



Spain National Report



Partners

KMOP | Social Action and Innovation Centre

Amalipe | Tsentar za Mezhdnetnicheski Dialog i Tolerantnost Amalipe

CESIS | Centro de Estudos para a Intervenção Social

Kamira | Federación Nacional de Asociaciones de Mujeres Gitanas

PCRM | Fundatia Policy Center for Roma and Minorities

Authors

Laura Casanovas, Kamira, Spain

Contents

Spain National Report.....	0
1. Introduction.....	3
2. National framework (in brief) on domestic violence in the Roma communities.....	4
2.1 Law and policy.....	5
2.1 Statistics and research results.....	8
2.2 Specifics of domestic violence in the Roma communities.....	9
3. Methodology.....	11
4. Characterisation of the participants in the interviews.....	12
5. Findings.....	16
5.1 Roma women's perceptions of domestic violence.....	16
5.2 The range of domestic violence commonly occurring in Roma families.....	19
5.3 The level of knowledge Roma women possess in regards to domestic violence, their rights, and how to seek help for themselves.....	24
5.4 The experiences of Roma women in accessing, or not accessing, support services	25
5.5 The skills Roma women may lack in order to claim their rights.....	29
6. Conclusions.....	31
7. References.....	34

1. Introduction

The present document corresponds to the national report on Spain, part of Deliverable D2.2 'National and summary reports' of the project Prevent And combaT domesTic violEnce against Roma women with the acronym PATTERN and project number 881731 that started on June 1st 2020, for a duration of 24 months.

PATTERN addresses the call priority 'REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2019 – Call for proposal to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women'. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the prevention and combatting of domestic violence against Roma women in Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal, Spain, and Romania.

In order to reach its overall objective, the project has set the following more specific objectives:

- Increasing access to knowledge/data on the phenomenon of domestic violence against Roma women.
- Developing Domestic Violence Protocols for Roma Women that enable professionals to respond to domestic violence comprehensively.
- Enhancing the capacities of at least 350 Roma intercultural mediators and professionals in community centres/other local community services on domestic violence against Roma women.
- Enhancing the capacities of at least 100-150 Roma women on how to recognize and report domestic violence and act as leaders of change in their communities.
- Raising awareness in Roma communities to building healthy & egalitarian relationships.

This deliverable D2.2 forms part of PATTERN WP2 "Research on domestic violence in Roma communities with the involvement of Roma women" which has the objective of increasing access to knowledge/data on the phenomenon of domestic violence against Roma women.

This report has the following structure: in section 2, the national framework (in brief) on domestic violence in the Roma communities is set; in section 3, the methodology adopted in the fieldwork is detailed; section 4 is devoted to the characterisation of the participants in

the interviews; section 5 presents the main findings of the interviews; finally section 6 summarises the key conclusions of the research on domestic violence against Roma women in Spain.

2. National framework (in brief) on domestic violence in the Roma communities

The Roma [*Gitano*] population has been present in Spain since the 15th century. As in the rest of Europe, its history has been marked by systematic persecution, attempts at conversion and social exclusion. However, there was a significant turnaround in the community's situation in 1978, with the modification of the Constitution. This granted equal rights to all citizens and thereby recognised the Roma as equal before the law, additionally making any kind of racial discrimination a crime. (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática 27 de septiembre 2011). At the same time, the “anti-Roma” articles of the regulations governing the Civil Guard (one of Spain's national police forces) were repealed. From this point onwards, policies specifically aimed at helping the Roma population achieve that formal equality began to be developed. These included the Roma Development Programme (Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030 2005) of 1989 and the creation of a National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Population in Spain (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2012-2020).

While the situation has generally improved, the Roma community continues to be affected by structural problems in crucial areas, such as employment (high rates of unemployment and difficulties accessing work), accommodation (insecure housing), education (high absenteeism and drop-out rates, segregated schooling), and health (a lower life expectancy than the rest of the population). It is also important to underline the problems with discrimination and the risk of social exclusion suffered by this community, exacerbated by the negative social image and stereotypes perpetuated by the media.

