amongst the most marginalized, stereotyped and discriminated against means that, especially since the breakup of ex-Yugoslavia and the adoption

¹⁶ The usage of the umbrella term ‘Roma’, despite being highly controversial, has gained momentum and is widely used in the way outlined by the European Commission: “Roma is the term commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, although it encompasses diverse groups that include names like Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and Boyash”(European Commission DG JUST 2011). The main criticism to such an approach is that the Sinti, Manouches, Romanichals, Travellers in Ireland and the UK, as well as the Gitanos in Spain are not Roma and do not generally identify as such—it is roughly the equivalent to classifying all indigenous populations of Central America as ‘Maya’, which is the most numerous and well-known group.

of the Copenhagen criteria to join the European Union, Romani communities have also started to be addressed from a human rights and anti-discrimination perspective (European Commission 2008b; Jagland 2014; O’Nions 2011; Goodwin 2009).

This strand of literature often overlaps with general issues of the acquisition of rights for minorities in Europe, which are mostly to be found in continental Europe within the negative non-discrimination paradigm, as opposed to positive (or affirmative) action (European Commission 2009a). From a legal perspective, Francesco Palermo, Claudia Tavani, Roberta Medda, Tommaso Vitale, Alessandro Simoni, Serena D’Agostino, Kristin Henrard, Sara Memo, Barbara Bello and Letizia Mancini, among others, contributed to tracing the emergence and development of Roma anti-discrimination law, and to monitoring the progress of bodies such as the European Roma Rights Center and of the Romani rights cases addressed by the European Court of Human Rights, which have been instrumental in providing legal tools for discriminated members of Romani communities to voice their rights (Palermo and Woelk 2011; Tavani 2012; Jacquot and Vitale 2014; Paolo Bonetti, Simoni, and Vitale 2010; Simoni 2012; D’Agostino 2015; Henrad 2011; Henrard 2004; Bello 2013; Mancini 2012; Medda-Windischer 2012).

From the point of view of equal opportunities and access to education, employment, health and housing, given the high levels of unemployment and the young demographics that characterize many Roma communities (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - UNDP 2012a), international organizations such as the World Bank and UNDP have suggested to take a social mobility approach to the matter, framing Roma exclusion in terms of an economic cost for all of society (de Laat 2010; The World Bank Group 2014; Ivanov 2012; Ciaian and Kancs 2016).

In 2008 a coalition of organizations that promote equality of rights for Roma founded the Alliance against Antigypsyism, and its reference paper *Antigypsyism* is indicative of a growing literature which acknowledges antigypsyism and romaphobia as mechanisms which are deeply embedded in mainstream societies (Alliance against Antigypsyism 2016; van Baar 2014; van Baar 2011; McGarry 2017). One of the main points raised by this body of literature can be outlined by the following quote:

“[i]t is essential to see that antigypsyism is not a ‘minority issue’. It is a phenomenon of our societies, which has its origins in how the social majorities view and treat those whom they

consider ‘gypsies’. To combat antigypsism, our attention needs to shift to mainstream societies, while raising the voices of those who are dramatically affected by antigypsism, but also usually silenced by it.” (Alliance against Antigypsism 2016).

In line with such an understanding of antigypsism, the present research constitutes a step in the direction of studying the majority in charge of Roma inclusion policies, rather than the Roma themselves. I however argue that in order to do so it is useful to look beyond the existing legal and human rights literature, since the issue of how we should think theoretically about the Roma, how to conceptualize group boundaries, or how to operationalize ethnic identity into rights linked to these identity markers cannot be settled solely drawing from a legal perspective. Because legal sources and the ways in which they are interpreted and applied hinge by and large on the political context that produced them, analyzing the politics behind legislation becomes particularly relevant in cases of power asymmetries, such as measures aimed at minorities in a weak political position.

The political science, migration and citizenship strands

In recent years, and most importantly for the aims and scope of this research, public policy studies, migration and citizenship scholarship have been slowly but steadily starting to intersect with Romani Studies (N. Sigona and Treheran 2009; Kostka 2015; Vermeersch 2013; Sardelić 2016).

Even if quantitatively still limited, some major efforts have been made from a political science perspective to reset the terms of the debate of Roma-related research in Europe with a focus on integration and migration: Nando Sigona, Nidhi Trehan, Peter Veermersch, Huub van Baar, and Julija Sardelic have explicitly addressed socio-economic mobility of Roma migrants in the context of contemporary European policies on migration and ethnic minority protection. *From Victimhood to Citizenship. The Path to Roma Integration* (Bíró, Gheorghe, and Kovats 2013) provides a thorough summary of the development of the Roma movement over time, and an engaging critical debate on the current state of Roma activism¹⁷. Aidan McGarry has offered

¹⁷ In 1971, at the First World Romani Congress, it was already clear that at least two different lines of thought were present among the Romani elite, and that questions such as whether to pursue a nationalist agenda or not would

sharp critical analysis on the politicization of Roma identity; Angela Kocze has looked at the inequalities of Roma from a feminist and intersectional standpoint; Marton Rovid, Iulius Rostas and Marius Taba approached the subject from a multi-disciplinary point of view encompassing transnational social movements, global civil society, international politics and the Romani movement. Mihai Surdu has begun to fill the gap of addressing how the Roma have been labeled, categorized and identified in the scientific literature (by both friends and foes) with a much needed systematization of the discourses created by numerous ‘experts’ on the knowledge production about Roma; Joanna Kostka has provided rich empirical data on the use of structural funds in Roma inclusion projects, and Giovanni Picker has produced a comprehensive analysis of the segregation of Romani people in Europe. The urban studies and racial segregation studies have seen a rich proliferation over the past years, with particular attention being paid to ghettoization and housing patterns on behalf of Tommaso Vitale, Gaja Maestri, Simone Tosi, and Thomas Aguilera, among many others. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the European Academic Network on Romani Studies, a network of over 300 academics working on Romani studies¹⁸ has set up an impressive nexus in both variety and depth of topics; and the Open Society Foundation, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the Fundamental Rights Agency have funded or otherwise supported a range of case-specific in-depth studies, especially in CEE countries.

Crucially, and despite mechanisms in knowledge-production and academia which are far from being immune to structural discrimination, an engaged and widening group of Romani scholars are increasingly becoming more vocal in the debates that revolve around what knowledge production on and around Romani Studies should look like.

It would therefore be an exaggeration to claim that nowadays the bridges between Romani Studies, political science and social justice are totally missing, and I therefore draw from, and

create divides within the movement. Such divide has, in recent years, become starker, as the integration of the Roma ‘identitarian’ aspect within mainstream European politics is moving at a very different pace than the more concrete, slow and problematic integration (both socio-economic and cultural) of Roma communities in the societies in which they live.

¹⁸Active since 2011, funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and which has the declared goal of supporting efforts toward the social inclusion of Romani citizens in Europe by a) facilitating intercultural dialogue and disseminating academic research on Romani studies to policymakers and other stakeholders b) creating an interface between academic researchers and political decision makers, such as the recent calls for “Bridging the Gap” and c) promoting and improving the existing resources on the European Roma communities, thus contributing to conceiving evidence-based policy initiatives.

build upon, much of this scholarship. However, despite the breadth and depth of the scholarship described in the previous section, rarely do studies dealing with Romani minorities, be it from a legal, political or sociological perspective, tackle Roma-specific policies within a social justice framework. This means that even where systematic and sound research has been carried out on Roma integration policies, it remains within the paradigm of understanding and, thus, explaining, Roma ‘issues’ as a specific group with very specific problems that do not affect the rest of the population and that therefore require tailored and targeted measures.

1.3 This research’s approach: framing inequalities within a social justice paradigm through a comparative critical frame analysis

What I propose with the present study is, through adopting Nancy Fraser’s conceptualization of justice and Carol Bacchi’s *What’s the problem represented to be?* methodological approach to targeted integration policies, to analyze what kind of demarcation is drawn between Roma and non-Roma, by whom, and why. Is the matter framed in terms of cultural diversity, of socio-economic disadvantage, both, or neither? How have these representations of the problem emerged, and what solutions are proposed based on such understandings or constructions of Roma’s (lack of) integration?

The broad concern that informs this study is the need to rethink the political, social and methodological approaches to the policies for ‘Roma’ in Europe. This concern is rooted in three main considerations that I regard make this research, and the societal questions it tackles, necessary and relevant: firstly, the need for a comparative approach between countries and sectoral policies as a useful means to evaluate public policies; secondly, making explicit the under-studied link between Roma-specific integration policies and wider issues of social justice; and thirdly, the importance of studying ‘Roma integration’ as a testing ground for how we conceive and negotiate both internationally and nationally ‘the other’ in contemporary Europe.

Regarding the need for more comparative studies across countries and policy experiences, this is a desideratum which has in recent years been shared by many social scientists interested in equality policies in order to overcome the dangers of a narrow and self-serving knowledge-production (Surdu 2016; Cianetti 2016). This research emerges from the awareness that a variety

of understandings and definitions exist about ‘who the Roma are’ and ‘what integration is’, and that this diversity triggers very heterogeneous political approaches and actions. In looking at Roma integration measures in Italy and Spain I compare neither the Romani groups nor just the policies, but the policy frames that underscore the policies, while keeping present the European dimension and the regional specificities.

Roma integration as an object of study also raises issues related to diversity management, the indicators of integration, and its desirability as a policy objective. These issues, while they have been long present, have remained largely latent in the background and unaddressed in the scholarship on Roma inclusion policies. The scope and limits of the EU common framework on ‘Roma integration’ are largely conditioned by the divides between Western and Eastern European countries, between colour-blind and identity-policy traditions, between the understanding of ‘Roma’ as a domestic or European issue. The issue of how integration is being thought about becomes therefore ever more salient. Nowadays, at a time in which the current model of European integration is questioned by newly born populisms charged with an old rhetoric on state-sovereignty, it is essential to move a constructive critique to those European policies that hold the potential to both promote social justice and shed light on the existing contradictions between the national and local levels.

Finally, with the emergence of the ‘Roma issue’ as a politically constructed problem in Europe, the concerns of the European Member States and institutions about the phenomenon of ‘Roma migration’ have become a testing ground for how we conceive and negotiate ‘the other’, both nationally and internationally. Research on the management of the so-called ‘Roma issue’ has much to contribute to the understanding of the discourses, procedures and solutions underlying what is generally presented as a ‘refugee crisis’¹⁹. Similarly, research on how local public policies address the needs of low-income immigrant Roma can shed light on broader neoliberal welfare/workfare policies in times of (financial and democratic) predicament.

¹⁹ For a problematization of the term ‘refugee crisis’ see (Cantat 2015a; Cantat 2015b).

1.3.1 Framing Roma integration as social justice

The framing dimension

In policy-making, constant tensions arise between those who advocate for the need to valorize Roma's cultural specificity versus those who believe that priority should be given to the socio-economic inequalities they face, denying Roma specificity in order for the group to “put itself out of business” (Fraser 1995, 9) as a socially excluded minority.

This tension has so far gone under-researched. Far more effort has been made to pit the concept of ‘cultural identity’ against the concept of ‘cultural integration’ in mainstream society: which is a fair question to pose, and to some extent an inevitable one²⁰, but cannot account for the scant success of Roma policies and programs if it is not put into relation with an analysis of the agenda that was pursued when these policies were drafted (and implemented)—which is not solely, nor mainly, cultural in nature.

Against this background, the use of Carol Bacchi's approach seems appropriate: the main argument put forward by Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be?* (or WPR in short) perspective is that “looking at what is proposed as a policy intervention will reveal how the issue is being thought about.” (Bacchi 2009, 3). By working backwards from the concrete proposals and policy documents on Roma integration, what emerges is what is represented to be as ‘the problem’ according to the measures taken. As will be explained in the methodology section of the following chapter (2.4), I process-trace the policies and adopt a WPR method to analyze the existing Roma-targeted policies in Italy and Spain. I then triangulate the results with interviews conducted with the policy-makers in charge of said policies. This allows me to qualify and to better understand the intentions behind the measures, as well as to connect the dots between the present situation and how it has evolved over the past governments and administrations.

Given that all the policies analyzed explicitly aim at ‘Roma integration’, chapter 3 is devoted to

²⁰ Roma activist and intellectual András Bíró puts forward and elaborates on the idea that Roma integration in the societies where they live has never occurred without losses or heavy adjustments in terms of culture (where culture is used as shorthand for a way of life, the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group) in his chapter “The Price of Roma Integration” (Bíró, Gheorghe, and Kovats 2013, 11–40). The conviction that there is a necessary trade-off between traditional values and socio-economic integration is a recurrent one, but it only holds if Roma traditions are interpreted in a strictly conservative way.

analyzing who the ‘Roma’—the target of the policies—are represented to be (according to the documents and to the policy-makers, through a WPR approach), while chapter 4 focuses on what ‘integration’ is represented to be (also according to the documents and to the policy-makers through a WPR approach). Chapter 5, which centers on the political representation dimension, looks instead at who is charge of Roma policies at a governmental level and where the ‘problem’ is located within the institutions.

The social justice dimension

This thesis, while adopting Bacchi’s WPR as a method of choice, in terms of theoretical framework builds upon an idea of social justice which borrows its main components from Nancy Fraser’s theory of justice.

As abovementioned, the ‘issue’ of Roma integration has been described by and large as one of discrimination and of inequality of opportunity (European Commission 2011; European Commission 2012; European Council 2013; Government of Sweden 2014; Hammarberg 2014). One of the main dilemmas, if not the main one, in designing and assessing Roma-targeted policies in contemporary Europe is that of what type of inequality—cultural or socio-economic—is more pressing for Roma minorities, and what kind of a trade-off there is between the two (Bíró 2013; Ciaian and Kancs 2016).

Nancy Fraser’s theory of justice as developed in her publications from the nineties and early 2000s puts forward a two-dimensional conception of justice, which requires both redistribution—as a remedy to economic injustice—and recognition—as a remedy to cultural injustice— (Fraser 1996; Fraser 1995; Fraser 2001b). The normative core of her conception of social justice is the notion of *participatory parity*, according to which “justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers.” (Fraser 1996, 30).

Since “parity means the condition of being a peer, or of being on a par with others, of standing on an equal footing” (Fraser 2001a, 20), in order for the conditions to be met which allow all adult members of society to interact with one another as peers Fraser posits two necessary conditions:

on the one hand, some guarantees of economic justice must be met²¹, and on the other hand, the institutionalized cultural system should require all members of a community to pay due respect to one another and treat one another on an equal footing (intersubjective condition).

The framework developed in Fraser's work around the tensions between economic and cultural injustices, and the available options to remedy such injustices offers an insightful analytical distinction between recognition and redistribution claims, and in my opinion it provides a particularly useful foundation for analyzing the policies and practices addressed at Europe's Roma population. Despite vast in-group heterogeneity both in terms of economic status and of cultural practices, Romani minorities represent a clear case of a bivalent collectivity, since they suffer from both cultural misrecognition and economic maldistribution, and thus policies aimed to address one of these aspects alone might have a negative effect on the other. Additionally, there is a widespread preoccupation that by putting emphasis on the socio-economic dimension of inequality, this might end up being associated with the entirety of the Roma communities, or even identified as an 'identity trait' of the Romani persons themselves. As William Bila, a participant to a symposium on "Combating Romaphobia" held at the University of Brighton in 2015 clearly stated: "the number one problem that we [Roma activists and scholars] identified is the need to distinguish between culture/ethnic identity and socio economic status."²²

Fraser's core argument, that (multi)cultural politics often interferes with progressive economic restructuring, and vice versa, is rendered more complex by the fact that she envisions two forms of redistributive policies and two forms of recognition policies, which are conceived as being either 'affirmative' or 'transformative' in nature. What emerges from such scheme is the following (Fraser 1995, 87):

²¹ Even though Fraser does not go into the specific measures of how to achieve such condition, this objective requirement should ensure that participants' independence and voice are not hindered by material inequality.

²² The Symposium 'Challenging Romaphobia' took place on November 3, 2015, in Brighton. For the programme see: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/documents/romaphobia-programme-university-of-brighton.docx>

	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	The liberal welfare state	Socialism/ social democracy
Recognition	Mainstream multiculturalism	Deconstruction of the mainstream

In the well know essay *From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age* published in 1995 in the *New Left Review*, Fraser argues that transformative policies (social democracy and the deconstruction of the mainstream) are preferable to affirmative ones (the liberal welfare state and mainstream multiculturalism), since the latter do not challenge the root causes on inequality, but merely reduce them temporarily while creating other negative externalities in the process (Fraser 1995). Transformative policies, on the other hand, undermine cultural and/or economic injustices by engaging with, and challenging, the whole (mainstream) system, therefore allowing to 'level the field' by deconstructing the structure which generates the injustice in the first place.

However, as a result of criticism and debates around this model from theorists such as Judith Butler and Iris Young, Fraser's initial position (that affirmative policies such as mainstream multiculturalism and the welfare policies of the liberal state increase resentment and ultimately undermine minority claims) increasingly opened up to a more ambivalent, and at times positive, regard of the effect of group identity (Butler 1997; Fraser 1997b; Young 1997; Fraser 1997a).

Critiques to the recognition-redistribution model and the role of institutions

Without entering into the details of the philosophical debates on the redistribution/recognition dilemma, it is important to note that Fraser's rejoinder to Young clarified that she does not see an inevitable conflict between the egalitarian politics of redistribution and an emancipatory politics of recognition. Such appearance of conflict, she wrote, is misleading: "[o]nce we distinguish

affirmative approaches from transformative approaches, what looked like an ineluctable contradiction gives way to a plurality of possible strategies from which we must reflectively choose. Some kinds of recognition claims, especially the ‘deconstructive’ kind, are better suited than others to synergizing with claims for socio-economic equality.” (Fraser 1997a, 129)

The dilemma between redistribution and recognition politics is therefore neither an inevitable outcome nor is there a built-in need to pick sides within the movements advocating for social justice. In practical terms, however, affirmative policies require less political capital than transformative ones. While subscribing to the desirability of a type of equality policies that are transformative in nature (thus challenging the source of inequality rather than remedying its outcome), after analyzing the framing of the Roma integration policies I reach the conclusion in this thesis that the two (affirmative and transformative measures) need not necessarily be mutually exclusive, at least in a landscape in which transformative approaches are far from sight. Rather, certain kinds of affirmative policies could be usefully employed as a means to achieve a status quo that is less hostile to engaging in transformative options.

More recent criticism of the recognition-redistribution model have highlighted shortcomings related to the agency of where the injustices are coming from, and who is supposed to address them. Much of this criticism revolves around the role of the state and of politics as a category that cannot be subsumed by either solely the cultural nor the economic aspect of injustice, nor either of them combined (Bozkurt and Trimikliniotis 2014; Feldman 2002; Garrett 2010; Markell 2003). Feldman, for instance, claims that by focusing on civil society as the site where all injustices stem from, reside and take place, Fraser ‘flattens’ the state, reducing it to an “instrument for confronting the injustices of civil society” (Feldman 2002, 411), and suggests to bring political exclusion into the analysis, turning the dichotomy cultural exclusion-economic exclusion into a trivalent cultural-economic-political approach that includes the State as a specifically political actor.

Feldman’s claim that Fraser’s model, as originally conceived, overlooked the role that the state plays in shaping structures of both recognition and redistribution remains highly relevant. This does not necessarily have to do with voting rights or political participation *per se*, but rather with understanding the role that institutions play in problematizing minority integration. While Fraser’s account is mostly focused on social movements and their potentially contradictory

claims, governments and supranational organizations such as the European Union institutions are generally the main actors in charge of deciding 1) the meaning of “integration”, “inclusion” and “social justice” in their policies and programs, and therefore which kind of dimension (socioeconomic, cultural, other) to address and what the benchmark for integration is (reducing the gap in a specific area with the majority population, for example) and 2) how to frame the target group (ethnically, economically, by legal status, etc.).

In the specific case of the Roma, McGarry has convincingly argued that “the EU concerns itself primarily with the politics of redistribution and treats Roma as a social group with fundamentally social problems and is unwilling to recognize the ethnic identity of minorities within the EU polity” (McGarry 2012, 129).

This does not, in my opinion, hinder Fraser’s analysis of the nature of the relationship between claims based on a group’s identity recognition and claims based on socioeconomic redistribution. It does however call for a re-visitation of how these claims are addressed by policy-makers.

In response to the set of criticisms regarding the political dimension of justice and the role of the state, Fraser addressed it by claiming that her requirements for participatory parity stated that “at least two conditions must be satisfied”, which does not rule out a possible third class of obstacles that are political in nature (Fraser 1996, 30–31). This could be thought of as “decision-making procedures that systematically marginalize some people even in the absence of maldistribution and misrecognition” such as single-member district winner-takes-all electoral rules (Fraser 1996, 31). As a form of political exclusion/marginalization, the type of remedy that this type of injustice would require is one that Fraser labeled as ‘democratization’, and later as ‘participation- and ‘representation’.

In Fraser’s book *Scales of Justice* (2008), this third political dimension, distinct from the cultural and economic ones, is elaborated upon and is given as much relevance as the previous two.

For the purposes of this thesis, however, the departing point of the research has been the tendency on behalf of policy-makers to frame Roma integration in either prevalently cultural or in socio-economic terms. Despite departing from these two main categories, combining inductive and deductive coding has allowed for other themes to emerge, and one of the most prominent that

became apparent particularly through the interviews is precisely the political aspect of Roma integration, on which chapter 5 focuses.

Finally, one more of critique to Fraser's redistribution/recognition dilemma was moved by Sheila Benhabib, who pointed out that to distribute goods, services, and entitlements to persons always implies recognizing the individual benefitting from the redistribution to be a certain kind of group member in virtue of which he or she is entitled to the benefit in question (be it health care, food stamps or language rights) (Benhabib 2002). Indeed, policies are generally designed with an idea, however vague, of its target population: thus looking at for whom, or with whom in mind, Roma policies are designed, should help us understand what kind of integration majority societies and policy-makers are striving to achieve—which brings us back to the relevance of adopting a critical frame analysis. For this, though, we need to stop talking about a generic 'Roma identity' and analyze rather how the Roma have been and keep being 'identified' by policy makers (at different levels of government), academics, Roma rights organizations, and so on²³. With this in mind, the following section attempts to clarify how two of the key concepts used in this research are understood: (Roma) identity and (Roma) integration.

1.3.2 Terminology and key concepts

Defining identity

Identity is a particularly murky concept, as it can be (and is) utilized in either very individualist terms or as a marker of group belonging, as a 'constructed' choice or as a primordial and intrinsic characteristic, as a connotation of uniqueness or a marker of sameness, and everything in between.

The main reference point for a reflection and explanation on the usage of the term, as it will be employed in this research, is Brubaker and Cooper's 'Beyond "identity"' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Brubaker 2002). The main argument of said article is that "identity", as an analytical category, is used in the social sciences in ways that, in order to escape the accusations of

²³ This research, as will be detailed in chapter 2, will focus mainly on the policy-makers responsible for the creation and implementation of Roma policies in two paradigmatic cases of Western Europe.

essentialism and reification, have turned it versatile to the point of rendering it useless in terms of conceptual clarity and analytical operationalization.

Brubaker and Cooper distinguish five key uses of identity, and the underlying assumptions that underpin “strong” and “soft” usages of the term. Their categorization of the uses of “identity” highlights, as key analytical uses,

- (1) Particularistic self-understandings (either individual or collective) that are non-instrumental, as opposed to the concept of “interest” (Cohen 1985; Somers and Gibson 1993)
- (2) A specific collective phenomenon which emphasizes the characteristic of sameness among members of a group or category (Hill Collins 1990; Connor 1994; Melucci 1995)
- (3) A fundamental and core condition of humans as social beings (Erikson 1968)
- (4) The process of affiliation and identification with a group in order to push forward a common interest (this definition is at odds with the first one, as this interpretation uses identity as an instrumental/ strategic lobbying tool for a group)
- (5) The unstable, fluid, contextual, fragmented, ever-changing and ‘liquid’ nature of the ‘self’: the post-modernist approach (Foucault 1977; Hall and Gay 1996; Bauman 2004; Clarke 2008).

To make sense of these various meanings combined under the umbrella term ‘identity’, Brubaker and Cooper’s proposed alternative terms to employ as analytical categories are subsumed in three clusters:

- a) Identification and categorization, which focuses on the agents that do the identifying, rather than on the subjects identified. Differently from “identity” in its uses #1 and #5, identification is intrinsic to social life, as categories require relatively unambiguous analytical grouping of oneself and of others for them to be usable (which of course does not prevent individuals from moving in and out of such classifications depending on the context and on eventual changes in the self-understanding and social location, which is the second cluster identified).
- b) Self-understanding and social location, which in the connotation suggested in “Beyond ‘identity’” has no privileged connection with either sameness or difference,

but rather puts forward the subjective sense of who one is (regardless of whether one can be ‘mistaken’ about one’s own identity, in external “objective” identification terms).

- c) Commonality (the sharing of some common attribute), connectedness (the relational ties that link people) and groupness (usually the product of the combination of commonality and connectedness, or in other words, the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group), where the emphasis is on the *collective* nature of the identity (belonging to a group).

Of course the different clusters are not this clear-cut, but rather intertwined, in practice; however for analytical purposes I think that it is useful to keep at least two categories separate: on the one hand the first ‘cluster’ made of identification and categorization: identification as external ascription. On the other hand, I will merge Brubaker and Cooper’s second and third clusters, as the authors themselves describe the third ‘commonality, connectedness and groupness’ typology as “one particular form of affectively charged self-understanding”, to a subjective self-identification (not only individual self-identification related to the feeling /perception of belonging to a group, but also group self-identification as such, i.e. potential basis for self-determination or nationalist claims): identity as an internal ascription.

Unless otherwise specified, from now onwards I will use *identity* as shorthand for self-perception and social location linked to a group affiliation or sense of self-ascription, and *identification* as a categorization that is constructed and employed by academics, policy-makers, and any other stakeholder involved in shaping strategies and policies aimed at this group/groups.

Defining integration

Following Brubaker’s and Cooper’s criticism of the (mis)uses of ‘identity’ in social science, a similar claim can be made with regard to the term ‘integration’. This is particularly problematic insofar that it is both a category of practice and a category of analysis. ‘Integration’ as a category of analysis may well fit the Bouchard-Taylor report (Bouchard and Taylor 2008), which defines it as a process comprising several interdependent dimensions (economic, social, cultural, civic and legal) that should be examined jointly and on an equal footing, or the definition contained in the

Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies as a two-way process of mutual accommodation by minorities and residents of Member States (OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 2012).

The actual policies and practice related to it have however been developed along quite different lines, to the point that it seems that we are talking about two very different things in theory and in the practice of policies (in terms of content, not only of definitional issues). Indeed to use the concept of 'integration' is to enter a mine-field which can cause a great political and theoretical concern, confusion, and, in some cases, hostility, because of the diversity of meanings to which the term can refer to.

Lorenzo Cachón and Ben Gidley, amongst others, have pointed at how conceptualizing integration means making choices regarding what kind of 'issue' is to be addressed, which can take radically different turns depending on whether we interpret it as:

- 1) An individual or collective 'integration';
- 2) An issue involving a study of the actors, or rather an analysis of the structures;
- 3) A process, a 'measurable' result reflected upon general society, or as result/outcome measurable only with reference to the minority community;
- 4) Whether it is a one-way process that only affects the community or the individuals to 'be integrated' or whether it is bi-directional, affecting also (in some cases, mainly), the 'host' society and institutions;
- 5) Whether it is to deal with immigration seen as a 'temporary phenomena', or whether it adopts a frame according to which the community to be 'included', 'accommodated' and 'integrated' is one that is in the country to stay;
- 6) Whether it should study the behavior (and/or processes) at an analytical level (including analyzing policies) or instead delve into the normative regulatory field of how integration 'should be' and 'should take place' (Cachón 2014; Gidley 2013; Gidley 2014).

These choices open important questions related to the various dimensions of rights (civic and political, social, economic, cultural...), as well as the interplay and relations between them, and issues such as whether there is a trade-off between different types of integration (i.e. cultural versus socio-economic). But also, and similarly to 'identity talk' and 'identity politics',

‘integration talk’ and ‘integration politics’ as a category of practice do not require their use as a category of analysis.

Thus –given all these variables, options and potential for misunderstandings– the first temptation is to criticize the word and concept ‘integration’ and jettison it, as a number of authors have proposed to do (Willem Schinkel, Bowen Pauelle, Michael S. Merry, to name a few). It is, however, a term that is increasingly difficult to avoid, as it has entered the jargon of international politics and of EU policy to such an extent that to do away with it would mean to give up on analyzing altogether the causes and consequences of one of the most compelling current debates both in terms of minority rights and of diversity management. Moreover, it has also come to be used in relationship to social (in)equality and the quality of democracy. As Elizabeth Anderson argues in her book *The Imperative of Integration*, the integration of groups that mark significant lines of inequality is a vital ideal for the successful functioning of any democratic society’s basic institutions:

“[t]he democratic ideal seeks a culture and political institutions that realize society as a system of equal citizens. Democratic political institutions should be equally responsive to the interests and concerns of, and equally accountable to, all citizens. Segregation impedes the realization of this ideal and these principles. It impedes the formation of intergroup political coalitions, facilitates divisive political appeals, and enables officeholders to make decisions that disadvantage segregated communities without being accountable to them. It undermines the competence of officeholders by limiting their knowledge of and responsiveness to the impacts of their decisions on the interests of all.

If segregation is a fundamental cause of social inequality and undemocratic practices, then integration promotes greater equality and democracy. *Hence, it is an imperative of justice.*” (Anderson 2010, 2)

1.4 Bringing together the issues of integration, economic injustice and cultural injustice

In the specific case of Roma, the choice of ‘integration’ as the key term of those pro-Roma policies that have been promoted by European institutions over the past few years was the result of long negotiations, about the form as well as the content of actions. More broadly, as Adrian Favell has put it, despite its somewhat old-fashioned, functionalist air, ‘integration’ is still the most popular way of conceptualizing and framing the advocacy of political means for dealing with diversity (ethnic and cultural) (Favell 2010). And if diversity is a ‘social fact’, as Durkheim argued, and an increasingly relevant one, it is not enough to criticize the concept of ‘integration’

for its ambiguity without offering reasonable alternatives that might do a better analytical job at addressing diversity management issues. I will therefore, rather than dismiss the term, outline some of the key points that emerge from three important documents that have promoted the idea of integration, internationally and in Europe (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 2012; Ager and Strang 2008) from a theoretical/analytical perspective, and draw from them an interpretation of which aspects of integration seem to be the most relevant and useful for the purpose of the analysis I wish to conduct. I by no means imply that these sources are especially representative of the state of the art on integration; and the field is way too broad and diverse to address all aspects of this complex issue.

The aim of analyzing the definitions of integration employed by the Bouchard and Taylor report *Building the Future. A time for reconciliation*, by the *Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies* and by Ager and Strang's widely cited *Understanding Integration: a conceptual framework* is much more modest. I use them to answer the question raised at page 27 on the need to make choices regarding what kind of 'issue' is to be addressed by integration for the aim of this research, as they include most of the elements that one needs to take into account when approaching Roma integration in Europe.

The Ager and Strang framework is, in itself, an analysis of the numerous attempts at defining the term 'integration'. Building upon a review of the integration literature (up to 2008) coupled with fieldwork with refugees in the UK, the authors propose to conceptualize integration along four main domains: 1) the "markers and means" refer to achievement and access to the four field of employment, housing, education and health; 2) the assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights constitute what the authors label the "foundation" of integration; 3) social bridges, bonds contribute to fostering processes of "social connection" within and between groups; and 4) structural barriers such as language and the lack of a safe and stable environment.

This study, which has not only influenced national and regional policy formulation in the UK, but has also informed debates regarding integration at EU level, is relevant for this research because of how its four 'markers and means' categories overlap with the four axes around which the Roma Integration Strategies are built: employment, housing, education and health. These are the areas based on which integration indicators are set in the Roma National Strategies (at request of the European Commission). However, as will be elaborated on in chapter 4, such indicators are

not always put into relation with the other dimensions of integration, and particularly with the domain regarding citizenship and rights. Therefore the present research is, at least to some extent, taking up Ager and Strang's call, in their concluding remarks of the paper, to test this framework in different settings and timeframes:

“The challenge of any framework seeking to reflect normative understandings of integration is for it to accommodate the diversity of assumptions and values of different settings while retaining some conceptual coherence. The framework proposed here seeks to address this by suggesting domains of wide relevance, but determining that in any given context indicators of local or national relevance be negotiated for each domain. [...] Its wider utility and explanatory value now needs to be tested in diverse contexts to gauge whether the proposed structure captures key elements of stakeholder perceptions of what constitutes integration in an appropriately broad range of settings and timeframes”.

Regarding the integration model presented in the Bouchard-Taylor report, it is founded upon three core principles:

- a) An ideal of equality, which underpins the integration process overall. This is described as “the protection of rights that guarantees fair treatment to all citizens” (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 8:115). This is of course perfectly reasonable when the issues that one is trying to address are ‘solely’, or at least mainly, cultural ones. This matter is, however, as it will be seen, complicated by the fact that the Roma population in Western Europe is diverse not only in cultural terms, but also in legal status: not everyone being a citizen, not everyone is guaranteed ‘as fairly’ as others in terms of access to social housing, health benefits, pensions etc. While some are citizens of the state where they reside, others are economic migrants, some are refugees or asylum seekers, and others yet are stateless. Therefore, even if we assume that all European Roma have a somewhat similar culture and identity that requires integration (and questioning this approach is one of the purposes of this research)²⁴, ‘one-size-fits-all’ integration strategy will not do.

²⁴ So far, the most sceptical approaches towards the National Roma Integration Strategies have come from Roma intellectuals from Romania, a country that started adopting a number of Roma-specific policies already in the 90s. Nicolae Gheorghe has been one of the most outspoken critics of group-specific policies: “In my opinion the Romanian government should not develop a new Roma strategy [...] There is no need for the type of political strategy that was adopted in 2001. Instead what is needed is an effective system of public administration that works for everyone. If the Romanian social services would only function as they should by following their own regulations, this would be far more beneficial –for everyone– than any specific Roma strategy could be.” (Bíró, Gheorghe, & Kovats 2013).

- b) A general rule of reciprocity, which demands interaction. This is explained as “exchanges that make possible public deliberation and democratic life, the search for common values and reference points, the establishment of consensus and, generally speaking, participation itself. These exchanges assume that intercultural contact, harmonization and adaptation occur in both directions.” (p. 115-6). This two-way process, however, as participative and democratic as it might be, still has in mind an immigrant population as its target: it follows that “the immigrant, for example, must accept certain changes in relation to his culture of origin and that the host society must agree to change in response to its contact with the immigrant.”

Nonetheless the situation in Spain, for example, where the Roma population is by and large Spanish, or that of the Sinti in northern Italy, complicate the picture. For instance, the Sinti living in what is now the region of Trentino, or in the autonomous province of Bolzano in Italy, have resided in that area for approximately five centuries, way earlier than Italy was formed as a nation-state. What and whose “culture of origin” are we talking about, in these cases? And on which basis can the nation-state ask an ‘old’ minority²⁵ to accept certain changes in culture, regardless of whether such minority is officially recognized as a ‘national’ one?

- c) Social mobility as the key to integration: this is possibly the most original feature of the integration concept as presented in the report, and it ties in with the first point (the equality ideal). If “the fate of the individual, whether or not an immigrant, who integrates into society must not be confined to the path (social class, occupation, cultural milieu or ethnic group) that gave him access to it”, and if the boundaries must be porous, then indeed “integration is thus a mechanism that involves not only the State but also the entire population.”²⁶ Based upon this premise, the two principles of equality and of diversity

²⁵ For a distinction between the concepts of ‘old’ and ‘new’ minorities see Medda-Windischer (Medda-Windischer 2014).

²⁶ Also, the Bouchard-Taylor report distinguishes between individual and collective integration: “From an individual standpoint, integration is the array of choices by virtue of which a citizen participates fully if he so desires in the life of society, especially in the public sphere, and develops according to his traits, needs and outlook. In collective terms, it refers to all of the processes through which a community organizes its institutions, social relations and culture in such a way as to encourage the adherence of the greatest number of its members and to treat each one fairly.” In the case of the Roma Integration Strategies, the major challenge is the collective dimension, as the goals and respective ‘integration’ objectives and indicators are set mainly in terms of individual achievement in terms of ‘closing the gap’ in material terms (in the areas of housing, health, employment and education) with the majority populations.

that according to Richard Alba connect the challenge of integration (Alba, Sloan, and Sperling 2011) can be tackled jointly by addressing not only ‘defensive’ legal anti-discrimination practice, but also promoting policies that aim at structurally making the system more ‘porous’ and more just, based on what Lila Abu-Lughod has called ‘a radical respect for difference’ (Abu-Lughod 2006).

In line with this idea (ideal?) of integration as fundamentally concerned with meeting the responsibilities that sovereignty entails, not especially for any specific minority (immigrant or otherwise)²⁷, the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies also go beyond supporting the recognition of minority culture, identity and political interests.

The Guidelines suggest that minorities should not only enjoy the legal right to effectively participate in the overall governance of the State, but that they should also be encouraged to do so:

“To support the integration process, States should adopt policies that aim to create a society in which diversity is respected and everyone, including all members of ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious groups, contributes to building and maintaining a common and inclusive civic identity. This is achieved by *securing equal opportunities for all* to contribute to and benefit from the polity. It requires that the State ensure that the rights of all are respected and creates the conditions for all members of society to take on their share of the responsibilities. Society as a whole benefits from such a policy. This process can lead to changes in majority and minority cultures. This is why the High Commissioner on National Minorities prefers to speak about the integration of multi-ethnic societies rather than integration of a minority group into a particular society.” (OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 2012)

Despite its apparent vagueness, it appears from both these documents that ‘integration’ can be employed as a useful tool for an agenda based on empowerment and substantial equality of opportunity, as the underlying foundation of both documents is the concept of *integration as social justice*. It is in this sense that I propose to use the term, and to do so analyzing whether, how, and to what extent it has translated into policies that have redressed social injustices (or failed to do so). For this purpose, however, some important distinctions must be made, if not in

²⁷But rather acknowledging a “dynamic, multi-actor process of mutual engagement that facilitates effective participation by all members of a diverse society in the economic, political, social and cultural life, and fosters a shared and inclusive sense of belonging at national and local levels” as being intimately related to the overall stability of any pluralist society.

what we mean by integration, in what kind of injustices are to be addressed and redressed (if cultural, distributive or both).

1.4.1 Socio-economic injustices, class and underclass identity and identification

The notion of ‘class’, which had been one of the main concepts used in sociology and political science since Marxism and Weber’s social stratification theory, started receiving increasing criticism over the second half of the twentieth century²⁸.

Yet inequality, especially wealth inequality, has seen a resurgence in recent years with authors such as Thomas Piketty, Tony Atkinson and Mike Savage, among others: the London School of Economics created an International Inequalities Institute in 2015, while a Centre on Socio-economic inequality was launched in 2016 at the City University of New York and is run by Janet Gornik, Leslie McCall, Paul Krugman and Brank Milanovic, all of which have made important contributions to the literature on global inequality and welfare regimes. The upturn in inequality scholarship, however, is hardly ever framed in terms of class.

The reasoning according to which class ‘is dead’, or that it is “manufactured where it no longer exists as a meaningful social entity” (Pakulski and Waters 1996b), is based on the evaluation of four propositions of “economism, group formation, causal linkage, and transformative capacity” (Pakulski and Waters 1996a). Rather than thinking about resource ownership, however, looking at issues related to resource control (such as financial assets), demographic changes, social mobility and unequal distribution of educational opportunities might still be useful to assess material inequalities. In other words, while class identity might no longer be a relevant category the way it used to be, there still are ‘classes’ as identified by economic power. In this respect, the preoccupation of Western European countries towards immigrants, and particularly towards

²⁸ In 1959 American sociologist Robert Nisbet was the first to dismiss the term ‘social class’ as ‘valueless’; in 1978 Hal Draper argued that the fragmentation of middle class identities made the concept of class no longer useful for sociological inquiry. In the 1990s Lipset asserted that social classes were ‘dying’, while Pakulski and Waters produced somewhat of an obituary in 1996 with their *The Death of Class*: “Class has collapsed and is decomposing, leaving only the merest traces of its effects” (Draper 1978; Lipset and R. Bendix 1991; Pakulski and Waters 1996a; Nisbet 1959).

Roma immigrants, is often presented in terms of an economic burden and of undeservingness judgments (Kymlicka 2015).

As Sigona and Trehan have documented, the early 1990s saw CEE economies transition to capitalism and the establishment of a ‘new world order’ “that found in the ‘human rights’ doctrine one of its ideological pillars” (Sigona 2011, 1; Sigona and Treheran 2009).

Their main argument is that while the human rights discourse allowed the Roma to be recognized as a national minority in most Central and Eastern European Countries, and therefore to have their culture, traditions and lifestyle officially recognized, Roma workers were in parallel ‘made redundant’ from an economic point of view, as they did not (or no longer) fit the ‘socialist worker’ imaginary. At a time in which most CEE countries were in the process of rebranding their own nation-building processes and national identities, the Roma minorities were, by being conferred a ‘special status’, left out of the body politic. This incompatibility of identifications of someone as both ‘Roma’ and a ‘good worker’ or a ‘skilled worker’ seems to have been carried out to Western Europe over the past two decades. While a Roma middle class does exist, it is rendered close to invisible because it is a group that has no representation, is not cohesive, is mostly not politically engaged and does not fit the stereotype of the Roma as identified by mainstream media²⁹.

The identifications of Roma not being ‘good workers’ or more widely of not belonging to mainstream society has in turn translated into a de facto status of being treated as second-class citizens in their own countries.

On the other hand, class identity and class struggle have historically been intimately tied to the condition of being a worker, unionized, etc. Both in organizational/ practical terms and from the perspective of group solidarity, it is more difficult to gather around the identity of being unemployed rather than one of being an exploited worker.

Wolfensohn and Soros stated in 2003 that “Roma have been among the biggest losers in the transition from communism since 1989. They were often the first to lose their jobs in the early

²⁹ Between 2013 and 2015 SciencePo funded a two-year pilot project led by Tommaso Vitale, RONEPP (Roma Networks and Political Participation) to better understand the strategy of invisibility pursued by Romani middle class families and individuals. See: <http://www.sciencespo.fr/centre-etudes-europeennes/fr/node/6503>

1990s, and they have been persistently blocked from re-entering the job force due to their often inadequate skills and pervasive discrimination” (Soros and Wolfesohn 2003). Statistics regarding the rate of Roma employment during and after the Cold War support such claims (Messing 2014b). This does not mean that the driver of economic exclusion of Roma from the workforce in CEE countries has been solely, or even mainly, racism. Rather, as Sigona put it:

“The primary cause of the impoverishment of Roma after the end of the USSR was not racism, which certainly has played its part and still plays a central role in defining experiences and life opportunities for people belonging to the Roma minority, but the structural transformations that have radically re-defined the economy and social contract on which the former Socialist countries were founded. The Romani communities’ of the continent, which, post-Holocaust, were constructing a semblance of a ‘social contract’ with socialist Europe, have found it even more difficult negotiate this contract in the current climate of rising xenophobia. And this is despite the putative protections afforded by EU citizenship.” (Nando Sigona 2011, 4)

The terminology employed with regards to poverty, unemployment, marginalization and vulnerability also plays a role. Since the 90s social policies in Europe have moved away from the concept of poverty towards that of social exclusion, as a response to new arising profiles of ‘need’ (Evans 1998). Social exclusion has been presented as comprising of four dimensions: exclusion from civic integration; from the labor market; from welfare state provision; and family and community (Commins 1993), but it is also widely used to describe a general situation of disadvantage and deprivation. A similar term, ‘marginalization’, is now being more widely used in public policy, and the concept of deprivation, vulnerability and of ‘particularly vulnerable groups’ has recently started to gain relevance (Peroni and Timmer 2013; Abrisketa et al. 2015).

Within this context, the official term employed in the EU Framework for Roma integration and in most national strategies is that of ‘marginalized group’, which has come to be identified not only nor mainly, with cultural diversity and lack of interaction with the majority population, but also with belonging to a socio-economic underclass that has significantly less access to resources (material, in terms of information, and symbolic) than ‘normal’ citizens. The terminology adopted (underclass, socially excluded, marginalized, vulnerable group) can be strategically used in order to promote empowerment and rights for disadvantaged groups, however by becoming the “access formulas” adopted by the Roma NGOs themselves in order to qualify for funding schemes and programmes aimed at “Roma and other marginalized groups” they also risk

becoming characteristics that are interiorized and processed to the point of turning into identity markers in and of themselves: “indeed, the ‘poor’ and the ‘excluded’ define themselves and are defined by such institutions and processes” (Evans 1998). Some scholars have tried to develop strategies aimed at avoiding the incidental promotion of victim status which is disempowering for the victims and disruptive to the dialogical relationship with the majority, but it is no easy task (Goodwin 2009; Jacquot and Vitale 2014).

If marginalization is linked to institutional provision, however, and the results of integration policies are assessed and evaluated, then a comparative approach offers a valuable opportunity to open up the area of how policy can best be designed to cope and answer to different cases and needs of socially excluded groups. In this regard, the case of the National Roma Integration Strategies, the regional and local plans related to said strategies, and the evaluations that are now being produced following their implementation, provide the chance to both evaluate how well such policies perform, and to assess the intellectual rigor of their conceptual basis linked to the kind of identifications adopted for Roma communities.

1.4.2 Cultural injustices vs. socio-economic injustices

Mixed and contradictory approaches toward the Roma, both as an object of academic research and as a targeted group for social and cultural policies is not new: what is, for instance, considered to be by many scholars the most comprehensive and well-researched historical account of the Roma extermination during World War II, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, was written by a Jewish scholar in order to claim that the Roma’s overall plight does “not constitute genocide within the meaning of the genocide convention” (Lewy 2000). If there is little agreement between and within various academic theoretical frameworks, the logics of integration policy-making and of policy implementation have proven to be even more riddled with controversy. Even within the ‘pro-Roma’ movement, one end of the spectrum (most studies carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency, the Open Society Institute, and generally linked to or funded by the EU, WB and/or UNDP) is struggling to translate into policy a Roma integration based on bringing the Roma ‘up to level’ with ‘normal’ society, and ‘mainstreaming’ (which is one of the ten ‘Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion’ according to the official EU integration strategy) while another line of thought claims that “if anything, political

institutions supporting Romanis further undermine the options for Romani individuals equal access and participation on their terms because they accommodate only those Romani interests that are easily translatable into or understandable for members of the dominant majority” (Agarin 2014, 14).

In Europe this ambivalence has translated, in the past two decades, in measures to address diversity that have varied and vary widely, and can oscillate between opposite and at times contradictory extremes: while recent EU directives have put a strong emphasis on the non-ethnicization of integration measures (European Commission 2000a; European Union 2006; European Commission 2000b; Council of the EU 2004; Commission of the EC 2008) on the other hand most initiatives assume that social inclusion can be pursued alongside promoting the cultural identity of the Roma minority (Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005; European Commission 2012; Ivanov 2012).

Peter Vermeersch has examined the recent political reinterpretations that accompany the EU’s framing of the Roma as a group in need of special attention, and argues that EU institutions will have to find ways to deal with the ambivalence inherent in their ‘European’ appeals for tackling the problems at hand:

“These calls may indeed—as, for example, the European Commission insists—enhance cooperation between different levels of government and persuade member-states to adopt new policies that will benefit Romani citizens. But, somewhat paradoxically, they also provide new discursive material for nationalist politicians with an anti-Romani agenda who try to minimize or evade their countries’ domestic responsibility by highlighting the role and responsibility of the EU. They also latch onto the alleged ‘Europeanness’ of the Roma in order to exclude them symbolically from their own national space and frame them not only as ‘Europeans’ but also as ‘outsiders’ and ‘cultural deviants’.” (Vermeersch 2012)

It can be argued that both ‘old’ Roma minorities (the first historical records of the Roma in Europe are of the XII century) and ‘new’ ones (partly stemming from the Balkans war, but mostly from the European Commission’s 2004 and 2007 freedom of movement directive, following which a number of citizens of new European member states, Roma and not, migrated to their Western neighbors) suffer from discrimination and stereotyping, being seen as ‘foreign’ to the society, even in cases in which they have a long history of belonging to the territory, are citizens of the state in which they reside, and their mother tongue is the official language of the

state (as is the case of the Sinti in northern Italy or the *Gitanos* in Spain). Such discrimination may take the form of either direct or indirect discrimination, but as Julija Sardelić's has written, cultural racism underlying anti-Gypsyism is as a form of discrimination that "constructs Roma as culturally distinct and uses such constructed cultural difference to legitimize their hierarchical positioning in society" (Sardelic 2014, 204).

The problem remains that by mixing the socio-economic and the cultural dimension, the host society is seen as the 'identity' benchmark for social integration, which means that the idea of integration being a "two-way process" in the cultural diversity realm remains in the best case scenario a declaration of good will or, in the worst case, window-dressing that fosters both majority's and minorities' disappointment in 'multicultural' societies.

For instance, EU institutions in general, and the Council of Europe in particular, have been among the strongest and steadiest promoters of Roma cultural identity: as Yaron Matras has put it, no other ethnic minority has their history published by the Council of Europe, or had an Institute fostering their culture and traditions set up by EU authorities (Matras 2015b). But at the same time, comments such as that of Gabriella Cretu (Socialist Member of the European Parliament at the time of this statement, in 2009), who stated: "[R]oma are citizens like any of us, although many of the Roma people are currently found in a more vulnerable position, due to discrimination and poverty", transmit a different approach. On the one hand, such statement underscored the recognition of formal equality of Roma and their status as European citizens, with no mention to cultural difference or distinctiveness; on the other hand, it highlighted the Roma situation as one characterized mainly by vulnerability and marginalization. In this sense, it is consistent with the terminology that was later adopted in the National Roma Integration Strategies, which are targeted to "Roma and other marginalized groups": if marginalization is interpreted not as an intrinsic characteristic of the group, but rather as structural conditions that have shaped power relations, it is understandable why European institutions feel a 'special responsibility' towards the Roma. How and why this responsibility has translated into either cultural policies or redistributive policies, depending on the time and context, is what I believe has been overlooked in the literature, and could offer a new insight on this topic.

1.5 Main research questions and hypothesis

An overview of the existing literature on the Romani minority in Europe coupled with the developments in Roma integration politics shows this to be a topic of broad and current interest. In policy terms, inclusion and integration measures have gained relevance, and Roma integration in particular has been the object of unprecedented political and financial investment on behalf of European institutions over the past years: while approximately 26.5 billion euro were devoted to social inclusion projects in 2007-2013, the latest programming period 2014-2020 allocated 80 billion euro to the European Social Fund. Of these, a minimum of 20% (around 16 billion euro) were earmarked for social inclusion with an explicit reference to “improving Roma integration in fields such as education, employment, housing and health” (European Commission 2014).

