

**Multiple Discrimination and Untold Stories of Resistance: a case study of
Romanian Roma women conducting informal street work in Oslo**

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Abstract

This thesis aims to challenge the stereotypical collective image toward Romanian Roma women by offering a study case that examines the experiences of Romani women who live in a state of unintentional homelessness in Oslo, Norway and survive by begging, recycling bottles, or selling magazines. To tackle the hegemonic knowledge, which is predominantly toxified by negative prejudices toward Roma, the special narratives of Roma women refute these images and seek to disclose untold stories of resistance. As this is the first case study made on this topic by a Roma woman, I aim to create a space for the silenced voices of Romanian Roma women whose narratives and struggles remain unheard. In order to conduct a thorough investigation of the intersectional discrimination suffered by Roma women and the outcome of their oppression, I will use the framework of intersectionality and explore the concepts of resistance developed by Roma women. Thus, by taking the cases of Romani women who are left in extreme poverty in Romania and, therefore, “forced” to migrate as a strategy of survival to provide for them and their families, I will analyze both the intersectional experiences of Roma women and the forms of resistance they have developed as a way in resisting oppression. Hence, this study also aims to challenge the previous research made on Roma migration to Norway and Western countries by tackling the missing female experiences of Romani women in light of their multifaceted forms of discrimination that stem from being women, Roma, poor, migrants, and homeless.

Key words: *Romanian Roma women, untold stories, informal street work, multiple discrimination, Oslo, stereotypes, intersectionality, Norway.*

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Thank you all!
Multumesc!
Nais Tuke!

Declaration

Declaration I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference. I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate: Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 29446, words Entire manuscript: 32377 words.

Maria Georgiana Dumitru

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I. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of 2007, Norway has faced an influx of Roma Romanian migrants following Romania's entry into the European Union (Djuve et al., 2015). With Romanian Roma women and men living homeless and making a living from begging, collecting bottles, and selling magazines, this situation has garnered strong reactions from the Norwegian public, resulting in discourses that have led to the depiction of Roma based upon a stereotypical image (Barker, 2017). When asking whether Roma are "criminals or victims" (Engebrigtsen, 2012 ; Djuve et al., 2015), both the literature and media had a significant role in portraying Roma people through the lens of a prejudicial and stereotypical image, reproducing a negative narrative which is in turn fueling anti-Roma racism (Langaas 2017:14–15). Within this climate, most research addresses Roma as a collective and homogenic group, thereby neglecting the female experiences of Roma women who are engaged in informal street work and live in a state of unintentional homelessness.

In response to this lack, the current thesis proposes an investigation that will explore the experiences and the struggles of Romanian Roma women who live homeless and support themselves by conducting informal street work in Oslo. When referring to informal street work, I include activities such as begging, gathering bottles, etc. for recycling, and selling magazines. It must be mentioned that all the women who are engaged in informal street work lack primary education, and therefore their access to contractual work is extremely difficult. However, despite the fact that they sleep outside, enduring harassment, rejection from the Norwegian society and, poverty; (Damsa, 2015; Djuve et al., 2015), by disclosing the daily experiences of the Roma women who live in the conditions detailed above, this research offers a firm denial of the prejudices against Roma. By focusing on Roma women's narratives gathered via interviews, it becomes clear that these women have also developed forms of resistance. The thesis's data was collected during intensive fieldwork of three months in 2019 at the City Mission organization Oslo, as part of my applied track master's program. Beyond relaying the narratives of Roma women and underscoring their forms of resistance, the thesis also proposes an analysis of the intersecting challenges inherent to living on the streets not just as women, but also as Roma, migrants, and homeless people. Given the circumstances, only an intersectional approach may reveal the layers of oppression that Roma women survive while being homeless and engaged in informal street work in Oslo. Likewise, taking in account that

the umbrella term of intersectionality can generate new knowledge and is well known as the “interconnectedness of race, class, gender and sexuality,” (Collins 2015:9), this theory becomes the apparatus that can identify the specific factors that intertwine and multiply the challenges that Roma women face.

Research questions

I. How do Romanian Romani women's experiences as individuals who are unintentionally homeless and informal street workers shape their power to remain a resilient “community” in Oslo?

II. What challenges do homeless Romanian Roma women who live unintentionally homeless in Oslo face from an intersectional perspective?

The Roma women resist the challenges of being homeless, but their survival in the face of living on the street has not been analyzed as a form of resistance. Therefore, these questions seek to reveal stories from Roma's daily narratives and aim to enclose both their struggles and the effects and consequences of all these challenges, concluding with the focal point of their resistance.

Justification

I worked with homeless Roma women in Oslo during the year of 2017 and 2018, an experience which motivated me to do further research in this topic. One of my main motivations for choosing this issue is that the existing literature on informal street work is too limited and ignores the female experience (Damsa, 2015). Moreover, within the available sources and literature on informal street work, the extant literature misrepresents Roma and depicts them from the perspective of stereotypes and prejudices that are found in the Norwegian context (Djuve et al. 2015). This study will also be the first research exploring the female experience's forms of resistance in undertaking informal street work in Scandinavia and aims to portray Roma women for the first time as survivors of multiple discrimination. Equally important, this study also represents the first time that the author's perspective is not only that of a Roma individual, but also that of a Roma woman. Finally, the new findings in this research will

challenge the public discourses that dominate Norwegian society regarding Romani women, and it will contribute to the general knowledge of the intersectional experiences encountered by Romani women and their forms of resistance.

The Body Structure of the Thesis

The body structure of the research project is divided into the following order. The introduction will expose the issue, address the research questions and detail the body structure of the research project. Given the current harsh situation that Romani people are facing in Romania, the second chapter provides background that encompasses a brief historical outline of the history of Roma in Romania and Norway and seeks to demonstrate that the present situation of Roma is a consequence of the unjust historical background experienced by Roma in Romania. This chapter will additionally discuss the heated reactions recorded in Norwegian public discourse and from authorities while aiming to summarize the importance of stereotypes regarding Roma in general. The literature review analyzes the most important research regarding Roma migration to Western and Northern Europe. It explores the value of gender and migration and draws upon the missing aspect of the female Roma experience. It also demonstrates that the intense reactions, stereotypical depiction of Roma, and new policies in regulating Roma migration is not a unique case, but rather just one glimpse of a pan-European issue.

Moreover, the methodological section of this thesis will analyze the employed qualitative methods and argues the reasoning behind employing the chosen methodology. Following this chapter, the theoretical section will explain the use of intersectionality in undertaking this study while summarizing and analyzing both the theory and method of intersectionality. Furthermore, the first analytical chapter draws on the findings from the qualitative methods used. It carefully examines the experiences and results shared by Roma women on the topics of sleeping outside and intersectional discrimination. With the analyzed findings, this chapter challenges the distorted knowledge and image that Roma Romanian migrant homeless women confront in Oslo, and it will draw on the consequences of living outside versus the need for community building, and solidarity. The second analytical chapter has its base to continue exploring the experiences and the stories of the interviewed Romani women, this time from the perspective

of resistance. It includes theories both from women of color and black women and sheds light on the forms of resistance that the Romani women develop when engaged in informal street work and homeless life in Oslo. Finally, the last part encloses the conclusions and explains what has been discussed while offering further recommendations.

II. BACKGROUND

This chapter will explore the stereotypical representation of the Roma and how these stereotypes have appeared in the strong reactions and heated public debates found at the international level and in turn influenced the migration of Roma from Eastern Europe to different western and northern countries following the EU-expansion in 2007. Having in mind that Romanian Roma women migrants are subject to multiple forms of discrimination in general, before examining the particular case of female Roma migrants who emigrated to Oslo, Norway, it is first necessary to briefly outline the history of Roma both in Romania and Norway and follow up this part with an introduction and examination of how the theories surrounding intersectionality can be used to comprehend more deeply the situation that these women face. Afterwards, a general overview of what stereotypes are connected to Roma men and women—a situation that is closely related to the intersectionality of their social positions—will be provided. Both Roma female migrants and the forms of resistance exhibited by Romani women while unintentionally living in a homeless state and surviving by performing informal street work are issues that have been neglected by academic research. In light of this gap in the research literature, I will analyze the concept of resistance while exploring gender with special consideration regarding the experiences of Roma women. According to the European Commission, Romania is the country that has almost two million Romani people (Refugees 2015). Out of the two million Roma who live in Romania, 40% of Roma communities live in extreme poverty in Romania, and their access to quality education and employment is significantly lower than that of another non-Roma. (Roma Inclusion Index, 2015:56–59).

A study made by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reports that Roma face extreme challenges regarding racial discrimination, a situation that affects equal access to justice, housing, education, employment, health care and public services, all of these inequalities ultimately determine the ability of Roma to achieve a dignified life (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). As a consequence, when faced with living in poverty and exclusion from any social system, Roma are left without any choice. In order to survive, they temporarily emigrate to Norway with the hope of providing for their families. Within this picture, gender is essential; I highlight this aspect since among the Roma people who emigrate to Norway, Roma women are the most vulnerable group since they also suffer the triple discrimination of being a woman, poor, and Roma (Kocze 2009:19–24; Bitu,

2010:46-48; Oprea, 2015). In spite of these factors, they find strength and hope in migrating almost 3,000 kilometers away from their families to a foreign country where they seek ways to provide for their loved ones back home. It is equally significant to mention that illiteracy rates in Romania is higher for Roma women than they are among Roma man (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). It can therefore be stated that their access to education is lower compared to that of Roma men, which consequently leads to lower access to employment in the job markets (Oprea 2017:40). In light of this aspect, the situation of Roma women who migrate from their countries to seek chances to survive despite their minimal resources, makes Romani women individual agents who challenge the gender roles within the Roma culture by migrating independently or in couples to Norway and trying to provide for themselves and their families.

A brief history of Roma in Romania

To understand both the current situation of Roma in Romania and the reactions of Norwegian society when receiving Roma Romanian migrants, a brief historical outline is first necessary. Romania today suffers from national amnesia in terms of Roma history. Defined as “the specific racism towards Roma, Sinti, Travellers and others who are stigmatized as ‘Gypsies’ in the public imagination” (Alliance against Antigypsyism 2016), antigypsyism (i.e., anti-Roma racism) is the racism that has been present in the Romanian collective mentality since the arrival of Roma in Romania. The Roma arrived in Romania in the fourteenth century (Achim 2013:15) and were enslaved until the nineteenth century (Achim 2013:111). During slavery, Roma regularly endured persecution while being completely dehumanized and oppressed under their status as slaves (Hancock 2002). During the aftermath of slavery, Roma once again became the target of persecution and scapegoats, resulting in deportation to the concentration camp, Transnistria, under the Nazi rule that proclaimed Roma as racially impure. As a result of this practice, Roma suffered a genocide throughout which roughly 36,000 Roma from Romania were eradicated (Achim 2013:181–83). After this period, Roma did not receive any emancipation programs, official apologies, or legal remedies. Left at the margins, excluded from the political Romanian agenda (Selling 2018:47) today, Roma and non-Roma do not learn about their history of slavery or deportations. This part of the history is missing from the

mainstream history books texts and Roma remain the most discriminated minority in Romania (McGarry 2017:1). As a result, history reflects today's lack of human rights for Roma. They suffer persecution, poverty, racial profiling and a lack of equal opportunities compared to other, non-Roma living in Romania (Rostas 2013).

Similar to Romania, Norway has also historically jeopardized their local Roma population by implementing different Roma people's policies and practices (Langaas 2017). In the past being referred as “thieves, rowdy, dirty and immoral people, tricksters, or social misfits” (Langaas 2017:15), the research *New Policies, Old Attitudes? Discrimination against Roma in Norway* (Langaas 2017), captures the primary practices of Norwegian authorities, which, in essence, meant eradicating the Roma populations. According to Langaas's work, the Tater and Romani people's lifestyles started to be criminalized by 1845 (Langaas 2017:16). By taking children away from Romani families through the Child Protection Act (*vergerådsloven*) of 1896 and sterilizing hundreds of Roma women to prevent the Roma population from growing, Norwegian authorities sought to assimilate Roma communities (Langaas 2017:18–19). Today, anti-Roma sentiments become the tool to “justify and perpetuate the exclusion and supposed inferiority of Roma, which is based on historical persecution and negative stereotypes” (Nicolae, 2006). Having outlined the current situation and the tough history of Roma in Romania and Norway, it does not come as a surprise that the marginalization and discrimination suffered by Roma in Romania are a continuation of an unjust historical past both in Romania and Norway. Therefore, left in poverty and marginalization, many Roma women and men from different rural and city areas temporarily emigrate to Norway for the allowed 90 days of staying within the European community to make a living from the gains of the informal work (Freedom of Movement, European Convention on Human rights, Protocol 4, Art.2).

A Brief Introduction to Roma Stereotypes

Like Black women and women of color, Roma women have not escaped white, European stereotypes that are rooted in racial and ethnic prejudices (Hancock 2008:181). To give one example from a source in Eastern Europe, within Romanian literature, Roma people have been depicted by means of negative and long-lasting racial and ethnic stereotypes such as “lazy, clever, stupid, conniving, childlike, untrustworthy, nomadic” (Woodcock 2015:180). At the

same time, popular opinion in Romania regarding Roma is determined by sayings and proverbs that originate from the time when Roma were first enslaved in Romania (Woodcock 2015:176). For instance, “Tiganul nu e om” (the Gypsy is not human), is a saying that demonstrates a dehumanizing attitude toward the Roma. “O murit de foame ca Tiganul intre paini” (He died of hunger like a Gypsy surrounded by bread)” (Woodcock 2015:182), displays the stupidity and incapacities that Roma were perceived to have. Another example is given by the widespread stereotype of “Roma bearing criminality in their race,” or “Roma are born to steal and cheat” (Hancock 2002:40–41). The consequences of these cultural processes of racialization carry the potential for violence and great harm, as exemplified by the eradication of Roma during the Second World War.

Stereotypes are extremely important; Alexandra Oprea notes the fact that the stereotypes held in reference to both Roma men and women overlap one another. Both genders are depicted as being “lazy, belligerent, vulgar, unwashed, and criminal,” yet Romani women are also portrayed as promiscuous while Roma men are believed to be violent and therefore viewed as a threat (Oprea 2012:15). From the beginning of slavery (Hancock 2002:18), Roma women were depicted as sexually available, seducers and promiscuous in the eyes of Romanians (Woodcock 2015:180). Ian Hancock points to a law found in the Moldavian Code from 1800, in which the abuse, rape and sexual exploitation of Roma women were justified by the following: “If a Gypsy slave should rape a white woman, he should be burnt alive,” but if a Romanian should “meet a girl in the road “and yield to love, “he should not be punished at all” (Hancock 2008:186). From this law, Hancock clearly reveals how Romani women's bodies were subjected to rape and sexual exploitation as a consequence of the stereotype that portrayed them as being hypersexual and sexually available. Although feminists have been writing about and resisting these imagined characteristics that landowners gave their slaves, the images connected to stereotypes regarding Roma women's hypersexuality, sexual availability and their characterization as “charming women” still dominate current, European popular opinion and literature (Oprea 2012:18-19). Oprea provides one example in her analysis of Esmeralda, a young Roma girl in Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* who was described as the following, “Esmeralda is a voluptuous Gypsy temptress whose beauty, dance, and charm make her the fantasy of every European man” (Oprea 2005:29).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Roma Migration and Intersectionality

The extreme poverty or, in some cases, conflict zones that Roma communities were forced to live in in different Eastern European countries led to several waves of migration to Western or Northern European countries directly after the European Union enlargement that occurred in 2007 (Sigona 2008:7). As this phenomenon was occurring, right-wing parties were gaining further footholds and advancing their influence throughout Europe, where migration has been portrayed as a threat to different Western societies and a matter of national security (Sigona 2008; Mahoney 2012; van Baar 2011). While many Roma have migrated for the purpose of gaining better economic opportunities, the new, receiving countries placed newcomers into the role of the scapegoat. France and Italy have been one of the most common destinations for Roma migrants, and the both countries have applied similar policies to stop the migration of Roma. These events have overwhelmingly earned the attention of media, whose role in portraying Roma by means of stereotypical and prejudicial images of “inherently criminals” was significant (Sigona 2008:14; Magazzini and Piemontese 2016). To provide a brief summary of the stereotypes that were commonly connected to Roma individuals within the xenophobic climate that arose in response to the mass migration of Roma men and women to Western and Northern Europe, Roma men were portrayed as criminals, and the migrant Romanian Romani women were perceived as “prostitutes,” as Mr. Fini, leader of the rightwing party National Alliance and former deputy prime minister stated in an interview for the *Corriere della Sera*, 4 Nov 2007” (Sigona 2008:9). While neglecting to report factors such as continuous evictions, the difficulty in attaining residency permits, the stigma enacted against Roma that led to hundreds of Roma experiencing harassment, attacks and employment discrimination, in connection to begging, Sigona writes that politicians view begging as a cultural trait of Roma (Sigona 2008:9-13). In reality, Roma were left without any material resources and started to beg in order to survive (Sigona 2008:29). Although this is only one example, it amply demonstrates how ethnic identity, gender and social position are key to determining an individual’s access to civil rights and social mobility. The examples given above are found throughout all of Europe as they form a basis for antigypsyism. An examination of the concepts surrounding intersectionality are therefore essential to any analysis of Roma migration. Comprehending the concept of intersectionality plays a crucial role in both

framing the research questions of this thesis and analyzing the situation Romani women find themselves in when conducting informal street work in Oslo, Norway. Therefore, the concept of intersectionality is the principal tool in grasping and exploring the multifaceted challenges that Romani women face while living homeless in Norway. Thus, this review aims to define intersectionality within the context of feminist studies and explore how the theory of intersectionality can be used to theorize the multidimensional struggles that Roma women are facing in general.

What is Intersectionality?

The term intersectionality was conceived as both a method and an “analytic strategy” (Collins 2015:13) that aims to assess social categories critically and study the dynamics of power relations between social structures. This concept emerged as a result of Black women's experiences in the United States in living in both racist and sexist society. Initially coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, the term intersectionality was merely developed in 1980; its utility lies in its ability to address oppression from multiple perspectives, yet nevertheless still act as a reliable tool in achieving social justice. (Collins 2015:2–4). To clearly understand the complexity of intersectionality, Kimberle Crenshaw outlines the differences between distinctive groups of women by analyzing the double oppressions that Black women face, yet are ignored by the rest of society, including white feminists.