The Roma community in Spain

In order to avoid discrimination, persecution and anti-Semitism, the principle of equality before the law established in the Spanish Constitution prohibits disaggregating data by ethnic or racial origin, religion or sexual orientation. As a result, no statistical data are available that exclusively address the Roma population in Spain (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e

Igualdad 2012-2020). Nevertheless, some social organisations have produced estimates of the Spanish population belonging to the Roma culture, which give an approximate result of 800,000 to 970,000 people. Similarly, the Council of Europe estimated that there were 725,000 Roma people in Spain in its latest figures, published in 2010. This means that the Spanish Roma community is estimated to be the second largest in Europe, representing 6.4% of the global Roma population. In terms of socio-demographic data, the studies conducted show this to be a predominantly young population, a third of whom are under 16 years of age, and whose birth rate continues to be substantially higher than the average for the population as a whole (Laparra 2007).

The Roma population in Córdoba

There are an estimated 7,500 to 8,000 Roma people living in the city of Córdoba. It is generally understood that a significant proportion of this group is fully integrated into the community, living alongside the majority population with no serious problems. In addition, all members of this population have access to public services, given that all citizens have access to public health, free education and social services. However, there are still barriers and difficulties that limit this population, such as problems accessing employment, high school drop-out rates, and the low socioeconomic status that affects over half the Roma population in the city. For example, while an estimated 97.5% of school-age Roma children attend school, around 80% leave the school system before completing secondary education. Added to this, is the continued existence of problems with discrimination and prejudice against the Roma culture, and the difficulties unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has worsened inequality, the digital divide and the situation of women who are victims of gender-based violence.

2.1 Law and policy

Addressing the problem of gender-based violence, on 28 December 2004, Organic Law 1/2004 on *Integrated Protection Measures Against Gender-based Violence* [*Ley Orgánica 1/2004 de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género*] was enacted, which is the measure currently regulating this issue in Spain. It was unanimously passed by parliament and introduced by then President of the Spanish Government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (Nogueira 2004). The law was enacted in the context of a tragic case of gender-based violence that received widespread press coverage and caused significant media and

societal controversy: the brutal murder of Ana Orantes at the hands of her husband. Despite the victim making multiple public declarations on television about the sustained abuse and violence she was suffering, the authorities failed to take any measures to put a stop to the situation. Orantes was eventually killed by her husband. The case was declared “an isolated case, the act of a misfit”. The brutal chain of events caused collective outrage, giving rise to the creation of women’s associations and organisations, which sought to monitor cases and collect data on domestic violence, assist victims, and pressure the authorities to intervene and take measures to tackle this issue. With the subsequent change of government and against a background of social unrest, the law was finally passed.

According to its text, the purpose of this Law is “to act against the violence which, as a manifestation of discrimination, a situation of inequality and power relations of men over women, is exercised against women by persons who are or have been their spouses or persons who are or have been connected to them by similar affective relationships, even without cohabitation” (Dirección General de la Policía 18 de noviembre de 2020)¹. Gender-based violence is thereby understood to encompass all acts of physical and psychological violence, including attacks on sexual freedom, threats, coercion and the arbitrary denial of liberty. The law aims to tackle the current problem of violence against women through a series of integrated protection measures. These are designed to prevent, create sanctions against and eradicate this situation, and to provide assistance to women who are victims of these forms of violence, as well as the children or minors in their care. As an integrated law, it not only provides for sanctioning perpetrators and protecting victims, but seeks to combat this violence from all possible angles (Gimeno Reinoso y Barrientos Silva 2009). Its aims include: ensuring quick, transparent and efficient access to established services; taking awareness-raising measures by providing public authorities with tools in the fields of education, health and social services, and advertising; improving existing services; and guaranteeing women’s rights as workers, as well as their economic rights, so as to increase their social inclusion. Similarly, it strengthens the criminal-law framework by modifying and adding new articles to various laws, such as the Law on *Criminal Procedure* [*Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal*] and the Organic Law on *the Right to Education* [*Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*], as well as supporting the creation of public policy, encouraging the

¹[BOE.es - Código de Violencia de Género y Doméstica](http://BOE.es) [Official State Gazette. *Gender-based and Domestic Violence Code*]. Article 1. Purpose of the Law. 1.

specialisation of professionals who work with victims, and promoting participation in and collaboration between organisations, associations and other bodies. Finally, it seeks to guarantee the principle of transversality, to ensure that the specific needs of each victim are met. (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática 29 de diciembre de 2004)²

It is important to note that, in the Spanish context, there is a significant difference between the concepts of gender-based violence and domestic violence. Gender-based violence refers to violence or abuse inflicted upon women by their partners or ex-partners, due to the fact that they are women (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática 29 de diciembre de 2004). In contrast, domestic violence concerns any type of violence in the home, directed against any person who lives there (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática 29 de diciembre de 2004).