In scientific terms, the development of ethnically targeted policies in color-blind settings, and settings in which migration also plays an important role, leads to a compelling puzzle that, I argue, can be best analyzed by studying the frames used by policy-makers to make sense of the policy problem they are to solve. I am interested in how these actors who are in charge of shaping Roma integration policies understand Roma integration, what they mean by it, how these understandings inform their decisions, and how they see their role in it. Thus, what I propose to do is to address the following broad questions that are at the heart of these policy framings mechanisms:

(a) Who are the target of the ‘Roma’ integration policies represented to be?

Which are the identification frames used in Roma integration initiatives in Western European countries, where States have to deal with the integration of both ‘national’ Roma and ‘non-national’ Roma groups? Who is to be ‘included’ or ‘integrated’, and, by extension, who is not?

(b) What is ‘integration’ for Roma represented to be?

What do policy-makers understand integration to be in general, and how do they decline integration to target the population that they identify as Roma? How do certain integration frames and discourses as category of analysis translate into integration as categories of practice?

The aim is therefore to apprehend how actors of governance organize their experience of Roma integration, how they understand the causes and effects of Roma integration, and how they understand the risks and uncertainties associated to Roma policies and to integration measures.

While I chose to conceive of integration as social justice (see *supra*, pp. 26-33) and to distinguish between cultural injustices and socio-economic injustices, such frames were never projected onto the policy makers during fieldwork, as is detailed in chapter 2.

My departing hypothesis, following Nancy Fraser's 'redistribution-recognition' dilemma, is that when it comes to Roma integration, the Italian state has engaged mainly in forms of cultural diversity mis-recognition policies, while the Spanish state has adopted mainly redistributive policies, but that the approaches of both countries have so far been confined within an 'affirmation' and not a 'transformation' dimension, which is why they present different but structural problems³⁰.

What I mean when referring to a cultural rather than a socio-economic approach is that, in general terms, if the Roma are seen as a minority which is best defined by being "culturally different" from majority populations in ways that require cultural mediation, accommodation and recognition, then one would expect for cultural policies to be developed in response to an injustice which is quintessentially a cultural devaluation of what is identified as Romani. To counter such injustice, governments and policy-makers could either provide the minority with opportunities to valorize their group specificity (such as the creation of a European Roma Institute at the European level, for example), or promote what Fraser calls a "deconstruction of the mainstream"³¹.

If, instead, the Roma are viewed as an essentially socio-economic marginalized group, then the remedy for the socio-economic injustice should be not to enhance its sense of specificity and

³⁰ This is not to say that the problems faced by Italy and Spain are of the same degree. While Spain is typically presented as the most successful case of Roma integration in Europe (in reference to its Spanish Gitanos population) it has recently started to face the dilemma on how to address Roma migrants. Italy, on the other hand, has become one of the most problematic cases in Europe despite its relatively small Roma population, particularly in relation to the "nomad camps" policy.

³¹ A debate that has developed along the lines of what 'deconstructing' the mainstream might look like has taken place since 2007 using the term coined by Steve Vertovec 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007; Tremlett 2014; Magazzini 2017).

difference but, quite to the opposite, “to abolish itself as a class” in affirmative terms or pursue a social democratic redistributive system in a transformative approach (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

The underlying assumption is that the Roma are a bi-valent group suffering from both misrecognition and maldistribution, and that affirmative policies are in many ways cheaper and more attainable than transformative ones. From the perspective of a State, both at a national and local level, policies aimed at ‘remedying’ a situation of injustice tend to be regarded as more feasible, as well as desirable, not only with regard to the Romani groups, but for any other disadvantaged minority.

The two main research questions outlined above are developed in chapter 3 and 4 respectively.

Carrying out fieldwork, however, another question emerged from the frames put forward by policy-makers and from the implicit or explicit categorizations present in the policy documents analyzed. Some such frames did not fit neither the ‘cultural’ nor the ‘socio-economic’ integration categories that I started out from. A third question needs therefore to be added to address the understandings of Roma integration that emerged through an inductive methodology, which could be summarized as:

(c) What other types of Roma integration remain socially and politically largely (in)visible?

This aspect is approached in chapter 5, in which I analyze the political dimension of integration measures that cannot be accounted for by the redistribution-recognition framework. I analyze the sites of ‘production’ of the Roma integration as a political problem and try to situate them in the institutions and organizations that are in charge of them, each of which has its own organizational culture.

While the three questions on the injustices regarding the realms of Roma (a) recognition; (b) redistribution and (c) representation/ participation are closely intertwined and at time policy-makers conflate them in the general category of ‘marginalization’, I believe it is important to keep these three dimensions separate, in order to understand what kind of marginalization is provoked, by whom, and through which mechanisms.

1.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce Roma integration as the research topic, to situate it in the literature, and to explain the choice of the theoretical framework and the kind of analysis that is carried out in this thesis.

The first two sections give an overview of the state of the art of the Roma integration debate, make a case for the relevance of the topic for both policy-making and academia, and look at the scholarship as it has developed so far, and what its limitations are. As Yildiz and De Genova have noted:

“[t]he scholarly status quo within Romani studies [...] has long been so woefully polarised between rigid orthodoxies preoccupied, on the one hand, with verifying or validating presumed ‘objectivity’, ‘authenticity’, and essentialised integrity of Romani ‘culture’ and ‘ethnicity’ or, alternatively, with more sociological or political-economic approaches that emphasise the socio-economic subordination of the Roma in stubborn disregard for the cultural politics of racism. As a result, there has been an ossified binary opposition between essentialist and positivistic accounts that fetishise Roma identity, ‘culture’, and ‘ethnicity’, on the one hand, and those that deny outright the importance of race/ethnicity and the salience of Roma ‘ethnic’ identity on the other.” (Yildiz and Genova 2017, 2)

The present work seeks to contribute to overcoming this polarization.

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 introduce the approach used in this research, the reasons for it, and discuss the key concepts and terminology adopted. I make a case for looking at Roma integration using Nancy Fraser’s recognition-redistribution theoretical model as a point of departure, with critical frame analysis as a method of choice. Since the construction of the two main identitarian frameworks outlined above (ethno-cultural and socio-economic) have been intertwined in the formulation of policies on Roma integration, I find it necessary and useful to distinguish the two approaches, without dismissing either, and see how they operate differently.

This leads to the main research questions and hypothesis outlined in section 1.5, which ask (a) who the Roma are represented to be according to the policies aimed at promoting their integration, (b) how integration is understood on behalf of those in charge of developing Roma integration policies and (c) what kinds of processes and mechanisms cannot be explained through the recognition-redistribution lens: whether there are injustices that cannot be traced back to either a cultural or socio-economic dimension, but that require a wholly political analysis.

The hypothesis put forward, stemming from Nancy Fraser's framework, is that Italy has adopted a largely cultural approach to Roma integration while Spain has engaged in mainly redistributive policies. Beyond such difference, I however suggest that both countries have pursued objectives that aim at remedying a certain type of 'gap' while falling short from question the site of productio of injustice.

This first part sets the structure for the following chapters, which will examine how the narratives examined here as categories of analysis have translated into policy discourse as categories of practice.

CHAPTER 2

Introducing the case studies and the methodology

2.1 Introduction

As noted in the first chapter, this research investigates why different responses to the presence of Roma minorities have arisen in official, legislative, and political frameworks and debates in Italy and in Spain. It has been proposed that the explanation lies in an analysis of the political claims making by which “Roma integration” is constructed in either cultural terms or socio-economic ones.

Tracing out the main developments of the policies and institutions for Roma integration is crucial in order to understand the structures, assumptions and beliefs that underpin these measures, which will be analyzed in depth in chapters 3, 4, and 5 following respectively a cultural, economic, and political lens.

Before delving into the analysis itself, however, some context should be provided about the setting in which this research has been conducted, and why the cases of Italy and Spain were chosen for this investigation.

Accordingly, this section provides a background on how the ‘Roma issue’ came to the forefront of European policy debate, starting from outlining how European institutions (the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament) and the Council of Europe have addressed it. Since the process of Roma ‘Europeanization’ has been highly consequential for national Roma-targeted policies (Cruickshank 2012; Ram 2014; Van Baar 2015), looking at how representations of Roma in European institutions have emerged and developed into a political issue is a necessary starting point.

A justification of the case-study choice for Italy and Spain is then provided, followed by a brief history of how Roma started becoming a ‘political issue’ in both countries.

Particular attention is paid to the structural definitions of Roma in laws and policies, which serve the purpose of providing a basic factual map from which to start addressing the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the current situation. The main questions addressed in this section are: how and when did the

integration of the ‘Roma’ minority become a European issue? How have European measures on this issue affected national policies? Why study Italy and Spain as case studies? What is the history of Roma in Italy and in Spain and what are the specific policies and legislation that address them? How have these changed over the years, and what is the current situation?

2.2 Context and background: Roma as a political issue in European institutions

In the last two decades (with a steep curve in policy measures over the past few years) the Roma have come to be recognized, or constructed, as a “category” of its own in European directives, recommendations, and reports (Surdu and Kovats 2015). Generally not subsided under neither of the groups identified in anti-discrimination surveys and policies, they are however invariably included amongst those minorities considered to be most at risk of discrimination (a quick look to any survey on attitudes towards minorities in Europe shows that this concern is well-founded)³², and are often featured as a stand-alone category.

This trajectory is the product of both political and historical circumstances: the Balkan wars of the nineties and the breakup of Yugoslavia, the swift move of that region towards a market economy, the breakup of the USSR and the EU’s increased attention towards minority protection and rights with the 1993 Copenhagen criteria for accession, in ways however that inherently encouraged “form over practice” (Vermeersch 2012, 6). As a result, Central European countries adopted the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995 and most of them currently recognize the Roma as a national minority, but discrimination has all but decreased over the past two decades. This should not, however, be seen exclusively (nor mainly) in terms of ethnic prejudice or cultural issue, but rather as a product of a wider system of growing inequality in which those less equipped with capital and marketable skills are the ones pushed the furthest to the margins (Kovats 2001, 2) and the ones hit the hardest by the economic crisis (Nando Sigona 2011). Shortly after the breakup of Yugoslavia, with Recommendation 1203 “Gypsies in Europe” (1993), based on a report by Josephine Verspaget, who later became Chair of the Council of Europe’s Special Group on Roma/Gypsies, the Parliamentary Assembly of the

³² Every second Roma interviewed for the EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) in 2011 reported that he or she had been discriminated against in the previous 12 months (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2011). According to the Pew Research Center, in 2015, 86% of Italians, 60% of French, and more than a third of Spanish, German and British populations hold negative sentiments about Roma (Stokes 2015).

Council of Europe identified the Roma³³ as a “true European minority”, and more specifically a cultural one, stating that “[a] special place among the minorities is reserved for Gypsies. Living scattered all over Europe, not having a country to call their own, they are a *true European minority*, but one that does not fit into the definitions of national or linguistic minorities. [...] Gypsies greatly contribute to the cultural diversity of Europe [...] be it by language and music or by their trades and crafts” (Council of Europe 1993, Parliament:1).³⁴

The Europeanization of the Roma question was further institutionalized by the European Parliament resolution of January 2008 which called for a EU Strategy on Roma, based on a motion by Hungarian MEP Livia Járóka (Járóka 2008)³⁵, and eventually found a middle ground between European political will (and funding) and national responsibility in the approval of the National Roma Integration Strategies (COM(2012) 226 final)³⁶.

The growing commitment of the European institutions towards the ‘Roma issue’ has given heed to questions related to the need to adopt social and cultural policies explicitly directed at an ethnic minority (which however shy away from being affirmative action policies) and to who the beneficiary population of such policies comprises of³⁷. Therefore to identify or be identified as ‘Roma’ has come to constitute, particularly in the last decade, an ad hoc category in surveys on discrimination, inclusion/exclusion and marginalization. For instance, the standard classification of discriminated groups according to the latest Eurobarometer Report “Discrimination in the EU in 2015” can be appreciated in the following sample question: “Do you have friends or

³³ The terminology ‘Roma’ in policy emerged later, and the EU documents from the early nineties invariably refer to ‘Gypsies’, which is currently regarded as being a misnomer and a slur.

³⁴ Italics added. For a critical analysis of how, over the 1990s, the Roma issue has been increasingly defined in cultural terms, see the article “Problems of Intellectual and Political Accountability in Respect of Emerging European Roma Policy” (Kovats 2001). Kovats’ main argument is that framing the presence of the Roma people in Europe as a matter of discrimination and of cultural identity, rather than identifying the causes of socio-economic problems faced by many Roma people such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, health etc. serves the interests of mainstream institutions, but is detrimental to the Roma communities themselves.

³⁵ The Parliament’s resolution was supported by the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) as well as by governments of member countries of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, an international initiative launched in 2005 by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute to support the adoption and implementation of Roma-targeted action plans in eleven former communist countries plus Spain.

³⁶ The decision of the European Commission to adopt a common strategic framework was largely based on the inability demonstrated by European governments to guarantee access to fundamental rights to its Roma minorities through the already existing policies and legislation, such as the Council directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (2000/43/EC).

³⁷ Since European institutions have no binding power over how each state chooses to identify and recognize its minorities, every country has built its own Roma strategy identifying its beneficiaries based on the national perception of what the ‘problem’ is and who counts as ‘Roma’ (Surdu 2016).

acquaintances who are...? 1) People whose ethnic origin is different from yours 2) Roma 3) Gay, lesbian or bisexual 4) Disabled 5) Of a different religion or have different beliefs than you 6) Transgender or transsexual” (European Commission DG JUST 2015, 10).

According to the formulation of the survey we can draw the conclusion that Roma should not be treated as an ethnic minority within other “people whose ethnic origin is different from yours”, nor as a group that has “different beliefs” from the mainstream, but rather as a category of their own. The previous Eurobarometer of 2012 went further, and included a specific chapter titled “The case of the Roma” which presented Roma as “Europe’s biggest ethnic minority” (European Commission DG JUST 2012e, 107–17) yet at the same time it clearly set them apart from the section on “Ethnic origin as grounds for discrimination” (European Commission DG JUST 2012e, 28–34). Similarly, the 2014 Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe “State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe” featured a stand-alone category of Roma³⁸ which was set apart from the section on “Ethnic and national minorities” (Jagland 2014, 46–48).

In practice, Roma are generally presented as Europe’s largest and most discriminated ethnic minority³⁹, albeit one that comprises of many highly diverse and dispersed groups (Tremlett 2014; European Commission DG EMPL 2004)⁴⁰, but their ethnicity is framed as somehow of a ‘different kind’ from that of most other ethnicities. European institutions have no power over issues relating to the recognition of the status of minorities, minority integration, the regime governing the use of minority languages, nor is there any internationally accepted legal definition of ethnicity nor of minority (Ruiz Vieyetz, 2014, p. 14). However, the EU has produced a large body of reports, white papers and framework documents on how member states should reduce the exclusion and ethnic marginalization of minorities in general (Cianetti 2016) and the Roma in particular (Vermeersch 2012).

³⁸ In this document, the definition used is the following: “the term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.”

³⁹ The issue of whether they are one ethnic minority or many is debatable, but Roma representatives have always claimed that despite great diversity they constituted one people, and that assertions to the contrary were attempts to divide and disempower the Roma movement. In 2000, the International Romani Union (IRU) publically announced that the Roma people constituted a nation.

⁴⁰ *The situation of the Roma in an enlarged European Union* released by the EC DG Employment and Social Affairs (2004) specified: “At a number of points in this study, the term “Roma” or “Romani” is used as shorthand for the broad umbrella of groups and individuals. In no way should this choice of terminology be taken as an endorsement of approaches aimed at homogenizing Roma and other groups perceived as “Gypsies” in Europe or at eliminating the rich diversity among Roma, Gypsies, Travellers and other groups perceived as “Gypsies”.”

Over the past two decades the Council of Europe has played an important role in constructing a narrative that puts the concept of a shared Roma cultural identity at the center of the discourse. Almost one decade after the earlier cited Recommendation 1203 (1993) the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed another Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the “Legal situation of the Roma in Europe”, picking up and developing the “Gypsies in Europe” document, but also introducing a radically new element, the concept of Roma as a ‘socially disadvantaged group’. Point 4 of the recommendation reads: “Roma form a special minority group, in so far as they have a double minority status. They are an ethnic community and most of them belong to the socially disadvantaged groups of society” (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2002).

It is well documented that the Roma are amongst the groups most at risk of discrimination, and that there are wide gaps in the access to education, housing, health and employment between Roma and non Roma (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - UNDP 2012a), however by framing this as a sort of intrinsic characteristic of the Roma themselves (and not of the structural and institutional racism of Europe’s majoritarian societies, surmountable by changing the dynamics at play within these societies) within a wider framework that, up to that moment, had emphasized Roma’s minority culture status, it risks conflating the two issues. While founded upon a legitimate concern for a real situation of disadvantage, this kind of language can potentially entrench, rather than help overcome, stereotypes on Roma, naturalizing the criteria used to evaluate Roma’s human capital as one of poverty, exclusion and marginalization. Examples of this approach of thinking of the Roma as intrinsically problematic abound, and further articulation of this can be seen in point 9 of the same recommendation, which states “[t]he majority population must accept Roma into society without assimilating them, and *support Roma as a disadvantaged social group*. Roma have to accept the rules governing society as a whole, and they can be called upon to be more active *in handling their own problems*, but this must be associated with appropriate conditions, encouragement and incentives provided by the state.” Such statement seems to identify the Roma as both the victims and perpetrators of exclusion and marginalization, sidelining the fact that the drivers of marginalization are wider structures of

economic and political power⁴¹, and making the implicit assumption that Roma culture is somehow at odds with ‘the rules governing society as a whole’.

This categorization is not inconsequential, as it has informed much of the recent European policy-making on Roma inclusion. It is interesting to observe how, in different settings, the definition of ‘who the Roma are’ has been declined to fit different agendas over the past years, and particularly the definition of the Roma that ended up being adopted in the European Commission Communication 173 “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” is (COM(2011) 173 final). This reads:

“The term ‘Roma’ is used—similarly to other political documents of the European Parliament and the European Council—as an umbrella expression which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not; around 80% of Roma are estimated to be sedentary” (COM(2011) 173 final, 2).

This definition follows and references another similar one, the Commission Staff Working Document (SEC(2010) 400 final), with which the only significant difference is that the definition from 2010 did not explicitly cite the Gens du voyage⁴², it included the sentence “they share a history of persistent marginalization in European societies”, and it did not mention of the issue of nomadism/ sedentary lifestyle. It thus seems reasonable to interpret this gradual shift in definitions as an attempt, on behalf of the European Commission, to emphasize the socio-economic dimension of disadvantage of the Roma community while moving away from the cultural stigma element (particularly in the form of atavic and romantized nomadism that the Council of Europe had been promoting). The shift towards a focus on the socio-economic dimension is substantiated by the contents of the Communication on the Framework for the National Strategies, which opens with a section titled “Improving the situation of Roma: a social

⁴¹ Point 5 of the same recommendation states: “Most Roma are currently faced with a rather severe economic situation in most of the member countries of the Council of Europe. Despite efforts in the social field, the market economy, especially the neo-liberal version of it, has marginalized disadvantaged social groups including Roma even in the most developed European countries. In central and eastern Europe the economic and political transition has aggravated their socially disadvantaged situation” (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2002).

⁴² The suggestion that the addition might not be coincidental is purely speculative. However, given the statement of Viviane Reding, DG Justice Commissioner at the time, who likened Sarkozy’s government deportation of over a thousand Romanians and Bulgarians of Roma ethnicity to Vichy France’s treatment of Jews during the second world war—a policy that was developed after an incident in Loir-et-Cher involving French Gens du voyage—is not so far-fetched (Doitcheva 2015).

and economic imperative for the Union and its Member States”, and the fact that in the whole document the word socio-economic appears 29 times, while the word culture not even once.

Similarly, putting the emphasis on Roma vulnerability, the Commissions’ DG Justice portal “Roma and the EU” (European Commission DG JUST 2014) explains that many of the estimated 10-12 million Roma⁴³ in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion on a daily basis. The portal was created in 2011 to publicize and disseminate the EU Roma framework, on the premise that Roma are overrepresented in marginalised groups and live in very poor socio-economic conditions (COM(2011) 173 final) and that “[t]he European institutions and every EU country have a *joint responsibility* to change this” (European Commission DG JUST 2011). Along these lines, one of the European Council’s recommendations to Member States in 2013 was to “adopt measures that might be based on socio-economic indicators, such as high long-term unemployment, level of educational attainment and health parameter, or may focus on geographical areas that are marginalized and/or segregated” (2013/C 378/0). Such an approach clearly privileges economic and demographic concerns over cultural ones. Indeed, in many EU Member States (especially CEE members), Roma minorities represent a significant and growing proportion of the school age population, and therefore of the future workforce. According to EU estimates 35.7% are under 15 compared to 15.7% of the EU population overall. The average age is 25 among Roma, compared with 40 across the EU, and the vast majority of working-age Roma lack the education needed to find good jobs (COM(2011) 173 final).

The survey “The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States” conducted by the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Fundamental Right Agency and the European Commission in 2011 shows that in the 11 EU Member States⁴⁴ covered by the study, the socio-economic situation of the Roma in the four key areas of employment, education, housing and healthcare is substantially worse, on average, than the situation of the non-Roma living in close proximity (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - UNDP 2012a).

⁴³ The Council of Europe’s estimates of the Roma population provide ‘minimum’, ‘average’ and ‘maximum’ estimates that can be consulted here: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma/>. On the other hand, recently professor Yaron Matras has challenged the reliability of these figures in the article “Counting Roma: the ethical dilemma” (Matras 2015a).

⁴⁴ The 11 EU Member States where the survey was conducted: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia.

Despite the diversity of legal status in different countries, the profile of the marginalised Roma analysed in the FRA study is quite uniform amongst the different Member States and shows that:

- on average, only one out of two Roma children surveyed attend pre-school or kindergarten;
- on average, fewer than one out of three Roma were reported to have a paid job;
- on average, about 20% of Roma respondents were not covered by medical insurance or did not know whether they were covered;
- about 45% of the Roma lived in households that lack at least one basic housing amenity, namely indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower or bath and electricity;
- on average, around 40% of Roma live in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry at least once in the past month because they could not afford to buy food.

This shift in the degree and in the type of attention dedicated to the Roma minority by European institutions did not emerge casually, nor did it take place overnight. As mentioned in the first chapter, following the EU enlargement in 2004 and the accession, in 2007, of Romania and Bulgaria, the situation of Roma communities started to be perceived as of particular concern and characterized by persisting individual and institutional discrimination coupled with far-reaching social exclusion and extreme poverty, likely preconditions for westward migration flows.

In December 2007 the Brussels European Council invited Member States and the Union to use all means to improve Roma inclusion. To this end it invited the European Commission to examine existing policies and instruments and to report to the European Council on the progress achieved before the end of June 2008. In July 2008 the European Commission published the Communication on non-discrimination and equal opportunities as a renewed commitment towards the fight against discrimination through both legislative and policy tools (COM (2008) 420 final). For the first time the need to apply better tools in order to promote the social inclusion of the Roma was explicitly acknowledged. In that same year the European Commission acknowledged the pressing problem of widespread unemployment and dramatic living conditions of Roma and committed to achieving progress at European and national level in key areas, such as awareness raising, non-discrimination mainstreaming, positive action and data collection. Moreover, the Commission committed to operate in collaboration with civil society and social partners to monitor and evaluate the implementation of initiatives.

The discussion triggered by the 10 Common Basic Principles⁴⁵ in 2009 represented an important push for all the successive actions taken by the European Institutions, the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency, the OSCE office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OCSE High Commissioner on National Minorities and other international organisations in support of Roma communities, in particular the marginalised ones:

Box 1 – The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion

- 1 Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies;
- 2 Explicit but not exclusive targeting;
- 3 Inter-cultural approach;
- 4 Aiming for the mainstream;
- 5 Awareness of the gender dimension;
- 6 Transfer of evidence-based policies;
- 7 Use of European Union instruments;
- 8 Involvement of regional and local authorities;
- 9 Involvement of civil society;
- 10 Active participation of the Roma.

Further coordinated efforts were however needed to extend the scope of the Roma issue, mostly treated at the European level by then as a pure antidiscrimination issue, to include a socio-economic angle that addressed positive and explicit measures and markers. The clear mention of the need for an active participation on behalf of the Roma, the involvement of civil society and

⁴⁵ The principles were proposed by the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion and were adopted by the Commission in 2009. For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index_en.htm

the territorial approach were included in the principles as a means to achieve a more effective use of European Union structural funds and a more active involvement of Member States and regions⁴⁶.

Thus, in the late 2000s the Roma issue slowly started becoming a responsibility shared by the European Union institutions, Member States and regions, with the Structural Funds constituting the main financial tool available at local level to design and implement actions in support of Roma. The regulations of the funds for the programming period 2007-2013 reflected a critical situation present at territorial level, without explicitly targeting Roma communities, but also without providing data, good practices or guidance on how to design effective programmes and projects.

In the European Union context, the European Parliament was a decisive actor to secure the support of the European Commission in identifying areas of intervention and to start a discussion with the major stakeholders active on Roma socio-economic inclusion and antidiscrimination. In 2009, the European Parliament entrusted the European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban policy with a pilot project whose objective was to explore innovative and integrated approaches to tackling the multidimensional problems facing Roma communities. The project explored ways in which Roma inclusion could be promoted through education, awareness raising, and microfinance initiatives. It also proposed new methods and tools for data collection, monitoring and evaluation. The project pointed with evidence at the fact that Roma suffer from multiple, interlinked vulnerabilities. The project also identified that the cycle of poverty is reinforced by frequent segregation – in housing but also in schooling – misperceptions, and discrimination. Increasing the extremely low employment rates among Roma was identified as an economic necessity for countries in Eastern Europe and a priority for the European Union as a whole (de Laat 2010), given that while majority populations are aging, as many as 7–20 percent of new labour market entrants in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia are Roma (World Bank 2012). The project undertook a careful review of the early learning

⁴⁶ Article 158 of the Treaty establishing the European Community states that, in order to strengthen its economic and social cohesion, the Community aims at reducing disparities between the development levels of the various regions (although EU fiscal consolidation and austerity policies might suggest otherwise). Article 159 of the Treaty requires this action to be supported by the Structural Funds, which are to be deployed in favor of economic and social cohesion and to achieve this goal the EU Community is to promote equality and combat discrimination, including discrimination based on ethnicity.

environment faced by Roma children at home, in their communities and at national level, including a review of national policies and local programs. The evidence showed that the gap in access to learning opportunities starts early, especially in CEE Member States: while more than 75% of all non Roma children aged 3-6 are in preschool in Eastern Europe, the large majority of Roma children are not. In Bulgaria only 45%, in Romania 37%, in the Czech Republic 32%, and in Slovakia 28% of Roma children aged 3-6 are in pre-school. Hungary, where preschool is compulsory, and where the government supports poor families for out-of-pocket expenses and school lunches, and gives them subsidies for regular pre-school attendance, enrolment is considerably better, with 76% of Roma children in preschool (World Bank 2012).

Unsurprisingly, the study “Roma and non-Roma in the Labour Market in Central and South Eastern Europe” carried out by UNDP around the same time, and as part of the same project, found that Roma continue to face extensive labour market disadvantages (O’Higgins 2012). One of the identified challenges of the study was that of channelling Roma employment to the official labour market, since it provides access to health and social insurance and enables the overall inclusion of the worker in the regular social systems. If this does not happen, the access to health insurance will continue to be covered by the state, mainly through “registered unemployment”, as was illustrated by the Regional Roma Survey data (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - UNDP 2012b).

The Roma pilot project approved in 2009 also assessed the scope for leveraging microcredit schemes to increase self-employment and reduce the large employment gaps between Roma and non-Roma and found that self-employment levels are relatively low, but there is considerable interest among Roma in becoming self-employed (The World Bank 2012). The vast majority of Roma expressed a desire for stable jobs, similar to the responses of non-Roma neighbours, and many expressed an interest in starting a business and becoming self-employed. However, not many suppliers of microfinance target start-up businesses in general, and even fewer are reaching Roma entrepreneurs. A key reason, as presented by the survey, is that many potential Roma entrepreneurs do not qualify for credit in light of lack of savings and indebtedness, very low levels of education, even when compared to the segment of the general population that is being refused credit, and little employment experience, especially lacking experience starting and operating a business in the formal economy (World Bank 2013). The material conditions of

precariousness of the Roma who apply to micro-financing schemes, especially the housing situation, also take a tool. Given the failure of the pilot project with respect to microcredit UNDP and the European Commission suggested that a comprehensive approach to financial inclusion that goes beyond strictly providing microcredit, and addresses low financial literacy and business skills, might be more adequate. The report on “Reducing vulnerability” also highlighted that rights-based approaches to Roma housing should be applied and commitments stemming from international human rights legal documents should be implemented, noting that housing conditions for Roma had not bettered since a UNDP report of 2004 (The World Bank 2012; Peric 2012).

Finally, the pilot project identified the need for a holistic and comprehensive approach towards Roma socio-economic inclusion in order to set objectives and priorities to avoid incoherence and fragmentation of activities (Ivanov, Kling, and Kagin 2011). The call for combined interventions (the so-called “integrated approach”) and the recommendations to customise interventions to specific local needs and involve the community (Roma and non-Roma) are however complex to implement and have so far provided a serious challenge for national and local administrations.

2.2.1 The European Structural Funds 2007-2013

The 2008 staff working document accompanying the Communication 420 on non-discrimination and equal opportunities underlined the potential of the structural funds and pre-accession instruments to create synergies with other processes like the Roma Decade (European Commission 2008a). It also identified specific measures to be implemented at Member States level such as capacity building, monitoring and participation. However, during the negotiation of the Structural Funds 2007-2013 the potential of this investment tool were only partially allocated to marginalised Roma inclusion. The main pitfall of this integrated approach laid in the distribution among six different operational programmes of the funds that were going to indirectly target Roma communities. Out of the initial impressive allocations, finally about one fourth was spent and it is still unclear how many Roma and in which localities benefited from the interventions. The bar was set quite high, and expectations were largely frustrated in the transition of the funding and implementation from the European level to the national and local levels. The lack of administrative capacity, involvement of Roma, ownership and political will

have been pointed out as the major obstacles to an effective implementation of projects in support of marginalised Roma, particularly in the Eastern European Member States.

The exception in the European Union - at least according to European Commission officials (and based on absorption capacity of available funding) - has been Spain, with a Roma population of approximately 750,000. With a quite limited level of marginalisation (if compared to Italy, France, or CEE Member States), this country has been able to coordinate the implementation of the Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund in a quite effective way.

In 2009 the European Council invited the Commission and Member States to take into account the 10 Basic Principles on Roma inclusion when designing and implementing policies to promote the full inclusion of the Roma (Council of the European Union 2009), and a study on “What works for Roma inclusion” was commissioned by the European Commission (Fresno 2011). In May 2010 the first EU regulation which explicitly, though not exclusively, targeted Roma was adopted in co-decision process (by the European Council and European Parliament) and aimed at amending the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities, including Roma. However, a piece of regulation was not sufficient to boost Member States and regions’ investments in integrated approaches in support of marginalised Roma. Again, administrative capacity building and political will were found to be the main obstacles for investments. The municipalities were in general aware about the needs of the local Roma and non-Roma communities, but they failed to put together projects that could be co-funded by the regional or national authorities. During the 2010-2013 period few Member States were able to use the opportunity to invest in integrated housing approaches.

2.2.2 The National Roma Integration Strategies as precondition for the European Structural and Investment Funds investments in support of marginalised Roma

Between 2010 and 2011, policy wise and at European level, some progress was made. The Roma agenda was high in the European Commission priorities and the European Commission and European Parliament started to gather some evidence on the situation of Roma in Europe. In April 2010 (the 7th of April, one day before the second Roma Summit was held in Cordoba during the Spanish Presidency) the European Commission adopted a Communication on the

social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe. This was the first official recognition that the Roma issue was not solely a ‘minority issue’ and that the cost of no action would have wide negative economic and social implications on society as a whole (all the more in those Member States in which Roma represent an important share of the population). The active implication of the European institutions is also linked to the fact that on the in the summer of 2010 French authorities dismantled a number of settlements and returned many Roma families to Romania and Bulgaria (some ‘voluntarily’ following the payment of a 300 euro bonus for each returnee). Reactions from a number of international and European institutions and NGOs pushed the European Commission to take action, in order to prevent that such ‘model’ started to be copied by other countries as well (Kelkar 2012). On the 5th April 2011 a Communication was adopted by the European Commission calling on Member States to submit National Roma Integration Strategies and to create Roma National Contact Points by the end of December 2011 (European Commission 2011). The European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies was launched, and to date it remains a major reference for the Roma policy in Member States and regions in Europe. The framework is the condition under which the new European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, can be invested in European Member States and regions. This has represented an important shift in Roma politics at both the European level and for the Member States, however the economic crisis combined with the sudden politicization of the Roma ethnicity has also presented new challenges for equality policies. The core idea put forward with the National Strategies fits within the broader trend emerged in recent years and that has been called “trickle down minority social integration” (Cianetti, 2016). This is characterized by a “growing mismatch in the EU social inclusion and minority/anti-discrimination agendas between a growing recognition of minorities’ special vulnerabilities and a diminishing willingness to propose structural solutions” (Cianetti 2016, 18). On the one hand, the EU has commissioned studies that show that minorities in general, and Roma in particular, are disproportionately at risk from social exclusion; on the other hand, the dominant discourse developed especially starting with the economic crisis argues that economic growth will fix this, ‘trickling down’ from job creation to social and minority inclusion: social inclusion will derive naturally from a stronger economy and higher employment. It is against the background of this general trend that Member

States have developed, adjusted or amended each their own Roma Integration Strategies in the past few years.

2.3 Introducing the case studies

As mentioned in chapter 1, this research adopts a comparative approach, analyzing the frames used in developing Roma integration policies in two countries, Italy and Spain. The choice of Spain and Italy as case studies for this analysis on Roma integration narratives and policies is rooted in two main reasons.

One is comparability, both conceptual and practical. The other is variation, as each case occupies one far, and opposite, end on the spectrum of the recognition-redistribution dilemma, and presents very different outputs.

While initially I had thought of addressing the issue of Roma integration in Central and Eastern European countries vs. Western European countries, an overview of the available data and literature convinced me that beyond being overly ambitious and having serious feasibility issues, such a project would also have less explanatory potential in understanding integration mechanisms, because scope conditions would have been too broad. Instead, focusing on ‘immigration countries’ makes it possible to observe significant variation between (and within, in different regions) ‘Old Europe’. The Roma population in Western Europe, while numerically less relevant than the minorities present in Central and Eastern Europe, raises a compelling quandary: they are generally not recognized as a national nor ethnic minority “due to the lack of clear territorial features” (Memo 2014, 125), but official non-recognition does not prevent the implementation of targeted programmes. In addition to issues of overrepresentation with regard to poverty and marginalization indicators, differentiated immigration and legal status create various categories of entitlements to social welfare rights within one single “National Strategy” in

Western European countries, addressed towards one broadly defined ethnic minority⁴⁷, raising important identity issues for both majoritarian society and for the Roma minority.

In Italy, where the overall population is a little over 60 million, Roma minorities account for an estimated 0,2% of the population (between 170,000-180,000 according to the National Strategy), of whom close to half are Italian citizens, approximately 90,000 fled ex Yugoslavia during or in the aftermath of the Balkan wars, while others are EU citizens of more recent migration from Romania and Bulgaria. Unaccounted for in official statistics are also approximately 15,000 de facto stateless persons, the vast majority of whom are Romani (Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati, 2015).

In Spain, out of a population of slightly over 46 million, Spanish Roma represent close to 2% of Spanish citizens (between 750,000 and 1 million according to the National Strategy), while there is little data regarding Roma who have migrated to Spain in recent years, mostly from Romania.

While holding different historical and political legacies, Italy and Spain share a number of features that I argue make them cogent and useful case studies particularly in a comparative perspective. This section aims at outlining the reasons for the choice of these two countries as case studies, before moving on to provide some background information on each.

In broad terms, Italy and Spain are comparable on the grounds of having a similar history of migration; analogous political/ administrative structures; and of having experienced a strong impact of the economic crisis on unemployment.

Firstly, amongst Western European countries, Spain and Italy are states of recent incoming migration flows (if compared to France, England or Germany, for example) and they have reasonably similar systems in terms of State models and regional competencies. A vast literature has suggested that Italy and Spain are comparable in their experiences of immigration and welfare provision, as part of the 'Southern European' or 'Mediterranean' model (Aiginger and Leoni, 2009; Arango, Finotelli, Sabino, Strozza and Triandafyllidou, 2009; McMahan, 2015, pp. 4–8).

⁴⁷ Most Roma residing in Western Europe are EU citizens, but a number of them are not nationals of the country where they reside, and some migrated from former Yugoslavia or were born in Western European countries from parents who do not hold European citizenship.

Both are countries that have a long history of emigration, and have only over the past few decades become destination countries for migrants coming from CEE countries, North Africa and Latin America. As McMahon points out, in both Italy and Spain underground labor markets have provided employment opportunities for immigrants (albeit often in precarious, irregular and temporary conditions) regardless of their legal status, fostering high levels of undocumented migrants that were addressed through ad hoc, but fairly regular, amnesties (in 1986, 1990, 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2009 in Italy; in 1986, 1991, 1995 and 2001 in Spain) (McMahon 2015, 6).

Secondly, in terms of governmental competencies and administrative power, both Italy and Spain are decentralized unitary states in which the regions and the autonomous communities - 20 (plus 2 autonomous provinces) and 17 (plus 2 autonomous cities) respectively - are granted residual policy competence and where asymmetry between the regions is recognized (even though Italy includes the asymmetry in its Constitution while Spain does not). They both differ significantly from highly centralized States such as France, as well as from federal States such as Germany, and from partially decentralized ones such as the United Kingdom (Ruiz Vieitez 2013, 86). In demographic terms Italy is larger (approximately 60 million inhabitants, while Spain's population nears 47 million) but they still roughly belong to the same scale, if compared to other European countries such as Greece, Portugal or Belgium.

Thirdly, in economic terms, both Italy and Spain were hit hard by the economic crisis of 2008, and in both countries the crisis amplified some already existing trends. The erosion of the social safety net and of public spending, the rise of inequality and of the amount of people at risk of social exclusion, and a sharp increase in unemployment and precariousness have fostered in recent years a widespread distrust in parties, institutions and politics in general. Both Italy and Spain had to adopt unpopular austerity measures and the economic crisis turned into a political crisis (Penalva Verdú, Clemente and Raffini et al. 2015). It has been written that:

“Within the European context, Spain and Italy share many common characteristics. They share the cultural, social and political effects of economic crisis. [...] As a consequence of crisis, expenditures in welfare state are cut. The crisis amplifies uncertainties and risks typical of late-modernity and exacerbates the processes of individualization. The economic crisis turns into a political, social and cultural crisis. Both roots and remedies to crisis turned to be endogenous to the neoliberal model. The idea of [...] a comparative analysis project has been developed from the intuition that, despite Italy and Spain share

many characteristics, the crisis, in some respects, produces different dynamics, especially in the political dimension” (Penalva Verdú, Clemente and Raffini et al. 2015, 18).

Additionally, both the Italian Republic and the Spanish State have adopted since the mid-1980s a series of programmatic documents and policies that explicitly target Romani groups; both countries include Roma in their reports to the Council of Europe regarding the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and both have developed a National Roma Integration Strategy as requested by the European Commission in 2011.

Conversely, it would be difficult to take other Western European countries as a benchmark of reference, or model for comparison: France, despite its de facto Roma population, and its strong reaction to EU citizens of Roma ethnicity moving to France after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements⁴⁸, does not recognize minorities, is not a party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities nor to the Treaty minority languages, and its National Roma Integration Strategy is not a proper strategy, since “the term ‘Roma’ refers to a concept of ethnicity, which cannot be used under French law to construct public policies” (French government 2012, 1). Therefore the European Commission’s DG Justice website states that “France’s National Roma Integration Strategy is not a strategy as such, but rather an integrated set of policy measures within France’s social inclusion policies” (European Commission DG JUST 2012b).

The UK, despite the fact that Romany Gypsies were recognized as a distinct ethnic group under the 1976 Race Relations Act, and that Irish Travellers were accorded this status in 2000, presents a similar reluctance to engage into an inclusion plan or strategy targeting explicitly its Gypsy, Roma and Traveler population. As a matter of fact, exactly as with France, the website of the European Commission’s DG Justice asserts “[t]he UK’s National Roma Integration Strategy is not a strategy as such, but rather an integrated set of policy measures within the UK’s social inclusion policies” (European Commission DG JUST 2012d).

Germany, despite recognizing German Sinti and Roma as a national minority in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and stating that “[t]he Federal Government

⁴⁸ As mentioned in the previous section, it was largely France’s expulsion of Romanian Roma citizens in 2008-2010 that triggered a heated debate at the European level, see (Reding 2010), and which in turn resulted in the EU Roma strategy.

is conscious of its particular responsibility in the light of Germany's history, and pledges to observe the prohibition on the discrimination of ethnic minorities and to comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights established under Community law and the European Convention on Human Rights. As part of its broadly conceived policy on minorities, German efforts to promote integration take into account the interest of Roma communities" (Federal Ministry of the Interior of the German government 2011, 5), adopted the same approach: "Germany's National Roma Integration Strategy is not a strategy as such, but rather an integrated set of policy measures within Germany's social inclusion policies" (European Commission DG JUST 2012c).

The same can be said for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands: all of them submitted programmatic documents to the European Commission in response to Communication 173 of 2011, but none of these countries have submitted "strategies as such". Conversely, Italy (even though with a few months delay) and Spain did—the only two countries of Western Europe to do so other than Portugal.

Lastly, regarding comparability, the fact of being based in Spain and of being Italian greatly helped in terms of gaining accessibility to policies, legislation, white papers and debates in their original language, as well as making it possible to conduct in-depth interviews with policy-makers and other stakeholders.

As regards to variation, despite the abovementioned similarities, Italy and Spain represent two radically different cases in dealing with Roma, with very different outputs in terms of majority-minority relations and of track record on Roma integration.

Spain has, in many respects, become the model of reference for the Roma national integration strategies that the European Commission in 2011 requested each country to develop, and is generally presented as the exception 'positive example' in Western Europe by reports in Brussels: "In Old Member States, Roma integration policies are poorly developed with the exception of Spain" (European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs 2015a, Policy Dep:17). Even though some scholars have recently raised objections regarding the actual effectiveness and the "alleged success" of Spain's Gitano policies of the past quarter of a

century (Bereményi and Mirga 2012; Flores 2015; Ovalle and Mirga 2014)⁴⁹, the empirical data collected from evaluation reports such as the Decade Watch Survey (measuring the impact of government policies), the CAHROM Roma Thematic Reports, the Evaluation of European Social Fund Support for Enhancing Access to the Labor Market and the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities, and the EP study on Measures to Promote the Situation of Roma EU Citizens in the EU, all present Spain as the most efficient country in terms of absorbing and allocating funding towards Roma social inclusion measures⁵⁰ (Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) 2014; European Commission DG EMPL 2011; European Parliament 2011; Müller and Szigo 2009).

Italy, on the contrary, despite its relatively small Roma population, has emerged in recent studies on public opinion as being the most hostile Western country, by a significant gap, towards the Roma (with 85% of Italians having unfavorable opinions of the Roma who live in Italy) (Stokes 2015, 30). Between 2008 and 2009 the Italian government passed a renewed a declaration of a state of “Nomad emergency” in 5 regions (Lazio, Lombardy, Campania, Piedmont and Veneto) justified by “[g]iven the extremely critical situation due to the presence of numerous irregular non-EU citizens and nomads who have settled permanently in urban areas” (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2008, 1; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2009; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2010). While, by using law 225/1992 in relation to the settlement of so-called “nomad” communities the Italian State conferred special powers on delegated commissioners to “solve the emergency” (including by derogating from ordinary laws), such measures did not constitute a sharp break from the Roma-targeted measures that had been developed since the mid-80s, and which have given rise to a peculiar state of affairs dubbed as “Campland” by the European Roma Rights Centre (European Roma Rights Center 2000). As a

⁴⁹ The EMIGRA report (Bereményi & Mirga, 2012) presents some legitimate concerns regarding the Roma integration plan in Catalonia, but it did not expand its scope to the entire country. The criticisms to the Spanish model will be addressed when analyzing the policies in the following chapters.

⁵⁰ While funding absorption is not per se an indicator of good inclusion measures, during the 2010 2nd European Summit on Roma Inclusion held in Córdoba (Spain), Viviane Reding, the EU Commission Vice President and Justice Commissioner stated that “the Spanish model shows how to use EU funding most effectively and how to use it to promote social cohesion and combat poverty in the Roma communities”. Along similar lines, in the concluding session of the 2011 High Level Event on the Structural Funds Contribution to Roma Integration in Bratislava, Nicholas Martyn, a Deputy Director General of the DG for Regional Policy claimed that “Spain has already developed good solutions, and the examples are worth following”. Similar statements were made by the representatives of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, the Roma Education Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, among others.

result, Italy is currently the only Western European country engaged in the ROMACT program, a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission that aims to improve the responsiveness and accountability of local authorities towards marginalized Roma communities⁵¹.

These differences should not discourage comparison, quite on the contrary. As Bettin Lattes has noted, “[c]ontemporary Europe is an ideal terrain to apply the comparative method, since, although it has been built from a network of deep historical differences, it is now a transnational space socially and politically interconnected, which presents itself as a case of macro-context which tends to unity and interaction, while being interwoven by diversity” (Bettin Lattes 2011, 108).

What follows is a brief overview of Roma-target policies in Italy and in Spain in the second half of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century.

2.3.1 Italy’s Inclusive Exclusion⁵²: a brief history

Romani minorities have been present in Italy since the 14th century (Senato della Repubblica. Commissione straordinaria per la tutela e la promozione dei diritti umani 2012), but a history of anti-Roma policies and practices coupled with the recent years’ high visibility and media coverage of Romani groups and individuals (still often referred to as ‘nomads’) constructed almost exclusively in terms of poverty, criminality and securitization, have generated a reality in which the Roma are still the least included and accepted minority in the country, despite the fact that they constitute only between 0,25%-0,3% of Italy’s current population, with estimates that

⁵¹ The other countries that are engaged in the project are CEE countries with the highest percentages of Roma population and the strongest discriminatory perceptions: Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Check Republic. The rationale for including Italy was, fundamentally, that policies enacted so far have not given positive results, and that anti-gypsism and racist attitudes are amongst the strongest in Europe, and on the rise. Information about the ROMACT programme is available at www.coe-romact.org

⁵² The term ‘inclusive exclusion’ is borrowed from an article by Riccardo Armillei in which the author provides a sobering analysis of the contradictions embedded in the production of Roma as “nomads” (Armillei 2014).

range from 130.00 to 180.000. (European Commission DG JUST 2012e; Burgio 1999; Picker and Roccheggiani 2013; Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali 2012)⁵³.

Since Italy's Risorgimento and unification as a nation-state in 1861, laws addressing 'vagabonds' and 'socially dangerous groups' were put into place, enlarging the category of 'deviant citizen' to include 'idlers and vagrants' (Picker and Roccheggiani 2013, 192). In the 1920s, under fascism, Italy passed a number of *circolari*⁵⁴ giving clear instructions to refuse entry into Italian territory to Roma—always referred to as 'zingari', an exonym which carries a markedly stigmatized, negative stereotype in Italian language—“even if they have documents and means” (Prefettura della Venezia Tridentina 1926) and to expel them from the kingdom, with the declared aim to “[c]leanse the country from the presence of *zingari*, of which it is superfluous to point out the danger with regard to security and public hygiene, due to their way of life” (Corbelletto 2008, 74). Such practices were part of a widespread approach, in Italy as well as in the rest of Europe, designed to identify and control Roma minorities, following the anthropometric and criminological criteria popularized by Cesare Lombroso in the late 19th century, according to whom deviance and criminality were inherited and “criminal types” such as the Roma⁵⁵ could be identified by physical features and behavior (Stewart 2012, 15).

Following and overlapping with the policy of expulsion of foreign Roma, the internment of Italian citizens of Roma ethnicity in Italy officially started on the 11th September 1940, when Chief of Police Arturo Bocchini sent out a *circolare* to prefects which called for the immediate mop-up (“rastrellamenti”) and concentration of all the Roma present in the country (Corbelletto 2008, 79). Judging from the Ministry of Interiors' documentation it seems however that the order was only partially implemented due to the opposition of many municipalities to welcome Roma families on their territory (even if in segregated camps). The lack of a specific ministerial

⁵³ The numbers cited by UNAR in the Italian National Strategy for Roma Integration are an estimate of approximately 170,000; this estimate will be looked at in detail and problematized in chapter 4.

⁵⁴ Texts emanating from a ministry with the aim of giving an interpretation of a regulation in order to apply it consistently; it carries more weight than simple administrative acts.

⁵⁵ Eugenetic theories defining the 'Gypsy-nomad' as asocial, deviant and dangerous gained further authority and reach with the establishment, in 1912, of the first academic chair of Social Eugenetics at the University of Genoa (which shifted the racialized discourse from a bio-physical to a bio-psychological one, emphasizing way of life and nomadism over descent) and later with publications such as *La difesa della razza*, a fascist journal on racial theories published between 1938 and 1943. Despite eugenetics and Lombroso's theories of atavism being disavowed and declared unfunded in the aftermath of World War II, many of the stereotypes and myths tied to such theories persisted (and persist to date) in majority popular culture, legends and widespread prejudice.

planning resulted in that the whole process was operated and handled as an emergency, or a series of emergencies, with some concentration camps for both Italian and foreign Roma being set up in Boiano (Molise), Agnone (Molise) and Tossicia (Abruzzo), as well and with the paradoxical situation that male Italian Roma of military age were still being drafted to serve in the army, while their families were usually detained in internment camps, officially because of the “antinational” nature ascribed to all Roma (Corbelletto 2008, 79–81; Bravi and Bassoli 2013, 67–83). After the end of World War II, differently from Jewish survivors, no restitution, reparation, nor indemnification for Roma survivors were put in place (neither in Italy nor elsewhere).