After initially outlining the concept of intersectionality in her first work, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” (Crenshaw 1989), Crenshaw further develops the concept of intersectionality in her later article, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color”(Crenshaw1991). Crenshaw draws attention to how Black women are oppressed by both a racist and sexist a system. For instance, due to the fact that Black women belong to a racialized group while also belonging to the female gender, they are prone to experiencing double discrimination. Thus, both categories of race and gender overlap and create intersectional discrimination toward Black women. To comprehensively address these issues and highlight the multiple discrimination that Black women are facing, Crenshaw analyzes rape and violence toward women of color and Black women while demonstrating that Black women inhabit numerous identities as women who are Black and poor. The presence of these three factors resulting in the fact that these categories

can intersect and affect Black women from different angles. Furthermore, by analyzing the fact that mainstream feminism was composed mainly of white and middle-class women, Crenshaw challenged the concept of there being a homogenous woman voice. Therefore, she advocates the need to bring the voices of women left at the margins into the mainstream feminist struggle. To do this, Crenshaw explains how black women experience sexism differently from white women. It must, however, be emphasized that “Black women suffer, and experience racism differently compared to Black men” (Crenshaw 1991:1252). In turn, Crenshaw additionally explains how Black women and women of color experience domestic violence or rape differently from how the same case is experienced by white women due to the consequences of the intersectional position of race, gender, and class that Black women and women of color bear (Crenshaw 1990:1251). Based on Crenshaw’s argument, women of color are, for example, disproportionately affected by poverty; being located at the periphery limits women both culturally and physically from seeking help as their access to information is minimal (Crenshaw 1990:1250). Furthermore, to a more significant extent than white women, Black women are forced to stay in abusive relationships than white women who often have the privilege of seeking help from relatives or becoming economically independent. Therefore, Crenshaw makes the point that initiatives aiming at helping women of color must address their whole situation, including poverty and childcare responsibilities, and not only the physical abuse in isolation.

After Crenshaw, a range of other Black feminists and theorists have contributed to the development and usage of intersectionality. Patricia Hills Collings defines intersectionality as the “interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality, gender studies as systems of power” (Collins 2015:9). Collins writes that—when analyzed correctly—race, gender, and class offer critical insights that can be used to comprehend how social power relations and structures could be made to work better. Collins reiterates the following: “to ensure African American women’s liberation, it is an urge to understand that the systems of oppression are interlocking. Namely, racism, class exploitation, patriarchy, and homophobia are determining African women's experiences” (Collins 2015:14). Based on Collins’s arguments, intersectionality can cover broader categories of oppression; beyond what Crenshaw has exposed as central identities of oppression gender, race, class, Collins adds the category of sexuality, which can equally oppress an individual’s rights.

Another scholar who has expanded the framework of intersectionality is bell hooks. Hooks argues that the relational dimensions of class, gender, and sexuality cannot be translated/

interpreted correctly unless one is investigating the category of race. Hooks is one of the Black feminist scholars who pinpoints the paramount role of racialization and consistently highlights this aspect in her work, *Ain't I a Woman?* (Hooks 1981). Through her work, Hooks writes how both the racist and patriarchal society profoundly rejected women of color. Thus, during the liberation movement of all women subjected to patriarchy, the options available to women of color were highly limited when it is taken into account that they could not choose to stand with either sexists or racists. As a result, the dimensions of discrimination were felt at a higher level by Black women, who had to manage the burden of being women, Black and poor (Hooks 1989:13). Finally, as understood from the theory of intersectionality, this tool and concept create new knowledge that enriches feminist studies. Intersectionality has brought new approaches to how oppression can be analyzed from different angles to fight against social inequalities. Moreover, intersectionality demonstrates how race, gender, and class are particular identities of oppression and therefore have to be taken into account in order to understand the multidimensional issues that women from vulnerable groups face. As Crenshaw writes, this identity can occur one at a time or sometimes appear all at the same time. However, these oppressive identities never stop coexisting together. Thus, intersectionality was meant to create a perspective that would be adequate for analyzing and understanding discrimination from an intersecting approach that takes both race and gender into account and also considers how these factors are interrelated.

Criticism of Intersectionality

Within the field of feminist studies, some arguments have arisen regarding the theory of intersectionality or, more precisely, the question of who has ownership of this concept, or how the work of Crenshaw has been misread by European feminists. Among these critiques, some tend to contribute to the concept and theory of intersectionality while others try to dismiss some of the strengths inherent to one of the paramount theories within feminist studies.

In her article, “Who Owns Intersectionality?” (Davis 2020), Kathy Davis creates a very detailed dialogue between feminists that debates the usage and purpose of intersectionality while capturing the most important aspects of the criticism garnered by the concept of intersectionality. Davis argues that, when this concept travels between two different geographical settings, it may be difficult to translate it accurately to suit new norms, values, or

even history. The author greatly emphasizes this aspect in reference to the work done by the Crenshaw, which Davis says has been misread by European feminists. For instance, Davis gives as examples the critique of Tomlinson and Blige who implies that Crenshaw has not necessarily revealed something new since intersectionality was already “in the air,” but the origin and its intention of the theory were read carelessly by European feminists (Davis 2020:117). Furthermore, Davis tries to develop or contribute to intersectionality’s primary purpose, that of fighting oppression with a multidimensional approach and seeking social justice (Davis 2020:114-119).

Other than Davis, in her other writings Crenshaw, herself the “mother” of this concept, has also argued that this theory has been wrongly understood by Europeans (Davis 2020:117). According to Crenshaw, in different articles she often saw her work regarding the theory of intersectionality as misperceived, distorted, or wrongly understood (Davis 2020:114). In some of her work, Crenshaw mentions the fact that this concept emerged as a way to demolish the racist structures and pursue social justice, rather than building other hierarchies based upon whose human sufferance matters more; her will was not to create new divisions based on suffering and difference, but rather to smash racialized concepts and discrimination that arise from race and gender (Davis 2020:114). As a legal scholar, Crenshaw writes that the categories of race and gender are the most disruptive for Black women. Davis, however, argues that Crenshaw has devoted very minimal attention to other categories, such as class, sexuality, language, or other identities which can be considered as sites of oppression and discrimination. As a response and critique to this aspect of Crenshaw’s work, other feminists have broadened the list in this regard and have argued that other categories such as sexuality, religious beliefs, geographical position, tradition and other categories can equally harm/cause discrimination against individuals (Davis 2020:116).

In contrast, Anna Carastahis attempts to demonstrate the importance of intersectionality in terms of identity. In her work, *Invisibility of Privilege: A Critique of Intersectional Models of Identity*, (Carastathis 2008), Carastahis argues that there is a need for a space in which intersectionality can be analyzed as a tool that focuses on solidarity and not merely difference. With this statement, she builds her arguments in light of the “privilege” that appears once intersectionality is used. While intersectionality seeks to expose differences among women in a more precise manner (i.e., the differences among Black women or women of color and white women) by deconstructing the idea of homogeneity and trying to bring oppressed groups from

the margins with the goal of providing a voice for silent women, (Crenshaw 1989:167), Carastahis states that solidarity has a more important role in uniting feminists rather than deepening their differences (Carastathis 2008:23–38). Another article that introduces the idea that a “new intersectionality” has to re-appear, is entitled “Re-thinking Intersectionality” (Nash 2008) by Nash, who also questions some of the parts that intersectionality contains, more exactly, a lack of “defined intersectionality as a methodology, the usage of Black women exclusively as intersectional subjects, the ambiguous definition of intersectionality and the empirical validity of intersectionality” (Nash 2008:1–2). Similar to Davis, Nash argues that Crenshaw’s extreme attention to gender and race as being “too simplistic” in that it ignores or incorrectly analyzes the oppression Black women or women of color suffer from in their lived experiences in general. Nash therefore adds different identities and categories such as nationality, sexuality and class that can fall under the umbrella of intersectionality (Nash 2008:5).

New criticism may arise with the aim of improving the concept and application of intersectionality since the world and societies are in continuous change and therefore, new identities may emerge as a further category under oppression. With regard to Davis’s claims of how European feminists misunderstand intersectionality, mistakes of this type can also occur when different backgrounds apply a concept to new settings and histories, all factors which can change or obfuscate the purpose of this concept. The translation, interpretation of this concept as well as the dissemination of its knowledge can change, especially when different continents—such as North America versus Europe—are involved. Yet, even though this concept has travelled to different countries and continents, the primary basis of this concept remains the same. It is a tool to deconstruct social inequalities and illuminate the types and the layers of oppression that vulnerable groups of women can suffer from. Finally, although intersectionality initially emerged out of the suffering and marginality experienced by Black women in the United States, both the theory and methodology of intersectionality can be attributed to other groups of marginalized women (Davis 2020:119).

Intersectionality and Romani Studies

Admittedly, intersectionality has been especially associated with gender studies, cultural studies and media studies. Currently, other interdisciplinary fields such as history, public policy, education and criminology are enriching their perspectives by using this theory. As was outlined above, although the theory was initially developed by and for Black women, it has been adopted and used by other groups, such as Latina women or Asian women. Although Romani women share the experiences of these categories of women, Romani women's voices have been neglected in general feminist discourses. The absence of Romani perspectives and voices in the general feminist knowledge is consequently rapidly fueling their vulnerability and weaknesses. Based on my analysis of the framework of intersectionality, this concept will pave the way for understanding the position of Roma women in feminist studies. Similar to how Crenshaw describes Black women as possessing numerous identities that can work to suppress women in different forms, Roma women encounter like experiences as they face multiple discrimination. Roma are among the most vulnerable communities in Europe (McGarry 2017:1); however, research proves that Romani women face even more challenges. They are prone to inhabit multiple discriminatory categories, such as by being a woman, poor and Roma, all identities that position them on a very vulnerable periphery as Roma women constantly navigate between racism, sexism and classism (D'Agostino 2019:1–3). Thus, these factors form the identities of Roma women cannot be situated as two parallel streets, but rather as one, large intersection. Despite the historical differences and geographical settings that are found in the United States versus Europe, Roma feminists draw upon the similarities between the lived experiences of Black women, women of color and Roma women. As subjects of racism, sexism, and classism, this paper contends that the theory of intersectionality can also be applied to other oppressed groups. In this case of this paper, the case under discussion is that Roma women living in Europe.

Angela Kocze introduces the framework of intersectionality into Romani women's studies in her study, "Missing Intersectionality: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in Current Research and Policies on Romani Women in Europe" (Kocze 2009). In this work, Kocze argues that similar to Black women or women of color, Romani women experience multiple oppressions. She advocates for the use of intersectionality within Romani women studies as a critical tool for exploring oppression (Kocze 2009:14). Kocze argues that adopting Crenshaw's model can

be extremely relevant to Roma women's experiences. In doing so, Kocze exposes the walls that Romani women have to break down and overcome. Like Black women, Roma women bear the burden of suffering double, if not always triple, discrimination. To demonstrate this point, Kocze gives an example of the high rates of illiteracy that Roma women face as a consequence of the multiple discrimination that Roma women experience (Kocze 2009:23–30). Considering that Kocze analyzes the intersections of race, gender, and class as a whole, she pays notable attention to the “class” category as a missing pivotal part when the EU designs policies that target Roma. The author claims that class holds an invaluable role in the process of policymaking for Roma communities at the EU level, yet this category is not held as a valid ground of discrimination (Kocze 2009:18–19). Another scholar who uses the concept of intersectionality within the field of Roma women’s studies is the Romanian Roma feminist, Alexandra Oprea, who describes the exclusion of Roma women from European and feminist general discourse in her article, “Re-envisioning Social Justice from Ground Up: Including the Experiences of Romani Women” (Oprea 2004:29). By calling upon organizations, programs and research that neglect vital aspects when researching Roma, Oprea challenges the perpetuation of anti-Roma sentiments such as those which label Roma as lazy, criminal or untrustworthy. By examining the overly romanticizing and sexualizing images of Roma women as an example, Oprea discusses gender violence that Roma suffer due to the vulnerabilities that Roma are forced to live with. Moreover, Oprea discusses the gendered experiences of racism by looking at the issues of gender violence and early marriages, questions that are heavily discussed by Romani women activists, but silenced by Roma men activists. Oprea argues that research fails to examine the weak position Roma women have via the lens of discrimination and marginalization, mentioning how often Roma women have to choose between being either women or Roma as a means of preserving their so-called Roma identity (Oprea 2004:35). In a report made for Roma Rights Center, Oprea also states that, “Race and gender does not exist in isolation, the marginalization of Romani women must therefore be understand in the context of both racism and sexism.” According to Oprea, while NGO’s address the racism that Romani women face, they fail to address gender discrimination. Similarly, feminists address gender discrimination, but neglect racism (Oprea 2009). Hence, according to Oprea, systematic oppression, exclusion from the mainstream politics and feminism, living at the margins and finally suffering multiple discrimination are all factors that endanger Romani women's equal access to health, housing, education and employment. Furthermore, these circumstances increase the chances of exposure to gender violence and early marriages. Accordingly, Oprea explains the risk of Roma women to gender violence by

the consequences of Romani women's absent voice within feminism and politics. Lastly, another equally important claim made in this article is that Oprea also argues that patriarchy is often seen as part of the Roma traditions and not a result of the European sexist mentality (Oprea 2004:29–33). In other words, Oprea points to the fact that researchers choose to blame Roma culture as the “root” for instances like of events such as child marriage rather than looking to other, far more dominant cultural sources (Oprea 2004:29-31). Oprea then concludes by demonstrating that violence against Roma women is not related to the Roma culture, but to patriarchy and sexism which are inherent to both Romanian and European mentalities.

To continue, Nicoleta Bitu numbers among the first Romanian Roma feminists who broadens the agenda of Romanian mainstream feminist movement by including Roma women's rights. Inspired by Black feminists (more precisely, bell hooks and Kimberle Crenshaw), Bitu also emphasizes the framework of intersectionality as a key concept to deciphering the intersecting, oppressed identities that Roma women have. In her work, *Roma Women and Feminism* (Bitu 2012), Bitu takes another step in challenging both the Roma movement in Romania for silencing or neglecting the Romani women's contribution in establishing the Roma movement. By doing so, Bitu writes about the barriers that she had to break down in order to make her feminist thinking heard. Moreover, she pinpoints the paramount aspect of the political and social position of Roma women by describing Roma women as belonging to two worlds. Like Oprea, Bitu talks about cultural relativism, in which culture is invoked as an excuse to justify injustices what happen to Roma women, for instance, childhood marriages, rape, or abuse. Also, by building upon hook's arguments, Bitu mentions how—similar to Black women or women of color—Roma women are first perceived based upon their racial belonging: “The parallel between women of color and Roma women is valid in ignoring the identity of a woman and recognizing it as the primary or absolute identity, that of belonging to the Roma ethnic group” (Bitu, 2012:136). Moreover, to demonstrate her arguments above, the author shared a dialogue that happened with the occasion of the conference, *Roma Women in the Majority Society and Roma Society*, Budapest, 2000. “My advice to you, though, is not to divide Roma into women and men, or gays and lesbians. Rather, turn your attention to the global Roma problems and our discrimination and make them your priorities. Let's work to solve the problems of all Roma. Once all these huge issues have been solved, we can use our power to discuss other issues between us. To be clear and short, for the moment, in the eyes of the gadje (non-Roma people), you are not a girl or a woman first, but you are a Gypsy” (Bitu, 2012:136).

Although Bitu had a clear-cut vision in terms of the multiple issues that Roma women face, and due to the similar experiences, that racialized women groups are suffering, she states that only the tool of intersectionality can best explain Roma women's position. Based on Bitu's work, it can be concluded that discrimination against Roma women in Romania cannot be discussed without first addressing the multilayers of oppression that Romani women face. Hence, race, gender, and class are paramount factors to be considered as, most of the time, these identities predetermine Romani women's political and social lives. Likewise, the Romani scholars mentioned above have amply demonstrated how poverty, racism, and sexism have severe consequences regarding Roma women's access to education, employment, physical health, mental health and overall human rights. The social class of Roma is a question that remains to be debated and challenged as this can be another consequence of poverty, a factor that further renders the lives of Roma women invisible. Finally, my usage of the concept of intersectionality has drawn upon the multiple similarities between Black women and Roma women. Although intersectionality has historically been applied by Black feminist scholars, this tool can perfectly be used within Romani women studies, as Romani women also frequently suffer the triple discrimination that results from being a woman, Roma and poor. Finally, considering that when a discriminated group is dealing with different types of oppressions, one has the ability to also create new ways in facing certain struggles. Intersectionality shows how multiple factors and identities may oppress individuals from different directions. However, it does not identify the new means that are created, or improvised by individuals in facing adversities, in light of this, the next section will explore theories on the power of resistance and provide a voice for the forms of resistance exhibited by minority women.

Resistance in Feminist Studies

According to the Indian feminist, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, resistance within feminist studies offers a "complete landscape of the complexities of a subordinated group in trying to overcome or oppose hostility, oppression, and sexism" (Rajan 2000:153–65). In her article, "Feminism and Politics of Resistance" (Rajan 2000), Rajan examines women's actions through the lens of agency and strength as a tool of resistance. Rajan defines resistance as a "deliberate course of oppositional action and a natural counter-force to an organized collective movement for change

activism by individuals and people subjected to various kinds of domination” (Rajan 2000:154). With the aim of disclosing valuable tools that resistance offers to feminist studies, she takes a further step by highlighting the power of resistance. Moreover, in the same piece of work, Rajan discusses forms of resistance which can be contextual, thereby exposing the fact that actions of resistance involve agency and choice.

