THE ROMA MOVEMENT AT A CROSSROADS

Competing Visions of Roma Civil Society and their implications for Sustainable Community Organizing

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The Roma Movement at a Crossroads - Competing Visions of Roma Civil Society and their implications for Sustainable Community Organizing

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Abstract

The paper provides a review of the development of Roma civil society or what might be termed the 'Romani movement' in light of recent developments in Europe. It then contextualizes the concurrent – though often divergent - visions of Nicolae Gheorghe and George Soros, two deeply influential figures in the evolution of Roma civil society over several decades. The accumulated work of Soros' foundations and initiatives, often focusing on advocacy, high level diplomacy and the formation of a Roma vanguard, has at times been criticized for shaping an elitist project, nevertheless some of his initiatives were catalysts for empowerment, and have made valuable contributions to Roma inclusion. Gheorghe, in his wide-ranging career, is perhaps most noted for his vision of Roma grassroots community organizing that has inspired many activists. These competing visions continue to influence and shape the Roma movement and thus reflection and a re-evaluation of these approaches is timely in order to contribute to the formation of a Roma Foundation as proposed by Open Society Foundations.

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[1] The paper is informed by the academic and civil society backgrounds of the authors, see the end of the paper for biographical details

Gheorghe and Mirga (2001) define the movement as below:

> "The Romani movement and its activities as a whole present themselves as a 'collage'. They consist of the Romani international organizations, the local/national parties and associations, and the individual Romani activists. Sometimes these elements function independently. There are strong national/local organizations that are rarely active in the international Romani movement and whose voice are not heard; there are international organizations that are active but struggle for their legitimization; and there are individuals who set the 'tone' for Romani politics while at the same time being active in both settings".

The Romani movement can be seen as a remarkable mixture of successes and failures, having created a strong transnational form of Roma activism that has had an important input into European policy formation and forged a 'Roma' identity. However, on the negative side, the movement has failed to generate a mass mobilization and often policy input in national decision-making bodies and processes remains weak (Vermeersch, 2006, 2017). Many Roma organizations are striving to change management approaches and paying consultants to spend endless billable hours wordsmithing internal structures and leadership. Critics would argue forms of technocracy and managerialism have led to a disconnection between civil society and Roma communities.

A key aim of the paper is to consider the implications and the potential impact of a Europe-wide 'Roma Foundation' as proposed by Open Society Foundations, that is expected to be established in October 2023. How can the Roma keep the flame of European transnational activism alive while also being attentive to local and national specificities (including uneven development), as well as the impact of the Covid pandemic and the ongoing energy, food, economic, climatic and health crises? Another huge concern is the resurfacing of authoritarian populism that specifically targets and

scapegoats the Roma. These are the critical challenges facing the Roma movement and the proposed Roma Foundation.

Some of the most important stakeholders in the development of a Roma Foundation are external, such as constituency groups, grassroots associations, academia, and so on. In planning for the new Roma Foundation there is a need for solid and inclusive consultation. and a key message in this paper is the need for genuine and respectful dialogue and consultation that avoids tokenism and creates new synergies and a viable Roma movement for the 21st century. The paper also presents a number of proposals for the new Roma Foundation to help create a dynamic and inclusive force in Roma advocacy. The paper has been written for a civil society and academic audience.

Keywords: Roma – New Social Europe – The Roma Movement -Sustainable Community Organizing – George Soros

Overview

In May 2022, the EU staged a citizens-focused, bottom-up exercise, on what European citizens expect from the European Union. The 'Future of Europe' conference concluded that there was a need for greater social justice and deeper integration in Europe, but the details of how these ideals can be put into action remain to be defined as the three branches of the EU start to devise concrete plans (EC, 2022).

Within the debate on the future of Europe, important points need to be discussed, for example, the degree to which EU members states can act in unison and accept direction from the European Commission and establish robust forms of intervention. One counterweight to greater coordination and directives is the question of how such transnational initiatives can remain grounded in community aspirations and be shaped and directed by

community opinion in accordance with the EU's commitment to community led local development.

European policy towards the Roma is one of the EU's rare forays into social policy and provides an important case study as to how a bolder EU social policy might progress for other communities and groups as well. Moreover, civil society is seen as a major partner in the formation of EU Roma policy, and should, according to EU declarations and policy frameworks, such as the '10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion', be a major partner of national governments in the delivery of Roma inclusion policies (EC, 2010). Some observers argue that civil society partnerships can help diminish the bureaucracy and hierarchical nature of the EU by connecting with communities. However, critics assert that for the EU Roma policy to achieve success, more consideration needs to be given to the role and organisation of Roma civil society in order to avoid tokenism and manipulation. It is in this context that the announcement to create a European Roma Foundation has relevance.

The Roma Foundation: its vision and role

In May 2022, the influential civil society institution Open Society Foundations announced plans to establish a Europe wide Roma Foundation. This could have major implications for Roma activism and could provide an opportunity to move on from forms of managerialism and hierarchy that some critics assert has bedevilled Roma civil society. However, some fear it could lead to further centralization and a factional Roma politics reliant on patronage and even cronyism (Ryder, 2022). This paper provides a deeper analysis of these developments, grounded in a vision of a new Social Europe predicated on redistribution and recognition through a common EU social policy centred on new empowerment tools, including a revitalized community-based Roma civil society that would play a central role in forging a stronger Roma political presence at the national level (Ryder, et al 2020).

The new Roma Foundation will be perceived as a new actor at the EU level and may well raise expectations for multiple stakeholders (institutions, civil society, academia, and communities) whose genuine involvement will be needed for a successful transformation. The new Foundation could create some uncertainties (possibly anxiety) among the existing entities within the Roma movement which are currently collaborating with the EU and other international institutions. What will be the role of the Foundation and what will its position be in terms of new shifts in Brussels or other European capitals? Shifts that could encompass new forms of intervention and even redistribution, but also, conversely, the politics of nativism and authoritarian populism. Later in this paper, we outline a number of recommendations and discussion points which may help to formulate a vision for the new Roma Foundation and its role in the arena.

Context

To provide contextual background for the discussion, the paper asks: Who are the Romani people? How did Roma civil society emerge and evolve? What are current policy frameworks? What role has civil society played in European policy regimes vis-à-vis Roma?

According to the European Commission, there are an estimated 10–12 million 'Roma and Travellers' in the EU. The umbrella-term 'Roma' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.). EU policy documents and discussions commonly employ this terminology (EC, 2021). Throughout the discussion here, we have adopted the term Roma, but this should be seen as a short-hand term for a diverse range of communities.