In 1965 the Italian Ministry of Education signed an operational agreement with the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Padua and with the NGO Opera Nomadi, a Church-inspired pro-Roma organization founded in 1963 by non-Roma activists⁵⁶, which resulted in the creation of special Roma classes (called “Lacio Drom”). The choice of putting Roma kids in special classes was motivated by the fact that it was the first approach to school for a population that had never attended school before, and that the special classes were flexible in terms of designing the school calendar to meet the needs of nomadic life. That same year the journal ‘*Lacio Drom. Rivista bimestrale di studi zingari*’ was established, directed by Mirella Karpati of the Pedagogy Institute of Padua University in cooperation with Opera Nomadi and published from 1965 to 1999 by the publisher Centro Studi Zingari (also founded by Karpati). Beyond being the main forum for “expert theories” on Roma in Italy at the time, it also served as a consultancy/think tank to inform policy-makers on this topic (Picker and Roccheggiani 2013). It should be noted that term ‘zingari’ included very diverse Romani groups each with their own specificities and culture, and not all of them had the same traditional occupations or the same relationship to the majoritarian

⁵⁶ The charity Opera Nomadi was founded initially in Bolzano-Bozen as a regional association; it became a national association in 1965 and then “Ente morale” [charitable trust] by Decree no.347 of 26 March 1970. The description of the association on its official webpage reads: “The Association has always promoted interventions in favor of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers population; it is set up as nonpartisan, nondenominational association that welcomes volunteers engaged in social promotion, by acting as mediator between the public authorities and groups of *zingari*, for the protection of their rights and to favor specific interventions to remedy their disadvantage” (Opera Nomadi 2016).

In 2005 Opera Nomadi signed a Memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education for a three-year programme to combat school drop-outs of Roma youth, in 2007 it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional School Office of the Veneto Region to foster Roma integration in schools, and in 2008 it participated to the collection of the ethnic census of Roma and Sinti minorities that took place in the City of Rome. Massimo Converso, President of the association, is currently being tried for aggravated fraud in public supply, embezzlement, and sexual assault. Kasim Cizmic, the association vice-president, is instead accused of having orchestrated the so-called ‘Nomad emergencies’ to favor specific service providers operating in the Roma camps (Errante and Menafra 2016).

local communities⁵⁷. The journal provided a description of Roma communities and individuals that oscillated between the dangerousness of so-called *zingari* and their re-educability and potential for integration through ‘cultural evolution’. Psychologist Karpati, the director of the journal, summed up in a 1969 article the alleged nine main characteristics of the ‘zingari’ which were identified as: internal and external instability; the intensity with which they live in the present; exaggerated individualism; lack of discipline; impulsive and violent reactivity; lack of moderation; emotional suggestibility; thriftless and interest for satisfying immediate needs (Picker and Roccheggiani 2013, 193–95). The core rationale behind these studies was that the ‘a-sociality’ which was seen by such ‘Roma experts’ as a core characteristic of Roma minorities could be explained mainly by nomadism, and that emancipation through re-education should be promoted by the government—hence Opera Nomadi’s staunch support to the creation of ‘equipped halting sites’ through which they could gradually target and ‘reform’ the ‘cultural obstacle’ of nomadism (Picker and Roccheggiani 2013, 193; Nando Sigona 2005).

The first “temporary camps” were therefore built in the late sixties in some northern cities under the impulse of this approach, and were later crystallized in social policies that saw the camps as the natural habitat of the so-called ‘zingari’. At this time the first migration of Roma from Yugoslavia took place, of approximately 40,000 people over the two decades (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a), leading to a twofold action: “on the one hand, new camps were planned and equipped, on the other the presence of Roma living in slums was tolerated through the regulation of the same areas where they were settled” (Manzoni 2016, 5). In Turin, for example, four ‘nomad’ camps were built in the seventies, two of which for Italian citizens (mainly Sinti), and two for Roma from the Balkans (Regione Piemonte 1993).

The image of the Roma culture as proposed by the scholars and volunteers who worked in the nomad camps in the 1960s and 1970s is one characterized by backwardness, underdevelopment, and the inability to adapt to the modern urban and industrial society: “Because of his culture, the *zingaro* is running behind [“è in ritardo”], he is a child who has to be helped to grow, to make up for his gap” (Azzolini 1971, 17). Under this approach, the view that social workers and psychologists held of Roma have much in common with the cultural anthropology of the 19th

⁵⁷ For an overview of the differences between the various Roma groups in Italy – Sinti, Rom Abruzzesi, Rom Molisani, Rom Cilentani, Rom Kalderasha, Rom Harvati, Rom Xoroxané, Rom Dasikané, Rom Kaulja, Rom Rudara, etc. – see (Vitale 2010).

century that focused on Indigenous People societies as ethnographic subjects: bearers of an archaic culture defeated by history, such minorities were seen as in need of help to ‘modernize’, ‘stabilize’, ‘become social’ and ‘fit in society’, while remaining an exotic object of cultural studies (Bonetti, Simoni and Vitale 2010; Bontempelli 2009; Sigona 2002).

In the 1970s and 1980s a specifically cultural connotation was also attached in legislative documents to the alleged ‘nomadism’ of the Sinti and Roma groups present on the Italian territory, and all government interventions aimed at the Roma started to revolve around the existence of the “nomad camp” (Piasere 2009; Picker and Roccheggiani 2013; Armillei 2014). In October 1973 the Italian Ministry of Interior issued a *circolare* (M.I.A.CEL n.17, 11 October 1973) titled “*The problem of nomads*” addressed to mayors. The *circolare* explicitly required local authorities to abolish the so-called “no parking areas” (*area divieto di sosta*) which some municipalities had adopted in the late sixties to prevent Roma and Sinti groups from settling in the parks and open space areas in the city suburbs, and it invited mayors to facilitate the inclusion of ‘nomad families’ in the regular population registry as well as to facilitate the access to health services and to work licenses (Scala 2006). It is noteworthy that informal settlements by Roma families were by no means an exceptional phenomenon in Italy in the sixties; they were rather part of a more general economic migration trend from rural areas to urban ones. In the aftermath of WWII, Italy’s main cities experienced an unplanned growth and diverse forms of informal housing development. In the city of Rome, for instance, approximately one third of the surfaces that are currently built were informally occupied and/or constructed without building permissions or links to the urban infrastructure: “This phenomenon has a long history and very diverse forms, from self-built provisional accommodation and ethnic Roma settlements to major speculative ventures” (Tulumello et al. 2013, 1). The Roma settlements were however generally more visible, more disconnected from the mainstream, less politicized and less organized than the non-Roma ones, and therefore more easily to target for the authorities. In July 1982 a second *circolare* (M.I.A.CEL n.13, 1 September 1982, “Problema dei nomadi”), in 1985 a third one (M.I.A.CEL n.4, 5 July 1985, “Problema dei nomadi”) and in 1988 a fourth one (M.I.A.CEL n.9, 8 April 1988, “Problema dei nomadi”), all recalling the one from 1973, singled out the temporary nature ascribed to the expected stay of “nomads” in such areas. They did so by making explicit that, rather than evicting them, what mayors needed to do was to provide “an adequate response to the basic needs of the nomadic populations, *which must be respectful of the culture and traditional*

way of life of the various ethnic groups that comprise the nomadic groups, which are extremely diverse” (Ministero dell’Interno 1985). The declared goal of such order was to ensure “a real equality of those belonging to these groups [Roma and Sinti]—which incidentally, are mainly Italian citizens—and the rest of the citizenry” (Scala 2006). All *circolari*, however, just as the one from 1973, were titled *The problem of nomads*. The framing of the Roma minority is thus one that is intrinsically, and indiscriminately, nomadic and problematic (even if made up of mostly Italian citizens and even if culturally heterogeneous). Based on the premise that all Romani minorities, however diverse, are nomadic, the approach of all *circolari* was one of an envisioned cultural policy that clearly identified the Roma as one ethno-cultural minority which needed protection in the specific form of removing obstacles to the promotion of their identity and lifestyle, i.e. nomadism. On this premise, policies for Roma groups in Italy continued to consolidate in the 1980s around the two main concepts of (re-)education and of nomad camps, mainly through regional laws (Nando Sigona 2002), even though according to Clough Marinaro “[b]y the end of Italy’s economic and urban boom of the 1950s and 1960s it was no longer logistically and economically viable for many Roma to continue travelling” (Clough Marinaro 2009, 273). In 1982 a new agreement (after the one of 1965-1968) between the Ministry of Education and Opera Nomadi established that Roma children of compulsory school age were to attend normal Italian classes, but that the presence of an additional teacher for every six Roma students should be provided by the school, and these teachers would function as mediators between school and families (Ongini 2010; Vitale 2010, 7). In 1986 the *circolare* n.207 (1 July 1986) was approved on the schooling of ‘zingari’ and nomad pupils in kindergarden, in elementary school and in middle school (“Scolarizzazione degli alunni zingari e nomadi nella scuola materna, elementare e secondaria di primo grado”). This document identified three main obstacles to the schooling of Roma children: problems of principle; organizational problems; and functional aspects. The problems of principle can be resumed in the fact that, while basic education is compulsory, schools should show “maximum respect for the cultural identity of the persons concerned” (Ministero dell’Interno 1986, 1), thus a high degree of flexibility (on attendance and expected outcomes) was encouraged in the organizational aspects, where the collaboration of mediators such as volunteer associations or cultural entities was encouraged to ‘assist’ Roma pupils. In ‘functional’ terms, the previous agreement of 1982 according to which the presence of Roma pupils had to be automatically accompanied by support teachers was

abandoned, replaced by an assessment of whether the Roma pupil in question was a ‘bearer of socio-cultural handicaps’ (even though such condition is not elaborated upon):

“A first, important issue concerns the allocation of support teachers. Because this figure cannot be automatically regarded as necessary to the pursued objectives, the maintenance of the already assigned support teachers will only be arranged in cases where pupils are effectively bearers of socio-cultural handicaps.” (Ministero dell’Interno 1986, 3)

In addition to the above-mentioned directives and *circolari*, between 1985 and 2015 a number of regional laws in 11 regions (and in the autonomous province of Trento) were passed in order to “protect and promote Romani culture and identity.” Not all of them use the same wording: some of the provisions use the term “popolazione zingara” or “zingari” (Trento’s provincial law no. 15/1985, before the new one currently in force, Piedmont’s regional law 25/02/1993), others refer to “nomad minorities” (Sardegna regional law no. 9/1988, Emilia Romagna regional law no. 47/1988, Umbria regional law no. 32/1990), and Liguria’s regional law no. 21/1992 spoke of “the culture and identity of *zingari* and nomad minorities”, while Lombardia’s regional law no. 77/1989 referred to “populations belonging to ethnicities that have traditionally been nomadic or semi-nomadic.” Some legislation address “i Rom” (Lazio regional law no. 82/1985, and Friuli Venezia Giulia’s regional law n. 11/1988), and Veneto Region’s law no. 54/1989, before it was abrogated in March 2016, as well as Tuscany’s law no. 2/2000 and Emilia-Romagna’s no.22/2015 speak of “Roma and Sinti”, which is currently considered to be the appropriate and politically correct wording. In all these cases the target population is, under different denominations, clearly defined in ethno-cultural terms.

While the declared intent of such an approach might have been one of genuinely preserving ‘nomadic cultures’ through the creation of transit areas/special campsites (which, however, have hosted mostly settled groups from the very beginning), this does not cease from considering nomadism a deviant and asocial behavior⁵⁸. The fact that nomadism constitutes a ‘deviant lifestyle’ comes across through the fact that the vast majority of regional laws contain, alongside a clause in favor of “protection and promotion of nomadism” (art. 1 of most R.L.s), the provision

⁵⁸ The normalization of Italy’s camp policy for Roma minorities has been referred to as a clear case of institutional segregation and exclusion by the European Roma Rights Centre, which has in the past referred to Italy as “Campland” in their reports (Armillei 2014; European Roma Rights Centre 2010).

that—if and when possible—nomads should be “helped” to “become sedentary”⁵⁹. Piasere and Hepworth have noted how the progressive narrowing of the spaces in which Roma were allowed to camp pushed them increasingly farther to the margins (both geographically and symbolically), creating a self-reinforcing material segregation as the result of the contradictory policies of ‘sedentarization’/assimilation and those aimed to ‘protect’ their nomadism (Piasere 2009; Hepworth 2012):

“The construction of official nomad camps followed the progressive limiting of spaces where gypsies could camp. It is here that this policy is distinguished from the anti-nomadic bans described above. While these bans aimed to assimilate Roma by forcing them into housing and making them productive, the Italian laws aimed to isolate them from the majority society, with hygienic and sanitary reasons used to justify this exclusion” (Hepworth 2012, 444).

It should be kept in mind that the segregation of Roma groups into “nomad camps” did not occur in a void, but rather developed alongside an immigration trend (mainly from Albania and the Balkan states in the 1990s, later from Romania and Bulgaria in the 2000s) that has seen Central and Eastern European citizens move to Italy over the past few decades:

“Along the Via Casilina, one encounters a broad spectrum of self-produced city: At first, it was the migrants from the remote regions of Italy who moved into the city and began to build their own houses without construction permits. Over time, these houses were enlarged and supplemented by major housing construction projects. Other groups arriving since the 1990s have included refugees from the wars in Yugoslavia; job seekers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Morocco; Roma from Rumania; and merchants from China.” (Tulumello et al. 2013, 1)

The conflation of Roma minorities with nomadism, if it had little grounding in empirical data in the 70s and 80s, became even more specious with the arrival of asylum seekers fleeing the Balkan wars in the 90s and with the migration of Romanian citizens, some of which of Roma ethnicity, in the 2000s. Nomadism had been forbidden in most Central and Eastern European countries in an attempt to turn Romani citizens into socialist workers since the fifties, when

⁵⁹ One outlier is the region of Marche, whose law n. 3/1994 is titled “Interventions in favor of emigrants, immigrants, refugees, stateless persons, nomads and their families” which evolved from a previous law aimed only at Italian returnees of the Marche region and to economic migrants, and which was modified mainly in order to accommodate persons fleeing former Yugoslavia and applying for refugee status. The law was however devised as a response to the humanitarian crises of asylum seekers arriving from the post-war Balkans, and was abrogated three years later (1997).

“Roma were ‘assisted’ to enter factories and apartments to render them ‘productive’” (Hepworth 2012, 434).

The idea that Roma are inherently nomadic has however become such an ingrained myth in Italian society that most of the policies and practices directed at Roma minorities have been, and to a large extent still are, shaped accordingly, even though the scope and reach of such measures have changed over the years: regardless of actual cultural norms and practices, the main issue regarding the diversity management of the Roma minority in Italy in the second half of the XX century can essentially be resumed to the fact that “it escapes the ‘territorialist’ logic that prevails in the management of so-called minorities” (Vitale 2010, 3). The ‘nomad’ paradigm represents, first and foremost, a way to categorize the Roma in opposition to the majority:

“Nomads and nomadism are actually 18th century terms, of a positivist nature. Not so much conceived as a way of describing a lifestyle, as they may seem to do, but to identify the Roma as one of the ‘inferior races’, unable to stay still, a vagabond by nature: to identify them, according to the beliefs of the time, from the superior race of the non-gypsy ‘lover of homeland’, at home and subject to the morals of consumerism and industrialized production.” (Colacicchi 1996, 35)

Within the nomadism paradigm the most important development in Roma-targeted policies of the past decades has been the gradual shift in Italy that saw a change in lexicon in the *circolari* and the *decreti* from dealing with ‘the problem of nomads’ through an at least alleged cultural protection approach (Ministero dell’Interno 1985) to one based on ‘responsibility and control’ (Ministero dell’Interno 1989), to ‘vigilance and control’ (Ministero dell’Interno 1991) and to, more recently, an ‘emergency’ approach (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2008; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2009; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2010). The 2012 National Roma Integration Strategy was presented as a new approach that represented a radical break with the legacy of addressing Roma as a ‘problem of nomads’, but, as is analyzed in chapters 4, such strategy does not entirely do away with the previous categorizations, and offers more of a rebranding than a truly innovative understanding of who the Roma are, and how to promote integration.

2.3.2 Spain's Exclusionary Inclusion: a brief history

The first traces of Romani presence in Spain date back to the 14th century, documented by a letter of insurance (*carta de seguro*) afforded in 1425 by Alfonso V to groups of people either called or calling themselves Egyptians (Martín 2017, 16). While during the first decades of their presence in the peninsula Romani were generally associated to pilgrims and not portrayed in a negative light, Spain rapidly caught up with the laws in vigor in other European countries⁶⁰, and in 1499 passed a royal decree (*Real Pragmática*) according to which “the Egyptians that wonder our kingdom and lands with their families” had two months time to settle and find a stable job (“*oficios conocidos*”), under penalty of expulsion or death in case of non compliance (Vega Cortés 1997). Such penalty was converted to six years of prison in 1539, and was followed over the next three centuries by more than 280 decrees against the Roma, which has brought Leo Charnon-Deutsch to speak about a Spanish “obsession” (Charnon-Deutsch 2004).

The persecutions of the Roma that started in the 16th century are however not a unique case, and are historically situated among the Spanish persecutions that also targeted Jews (with the 1492 edict of expulsion) and the final period of the Reconquista, followed by the edicts outlawing Islam, the forced conversion of Muslims and the decrees on the expulsion of the Moriscos.

The 30th of July 1749 is a significant date marking the event, which is regarded as the most dramatic, suffered by the Romani population in Spain, the so-called “*Gran Redada*”. This meant the mop-up and general imprisonment of all Roma, with the explicit aim of internment in labor camps and extermination, and was definitively reversed only in 1763 (Gómez Alfaro 1993).

In 1783 a decree by Carlos III afforded Romani persons Spanish citizenship, removing the previous conditions related to being able to prove residency in specific towns. Such ‘privileges’ or citizenship was however dependent upon assimilation, namely the three conditions of giving up traditional dressing, nomadic lifestyle (even though estimates consider that by 1783 close to 90% of Roma in Spain were already sedentary) and not use the Caló language in public. The same decree declared that the term “*Gitano*” would be replaced by “*Castellano Nuevo*”, since “all

⁶⁰ Between 1450 and 1500 Roma were expelled, under penalty of death, from France, Switzerland, Germany, and by 1540 also from Great Britain and Belgium.

citizens are the same”⁶¹. It is also noteworthy that the law, which remained valid until 1878, expressly mentioned ‘Roma integration’ as a desired goal, with the sentence “Penalties will be imposed upon those who hinder the integration of the Roma” (“Se imponen penas a los que obstaculicen la integración de los gitanos”) (Vega Cortés 1997).

Charnon-Deutsch contends that the cultural representation of the Roma in Spain, and the stereotypes around the ‘gitano’ provide a useful grounding for the study of the evolution of Spanish nationalism. Her main argument is that the relationship between the Roma and Spanish identities should be analyzed through “the economic and productive forces that impinge on discursive practices that in turn participate in the construction of national identity” with a particular attention at the collapse of the Gitano identity and the Andalusian identity, which “by the twentieth century came to stand for Spanishness both outside and, to an extent, inside Spain’s cultural arena” (Charnon-Deutsch 2004).

Spanish culture has indeed a dual relation with the narrative of Orientalism, which is an integral part of European material civilization and “[e]xpresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” (Said 1978). As a constitutive component of its historical identity, such ‘otherness’ has been projected onto an imaginary Gitano that is described in the narrations, verses and plays of Spanish writers, from Cervantes to García Lorca. But it has also represented, from the 1700s onwards, and particularly after 1881—year in which the word ‘Flamenco’ appears symbolically naming a kind of show in a *Café cantante*—, when we assist to a proliferation of images about Roma in Spain and in Europe, an exoticized ‘other’ to its Northern European counterparts.

Ángel Vargas, an Andalusian Roma scholar, building on the historian Paul Hauben, put forward an interesting and provocative explanation for the apparent Spanish idiosyncrasy towards the Roma in the second half of the 17th century—that of passing in a very brief time from the mass incarceration of Roma because of their identity, to the popularization of the image of Gitanos in literature and as characters on stage of the biggest theatres of Cádiz, Sevilla and Madrid (Hauben

⁶¹ The decree reads “Debe dejarse de decir gitano, ya que todos los ciudadanos son iguales”. The word ‘igual’ in Spanish can refer to both equality and sameness. The translation is mine, and I choose the second meaning because it seems to better reflect the reasoning of the edict, but it is of course a personal choice.

1979). What Ángel Vargas suggests is that the attempted extermination of the Roma in Spain was, to a large extent, a product of an Enlightenment idea: the idea of ‘equalizing’ all citizens and doing away with minorities perceived as problematic. The “Gran Redada” objective eventually failed because the Roma found solidarity and received support among the mayors of the towns they resided in, some priests and members of the Catholic church (despite the Church having officially approved the Redada), but also from sections of the nobility and the new middle class. This pro-Roma solidarity among the nobility materialized by a number of non-Roma dressing as Gitanos, pretending to be Gitanos, composing poems in Caló: in short, Gitanos became the symbol of the old regimen, so certain part of the population performed such acts no so much to support the Roma minority, but rather as a political statement against Enlightenment and in defense of the old regimen (Ángel Vargas, forthcoming).

With the 1812 Constitution Spanish citizenship for Gitanos became automatic upon proof of having been born in Spain, and was no longer attached to requirements to assimilate and to be ‘productive’⁶². However in the 20th century, under the Franco dictatorship things worsened again for the Roma community, with the prohibition to speak Caló and with the regulation of the Civil Guard of 14 May 1943 specifically outlying the need to police and control Roma, which remained in force until 1978 (Congreso de los Diputatos 1978).

At the same time, Catholic ideology played a role in framing the presence of Spanish Roma as an object of charity, while widening and shifting the categories of those seen as deviant to other groups⁶³:

“The Franco era is characterized by a dichotomy in which, on the one hand, there is a total and intolerant cultural repression against minorities in general and against the Roma people in particular, but on the other hand the dominant classes, imbued with the Catholic concept of ‘charity’, initiate lukewarm and uncoordinated actions towards the Roma community to integrate it into the religious, cultural and social Gadge world view. Programs funded by the Central Administration, but specially designed by Catholic organizations, tried to ‘promote’ them, ‘integrate’ them or ‘teach’ them to be Gadge. To the dominant fundamentalist ideology, so convinced of its superiority, it was very difficult to abandon an assimilationist perspective.” (Mathioudaki 2010, 10)

⁶² According to the 1783 decree, unemployed or ‘unproductive’ Roma would have their children taken from them.

⁶³ The 1933 law of vagrants (“ley de vagos y maleantes”) was modified in 1954 to include homosexuality among behaviors considered ‘asocial’, and again in 1970 into the law on dangerousness and social rehabilitation (“ley sobre peligrosidad y rehabilitación social”) including prostitution, drug dealing, pornography and illegal immigration (Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros 1933; BOE 187 1970).

With the 1978 Constitution, all Spanish citizens were declared equal before the law (art.14) and it was established that it is “the responsibility of public authorities to promote conditions ensuring that freedom and equality of individuals and of the groups to which they belong are real and effective, to remove the obstacles preventing or hindering their full enjoyment, and to facilitate the participation of all citizens in political, economic, cultural and social life” (art.9.2).

In 1979 a Roma Inter-ministerial Commission was created with the goal of studying “the problems that affect the Roma community, as well as the coordination and administration related to the development of the Roma people, the respect of its culture and its full incorporation in, and coexistence with, society”, but it was not effective and ultimately did not translate into much more than a declaration of intentions (Ministerio de Cultura 1979, interview 19, Madrid, April 2015). In 1982 the association Secretariado General Gitano, a pro-Roma Catholic NGO that had been operating since the mid 1960s, was established as a legal entity⁶⁴, and in the same year the *White Book: Spanish Roma* was published by the Institute of Applied Sociology of Madrid. In 1983 the decree 1174/1983 established compensatory education measures for “persons who find themselves in unequal educational access and attainment because of their economic status, social status or residency”, which formalized and structured the already existing so-called bridge schools that were created in the seventies through an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Secretariado Gitano (Ministerio de Eudcación y Cientia 1983).

In 1985 the Lower Chamber of Parliament approved an early day motion on the creation of a National Roma Development Plan, which started being financed by the general State budget, and therefore implemented, in 1989 (Congreso de los Diputatos 1985). Meanwhile the Autonomous Region of Andalusia created the Secretary for Studies and Applications for the Roma Community (1985) and the Federation of Roma Associations of Andalusia (1988), and the Basque Country, Catalonia and a few other Autonomic Regions also started developing their own Roma Inclusion Plans. The National Roma Development Plan as established in 1985, as well as the regional plans, had the overarching goal of promoting the equality of opportunity of the Roma compared to the rest of the Spanish population in access to the public normalized services of education, health, housing, employment etc.

⁶⁴ In 2001 the name of the association changed to Fundación Secretariado General Gitano, and in 2004 to Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG).

In 1986 the Spanish Unión Romani was founded and Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, the first Spanish Roma politician, was elected to the European Parliament with the Socialist Workers' Party. Since the late 1980s/ early 1990s the number of Roma associations and their voice grew considerably, and in 1999 the Commission on Social and Labor Policies in the Lower House created a sub-committee on Roma issues. In terms of State policies, according to a Spanish policy-maker: "There was practically a consensus, even though not explicit, that the integration of Roma in Spain had to be carried out simultaneously by a mainstreaming approach—that is to say including Roma within the general measures of social welfare—and then provide specific measures to compensate for the disadvantages. Of course, this was then developed much more starting in 2000 when the European Social Funds made funding available via the 2000-2006 Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination, and later with the Roma Strategy, which consolidated this pattern of operation" (interview 19, Madrid, April 2015).

Over these years, as abovementioned, a number of Regional Plans for Roma development (desarrollo) or promotion (promoción) were put into place, and several State programmes aimed at social inclusion in general were revised to include Roma-specific policies or areas. One example is the 2000-2006 Anti-Discrimination Operational Programme (ADOP), in which specific targets and indicators were included regarding the Roma. This trend continued in the 2007-2013 ADOP, and the 2008-2010 National Inclusion Plan included specific measures for the Roma population such as the adoption of a specific, state-wide action plan and autonomous plans, as well as the development of the functions of the State Roma Council. The relationship between European goals, European funding and the Roma measures as they have developed since the 2000s is something that will be looked at more in detail in chapters 4 and 5, but represents an important feature of the Spanish policy approach.

Not all policies took a developmentalist approach, and initiatives have emerged, even if later compared to the socio-economic ones, regarding Roma culture and identity. The two most noteworthy are the State Roma Council and the Institute for Roma Culture. In 2005 the Lower House passed an early day motion which created the State Council of the Roma People (Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano, governed by decree 891/2005) to promote Roma culture, history, identity and language, and to serve a consultation and advisory collegiate inter-ministerial body designed for collaboration between the Roma associative movement and the General State

Administration (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales 2005). In 2007 the Institute for Roma culture was established, supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and in 2010 the Spanish government approved the Roma Action Plan 2010-2012 (Resolution of the Council of Ministers of April 9, 2010).

Despite a past of persecution and marginalization of Roma minorities, given these developments over the past decades, it is not surprising that Spain is nowadays often taken as a positive example on Roma integration. As has been analyzed elsewhere (Ovalle and Mirga 2014; Bereményi and Mirga 2012) Spain is often upheld as a model for ‘integrating the Roma’: in 2010, for instance, the US press openly praised the ‘Spanish Model’ through the publication of two controversial articles. Time Magazine’s piece *Spain's Tolerance of Gypsies: A model for Europe?* (Cala 2010) described the ‘Spanish exception’ by comparing it to other countries, at a time in which the French government was carrying out mass deportations of Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity and Italy was renewing its “Nomad state of emergency”. Soon afterwards, The New York Times’ article *In Spain, Gypsies Find Easier Path to Integration* (Daley and Minder 2010) reinforced the message that Spanish Gitanos’ living conditions should be ascribed to the successful implementation of specific policy measures for Gitanos at a national level.

Although recent studies are now beginning to reconsider the overall impact of the Spanish policies for Gitanos on the improvement of the living conditions of their target population (Vallvé 2009; Bereményi and Carrasco 2015) the good will and political commitment characterizing the Spanish governments during the last decades are usually still out of the question.

2.4 Methodology

As outlined in chapter 1, the aim of this research is to develop a sound comparative analysis of the identitarian frameworks adopted by the Italian and Spanish Roma integration policies and practices, as a way to make a more general contribution to understanding how the ways in which policy ‘problems’ are framed and constructed affect the measures taken towards bivalent collectivities that face multiple injustices. The construction of policy frames has been recognized

as playing a crucial role in decision making, particularly with regards to measures aimed at groups who have limited ‘voice’ and lobbying capacity (Verloo 2007; Surdu 2016). In order to understand the ways in which Roma integration has been constructed as a policy ‘problem’, the following sections therefore outline how I collected and analyzed the data.

The methodology adopted in this study is at the intersection of grounded theory and comparative policy analysis, with Bacchi’s critical frame analysis as a reference for assessing what kind of representation of the ‘problem’ of Roma integration is performed by policies and policymakers through her *What is the Problem Represented to Be* approach (WPR).

The core idea is to assess the ways in which Roma integration narratives have been built, how they came about, were formulated, and have been received and implemented in Italy and Spain.

As will be discussed in chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively, Roma face three broad categories of injustice. The first is cultural, and can be thought of as inequality of esteem: when some groups stigmatize, demean and monopolize honourable status to themselves. The risk of reification as Fraser sees it is that, as a reaction to cultural injustice, the current focus on identity politics might end up reifying social identities and promoting repressive communitarism.

While Fraser’s categories of injustice serve as a lens to broadly identify cultural, socio-economic and political injustices and their correspondent problems of reification, displacement, and misframing (Fraser 2005), the grounded theory component comes from the attempt to analyze the data inductively, rather than imposing pre-established categories on the data. Grounded theory as a method aims at conceptualizing the problem being researched by using empirical data –which in this case are the policies analyzed and the interviews conducted with policymakers– without starting out from a pre-established theory or causal mechanism (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This allows to ‘work back’ to the theory from the data, allowing for the emergence of non pre-established conceptual categories.

On the other hand, as David Lake and Patrick Morgan explain, a comparative approach enables us to “generalize about regions while predicting different patterns of behavior from their individual traits” (Lake and Morgan 1997, 9). In order to do so I will use a socio-constructivist approach (according to which neither identities nor identifications are ‘given’, but rather emerge, develop, and are created from difference/distance towards ‘the other’ or ‘others’) and analyze the

cases of Spain and Italy both through State and regional policies as well as through first-hand data gathered interviewing the policymakers in charge of said policies.

As outlined in section 2.3, the cases of Spain and Italy seem to be particularly compelling: both are what Esping-Andersen labeled as “Mediterranean welfare states” (Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen 1996); both have had Roma integration policies in place since the mid 1980s which have been significantly stepped up over the past few years, yet the outcomes, as well as mainstream society’s attitude, differ in very significant ways.

2.4.1 Triangulation between policy mapping, critical frame analysis and interpretative interviews

The collection and analysis of data has been carried out in different stages over the past 4 years, and the choice of mixed methods responds to the goals of the research questions: while a mapping of Roma integration policies, plans and legislation is crucial to situate the issue in demographic, geographic and political terms, the official documents and integration plans alone do not always reflect how the agenda was set, why the policies were developed following a certain criteria, or what events are responsible for certain changes in the policies. In short, while the policies provide vital information to understand what the ‘Roma integration problem’ is represented to be, the interviews with the policymakers help shed light on what assumptions underlie these representations of the problem.

The first step was therefore to compile a history mapping of policy developments in Italy and Spain, and to gather the contextual data of policy making. The step of retracing the policymaking process for this study—when and how Roma integration appeared on the political agenda, who contributed to the debate and what documents were produced— was greatly facilitated by a previous experience at the European Commission’s Directorate for Policy Coordination (DG REGIO) in 2012, at a time in which the National Roma Integration Strategies were being monitored and evaluated. Following a WPR approach, I then defined the sensitizing questions for document analysis, coding, and frame identification.

The following step, which took comparatively much more time and effort, was to trace the

policymakers who had contributed to the policies analyzed, interview them, and analyze the transcribed material. As explained below (pp. 85-86), the result is not an exact match of a policymaker for each single policy, because of a number of reasons, but I believe the material collected to be sufficient to provide a rich understanding of the general dynamics and mechanisms behind the formulation and development of Roma integration policies in both countries.

For the organizing and coding of both the policy documents and of the interviews material I used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software which allowed me to classify the material by arranging the data through categories and nodes that I created, systematizing and updating it as I linked the interviews to the policies.

While the amount of documents and interviews were not so vast as to make qualitative data analysis unmanageable without a software, Nvivo proved a useful tool to arrange information, to cross-compare and to examine relationships between and within the data.

2.4.2 Policy documents as data generators

While I made use of a wide variety of documents and background material—including parliamentary debates, white papers, policy reports, civil monitor evaluations, official letters and statements, internal notes, communications and meetings among the European Commission’s Roma task force—to gain a comprehensive understanding on Roma integration policies in the contexts of Italy and Spain, the documents that are explicitly taken into account and analyzed for the purpose of this research are of three main kinds: (a) the State Reports, the Opinions, the State Comments and the Resolutions pursuant to article 25, paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities over the 4 cycles that have so far taken place for both countries; (b) the regional laws explicitly targeting Roma groups that are currently in place in Italy (11) and in Spain (7); and (c) the two National Roma Integration Strategies submitted to the European Commission by both countries in 2012.

Because policies constitute (or give shape to) ‘problems’ (Bacchi 2009) and the aim of this research is that of understanding what kind of underlying assumptions have shaped the current Roma integration schemes in Italy and Spain, I applied a WPR approach to Roma integration policies, focusing on the following aspects:

- What’s the problem represented to be according to the Roma integration policies (State reports and Comments within the FCNM, National Roma Integration Strategies, regional laws)? What kind of demarcation is drawn between Roma and non-Roma, and between Roma and other minorities?
- What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the “Roma integration problem”? Is it a matter of cultural diversity or of poverty, or both, or neither?
- How has this representation of the ‘Roma integration problem’ come about?
- What is left unproblematic in the available representations of the Roma integration problem? Where are the ‘silences’? Can Roma integration be thought about differently?
- How and where is this representation of the ‘Roma integration issue’ produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?
- What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?

With these questions in mind, the way in which I analyzed these documents was through thematic and interpretative analysis. Both thematic analysis and interpretative analysis fall within the broad category of ‘qualitative data analysis’, and both were born (or at least ‘institutionalized’) in the second half on the 20th century, stemming from the concern of modern social sciences with providing ‘rigorous’ qualitative research (Ritchie and Spencer 2002; Miles, Huberman and Saldana 2014; Riessman 2008; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006).

The increased attention given by social scientists to the importance of language and discourse (as opposed to the positivist approach of quantitative methods and to the want for an ‘objective account’ typical of classic ethnography) resulted in an interpretative tradition, which nowadays comprises of a wide variety of approaches. There are always multiple entry points into data, and ways to analyze them, and most interpretative methods combine some degree of systematization, of classification, and of interpretation; there are however important differences between different methods. Thematic analysis approaches qualitative data analysis (QDA) as a classificatory

activity, “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 79). Within the interpretative tradition it is probably the most used and at the same time the most poorly ‘branded’ method, as it rarely gets explicitly acknowledged or explained. As a matter of fact, thematic analysis is often not considered to be a method in and of itself, but rather as a versatile ‘tool’ or ‘technique’ that can be applied to either discourse analysis, grounded theory, content analysis and so on (Ritchie and Spencer 2002; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006).

Once I identified and traced the policies which are relevant in both Italy and Spain for this study (those abovementioned and that explicitly provide or refer to a strategy aimed at “Roma”, “nomads”, Gitanos”, “zingari” or whichever nomenclature used by the administration to identify this ethnic minority), I used thematic analysis to identify, within the policy documents, the categories that emerged as being the ones that served as justification for designing policy as specifically targeted to the Roma. In the analysis of the data I paid particular attention to who is identified as a target group, and by whom (who does the identification), and whether the policy framing of ‘Roma integration’ responds to a logic of recognition, of redistribution, both, neither, or some other rationale.

One of the strengths of thematic analysis is that, being a generic procedure that can be transposed to many other types of qualitative analysis, it is adaptable to both deductive and inductive analytical strategies, and it can be used for either cross-case analysis but also for within case analysis. As Reissman put it, thematic analysis is a type of analysis that looks at what the data has to say (Reissman 2008). Thus, in order to ‘work’, it must tell us something relevant in relation to the research question(s), and it “represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 82). I started out from the two broad themes or cultural policies and socio-economic ones, but as I analyzed the documents a few more themes emerged, such as citizenship and legal status. In addition to the two main departing categories linked to cultural elements and socio-economic ones, two other broad categories (‘migration’ and the ‘exceptionality/peculiarity’ of the Roma) emerged from the Framework Convention reports.

Analyzing the national and regional plans and policies the main frames that seem to carry more weight, beyond the cultural and socio-economic dimensions, seem to be those of territoriality and of ethnic identity (not necessarily tied to culture, and again with migration playing an important role) tied to national belonging.

While thematic analysis has no ‘a priori’ preference for a positivist rather than a constructivist epistemology, interpretative analysis such as discourse or narrative analysis starts off from the premise that the ways we commonly understand the world are historically and culturally specific and relative, that knowledge is socially constructed, and that discourse plays a central role in constructing it (Gill 2000, 172–73). Discourse analysis tends to put more emphasis on the human activity of creation of meaning through interpretation, which translates into a concern with language itself (discourse seen as social action, something that is not necessarily present in thematic analysis). Gill called it a “careful, close reading that moves between text and context to examine the content, organization and functions of discourse. [...] a discourse analysis is an interpretation, warranted by detailed argument and attention to the material being studied” (Gill 2000, 188). Conducting a sound discourse analysis requires firstly finding the demarcations in a text, including looking for the ‘missing part’/ ‘missing voice’ of the discourse. This involves identifying the words, concepts and expressions that are the most telling of the text (not necessarily because they are recurrent, but rather because they structure the system of meaning of the discourse). Compared to thematic analysis, it does not require a ‘matrix’, and it usually involves more heterogeneous and less formalized coding units, which are often ‘relational’ types of codes. Most importantly, the analysis extends to various types of latent material, it is an intensive rather than extensive type of interpretative analysis, and it takes into account the ‘uncodable’ structures that pervade the text.

From an analytical procedure point of view, the key steps I followed are: constitution of the data body; pre-analysis; identification of ‘relevant’ elements (which relates back to the research design and Fraser’s framework); a first layer of systematic analysis coupled with the writing up of a descriptive account; and finally a second layer of analysis plus the writing up of a second (‘tighter’) version of the analysis. While in looking at the state reports, legislation and policy documents I identified main ‘themes’ or issues and organized them in a matrix, conducting and analyzing the interviews with the policy makers required a discourse analysis approach.

2.4.3 Interpretative interviews as data generators

As Hermanowicz puts it, semi-structured in depth interviews are among the most basic yet powerful methods to gain an intimate understanding of people and their social worlds

(Hermanowicz 2002). Because all forms of language get their meaning from the practices they are used to enact, language is “always ‘political’ in a deep sense” (Gee 2014, 241).

Taking this into account, good interpretative interviewing is by no means ‘solely’ limited by the ‘interview’ part of it. The preparatory phase and the interpretation phase are just as consequential: making sure the person interviewed is the ‘right’ respondent for the research questions, and that we convey clearly in which ‘role’ we will interview him or her (since language allows us to take on different socially significant identities), getting his/her consent, mapping out the possible directions in which the interview could go, and—once the data has been collected—what McCormack calls ‘constructing a meaningful story’ (McCormack 2000).

I conducted 32 semi-structured, in depth interviews in Italy and in Spain (15 in each country, 2 with desk officers at the European Commission and the Council of Europe), in order to understand what underlying concept of integration and of the Roma minority has driven these processes. The interviews were carried out between September 2014 and December 2015 mainly with policy-makers. Where possible, I interviewed those directly responsible for Roma integration policies: on a national level, the National Contact Points charged with the drafting and the implementation/follow up of the National Roma Integration Strategies are the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) in Italy, and the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality in Spain. At the regional level, I focused on those regions that have specific laws and policy integration plans for Roma. Where access to those responsible for the legislation and policy plans was not possible, I interviewed administrators and experts who were and are involved in consultations and/ or the drafting and implementation of the policies.

Not all regions were covered in the same way, for diverse reasons: on the one hand, given that Roma integration is a current and evolving topic high on the political agenda, a number of regional laws and plans have been developed and are currently still being discussed by the regional administrations, others have been approved over the past three years, and others yet have been repealed. Of the plans and legislation in place, the signatories do not always overlap with the person(s) who drafted or pushed for the measures politically, and given the high turnover and shifts in positions between and within ministries and public administration in general, tracing the ‘right’ respondents proved challenging in some cases. Since the beginning of this research there have been three changes in government in Italy, and while Spain has been comparatively more

stable, the changes in some local governments in 2015 (particularly in Madrid) have affected the implementation of existing policies and created new ones. Additionally, my fieldwork in Italy overlapped with the so-called Mafia Capitale investigation, a scandal that broke in December 2014 and involved tens of public officers who were profiting from the bids Roma camps and integration policies for Roma, asylum seekers and refugees.

In most cases, I contacted people via some already established contact. Access to policymakers in Italy was facilitated by being selected by the Council of Europe in 2015 as a national expert to assess the ROMACT programme⁶⁵, a European-sponsored project that aims at providing local authorities with capacity-building to develop and implement inclusive policies. In Spain, policymakers were generally easier to approach on the topic of Roma policies. In October 2014 I participated in the organization of a workshop for scholars, policymakers and NGOs that took place at the Parliament of Catalonia⁶⁶ and involved many of the key players in Roma integration policies in Spain. This initial contact facilitated the availability of some stakeholders to be interviewed.

Some interviews were also conducted with policymakers at the EU level, and a number of informal talks, emails and exchanges with desk officers that are members of the Roma Task Force at the European Commission, as well as officers from the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency and with members of international Romani networks such as the Alliance for the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture allowed me to get a wider picture of the transnational framework in which national Roma integration political dynamics operate within. A list of the interviews can be found as an appendix.

While the general structure of the interviews was similar in all cases, the topic guide slightly differed for Italy, Spain and the EU officials. I generally started the conversation from a specific piece of legislation that the respondent had actively contributed to, or was in the process of implementing.

⁶⁵ <http://coe-romact.org/>

⁶⁶ "Bridging the Gap between Policy Making and Social Research. Strengths and challenges of the policies for Gitanos/Roma in Spain" took place in Barcelona, on October 16-17, 2014, co-organized by Taller ACSA and the EMIGRA Research Group (Autonomous University of Barcelona) with the financial support of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies. For more information see: <http://www.unionromani.org/downloads/noti2014-10-09b.pdf>

The interviews inform my analysis in at least four ways. Firstly, they provide data in the form of insider information on the policy-making process. Secondly, they reveal discursive attitudes towards the decision-making process and Roma integration. Thirdly, they help me make sense of the data collected through other sources, disproving or reinforcing original expectations and relevant categories, and potentially adding new angles to the analysis. Finally, they give a sense of the weight of the different factors and of their interactions in the reality of day-to-day policy making. In other words, these elite interviews help me construct rich and detailed narratives of Roma integration in Spain and Italy and suggest ways of analyzing and inferring from these narratives.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide some basic context and background about how Roma integration has become a subject of political attention at the European level over the past decades, and how the present research has been carried out.

Therefore, section 2.2 traces the ‘Europeanization’ of Roma integration, and how geopolitical developments have shaped the formulation of national policies. I make a case of looking at Italy and Spain as two countries that are comparable under a number of criteria, while presenting striking differences in their approach to their Roma minorities.

I then provided a historical overview of Roma policies in the two countries, the specific Roma-targeted legislation as it has changed over the years, and explain how I have collected the policy and interview data and how I set out to analyze it in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

On who the target of policies are represented to be

3.1 Introduction

Mihai Surdu wrote in his recent *Those who count: expert practices of Roma classification* on Roma group construction that emergence of Roma as a category and ethnic group was a decision taken by (mostly non Roma) political actors, rather than a need felt at the Roma grassroots level (Surdu 2016). He also concludes, based on a thorough review of publications on or about Roma since the beginning of the 90s (when scholarship on this topic started rising sharply) that the most powerful and influential frames have been produced and disseminated by the policy world, rather than academia, even though “Roma identity is co-constructed by both academic and political actors” (Surdu 2016).

If the institutionalization of the ‘Roma’ category has taken shape mainly at the policy level, which has in turn shaped academic discourse, it is to Roma-specific policies then, and to their modalities of framing the issue, that we must turn in search for answers on what kind of (mis)recognitions have been offered, by whom, and why.

In order to locate the main frames through which Roma are distinguished as an object of (mis)recognition I used a hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis, meaning that I integrated data-driven codes with theory-driven ones to identify the main themes present in the most relevant official policy and administrative documents regarding Roma in Italy and Spain. The two broad departing categories were theory-driven: the ‘culturally different’ and the ‘economically disadvantaged’ lens of representing the Roma, which in turn are at the core of the dynamics of production of cultural injustice and economic injustice, identified in the theoretical framework as misrecognition and maldistribution following Fraser’s approach. Another category that clearly emerged is that of the Roma as foreign or (im)migrant. Also relevant as a recurrent theme is the alleged ‘exceptionalism’ or ‘peculiarity’ of the Roma minority, articulated by the Italian state in terms of deviancy, security and emergency discourse, and by the Spanish state more loosely, but still present in implicit ways, through a narrative representing a romanticized community not quite in tune with modernity, and seen as holding a natural inclination to

swindle⁶⁷ and to the arts (especially flamenco). The following is a thematic analysis of the Roma representation in the documents related to, and surrounding, the Spanish and Italian four cycles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1999-2016), the National Roma Integration Strategies (2012) and regional legislation on Roma integration (1985-2016). While a detailed discourse analysis of the documents, comprising of over 1,000 pages, would not be feasible (nor do I believe it is necessary), I hope—by highlighting the states’ view on “who” should be protected—to provide an understanding of how the construction of the Roma as an ethnic and political category has developed differently in the two countries, thus providing different sets of ‘solutions’ to the perceived ‘problem’.

3.2 Roma recognition in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is a multilateral treaty of the Council of Europe that came into effect in 1998 as a result of increased concern about the protection of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, particularly “with the collapse of European communist regimes, extreme nationalism and conflicts in certain parts of Europe” (Council of Europe 2016b). It is a binding instrument under international law (even though the flexibility allowed by expressions such as ‘as far as possible’ and the lack of sanctioning consequences in cases of violation makes its effectiveness and implementation highly dependent upon the political will of the state parties) and it has a monitoring procedure through which reports on the situation of minorities are regularly issued by the signatory states and assessed by an Advisory Committee made up of independent experts⁶⁸ which advises the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The methodology of the preparation of the periodic country reports is based on the rules of procedure⁶⁹. The basic idea is that every five years each of the signatory states submits a State Report on the situation of the national minorities in their country. The State Report is prepared by the respective government in consultation with relevant minority

⁶⁷ In 2015 the Segretariado Gitano, a pro-Roma organization, raised the issue of the newly released edition of the Royal Spanish Academy’s dictionary still featuring ‘swindler’ as one of the definitions for ‘Gitano/a’.

⁶⁸ The composition of the Advisory Committee can be consulted here: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/current-composition>

⁶⁹ See <http://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/rules-of-procedure>, point 34 and below.

organizations, sent to the FCNM Advisory Committee and published (alternative reports on the implementation of the Framework can also be submitted, and often are, by different NGOs).

In a second stage the Advisory Committee on the Framework evaluates the reports and the measures taken by the governments, and requests additional information. As a part of that, a delegation of the Advisory Committee visits the country to meet with officials, ombudsmen, and human rights NGOs. Upon return from the country visit an opinion is adopted by the Advisory Committee, which is made public and transmitted to the respective government. The government can, in a third stage, comment on the opinion. Based on these reports the Committee of Ministers of the CoE adopts a resolution and formulates recommendations to the state party (i.e. the government). The recommendation is also published and there is a monitoring follow up phase.

In a recent thematic commentary on the scope of application of the FCNM, the Council of Europe stressed the fact that “[t]he Framework Convention addresses society as a whole and not just individuals or specific groups. Rather than asking “who” should be protected [by the Framework Convention], it asks “what” is required to manage diversity most effectively through the protection of minority rights.” (The Council of Europe 2016, 3). The state reports, opinions, comments and resolutions remain however, so far, largely focused on, and organized by, “who” should be protected—which minorities and groups are eligible for ad hoc measures, and according to which rationale.

Italy and Spain are both party signatories to the FCNM, which having come into effect in 1998 is now in the final phase of its 4th cycle. As mentioned in chapter 2, neither Italy nor Spain officially recognize Roma as a minority in their respective national legislation, but they do systematically include the Roma in their FCNM Reports to the Council of Europe, which amounts to a sort of informal recognition, or misrecognition (as status of subordination and/ or acknowledgment of discrimination). It is therefore of interest to see how the two countries have framed the Roma discourse in their FCNM reports, and how, if and when these frames have evolved over the past 15 years, as well as how the issue of ‘formal’ invisibility in terms of legal recognition copes with ‘informal’ (yet institutionally sanctioned) ad hoc measures.

The following table represents the timeline of the FCNM cycles for Italy and Spain:

Table 1

Cycle	State Report	Opinion	Comments	Resolution
1st Italy	3 May 1999	14 Sep 2001	31 Jan 2002	3 Jul 2002
1st Spain	19 Dec 2000	27 Nov 2003	10 Jun 2004	30 Sep 2004
2nd Italy	14 May 2004	24 Feb 2005	4 Oct 2005	14 Jun 2006
2nd Spain	10 Apr 2006	22 Feb 2007	11 Dec 2007	2 Apr 2008
3rd Italy	21 Dec 2009	15 Oct 2010	20 May 2011	4 Jul 2012
3rd Spain	23 Aug 2010	22 Mar 2012	13 Nov 2012	10 Jul 2013
4th Italy	12 Mar 2014	19 Nov 2015	12 Jul 2016	
4th Spain	4 Mar 2014	3 Dec 2014	12 Jun 2015	6 Jul 2016

3.2.1 First cycle

Italy

Starting from the first cycle of the country-specific monitoring of the FCNM, it becomes clear that Italy and Spain chose to give a different meaning to the term “national minorities”.

In its first report, the Italian state associated “national minorities” only—and exclusively—with linguistic minorities: “For historical reasons Italy has a multilingual context, with different populations which have been settled in its territory for centuries; it includes communities whose languages are German, Albanian, Greek, Slovenian and Croat, Franco-Provençal, French, Occitan, Ladin, Sardinian and Friulan” (Italian Government 1999a, 3) and recalled article 6 of the Italian Constitution, which states that “[T]he Republic shall safeguard linguistic minorities by means of special provisions”. Indeed, in accordance with this principle, a few months after submitting the first report Italy passed a law (482/1999) for the protection of the so-called ‘Historic Linguistic Minorities’ that aimed at safeguarding “the languages and culture of the Albanians, Catalans, Germans, Greeks, Slovenians and Croatians, as well as of those speaking French, Friulan, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian” (Italian Government 1999b). The law established a national fund for the protection of linguistic minorities in order to ensure the teaching of the minority languages and cultural traditions, and for their use in official acts at various administrative levels, as well as in the media (Council of Europe 2016a; Italian Government

1999a, 31). The absence of Romanés as a recognized minority language in this setting is telling. According to the *First report on the status of minorities in Italy* of 1994 (Ministero dell'Interno 1994) as well as to a previous draft of law 482⁷⁰, Roma and Sinti were considered a linguistic minority⁷¹, but in the final stages of the law approval they were eventually excluded from the scope of the law because of the resistance of a significant section of the Parliament, which argued that Roma and Sinti failed the 'territoriality' criterion required by the state for the protection of minorities (Tavani 2012, 209–11). In other words, "[t]he impression is that not all cultural and linguistic groups are a constitutive part of the multicultural Italian nation" (Tavani 2012, 207).