The growing influence of conservative ideologies in recent years, along with the founding of the far-right, nationalist political party VOX, have led to increasing dissent about the law in question. In 2018, the leader of VOX proposed to eradicate the Law on *Gender-based Violence* (Álvarez y Valdés 2018), declaring the party fiercely opposed to the agreements reached around it, arguing that the only thing the law would achieve would be new forms of discrimination and injustice (Minder 2020). In its place, he proposed a creating a bill termed the “Organic Law on Intra-family Violence” (Toscano 2020), based on the principle that women are not the only victims, and according to which any type of legislation that excludes other nuclear family members from protection is unjust. The proposed law would therefore include any type of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence which occurs in the home, or is exercised between former or current spouses or civil partners. It would give equal protection to the elderly, men, women and children, and guarantee the legal equality of all Spaniards, with equal penalties for all cases of violence in the family sphere, regardless of the sex of the victim and the aggressor, and with protection measures for all victims. According to this proposal, no distinction is to be made in terms of gender, meaning that men as well as women could report violence under the law. The proposal poses a significant risk to women at a legislative level. It would leave them without protection against a form of violence which stems from inequality between men and women, occurs in the context of an

affective relationship, and whose scale and unique nature necessitates its legal recognition as a specific crime. Further, the other family members addressed by this law already receive legal protection from other laws in the *Criminal Code* [*Código Penal*].

Additionally, this party contends that the Law on Gender-based Violence and the cross-party agreement to tackle such violence contravene the Istanbul Convention. As a result, it put forward a non-legislative proposal [*proposición no de ley*] that called for the amendment of the cross-party agreement against gender-based violence, as well as the repeal of the Law on *Gender-based Violence*. In response to these measures, the Spanish Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of the Law on *Gender-based Violence* on all counts, specifying that an assault against a woman is an aggravating circumstance “simply because she is [a woman]”, there being no need to be in any kind of affective relationship with the aggressor, and stating that the law’s measures are reasonable and proportionate (europapress 2019).

2.1 Statistics and research results

According to the Large-scale Survey on Violence against Women (Ministerio de Igualdad 2019), conducted by the Spanish Government Delegation Against Gender-based Violence [*Delegación del Gobierno contra la Violencia de Género*] in 2019 to determine the percentage of women who had suffered or were currently suffering any kind of violence because they are women, 11.0% (2,234,567 women) of all women aged 16 or over and resident in Spain had suffered physical violence from a current or past partner at some point in their lives. With regards to sexual violence, 17.1% had suffered this type of violence from one or more of their partners over the course of their life. Women who had suffered psychological violence from one or more of their partners at some point in their life similarly accounted for 17.1%. Finally, 17.1% had been victims of economic violence from one or more of their partners in their life. Overall, considering all forms of violence against women, 17.1% had suffered some kind of violence from a partner in their life.

Similarly, Spain’s National Institute of Statistics [*Instituto Nacional de Estadística*] produced a Statistical Report on Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence in 2019 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2019), which presented data on gender-based violence showing that

31,911 cases³ of such violence were recorded in 2019, representing a 2.0% increase on the previous year. According to this report, almost half of gender-based violence victims (47.1%) are aged between 25 and 39 years. Victims of this form of violence had an average age of 36.6 years. The greatest increases in numbers of victims in 2019 were recorded among women aged 75 or over (25.0%), and between 70 and 74 years (15.6 %), while the largest decrease was seen in women aged between 65 and 69 years (-8.9%).

