

Images of Gypsies, a German Case: Gilad Margalit.

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Sinti and Roma have lived for over six centuries in Europe and, numbering well over eight million people, constitute its largest ethnic minority. It is somewhat hard to estimate the exact numbers of German Sinti and Roma since Germany's Basic Law prohibits the collection of ethnic data. Nonetheless, a 1999 report submitted by the German Government to the "Advisory Committee on Implementation of the Framework Convention of National Minorities" estimated there to be 70,000 German Sinti and Roma. Many Romani leaders put the number between 150,00 and 200,000, mindful that their estimates include all Sinti and Roma living in Germany independent of their citizenship status¹. As a reference year for the first chronicle citation of Sinti and Roma in Germany, authors² point to the year 1417 and to Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* as the first detailed account. Münster was acquainted with Sinti and Roma from Heidelberg, observing and documenting their customs, which is why his chronicle became the most colorful, personal, and creditable account. Historically, German Sinti and Roma have been depicted as nomads and itinerant showmen. Often, the description of Sinti and Roma as non-sedentary or as people having only atypical occupations allows for further discrimination against this ethnic group. Portrayed as *different* from the rest of the Germans, both in their alleged essence (nomads) and means of livelihood (entertainers, door-to-door salesmen, or small circus performers), Sinti and Roma continue to be considered foreign or *Fremde*, although they have lived in Germany for more than six centuries. Sinti and Roma are generally characterized as the eternal Gypsy wanderers who stand outside of the conventional norms.

Although the nomadic lifestyle might be desirable for some Sinti and Roma, as may also be the case for individuals of various other ethnicities, the argument that all Sinti and Roma are intrinsically nomadic is reductive and even at times racially prejudiced. Moreover, the issue of nomadism in relation to Sinti and Roma remains a

¹ Source: "State FCNM Report". <http://www.coe.int>

² See Ebhardt, Wilhelm. "Die Zigeuner in der hochdeutschen Literatur bis zu Goethes 'Götz von Berlichingen'". Diss. Georg-August-Universität zu Göttingen, 1928. p. 17.

multifaceted issue that requires a well-balanced approach, even if some Sinti and Roma do assert their nomadic lifestyle. Accordingly, this paper challenges the antiziganistic hegemony that essentializes and others Sinti and Roma, forcing an entire group to morph into a homogenous entity. Particular lifestyles (nomadism or sedentary), types of occupations, and behavioral characteristics are not tied to a single identity of a group as a whole, but rather individually determined. Lastly, it is not one of the goals of German Sinti and Roma to create an artificial so-called “nation state” in which all Sinti and Roma would be granted citizenship based on their ethnicity. Rather, Germany is the nation state of German Sinti and Roma³.

As much as the historical data imparts that German Sinti and Roma have lived in Europe for centuries, the taxonomical description of their culture makes the debate about their nationality and the nature of their cultural production animated and continuous. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, research on Roma continues to be based on observation, collection, classification, and description whereby the researcher’s objectivity frequently remains unquestioned. Often, the authority of the researcher is established by an addendum of charts, tables, and other statistical data as an empirical support of their claims. In his book *Time and the Other*, postcolonial scholar Johannes Fabian addresses the issue of the de-temporization of the Other in anthropological writing. In his account, the Other is the object of a researcher’s study, ontologically and culturally presumed to be different. Additionally, Fabian maintains that the researcher is allowed to disregard temporal relations when studying a presumably unchanging, primitive culture. The terms civilization, evolution, development, acculturation, and modernization are all terms “whose conceptual content derives from evolutionary time⁴” (17, footnote added).

³ Romani Rose, the Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and one of the most prominent political figures in the Sinti and Roma discourse in Germany, asserts that “...the reality is that the German Sinti and Roma are Germans and Germany is their own home country. [...] Like the Danes, Sorbians and Frieslanders in Germany, the 70,000 Sinti und Roma in Germany form a historically developed national minority. Rose, Romani. “Sinti and Roma as National Minorities in the Countries of Europe”. *The Patrin Web Journal*. Sept. 3, 1999. <http://www.geocities.com>