The reference to the Roma minority in Italy's first FCNM report (under the label 'gypsies') was therefore limited to one sentence: "A number of regional laws specifically intended to protect gypsies have also been adopted. In addition, a number of Bills on the protection of gypsies are currently being examined by Parliament." (Italian Government 1999a, 16). At table 18, an estimate of 130.000 'gypsies' was included as a "minority with no connection with any particular territory"⁷² (Italian Government 1999a, 34).

Unsurprisingly, the response of the FCNM Advisory Committee to Italy's first report was to manifest deep concern regarding the situation of the Roma on different fronts: particularly on the "shortcomings of the existing statutory provisions for safeguarding their identity and culture" (p.2), "the negative image often associated with their identity in Italian society" (p.11), the fact that "the Italian authorities still frequently refer to the Roma community in general as 'Gypsies' ('Zingari') or 'nomads' ('nomadi')" (p.11) and the fact that "efforts to support Roma culture are only sparingly supported by the authorities" (p.11). The advice of the Advisory Committee to the Italian government was to remedy to this cultural injustice by, first and foremost, tackling

⁷⁰ The draft law from 1996 the languages to be protected were the same as in law 482/1999, plus Romanés, identified as "lingua zingara", based on the fact that "The populations of Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Slavic and Roma [zingara] origin are of ancient settlement on the Italian territory [di antico insediamento]" (Proposta di legge 169/1996, 3). The same document one page later specifies: "A separate consideration deserves the case of Roma communities, which present some peculiar characteristics. In all the law projects for the protection of linguistic minorities - the current ones and those of past legislatures - the Roma minority has been treated as other minorities. Additionally, the Council of Europe has included the presence of the Roma minority in the map of the linguistic minorities existing in the continent's territory. Therefore, we have considered opportune to maintain this point in the text currently under consideration" (Proposta di legge 169/1996, 4).

⁷¹ The final version of law 482/1999 provides protection on the basis of four main principles: ethnicity, language, history and presence in a specific territory (Palermo, 2004).

⁷² No specific source is cited about the estimated Roma population. At page 31 of the report it is written that "[t]he numbers of the latter groups are established on the basis of studies and publications; the figures in the following tables are therefore purely indicative."

discrimination: “It is clear [...] that more satisfactory integration of Roma cannot be confined to a purely social approach but depends primarily on recognizing and eliminating all forms of discrimination faced by this population” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2001, 12). This attitude was in line with the concluding observations on Italy adopted on 7 April 1999 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which had noted how “the housing of Roma in camps leads not only to a physical segregation of the Roma community from Italian society, but a political, economic and cultural isolation as well” (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 1999, 7 April:3). Additionally, on 20 July 2000 the Italian Parliament passed a law establishing the ‘Day of Remembrance’ in memory of the extermination and persecution of the Jewish people and Italian military and political deportees to Nazi camps, but no mention was made to the deported and persecuted Roma and Sinti.

The recommendations of the Advisory Committee to the Italian government regarding its Roma minority in the 2001 opinion was therefore “that the government should envisage a comprehensive and coherent strategy at national level, no longer to be centered on the model of separation in camps” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2001, 9); that the severe difficulties in the attempts of a large number of Roma (who have resided in Italy for some decades or were even born there) to acquire Italian citizenship should be addressed, and that in any case “these measures cannot have the desired effect unless framed and implemented in consultation and collaboration with the Roma community and unless the various parties involved show understanding and respect for Roma culture” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2001, 11). In short: the need of a framework in order to address discrimination, segregation, and misrecognition.

In response, in its 2002 comments to the Advisory Committee’s opinion, Italy’s government—which meanwhile had passed from Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema (Democratici di Sinistra) to Giuliano Amato (L’Ulivo) to Silvio Berlusconi (Forza Italia)—took note “of the advisability of identifying the gypsy minority more correctly using the terms ‘Roma, Sinti and Travellers’, which will be used henceforth” (Italian Government 2002, 4). At the same time, however, it made clear that “[o]n the subject of the Roma minorities, the understanding is that this minority does not fall within the scope of protection provided by Law No 482/1999.” It is noteworthy that, in

supporting this stance, the Italian government claimed that the purpose of not recognizing nor promoting the Romani language was “to enable these individuals to become more easily incorporated into Italy, linguistically and culturally, for which it has been decided to give preference to focusing on the learning of the Italian language, also considering the difficulty of finding any Roma or Sinti language teachers.” Above and beyond the fact that the numbers of Romanés speakers in Italy exceed those of many of the communities whose minority languages are included in and protected by Law 482/1999⁷³, the above mentioned passage gives us important information on the Italian approach at the time: firstly, the Roma minority was seen as an ‘external’ body to be ‘incorporated into Italy’ by means of linguistic and cultural assimilation; secondly, the difficulties in said ‘incorporation’ were identified in “the enormous economic, social and also psychological obstacles they face” (Italian Government 2002, 6). However no real policies were envisioned in order to reduce such enormous obstacles, other than a law⁷⁴ that was laid before the Senate and that was to constitute a framework “to assist members of the Roma, Sinti and Travelling communities to obtain vocational training, employment and a dwelling, and *to govern their presence on Italian soil* [disciplinare la loro presenza sul territorio nazionale]” (Italian Government 2002, 2).

Reading the text of the proposed law it becomes clear that the emphasis should be put on the verb “discipline”, rather than on “assist”: the proposed so-called framework, similar in many ways to the already existing regional laws (including in its usage of the terminology ‘zingari’ to identify the Roma), envisioned allowing, but at the same time sanctioning, freedom to nomadism as a means to ‘responsibilize’ the Roma, whose presence was to be kept to under a one per thousand ratio in any given municipality. Additionally, the introduction of the proposed law stated that Roma should be denied any integration or inclusion policy or scheme, following the rationale: “[A minority] who rejects a priori and systematically any kind of integration with the host community, will perhaps keep pride in their traditions, but certainly cannot claim grants or claim

⁷³ While there is no linguistic census in Italy with the exceptions of the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bozen/Bolzano, the vast majority of Roma migrants from ex-Yugoslavia and from Romania, estimated to be around 90,000 and 40,000 respectively (interview 25, August 2015), speak the Vlax Romani language. According to the survey *Enquesta d'usos lingüístics a l'Alguer* of 2004, Catalan speakers in Alghero (the only Italian city where Catalan is spoken) amounted to slightly less than 10,000 persons. According to the 2011 linguistic census, Ladin speakers amounted to approximately 20,500 in Bozen/Bolzano and to 18,500 in Trento. Both Catalan and Ladin are among the minority languages protected by law 482/1999.

⁷⁴ Disegno di legge no. 447/2001 proposed by Senators Paolo Danieli and Giuseppe Valditara, available at: <http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00008135.pdf>

assistance from the same social structures that it refuses.” (Senato della Repubblica 2001). The proposed law was eventually not adopted, but its content becomes less surprising considering that it was put forward by senators Paolo Danieli (Alleanza Nazionale and ex member of the Italian Social Movement⁷⁵) and Giuseppe Valditara (Lega Nord), both members of a newly elected government that had run a campaign strongly focused on crime reduction presented as a phenomenon tied to immigration and to the presence of Roma.

The Council of Europe’s Resolution, published in July 2002 at the end of Italy’s first FCNM cycle, reached the conclusion that while Italy’s efforts to protect the twelve historical linguistic minorities were commendable, “[r]eal problems remain in respect of the implementation of the Framework Convention as concerns Roma, especially as regards access to housing, certain discriminatory practices and socio-economic inequalities and participation in the public affairs concerning them. The existing statutory provisions for safeguarding the identity and culture of the Roma are not yet adequate, and Italy should consider a comprehensive and coherent strategy *vis-à-vis* the Roma, particularly so as to promote their integration in Italian society” (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2002, 2). In other words, it reiterated the core issues of access to housing, discrimination, and both economic and cultural inequalities.

Spain

The first report of the Spanish state to the Council of Europe presents a very different picture. Nowhere in the report is the expression “national minorities” to be found other than in the title of the document, much less defined: the Roma minority (identified as ‘Spanish Roma Community’) is, as a matter of fact, the only one included.

The report’s introduction opens stating that “Spain offers an example of coexistence because it has, throughout its history, been influenced by the cultures and life-styles of many different peoples and population groups” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:3) and at page 4 it says that “all

⁷⁵ The Italian Social Movement [Movimento Sociale Italiano] was a post-fascist party established in 1946 by Mussolini supporters, and derived its name and ideals by the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (Italian Social Republic) proclaimed by Mussolini in 1943 behind Nazi German lines. The party later changed its name to Italian Social Movement – National Right, and in 1995 it was rebranded into National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale), which merged into Silvio Berlusconi’s party The People of Freedom (Il Popolo della Libertà) in 2009.

the surveys show that the Roma are the most unpopular of the minority groups”, but nowhere does the report explicitly say what other minority groups are there.

The introduction is followed by an “Information on the Spanish Roma Community” section that comprises of a summary of the Roma’s ‘Social and demographic situation’, in which it emerges that the estimated 600,000-650,000 Spanish Roma are overrepresented in early-school dropout, health problems, and low life-expectancy⁷⁶, and Roma’s ‘Employment situation’, in which it is argued that “[i]t is still unusual for Roma to have regular employment or work for others. They mostly engage in commercial activities, particularly as peddlers” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:5). The focus is therefore by and large on employment integration schemes, followed by social integration schemes (mainly aimed at reducing early school leave, promoting social training schemes in prisons and schemes for Roma families employed as seasonal farm workers) as well as some schemes to promote and support the development of Roma women (Spanish Government 2000, 5:12).

In terms of cultural diversity recognition and management, it is noted at page 3 that “the Spanish Roma population does not constitute a ‘whole’, but comprises various communities – although all of them have preserved the same basic identity, culture, value system, social organization and language (mostly based on the ‘caló’ dialect).”⁷⁷ The elements of the “basic identity, culture and value system” of the Spanish Roma are identified in the report as: (a) the family, usually larger than non-Roma families, being the basic social unit (Spanish Government 2000, 5:4), (b) the Romani language, (c) a history of discrimination and unequal treatment.

It should however be noted that in the scope of the application of the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECML) Spain (that, differently from Italy, ratified it in 2001) includes Aragonese, Aranese, Asturian, Basque, Catalan, Galician, Leonese and Valencian, but not the caló/ Romani language (Council of Europe 2015). There is therefore an interesting overall inconsistency: language is identified as an important element for the identity of the Roma in the Spanish FCNM report, but the Romani language is not recognized by the Spanish state neither in the ECML nor in national legislation. The Roma are however the only minority included in the

⁷⁶ The difference of life expectancy at birth in Spain is approximately of 10 years less for Roma compared to non Roma (Fundamental Rights Agency and UNPD 2012).

⁷⁷ This is the ‘highly heterogeneous, but a single minority’ formula that will often later be adopted in EU documents in which an attempt to not appear as essentializing the Roma yields to using Roma as an ‘umbrella term’.

report, whereas officially recognized linguistic minorities that are included in the ECML and that hold co-official status with Castilian in certain Autonomous Communities such as Basque, Catalan and Galician and not even mentioned.

One must thus conclude that the reason for including the Roma in the FCNM cannot rest chiefly on the *caló*⁷⁸, but rather on the fact that “many Roma are still not treated equally” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:2), and thus, by extension, it would be logical for them to ‘disappear’ from the Framework Convention once socio-economic equality is reached.

Regarding estimates and data collection, the Spanish report includes the disclaimer that the information collected is based on sociological research and surveys carried out at local and regional levels, which are not standardized and thus “cannot be used for official purposes, although they do give us vital information on the situation of the Spanish Roma community” (p.5). Regardless of the fact that any census based on a person’s membership of a given ethnic or religious minority faces the same obstacles in Spain as it does in Italy, the Spanish report provides detailed numbers of its Roma population disaggregated by Autonomous Community, and it does not seem to see an obstacle in the fact that, as in Italy, the Roma are scattered across the country (“are present in all nineteen Autonomous Communities and in the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla”, p.2). On the issue of ‘who does the identification’, while it is safe to assume that the sociologists and local administrators on whose data the estimates are based are for the most part not Roma, the report adds that “the Constitution does not formally recognize or define ethnic minorities” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:4) but “some Roma groups in Spain (usually those who have set up associations) do say that they belong to an ethnic minority” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:6). There is therefore, even if in passing, the notion of self-identification as a relevant element for the construction of ‘Roma’ as an ethnic/minority category.

The same cannot be said with regard to other Spanish communities or individuals that might self-identify as Basque, Catalan or Galician (or Berber, or Jewish, etc.). The introduction of the report is very clear in asserting that “[t]his report describes the *social policy* measures implemented by

⁷⁸ Art.9 at page 21 of the first Spanish report for the FCNM notes that while Romani language is not recognized as an official state language, the Spanish Constitution has been translated into Romanés and the central government and other authorities provide financial support for written publications in Romanés.

the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with the *Roma community*” (Spanish Government 2000, 5:2).

Coupled with the fact that the report was turned in with an almost two years delay and with the fact that the Spanish government decided not to organize any visit of the delegation of the FCNM Advisory Committee during the first cycle, the quoted statement gives us a few important pieces of information on the Spanish approach: firstly, the framework rests on a social policy approach, not a cultural identity one, even though Roma are acknowledged as an ethnic minority; secondly, the fact that the only minority acknowledged is the Roma can be seen in contrast with other minorities (more cultural, or more political, and not necessarily economically disadvantaged ones). The history of discrimination, persisting socio-economic disadvantage and the scattered geographical distribution of the Roma makes them a less political, and thus less problematic, minority. Thirdly, despite the note on its heterogeneity, the ‘Roma community’ is talked about, described and targeted as if it were a consistent group with a consistent series of needs and disadvantages, reinforcing the framing of the issue as a socio-economic one, and fourthly, careful attention is made to avoid any reference to the concept of “national” in ways that could diverge from that of “Spanish”. As the Advisory Committee notes in its opinion on the report, “the Roma are not recognized either as a Spanish “people” or as a national minority, although some of them have submitted requests to the authorities to that end. [...] Moreover, this position was borne out at domestic level by the Spanish Senate’s rejection of a recent motion calling for such recognition” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2003, 8–9). In any case the Advisory Committee, similarly as it had done with Italy, welcomed the fact that “even though Roma are not formally recognized at national level as a national minority, the authorities intend to give them the protection accorded by the Framework Convention” (p.9).

The 2003 opinion on Spain’s first report with regards to the Roma, despite the general consideration that “[s]pecial attention should be given to promoting Roma culture, language and traditions” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2003, 3) falls in line with the Spanish governments’ definition of a socio-economic marginalized minority, and talks about the need to further enhance antidiscrimination efforts targeting ‘Roma and other vulnerable groups’ (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2003, 4) and bridging the gap with Spanish non Roma in socio-economic indicators.

Regarding the demographic estimates, the Advisory Committee challenged the numbers provided by the Spanish state, as NGOs' estimates put the Roma population in Spain at over 800,000 (p.8), and asked for more details regarding the Governmental Roma Development Programme (Plan de Desarrollo Gitano). To the end of ensuring the efficacy of the measures taken (the Roma Development Programme), it was suggested that the government should identify the most appropriate means of obtaining reliable statistical data on the composition of the Roma population, broken down by age, sex and geographical distribution. On identifying 'who the Roma are' it however adopts exactly the kind of language that the Spanish government had been using: the Committee notes that "despite a strong sense of identity and a common origin, the Roma population in Spain is very heterogeneous in terms of level of education, vocational skills, way of life and belief" (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2003, 13), which is why a more participatory approach is needed, but does not challenge the idea that the target population is one ethnic group characterized mainly by socio-economic disadvantage.

In its 2004 comments to the Advisory Committee's opinion, the Spanish government noted how "Spain limited its State Report, tabled in December 2000, to the Roma community because, although not constituting a 'national minority', it is the only one which may in any way be integrated into the spirit of the Framework Convention" (Spanish Government Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs 2004b, 2). It then goes on to explain that the way that Spain considers to be best suited to promote and protect the interest of the Spanish Roma is making sure that the principle of equality, "a fundamental principle of the Spanish legal system and constituting a higher value of its legal order" (Spanish Government Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs 2004a, 5), is respected. Attention is brought to the fact that Spanish citizens "of the Roma race or ethnicity are citizens with full rights, like remaining Spaniards (Article 14 of the Constitution)" (p.6), and that with law No. 62 of 30 December 2003 Spain transferred into national legislation the Council Directive 2000/43/CE of 29 June 2000, guaranteeing the principle of equality of treatment of persons, irrespective of race or origin. The remaining comments are devoted to further explaining how the Governmental Roma Development Programme benefits the most disadvantaged Roma communities, and a brief mention is made to measures taken by some Autonomous Communities.

Indeed, in December 2001, the Parliament of Catalonia had passed two resolutions: one “on the recognition of the identity of the Roma and the value of their culture” (Resolució 1046/VI) and the other announcing a “Plan integral del pueblo gitano en Cataluña” (Resolució 1045/VI). Around the same time, Extremadura created a Regional Council for the Roma Community [Consejo Regional para la Comunidad Gitana, Decree 179/2001], and in 2003 a Council for the promotion and participation of the Roma People in the Basque Country was established, and led to a Basque integration plan for the Roma People the following year. Until then, the only Autonomous Community that had a specific body and policy guidelines dedicated to the Roma was Andalusia, the region where the vast majority of Spanish Roma resided, that in 1997 had adopted the Comprehensive plan for the Spanish Community of Andalusia. The terminology used to address and identify the Roma minorities in the different Spanish regions clearly follows the pattern of tension around what is considered to constitute a “nation” or a “people” in Spain: therefore the Roma are classified as a “people” in Catalonia and in the Basque Country—Autonomous Communities aspiring at being acknowledged as “nations” themselves by the Spanish state—while there are a “community” in Extremadura and Andalusia.

The resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe was of general satisfaction with regards to the Governmental Roma Development Programme, even though it is noted that more efforts are needed in order to reduce socio-economic inequalities in the areas of housing, education, labor and health; promote Roma culture “in order to facilitate a better integration and participation of Roma in Spanish society” (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2004, 1) and combat discrimination.

3.2.2 Second cycle

Italy

The second report submitted in 2004 by the Italian state, 5 years after its first one, was more detailed with respect to the Roma, with a special section titled “The communities of Roma, Sinti and Travellers” (Italian Government 2004, 20–28). This part of the report was however mostly used to draw a close link between the concept of ‘Gypsies’ (the ‘Roma, Sinti and Traveller’ label apparently got forgotten soon after the section title) and that of ‘nomads’. The objective of Italian

legislation was defined in the report as that of achieving “real equality among citizens, compensating for social inequality” (Italian Government 2004, 22); the application of the concept of equality to Roma citizens is however ambiguous. On the one hand, the Italian government defended in the report the position of not including the Roma in the scope of law 482/1999, on the other hand it stated that the Roma were indeed an ethnic and cultural minority: “The very existence of this legislation [specific regional provisions] is important in itself since it is a form of recognition of the fact that Gypsies are an ethnic minority with a language and a culture of their own. In all above-mentioned provisions, *nomadism is regarded as a basic element of the Gypsy culture*: therefore, the right to nomadism, and consequently to stays, is openly stated. Furthermore, all mentioned laws envisage the adoption of measures in favor of Gypsies [...]; all of them are respectful of the ethnic and cultural peculiarities of the Gypsy community” (Italian Government 2004, 25). A part from the report’s endorsement of the regional laws (and therefore of the encampment system that the Council of Europe had labeled as segregationist in the previous cycle), the attention to the Roma minority is in the second Italian report “put not only in consideration of the current situation, but also in view of the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union, since our country will number among those likely to be most considerably affected by the movements of Roma and Sinti within the newly defined European territory.” (Italian Government 2004, 25)

This statement is particularly telling, together with a comment on page 9, stating: “As far as the problems posed by the communities of Roma, Sinti and Travellers are concerned, it is advisable to refer to the relevant chapter”.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the report are that firstly, the Roma minority remain, in the view of the Italian state, first and foremost, a ‘problem’. Secondly, such problem is attributed to nomadism being the foremost cultural feature of all Roma. Thirdly, because the issue is seen as cultural, the only two pilot projects envisioned were that of sponsoring mediators to bridge the cultural gap (via the NGO Opera Nomadi) between Roma and schooling institutions; and fourthly, potential future Roma migrants from CEE countries was a major concern.

The Advisory Committee’s 2005 opinion was unequivocal in condemning Italy’s regional laws targeting the Roma as “clearly inadequate in that they are disparate, lack coherence and focus too much on social questions and immigration issues at the detriment of the promotion of their

identity, including their language and culture” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2005, 5). It is noteworthy that the Advisory Committee, while rightly concerned about authorities themselves contributing to the negative perception of the Roma (p.20), gave somewhat contradictory recommendations: at page 15, it claimed that the Roma, Sinti and Travellers living in Italy were by no means a homogenous group, and thus should not be treated as such, but on page 18 it stated that insufficient attention was paid to the promotion of the essential elements of their identity. Further, the lack of a comprehensive national strategy to improve their socio-economic situation was held responsible for the lack of tangible progress in integration of the Roma (p.32).

Italy’s comments on this opinion, a part from the claim that some measures were being considered (“the problem is being examined by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Department of Regional Affairs”), included two relevant statements:

1) “As far as Roma are concerned, the issue of housing, that anyway in Italy also affects other social categories not belonging to minorities, is expected to be solved by means of a legal instrument entailing that Roma become sedentary - a process that is already well under way” (Italian Government 2005, 3);

2) “With regard to the education of Roma, Sinti and Travelers children a preliminary remark is necessary: although schools are quite willing to receive nomads, they actually display a low inclination for integration (including in the school community) resulting in the inborn tendency to refuse regular attendance to schools in the places where they temporarily stay” (Italian Government 2005, 11).

These statements were, at least apparently, contradictory with the 2004 report (which had been written by the same Berlusconi government and which enshrined the ‘right to nomadism’ as the cornerstone of Roma culture), and with each other: on the one hand it said that a process of ‘sedentarization’ was underway, while also claiming that Roma had an “inborn tendency” to resist schooling because of the temporality of the stays. The only constant was therefore that of the Roma presented as a ‘problem’, as an anomaly, to be assimilated to some extent while kept at a safe distance.

The 2006 Council of Europe's Resolution reiterated its condemnation of encampments and its call for a comprehensive strategy on Roma integration to be completed in consultation with those concerned, as well as for legal protection to enable the Roma, Sinti and Travellers "to preserve and develop their identity and culture" (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2006, 2).

Spain

The second FCNM report of the Spanish Government does not fundamentally alter the definition it had given of the Roma, even though it revised its Roma population from 600.000-650.000 to 650.000-700.000, approximately 1.6% of the country's total population (Spanish Government Ministry of Work and Social Affairs 2006, 2). As in the previous cycle, issues of discrimination were addressed, and a detailed report outlined the facts and figures of the actions taken by the various ministries (labor and social affairs, education, housing and health) on Roma integration. While there was mostly continuity with the priorities and trajectory outlined in the first cycle, the second report documented a strong impulse in terms of both political and financial resources to the promotion of Roma integration policies and projects, amongst which the ACCEDER programme, the Decade for Roma Inclusion, and schemes targeted at Roma women developed by the Women's Institute (the first governmental structure set up to foster gender equality in 1983). Additionally, in September 2005 the Congress of Deputies passed a bill calling on the government to promote the culture, history, identity and language of the Roma people, while the Ministry of Culture earmarked the creation of an Institute of Roma Culture as one of its priority objectives⁷⁹.

It is also noteworthy that, with Royal Decree No. 891/2005 of 22 July 2005, the Spanish government instituted the State Council for the Roma People as a consultative body attached to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and in September 2005 the lower house of the Spanish parliament (Congreso de los Diputados) adopted a 'Non-binding proposal on the recognition of the rights of Roma'. During this second FCNM cycle, differently from the first, a visit to Spain of representatives of the Advisory Committee took place. Both the strong impulse given to the Roma integration policies during this period and the formal (but significant) detail of the State

⁷⁹ The 'actions' on Roma culture included in the report are however mainly focused on classes in Romani and flamenco.

Council being named “of the Roma *people*” (‘Pueblo’), rather than ‘community’, can be seen as a consequence of the change in government (the second FNM cycle took place during the socialist Zapatero government).

While acknowledging all these efforts, the 2007 Advisory Committee’s opinion on Spain was critical on two issues: (a) it claimed that “Spanish legislation and policy measures of relevance to Roma are mostly designed for persons belonging to economically and socially vulnerable groups rather than specifically for Roma” (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2007, 5); and (b) concern was expressed for a registered rise in “the number of persons expressing intolerant views toward Roma and persons of immigrant origin” (p.6), despite the Spanish government’s efforts.

The follow-up comments from the Spanish government did not present major novelties, nor does the 2008 Council of Europe resolution, which reiterated the need to involve Roma in the policies of which they were beneficiaries and the desirability to collect accurate data on Roma in order for the policies to be more effective (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2008).

3.2.3 Third cycle

Italy

The third Italian report was submitted in 2009, not long after Italy had declared a “Nomad State of emergency” (2008) based on which it started collecting fingerprints and data on Roma residing in camps (including minors).

For the first time three different legal situations were outlined in the report by referring to Italian Roma, EU citizens of Roma ethnicity, and third country nationals of Roma ethnicity. With the exception of some immigration funds re-directed towards plans for the access to housing of Roma (Italian Government 2009, 22) and some ‘Roma cultural mediators’ pilot projects (p.21), the policies taken had been chiefly of securitization, eviction from the ‘non-authorized’ encampments, at times followed by relocation in ‘authorized’ ones (under police surveillance and with restricted mobility in who could enter and leave the camp). This “extremely complicated

nature of the issue” was used to justify why none of the proposals aimed at the extension of protection provisions envisaged by Law No. 482/99 to include the Roma concluded their procedure. As to the declared State of Emergency, a brief mention was made at page 27, framing it as a “situation of social-environmental decay” [“degrado”] that was taken “in order to fulfill the need for more security in favor of the inhabitants of the above settlements”. The reason for carrying out a census and fingerprinting all persons who were present in the camps was justified as “necessary to have a clear picture of the number of persons living in the settlements”. No mention was made to the expulsion of Roma who were not Italian citizens from the country, which had started taking place in 2008 and went on until 2010 (European Roma Rights Centre, Open Society Institute, and OsservAzione 2009; Open Society Justice Initiative 2012).

Unsurprisingly, in its 2010 Opinion, the Advisory Committee expressed its alarm and preoccupation regarding the rise of xenophobia and racism in Italy, the breach of human rights particularly with the regard to the population ‘census’ conducted in 2008 in the ‘camps for nomads’ and used for the first time the term “vulnerable group” in reference to the Roma in Italy: “Hostile attitudes are sometimes found also at institutional level and they are increasingly present in political discourse and the media, against people belonging to these vulnerable groups” (Adivisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2010, 2).

As a response, the Italian government (at the time still a Forza Italia government with Berlusconi as prime minister) claimed that “[c]ontrary to what the opinion states, the ordinances do not refer to the Roma ethnic group, but to illegal ‘nomad’ settlements” (Italian Government 2011, 6), but also stated its willingness to develop a Roma National Integration Plan in accordance with the European Commission’s requirements (European Commission 2011).

The comments of the Italian government of the Advisory Committee’s third opinion also included a section titled “The Status of Roma and Sinti” in which the issue of defining the Roma was explicitly addressed, and made explicit (if somewhat convoluted) some of the implicit assumptions from the previous documents. The stress was put on the diversity of legal profiles (Italian citizens, EU citizens, third country nationals and stateless persons who fled ex Yugoslavia in the nineties), but it was added that despite the lack of a specific legal framework for Roma “such specific measures, whether adequate or not, can be considered as a form of recognition in substantial terms. [Even though] the legal system rejects a recognition of the Roma

and Sinti as national minorities, it contains an implicit, sectoral, diversified recognition, which mirrors the complex institutional structure envisaged by the Italian legal system”. In other words, it is an official recognition of mirecognition: a form of institutionalized subordination that prevents Roma, in this case, from participating as peers in social life.

The 2012 Council of Europe resolution on Italy’s third FCNM cycle made this point by noting that, beyond the National Roma Integration Strategy (submitted to the European Commission in March 2012), the adoption of a specific legislative framework at national level for the protection of the Roma and Sinti living in Italy was still needed (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2012, 2). The 2012 resolution of the 3rd cycle also saw the Council of Europe taking heed that Italian society had been marked, as elsewhere in Europe in recent years, by an increase in racist and xenophobic attitudes towards persons belonging to vulnerable groups such as Roma and Sinti, Muslims, migrants, refugee and asylum seekers. It is interesting that, while condemning the collection of data conducted in 2008 and noting that it was a serious human rights violation, the Council of Europe’s resolution asked the government to make greater efforts to gather reliable data on minorities, including Roma and Sinti—but in accordance with the principle of self-identification (p.4).

Spain

The third Spanish FCNM report presented the ongoing activities and plans in place, largely drawing from its previous report. A particular note of interest is the creation in May 2007 of the Roma Cultural Institute Foundation, which had been announced in the previous report: with the Spanish Minister of Culture as its Chair, and the participation of numerous Ministries (Education, Social Policy and Sports, Public Administration, Foreign Affairs and Cooperation) it fostered a corporate image that reflected the idea that Spain is also Roma from a cultural standpoint, with the slogan “España también es gitana” [Spain is also Roma] (Spanish Government 2010, 22–23). Even if largely symbolic (since the economic crisis meant that in these years not much resources went to cultural or social organizations) it is a powerful message, particularly taking into account that the fact that “Roma are also Spanish” and thus entitled to full Spanish citizenship had been acknowledged only 30 years earlier. To claim Roma’s identity as ‘Spanish’ meant also taking a step towards the possibility of revisiting the majoritarian Spanish culture (as perceived and

performed by the various government institutions) to include elements of what was seen as Roma culture. The third FNMN cycle was, however, also where the first distinctions between Spanish and non Spanish Roma started to emerge. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that “no distinction is made” in the application of programmes in the fields of education and access to health care, between Spanish and non Spanish Roma (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2012, 10, 35), but also expressed concern at the fact that foreign Roma were particularly affected by prejudices and racism (p.19). In definitional terms, both the Spanish state and the Advisory Committee used the term “Roma” to refer to “persons who usually self-identify and are referred to as ‘Gitanos/as’ in Spain”, while the term “foreign” Roma was used to refer to Roma who moved to Spain from other countries (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2012, 5).

In its comments, the Spanish government stressed the establishment of specific measures targeting the Romani people from other countries, introduced by the National Roma Integration Strategy (Spanish Government Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality 2012, 3), that recognizes the phenomenon of migration of Roma from other countries and foresees specific measures based on an inclusive approach, “so as to achieve their participation in the measures and actions that target the Spanish Roma population” (p.4). This makes it clear that, while the Roma policies and plans might be expanded to include migrant Roma, they retain as their ‘target’, fore and foremost, the Spanish Roma.

In its 2013 resolution on the third Spanish cycle the Council of Europe noted an increased racism towards Roma (particularly foreign), migrants and an “anti-mosque” attitude, as in the rest of Europe, and suggested a thorough assessment of the economic crisis’ impact on Roma in order to avoid further discrimination.

3.2.4 Fourth cycle

Italy

Between the third and fourth report of the Italian State three different governments were briefly in charge. Prime minister Silvio Berlusconi (*Forza Italia*) resigned in 2011 following low results

by *Forza Italia* in Italian local elections and the resistance of many members of parliament to the law on the budget of the State proposed by the government. Mario Monti, an economist, was appointed to form a technocratic government that would implement austerity measures and labor market reforms. Monti resigned in December 2012, and following the elections of 2013 which resulted in a hung parliament, a coalition was formed between the *Partito Democratico*, *Forza Italia* and *Scelta Civica*⁸⁰ with Enrico Letta (*Partito Democratico*) as prime minister. Letta was replaced by Matteo Renzi (*Partito Democratico*) as prime minister in February 2014.

The fourth report of Italy is of March 2014, two years later the submission of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti to the European Commission in 2012. The report refers repeatedly the NRIS, and its ‘new’ approach with regard to the Roma, particularly in marking a break from the approach that equated Roma to ‘nomads’ and ‘foreigners’.

However, the report still retained many of the ambiguities in identifying the group as a national minority: “No specific piece of legislation of our legal system recognizes and protects the Roma communities living in Italy as linguistic minorities as they lack a stable connection with the territory, as it is well known. However there is a lively parliamentary debate aiming at the definition of provisions for recognition and the protection of the Romani language and many bills have been tabled in this connection” (Italian Government 2014, 10). Of these many proposed protections laws, none have been adopted to date (November 2016). Despite the approval of the National Roma Integration Strategy the continuation of an approach based on securitization can be found at pages 17-18, where the interventions financed by the PON Sicurezza (National Operational Programme “Security”) for the period 2007/2013 are described as “have been very important” and it is stated that “the peculiar nature of the problems of social minorities involving marginalisation and distress, such as those often associated with the condition of being an immigrant, a second generation immigrant, a stateless person, a foreign nomad or a nomad with Italian citizenship have made it necessary to alert the Juvenile Justice Services system to ensure a cultural mediation service.”

By the time that the Advisory Committee sent its comments to Italy, the investigation known as ‘Mafia Capitale’—involving a significant number of city officials and administrators, particularly

⁸⁰ Scelta Civica was a party founded by Mario Monti in 2013 and which received 10,5% of the votes.

from the 'Ufficio Nomadi', in criminal schemes that took advantage of the housing state-sponsored programmes for Roma, asylum seekers and refugees—had been covered widely by the Italian and international press, and many of those responsible for the implementation of Roma policies had either already been convicted of or were facing charges; there is however no mention to this in the Committee's opinion.

The Advisory Committee did note however that, despite the 2011 court decision that annulled the state of emergency (declared by the Italian government in 2008) and all the measures and decisions that followed, the situation had not improved in the slightest (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2015, 7), and included a section about the Status of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti, as well as one on data collection. The first section draws on the 2012 National Strategy, in which Roma are defined as an umbrella term comprising different groups characterized by shared practices: this is the first document, after the first report of 1999, in which estimates of the Roma population in Italy are given (110.000-170.000). A differentiation is made between Sinti people (who speak Romanés and live mainly in northern Italy), Roma (most of whom reside in central Italy, and who are also associated with Romanés language), and Caminanti, a small group concentrated in the municipality of Noto (Sicily) that adopted the local dialect. The continued use of the term "nomads" by public bodies (including Italy's latest state report) is condemned as "outdated, inaccurate and discriminatory" and "used as an excuse not to extend the protection afforded by Law No. 482/1999 to these groups, which is territory-based" (Advisory Committee on the FCNM of the Council of Europe 2015, 6, 11). The opinion goes on to denounce supposed nomadism as the justification for "shifting the blame for poverty, hostility and systematic discrimination on the shoulders of Roma" (and ultimately maintaining the inertia of the status quo), using the strongest wording it had yet. It also noted that the mandate and status of the Office for the Promotion of Equal Treatment and the Fight against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) was not sufficient to guarantee its independence, since it depends directly on the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and that the lack of data on the Roma undermined the ability of the state bodies to develop appropriate measures to improve the situation of these groups (p.11-12). In its comments to the opinion, Italy acknowledged the limited presence of reliable data, which it agrees to be as an essential prerequisite to give practical implementation to the integration strategy, and mentions the future set up of "an ad hoc working group at UNAR to

fill the information and statistical data gap” (Italian Government 2016, 4). The Council of Europe’s resolution has yet to be published.

Spain

The 2014 fourth Spanish FCNM report, as the Italian one, contained information regarding the newly adopted National Roma Integration Strategy, but in this case seen as a continuation of the previous policies, rather than a rupture—following the Roma Development Action Plan 2010-2012, and as framework for a Functional Plan on the Social Inclusion of Roma People 2014-2016.

The approach taken by such policies is consistent with the previous cycles: based on the one hand on “universal measures – targeting disadvantaged segments of the population, which may have positive repercussions for the Roma population” and complimented with “specific measures for the Roma population targeted towards specific issues, subsidies, etc.” (Spanish Government Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality 2014, 5).

A Comprehensive Strategy against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance was adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2011, and the crime statistic system was reformed to include the definition of hate crime. Here one of the most innovative aspects was introduced: in addition to racism/xenophobia, sexual orientation or identity, religious practice or belief, anti-Semitism, disability, violence against the elderly, the area ‘peniaphobia’ was added, defined as “[h]ate or rejection of the poor. This spans all expressions and manifestations of intolerance referring to hate, disgust or hostility before the poor, the needy and the vulnerable” (p.20-21).

In its opinion, the Advisory Committee also stressed the ‘at risk of poverty’ factor of the most vulnerable sectors of the population, such as Roma and migrants, and recommended to make sure that austerity measures taken in the context of the economic crisis did not disproportionately impact—directly or indirectly— on Roma (Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 2014, 32).

Spain commented that efforts were made towards increasing Roma participation in contributing to inclusion policy, and a number of the suggestions of the State Council of the Roma People

were incorporated in the document: amongst these, a relevant proposal in terms of recognition is that of changing the definition of the word “Roma” in the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Language Academy (Spanish Government Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality 2015, 4).

The final 2016 resolution of the Council of Europe restated the need to reduce Roma inequality and to ensure that cuts from the economic crisis do not disproportionately affect Roma and other vulnerable groups.

3.2.5 Who are the Roma in the FCNM

As can be seen in the table below, the definitions employed in identifying ‘who the Roma are’ over the four cycles of the FCNM are consistently divergent in Italy and Spain, outlining an understanding of who the Roma are that rests on fundamentally different assumptions. A symptom of such diverse attitudes can also be seen in which the Ministry in charge of redacting the reports is. While it is the whole government that takes responsibility for the reports, and often more than one ministry are involved in drafting the documents, traditionally in Italy this tasks has fallen on the Ministry of Interior (in charge of security and immigration) while in Spain it has been carried out by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

Matrix scheme of how the Roma are constructed as a minority in Italy and Spain’s FCNM reports and documents:

Table 2

	Culturally different	Socio-economically disadvantaged	Foreign/migrant	Exception/peculiarity
1st cycle IT	Should be more 'incorporated' linguistically and culturally in Italy			Minority with no connection to any particular territory
1st cycle ES		The most unpopular of the minority groups; social policy measures implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs		
2nd cycle IT	Nomadism is regarded as a basic element of the Gypsy culture, 'inborn' tendency to resist schooling. Cultural mediators as the main policy		Worry of Roma migration with the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union	
2nd cycle ES		Spanish legislation and policy measures of relevance to Roma are mostly designed for persons belonging to economically and socially vulnerable groups rather than specifically for Roma		
3rd cycle IT			EU citizens of Roma ethnicity, third country nationals of Roma ethnicity, stateless	Extremely complicated nature of the issue; need for security and emergency measures
3rd cycle ES	'Spain is also Roma' (creation of the Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano and of the Instituto de Cultura Gitana)			
4th cycle IT	Nomadism		'Illegal' and foreign nomads	Peculiar nature of the problems of nomads
4th cycle ES		Universal measures for disadvantaged segments of the population, which may have positive repercussions for the Roma population; 'peniaphobia'		

3.3 Roma recognition in the National Roma Integration Strategies and regional laws

3.3.1 National Roma Integration Strategies

As mentioned in chapter 2 and in the reports from the FCNM, in 2012 both Italy and Spain submitted a National Roma Integration Strategy to the European Commission (*Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, Sinti e Caminanti* and *Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España*, respectively).

Such strategies were to provide a framework and guideline to promote Roma integration by developing policies that were to “focus on Roma in a clear and specific way, and address the needs of Roma with explicit measures to prevent and compensate for disadvantages they face” (European Commission 2011, 5). The definition of whom the Roma beneficiaries of such policies were, as well as the identification of their needs, were left to each country to develop according to each specific context.

Spain

In 2010, one year previous to the European Commission’s 2011 Communication “A EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”, Spain had already adopted an Action Plan for the promotion of the Roma population 2010-2012 (*Plan de Acción para el desarrollo de la población gitana 2010-2012*), conceived and drafted by the Ministry of Social Services and Equality, the same in charge of the FCNM reports, and that also currently functions as National Contact Point for the National Strategy.

The identification of what kind of injustice was to be tackled, and the relevant population to be the targeted, had therefore already been located in the 2010 Plan as the following: “The development of compensatory policies towards those sectors of the population affected by disadvantages, be they economic and social or inequality of treatment based on ethnic origin” were to be directed to the Roma as a minority that has been victim of discriminatory policies in the past, and that still remains one of the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Spain (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2010, 3). Consistent with this approach, the “Roma people in Spain. A basic profile” section of the 2012 Spanish National Strategy highlights

firstly, the Roma presence in Spain since the 15th century and their history of persecution and social exclusion; secondly, the demographics—which are estimated in the Strategy as being around 725.000-750.000—mainly based on a country-wide housing mapping combined with local and regional studies (and which therefore admittedly tends to leave out the ‘invisible’ or ‘more integrated’ Roma residing in urban centers but not in ‘Roma’ neighborhoods). Thirdly, the social situation of the Roma is addressed: this is described as heterogeneous and diverse: “<It is a common error to associate a given ethnic group to situations of material deprivation, social exclusion or self-exclusion. Many Roma people enjoy medium to high socio-economic levels and are fully integrated into society” (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2012, 4). However, the assessment goes on to add that “[a] minority sector exists, comprising the severely excluded Roma who have seen little progress in terms of their social inclusion. [...] It is essential that social inclusion processes for these people receive continued support in order to avoid stalling or even regression”. Fourthly and lastly, it is acknowledged that the Roma population in Spain has increased since the 2000s because of migration, mainly from Romania and Bulgaria⁸¹.

Italy

In Italy, the National Roma Integration Strategy was instead developed by a relatively new institute, the National Anti-Racial Discriminations Office (UNAR), which was established in 2003 following Italy’s adoption of EU Directive No. 2000/43/EC and that was appointed as the National Contact Point. The declared aim of Italy’s Roma integration strategy was to “definitively overcome the emergency phase, which has characterized the past years” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 3). Against this backdrop, the identification of ‘who the Roma are’ is also strikingly different from some of the characterizations adopted in the FCNM reports. Firstly, the term ‘nomadism’ is declared outdated and inaccurate: “[t]he old conception, which associated these communities with the solely connotation of ‘nomadism’ has been overcome: this term is outdated both linguistically and culturally, since it does not portray correctly the current situation” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 4). Secondly, the heterogeneity of dialects, groups, and cultures is acknowledged “within the so-called polythetic category, consisting of

⁸¹ In 2002 visa requirements for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens were lifted, and since 2007 they are EU citizens.

elements being similar in something but with different features”. Thirdly, it is made explicit that the Roma minority comprises of Italian citizens, citizens from other EU countries, non-EU citizens, foreigners who were granted asylum or subsidiary protection, and (de facto) stateless people, born in Italy from stateless parents (this point is expanded upon in a section on demographic issues, statistical analysis, migration flows, and legal status). Fourthly and lastly, the estimates given are of 120.000-180.000, of which 70.000 Italian Roma; 90.000 Roma from the Balkan region (Non-EU citizens) who arrived in Italy in the 90s, especially after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia; and a third group of Roma from Bulgaria and Romania (thus EU citizens) mostly living in large cities.

3.3.2 Regional laws

Beyond these two national frameworks, Italy and Spain are both fairly decentralized countries where, as mentioned in chapter 2, a number of regions have, over the years, adopted specific Roma target measures.

Italy

In Italy, eleven regional laws on ‘nomads’, ‘Roma’ and ‘gypsies’ were passed over the past three decades, and a number of them remain in place despite their often-contradictory approach vis-à-vis the National Roma Integration Strategy. From a ‘recognition’ point of view, it is worth looking at the first articles of most regional laws, which define the scope and target of the legislation. The following cases are drawn from those regional laws that are still in force, and which despite appearing outdated in both language and content, are relevant for two reasons: on one hand, to show how the language and framing have been rapidly changing in just a decade; on the other hand, because some of the most outdated ones are still invoked in some instances to justify evictions from ‘unauthorized’ occupied areas or to deny the right to social housing.

Lazio’s 1985 art.1 (Legge regionale no.82/1985), the first regional law to be passed in Italy (and that was never amended nor suppressed), reads “[t]he Region establishes norms for the protection of the cultural heritage and the identity of the “Roma” and to remove obstacles to the right to nomadism and the right to stop temporarily [*sostare*] within the regional territory. It establishes norms to remove obstacles to the access of structures aimed at health protection and social

wellbeing” (Regione Lazio 1985 art.1). The expression used to identify the Roma minority in art.1 is ‘Roma’ in brackets, while arts. 2 (interventions measures) and 7 (access to housing) speak of ‘nomadic populations’. The concept of nomadic is however ambiguous, since art. 7 states that initiatives must be adopted in order to provide housing to those nomadic populations who would rather “live a sedentary life” (Regione Lazio 1985 art. 9). We can therefore gather that, at the time in which the law was adopted (a) the Roma were not seen as a necessarily homogeneous group, and (b) not all of them, despite being identified as nomadic, were perceived by the regional administration as wanting to lead a nomadic lifestyle. Similarly, Sardinia’s 1988 regional law is titled *Protection of the ethnicity and culture of nomads*, but in the body of the text the law speaks about ‘zingari’. Art.1 does not differ in substance from Lazio’s law, stating: “In order to protect the ethnic and cultural heritage of ‘zingari’, the Sardinian Region promotes direct interventions aimed at removing obstacles to nomadism and to temporary stops/ campsites within the regional territory of Sardinia. It aims at assuring the availability and access of structures in compliance with health norms and in favor of cohabitation and social wellbeing” (Regione Sardegna 1988 art.1). Art.2 envisions the possibility of consulting with the associations and organizations of the ‘nomads’, and art.7 states that it is the municipalities’ responsibility to offer housing solutions to those so-called nomadic families who choose to opt for a sedentary lifestyle, promoting the use of the European Social Funds to this aim. Here, again, what emerges is a category of ‘nomads’ that might not choose nomadism as a lifestyle, and should thus, according to the law, be assisted by the institutions in their “sedentarization”—even though nomadism keeps being used as an ethnic category (creating the oxymoron of “sedentary nomads”).

This predominance of the ‘nomad’ paradigm saw a slight change of narrative at the beginning of the 90s, with Piedmont’s 1993 regional law, which stated that the aim of the initiative was “to safeguard their ethnic and cultural identity and facilitate, in accordance with mutual understanding and coexistence, progressive integration into the regional community. The Piedmont Region therefore recognizes that the ‘zingari’ groups have an equal right to a nomad lifestyle as to a settled lifestyle, and to this end it intends to respect their free choices regarding these options” (Regione Piemonte 1993, 1).

Friuli Venezia Giulia’s 1988 law (but amended in 1991 and then again in 1995) *Norms to protect the “Roma” culture* (Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia 1988) also introduced a new element of

recognition, acknowledging that Roma minorities are, as any other, subject to (cultural, social, lifestyle) change: “In accordance with the Constitution, the resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and with the European Parliament, the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia safeguards, in the areas of its competence, ‘Roma’'s specific cultural values, their historical identity *and the processes of change taking place*. To this end, the Region, acknowledging both nomad and settled lifestyles, grants ‘Roma’ the fruition of all the services necessary to their cultural and socio-economic autonomy and to ensure their health and personal and social well-being, for a more aware and better informed coexistence” (Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia 1988, 1). Even though the measures proposed were still largely targeted to an unidentified, possibly nomad, ‘other’, the reference to changes taking place within the Roma community is noteworthy, since as has been noted elsewhere (Nando Sigona 2002; Sordini 2014), to define the culture of a minority (or minorities) in a fixed law is always problematic, as it risks essentializing it. In the case of Roma in Italy, the issue is rendered even more problematic by the fact that factual cultural features such as Romani language—which should entail specific rights according to the Italian national legislation— exist but are not recognized, while the label of nomadism has been applied indiscriminately in legislative documents without any concern of whether it represents or misrepresents the lifestyle, custom and claims of the population it is supposed to protect⁸². When the first regional laws were approved in the mid ‘80s, the aim was clearly one of “normalizing” and “pacifying” tensions that had emerged between Roma groups that had set up temporary campsites in some areas and the local inhabitants. The original idea of the legislators was therefore that of addressing an issue of “public order” caused by a part of the population that, while Italian, mainstream society perceived as foreign. The traditional traveling lifestyle started however being abandoned in the fifties and sixties, for a variety of reasons among which the transformation of economic activities and of the transport systems (Sordini 2014). In the 90s, Roma asylum seekers coming from ex-Yugoslavia were placed in camps (despite the fact that none of them were nomadic), as were many EU citizens of Roma ethnicity who migrated to Italy in more recent years. Living in shacks/ encampments (either institutional or not) has in most cases been an issue of lack of viable and affordable alternatives, but has often been

⁸² This is not to dismiss the (legitimate) claims that a minority who leads a non-sedentary life might have. Such population is currently estimated in Italy to be under 5,000 (Senato della Repubblica. Commissione straordinaria per la tutela e la promozione dei diritti umani, 2012).

interpreted by the majority society as “proof” of the cultural diversity and nomadism of these minorities.

A ‘Europeanization’ in wording and categories can be found in Tuscany’s law no. 2/2000 (replacing a 1995 law), the province of Trento’s law 12/2009 (replacing a previous 1985 law) and Emilia-Romagna’s law no.22/2015 (replacing a previous 1988 law), which are the most recent, and which explicitly include integration as their framework.

Tuscany’s law *Interventions for the Roma and Sinti population* offers a range of alternative solutions to the camp model which dominated previous legislation, and the section ‘activities for social integration’ follows the structure on the axes of employment, health and education. Culture is addressed towards the end of the text, stating that cultural projects can be activated “in the context of integrated social policies” (Regione Toscana 2000, 4). There is however a continuity and fluidity in what is regarded as a political object that requires intervention: art. 1 of Tuscany’s law specifies that “For the purposes of this Act, for the Roma and Sinti they are meant all the groups commonly referred to as ‘zingari’.”

The autonomous province of Trento, which had been one of the first local authorities to pass legislation on the Roma/ Sinti in the eighties, abrogated and introduced a new legislation *Integration measures for Roma and Sinti groups residing in the province of Trento* in 2009. Even though the label ‘Roma’ is included in the law, it is really targeted at the historical Sinti minority. The target group of the measures is not described, but the law implicitly identifies with marginalization, since the aim is to “promote the integration of traditionally nomadic groups Sinti and Roma, residents in the province, in order to overcome their precarious living conditions” (Provincia di Trento 2009, 1).

