INTRODUCTION

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# THE ROMA IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

## Struggling for Identity at a Time of Proliferating Identity Politics

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## Thirty Years On

> Under communism we were denied any identity; now we have to
> have one.
>
> —Female Slovak Romani journalist, August 2005

In 1992, the non-governmental human rights organization Helsinki
Watch published a report under the title 'Struggling for Ethnic Identity:
Czechoslovakia's Endangered Gypsies'. It was the successor to two earlier
reports published in 1991 under the title 'Destroying Ethnic Identity' on
the position of Roma in the aftermath of the fall of communism in Bulgaria
and Romania respectively (Helsinki Watch 1991a, 1991b, 1992). These
reports were among the first international non-governmental documents
that, directly after the changes of 1989, discussed the position of Roma and
called for national and international political, legal and institutional action to
improve their societal position. Nearly thirty years on, a discussion of what
these relatively unknown and largely forgotten reports assessed in terms
of a 'struggle for identity' would be helpful in order to introduce several of
the thematic dimensions of identity that the contributors to this study will
analyse and revisit.

One of the prominent issues discussed throughout the three Helsinki Watch reports is the lack of recognition of the Roma's status as victims of racially motivated violence against them. The reports highlight the rapid emergence of mob and institutional violence against Roma throughout Central and Eastern Europe in the immediate aftermath of 1989. The report on Romania, for instance, states:

> The single, most dramatic change for Gypsies since . . . 1989 . . . has been the escalation of ethnic hatred and violence directed against them by the non-Gypsy population. Prior to 1990, anti-Gypsy sentiments took more subtle forms of expression. Now, rarely a month goes by . . . without another Gypsy village being attacked. Many of those interviewed . . . expressed their growing sense of insecurity and fear for their families and homes. (Helsinki Watch 1991b: 33)

These early reports and several later ones – such as the many reports published by the Budapest-based European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) since its establishment in 1996 – clarify that the eruption of violence against Roma was directly related to the lack of adequate responses from public authorities, or to the denial of or even support for this violence from their side. Since 1989, numerous cases have been documented in which the racially motivated character of attacks was denied, in which the police or health authorities refused to investigate or report assaults, in which independent investigations or court cases were frustrated, in which police officers passively or actively supported violence against Roma – sometimes in collaboration with extremist factions – and in which the police themselves violated the rights of Roma or even reversed charges against the police in their own favour.

A second key identity-related theme discussed in the reports is the racial dimension of several persistent and severe practices of segregation, such as those related to education (special schools or classes), residence and housing (in separate shantytowns, ghettoes or so-called 'settlements' that are occasionally the targets of police raids or removals by authorities), health care (separate rooms in hospitals, practices of sterilization, denied access to emergency services) and other public services and facilities (separate or denied seats on public transport; lacking or substandard infrastructure; denied access to restaurants, pubs, discos and cultural or sport clubs; no refuse collection). The reports also put these diverse aspects of segregation in the context of the often devastating impact of assimilation policies during (and before) state socialism, and of the neglect or active denial of Romani culture and ethnic identity, such as in Bulgarian socialist policies that forbade Roma from speaking the Romani language, and in socialist policies that limited or denied Romani forms of cultural association more generally.

A final major element that these reports relate to the then 'struggle for identity' is the ways in which authorities, politicians, citizens and media negatively or one-sidedly identified Roma, through various overlapping and intersecting processes of stigmatization, criminalization, pathologization and dehumanization. The reports also pay attention to how these processes of stereotyping and interrelated practices of marginalization had led to a culture of fear in which many Roma tried to hide their identity in order to avoid as much as possible the negative attitudes and behaviours towards them. At the same time, the reports discuss the emergence of new forms of political and cultural association, organized by Roma themselves and for various reasons, including activism to improve their situation, their self-articulation and their self-representation.

Thirty years on, an assessment of these three complex dimensions of identity related to the denial of racially motivated violence against Roma, radical practices of marginalization and exclusion, and the interconnection between outside identification and self-representation is still highly relevant to understand adequately the contemporary Romani struggle for identity. Therefore, in the next two sections, we begin with this threefold assessment. Then, in the following two sections, we discuss in greater detail how we will approach the issue of identity in this volume. First, we will consider identity in the context of the contemporary proliferation of identity politics, and then in terms of debates of essentialism versus constructivism, and how to move beyond this binary. In the final section, we will present the structure of the book and introduce the individual chapters.

While significant developments have been achieved with regard to each of the three identity-related domains that we have briefly discussed above, the challenges that relate to these dimensions are astonishingly similar to those of the early 1990s, as the contributions to this volume will demonstrate. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to indicate all the significant changes that have taken place since the 1990s, it is helpful to delineate a few of the more important ones, beginning with those in the context of the relationship between outside identification and multiple practices of self-identification.

## Significant Changes: Romani Presence, Voice and Participation

The post-1989 widening and deepening of various formal and more informal Romani social movements have had a profound impact on making Roma publicly visible and audible on political, policy, cultural and public debates about their societal position within and beyond the contested borders of Europe.

Throughout the 1990s and since the beginning of the new millennium, what has become known as 'the Romani movement' (Puxon 2000; Vermeersch 2006) has increasingly become more diverse, intersectional and transnational (Vermeersch 2006; Nicolae and Slavik 2007; Sigona and Trehan 2009; McGarry 2010; van Baar 2011a; Bunescu 2014; Bhabha, Mirga and Matache 2017; Beck and Ivasiuc 2018; Law and Kovats 2018; Kóczé et al. 2019). By developing their own heterogeneous social movements, those Roma who have associated themselves with these movements and their various more or less institutionalized practices have increasingly entered the sociopolitical and cultural scene as active agents of representation, not merely as passive 'victims' of representations and disputable identifications by others. As part of these developments, discussions about self-representation – for instance, about the contested use of 'Gypsies', 'Roma', 'Travellers' or other terms as homogeneous or homogenizing labels – have become an almost permanent ingredient in debates at diverse institutional levels, ranging from everyday encounters at the local level to institutionalized European and international fora dealing with politics, policy and culture. Today, it has become odd and even controversial to implement a social, political, cultural or academic programme without some form of Roma participation – notwithstanding the fact that this still continues to take place.

Consequently, Roma have now become more than simply the subject of discourses, programmes and tools of inclusion, antidiscrimination, development, empowerment, participation and cultural and media production and consumption. They are also critical voices in debates about their status, identity, history, memory and more general representation as minorities; as such, they have tried to influence the policy fabric around their position and the debates about how they could or should be represented in society, culture, media and history at various levels. The momentum of '1989' and the dynamic interactions between formal and informal Romani activisms, advocacy networks, non-governmental organizations and international governmental structures have led, for instance, to a wide and diversified landscape of Romani and 'pro-Roma' activism and engagement in and beyond Europe. These debates have increasingly emphasized the vital role of intersectional dimensions (Kóczé 2009; Schultz, this volume; Szalai, this volume; Zentai, this volume). Those who have raised their voices in public and academic debates have increasingly articulated the importance of paying attention both to the connections between different societal sectors (economy, culture, society, politics, religion, media, environment, science, etc.) and the intersections of – in particular – ethnicity, race, gender, class, age and nationality.

These social, political, civil and cultural movements have had diverse impacts throughout European cultures and societies, some of which will

be explicitly and more extensively discussed in the contributions to this volume. In the domain of history and memory, for instance, we have been able to observe a hard-won, but nevertheless increased sense of ownership over Romani histories and memories, and over the sites, archives, institutions and narratives key to historical awareness and collective, cultural memories. This is particularly true for the histories and memories related to the Romani Holocaust (see, for instance, Rose 1987; Hancock 1996; Bársony and Daróczi 2008; Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Acuña and Trojański 2015). In this field, we have seen the continuation of struggles for the recognition of the occurrence and huge human and societal consequences of genocide and violent persecution. Although these struggles began soon after the Second World War and, for decades, primarily took place in Germany,[1] since the 1990s they have increasingly taken place all over Europe and become more impactful. Romani claims for the recognition of their histories have become public and more robust and, moreover, have found significant inroads into institutional, cultural and political infrastructures, to allow for narrating and imagining Romani histories and memories as integral rather than marginal parts of national and European narratives. This development has not remained limited to the Romani Holocaust; for instance, regarding the position and situation of Roma during processes of modern European nation- and state-building, as well as during communism (Majtényi and Majtényi 2016; Donert 2017; Trehan, this volume), we have been able to observe the trend of increasing attention being paid to Roma, and also on their own terms, even while this trend is still preliminary. In this context, both access to archives and Roma mobilization for the production of new archives – such as the ones included in the *RomArchive* project[2] – have been vital not only in terms of reconsidering the position of Roma in European histories. They have also been fundamental in the creation and performance of new narratives and memories regarding Romani identities, implicitly or explicitly critical of how canonical discourses about Europe have historically and until now often managed to exclude and marginalize them (Picker 2017; Tremlett and Le Bas, this volume; van Baar 2011a, and Chapter 1, this volume).

In this respect, the establishment of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) in June 2017 in the centre of Berlin can be considered one of the key moments in this development in which Roma actors themselves create, perform and institutionalize new narratives regarding their identities, histories and memories – notwithstanding the complex history and disputes in the course of the 2010s, out of which ERIAC emerged (Ryder 2018; Magazzini, this volume). These processes have not been homogeneous, just as the emergence and development of the Roma social and civil movement have, throughout history, been a highly heterogeneous societal process (Mayall 2004; Klímova-Alexander 2005; Vermeersch 2006;

van Baar 2015a). In the more recent development of and within the Roma social movement, we have been able to observe the emergence of various new movements, overlapping but at times also conflicting with other, more mainstream factions of the movement. Here, we particularly want to mention the Romani women's movement (Kóczé et al. 2019; Schultz, this volume; Zentai, this volume) and various intersecting movements that could be qualified as the Romani LGBTQI+ movement (Kurtić 2014; Fremlová 2017; Fremlová and McGarry 2019). In all these instances of Roma involvements and movements, the possibilities to claim their own history and gain ownership over its dominant discourses, imageries, sources and representations, as we will see in this volume, have been key to organizing critical debates about important and often delicate issues such as citizenship, political voice and representation, cultural ownership, poverty, sustainable development, racism, displacement, gender, domestic violence, public visibility, and equality and justice more generally.