Romani peoples in Europe have been the focus of cultural erasure and assimilation throughout history. Influenced by Enlightenment ideals, the

Hapsburgs, most notably Empress Maria Theresa (1717 –1780), categorized the Roma as a group that needed to be 'civilized' through assimilation and sedentarization. Nazi pseudo-science on race classified the Roma as a subhuman group, who alongside the Jews, needed to be eradicated through policies of genocide (Friedlander, 1995). Under Communism, Central Eastern Europe witnessed a policy of proletarianization, where it was contended the Roma could be assimilated through sedentarisation and waged employment. A policy that left some Roma stuck between two worlds, in a liminal social space, unable to fully integrate into the mainstream because of prejudice and exclusion, yet also unable to return to the kinship/ethnic based coping mechanisms of their forebears. The Roma have been some of the greatest victims of transition in Central Eastern Europe, as during the switch from statism to neoliberalism in the late 1980s, when industries were privatised or streamlined, the Roma lost jobs and a lack of skills and education hampered efforts to find new employment.

The triumph of neoliberalism meant that the post-war ideal of a 'trilateral balance' between the state, market and civil society was imbalanced, as the market emerged as dominant. The neoliberal order has made Roma communities more vulnerable through rising unemployment, fragmented welfare services and the 'politics of discontent' whereby nationalist populists seek to blame the Roma for the ills many impoverished communities now face (Ferkovics et al, 2020).

Within some countries in Europe, the Roma have become what can be termed as an 'ethno-class', a people experiencing extreme and multiple forms of exclusion borne out of an interplay between deep poverty and racism. Romani communities, already racialized, are now being increasingly securitized, whereby they are perceived as a risk and danger to society, with accusations of anti-social behaviour, welfare dependency and spatial encroachment through nomadism and/or migration (van Baar, 2014). Despite two decades of EU and Eastern European national integration

strategies, which attempted to address their precarious socio-economic conditions and discrimination, the Roma's situation has not shown great improvement. Unemployment among the Roma and discrimination against them has remained very high, as evidenced by surveys of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2014, and 2018) which reveal that in some areas the situation of Roma has continued to deteriorate, e.g. school segregation.

Roma Civil Society in Focus

Low achievement and academic failure by the Roma are framed by their opponents as a sign of cultural dysfunctionality and/or lack of ambition. Racism or what is termed as a particular racism towards the Roma (ie anti-Gypsyism) with deep historical and cultural roots in Europe accentuates exclusion (Taba, 2020). Roma have remained marginal and excluded in national decision-making processes. In some cases, such othering and lack of inclusion into the mainstream leads to traditional and/or isolated Roma communities looking to bonding forms of social capital within family networks, which often preserve charismatic leadership. Such bonding networks are maintained through narrow interpretations of tradition and/or a reliance on the informal economy and in-group socialization practices (Rostas and Ryder, 2012). Self-exclusion narratives though should not be over-generalised and applied to the whole community as such. Power differentials between Roma and non-Roma are evident in a historical context, and are solidified through distorting narratives where often Roma are portrayed as newcomers and 'outsiders', and systematically characterized as people who do not participate in the structures of power of their time and who do not want to be part of the mainstream. These narratives can easily veer into racist tropes. In a lesser told story, akin to phenomenon of 'passing' among other groups facing racialized oppression, some Roma have adapted by forging identities where, for example, in the workplace they are not Roma, but with friends and family they are;   a

situation where identity is whispered and constrained, leading to self-doubt, anxiety and often, assimilation. Others though have adapted their identity – with the reality of 'double consciousness' (Dubois) - to embrace hybridity and cosmopolitan notions of Roma identity, including involvement in activism and intersectional alliances that challenge oppression within conservative Roma communities. Taking into consideration this diversity, an important challenge for the Roma movement is to establish goals or objectives that can encapsulate common values.

A section of the Roma community has used identity as a resource to mobilize and secure collective rights for Roma communities. The first organised Roma NGOs were established from the 1960s, the Gypsy Council that was established in the UK in 1966 was one of the first such NGOs (Acton, 1974). The progress and expansion of the Romani movement was slow, traditional coping mechanisms centred on extended families, bonding social capital and charismatic leadership, as well as a lack of education and limited donor support meant the growth of Roma civil society was slow and sporadic.

Since the 1970s, forms of transnational activism have created a global umbrella group for the diverse Romani diaspora, which strengthened networks within Europe. In 1971 the First World Roma Congress was held in London, adopting a flag and anthem and establishing a Roma nation day on the 8th of April each year. The congress evolved into the International Romani Union (IRU) established in 1978, which was composed of a congress and parliament. Key areas of work have included efforts to draw attention to the plight of the Roma in the Holocaust (*Pharraijmos*) and promotion of the Romani language and Roma civil rights. The work of the IRU though has been hampered through various schisms and power struggles between charismatic Roma leaders. Today the IRU is fractured into various splinter groups but there are plans to try and unite the different groupings at a congress being planned in Berlin in 2023.

In terms of transnational activism, the EU and Council of Europe established a European Roma Traveller Forum (ERTF) in 2005 that was funded by and had privileged access to the various bodies and organs of the Council of Europe which deal with matters concerning Roma and Travellers. It had a Secretariat in Strasbourg within the Council of Europe's premises, with access to different bodies within the institution and having a consultative role in policy making process. During the first year, elections for national delegates were organised in forty countries. The first Plenary Assembly was attended by 67 delegates from 33 countries. However, despite the early attempts at democratic organisation, the ERTF did little to develop sustainable lines of communication to Roma communities and civil society at the grassroots, and lost ground as a representative body.

Other important transnational actors included the European Roma Information Office (ERIO) established in 2003, again, funded by George Soros and the European Union, and which described itself as an international advocacy organization for Roma. ERIO has been inactive in recent years and critics claimed it was ineffective in helping to develop transnational activism rooted in Roma communities. In terms of connecting to Roma communities, the European Roma Grassroots Organisation (ERGO), founded in 2008, has been more successful. It was established as a network bringing together Roma and pro-Roma organisations from all over Europe. dedicated to grassroots empowerment. Nevertheless, the lack of national and European support for establishing grassroots NGOs across Europe has to some degree impeded the success of ERGO in its mission. Despite this reality, it continues to operate from its headquarters in Brussels, and is an important transnational actor in Roma politics today.