⁴ Here, Fabian refers to the notion that non-Europeans were exemplars of the stages of human development that civilized Europeans had presumably passed through long ago. Allegedly, Europeans were far apart (far ahead of) in their propensity for development from their non-European counterparts. Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Persistently referring to the time of the Other as not belonging to the contemporary time, the researcher marginalizes the Other and permanently signifies it as primitive and “not-the-same.” Partially borrowing from Levi-Strauss, Fabian argues that the taxonomical description of culture becomes ontological when “it maintains that culture is created by selection and classification.” The consequent concept of culture is “devoid of a theory, creativity or production because in a radically taxonomic frame it makes no sense to raise the question of production. By extension we never appreciate the primitive as producer” (62). In cultural texts, the examples of portraying Sinti and Roma as primitive, as gatherers rather than producers, as people completely incapable of relating to modern society and its economically highly structured system, and as borrowers, if not thieves, are myriad.

Moreover, the perpetual discrimination against Sinti and Roma is facilitated by the rhetoric of Gypsies as nationless people, who are first and foremost perceived as not German (or broader “not European”). As there might be individuals or groups of Sinti and Roma who indeed would associate with nationless, my emphasis in this critique will be on the general argument of the inherent nationless of Sinti and Roma as eternal wanderers incapable of relating to conventional lifestyle. It is the homogenizing feature of the discourse about Sinti and Roma that makes it antiziganistic. Similarly, some Sinti and Roma might adhere to the nomadic lifestyle, as do individuals of various other ethnicities across the world, but the contention that all Sinti and Roma are inherently nomadic is racially prejudiced. Additionally, due to the historical circumstances associated with nomadism and Gypsies, such as the anti-Gypsy laws explicitly targeting Sinti and Roma’s alleged itinerant way of life and trades, the issue of nomadism in relation to Gypsies remains a multifaceted issue that has not yet been studied in all its dimensions.

In his 1996 article “Antigypsyism in the Political Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: A Parallel with Antisemitism?”⁵ and his 2002 book *Germany and Its Gypsies*⁶ historian Gilad Margalit characterizes and exploits the cultural construct

⁵ Margalit, Gilad. “Antigypsyism in the Political Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: A Parallel with Antisemitism?”. *The Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism*. No. 9, 1996.

⁶ Margalit, Gilad. *Germany and Its Gypsies*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

“Gypsy” (he is only one of many authors who manipulates the construct⁷). By critically engaging with this construct, I will illustrate here⁸ some of the characteristics of the persistent nature of the contemporary discourse about Sinti and Roma that continues to study “Gypsies” as unchanging and primitive (“disregards temporal relations”). The critique of Margalit’s marginalization of the persecution of Sinti and Roma, both prior to and in the Holocaust, as well as in post-war Germany, allows me to delineate some of the general misconceptions still circulating within the Romany discourse (both in German and American scholarship⁹). He portrays Gypsies (his term for Sinti and Roma) as stateless, apolitical, and criminal nomads, and in doing so creates fertile ground for continuous discrimination against Sinti and Roma. His characterization of Gypsies parallels historical, narrative, and ethnographic texts, which in similar fashion typify Sinti and Roma as uncivilized and uncultured Gypsies (outside of terms “derived from evolutionary time”, e.g. “civilization, evolution, development, acculturation, modernization...”) ¹⁰.

⁷ On the topic of “political unconsciousness” and “wandering (stateless)” Gypsies, see Brearley, Margaret. “The Roma/Gypsies of Europe: a persecuted people”. In: *Research Report for: Institute for Jewish Policy Research*. No. 3, 1996.; an ethnographic account of Gypsies, see Fonseca, Isabel. *Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.; the “Gypsy occupations” and “otherness”, see Hermann, Arnold. *Das Fahrende Volk*. Neustadt/Weinstraße: Pfälzische Verlagsanstalt, 1980.; the Gypsy records and research in the Third Reich, see Justin, Eva. “Lebensschicksale artfremd erzogener Zigeunerkinde und ihrer Nachkommen.” Diss. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1943.; For the constructs “Gypsy musician” and “Gypsy being”, see: Block, Martin. *Zigeuner, ihr Leben und ihre Seele: dargestellt auf Grund eigener Reisen und Forschungen*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institute, a.g., 1936.; on Gypsy police records and persecution, see Dillmann, Alfred. *Das Zigeuner-Buch*. München: Dr. Wild’sche Buchdruckerei, 1905.