In the other two identity-related contexts of the denial of racially motivated violence against Roma and the challenging of radical practices of Roma marginalization, the situation has been more ambiguous. In the broader context of the 'Europeanization of the representation of the Roma' (van Baar 2011a, Chapter 5, this volume) and the interrelated emergence of 'the Roma political phenomenon' (Law and Kovats 2018) in Europe, substantially more attention has been paid, at various institutional levels and scales, to the causes and impact of practices of physical and symbolic violence against Roma. During the 1990s, international non-governmental organizations such as Helsinki Watch and the ERRC, and local and transnational networks of Romani and pro-Roma activists, played a crucial role in representing the situation of Roma as a 'human emergency' and in bringing them onto Europe's political and institutional agendas (Ram 2010; van Baar 2011b). Several scholars have also shown how, since the second half of the 1990s, mechanisms that should guarantee the protection of Roma have steadily been developed at both national and international levels (Rooker 2002; Klímova-Alexander 2005; O'Nions 2007; Agarin and Cordell 2016; Bhabha, Mirga and Matache 2017). Over the years, in an increasing number of national and European court cases that have dealt with violence and marginalization affecting Roma, the role of racism has been acknowledged (ERRC 2010), as has the profound impact of institutional racism and racial discrimination on the daily, personal and professional lives of Roma, as well as on 'interethnic' relations and the formations and transformations of their identities.

More generally, from a programmatic point of view, it is probably reasonable to say that issues related to various forms and practices of segregation – and their impact on life quality, health, education, human

security, social mobility, family planning, gender, future prospects, self-esteem, societal participation and trust in authorities, as well as other intersecting issues of identity and identity formation – have come to the fore and been acknowledged much more prominently in political, socioeconomic and cultural contexts than they were in the early 1990s. This development could not have taken place without another significant change that we have been able to observe and which we have also highlighted at the beginning of this section: in various contexts and at many different levels throughout Europe, Roma have become involved much more prominently and constructively in affairs that directly or indirectly concern them – even while phenomena such as tokenism and at best consultative inclusion, rather than full and equal participation, are still omnipresent in processes of decision making that affect or pertain to Roma in contemporary societies and cultures.

## Similar Challenges: Displacement and Racial Reversibility

As diverse evaluations of the situation of the European Roma over the last thirty years have concluded, there is not much ground for optimism if we consider the impact of the various societal changes and developments on the quality of life of many Roma, and particularly the poorest and most marginalized among them. For them, daily realities are still bleak and often characterized by miserable future prospects. Academic and public discussions about identity struggles and transformations will probably not hold great appeal for them, if at all. Nevertheless, this study hopes to clarify why these debates do matter – and are meaningful.

### The Relation between Outside Identification and Self-Representation

We have been able to observe, for instance, important advantages of migration, ranging from the escape from social malaise and increased socioeconomic mobility to support for relatives through remittances, less (direct) discrimination and improvement of future prospects. And yet, many Roma who have experienced new lifeworlds through migration have chosen to hide their identity abroad in order to be able to navigate these worlds. Nonetheless, they have been confronted with exploitation in the labour and housing markets as well as high degrees of precariousness and, in the UK, with additional uncertainties caused by the debate about and possibility of Brexit. At the same time, those who, for various reasons, have not been able

to hide their identities have often been faced with 'spectacular' displacement and violent removal through eviction or deportation.

Various influential media spectacles have turned Roma into some of Europe's most visibly politicized subjects. Here, we can think of spectacles such as the 'nomad emergency', the 'security pacts' and the policy of fingerprinting of Roma in Italy (Clough Marinaro and Sigona 2011); the expulsion of mostly Romanian Roma from France and also Spain (van Baar 2011b; Parker 2012; Vrăbiescu 2019); the hype about 'poverty migration' of Roma in the UK, Austria, Germany, the Benelux countries and Scandinavia (Benedik 2010; Fox 2012, Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy 2012; Djuve et al. 2015; Hemelsoet and Van Pelt 2015; Lausberg 2015; Olesen and Karlsson 2018); the hysteria about supposed 'child stealing' Roma in Greece, Italy and Ireland (van Baar 2014; Kóczé and Rövid 2017); and the 'repatriation' of Kosovo Roma from Germany followed by the alleged 'asylum shopping' of Roma from Albania and ex-Yugoslavia in Germany (Castañeda 2014; van Baar 2017b). At the same time, in Central and Eastern Europe, similar practices of the hypervisibilization of Roma have repeatedly been articulated through events and practices such as anti-Roma demonstrations (Albert 2012; Balogh 2012; Efremova 2012), anti-Roma neighbourhood watch initiatives (Balogh 2012; Mireanu 2013), mandatory public works (van Baar 2012; Grill 2018; Kóczé, this volume; Szalai, this volume) and zero tolerance measures, evictions and police raids throughout the region (Vincze 2013; Trlifajová et al. 2015; Picker 2017; van Baar forthcoming).

Yet, as the diversity of these examples already indicates, it would be misleading to relate the irregularization of the sociopolitical identity and status of Romani migrants, refugees and citizens primarily to the dramatization generated by political rhetoric, crisis talk and media coverage, or even to the persistent present-day manifestations of extremism, nationalism and populism in and beyond Europe. More is involved. These processes of irregularization and the correlated, unorthodox measures affecting Roma have been and are becoming an integral and normalized part of 'unspectacular' everyday bureaucratic practices that are often presented as 'reasonable' and 'justifiable' ways to deal with Roma. In this respect, something highly peculiar and influential has taken place in the diverse institutional commitments towards Roma that have emerged throughout Europe. Huub van Baar and Peter Vermeersch (2017) have argued that those Roma representations that have been operationalized in decision- and policymaking bodies often exclusively fall within the categories of either 'risky people' or 'people at risk', and thus invoke the disputable assumption that there is a close or even inherent link between 'Roma' and 'risk'. Consequently, these institutionalized representations of Roma along the lines of risk contribute significantly to rendering Roma hypervisible. They make them visible, legible and governable, but

only in very specific ways, and operate in a regime of visuality that strongly affects Romani agency and identity negatively (see also Tremlett and Le Bas, this volume). On the ground, the impact of these operational Roma representations has frequently resulted in a situation in which 'positive' 'anti-policies' – programmes that focus on the socially desirable aims such as antidiscrimination, antiracism, antipoverty and desegregation – have ambiguously merged with their 'negative' counterparts – 'anti-policies' that focus on socially undesirable phenomena such as antisocial behaviour, crime, trafficking, mobile banditry, illegal migration, zero tolerance and the like (van Baar 2019).

## Practices of Marginalization and Exclusion

At the complex juncture of citizenship, security and development, the clear and ongoing trend to hypervisibilize and securitize Roma thus limits how others identify them – mainly negatively, with suspicion or as vulnerable victims with limited agency – and also limits the ways in which Roma can negotiate their own identities in everyday intersubjective, bureaucratic, cultural, economic or sociopolitical encounters. And even though deseg-regation programmes have been developed and court decisions against the segregation of Roma are numerous, their implementation on the ground has been incomplete at best, for a variety of reasons – corruption, a lack of political will, institutional racism, inadequate policies and their problematic top-down implementation, and hampered or inadequate decentralization (ERRC 2010; Rostas 2012; Hornberg and Brüggemann 2013; Miskovic 2013; Szalai and Zentai 2014). In particular, at the nexus of security and develop-ment, where attempts to combat exclusion and marginalization have tended to contribute more to the maintenance of a fragile and delicate status quo, and thus supported governing rather than solving poverty among Roma, we have been able to notice a radical but mostly negative impact on how Roma can exercise their citizenship rights. Within contexts of durable or even deepening segregation – often organized along a historically structural and well-established (though not necessarily steady) colour line between Roma and their fellow citizens – constructive or recuperative processes of identity formation and transformation of Roma have remained incredibly difficult, as both Júlia Szalai and Angéla Kóczé show in their contributions to this volume.

While this delicate relation between segregation and identity formation is highly tangible in Europe's rural and urban peripheries, it is equally tangible, though at a more symbolic level, in political, policy and academic debates on the multiple borders in and of Europe. Media spectacles such as those related to the still ongoing deportation of Romanian Roma from France have

illuminated the highly ambiguous character of the Europeanization of the representation of the Roma. Indeed, if these spectacles have clarified one thing, it is that they function as a political technology of separation in which citizenship has been dealt with differentially and in which Roma have often ended up on the 'wrong' side of the border (van Baar 2017a, forthcoming; see also van Baar, Chapter 5, this volume). Despite the political rhetoric of Roma inclusion in Europe and the fact that many of the Romani migrants targeted for eviction or deportation are EU citizens who exercise and practise their EU right to free movement, these Roma have nevertheless been relegated to the domain of 'non-' and 'not-yet Europeans', and thus to the 'imaginary waiting room of history' (Chakrabarty 2000: 8) in which they do not yet 'belong' to Europe, and nor are they yet considered as its full citizens.

Therefore, in debates on the relationship between Romani identity formation and their symbolic or physical separation, we have to challenge the open or hidden manifestations of both political and methodological Eurocentrism that are present in any suggestion that the 'Roma problem' is only an internal or 'intra-European' affair, just as we still have to revisit how the 'Gypsy Question' was once considered an integral part of the 'National Question' in the decades of state socialism (Stewart 2001: 77–82; Trehan, this volume). The consideration of Roma in terms of a 'problem' has not only turned things radically upside down and rendered the underlying societal problematic significantly invisible, but the European domestication of how this alleged 'Roma problem' should be solved has also resulted in a positivist kind of European Studies that does not question how Europe itself has historically been complicit in these narrow Roma problematizations. Indeed, it is perhaps not despite, but precisely *because of* the Europeanization of Roma representation that Roma could be qualified and approached as Europe's racialized, second-rank citizens (van Baar 2011a, 2017a, 2018, and Chapter 5, this volume; Yıldız and De Genova 2018; De Genova 2019).