2.2 Specifics of domestic violence in the Roma communities

There is no organisation in Spain that collects data on the number of deaths of Roma women that are attributable to their gender. However, information available from the media and other organisations that work with the Roma community enable some specific cases of gender-based violence towards women of this ethnicity to be identified.

Gender-based violence is a problem suffered by women of all nationalities, cultures, social classes, ages and ethnic groups, which therefore inevitably affects the Roma population as well. By reviewing the news items published by the media (while noting that most were sensationalist in tone), we were able complete a survey of the cases of gender-based violence specifically directed towards women of Roma ethnicity by their partners or ex-partners, thereby identifying five specific cases that occurred in distinct regions of Spain: Galicia, Extremadura, Mallorca, Santa Cruz del Retamar (Toledo) and Madrid. The first death from gender-based violence within the Roma community recorded in these information sources was that of María Luisa Jiménez, who was 37 years old, a mother of six children and pregnant when she was killed in 2014 by her then partner. According to the information published by the newspaper *20 Minutos* [20 Minutes], the measures proposed by the Roma community dictated that the family of the accused should leave Galicia to avoid reprisals by the relatives of the deceased woman (20minutos 2014).

Another case identified was that of Tamara Simón Barrut, a Roma woman of 24 years of age, who was killed by her partner in 2015. Tamara had been married for two years to a man who had a record of having abused his first wife. According to the statements made by the Roma

³ Obtained from the statistical exploitation of the Central Register for the Protection of Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. This statistic is carried out by the INE under a collaboration agreement concluded with the Ministry of Justice, the body holding that Register.

people in her local area, such a case had never occurred before in the Roma community, as a Roma man never kills his wife. By their account, when a man of Roma ethnicity has problems with his wife, the matter is dealt with by the families concerned (Lorenzo 2015).

A third case in which the victim was identified as a Roma woman was that of Dolores Vargas Silva in 2018, who was 41 years old. Despite never having reported it, people close to Dolores commented that she had been the victim of constant insults and humiliation (Diario de Madrid 2018). Another case of gender-based violence in which the victims are known to have been Roma women was the crime committed by Juan Mendoza Giménez, who killed one sister-in-law and injured his other sister-in-law and his mother-in-law in 2018, as an act of revenge towards his ex-wife for having left him (Quesada 2019). The final case identified occurred in Palma de Mallorca in 2020, when 32-year-old Remedios Cortés Cortés was murdered by her partner (Ultimahora 2020).

These are some of the instances reported in the media, which demonstrate that the situation regarding gender-based violence also affects women of Roma ethnicity and may result in the most extreme forms of violence, such as being murdered by their partners or ex-partners. In light of these circumstances, non-governmental organisations that work with the Roma community, including KAMIRA, have engaged in a range of actions to tackle this situation.

3. Methodology

In line with the terms established for this research, 40 interviews have been completed, through which we aimed to reach a diverse population of women who self-identify as being of Roma ethnicity. The interviews were initially conducted in person, after having made contact with the women who use and benefit from the services provided by the Kamira organisation in disadvantaged areas of the Cordoba city. We first explained the topic and objectives of the research by telephone, and subsequently arranged an in-person meeting with the women who agreed to take part. For the interview itself, safe spaces were secured, so as to ensure the participants' privacy at all times.

However, with the arrival of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the number of cases in Spain, we noted a reticence on the part of the women regarding participation in face-to-face interviews. Consequently, with the approval of the PATTERN project coordinators, it was decided to reduce the amount of in-person contact and instead perform the interviews by telephone. The interviews continued successfully under this system, enabling the research to continue. In spite of the research team's concerns, we have identified no evidence of any substantive, qualitative change in the information provided by the participants during the interviews. It is therefore our view that conducting the process by telephone has not affected the quality of the information, and that the women openly shared their perceptions and life histories, in a similar way to during in-person interviews.

The methodology employed was "snowball" sampling, as proposed by the research coordination team, enabling each interviewee to suggest another contact. It was thereby decided to ask each interviewee to approach her contacts and, if any agreed, the research team coordinated with them to set up the interviewees. This enabled the team to approach contacts in a non-invasive manner, in the context of what can be a delicate topic. The team sought to contact women from a range of areas and social strata, to avoid introducing biases in the research, and to be able to incorporate the perceptions of women in different situations. It has therefore been possible to obtain a broad and relatively representative sample of the Roma sub-communities in Córdoba.