⁸ I will concentrate primarily on Margalit’s article; most of his chief ideas from the article were later elaborated in his 2002 book.

⁹ Margalit is an Israeli historian and lecturer in the Department of General History at the University of Haifa, Israel. Some of his scholarship has been published in America (e.g. University of Wisconsin Press); however, the majority of his writing is specific to Germany, is distributed in Germany, and the majority of secondary literature is German (e.g. Peter Widmann; see footnote 7).

¹⁰ See: Widmann, Peter. “Germany and Its Gypsies: A Post-Auschwitz Ordeal”. *Journal of Social History*. Summer, 2005. Widmann, in his review of Margalit’s book *Germany and Its Gypsies*, critiques Margalit’s “socio-psychological speculations” (“the author relies less on analysis supported by research sources than on [...] speculations”) behind the supposedly questionable motivations of Sinti and Roma activists, their supporters, and in general, the political work of the Sinti Civil Rights Movement.

One of Gilad Margalit's central claims is that "racist antigypsyism began in Germany only in the late decades of the nineteenth century and existed on the margins of racist antisemitism."¹¹ In the article, he characterizes the contemporary as well as centuries-old antigypsism as "superficial", "less dramatic in character", lacking "demonizing characteristics" and "the element of 'conspiracy' that was dominant in nineteenth-century antisemitism." He asserts that the Gypsy within German culture could be categorized as the "known other", for Sinti and Roma's coexistence in Europe is six centuries old. "For generations, the Sinti [...] wandered in specific regions and consequently mastered the local dialects. [...] Their fortune-telling skills left its impression in German (and non-German) literature and folklore" (2). Lastly, Margalit contends that antigypsism "was never a political issue in Germany previous to the Third Reich" and that "...the 'Gypsy Question' was a marginal issue on the Nazi agenda; it was part of the so called 'Social Question'—the problem of the lower and poorer strata from which many criminals supposedly came, and on which most of the public welfare expenditure was spent" (2). He concludes that, "Due to these factors the Romanies and their bitter fate in the Third Reich did not become a central subject in post-1945 German political culture until the 1980s" (3). Although Margalit includes the alarming findings of the 1994 Emnid public opinion poll, according to which "68 percent of the Germans agreed they would not like to have Romanies as their neighbors", he fails to make an analytical assessment of antiziganism that would satisfactorily explain the continuing sweeping prejudice against Sinti and Roma. The same poll reveals the disproportionate hatred towards Sinti and Roma in comparison to other ethnic groups, such as Arabs, Poles, Africans, Turks, and Jews¹².

In order to show that "...hostility toward the Romanies lacked a religious temper and demonizing characteristics" Margalit evokes so-called "romantic" images of Gypsies evident in "centuries of coexistence." "The romantic aspect of the Gypsy image became a

¹¹ "Antigypsyism in the Political Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: A Parallel with Antisemitism?". p. 1. From his writing, it is not explicitly clear why Margalit chooses to compare and contrast antiziganism with antisemitism, apart from the manifest prejudice and racism inherent in both. Unlike Margalit, in my analysis of the construct "Gypsy", I only occasionally draw comparisons between antiziganism and antisemitism, for my primary study centers around the "Gypsy". As such, his assessment of antisemitism is not a focus of this work.

¹² Arabs, 47%; Poles, 39%; Africans, 37%; Turks, 36%; and Jews, 22%, (Margalit, 4).

symbol for freedom as early as the seventeenth century. [...] ...depiction of the Romani lifestyle as true, natural, and passionate influenced generations in Germany and elsewhere..." (2). Similarly, Margalit sentimentalizes Gypsies' "fortune-telling skills" that "left its impression in German (and non-German) literature and folklore." The same literature generally typified Gypsies (especially women) as deceitful, unscrupulous, and dangerous vagabonds¹³. The antigypsy laws highlight the authorities' particular disdain for Gypsy fortune-tellers¹⁴. Lastly, Margalit's assertions that "antigypsyism was never a political issue in Germany previous to the Third Reich" and that "...the 'Gypsy Question' was a marginal issue on the Nazi agenda..." are erroneous¹⁵. While evoking alleged romantic¹⁶ images of free-roaming Gypsies that might lead to the conclusion that antigypsism is "superficial", "less demonizing", and "not political"¹⁷ Margalit fails to scrutinize any antigypsy decrees and edicts passed by the German authorities targeting and limiting the movement, settlement, and coexistence of Sinti and Roma since their

¹³ See: Ebhardt, Wilhelm. "Die Zigeuner in der hochdeutschen Literatur bis zu Goethes 'Götz von Berlichingen'". Diss. Georg-August-Universität zu Göttingen, 1928.