One Romani activist from the Balkans, Orhan Tahir, in a recent Facebook posting to other activists, has been vocal in pointing out that the impetus to recognize the transnational work of Roma civil society seemed to be stronger at an international level back in 2001, when Emil Ščuka, the then

IRU President was holding meetings with top officials and even met UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in June 2001 (ERRC, 2001). Tahir suggests that since that point, there has been a decline in momentum in terms of representation and recognition of Roma in international forums. However, Kóczé and Rövid (2012) explain the dynamic shifts within the movement by noting that the pro-Roma global civil society "…shifted from a focus on self-determination to human rights violations, and finally, to social and economic inclusion. Each reflects upon an important segment of reality; however, none of them are sufficient in themselves. For instance, the most recent focus on social exclusion identifies Roma exclusively with misery, thus - unintentionally – it reproduces stereotypes that hinder the social integration of Roma" (2012: 120).

A decade after the foundation of the ERTF, the Council of Europe and EU withdrew support from the ERTF and instead in cooperation with Open Society Foundations established the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC). ERIAC has given a platform to a range of avant-garde Romani artists and musicians positing new, dynamic conceptions of Romani identity that challenge tradition and reification. Critics though assert despite the merits of the work of ERIAC, Roma in Europe presently lack a representative transnational voice with the democratic legitimacy and institutional power which the ERTF in theory was able to claim. With the recent demise of the ERTF and the relative disarray within IRU, some Roma activists lament the lack of democratic legitimacy that some Roma leaders now hold. Indeed, several Roma leaders have been appointed to posts within civil society, often by non-Roma, while the number of Roma who are elected to be mayors, councillors or MPs/MEPs remains pitifully low.

The Roma involved in the establishment of the ERIAC have close associations with Open Society Foundations, a product of the charitable endeavours of the philanthropist George Soros, that from the late 1970s sought to promote the ideals of an 'open society' (a la Karl Popper), namely

commitments to democracy and human rights in central and eastern Europe, as well as globally. A major priority for Soros's philanthropy in Europe has been the inclusion of Roma. Soros and the resources he made available has played a major/hegemonic role in shaping modern Roma civil society.

The Legacy of George Soros

The resources Soros supplied – and the elite networks that he leveraged - allowed Roma civil society to establish a number of important initiatives, such as the European Roma Rights Centre established in 1996, which focused on ameliorating human rights abuse of Roma through advocacy and strategic litigation. Another important initiative, in partnership with the World Bank, was the establishment of the Roma Education Fund (REF) in 2005 to provide educational scholarships and challenge school desegregation and educational inequality.

Within the Open Society Foundations, there is a Roma Initiatives Office (RIO), a successor of the RPP - Roma Participation Program, headed initially by Rudko Kawczynski. RIO was established in 2005 to coordinate all activities on the Roma within OSF and has played an important role in directing transnational strategic projects, striving to achieve equal opportunities for Roma in housing, employment, and education and facilitating dialogue and collaboration across the Open Society Foundations to coordinate efforts, increase knowledge, and enhance the impact of Roma-related grant making and advocacy.

The RIO had an important role in coordinating the Secretariat for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, (2005-2015) a cooperative and deliberative international effort to change the lives of Roma in Europe through national action plans and monitoring. It was an initiative adopted by twelve European governments, supported by the European Commission, Open Society Institute (OSI), the World Bank, Council of Europe, UNDP,

UNICEF, UNHCR and European Roma organizations[2]. RIO is very much a policy focused initiative, but incorporates Roma identity politics in its vision as evidenced by its active support of the ERIAC. RIO is expected to (re)form the leadership of the new Roma Foundation and within its broader network it will work with the aforementioned ERIAC, REF and some selected national initiatives. These civil society entities have already demonstrated that they are effective change agents, who have accumulated specific expertise and leveraged some sources of power and credibility, thus the Roma Foundation could be a powerful force if it effectively marshalls and sustains the actors within the network but simultaneously also ensures and respects their autonomy. The establishment of the Roma Foundation should be an important moment of reflection for the Roma movement and moment to review both the successes and failures of the past three decades of activism [3].

Among the successes, it can be said that Soros's philanthropy has played a key role in establishing the foundation of modern-day Roma activism promoting constituted NGOs and lobbying techniques that has enabled the Roma movement to 'punch above its weight' and secure some major policy concessions especially at the European level (Vermeersch, 2017). The Soros-supported Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) mentioned above, sought to establish a deliberative and guiding framework through which the EU member states, new EU members and accession states could share good practices and develop action plans to tackle Roma exclusion. The Decade for Roma Inclusion was the inspiration for a similar framework that was introduced in 2011 by the European Commission, namely the EU

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[2] For more information visit the Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat website https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/romadecade

[3] Some of the issues raised in this paper such as the role of donors, the ability of NGOs and transnational organisations to achieve legitimacy and the value of heterogeneity within the Roma movement were being actively discussed two decades ago – see ERRC (2001) 'The Romani Movement: What Shape What Direction? http://www.errc.org/roma-rights-journal/the-romani-movement-what-shape-what-direction

Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, where EU member states through Open Method Coordination (OMC) – a form of intergovernmental policy-making that does not lead to EU legislative measures that are binding, nor does it require EU member states to amend their laws - have devised national action plans on Roma exclusion in key policy areas like employment, education, housing and health (Rostas and Ryder, 2012).

More broadly, Soros supported initiatives allowed a new generation of Roma leaders to emerge, better educated and well versed in the mechanics of modern-day social movements than the traditional leaders they have seemingly come to replace. A whole generation of Roma leaders were trained through Soros supported initiatives in project management and policy formation. Importantly, such civil society initiatives gave visible platforms to Roma women and LGBTQ Roma activists helping to challenge often oppressive conservatism with Roma communities which heretofore had impeded efforts to forge social justice campaigns.

New community role models were promoted that encouraged Roma to be educated in higher education and embrace intersectional values that could build links and alliances with other minorities struggling to achieve social justice. Soros supported Roma civil society, especially through entities like the Roma Education Fund, also allowed the EU and other funders to find an interface with Roma communities in development projects, leading or partnering in projects that platformed, piloted and enabled new policy interventions.

However, there have also been failures. Some of the Soros supported civil society initiatives became disconnected from Roma communities and became prone to managerialism (Trehan, 2001). In part this was a consequence of the challenges and bureaucratic demands of modern-day civil society that requires high levels of education and expertise to manage highly complex grants. Another failure has been that some of the grand

transnational projects that have materialised were not rooted in the aspirations of Roma communities but were the brainchild of senior figures in Roma civil society. Hence, some of these initiatives have been adept at capturing the attention of elite decision makers but have correspondingly made little headway with Roma at the margins. Furthermore, despite localised success through pilot projects, governments have failed to do their part and scale up and widely apply lessons learnt.