On trying to legislate on a minority that is not officially recognized as such, the attitude of the policy-maker who wrote the new law and pushed for its adoption can be summarized by this quote:

“It’s complex, and the thing here is that it is even more delicate... because being our special autonomy based on minorities, at some point when working on the law we said ‘we should recognize them as an ethnic and linguistic minority’. But that would trigger uproar, in the sense that, here, for instance, the Ladin minority, Mochena, Cimbra, they are entitled to a seat on the Council... So if we were to imagine, even for a second, to make a path starting from the recognition of Sinti as an ethno-linguistic minority... this thing would probably be, really, on the

one hand the right framework to understand this, but there would be politically disruptive effects that, in short, would disrupt a piece of autonomy statute. In short, I did not see it, and did not push for it. I did not estimate it to be practicable, frankly, even though the question was raised.” (interview 11, Trento, February 2015).

Emilia-Romagna’s 2015 is however the only regional Roma integration law that was conceived after Italy’s adoption of the National Roma Integration Strategy, and the framing of the issue has changed even more significantly, clearly drawing upon the EU 2020 Roma strategy and UNAR’s documentation. It is, to date, the only regional legislation that includes an actual strategy to be developed and implemented, which happened in 2016. The law is articulate along the four axes ‘housing, health, employment, education’ and includes a gender perspective, but does not define the Roma (Regione Emilia-Romagna 2015).

The 2016 strategy however does, introducing the concept of “A non-recognized minority”, call for an explicit recognition: “In the presence of a norm on Roma minorities, Sinti and Caminanti it would be easier to legitimize interventions for integration *that depart from the recognition of a situation of social disadvantage*, it would become more effective and efficient to coordinate and promote positive actions to ensure equal opportunities to remove those obstacles which prevent the members of the minority equality and participation in social, economic and policy of the country in accordance with Article 3 of the Constitution” (Regione Emilia-Romagna 2016, 11).

While the vast majority (estimated in the strategy around 97%) of Roma residing in Emilia-Romagna are Italian, the lack of recognition as an official minority is seen in the integration plan as especially damaging for those *de facto* stateless Roma who (particularly previous to law 162/2015 ratifying the treaty on the reduction of statelessness) have no access to fundamental rights (including recognition of their statelessness).

As above-mentioned, most of these regional laws replaced previous, outdated ones. In some cases, such as Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Veneto, and Umbria, regions who had passed laws on the Roma in the late eighties, such laws were abrogated (in Marche in 1998, in Liguria in 2006, in Lombardia and Umbria in 2015, in Veneto in 2016). The abrogation and amendments of the regional laws directed to the Roma in Italy can be interpreted through a highly politicized lens, as the direct consequence of the political orientation of the regional councils, as can be gathered by contextual information. In the case of the Emilia-Romagna region, for instance, it is made clear

that the abrogation of the old regional law in favor of the new one is aimed at “a) contribute to overcome all those conditions that might create social exclusion and the stigmatization of groups or single individuals, with the objective of guaranteeing a stronger social cohesion and wellbeing for the whole community; b) promoting equality of opportunity of Roma and Sinti communities in the framework of rights and duties vis-à-vis society and the institutions c) recognizing the cultural and social identities of Roma and Sinti, supporting processes of gaining autonomy and responsibility within the current legal framework” (Regione Emilia-Romagna 2015 art.1). Conversely, in the case of the Veneto region the proposal to abrogate the *Law to protect the culture of the Roma and the Sinti* (Regione Veneto 1989) was put forward by a group of regional councilors belonging to the Northern League party, with the following argument: “In the name of a poorly understood ‘culture of acceptance’, funding has been afforded to these Roma and Sinti groups for years, causing huge damage from a social point of view to the national community in general and to the Venetian people in particular. The problem of the presence of nomadic tribes in our Region should be acknowledged for what it is, that is to say a problem, which cannot be resolved by facilitating and encouraging, through public funding, the presence of camps on the regional territory. The presence of Roma and Sinti communities in our cities is not something that should be protected but, at best, tolerated in due respect of the different lifestyles. [...] This law, in daily practice, has certainly not served the safeguard of the Roma culture, but only to finance new settlements. It should also be pointed out that law n.54/1989 has not been funded for a number of years, and therefore it is appropriate to repeal it. Lastly, we underscore how this law, approximately twenty years after its promulgation, has not achieved the goal of integrating these populations, *since they themselves do not want to integrate at all with the Italian society*” (Consiglio regionale del Veneto 2015, 2).

The battlefield is therefore a highly symbolic one, based on categories, stereotypes, and language. Also, while these categories might appear to be incompatible, they have often co-existed (and continue to co-exist) in many instances. In 2008, following a series of tensions and increasingly stigmatizing media coverage of the Roma, particularly around the murder case of an Italian woman killed by a Romanian man of Roma ethnicity, attacks on Roma camps were carried out by angry mobs, with some camps being burnt to the ground (McMahon 2015). This took place shortly before and during the 2008 national elections campaign, in which Silvio Berlusconi’s *Partito della Libertà* ran an anti-immigrant and anti-Roma platform based on fear and on the

promise of the restoration of order and security. Without going into the details of the legal and political controversies that the ‘Nomads emergency decree’ triggered at the time, it is interesting to observe how such measures—which applied to the Lazio, Lombardia and Campania regions (and were later, in 2009 and 2010, expanded to Piedmont and Veneto)—coexisted with Lazio’s (82/1985) and Lombardia’s (77/1989) regional laws ‘in favor’ of Roma. In the emergency decree of 2008, as well as in the *ordinanza* of 2009 and in the decree that extended the state of emergency of 2010, the reference was made to ‘nomad’ communities/ populations which are conflated with irregular migrants (“cittadini extracomunitari irregolari e nomadi”)⁸³.

In an attempt to abide to requests from the EU, in 2014 Ignazio Marino (Rome’s mayor at the time, Partito Democratico) signed a *circolare* that banned the usage of the word “nomad/nomads” in all municipal documents, claiming:

“I think one of the key factors to overcome discrimination is the cultural one, so an emergency approach can be abandoned in favor of policies capable of pursuing integration. [...] The terminology we use can be a tool to express the awareness of the areas upon which we are called to intervene. For this reason I ask that from now on—in institutional communication and drafting of administrative acts—the term “nomads” is replaced with the more appropriate one “Roma, Sinti and Travellers” (Associazione 21 Luglio 2014a; Roma Capitale 2014).

Spain

From the 90s onwards in Spain as well, albeit with a different approach, various Autonomous Communities in Spain have adopted comprehensive Roma Plans, often anticipating many features of the European Strategy on Roma Inclusion.

Andalusia, the Autonomous Community with the largest Roma minority by a large margin, was the first region to pass a comprehensive *Plan Integral para la Comunidad Gitana de Andalucía* (PICGA) in 1997. One first observation is that here, as in most Spanish regional Roma inclusion plans, the territoriality-regional dimension takes on a very important dimension. Regional strategies in Spain do not generally refer to generic or abstract ‘Roma’, but rather of ‘Andalusian

⁸³ Even though the threat to be faced is that these ‘nomad populations’ seemed to have “permanently installed themselves in urban areas” (“si sono stabilmente insediati nelle aree urbane”) (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2008; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2009; Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 2010).

Roma’, ‘Catalan Roma’, etc. (even though some subtle differences in how they are identified in the documents are present and will be noted).

The PICGA notes that “a project of the span of the Integral Plan for the Roma Community must necessarily, first and foremost, start from a thorough knowledge of the community to whom it is aimed” (Junta de Andalucía Consejería de Asuntos Sociales 1997, 22). For this reason, the strategy is based on data collected by researchers from the University of Granada on behalf of the Junta de Andalucía in 1996, and structured around seven pillars considered to be the most relevant for the target population: housing, education, employment, health, culture, social action/participation, and gender.

A section “The Roma as an ethnic group” is dedicated at reflecting upon the ‘ethnic’ component of the minority. The approach adopted is very different from the one that emerged from the regional laws in Italy: firstly it is noted how, despite a common origin (demonstrated by studies of linguistics), Spanish Roma in general, and Andalusian Roma in particular, are a highly heterogeneous minority undergoing profound and asymmetric changes in their lifestyle and culture (depending on class, residency, etc.), and that the differences between one group of Roma and another group of Roma can be greater than those between Roma and non Roma. Secondly, it is observed that because of a history of mixity, it is somewhat artificial to draw a clear-cut line between Roma and non-Roma communities in Andalusia, and that Roma have greatly contributed to the cultural identity of the Region. Thirdly, the plan notes that what is typically considered to be ‘Roma culture’ is actually the result of adaptation to situations of persecution, racism and poverty, and was not ‘originally’ Roma to begin with. In terms of socio-economic marginalization, even though the Roma that find themselves in situation of extreme social exclusion are a small minority, the image of poverty risks stigmatizing a whole group. Fourthly and lastly, “in practice, however, legal equality has not matched up with social equality, and economic marginalization remained unchanged” (Junta de Andalucía Consejería de Asuntos Sociales 1997, 23–25).

In the Basque Country, the *I Plan Vasco Para la Promoción Integral y la Participación Social del Pueblo Gitano* was adopted in 2003, followed in 2008 by the *II Plan Vasco Para la Promoción Integral y la Participación Social del Pueblo Gitano*. The latest plan was based on data collected by Ikusbide, an entity dedicated to the compilation and dissemination of diagnostic

work and action proposals on and around social services. The identification of the target of the policies is slightly different from the Andalusian strategy: on the one hand the category is not that of ‘Basque Roma’ but rather of ‘Roma residing in the Basque Country’ which thus includes Spanish Roma who relocated from other autonomous communities (particularly Andalucía and Extremadura); on the other hand more emphasis is put in describing the minority as a cultural one, with a section dedicated to ‘Roma identity’. This description lists the most common stereotypes and generalizing prejudices to avoid; however it also lists a number of features considered to comprise Roma identity which are, even if not negative, also stereotyped generalizations (free and independent spirit, specific family norms, high respect for the elderly etc.). The more general definition given, which opens the document, is: “The Roma people are a cultural minority and a minoritized culture in search of recognition of their Roma citizenship. Unlike other cultural minorities that have more recently become present in our society, the Roma community is a settled cultural minority. It is also a plural and heterogeneous community as are other Roma communities present in the rest of the State with which it maintains close ties of cultural and family relation of common identification” (Gobierno Vasco 2008, 1). Regarding which communities to include in the concrete, targeted measures, while the 2008 plan takes generically into account “the increase in the immigration of Roma people” (Gobierno Vasco 2008, 3) and supports the realization of a diagnostic study on Portuguese and Romanian Roma, it excludes explicitly immigrant Roma and Erromintxela⁸⁴ from the scope of the strategy, thus focusing on the descendants of the Gitano families immigrated to the Basque Country from other parts of Spain during the first half of the XX century.

In Catalonia, which is one of the best known examples, often presented as a best practice at the European level, the current plan—adopted in 2014—is the third one being implemented, after the 2005-2008 and 2009-2013 ones. The first plan was based on data collected by the Departamento de Bienestar y Familia de la Generalitat de Cataluña, and was approved a few years later two important resolutions of the Catalan Parliament were taken as a starting point: resolution 1045/VI of the Parliament of Catalonia, on the elaboration of an integral plan of the Roma people in

⁸⁴ The first Roma families arrived in the Basque Country in the fifteenth century and their contact with the Basque culture gave rise to a linguistic and cultural mixture between Romanés and Basque languages, denominated Erromintxela, that still some (even if very few) Basque Roma speak. The term refers to both the language and the minority.

Catalonia, and resolution 1046/VI, on the recognition of the identity of the Roma and the value of their culture (November 21, 2001).

The 2009 plan included a mention to the incorporation of ‘new’ Roma in the policy framework for ‘old’ Roma. The strategy recognized Roma as a ‘transnational’ minority and therefore required the Spanish authorities to pay special attention to “Roma population originating from other countries” (Generalitat de Catalunya 2008, 5), to include them in the measures and actions aimed at Gitanos and, where circumstances allowed it, to develop specific measures and actions aimed at promoting their social inclusion (Generalitat de Catalunya 2008). In terms of specific measures and actions, however, the plan has been criticized for the fact that no specific target population nor target performance were specified (Bereményi and Mirga 2012, 17). This is however intentional, as the “Government of Catalonia is committed to defining specific public policies for vulnerable groups or groups with regard to social inequalities, such as the Roma, in order for them to improve their living conditions and be in a position of real equality with the rest of the Catalan society” (interview 6, Barcelona, October 2014).

The 2011 *Primer Plan Integral de Atención a la Población Gitana de Navarra* dedicates a section to ‘Roma culture, social image and recognition’, where language and a history of marginalization are portrayed as identity markers of the Roma, and a brief overview of the main stereotypes perpetuated by the media—which mainly conflates Roma culture with ‘poverty’ culture—is included.

In terms of targeted measures, three types of policy recipients are identified, divided by socio-economic class: 1) Roma families in situations of extreme vulnerability and severe social exclusion; 2) Roma families in situations of social vulnerability (faring better than the previous group, but still in need of intense attention by the Social Services system); and 3) Roma families with a variable degree of integration, with “acceptable social and economic resources, but whose attention from the public authorities is useful for the new generations to consolidate this status and advance in some aspects, especially in educational mobility (Gobierno de Navarra 2011, 21). It also explicitly addresses the situation of the increasing number of immigrant Roma living in a condition of serious social exclusion and incorporates ‘Eastern European Roma’ as equal beneficiaries of the whole Plan.

In La Rioja, the *I Plan Integral de la población gitana de La Rioja 2015-2018* was developed in 2015. The Roma population residing in La Rioja is estimated to be around 5,000-6,000, and it is stated that despite some improvements over the past years “a large part of the Roma population still constitutes one of the most vulnerable groups and on the groups most at risk of socio-economic exclusion in our Region” (Gobierno de La Rioja 2015). Such data is based on a mapping of housing facilities tied to Roma in La Rioja of 2012⁸⁵, and under the section ‘Roma identity’ present in the strategy, emphasis is put on the negative consequences or housing segregation for Roma: “The Roma population needs recognition in and of itself, with its customs and culture, but also, in order to be part of an open and cohesive society, Roma people need to have access to same resources and opportunities as non-Roma. Effective inclusion is still missing, probably because of lack of exchange and communication, and because of prejudices that foster Roma exclusion. This produces a situation of separation, of distance which is often created by measures, such as those relative to schooling and housing, which tend to concentrate all Roma together, thus worsening the existing problem of still being a different socio-economic group” (Gobierno de La Rioja 2015)

A special section in the Plan is devoted to what are labeled as the ‘skills of the Roma community’ (las capacidades de la comunidad gitana), where, similarly to the Basque strategy, a number of features considered to comprise Roma skills are listed. These are meant to be positive, but fall into stereotyped generalizations (bargaining and commercial skills, artistic expression, respect towards the elderly, initiative and dynamism, etc.) (pp.16-17).

Despite the diversity in size of the Roma population per region, of local political trends and of economic inequality between the different Autonomous Communities, some common elements that are present in all Roma-targeted regional plans and strategies are the formal recognition of the Roma as an integrating part of the regional societies and cultures; the support to Roma-targeted initiatives; the consideration of the Gitano participation as a core element of the policies and programs to be developed; and a comprehensive approach as the best response of public administrations to tackle Gitano exclusion (Méndez López 2005). Given these premises, it is not

⁸⁵ Available at <http://www.larioja.org/noticias-infraestruc/es/detalle-noticia/mapa-vivienda-poblacion-gitana-rioja-2012-distribucion-vivi>

surprising that Spain stood out as a remarkable and positive example when in 2011 the European Commission called upon all Member States to develop National Strategies for Roma Integration.

According to a comparative study carried out by the European Roma Policy Coalition (European Roma Policy Coalition 2012) not only did the Spanish strategy incorporate the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion (European Commission 2009b) in a satisfactory manner, but the exemplarity of the Spanish strategy appeared to be based upon evidence and ‘lessons learnt’ from previous experiences coming precisely from the regional strategies: “[The Spanish strategy] takes stock of the institutional recognition of Roma and consolidation of Roma political representation in the 2010-2012 Plan, as well as of the explicit measures implemented within its framework (employment, education, institutional and cultural recognition among others), and of the regional plans and strategies adopted in Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Navarra” (European Roma Policy Coalition 2012). In the evolution of these regional plans over the years, the target of the integration plans have traditionally been the Spanish Gitano communities, and whereas some of the most recent plans do mention the fact that migrants of Roma ethnicity have in recent years resettled in Spain (or engaged in circular migration between Romania and Spain), it seems that Roma policies however struggle to include the new (migrant) Roma communities, despite the fact that (or possibly because of) they are often seen as “more authentically” Roma in cultural terms, since Romanian Roma generally speak Romanés, while Spanish Gitanos are Spanish mother-tongues and, on average, only know a few words of caló⁸⁶. Yet, unlike in Italy, the presence of immigrant Roma has not been framed as a ‘national problem’ or ‘emergency’ (McMahon 2015, 85)⁸⁷. Despite (or because of) harsh situations of poverty, institutional violence, racism, and conflicts with the majority population, Gitano and pro-Gitano organizations did not defend the rights of immigrant Roma up until 2005-2007. Only when the international context turned Roma migration into a political issue and the European Commission started to financially

⁸⁶ Some attempts were made in Granada through the Centro Sociocultural Gitano Andaluz to set up Romanés classes for Spanish Gitanos in 2010, but it was abandoned shortly afterwards.

⁸⁷ To date, Romanian and Bulgarian Roma citizens living in Spain are estimated to be somewhere between 50.000 (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad de España 2012, 12) and 170,000 (Slávkova 2010; López Catalán 2012). The lack of official records on the ethnic background and the phenomenon of ‘identity negotiation’ are some of the methodological and theoretical difficulties that hinder the processing of statistics on Roma in general, and Roma migrants in particular. The number of Roma migrants has been usually calculated considering their estimated proportion in the society of origin, and applying it to the stock of the migrants with the same nationality.

support projects aimed at ‘the Roma’ did these organizations start to address the needs of the ‘new’ Roma. While the local Gitano population looked at the newcomers as potential competitors for scarce resources, Gitano or pro-Gitano organizations realized that by adopting the EU discourse and terminology on ‘Roma’ they could gain easy access to the funds for the social intervention with these new beneficiaries. Around the same time, regional governments started taking measures to deal with the expected increase in the number of immigrants of Roma ethnicity. In the words of the Fundamental Rights Agency, Spain became an example for broadening its national Roma-specific policy in order to positively include Roma from other Member States (Fundamental Rights Agency 2009).

Several regional policies on Gitanos did include non-Spanish Roma as a target population in their original versions, but started doing so when the ‘Roma issue’ became a salient one at the EU level. The progressive incorporation of Roma immigrants in the Spanish policies for Gitanos has been influenced by financial, ideological, and political elements. In other words, while the progressive categorization of ‘the Roma’ as a transnational population fostered the ‘trickle down’ adoption of the EU official discourse on Roma people as both “victims of racism, discrimination and social exclusion” (Ivanov 2012) and “truly European minority”, the distribution of EU funding for Roma inclusion together with the need to give a policy response to the freedom of movement of impoverished Romanian and Bulgarian Roma citizens resulted in a puzzle of measures of both inclusion and securitization of the ‘new’ Roma.

In terms of implementation of the strategies and recognition, since the ethnic belonging of the beneficiaries of Roma-specific policies cannot be certified by any public authority⁸⁸, Roma and pro-Roma third sector organizations are made responsible for verifying ‘who is Roma’: “In this way, the state can both ensure its fundamentally redistributive orientation and take compensatory measures of ethnic recognition, but also avoid the troublesome, essentialist, and ever-dangerous task of establishing objective criteria for ethnic identification” (Beluschi Fabeni, López López, and Piemontese 2014, 94). The difficulties related to the implementation of ethnic policies in the Spanish color-blind State have thus been mainly resolved by outsourcing their implementation to third sector organizations or by relying on a geographical focus aimed at intervening in areas

⁸⁸ This is because Spain, as most Western European countries with the exception of the U.K., does not allow data collection based on ethnicity. See Simon’s report on the ‘Ethnic’ statistics and the data protection in the countries of the Council of Europe (Simon 2007, 36).

identified as pockets of poverty and marginalization, where it is commonly known that impoverished Spanish Roma live. This constellation becomes challenging when it comes to Roma immigrants: they cannot rely on a network of ethnic-driven associations and are not geographically concentrated in well-defined segregated neighborhoods, as impoverished Gitanos are. In other words, beyond a scarce mobilization potential, they have neither the resources nor the numbers to assert themselves as legitimate recipients of Gitano/Roma-specific policies⁸⁹. Therefore, immigrant Roma families are generally not recipients of targeted policies, although many of them would qualify both as members of the Roma ethnic minority, and as members of a socio-economically disadvantaged population. Their ascribed ethnic identity blurs in the super-diverse landscape of the Spanish suburbs. Eventually, when in need, they might attempt to access universal welfare services as other low-income individuals do. An exception to this general rule takes place in instances in which Roma immigrants happen to be hyper-visible, such in shantytowns, or in cases of conflicts with other neighbors. While the Roma policies in Italy are designed mainly for non-Italian citizens, current ethnographic research, as well as on the existing literature on Roma securitization (van Baar 2011; van Baar 2015; Marinaro and Sigona 2011; McGarry 2014; Sarcinelli 2015; Nando Sigona 2008; Vermeersch 2012; Vrăbiescu 2015) show that Roma immigrants in Spain become the target of specific measures only when other social actors problematize their presence. For instance, looking at the incorporation of ‘Eastern European Roma’ in the Catalan Plan of the Gitano People in Catalonia, Bereményi and Mirga convincingly show that “[...] if the integration of immigrant Roma families is not perceived by neighbors or public administrations as a threat to public order, they are served and attended in terms of ‘non-Spanish-nationality’ EU citizens” (Bereményi and Mirga 2012, 133).

From interviews conducted with Spanish policy makers, there seems to be a general consensus that the policies and programs developed for Spanish Roma are not applicable to Roma migrants, and that different measures need to be adopted: Roma immigrants are perceived to be ‘at a previous stage’ if compared to local Gitano communities in what concerns both their socio-

⁸⁹ Exploratory interviews realized in the framework of the EU/LLP REdHNET project (Romani People, educational and housing policies: key links to share) with the recipient organizations of the 2012 and 2013 grants for the implementations of initiatives in the framework of the Comprehensive Plan for the Andalusian Gitano Community (PICGA) show that the financed projects targeted Roma migrants only “as individuals” and “by chance”.

economic situation and their level of group organization⁹⁰:

“On the one hand there are administrative differences, of course, the lack of schooling degrees or the difficulties in having their titles recognized, and in addition to the ‘ethnic condition’ they have difficulties such as territorial and/ or cultural uprooting, given by their finding themselves in a new country, and economic difficulties, a higher rate of unemployment. These needs should be addressed in a different manner compared to what we do for the autochthonous Roma population. What they do indeed share is the social stigma as Roma, so anti-discrimination policies should be a line of action to be reinforced. If racism against Roma were acknowledged as a social scourge (‘laca social’)—since to date it’s something so embedded that it is hardly condemned by the institutions, even though similar attitudes towards other groups are strongly condemned— the policies would then recognize the issue of ethnic stigma as an added difficulty. Instead, the ethnic condition is officially considered neither positive nor negative, but neutral, and in so doing society avoids taking responsibility for the subtle criminalization that is there unacknowledged, from the expectancy of life at birth to the definition of Roma in the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE).” (interview 26, Granada, September 2015)

Additionally, migrant Roma are often blamed for reinforcing the overlap of the cultural and ethnic identity of ‘the Roma’ with situations of social-economic marginalization. The considerations put forward by the policy-makers (some of which Spanish Roma) consistently emphasized the distance between Spanish Roma and impoverished Roma newcomers⁹¹. However, in the making of this ethnic boundary, the description of immigrant Roma resort to the same old misconceptions that the majoritarian society holds about Spanish Roma themselves: that of a group made of deficient, welfare-dependent subjects always in need of protection. This, from the standpoint of the few Roma policy-makers and administrators, has much to do with the fear of a more powerful overlap between Roma identity and socio-economic marginalization: having worked for decades toward empowering and promoting the image of Spanish Roma, they now fear that the hostility towards Eastern European Roma will fall upon them. As other authors have shown, both in Spain (Bereményi and Carrasco 2014; Laparra and Macías León 2009) and elsewhere (Roman 2014) similarities between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Roma tend to create major differentiation markers rather than foster empathy or inter-ethnic solidarity. It thus seems understandable that the presence of Roma immigrants is dreaded by ‘old’ Roma because it might harm the reputation of the whole ethnic community by reinforcing stereotypes associated to the ethnic group as a whole.

⁹⁰ Interviews 4, 6, 8, 10 and 26.

⁹¹ Interviews 3, 6, 10 and 26.

3.4. Stereotypes and (mis)recognition: what is the ‘problem’?

The issue of the recognition of Roma as one ethnic minority has been (and is) controversial, yet unavoidable, given that “since the way the group is defined in each system in academic and policy literature is related to policy justifications, these groups are usually attached to a conceptual category with general implications for the discourse of ethnic/ national/ anti-racist politics” (Acton and Gheorghe 2001, 61).

While there is no universally agreed-upon definition of minority in general, or of Roma minority in particular, Roma has been identified as a target group of specific policies over centuries, and the most recent specific measures in Europe are the EU Roma framework and the National Roma Integration Strategies. Roma are also often identified as a minority in need of specific measures in the country reports pursuant article 25.1 of most signatories of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

I therefore consider that more useful than analyzing the Roma minorities, their culture, life-styles or markers of ethnicity (as these are fluid, contextual and generally defined by non-Roma), is to look at what Mihai Surdu has called “their [Roma] various classifiers and modes of objectification” (Surdu 2014).

For instance, the argument that the Roma were not a legitimate ethnic group has meant, in the aftermath of the Second World War, that the Porajmos survivors and relatives of the Roma died in concentration camps were denied compensation (Mayall 2004, 243). On the other hand, as Acton and Gheorghe have argued, external hostility has also helped foster ethnic boundaries and the creation of a Roma ethnic (and political) identity. Despite their diverse culture, physical appearance and language, as long as they are discriminated against based on dominant ethnic groups’ perception of Roma as non-white, that common identity will become an increasing reality: “The illusion of ethnic unity is created by the existence of a common threat – racism.” (Acton and Gheorghe 2001, 59).

In 1971, the first World Romani Congress that took place in London adopted the self-appellation ‘Roma’ (rather than ‘Gypsy’ or other heteronyms seen as denigratory). The second Congress of 1978 established the International Romani Union (from the previous International Rom

Committee, which in turn had emerged from the Gypsy Committee founded in 1965), which was given consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1979 and eventually, in 1993, was promoted to special consultative status with the United Nations (Mirga and Gheorghe 1997, 7–8). The idea of Roma as a ‘transnational minority’ was validated in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia in art. 40 of the Concluding Document of the Copenhagen Meeting (June 1990) of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference on CSCE (now OSCE)); and Resolution No. 21 adopted by the 43th session (August 1991) of the UN Submission for Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

In July 2008, a European Parliamentary debate addressed the creation of a Roma fingerprints database in Italy, and the debate rapidly turned into a discussion on the nature of racism and of how Roma minorities should be defined and thought about. Within this debate, the statement by Adrian Severin, a Romanian MEP, is telling of the ‘Europeaziation’ of the Roma minorities, a process that has emerged over the past decades and particularly since the EU enlargement:

“Roma people are a pan-European ethno-cultural community which does not have a nation state. Roma were already present in Europe when the European nation states were established. Those states kept them in misery, when not in slavery [Roma slavery was officially abolished in Romania in 1856], or sent them to concentration camps. The European Union enlargement was the last act of Roma liberation. Roma are today European citizens. Perhaps they are in absolute terms the truest European citizens because they are only Europeans. Their cultural, social and economic integration is a European challenge. Therefore we must communitarise the Roma policy. A strategy which only makes recommendations to the states, leaving them the ultimate choice and the ultimate responsibilities, simply does not work.” (European Parliament 2008, 4).

This position, shared by a number of other politicians present at this and similar debates, argued that there is a necessity “to give the Roma the status of a European minority...official recognition is the first step towards combating exclusion”⁹². Such statements are often rooted in the claim that the Roma themselves conceived of themselves as a separate nation.

The notion of being ‘only’ a European citizen, however, is something that is not contemplated even in the most rabid ideals of the Ventotene Manifesto. As stated in the DG Justice EU Citizenship page: “[A]ny person who holds the nationality of an EU country is automatically also

⁹² Daniel Cohn-Bendit, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, in the European parliamentary debate “EU strategy on Roma” of 3 December 2008. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20081203+ITEM-014+DOC+XML+V0//EN> See also European Commission working paper *Community Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion* COM(2008) 420.

an EU citizen. EU citizenship is additional to and does not replace national citizenship. It is for each EU country to lay down the conditions for the acquisition and loss of nationality of that country” (European Commission DG JUST 2016). It is therefore a catch-22 situation to proclaim the Roma ‘truly’ Europeans and ‘only’ Europeans, since there is no such thing as a European-ness that is disentangled from State citizenship. Also, while the project of European citizenship is an unprecedented political development, “it has institutionally been modeled upon and reproduces national conceptualizations of citizenship, rights and identity” (Cantat 2018).

3.5 What assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?

The Roma have often been depicted as an issue because of their distinctiveness from majority populations. Such distinctiveness has been defined either in terms of culture, ethnicity, nomadic lifestyle, or of overall socio-economic exclusion from mainstream societies (Paolo Bonetti, Simoni, and Vitale 2010). These different frames (ethno-cultural and socio-economic) have often been used in ways that reinforce one another, strengthening the idea of the Roma minorities being a ‘problem’ because their cultural difference, often depicted in terms of cultural deviance, has led them to poverty and helplessness. The 2006 Final Report on the Human Rights Situation of the Roma, Sinti and Travelers in Europe for the Attention of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly stressed that European societies have traditionally perceived Roma as “Others, as foreigners in their home countries” (Gil-Robles 2006), and treated them as such. Indeed, Romani “otherness” seems to have been the underpinning principle of interaction, and the distinction between Roma interests from those of non-Roma communities has been a part of dealing with Romani groups for centuries. Along these lines, Patrick Williams has summarized the social status of Roma in Europe by stressing elements of ‘immersion’ in territories inhabited by other populations, ‘dispersion’ within different territorial areas, and ‘illegitimacy’ as the general mainstream perception of Roma by other social groups (P. Williams 2011). An analysis of the various official terms used to indicate the Roma population in past policy documents (i.e. ‘disadvantaged social stratum’ in Hungary, ‘socially degraded stratum’ in Czechoslovakia, ‘population of Gypsy origin’ in Poland, ‘other nationalities’ in Romania, ‘nomads’ in Italy)

support such positions. On the other hand, there is a powerful branch in anthropology⁹³ which argues that not only have Roma communities always intimately engaged with the non-Roma population, but that what “makes a Gitano a Gitano” (Blasco 2002) is the very capacity of reproducing Romani social organization (mainly based upon family structure) while living inside a society of others, in which the ‘others’ (Gadje, non Roma) shape, at least to some extent, who the Roma are. On this topic, András Bíró has written: “It takes two to tango [...]. Attacking exclusively the prejudices and stereotypes of majority attitudes—unacceptable as they are—and ignoring the Roma’s own weaknesses reproduces the victimhood stance which blocks action and ‘explains’ the impossibility of changing the status quo” (Bíró, Gheorghe, and Kovats 2013, 12). As Bíró and a number of scholars have noted, the construction of alterity as the main feature of Roma—non-Roma relations is a product of identity and identification processes that have been cultivated on both sides. It would be however misleading to attribute equal responsibility to Roma minorities and to the majority societies in which they live for lack of dialogue and interaction, as the attitude of shielding from the public space and engagement is a typical behavior due to a large extent to a status of vulnerability, and which can be found in other discriminated and marginalized groups (homeless, immigrants...). Indeed, one of the main difficulties is that ‘integrated’ Roma are often regarded as not (or no longer) ‘true Roma’ or ‘genuine Roma’ by both majority society and by the Roma community, as the status of ‘other’ has become so engrained and integral to the societal, economic, political and symbolic image and understanding of who Roma are (and who they are not) that it becomes difficult to retain such identification while acting as part of, or at least with and within, the majority society.

As Acton and Gheorghe pointedly noted,

“[R]oma cannot win against these stereotypes: if they are poor, they are scroungers; if they are rich, they must be thieves; and if they are professionals and intellectuals – what a terrible chip they seem to have on their shoulders – so uncharacteristically bitter that they surely cannot be real happy-go-lucky Gypsies! And emigration continues to mount” (Acton and Gheorghe 2001, 57).

⁹³ As explained in chapter 1, anthropology is the discipline which has, by and large, developed Romany studies and maintained an almost exclusive monopoly on the subject until recently.

3.5.1 The poor/vulnerable as other

One representation of the Roma that dominates the Spanish State reports for the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, its national strategy and its regional plans is that of an economically and socially vulnerable group. The wording employed tends to avoid the use of term ‘minority’, relying instead on identifications that target “disadvantaged segments of the population” or promote “specific measures for the Roma population targeted towards specific measures, subsidies etc.” (Spanish Government Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality 2014, 4).

On the one hand, this has the positive effect of explicitly including the Roma in Spain in welfare measures and anti-poverty schemes, as will be examined more in detail in chapter 4. On the other hand, however, the framing of Roma integration as a predominantly socio-economic matter has left little space for claims of recognition and for addressing cultural injustices. To date, for instance, the Roma are not mentioned in Spanish history textbooks, and the caló language, which has never received any kind of institutional support, has a very reduced number of speakers as a result. In terms of stereotypes tied to the redistribution-recognition dilemma, it can be said that in contemporary Spain the approach to the Roma is closer to what Thomas Acton and Nicolae Gheorghe have called the Central and Eastern European approach, as a result of an assimilationist history and the a two-speed capitalist development (or rather multi-speed, since Spain’s economic ‘take off’ can be situated somewhere in between that of most of Western Europe and that of Central and Eastern Europe):

“To some extent, the development of capitalism in Western Europe helped to develop modern Romani nomadism in the form of ‘service nomadism’. By contrast, the persistence of a feudal type of economy in Central and Eastern Europe maintained the need for a large, coerced labor force which took various forms of servitude. [...] Thus, in some countries of Eastern Europe the need for an extensive labor force led to their incorporation into the local labor market and to the eradication of Romani nomadism, that is, their sedentarization and the creation of large Romani ghettos. These differences across Europe gave birth to contrasting stereotypes of the Roma: in the Western context ‘Gypsies’ means nomadic, traveling, or migrant, whereas in the Central and Eastern context, the corresponding terms, ‘Tsigani’ or ‘Cigany’, imply socially subordinate, impoverished, and marginal groups.” (Acton and Gheorghe 2001, 63)

It has been argued that, in general, there is a trade-off between economic performance and multiculturalism, and that while impoverished, marginal groups can be seen as ‘deserving’ because of their vulnerability, the State can also concede less in terms of cultural recognition:

“[i]n fact, individuals perceived as economically utile can ‘buy’ their cultural freedom, whereas groups from the South received by the cities are framed along their potential vulnerability. It is precisely this vulnerability that makes them deserving, but that also means that the assimilationist injunction is stronger” (Desille 2018, 16). In this sense, it seems that Spain’s approach towards its Roma population adheres to such a concept of deservingness⁹⁴.

3.5.2 The culturally different as other

On the other side of the spectrum, Roma’s ‘cultural difference’ from the majority population, especially framed in terms of nomadism, is very much present in Italy’s reports and policies. This is not to say that Spain disregards or completely omits the topic of Roma identity in its documents: most Spanish regional plans contain a section explicitly devoted to outlining what are seen to be as the main traits of Roma identity, and the third Spanish FCNM report puts emphasis on the creation of the Roma Cultural Institute and on the fact that Romani cultural is core and constitutional element of Spanish identity (“España también es gitana”). The main difference in the narratives of the two countries is that while in Spain the cultural difference of the Roma from the non-Roma⁹⁵ is seen as a product of historical persecution and segregation, in Italy it is understood as an inescapable and intrinsic ethnic trait (tied to core customs and values that differ from, and are to some extent incompatible with, ‘Italian’ ones).

The effect is specular. In Spain Roma culture is seen, at least to some extent, as a *consequence* of marginalization, as the most recent Integration Plan of La Rioja shows: “The cultural or ethnic identity [of the Roma] is to be understood in the first place by their past of having been a historically marginalized population” (Gobierno de La Rioja 2015). Conversely, in Italy Roma culture is still seen as the *cause* of marginalization and exclusion from the ‘normal’ employment.

⁹⁴ In the cited article, Desille adopts the concept of deservingness as put forward by Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2014). The argument made is that even in cases in which there seems to be no differentiation between the same minority coming from different backgrounds (such as Jews migrating to Israel from Europe or from Africa), there is. The fact that one category is labelled as especially ‘vulnerable’ (the one migrating from Africa in the case of Jews, the ones migrating from Central and Eastern Europe in the case of Roma) has important consequences in terms of integration measures. The ‘vulnerable’ group gets officially included in the integration policies on the same footing as the other groups, but in practice they are excluded from the cultural recognition that the other (less ‘vulnerable’) groups enjoy.

⁹⁵ Even though majorities and minorities are *equally different*, meaning that we live at the same (cultural) distance, both Spanish and Italian policies tend to frame cultural difference as ‘belonging’ to the Roma.

The policymaker in charge of the 2009 Trento law to favor the integration of Roma and Sinti explained the section of legislation that refers to fostering ‘traditional Roma employment’ in the following way:

“[i]n the reformulation of the new law, we also realized that we had to push for the creation of cooperation and services, of a type of employment that would respect the working culture of the Sinto, hence a ‘large’ time dimension, with a different, more flexible organizational structure... working outdoors, rather than in closed spaces, that kind of thing.” (interview 11, Trento, February 2015)

These narratives, once incorporated in the policy actions, are extremely consequential, and play an active role in shaping both the terminology that mainstream media tends to borrow from the official documents as well as the material opportunity (or lack thereof) afforded to Roma through the (mis)framing of their needs. Also, stereotypes tend to mutually reinforce one another, actively shaping the image of Roma minorities not only for the media or the non-Roma public, but also for the Roma. As a Roma member of the Basque Roma Council commented referring to the tv show “Palabra de Gitano”⁹⁶: “[T]he problem is that our youngsters watch these kind of shows, and because this patriarchal, petty criminal image is the only one of themselves that they see on tv, some are now starting to act it out on the street, as if it were admissible” (interview 2, Bilbao, September 2014).

As any identity, Roma culture as we know it today would not exist without the discourse created by numerous experts, policymakers and media outlets. The limited variety of images, information and stories available that escape the ghettoized and/or romanticized stereotypes on Roma make it however particularly difficult to leave the cultural straitjacket within which Roma identity has been confined: “The production of knowledge about Roma presents a curious consensus on who the Roma are and typically reinforces stereotypes. Consequently, Roma identity tends to be recognized by the strength of the stereotypes related to it.” (Surdu 2014, 1).

⁹⁶ A Spanish TV show advertised as a documentary on Roma culture, which presents folkloric and largely negative images of Roma communities in Spain.

3.5.3 The migrant as other

One frame that emerges as an important one in the ways in which the Roma integration policies are shaped is that of migration. In the case of Italy, the second State report to the FCNM explicitly states the preoccupation with the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union, and the NRIS attempts to situate legally and divide geographically (in different camps) Roma with different nationalities. At the same time, the connotation of ‘nomads’ being attributed to all Roma regardless of their nationality caters to the idea of an ‘internal outsider’ which has more in common with migrants as ‘illegitimate entities’ (Ibrahim and Howarth 2017) than with nationals.

In Spain, the migrant frame is mostly present by omission: while a few of the most recent regional integration plans acknowledge the fact that there is a non-Spanish Roma population that might fall under the same policy, the default wording assumes that the integration plans are directed solely at Spanish Roma. The National Strategy mentions that that “the quantity of Roma people in Spain has increased with the arrival of Roma principally from Romania and Bulgaria who, above all since 2002 (when visa requirements for the two countries were lifted) and once again since 2007 (when they joined the EU) have chosen Spain as their country of destination.” (p.5), but since their presence is considered to be difficult to quantify, measures are not target to them. The choice of ‘leaving out’ migrant Roma from the National Strategy was at least in part a product of local and Spanish national Roma associations and movements’ concern that stereotypes and racialized perceptions of the newcomers might be ‘transferred’ from one group to Roma in general (Magazzini and Piemontese 2016).

To a large extent, policies in both countries are an attempt to reconcile and make sense of two different mechanisms: one the one hand the trickle-down adoption of the EU narrative on Roma people as victims of racism, discrimination and social exclusion; on the other hand, and in parallel to the NRIS, administrative restrictions have been put in place by both Italy and Spain in the attempt of providing a policy response to the freedom of movement of impoverished European citizens.

What we are left with are ethno-national frames that both build on migration stereotypes/expectations, and actively contribute to them.

3.5.4 The exception/‘complex issue’ as other

While the principle of guiding the general approach of the Roma integration policies is that of the “explicit but not exclusive” approach, in practice the abovementioned administrative restrictions are often addressed to Roma in an exclusive yet not explicit way (Magazzini and Piemontese 2016; Bereményi and Mirga 2012).

Much of the justification of Italy for its exclusion of the Roma minority from official recognition is presented in the documents in terms of their ‘exceptionality’ or ‘complexity’. Such frame serves as an argument for virtually any unusual (and at times illegal, as with the ‘emergency’ declared in 2008) policy, and it goes hand in hand with a narrative of emergencies.

The contradictory and yet coexisting axis between the politics of benevolence and a securitization approach (Baar 2017), while not identified in the policies aimed at Spanish gitanos, is also present in Spain with regards to those Roma who are not included in the policies. In particular, Vrabiescu and Kalir have shown how migrant Roma women in Spain often fail to meet the normative standards of ‘good mothers’ used to evaluate potential recipients of social benefits, and “they are individualized and assessed according to a yardstick that represents the values and expectations of care workers (often a proxy to ‘mainstream’ Spanish society) [...], who de facto do not address but reproduce multiple discrimination” (Vrabiescu and Kalir 2017, 11).

3.6 Conclusion: the problem of reification

The framing of Roma’s European-ness as a *sui generis* case of non-nationals has gained increasing appeal in a number of countries over the past years. The appeal is understandable, since such representation allows for an articulation of Roma otherness that can be declined in different ways according to the preference of the policy, of the institution or of the policymaker in charge of defining and representing the Roma. As Vermeersch argued “[d]epending on how political and social actors portrayed them or on how activists represented them, the Roma could be conceived of in different ways: as migrants/ nomads, as a national minority, as an ethnic group

or as a social underclass” (Vermeersch 2012, 1203). Of course, none of such representations or ‘otherings’ in neatly separate, and they often overlap with an reinforce each other. Yet, depending on the situation, policies choose to focus on an aspect or category, and to identify them accordingly.

As argued in chapter 1 (pp.24-26), from a social constructivist point of view identities do not exist separately from the social situation to which they are appropriate, which in turn is created by the narratives that the actors choose to describe it with (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). If we are to judge from the representation of ‘who the Roma are’ according to the policies, strategies and plans that aim at integrating this minority(ies), the root of the cause of why Europe’s attempt to ‘integrate’ Roma failed can thus be found in the fact that we, European majorities, are hardly able to ‘imagine’ Roma people as peers.

The bureaucratic imagining and identity construction has however many variants.

In Spain the Roma integration issue is seen as fairly apolitical: if anything, it allows the central government (irrespective of its political color) to showcase at the international level how favorable they are towards minorities: in this sense the Roma offer a formidable opportunity to receive a ‘good mark’ in international/ European fora, to compensate the tensions with other minorities (such as the Basque and the Catalan) which are perceived as more politically problematic.

In Italy, instead, the picture is reversed: linguistic accommodation is seen as relatively unproblematic, and the territorial special autonomies competences and power relation with the central government is nowadays not a matter of serious debate. Roma minorities, on the other hand, are too scattered, fractioned, and disenfranchised to offer a competing different image of themselves to the majoritarian society. They are therefore more liable of being the object of political fear mongering and scapegoating for anything from increases in crimes to the social degradation of the city suburbs. What emerges on the issue of recognition is that the labeling of a minority as “national” or not is one that has much more to do with the issues of political expediency of the state in terms of identification and categorization, than with the identity of the group as having a short or long history of settlement, feeling more or less attached to the state in which it resides, and having a strong or weak sense of belonging towards said state.

CHAPTER 4

On what integration is represented to be

4.1 Introduction

Integration is a term that can fittingly be included in what W. B. Gallie labeled as “essentially contested concepts” (Gallie 1956). Essentially contested concepts are those notions “the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users” (Gallie, 1956, 169). Gallie warned that the indetermination suffered by this kind of concepts cannot be settled by appeal to linguistics or logic, since it is caused by a dispute, a substantive disagreement on the reasons to attribute any given meaning to the concept.

As we have seen in chapter 1 (pp. 26-33), integration has become a key term in social sciences, and yet it can be used—as it is—for a variety of meanings. Depending of the context, it may refer to European integration, to the integration of migrants or of Roma minorities, to integration into the labor market, and so on. Within each of these understandings, different ideologies take various and at times contrasting approaches: within the ‘migrant integration’ paradigm, for instance, integration can be interpreted as either a two-way process involving change in both the majority and minority population; as a responsibility which solely or mainly rests upon the migrant; or as a three way process that also includes countries of origin (Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx 2016).

The lack of agreement on the meaning of integration in academic debates mirrors and reflects the broadly diverse range of policies that fall under the label ‘integration’, since the scope and target of such policies are largely dependent upon the States’ categorization of migrants and minorities’ legal status.

Since the development of ‘A Common Agenda for Integration’, the European Union has pushed for an interpretation of integration that sees it as “[a] dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States” (Commission of the European Communities 2005, 5). As noted by Deborah Phillips, however, “[a]lthough the desirability of integration as a two-way process may be publicly acknowledged, the expectation is

that most of the adaptation will be undertaken by the minority ethnic population” (Phillips 2010, 3).

The indetermination of the notion of integration is closely related to what the aims or the target of integration is considered to be: whether the underlying ‘problem’ that integration should tackle is seen in terms of cultural distance from the majority or as socio-economic disadvantage. With these two main categories—cultural distance and socio-economic disadvantage—as a departure point, in the following sections I carry out a thematic and discourse analysis of the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) in Italy and Spain. The NRIS represent the cornerstones of the Roma integration policy in terms of goal-setting and specific objectives to be achieved, and thus are critical to understand how Roma integration is interpreted. I triangulate the analysis of the Strategies with 30 interviews conducted with policy-makers and administrators involved in the formulation, design and implementation of said strategies. By giving policymakers a voice on what Roma integration is about, or what it should be about according to them, and what they meant by it in the policy-process, it is possible to gain some insight into what the goals and expectations of such measures are, and thus how to evaluate the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of the state’s policies.

4.2 Whose integration and what kind of integration?

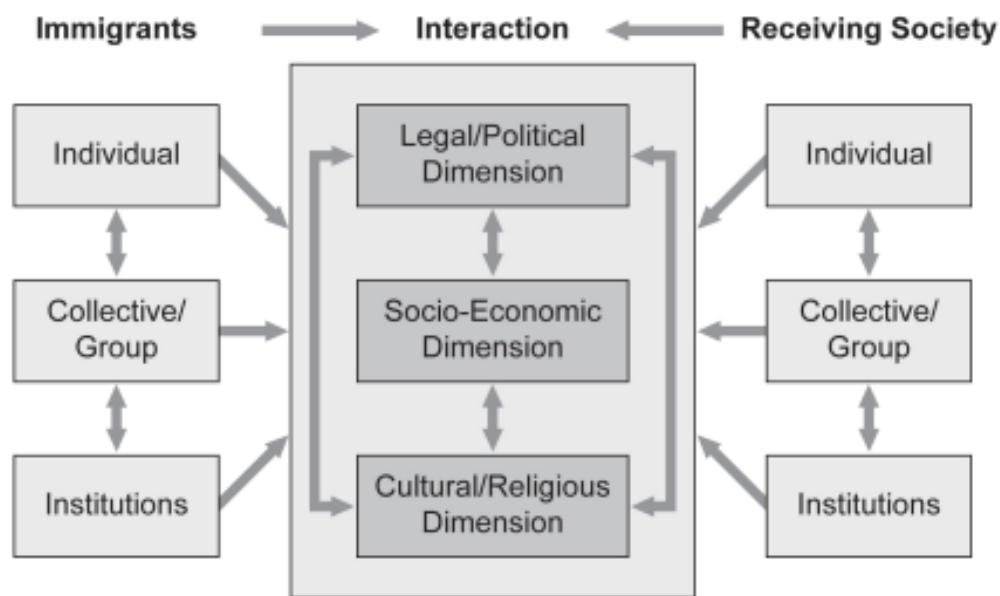
4.2.1 Integration of old and new minorities

While in European literature and policies the concept of minority integration is usually understood to address the situation of migrants, and specifically that of third country nationals (Penninx, Spencer, and Hear 2008; Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx 2016; Murphy 2010), it has also become an increasingly pivotal term in directives and policies targeting explicitly Roma minorities—even though the vast majority of them are European citizens and only a relatively small number have left their country of origin (Matras and Leggio 2018).

When referred to migrants, integration has been defined in the literature as “measures designed to deal with the longer term consequences of migration and settlement” (Favell 2003, 2) and more broadly as “the extent to which migrants are seen as a part of the host society” (Hunger 2014, 4).

Garcés-Mascareñas and Pennix have conceived of integration as a process shaped by the interaction between migrants and the receiving society, even though it is an interaction between parties that are fundamentally unequal in power and resources (Pennix and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016):

Figure 1. A heuristic model for the empirical study of integration processes



Integration Policies of European Cities in Comparative Perspective: Structural Convergence and Substantial Differentiation (Pennix and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016), p.160

They qualify their claim as follows:

“Who are the relevant parties involved? Firstly, there are the immigrants themselves, with their varying characteristics, efforts, and degrees of adaptation (the left part of Figure 1). Secondly, we find the receiving society, with its characteristics and reactions to the newcomers (the right part of Figure 1). It is the interaction between the two, however, that determines the direction and the temporal outcomes of the integration process. However, these two “partners” are fundamentally unequal in terms of power and resources. The receiving society, especially its institutional structure and reaction to newcomers, is far more decisive for the outcome of the process than the immigrants themselves are.” (Pennix and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016)

Should the relationship between the Roma minority and the majoritarian society be conceived of similarly as that between migrants and the receiving societies, or in some other way?