¹⁴ See: Dilmman, Alfred. *Das Zigeuner-Buch*. München: Dr. Wild'sche Buchdruckerei, 1905.

¹⁵ On March 17, 1982 then Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Schmidt, in front of the special delegation of Sinti and Roma under the leadership of Romani Rose, publicly acknowledged that Sinti and Roma were persecuted on the basis of "race" in the Holocaust ("Bundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt...anerkannte den Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma aus Gründen der sogenannten "Rasse"; Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma. Home Page. 12 June 2006.

<http://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de> More recently, on May 29, 2006, by the invitation of the Prime Minister of Poland, Kazimierz Marcinkewicz, Rose became a member of the International Auschwitz Committee ("Mitglied des Internationalen Auschwitz-Rats").

¹⁶ Although there is no exact equivalent to philosemitism within the Romany discourse per se, it could be argued that the exaggerated positive statements (since overt ziganism tends to be socially unacceptable) about Gypsies are manifestly philoziganism.

¹⁷ See: "*Germany and its Gypsies: A Post-Auschwitz Ordeal*", book review at *RomNews Network Community*, March 26, 2003. <http://www.romnews.com/de> According to book reviewer, "Margalit's aim [in this book] [...] is less to provoke sympathy for the continued suffering of Romanies, and more to dispute their claims to have been equal victims to the Jews in the Holocaust. Presented as a study of German attitudes towards Romanies, this book is actually a contribution to the disheartening literature of ethnic competition for victimhood status". The reviewer points to Margalit's unfounded claim that "despite everything, Gypsies, in contrast to Jews, were perceived by Himmler...to be part of the German fatherland and not its foe", p. 53 of Margalit's book. Reviewer concludes that regrettably "Margalit's aim here [from Margalit's claim that since Roma "had no contact with the German population, it seems unlikely that the extermination of the Roma constituted part of the German attempt to protect the racial purity of the German population", Margalit p. 48] is to establish a clear difference between the Nazi treatment of the Romanies, on one hand, and the Jews on the other, making it plain that it was the latter who were the true victims of Nazis".

arrival to Germany. The abundance and evident forcefulness of these laws elucidate the politically, racially, and culturally motivated exclusion of Gypsies from the rest of German society and Margalit's emphasis on romantic imagery obscures this fact.

In his book *Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zeit zwischen 1918-1945 (The Persecution of Gypsies: 1918-1945)*, historian Mohammad Gharaati outlines the persecution of Sinti and Roma in Germany. According to Gharaati, between the years 1500 and 1800¹⁸ the German authorities passed 148 antigypsy edicts preventing Sinti and Roma from acquiring permanent residency and employment (32). Decades before the rise of the Third Reich, German police and various government ministries enacted laws according to which all Sinti and Roma residing in Germany were required to register with the police and unemployment agencies in each district, be fingerprinted and photographed, and have their genealogical data recorded¹⁹. From April to December of 1907, a few years after the establishment of the special "Gypsy Affairs Agency" ("Nachrichtendienst in Bezug auf die Zigeuner", 1899) in Munich under the directorship of the criminal investigator Alfred Dillmann, there were 289 criminal cases filed against Gypsies, the majority of which were for such trivial offenses as camping or driving a defective car (59). The antiziganistic vehemence inherent in such laws, as explained in Gharaati's work, coupled with the general literary

¹⁸ In addition to the earliest antigypsy edicts (from 1500 to 1800), the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveal intense, politically motivated assimilation policies in both the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German lands. Thousands of Gypsy children were forcefully taken from their parents' homes and placed into orphanages or non-Gypsy families for the purposes of reeducation and assimilation. Often the parents were sent to *Arbeitshäuser*, places of forced labor. It is not difficult to foresee the devastating consequences of such actions on Romany families and the generations of unnaturally orphaned Sinti and Roma children. Similarly to the Romany historian Ian Hancock, a professor of Romany Studies at the University of Texas, Austin, I argue that such policies were often attempts to destroy Romany language and Sinti and Roma culture. See: Hancock, Ian. "Chronology". *The Romani Archives and Documentation Center*. <http://www.radoc.net> Hancock cites the efforts of such assimilation policies in the example of the Nordhausen authorities (from 1830) asserting that such projects had a goal to "eradicate the Romani population by removing the children for permanent placement with non-Romani families".