The incomplete shift in the Europeanization of Roma representation, from considering them a 'European minority' to perceiving them primarily as a 'European problem' (van Baar 2011b), has shown how their Europeanization has gone hand in hand with a highly disputable biopolitical bordering of Europe that, at the same time, has more clearly opened up the opportunities to discuss critically the position and identities of Roma from a postcolonial and critical race point of view as well (Imre 2005; Trehan and Kóczé 2009; New Keywords Collective 2016; Picker 2017; van Baar 2017a, 2018, 2019; Baker 2018). From such a perspective, it becomes clear that contemporary mechanisms of excluding and segregating minoritized groups are deeply rooted in Europe's notorious colonial, imperial and otherwise racial pasts, as Giovanni Picker (2017), Catherine Baker (2018) and Geraldine Heng (2018) have eloquently shown for the case of the Roma in their recent

monographs. Such a point of view also reveals how these mechanisms are related to problematic racial and biopolitical processes in which, both historically and currently, minoritized lives and bodies – 'migrants', 'refugees', 'minorities' and 'their' practices – are radically called into question, such as in the notorious and recurring articulations of the 'Jewish Question', the 'Gypsy/Roma Question', the 'Muslim Question' and, most recently, the 'Migrant/Refugee Question' (De Genova 2016; New Keywords Collective 2016).

At the same time, this double process – both revealing the links with Europe's 'present pasts' and interrelating the fate of various racialized and minoritized groups in Europe's global histories – has also enabled the kinds of 'travelling activism' (van Baar 2013) that have created productive spaces for dialogue between different global social movements, such as Romani, women's, Black, feminist, indigenous and LGBTQI+ movements (Szalai and Schiff 2014; Bhabha, Mirga and Matache 2017; McGarry 2017; Beck and Ivasiuc 2018; Corradi 2018; Kóczé et al. 2019; Magazzini, this volume; Schultz, this volume; Silverman, this volume; Tremlett and Le Bas, this volume; Zentai, this volume). Moreover – and this is crucial for any critical understanding of contemporary policies and the development of better future ones – the ambiguity of the Europeanization of Roma representation has turned into a *positive* ambiguity, in which travelling activism and the creation of productive spaces for dialogue have generated opportunities for critical interchanges and negotiations about the ways in which Roma have implicitly or explicitly been addressed in policy, political, cultural, social and media discourses. Furthermore, the peculiarities regarding the hypervisibilization of Roma in several European contexts have attracted the interest of scholars in fields as diverse as citizenship studies, migration and border studies, critical race studies, gender studies, queer studies, critical legal studies, critical security studies, social movement studies, visual studies and political geography, and, thus, in turn have indirectly contributed to a desirable interdisciplinary diversification of Roma-related scholarship – even though we are still at the beginning of this process (see also van Baar, Chapter 5, this volume).

We have been able to observe similarly ambiguous challenges in the context of the so-called 'refugee/migration crisis'.[3] In particular, some East Central European populist and nationalist politicians have rendered this crisis 'successfully' productive by managing to gain political capital through connecting the recent arrival of migrants to the long-term presence of Roma in their countries and, thus, by suggesting that both the international 'Refugee/Migration Question' and the domestic 'Roma Question' are 'untameable' and, most importantly, 'irreconcilable' with the 'National Question'. A notorious case in point is the way in which Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime

minister, has connected his anti-migrant rhetoric and measures with the suggestion that Hungarian Roma are an 'unruly' population, with whom 'the Hungarians' have been 'burdened' 'at some point' in their history (Kóczé and Rövid 2017). Similarly, when, after the 'hot summer' of 2015, Angela Merkel's *Willkommenskultur* (welcoming culture) was increasingly disputed in Germany, a bifurcation of its asylum system took place in which those migrants arriving from South Eastern Europe – among them a significantly high number of Roma – were relegated to newly established reception centres dealing with 'chanceless' asylum claimants. Similar to those who are advantaged in airport queues because they are 'speedy boarders' making use of specific priority lanes, these South East European migrants are *disadvantaged* because they have to be 'deported with priority' through these new and separate *Transitzentren* (transit centres) that some media and politicians have called *Sonderlager* (special camps). As Romani Rose, the chair of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, emphasizes – and particularly in the context of Germany's dark past – it is cynical, dangerous and unacceptable to discuss and install such 'special camps', which was the term used for many Nazi camps in order to disguise their real function (Staffen-Quandt 2015). Thus, in the context of the recent 'tests' to the EU's border regime, the proliferation of co-constituted and interrelated crises and crisis formations has coincided with the renewal and reinforcement of differential and racial treatment, not only of those who come from 'outside', but also of those who live within Europe's contested borders (van Baar 2015b, 2017a, and Chapter 5, this volume).

At the same time, however, and as in the case of the 'refugee/migration crisis', we have been able to notice the emergence of a productive synergy of Roma-related scholarship with diverse strands in, for instance, migration and border studies, citizenship studies, critical race studies, critical security studies and social movement studies (see, for instance, Bigo, Carrera and Guild 2013; Jansen, Celikates and de Bloois 2015; New Keywords Collective 2016; Yıldız and De Genova 2018). Even though we have to be critically aware of what crisis narratives do for scholarship about (not only) Roma and their problematization in all sorts of political and cultural communication (De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli 2018; Pulay 2018), these synergies have helped to reveal and interrogate the ambiguous links between, on the one hand, the ongoing and renewed racialization of the European Roma and, on the other, Europe's commitment to them in programmes officially dedicated to its 'largest ethnic minority' (Yıldız and De Genova 2018; see also Rostas, this volume; van Baar 2018, and Chapter 5, this volume). In other words, silencing or neglecting the presence of Europe's diverse racial legacies in the very tissue of what is supposedly '*ethnic* minority governance' in Europe equals a denial of the impact of racialization on Romani identities and their

position in Europe more generally, and the articulation of an oft-overlooked colour line that traverses Europe. Thus, our emphasis on race and racialization is not necessarily meant as a general critique of the notions of ethnicity or ethnic identity as 'essentializing concepts' (Pulay 2018: 185), but is a specific critique of those uses of ethnicity that overlook the racializing impact of institutionalized practices of 'ethnic' minority governance in Europe regarding Roma. This topic directly relates to racially motivated violence against Roma, and leads us to revisit what it looks like and how it is dealt with in contemporary Europe.

## The Denial of Racially Motivated Violence against Roma

In the domain of racial violence against Roma, many battles are still to be won. For instance, attacks on Roma have recently taken place in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine, while police brutality against Roma continues to be endemic in several European countries beyond the East–West divide. One outstanding case in point is the way in which Slovak authorities have dealt with the police raid that took place in the town of Moldava nad Bodvou on 19 June 2013. In the early morning of that day, sixty-three heavily equipped and masked police officers from special riot units entered the local, entirely segregated Romani shantytown, where they physically and verbally attacked thirty-one Roma, who offered them no resistance. In addition to committing physical and psychological violence against these people, including their children, the police damaged their property. They also detained fifteen Roma, who were again abused during detention. Medical reports have confirmed the serious injuries of those who were targeted.

At the moment of writing (June 2019) and, thus, about six years after the raid, no adequate or thorough investigation of the case has taken place. Only seven months after the police actions, in early 2014, the Department of Control and Inspection Service (DCIS) of the Slovak Ministry of Interior began examining the events. The DCIS did not find any police misconduct, did not refer the case for criminal proceedings, and ultimately closed it in August 2017, after the Slovak Constitutional Court – the highest court in the country – had investigated the case and reached similar findings, largely based on the testimonies of police personnel. As the body responsible for investigating police misconduct of police officers, the DCIS was widely criticized both domestically and internationally for not fulfilling the essential requirements of independence and impartiality; moreover, the Slovak Ombudsperson was repeatedly critical in her reports on the case (Public Defender of Rights 2013; Zalešák 2015).

Local and international human rights organizations, including the ERRC and Amnesty International, have condemned the ways in which the Slovak

authorities have thus far dealt with the raid, and therefore brought the case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 2018, where it is still pending.[4] Over the years, those who had to examine the raid took the testimonies of intervening police officers as the accurate truth, while those of the Roma were repeatedly disputed. Already in the first year of inquiries, an investigating police officer ordered 'psychological' examinations of many of the Romani victims and witnesses. As Michal Zalešák (2015) has suggested, 'this unusual step [gave] the impression that instead of concentrating on finding the perpetrators, the investigation [was] now focused on undermining the credibility of those giving evidence against the police officers'. He considered it as 'harassment and re-victimisation of the victims', and this is exactly what has happened. In the spring of 2017, it turned out that the irregularities in the testimonies of the Romani victims were attributed to their 'Roma mentality' (*mentalita romica*) which, according to psychologists and police officers involved in the investigations, was characterized by features such as 'a lack of self-discipline, neglect of commitments towards others, aggression, being asocial and an inability to adapt to social standards' (Zalešák 2018; see also Bán 2017). From there it was only a small step to what happened later in 2017, when the relevant Slovak police authorities stated that four of the Romani victims who were official witnesses in the case had fabricated their stories of being assaulted by officers during the raid. Even more disturbingly, the police brought charges against these four victims on 18 May and 30 August 2017 and have officially indicted them of perjury (Romea 2017). This development brings us literally back to the 1990s when, in the ERRC's third country report, Claude Cahn and Nidhi Trehan wrote that one tried and tested method of 'denying Roma due process when they are subject to an attack by a law enforcement official is to bring charges against them' (ERRC 1997: 27).