Reflecting on the hierarchies within the pro-Roma advocacy ecosystem back in 2012 Kóczé and Rövid observed, "Professional NGOs dominate pro-Roma civil society, often speaking in the name of the 'Roma', while grassroots Romani associations remain weak and fragmented. The case of the pro-Roma movement demonstrates *that solidarity can easily turn to hegemony* [italics ours]. A very thin layer of transnational Romani activists and professional elite has emerged, but an educated and well-off Roma middle class that could serve as the backbone of an autonomous Roma civil society is hardly perceptible" (2012:120). Such concerns remain pertinent.

In the last 15 years Roma exclusion has been exacerbated by the rise in authoritarian populism and nationalism, largely born out of the financial crisis of 2008 and what some would deem as an intensification of the crisis of capitalism (Sigona and Trehan, 2009). The rise in populism has manifested itself in incidents such as the Italian government in 2007 proposing the mass finger printing of Roma in camps as a clampdown on crime, effectively criminalising the Roma. In Hungary, a racist gang were engaged in serial killings of Roma (2008 –2009), and President Sarkozy in France (2010) deported Roma migrants from France in contravention of the rights of freedom of movement enjoyed by European citizens. More broadly Roma have become an increasingly scapegoated and demonised minority group in political discourse. These incidents reflect the continuing precariousness of Roma communities but to some degree the lack of meaningful progression in Roma inclusion despite decades of Roma

activism. Some critics assert this was a consequence of the Roma movement, including those entities funded by Soros, looking to governments directed by the principles of neoliberalism to assist them in their Roma inclusion programmes, an economic and political philosophy that has restrained and even subverted Roma inclusion and created socio-economic disparities and inequalities that has fuelled the politics of discontent and nativism as manifested in authoritarian populism (Van Baar and Vermeersch, 2017).

Some critics fear that Roma civil society has not sufficiently learnt the lessons of past failure and may fail to sufficiently reorient. Critics have argued that the announcement by Open Society Foundations of a new Europe-wide Roma foundation with a grant that would allow it to be funded for a decade was another illustration of top-down decision making as ideally there should have been a consultation with stakeholders before unveiling the Roma Foundation. It should be noted though that the Roma Education Fund has pledged itself to a consultation with stakeholders as to its future work and activists are calling for RIO/Open Society Foundations to mount similar dialogue on the new Roma Foundation (Ryder, 2022). Activists are arguing that a key principle promoted by Soros supported actors has been for the EU to empower Roma communities and activists, it would be deeply disappointing if RIO/Open Society Foundations failed to apply such principles to the work of the Roma Foundation.

Some critics argue that a Roma elite has emerged, using Soros resources to foster a system of patronage and clientelism that is debilitating to Roma civil society. Such criticism might have some justification, but we cannot ignore the valuable legacy of Soros's work over the past three decades and the potential that the resources Soros will bestow to the Roma Foundation could have for Roma at the margins, giving Roma in the future the chance to benefit from grants and organised civil society initiatives.

Furthermore, in efforts to assist the Roma, actors like the EU will continue to need and rely upon Soros supported civil society as they have valuable experience and skills to manage complex transnational development projects and form bridges between Roma communities and decision makers and service providers. The challenge should be to ensure RIO/Open Society stages a thorough and open consultation, avoiding tokenism and finds ways to overcome charges of disconnection and elitism. There is a case of 'not throwing the baby out with the bath water', in other words through reflection we need to recognise and save the best of the past and overcome what failed through innovation. In this process of reflection and praxis, the ideas and values of the Roma activist Nicolae Gheorghe have resonance.

Nicolae Gheorghe and the Vision of Inclusive Community Development

Nicolae Gheorghe (1946–2013) was a Romanian Roma intellectual, diplomat, human rights defender and activist who knew the corridors of power through his career highpoint at the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) within the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) where he was the founding head of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPSRI). He combined these roles with grounded experience of Roma grassroots communities through his work with the NGO Romani CRISS (the Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies) founded in 1993 in Romania. In these divergent (yet complementary) roles, whether as a diplomat or community activist, he often played the role of mediator trying to build bridges and forge deeper understanding between the Roma and non-Roma, and between the officials (bureaucrats, politicians) and activists (Romani leaders and human and minority rights and social inclusion NGOs). Gheorghe's powerful role as a visionary was forged through his personal charisma, deep knowledge and the ethnopolitical vision and social capital he generated for Roma across Europe. In some respects, he performed the role of what the renowned community educator and philosopher Paolo Freire (1972) termed as 'critical outsider' - in other

words, a catalyst or external educator who helps the oppressed on a journey of critical consciousness to identify the cause of their oppression and form strategies that can deliver transformative change (Acton and Ryder, 2015). It may well be in the thoughts and ideas of Gheorghe that we can identify solutions to the challenges now facing Roma civil society.

Gheorghe (2013) felt Roma civic associations had gradually lost their moral autonomy and organisational capacity and become dependent clients or protected customers of their paymasters, in other words, they were increasingly steered by donor driven agendas. The American community activist practitioner and theorist, Saul Alinsky (1971), made similar observations in the 1970s as to the dangers of civil society being absorbed into the state through service delivery programmes and action agendas reflecting the aspirations of centres of power rather than communities. Foucault (2008) has elaborated on this phenomenon of the hijacking of civil society and coined the term 'governmentality'. Some critics would argue forms of governmentality have steered sections of Roma civil society into narrow inclusion agendas centred on integration and a neoliberal conception of society that envisages change coming about through individual reform, most notably through education and training, rather than deep structural or societal change which would require the power differentials to be examined and challenged.

Gheorghe (2013) hoped Roma NGOs would become self-help groups which were not reliant on donors, fostering grassroots sustainable development by harnessing the resources from within the community. This was an outlook similar to the American community activist/theorist Marshall Ganz of Harvard University - as raised by Romanian Romani intellectual Magda Matache and discussed later in this paper - and an approach that can be termed 'inclusive community development'. In recent years, an exemplar of grassroots activism was the Hungarian Roma activist Jenő Setét, who was able to inspire and mobilise mass demonstrations against the segregation of

Roma school children and challenge the authoritarian government of Viktor Orbán (Rostas, 2021).

