

Invisibility of Romani women in Spanish laws
against gender-based violence:
reasons and consequences

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Abstract

This paper examines Romani women's (in)visibility within the Spanish legal system in relation to the laws that fight against gender-based violence. It offers a methodological analysis of both international and national laws that are implemented and ratified in Spain in order to demonstrate that the invisibility in the legal system is a consequence of the institutional racism that exists in Spain. Consequently, the paper urges the implementation of an intersectional approach in the creation of laws as well as the involvement of Romani feminism and Romanies experts in the development of those laws.

1. Introduction

This paper engages with the violence suffered by Roma women within the framework of the legal protection system in Spain. To contextualize the situation in which Roma women find themselves within the protection system, the paper analyses international and national legal documents adopted by the Spanish government in relation to violence and discrimination against women. Although Spain's legal system nominally offers protection against gender-based violence and discrimination for all Spanish residents, it treats minorities as a homogeneous group without taking diversity into account.

Since Spain is a member of the EU and also subject to international laws, the government of Spain has implemented national laws based on the recommendations of international organizations and committees of national experts. These laws are intended to protect all women without distinction regardless of their administrative situation, social class, race or other identity. Therefore, if we want to understand the Spanish situation, it is necessary to analyze national laws as the Organic Law of Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence 1/2004 and the State Pact against Gender Violence 2017, as well as international legal documents as The Istanbul Convention, ratified by Spain. The question is whether the present legal framework can be effective in combating gender-based violence against Roma women.

2. Conceptual framework

Before examining the issue of gender-based violence committed against Romani women in Spain, I shall define the concept of violence against women. I will use the definition given in The Istanbul Convention:¹

[Gender violence is] a violation of the human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.²

Roma as an ethnic group have been for centuries victims of racist attacks. Given that this paper examines the case of Romani women, the concept of racism must also be defined. In the following refer to ethnical identity discrimination as defined by the European Commission:

[Racism discrimination is] any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human right and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.³

Both concepts must be considered in order to understand how race and gender-based violence intersects in the case of Romani women. I shall also introduce another concept that is essential for this paper: gendered anti-gypsism. Gendered anti-gypsism is a racist and patriarchal ideological and institutional structure that supports a hierarchical system that perpetuates prejudices and stereotypes about Roma women, not accepting their cultural and gender diversity.⁴ In Spain, a notorious case of gendered anti-gypsyism dates from December 11, 2020 in which the Superior Court of Andalucía sentences a 24-year-old man to only three and a half

¹ Council of Europe. (2011, May 11). Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008482e>

² Art 3, Definitions, "Violence against women", pp 3, Council of Europe Treaty Series- No. 210.

³ Migration and Home Affairs, European Migration Network (EMN), EMN Glossary Search, Racial discrimination, European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/racism_en.

⁴ Sara Olvera: 2014 "Construyendo el feminismo gitano, feminismo Romani". DEA Universidad de Granada, España.

years in prison for “maintaining a sexual relationship” with a girl under eleven who had to undergo an abortion because pregnancy was life-threatening for her body. The Court judgment stated that the defence considered that “the mental damage in minors is conditioned by the culture and environment where they move, [and] since the minor belongs to the Gypsy ethnic group, and there it is customary to have sexual relations from a very early age, therefore, the impact has not been so significant”.⁵ This case demonstrates gendered anti-gypsism: the institutional discrimination of the Spanish courts against Roma women. I’d like to point out the language that is used to name the act, that is “maintaining a sexual relationship,” when the act has been a continuous rape against the minor. If an 11-year-old Spanish girl had been the victim, the court would have been much stricter with the perpetrator, the feminist movement would have made a protest, and of course the language used would have been different.

3. Background information: The reality of gender, race, class and location as experienced by Roma women in Spain.

When approaching the problem of gender violence within the Roma community, the transversality of other axes of oppression that affects them, such as class, race, and sexuality, should be taken into account.

[Intersectionality is] where systems of race, gender, and class domination converge, as they do in the experiences of battered women of color, the intervention strategies based solely on the experiences of women who do not share the same class or race backgrounds will be of limited help to come because of race and class face different obstacles⁶.