We have outlined this case in detail because it illustrates a deep and structural pattern of anti-Roma racism in Europe that has enormously impacted Romani struggles for identity. Spectacles such as those related to police raids, zero tolerance practices and evictions strongly interrelate to the securitization of Roma – that is, their problematization in terms of security threats to, for instance, public order or even national security (van Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide 2019). In these and similar contexts, we are able to observe a form of racial dismissal that can be characterized by a persistent reversal:

> Racial dismissal trades on the dual logic of reversal. It charges the historically dispossessed as the now principal perpetrators of racism, while dismissing as inconsequential and trivial the racisms experienced by the historical targets of racism. In doing so, racial dismissal renders opaque the structures making possible and silently perpetuating racially ordered power and privilege. (Goldberg 2015: 30)

The logic of reversal outlined by David Theo Goldberg – even though this logic is historically not new when discussing the position of Roma, and certainly not always fully reversed to the extent that it charges the Roma 'as the now principal perpetrators of racism' – has become increasingly manifest throughout Europe. For sure, the kinds of media spectacles discussed above have significantly contributed to what Goldberg calls rendering 'opaque the structures making possible and silently perpetuating racially ordered power and privilege'. Thus, the discourses and practices of ostensibly 'reasonable' antigypsyism that have emerged with this diabolic logic of reversal have significantly contributed to both the invisibilization and legitimization of contemporary anti-Roma racisms (Powell and van Baar 2019).[5] This finding does not imply that everything is reducible to racism or racialization – or, for that matter, to other '-izations' such as securitization, stigmatization, neo-liberalization, globalization or Europeanization – as if we were dealing here with a kind of master signifier or category of analysis. As the contributors to this volume clarify however, various intersectionalities – in which 'race' has also been assiduously present – have played a profound role in both the marginalization of Roma and possible ways out of this troublesome present-day condition.

At the same time, the racial reversal characteristic of currently ubiquitous 'reasonable antigypsyist' practices is directly related to the emergence of what Arjun Appadurai, in *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, calls 'predatory identities':

> Predatory identities emerge . . . out of pairs of identities, sometimes sets that are larger than two, which have long histories of close contact, mixture and some degree of mutual stereotyping . . . [V]iolence may or may not be parts of these histories, but some degree of contrastive identification is always involved. One of these pairs or sets of identities often turns predatory by mobilizing an understanding of itself as a *threatened majority*. (Appadurai 2006: 51, emphasis added)

Predatory identities, Appadurai maintains, are almost always majoritarian identities that fear that they themselves could be turned into minorities, thus losing the power and privilege that Goldberg connects with racial dismissal and attempts to maintain its logics of reversal. Here, with the relationship between racial reversal and predatory identities, we enter one of the central themes that will be taken up in several of the contributions to this volume, namely the theme of identity politics at a time when this is seen as one of the most common terms of abuse in popular political but also academic arenas. For a long time now, 'identity politics' has been considered a 'dirty word' and a kind of politics that one should, particularly when one is in a minority position, rather avoid if one wants to escape becoming the target

of harsh criticism. And when one starts discussing identity politics, one should also discuss what is actually meant by 'identity' and whether this is approached along the lines of, for instance, essentialism, strategic essentialism, anti-essentialism, constructivism or poststructuralism. In the following two sections, we will discuss how both 'identity' and 'identity politics' are relevant to this volume's general topic of Romani struggles for identity in contemporary Europe. To be sure, the authors in this volume explore different dimensions and understandings of identity and identity politics, as well as critiques of these notions and practices relating to them. Thus, we refrain from the suggestion that what we discuss in this volume represents one specific approach to these themes. Instead, the authors will present various approaches to these topics, including the ways in which identity and identity politics have been or become relevant to Roma in diverse contexts and settings, ranging from segregation, labour, social mobility, sociopolitical participation and decision- and policymaking, to discrimination, racism, social movement formation, everyday encounters, artistic and cultural practice and trans-local or transnational solidarity.[6]

A final caveat is in order. The contributions to this study primarily deal with issues of *collective* identity formation and transformation, even while personal and collective identities are always dialectically intertwined and the boundaries between the personal/individual and public/collective have historically been incorporated in governmentalities that tend to render delicate and important political and socioeconomic issues 'private', 'technical' or 'natural'. Indeed, crucial public and political Romani identity-related topics have often been rendered private (as in neoliberal, 'responsibilizing' programmes which suggest that Roma should solve 'their own' matters), technical (as in quasi-neutral policy interventions that suggest technical solutions to political problems), or natural (as in suggestions that it is Romani 'culture' or 'behaviour' that causes the problems with which they and their neighbours are faced) (van Baar 2011a, 2018). In this respect, we share the provocatively *repoliticizing* way in which Angela Davis has addressed the nexus of the personal and the collective, and consider the analyses in this volume as radically feminist:

> [O]ur analysis [has] to be feminist – not simply in the sense of attending to gender, but also in the sense of attending to the circuits that lead from the intimate to the institutional, from the public to the private and from the personal to the political. (Davis 2017: 263)

This perspective also allows a different and critical take on identity and identity politics, as we will show below.

## Articulating Identity within and beyond Identity Politics

Francis Fukuyama, in *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (2018), claims that in the present liberal democratic struggle for the recognition of all kinds of identities, we are willing to fritter away vital achievements such as justice, privacy and even democracy. According to him, it is identity politics and the interrelated demand for dignity and recognition that have now radically taken over a politics, focusing on redistribution, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and other major themes such as combating poverty and striving for equality. With reference to two concepts in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy, Fukuyama suggests that 'megalothymia' – a desire not just for respect and recognition, but a need to dominate others in excessive and spectacular ways – has begun to be at odds with the more reasonable 'isothymia', which stands for the human desire to be seen and treated by others as equals. Fukuyama connects the struggle for identity of groups such as LGBTQI+ and Romani communities to isothymia. At the same time, he suggests that some of these struggles – such as the Black Power movement in the United States – have gone further, if not too far, by asking not only for equal treatment, but also for recognition as a *separate* group. This is something that Fukuyama also criticizes in what he considers to be the cultural particularisms inherent in multiculturalism.

Critical debates about Fukuyama's latest reflection on modern liberal democracies should clarify to what extent this analysis of identity politics represents a continuation of, or a welcome break from, the much criticized liberal-conservative position he took in his seminal 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*. While his suggestion that Western multiculturalism has unsettled and weakened national identities, and his defence of the state's right to control its own borders suggest a continuation of his conservatism, he nevertheless brings up some key issues of concern. One of them is that, according to him, '[r]esentment over lost dignity or invisibility [of particular groups] often has economic roots, but fights over identity often distract us from focusing on policies that could concretely remedy those issues' (Fukuyama 2018: 179). Another of his main concerns is that politicians such as Donald Trump have played a 'critical role in moving the focus of identity politics from the left, where it was born, to the right, where it is now taking root', and that, consequently, 'white nationalism has moved from a fringe movement to something much more mainstream' (ibid.: 119, 120). He clarifies that one of the key problems of present-day identity politics is strongly linked to what he calls 'white nationalism', or to what others call

'white identity politics' ( Jardina 2019) or 'white innocence' (Wekker 2016). As the African-American writer Ta-Nahisi Coates has argued so powerfully in *We Were Eight Years in Power* (2017), leaders such as Trump are not just openly sexist and racist, but have plainly turned 'whiteness' into a political strategy for governing; this is the reason why – although it is perhaps not entirely accurate historically – Coates has ingeniously called Trump the first *white* president of the United States.

We have been able to notice similar developments in Europe. Indeed, in different ways and to different degrees, influential populist or extremist politicians across Europe have used anti-migrant and anti-minority rhetoric or measures, as well as ideas about white supremacy to re-articulate a complex but tangible colour line throughout Europe. These uses and abuses have also significantly influenced the agendas and discourses of other, more conventional political parties and thus – most importantly – contributed to 'mainstreaming racism' in key institutions of Europe's democracies. Therefore, the question is perhaps not so much to what extent identity politics itself is problematic, regardless of who is politicizing identities here. Rather, the question is to what extent a politics of identity regarding historically disadvantaged minorities could still be legitimately articulated at a time when all kinds of 'white' identity politics are proliferating, in which the logic of reversal has pushed majoritarian identities towards the brink of becoming predatory – thereby often rehabilitating some of the darkest moments and legacies of national, colonial and imperial histories.

Recently, questions of whiteness, white supremacy and majoritarian identity politics have also been discussed in the context of the position of Roma, scholarship regarding them and the role of Romani actors in academic, political, feminist, artist, activist and other kinds of social networks and movements (Imre 2005; van Baar 2014; Bogdán 2015; Vajda 2015; Matache 2016a, 2016b; Stewart 2017; Corradi 2018; Kóczé 2018). Violeta Vajda, for instance, makes the successful development of collective Romani emancipation considerably dependent on how it deals with issues of whiteness:

> [T]he project of Romani emancipation will have difficulty moving forward until the concept of critical whiteness is incorporated into it, both theoretically and practically. I contend that until such time that non-Romani people are willing and able to examine their own racialized identity, even those non-Roma who are committed to dismantling the discrimination experienced by Romani communities will be unable to play a powerful role in this process; whereas those non-Roma who are indifferent, resentful of or actively hostile to Roma could be persuaded to budge from their positions through a deeper understanding of the history of their own identities and how these are formed and performed in the present. (Vajda 2015: 48)

In order to incorporate the concept of critical whiteness adequately, Vajda calls for a hermeneutic learning process in which 'non-Romani people and communities . . . reach back into history to gain an understanding of their own *prejudices*, engage in a process of *Bildung* designed to open them up to the possibility of new insights into their own and Romani identity and be ready to seek out and genuinely accept the *provocation* (or learning experience) held up by Romani people and communities that they encounter' (ibid.: 54, emphasis in the original). Margareta Matache has similarly appealed for a shift away from the currently dominant, excessive focus on the Roma and their 'vulnerabilities' to a concentration on the impact of racism and whiteness:

> We should be able to start exploring critically the social power and privilege of dominant majority populations and their impact on the education and other social and economic rights of Romani people. We need to start exploring the language and the mechanisms of racism and whiteness in law, policy and practice. (Matache 2016b)

In the specific context of scholarship, Matache contends that, for too long, '[a]cademics have neglected to pay attention to the historic and present-day dynamics of power between Roma and non-Roma, including academia, leading to reaffirming and constructing unequal power dynamics' (ibid.). This persistent neglect by scholars and the lack of a 'serious effort to employ critical and self-reflexive analysis of their position in the social hierarchy' has led, Matache maintains, to the problematic and still ongoing reproduction of whiteness and white supremacy. In order to contest the 'long history of cultural domination of white Europeans and subalternization of Roma in Europe', she proposes to rigorously shift 'the frameworks of thought and Romani scholarly production' to, most notably, 'white privileges', 'perpetual institutionalized racism' and 'the means of liberating non-Roma from long-held racist *doxa* or commonly held beliefs' (ibid.).