Inclusive community development is an admirable aspiration; however, achieving effective empowerment and building an autonomous Roma civil society may take many years to realize. One means of envisaging empowerment is by using the metaphor of a ladder - at the base are forms of assimilation where communities are dictated to and unlike with integration, little scope is even left to preserve Romani language and culture, at the centre are forms of tokenism where at least some form of consultation takes place and at the pinnacle is community-led development, where the community are in control (directly negotiating with power outside the community, be it State or society or otherwise). However, achieving community control can take years of preparation and demands considerable skills sets to manage and operate a project. Gatekeepers and donors pushing community members into leading roles without sustainable skills development and the political tools needed to succeed often leave Roma and other oppressed minorities vulnerable to anti-Roma racist attacks and manipulation by right-wing political forces. Thus, rather than a ladder, a scaffold may be a better metaphor for community mobilisation with different starting points and trajectories for activists depending on skills and motivation (Ryder, 2014). The key point is that often empowerment is a more gradual process where upskilling and governance is achieved in stages; the skills and expertise of outsiders have their place in this progression, but care and attention is needed as to when outsider catalysts need to facilitate and or step back

An indicator of the tremendous obstacles facing Roma civil society is that even respected and established NGOs like Romani CRISS (founded by Gheorghe), have had to curtail activities in recent years because of ongoing administrative and legal challenges. Thus, despite being at the forefront of key empowerment initiatives, the broader environment for Romani NGOs -

characterized by pervasive structural racism – is harsh, often mitigating against their long-term sustainability. This can be compounded by institutional racism perpetrated by state actors. Coalition-building and the coordination of alliances with different stakeholders could be the way out of this hostile environment, especially today when there is a resurgence of the far-right in Europe (Taba 2020).

A fundamental question that arises is whether, as part of a process of change where communities like the Roma can assume greater control of civil society initiatives, it is possible for donor support to actually play a part in such transitioning? Increasingly, funding bodies like the EU stress the value of community-led local development, thus the argument and rationale for empowerment has been won, and now the real challenge is to convert the rhetoric into reality.

In his final years, Gheorghe (2013) was something of a clarion for raising concern about how the great hope and optimism of the earlier Romani movement had to some extent evaporated and given way to a sense of apprehension in some quarters. The question of evaluating gains made and whether there is a need for reorientation was a central topic of inquiry for Gheorghe in his reflective final years. Gheorghe wanted to see Roma activists and leaders reconnect with Roma communities. In theory, such principles and involvement by actors like the EU supposedly committed to community led local development should have helped these aspirations materialise, instead though EU funding streams have in some cases bolstered hierarchy, bureaucracy and disconnection and the guiding principles (10 basic principles of Roma inclusion, EC, 2010), have been hollowed out and become empty and meaningless slogans[4]. In the next

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[4] The '10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion', adopted in 2009 is a tool for both policymakers and practitioners. The principles were centred on: (1) constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; (2) explicit but not exclusive targeting; (3) an intercultural approach; (4) aiming for the mainstream; (5) awareness of the gender dimension; (6) transfer of evidence-based policies;

section this discussion paper ventures to explain how this problem could be resolved.

Revitalising Roma Civil Society through a new Social Europe

The new 'EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation', introduced in 2020 to replace the previous framework, could offer the panacea to the current tensions and malaise of the Roma movement (EC, 2020). The Roma Strategic Framework refers to infringement action to tackle anti-Gypsyism, a drive to cut the poverty gap in half between Roma and non-Roma, and efforts to empower Roma and an intersectional approach to Roma exclusion. An emphasis is also placed on Roma participation and empowerment. As with the previous framework these goals are to be achieved through deliberation and national action plans (Open Method Coordination). It should be noted though that the previous framework that operated between 2011 and 2020 was criticised for a lack of partnership with the Roma and limited progress in part due to the wider climate of austerity and cuts to already fragile welfare systems that impacted heavily on the Roma and other marginalized groups.

In considering empowerment it is important to differentiate between 'liberal empowerment' and 'liberating empowerment'. Liberal empowerment is often a feature of mainstream development agencies and organizations, and focuses on individual growth, though in an atomistic perspective, through the notion of the rational action of social actors based on individual interests, critics would argue such traits were evident in the first EU Roma Framework (Ferkovic et al, 2020). In contrast, liberating empowerment is a process where those denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability in terms of resources, agency and achievements/outcomes through a process of conscientization/critical awareness and relying on

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(7) use of EU instruments; (8) involvement of regional and local authorities; (9) involvement of civil society; and (10) active participation of the Roma (EC, 2010).

collective action and structural change (Ryder et al, 2020). It is now time to apply this broader definition to Roma inclusion measures.

We would argue that liberating empowerment and structural change through the principles of Social Europe are key to achieving genuine inclusion for the Roma and making the new framework a success. The new approach centred on the concept of Social Europe falls in line with a broader pattern of resistance and challenge to neoliberalism and the rolling back of the social state and solidarity. It is an outlook that is bolder and more ambitious than the strategy pursued in previous decades by Roma civil society that worked within a limited framework of liberal human rights (often only focused narrowly on civil and political rights) and acceptance of neoliberalism. In other words, the Roma movement including the Roma Foundation, needs to enter into a new moment of praxis, reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. According to Freire (1972) praxis makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will comes engagement in the struggle for liberation, potentially the creation of a mass social movement. The discussion paper will outline the policy and organisational change that such transformative action would require.

Such fundamental change would in policy terms entail government and EU supported growth programmes to stimulate the economy involving partnership with Roma civil society in either targeting projects or facilitating outreach and connection with Roma communities in more mainstream economic development measures. This approach, centred on redistribution and intervention, can be described as a vision of a new Social Europe, that would see a Roma targeted framework work in tandem with stimulus-based initiatives that benefit not just the Roma but the wider European population.

The concept of Social Europe was first championed by the left in the 1980s with the aim of fashioning an EU centred on social and economic justice as opposed to neoliberal narratives exalting the market. Such sentiments had

some part to play in the creation of the Social Chapter that sought to give protection to social rights and prevent a race to the bottom through economic competition in the single market (Andry, 2017). Some would argue that the scope for a Social Europe approach has been bolstered through the EU Covid Recovery Fund that is injecting approximately 800 million euro into the European economy as part of a Keynesian package to provide economic stimulus. The ongoing cost of living crisis and looming recession may give further impetus to bolder stimulatory and interventionist measures within the EU.

To achieve such goals and a more transformative policy dynamic there is a need for the Roma movement to more fully link poverty and inequality to interpretations of human rights, creating an opening where the former concept can be understood and addressed in terms of challenging the deprivation of capabilities or lack of empowerment, and as a denial and even a violation of human rights (Prada, 2011). Hence, a human rights framework can involve poverty strategies, a concrete parameter for providing legal remedies and measuring state compliance with international human rights obligations and can thus be harnessed within a Social Europe approach. Such a re-conceptualization of poverty moves away from personal shaming and the pathologisation of poverty that brands the Roma as indolent and welfare dependent (Lister, 2004). A radical conception of human rights identifies a dual politics of redistribution and of recognition and respect since the entitlements encompass both socioeconomic rights and citizenship rights. Here it should be noted that a major criticism of what can be termed the liberal American human rights model has focused on political and civil rights to the detriment of any serious focus on socio-economic rights. Critics would argue that at times the Roma movement has itself articulated the narrow liberal conception of human rights. A Roma Foundation could play an important role in the reconceptualization of human rights through its transnational advocacy work helping to further a Social Europe agenda.