Thereby, the analysis of the political figure of the Roma woman should be portrayed by the following indivisible attributes: the Roma woman shares with all women her sex which is the base of the hierarchical division of society⁷ in which women have been relegated to a space of

⁵ <https://www.diariojaen.es/jaen/tres-anos-de-carcel-por-mantener-relaciones-con-una-menor-que-tuvo-que-abortar-MH7584394>

⁶Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299. doi:10.2307/1229039. <https://blogs.law.columbia.edu/critique1313/files/2020/02/1229039>

I can use the example given by Crenshaw when she explains what is carried out of a woman of color, when she claims that “many women of color are burdened by poverty, childcare responsibilities, and the lack of job skills. She points out, that these burdens, largely the consequence of gender and class oppression, which are compounded by the racial discrimination employment and housing practices women of color often face.

⁷ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

inferiority and subordination towards men. This unequal division of power affects all women without distinction in all public and private spheres in all cultures and societies. Yet, for Roma women gender may not be the main source of inequality, discrimination, and disadvantage. The Roma community that has historically been persecuted, punished, discriminated against, enslaved, expelled from territories, and suffered extermination attempts by pogroms, the *Porrajmos*⁸ and present day attempts of erasure⁹.

The first picture that is perceived by society as well as by the public's powers is not the gender but yes, ethnicity. It seems as a disconnection between the person as subject and her gender which it has been established in a position less visible by the others. This is caused due to the terminological divergence in which the Romani woman is considered 'gypsy' not woman as two terms 'Roma' and 'woman' constructed as mutually exclusive¹⁰ Therefore, as Alexandra Oprea¹¹ points out the gender is not the first point of discrimination for the Romani woman because the categorization of Romani is in a homogeneous group in which the ethnicity overcomes sex. However, we must take in consideration how the multiple discrimination works and be aware that the factor of gender noticeably has a huge role related with Romani woman that we cannot ignore. For instance, when a woman is raped, beaten by her intimate partner, or forced to work in prostitution, it because she is a woman and in these cases of violence the ethnicity does not have an important relevance because is due to the subordination of the woman toward the man.

Continuing with the defragmentation of the figure of the Roma woman, we should turn to her social class status. It is politically recognized that class is a social factor in economic terms that interferes and affects the opportunities and life models. Nonetheless, what happens when a community does not have social class because practically all of them live in the marginal poverty?¹² This marginalization is perpetuated by the European and national policies, i.e., the

⁸ CHARNON DEUTSCH, LOU (2019) « ¿Quiénes son los gitanos ? Los orígenes del proceso de estereotipación de los Romaníes en España » en SIERRA, María. Creando subalternos: imágenes sobre el pueblo gitano. España. Historia social

⁹<https://www.dw.com/en/czech-republic-considers-compensating-roma-victims-of-forced-sterilization/a-56890206>.

¹⁰ Oprea, Alexandra. (2004). Re-envisioning Social Justice from Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women. Essex Human Rights Review Vol. 1 No. 1.

¹¹ Oprea, Alexandra. (2004). Re-envisioning Social Justice from Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women. Essex Human Rights Review. Vol.1 No.1

¹² According to the Second European Union Minorities Survey, published by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency in 2016, "come 80% of Roma in nine Member States with the largest Roma populations live below their country's poverty threshold: every third Roma live in housing without running water, every third Roma child lives in a household where someone went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month: and 50% of Roma between the ages of six and 24 was not in education". This trend is confirmed in the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Roma

so-called integration plans and strategies for the Roma, which had not resulted in considerable progress in any country where they have been implemented¹³.

When discussing gender-based violence experienced by Roma women, the Roma community's location is also an important factor. The expulsion of the Roma community to the peripheries, limiting its possibility of establishing housing only in marginal suburbs, their lack of access to public services marks our present. Because of their violated past and the present failure of European strategies the majority of Roma live in state social housing, illegal settlements, or marginal neighbourhoods in the peripheries of cities. These segregated neighbourhoods lack quality public resources such as healthcare, education, and employment, which perpetuates a poverty spiral from which it is difficult or practically impossible to get out. In these ghetto neighbourhoods several generations of families live together and because of intermarriages everyone has some family connection with each other. This situation gives rise to structural violation that forces women to remain silent because when a Roma woman suffers some type of violence against her, which could be from her intimate partner, a family member or anyone who lives in the neighbourhood, she will be find herself limited to report the situation because she is aware that the involvement not only concerns her but also the rest of the family she lives with.