While Rajan envisions resistance through direct action and works in fighting oppressive structures, in her article, *Marginality as site of Resistance*, (Hooks 1989), bell hooks discusses the power of Black women located at the margins from the mainstream society. Hooks thereby chooses to highlight the actions of resistance that developed on the margins in response to systematic oppression and exclusion. By doing so, hooks transform marginality into a “power of resisting, describing it as a space where one can transform and divert the power of the oppressed, of the colonized, of the exploited” (Hooks 1989:21). In her work, hooks offers a supplementary analysis of women possessing the capacity to resist oppression and marginality. She explains this capacity by emphasizing that once one is pushed away from the mainstream society, she or he has to improvise and create “new worlds, new alternatives that would speed up their power to resist.” Although Black women found at the margins are being repressed, excluded from the main body of the society and thus their voices are kept silenced, from hooks’s perspective, marginality and exclusion can for the first time become something more important than a site of deprivation: it becomes a space of resistance (Hooks, 1990:341). In her previous work, “*Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness*” (Hooks 1989), hooks continue to build upon the topic of the location of the margins as a site of resistance. For instance, while describing the broken, silenced voices of Black women, she states the following: “the broken silent voices of black women speak through pain and sufferance” (Hooks 1989:16). Therefore, hooks fill her arguments with emotions, experiences, and feelings as she writes from her own “lived experiences,” which inevitably legitimizes her arguments while offering the reader not just the truth, but also the pain through her words (Hooks 1989:16). Covering the themes of the politics of locations, language as a struggle, feminist theory and the struggle of memory of forgetting (Hooks,1989) in this new article, hooks is adding that there is a “necessity of resistance that is sustained by the remembrance of the past, which includes recollections of broken tongues, giving to black communities’ ways to speak that de-colonize their minds, their beings“ (Hooks 1989:21). With the idea that transformation is possible, the author is also explaining that resistance is a direct or indirect act which pushes against oppressive boundaries set by the categories of race, sex, and class domination (Hooks 1989:15). Also, hooks explain that marginality as a space of openness is a way to “create spaces

where one can redeem and reclaim the past, legacies of pain, suffering, and triumph in ways that are transforming present reality. Fragments of memory which are not simply represented as a flat documentary but constructed to give a “new take” on the old (Hooks 1989:17). Nevertheless, even though hooks provides a stronger meaning to the idea of margins, she also mentions the fact that there are distinct aspects of a “marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and marginality that one chooses as site of resistance—as the location of radical openness and possibility”(Hooks 1989:23). Following this line of logic, marginality is mostly imposed, but can also be interpreted as a place where one can develop strong tools of defence and resistance as a means of overcoming domination. From hooks’ point of view, the tool of resistance is a mechanism developed by marginalized communities that have undergone a history of injustices and exclusion. In the case of Black women or women of color, although they may be pushed to the margins/located at the margins and suffer multiple discrimination from different social factors and categories, they actively resist oppression by reinventing or recreating new ways of resistance, as this is the last option of survival.

Reflecting on the multidimensional understanding of human agency, the article, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the docile agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival,” by Saba Mahmood, can serve as a bridge to understanding new forms of agency and resistance. Mahmood takes a different stance in analyzing “agency not as synonymous with resistance but as an action that is challenging different kinds of domination or norms”(Saba Mahmood 2001:203), and therefore makes a significant contribution to comprehending human agency within feminist scholarship. Mahmood takes a further step in analyzing other forms of agency, which includes, will, desire, reason, and patience (Saba Mahmood 2001:203). To do that, the author writes about the group of women that started as a religious movement in practicing piety, shyness, modesty and kindness (Saba Mahmood 2001:206–9). Mahmood writes how these specific women perform and embody particular behaviour and practices which show their subordination. The author takes as a vital example of the religious gathering initiated as a movement that seeks to revitalize Islam, an act that was solely a practice that has historically been dedicated to men. Although, in the view of Mahmood concerning human agency, as a concept that is much more complex, she pays extreme attention to understanding how the layers of agency and resistance work. That is why she highlights the endurance, pain and patience of the women who perform and participate within this new religious movement, as crucial elements within the agency concept. She explains that even though women who participate in this religious movement seem to be subordinate and continue to perpetuate gender

inequalities and female submission, they seek to escape the norms imposed by Islam and attempt to gain self-autonomy and self-realization (Saba Mahmood 2001:205–8). While Rajan speaks about resistance and agency as synonymous with an active action that fights against oppressive structures, Hooks tackles this aspect by interpreting marginality as a space and site of resistance, where one can develop further tools to fight oppression. In a different vision, Mahmood extends the meaning and the way that agency and resistance work. Mahmood gives additional significance to resistance by exploring the feelings of desire, will, patience or endurance. By doing so, she challenges the traditional thinking and actions of seeing resistance and agency, by directing attention to the power of endurance as another form of resistance and agency.

In a similar line, in the work, “Reclaiming Agency, Reasserting Resistance,” the feminist Kalpana Wilson analyzes agency in a more complex way. Wilson study Indian women and tries to analyze agency and resistance form the individual level rather than as a collective, to choose to survive and not necessarily produce an immediate structural change (Wilson 2008:82–83). To do so, Wilson discusses the meaning of agency and returns to the period when the concept of agency was born, the Enlightenment, a time when agency and power of decision, solely referred to men. She writes that feminists have challenged this an analogy between free will, rational choice and man (Wilson 2008:82–85). While men were viewed as rational individuals, women were irrational, passive and unable to have autonomy or the power of decision-making. She states that feminists have long challenged these binaries, however, this way of thinking is still evident in some society’s mentalities. While in Wilson’s vision, agency is perceived as “free will,” i.e., the ability to make a choice, she also examines the marginality of women. More precisely, Wilson writes that in some cases, agency remains the only tool that can be used as a strategy for survival. Therefore, in her analysis choosing survival in very difficult situations reflects the power of resistance. However, even with that, she talks about the “invisibility of resistance” of Black women and Third World women, who are left out of mainstream feminist struggle. With this, she means that they are being denied their voice: “Women who have no voice, means denying them agency and simultaneously, to repudiate the possibility of social change” (Wilson 2008:84–85). She speaks about the collective thinking regarding Black women or women from the Third World countries as, “passive victims, with the need of being rescued, saved, this being encouraged not just by man but white women as well (Wilson 2008:84). Tackling these aspects brings significant importance to agency and resistance as a tool of analysis in feminist studies. It also brings new forms of resistance and

agency, as the goal of surviving which she is analyzing through the lens of agency and resistance remains the most important tool of power when one is founded in very difficult situations.

Resistance among Roma Women

In connection with resistance among Romani people, the first thought to come to mind may refer to the fight of Romani people imprisoned in the Nazi's concentration camp, Auschwitz Birkenau. The Resistance of Romani women and men is celebrated every year on May 16th by commemorating the bravery of Roma in the Second World War, 1944 when Roma fought back against SS Nazi guards and managed to stop the eradication of thousands of Roma on that day (Matache 2019, Travellers Times 2016). Beyond this one example, the history of resistance of Romani people has been very poorly researched. The portrayal of Roma under the paradoxical and stereotypical images of victims or perpetrators obscures other actions and identities that Romani people have shown throughout history. Even during this tragic episode of Romani history, their resistance is showed from a homogenous perspective; however, the dissertation *Is Survival Resistance? Experiences of Gypsy Women under Holocaust* (Szász, 2008) challenges the homogeneity of experiences and offers invaluable testimonies of Romani women survivors from the Roma Holocaust. While attempting to record the experiences of Romani women survivors, Szasz's focus on power, domination and the resistance of Romani women makes it possible to examine small actions such as solidarity, unity, or the silent disobedience of Romani women as strategies of survival and forms of resistance (Szász, 2008, pp. 63–66). By naming the act of survival as an act of resistance, she imbues additional meaning to the traditional definition of resistance and builds on the gendered terror experiences that the Romani women endured during the Holocaust.

Resistance is everywhere: while Szasz speaks about a specific episode of Romani resistance from a gender perspective, Angela Kocze takes a further step and examines resistance within the context of Romani political activism. By writing the article, "The Building Blocks of the Romani Women's Movement in Europe," Kocze criticizes the Romani movement, which has mainly been characterized by a male perspective: "The history of Romani political activism is traditionally narrated from a heterosexual, masculine perspective, with the role of men being

magnified, whilst the accomplishments of women and of people of differing sexualities, becoming a rather diminished, or even invisible matter“ (Kocze). To fill the gap and give recognition to Roma women activists, Kocze thoroughly investigated the historical female figures Roma leaders, activists, and feminists with the intent of drawing attention to the invisible female actors who have significantly participated and contributed to the Romani civil movement. To apply this to the study case of Romani women who are left in extreme poverty and “forced” to migrate to survive, I pause to ask the question of whether this is resistance or not. Can their acts of agency and forms of resistance be seen and analyzed in reference to resistance? Resistance among Romani women is still an area with so much to offer, but minimal attention has been paid to these questions. In its traditional ways, resistance is an act by an individual or collective that fights against oppressive structures. However, in light of the theories discussed above, especially in reference to Mahmood’s argument, resistance can be built on other forms that thereby broaden this concept. Szasz also views these small acts as forms of resistance and gives a more significant meaning to what resistance means. Kocze also explores resistance in the context of Romani women activism. Likewise, Oprea refers to resistance at Romani women found at the bottom, and she proposes a bottom-up approach to fighting against inequalities. The bottom-up approach refers to whenever studies, research or analysis has to start from lower social classes, (from the bottom-up) to higher social classes. Thus, this approach can also be employed to refer to the study case of Romanian Romani women engaged in informal street work in Oslo. Their struggles, forms of resistance, and challenges can be collected and narrated in other contexts. Voicing the challenges of women who are found at the margins and therefore totally excluded from the centre can contribute to the knowledge of resistance in general.

Conclusion

To conclude this part of my analysis, the theoretical framework section draws upon the two critical theories of intersectionality and resistance. I began with a brief analysis of the reactions recorded during public debates in regard with Romani migration to Western and Northern Europe as to offer an broader context to locate the topic of Romanian Roma women who have migrated to Oslo, Norway and are surviving by informal street work (begging, recycling bottles and selling magazines). In order to investigate the multiple challenges that they deal with, I have shed light on the tool of intersectionality as a primary method in investigating the

oppressive and multiple minority's women experiences including Roma women. Beyond this, I have explored the theories of resistance as a response to the oppression of women found at the margins. I build on their forms of behavior that can be interpreted as resistance and on the additional forms of resistance offered by Mahmood, hooks, and Szasz. Despite the minimal available resources discussing Romani resistance, I attempted to bring into the discussion some different forms of resistance that have been exhibited by Romani women. Finally, the theoretical chapter encompasses theories and experiences that can be used in the field of minority women experiences in facing multiple discrimination and on the creation of their alternatives that are developed as a form of resistance.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Using Stereotypes to Discriminate Against Roma Migrants

To refer back to the rhetoric applied against Roma who migrated in large numbers to Western and Northern Europe, the case of Italy has been discussed in reference to human rights violations and the repeated expulsion of Romanian Roma from Italy (Sigona 2008). In his study, “The Latest Public Enemy: Romanian Roma in Italy, The Case Studies of Milan, Bologna, Rome and Naples” (Sigona 2008), Nando Sigona analyzes how the presence of Romanian Roma migrants in Italy ignited severe political and public debates, leading to extreme means/measures in “protecting Italy” from the new migrants (Sigona 2008: 6-13). By collecting a multitude of political statements issued in different public interviews in Italy, Sigona demonstrates how statements made by politicians were imbued with anti-Roma sentiments such as Roma “being criminals, kidnapping children, thieves and immoral” when addressing the immigration of Roma (Sigona 2008: 18-44). As a result, such overused statements had an enormous role in inflicting fear and anxiety among civilians, thereby connecting the image of national insecurity to that of migrants (Sigona 2008:14). This can be demonstrated in the following statement made by the mayor of Rome: “Before the accession of Roma into the EU, Rome was the safest capital in the world. We need to repatriate people; otherwise, cities like Rome, Milan or Turin can't cope with the situation” (Sigona 2008:8).

The conclusion of Sigona’s report draws upon the impact of the anti-immigrant rhetoric that placed Romani groups from Romania in the forefront for migrating to Italy after 2007. Sigona writes that in just six months, more than 15,000 Romani men, women, and children were deported from Italy. Furthermore, another part of their conclusions shows the harmful implications of such practices toward Romani groups. Beyond this, the report concludes by shedding light on how political actors use practices such as biometric data, evictions and the destruction of Roma camps to legitimize and justify racism during situations of apparent national security. Since such acts have roots in historical stereotypes and prejudices that depict Roma as being “inherently criminal,” these mentalities are revitalized among the increasingly powerful right-wing parties in Europe. Therefore, Sigona’s research had a paramount role in disclosing how the migration of Roma is received and how anti-Roma racism has been materialized into concrete policies against Roma, thereby becoming a model for different countries.

Similar, anti-Roma rhetoric was voiced in France under the former president, Nicolas Sarkozy. France is the second country that has deported Roma (*gens du voyage*) repeatedly for reasons of safety and security for French citizens. The article, “Expulsion of the Roma: Is France Violating EU Freedom of Movement and Playing by French Rules or Can it Proceed with Collective Roma Expulsions Free of Charge” (Mahoney 2012) raises the issue of how France’s actions violated certain principles agreed upon within the EU community. Like Italy, France justified their practices by invoking stereotypes and prejudices against Roma communities and igniting public fear. While France declared that the deportations did not target Roma ethnic groups, they offered incentives of three hundred euros to “convince” Roma to leave their country voluntarily (Mahoney 2012:667). During this time, serious efforts were made in order to dismantle or eliminate Roma camps from France (Mahoney 2012:650). Even though Mahoney writes from the perspective of the deportations’ legal implications (see article Freedom of Movement), the author also exposes how prejudices and stigma against Roma, helped to materialize such actions by stating that political actors, media, and the public sphere were all “helping” in spreading anti-Roma racism. Similar to Italy, French media also depicted Roma as the “enemy” whose goal, in their mind, was to rob, cheat, undertake criminal activities and invade their civilized countries (Sigona 2008:50).

Much discussion has been made about Romanian Roma migrating to the Western countries, an event that was represented as an “issue” that became transformed into a European problem. As van Baar puts it in his article, “Europe’s Romaphobia: Problematization, Securitization, Nomadization,” (van Baar 2011), Roma have been represented as “criminals who do not want to work” or as nomads whose lifestyle reverts to medieval times and therefore renders Roma incapable of integrating into the society of the receiving countries (van Baar 2011:205). The author discusses such aspects in light of the dehumanizing events and expulsions both from France and Italy, during which the dignity of Roma individuals was degraded and accepted as inferior (van Baar 2011:206). Simultaneously, similarly to Sigona, van Baar, states that the mass migration of Romanian Roma and their subsequent representation in Western European media and public discourse is an event that has contributed both to the revitalization of nationalism in the receiving countries as well as the revival of anti-gypsyism anti-Semitic sentiments (van Baar 2011:208). The re-emergence of anti-gypsyist rhetoric consequently legitimized the severe backlash that became the response to Roma migration. In view of this, Roma migration it is not a recent phenomenon, their attempts to escape/resist different forms

of oppression by migrating, can be interpreted as a form of survival. However, the reactions of the receiving countries, have even contribute to the inequalities in terms of Roma rights as the same rhetoric of anti-Roma migration is still present in Europe and this can be traced in the recent debates and political discourses that happened in the North.

Migration to Scandinavia

While at the beginning of EU enlargement in 2007 most Romanian Roma migrated to the nearest countries in order to make a living, later on Scandinavia also became an opportunity for those who chose to migrate. In Sweden, the controversial topic regarding Roma street workers or Roma homeless begging for money in open, equalitarian and wealthy societies such as in Scandinavia, has raised debates on the national and international level. Vanessa Barker writes in her work, “Nordic Vagabonds: The Roma and the Logic of Benevolent Violence in the Swedish Welfare State”(Barker 2017), that street working activities such as begging, collecting bottles, or other informal work, undermine the welfare of the Swedish society as well as the country's values and the law system itself. In her study, Barker discusses similar patterns regarding the threat of Roma migration, an aspect discussed by Sigona in Italy, while mentioning how the locals’ safety and security have been repeatedly invoked due to Roma migration from Eastern Europe (Barker 2017a:129). Barker additionally reveals how many Roma migrants come from extremely impoverished backgrounds with the hope of making a living in Sweden. The author introduces the term of benevolent violence which can be traced to how Sweden attempted to stop informal street work by Roma migrants with the idea that “no one should beg in Sweden” (Barker 2017b:121). However, lawmakers do not consider the consequences of such measures that can violently affect Roma. The Roma who migrate to Sweden to undertake informal work lack both the minimal resources for sustaining themselves, or the required profile for working in Sweden (a home address, sufficient material resources, education, language knowledge). As a result, one can understand that begging and other forms of informal street activities become the last alternatives in surviving (Barker 2017a:132). Furthermore, similar to Sigona and Mahoney, Barker considers how history and old prejudices that surround Roma, are reflected in the attitudes of the public and political discourses of Sweden (Barker 2017a:129). Her conclusions draw on the criminalization of and measures

utilized to stop mobile, poor Roma from undertaking informal street work. Overall, her study comprises a significant contribution to the literature on the topic of Roma migration.

Furthermore, the ethos of anti-Roma sentiments was also demonstrated in Denmark. As regards Romani migrants from Eastern Europe, the response from social media has heavily influenced public opinion to display a sceptical attitude to the newcomers. Hence, while Roma reported harassment regularly, Denmark has officially banned begging since the year 2015 (European Parliament 2017). Although this law was implemented as a means of decreasing the migrants' influx, the findings of the research report by Djuve et al. argues that it has instead increased the rate of criminality (Djuve et al. 2015:64). Thus, the same old prejudices and stereotypes of Roma found in Western societies that were outlined earlier in the chapter are not absent from Scandinavia. Images of Roma picturing Roma in media, literature, and public discourses, as "beggars, criminals, thieves, dirty or immoral" (Thorleifsson 2018), (Carlqvist 2016) have emerged as a response to Roma migration from East and this circumstance subjected Roma to discrimination and marginalization (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, Cassidy 2017).

Different times, same old stereotypes

This section will both provide a critique that challenges research that has created a distorted image of both female and male Romani migrants who migrated to Norway to make a living by performing informal street work. For instance, *When poverty meets Affluence* (Djuve et al. 2015), this contrast provides helpful information about the three Scandinavian countries by revealing several aspects that have not yet been addressed. For instance, the real reasons for Romani migration from Romania which remain unexplored. Similarly, some of the most prominent studies perpetuate stereotypical assumptions and prejudices that most populations hold regarding Roma in general. For instance, Djuve et al. discusses and analyzes how Roma are harassed while begging or sleeping outside; despite their efforts in researching Roma begging and outdoor occupancy in the three Scandinavian capitals, the conclusions draw indirectly upon the fact that although they still face or experience discrimination and harassment, Roma somehow remain "satisfied" with their received treatment. Furthermore, regarding begging, this thorough study mentions how such informal practices as begging, collecting bottles, or selling magazines can be interpreted as life survival strategies. In spite of this, the study follows a stereotypical pattern in that begging is understood in the light of

cultural relativism; in short, begging may be part of Romani culture (Djuve et al. 2015, 59– 36, 97–108). As a consequence, some ideas and paragraphs of this particular study have raised deep concerns. As one of the well-known scholars and Roma activists, Margareta Matache, responds to some of the arguments used by Djuve et al.: “In a sense, the perceived identity as being Roma, and cultural practices embedded within Roma communities, can in some cases provide a form of protection against the sense of shame and humiliation that is commonly associated with begging in mainstream society” (Djuve et al. 2015:140). In response to this claim, in a blog series published by Harvard Center for Health and Human Rights, Margareta Matache examines both the modern scholarship conducted in Romani Studies and the limitations that prevail within the field of anthropology and sociology which have consequently limited the widespread of accurate knowledge about Roma. From her viewpoint, Matache views the paragraph quoted above as a problematic example and claims that such beliefs prevent researchers from grasping essential aspects of issues that Roma people confront. In her view, this can trivialize the issues that the Roma migrants’ people are struggling in Romania and Norway and instead perpetuates old, traditional, popular stereotypes held regarding Roma (Boston, Matache 2016).