As noted earlier, Kóczé and Rövid (2012) lament the absence of a Romani middle class that could form the base of an autonomous Romani civil society. Some observers would argue that in 1980/90s in Macedonia and Spain Romani social entrepreneurs were active in the formation of Roma civil society or advocacy. The Roma in both societies took advantage of what the State was able to offer but they also developed pathways for independence from it[5]. Interestingly, it could be argued that for a time the 'social distance' between Roma and non-Roma was less pronounced in Spain and Macedonia, thanks to these social entrepreneurs. Here the economically empowering agenda of a new Social Europe, through redistribution, training and nurturing of social enterprise has relevance. Open Society Foundations may be correct to emphasize the aging population and massive emigration in many European states, this it is argued presents a demographic opportunity for the Roma and the need through training, social enterprise and investment to transfer them from the informal economy and low-waged labour into part of the skilled/professional and more upwardly mobile strata of society (Jovanovic and Korunovska, 2021). Within the proposed Roma Foundation network, the Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI) could have an important role to play in advancing the economic empowerment of the Roma.

Revitalising Roma Civil Society through Inclusive Community Development

As noted earlier, the Roma movement, despite the disappointments, has gained considerable organisational expertise in recent years with a growing

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[5] In our discussions the authors noted that according to some observers the "Yugoslav" model of a federal system allowed for the flourishing of Romani identity as a constitutionally enshrined ethnic minority which enjoyed (at least in theory - popular prejudices against Roma notwithstanding) certain protections as a "constituent people of Yugoslavia". This could be seen in contrast to Western liberal multiculturalism and in moving ahead the Roma movement and Foundation needs to seriously reflect on such historic episodes, a task the Digital Roma Archives has recently sought to do. See https://www.romarchive.eu/en/

cadre of educated and skilled activists. However, Roma communities, in some cases sizeable ones, continue to lack effective, sustainable and well-resourced local community groups, this should be a funding priority for the EU and other donors. A Roma Foundation would be well placed to offer bespoke guidance and training on establishing and maintaining localised Roma community organisations and promoting and sharing good practice, especially with reference to Roma NGOs playing a lead rather than tokenistic role in service and research focused consortia, often funded by the EU. Civil society is also likely to continue to be the training ground for Roma to take up elected positions in the body politic, although the numbers of elected Roma politicians remain slight the expansion of community-based groups may help advance elected Roma representation. Again, the Roma Foundation could have an invaluable role in guiding such processes.

In terms of winning the trust and support of Roma communities and helping them engage in the process of praxis the Roma Foundation should also consider the development of new communication tools. For many years Open Society Foundations supported the Roma Virtual Network (RVN) that operated a range of discussion groups and news service via email, then Facebook. Sadly, this work came to an end with the death of RVN Coordinator Valery Novoselsky in 2016, creating an information vacuum which other civil society actors have been unable to fill.

A Roma Foundation could also play a role in promoting greater awareness and understanding of development finance, where local Roma communities can support, encourage and catalyse community development and expansion through public and private investment, which should be premised on egalitarianism, self-empowerment and growth, rather than on neoliberal principles centred on repayment generating profit. Winning the trust of communities at the grassroots will be paramount, programmes that actually deliver jobs and improved services for the Roma will help here. However, guidance and training on creating not only access to resources but means to

instil high levels of transparency and operational and organisational cultures based on equal opportunities will hopefully diminish claims of unfair patronage and nepotism, that has hampered Roma activism hitherto. Moreover, the twin goals of all civil society organizations – transparency and accountability to the community stakeholders – must be assiduously cultivated if we are to aim for a sustainable Roma movement. As noted earlier in the paper, Roma 'associationism' has been highly 'criticized for its dependency on donors, state administration, its debilitating internal divisions'.

The new Roma Foundation should also consider prioritizing the support and promotion of sustainable community organisations/inclusive community development as practiced by Marshall Ganz of Harvard University (2013)[6]. Magda Matache, the Romanian Roma activist-scholar who heads the Roma Program at Harvard, has been influenced by Ganz in seeking to shift power towards the people and creating sustainable constituencies with agency and autonomy (Trehan and Matache, 2020). In other words, the creation of a community organized around harnessing its internal resources and to act on behalf of its own interests. Such a model reduces dependency on donors and challenges top-down development (or the 'trickle down' elitist advocacy of past decades), where it was thought that elite Roma advocacy in itself could achieve major breakthroughs, create new role models and change perceptions. New approaches can strive to nurture and bring to the fore new leaders rather than becoming dependent on a small hegemonic elite. There is a pressing need for more guidance, resources and research into good practice on inclusive community organizing and development within the

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[6] The scholar-activist Marshall Ganz of Harvard's Kennedy School in his youth, had been a volunteer with the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, and then an organizer for the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a youth-focused civil rights group working in the South. In the autumn of 1965, he joined Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta in an effort to unionize California's farm workers, and later, through his academic research, was able to fuse activism with knowledge production and generate a novel approach to organizing.

Roma movement that creates genuine transparency, accountability and sustainability.

Development initiatives can also be centred on community identity (asset-based development) using identity and community traditions to create new inclusion measures, blending the old with the new and avoiding the dangers of more narrow development initiatives that leads to assimilation. Here, within the Roma Foundation network, the ERIAC might want to consider extending its role as a champion of Roma arts and culture in the traditional sense and reflect and act on how Romani culture can be used to facilitate economic and social change through asset-based community development, namely the adaptation and innovative use of culture as a foundation for community development (including that of 'intangible heritages').

Again, within the Roma Foundation network, there is a pressing need to review the nearly two decades of work by the Roma Education Fund in large transnational service delivery projects on Roma education. This work has not been thoroughly assessed nor analysed in a macro and longitudinal sense, and a review is needed to better understand what community development actions were successful or failed and to feed this experience into the next generation of large development projects.