These recent contributions to the debate are welcome interventions that focus on the analysis and historicization of power structures and relations, including the ways in which canonical institutions and discourses of knowledge production tend to continue sidelining Roma from society, culture and their centres of power, policymaking and knowledge formation. To some extent, these interventions continue the debate that Wim Willems (1997) initiated in the 1990s, when he emphasized the importance of postcolonial studies – mostly Said's *Orientalism* (1978) – for analysing Roma-related scholarship and its close relation to the persistence of the marginalization of the Roma in European cultures, societies and academies.[7] What scholars such as Matache and Vajda add to this debate is, among other key issues, the crucial importance of reflecting on positionality, privilege and the

conditions under which they are maintained or challenged in and beyond scholarship. At the same time, however, if we want to maintain the *criticality* of postcolonial studies – or, for that matter, of critical race studies, whiteness studies, citizenship studies, migration studies, gender studies and, last but certainly not least, critical Romani studies – scholarship should avoid falling into the trap of tribalizing 'white people' (or 'white scholars'), which can all too easily coincide with a shift of focus to white privileges, institutional racism and calls for the self-reflexivity of, in particular, 'non-Romani' people (and scholars).[8] Indeed, without suggesting that Vajda's or Matache's interventions do or imply so, such a tribalization and the interrelated reductionist understanding of racialization and racism would bring with them exactly the kinds of problems that Fukuyama and his like have addressed regarding the proliferation of identity politics.

'Unlike fights over economic resources, identity claims are usually unnegotiable' (Fukuyama 2018: 122) and, therefore, an all-too-narrow focus on racism and racialization could easily lead to fights over identity that distract us from the larger socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts that should be addressed simultaneously. Therefore, in order to avoid the anger and fear that Appadurai (2006) connects to the emergence of predatory identities, and to circumvent the politics of resentment that Fukuyama (2018) relates to current identity politics, the contributors to this volume underscore the indispensability of a focus on intersectionality. Here, we mean the 'classic' intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, nationality and the like (Kóczé 2009, 2011), but also how these intersecting categories are relevant for analyses of traversing sectors such as housing, education and labour (Rostas 2012; Szalai, this volume) and for examinations of the security–development, security–citizenship or security–mobility nexuses (Clough Marinaro and Daniele 2011; van Baar 2011b, 2017a, 2018; Nagy 2018; van Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide 2019).

At a fundamental level, the extent to which a politics of identity for disadvantaged minorities such as Roma can still be legitimately articulated depends considerably on how it manages to deal with various identity-related dilemmas and traps (see also McGarry and Jasper 2015). Almost fifteen years ago, in his eloquent notes on the ambiguities of Romani activism and identity politics, Peter Vermeersch suggested that Romani activists 'must make sure that the emancipatory potential of [their] act of group construction is not overshadowed by a discourse of oppressive essentialism' (2005: 468). Here, Vermeersch was referring in particular to an oppressive essentialism in their own (Romani) identity formation. Based on what we have discussed above in terms of the risk of tribalizing 'white people' and of discussing the impact of racism too much in isolation, we should add that the 'counter-movement' towards a narrative of reified 'oppressors' should be

equally carefully avoided.[9] This extension can also be connected with some of the other valuable remarks from Vermeersch on identity politics:

> [I]dentity politics should always fight a twofold battle. Defending the interests of an oppressed identity group always needs to be accompanied by an interrogation of the categorization schemes that have constructed the very identity group one is defending . . . [R]ecuperative identity politics and the politics of deconstruction need not be mutually exclusive. The politics of recuperation may *avoid the tacit reproduction of essential identities* on the *condition* that the advocacy of specific identities is *accompanied by targeted acts of contestation*. (Vermeersch 2005: 468, emphasis added)

Vermeersch concluded these observations with an appeal for making a conceptual difference between identity- and interest-based advocacy, suggesting that 'activism is not simply about the demand for recognition of group identities, but rather about the demand for the elimination of unequal access to opportunities and resources' (ibid.: 469). Several of the contributions to this volume prove that a shift to the latter kinds of demand has indeed taken place, including 'targeted acts of contestation'; yet *without* losing a critical focus on the role and impact of discussions regarding identity.

Therefore, we make a subtle though important distinction between 'recuperative identity politics' and a 'critical politics of identity'. While the former usually tends to start from a relatively reified notion of identity – whether it is based on strategized essentialism or not – the latter does not necessarily reify collective identity but leaves its materialization considerably open. A 'critical politics of identity' – with greater emphasis on critical politics than on identity – questions those kinds of 'politics' and enactments of 'political communities', as well as those structural mechanisms of governing and policing that, through various irregularization processes, differentiate and hierarchize identities, thus demarcating them in ways that lead or have already led to exclusion. The openness towards identity could also be approached from Stuart Hall's suggested change of perspective:

> [The question is not] how do we effectively mobilize those identities which are already formed, so that we could put them on the train and get them onto the stage at the right moment, [but rather] how can we organize . . . human subjects into positions where they can recognize one another *long enough to act together*, and thus to take up a position that one of these days might *live out and act through as an identity*? Identity is at the end, not the beginning of the paradigm. (Hall 1997: 291, emphasis added)

Hall's suggestion that identity is not at the beginning, but 'at the end of the paradigm' also helps to make a critical politics of identity resistant to the easy suggestions that thinking along the lines of ethnic identity, or ethnicity

more generally, is automatically equal to thinking in terms of more or less reified, unified groups. In the early 2000s, in articles with telling titles such as 'Ethnicity without Groups' and 'Beyond "Identity"', Rogers Brubaker called for a rethinking of ethnicity 'without groups' and rejected the use of identity-based groups because of the implied 'groupism'. Here, groupism is 'the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts and fundamental units of social analysis' (Brubaker 2002: 164; see also 2004: 8).

Brubaker's critique of groupism is relevant to challenge any kind of 'thick' identity politics based on strong forms of compartmentalization, but less so regarding what we consider a critical politics of identity. As some of Brubaker's critics have convincingly argued, he tends to 'set a very high standard for recognizing identity', suggesting that 'only perfectly bounded, fixed, and internally homogenous categories share identity' (Calhoun 2003b: 565) and, therefore, that these forms of 'groupism' should be critically examined, if not abandoned, at least as categories of analysis. However, as Craig Calhoun maintains, '[t]he problems lie not in the terms "group", or even "identity", but in certain tendencies of usage' (ibid.: 562). Alternatively, '[g]roups should not be presumed to be sharply bounded or internally homogeneous; they should be seen *as variably solidary, salient and stable*' (ibid., emphasis added). Therefore, Calhoun argues – and, we think, rightly so – that Brubaker underestimates the role of collectivities, particularly in the context of the cultural and the social, and how they are always constitutive of the personal (see also Silverman, this volume). Accordingly, Calhoun claims, ethnic identity or ethnicity is 'not merely an attribute of individuals, nor is it any specific attribute shared by all members of one set of people and no others' (ibid.: 560). It is, rather:

> a commonality of understanding, access to the world, and mode of action that facilitates the construction of social relationships and provides a common rhetoric even to competition and quarrels. In one sense it is helpful to say something like people participate to varying degrees in ethnicity, rather than that they simply are or are not members of ethnic groups. *It is indeed a relational phenomenon not simply a substance.* But it is also reproduced in ways that bind people into certain relationships and not others. (Ibid., emphasis added)

What is at stake for Calhoun, as well as for Hall, is an understanding of ethnicity and identity in the context of social solidarities. This is also how we interpret Hall's question: 'How can we organize . . . human subjects into positions where they can recognize one another long enough to act together?' (Hall 1997: 291) Put differently, in Calhoun's words, identities and solidarities are 'neither simply fixed nor simply fluid, but may be more

fixed or more fluid under different circumstances' (Calhoun 2003a: 537). In line with critical readings of identity politics such as those of Appadurai or Fukuyama, Calhoun admits that solidarities have been produced partly to engage in new conflicts. However, it would be a mistake 'to think that this is the only work that ethnicity or community do for people. They provide networks of mutual support, capacities for communication, frameworks of meaning' (ibid.). This approach to ethnic identity in terms of social solidarities that may (or may not, as in Hall's formulation) exist 'long enough to act together' is at the heart of how we understand a critical politics of identity. Such an understanding of identity acknowledges that 'a rigorously anti-essentialist attitude, with respect to things like identity, culture, tradition, gender . . . is not really a position one can sustain in a consistent way' (Clifford 2003: 62). With this acknowledgement, we are in the middle of the discussion about how we could approach identity beyond the opposition between essentialism and constructivism – the topic of our penultimate section.

## Identity beyond Essentialism versus Constructivism

> I saw myself as being mixed – this, that and the other – but people, they'd like to be able to put you in a perfect little box
> —Damian John Le Bas, June 2012 (quoted from Tremlett and Le Bas, this volume)

Once in a while, the debate over essentialism versus constructivism pops up again in discussions about Romani identity. Furthermore, Roma-related scholarship that mentions identity issues often refers to this dualistic debate as if it reflected the current state of affairs. An intense discussion over essentialism versus constructivism had taken place in the late 1990s and early 2000s, most notably in academic debates between Judith Okely, Wim Willems, Leo Lucassen, Yaron Matras, Ian Hancock, Thomas Acton and, to a lesser extent, Annamarie Cottaar, Will Guy, David Mayall and Michael Stewart. Largely, this debate began in reply to a few key publications by Judith Okely (1983) and the Dutch historians Lucassen, Willems and Cottaar (Willems 1997; Lucassen, Willems and Cottaar 1998).