Roma minorities are specifically addressed—as we have seen in chapter 3—in Italy and Spain’s Reports pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a framework that as a general rule does not include ‘new’ minorities (even though it is not forbidden to do so). This would lead to think of them as ‘old’ or national minorities, but at the same time a specific set of ‘integration’ policies aimed at the Roma has emerged, which is an atypical way to contend with diversity management of traditional minorities. Long-established minorities in European countries, whether officially recognized or not as national minorities by the state in which they reside, have generally, albeit to different degrees, been granted some sort of autonomy from the state. Such autonomy (linguistic, fiscal, etc.) has typically not included interaction with mainstream society as a necessary feature of majority-minority relations⁹⁷. Despite obvious differences, the same can be said about First Nations in Canada, Native Americans in the United States and Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders in Australia (Albinski 1983; Minority Rights Group International 2014; Minority Rights Group International 2016). The rationale is fairly straightforward: since historical, autochthonous minorities became numerical minorities in the territories they have traditionally inhabited as a result of conquest, colonization, state-building and/or of the redrawing of international borders, their incorporation into the state is seen as ‘involuntary’, which in turn makes it difficult for the state to ask for concessions in terms of cultural integration or assimilation⁹⁸ (Medda-Windischer 2014, 3). This is reflected in terms of institutional setting and the politics of the minorities’ representation: generally speaking, ‘old’ or national minorities (such as the Catalans or Basques in Spain, or the German-speaking minorities in Italy) are entitled to their own (territorially-based) institutions, while migrant minorities are not. In both cases the relationship with the State is unequal, but not to the same extent. Such difference can be exemplified by the view of an Italian policymaker who works on Roma integration policies in the capital:

⁹⁷ While important historical, political and legal differences exist between Western and Eastern European countries, the protection of ethnic national minorities is not generally framed in terms of ‘integration’. The only exception I am aware of are the ‘integration programs’ developed by Estonia and Latvia for their Russian minorities, but even in these cases an attempt was made to frame the policies as addressed to “residents with immigrant background” or “immigrant settlers” (Cianetti 2015, 201).

⁹⁸ The idea that migrants, and particularly refugees, have migrated ‘voluntarily’ and should therefore integrate into the host society is debated. See Schweitzer (2017); and Spencer et al. (2004).

“I am fighting a fierce battle to take away the minority status of the Ladin... I clearly wrote so in the REF report⁹⁹, because I am a cynic who is forced to cynicism and I am a concrete person. But seriously: why is it that we have a law on linguistic minorities in Italy? Do we really want to protect linguistic minorities? No. We have these laws because the Tyroleans put enough bombs for us to give in, so we turned them into ‘special status’ areas, as long as they wouldn’t place any more bombs. In Sicily and Sardinia, other riotous territories, same story [‘altre marchette’]. In Italy, as a matter of fact, we have laws on minorities that have been absolutely instrumental, part of a process of pacification of a unitary state that has never been perceived as really their own by the whole peninsula. Everyone feels special... I feel Roman, a colleague feels Sardinian... my partner is Palermitan, and sometimes we have a hard time understanding each other. In such a country, centrifugal drives are either repressed or negotiated. So they were negotiated. But tell me, what are we supposed to negotiate with the Roma minorities? They will never have the language minority status. Never.” (interview 32, Rome, December 2015)

4.2.2 Cultural versus socio-economic integration

A part from the issue of whether the Roma belong to ‘old’ or ‘new’ minorities, and what kind of implications such categorization has for the Roma integration policies, another distinction that must be made is between cultural integration and socio-economic integration.

The discourses and policies related to integration comprise of both a cultural and a socio-economic dimension. Since the ways in which ethno-cultural diversity and socio-economic inclusion have been narrated in Europe over the past decades have gradually shifted, they have therefore also affected the narratives on integration.

On ethno-cultural diversity, despite the backlash on multiculturalism that has gained traction over the past decades (Barber 2015; Connolly 2010), what has taken place is not so much a radical change in policies as much as a rebranding of multiculturalism into interculturalism and diversity (Magazzini 2017; Sigona 2015). The shift from multiculturalism to diversity can be observed, for example, in the Council of Europe’s 2008 White Paper on intercultural dialogue *Living Together as Equals in Dignity*, which was developed to contribute to an “international discussion gaining steady momentum” on the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe 2008, 51). The document argues that:

⁹⁹ ‘REF’ stands for Roma Education Fund, which was created in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005. Its mission and ultimate goal is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. In order to achieve this goal, the organization supports policies and programs that ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems. It has also advocated for including Romanés as a language to be taught in schools.

“[W]hile this [multiculturalism] was ostensibly a radical departure from assimilationism, in fact multiculturalism frequently shared the same, schematic conception of society set in opposition of majority and minority, differing only in endorsing separation of the minority from the majority rather than assimilation to it. [...] Whilst driven by benign intentions, multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals” (Council of Europe 2008, 18–19)

On the whole, there has been a growing willingness to recognize the benefits of diversity as a positive asset for society as a whole, particularly as an economic asset in cities and companies rebranding themselves as innovative, open and progressive. The main critiques to multiculturalism reside not in negating the potential benefits of plural societies and of different cultures coexisting in the same territory, but rather on the communitarism and separation that are attributed to multicultural policies. Therefore, there has been a shift from the recognition of cultural rights for *groups* to a narrative of desirability that *individuals* belonging to ethno-cultural minorities contribute to the diversity of mainstream society by participating in it (within mainstream structures, institutions and companies).

Regarding the socio-economic dimension, we have assisted to a similar shift of focus over the past decades from group or class redistributive claims to more individual-focused narratives that stress growth and employment as the solution to social exclusion (Cianetti 2016).

In 2004 *Facing the Challenge: Lisbon strategy for growth and employment*, also known as the Kok report, focused specifically on job creation and growth, a trend reinforced with the European Social Agenda (2005-2010) in which employment and growth (the “prosperity objective”) and equality (the “solidarity objective”) were framed as two separate issues. While both figured as ‘priorities’ in the Agenda, the solidarity objective hinged on the achievement of the prosperity objective¹⁰⁰, while integration started being framed as simply a matter of being employed (COM2005 12 final).

With the 2008 economic crisis triggering an ongoing social crisis (European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs 2015b), cuts in social services and austerity policies affected disproportionately those disadvantaged minorities that were supposed

¹⁰⁰ Characterized at page 6 as “[t]he most urgent issue facing Europe today is the lack of growth and job creation that safeguards the standard of living and social protection Europeans have grown used to”.

to be ‘integrated’ according to the Social Agenda¹⁰¹. In 2010, the European platform against poverty and social exclusion was launched as one of seven flagship initiatives within the new agenda for Europe 2020, and it identified as one of its challenges the increasing numbers of Europeans “still on the side-lines, both from the labour market and from social inclusion and integration”. The proposed solution was however growth, rather than redistribution: “Restoring economic growth with more and better jobs will be the key to the fight against poverty” (COM2010 758 final, p.2).

It therefore seems that integration is employed in these documents as the antidote to social exclusion and as a solution to unemployment (often interpreted as exclusion from the job market). The fact that minorities have been hit the hardest by the economic crisis has not, generally, translated into a willingness to propose structural solutions in terms of strengthening social policies aimed at vulnerable groups¹⁰². Conversely, economic growth and job creation have been promoted as the solution to social exclusion and marginalization, shifting the narrative from wider social integration to labor market integration, while neglecting the fact that minorities are still disproportionately disadvantaged even in a context of economic growth (Cianetti 2016, 19–20). The underlying assumption has been that integration would follow from growth promotion, according to what has been dubbed as “trickle-down minority social integration” (Cianetti 2016).

While the economic crisis is not responsible for the mismatch between the cultural recognition discourse (stressing the benefits of diversity for mainstream society and for the economy) and socio-economic redistribution (focusing on growth), it contributed to shift ‘minority integration’, over the past decade, from an issue of political necessity and desirability into a sort of ‘crisis management’ operation that has become detached from the more structural objectives of redistribution.

¹⁰¹ Disadvantaged minorities have increasingly been identified as ‘vulnerable groups’ in reports by the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Parliament. See (Abrisketa et al. 2015).

¹⁰² For instance, the Social Investment Package, a set of guidelines and recommendations developed by the European Commission’s DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in 2013 to tackle what it defined as the challenges of growing inequality, increasing poverty, social exclusion and record unemployment, does not identify ethnic minorities or migrants explicitly as categories at risk, despite the many studies that show how minorities have been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis.

4.3 Integration markers and means vs. integration foundations

Within this context, how can and should we situate the ‘Roma integration’ concept and policy framework? As mentioned in the first two chapters, the emergence of the Roma minority as a category to be ‘included’, and later ‘integrated’, saw a significant hoist in the late 90s and the early 2000s, along with a more general preoccupation with minority protection in Europe, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars that accompanied it. A 2003 meeting of twelve European countries to promote the socio-economic inclusion of Roma minorities in the region resulted in the launch of the Decade for Roma Inclusion initiative (2005-2015), which had the declared goals of (a) accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma and (b) to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way (Decade of Roma Inclusion Steering Committee 2005, 3).

Such initiative was supported by international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the Open Society Institute, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Roma Information Office¹⁰³, the European Roma and Travellers Forum¹⁰⁴, the European Roma Rights Centre¹⁰⁵ and the Roma Education Fund¹⁰⁶.

The same year of the launch of the Decade for Roma Inclusion, the European Agenda on Migration was announced in 2005 by the European Commission. The Agenda included a section on “Effective integration” (p.16) in which the European Commission stressed the importance of using available European funding measures such as the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund to foster integration of migrants and mutual trust, with a special focus on asylum seekers and refugees.

The governments signatories to the strategy committed “to combat Roma poverty, exclusion, and discrimination within a regional framework”, and the main goals of the Decade were identified as “improving the welfare of Roma by including Roma in the decision-making process, and

¹⁰³ The ERIO is an international pro-Roma advocacy organization founded in 2003. See <http://www.erionet.eu/>

¹⁰⁴ The ERFT is a Roma umbrella organization created in 2004 with the support of the Finnish government, and that held a partnership agreement with the Council of Europe between 2004 and 2015.

¹⁰⁵ The ERRC was established in 1996 as an international public interest law organization working to combat anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma mainly through strategic litigation.

¹⁰⁶ The REF was crated within the framework of the Decade for Roma Inclusion with the goal to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

reviewing such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way” (Decade of Roma Inclusion Steering Committee 2005, 3)¹⁰⁷.

The ‘acknowledging’ or ‘constructing’ of the Roma as a vulnerable category—a group considered to be especially susceptible to social exclusion (European Commission 2010b)—, and the representation of Roma exclusion as a public problem differed, however, from the accounts of other disadvantaged or marginalized groups. While the European Commission has generally not singled out (or even mentioned) Roma exclusion in most of its documents on welfare, economic growth, and social inclusion, it developed a parallel, growing set of reports, directives and recommendations addressing the Roma as a specifically disadvantaged group. Similarly, other international organizations, researchers and often also Roma activists have tended to reinforce the idea that the Roma face a kind of obstacles that are completely different from the issues of other groups or of the majority population and that set them in a category of their own.

The growing debate around Roma exclusion (and the need for Roma integration) alongside its increasing isolation from the social exclusion discussion affecting other marginalized groups has made for the hybridization of a discourse that is highly ethnicized, and yet at the same time centered on poverty and exclusion.

This has led to a Roma Integration Strategy Framework that, at the European level, sets the same markers and means typically used to assess the integration of other groups, but without addressing what Ager and Strang identified as the foundation of integration, namely the issue of rights and citizenship.

¹⁰⁷ The countries that took part in the Decade for Roma Inclusion were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. Slovenia, the United States, Norway and Moldova held observer status.

A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration



Source: Ager and Strang (2008), *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.21, No.2, p.170

In their 2008 paper “Understanding integration: a conceptual framework” Ager and Strang carried out a thorough review of the ways in which the term integration had been used in policy documents, in an attempt to identify those elements that were consistently central to perceptions of what constituted ‘successful’ integration (Ager and Strang 2008). In that case, the target population to be ‘integrated’ were refugees, and by analyzing the 200 indicators of integration proposed by the 1997 Council of Europe’s Report “Measurements and Indicators of Integration” and combining additional literature review with fieldwork in refugee camps, they came up with recurrent dimensions of integration, illustrated in the figure above.

In the following sections, I use the same approach, looking at how policymakers have defined ‘Roma integration’ in the Italian and Spanish National Roma Integration Strategies. The NRIS are the cornerstone documents that lay the conceptual framework for the policies and actions that the governments are then expected to pursue with regard to Roma minorities. Taking the NRIS as departing points, I then interviewed the key policymakers who have contributed to shaping them, and asked them what they meant by integration.

4.4 Roma integration in the NRIS: what is the ‘problem’?

As described in chapter 3, in 2012 both Italy and Spain submitted to the European Commission a National Roma Integration Strategy. Countries were left free to interpret and use the term ‘integration’ in any way they deemed appropriate, since there is no officially agreed upon definition of ‘integration’. However, the 2011 Communication “A EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” provided some guidelines regarding what was expected on behalf of the European institutions:

“Since non-discrimination alone is not sufficient to combat the social exclusion of Roma, the Commission asks the EU institutions to endorse this EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. It is a means to complement and reinforce the EU’s equality legislation and policies by addressing, at national, regional and local level, but also through dialogue with and participation of the Roma, the specific needs of Roma regarding equal access to employment, education, housing and healthcare” (COM2011 173 final, p.3).

In other words, the Race Equality Directives (2000/43/EC) and the Framework Directive (2000/87/EC) were deemed insufficient to tackle “the social and economic problems of a large part of the EU’s Roma population” by the Commission’s Roma Task Force: such a situation required “explicit measures to *prevent* and *compensate* for *disadvantages* they [the Roma] face” (COM2011 173 final, pp.3-4, emphasis added).

The rationale for introducing explicitly targeted measures aimed at reducing inequality was rooted in the conviction that Roma integration, far from benefitting solely the Roma communities, would both foster social cohesion and bring economic benefits to society as a whole, as well as deter large numbers of Eastern European Roma from migrating westward (Vermeersch 2012). Regarding the scope and form that such targeted measures were to take, some general guidelines were provided already by the 2010 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion (see chapter 2, p.52) and by six actions that countries were expected to include in their National Roma Integration Strategies and that are listed at pages 8-9 of the 2011 Commission Communication 173 under the section “Expressing the EU ambition: setting Roma integration goals”, and which can be summarized as follows:

- To set out national goals for Roma integration to bridge the gap with the general population (particularly with regard to the four axes of education, employment, healthcare and housing);

- To carry out a poverty mapping using already available socio-economic indicators (such as intergenerational poverty, unemployment and low education attainment) in order to locate the most deprived areas and communities and eliminate segregation where present;
- To make use of available EU funding, while also allocating national resources to pursuing Roma integration;
- To develop a monitoring and evaluation methodology;
- To involve the Roma civil society, regional and local authorities;
- To appoint a national contact point for the national Roma integration strategy with the authority to coordinate the development and implementation of the strategy.

From these guidelines, the main concern of integration seems to be that of advancing Roma's access to services and their 'scores' in the realms of socio-economic status and standards of living. The 2011 EU Strategy for Roma Integration Framework focuses on two main concerns: on the one hand, discrimination towards Roma communities and individuals, which is identified as one of the major obstacles to integration, and on the other hand inequality of outcome between Roma and non Roma in the four axes of employment, housing, health and education. Issues of culture, identity, or difference in lifestyle between Roma and non-Roma, instead, are not even mentioned once in the various European Commission communications and reports on Roma integration, and the only time that the term 'difference' is employed in COM(2011) 173 it stands to highlight the disparity in access to institutions and to services (thus the call to 'bridge the gap' with the mainstream population). Such representation of Roma integration was confirmed by the way in which the 'Roma issue' continued to be treated at the European level following the 2010-2012 momentum, as well as by opinions voiced by European officials at meetings and interviews. In the words of a European Commission officer asked about an opinion on a proposed bill for Roma to be recognized as a national minority in Italy: "Of course activists are free to pursue any cause they want. But we don't need to fragment Europe in ever more minorities and nationalist movements than we already have. What we need is for Roma to be treated as full and equal citizens" (interview 31, December 2015, Brussels).

Spain, as mentioned in previous chapters, in 2011-2012 already had a fairly long trajectory of Roma inclusion plans and practices to draw upon for the drafting of its National Roma Integration Strategy. As a matter of fact, the European Framework for Roma Integration put

forward by the European Commission borrowed some features—such as the focus on four priority areas (education, health, housing and employment)—from the structure and goals set by Decade for Roma Inclusion (of which Spain was a member and strong driver) and from the Spanish ‘explicit but not exclusive’ approach. It is therefore not surprising that the 2011 EU Framework was well received by the Spanish government, and that Spain did not encounter major difficulties in producing a National Strategy that was in line with the European guidelines. The way in which the term ‘integration’ is used is however noteworthy, as it was not Spain’s term of choice: the “National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020” is titled in its Spanish version “Estrategia Nacional para la *Inclusión Social* de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020”, choosing to use the term ‘social inclusion’ rather than ‘integration’¹⁰⁸. This is reflected in the body of the text as well: the word ‘inclusion’ is used 54 times in the text, while ‘integration’ 13 times¹⁰⁹. Even more relevant than the preference of the Spanish government for the term ‘inclusion’ over ‘integration’ is that the word ‘integration’, when employed, is used as a synonym for overcoming socio-economic marginalization. When describing the challenges that the Strategy aims at tackling, the document reads: “In general terms, Roma people in Spain have seen significant social progress in the last 40 years; such progress is the result of the arrival of democracy in Spanish society, economic growth on a national scale, the establishment of a Social state, generalised access to social welfare systems (particularly housing, education, healthcare and social services and benefits) and specific measures and programmes aimed at correcting disadvantages. However, there is still a long way to go for there to be equality in the four fundamental areas for social inclusion, and on which the targets of this National Roma Integration Strategy for Spain are based” (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2012, 5).

The goals of the Spanish Strategy in the document are identified along six main aims: firstly, the Strategy it is seen as an opportunity to consolidate the measures that are identified as having been successful in previous years; secondly, the need to find a balance between mainstreaming (general) and targeted (Roma-specific) policies is highlighted. Three of the aims (3, 4, and 5) are dedicated to stress how the Spanish reform fits in line with European requirements and will continue to promote a European sanctioned approach (including special attention to the Common

¹⁰⁸ Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad de España, 2012, emphasis added.

¹⁰⁹ In the Spanish version, the word “*inclusión*” is used 52 times, while the term “*integración*” 11 times.

Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion and a greater use of Structural Funds), while the last goal is described as the need to adapt “the general principles to the plurality of socio-economic circumstances of the Roma, by means of flexible and appropriate work models” (p.12).

A section titled “The 2020 National Roma Integration Strategy: Definition and Targets” provides a detailed description of the targets aimed at improving the living conditions of Roma, and include mid-term quantifiable targets to be reached by 2015 and 2020 for each of the key areas of social inclusion: education, health, jobs and housing. It however does not offer an explicit definition of what is meant by ‘integration’ nor of ‘inclusion’.

The following quote from a policymaker who contributed to the Spanish Strategy’s conceptual framework helps get a better sense of how and why ‘integration’ was adopted in the Strategy to begin with:

“Well, the semantics of a term always carries nuances and is important. It’s not the same to say ‘handicapped’ or ‘disabled’, or ‘person with disability’. The terminology has been changing and evolving as well...but basically the National Strategy uses the term [integration] that was established by the European Framework; *the term was really just adopted because of that*. However, when [later in the document] the meaning that is given to [integration] is defined, you can see that the principles for Roma integration are defined, and *basically what is meant by integration is the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma population, their normalization into society*, while respecting their differences and their particularities. And for this reason, the Spanish Strategy should not be reduced to the four axes established by the European framework (education, housing, etc.) but we also included aspects related to culture, discrimination, etc.; aspects that we have always worked on and that we considered important.” (interview no.19, April 2015, Madrid)

Similar considerations about this understanding of integration, consistent with the idea of it being a matter of improving Roma’s socio-economic conditions—often referred to in terms of ‘normalizing’ or ‘bringing up to level’ the rate of unemployment, education outcome etc. or Roma persons with that of the majoritarian population—were made by a number of other Spanish interviewees in charge of policy-making and/or implementation¹¹⁰. While the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (that was charged with producing the Strategy and remains the National Contact Point to manage and implement it) seems to have incorporated in the document some cultural elements advanced by the Secretariado Gitano, the Unión Romaní, the Fundación Instituto de Cultura Gitana and other entities, the focus and benchmarking remained strongly

¹¹⁰ Interviews no.4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 21 and 23.

centered around the economic, and particularly, the employment and schooling dimensions. A Spanish policy-maker described the ‘Spanish model’ of Roma integration and its line of action in the following terms:

“The key to the Spanish model has been a programmatic approach that has prioritized measures to redress inequalities and improve living conditions over other approaches more focused on issues of identity, advocacy for minorities or political participation, which in fact have also started to emerge, but later. This is to say, we privileged a socio-economic approach over the ethnic approach.” (interview no.3, October 2014, Barcelona).

This does not mean that there is unanimity amongst the different stakeholders on the success of such an approach, or that its implementation has been applied in a consistent or uniform way in different autonomous communities (Bereményi and Mirga 2012). Mónica Santos Carrillo, a Spanish Roma activist and writer, took issue with the very definition of the problem in a 2015 article:

“The concept of ‘Roma integration’ is discriminatory in and of itself: Where and how are we supposed to integrate? Is it correct to use the general term Roma [Gitano o Pueblo Gitano], applied to these types of policies that favor the most marginalized layers of society? When we generalize in referring to a segment of the population that, because of its cultural or economic peculiarities is the object of discrimination, abuse and persecution, we only contribute to increase the hostility of the majority” (Santos Carrillo 2015).

That being said, neither government administrators nor any of the interviewed representatives from large and medium-sized Roma NGOs disagreed with the general goal of Roma integration being a worthy aim. Despite coordination issues between different levels of government and the third sector and disagreements on the priorities to pursue, none of the policy-makers questioned Roma integration as something positive, and there was general agreement in understanding the concept as ‘raising the living standards of the Roma population’, and therefore of the Spanish population. From an official or governmental point of view, therefore, the ‘Spanish model’ offers a consistent representation of the main ‘problem’ being that of the social and economic structures, the access to services, the ‘gap’ between Roma and non-Roma in socio-economic status. The concept of Roma identity and culture is neither dismissed nor totally excluded from the Strategy—the document mentions the creation, in 2007, of the Institute for Roma Culture, and contains the creation of educational materials on Roma culture and history to be included in schools, but these are certainly not the main pillars of what Roma integration is understood to

require or entail. Having to take a position between an identity-based approach and a socio-economic one, where Spain stands can be summarized by the following quote:

“For years there has been, in Spain and also in Europe, something that I would call ‘a mistaken empowerment’ or a ‘misunderstood empowerment’ of Roma with a focus in some cases towards defending and using more ‘ethnic arguments’ of Roma integration. I don’t share this view; I don’t think that it’s the right approach. I am more in favor of an intercultural approach, for many reasons, which doesn’t mean that I am against Roma identity...on the contrary, I am completely in favor of the empowerment of Roma, that is to say, I believe that we must seek the protagonism and participation of Roma. But when you have an ethnic approach—and I have seen this quite a bit in the countries of Centre and Eastern Europe—the fundamental risk is that the Roma issue becomes a problem *of the Roma*, not a problem *of society*, and therefore specialized agencies are created, and the integration of Roma is of course delegated to these organizations. And that does not work, and nowhere has it been shown that this works, because in the end *the key to the integration of Roma lays fundamentally in the access to standardized, normalized services, in policies by the Ministry, which then have to be balanced with targeted measures*. From this point of view, either you really get society involved in the Roma cause, or else in the end what we end up with are measures that society perceives as very differential and very segregating and then people do not get involved.” (interview no.19, April 2015, Madrid).

This approach, as expected, is quite different from the Italian one. In Italy’s National Roma Integration Strategy¹¹¹, which is approximately twice the Spanish one in pages, the word ‘integration’ is not featured in the title. The title is “National Strategy for the *Inclusion* of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities (RSC)”¹¹², or “Strategia Nazionale per l’Inclusione dei Rom, Sinti e Caminanti” in Italian. Footnote 1 of the text specifies that “[i]n view of the differing legal status of the members of relevant groups [please see below para. 1.5], it would better respond to the current heterogeneous Italian situation, the following title: ‘Strategy for the Inclusion/Integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities’.”¹¹³

The mentioned paragraph 1.5 “The Roma, Sinti and Caminanti presence in Italy: demographic issues; statistical analysis; migration flows; and legal status” opens with the statement: “The legal status of an individual impacts on his/her human condition and *way of life* in the society”¹¹⁴. The section does not explicitly define neither inclusion nor integration, but provides an extensive

¹¹¹ (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 3).

¹¹² RSC is an acronym often used in the Italian National Roma Integration Strategy to mean “Roma, Sinti and Camminanti”. The association *Idea rom onlus*, an association of Roma women based in Turin and which was created in 2009, contested the fact that the Camminanti from Sicily are included under the umbrella term Roma even though they do not identify as such.

¹¹³ National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 3.

¹¹⁴ National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 12, emphasis added.

overview of the various Roma dialects spoken in Italy by different Roma groups and gives demographic estimates broken down by citizenship status, with a particular attention to the issue of statelessness, to which a whole section is devoted.

The data provided is however not always consistent: at page 12 the estimate given for the totality of Roma persons residing in the Italian state is of about 140,000 (around 0.23% of the total population living in Italy, which is the approximate calculation provided by the Council of Europe), “most of whom are children and youngsters based in Italy, with Italian nationality”. This is however immediately followed and contradicted by a paragraph in which the estimates add up to over 160,000 persons, most of whom not holding Italian citizenship:

“They can be divided into three main groups in relation to their citizenship and period of immigration:

- The first group consists of approximately 70,000 people (Italian citizens) who settled in Italy over 600 years ago and are distributed throughout the Country¹¹⁵;
- The second group consists of about 90,000 Roma people from the Balkan region (Non-EU citizens) who arrived in Italy, in the 90’s, especially after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. This group is mainly settled in Northern Italy;
- The third - and more recent - group of migration is made of Roma people with Romanian and Bulgarian nationality (EU citizens), who mainly live in large cities (Milan, Turin, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Bari, Genoa).”

It is noteworthy that even for the first group, comprising Italian citizens, the ‘foreign’ ancestry dating back to the fourteenth century is stressed. Mention is also made one page later to “those irregular Roma people, whose exact number has not been set yet, officially. For example, the Prefecture of Rome detected the presence, on the local territory, of 12,000/13,000 irregular Roma people, compared with 7,000 regular Roma people living in around 20 unauthorized camps.”¹¹⁶

The last sentence is particularly telling of how, despite the claim that the National Strategy represented a radical rupture with the previous paradigm, Roma are still very much tied, in the government’s view, to either the so-called ‘authorized camps’ (in practice, segregated ghettos ran

¹¹⁵ This passage reads in the Italian version of the Strategy: “Essi possono essere distinti in tre gruppi principali in relazione alla cittadinanza ed al periodo di immigrazione: un primo gruppo è composto da circa 70 mila persone (cittadini italiani) presenti in Italia da oltre 600 anni e distribuito su tutto il territorio nazionale [...]” (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali 2012, 13)

¹¹⁶ National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 13

by local administrations that sub-contracts the ‘management’—mainly surveillance—of the space to private agencies or NGOs) or the ‘unauthorized camps’ (slums/ shantytowns, generally built on publicly owned land in the outskirts of cities)¹¹⁷.

On the terminology used, and the way in which ‘integration’ is applied in the Italian Strategy, the person who drafted the Strategy’s conceptual framework argued:

“From a juridical point of view we should keep the concept of integration and inclusion separated, because integration applies to those who, for instance, are not European citizens, while inclusion is for those who are European citizens but are not Italian. This is a distinction that I made in the strategy. Honestly it is however a bit useless to make these distinctions between integration and inclusion, I prefer to speak of outright inclusion, because if let’s say you are a European citizen, it is now useless to make these distinctions between European and Italian citizen, we are all Europeans now...so I think we should enter the order of ideas that the concept of integration must be overcome, even if it is true that part of the Roma who are in Italy are from places such as Bosnia, Albania, Montenegro, so they are not yet in the European Union. I did specify in the first footnote of the Strategy that the concept of integration is different from the concept of inclusion... But I tell you, really, it’s quite useless to make that distinction, because we should really just speak of inclusion and that’s it.” (interview no.25, August 2015, skype).

It should be noted how the term ‘inclusion’ is however used in administrative documents and policy measures elsewhere also referred to Italian citizens (Dente and Fiorani 2016): the *PON Inclusione*, for instance, is a National Operational Programme funded by the European Social Funds and aimed at combating poverty and exclusion:

“[T]he main purpose of the Program is to support a shared path between the various levels of government for the definition of an active measure to counter absolute poverty, since Italy is one of the few countries in Europe (the other is Greece) lacking a minimum income instrument” (Ministro del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2014, 6).

Also, in March 2017 the Italian government passed a decree creating a ‘social inclusion income’ (reddito d’inclusione sociale, REIS), a measure put forward by 35 organizations that constituted an ‘Alliance against poverty’ (Ministro del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2017).

The term ‘inclusion’ is, in the Italian National Strategy for Roma Inclusion, very often linked to the principle of anti-discrimination and the principle of equality, but the usage of rights and equality is also very much tied to the differentiation between citizens and non-citizens. There is a

¹¹⁷ The issue of infrastructure and legality in Italy is something that, as will be seen in chapter 5, is by no means exclusive to the Roma communities, given that approximately 70% of the capital’s housing infrastructure has been constructed illegally following the Second World War economic and demographic growth and was later gradually regularized over the last decades with law no.47/1985.

general preoccupation with defining the excluded groups as precisely as possible in terms of them being either ‘regular’ or ‘irregular’, while the Spanish Strategy is more concerned with the type of problem / marginalization to be overcome, rather than the specific social groups and their legal status. In Spain, a ‘neutral approach’—in the sense of not singling out the Roma as recipients of specific policies, or not targeting Roma exclusively—was considered necessary in order to prevent the promotion of ‘difference’ over ‘equality’ and the ethnicization of poverty (Kostka 2015, 82). In the Italian Strategy the focus is instead quite squarely put on ‘difference’:

“The effective implementation of the principle of equality, the realization of constitutional rights, the prevention of marginalization and discrimination, and the adoption of measures for the promotion of social inclusion/integration are closely linked. [...] It has been stressed, under Part One of the present Strategy, the differing legal statuses of members of the minority under reference, to whom to apply the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution, primarily Art.3, being dedicated to the principle of equality and non discrimination. [...] On a practical note, such principle [the equality principle] envisages that: it shall be treated on an equal basis what is equal; and on a different basis, what is different. To promote the effective application of the principle of equality vis-à-vis the RSC communities, it is necessary, at all levels of the national system, to consider the heterogeneity of this minority and the several internal differences on which to apply Art.3, para.2, of the Italian Constitution.” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 20).

The general aims listed in the Italian Strategy can be summarized as follows: firstly, the Strategy proposes to move away from dealing with Roma as an emergency issue, and to this end, it aims at planning long and medium-term actions tackling stock of the EU Agenda-Europe 2020. Secondly, it aims at making the inclusion of the Roma communities part of a more comprehensive process of cultural growth, involving society as a whole: “The acceptance of Roma and Sinti people as ‘different’ will contribute to eliminate the racial discrimination germs”¹¹⁸. This aim seems less straightforward than the first: promoting equality by stressing Roma’s ‘difference’ from the mainstream Italian population has so far, according to the 2015 DG JUST Report ‘Progress made by EU Member States in Roma integration’ (Justice and Consumers Directorate General 2015), proven to be counterproductive, while the cases that are generally presented as good practices are those geared towards creating access to services, affordable housing and rights for a range of persons living in conditions of marginalization, not limited to the Roma, but encompassing also homeless, migrants and asylum seekers (Bontempelli 2013).

¹¹⁸ National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 22.

Another goal listed in the general aims of the Italian Strategy is to adopt an inter-ministerial approach—something that the Spanish government had done, at least to some degree, from the early stages of their first ‘Plan de Desarrollo Gitano’ in 1989, while in Italy the managing authority for all Roma-related policies had in the past always been the Ministry of Interior. A last point included among the general aims was to systematically introduce the acknowledgement of the Porajmos into all public events dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust¹¹⁹.

Regarding the conceptual framework on which the Italian Strategy is based, this is described as a human rights-based approach:

“From a legal standpoint, it stems from international human rights standards; from an operational standpoint, is aimed at promoting and protecting human rights. When considering the human rights-based approach, *it should be always very clear who are the recipients of relevant measures, the rights-holders and the duty-bearers.* [...]”

With this Strategy Italy intends to achieve the effective integration/social inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities, besides effectively enabling them to fully exercise fundamental rights, as enshrined in Art.2 of the Italian Constitution” (p.19, emphasis added).

This passage is interesting for two reasons: on the one hand, it claims to intend to achieve the effective integration/social inclusion of Roma *besides* enabling them to exercise their fundamental rights: integration/ inclusion must therefore mean something else, or something beyond, being able to exercise ones’ fundamental rights. On the other hand, the text makes explicit that one of the main concerns of the Italian Strategy is to identify and categorize the various Roma groups based on their legal status, and that those categories should function as a criteria for specific measures and decision on what kind of rights and duties belong to each category.

In order to achieve the listed goals, the Italian Strategy envisioned a multidimensional model of governance based on the following principles:

- *Integrazione/sussidiarietà* (Integration/subsidiarity): the way in which integration is defined here as a ‘key word’ refers to a method of intervention (labeled as the ‘integrated approach’ in the EU Framework). The Italian Strategy seems however to narrowly

¹¹⁹ Law no. 211/2000 recognized the 27 of January as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, in which the Italian state acknowledges its responsibility in the deportation of Jews and of political dissidents, but has to date not yet been modified to include a mention to the Roma.

interpret an integrated approach as the coordination amongst different funding sources (while the EU call spoke about coordination amongst the four main areas of intervention). The text reads a few paragraphs later: “Regarding the subsidiarity principle the more stakeholders can cooperate through complementary and synergistic interventions which can optimize the use of public resources, the more the subsidiarity so realized will produce visible and lasting effects in terms of social integration and public order, with the additional positive results of eradicating stereotypes and prejudices” (p.23). The reference to the ‘public order’ component, which has been historically the main argument for forcibly relocating Roma in camps, seems to carry a vision in which Roma are still seen, at least to some extent, in terms of security and policing, while the anti-discrimination dimension remains an ‘added bonus’.

- *Coordinamento/condivisione* (Coordination/sharing): here it is explained that the Italian government chose to appoint as the national focal point for the Strategy the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), which is presented as being “not a ‘management entity’ but rather a third party’ [...] with the specific duty to oversee the effectiveness of the protection tools against discrimination”
- *Informazione/mediazione* (Information/mediation): “the social cultural mediation action shall set aside the charity approach in order to acquire the features being necessary to make those communities responsible, more representative and protagonist at decision-making bodies both nationally and locally, and within the society as a whole, so as to eliminate prejudices” (p.23). The phrasing of this section seems to suggest that Roma’s lack of ‘responsibility’ and participation in society can be ascribed to behavioral and cultural conditioning, reversible by the mediators taking a less ‘charitable’ approach. Reference is also made to *Dosta!*, an awareness raising campaign, and *ROMED*, a programme for cultural mediators.
- *Identità/cambiamento* (Identity/Change): this section reads “One of the major themes highlighted by the RSC people and confirmed by several studies and researches is the historical-cultural identity, [...] especially in relation to new generations, born and raised in specific contexts being often without a strong identity. They result to be vulnerable to factors and settings with high risk of delinquency. Against this background, the present

Strategy needs to cope with the risk of progressive depletion of memory, identity and cultural tradition of the RSC community” (pp. 23-24).

Taken as a whole, it seems that the approach adopted by the Italian government in its 2012 Strategy is indeed an attempt to comply with European demands (by announcing a radical break with previous policies and adopting a human rights approach), but that the change in terminology and declared aims do not reflect a change in how the inclusion of Roma is seen. Despite the declared and reiterated need to overcome an emergency approach that produced physical, cultural and social segregation, the Roma are still represented as an inherently problematic minority facing difficulties that are unique in scope and character. Simplifying, while the Spanish approach “views Roma exclusion as a by-product of wider socio-economic changes”(Kostka 2015, 81), the Italian one regards it as something cultural and behavioral, thus focusing on group identity and characteristics rather than on discriminatory patterns or institutional incapacity to address a systemic lack of affordable housing. While the Spanish agenda focuses on identified ‘deficits’, poor outcomes and socio-economic indicators, the Italian one points directly at specific groups with alleged specific problems. Each case responds to distinct political necessities and societal contexts, and neither is accidental. While Spain decided to ‘use’ Roma policies as an effective tool to attract European funds and develop what has been called “a strategy of competitiveness with a human face” (Kostka 2015, 82), Italy wrapped its plan in an eloquent human rights discourse which however has proven quite poor in terms of concrete measures and indicators, making any degree of compliance or success difficult to assess.

The Strategies are, by and large, a reflection of how the majority policy-makers understand the Roma’s role in society, and what role they can ‘fill’ in either economic or political terms. Thus, in order to get a sense of what underlies their perception of what the problem is, it is important to not only look at whether a socioeconomic redistributive component is included in the Strategies, but what the actual proposed measures are, and the political rationale of the policy-makers for including them.

By looking at the integration markers and means adopted in the two strategies, what comes across is that both governments made significant efforts to align the identified targets with those requested and expected by the European Framework. If, in addition to the targets, however, we

also look at the proposed measures, the plans appear to rely on distinctively different understandings of ‘what the problem is’. This, in turn, is helpful to gain a better appreciation of the underlying assumptions regarding what integration amounts to according to policy-makers in the two countries.

Integration markers and means:

HOUSING

Table 3

	Identified objectives	Proposed actions	Final recipients
Italy	Integrated policies for housing supply for the RSC people	Take stock of positive pilot projects at the local level, particularly involving mediation	RSC population from the gypsy camp
Spain	Eradication of slums and sub-standard housing	Boosting the use of Structural Funds	Roma households living in slums or sub-standard housing
Italy	Housing solutions which meet the specific needs of the RSC families; raising awareness of EU existing economic resources	Movable caravans ; Micro-areas for Sinti	RSC wishing to maintain a communal lifestyle in relation to extended families in caravans and mobile homes
Spain	Improve accommodation quality for Roma	Adjustment of public housing leasing costs according to need	Roma households with overcrowding or lack of basic services

EDUCATION

Table 4

	Identified objectives	Proposed actions	Final recipients
Italy	Promote pre-schooling and schooling of Roma and Sinti children	Linguistic-cultural and social mediators targeting the needs of foreign children	Minor immigrants, Roma, Sinti, Caminanti, lower foreign offenders prosecuted
Spain	Increase Roma pre-school completion and primary education completion	Support to enroll Roma at 0-3 years, with priority given to families at risk of social exclusion; avoid the concentration of Roma pupils in certain schools or classrooms	Roma pupils in pre-school and primary education
Italy	Increasing the participation of the RSC youth in university education , advanced training courses and vocational training	Decree of 19 Nov 2010 on university loans for high performing students	Persons between 18-40 years old enrolled in BA, MA or PhD studies with above-average grades
Spain	Increase Roma secondary education completion and attainment	Reinforcement, Guidance and Support Programmes to avoid absenteeism; avoid concentration of Roma pupils	Roma pupils in Compulsory Secondary Education
Italy	Promoting dialogue and cooperation between educational institutions, neighborhood, families and the RSC communities	Escort service to school with mediators on school bus; actions to combat [Roma] opposition towards the school; activities aimed at enhancing the gypsy culture	Those who still reside in camps or areas not served by public transport; immigrant families
Spain	Increase the education level of Roma adults; eradication of illiteracy	Boosting of literacy + permanent education programmes for Roma in Adult Education Centres, Popular Universities, Training Workshops, etc.	Roma adults

EMPLOYMENT

Table 5

	Identified objectives	Proposed actions	Final recipients
Italy	Provide the training necessary to be integrated into the labor market and	providing basic skills for start-ups and / or self-employment; Microcredit projects	Non-EU citizens and immigrants of Roma origin
Spain	Improve access to normalized employment	Awareness activities to remove discrimination in the access of the Roma to the labor market; access to micro credits	Public Employment Services; Roma
Italy	Promoting tools, methods and devices for the regularization of irregular or precarious employment	self-employment and micro-businesses (agricultural field, waste collection, street performances, iron and wood collection)	Roma and Sinti individuals at risk of social exclusion
Spain	Reduce job precariousness among the Roma	Normalization of undeclared professional activities in which a high percentage of Roma work (mobile trading, rubbish collection)	Roma people at risk of exclusion
Italy	Developing individualized pathways to accompany Roma women and youth to the labor market	Replicate the Spanish ACCEDER programme	Roma and Sinti women and youth who are legal residents even if they do not have Italian citizenship
Spain	Improve professional qualifications of Roma	New technology training (ICT) for Roma; agreements and paid internships	Roma people at risk of exclusion

HEALTH

Table 6

	Identified objectives	Proposed actions	Final recipients
Italy	Promote the analysis and access to quality health and social services for Roma and Sinti	Vaccination campaign for Roma children; Interregional Migrants operating table created at the Interregional Coordination in Health of the State-Regions Conference	Immigrant Roma living in camps; de facto stateless Roma
Spain	Improve health among the Roma	Boosting promotion of lifelong health active measures	Roma, with special attention to adolescents
Italy	Promoting access to preventive health services, with specific regard to reproductive health and maternal-child health	Health intercultural approaches aimed (project ‘Prevention of abortions in foreign women’ and ‘Lines of cross-cultural intervention in primary care and maternal and child’)	Health professionals and foreign women, among which Roma women
Spain	Reduce social inequalities in healthcare	Reorientation of health services towards equality, in terms of areas for promotion and the prevention of diseases and healthcare assistance	National Healthcare System
Italy	Involving trained Roma and Sinti in social services and medical care programs as cultural mediators	Create a brochure “Choose health” with information of health education and facilities in Italian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian; specific training courses for personnel of linguistic and cultural mediation	Health professionals and Roma migrants
Spain	Health interventions among Roma children	Coordinate with pediatric services in order to promote information and training circulation actions for Roma, particularly immigrants	Health professionals, immigrant Roma minor

4.5 What assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?

By observing the proposed measures for achieving integration, rather than the declared aims, the most noticeable difference between the two countries is not the focus on the socio-economic dimension of integration or on the cultural one—even though the economic/ cultural divide can also be appreciated. The most stark distinction between the two approaches is that, while the Spanish narrative is about improving living conditions for a part of its population (that might well be overly represented among the poor and poorly educated, as well as culturally different and/ or subject to ethnic discrimination), Italy's discourse is about incorporating, integrating or accommodating an 'external' group (or rather multiple external groups) that are not a part of the Italian nation and its society, even though they might hold Italian citizenship. This fundamental issue of being represented as belonging or not to the body politic can be seen both in the terminology used by policy-makers, as well as in the National Roma Integration Strategies: in Italy, the problem is framed as one about integrating foreigners, or citizens of foreign origin, and that in any case hold a culture and values that are seen as foreign and distant, and often opposed, to 'Italianness'. Therefore the indicators, categories and framework adopted are those usually employed in the "integration for migrants" literature, including the need to respect the "migrants" identity and 'diversity' while making sure that they [the migrants/ Roma] accept 'Italian' values. In Spain, it is instead about bringing 'up to level' an impoverished and 'deficient' part of the population, and therefore the indicators and categories used are those linked to social exclusion, employment, and growth. A sentence that is repeated more than once in the Spanish Strategy, as well as in the numerous plans and actions, and that represents the main pillar of Spain's approach towards Roma integration is "[l]os gitanos son ciudadanos de pleno derecho en España" ('Roma all full and equal citizens in Spain')¹²⁰. This narrative is rooted in the democratic transition during which the 1970 law on *Criminality and social rehabilitation* [Ley sobre peligrosidad y rehabilitación social] was abolished and Roma were proclaimed full citizens. The welfare programmes of the eighties also played an important role, but they have slowly incorporated the increasingly widespread tendency (in Europe and globally) to see unemployment and poverty as a personal failure and individual shortcoming. Therefore the economic crisis that hit Spain in 2008

¹²⁰ (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2010, 38). The Fundación Secretariado Gitano publishes an annual report on cases of discrimination against Roma in Spain (Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2013; Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2015; Fundación Secretariado Gitano 2016).

(and which has not yet been completely overcome) has seen cuts to social welfare, at a time when social services would have needed a greater investment instead.

On the whole, the fundamental difference seems to be whether Roma are framed as belonging to the national polity or not. Because group solidarity and the politics of redistribution heavily rely on the contingency of perceptions of commonality and otherness (Kymlicka 2015), this dichotomy ‘in group’ v. ‘out group’ is crucial, particularly in times of economic crisis, to construct categories of deservingness: who belongs to ‘us’, and is therefore rightfully entitled to welfare benefits, popular housing, health services and so on—in short, to benefit from redistributive policies?

This distinction points at the necessity to delve, beyond integration’s markers and means, into integration’s foundation, as defined by Ager and Strang: integration as rights and full citizenship.

The departing point is that, from what can be gathered from the National Roma Integration Strategies and the policy-makers’ comments on the drafting process, being represented as belonging to an ‘in group’ or ‘out group’ matters. But what characteristics determine such representation? Why, and according to which mechanisms, is the same ethnic group understood as endogenous in Spain but exogenous in Italy?

Ager and Strang, in their definition of integration’s foundation (rights and citizenship), acknowledge that this is by no means consistent across different countries, nor does it necessarily respond to fulfilling the same criteria: “Definitions of integration adopted by a nation inevitably depend on that nation’s sense of identity, its ‘cultural understandings of nation and nationhood’ (Saggar 1995: 106). This sense of identity as a nation incorporates certain values; and these are values that significantly shape the way that a concept such as integration is approached” (Ager and Strang 2008, 173–74). They suggest that a discussion about citizenship and rights should be made explicit whenever applying the notion of integration in any given setting.

In order to make explicit the notions of nationhood, citizenship and rights in the context of Italy and Spain, as they relate to Roma integration, I hereby propose an assessment of the four categories that emerged as the most determinant for being categorized as belonging to the ‘in group’ or ‘out group’. It seems to me that from the interviewees’ description of integration, as well as from the Strategies’ targets, goals and proposed actions, what emerge as the key

characteristics that mark a group as belonging to ‘us’ or ‘them’ are fundamentally of four types, even though they often overlap and are of course not mutually exclusive: belonging based on ethnicity (*ius sanguinis*), belonging based on territory/ residency (*ius solis*), belonging based on cultural affinity (*ius culturae*) and belonging based on economic status or class (*ius pecuniae*).

4.5.1 Belonging based on ethnicity (*ius sanguinis*)

The most apparent and easily identifiable category is that of legal citizenship. Since both Italy and Spain are countries in which citizenship is determined by having one or both parents who are citizens of the state, ethnicity, or *ius sanguinis*, is an important dimension in identifying rights and duties tied to legal citizenship.

In Spain the vast majority of Roma are Spanish citizens—identified and presented as an ‘old minority’ in policy documents. Whenever non-Spanish Roma are the subject of integration programs or are referred to by policymakers in the interviews, this is made explicit by specifying that the subjects are ‘gitanos rumanos’ (Roma from Romania) or ‘gitanos inmigrantes’ (Roma immigrants), and that they can also be included under the cloak of ‘Roma integration policies’, which are however aimed at Spanish citizens.

The consequence of this approach is twofold: on the one hand, there has been a conscious choice and effort on behalf of policy-makers to not ‘single out’ Roma with exclusive policies directed at them as an ethnic group. Spanish integration policies tend to focus on making the access to certain services available at a general level, for all persons who find themselves in a situation of socio-economic disadvantage. This, coupled with the official endorsement and support for the creation of institutes such as the Secretariado Gitano and the Instituto de Cultura Gitana has succeeded in promoting a representation of the Roma minority in Spain as one that belongs within the boundaries of the Spanish polity, and constitutes an integral part of it—even if generally limited to the stereotypical imagery of flamenco, musicians and street vendors (as noted in chapter 2 with reference to the regional plans).

On the other hand, by focusing on the issue of citizenship in order to downplay the aspect of ethnicity, this approach has rendered invisible and left out of the ‘imagined community’ those

Roma persons who are not Spanish citizens. Non-Spanish Roma, even though they are European citizens (having migrated mainly from Romania, a smaller percentage from Portugal and Bulgaria) on top of the stereotypes and difficulties faced by the Spanish Roma population, confront the additional hurdle of legal paperwork, language, lack of community network etc. As highlighted in a recent assessment of the Spanish Strategy:

“It is extremely important to understand the difference between Spanish Gitano who are well-integrated even if facing, from time to time, discrimination in social and economic rights and a growing racism from the rest of society and Roma migrants who have arrived recently in Spain, live in harsh economic conditions and face considerable racial discriminations in all fields of life.”¹²¹

Because they have neither the resources nor the numbers to assert themselves as legitimate recipients of the few Gitano/ Roma-targeted policies (‘explicit but not exclusive’ projects, such as ACCEDER, which are run by national Roma organizations such as the Secretariado Gitano), nor are they eligible for the national welfare policies directed at Spanish citizens, non-Spanish Roma are generally not recipients of neither targeted policies nor of general provisions for low-income families (such as subsidized housing), although many of them would qualify both as members of the Roma minority and as members of a socio-economically disadvantaged population (Magazzini and Piemontese 2016; Vrăbiescu and Kalir 2017).

One stark example is the shanty-town Gallinero, about one kilometer away from the Cañada Real, originally a traditional cattle road that now runs close to the M50 motorway (Madrid’s third outer ring road) and is considered a particularly problematic area in terms of drugs and criminality. The Madrid municipality has developed a Social Intervention Plan for the Cañada Real¹²², which aims at mapping the needs of the minors residing there and to provide a free bus service to schools (since public transport is scarce and located only in the ‘first section’ of the Cañada). The Plan however completely glossed over the Gallinero, where approximately 420 Romanian Roma have been living since the nineties, with no electricity, bathrooms or sewage system, and one water access for the whole community (of which over 60% are minors).

A volunteer who for the past years has helped provide transportation to schools for the children living in the Gallinero shantytown, commented on the subject:

¹²¹ European Roma and Travellers Forum 2016, 3.

¹²² The information is available on the [Comunidad de Madrid website](#).

“With the new Madrid administration¹²³ things have changed quite a bit. Things still move slower than what we’d like, but it’s much better than before, without a doubt. Looking at the plan you sent¹²⁴, indeed there is no mention of the Gallinero. It looks as if there are Roma of first and of second class...and then there are the Roma from Romania, of fifth class!” (Núñez Martí Paz, email exchange, October 2016).

In Italy, the framing of the Roma minority is quite different. The migration of (Roma and non Roma) persons fleeing the Balkan wars in the nineties, coupled with more recent intra-EU-migration (especially from Romania) has shifted the demographics and composition of Roma minorities. However, as seen in chapter 2, even when the majority of Roma and Sinti were Italian citizens they have always been consistently represented, in local policies, national legislation and the media, as ‘foreign’. What makes this evident is that, regardless of the labeling and terminology used that has been changing over the years, the antonym of the Roma (or ‘zingari’, ‘nomads’, etc.) has always been, and remains, ‘the Italians’. Conversely, when the subjects are Italian Roma, the adjective ‘Italian’ is always added.