In all cases, participants received advance information on the objectives of the project and how the data provided were going to be used, as well as a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants then proceeded to sign the consent form or provide the

corresponding oral consent, and the approval of 39 of the 40 interviewees was recorded on the dictaphone. Finally, the 40 interviews were transcribed, before being analysed for use in this research.

In general, participants were felt to be open to discussing the topic and sharing information about it. Multiple personal narratives have been obtained from women who have lived through or are currently experiencing a situation of gender-based violence. In all cases, we made efforts to confirm that the women are not in a situation of risk and that they have a support network of close contacts to draw upon if needed. It was not necessary to provide any of the participants with information about the resources and assistance available, given that the interviewees were already aware of or using them, although the women interviewing them were provided with this information in case it was needed. Nevertheless, in certain specific cases, emotional support was provided. The women participating were asked to share only the information they desired, to avoid exerting any kind of pressure. The interviews were conducted with a focus upon gender and, consequently, in an ethical manner, prioritising the wellbeing and emotional health of the participants.

Finally, it is important to note that it was agreed, with the prior approval of the PATTERN project team, to use the term “gender-based violence” [*violencia de género*], rather than “domestic violence” [*violencia doméstica*], in these interviews. The aim was to be consistent with the terminology employed in the Law on *Gender-based Violence* within the Spanish legislative framework, and also to avoid entering into the debate generated by parties of a conservative ideology, which are attempting to invisibilise violence directed towards women because of their gender.

4. Characterisation of the participants in the interviews

Analysis of the sociocultural data collected on the women interviewed for this research showed that, at a general level, they belong to a variety of districts, age groups, and social strata. Regarding housing, most of the women who participated in interviews live in working-class neighbourhoods, or in neighbourhoods that are socially marginalised. Most stated that they live in flats that are rented or classified as social housing. However, some of the interviewees live in neighbourhoods they described as upper-class, and two live in the city centre, which is considered a middle to upper-class district. A minority stated that they live in “normal” areas that are middle-class. Finally, four of the women mentioned that they live in

the home of their parents or parents-in-law, from which it may be concluded that they do not have the economic means to start living in their own home.

The Roma community

According to the sociocultural data collected in this research, most of the interviewees do not live in Roma communities, although they frequently described their neighbourhoods as areas containing a range of cultures, in which Roma people and the majority population live alongside each other. However, eleven of the women do live in communities with other people of the same ethnicity, which they described as a positive way of organising themselves as a community, where they help and support each other.

Regarding the age of the women interviewed, the sample was very wide and heterogeneous. As reported by the women who participated in interviews and decided to share this information, the age range is as follows:

Age range of the women interviewed

Age	Number of women
18 to 23 years	8 women
26 to 29 years	7 women
30 - 35 years	6 women
36 - 40 years	5 women
41 - 46 years	6 women
47 - 51 years	6 women
52 years or over	1 woman

The information provided by interviewees about their level of education shows that approximately half of those who shared this information had post-secondary-level training, whether on vocational or higher-education programmes. Of the other women in the sample, ten had completed compulsory secondary education, without continuing into further education (until approximately 16 years of age). Seven had completed primary-level education only and two described having left school at a very young age. Of these

interviewees, only one had completed upper-secondary education and another returned to her studies after getting married (at approximately 18 years of age).

Marital status

The civil status of the women has been classified using the following variables: single, married, cohabiting and separated/divorced.⁴ It is important to clarify that in the most traditional form of Roma culture, women's virginity is an important value that is celebrated in traditional weddings, and verified through the "handkerchief test". Couples who have had sexual relations before marriage therefore opt to "slip away": moving in with each other without going through the ritual of the wedding. Nevertheless, even if a couple has not taken part in a ceremony and there is no legal document certifying it, within Roma culture, they are still considered to be a married couple. Therefore, when the women in these interviews chose the "cohabiting" category, it is understood that they made the distinction for interviewers who were from the majority population, to indicate that they had not had a wedding ceremony.