From an anti-essentialist, constructivist point of view, the latter three scholars have argued that Gypsy identity formation – they use 'Gypsy' rather than 'Roma' for reasons that become clear below – is the result of historically fluctuating, yet nevertheless intense and fundamentally influential processes of labelling and stigmatization. In particular, Willems has argued that the use of the term 'ethnicity' in debates about Romani/Gypsy identity has to be

considered as a 'death trap' (Lucassen, Willems and Cottaar 1998: 17–34). Any use of the term 'ethnic identity' – even when mobilized strategically – would lead to a re-articulation of the problematic essentialization of Gypsy identities that has dominated the long, unceasing European history of stigmatizing and marginalizing them. Based on a rather monolithic assessment of Enlightenment legacies and an inadequate analysis of the role of the Romani language,[10] Willems and Lucassen were highly sceptical towards the growing use of ethnic categories in articulations of Romani identity formation and politics in the 1990s. Lucassen, for instance, has suggested that 'this habit' of 'using the ethnic term *Sinti und Roma* instead of Gypsies' does not spring 'from historical considerations, but it is the fruit of the actual political (and politically correct) struggle of interest groups from among and for Gypsies' (ibid.: 92–93). He continues that, 'from a scholarly point of view, the disadvantage of the *Sinti und Roma* approach is that all kinds of contemporary racist as well as present-day ethnic categories are . . . used' (ibid.: 93). He concludes that 'assuming that there ever was a clearly ethnically defined *Sinti und Roma* group in the past means that we in fact accept the point of departure . . . that it was possible to define who was a "real" Gypsy' (ibid.). The latter refers to the historically highly ambiguous 'search for the "true" Gypsy' and her origins, which was the central focus of Willems's (1997) critical study of Gypsy-related orientalism in Europe. There, he concluded:

> It remains questionable . . . whether corrections [regarding the required re-evaluation of extant historical knowledge] are to be anticipated from this corner [of Gypsy groups involved in the process of emancipation] since the intelligentsia in Gypsy circles are not likely to profit very much by challenging the core concepts of Gypsy Studies. For political and pragmatic reasons, they will sooner close ranks in support of the idea of a *collective* Gypsy identity, including a language which belongs to them. Recognition as an ethnic minority culminates, to be sure, in more agreements pertaining to specific rights. (Willems 1997: 307; Lucassen, Willems and Cottaar 1998: 34, emphasis in original)

This debate over the political reasons behind Romani identity struggles and the politicization of Romani identity more generally has recently returned once more, along surprisingly similar lines of essentialism versus constructivism (Surdu and Kovats 2015; Surdu 2016; Law and Kovats 2018; Mirga 2018). Most notably, Mihai Surdu and, to a lesser extent, Ian Law and Martin Kovats, have been critical about the involvement of Romani activists and scholarship in debates about Romani identity, as well as about the ways in which various kinds of policy and academic experts have been highly influential in politicizing, classifying and stigmatizing Roma. Surdu goes the furthest by suggesting that 'Roma activists and scholars have their role in reproducing and reinforcing a stereotyped and negative Roma identity'

(Surdu 2016: 32). He claims that 'Roma activists in fact *mirror* a negative generalized Roma group image', and that, because of the 'perniciousness of ethnic policies and politics to sooner or later *trigger ethnic conflict*', the 'scholarly community and policymakers should *de-ethnicize* (in the sense of *de-essentialize*) *Roma identity*' (ibid.: 32–33, emphasis added). This leads him to conclude that 'I do not affirm that Roma people do not exist, but I assert that [the] Roma population exists *as a negative and oppositional construction made by dominant groups* and *self-internalized by many of those labelled as Roma*' (ibid.: 39, emphasis added). This position brings Surdu's view remarkably close to the constructivist one of Willems, Lucassen and their like.

Yet one of the dominant alternative positions that criticizes the constructivist position through a positivist reaffirmation of Romani identity (Matras 2004) is equally problematic (for an extensive critique, see van Baar 2011a: 75–149). Whereas Willems had lumped divergent eighteenth-century legacies within Romani Studies together as being equally involved in stigmatizing Roma, Yaron Matras (1999, 2004) has, appropriately, differentiated between them, and fervently and repetitively criticized the debatable views of, most notably, Okely (1983) and Willems (1997) regarding the Romani language. However, in turn, Matras has politically neutralized what he calls the 'objective' eighteenth-century 'sensational discovery' (2002: 2) of the Indian origins of the Romani language by considering it the rational, well-explained 'foundation for Romani linguistics' (1999: 89). This argument in favour of an argued 'objectivity' (1999: 94) – one that would articulate Romani identity through linguistic communality – positivistically brings essentialism in again through the backdoor.

Not only have the sources underpinning the two main positions in the essentialism versus constructivism debate largely run dry, at a second order of analysis, they have also remained problematically preoccupied with 'origins' (van Baar 2011a: 92–105). According to Willems, Lucassen, Surdu and their like – even though their positions should certainly not be conflated – the influential legacy of the persistent, relentless labelling, classification and stigmatization of Roma has its incontestable origins in the emergence of modern scientific mechanisms of quantification and qualification that, as political technologies, are deeply rooted in the modern, mostly Enlightenment history of Europe. On the other hand, in the case of Matras, the legacy of the Enlightenment is mobilized differently, namely to (try to) rigorously sift pseudo-scientific or mystifying, and thus 'politicized' approaches to Roma from objective, scientific, demystifying, and thus 'politically neutral' ones. This search for origins represents a scientistic pursuit of neutral, objective scientific methods – one that arguably detaches the emergence of scientific methods of comparison in the eighteenth century from the simultaneous

emergence of new minority-related governmentalities and the interrelated problematization of Roma (among other minoritized groups) in terms of their cultural, linguistic and diasporic origins (van Baar 2011a: 99–149; see also Ivasiuc 2018).[11]

Poststructuralist approaches to the essentialism versus constructivism debate have seriously challenged the 'either-orism' central to this debate. In several strands of critical scholarship – for instance, in cultural studies (e.g. Clifford, Gilroy, Hall, Pratt), gender studies (e.g. Butler, Haraway, hooks, Fraser) and post/decolonial and subaltern studies (e.g. Bhabha, Chakrabarty, Chatterjee, Mignolo, Spivak) – the identity-related binary opposition of essentialism and constructivism has been thoroughly challenged for a relatively long time now, and mostly through mobilizing poststructuralist and deconstructivist strands of philosophy (e.g. Derrida, Foucault). However, in Roma-related scholarship, the deconstruction of this binary seems curiously difficult to achieve – despite several serious attempts to do so (for instance, Imre 2005, 2009; Trehan and Kóczé 2009; Tremlett 2009; van Baar 2011a; Silverman 2012; Corradi 2018; Szeman 2018). Although we could observe a serious delay of the influence of Said's *Orientalism* (1978) in Roma-related scholarship – Willems's study appeared almost two decades later – Romani Studies is also confronted with the delayed influence of those pioneering scholars in postcolonial, decolonial and cultural studies who have critiqued, for example, the remnants of essentialism and constructivism in earlier postcolonial studies.

Homi Bhabha's (1994) seminal critique of Said's reified juxtaposition of 'colonizer' and 'colonized', for instance, and the former's introduction of the concepts of 'hybridity' and 'mimicry' to challenge such binaries, are also highly relevant to the debate about the Romani struggle for identity, as several scholars have emphasized (Tremlett 2009; Okely 2010; Silverman 2012; Toninato 2014; French 2015). However, as Carol Silverman (2012: 39–56) has persuasively argued with reference to poststructuralist thinkers such as Rey Chow, Arif Dirlik and Paul Gilroy, the use of such new-fangled concepts should result neither in a kind of easy celebration of difference or multicultural diversity, nor in the embrace of how notions such as hybridity have been globally marketized. Instead, she has called for both critically translating them to Roma-related scholarship and grounding them in material realities, rather than just projecting them abstractly onto Roma-related contexts and suggesting that they 'apply' there (for the latter critical view, see also Bogdal 2018).

In a similar fashion, Huub van Baar (2011a) has mobilized poststructuralist and postcolonial frameworks of analysis to historicize not only Roma stigmatization – as the constructivists in the debate have done, and extensively so – but also, and *co-constitutively*, Roma agency. His attempt at

renewing more canonical Roma-related historiographies could also be read through the lens of Bhabha's notion of mimicry, which offers a welcome critique of an all-too-rigid and binary reading of the relationship between what Willems and Lucassen call the 'stigmatizer' and the 'stigmatized', or between what Surdu, Kovats and Law call the 'classifier' and the 'classified'. Notwithstanding highly influential Roma-related histories of stigmatization and classification, readings such as Surdu's – which claim that Roma can merely 'mirror' a 'negative generalized Roma group image' (Surdu 2016: 32) and thus only 'self-internalize' a 'negative and oppositional construction made by dominant groups' (ibid.: 39) – leave little if any room for Roma agency, subversion, and their histories and memories. An understanding of Roma agency through the lens of mimicry, however, helps to explain why the ways in which those who are classified as 'Roma' always do more than just mirror the power relationships (of being classified, stigmatized, and so on) in which they are implicated. Indeed, mimicry implies not just the imitation, copying or mirroring of such relations, but the ambiguous reworking of them to the extent that it could disrupt the classifying or stigmatizing authority (see Bhabha 1994: 121–31).

Particularly here, in the context of the complex relationship between agency and continued and renewed mechanisms and processes of stigmatization, several of the contributions to this volume try to intervene and contribute to debates beyond reproductions of the essentialism versus constructivism debate. For sure, finding the right balance between recuperative identity politics and a critical politics of identity is not easy, and will also lead to developments where, once in a while, the balance will be unstable – as in every trial and error process. Yet the contributors show that beyond the horizon of the trite debate of essentialism versus constructivism, new discussions have become vital to rethinking Romani struggles for identities in contemporary Europe.

## Structure of the Book and Chapter Overview

This book is composed of five closely interconnected parts in the form of a circle that will bring us back to Part I. In Part II, entitled *Society, History and Citizenship*, topics will be discussed that are primarily related to the impact of historical and societal mechanisms of marginalization and exclusion on present-day processes of Romani identity formation, and particularly on the opportunities and constraints for Roma to articulate adequately their agency and exercise their citizenship (rights, ownership over their own affairs, access to public debate, etc.). In Chapter 2, *Júlia Szalai* explains why segregation, as a ubiquitous and influential force of separating and subordinating

Roma in Central and East European societies, has to be considered as one of the most dominant characteristics of contemporary interethnic relations in the region. By looking at key domains of everyday life, such as education, labour and housing, Szalai explores those majoritarian interests that have made significant contributions to the prevailing arrangements for Roma through mechanisms of reproduction and intersectionality. She shows how segregation has become an increasingly powerful social mechanism of splitting universal social and political rights, and of erecting, for the Roma, a second-class order in which their citizenship rights are seriously threatened. By explaining how segregative forces strongly and negatively impact practices of Romani recuperative identity formation, including opportunities for upward social mobility, Szalai illuminates the radical ways in which contemporary mechanisms of segregation have reduced Roma agency.