The person in charge of the conceptual framework of Strategy explained:

“What I tried to do was to create a kind of overview of the international recommendations that had been made to Italy over the years. I also took into account, of course, the requests made to us directly by the European Commission. I included also the annulment by the State Council of the decrees of the so-called former ‘nomad emergency’, of the Court of Cassation and the Supreme Court which confirmed the position of the State Council on what were the so-called emergency decrees for the former nomads.[...] I then focused mainly on what the legal situation of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Italy is, [...] and *because half of the Roma and Sinti in Italy are not Italian citizens we therefore must distinguish...the variety of the legal status of Roma and Sinti in Italy*. In addition to the categorization of 2010 by Bonetti and Vitale¹²⁵, in reality we went even further and with the approval of the Riccardi Cabinet¹²⁶ we included the High Commissioner for Refugees in the Strategy, because there is a specific problem of statelessness. [...]

Among other things let’s not forget that Italy has faced a process of immigration since the late 90’s, and we were not at all prepared for all this. We [Italians] were known because we

¹²³ In 2015 Manuela Carmena, at the head of the citizen platform Ahora Madrid, became the Mayor of Madrid replacing Ana Botella, of the People’s Party. The People’s Party had administered the capital for the previous quarter of a century.

¹²⁴ The plan mentioned was the *Study-Map on Housing and the Roma Population* conducted by Fundación Secretariado Gitano and Daleph in 2015 and published in 2016 by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality as part of the follow-up to the Spanish National Roma Integration Strategy.

¹²⁵ In 2011 Bonetti, Simoni and Vitale published a book, resulting from a three day conference among jurists that took place in 2010, on the legal status of Roma in Italy (P. Bonetti, Simoni, and Vitale 2011).

¹²⁶ Andrea Riccardi was Minister of Integration and International Cooperation from 2011 to 2013, under the Monti government. From 2013 to 2014, with the Letta government, he was replaced by Cécile Kyenge, and in 2014 the Renzi government eliminated the Ministry of Integration.

emigrated... for us immigration was really just an abstruse concept. And so in my opinion we were not adequately prepared to deal with all the enormous transformations that we witnessed especially in the last 10 years. Now we have started talking a bit about the need to manage this, sometimes we hire cultural mediators, but that's basically it, I would say that there is no specific preparation. This is also something we should reflect upon." (interview no.25, August 2015, skype).

The same interviewee also remarked on the attitude of Italian Roma and Sinti towards Roma migrants:

"There is also a lot of resistance from the Italian Roma and the Sinti, the ones with Italian citizenship, who would have wanted the Strategy to be only about them. They want some kind of legislation that is either an extension of the law of 1999 [on linguistic minorities], or at least some specific rule that speaks of the Roma in terms of national minority or linguistic minority, without taking into consideration the other [non-Italian Roma]. And this is not possible...this way we would create a discriminatory context, we would continue to generate discrimination upon discrimination, and this is not possible, it is not acceptable."

The emphasis on citizenship and legal status might also be an issue tied to timing, since Spain started implementing its Roma policies at a time when virtually all Roma were Spanish citizens, while Italy's Roma population already included approximately 40,000 non Italian citizens in the nineties. Additionally, the results of the 2012 comparative study *EU Inclusive: Roma from Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain between Social Inclusion and Migration* has shown that non-Spanish Roma in Spain tend to engage in more circular migration depending on seasonal jobs, while non Italian Roma in Italy tend to remain in the same place, in part as the result of the segregation in camps which comes with a series of residential requirements (in the case of 'authorized camps') or is completely cut off from public transport and contact with mainstream society (in the case of many 'unauthorized camps').

4.5.2 Belonging based on territory/ residency (*ius solis*)

Both Italy and Spain enjoy similar levels of regional autonomy, and the policy domains in which regional governments have the most leverage in both countries (as legislators/regulators and administrators/providers) are health care and social assistance (Vampa 2016, 98). In both countries there is significant disparity in wealth, quality of services and social provision between regions, and such disparity can be observed along both income and political lines. In Spain, the regions in which more political and economic capital has been invested in social programs

(proportionally to the regional GDP) are the Basque Country and Navarra (Fundación Foessa 2014). This is not limited to policies aimed at the Roma, but encompasses plans and strategies for other minorities as well (especially migrants). In Italy, the central regions of Emilia Romagna and Tuscany are those with a similar (more inclusive) track-record, but the majority of Roma identified as such (that is, living in either ghettos or shantytowns) reside in large cities such as Rome, Milan and Naples.

In terms of identity, regional belonging seems to be significantly stronger in Spain, translating in the fact that Roma are often identified in the regional integration plans as ‘Andalusian Roma’, ‘Catalan Roma’, etc. The introduction to the Andalusian Plan reads: “The Andalusian Roma Community is *our* ethnic minority par excellence and it is a group that has historically been marginalized” (Junta de Andalucía Consejería de Asuntos Sociales, 1997, p. 1, emphasis present in the original text). The plan goes on to define the strategic objectives and benchmarks, always keeping the “other Andalusians” as a term of comparison, while there is hardly any reference to Spain or the Spanish population as a whole to be found. The importance of regional identity in Spain can be observed also in how many Roma, as well as non-Roma, self-identify in terms of the region they reside in, rather than to the state: “I am Roma, I am Basque, and nothing in between” (interview no.2, September 2014, Bilbao).

Regional identity and national identity however need not be at odds, and are actually generally both quite strong (with the Basque Country and Catalonia as outliers in Spain, and the special autonomy regions constituting somewhat of an anomaly in Italy). The general underlying principle of territoriality in both countries seems to be that if a community is rooted in a specific territory/ region, then that community also belongs to the State polity, regardless of its ethnic or linguistic characteristics. Therefore there is little doubt that Andalusian Roma, Basque Roma, Castilian Roma etc. are Spanish in the eyes of the Spanish State.

In Italy, conversely, as noted in chapter 3, an important part of the controversy around the legal and social categorization of the Roma has to do with the fact that they have been historically considered nomadic, and therefore not attached to a specific territory. Regardless of the inaccuracy of such representation, this framing has informed the regional laws of the eighties and nineties, the law on national minorities of 1999, and to a large extent the National Roma Integration Strategy as well:

“Following a difficult parliamentary debate, Act No. 482 of 15 December 1999, on ‘Provisions concerning the protection of historical linguistic minorities’ recognizes and protects twelve linguistic minorities relating to: Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Greek, Slovenian, Croatian, French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian (to this end, it has been taken into account the historical and linguistic criteria, as well as the territoriality /permanence in a given territory – namely the historical presence in a given territory). By interpreting and implementing Article 6, *it prevails the principle of “territoriality”, which excludes the Roma minority, since this is a “minority spreading throughout the country”, i.e. lacking a recognizable permanent spatial concentration.*” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point, 2012, pp. 6–7, emphasis added).

The ‘territoriality principle’, while less clear-cut than citizenship based on *ius sanguinis*, has important consequences as well. In Spain, it helps reinforce the notion by which Spanish Roma belong to the ‘in-group’, while ignoring non-Spanish Roma who, albeit European citizens, are seen as especially problematic and needy. In practice, policies such as access to social housing—that has marked an important shift in housing integration of Roma families particularly in the Madrid area in the 80s and 90s—are tied to residency requirements¹²⁷. The totality of Spanish policy-makers who were explicitly asked about policies for non-Spanish Roma argued that such cases would require specific and special measures, different from the Roma integration plans currently in place (interviews no. 2, 4, 5, 29). The following quotes give a sense of how the issue is understood:

“They need different policies. This [Roma immigrants] is a kind of problem that is global and requires all States to adopt the same kind of measures and support for concrete cases” (interview no.9, October 2014, Madrid);

“Experience tells us that we need to adopt different measures. These [non-Spanish Roma] families have a high level of uprooting (*desarraigo*) and difference, and they mostly live of criminal activities or begging” (interview no. 10, October 2014, Madrid);

“On the one hand European Roma who move to Spain present specific circumstances in addition to their ethnicity, such as the territorial and/ or cultural uprooting given by finding themselves in a foreign country; the extreme economic difficulties and higher levels of unemployment; the lack of academic or other kind of degree because of difficulties in obtaining the equivalency of titles, qualifications; the traveling condition of life... For all these reasons they should receive a different kind of attention that the autochthonous Roma population. What they do share is the social stigma of being Roma, so in the case of racism and anti-discrimination, policies could cover both. If we recognize anti-Roma racism as a social scourge—because up until now it’s something so engrained that it is hardly condemned by the institutions, compared with similar cases that affect other groups—then policies would acknowledge the need for considering ethnic stigma as an additional hurdle in life. As of today, ethnic belonging is not considered neither

¹²⁷ In the case of popular housing in Madrid, proof of ten consecutive years residing in the municipality is required.

explicitly negative nor positive, we just pretend it doesn't exist, and so society avoids addressing the subtle criminalization that is however made [towards Roma]." (interview no.27, September 2015, Sevilla)

In short, Roma immigrants are perceived by policy-makers to be more disadvantaged compared to local Gitano communities in what concerns both their socio-economic situation and their level of group organization. They are also seen with some diffidence on behalf of the Spanish Roma, who are concerned that Roma migrants might reinforce stereotypes about Roma as a whole in the eyes of the majority, creating an overlap of the cultural and ethnic identity of 'the Roma' with situations of social-economic marginalization.

In Italy, the issue of Roma being considered as generally 'uprooted', combined with a very restrictive national legislation in terms of naturalization, has created a situation in which approximately 15,000 people are currently stateless, the almost totality of whom are Roma¹²⁸.

4.5.3 Belonging based on cultural affinity (*ius culturae*)

In 2012, a citizens' initiative law that has been dubbed the "*tempered ius solis*" ("*ius solis temperato*") or "*ius culturae*" bill was brought to the Italian parliament. The proposed law noted that five million non-Italian citizens lived in Italy¹²⁹, but their naturalization is rendered impossible by a citizenship law that is based almost uniquely on the principle of *ius sanguinis*.

The proposed amendments to the current citizenship law can be summarized as follows: the proposed modifications to law no.91/1992 would provide for naturalization for those who, born in Italy from foreign parents, have one the parents who was either born in Italy or has resided in Italy for over a year (this is what has been called the "*tempered ius solis*"). Also, the proposed changes to the law would provide Italian citizenship to those who arrived in Italy when they were under twelve years old and remained in Italy until turning eighteen, as well as to any minor who completed a full school cycle, comprising five years ("*ius culturae*"). The initiative has so far been approved in the Chamber of Deputies (in 2015), but has stalled in the Senate. Interestingly,

¹²⁸ <http://nonesisto.org/apolidia-in-italia/>

¹²⁹ The legislation regulating citizenship in Italy is law no.91/1992. The proposal to amend law 21/1991 is available here (in Italian): http://www.camera.it/leg17/995?sezione=documenti&tipoDoc=lavori_testo_pdl&idLegislatura=17&codice=17PDL000090

if not surprisingly, the naturalization of Roma has been used by political parties opposed to the reform as an argument against a change in legislation.

Even left-wing policy-makers who have taken an active role in the promotion of Roma integration measures to overcome the current ghettoization in camps, tend to talk about ‘Roma culture’ as something that is fundamentally backwards and rooted in values that are incompatible with modern Italy:

“I cannot really blame them, because I also come from a proletarian background, and I can understand how this works...according to this [their/ Roma/ underclass] mentality, let’s say you have one hundred euro at hand. You don’t have the bourgeois notion that ‘I have one hundred euro, so I can spend ten a day for the next ten days’. No, you will most likely spend ninety-nine euro, immediately, now, on something that you don’t really need, you know? You buy something outlandish, or just useless. It makes you happy at the moment, and then you don’t have money for basic necessities for a week. See, I have a bit of this Roma mentality in me as well... But the point is this: it is not that the poor little Roma girl did not get sent to school because she doesn’t have shoes; the thing is that you [Roma parents] have other priorities and your daughter’s schooling is the last thing you worry about, because she will have to get married, anyways. In order for this clan-tribal structure to stay alive, you see, this structure must remain in place: and this can go on only as long as the children do what the parents say, only if they remain within that context, because if they start to study and graduate then everything crumbles. *So, what is it that we want to do with this culture? Because if we want to integrate it, we must destroy it. That is, we must destroy its essential foundations: the patriarchal basis; the productive structure; and the reproductive control over females.* Once these three things are unhinged, Roma society is over. So, what do we want to do? Do we want to *protect*, or do we want to *include*?” (interview no.30, December 2015, Rome).

In Spain, the relationship between culture and citizenship is of a quite different nature. As a general rule, Spain requires foreigners applying for Spanish citizenship to give up any other citizenship they may have. This condition is however lifted for citizens of Latin American countries, Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Portugal, and Sephardi Jews: that is, those countries/ peoples identified as ex colonies and/ or having some degree of cultural affinity. For these categories, beyond having no obligation to renounce to one’s other citizenship; the residency requirement is of two years, while it is five years for refugees and ten years for everyone else, as a general rule. In terms of rights and citizenship, this translates in the fact that any migrant from Latin America or the Philippines is seen as ‘culturally closer’ than (Roma on non-Roma) migrants from Romania or Bulgaria, regardless of their European citizenship.

Regarding Spanish Roma, on the other hand, cultural difference is not seen (by policy-makers, at least) as of particular concern, and mixed couples are not that unusual:

“Mixed marriages in Spain are very, very common...there were already mixed couples in some areas of Spain with a longer tradition of integration, such as some areas of Extramadura, of Andalusia, especially western Andalusia, in the past, but nowadays it is very common everywhere. I could provide data for those communities with whom I have been working... and why is it so [that the rate of mixed couples has increased]?”

Because in the end, if the Roma go to school with the non-Roma, those personal or identitarian feelings eventually subside... and so they end up marrying the person with whom they connect the best and affectively they feel better understood. If he or she is Roma, even better! But if not, they will still marry the person they choose. So you can see a lot of Roma girls in their twenties, that in other generations would marry at a very young age—it used to be “So, you’re not married yet?” ...and now it’s more “I’ll get married eventually...I’d rather marry a Roma, but I’ll marry with whom I think is the man of my life, and he might be Roma or non Roma; the important thing is that he loves me. If he’s Roma, even better, but that’s not a good enough reason.” *What does this mean? And we go back to the ethnic approach: in society we are first of all persons, human beings, then we are citizens, and then we have other identities. In this order.*” (interview no.19, April 2015, Madrid)

4.5.4 Belonging based on economic status (*ius pecuniae*)

The recently coined term by Joachim Stern “*ius pecuniae*” provides an apt concept to problematize Roma’s access to and exercise of rights and citizenship, in a realm that is just as important and consequential as ethnicity, territoriality and culture, but that is completely absent in all policies and official strategies regarding Roma integration: economic resources. Citizenship designates a relationship of reciprocity between an individual and a State—a relationship that has a political dimension (the individual’s identification with the polity, with the rights and duties that this implies) and a normative dimension (naturalization laws that set the rules for how membership is acquired, which is a prerogative of the State) (Dzankic 2012, 1). Regarding the relationship between economic resources and citizenship, the term ‘*ius pecuniae*’ has been coined to indicate cases of citizenship facilitation such as investment citizenship and residence programs, in which an individual is afforded a fast-track access to citizenship in exchange of a significant monetary investment in a country. Such cases pose a serious dilemma on how the institutionalization of citizenship can play a role in fostering equality within a state (through redistributive policies and because all citizens are equal before the law) but also in the maintenance and reproduction of global inequalities (Boatca 2016).

While the cases of “global mobility corridors for the ultra-rich” are relatively few (Shachar and Baubock 2014), the same principle applies in reverse as well, not only in terms of denying citizenship to, or making the process more difficult for, those who are seen as an economic burden to the community, but also as a way to regulate people’s mobility/ right to stay/ legality through residency permits.

In Barcelona, for instance, a number of ‘volunteer returns’ of Roma families originally from Romania have taken place since 2014, when local authorities started putting into the custody of the social services minors from Roma families whose living conditions and housing were deemed “not fit to raise children” by the local authority (Vrăbiescu 2015). Similarly, the prefecture of Turin used part of its ‘emergency funds’ from the 2008 Decree to evict Romanian Roma from a shantytown (Lungo Stura Lazio) and pay them to go back to Romania.

The idea of citizenship as a shared responsibility for economic wellbeing can therefore simultaneously be used as a basis for redistributive claims *within* the national community while simultaneously being used as an argument against inclusion towards non-citizens, for which a certain pecuniary criteria is used as vetting for accessing and securing membership. In this sense, the socioeconomic dimension appears to be included in the strategy or excluded from it in ways that reinforce a basically ‘foreign’-ethnocentric idea of minority integration, while making sure to fit the Roma integration goals into the wider political and economic priorities. Somewhat ironically, by creating ad hoc plans for the Roma and the most marginalized sectors of society, the NRIS delegitimized to an extent a more structural redistributive claim—badly needed particularly in times of economic crises in two countries in which in 2017 the unemployment rate is still over 18% in Spain (youth unemployment 42%) and around 11% in Italy (youth unemployment 35%), in line with what Nancy Fraser identifies as the problem of displacement (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal 2017; ISTAT 2017).

The Roma-targeted strategies were effective in bringing to light the widespread socioeconomic exclusion that Roma face both in Italy and Spain, but the stress put on the individual ‘deficits’ of the targeted population, seen through the lens of lack of skills, education or motivation also reinforces the narrative of Roma as victims and perpetrators of their marginalization. By juxtaposing a ‘functional’ and ‘normal’ mainstream (even though in both countries data shows that inequality is rising and affects large parts of the population), it creates a false dichotomy

marginalization—normality, de-problematizing structural inequalities and presenting lack of ‘integration’ as a personal failure. Against this background, the framing of austerity measures and cuts to general social expenditure as a matter of ‘responsibility’ and compliance with EU requirements, while specific economic measures and programmes are taken for Roma minorities, have to some extent contributed to the ethnicized narration of Roma as ‘deficient’ and lacking the capacity or willingness to integrate into mainstream society. While Roma are by no means the only stigmatized group of neoliberal economic policies, the division into ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ categories has clearly situated them in the ‘underserving’ one. In Spain this has been limited to non-Spanish Roma, while in Italy the situation is made worse by the fact that the ‘undeserving’ are not only socially marginalized but also identified as ‘ethnic others’ regardless of legal citizenship. The wider issue that this raises is that as state institutions are themselves engaged in producing and reproducing maldistribution, the focus should shift from the consequences of maldistribution to its cause, which belongs largely in the realm of the State and the policy makers.

4.6 Conclusion: the problem of displacement

This chapter built upon a discourse analysis of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Italy and Spain, and on interviews with the policy-makers in charge of said strategies, to understand what is seen as constituting ‘successful integration’ for Roma minorities.

The Spanish policies continue to revolve mainly around socioeconomic elements, while the Italian ones still prioritize the need for cultural mediation. However, there seems to be a very slow convergence between the two, and a common denominator. The Spanish meaning of “integration”, initially meant to indicate a path of socioeconomic betterment of the Roma population, is slowly incorporating a few ‘cultural’ elements (such as adding Roma history to the school programs in La Rioja and creating an Istituto de Cultura Gitana tied to the Ministry of Education and Culture). Meanwhile, the Italian meaning of “integration”, originally meant to indicate the Roma’s route to adapting and adjusting to mainstream society (however defined), has in the past few years taken on board socioeconomic indicators such as unemployment and substandard housing.

The commonality resides in the reason at the origin of the National Roma Integration Strategies, namely the fact that the Roma are seen as ‘deficient’, lagging behind the majority population (either in cultural terms, in economic terms or both). This can be problematized and declined in various ways, but the baseline narrative is that Roma have problems (or are themselves a problem) and are in need of help (from the State, from NGOS, from European institutions, from themselves).

The framing of both strategies is also determined by the fact that they have more than one audience: in the Italian case it is the international community and a national electorate that does not include the Roma as equal citizens; in the case of Spain it is the international community, and the Roma elite/ official representatives (in the form of the Secretariado Gitano and of the regional Councils for Roma inclusion), together with a national electorate that sees Spanish Roma as co-citizens (even if impoverished and folkloric co-citizens) but non-Spanish Roma as welfare scroungers. The push to draft comprehensive Roma Integration Strategies was clearly top-down, as it came from the European Commission, and the double-audience resulted in some conceptual inconsistencies. Therefore, the strategies end up advocating for contradictory goals such as a diverse society that does not assimilate the Roma, and strong social cohesion characterized by integrating the Roma into the majority’s lifestyle (both cultural and economic). Both societies as well as ethnic communities are however rarely homogeneous in terms of socioeconomic standing, and by overlooking the power structure internal to the various Roma communities, redistributive claims based on cross-cutting class and gender issues can be discouraged.

An element that emerges through the analysis of the strategies and their drafting processes is that the most important feature of the Roma National Integration Strategies does not seem to be what constitutes the ‘Integration’ concept, but rather what constitutes the idea of being a ‘National’.

While the words ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ are used cumulatively about 60 times in the Spanish Strategy and 130 times in the Italian Strategy, the Spanish document used 188 times the terms ‘national’, ‘Spain’ or ‘Spanish’, and the Italian one 483 times the words ‘national’, ‘Italy’ or ‘Italian’. The fact that national identity dominates both strategies more than the concept of integration does has to do with the assumptions that underlie the representation of Roma marginalization as a problem to be overcome. While framed from different angles, the common pattern in Spain and Italy is that integration is ultimately conflated with being a national,

therefore to become ‘integrated’ means to become ‘Spanish’ or ‘Italian’, which in turn creates a non-existing ‘majoritarian’ ideal-type against whom to measure minorities.

Policies therefore aim to turn Roma into the stereotypical majoritarian citizen¹³⁰, and when the target groups are perceived as being too far away from this ideal, they are ignored from the policies altogether (such as the Romanian Roma residing in Gallinero, or de facto stateless Roma in Italy).

¹³⁰ For example, much emphasis is put on employment, but the percentage of employed women (not belonging to any minority) in Southern regions in both countries is extremely low compared to European standards.

CHAPTER 5

On the political dimension of justice

5.1 Introduction

In the introduction and first chapter I adopted Elizabeth Anderson's concept of integration as an "imperative of justice" (Anderson 2010) and Nancy Fraser's concept of social justice as the idea of interaction between groups and individuals on terms of equality (Fraser 2005; Fraser 1996). Fraser's main arguments in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "postsocialist" Condition* (Fraser 1997c), *Redistribution or Recognition?* (Fraser and Honneth 2003) as well as her articles from the late '90s and early 2000s in relation to social justice as parity of participation revolved around two main dimensions of (in)justice: cultural (regarding hierarchy and status ascribed based on gender, ethnicity, etc.) and economic (regarding class inequalities).

The concepts of recognition as a remedy to cultural injustice and redistribution as a remedy to economic injustice have been the departing points of this study's theoretical framework, and I have addressed them in chapters 3 and 4 by looking at *who* the targets of Roma integration policies are (whether they are recognized as a minority, and of what kind), and *what* the content of these policies is (what kind of integration they require, and based on which assumptions).

In her more recent writings Fraser has however included a third political dimension to the problematic of justice that is distinct from both the cultural and economic one, and cannot be weighted on the same scale of neither. The inclusion of this third, political dimension, can in turn be declined along two main aspects, and requires a preliminary disclaimer.

The preliminary disclaimer is that the realms of recognition and redistribution are themselves charged with power dynamics embedded in public affairs, since any problematization of an issue into policy and law requires adjudication either by the state or by the body politic in power of shaping the 'who' and the 'what' of any given policy.

The specificity of the political dimension as presented in *Scales of Justice*, while acknowledging the endemic political characteristics of the various claims for justice, be them cultural or economic, has however to do with the distinct claim for representation (Fraser 2008a).

Such claim for representation can be examined on two orders of magnitude or levels: one is what Fraser calls ordinary-political misrepresentation, while the other is misframing.

On the one hand, the ordinary-political misrepresentation contributes to the competing idioms for articulating justice claims that result in a heterogeneity of justice discourses, challenging the possibility of an ‘impartial’ answer to the issues of justice. This translates in the addition of the claim for representation to the claims for redistribution and recognition, and can be synthesized as having to conciliate different claims for justice, which gives rise to the problem of “*what counts as a bonafide matter of justice?*” (Fraser 2008a, 5).

The field of political representation has mostly focused on electoral engineering, trying to assess which electoral system is the most appropriate, or fair, to give a chance to all those included in the political community to participate fully and have their voice heard. The debates around misrepresentation in political science thus generally address the methods and techniques to remedy to legacies that have seen the voices of disadvantaged groups invisibilized, and can take the form of electoral quotas, affirmative action measures, veto powers of representatives or the need for consensus to approve certain measures affecting minorities, among others.

On the other hand, the political dimension of (in)justice, by raising the issue of what is the most appropriate unit (and its subjects) within which justice is to be applied, also begs the question of “*who counts as a bonafide subject of justice? [...] Territorialized citizenries or global humanity or transnational communities of risk?*” (Fraser 2008a, 5).

The consequences of this declination of the political dimension of justice (which Fraser refers to in *Scales of Justice* with the imagery of the map, as opposed to that of the scale) are further-reaching than a reconfiguration of ordinary-political injustices, since they question the boundaries of the political communities, and therefore require a reflection on *how* one can determine the “*who*”. This mapping of the political space from the standpoint of justice is what Fraser calls the problem of misframing, where the problem of political injustice cannot be solved simply by increasing the levels of descriptive and/ or substantive representation of minority groups within bounded political communities, since affected non-citizens (such as Roma migrants, or stateless Roma, or Roma who do not hold Italian or Spanish citizenship even though they are born in Italy or Spain) are excluded anyways.

This chapter is guided by two questions stemming from the two abovementioned dimensions of political injustice.

First, what role does Roma representation play in the integration strategies? In which ways and to what extent has a political claim for Roma representation and participation affected the policy process and design in the policy measures targeted to these communities (if at all)?

Second, if integration of Roma communities is the goal to be achieved, how can the unit of analysis be adjudicated, who is responsible for carrying out integration, and in case of failure, whose fault is it? Where does the power reside?

In order to answer the first question I look at the dynamics and mechanisms of inclusion and representation put into place (or missing) in the integration policy process during the drafting of the Italian and Spanish National Roma Integration Strategies.

The second question requires instead what Fraser calls “the capacity for reflexivity”, which involves the politics of framing, or “the capacity to step back from apparently discrete issues and to problematize the deep structures that underlie them. The capacity to interrogate the frame, to make it an object of critique and political action” (Fraser 2008a, 154). In order to call into question the meta-injustice of misframing, I attempt to understand and render explicit where the power lies with regard to constructing Roma minorities as persons who are included either in the group of potential claim-makers (even though their claims might go ignored, misrepresented or rejected) or in that of non-persons with respect to justice.

5.2 Ordinary political misrepresentation: representing people or interests

In its 2011 Communication, the Commission committed itself to help, at regional and national levels, “the efforts of countries to improve the social and economic inclusion of Roma through strengthening the involvement of civil society by encouraging institutionalized dialogues with Roma representatives to become involved and take responsibility for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring on regional, national and local level”¹³¹.

¹³¹ COM(2011) 173 final, p.13.

The idea that Roma participation and representation should play an important role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the integration strategies can also be found as one of the 2009 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion:

“Principle n.10. Active participation of Roma: [...] Roma involvement must take place at both national and European levels through the input of expertise from Roma experts and civil servants, as well as by consultation with a range of Roma stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy initiatives. It is of vital importance that inclusion policies are based on openness and transparency and tackle difficult or taboo subjects in an appropriate and effective manner. Support for the full participation of Roma people in public life, stimulation of their active citizenship and development of their human resources are also essential”¹³². (European Commission 2009b).

Such an approach is consistent with a number of internationally accepted policy principles and guidelines that deal with minority participation in decision-making processes—such as the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the 1999 Lund Recommendation for the Participation of Minorities in Public Life—as well as with scholarly work on the political struggle for representation on behalf of disempowered groups in society (Ryder et al. 2015; M. S. Williams 1998). Following an understanding of democracy that, in order to be such, must be inclusive, particularly in multicultural societies in which majoritarian rule could numerically permanently exclude minorities from power, representation means that minorities must be able to influence the policy making process by which they are affected, rather than being mere policy objects (Lijphart 1999; Cianetti 2014; Young 2000). In Young’s words, “[t]he normative legitimacy of a democratic decision depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision-making process and have had the opportunity to influence the outcome” (Young 2000, 5–6).

In the above-mentioned communication by the European Commission, its section 7—titled “Empowering civil society: a stronger role for the European Platform for Roma Inclusion”—stresses that “[t]hrough the Platform, concerned stakeholders, especially representatives of the Roma communities, should have the possibility to play a role in the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies”¹³³.

¹³² Vademecum. The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, p.8. Available at: <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/the-10-common-basic-principles-on-roma-inclusion-pbKE3010317/>

¹³³ COM(2011) 173 final, p.9.

At the European level, the European Roma Platform set up by the European Commission has been gathering on a yearly basis since 2009 a range of policy-makers, activists and members of civil society—many of whom are Roma—to debate, comment and criticize the European Framework for Roma Integration. Regarding the national and regional levels, however, no specific mechanism or requirements were established, resulting in a wide-ranging diversity of participation and representation in different countries (and regions).

5.2.1 Roma politics in Italy

In Italy, the Office for Anti-Racial Discrimination (UNAR) was created in 2003 when the EC Race Equality Directive 2000/43 was transposed in Italian legislation through decree 215 of 9 July 2003. The UNAR was charged with the drafting of the National Roma Integration Strategy (of which it remains the National Focal Point), for which it involved “those institutional actors and associations, being the most relevant to socio-economic policies and services for the RSC communities” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 28). The strategy then goes on to explain that following meetings with the national representatives of the RSC communities, the National Focal Point—chaired by the UNAR Director (Massimiliano Monnanni at the time)—organized a structure in which a number of Ministries and Municipalities were represented (Interior, Justice, Labor and Social Policies, Education, University and Research, Health, the Conference of Regions’ Presidents, the National Association of Italy’s Municipalities, the Union of the Italian Provinces). Dialogue with the Roma and Sinti Federations is also mentioned, since “to formalize the participation of Roma associations in drafting and monitoring the present Strategy, it was posted on the UNAR website a public call for those relevant stakeholders interested in participating in future Tables to be set up at the regional, provincial and municipal levels” (National Office on Anti-Racial Discriminations National Focus Point 2012, 29).

However, while 94 Roma or pro-Roma organizations registered to an open call launched by UNAR between December 2011 and 14 March 2012, many of them subsequently complained that they were given only a few days to read the strategy and provide feedback before it was sent

to the European Commission¹³⁴. On 22 February 2012, the association *Federazione Romani* published a post titled “General Observations to the draft of the national strategy for the Roma population”¹³⁵ in which it stated that it had only been given five days (17-22 February) between the draft being made available to them and the meeting organized by UNAR that took place to consult and include Roma’s feedback on the Strategy. The observations made by the Federation noted that Roma participation was only included marginally in the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS), without the inclusion of any kind of Roma representation in the main decisional bodies that were in charge of defining the policies to be put in place or the target indicators to measure progress.

According to the policymaker in charge of drawing up the list of eligible associations with a consultative status, the involvement of Roma and pro-Roma associations was encouraged as soon as possible and to the best of UNAR’s capacity, despite some administrative hurdles:

“We immediately made a call to create a list of associations interested in the subject, or representatives of the Roma themselves, but they had to have some basic requirements: thus, for example, the founder [of the association] of course had to have a clean criminal record, they had to be registered as a legal entity, etc. Between December 2011 and March 2012, 96 associations registered. Of these, about 12 or 13 were national associations, and 7 or 8 were actually constituted by Roma people. Of the 96 we had to exclude two of them, and of the two excluded one was actually Roma, but unfortunately they submitted their application late, and the law is the law, we had to respect the rules...the second case was excluded because the person who registered with his association had no legal entity, he had just invented an association from scratch, so it was of course excluded. So that’s the context. The list of these 94 registered associations was then shared with the then-president of the Conferenza Stato-Regioni¹³⁶ responsible for policies concerning the Roma—we are talking of 2012—and he in turn shared it with the Regions, since the Regional Tables for the Inclusion and Integration of the Roma were being created. As of today, there are 10 Regional Tables out of 20 Regions.” (interview 13, Turin, March 2015)

The role, scope and structure of such Tables, as well as the role of the Roma or pro-Roma organizations that participate in them, is however not clearly defined in the Strategy, even though

¹³⁴ While all strategies were supposed to be submitted by the end of 2011, the Italian strategy was submitted with a three months delay (interview 1, skype, September 2014).

¹³⁵ Available at <https://federazioneromani.wordpress.com/2012/02/22/osservazioni-generalis-alla-bozza-di-strategia-nazionale-per-la-popolazione-romani/#more-2161>

¹³⁶ The Permanent Conference for relations between the state, the regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano (also known as the State-Regions Conference) is a collegial body created in 1983 aimed at fostering institutional collaboration and communication between the state and local governments.

they are envisioned to be both a site of dissemination and sensibilization, as well as the platforms in charge of developing—in coordination with the National Contact Point (UNAR) —the Local Inclusion Plans for Roma and Sinti. The local plans, in turn, were to be implemented giving priority to those Regions that have a past of emergency measures (Lazio, Campania, Lombardy, Piedmont, and Veneto).

According to the same interviewee, who was in charge of the participatory dimension of the NRIS, the practice of the Regional Tables seems to not have worked out as initially envisioned:

“The thing is, with the Lazio Regional Table, for instance, when it was first constituted it started out with this approach: ‘We are open to all, any association who wants to join can do so!’...And sure, from a point of view of transparency it would be ideal to allow everyone to participate, but organizations arrived *en masse*, it was simply not manageable...so we had to put some barriers, some rules, to decide who to include and who not, otherwise it would have been a mess.” (interview 13, Turin, March 2015)

In Emilia-Romagna, where a Regional Plan for the Integration of Roma was approved in 2015 following the guidelines of the National Strategy¹³⁷, the way in which a policy maker involved in the strategy described the obstacles to Roma participation and representation resemble the very definition of Fraser’s idea of ordinary misrepresentation—that is, when decision rules and political boundaries deny some people the possibility of participating on a par with others in social interaction:

“Direct involvement is not an easy thing to achieve: we are talking about communities who have never sought representation within the institutions, just as the institutions have never felt any responsibility to represent these communities...the administration has dealt with them—if at all—as elements external to the population, either to be ‘saved’ through humanitarian actions or avoided altogether.” (interview 16, Turin, March 2015)

Representation is also impaired by wider political issues, as had been repeatedly denounced by ‘watchdog’ NGOs. Associazione 21 Luglio, a NGO based in Rome that was charged by the European Commission with drafting a shadow report of the Italian NRIS, has been among the leaders in investigating, bringing to light and condemning Mafia Capitale¹³⁸. When asked about Roma representation, its director commented:

¹³⁷ To date, it is the only regional strategy existing in Italy.

¹³⁸ As mentioned at pages 86 and 108, Mafia Capitale is a still ongoing investigation about the institutionalized corruption that revolved around housing services for those Roma residing in ‘authorized’ camps in and around the

“While the situation that we have been denouncing for years is now finally imploding, hopefully leading to a radical change, right now it is still operating, to an extent...because while the bosses have been removed, the system—which is a criminal system—still stands. It is the system itself that must be replaced. I am talking about a system that over the past twenty years has been invested in segregating the Roma, generating a huge revenue, both economic and in terms of political consensus. Such system operates through political references, mainly city councilors and in certain cases assessors, who favor friends who in turn guarantee them a certain number of votes. So these ‘friends’ of policymakers are favored in cases of public bids for Roma camps, when there are public bids—since these represent only around 10% of the contracts, while the rest of the tenders are awarded directly, in which case the process is even easier, and they all end up in the same hands. What role does representation play in all this?

This criminal system aimed at keeping the Roma segregated relies on internal ‘*kapo*’ figures, which are alleged Roma representatives, so the whole system runs smoothly. There is always one, or more than one, bosses in each camp, who are the same “representatives” that have meetings with the assessors, the mayors, and which are unscrupulous persons...above and beyond their criminal records, these are people whose job it is to oppress the Roma community inside the camps, and then give a different image on the outside. To give you a sense of the reach they have, I currently have to go around protected by the police¹³⁹, because of the ‘*kapos*’ of La Barbuta¹⁴⁰, whom have quite a few friends in the Capitoline Hill¹⁴¹.” (interview 24, Rome, July 2015)

The specific dynamics of the ‘creation’ of ad hoc Roma representatives on behalf of the local administration for the purpose of justifying ever-going evictions and relocations in new, more costly, more securitized camps, is well documented in the chapters “Actors and players of the Nomad Plan” and “Alemanno’s Roma” of the 2012 book *On the backs of the Roma: the Nomad Plan of the Alemanno administration* (Stasolla 2012).

city of Rome since 2000. Money destined to housing and integration services for Roma, as well as funds allocated to lodging and programmes for asylum seekers and refugees were misappropriated. 37 persons were arrested in 2014, and other 44 in 2015, while a number of trials are ongoing. Between November 2015 and June 2016 Prefect Francesco Tronca was appointed as Special Commissioner for Roma Capitale, a role created to deal with urgent or extraordinary assignments through a centralization or derogation of power. For more information, see the [Order to apply precautionary measures](#) by the Tribunal of Rome regarding the investigation Mondo di Mezzo.

¹³⁹ DIGOS in the original. This stands for “Divisioni Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali” (the General Investigations and Special Operations Division), an Italian law enforcement agency responsible for cases regarding organized crime.

¹⁴⁰ La Barbuta was a ‘formal camp’ located in the outskirts of Rome that was built in 2011 within the scheme of the so-called “Roma Emergency Measures”, despite the fact that such measures had been declared illegal by Italy’s Consiglio di Stato in November 2011, a sentence later confirmed by the Supreme Court of Cassation. La Barbuta was officially opened in June 2012 and hosted approximately 650 Roma. Named (somewhat ironically) “Best House Rom”, not only it comprised of segregated housing in the periphery that violated the EC Directive 2000/43, but it was also not provided with any windows, thus no natural light or fresh air, and was clearly in violation of human rights. Despite repeated complaints and legal action taken by the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI) and the association 21 Luglio, the Roma persons who were forcibly relocated there in 2012 from other ‘not authorized’ camps were only offered an alternative in December 2015.

¹⁴¹ In Italian “Campidoglio”, referring to the fact that the representative office of the municipality of Rome is based in the Senatorio Palace, in the Campidoglio Square.

By coopting some Roma ‘representatives’ in order to be able to showcase the participation and representation of the stakeholders, the Rome administration governed by the People of Freedom party between 2008 and 2013 was able to justify a number of measures which might have generated stronger contestation on behalf of national and international NGOs otherwise—such as the forced relocation, in 2010, of approximately 650 Roma who had been living in the ‘illegal’ Casilino 900 camp for two decades to other smaller, more peripheral and less visible ‘tolerated’ camps.

Najo Adzovic, originally from Montenegro, a Roma ex inhabitant of Casilino 900 who in 2010 was nominated by the then mayor Gianni Alemanno the ‘delegate for the mayor to the Roma issue’, created a cooperative called “Cooperativa Rom a Roma”. At the same time he was however expelled from the Romaní Federation with the accusation of seriously damaging the image of the association and of the Roma in general. It later emerged that in exchange for their ‘representation services’ the three heads of the “Cooperativa Rom a Roma” were awarded each a tender for the cleaning services of three Roma camps, for a total of around 400,000 euro a year (Stasolla 2012, 54–57).

While half a decade has passed since these episodes, in 2016 a policymaker in charge of designing a new plan for the integration of Roma for Rome’s *Cinque Stelle* administration¹⁴², which has officially stated its intention to close down all Roma camps and to find viable alternative solutions for its inhabitants, was unequivocal in painting a grim picture of Roma representation in the city of Rome still nowadays:

“In Rome there is no such thing as Roma representatives. It is well known that those who like to call themselves such represent nothing but their own personal interests, and, amazingly, it is still the very same people that were doing so ten years ago. For this reason my proposal to the Department for Social Policies has been to do away with the Regional Roma Table altogether, since there is no Roma representation in Rome: we should work on an individual basis with each Roma family instead. We can’t have as interlocutors persons with a criminal record who do not represent anyone! Frankly, I think we should withdraw all tenders and only promote measures that focus on employment. We need to put an end to the co-designing of policies with associations involved in Mafia Capitale.

¹⁴² Ignazio Marino (Democratic Party) was the mayor of Roma Capitale from June 2013 to October 2015. In November 2015 he was replaced by Special Commissioner Francesco Paolo Tronca, who remained in office until June 2016, when following municipal elections the mayor Virginia Raggi (Movimento Cinque Stelle) took office.

Of course I was asked to square the circle, and in the end we will have to keep the Regional Table on Roma Integration because it's included in the National Strategy, but what I will make sure happens from now on is that those associations that take part to the Table will no longer be able to participate to the Municipality's tenders. Because one cannot first make policy suggestions, and then be the one to implement them, as was common practice until now: there's a conflict of interest bigger than a house..." (15 December 2016, email follow-up to interview 30)

Of course, not everywhere in Italy is the situation the same as in the capital, even though Rome's 'camps system' has, according to many, been replicated elsewhere¹⁴³.

Other than the size of the population and the concentration of Ministries and political power in Rome, one difference also has to do with the fact that while in the city of Rome most Roma are either Romanian or third country nationals, in Milan, Bologna or Bozen most Roma are Italian citizens.

In Trento, for instance, a local policymaker who, following a renewal of the provincial council in 2008, pushed for the adoption of the 2009 legislation on *Measures to favor the integration of Sinti and Roma residing in the province of Trento* (that replaced the previous law from 1985), commented on Roma participation:

"I actually knew fairly little about the reality of the Roma and Sinti in Trentino back then [in 2008], but I wanted to learn more about it, and I started to organize the Roma Tables, because the interesting thing is that in 2008 groups of Roma and Sinti were just starting to structure themselves in associations...I saw potential in this. It seemed that they had understood that they needed to structure their demands in a way that was shared and agreed upon internally to the Sinti community, first and foremost, rather than having single individuals trying to obtain solutions from the *gadje*. So I supported this process of creation of an assembly of the 'Sinti in Trentino', from which two associations were born. [...] They [a local Sinti community] then invited me to live with them for some time, so I lived in a non authorized camp in Trento for about ten days, during which we held daily meetings, visited the municipalities around, as well as the office for employment...in short, we carried out a sort of community work made of awareness and shared efforts. What came out of it was a document based on three main points: housing, employment and education, the areas in which they [the Sinti] explained which difficulties they were experiencing and what they saw as possible ways to overcome them. Based on this document we wrote the 2009 law, which was deposited in May and approved in October of that same year, with the inevitable mediation needed in the process." (interview 2, Trento, February 2015)

It seems that the Trento law did not encounter strong opposition by the main parties and was approved by a compact majority, even though the linguistic minorities (Ladin, Mocheni, Cimbro, and German speakers) all voted against it. As mentioned in chapter 3, the text of the legislation

¹⁴³ Interviews 12, 15, 17, 24, 30.

seems to however not have yet translated into concrete policy actions. One issue is that responsibilities and division of tasks for taking the initiative are often unclear, which leads different administrative departments to blame each other, the political climate, administrative obstacles and at times the Roma themselves¹⁴⁴.

As one policymaker explained:

“You have to understand how things work here. It’s not even a problem of illegality, it’s actually worse than that: everything is incredibly opaque. And because it’s so opaque, you can never pin down the person or department responsible for keeping track that deadlines are met, policies are put in place and that we don’t go overbudget.

In 23 years, no data has been collected on social services, neither in the municipality that I am now in charge of, nor in any part of Roma Capitale. The so called SiS (Sistema Informatico dei Servizi Sociali) is cited everywhere but actually contains no real data...I am currently working with no data available. The only information that the social workers collected so far are in an excel table and contain the following information: number of users, and number of social benefits (‘prestazioni’). That’s it. When I first started and asked how it has been possible in the past to plan and monitor the social policies, which account for 80% of the expenditure of the municipality, I didn’t get any answers. The Social Investment Plan here and everywhere else was drawn up to satisfy a huge favoritism made up of associations...this is the reason why tenders were always broken down to amounts that were under the threshold¹⁴⁵. And investments were always made without keeping in mind the resources available, always certain that there would be a re-budgeting (‘asestamento del bilancio’), which seems to be common practice.

And if a re-budgeting weren’t to happen, we are half a million euro short and I will have to cut basic disability services...and I’m considered lucky! I know of a colleague from another municipality who has a deficit of almost two million euro to manage.” (email follow up to interview 30, 28 September 2016)

On the other hand, a number of open discussions and hearings on Roma inclusion policies have been organized by public bodies after the approval of the NRIS, but few Roma took part to such debates. The few Italian Roma activists who have the means to make their opinions known have often expressed their frustration with the majority-minority power dynamics and with the lack of Roma representation in those forums where issues that directly impact their life take place. Radames Gabrielli, the General Secretary of the *Federazione Rom e Sinti Insieme*, an association that was created in 2007 and comprises of 28 Roma organizations, posted a commentary in 2013 on the website of the association that well expresses such feeling:

¹⁴⁴ Interviews 13, 25, 30, and 32.

¹⁴⁵ For services under 40,000 euro there is no obligation to issue an open call, and the municipalities can contract directly any association they choose to carry out social services.

“On Tuesday, September 17th I participated in a congress promoted by the Italian Senate of the Republic and the association *21 luglio* at palazzo Giustiniani in Rome.

Minister Cécile Kyenge, senator Luigi Manconi, senator Francesco Palermo, anthropologist Ulderico Daniele, jurist Aurora Sordini, professor Paolo Bonetti and president of the association *21 luglio* Carlo Stasolla were all there. These are all people I hold in high esteem, but that even though they work for the betterment of the lives of Roma and Sinti, did not think of inviting even one single Roma or Sinto as a speaker to this important event. Not only did the organizers not invite any Roma to intervene, but they did not even invite them as public: myself, an Italian Sinto, was only invited by senator Palermo because I had met him a few days before. Had that not been the case, I probably would not have even found out about the event. The issues debated at the congress were extremely important for all Roma and Sinti, but the conference room was filled with representatives of the majority culture, with only five Roma amongst the audience.

I, as president of the association *Nevo Drom* and as General Secretary of the *Federazione Rom e Sinti Insieme*, deplore this attitude in which the future of Roma and Sinti is debated and decided without the full participation of us directly affected. They do not call on us, they do not invite us to explain our reasons, and yet they continue to talk about us in conferences and debates...”¹⁴⁶

The National Project Officer of the Italian chapter of ROMACT, a Serbian Romani woman naturalized Italian, expressed similar views in numerous occasions, which eventually led her to become involved in politics (coming from a career in acting) and to launch, in 2015, the campaign *Se mi riconosci mi rispetti* (“If you recognize me you respect me”) in favor of the recognition of Roma as a national minority in Italy: “They [academics and politicians] only talk about us when they talk about camps, poverty and crime. But we are a people and want to be recognized as such; we are not here for academics to write essays on poverty.” (interview 18, Strasbourg, March 2015). However the initiative did not reach the 50.000 signatures necessary for it to be brought before Parliament.

This picture is rendered even more complex by the fragmentation and at times contradictions of the Roma organizations themselves, many of which call for more Roma representation, but often with criteria based on ‘expertise’, which has been the key word used in the political narrative at the European level. Nazzareno Guarnieri, president of the *Federazione Romani* since 2009, has argued for years that what is needed is a shift from cultural mediation to participation. Yet, after years of campaigning, Roma participation in politics remains limited at best, and instrumentalized at worst, as a recent statement on the organization’s official webpage seems to acknowledge:

¹⁴⁶ Post of 10 October 2013 titled “Chi fa una cosa per me senza di me è contro di me” (those who do something for me but without me are against me), available at <http://comitatoromsinti.blogspot.com.es/>

“To be Roma does not automatically mean to be an expert. In Italy most of the projects and initiatives carried out with the active participation of Roma people/Roma associations show that the active participation model of the Roma, often backed and supported by the institutions, has not produced (or even proposed) a radical change that is beneficial to improve the social, cultural and political situation of the Romani minority.”¹⁴⁷

Overall, despite the National Roma Integration Strategy, to date the situation of Roma and Sinti’s representation in Italian institutions and their political participation does not seem to have changed significantly from the one described by Nando Sigona in a 2009 chapter in the book *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe*, and which shows how the high visibility of the ‘Gypsy problem’ operates alongside, and in synergy with, the invisibility of Roma and Sinti as political subjects (Nando Sigona 2009, 274). As a result, political parties in Italy tend not to engage with Roma issues, unless it means further disenfranchisement, opportunities for promoting securitization policies and blame placing—as happened in the 2008 *Forza Italia* campaign, and as continues to happen through the sensationalization of what is portrayed as ‘Roma crime’ (mainly by the two parties *Fratelli d’Italia* and *Lega Nord*).

5.2.2 Roma politics in Spain

In Spain, the drafting of the Strategy followed, according to the Ministry in charge of it [Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad], a participatory methodology similar to that used for the elaboration of the Action Plan for the Development of the Roma Population 2010–2012. Such methodology involved the consultation, through meetings and shared documents, of eight Ministries, the Autonomous Communities, the Spanish Federation of Provinces and Municipalities, and “the most representative Roma entities”¹⁴⁸. Additionally, the State Council of the Roma People was party to the process from its inception.

The Annex I of the Spanish Strategy is quite comprehensive in listing the associations and departments involved in the process of the elaboration of the Strategy, including the names of the 20 Roma organizations consulted in the process (while a similar list is not included in the Italian

¹⁴⁷ http://www.fondazioneromani.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=252

¹⁴⁸ See page 50 of the Spanish Roma National Integration Strategy (Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2012).

Strategy). Additionally, Annex III lists all the existing plans and bodies specifically targeting the Roma—at the time, five regional plans (Extremadura, Basque Country, Andalusia, Catalonia and Navarra), the State Council of the Roma People, the Action Plan for the Development of the Roma Population 2010-2012, the Roma Development Programme and the Roma Cultural Institute.

The issue of Roma representation and participation, and the debate around which entities constitute “the most representative Roma entities”, is however quite controversial and there is ongoing animosity within the Roma community (communities) as well as between the different, and differently powerful, Roma organizations that compete for funding when it comes to integration projects and actions. The following paragraphs aim to give a more nuanced picture than the one generally projected internationally of Spain’s ‘model’ of Roma representation and participation in designing and implementing inclusion measures.