4. Analysis of the international and national legal framework: the figure of the Roma women in legal documents

Next, I will analyze the figure of Roma women as it appears in international and national documents for the elimination of the violence against women. The Spanish government is committed to the fight for the eradication of violence against women, and it has signed and ratified several international conventions with the aim of achieving real and effective equality between men and women. Presently in the Spanish legal system, there are laws at the national, autonomic and local levels with the same objective. However, as it will be proved throughout the analysis, Roma women are omitted from these official documents, which makes them invisible as a political category and a more likely subject to gender-based violence.

and Travellers Survey 2019, which shows" dramatic high rates of persons and children going to bed hungry at least once in the last month" and notes that "almost half of Roma and Travellers 45% in the six EU-Member States felt discriminated against in at least one area of life.

¹³ Report on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe. (2011/2020). Committee on civil liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. European Parliament.

4.1. The Istanbul Convention.

The Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was signed in Istanbul on May 11, 2011. This document was ratified by Spain in 2014 and it became a binding legal document. In the legislative proposals as well as in the objectives of the document, the legal protection of women is proposed without distinction: Article 1- Purposes of the Convention: a) protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute, and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.¹⁴

With this objective, the text makes a declaration of intent as well as the obligation to protect all women from all types of violence. However, throughout the entire document, no direct reference is made neither to the Roma nor another minority group, which seems very problematic considering the broad representation of minority population in Europe. This text is based on the idea of a generic European woman without taking into account the intersectional position of different ethnic minorities.

There is only one article during the text in which we can identify a potential to address Roma women as a vulnerable group: "Any measures taken pursuant to this chapter shall take into account and address the specific needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances and shall place the human rights of all victims to centre" .¹⁵ Therefore, article 12 declares the adaptation of the measures according to the specific circumstances of women belonging to vulnerable groups. Thus, the particularities of the situation of Roma women within its diversity must be taken into consideration, adjusting them to consolidate the achievement of recognized human rights.

4.2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW.

The CEDAW Convention was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and, accession by resolution 34/180 of the United Nation General Assembly of December 18, 1979¹⁶. Spain ratified the text in 1984 and undertook to comply with it.

¹⁴ Art 1 a), Istanbul Convention. Pp 2.

¹⁵ Art 12 3), Istanbul Convention. Pp 5.

¹⁶ OHCHR | Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women CEDAW.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

The text of the convention begins with a declaration of principles and rights as the basis for achieving equality and non-discrimination against women. The fundamental principle includes a strong statement against racial discrimination: “Emphasized that the elimination of apartheid, of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination, and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential for the full enjoyment of human rights and of the woman” .¹⁷ In other words, the signatory member states must eliminate any type of discrimination and violence based on ethnicity by implementing the necessary legal measures to eradicate it with the ultimate objective of achieving the fundamental rights established in the convention for all women without giving rise to any to discrimination or vulnerability of them. Therefore, the violation of the fundamental rights of Romanies in Spain must be analyzed and contextualized for the creation of concrete, specific and effective measures in the fight against discrimination and violence based on ethnicity.

The convention has a committee of independent experts, which monitor the implementation of CEDAW. The signatory countries of the convention are obliged to submit regular reports to the committee. These are the CEDAW Shadow Reports, which act as monitoring and surveillance tools. These Shadow Reports are put together by national and local feminist associations and NGOs. However, despite the fact that the original document calls out for the elimination of racism, of 295 participants in the drafting of the last 2019 shadow report in Spain, none were Roma. Only one Roma association appears as the signatory of the document, and they did not participate in its drafting either.

After each report sent to the committee of experts, they create guidelines for each country to be implemented. In the last shadow report of the Spanish platform of CEDAW 2019¹⁸, the analysis of article 11 of the CEDAW is carried out on the observations point 9c) of statistics disaggregated by sex of all aspects of the public and private employment argue that there have been no appreciable improvements, specifically regarding the Roma population. This result has as a consequence the difficulty of creating public policies and specific measures for Roma women to eradicate the violence and discrimination suffered by them in terms of employment, considering employment as a tool for emancipation, independence, and a recognized right.