In Chapter 3, *Nidhi Trehan* follows close in the footsteps of scholars such as Celia Donert (2017), who have challenged the prevailing image of the socialist past as a period in which Romani and pro-Roma citizens were denied any opportunity to critically discuss and influence debates regarding issues that were highly relevant to the societal position of Roma. Trehan examines socialist-era ethnographic materials in Hungary with a view to revisit and elucidate the complexities of Romani collective identity formation in the region. To a significant extent, Romani identity has been influenced by various forces such as, most notably, state policy interventions as well as ambivalent displays of both social prejudice and social solidarity by the majority. What is striking about the record – based on an interrogation of the archives from the 1950s to the 1980s as sites of the epistemological enterprise (Stoler 2002) – are the continuities and discontinuities, at times ruptures, with post-socialist regimes. Trehan offers an analysis of how, from the 1970s onwards, scholars, journalists and policymakers – including Hungarian Roma – dealt with what was then considered as the 'Gypsy Question'. She argues that a subtler, historicized approach to the socialist-era experience of Romani communities – including the question of Romani identity – is empirically, methodologically and conceptually necessary to arrive at a richer understanding of socialist-era and post-socialist experiences for Roma.

In Chapter 4, *Angéla Kóczé* focuses on the relationship between the restructured welfare state in post-1989 East Central Europe, the growth of poverty, and their impact on Roma at the intersection of class, race and gender. Kóczé intervenes in debates about long-term poverty among Roma and the ways in which it has become manifest both in materialized social structures and in gendered, racialized and class-based discourses about the welfare state, during its transition from a 'state socialist' one to the current 'embedded neoliberal' welfare state. She explains how the restructuring

of welfare in the region has intensified poverty in terms of both width and depth, and how it has also produced material and discursive devastation, particularly in the lives of gendered and racialized groups such as Roma. Kóczé brings together the findings of two groups of scholars who are often presented in relative isolation. She shows how scholars working on Roma-related issues and those working on gender inequality have both, often independently, come to the conclusion that Roma and women are among the most serious 'losers' of the processes of welfare reform, particularly as a result of restricting social rights and political guarantees. Kóczé cross-fertilizes these two strands of scholarships to highlight and interrogate the vulnerable position of Romani women in particular, who lie at the intersection of gender, race and class.

In Part III, entitled *Europe and the Challenge of 'Ethnic Minority Governance'*, the focus shifts to the Europeanization of the representation of the Roma, and its relevance for the ways in which Romani identity has been problematized in and beyond the sphere of transnational European policymaking. The two chapters in this part continue to concentrate on the relevance of citizenship and societal participation, but now relate this debate to the transnational dimension of EU citizenship and how its arrangement in and through European policies has often led to a continuation of mechanisms of marginalization affecting Roma, rather than a decisive break with them. In Chapter 5, *Huub van Baar* revisits the discussion over the Europeanization of Roma representation that he initiated about a decade ago to clarify how it differs from what others have called the Europeanization of the Roma issue, identity or policy. The focus on the Europeanization of Roma representation, seen as a specific and contestable practice of transnational governmentality, helps to challenge the remnants of Eurocentrism that are still present in discussions of the Europeanization of Roma identity or policy. This Eurocentrism, for instance, leaves the question of the normativity of European programmes meant for Roma considerably untouched, and therefore problematically undisputed and analytically underexposed. Van Baar goes on to discuss how his perspective on Europeanization is relevant for a critical analysis of the current position of Roma at the nexuses of security and citizenship, and security and development. By means of a brief exploration of these nexuses, he first demonstrates how, despite their European citizenship, Roma have often ended up as the 'internalized outsiders' in the current European Union, whose exercise of citizenship has been seriously hampered. Second, he shows how, despite the launch of Europe-wide development programmes, Roma have been faced with practices of development that have contributed less to the alleviation of their poverty, and more to their governance and to the maintenance of the ambiguous societal status quo. Finally, van Baar proposes a research agenda beyond the existing

preponderance of Eurocentric and Roma-centric approaches that helps to diversify Roma-related research and to 'de-exceptionalize' practices of displacement that affect Roma.

In Chapter 6, *Iulius Rostas* reflects on three decades of Roma-related European policies, and argues that, despite all institutional and transnational efforts, we have not been able to observe serious improvements in the position of Roma or in their opportunities for societal participation. Even more delicately, he points to the paradox that the more policy attention the situation of the European Roma receives and the more measures targeting them are adopted and implemented, the worse their situation seems to become. In his analysis of how we could understand this grim impasse, Rostas interrogates the role that ethnicity has played in the design, process, implementation and outcome of European policies dedicated to Roma, thereby using insights from policy design, policy analysis and critical race theory. In particular, he analyses the policy framework for Roma launched by the EU in 2011, and to which all its members have committed themselves in terms of devising, implementing and evaluating so-called 'national Roma integration strategies'. By focusing on questions such as: how do policymakers define 'the Roma'?; who exactly is part of the group that these policies target?; and how are their 'problems' defined?, Rostas shows that the kinds of defining parameters involved have greatly influenced the design, process and outcome of policies dedicated to Roma. Rostas demonstrates not only that the various actors involved in policy design and implementation have used different definitions and problematizations of their 'Roma' target groups, but also that these policies have failed to take their ethnic relevance and, thus, Romani ethnic identity adequately into consideration.

In Part IV, called *Gender and Social Movements*, the focus remains on the transnational dimension, but now zooms in on the specific context of the Romani women's movement, and how it has interconnected with the broader Romani social movement and various other social movements, and with international women's movements in particular. The two chapters in this part show how the Romani women's movement has developed considerably over the years, moving through various difficult phases in which their main actors were confronted with the difficulty of gaining recognition both within the Romani social movement and the broader European and global women's movements. The chapters illustrate how actors within the Romani women's movement have nevertheless been able to set their agendas and develop, both domestically and internationally, ongoing dialogues with key stakeholders about the main issues to be addressed. This process has resulted in a situation in which the actors in the Romani women's movement have increasingly managed to claim their rightful place in key debates about the situation of the Roma in and beyond Europe. In Chapter 7, *Debra Schultz*

revisits two decades of Romani women's activism in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically the feminist-inspired claims Romani women have made on the Romani movement, the women's movement, nation-states, multilateral institutions, donors, partners, and on themselves and each other. She shows how Romani women's activism and their claims have impacted individual and collective Romani identity quests and social change discourse. On the basis of Schultz's research with leading Romani women activists and a reconsideration of the seminal 'Roma Women's Initiative' (1999–2007), she demonstrates that Romani women's unique intersectional location challenged them to examine the combined effects of ethnic, racial, class, national and gender identities while developing influential intellectual and activist agendas. In her reflection on the role that she herself has played vis-à-vis the Romani women's movement, she also offers a good example of the critical whiteness inquiries that scholars such as Matache and Vajda have called for. Moreover, in her discussion of several mini-biographies of Romani women activists, she eloquently demonstrates feminist epistemological interventions that articulate the dialectical relationships between personal and collective activist practices of identity formation.

In Chapter 8, *Violetta Zentai* investigates recent trends in the formations of the Romani women's movement in Europe, with a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Her research is conceived within the larger puzzle of what explains this movement's standing and voice, shaped in a multi-scalar European political space in the 2010s. She examines the acts of and within the Romani women's movement in relation both to wider gender equality struggles and the broader Romani movement for equal citizenship, by acknowledging a recent trend that repositions Romani women's claims and alliances in a wider political and social landscape. One of the important developments that Zentai brings to our attention is how Romani women, who have acted in accordance with relational identity configurations and social justice agendas, have addressed, developed and encouraged strategies of what she calls 'transformative anti-essentialism'. These new strategies, Zentai argues, have increasingly (but not entirely) replaced the intersectional reasoning and punctuated strategic essentialism that inspired these women and their allies in the recent past.

In Part V, entitled *Art and Culture*, the focus shifts to culture and Romani art movements, and their relevance for discussions about Romani identity formation and transformation. In different ways, the three chapters in this part adopt a critical stance towards narrow interpretations of culture, both in the broader societal sense and more specifically in terms of cultural and artistic artefacts and expressions. In Chapter 9, *Carol Silverman* interrogates current debates about ethnicity and culture regarding the representation of Roma. She explains that the label 'Roma' may be used, on the one hand, to

essentialize a diverse group, or, on the other, to serve as an umbrella term for political mobilization. Using three examples, Silverman discusses the 'essentialism' conundrum to unmask the tension between the danger of reifying Romani culture and the need to define it. She suggests that culture and tradition are not static givens, but rather tools in representational projects. Silverman views Romani claims to identity and culture as performative works in progress, situated on a hierarchical political playing field. In dialogue with several key authors in cultural studies, she argues in favour of understanding culture and ethnicity in the context of shared commonalities, thereby taking a critical stance towards those scholars such as Rogers Brubaker (2004) who have called for a departure from using the concepts of 'identity' and 'groups' in discussions about ethnicity. Finally, Silverman suggests that in the discussion about Romani ethnicity and identity, one of the main challenges is to reject both a pro- and anti-essentialist position, and to embrace what James Clifford has called an 'anti-anti-essentialist' position. This does not simply imply, through the double negation, a return to essentialism, but is an attempt to move beyond the binary opposition between essentialism and constructivism.