One instance of such a misinterpretation can be pinpointed in the lack of “shame” or the feelings of humiliation, which is described by Djuve et al. when referring to Roma people who make their living by begging. It is pivotal to underline that the work by Djuve et al. includes crucial aspects that were ignored by other researchers, such as researching Roma lifestyles back in their home countries or analyzing Roma slavery and history in order to draw upon the historical developments that led to the Romani present situation. However, the study also neglects to mention the passivity and the hostility of Romanian state concerning its own citizens (Minkova 2017:9-11, 76-77). Although researchers mention Roma survival strategies while living homeless, no form of resistance or agency held by Roma is mentioned. Another omission is the lack of particular attention paid to Roma women as a distinct group. Moreover, in the introduction part, this work builds upon—as its most reliable source—the work of Ada I. Engebrigtsen (Djuve et al. 2015:8). While Engebrigtsen writes about Roma in her study entitled “Beggar Gangs and Criminal Backers or Poor EU Citizens?” (Engebrigtsen 2012), she also generated problematic issues when talking about begging. The author describes Roma as “shameless” while begging, and in doing so, Ada I. Engebrigtsen is downplaying the issues that the Roma migrants’ people struggle to face in Romania and Norway. Unlike Damsa, Engebrigtsen builds upon stereotypical assumptions that Roma are shameless, a pattern that

has become a reference within Norwegian scholarship regarding Roma migration to Scandinavia and a viewpoint that consequently empowered the open speech and development of anti-Roma sentiments. The following provides an example of Engebrigtsen's approach to understanding the position of Roma migrants:

“Street work in Europe has become an important way of life for many Romanians; it is not considered degrading. The Roma I studied in Romania did not beg on the streets, the women begged from their regular clients in the village where they lived and in the surrounding villages; often the begging was more barter in the form of gossip, magic, services, and gifts from Western relief organizations, towards food. These preys were often disguised as begging, while begging could be disguised as prey. Roma often explained them as a form of ‘sharing.’ I suggest that the idea of ‘earning a share’ may also explain Roma’s ‘shameless’ street begging: as it is almost considered a right they have as poor. By presenting themselves as our clients and submitting to our mercy, they reveal their vulnerability and dependence and their confidence that we will help and protect them” (Translated from Norwegian to English; Engebrigtsen 2012:39–40).

In regard to the aforementioned paragraph, such statements and research does harm because the data and information about Romani people is interpreted wrongly. While Matache succeeded in responding to and challenging Djuve's et al. problematic paragraphs, minimal efforts have been initiated to refute Engebrigtsen's arguments. Most of the scholarship conducted in connection with Roma migration to Norway builds research questions upon stereotypes and prejudices by questioning whether the newcomers in Norway (Roma) are either criminals or victims (Naylor 2015; Djuve et al. 2015; Engebrigtsen 2012). Similar to Romania, the stereotypical images and prejudices regarding Roma are found in the population and in literature. In her master's thesis, Runa Falck Langaas shows how new policies directed toward Romani people who undertake informal street work are determined by old attitudes and behaviors rooted in stereotypes and prejudices against Roma (Langaas 2017). The author writes that Roma in the Norwegian history and literature are regarded as, “thieves, rowdy, dirty and immoral people, tinkers, social misfits and layabouts” (Langaas 2017:15). Such stereotyping of Roma in Norway is not too different from that found in Romania. Finally, the outlined stereotypes can serve to understand the misperception of Norwegian society against Roma but can also facilitate and explain the collective fear and exclusionary/discriminatory treatment paid to Romani people nowadays. Therefore, based on this fact, a critical and a gendered

research analysis of these studies must be initiated, in order to deconstruct the stereotypes against Roma and thereby free researchers from prejudices embedded in the social, historical, and collective mentality across Europe. In conclusion, one cannot refer to Romani communities, or Romani women without taking into account the multitude/range of the stereotypes that underlies both Romanian society and Europe in general in the form of stereotypes that are being nurtured and perpetuated not just by popular thinking, but also by society, literature, policies and even laws.

Gender and Migration

While at the beginning of migration research, gender has been neglected, in the last decades, feminists have been adding the highly important factor of gender to the field of migration studies (Carling 2005:4). Although gender does not include the exclusive category of women, since other groups such as LGBTQ are also profoundly affected by migration, women constitute one of the largest groups that are the most affected by this phenomenon. According to the latest report on migration by the United Nations in 2019, 48 % of migrants worldwide were women. In light of this, studying women as a distinct group can identify specific data and issues that can be addressed and directed to female experiences as principal migrants (Tam O'Neil et al. 2016). Firstly, the developments that female migrants experience can be different compared to men. Given that many women from different cultures are closely confined within traditional gender roles, once women migrate, the experience of being in charge of the household work or children's education, i.e., their experiences in terms of independence and autonomy, can change (Jollie 2005:17). Such an aspect is influenced by the new role that women attain by migration, where they become the breadwinners of the family, and begin participating in the family's decision-making process. Also, another reason that migration impacts female migrants can be the fact that once women start to build a life outside of their home countries and away from imposed gender and family roles, they discover themselves in new positions that benefit their self-realization and female empowerment (Fleury 2016:16-17). At the same time, research proves that consequences of women's migration are highly different compared to men (Nawyn 2010:749). While studies show that migration can be a possible tool for empowering women in gaining autonomy, getting further opportunities in accessing education and challenging traditional gender roles, the on-going global migration is also

subjecting female migrants to experience a set of risks (Global Knowledge Partnership for Migration and Development 2016). First of all, migration can put women at risk to human trafficking for sexual exploitation. The data offered by Migration Data Portal 2020 shows that the majority of exploited victims found at the global level were women. Secondly, women can be victims of violence, especially when fleeing war and conflict zones (The Struggle of Migrant Women across the Mediterranean Sea: WatchTheMed Alarm Phone 2019). In addition to this, it has been proven that migrant women are also prone to gender violence, harassment, and multiple discrimination (Fleury 2016:30). All of these events or factors can occur either during the process of migration or in the receiving countries. In short, multiple discrimination can severely affect the lives of migrant women (Migration Data Portal 2020) since discrimination can occur due to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other open grounds that can be perceived as a motive of oppression. Taking all of these elements into consideration, gendered migration studies can play a crucial role in addressing specific issues and challenges that impact migrants in general. Oprea mentions that, “disaggregated data on minorities and women is a necessary tool to successfully combat structural inequalities” (Oprea 2009). Yet, today, even though joint efforts have been made in researching desegregate data, the issues faced by female migrants are still not analysed in depth, an aspect that affects their lives and leads to further challenges that endanger the achievement of gender equality (Nawyn 2010:749).

Regarding the study case of Romanian Romani women migrants residing in Oslo, minimal studies have focused on Roma women to mirror their experience as migrants and females. Their double oppression is overshadowed by ethnicity, a category which is overly researched from a homogenous perspective. Thus, Roma women undertaking informal street work remain invisible since they receive very little attention from the researchers as a distinct group, and like different other migrant women, Romani women migrants are understudied. Likewise, their reasons of migration, the experiences and the forms of resistance that Romani women are developing as a strategy of survival while migrating are neglected and in light of that, their needs, issues and rights remain unaddressed.

Female experience, Roma women migrants in Norway

One issue that I have encountered while conducting the literature review was the limited scholarship connected to Romanian Romani women migration to Scandinavia. While much has been written about Roma in general in this context, very few studies have offered particular attention to Roma women as a distinct group. As a result, in light of this aspect I will try to analyze the available resources thoroughly. One exception to the dearth of sources examining this issue is the dissertation written by Dorina Damsa, “Are We Not Human!?!” Human Dignity in the Lived Experience of Poor, Roma Women in Oslo (Damsa 2015). Damsa addresses the construction of human dignity in the lived experiences of Romani women who are unintentionally living homeless in Oslo. By using the phrase, “living unintentionally homeless,” the author refers to women who come in Norway in the hope of sustaining themselves and their families economically but end up living on the streets or occasionally sleeping at the City Mission Shelter (Shelter for undocumented citizens). In this research, Damsa, discusses the background of their home country in light of the extreme poverty that Roma endure in Romania as well as the multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization that they regularly experience. Besides the legal scholarship regarding human dignity and Black feminism, the author uses a range of scholars to draw her topic, including notable work done by Roma feminists and Romani scholars (Damsa2015:24–26). Her positionality as an ethnic Romanian helps to facilitate better communication as she shares a common language with her study group and has a basic knowledge of Romania and the Roma culture (Damsa2015:34). In fact, this work significantly contributes to my topic as Damsa is the first author to use an intersectional approach in the field of Roma women migration in Oslo. Moreover, her findings show how the loss of human dignity leads to severe implications not just from a legal perspective, but also from the point of view of mental health and well-being. This is demonstrated by the case of the Romani women participants in the research study, in which Damsa reveals how her correspondents experienced the loss of human dignity in relation to the “right to work, decent living, personal integrity, cultural identity, non-discrimination and suffering” and how all these aspects were seriously affecting their construction of human dignity (Damsa 2015:60–61). Although her goal was to research the construction of human dignity from a legal perspective, Damsa managed to challenge other additional equally essential aspects related to Roma women, such as the inexistent knowledge of Norwegian public discourse regarding poor Romani women in Norway. Overall, this work is among the

few that devotes particular attention to women and intersectional feminism and therefore enriches the literature on Romani women migration, feminist studies and homelessness in Scandinavia.

Conclusion

The important consequences inherent to stereotypical representations of and prejudices toward Roma have a significant role as was demonstrated above. The literature review draws on the broadest research that discusses Romani migration with a focus on Romanian Roma migration to Scandinavia. Most of the reviewed articles shared a principal characteristic: anti-Roma rhetoric, which was used to legitimize Roma migrants' injustices in the context of Roma deportations, expulsions, and anti-begging laws in western and northern countries. Throughout this landscape, the focus was on the role of the prejudices and stereotypes that appeared in portraying the Roma communities as a potential threat to the new receiving countries. The most important actors, literature, media, and political discourses have also contributed to revitalizing the old stereotypes and prejudices that portray Roma as "criminals." In light of this, I attempted to challenge some of the studies and question the minimal attention given to the migration of female Romani migrants. While doing so, I built upon feminist theories advocating for the collection of disaggregated data in migration studies to identify issues and challenges experienced by female migrants. Finally, in spite of the dearth of more resources that discuss Romani women in Scandinavia engaged in informal street work, I have reviewed Damsa's work as a reference to the main challenges Romani women face while living unintentionally homeless and surviving by begging, collecting bottles, or selling magazines.

V. METHODOLOGY

This section will detail and analyze the qualitative methodology used to address the research questions discussed in this thesis. The main research question can be summarized as the following:

1. How do Romanian Romani women's experiences as homeless individuals and informal street workers shape their power to remain a resilient “community” in Oslo?
2. What challenges do homeless Romanian Romani women face while living unintentionally homeless in Oslo from the perspective of intersectionality?

“The goal of feminists is to seek a methodology that will lead to a social change or an action beneficial to women” (Metso, Feuvre 2006:3). This quote best expresses my aim as regards the chosen methodology for the research study. I chose the qualitative research methods, as “from an epistemological point of view, is said to be conducive in giving a voice to the most oppressed groups in society (Metso, Feuvre 2006:4). The intention of giving the voice to the silenced (Miles, 2012)(Crary, 2001)(McLeod et al., 1994) stems from the fact that the Romani women living homeless and surviving by engaging in informal street work have never had the chance to share their numerous struggles and have their stories heard. Therefore, the chosen methodology aims to make those Romani women voices heard which are absent from almost all the extant research conducted in connection with Romani migration to Norway. The goal is to reveal their stories and spread their experiences of resistance.

In acknowledgement of the feminist struggle in choosing the most appropriate methodology in doing feminist research, I have chosen the qualitative approach of interviewing ten Romani women instead of pursuing more quantitative, statistics-based methods. My reason for conducting interviews was that feminist studies methods require a more in-depth interpretation of the data, one that takes into consideration the social and cultural particularities related to each subject (Metso, Feuvre 2006 (Doucet & Mauthner, 2007). I am mentioning this factor since both intersectionality as a concept and as a method is the foundation of this research thesis. Therefore, in my view, only qualitative methods would allow me to transcend all potential barriers. Beyond this aspect, another important issue that is worth mentioning is that, qualitative research methods can allow me to analyze resistance while capturing Romani

women's experiences as homeless individuals in Oslo and voicing a perspective that is pushed into the margins within mainstream feminist studies. While the semi-structured interviews sought to reveal the subjects' untold stories, challenges, and experiences, the participatory observation method (Kawulich, 2005), helped to establish a broader picture of the real situation faced by unintentionally homeless Roma women in Oslo. Therefore, I firmly believe that semi-structured interviews and participant observation method enriched and strengthened my arguments and built the best basis for my thesis work. Based on the work of Kaur and Nagaich which states that "the objectives of feminist research include both the knowledge and the production of social change"(Kaur, Nagaich 2019:3), only qualitative methods could investigate the untold story of Romani women who live homeless and beg to survive in Oslo.

The data was collected during a three-month, intensive internship conducted at the City Mission, Oslo, an organization that is situated in the city center but is quite accessible to homeless people. The internship, which was part of the Applied track program, played a crucial role in my fieldwork and offered me the chance to use the participant observation method, thereby allowing me to see with my own eyes how Romanian Roma women and men migrants suffered inequalities due to living temporarily homeless in Oslo. The City's mission activities are divided into various activities and programs. As the largest organization in Norway, they cover most basic social needs of people living on the streets. While doing my internship with them, I mostly worked in the Shelter where Roma women and couples were able to sleep inside. Beyond this task, I attended and worked many shifts at the Breakfast Facility, which was a breakfast that was mostly held at weekends, with Sunday usually being the most crowded day. This place was extremely important for people in vulnerable situations, including homeless Roma women and men. The services that City Mission provides are mostly designed to respond to the needs of people who find themselves in difficulties, why during their activities and facilities, homeless people could eat fresh and warm breakfast, drinks, coffee, tea, and desserts without charge. Taking into account the hostility and rejection that most homeless people face, City Mission was the place where everyone was welcome and treated equally. Beyond this, they provided services for both Roma women and men, whose access to warm food, internet, laundry, a place where to rest was almost impossible. Out of all these activities, my role and duties were very similar to those of any other employees at City Mission. During the shelter shifts, I was either arranging the beds for the homeless Roma women and couples or staying at the reception where I registered and welcomed them. I was also responsible for giving them hygiene products and towels for having shower. I also assisted

them while they were cooking dinners or translated for them if necessary. At the Breakfast service, like any other employees or volunteers I was arranging the breakfast room before homeless people would come. I helped in serving food, drinks, cleaning and while doing that, often chat with the people, eating together, translating if necessary, to either the police or ambulance. Besides that, participating at each reunion of the City mission employees which was held after every activity.

The Laundry services were available at nominal prices for people living outdoors. Most of the time, this service was fully booked as many people live without the benefit of a home in Oslo. The following service was “Kroa coffee,” a time for serving lunch at very low prices. Most of the people who came during this time were locals, but some Roma people also came to buy their lunches. The next service comprised a program called Outreach, a time that was reserved for social workers to do fieldwork. They would go in teams of two with the goal of assisting homeless people. This fieldwork aimed to inform and ensure that all people living on the streets are aware of the City's mission activities, facilities and services. Besides this task, if social workers found new homeless people, they informed them and guided them to the organization centre, medical services, or aided them. As outlined above my work consisted in doing almost the same as the other employees at City Mission. I handled the laundry for people, registering them for the queue and offering clothes if they were needed. Other than these tasks, during the outreach I went onto the streets to assist homeless Roma and try to offer any information that they might need and try to encourage them to come and use the City Mission facilities, such as access to medical care, breakfast, shelter or other help. With that being said, I tried to work there and get as much information and experience as possible so I may come to understand the complex situation that the Romanian Roma women experience in Oslo when living unintentionally homeless and conducting informal street work.

Semi-structured interviews

It must also be mentioned that I had already been acquainted with the topic of homeless Roma Romanian women before conducting my internship at the City Mission; beyond this experience, I also worked for the Salvation Army in Oslo. The experience I gained during this time paved the way to formulating the structure of my research while also familiarizing myself with the situation of Roma women living on the streets. More than that, it pushed me and

motivated me to turn this interest into a thesis. Since I worked during the previous consecutive summers (2017, 2018) with homeless, Roma migrants in Oslo, I already had a grasp of the extent and nature of the issue before I began interviewing my research subjects while doing my internship at City Mission. I had a pattern and some information regarding the life experiences of this group of Romani women. For instance, I knew that they had all lived suffered discrimination or have experienced the aftermath of communism in Romania. This aspect is very important since the senior Romani women had the experience of working in agriculture, textiles, cleaning, but that all were dramatically economical affected when communism fall, and their work was not needed anymore. This aspect in their view, resulted in more poverty, and it continued to get worse once Romania became a democracy. As a result of these developments, abandoned to the margins of society, Roma communities lived in segregation and ghettos, where most women did not have access to basic and primary school.

Considering that I wanted to research poverty from a two-generational perspective, I used the framework of intersectionality to draw upon the numerous discriminatory structures and identities that affect Romani women. I strategically chose to interview also younger women from different Roma groups or different regions, an aspect that would give me the chance to discover more information and expand my vision of the Roma situation in Oslo. Therefore, the criteria that I used to select my interviewees was not random, but rather a carefully thought out plan that I put in place before starting my interviews. In order to capture and analyze as many aspects and facts as possible about the Roma women who are surviving by begging, and living temporarily homeless in Oslo, I had to choose women who had an older history of migration, older/ younger women and women from different, social statuses and backgrounds. In Oslo, there are homeless Roma Romanian from all walks of life. Therefore, it was advantageous to select Roma women who had been traveling temporarily to Norway for 10-12 years as well as women who had recently arrived in Norway during a period that stretched from three years to three months. As other statuses and social factors were, age was also carefully considered. Furthermore, as was mentioned above, intersectionality is the key theory that facilitates a higher comprehension of the situation of Roma women in general. For instance, taking into account the vicious circle of poverty and marginalization that Roma are exposed to, I could make a clear connection between this background and the current state that most Romani women who were living in: their condition was due to hostile and discriminatory environment that limited them to access equal education, housing and employment in Romania. That is way I also chose two subjects who are a mother and her daughter since I wanted to study two

generations of Roma women who struggle with similar issues (such as poverty, discrimination, migration) and are doing the same job.