¹⁷ Adopted and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979. Entry into force 3 September 1981, in accordance with article 27(1). Pp 1.

¹⁸ CEDAW, Spain platform, 2019 shadow report.

<https://cedawsombraesp.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/190513-informe-cedaw-sombra.pdf>

In turn, section IV of Care is analyzed, Observation 9) Gender impact of the economic crisis and of the policies to face it, the result is: Almost 1 in 3 boys and girls, more than 2.6 million, are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, amounting to 47, 9% in single-parent families (83% headed by women), 70% in households with both foreign parents and 72.3% in the Roma population. This result is connected with the previous point, where the lack of data disaggregated by sex in employment has the consequence of not creating policies to eradicate the extreme poverty in which the Roma community is situated, the percentage of families being below the threshold of the poverty even higher than that of non-national families. These two points are the ones that refer to the Roma community throughout the entire text, limiting the analysis of the impact of the implementation of the convention to those only two sections but with quite conclusive results.

4.3. Spanish Organic Law of Comprehensive Protection / Measures against Gender Violence 1/2004.¹⁹

The objective of this Law, developed in article 1 of the text, is to fight against violence against women, all acts considered discrimination, situations of inequality, and the power relations in which men subordinate women. This law is aimed at those women who have suffered violence at the hands of their partners, ex-partners or have been linked to them by emotional relationships.²⁰ Throughout the legal text, the only reference made to ethnic minorities is in Title III of the Institutional Guardianship. In article 32 of Collaboration Plans, section 4 is drawn up: “In the actions provided for in this article, the situation of women who, due to their personal and social circumstances, may be at greater risk of suffering gender violence or greater difficulties in accessing the services provided for in this Law, such as those belonging to minorities, immigrants, those in a situation of social exclusion or women with disabilities” .²¹

This article highlights the vulnerability of Roma women, as an ethnic minority, to suffer violence as well as the difficulty in accessing the public network of resources for women victims of gender violence, accepting the existence of discrimination that hinders the possibility of leaving the situation of violence. However, the text makes no mention of carrying out specific protocols for action or implementation of strategies designed to facilitate women's access to public resources or to give visibility to the violence they may suffer.

¹⁹ Spain, Organic Law of Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence 1/2004, December 28.

²⁰ Art. 1. Law 1/2004. Preliminary title. Pp 10.

²¹ Art 32, 4. Law 1/004. Collaboration Plans. Pp 20.

4.4. State Pact against Gender Violence, 2017.

The State Pact²² is a document of programmatic principles agreed upon by every political party, but it does not have the status of law and therefore is not strictly normative. Yet, even though the fact that once Law 1/2004 was promulgated, and more than a decade has passed since that milestone, it is still necessary to continue advancing in the fight against gender violence, and the State Pact is a reflection of what remains to be done by the public powers. This State Pact involves the union of a large number of institutions, organizations, and experts who made the formulation of measures for the eradication of violence against women. The Pact implies influencing all areas of society and is structured around ten frameworks.

Throughout the entire text, only one mention is made of the Romani women's collective. In axis 2. of the Improvement of the Institutional response, coordination, and networking. point 2.5 of Vulnerable Sectors number 99: "Involve groups such as immigrants or Roma women in the design of specific policies"²³. Despite this, none of the experts invited was Romani or belonged to an association or NGO that works with Roma women. The expert who brought this proposal to the committee was the director of the Spanish Society of Epidemiology who is non-Roma.

5. How invisibility affects Romani women

The lack of Roma expertise in legislation is related to a general lack of representation of Romani women in politics and decision-making and, on the other hand, Romani women's exclusion from mainstream feminist discourses. In Spain feminist discourses are marked by a White hegemonic vision. In Maria Lugones²⁴ definition the White hegemonic vision equates white women's experience with all women's experience. However, this interpretation of women's experiences, that is without awareness of racial and other differences, omits the fact that gender-based violence can appear in different situations, contexts, forms, and manifestations. Furthermore, due to this denial of the existing differences among women, it is assumed that there is no need to create intersectional feminist coalitions in the fight against discrimination.