In Chapter 10, *Tina Magazzini* interviews Tímea Junghaus and Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, who co-direct the Europe Roma Institute of Arts and Culture (ERIAC), established in 2017 in central Berlin. In her conversation with them, Magazzini discusses three broader themes that relate to ERIAC, its development prior to its launch and its institutional position in the field of European politics and knowledge formation. First, she focuses on 'the making of ERIAC' and some of the challenges and controversies that coincided with the trajectory towards the opening of the institute. Junghaus and Mirga-Kruszelnicka emphasize that the emergence of ERIAC should be placed in the context of a long struggle to establish an institute that would deal with Romani art and culture, which began in the 1970s. The second part of the interview concentrates on the position of ERIAC vis-à-vis the Council of Europe and the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), and on the more general question of what ERIAC has to offer as an institution that explicitly focuses on Romani arts and culture. Finally, Magazzini encourages Junghaus and Mirga-Kruszelnicka to reflect on the role that ERIAC has played and wants to play in the context of social responsibility, identity formation and knowledge production. In her critical interview with the directors of ERIAC, Magazzini aims to understand its activity and the broader institutional context of its emergence. She triggers a constructive debate about Romani art and culture in the context of identity formation and identity politics in contemporary Europe.

Last but not least, in Chapter 11, *Annabel Tremlett and Delaine Le Bas* focus on the contemporary Romani art movement and what it can offer to

our understanding of processes of Romani identity formation and transformation, and their relationship to issues of social justice in contemporary Europe. The chapter is based on interviews with the artists Delaine and Damian Le Bas who have, for more than a decade now, been two of the leading figures in the contemporary European Romani art movement. The interviews are about their histories, beliefs and desires, and were conducted mostly in June 2012, five years before Damian Le Bas's unexpected death at the age of 54 on 9 December 2017, causing shock to and beyond the European Romani art world. The chapter is primarily dedicated to the larger question of the relevance and impact of the Romani art movement – or better, *movements* in the plural – but is also meant as a special tribute to the life and work of Damian, to what he created on his own and also to what he created and developed over the years together with Delaine, his wife and ultimate partner in artistic production. The chapter is in three parts. First, it looks at art as emancipatory and a way to connect with others about the lived experiences of inclusion and exclusion. For Delaine and Damian Le Bas, throughout their lives as artists, 'identity politics' first and foremost meant something emancipatory, based on learning about oneself and one's position in and beyond one's own community, in order to better understand others and relationships with them and, thus, to transform the personal into the political. Gayatri Spivak (2012) has suggested that their work shows the 'fragile staging of Roma life and history' in which theory and art practice merge in the act of making visible and staging, and thus where theory could be considered as a kind of theatre. The second part of the chapter looks at how the exhibitions of works by Damian and Delaine Le Bas have created space for relationships and social change. It discusses how their very presence at their exhibitions and their direct engagement with their audiences has been instrumental to their art as activism, and how the kinds of artwork they have produced are often interactively situated, as public art, in dialogue with mainstream Roma and Gypsy representations as well as with their audiences, by inviting them explicitly 'to Gypsyland' as an imagined space of interpersonal exchange. Finally, the chapter looks at the constraints of the art and social world, and how structural barriers and the politics of labelling can obstruct the work Romani artists strive to create.

We, the editors of this volume, have dedicated this book to Damian Le Bas and his legacy. The chapter by Annabel Tremlett and Delaine Le Bas ends with Damian's wish to initiate an alternative to the Roma pavilion of the 2007 Venice Biennale: what he imagined to be a Roma Biennale. In collaboration with several artists, and curated by Delaine le Bas and Hamze Bytyçi, this first Roma Biennale, entitled 'Come Out Now!', was finally realized in April 2018, after Damian's death and thus in his memory. During the Biennale, the theatre play *Roma Armee* (Roma Army) was also performed again, following

its premiere on 14 September 2017 in the presence of Damian. For this play, directed by Yael Ronen & Ensemble after an idea of the Romani actors Sandra and Simonida Selimović, Delaine and Damian Le Bas produced the theatrical sceneries and costumes.

To complete the circle, we will start this volume with our first chapter in which *Huub van Baar* reflects on some of the key themes in Damian's oeuvre, including those that are clearly present in the sceneries he made for *Roma Armee*.

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the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, honoured Kóczé with the Ion Ratiu Democracy Award for her inter-disciplinary research approach, which combines community engagement and policymaking with in-depth participatory research on the situation of the Roma. She is a co-editor of *The Romani Women's Movement: Struggles and Debates in Central and Eastern Europe* (Routledge, 2019, with Violetta Zentai, Jelena Jovanović and Enikő Vincze).

## Notes

Huub van Baar wrote this introductory chapter and, afterwards, Angéla Kóczé commented on the text. We would like to thank Thomas Acton, Sam Beck, Debra Schultz, Júlia Szalai, Nidhi Trehan and Violetta Zentai for their valuable comments on draft versions of this chapter.

1.  This struggle for the recognition of the Romani Holocaust was a difficult and long-lasting one against the denial of racially motivated and genocidal violence against Roma (see, for instance, Rose 1987; Margalit 2002; for the ambiguities of this struggle, see von dem Knesebeck 2011; van Baar 2011a, 2015a).
2.  *RomArchive* is a large digital archive for Roma arts and cultures. It archives works from all genres, and augments them with contemporary documents and scholarly appraisals. More information about the archive is available at https://www.romarchive.eu/en/.
3.  The framing of the situation of Roma in terms of the 'refugee/migration crisis' should not be analysed in isolation from the much broader proliferation of crisis narratives ('economic crisis', 'financial crisis', 'debt crisis', 'crisis of the Euro-zone' or 'banking crisis') that, at least since 2007, have been mobilized to manage societal problems and processes in and beyond Europe (New Keywords Collective 2016: 8–15). In many countries across Europe – and Central and Eastern Europe in particular – the European and domestic 'financial crisis' has been mobilized to legitimate various drastic measures that have affected Roma negatively, ranging from evictions to harsh, racializing labour market policies (van Baar 2012, 2017a, this volume; Grill 2018; Kóczé, this volume; Szalai, this volume).
4.  The case is known as 'M.H. and Others against Slovakia', and was lodged on 19 March 2018 under application number 14099/18 of the European Court of Human Rights. The applicants are eight Slovak nationals, who live in Moldava nad Bodvou, and are represented by the European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest.
5.  'Reasonable antigypsyism' (van Baar 2014) is the kind of anti-Roma racism in which racial reversibility has become prominent, and which follows a logic whereby one would rightfully be entitled to act against Roma and treat them differently, based on the idea that not 'we', but 'they' violate rights and fail in their duties (ibid. 30).
6.  Of course, the ways in which just one volume can deal with complex issues of identity and identity formation are limited; therefore, we do not want to suggest

that we cover the field comprehensively. Some key dimensions of present-day Roma-related identity formation and struggles for identity – such as, most notably, those connected with religion and the emergence of new religious affiliations and movements – are underrepresented in our analysis.

7. In Michael Stewart's (2017: 127) recent attempt both 'to retrace the history of Romani Studies' and to assess what postcolonial studies, feminist critique, intersectionality and critical race theory have contributed to Roma-related scholarship, remarkably enough he does not include the contributions of Willems or others who have discussed the societal position and imagery of Roma through the lens of manifestations of orientalism. However, this exclusion seems to be based on Stewart's narrow understanding of postcolonial studies and theorizations of intersectionality as primarily preoccupied with 'questions of identity' and of the 'authority to speak' (ibid.: 127, 128). Although we should be wary of manifestations of the tribalization of either 'white' or 'black' people (or for that matter, group reifications based on class, gender or other categories), any suggestion that the theorizations in postcolonial studies, feminist critique, intersectionality or critical race theory tend to reify identity and, therefore, contribute to questionable forms of identity politics or troublesome mixtures of activism and scholarship, misses the point of what 'reigning deities, such as Spivak and Chakraborty [sic]' (Stewart 2017: 128), as well as later postcolonial authors, have tried to argue. Moreover, Stewart's identification of recent scholars (who have used one or more of the mentioned theoretical lenses to analyse the position of Roma) with those who are predominantly preoccupied with issues of identity and activism, creates artificial boundaries between academic and activist work (ibid.: 127, 137–44), between different generations of scholars (127), between Romani and non-Romani scholars, and also between more established and newly developed conceptual or methodological scholarly paradigms.

8. In his review of Coates's *We Were Eight Years in Power*, Cornel West has accused him of such tribalization: 'Coates rightly highlights the vicious legacy of white supremacy – past and present. He sees it everywhere and ever reminds us of its plundering effects. Unfortunately, he hardly keeps track of our fightback, and never connects this ugly legacy to the predatory capitalist practices, imperial policies (of war, occupation, detention, assassination) or the black elite's refusal to confront poverty, patriarchy or transphobia. In short, Coates fetishizes white supremacy. He makes it almighty, magical and unremovable . . . Note that his perception of white people is tribal and his conception of freedom is neoliberal. Racial groups are homogeneous and freedom is individualistic in his world . . . It is clear that his narrow racial tribalism and myopic political neoliberalism has no place for keeping track of Wall Street greed, U.S. imperial crimes or black elite indifference to poverty' (West 2017).

9. Similarly, this dialectic was also missing in Willems's analyses. To remain with Said's terms, while Willems (1997) was primarily focusing on the role of orientalism and orientalist Gypsy identity formations, he largely overlooked the simultaneous formation of occidentalist European identities through (for Said, fundamental) occidentalism. We return to an even more substantial critique of Willems's work below.

10. Willems (1997: 82–83) suggested that we could assess various historical and contemporary uses of Romani vocabularies primarily in terms of something like argot and, thus, not as the dialects of an existing, practised language. For a valuable critique, see Matras (2004: 63–68), who, in turn, overemphasizes the importance of

Willems' view on language to invalidate several of the latter's important insights on other key issues (see van Baar 2011a: 75–149).

11. For similar reasons, Thomas Acton has suggested that Matras's 'common-sense positivistic search for a magic epistemological bullet to kill off sloppy scholarship is fundamentally a mistaken approach' (Acton 2008: 33). In the first volume to Berghahn's book series Romani Studies, and in the context of activism, Ana Ivasiuc (2018: 6) has likewise problematized views that all too strictly distinguish between 'neutral', 'objective' knowledge claims and forms of knowledge production that would be 'contaminated' by 'political' or 'activist' preoccupations, and which, therefore, are less reliable.

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