¹⁹ Despite the terms of Article 108 of the National Constitution of the Weimar Republic (ratified in 1919 and 1921), which guaranteed Sinti and Roma full and equal citizenship rights, antiziganism throughout the German-speaking lands was widespread and on the rise in the beginning of the twentieth century. The similar registration of Jews in Germany was mandatory during the Third Reich. As non-Sinti and Roma citizens were also required (and still are) to register upon living and acquiring a new address (*Anmeldung* and *Abmeldung*), they were not fingerprinted, photographed, and their genealogies were not recorded.

descriptions of Gypsies as Tatars, Turkish spies, Egyptians, carriers of the plague, traitors to Christendom, and invaders in general, speak against Sinti and Roma as the “known other(s).”²⁰ Gypsies are indeed perceived by the political authorities as “the element(s) of ‘conspiracy’” within German society, notwithstanding that their history in Germany is over six centuries long. By considering the historical data that Gharaati presents, we see how Margalit fails to reveal the mendacity inherent in the romanticization of “wandering” Gypsies.

Based on extensive research of the anti-Gypsy laws²¹, the persevering antiziganistic attitudes, and the contemporary literature of the Sinti and Roma political activists, it is my contention (contrary to Margalit) that most Sinti and Roma “traveled” in order to comply with the law and out of necessity to find employment. For example, in his book *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland*²² (*The History of Persecution of Gypsies in Germany*), Joachim Hohmann highlights the immensity of anti-Gypsy laws since Sinti and Roma’s arrival to Germany. These ordinances targeted the movement and prohibited the settlement of Gypsies. Hohmann concludes that based on his analysis of the anti-Gypsy laws the image of a free-roaming Gypsy is merely a

²⁰ For the chronology of the depiction of the literary figure “Gypsy”, see Ehardt Wilhelm’s dissertation (cited in footnote 10).

²¹ On February 17th 1906, the Prussian Minister of the Interior (Prussian Law) issued a directive entitled “Combating the Gypsy Nuisance” (“Die Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens”) guaranteeing the expulsion of Sinti and Roma from not only Prussia but the surrounding countries as well. Prussia introduced “Gypsy licenses”, requirements for all Gypsies that would allow them to stay in the region, but not to settle permanently. On July 16th, 1926, the Bavarian “Law for Combating Gypsies, Vagabonds and Idlers” (“Gesetz zur Bekämpfung von Zigeunern, Landfahrern und Arbeitsscheuen”) proposed a year earlier at the 1925 conference, was passed. Firstly, the law reiterated that Gypsies are a different race, secondly that they are by nature opposed to all work, and thirdly that they should be subjected to forced labor. Pre-Holocaust Germany targeted Gypsies by law, classifying them as so-called non-Aryans and those seen as unworthy of living. “The Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring” was passed in 1933, making forceful sterilization legal and ordering sterilization of Gypsies, Jews, Germans of black color, disabled, and alleged asocials. On September 17, 1933, “The National Citizenship Law” relegated Gypsies and Jews to the status of second-class citizens, and deprived them of their civil rights. In the same year under the second Nuremberg “Law for Prevention of Blood and Honor” intermarriage or sexual relationships between Aryans and non-Aryans, including the Gypsies, was outlawed. The subsequent internment in the concentration camps and Heinrich Himmler’s signing of the Auschwitz decree on December 16, 1942 authorizing elimination of Gypsies, resulted in murder of 500,000 Sinti and Roma.

²² Hohmann, Joachim, S. *Geschichte der Zigeunerverfolgung in Deutschland*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1988.

cultural construct. “Under these circumstances, that there could have existed an unrestrained, free-roaming nomadic way of life is out of question” (80)²³. While some Sinti and Roma choose to lead a nomadic lifestyle (as do individuals of other ethnicities throughout the world), the contention that all Sinti and Roma are inherently nomadic is at best reductive and at worst racially prejudiced.