²² Spain, State Pact. Consolidate document of measures of the pact of state on gender violence, Congress plus senate. 2017.

²³ Number 99, Vulnerable Sectors. State Pact. Vulnerable Sectors. No 99. Pp 42.

²⁴ LUGONES, MARÍA (2008). Colonialidad y género. *Tabula Rasa*, (9),73-101. ISSN: 1794-2489. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=39600906>

As a result of this invisibility of Roma women's situation, although there are studies about the education, employment, economy, and health circumstances of Roma, there are zero studies about gender violence endured by Roma women. Since there is no database of violence suffered by Roma women either on the European or at the national level, the problem is totally invisible.

While Spanish feminists are blinded by their White hegemonic vision, the government's non-inclusion of Roma experts is due to gendered anti-gypsyism, defined by S. Olvera as racism towards Roma women. To put it simply: it is misogyny combined with anti-Roma sentiments makes Roma women invisible.²⁵ Or, as Oprea put it: the "patriarchy within Romani communities is either ignored or deemed Romani culture."²⁶ This understanding of the Romani culture is embraced not only by the general society, but also by the Spanish feminist movement, which looks at Roma women as victims and never as potential leaders of social changes.²⁷

According to this view Roma culture is to be blamed for the violence and oppression that Roma women suffer at the hands of their partners. It also delegitimizes our right to represent ourselves with our own feminism, claiming that our culture is the main source of violence of our discriminations as women. This racist declaration legitimizes the racist, hegemonic, and discriminatory systems established more than six centuries ago when the Romanies first arrived in Spain. A revision of this view would necessitate the revision and defragmentation of all current structures and the institutional recognition of the history of violence, persecution, and attempted extermination suffered by the Roma community in Spain.

When racism and sexism come together, they create a cage where Roma women are positioned, perpetuating their silence, and leaving them in a situation of extreme vulnerability. According to P. Caro, when the institutions speak of "inclusion of the gypsy people, the Roma men are represented. When they talk about equality, only non-Roma women are represented. Where are we then?"²⁸

²⁵ Sara Olvera: "Del movimiento silencioso al movimiento ruidoso del feminismo gitano" 2020. Universidad de Granada, España.

²⁶ Oprea, Alexandra. (2004). Re-envisioning Social Justice from Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women. Pp 30. Essex Human Rights Review.

²⁷ Sordé Martí T, Munté A, Contreras A, et al. Immigrant and native Romani women in Spain: building alliances and developing shared strategies. *J Ethn Migr Stud*.

²⁸ Ismael Cortes, Patricia Caro, Markus. (2021). Sueños y Sombras sobre los Gitanos. *Antigitanismo 13 miradas*. Pp 273. "Cayardó como estrategia para eliminar el sexismo antigitanismo". Barcelona: Bellaterra.

The invisibility, and victimization of Roma women have direct consequences when we deal with the issue of violence at the hands of their partners, access job discrimination, rates of unemployment and low education, etc. The lack of recognition of racism in the structures is reflected by the protection system for victims of gender violence where Roma are not named and they have no safe place to go to safeguard their physical and psychological integrity. The invisibility of racial differences within some international and nearly all national laws, programs and institutions destined for victims of gender violence results in the denial of Roma women's rights. Without a database of the impact of violence in the community, it is not possible to create specific programs and resources for Roma women aimed at prevention, protection, and recovery.²⁹

Although there is data provided by some non-governmental NGOs, the numbers do not correspond to the reality in which Roma women find themselves. For instance, the Calí program began to work in 2016 financed by the European Social Fund to promote equality, socio-labour inclusion, and attention to multiple discrimination in vulnerable situations of Romani women. After 3 years they recorded 293 cases of gender violence in their localities in Spain and 685 Roma woman have been accompanied and advised in situations of discrimination.³⁰ If we compare this data with the statistics of the general population, taking as a reference the official data offered by the National Institute of Statistics, the data show that in 2020 there were 1.4 cases of gender violence per 1,000 women.³¹ Therefore, it can be concluded that the numbers related toward Roma women is a much lower number than the real.

6. Instead of invisibility: Need for institutional and social response to the problem of gender violence toward Roma women.