The source that provided the settings in taking and selecting my subjects was the City Mission organization. City mission is part of a “network of churches and Christian organizations that provide social and health care services and advocate for social justice.” Although based on religious values, this organization is independent and very diverse. Their aim in doing social work and fighting inequalities inspired me when I visited them in Oslo while I was part of an international research on Roma migration to Scandinavia that was funded by Romani Studies in 2018. Due to its location in the Toyen neighborhood, a quite rough area, the City Mission is also very central; since most homeless people work in informal street work in the city center, it is also accessible to them.

Every interview undertaken with homeless Romani women in Norway was preceded by an appointment before the real meeting for the interview took place. Before starting the interview, the correspondents were carefully informed about what the research comprises, how long the interview would take and their right to choose a fictional name or maintain their real name. Most importantly, each subject was asked for their oral consent before proceeding any further with the interviews. Although most of the interviews took place at the shelter, two interviews were done during the Kroa while one was taken at the spot the subject used for begging purposes. The interviews were taken during the last month of the internship/third month. I intentionally left the interviews to the last part of my work in the research field, as I was working on building a trusting relationship with my subjects. Given the fact that I worked with several Roma women who lived on the streets, it helped me a lot to be accepted at the City Mission, the place where I developed much closer relationships with my research subjects. I am writing this since it is essential to know that the women already knew me in advance, the fact that brought us closer and created a relationship based on trust (Kaur, Nagaich 2019:6–7). In addition, because I also belong to the Roma ethnicity, this factor helped me establish a closer level of communication since I had not just the culture in common with my subjects, but also language, experiences, traditions and even jokes. Therefore, this was an extra advantage compared to other researchers (Mullings 1999:339–40). Moreover, before attending and performing all the signed, agreed-upon activities during the three months of the internship period, I had the chance to meet the women and introduce myself. Building trust is not something that can happen in one day. As a result, I allowed myself to start the research by

taking small steps that would bring me closer to my potential interviews. Also, I waited to get to know the people so that they would be the ones who would choose the place/setting to give the interviews. At the Romani women/s suggestions, the shelter was the place where they felt the most comfortable, so I trusted them and did almost all my interviews at the shelter (Bailey et al. 2019:3).

Another reason why I decided to ask them what their preferences was because values of respect are one aspect that is crucial within feminist studies. I wanted to respect my subjects and not disturb them while they were working/ begging yet also give them the chance to choose the place where they could share their stories, pain, and experiences most accurately (Kaur, Nagaich 2019:11). Other than this factor, as regards the ethical implications of feminist research methods, it also helped me in proving my intention of collaboration and trust in their knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, the fieldwork aimed to base the collection of data on an active dialogue. The intention was not only to gather information but also to communicate with Roma women so they could express themselves in their best way and participate within the research. Thirteen women took part in the semi-structured interviews; in order to be able to draw a complete image of the situation and its challenges, I kept and analyzed ten of these. The duration of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded in audio on my smartphone, where once again, oral consent was given by the subjects. Finally, the interviews were transcribed into the mutual native language, Romanian, and the most relevant paragraphs and quotes were later translated by me into English.

Participant observation method

The method of participant observation was conducted in the second month of my internship. I strategically chose this second month as it was preceded by one month of intensive work to get to know the people and invite them to meet me and build a relationship based on trust. The participant observation method was conducted during the activities held by City Mission, including shelter, coffee/ kroa/ breakfast and outreach, but also on the street at the begging sites. The duration of the activities at the City Mission was from one to four hours. The way to collect the data was by taking notes after each activity where I used the participant observation method. Working intensively for three months with the Roma women allowed me to be part of

numerous inside discussions, attitudes, and observe behaviours exhibited by the group that I studied. By using the participant observation method, I have gained insightful information and knowledge that enrich the data's collection and interpretation. Participating in the various programs and activities offered by City Mission organization while observing how people relate to one and another, face the harsh conditions or just only how they are discussing to each other, made the landscape of my research much more comprehensive. In addition, by using the participant observation method I got the chance to feel like I was a part of their community, a circumstance which enabled the Romani women to feel natural around me. When people felt comfortable around me, I could also grasp and test the validity and credibility of their actions, sayings and attitudes. As a result, this method paved the way in better understand the Romani women, as well as knowing them as individuals and thereby enabled me to understand more of the challenges that they face when living homeless in Oslo (See Kawulich 2005 and Llewelyn 2007). Finally, both the semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods equally helped in collecting and interpreting the data. Inspired by feminist research methods, I aimed to investigate a topic with the goal of producing an impact upon the lives of Romani women. When carefully selecting my theories, intersectionality proved to be the foundation that helps better decipher the multiple discrimination that Romani women experience while living homeless and working in informal street work for survival. Therefore, only by speaking with my subjects in one-on-one meetings was I able to learn about each interviewee and better interpret their stories. The semi-structured interviews offered direct interaction and communication with my subjects and the participant observation method enriched my vision about my subjects, environment and behaviours. For example, doing laundry together, having dinners, focus groups, discussing different topics of being homeless, Roma, women and migrant, all of these activities, discussions and services served to strengthen our knowledge of one and another.

Weaknesses and Limitations

1. Migration, as discussed in the section of migration and gender, often involves prostitution as one form of human trafficking. While doing my research about Romani women migration for informal street work (begging, collecting bottles, or selling magazines), I have admittedly heard about cases of prostitution and trafficking. However, my research goal aims to explore the experiences of women within the field of informal street work, begging, recycling and

selling magazines, and therefore, I have not intended to find out more about prostitution and other forms of human trafficking, as it was not my expertise.

2. The number of homeless Roma women is much higher than the 80 women whom I have interacted with during my fieldwork in Oslo. Therefore, the results gained from the ten semi-structured interviews may be seen as being too limited to draw a general perspective of the situation of Romani women who live unintentionally homeless and engage in informal street work. However, I have spent three months working extensively with 80 Romani women, and therefore the findings are collected from more than ten interviews. Likewise, as was outlined earlier in this chapter, I also spent the summers of the years 2017 and 2018 at the Salvation Army organization where I worked with both homeless Romani men and women.

Besides that, before starting the research, I intended to undertake roughly 15-20 interviews. However, while doing the research, although people were very responsive and open to talking, I also encountered a few challenges. For instance, it was usually very difficult to catch women in a good mood to talk and get an interview. I would like to mention that it was not hard to approach the women, as every day I would discuss with them similar topics that I addressed in my interviews, but other factors would challenge the possibility to hold an interview. For instance, many of them were intimidated by the fact that I had to take them to a separate room and record conversations that we usually talked about together and maybe contained information we had already shared. Besides this, in the presence of other women, the women felt free to speak openly about their multitude of issues; however, when they saw themselves alone in a room where they were being recorded, they felt inhibited about verbalizing their problems or even expressing criticism. In fact, I always had to reassure and encourage them before the interview that I was not there to listen to only good things about the shelter, police, or other kinds of issues, but also to hear their criticism and aspects that in their opinion could be better.

Additionally, the women were exhausted after a full-time day of working in the elements outdoors. They were maybe hungry, had suffered harassment on the streets, or endured other stressful situations. Therefore, they arrived at the shelter exhausted. One example that I can offer is the following: one week I was trying to get a Roma woman for an interview. She was very open and willing to do it, however, whenever I got to the shelter to take her to the appointed interview, I already found her asleep. As a result, under these circumstances, I had to change and adapt, so my interviewees would not be too tired or not feeling well. Another

crucial aspect was most people were also very depressed and lonely. They missed their families continually while additionally feeling that, they were unable to help them as their families were in tough situations. Some interviews sometimes became another conversation or even a moment when these Roma women could confess their struggles and reveal their emotions. Sometimes I had to stop, as my subjects were not feeling well and crying while sharing their struggles with me in the semi-structured interviews. Therefore, when they cried and became overwhelmed during the interview, I would either stop the audio and just talk and offer them the space to express themselves or try to take notes while speaking and maybe focus on their body language. So, although I tried to stay on the topics in the interview, I could also become easily side-tracked. Having that explained, these are the main barriers that have limited me to take finally just thirteen interviews from where I kept ten. Furthermore, I never neglected the aspect that the ladies that I was working with came from very rough environments with harsh experience in battering, violence, discrimination and poverty and in that moment of the interview they were still experiencing severe living conditions. While I had a bed and accommodation, they were sleeping outside. For that, I always took into account the power relations and my own, different circumstances in comparison to those known by my interviewees. Therefore, in the interviews, it was sometimes complicated to touch upon some topics, as I did not want to pressure my interviewees or provoke any sad feelings that would affect them at that moment.

The Position of the Researcher

Discussing positionality is enormously relevant when researching Roma (Costache 2018:32; Brooks 2012). In my case, as a Roma woman working and researching this topic, my background privileged me in many ways. For instance, it helped me build strong communication with my subjects and with the Roma people in general. The way Roma women addressed me was much closer compared to others. Such an aspect can be explained by the fact that often people could relate to me as a member of their national country. We shared experiences from back home (Romania), we spoke in Romanian and we knew what it means to be Roma. I also felt comfortable among Roma women, as I came from a similar community that is not too different from theirs. Also, as a Roma woman, I have myself struggled with discrimination during my studies while being and Erasmus student in Turkey and an exchange

student in Norway. Although my experiences are completely different of my group of study, we share the experience of migration and discrimination.

Although, the translation of data, are “always interpretive, critical, and partial,” (Haraway 1988:589), the advantage of my positionality sought to bring additional positive aspects to this research; being an insider offered me the chance to create a stronger bond with my interviewees and also helped me write their confessed experiences in a much more accurate way (Vanner 2015:4) see also (Hayfield and Huxley 2015). Similarly, beyond all the benefits of being Roma while researching Roma, an equally important part is also the aspect of power relations. While I was privileged to get an education, my interviewees did not have the same chances as I. Moreover, I fortunately had accommodation, daily food, clean clothes, and other basic needs facilities, while my interviewees did not. Therefore, I acknowledged our power dynamics and as a result, we often could not speak on an equal footing. Finally, feminists claim that it is impossible to conduct research that is completely free from subjective bias (Metso, Feuvre 2006:6). In the relation between me and my interviewees it was impossible not to feel affected by seeing and witnessing how Romani women and men are struggling to live on the streets. Even though I have acknowledged that I am doing research, my position was crucial in collecting the data, analyzing them, interpreting the results, and exposing their stories. I support Metso and Feuvre’s argument, since as a Roma myself, throughout the thesis project, this study work had personally motivated me to be subjective and look up for the gains and the positives aspects given by the shared experience and positionality between me and interviewees. Having said this, using the approach of Paulo Freire (1970), I aimed to create knowledge through my study group’s language, (our mutual native language, Romanian) but while also using their voice, struggles and experiences encountered when living unintentionally homeless and enduring informal street work.

Analytical Chapter I

Roma, Migrant, and Poor: Roma Women Living Unintentionally Homeless in Oslo - Consequences

Adina: “We have no chance, we have nothing home, 700 lei (150 Eur)¹ what we can do with this money? One cannot live for one month; you can barely buy food..., in Romania, there is no possibility, even many Romanians, have decided to leave because of the low wages that everyone has.”²

This chapter records the experiences of women who live in an unintentionally homeless state and undertake informal street work in Oslo. I explicitly chose to start with the quote mentioned above as it reflects the reality faced by many Romanian Roma women who temporarily migrate to Oslo. It also stresses the on-going phenomenon of Romanian migration (Simionescu 2019), which is caused by oppressive structures and poverty. Considering this aspect, in this part, I will analyze the daily experiences that occur in the lives of Roma women who conduct informal street work and the consequences they face due to sleeping outdoors. Taking into account the intersecting challenges of living on the streets, not just as women, but as Roma, migrants, and homeless individuals, I will pinpoint the risks Roma women are subjected to in Oslo.

Based on the data collected during ten semi-structured interviews and the observational method, I have found that the two most important issues related to Romani women who live in unintentionally homeless circumstances and engage in informal street work in Oslo are the rough, outdoor sleeping conditions and compound factors of multiple discrimination. This aspect is of a high importance since all the effects and consequences of the harsh conditions, collective struggle in facing oppression, the feeling of shame, health issues, the on-going harassment and discrimination, make the life of Roma women extremely difficult but also the effects of such experiences, turn into spreading solidarity among each other and form a community where they feel welcome and secure.

¹ Romania National Minimum Wage – NMW in 2012

² All the quotations were translated from Romanian to English by me. Although some phrases are incorrect in English I have intentionally translated literally as to reflect on the level of the language hold by my interviewees.

It was 2°C in April, when I first was part of the lottery at City Mission's shelter for undocumented migrants. While people were standing in a line to try their “luck” at getting a bed in the shelter that night, they were shaking—not just because it was cold, but also because of worry and anxiety. Due to the shelter’s limited space, the lottery seems to be a “fair system” that will ensure homeless Roma women and couples the opportunity to sleep indoors. However, the City Mission shelter's space is neither sufficiently equipped nor adequately prepared for receiving all the women who need their services; therefore, the lottery method is utilized in order to avoid favoritism. Even though the number of homeless Roma is much higher,³⁴ the City Mission shelter is equipped enough to receive just 79 persons. Although most of the women got a bed that day, some were left out in the cold. For those who could sleep inside, this “lucky break” meant everything to them for that day. Yet the experiences outlined in the following paragraphs are shared ones for all those who are forced to sleep outdoors. Out of the ten semi-structured interviews I conducted, fear was the overwhelming element that all the women confessed to feeling. They are afraid to sleep outdoors. This fear can stem from different sources: while three women described their fear of the police, others explain how they were harassed while sleeping on the streets.

Homelessness involves a set of difficulties and a rough life for anybody, and I refer to health, safety, and decent conditions to sleep. However, in the case of the Romani women that live unintentional homeless in Oslo while being engaged in informal street work, the intersectionality of their experiences is harsher as they face additional types of oppression, namely, racial and gender discrimination. While this chapter proposes a thorough analysis of Romani women's experiences while living homeless, special attention will be turned to intersectional discrimination, an aspect that plays a crucial role in completely comprehending the situation of Romanian Romani women who undertake informal street work and live

³There are no approximate numbers of how many Roma women and men live homeless in Oslo. However, according to the research made by Djuve et al.,(2015) in the year 2015 in Oslo they interviewed more than 438 Roma homeless. See all research here, Page 14. <https://www.rockwoolfonden.dk/app/uploads/2016/02/When-poverty-meets-Affluence-WEB-VERSION.pdf>

⁴ In Oslo there are two shelters for undocumented migrants. One is offered by City Mission for women and couples and they have 79 beds and the other shelter is offered by Red Crouse, Oslo and is offered to men. See website here: <https://www.rodekors.no/en/lokalforeninger/oslo/pages-in-englishx/emergency-shelter-for-homeless-migrants-in-oslo/>

unintentionally homeless. Most of the Roma women living unintentionally homeless in Oslo come from segregated excluded societies where access to education is minimal, and the quality of education is accordingly low. From the ten semi-structured interviews conducted, I have found that they all come from different regions or Roma groups in Romania. Some groups are more traditional than others or come from regions that are wealthier than others. Although most women share similar experiences related to extreme poverty and discrimination, they also share differences seen in their social status, age, life experiences and job opportunities. Having explained that, in light of these similarities and differences it is pivotal to highlight that the aspect that I will focus on is not just on the discrimination of being Roma, women, homeless and migrants, aspects that repress the Romani women, but also on the outcome. Left without any alternatives, the oppressive identities mentioned earlier also push Roma women to stay together and form a community and this chapter will stress out how Romani women find the tools to survive and therefore to resist.

Multiple Discrimination

This part will center on analyzing the intersectional discrimination that homeless Roma women face in Oslo. To refer back to the literature review and theoretical background (See Chapter III and IV), discrimination appears to be the issue most Romani women encounter in Oslo. The embedded stereotypes and social rejection are best reflected in the condescension that Roma receive in the public places on Oslo's streets. The lack of facilities in the city, the lack of space of sleeping indoors, the regular harassment and the insecurity of living on the streets are multiplied by the fact that Roma face discrimination. Out of the ten semi-structured interviews, if four respondents explained how often they had been insulted and harassed while begging, the rest of the women talked about how painful it is to be rejected just because there were identified as Roma women. While this part will be further elaborated in the next part of this chapter, another equally important aspect that has to be brought into discussion, is the constant show of solidarity Roma women made by sticking together and the goal of forming a “community” as an effect of suffering multiple discrimination.

Andrada who is from Bacau but had migrated temporarily to Sweden, has been engaged in informal street work for more than four years. Now she is an unintentionally homeless together with her husband in Oslo. She hopes to get a job and soon plans to have a child. She is very young but was married from the age of fourteen as the result of an arranged marriage. Ever

since her marriage, Andrada has been working in all kinds of jobs, including cleaning or selling newspapers and magazines. Now she occasionally begs to gain a living.

Andrada: *mentioned the following: “I feel so shame to beg, I prefer to work, I really want work. The other day I tried to make a CV, the boys from the shelter helped me, but still nothing. Yesterday I was hungry, and I went to a restaurant to ask for some leftovers, but they barely let me to enter. I didn’t get any food. I don’t know if it is because I am Gypsy, or they don’t care about us... ”*

Adina: *“It is very hard, to me as a woman is very bad. You see me dirty, but and I showering whenever I have the chance. I cry about this thing. For instance, this morning, I spilled a glass of coffee on my blouse, and I had no place to wash my hands or my blouse. Do you understand how difficult it is? (Talking with desperation) I am not allowed to get to go to a cafe or a bar. They say to me no.... .not even McDonald’s receives me. They say I am a Gypsy.”*

Lenuta, the quite young mother who wants to attain a better life and invest in her children’s education said the following: *“Because I am a Gypsy, and they believe that all Gypsies steal and cheat. But it’s not like that. I am not a criminal. Not all of us are the same. Life back in Romania is difficult, very difficult...”*

As seen from the aforementioned quotes, Roma women are conscious of the unwelcome behavior and often discriminatory treatment that they receive while living on the streets in Oslo. Nonetheless, the multiple discrimination that Roma women suffer when engaged in begging and sleeping outside endangers their safety and worsens their coping mechanisms for dealing with the inhumane conditions that they endure. When discussing discrimination, it is also crucial to highlight how the stereotype of “criminality” which was previously discussed in the literature review in the thesis, is also experienced by Romani women who perform informal street work in Oslo. These prejudices are reflected in people’s attitudes and suspicious behavior in relation to them. Andrada and Lenuta and Adina explain the known and unknown rejection and discrimination that they experience as a result of their ethnicity belonging. Anti-Roma sentiments are projected toward Romani women individually but also as a group. The awareness of being the Other, a role that consists of being different and portrayed negatively, have deep consequences for Roma as they seek better opportunities. For instance, if one lady said “I feel like a slave when I am begging” the rest explained how hard it is for them to sit

down and depend on people who determine whether they will eat or not or if they can send money home to their home kids.

