



The Romani Women’s Movement. Struggles and Debates in Central and Eastern Europe

edited by Angéla Kóczé, Violetta Zentai, Jelena Jovanović and Enikő Vincze

*Routledge*

2018, 271 pages.

ISBN: 9781138485099

Book review by Enikő Vincze

Four editors and over 20 female authors from 10 countries, brought together by the ideal of intersectional feminism and also by the activism of Roma women starting as early as the 90s, try through this book to reposition their discourses (and the discourse about them in academic and public spaces), from the periphery towards one which enjoys a well-deserved attention.

One foreword, one introduction, 11 chapters structured in three sections and also two afterwords extend the definition of Roma women’s movement toward an understanding that includes actors, debates and practices which address the power relations enclosed in the wider system of domination of any kind, reflecting upon the activism of Roma from different contexts, also upon the controversies related to their involvement in it. This short presentation of this collective volume will bring attention to the Romanian public (of the AnaLize journal) the contributions related (also) to Romania.

Margareta Matache, author of the foreword of the volume, reveals and appreciates the ways in which Roma ethnic researchers have proved, throughout the decades, that the intersectional nature of the oppression systems affects Roma women, thus contributing to a better understanding of racist and patriarchal practices.

The Introduction of the book places the discussion about the activism of Roma women in four conceptual frameworks: Roma feminism inspired by the feminism of women of color and post-colonial feminism; theories of intersectionality; studies about social movements; investigations about citizenship.

The first section of the volume explores the exclusive nature of male discourses and practices inside the Roma movement and the diversity of the political positions of Roma women, analyzing the complex relations between their movement, the LGBTQ Roma movement, as well as the Roma movement and the wider movement of women. Here we must mention the first chapter of the book, where Roma feminist from Romania Nicoleta Bițu, together with Debra Schultz, reflect upon the *Roma Women's Initiative* program started from 1999, which led the way towards a transnational understanding of this type of activism. Given the theme of this issue of AnaLize journal, we would also like to draw attention to the second chapter of the volume, which endeavours to reconceptualize Roma identities through the use of non-normative *queer* concepts.

The authors of the second section of the book reveal personal experiences incorporated in social positions created at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, class and age. Bringing into discussion the context of Romania, chapter 5 historicizes, personalizes and politicizes the intersection of academic and activist spheres and highlights the potential of Roma women's movement in the fight against racism, different forms of oppression and social injustice. Carmen Gheorghe, Letiția Mark and Enikő Vincze argue in favor of intersectional feminism as a political tool, starting from the solidarity among women, with the clear aim to dismantle the wide structures of exploitation.

The third section opens the discussion about Roma women's movement in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, towards the inspiration this movement receives from the *Gitanas* in Spain, from the approaches of anti-racist feminism and from the feminist critique of the neoliberal state. In one of the two afterwords of the volume, Alexandra Oprea brings the discussion towards the functioning of the intersectional exclusion in the academic sphere and underlines the effort of the volume to disrupt the practice of representing Roma women as alterity, without including them among those who speak about them.

Regarding the contributions coming from Romania to the volume *The Romani Women's Movement. Struggles and Debates in Central and Eastern Europe* (*Mișcarea femeilor rome. Lupte și dezbateri în Europa Centrală și de Est*), it is important to also acknowledge in these terms the precedent value of *the Nevi Sara Kali. Revista Femeilor Rome. Roma Women's Journal. Romane 3uvleange 3urnalo* magazine. Born between 2008 and 2011 from the friendship between Roma and non-Roma women from Romania, the magazine created a trilingual, transnational and

transethnic discursive space about both the intersectional oppression of Rroma women and their social, cultural and political activism.

*(Transl. Ciprian Șiulea)*

© 2018 AnA Society for Feminist Analyses  
New Series. Issue No. 10 (24)/2018  
Website: [www.analyze-journal.ro](http://www.analyze-journal.ro)