The gendered anti-gypsyism present in institutional structures but also in the feminist movement has devastating consequences. The existence of gendered anti-gypsyism is present in the acceptance and non-criminalization of violent actions against the Roma women both

²⁹ As a consequence of the lack of statistics on Roma women from the Ministry of Equality, I have only been able to obtain the data available on the official website of the *ONG Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (Roma Secretariat Foundation NGO) on the results and impact of its Calí program for the equality of Roma women.

³⁰ Fundación Secretariado Gitano, programa Calí, España.

https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/inclusion_social/cali.html

³¹ National institute of statistical, Statistics of domestic violence and gender violence, Spain.

https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176866&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735573206#:~:text=%C3%9Altima%20Nota%20de%20prensa&text=El%20n%C3%BAmero%20de%20mujeres%20v%C3%ADctimas,creci%C3%B3%20un%208%2C2%25

inside and outside the Roma community. This must be addressed by broadening the concept of gender-based violence towards a more inclusive, intersectional framework. A crucial step towards this would be the involving of Roma experts into the drafting of legal documents.

Due to their resilience, in Spain there is a strong network of Romani women that arises from the need to respond to the violence and discrimination they endure. Presently the responsibility for the fight against discrimination and violence against Romani women is transferred to the Roma or Pro-Roma organizations and associations, who carry out social work with an intersectional approach. Despite all the adversities in which they find themselves these grassroots associations work against the violence and discrimination that Romani women suffer. As a result of their tireless work the Roma women's associative movement FAKALI³² participated in the last special commission for monitoring and evaluation of the Senate Report on strategies against gender violence. The vice president, Maria Filigrana, called for the participation of Romani women as part of the social change towards a society free of machismo and violence, making visible the diversity of women and the fight for an inclusive and intersectional feminism. Filigrana also told politicians that they need to know first-hand the decisions that affect Roma people, especially Roma women, and proposed to carry out a study of the situation of Romani women victims of violence gender, with the participation of entities and experts in the field.

7. Conclusion

By analyzing different international and national legal documents on gender violence, I have been able to verify the lack of differentiation that public powers employ regarding the issue of gender violence against Roma women. As a result of this insensitivity toward the intersectional nature of a Roma woman's position in society, it can be argued that Roma women are rendered institutionally invisible. Gendered anti-Gypsyism as a silencing tool for our voices and our rights is present through the lack of acceptance of Roma Feminism. Roma feminism is the start point for the creation of Romani knowledge as a source of emancipatory wisdom for our bodies in the face of existing White supremacy in our societies.

I have been arguing throughout the text that gender violence cannot be considered as an isolated phenomenon, it must be regarded intersectionally. The lack of data makes the violence that

³² https://fakali.org/fakali-senado-pacto-estado-violencia-genero/?fbclid=IwAR2i-CjXmGhy8Ei8na_s-zDLA9Gj0iHlvDy4B8tKTGb3VrCIG9f_wt8kfyw

Romani women face invisibility, resulting in the lack of awareness about the scope of hate crimes and discrimination committed against them. The lack of rigorous and scientific data in all categories and spheres of discrimination makes it difficult to create and implement strategies and action protocols that respond to violence.

The situation in Spain regarding Roma women is not vastly different from other countries in Europe. Roma women are underrepresented in all social and political structures. Since the political structure is the institution of change and power, the lack of representation on it of the Roma community and specifically of Roma women has direct implications. Roma women are being denied the right to decide about their lives and the right to have a safe life. In turn, the lack of social and political spaces run by Roma women places them in a position in which they have limited power. They have a voice only in the problems in which Roma are involved while the non-Roma women have the right to have their voice but also to interfere into ours.

The invisible but impenetrable barrier between Roma women and the different organizations of power due to the non-recognition of our bodies as political categories of change and right has consequently the situation of poverty, extreme vulnerability, and the greater possibility of suffering violence by the defencelessness that we have of protection systems against discrimination based on sex. Whereas do not accept the historical persecution suffered by the Roma community and in particular Roma women because there is no recognition of the existing institutional discrimination against Roma women, we will continue to fight alone against an impervious and superior structure that is difficult to penetrate.

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Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women CEDAW.
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