Adina: *“I want to work, but who will hire me? I don't want to beg, but who will feed my children?”*

Doina, one of the homeless activists who is advocating for public toilets, more places at the shelter for Roma women and is here with her mother and her brother states that: *“Many people discriminate against us because we collect bottles and walk through the trash. Nevertheless, this is something that offends some of us, and it makes me feel ashamed. Most of us never went to school, we have no places where to work. I feel in the need to beg or collect bottles.”*

Lenuta, *“I am a mother of two students, one is in the police school and the other is in high school, I would do anything for my children, cleaning, collecting bottles, begging, everything...”*

The quotes found above draw on the deep concern and shame in begging or collecting bottles that is expressed by Romani women. It is not hard to imagine that Doina, for instance, is just one of many, many Roma women who are ashamed or feel humiliated by the constant offenses and discriminatory treatment that Roma women receive while sleeping or working outside. Most women have said that they would work if they had the opportunity and the resources. However, apart from this, there are also other limitations imposed by the system. Most of them do not meet the criteria for finding a job in Norway. As undocumented migrants, they lack an address or educational background that would secure them an income. Most of the Roma women living homeless in Oslo come from segregated excluded society in Romania where access to education is minimal, and the quality of education is accordingly inferior. When asked about their education, it was revealed that most of them have not reached secondary school. This means that the educational level, the situation of being homeless and lacking resources disqualifies Roma women from getting a contractual job. Therefore, for them, the undignified or the “shameless” job of begging remains among the last chances to survive and provide for their families.

Adina, who is just 23 years old and earns money together with her husband by begging and collecting bottles in order to send money to their two children left in Romania stated that: *“It*

is dangerous to sleep outside, once I had a problem because I was sleeping in the park and some people came to me while my husband went away to bring me water. They asked for a lighter, and I had to give them a lighter. To be honest, I don't know what they wanted from me; they started laughing at me very strangely while speaking Norwegian, and when I ran away, they started to chase me....”

The report entitled, *Migration for Begging from Romania to Norway: A Human Trafficking Perspective* (Jon Horgen Friberg and Guri Tyldum 2019), mentions the “willingness” that Roma migrants tend to demonstrate in sleeping outside. In light of this, to refute such statements and the distortional images of the reality of Romani women homeless in Oslo, I will draw on the ten interviews mentioned and share the implications and the danger they experience. For instance, while four women out of ten have expressed deep concern for their health, others tiredly confessed that sleeping outside makes them feel extraordinarily tired and depressed.

Elena, convincingly undermines the idea that Roma enjoy sleeping outside when she reveals the following: *“In the night, where we slept under a bridge, the police used to come and woke us when it was the sweetest hour of sleeping.... It was so painful and hard to sleep outside. I just wished to sleep in a place that had a roof and not be disturbed or attacked by anyone.”*

Viorica, who is in Oslo with her talented musician husband, makes her living by begging on the streets, decided to come in Norway to try her “luck” since she could no longer work in agriculture in Romania. *“I am tired of sleeping outside, every day my thoughts are whether today I will sleep inside or outside, this makes me so anxious. I do not want to sleep outside, but I have no other option.”*

Considering the confessions voiced by the Romani women in the ten semi-structured interviews, it is demonstrated how Romani women are subjected to various challenges while sleeping outdoors. For instance, the lack of safety and adequate human conditions to sleep deprive Romani women of decent sleeping conditions. Beyond this, it is clear that Romani women can be subjected to additional issues, such as harassment. Likewise, physical and mental health are profoundly affected by the situation of sleeping outside, which is also fueled by the uncertainty and unpredictable events faced by homeless Romani women. Despite their resistance in face of the adversities and harsh conditions that they endure while sleeping

outdoors and engaging in informal street work, they remain prone to different risks and discrimination that endanger their well-being. Therefore, their minimal options of where to sleep make them unintentionally homeless and bring additional challenges during their migratory time in Oslo, a period that leads to the gradual deterioration of their physical states.

Health

Many Roma women who are undocumented citizens migrate temporarily to Norway to make a living from begging and collecting bottles or selling magazines and living unintentionally homeless; they came with a background of extreme poverty, which means that they already possessed a precarious state of health. Therefore, the conditions that accompany sleeping outside continue to erode their health, meaning that new issues emerge and expose them to vulnerable positions in accessing health services. The study “Doubling Syndemics Ethnographic Accounts of the Health Situation of Homeless Romanian Roma in Copenhagen” (Ravnbøl 2017) argues that Roma migrants are the group that is the most exposed to health issues compared to other migrants. Along the same line, from the undertaken semi-structured interviews, Roma themselves have said that sleeping outdoors is directly linked to their worsening health conditions.

Elena, who is from Buzau, arrived for the first to Norway in 2012. Before coming to Norway, she worked in Portugal and Italy with her husband, but her spouse got extremely sick, and they returned to Romania. Now, she is in Oslo alone, begging and hoping to collect money to buy her medicine for her husband as well as for herself. She cannot perform strenuous tasks as she has asthma, and her health is deteriorating in general. She is nearly 65 years old, but she believes that her health condition will get worse if she continues being outside. *“It is so hard to live on the streets...I am sick, and I am alone here...I do have my asthma spray, but I cannot make any efforts because I am afraid that I might die.”*

Another respondent, Marioara, who is from Tirgu-Jiu, left her disabled husband back home and came to beg and collect bottles in Oslo. Marioara is not alone here; she is with her daughter and son, all of whom conduct informal street work. Back home, Marioara used to make bricks and make a living from her inherited talent of Caramizari. Nowadays, this work is very little

appreciated and not paid; as a result, Marioara migrates temporarily to Oslo to beg instead of starving in Romania.

Marioara, *“I still have a lot of health issues. I had passed through five surgeries to my stomach, I cannot make any effort and suffer cold; therefore, is very hard to work outside and sleep outside.”*

Andrada, also disclosed that, *“here it is tough, especially for a woman, it is hard to sleep on the streets. I think a woman needs a lot more than a man (hygiene, proper clothes in order to not get sick, a normal toilet, everything.”*

From the outlined quotes, it is obvious how Romani women do wish to sleep indoors on a daily basis. They all mention their struggles in coping with a multitude of challenges. They do not want or have any will to be exposed to the kinds of experiences that mark their existence and worsen their already poor health. While Andrada, who is 24 years old, needs basic facilities and personal hygiene, Elena fears that her life will end because of her health condition. Although many women are relatively young, (between the ages of 50 to 60 years old) they believe that their bodies cannot take anymore suffering or harsh conditions as they already grapple with severe health issues caused by the extreme poverty that they endured back home and the harsh conditions they encountered while living unintentionally homeless. Health is a fundamental human right, and every day, women who work outside and sleep outdoors in the low temperatures and severe conditions are risking their lives. Thus, sleeping outside and working outside have severe repercussions on Romani women's health.

Harassment

This section is equally important not just for speaking of the harassment per se, but also for analyzing the consequences of being victims of hate crimes. In the undertaken semi-structured interviews, every woman has stated that there is no single day that passes without experiencing different forms of harassment (Langaas 2017:70). The following quotes will contain many experiences and talks from the first person. If one woman expressed that she had experienced

sexual harassment, the others explained how they have regularly encountered racism and harassment in different forms regularly.

Lenuta, a smile that one cannot forget. She came to Norway to do street work and support her two school-age children in school. She dreams that her children will have a profession, and they will not “live like her.” She is a single mother, but strong and resilient. She would do anything for her children because she adores them. *“When I came here, there was nothing for us, nothing, the police were getting along with the guards and us, and now some people on the streets who are racist are still bothering me, they kick my glass or take my money. Sometimes people who are passing by stop, but often they don't.”*

Marioara, *“They spit when we are on the street; they do not put money to us; they treat us with a big difference.”*

Daniela, another Roma lady who comes from the southwest of Romania, is 50 years old, a single mother, and has been the breadwinner of her family for almost all her life. Although she primarily worked in open markets selling fruits and vegetables, she momentarily is begging and collecting bottles. *“The drug addicts are threatening me because there are conflicts among us since we both are begging, for that I changed my begging spot several times. I am scared because I am alone here....”*

Veronica, who is here (Oslo) with her partner, is around 50 years old and she is making a living from begging and recycling. She had been working in agriculture and cleaning back home, but now she and her partner are without a job in Romania, said the following: *“Every day, at my begging spot a man harasses me, I do not understand him, but he is angry at me, he screams at me, and today he hit my cup and the things that I had with me.”*

As can be understood from these valuable quotes, Romani women regularly encounter and experience harassment. Roma women expressed how they are harassed and consequently feel helpless. Even though they have tried their best to protect themselves, they are still at risk of being attacked, humiliated, or harassed. Most of the harassment shows that it occurs when they beg. Similarly, the passivity of people, the lack of courage to call the police and the lack of resources, are all factors that discourage these women from pressing charges against people when they are harassed in the nights. Adina mentioned that she could not call the police because

she did not know the address where she was in the moment when she was chased, and so she simply ran away. The safety of the Roma women is extremely precarious and sleeping outside and begging as a strategy to survive exposes them to many risks. Although research and police acknowledge that Roma are experiencing harassment, Roma women remain at the risk of being chased and harassed every day.

Community Building

Marginality as a site of resistance, explained by hooks referring to Black women, (see theoretical framework, chapter III, page 18-19) helps to strengthen my claims regarding the Romani women's forms of resistance. Hooks states that due to the location at the margins, Black women join their forces to challenge the relation of the oppressor and the colonized (hooks 1990:341). In hooks's view, Black women are able to build solidarity among each other and therefore "transcending poverty and despair," which is triggered by the intersectional discrimination that Black women are exposed to suffer. Therefore, the strategies used by Black women in overcoming oppression can be a mirror example of how the effects of marginalization get turned into a tool of strength and resistance. hooks's approach has a great value to understand both the experiences and effects produced by the multiple discrimination that unintentionally homeless Roma women are experiencing and yet, despite of all the hardship that they endure, they find strategies of survival and solidarity. With that being said, the reiteration of intersectionality which was earlier (see page...) it must again be analyzed as under oppressive structures, Roma women, similar to Black women gain the force of resisting and creating a community where they feel accepted and equal. Moreover, all the consequences of living "invisible" at the margins, belonging to nowhere, make Romani women stick among each other and create a collective struggle in resisting the discrimination of being women, Roma, migrants, homeless and poor.

In the aforementioned quotes, women have expressed their suffering, discrimination, hardship and strength in dealing with the inhumane conditions that they endure as homeless migrants in Oslo. The question that must still be raised is that of what outcome can be expected from all these struggles? Despite all the challenges that Roma face, they still manage to express a sense of solidarity amongst one another. Solidarity and community building can be described as a

coping mechanism and a form of resistance to all the health issues, hunger, frustration, lack of sanitation, the loneliness, the fact of missing their own family and experiencing harassment and discrimination regularly. Most of the women who were interviewed confessed that they had developed strong bonds with other Roma women begging and living homeless. If most of the women feel welcome at the shelter or “safer” on the streets, this is because they can relate to common struggles and experiences among each other, and as a result, this makes them stay together. For instance, Lina mentions how they share food or medicines amongst one another, but also how they learn from one another since they all come from different regions or Roma groups in Romania. In her interview, she said that they accept themselves despite their differences in faith, Roma ethnicity, social status or regional origin.

Lina *“Yes, we give pills, food, to each other, we help if we can. We cannot make differences among us, whether we are wearing a long colorful-skirts,⁵ or you are young or from Bacau, Buzau,⁶ we are all humans.”*

Doina *“In the cold winter, my heart breaks when women have to sleep outside. We need more space in the shelter; I would prefer to leave someone else in my place to sleep if she is old or alone.”*

Being alone and living in these precarious life conditions pushes the Roma women to stay together, express solidarity with one another and form a community within which they will feel comfortable. As is demonstrated by the quotes mentioned above, Romani women care for each other and try to form a community that provides support and help. Doina's quote shows the immense compassion and empathy that she has for older women who are sick. Beyond this, she also shows the community bond and the willingness to save someone who is in bigger need than she. Therefore, as a mechanism of resistance, people who once were strangers became family, and they are ready to jump into one another's defense.

Marioara: *“I feel good with the women. At the shelter, one day I could not breathe; they made me take a mandatory alcohol test, and I obviously cannot breathe since I have had five*

⁵ A clothing element that often identifies Laieti Roma Group

⁶ Bacau and Buzau are two cities from Romania. A lot of Roma who live unintentionally homeless and making a living by informal street work were from these two cities from Romania.

surgeries to my stomach. I am sick, and my stomach could explode because I could not push air, therefore, all the Roma women at the shelter, jumped to my defense.”

Andrada: *“I feel very well when I come in here at the shelter. I forget all the problems that I have on the street, like pain in my body, in my feet, or my daily stress.”*

Lina: *“I feel here like my own house, especially with the women, I got used to the shelter.”*

Viorica: *“I feel very good here. People are nice to me, they help me, even if I don't have food the Roma women share with me.”*

Despite all the challenges and hardships that Romani women face while being homeless in Oslo, they also find the strength to form communities where they feel good. When Lina refers to the fact that she feels like she is at home at the shelter, she also includes the environment and her friends' company. Marioara is not alone anymore as she has her friends to defend her whenever she needs it. Finally, all these quotes show how Roma try their best to remain a resilient community and group despite the adversities, discrimination, and harsh conditions of either sleeping outside or working in informal street work. As final thoughts to this last section, all these women work more than ten hours per day in an environment that deprives them of basic needs and includes harassment and rejection. However, their models of kindness show Roma women's power in coping with everything and is even quite inspirational. They still keep their very last drop of energy and strength in building a community where they will feel safe and accepted and challenge all the public discourses with their own experiences and narratives.

Conclusion

To reflect on the quotes and the issues explored in this analytical chapter, the experiences of Romani women are still invisible and unknown by both Romanian society and Norwegian. The struggles, pain, resistance, and experiences of Romanian Roma women who migrate to Oslo as a strategy for survival are topics left at the margins. As a result, this chapter proposed to voice the experiences and confessions revealed from ten semi-structured interviews that I conducted with Romani women who have migrated temporarily from Romania to Oslo,

Norway, and make a living based on informal street work. As I have outlined earlier in the introduction, the most relevant issues that I have found to analyze included sleeping outdoors and multiple discrimination. In light of this, I have collected quotes and paragraphs from Roma women's daily struggles sleeping occasionally outside (unintentionally homeless) and being engaged in informal street work. Within these two main themes, I divided this section into other subtopics, including health, harassment, discrimination, and community building. Findings show that most women coming to Norway are finding that temporary migration can be a survival alternative. If the younger Roma women try to find a job and make a living, the chances are predetermined for the older ones. Most of the women have low educational levels, come from impoverished families, and are single mothers. All that considered, they remain excluded from both Romanian and Norwegian society.

The invisibility of their issues and discrimination of living in an unintentional state of homelessness and begging to survive also causes other issues. As discussed, findings show that health and safety are the two crucial aspects that have to be improved as they damage the lives of Romani women. However, the findings also draw on intersectional discrimination, which remains the element that mostly affect Roma. The discrimination of being women, homeless, poor, and Roma multiplies their oppression and affects them on every level. This can be demonstrated through the practical implications of intersectional discrimination of how Romani women experience discrimination from different angles. To refer back to the literature review, Roma women in their interviews have touched the topic about the stereotypes and prejudices that they evoke among members of Norwegian society, and that these factors greatly impact them. Romani women also experience the stereotype of Roma as criminals, and this aspect endangers their coping mechanisms when facing all challenges, they experience while being homeless and performing informal street work. Yet, despite this, they remain resilient as they are breadwinners of the family: in order to survive back in Romania and in Oslo, they endure and resist for getting a better life themselves and their families.

Analytical Chapter II

Roma women and Forms of Resistance

Lina “my smile is in my mouth but not in my heart; when people are harassing me on the streets, I am covering my mouth and leave my face down, I do not want to respond. They swear me, and I answer hi, again and again.”

I have chosen to start this chapter by emphasizing this quote to draw upon the intersectional discrimination that Romani women encounter on the streets and discuss in depth the consequences of their oppression and their forms of resistance. Prior to this chapter, I have discussed the intersectional experiences and challenges that Roma women encounter on the streets. Within this section, I will pay particular attention to the forms of resistance exhibited by Romani women. I propose further investigation of the ten semi-structured interviews with the goal of voicing the invisible narratives of Romanian Romani women migrants with resistance as a focal point. By doing so, the employed qualitative methods will more deeply explore Romani women’s experiences regarding discrimination, rough condition of sleeping outdoors, harassment and their effects and consequences in resisting oppression. Beyond this, I will highlight that, the absence of Roma women’s voices from the mainstream literature, which leads to the perpetuation of the general stereotypes and prejudices regarding Roma. With the collected quotes from Romani women exposed in the semi-structured interviews, I will attempt to confront the stereotypical depiction of Roma within mainstream Norwegian discourse and shed light on Roma women their forms of resistance by using the concepts of intersectionality and resistance that have been evaluated in the theoretical framework (see page 18-20). By taking the approach of Mahmood (2005) and hooks (1989), I aim in pushing forth the multidimensional forms of resistance demonstrated by Romani women, such as the efforts they make to sacrifice for their own families, the decision to migrate in order to provide for themselves and their families, their experiences of harassment, discrimination, and marginalization both in their home and in Oslo.