The Central European University is a premiere Soros founded institution of higher learning that the Roma Foundation may work with to ensure that the profile of Roma in higher education as both students and academics is raised, thereby challenging the elitism that has often marginalised the Roma in academia. The Romani Studies Programme at the CEU has been important in engaging scholars, policy makers, and activists in debates on Roma identity, activism and policy and coordinates the Roma Graduate Preparation Program, developing a cadre of future Romani intellectuals, leaders and activists who currently work across Roma and pro-Roma civil society, policy-making as well as government and multilateral organizations.

In such work within academia, the Roma Foundation could consider building upon the work of the CEU Roma Civil Monitor, that has successfully trained and developed civil society coalitions to produce monitoring reports on the progress achieved in EU member states through the various EU Roma Frameworks. An obvious progression would be to train and fund such coalitions to undertake participatory action research, a form of research where community members are actively involved in the design, data collection, analysis and dissemination of a research project. Such research is upskilling, allows community voices to be heard but also can access data which outsider researchers can sometimes have difficulty accessing. Participatory Action Research is an essential tool in shaping and forming inclusive community development. Participatory action research could provide important insights into under-researched areas such as the problems aged/elder Roma experience etc as identified by the CEU Roma Civil Monitor as areas where we need to understand more the experiences of highly excluded sub-groups within the Roma community, facilitating intersectional insights and alliances and a more nuanced picture of Roma communities and the forms of exclusion they face (Ryder, 2022).

The Value of Ethical Governance

Reflecting concerns about cronyism and the patronage of a Roma elite, the Roma Foundation will need to be governed by a board with high levels of expertise but who are also not Open Society Foundation/RIO insiders, *who are capable of thinking and acting autonomously and holding the Foundation to account.* These would be experienced practitioners well versed in the administrative and legal demands and challenges of civil society, experienced at instilling effective and transparent operational structures and procedures capable of retaining and developing committed work teams that enjoy stakeholder and community support. High levels of professional and ethical standards would be needed on the part of those involved in the governance of the Roma Foundation but with the ability and

imagination to adapt and innovate to accommodate Roma cultural outlooks and needs. Although high levels of administrative experience would be needed, narrow forms of technocracy must be avoided as these can foster hierarchy and disconnection. A careful balance will be required.

Other major transnational positions related to the Roma such as the Roma dedicated posts within the OSCE/ODIHR are time limited, in part to prevent office holders becoming too dominant and accumulating too much power. It could be argued that although not an institutional power in the sense of OSCE, the lead position in the Roma Foundation should be similarly time limited.[7] This would ensure that the key executive within the Roma Foundation would focus on the work of the Foundation and its stakeholders, and not on making it a long-term career for themselves; it would also ensure that new ideas and innovation would be encouraged with new leadership.

Preserving the Heterogeneity of the Roma Movement

In terms of giving support, the Roma Foundation needs to be a facilitator and not a controller, as it is important to maintain the heterogeneity and autonomy of the Roma movement and avoid the Roma Foundation becoming a centralizing force with an 'Empire building' mindset. The plurality of Roma civil society is essential to avoid dependency and elitism. As Freire (1972) stated "Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people-they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress." This is a dangerous tendency that Roma civil society needs to break.

In terms of networks the Roma Foundation could also tap into the network of Open Society Foundations and its links with international dissident movements promoting the ideals of an open society, namely democracy and

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[7] In a statement to OSF staff (13th May 2022) its president Mark Malloch-Brown stated that he anticipated that current RIO staff will be able to continue their work as part of this new Roma Foundation, if they wish to do so, and that Zeljko Jovanovic, currently Director of the Roma Initiatives Office, will become director of the new foundation.

human rights. By utilising such contacts and experience the Roma Foundation could give support to Roma activists, particularly in countries like Hungary, that find themselves increasingly at odds with authoritarian governments. However, it should be noted that Soros and Open Society Foundations did cause some frustrations on the part of Roma activists by withdrawing most of their operations from Hungary, arguing it was not a safe environment for its staff. Maybe this step was necessary, but some saw it as a retreat that might embolden authoritarianism.

In the press statement announcing the establishment of the Roma Foundation, REF, ERIAC and Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI) were listed as being part of the wider network. No reference was made to the European Roma Rights Centre, a civil society established and financially supported by the OSI in 1995, but now functioning as an independent civil society organization. The value of ERRC's strategic litigation will continue to be of great relevance in prompting the EU to be firmer and bolder in infringement actions on issues such as Roma school segregation. It should be noted though that the ERRC receives only a small level of funding from Open Society Foundations/RIO and has a wider funding base, this is a trajectory that ERIAC and REF should emulate, thereby reducing their dependency on the Roma Foundation in the future.

It is also to be hoped that in terms of geographical focus that the Roma Foundation does not just focus on Central Eastern Europe, although in terms of the concentration of the Roma in this part of Europe and acute marginalisation means that it will no doubt continue to be an important geographic focus for the Roma Foundation, especially as Moldova and Ukraine, two countries with large Roma communities prepare for EU entry, which because of the war in Ukraine entry could be accelerated. In addition to these countries Serbia and other Balkan countries with large Roma communities also hope to gain entry into the EU and may benefit from an

exchange of knowledge and experience with Roma civil society in countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Again, the Roma Foundation could play a key role in facilitating the transfer of expertise from EU members to accession status countries. Hopefully, the Roma Foundation will play a role in facilitating dialogue and partnership between Roma civil society in the East and West of Europe but also support some transnational campaigns in the West, there is a pressing need for a campaign to protect Roma nomadism in countries like Ireland, UK, France, Netherlands and Belgium where some Roma/Traveller communities still practice nomadism.

The statement announcing the establishment of a Roma Foundation also indicated that national Roma movements including Aresel in Romania, Opre Roma in Serbia, Kethane in Italy, Roma Standing Conference in Bulgaria, Avaja in North Macedonia, and others will be supported. Here, care and diplomacy will be required. A criticism of Open Society/RIO in the past was that sudden and large injections of resources sometimes created an imbalance in the aspirational goal of equilibrium within the Roma movement in certain countries, thereby creating tensions between those supported and those not. To reiterate an earlier point, the Roma Foundation needs to consider itself a facilitator to organic civil society developments and preserve the diversity and pluralism of the Roma movement and avoid the creation of monopolies and Roma elites that might create dissension and disunity.