Firstly, despite the declaration of inclusive processes outlined in all Roma plans and in the national strategy, all the interviewed Spanish policy-makers agreed that Roma representation in public life, in government institutions, and even in the drafting of those policies that affect them directly is scarce and nowhere near what it should be. Answering the question of whether they consider the degree and quality of Roma participation in the development of policies that affect the Roma community to be satisfactory, the typical response was “No, it is not. There are very few Roma men and women who participate in decision-making spaces” (interview 5, Barcelona, October 2014). When asked for suggestions on how to improve such representation and participation, the answers were, even if well intended, quite generic and not very likely to produce results or have a concrete impact at least in the near future:

“One could create more visibility for those Roma who have the skills needed, and invite them to participate more actively” (interview 5, Barcelona, October 2014);

“Representation could improve through trainings for Roma mediators, involving them in the development of actions that improve and raise awareness of the situation in which they are, and of course improving the employment aspects that would facilitate their participation” (interview 10, Madrid, October 2014);

“Roma participation is indeed weak, but so is civil society in general. On the one hand, it is crucial for the [Roma] associations to have an institutional backing with measures of control and technical support, marking clear lines of actions and demands. On the other hand, it is necessary

for minorities to receive better training and higher standards of living” (interview 9, Madrid, October 2014).

The issue of ‘better training’ is one that is recurrent in discussions regarding the needs of the (Spanish) Roma population and the possibility of involving more Roma in social projects and programmes. On behalf of the local administrations there seems to be a fairly strong demarcation made amongst different kind of Roma: the ‘trained’ ones who belong to associations and can be involved as a constructive (or acquiescent) interlocutor and those who are not trained, or who are too critic of the policies designed for them¹⁴⁹.

A Roma member of the State Council of the Roma People argued that political parties do not promote the involvement of Roma among their representatives, which hampers both the image of Roma and that of integration measures. One of the major obstacles to Roma participation and to the creation of mechanisms for making claims and expressing a critical view on the Roma integration policies is, according to this interviewee, the marginalization—not just economic, but rather the fact of belonging to a section of the population that has always remained outside the processes of citizen participation: “And the powers do not show an interest in hosting this part of society, perhaps because it is not politically profitable” (interview 27, Sevilla, November 2015).

The result is that the presence of Roma activists or representatives involved in proposing measures, designing policies, or voting and holding decisional power over the final outcomes is meager:

“While in other groups there are such things as participation councils where civil society has the capacity to propose and participate in the articulation of measures, in the Roma community this presence is significantly smaller. There is the State Council of the Roma People, indeed, but at regional levels no similar bodies have been created. The creation of specific bodies at different levels—regional, local or even at neighborhood level would give the issue more visibility and would help make right the historical debt that the majoritarian society holds towards the Roma people. Such institutions would give a voice to the Roma community”¹⁵⁰ (interview 27, Sevilla, October 2015)

¹⁴⁹ Workshop “Bridging the Gap between Policy Making and Social Research. Strengths and challenges of the policies for Gitanos/Roma in Spain”: <http://www.unionromani.org/downloads/noti2014-10-09b.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ The fact that there are no regional Roma bodies is not completely accurate. In 2003, the *Consejo para la promoción integral y participación social del Pueblo Gitano en el País Vasco* was created in the Basque Country with decree 289/2003 of 25 November 2003 (<https://www.euskadi.eus/bopv2/datos/2003/12/0306619a.pdf>). In June 2013 the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha approved the creation of a *Consejo Regional del Pueblo Gitano* with the declared aim of fostering equality (<https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/100232.html>). The plan integral del Pueblo Gitano de Cataluña 2014-2016 instituted a *Consejo Asesor del Pueblo Gitano*, composed by

From the point of view of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano—which is by far the most powerful and well known organization in Spain working on Roma inclusion—instead, an intercultural approach rather than Roma-only councils or associations is best suited to tackle issues of marginality and exclusion:

“The Secretariado Gitano is an intercultural organization, which has both Roma and non Roma in its patronage. Approximately 45% of the people who work in the organization are Roma, and this is very important. Not only for the Roma themselves, but for society as a whole... Which is not to say that there shouldn't be ethnic associations. I think there should be, and they should be supported. But my understanding is that from a point of view of social intervention and social problems, an intercultural approach is both more effective and it holds the potential of being more easily accepted by society as a whole” (interview 9, Madrid, October 2014)

According to the 2016 data available on the official webpage of the Secretariado Gitano, its staff amounts to 690, of which 29% are Roma. 630 volunteers, of whom 34% are Roma, also support the foundation's activities¹⁵¹. The current president of the foundation is not Roma (even though he presents himself as ‘Roma by adoption’).

Regardless of the specifics of how many Roma are currently employed by institutions working to foster Roma integration in Spain, it is noteworthy that low Roma participation and representation is generally regarded as unproblematic. In this sense, the fact that the composition of the most powerful pro-Roma non-governmental organization comprises a majority of non-Roma has both advantages and liabilities. On the one hand, the Secretariado Gitano has managed to get many (Roma and non-Roma) citizens involved in actions aimed at fostering social inclusion, and has achieved a capacity for project-management, a visibility, an international standing and an access to resources and human capital that would have been virtually impossible to accomplish on behalf of a smaller, Roma-only organization. On the other hand, in the process of expanding its reach and personnel it has also become the main Roma-related interlocutor for both the Spanish State and European institutions, which has in turn generated resentment and bitterness on behalf of smaller, Roma-led organizations.

21 representative of Roma organizations. Since the interview, the Autonomous Community of Extremadura has also approved the creation of a *Consejo Regional del Pueblo Gitano de Extremadura* in May 2016 (<http://www.gobex.es/ddgg005/consejo-regional-del-pueblo-gitano-de-extremadura>).

¹⁵¹ It is quite possible that the data on the percentage of Roma employees of the Secretariado Gitano has changed between 2014, at the time of the interview, and 2016.

Augustin Vega Cortes, president of the organization *Opini3n Romani*, for instance, complained that he has witnessed decades of similar projects and policies in Spain, carried out always by the same Roma organizations, animated by similarly good intentions, but with little results to show for:

“The issue of the ‘poor marginalized Roma’ has almost always been a business for a few know-it-all and a niche employment market for unemployed social workers and sociologists, and things keep working this way. There are of course a number of well-intentioned people, but that is beyond the point. The point is that this is a perverse system that has only served the purpose of projecting a false appearance of specific, targeted social policies, in order to justify the fact that the State is abandoning its main obligation, which is none else than attending to all persons in terms of equality, and removing obstacles to equality where obstacles exist. [...]

I don’t know what irritates me the most, those who hate us, or those who won’t leave us alone. Please, stop making plans and strategies to help us. And what about the Roma of these organizations, who are always the same? Why don’t you limit yourselves to speak in the name of your families, or in the name of the members of your association? Who elected you and gave you a right to speak in the name of all of us? This is neither democratic, nor is it Roma. I understand that everyone must make a living, but don’t do so by speaking in my name...”

(21 October 2014, email exchange, follow up to the workshop for scholars, policy makers and NGOs ‘Bridging the Gap between Policy Making and Social Research. Strengths and challenges of the policies for gitanos/Roma in Spain’¹⁵²)

Another issue is the representativeness not of those contributing to the Roma integration policies, but those benefitting from them.

The Spanish Roma integration policies led by the Secretariado Gitano have so far been based on large projects, such as the flagship ACCEDER program, that heavily rely on EU funding. In order to be financed, Roma integration projects require being able to show some measurable results in a relatively short timeframe from the completion of the project. This is on the one hand logical, and the project pre-assessment criteria was added in the new EU programming period precisely as a means of obtaining more accountability for the money spent, and more reliable data on the projects, which also permitted the creation of a database of good practices¹⁵³. However, Messing and Bereményi, among others, have argued that bidding for large and highly ambitious projects, at least in the past, has led to (a) a ‘creaming’ of the Roma beneficiaries and to (b) the problematic of the Secretariado Gitano being both the organization in charge of ethnic data

¹⁵² http://www.uab.cat/Document/640/292/Bridging_the_Gap_BookletENG.pdf

¹⁵³ When funding for Roma inclusion was initially earmarked in the 2007-2013 programming period, the only indicator to assess the ‘success’ of the programme was whether the money had been spent or not. For a database on good practices, see <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20787>

collection on Roma in Spain (including for the National Strategy) and the one implementing many of the projects (Messing and Bereményi 2016).

Regarding the issue of the selection of the beneficiaries of the integration programmes, it is a difficult matter that generally relies on some sort of ‘points’ and minimum requirements. The choice of the most ‘worthy’ beneficiaries is, according to Messing and Bereményi, at least to some degree influenced by the fact that they already possess the skills to perform well in the job market, while those who lack the basic skills requested to participate in such schemes and who are the most in need are stuck at the pre-access stage, even though according to the National Strategy the most vulnerable should be the main target group.

The PROMOCIONA project, also carried out by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano is an important and needed endeavor to overcome the significant existing gaps in education attainment between Roma and non-Roma pupils. This programme however also presents some aspects related to the framing of the Roma involved that can be seen as problematic: even though the FSG has denounced for decades segregation in schools, it does not mention structural or systemic factors in PROMOCIONA, but focuses instead solely on the agency of the Roma families, for which it provides detailed data. Such data might indeed prove useful, but it also gives the impression that the cause for low performance of Roma students resides exclusively or mainly within the Roma families.

In sum, while these types of redistributive policies are more participatory and effective than Italy’s cultural mediation schemes (Bernàt 2016), they remain confined within the realm of what Fraser labeled ‘affirmative policies’, which do not ultimately challenge the status quo and the mechanisms that produce the injustices in the first place.

5.3 Locating the ‘Roma issue’ at the institutional level: where is the ‘problem’?

In his 2010 book *Who Speaks for Roma?* Aidan McGarry put forward two main hypotheses: firstly, that political decentralization increases the legitimacy of Roma representation, and secondly that due to inadequate organizing structures of representation in the domestic political context, transnational Romani activity increases.

Regarding the first hypothesis—the need for territorial proximity and embeddedness of representatives into a local grass-roots movement—while this is true for virtually any political representative or party, it holds particular importance in the case of Roma leaders because such representation does not generally stem from an electoral process, and legitimacy must therefore come from elsewhere.

In terms of the Roma representatives present in parliaments or local administrations, neither in Italy nor in Spain have there ever been ethnic political parties¹⁵⁴ and when Roma candidates do run for office (seldom), they do so as members of mainstream political parties, generally in left-wing parties (Rifondazione Comunista in Italy, PSOE and Podemos in Spain)¹⁵⁵. Of course, this does not mean that mainstream political parties have the same approach in Italy and Spain towards Roma candidates or Roma identity politics, nor the same outcomes. In Spain, Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, one of the founding members of the International Romani Union (1971), was elected in the national parliament with the Union of the Democratic Centre in 1977, with the Socialist party in 1982, and later (1986-1999) served as member of the European Parliament.

While Roma remain severely under-represented as elected officials, the historically two major parties in Spain, the *Partido Popular* and the *Partido Socialista*, both expressed their support to promoting the integration of the Roma National Strategy in the last general elections (2014), and during the campaign the PSOE committed to the creation of a Delegation to the Government for the Roma people, as well as to the elaboration of a White Book on discrimination and for social inclusion, in case of victory.

In Italy, while Roma and Sinti are largely absent from the political arena, and the few Roma candidates that have run for office reported moderate to low results (Nando Sigona 2009), the ‘nomad problem’ and the issues revolving around ‘Roma camps’ have instead become

¹⁵⁴ In Majano, a small town in the province of Udine (Friuli Venezia Giulia region) a list of Roma-only candidates presented itself to the 2016 elections, but was excluded because it did not meet some of the requirements such as the minimum number of signatures in order to run for elections.

¹⁵⁵ The only exception that I am aware of is the far-right party España 2000, which in 2007 included two Roma men in their electoral list in Crevillente and Benidorm (both in the Alicante province), allegedly as proof that the party did not hold racist views.

increasingly politicized over the past decade, leading a policy-maker to state that the best thing that could happen to the Roma in Italy would be for them to go unnoticed¹⁵⁶.

Not all representation, however, takes place through political parties, and certainly not solely nor mainly in national bodies. If the purpose of representation is to make present what is absent (Severs 2010; Pitkin 1972), an important aspect of representation also lays in which level of government has power over what, how competences are distributed, how they overlap at the various levels—local, national, and international.

Nicolás Jiménez González, a Spanish Roma sociologist who works for the Spanish Roma Cultural Institute and who ran for local elections in Mutxamel (Alicante) with the Socialist Party in 2011 commented in a newspaper interview inquiring about his candidature:

“Municipalities do not have the competencies to create employment, which is the most demanded service by the [Mutxamel] residents. Reforms should be passed in order to allow municipalities to have competencies such as job-creation, since the local level is the closest administration to the people, the one that best knows the citizenry. [...] My priority will be to make visible the real problems and concerns of the inhabitants, in order to make sure that the municipality responds to them and increases the levels of participation of our Roma neighbors, and improves the lives of those who find themselves in a vulnerable situation: the elderly, dependent persons, persons who live alone...I also believe that our city is lucky in that it counts among its residents many who have migrated here from foreign countries, but who are nonetheless very much part of the local dynamics of the city, and who should participate to the municipal activities; our attention and management will cater to them as well.”¹⁵⁷

The local levels of administration, and particularly cities, have seen an increase in attention and relevance both in academia and in policy over the past few years, especially around topics such as migration and integration, the implementation of which are highly dependent upon local contexts and politics¹⁵⁸. This shift can be seen both at a symbolic level, with initiatives such as the

¹⁵⁶ Interview 14.

¹⁵⁷ <http://costacomunicaciones.es/la-rambla-de-mutxamel/actualidad/entrevista-nicolas-jimenez-gonzalez-sociologo.-miembro-de-la-candidatura-del-pspv-psoe-en-mutxamel/>

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, the JMDI network, which comprises of NGOs working on migration and civil society actors that collaborate with local authorities. They have produced a series of training / learning tools and knowledge products amongst which are a database of good practices at the local level, and free e-learning courses for local authorities that are recognized by UNDP. Available at: <http://www.migration4development.org/en/about/about-jmdi> Amongst the many and increasing similar initiatives see also URB-ACT, available at: <http://urbact.eu/migrant-crisis-which-engagement-europe-and-urban-agenda>

European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers¹⁵⁹ (which include the municipalities of Donostia, Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Sevilla, Valencia and Vigo in Spain; the municipalities of Castel Maggiore, Naples, Padoa, Pisa, Rovereto, Teramo, Trento, Turin, Settimo Torinese, and the Tuscan and Umbria regions in Italy) set up in 2013 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, as well as in more concrete measures and projects such as the Roma inclusion taskforce¹⁶⁰, created at Eurocities in 2012 to exchange good practices on Roma inclusion, and ROMACT¹⁶¹, a joint programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission created in 2013 with the aim to build the capacity of local authorities to develop and implement inclusive policies and public services.

The focus on the local level has both advantages and hazards: on the one hand, cities have indeed more detailed and updated information about the concerns, issues and obstacles to inclusion of its inhabitants, and they are the main providers of services in terms of health and education. Also, it is in the best interest of municipalities to avoid conflicts between its neighborhoods and residents, as well as to prevent and to combat high levels of deprivation, marginalization and criminality on their territory. These are all reasons that might push local authorities to intervene more promptly and/or more adequately than the central government might do in tackling issues of exclusion. Also, while participation (both active and passive) in national and regional elections is a prerogative of Spanish and Italian nationals in the respective countries, European citizens can participate in municipal elections, making local authorities in principle more representative and inclusive of its residents than the national government (even though third country nationals are excluded on all levels).

On the other hand, as noted in Jiménez González's interview, municipalities often lack the competences and the resources to address the root causes of marginalization or to promote integration policies. In the extreme case of the estimated 15,000 *de facto* stateless Roma living in Italy, for instance, providing services proves very complicated for municipalities, given the bureaucratic system of rules and regulations which requires a nationally officially sanctioned 'stateless status' in order to access any kind of public service, which most stateless persons do not have. Additionally, local administrations might find it easier or more appealing to either 'remove

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.roma-alliance.org/>

¹⁶⁰ http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/working_groups/Roma-inclusion-task-force&tpl=home

¹⁶¹ <http://coe-romact.org/>

the problem' by physically expelling the unwanted 'others'—as happened in the '70s and '80s with the constant Roma evictions in Italy which eventually led to the regional laws— or else to decline the Roma inclusion narrative into whatever priorities municipalities might have already set on the agenda. A local policy maker in the Basque Country explained his point of view on Roma-target policies at the local level in the following way:

“In the Basque Country there are no municipal plans related to the Roma population, as opposed to municipal plans referring to the immigrant population, which instead do exist. The municipalities of Vitoria, Bilbao and Donostia play more of a role than other cities, but that's mainly because of their status as capital cities of the province and because they have more resources than the rest of local authorities on the territory. There is however no coherent or shared action plan, and each city acts more or less in accord with what it considers to be 'sellable' to its electorate, trying to squeeze Roma measures in those areas where they are the least controversial. You can even see different nuances between the priorities of the cities: Donostia, for example, has been investing more in the cultural aspect of the Roma, co-financing the amateur flamenco singing festival promoted by Kamelamos Adiquerar or bringing next year the exhibition 'Ijitoen bizierak-Gypsy Lives-Lungo Drom' to Aiete in the framework of DSS2016¹⁶². Bilbao has a team working on socio-educational intervention with minors and young Roma (PISE Kaló) within the framework of its strategy of social intervention with minors and families. Vitoria-Gasteiz has been instead mainly contributing to the maintenance of the ACCEDER Program for the improvement of the employability of the Roma population. In short, each municipality tries the best it can to tailor these targeted-measures to its priorities...but all in all none of them are really remarkable policies that have a great reach.” (interview 23, San Sebastian, July 2015).

In Italy, the local policy-maker that had pushed for a new Roma inclusion law in the region of Trentino was also critic of the way in which the law had translated at the provincial and municipal level, largely because of local lack of interest and political will to implement the new approach:

“Indeed, the municipalities were supposed to be the ones to implement it...frankly, the way things have worked out, it is clear that the political will on behalf of the municipalities is quite weak. I must make some self-criticism here, and admit that this law was my first intervention, so it is also my fault, because without realizing it I left a 'loophole', an element that hinders the law. What I mean is that I wrote that, as a transitory measure, the 1985 law would remain into effect until the new one is implemented. But I didn't set an expiration date for the old law or a time limit for the new one to be implemented...it was my ingenuity's fault, I would never do a mistake like that nowadays. This has translated, for the moment, into a transitory period...with no

¹⁶² Donostia/San Sebastian was European Capital of Culture in 2016.

deadline. In this case, as was done with the Basaglia reform¹⁶³, one should have written ‘at the latest by 31 December 2009 the Roma camps must be closed and viable alternatives found’.” (interview 11, Trento, February 2015)

At the national level, similar dynamics seem to apply, but on a larger scale and subject to more complex political interests, as well as to international pressures.

5.3.1 Spain

In Spain, the Ministry that has been in charge of leading and coordinating measures regarding Roma inclusion over the past decades has been the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI). The MSSSI remains both the National Contact Point for the Spanish National Roma Integration Strategy as well as the body in charge of drafting the reports for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for the Council of Europe. The nomenclature of the Ministry went from “Ministry of Health and Social Security” (in the first democratic government after the Franco dictatorship) to briefly including Employment, and then to “Ministry of Health and Consumers” in 1981. In 2009, under the second Zapatero government (PSOE), it became the Ministry of Health and Social Policies and in 2011 it was re-branded the Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality when the Ministry of Equality (which had been created in 2008 as a separate Ministry) was merged with the MSSSI.

It is important to note that social security, originally included in the competencies of the MSSSI, was in 1981 transferred to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (1981-1996) which then in turn became the Ministry of Labor Social Affairs (1996-2008), the Ministry of Labor and Immigration (2008-2011) and is now back to being titled the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (since 2011). While the Ministry of Labor and Social Security is responsible for the proposal and implementation of the government’s policy on employment and social security, as well as for the development of policies on citizenship, immigration and emigration, the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI) is responsible for the government policies on health, social cohesion and inclusion, family and protection of minors, care for persons with disabilities, equality and combating discrimination. The fact that the MSSSI does not deal

¹⁶³ Law 180 passed on 13 May 1978, often referred to as the Basaglia Law, was the Italian Mental Health Act of 1978, which marked an important shift in the psychiatric system, leading to the gradual closing down of all psychiatric hospitals and their replacement with a range of community-based services.

(mainly or directly, at least) with neither issues of employment/ social security nor with those of citizenship/ immigration¹⁶⁴ have made Roma integration issues less visible and somewhat less ‘political’ or controversial than they could have been had they been handled by the same Ministry that is in charge of labor and of immigration. Yet, while the MSSSI has a clear mandate for antidiscrimination and equality of opportunity, the department that handles the “Roma population” policies is not that of ‘Equality of Opportunity’¹⁶⁵, but instead the one in charge of ‘Families. Childhood. Social Programs. NGOs. Volunteering’¹⁶⁶.

It is also noteworthy that the MSSSI is the same Ministry in charge of drafting Spain’s reports for the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities and of following up with the Council of Europe’s Advisory Committee on minority protection issues. In the latest opinion of the Advisory Committee to Spain there was an attempt to expand the scope of the application of the FCNM in Spain, explicitly mentioning non-Roma minorities such as the Basques, the Catalans and the Galicians (Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 2014, 6–7), to which the Spanish government responded that it saw no new circumstances that would lead to apply the Framework Convention compensatory mechanisms of protection to any individuals or groups other than the Roma (Spanish Government Ministry of Health Social Services and Equality 2015, 5). A recent development in this regard is Spain’s communication of November 2016, accepted as a reservation by the Council of Europe, stating: “[S]pain reiterates that, in line with its constitutional provisions, it has consistently interpreted the Framework Convention in the sense that no national minority exists in its territory. The Framework Convention applies to the Spanish citizens of the ‘*comunidad gitana*’ (roma, gypsies) although these citizens do not constitute a national minority.”¹⁶⁷ Such position, coupled with the framing of Roma issues as that of a minority that belongs in the policy dimension dealing with European funding for the most disadvantaged, European Regional Development Funds absorption and child poverty, and squarely *not* in institutions dealing with equality, justice,

¹⁶⁴ Both topics have become more questioned and debated with the high unemployment rates that followed the economic crisis.

¹⁶⁵ The Equality of Opportunity department is, in turn, divided in four areas: non-discrimination; equality in employment; the institute for women and for equality of opportunity; and international.

¹⁶⁶ A part from Roma policies, this department is in charge of: families, childhood, social services, social inclusion, subsidies to NGOs, volunteering, Council of NGOs on social action, training, equivalence of the qualifications of social workers from the EU. Details about the Ministry’s activity on Roma policies can be found at the webpage: <https://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/PoblacionGitana/home.htm>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/157/declarations>

citizenship, migration or culture, corroborates the proposition put forward in chapter 3. That is, it appears that Roma integration in Spain is seen as a fairly apolitical issue that allows the central government to promote social policies that prioritize achieving basic socio-economic standards for all Spanish nationals over any recognition of difference, while successfully projecting an inclusive international image.

5.3.2 Italy

In Italy, matters of Roma inclusion have historically fallen under the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for six broad themes according to which its departments are organized: internal security and public order; immigration and asylum; citizenship; civil protection against natural disasters and terrorism; territory and administrative jurisdiction (prefectures). The National Contact Point for the Italian Strategy is however not the Ministry of Interior but the National Office for Racial Antidiscrimination (UNAR), established at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, within the Department for Equal Opportunities. It was instituted with the decree n.215 of 9 July, which transposed into Italian law the European Directive 43/2000. The UNAR has however seen a series of setbacks, scandals and changes in its directorate and staff composition: in 2012 Massimiliano Monnanni, who had been UNAR's director since 2009, was fired together with 9 out of the 13 persons who made up UNAR's staff following a controversial spending review. Marco de Giorgi—UNAR's director who had preceded Monnanni and was appointed again in his place in 2013— was ousted in 2015 because of a dispute with Giorgia Meloni, president of the right-wing party *Fratelli d'Italia*, who accused him of censorship. Francesco Spano, who had replaced De Giorgio in 2015, handed his resignations in 2016 following an alleged scandal. The president of the party *Fratelli d'Italia* in February 2017 called for the closure of the UNAR, which to date remains without a director or an organigramme (to be appointed by Paolo Gentiloni, the current Prime Minister).

Asked about the role of UNAR in the policy-making, implementation and monitoring of the Italian Strategy and policies for Roma inclusion, the responses of most Italian policy-makers interviewed were either not favorable, or ignorant about its role in Roma inclusion measures. One Italian policy-maker stated “UNAR is not independent, it doesn't have its own budget nor political autonomy; it is completely dependent upon the Prime Minister who can appoint and

revoke the staff; and it is attached to the Department for Equal Opportunities, which isn't even a Ministry...in short, it is not worth a hill of beans" (interview 32, Rome, December 2015). Another interviewee commented, "[t]he UNAR staff basically lives off the National Roma Integration Strategy. Without it they would have no purpose, even though they couldn't care less about the integration of the Roma" (27 January 2017, email follow up to interview 30) while yet another asked "What does UNAR do, exactly? What are its competences, and could it help us apply for EU funds?" (interview 12, Turin, March 2015).

From the point of view of the (former) UNAR staff, it seemed that they had nurtured some hope that the short-lived Ministry for Integration¹⁶⁸ might prove instrumental in the implementation of the Roma Strategy, and to be struggling with establishing constructive communication with the local authorities. One UNAR employee recalled:

"In 2012, the National Strategy was presented in Parliament by the then Minister for International Cooperation and Integration Riccardi just before local elections in Rome. At the time we followed closely those elections and expressed our solidarity to the new Rome administration of mayor Marino [Democratic Party], because it was necessary to give a signal of change from the approach taken by the Alemanno¹⁶⁹ cabinet, which had been terrible. The Office that used to be the 'Nomads Office' was renamed 'Roma, Sinti and Camminanti Office' under assessor Cutini¹⁷⁰ and in 2013, when Kyenge was still the Integration Minister, we managed to hold meetings with representatives of the Council of Europe, who visited the Roma camps and met with vice-mayor Nieri and assessor Cutini...and well, then the Rome case exploded [with Mafia Capitale]." (interview 13, Turin, March 2015)

Regarding the relationship between UNAR and the local authorities, UNAR staff commented:

"[T]he strategy calls for the Regions to re-propose the same principles of the NRIS with local strategies, which should be responsible for the implementation of local social inclusion. Since 2012, when the strategy was approved, we have been trying to promote and to raise awareness in cities and regions in order for them to adopt local social inclusion plans that respect and reflect these principles and these axes. On the one hand there is a lot of goodwill on behalf of some regions, but the situation is very uneven, as in other areas...of course the most advanced regions, the first of the class are Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, as usual. Then there are a number of regions that would have the good will, but do not even know how to write a project...we try to help where we can, but it is clear that the real problem is the lack of proper knowledge on norms, directives, regulations, how to design an action plan, to apply to European funds and so forth.

¹⁶⁸ In November 2011, under the technical government of which Mario Monti was prime minister, Andrea Riccardi was appointed as Minister without portfolio for International Cooperation and Integration. From April 2013 to February 2014, under government led by Enrico Letta (Democratic Party) a Ministry for Integration was created, headed by Minister Cécile Kyenge. The government led by Matteo Renzi (Democratic Party), who took office in 2014, did not include a Ministry dedicated to integration (neither with or without portfolio).

¹⁶⁹ Gianni Alemanno (People of Freedom party) was mayor of Rome from April 2008 until June 2013.

¹⁷⁰ Rita Cutini was assessor to the social policies of Roma Capitale between 2012 and December 2014.

And then there's the other problem, which is political. And in a way it is to be expected, because when one says that there are limited social inclusion funds the ordinary citizen does not understand, and the typical reaction is 'why should this money go to the Roma and not to my family, if I am unemployed'. So of course politicians are weary of exposing themselves...I understand their difficulties, it is not a rosy moment for this." (interview 25, skype, August 2015).

In Italy a problem that affects both the local and national levels is the high dependency of specific plans and actions on the political color of the government: because the usage of the 'nomad emergency', of Roma inclusion, or of any Roma-targeted measure has become politically loaded and is generally seen as partisan (even though the corruption scandals surrounding the Roma camps management business involved administrators of different parties) whenever there is a change in the administration, Roma policies also change. In Spain, instead, many Roma inclusion policies go steadily forward through a system based on a few large organizations that have proved to be the most successful in securing European funding for Roma targeted projects¹⁷¹. On the whole, it seems that in both cases the "Roma integration" problem and the policies surrounding it are a lucrative business, either economically or politically/ mediatically, even though for different stakeholders and in a different manner.

MacGarry claims that, since actors in democratic governments represent the majority, it is hardly surprising that they tend to suppress interests that they deem less important (such as those of the minority) The issue in most of the representation debates is therefore, from this point of view, that

"[D]ue to a focus on rights, the literature has worked through a catalogue of duties on the state and therefore has failed to give credence to the role of interests. [...] These literatures have also failed to take account of the interests of the minorities themselves. When interests are brought

¹⁷¹ The 2011 evaluation reports *Support for Enhancing Access to the Labor Market and the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities* and *Roma Thematic Report* demonstrated that certain countries have made considerable progress developing concrete Roma inclusion measures with the use of SF, while others considerably lagged behind. The empirical data collected from 15 member states indicated Spain as the most 'successful' country in terms of absorption and allocation of available funding towards social inclusion and integration initiatives targeted at the Roma. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/evaluationofsupportroma2011_en.pdf

The same year, a study commissioned by the EP *Measures to Promote the Situation of Roma EU Citizens in the EU* (2011) evaluated 12 member states, reaching the conclusion that Spain allocated more ESF budget per capita directly targeting social inclusion of Roma citizens than any other member state. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL-LIBE_ET\(2011\)432747](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL-LIBE_ET(2011)432747)

According to the data made available on the "EU and Roma" portal of the European Commission, Spain continues to be the European country that has been allocated the most in the fields earmarked for Roma inclusion. See <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/>

into the equation, they are centered on the *state's interest* to enact certain pieces of legislation or policies, and how this maps with the rights of Roma” (McGarry 2010, 75).

Looking at where the problem is ‘situated’, both symbolically and not, can help understand what kind of interests underlie it. In Italy the ‘problem’ is situated somewhere between the domains of security, public order, migration and cultural rights rhetoric. In Spain ‘Roma integration’ is instead placed squarely amongst the groups in need of social assistance and policies, but not of equality policies. In both cases, even if the matter were to shift to the Ministries or Departments in charge of equality, this is, itself, situated either as dependent on the Council of Ministers (in Italy), or it is a matter related to health and social services (Spain), respectively.

An overarching issue is that neither Italy nor Spain are equipped with an overall antidiscrimination policy that might coordinate sectorial initiatives, nor do they have an independent body in charge of equality. Individuals and groups that face multiple forms of injustice cannot therefore rely on an equivalent to the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency in Germany or to the High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality in France.

5.4 What assumptions underlie this location of the problem?

Separate can (never) be equal

One of the fundamental debates around the role, scope and need for Roma integration policies in the first place is the issue of segregation, which can be defined as “[a] process of special concentration and separation of a homogeneously categorized group deemed ‘different’ from the majority by the majority itself, be this difference framed as socio-economic, cultural, religious, ethnic, or racial” (Picker 2017, 5).

The need to combat segregation, particularly in schooling and housing, has become one of the leitmotifs of European reports on Roma, and arguably, one of the main scopes of the EU Roma Framework, as the European Commission has stated in its 2011 Communication: “[M]ember States’ national strategies should pursue a targeted approach which will, in line with the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, actively contribute to the social integration of Roma in mainstream society and to eliminating segregation where it exists.” (COM(2011) 173 final, 8).

Such principle is understandable, since Roma segregation has been linked with widespread poverty, lack of education, chronic unemployment, limited access to healthcare, housing and essential services (Fundamental Rights Agency and UNPD 2012; European Commission 2011, 12). As Elizabeth Anderson has argued,

“Segregation of social groups is a principal cause of group inequality. It isolates disadvantaged groups from access to public and private resources, from sources of human and cultural capital, and from the social networks that govern access to jobs, business connections, and political influence. It depresses their ability to accumulate wealth and gain access to credit. It reinforces stigmatizing stereotypes about the disadvantaged and thus causes discrimination” (Anderson 2010, 2)

According to this rationale, article 7.2 of the European Regional and Development Funds (ERDF) was modified in 2009 in order to make the ERDF available for Roma integration projects, conditional upon the fact that the plans could by no means foster or endorse segregation¹⁷².

Such an approach has however triggered a discussion on what constitutes ‘legitimate’ segregation along the lines of ethnicity/race, socio-economic status and age.

In Italy, the National Project Officer of the ROMACT programme spoke about the situation in Naples, where the administration had proposed to ‘join’ two existing Roma camps into one:

“Together with the Naples administration, we wanted to keep working on this project; they [the administration] had actually already found the land to build it [the camp] on and all...but the communities are very different and not in good relations with each other, so we thought about creating a Table to change that project, but keeping some elements of it, because there were some good things.

I mean, if one could refurbish and restructure an already existing ‘village’ of theirs, and restructure it in a way to turn it into an ecological village, self-sufficient from the point of view of energy-provision, in short, a real village, you see what I mean? With solar panels and proper lighting... So basically, this would be the idea, but just for one of the communities, not the two of them together. It would be a beautiful village, open to the citizenry, with activities...” (interview 18, Strasbourg, March 2015).

The project was denied funding based on the fact that it perpetuates segregation, and of both camps were eventually closed and its inhabitants evicted, with only a small number being offered an alternative temporary housing. However, no infringement proceeding has yet been opened against Italy, even though in September 2012 the European Commission launched a pre-

¹⁷² Of the almost 256 billion euro of the Structural Funds (programming period 2014-2020) the ERDF accounts for 75,2% of the budget, and the European Social Funds (ESF) for 24.8%.

infringement phase or ‘pilot’ proceedings against Italy for its treatment of Roma under the Race Equality Directive, alleging forced evictions, segregation in mono-ethnic camps and discrimination in access to housing (European Roma Rights Centre 2017).

In Spain, policymakers seem to have a better understanding of the need to desegregate the marginal slums with substandard housing in which some Roma (mainly migrants) still live, and the social housing projects carried out in Madrid since the 1980s are still seen as one of the good practices used as an example by the European Commission. Still, issues of lack of adequate housing remain, and are reinforced by the fact that the poorest neighborhoods tend to provide scarce services:

“The global inclusion of both, majorities and minorities, is important. It’s important that the majority society feels that the specific policies for the Roma population also benefit them, that it benefits all of us, the society in general. The disappearance of a neighborhood such as Cañada Real Galiana as we know it, and its transformation into a decent, urbanized neighborhood benefits the whole society. We are, of course, left with the problem of where to relocate these people: and let’s not kid ourselves, it’s always going to be the outskirts and the poorest neighborhoods. The thing with segregation is that it is acknowledged as such only when it is poor people, immigrants, or Roma that inhabit it: but what about neighborhoods such as el distrito de Salamanca, el Viso, Cruz del Rayo, Chamberí? An apartment in some in these places costs around 12,000 euro per square meter: are these not ghettos?” (interview 10, Madrid, October 2014)

The issue of urban segregation is a consequential one for a number of other aspects of integration, such as access to quality education and health provision. Beyond the integration ‘markers and means’, however, geographical marginality also translates into difficulties in making the voice of the peripheral Roma communities heard at a political level.

5.5 Conclusion: the problem of misframing

Carol Lee Bacchi’s (1999) WPR approach, as mentioned in chapter 2, is based on the assumption that any description of an issue or a ‘problem’ is an interpretation, and interpretations involve judgment and choices. As opposed to a positivist conception, according to which policymaking is a fairly straightforward matter of finding a technical answer to a readily identified problem, Bacchi argues that “[while] there are a multitude of disturbing social conditions, once they are given the shape of an interpretation, once they are characterized as a ‘problem’ or as a ‘social

problem’, they are no longer ‘real’. They are interpretations or constructs of the ‘real’ ” (Bacchi 1999, 9).

What emerges from an overview of the participation and representation dimension of the Roma in the political realm of Italy and Spain, is that in both cases Roma minorities are underrepresented in the policymaking of the Strategies that address their integration, as well as in institutions in general. Such underrepresentation responds however to different dynamics and mechanisms at work both in policymaking in general and within the Roma communities: in Italy, a small, weak and largely corrupted Roma alleged representation has been, at least in the capital and at least until the Mafia Capitale investigation, quite integrated in the corrupted dynamics of the public administration. As one interviewee summed up:

“In short, Alemanno bought the so called Roma representatives; and the so called Roma representatives allowed themselves to be bought. And the Roma woman I met 25 years ago who gathered scrap metal for a living with an old Ford Transit together with her husband, continues to gather scrap metal with the Ford Transit with her husband” (interview 32, Rome, December 2015)

Conversely, in Spain one of the major obstacles to Roma participation and to the creation of mechanisms for making claims and expressing a critical view on the Roma integration policies is, according an interviewee, the marginalization—not just economic, but rather the fact of belonging to a section of the population that has always remained outside the processes of citizen participation.

Roma’s lack of visibility in Spain and over-exposure in Italy both have serious repercussions in claims for representation and the possibilities for redressing political injustices.

CONCLUSION

The present thesis analyzed the role of the political framing of Roma minorities and their integration on behalf of policy-makers in Italy and Spain. Setting out from Nancy Fraser's redistribution-recognition dilemma, I started from identifying two types of injustices that Roma face: cultural and economic. Through an analysis of the Roma-targeted integration policies that have been developed and implemented by Italy and Spain over the past few decades, one additional type of injustice emerged, namely the lack of voice of Roma communities and individuals in the development of those policies that directly affect them.

From a methodological point of view, I adopted Carol Bacchi's WPR approach as a tool to unpack the decision-making process, which opens the possibility to look at multiple ways in which minorities can be produced as a 'problem' in the political arena.

Empirical findings

The three questions asked in the first chapter were (1) who the Roma are represented to be according to the policies aimed at promoting their integration; (2) how integration is understood on behalf of those in charge of developing Roma integration policies; and (3) what kinds of processes and mechanisms cannot be explained through the recognition-redistribution lens.

Regarding the representation of Roma as a group to be 'integrated', Italy and Spain present considerable differences as a result of both historical legacies and political context and priorities. On the one hand, Spain has maintained a fairly steady narrative since the 1980s, which identifies the recipients of Roma-targeted measures as Spanish citizens of Roma ethnicity (*gitanos*), and has so far avoided addressing migrant Roma residing on its territory—or when it has, it has been either to justify inaction through lack of reliable data, or through policies of control and securitization presented as 'policies of benevolence' such as the repatriation of EU citizens who are unable to provide proof of 'suitable accommodation' to raise children (Vrăbiescu and Kalir 2017). On the other hand, Italy has instead constructed an image of the beneficiaries of Roma integration measures which is fundamentally 'migration-ized', in the sense that even when measures address Italian citizens of Roma ethnicity as the target population of integration policies, the approach builds upon an understanding of the Roma minority as fundamentally and intrinsically culturally different from the 'Italian population' or the 'mainstream' (whatever

that may mean), and thus requiring cultural mediation as a basic tool.

In both cases, it seems that much of the difficulty of upholding Roma rights in terms of minority recognition comes precisely from the fact that the wide-range freedom of interpretation of what kind of minority such group constitutes depends more on the political expediency of the State—in terms of how it chooses to identify and categorize the Roma vis-à-vis other minorities—than with the identity of the group as having a strong or weak sense of belonging towards the State in which it resides, being a ‘new’ or ‘old’ minority, or any kind of self-identification mechanism. The language adopted in the FCNM reports as well as in the national and regional strategies, as well as interviews with policy-makers, show that the choice of categorizing the Roma as a certain kind of minority (defined mainly in terms of their cultural, socio-economic, migrant status or perceived exceptionality that required securitization measures) on behalf of both States is rooted in wider political dynamics of which the Roma are only one, and often secondary, aspect. Because the Roma have little lobby capacity at the state level (particularly in Italy), yet their inclusion remains high on the European political agenda, national policy-makers find it easier or more appealing to decline the Roma inclusion narrative in ways that play both sides. That is, in ways that speak to two audiences: to the EU, by adopting the wording required by EU institutions, but so that in practice it can be interpreted as to fit the policy debates that the governments want to gear the attention to (or stir the attention away from) in terms of agenda-setting.

In this sense, if the Roma have emerged as a crucial case for testing the ways in which a group can be “socially and politically *produced* as a ‘problem’ within the context of the contemporary EU” (Yıldız and Genova 2017), this research shows that these very representations can also be—and are—produced at the national level, and that the EU so far seems incapable of confronting Member States with the inconsistencies and contradictions of such representations.

Regarding the meaning attributed to ‘integration’ on behalf of policy-makers, the findings confirm the hypothesis that Italy has adopted a largely cultural approach to (Roma, but also migrant) integration while Spain has engaged in mainly redistributive policies, and that both have engaged in measures that are fundamentally ‘affirmative’ rather than ‘transformative’ in nature. That being said, what also emerged from delving into the different understandings of integration was that ‘integration’ as well as ‘minority’ and ‘Roma’, served as a largely hollow term imported

by EU documents that was filled with meaning on behalf of the strategies' National Contact Points. Ultimately, to become 'integrated' in both countries has been interpreted to become 'closer' or part of what is perceived as being the national standard. This means that, rather than promoting integration as a two-avenue process which secures equal opportunities for all, or as "integration of multi-ethnic societies rather than integration of a minority group into a particular society" (OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 2012), the NRIS focus on the negative and highly individualized issues (lack of skills, of education, of access, of cultural capital, of resources, etc.) which place Roma within a 'deficit paradigm' (with emphasis being put on the 'cultural' deficit in Italy and on the 'economic' deficit in Spain).

This aspect is strongly intertwined with the findings relevant to the third question, namely to the political processes of (lack of) representation and participation. Because of the underrepresentation of Roma in positions of power in both countries—in Italy because of internal divisions of the Roma representation and cooption into widespread corruption mechanism at the institutional level, in Spain mostly because of confinement of the Roma elite within welfare provision policies—the very definition of Roma as a 'problem' has largely gone unchallenged.

What can be observed is a significant difference in how, and where, such 'problem' is located in politics in Italy and Spain. In Italy, it has been increasingly framed as a security threat coming from a population external to the body politics. This means that it is often conflated with narratives on immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as with racialized 'cultural others' such as non-whites and Muslims. The department in charge of implementing the policies is consequently fragmented between an ineffective and largely performative Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) and the Ministry of Interior, particularly the department dealing with security.

In Spain, conversely, the 'Roma problem' is one that is produced in terms of social services and welfare provision, and thus the department that is chiefly responsible for Roma integration is the one charged with 'Families, childhood, social programs, NGOss and volunteering' within the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

In the case of Italy, such 'problem location' reinforces the stereotype of Roma as a 'foreign' group with very specific problems that do not affect the rest of the population and thus require

tailored and targeted measures (and resources, which are widely perceived as being unjustly used to ‘favor’ the Roma rather than to provide services to the ‘working Italians’). In Spain, the framing of the Roma as a socio-economic underclass turns any claim of Romani cultural recognition that escapes the well-rehearsed clichés of flamenco into the whim of a minority that is not considered skilled enough or prepared enough to really contribute to the Spanish society in its increasingly precaritized capitalist economy, and consequently to society tout court.

In both countries, the focus is on remedying a specific kind of ‘gap’ that Roma seem to carry with them, be it cultural or economic. This, in turn, puts the focus on Roma minorities and their ‘deficits’ rather than on structural inequalities, or on the agents and institutions that perpetuate inequalities, marginalization and power asymmetry. In practice, this translates into a narrative that does not challenge the status quo, but rather feeds the understanding that it is the Roma minorities who are responsible for their situation, and who need to change in order to benefit from rights and services (while the policies of welfare provision in themselves are not problematized).

Beyond Italy and Spain

This research had focused on the integration policies for Roma as a minority that suffers from multiple forms of inequality, but has not been carried out with the pretense or the aim of providing a study of, or on, Roma minorities themselves. Quite the opposite, the departing point of this thesis was that an understanding of the ways in which national majorities construct, produce and ‘other’ the minorities that inhabit their shared territory can give us a good indication regarding the character, political priorities and dynamics of the ruling majority.

Indeed, an overview of the mechanisms at work in the framing of ‘Roma integration’ as a policy problem has demonstrated that Roma are neither an exception that escapes wider national political dynamics nor a special minority that somehow ‘does not fit’ the governance of other (both migrant and national) minorities. The labeling of a minority as a ‘national’ one or not, in particular, was shown to have little to do with objective analytical categories and more to do with power dynamics.

More generally, the normative claims underlying the production and reproduction of a minority as a certain type of policy problem are strongly contingent on the macro variables that structure the entire policy process. This can be observed in the case of the Roma in Italy and Spain, but also in the response (or lack thereof) that such approaches have generated on behalf of European institutions.

If the Roma have emerged as a crucial case for testing the ways in which a group can be “socially and politically *produced* as a ‘problem’ within the context of the contemporary EU” (Yıldız and Genova 2017), the representation that needs to be problematized is that of Europe itself and its lack of capacity or willingness to engage with underprivileged groups in ways that are inclusive, rather than othering.

Far from being a concern only relevant to Italy and Spain or to Europe’s Romani groups, the unwillingness or inability of EU institutions to produce models of European citizenship and identity that go beyond national conceptions mean that issues of cultural diversity, social cohesion and integration remain confined within a paradigm of European identity which is based on the same premise of national constructions (Cantat 2015a). Therefore, the outcome is a European identity built as an oppositional identity to both internal and external others (such as the Roma, but also that of non-white migrants and of Muslims), which become indispensable to an understanding of ‘Europe’ that endorses diversity without practicing it, and conceives of the ethnic minorities (racialized and migrant-ized) as “ ‘European’ only inasmuch as it is constructed as effectively *non-European*: they are figured as inextricably *in* Europe, but never truly *of* Europe, and thus, always vexingly ‘out of place’.” (Yıldız and Genova 2017, 5)

With this thesis, which explicitly problematizes the relationship between the underlying assumptions of policy-makers about what constitutes a policy problem and the ways in which they promote policy solutions in matters of Roma integration, has aimed at contributing to the strand of scholarship building bridges between the too often disconnected disciplines of political theory, comparative politics and Romani studies. However, I believe that the present work shows that more cross-pollination is needed not only between disciplines, but also between different regions, as well as between academic and non-academic research. The US literature on identity politics has informed much of this study, and it could be usefully employed to achieve a more thorough understanding of minority-majority relations by merging it with European studies on

integration. In general, the insights from US studies on Black and Latino representation (such as Anderson, 2010) and on the repercussions of minority oppression for the quality of democracy (such as Fraser, 2008) could help engage with different types of social mobility barriers for minorities from perspectives that, while not new, could help us understanding injustices that have multiple causes.

Furthermore, this thesis also demonstrates the methodological advantages of an approach that favors looking at the decision-making process in addition to the legal and policy outcomes, since it can give us a full(er) picture of how policy-makers engage with minority politics in the first place. Focusing on the policymaking process also implies that there is no need to decide a priori what the interests of a group are, and to see them as fixed and homogeneous (what Brubacker calls groupism). A critical discourse analysis applied to more than one case could also be useful to understand trade-offs and the effects of the NRIS in other European countries, thus allowing to disentangle the different components (migration, economic, cultural, etc.) and weight them against each other. Interesting comparative examples, for instance, could be Romania and Bulgaria, in which the migration narrative is likely to play a very different role from the one in plays in Western European countries. Conversely, a similar study in the same countries (Italy and Spain) but aimed at the development of integration policies for asylum seekers and refugees could help us understand whether similar political dynamics are at play and us allow to problematize the link between desirable policies and desirable process.

Finally, if we want to gain a better grasp into what constitutes European identity and cultural integration, we must look at who is included and who is excluded in policy-making, and which groups can make claims for inclusion into what is regarded as constituting 'European-ness', and through which narratives. To conclude, all democracies are confronted with similar challenges for the realization of the principle of integration as social justice in the face of unequal citizenship (Jacobs and Skocpol 2005; Gonzales and Sigona 2017). The better we understand how different dimensions of inequalities work, and what kind of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion they produce, the better equipped we will be to think of problems differently, and hopefully remedy to them in ways that do not only answer to the needs of the majority.

APPENDIX – List of interviews

Code	Role	Country	Date of interview	Place of interview
Interview 1	Consultant to Italian National Roma contact point (UNAR) on IT national strategy	IT	23-Sep-14	Skype
Interview 2	Member of the Consejo del Pueblo Gitano del País Vasco	ES	27-Sep-14	Bilbao
Interview 3	Programas Sociales, Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad (MSSSI)	ES	14-Oct-14	Madrid
Interview 4	Ayuntamiento de Aviles (Asturias)	ES	16-Oct-14	Barcelona
Interview 5	Fundación Segretariado Gitano Madrid	ES	16-Oct-14	Barcelona
Interview 6	Parlament de Catalunya, Miembro del grupo bienestar	ES	17-Oct-14	Barcelona
Interview 7	Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano (Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Extremadura)	ES	17-Oct-14	Barcelona
Interview 8	Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza	ES	17-Oct-14	Barcelona
Interview 9	Fundación Segretariado Gitano Departamento Internacional	ES	18-Oct-14	Madrid
Interview 10	Instituto de Realojamiento e Integración Social (IRIS)	ES	18-Oct-14	Madrid
Interview 11	Consiglio della Provincia Autonoma di Trento	IT	27-Feb-15	Trento
Interview 12	Comune di Torino	IT	19-Mar-15	Torino
Interview 13	Roma integration unit at UNAR	IT	19-Mar-15	Torino
Interview 14	Ufficio Stranieri e Nomadi (Rome)	IT	19-Mar-15	Torino
Interview 15	Comune di Napoli	IT	20-Mar-15	Torino

Interview 16	Comune di Reggio Calabria	IT	20-Mar-15	Torino
Interview 17	Regione Toscana	IT	20-Mar-15	Torino
Interview 18	Head of ROMACT (IT)	IT	28-Mar-15	Strasbourg
Interview 19	Consultant for drafting the National Roma Integration Strategy	ES	17-Apr-15	Madrid
Interview 20	Aid to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues	CoE	22-Apr-15	Strasbourg
Interview 21	Ayuntamiento de Bilbao	ES	9-Jun-15	Bilbao
Interview 22	ROMACT National Expert (IT)	IT	12-Jun-15	Milan
Interview 23	Director of Community Development and Family Politics in the PV Government	ES	8-Jul-15	San Sebastian
Interview 24	Director of watchdog NGO on Roma integration (IT)	IT	29-Jul-15	Rome
Interview 25	UNAR (legal aid)	IT	6-Aug-15	Skype
Interview 26	Consejería de igualdad, salud y políticas sociales (Junta Andalucía)	ES	19-Sep-15	Granada
Interview 27	Consultant for drafting the new Roma integration strategy for Andalucía	ES	5-Nov-15	Sevilla
Interview 28	National Contact Point, Decade of Roma Inclusion	ES	23-Sep-15	Madrid
Interview 29	IRIS	ES	6-Nov-15	Madrid
Interview 30	Italian policy maker	IT	14-Nov-15	Skype
Interview 31	Desk Officer (Roma task force)	EC	10-Dec-15	Brussels
Interview 32	Roma Capitale	IT	19-Dec-15	Rome

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