While exploring the concepts argued by Mahmood regarding resistance, I will employ the active feeling of endurance as a form of attempting to resist oppression. In most of the conducted interviews, Romani women highlighted the hardship they are experiencing when

migrating to Oslo, becoming unintentional homeless, and working in informal street work. According to their views/narratives, all of these aspects entail several challenges, and the ongoing feelings of responsibility and endurance. The hope for both attaining a better life and supporting their families keeps them on the front lines and pushes them continue working in the exposed conditions that were mentioned previously. The next step will be to build on the space of marginality introduced by hooks (1990). According to hooks, marginality in her work, represents the place where Black women can find their forces in building a space of resistance and new ways of coping with intersectional discrimination. As hooks argues, “the mode of being unknow to most of their oppressors sustained black women, aided in their struggle to transcend poverty and despair, and strengthened the sense of self and solidarity” (Hooks 1990:341). Following her argument, hooks claims that Black women are erased from the mainstream feminist agenda, and as a response to that, their marginality becomes a site of repression but also a site of resistance). Hooks explains also that, them, who live at the margins, “could enter the world but that could not live there” (Hooks 1990:341). That is why hooks builds upon the fact that Black women had no other alternative but to use their resources found at the margins to fight oppression and to resist.

Similar to Black women, Roma women are also pushed to the margins; in the case of unintentional Romani homeless women begging in Oslo to survive, they use their minimal resources to resist and overcome oppression. By employing the concept outlined by hooks, i.e., marginality as a site of resistance, I will stress both on the acts of discrimination and consequences such as the survival strategies and forms of resistance that Romani women develop when conducting informal street work and living homeless. As Rajan defines it, in its traditional definition the concept of resistance refers to this phenomenon as “resistance are actions of a subordinated group in trying to overcome or oppose hostility, oppression, and sexism” (Rajan 2000:153–65). However, according to Mahmood, the power of resistance is multidimensional. First of all, the general definition on resistance may be limited in defining resistance in its complex way. Therefore, proceeding in analyzing other feelings, acts, and actions may reveal other non-traditional forms of resistance that are not being taken into account. For instance, according to the concepts developed by Saba Mahmood concerning the religious movement of Muslim women whose sites of resistance and agency are not necessarily recognized, it helps to strengthen and to expand the way feminists perceive resistance (Saba Mahmood 2001:203). When Mahmood describes this movement as a pathway where Egyptian Muslim women seek their goal to cultivate/practice piety through religious values, she reveals

how these women whose subversives may encourage traditional and patriarchal values are challenging such norms through patience, endurance, will and resilience (Saba Mahmood 2001:205–8). Mahmood’s concept and expansion of how resistance can be identified or how new forms of resistance can appear when facing oppression play a crucial role in relation to Romani homeless women. Roma women themselves acknowledge the stereotypes that they embody by begging to survive. Then, employing the concept of Mahmood unfolds additional meaning and understanding of what resistance can be. Finally, the actions of homeless Romani women whose conditions are miserable in Oslo their attempts in making a living from informal work became their last strategy of survival. Such conditions are also multiplied by the hardship of rough experiences in battering, violence, discrimination, health issues, and vulnerable conditions suffered back home (CEDAW 2016:3-8; OHCHR 2017). Yet, despite the background/environments that they come from; they find the strength to survive.

Lina, “when people are harassing me on the streets, I am covering my mouth and leave my face down, I don't want to respond. They swear me, and I answer hi, again and again...” I never was in another country before Norway. I left Romania because of the big need I had. I kept on hearing my neighbors that they could advance and live better, and I made myself the courage to come. However, sleeping outside was terrible, that's the reality and sometimes on my begging spot, I was singing and crying, but people did not know what I was saying. You see, ahh.. I come from a tough situation, ten years before being a single mother, my husband became alcoholic and violent. However, despite all of this I kept on forward in raising my four children alone. Now, are 20 years since I am the head of the family and keeping the house by myself. I am very brave, is hard, but I am not scared to live on the streets... yet, I am collecting money very hard, I am thinking how to consume less and save more. I sometimes eat only a soup of five Norwegian kroner (50 cents) per day. I am resisting hard... for that, I am also sick.... (crying), you see... I don't put on weight I am suffering from so many diseases. I haven't seen a person saying to me: you lady! you are so old! why do you work/beg here? Because then I would reply: I have two beds to buy, wood for winter and materials for putting my house floor and that's it. [...]

Lina, the single mother, mentions how hard it is for her to beg and live unintentionally homeless. Yet, in her narrative, glimpses of forms of resistance and agency can easily be grasped. While she is crying and verbalizing her fears, she is convinced that she has to endure such harsh conditions because she has no other alternative to push forth with her life. When I

met Lina in the first week at the shelter, she told me that she managed to build a new roof for her poor house with the money collected from recycling and begging. She told me that her house was full of rats and, after seeing that, she decided to do something to escape poverty. Considering the critical theoretical framework on intersectional discrimination that was previously discussed in the thesis, the concept of intersectionality helps and facilitates a broader picture in envisioning how Roma women are prone to suffer racial, class, social, and gender discrimination. Following that, intersectionality can be identified in Lina's narrative. As explained by Kocze, earlier in the theoretical framework, Roma women face and are subjected to suffer multiple discrimination (Kocze 2009:23–30). In the present case, both race, gender, class, immigrant, and roofless status intersect and oppress Lina from different directions. Therefore, having in mind all these aspects, Lina's experiences cannot be treated singularly but gathered to draw the complexity of intersectional discrimination. Moreover, the exhibited forms of resilience and resistance maintain her goal of being the breadwinner of her household. Although her alternatives in resisting are not the traditional direct actions to push against oppression, given the circumstances and the conditions that Lina survives when she lives roofless and begs for survival, her endurance can be inferred as resistance.

Using Mahmood's concept that aims to challenge the binary traditional definition of resistance, in which she analyzes the experiences of unmarried Muslim Egyptian women's narratives in a society based on patriarchal values, Mahmood seek to find, resistance and agency in endurance, patience will, or sacrifice, and to perceive "agency not only as the capacity for progressive change but also, importantly as the capacity to endure, suffer, and persist" (Saba Mahmood, 2001, p. 217). Thus, Mahmood argument can be perfectly applied within Lina's story whose hardship and endurance helps her survive. For instance, Lina says, "I am very brave" but in the same sentence, she states that "is hard, but I am not scared to live on the streets," her will of going ahead with her life despite of all the adversities, characterize her as a resistant agent. Like many other women who are found in similar situations, the instinct of survival helps them develop new tools for resisting and facing the fear, insecurities, and all other harsh consequences of being subjected to intersectional discrimination and living under rough conditions.

Hope and responsibility

Another aspect that it was mentioned in the interviews is not just endurance but also responsibility and hope.

Carmen, “I cannot expect money from my children neither from my husband, I have worked all my life in agriculture, cleaning, in fabrics, everything that I could. But now my pension is just 500 lei (103 Euros) and it is way too little to survive with this money. You know how it is home (Romania)⁷ therefore, I am coming here (Oslo) to collect bottles and to beg in order to pay my rent, my utilities, electricity, water, and food but to also give money to my young grandchildren who are now going to school. I have big hopes for them; God helps them to achieve something in life.”

Similar to other Romani women, Carmen discloses how low the incomes are back home. Even though she had worked for more than twenty years, her pension does not cover her basic needs. By migrating temporarily to Oslo, living unintentionally homeless and begging to survive, it is clear that Carmen does not want to depend of her family. On the contrary, she aims to support herself and her grandchildren as they go to school. She views begging or collecting bottles as an alternative/strategy of survival and investment into the future generation. Due to this interpretation, her feeling of hope and responsibility is reflected in her interview. It is not the first time when women in the ten semi-structured interviews state that they find the only alternative to survive by enduring the harsh conditions of living outside and working in begging as a hope for them and their families. Carmen is roughly 57 years old and strives to support her family. However, Roma women of different walks of life whose aims, and efforts are heavily pressured by their families' poverty endure similar experiences migrate to Oslo to make a living. The picture and narrative from Romania help to understand the influx of people that leave Romania in order to survive.

As it was explained in the background section, Romania's 40% of Roma communities are living in extreme poverty (Roma Index 2015: 56-59). Therefore, to keep living in rough

⁷ During the ten semi-structured interviews, often my correspondents refer to me as their co-national and would seek for reaffirmation of their experiences, as we come from the same country and Roma context.

conditions, roofless, with no access to basic hygiene, subjected to discrimination, and experiencing harassment (Djuve et al. 2015) it is reaffirming that Roma women back home are grappling with a generational issue of extreme poverty that is further provoked by hostility and marginalization, lack of access to basic needs, education and employment (FRA 2014). In the face of this, staying in Oslo under the above listed situation gives them an alternative to survive and overcome their struggles. To return to the claims argued by Kalpana Wilson in her work *Reclaiming Agency, Reasserting Resistance*, detailed in the theoretical framework where she includes a discussion on the exclusion of Indian women who live on the margins of the mainstream feminist context. Although she speaks about women's struggles in finding strategies of survival and not transformation (Wilson 2008:83), her arguments can be thoroughly used to describe other minorities, racialized and marginalized women in other parts of the world. Wilson's interpretation argues that women whose positions are erased/ excluded from the mainstream movements and political agendas lack a wider representation of their efforts, survival strategies, progress and other forms of resistance. As a result, Wilson states that in this kind of vulnerable environments, women are the first to sacrifice either for themselves or for the good of their families, yet, even as they do so, their acts are erased and not named as resistance (2008:87). In respect to Romani women, a similar approach can be claimed as Roma women lack a thorough representation of their actions (D'Agostino 2019).

Combining Wilson's argument with Mahmood's can significantly help to strengthen my claims concerning Roma women. For instance, while Wilson speaks about the minimal documentation and representation of marginalized women, Mahmood draws on the distortional depictions of Muslim women portrayed as submissive, docile, and subverted by the West (Saba Mahmood 2001:205). Considering that a similar pattern of the Roma women's stereotyped image was constructed, it can be argued that Roma women have been depicted as being submissive and culturally oppressed by their Roma man (D'Agostino 2019). However, Oprea has a strong argument against these stereotypical images claiming that this is not a cultural matter, but that patriarchy does not exempt any culture, and it is an issue that is embedded in all societies, including the Romani people (Oprea 2005). As for unintentional homeless Romani women in Oslo, they may be perceived as invisible and voiceless under the traditional definition of resistance. However, in the analysis of their narratives and personal stories, they are individuals who inhabit a set of oppressive identities and try to overcome their challenges of being in the picture of a stereotype, women, migrant and homeless. Therefore, both the arguments given and outlined by Wilson and Mahmood bridge a smooth understanding that women's strategies

for seeking to survive and remain resistant have a higher importance than producing a change in highly difficult situations.

Lenuta: *“I am here for my children, I am living homeless, but home I have to maintain and to support two students. My son will be in the police school, and my daughter is now in high school. I would do anything for them; they are my life. I am begging, I am collecting bottles, I am also cleaning to a lady from time to time, so you see, I do everything that I can.”*

This is not the first time Lenuta openly talks about all her efforts as a single mother to raise her children and maintain them in school. While working in my shelter shifts, she would often stop to show me her students' photos with a bright gleam of pride in her eyes. Striving to raise her children is a part of her identity; while Lenuta has a specific goal/motivation of her endurance, it is not difficult to imagine that other women who live in a similar situation and are acting accordingly.

Ileana: *“Home, I live with my little girl, she is very young, but I want her to go to school and study. Now, I am searching any kind of jobs, I had an interview in a cleaning company and hopefully I can start soon.”*

Another woman that shared her story of living homeless in this research is Ileana. Thanks to the fact that she has travelled to other countries before, she speaks various languages. Yet she also ended up in Oslo collecting bottles and sometimes begs to survive. Before coming to Norway, she lived in the Netherlands for a couple of years, where she worked in cleaning. Now she is unintentionally homeless and occasionally sleeps at the shelter and recycles bottles and cans so her daughter will have a better life and will follow education. Ileana is just 24 years old, and all her life projects, goals, and plans are directed toward her very young child but also to new opportunities. Her individual case can be connected with the brief argument outlined by Wilson in the paragraphs above. Ileana is using the very limited resources that are available to her to find better alternatives in raising her daughter. Although she states that she is in Oslo for her daughter, she also mentions her desire to find a contracted job. During the interview, Ileana could not stop talking about her little girl, and although she missed her a lot, the thought that she and her daughter may have a better life in the future motivated her to resist the harsh conditions on the Oslo's street. With that in mind, Ileana's story is just one of the women who

think in this particular manner since most of the interviewed Roma women believe that work done outside, sleeping outdoors, suffering discrimination or rejection is “worthen” as long as their children's lives, them, relatives or parents are getting better life. Sometimes “better” meant food, home, clothes, or education. I am mentioning that because once again I would like to reiterate the poverty that Roma women live back home in Romania.

Homeless and activists?

Doina: “I would appreciate even a place to stay to hide from the rain or just drinking a coffee. However, I am begging, here (Oslo) I am collecting bottles I am managing to survive. Yet, I am not good in begging... I feel stupid; I feel that I am in their (Norwegian) hands, I feel their slave...” Even home (Romania) I feel the same, I went to the mayor to ask for a house, and he told me that I could not afford to pay a rent... I felt so discouraged, humiliated ... nobody notices me; I have no rights.”

Although Norwegian society naturalizes the fact that Roma women migrants can sleep outside, the burden of sufferance lies in the fact that almost every night, these women seek a place indoors as they are constantly afraid of the potential dangers that they can be exposed to. Doina is one of the correspondents that has been very open to sharing her story. While having the interview, I could notice how deeply ashamed she felt to beg or live outdoors. As she is said in the paragraph above, she feels extremely humiliated and shameful. Like the other included quotes, Doina’s story is extremely relevant in discussing how Romani women feel when begging and the outcomes of these feelings. The diversity and the different manners that Romani women deal with the intersectional discrimination, oppression, and rough life, in general, is different. If earlier in the thesis, Mahmood’s argues in terms of resistance, are immensely helping expand the concept of resistance, Doina and Alina demonstrate that the need for survival leads to unexpected decisions. Doina, together with Alina, have been involved in local activism in Oslo. With the support of the organization of City Mission and Salvation Army, they have strived to find alternatives for income and various hade-made crafts to produce money and survive. Besides that, the two Romani homeless women made their voices heard by attending several workshops and seminars, giving interviews, exposing their needs,

and claiming their rights.⁸ Both women have been a model of resistance, yet very little attention and documentation of their acts can be obtained. Follow up on this aspect, if the narratives of the other interviewed Romani women are not necessarily capturing the traditional idea of resistance, there is no doubt that Doina and Alina are resistant agents due to their initiatives, activism, and persistence of making a change. In an interview given to one of the most read online newspaper in Norway VG, (2018),⁹ Alina and Doina claim that they feel terrible and deeply ashamed when begging, but that they do not do any harm to people. Besides that, they demand respect, and I quote them: “*We live in extreme poverty, we (Roma) feel like slaves when begging, but we want respect.*” Doina and Alina’s actions explain the particularity of each Roma woman in resisting and coping with the harsh situation that they live in. It shows how traditional ideas of resistance tangled with nonconventional forms of resistance argued by Mahmood help to pinpoint the different forms of resistance that Roma women develop to face adversities.

“I am not a criminal”

To reiterate the invaluable claims made by bell hooks in the theoretical framework, “our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance” (Hooks 1989:16). Despite the minimal resources held by Romani women to oppose injustices, stereotypes, and prejudices, the women I interviewed constantly try to refute the negative and stereotyped image that depict Roma as beggars, unreliable, criminals or traffickers within the Norwegian public opinion (Langaas 2017: 9–15). In their view, language becomes, one of their most vital tools in reclaiming who they are and defending or differentiate themselves as individuals from the stereotypical and prejudiced opinion regarding the „collective” Roma migrants in Oslo. I am highlighting the meaning of collective, as Roma individuals are never seen as separate entities, but rather as a collective. Yet, the need to find individuality and differentiation that Romani women try to find, is equally important to the collective struggle in finding strategies of survival and resistance. Although, individually every woman stated that, “I am not a criminal,”

⁸ Read more about Doina and Alina <<https://kirkensbymisjon.no/artikler/byttet-tigger%C2%ADkoppen-med-middag-pa-slottet/>>

⁹ See all video here <<https://www.vg.no/nyheter/i/6n6wre/doina-40-tigger-i-oslo-vi-blir-skjelt-ut-og-truet>>

a strong affirmation that shows the individual resources in combating the stereotypes, same statement, it also shows the ongoing collective struggle of being the picture of a stereotype. With that in mind, it can be inferred that every woman are using and uniting their minimal resources to oppose the above prejudices and one example can be given by the two Romani women who are mother and daughter to use their voices in order to disclaim the negative stereotyped image of Roma as criminals.

Marioara: *“They (Norwegians) say we are criminals, but that is not true, I am not a criminal, not every Norwegian or Romanian are the same, neither the Roma people.”* In the same interview, Marioara acknowledges that there have been some Roma cases involved with illegal dealings. However, she mentioned that they are not representative of the Roma groups in Oslo. *“I heard about that documentary,¹⁰ it might be true, but I doubt. Look how we live, I have neither palaces or money, I do not sell drugs and I live on the streets.”*

Marioara is not the only Roma woman who feels the need to defend herself against the distorted image that surrounds Roma while trying her best not fit within the expected roles/images. Another woman that mentions the aspect of criminality is Adina.

Adina: *“We are not all the same. Whenever I go to a shop to buy something, people are staring at me as they believe that I will steal something. It is so uncomfortable because I am not a criminal.”*

The stereotype of the criminality of Roma has been used for so long within studies concerning Roma. Both current research and literature, mainly written by non-Roma, still portray Roma based upon stereotypical images that affect their lives. Witnessing the continuation of this harmful prejudice against Roma, both the prejudices and stereotypes are important, primarily when referring to a racialized marginalized minority as Roma. Besides that, the gender component plays a critical role in drawing on the intersectional discrimination that Romani

¹⁰ In 2015, a Norwegian controversial documentary film was released to talk about Roma beggars and migrants. During the documentary Roma were negatively and stereotypically depicted. As an outcome of this documentary harsh reactions have busted from the public toward homeless Roma people. As Djuve et al. 2015 written in the research, *When poverty meets affluence*, after this documentary was public, Roma suffered additional harassment, hate speech and hate crimes. See the link to the documentary here < <https://tv.nrk.no/serie/brennpunkt/2017/MDDP11000617/avspiller> >

women are exposed to suffer in this case. The danger of stereotyping and perpetuating the prejudice of criminality against Roma has to be mentioned since these perceptions bore terrible consequences in the past. Still, as Nando Sigona writes, Romani people's stereotypes and prejudices are again today used to justify injustices committed against Roma (Sigona 2008:12). Referring back to the literature review where the stereotype of criminality was investigated in different contexts regarding Roma, the analysis made on the relevance of the stereotypes helps to understand the vast challenges that Romani women are prone to suffer as they become the picture of a collective stereotype. Thus, with that in mind, it is pivotal to understand how these women use their minimal resources in fighting this prejudice while using language as an instrument of resistance. In conclusion, discussing such aspects of high importance facilitates deeper comprehension of the multiple discrimination that unintentionally Roma women endure when engaged in informal street work. Also, to put it differently, in general, the situation of a homeless individual is already complicated, but in addition to these challenges given by the roofless status, homeless Roma women are prone to suffer additional burdens due to racial, social, and gender discrimination. Therefore, this analysis of stereotypes denotes a problem rooted in most societies and is crucial to highlight its real consequences on each Roma woman's well-being living in the conditions listed above.