Social Policy: Mainstreaming, Targeting and Coproduction

A key point of debate in Roma civil society has been whether targeting that creates tailored and bespoke services and/or outreach for Roma is advisable. Such work has in some cases involved the Roma movement in forms of coproduction, acting as a bridge between service providers and Roma communities. The 10 basic principles of Roma inclusion countenances both mainstreaming and targeting (EC, 2010). Critics assert that targeting is the product of a narrow identity politics that bolsters difference and ghettoises

Roma in service provision. Conversely, though it has been argued that Roma cannot access mainstream services because of cultural inflexibility, assimilating tendencies and even the racism of service providers. The Roma Foundation might need to consider how effective targeting and forms of coproduction can be developed, surprisingly little research has been undertaken in this policy area and more guidance is needed to help civil society to navigate the challenges such approaches present. It should be noted though that targeting, and mainstreaming do not need to be in opposition to each other. For example, targeted approaches and or pilot projects, where successful should ideally be incorporated into the mainstream. Hence, affirmative measures should be fluid and under constant review and be absorbable into the mainstream (Ferkovics et al, 2020).

In recent years there has been some debate on the merits of the EU developing a social policy. If the EU were to develop a common social policy it could come in the form of a European Social Union (ESU), a 'coming together' process involving welfare states that would facilitate mutual adaptation based on jointly defined criteria and would include risk-pooling. Given the EU has its own budget and resources, the foundations are there for forms of social federalism. Hemerijck (2013) has defined the ESU as a holding environment: in other words, a zone of resilience centred on shared values and a common purpose, backed up by competent institutions, ready to act in times of crisis and adaptation. Thus, a holding environment should mitigate stress and tensions and consequently uphold the integrity of national welfare states. The global economic system has become highly complex and difficult to regulate, in part, because of financialization; the power and dominance of financial investment, free market thinking centred on deregulation and privatization have empowered global finance and helped it prosper and take over aspects of the state, such as welfare and social care (Citizens for Financial Justice, 2019). Clearly, if there is to be a meaningful ESU and a holding environment, these trends need to be

challenged at the European level. ESU could have major implications for the Roma by managing and reducing the impact of economic downturns and persistent inequality, major drivers of Roma exclusion, hate speech directed at the Roma and migration waves in response to poverty.

Critics assert that a more dynamic and federalized EU policy might hold the danger of 'Europeanizing' the Roma issue with national governments abandoning responsibility for this community and the Roma consequently being seen as a 'European issue' rather than a national one, a process that might accentuate othering and exclusion. Critics also assert that there might be a danger of reified and even assimilatory policy in a federal policy approach. This is not an inevitable consequence of social federalism, and such dangers can be avoided through empowering policy frameworks that creates flexibility and innovation through targeting and forms of coproduction with civil society. Again, this could be an important area where the Roma Foundation can help stimulate discussion. The paper concludes by considering the relevance of targeted measures, as well as Social Europe and inclusive community development to the notion of inclusive European citizenship.

Inclusive Citizenship

Earlier in the discussion reference was made to the value of using radical interpretations of human rights to address Roma marginality, which in the context of the European Union could entail new conceptions of European citizenship built upon notions of 'inclusive European citizenship'. This is a new and important attribute in conceptualizing Social Europe that we feel could address the colour-blindness and monocultural traits of previous conceptions of Social Europe. Inclusive citizenship encompasses solidarity, or a belief in the capacity to act in unity with others in their claims for justice and recognition; thus, it complements well the policy agenda of a new Social Europe (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2017).

Inclusive citizenship should articulate the terms of when it is fair for people to be treated the same and when it is fair that they should be treated differently. In this sense, it should not have the rigidity of, say, French conceptions of citizenship that preclude minority ethnic targeting and affirmative action. This flexible and fluid approach provides scope for ethnically targeted initiatives to complement and feed into the mainstream, avoiding the 'one size fits all' approach of narrow forms of mainstreaming. Social policy should strive for mainstreaming as a form of interplay between uniformity and targeted and pilot projects, allowing adaptation, experimentation and targeted forms of co-production that can ultimately shape and influence wider policy agendas. It might be through such conceptions of inclusive citizenship that the tensions noted by Fraser (1995) between recognition and redistribution can be resolved. In addition, recognition – framed in terms of the intrinsic worth of all human beings, as well as recognition of and respect for their differences – should be a core value in inclusive citizenship and power should act decisively where such principles are challenged.

Multiculturalism has been renounced in the past decade by political leaders such as Merkel as a culturally ghettoising force in society, instead an emphasis has been placed on integration, and here critics would argue that this can easily veer into assimilation. In the wake of this change of narrative, ethnic minority groups started to increasingly look at the rights to self-determination and identity, thus anti-Gypsyism can be viewed as part of this new paradigm shift. This paper is not advocating a return to narrow liberal multiculturalism that was often laden with tokenism. Critics have argued liberal multiculturalism embodies a version of liberal 'tolerance' based on the assumption that there is a dominant cultural identity to which minority ethnic groups have to adapt but that concessions can be made for members of minority ethnic groups. Instead, this paper advocates a more robust approach termed critical multiculturalism that encourages genuine intercultural dialogue and in turn two-way change that challenges deeply

ingrained racist and hegemonic tropes in the European mindset. Crucially, critical multiculturalism highlights structural inequities for the purpose of redistributing power and resources more equitably across society (Taba, 2020).

Conceptions of European citizenship which enable the forms of inclusive community development envisaged in this paper but also the scope for the intercultural and intersectional dialogue and action of a critical form of multiculturalism strongly complement the vision of a new Social Europe.

Conclusion

Kóczé and Rövid (2012) discussed above, noted the Roma movement initially focused on recognition, then human rights, and in next phase, focused on socio-economic rights, since their paper was written we can add the critical turn of antigypsyism and intersectionality. The new Social Europe sees tackling poverty as a human right, with an emphasis on liberating empowerment and inclusive community development and the fusion of recognition and redistribution through critical multiculturalism and inclusive European citizenship. It is a formula that can unite and encompass different strands and traditions of activism within the Roma Movement.

By increasing the capacity of the Roma movement for community-based activism (inclusive community development) the paper is proposing a process of 'reverse governmentality', where rather than government using civil society as a tool to impose narrow inclusion/assimilation policies (governmentality) we would see instead a situation where civil society is in the driving seat and given a more meaningful role in directing government and the European Commission as to what needs to be done. The Roma Foundation and its network in alliance with a wide range of stakeholders could use its considerable resources and expertise to advance this agenda and be an incubator for sustainable community organizing.

We conclude this discussion by reiterating that crucial to this vision for a reorientated and revitalised Roma civil society is the need for the new Roma Foundation to place a premium on accountability and transparency in its work. As part of this process, it needs to initiate genuine dialogue with diverse segments of Romani communities on what it needs to do in the coming years; indeed, the success or failure of that dialogue will have major implications for Europe's Roma.

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In memoriam: We dedicate this paper to the late Jenő Setét (1972 – 2022), a lead activist in the Roma movement

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