The extermination of Sinti and Roma resulting in deaths of more than 500,000 Sinti and Roma could hardly be summarized as “marginal” and “not politically motivated.”²⁴ It certainly was not due to the lack of antiziganism that the persecution of Sinti and Roma before and during the Holocaust “did not become a central subject in post-1945 German political culture until the 1980s.” Contrary to Margalit (and an array of similar authors), I argue that post-war attitudes towards Sinti and Roma, exemplified by the absence of a single Sinti and Roma witness at the Nuremberg trial, the fact that no reparation monies were paid, or the denial, well into the 1980s, of their genocide in the Holocaust, are centered around the construct “Gypsy”. By supporting the unchanging and unchallenged nature of this construct, Margalit’s writing furthers this particular discrimination of Sinti and Roma. Surely, the approach of non-Gypsies towards Gypsies was adjusted to the spirit of the era, but the belief in the Gypsy essence, and the prejudiced vision inherent in such a viewpoint, remained the same.

In his analysis of the history of madness, *Madness and Civilization*²⁵, Michel Foucault reminds readers that in order to understand the relationship between the sane and insane in any given epoch one must begin to examine the silence, what has not been said about the changing treatment of those labeled as the insane. The belief in a particular and anomalous essence of the insane, which makes them ontologically different than those categorized as the sane, supports the further belief in a permanent essence of being, and in this case, radically different and possibly dangerous. The idea that there could be

²³ “Von einem ungebundenen, freien Wanderleben konnte unter diesen Bedingungen keine Rede sein...” (80).

²⁴ “Antigypsyism in the Political Culture of the Federal Republic of Germany: A Parallel with Antisemitism?”, p. 2 (“Racist antigypsyism began in Germany only in the late decades of the nineteenth century and existed on the margins of racist antisemitism. In contrast to the latter, however, racist antigypsyism had no political character. Furthermore, the *racist* preoccupation with the Romanies in Germany, as in England, was *not solely negative*”; emphasis added).

²⁵ Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization*. trans. Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon, 1965. p. 3-37 (especially 6 and 7), 66-7, 211 (fear of madness).

an irredeemable Gypsy essence, or what Slavoj Žižek terms the “real kernel”²⁶, that could be qualitatively assessed, led to Sinti and Roma’s extermination in the Holocaust.

In summary, as only some Sinti and Roma identify with “mobility” and non-wage labor, it is antiziganistic to characterize an entire group as inherently and uniformly nomadic and communal, particularly due to the generalized, culturally assigned anti-Gypsy connotations that such descriptions generate. The celebrated Gypsy innocence and worry-free lifestyle are presumably what makes them Gypsies. They all dance, sing, play music, and have strong communal relations. The persistence of the belief that all Gypsies create and remain in close-knit communities has had certain detrimental effects, one example of which is the common belief in high rates of incest among Gypsies. Certainly it is not Sinti and Roma’s alleged racial inferiority or general inability that pigeonholes them in the role of wedding musicians and traveling salesmen. Instead, a revision and careful evaluation of the autonomy of expression and the necessity of the space for such exhibition is needed. Often forced to be on the move, Sinti and Roma frequently did not have access to education or public life in the past. The children of those Sinti and Roma who would permanently settle in an area faced continued persecution in schools and communities, and the adult Sinti and Roma were often performing menial services for those in power and with prominent positions. Pointing to the paradigm and the predicament of subaltern women, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her article “Can the Subaltern Speak?”²⁷, asserts that at the crux of the problem is not merely speaking, having nothing to say or that no accounts of the subject-consciousness of women exist, but that she is allocated no position of utterance. Appropriating Spivak’s gender-centered critique, it could be said that by ignoring the efforts and achievements of hundreds of organizations and people working for the rights of Sinti and Roma, such as European Roma Rights Center, Roma National Congress, Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly, Roma Section, Union Romani, Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma, Dokumentations-und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, Romani Rose, Wilhelm Spindler, Anton Franz, William Duna, and Ian Hancock, to name a few, authors curtail the impact the

²⁶ Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London and New York: Verso, 1989.

²⁷ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988. p. 294-297.

Roma advocates have had in exposing biased trends and practices towards Sinti and Roma.