Conclusion

Beyond recording what it is like to be trapped in extreme poverty, suffering institutional discrimination and segregation, the interviews draw on the survival strategy most Romanian Roma women seek to live. Intersectional discrimination remains a crucial part of this chapter in addition to the main forms of resistance exhibited by Romani women while conducting informal street work and living unintentionally homeless. As was found in the interviews, extreme poverty push Roma women to migrate from Romania to beg or collect bottles in Oslo as a way to invest in their families, children and themselves. They are located at the margins both in Romania and in Oslo, and the complexities of their oppression and discrimination must be evaluated based upon this context. For example, it can be given that women who come to beg or recycle for survival at almost 3,000 kilometers away from their homes must have reached this decision due to desperate situations and living conditions. Nevertheless, despite the harsh conditions they live in, they hold hope, responsibility and see the future, as was stated in the interviews. In light of this, hooks and Wilson's resistance employed theories play a crucial role in understanding Roma women's situation in Oslo. Both intersectionality and

resistance are essential. Using hooks' approach, the location at the margins while conducting informal street work fuels Roma's new ways of creative alternatives in resisting oppression. Mahmood's knowledge helps to see agency and resistance through endurance, will, reasoning, and patience. As the gender and migration part argues in the literature review, Romani women who live unintentionally homeless and are engaged in begging to survive live under harsh conditions and are exposed to risks, including violence and sexual harassment. Yet, even though seen as a social issue and lacking assistance and sufficient support from the authorities, they see future and hope. Their projects of investing in their families to get a better life motivate them to endure and resist in spite of undignified conditions. Therefore, as was stated in the quotes, their endurance, efforts, and sacrifice are not in vain.

Finally, bringing the marginality of migrant Romanian Roma women into public discussions can start giving voice to voiceless Roma women. As Wilson states, the difficulty of finding survival strategies is equally valuable to acts of transformation and change given the harsh conditions that most marginalized women face when they are erased from mainstream feminist agendas of different geographical contexts. Roma women face discrimination both in Romania and Oslo, they are invisible and homogenized within the collective group of Roma. However, as was explained in the theoretical framework, Roma women are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination due to gender, race, class and in this case, migrant and homeless status. With that in mind, the arguments given by Wilson help in capturing the multiple struggles that homeless Romani women are facing when engaged in informal street work. Both Doina, Alina, Marioara, Ileana, and all women that have shared their narratives above, want more or less the same: a better life for them and their families. Despite the intersectional discrimination that they are exposed to suffer, their survival is fueled by a motivation and set of survival strategies that is resistance.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis fought to challenge the stereotypical collective image toward Romanian Roma women by examining a study case detailing the experiences of Romani women who live in a state of unintentional homelessness in Oslo and survive by begging, collecting bottles for recycling, or selling magazines. To tackle the hegemonic knowledge, which is mainly toxified by negative prejudices toward Roma, the particular narratives of Roma women refute these images and seek to disclose untold stories of resistance. The research project proposed to reveal Romanian Roma women's daily narratives who are engaged in informal street work and living outdoors. Having used the tool of intersectionality to analyze the layers of oppression that Roma women are encountering, the findings show that Roma women are prone to suffer multiple forms of discrimination for being female, Roma, and poor; nevertheless, in the investigated study, they face additional forms of discrimination for being migrants and homeless. Besides that, both the harsh living conditions encountered by Roma women who live outdoors while surviving from informal street work, and the regular harassment and discrimination expose Romanian Romani women to violence, health issues, and marginalization. This study also chose to disclose not just the intersecting factors of oppression that Roma women experience. By aiming to identify potential forms of resistance as an outcome of all the encountered challenges faced by Roma women, this research proves that Roma women thoroughly work toward building a community that can inspire solidarity and resilience among one another. The analysis of the collected data from the interviews and the participant observation method explains the enormous need for women to create a space where they can unite their forces and form a community where they share similar experiences. In light of this, the need to remain resilient when confronting their encountered adversities confirms that Roma women remain resilient to potential threats. Findings also show that Roma women develop resistance based on endurance, survival, solidarity, community building, and activism. Given the circumstances of surviving in inhumane conditions, discrimination, harassment, lacking basic hygiene, shelter, and access to basic needs, Roma women continue to believe that both migration to Oslo and informal work can be a chance for them and their families in getting a better life away from the generational poverty that they experience. One aspect that this study argues is the severe repercussions of living outside toward Roma women's health. Research shows that Roma women who migrate from an already impoverished background already possess a poor level of health. Considering that, findings prove that most Roma women are

subjected to developing additional severe health issues, which endangers their lives. Beyond that, they also have experienced battering and violence back home, but their exposure to the living conditions that were outlined above continues to subject them to harassment, discrimination, and hostility regularly. Furthermore, while suffering multiple discrimination, Roma women are experiencing a set of risks and limitations. As the data shows, Roma women live at the margins both in Romania and in Oslo's streets. As a result, this study demonstrates that erasing Roma women's voices from the mainstream feminist agendas renders them invisible. It is precisely for this reason that this research strove to lift Roma women's voices in order to refute the collective stereotypes and prejudices against Roma by demonstrating that, despite their minimal resources, Romani women use their voices to challenge the public discourses by shouting: „I am not a criminal.” Another important aspect that had been demonstrated is that based on the gathered data, this study shows that Roma women are the breadwinners of their families; thus, they hold responsibility and pursue a feeling of hope. The findings show that while Romani women endure and live under severe conditions, they are still determined to resist and seek higher opportunities for progress, as was stated in the interviews. Finally, the study argues that most Romani women view migration and informal street work as an alternative for survival and a tool of strength while investing in themselves and their families.

A brief summary of the research

The first chapter introduces the topic and addresses the research questions. After providing a brief historical overview of Roma in Romania in the background section of this thesis, I argued that Roma's present in Romania is a harsh consequence of an oppressive and unjust past. The literature review chapter analyzes the essential research regarding Roma migration to Western and Northern Europe. It explored gender and migration's value and drew upon the missing aspect of the female Roma experience. It also demonstrates that the intense reactions, stereotypical depiction of Roma, and new policies in regulating Roma migration are not unique cases, but rather just one glimpse of a European issue. Following this chapter, the theoretical section explained intersectionality in undertaking this study while summarizing and analyzing both the theory and method of intersectionality. The chosen methodology thoroughly explained what motivated me to choose qualitative research methods and examined the role of the lived experience and the researcher's position. Furthermore, the first analytical chapter draws on Roma's struggles and experiences when living in a state of unintentionally homeless. Having

discussed Roma women's multiple discrimination, this chapter highlights the outcome of the suffering and struggles endured by Roma women. The need to create a community where each woman will feel accepted and respected. This chapter discusses community building and solidarity to resist the daily harassment, discrimination, and poor living conditions. The second chapter excavates deeper into Romani women's experiences when living homeless and engaged in informal street work, revealing narrative and forms of resistance developed by Roma women. By carefully selecting theories from both Black women and Third World women, this chapter employed Mahmood's and hooks approach in terms of resistance and helps apply these theories to Roma women's lived experiences.

Recommendations

Finally, whenever studying Roma, gender, race, class, and sexuality may constitute the main factors to be considered. Furthermore, this research could also be further addressed in other countries, such as Spain or other Nordic countries. Equally important, Roma are often being researched from a hegemonic perspective; for further research, I would recommend studying Roma women as a distinct group of research. Finally, for further studies in terms of Roma women's migration or resistance, history may also be considered as most of the time, it reflects Roma's current situation in general.

Contributions

Due to the lack of literature on the topic of Romani women migration and their experiences, while living homeless and conducting informal street work in Oslo, with this study, I have analyzed new knowledge of Romani women experiences and struggles, experiences that are very much neglected by mainstream feminist literature. Therefore, as it offers a topic that has been researched for the first time from a Roma woman's perspective, this study seeks to eliminate European researchers' inflicted prejudices when studying Roma and try to portray Roma women as they are. Other than this, the thesis contributes to expanding traditional definitions on the power of resistance and tries to put forth silenced voices such as those of Roma women. Also, the thesis project contributes to intersectional studies made on Roma women in general and Romani feminism.

Translated quotes

As explained in the thesis, unfortunately, many of my correspondents had very limited access to basic education. Due to this aspect, most of them were speaking a broken or incorrect Romanian. I tried my best in respecting the way my corresponding was speaking and transcribing almost literally.

Analytical Chapter I

Adina “Nu avem nici o sansa, un avem nimic acasa, 7 milioane, ce sa faci cu banii astia? Nici un iti ajunge pentru o luna: abia poti cumpara mancare,.. in Romania nu e nici o posibilitate, salariile sunt atat de mici ca pana si Rumanii pleaca.”

Andrada “Este foarte greu, mai ales pentru mine ca femeie. Ma vezi murdara dar ma spal si eu cand pot. Plang pentru lucrul asta, credema. Uite intr-o dimineata am varsat un pahar de cafea pe bluza si nu am avut si eu nici un loc unde sa ma spal pe maini sau sa imi spal bluza... Tu ma intelegi cat de greu este? Vorbind cu disperare... Eu nu am voie sa intru in nici un bar sau cafenea. Imi zicea un.... nici la McDonald’s nu ma lasa. Zace ca sunt tiganka.”

Lenuta “Pentru ca sunt taganka, si ei cred ca toti tiganii fura si insala. Dar un e asa, nu sunt o criminala sau hoata, nu toti suntem la fel. Viata acasa in Romania e grea, e foarte grea”

Andrada “Eu vreau sa muncesc, dar cine sa ma angajeze pe mine?Nu vreau sa stau la cersit, dar cine da de mancare la copii?”

Doina “Multi oameni face discriminare impotriva noastra pentru ca noi adunam sticle si bidoane si mergem prin gunoaie. Dar na, asta de deranjeaza si ne jigneste si pe noi, si ma face sa imi fie jena. Noi nu am mers la scoala, un avem unde sa muncim. Eu sunt nevoita sa cersesc sau sa adun sticle.”

Lenuta “Eu sunt mama la doi copii, unul e la scoala de politie, si cealalta e la liceu. As face orice pentru copii mei, curatenie, adunat la sticle, cersit, totul..”

Adina “E periculos sa te culci pe strazi in noapte.., o data am avut o problema pentru ca dormeam in parc. Cand barbatul meu s-a dus sa gaseasca niste apa, niste barbati au venit la mine si mi-au cerut o bricheta. Sa fiu sincera, chiar un stiu ce voiau de la mine” vorbeau norvegiana si au inceput sa rada foarte ciudat. Am luato la fuga de frica si au inceput sa ma alerge...”

Elena “Noaptea unde dormeam noi sub un pod, venea politia mereu sa ne trezeasca atunci cand era somnul mai dulce... Era un greu si un amar sa dormim afara. Nu voiam si eu decat sa dorm undeva cu un acoperis ca sa nu se mai ia nimeni de noi.”

Viorica ”Ma-am saturat credem sa dorm afara, in fiecare zi ma gandesc daca dorm si eu inuntru, cand ma gandesc el asta, ma face sa ma simt foarte rau. Nu vreau sa ma culc afara dar daca nu am incotro.”

Elena “E asa de greu sa stau pe strazi, sunt bolnava si nn am si eu pe nimeni aici. Am spraiul meu de astm, dar un pot sa fac nici un efort ca mi-e frica ca mor..”

Marioara ”Inca am o gramada de problema cu sanatatea. Eu am facut 5 operatii la stomac si nu pot sa fac nici un effort sau sa stau in frig, asa ca e greu sa muncesc, sa stau la cersit si sa dorm afara.”

Andrada “E greu aicia, e nenorocire pentru o femeie, e greu sa dormi pe strazi. Cred ca o femeie are nevoie de mai multe decat un barbat, de igiene, haine calumea ca sa nu se imbolnaveasca, plus un WC, totul, na...”

Lenuta “Cand am ajuns aici, nu era nimica pentru noi, nimic, politia, gradienii se luau de noi, iar acum lumea pe strada e cam rasista si unii se iau de mine, da cu picioaru in pahar sa imi ia banii. Cateodata, se mai opreste lumea dar un mereu.”

Marioara “Ne scuipa, ne trateaza cu diferente mare, si nici nu ne mai da bani.”

Daniela “Drogatii ma ameninta, mereu sunt certuri, ca na daca si noi cersim ca ei, de aia mi-am schimbat locul de cersit de mai multe ori. Mi-e frica ca eu sunt singura aici...”

Veronica “In fiecare zi cand stau la cersit, e un om care se ia de mine. Nu il inteleg ce zice, dar e nervos si tipa la mine, azi mi-a dat cu picorul in pahar si in toate lucrurile pe care le aveam si eu cu nimeni.”

Lina “Da, da ne dam pastile, mancare intre noi, ne ajutam si noi cum putem. Nu putem face diferente intre noi, chiar daca purtam fuste lungi colorate sau una e mai tanara sau e din Bacau ori Buzau, cu totii suntem oameni.”

Doina “Cand e frigul al mai mare si rece iarna, mi se rupe inima ca femeile se culca pe strazi. Avem nevoie de mai multe locuri la dormitor. Daca e vreo femeie mai batrana sau singura aici as prefera sa o las pe ea in locul meu.”

Marioara ”Eu ma am bine cu femeile aci. La adapost intr-o zi un puteam sa respir ca mi-a facut un test dala de alcool, si era obligatoriu. Eu ti-am spus am cinci operatii, sunt bolnava nu puteam sa imping aerul, ca poate imi exploda stomacul, si atunci s-a pus toate femeile sa imi ia apararea.”

Andrada “Eu aici ma simt foarte bine la adapost cand vin. Uit de toate problemele de pe strada, uit de durerile mele din corp din picioare de tot stresul.”

Lina “Ma simt aproape ca la mine acasa. M-am obisnuit la dormitor.”

Viorica “Ma simt foarte bine aici. Oamenii sunt de treaba cu mine, ma ajuta si ei daca pot, daca nu am sa mananc cu femeile, ne mai dam de mancare, ne ajutam si noi cu ce putem.”

Analytical Chapter II

Lina “Zâmbetul meu ie pe fata, dar nu în inima mea; când oamenii se ia de mine pe străzi, îmi acoper gura și mă las cu fața în jos, ca nu vreau să răspund. Mă injura și eu răspund hi, inca o data și iar si iar.. ”

Lina. Am plecat din România din de nevoie mare. Imi auzeam si io vecinii ca faceau bani și mi-am făcut curajul să vin. Chiar si asa, cand ma culcam pe afara, pa strazi a fost greu, asta este realitatea și uneori pe locul meu de cersit, cântam și plângeam, dar oamenii nu știau ce spun. Vezi, ahh..eu vin dintr-o situație dificilă, cu zece ani înainte sa raman singura, barbatul meu a devenit alcolic și ma batea. Cu toate acestea, am continuat să cresc patru copii singura. Acum, e 20 de ani de când sunt capul familiei și tin singura casa. Am curaj, este greu, dar nu mi-e frică să trăiesc pe stradă ... totuși, strang banii foarte greu, mă gândesc cum să consum mai puțin și să strang mai mult. Uneori mănânc doar o supă de cinci coroane la zi. Rezist greu ... pentru asta, și eu sunt bolnava ... (plângând), vezi ... Nu pun si eu pe mine, sufăr de atâtea boli. Nu am văzut si eu o o persoană care să-mi spună: doamnă! esti atat de batrana! de ce lucrezi / cerșești aici? Pentru că atunci aş zice: am două paturi de cumpărat, lemne de foc și materiale da pus si eu podeaua parchet la casa [...]

Carmen „Nu măi pot aștepta bani da la copiii mei nici de la barbatul meu, am lucrat toată viața în la camp, curatanie, țesături, tot ce am putut. Dar acum pensia mea este de 500 de lei (103 euro) și este prea puțin pentru a supraviețui cu acești bani. Ști si tu cum este acasă (România), asa ca vin si eu aici (Oslo) să strâng sticle și să cerșesc pentru a-mi plăti casa, lumina, apa sa am de mâncarea, și sa dau si bani nepotilor, ca acuma merge la școală. Am mari speranțe pentru ei; Doamne ajuta să realizeze si ei ceva în viață .”

Lenuta „Sunt si eu aici pentru copiii mei, trăiesc fără pe unde apuc, dar acasă trebuie sa tin doi studenți. Baiatul va fi la școala de poliție, iar fata este acum la liceu. Aș face orice pentru ei; ei sunt viata mea. La cersit, la adunat sticle, la curatenie merg, colectez așa că vezi tu, fac tot ce pot.”

Ileana „Acasă, stau cu fetița mea, este foarte tânără, dar vreau să meargă la școală și să studieze. Acum, caut orice fel de muncă, am avut un interviu într-o firma de asta de curățenie și sper să incep si eu repede. ”

Doina „Aș aprecia chiar și un loc în care să mă ascund de ploaie sau doar să beau o cana de cafea. Cu toate acestea, cerșesc, aici (Oslo) strang sticle si asa traiesc. Nici un stiu sa cersesc. mă samt prost, si mi-e rusine; ma samt că sunt la mâinile lor, sclava lor, ... ”Chiar și acasă samt același lucru, m-am dus si eu la primar să cer casă și mi-a spus că nu-mi permit, un am am

banii să plătesc o chirie ... M-am samțit atât de rau, parca nimeni nu ma ia în seama; Nu am și eu nici drepturi.”

Marioara „Ei zace că suntem criminali, hoti, banditi dar nu e așa, eu nu sunt nici hoata nici un criminala, nu fiestecare norvegian sau român ie la fel, așa nici taganii.” „Am auzit da documentaru’ ala, o fii adevărat, dar un cred. Uite cum trăim, cum stam, avem noi palate?eu nu vând droguri și iete stau pe strazi.. “

Adina „Nu suntem cu toții la fel. Ori de câte ori merg la un magazin să cumpăr ceva, oamenii sa uita la mine, crede că vin la furat. E aiurea și mă face să mă simt prost, eu un fur, un sunt hoata.”

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