In this sense, most of the women who participated in this research (40%) described themselves as married (and therefore are understood to have had a wedding ceremony), while 6 cohabit with their partners. According to the data collected, most of their partners are of Roma ethnicity (37.5%), of mixed ethnicity, or from the majority population but have grown up in Roma communities. Seven of the participants stated that they were divorced or separated, and ten of the women interviewed were single.

Regarding living arrangements, according to the interviewees' statements, most (38%) lived with their children and partner, although some lived with their partner alone (18%) and a limited number just with their children (8%). A situation mentioned by four people was living in their parents' home, while one of the participants lived with her mother and her nieces and nephews, and another with her father and her son.

⁴ It should be noted that this research did not engage with the sexual orientation of the couples, so masculine pronouns have been used to refer to the interviewees' partners.

It was not common in this group for there to be a large number of relatives living with the interviewees. We learned of only one case in which the family consisted of the interviewee's husband, daughter, grandchildren and son-in-law. Finally, it was striking that only two interviewees described living with people from outside the family: one lived with a flat-mate, and only one lived alone.

Employment status and occupation

Most of the women interviewed were working, mainly in social roles, such as jobs in NGOs or as social workers. According to the responses provided, many of the interviewees also work in the hospitality sector, street markets or as street vendors. Six of the participants were studying and, of this group, four worked alongside their studies. However, the proportion of the sample who were unemployed was high, 22.5% of the women being out of work. This situation has been exacerbated by the context of the pandemic which, according to these women's testimonies, caused them to lose their jobs, given that they had insecure positions such as in cleaning. Finally, six of the women who contributed to this research stated that they worked in managing the home (housewives).

Regarding the occupations of the women's spouses, only one was unemployed, while the rest had some kind of work, albeit in some cases within the informal economy. Of the occupations held by the partners, according to the interview data, five were self-employed, 14 were employed and four had an informal work situation. Additionally, two of the spouses held more than one position at the same time.

5. Findings

5.1 Roma women's perceptions of domestic violence

The women interviewed in this research understand the concept of gender-based violence in a relatively homogeneous way, most of them considering it an act of aggression towards the partner which is manifested in two main forms: physical and psychological violence. According to the responses, these forms of violence are exercised through behaviour involving prohibition, humiliation, insults, abuse, control and disrespect. While the majority concur on this conceptualisation, other forms of violence were also mentioned, such as economic violence (two interviewees), as well as institutional, structural, narrative and discursive violence.

However, it is notable that no mention was made of sexual violence as a form of gender-based violence. In an attempt to explain this omission, interviewers specifically asked about this form of violence in a couple of the interviews. The response obtained was that it is included within the concept of physical violence. However, this omission may be interpreted in many ways: for instance, it may be a sign that this form of violence does not figure within the consciousness of the women interviewed; or it may be a transgression that is less evident when it occurs within an affective relationship.

In a wider sense, it may be concluded that the women interviewed are aware of the severity of this issue, given that absolutely all of them agreed that gender-based violence is a serious problem in Spain, and many (15 of the interviewees, corresponding to 38%) saw it as a global-level problem which impacts women regardless of their ethnicity, social class, religion or culture. They therefore defined it as a structural problem that affects all women. On this point, one of them commented: "I believe that it's [all over] the world, that it's not about one country, one race, one ethnicity or one specific municipality. It's something that is as widespread as the Coronavirus pandemic we're experiencing now" (interview no 38).

Similarly, most (28 of the interviewees, corresponding to 70%) agreed that when it comes to violence, it is women who are the most affected. Nevertheless, it is striking that they repeatedly alluded to there being many men who also suffer violence at the hands of their partners, albeit to a lesser degree. According to their responses, abuse towards the male sex

is an issue that is hidden, for reasons such as the shame of reporting such abuse from their female partners. At the same time, it was stated that most violence towards men is primarily psychological. On this point, an interviewee said: “I think that there probably are more women who are abused, I don’t deny it. But I believe that there are many men who are abused too, but because of shame or what people will say, they don’t report it” (interview no 23).

Only a limited number of interviewees said that they considered violence to affect everyone equally (5), regardless of gender, age or class. They often commented that boys and girls are also victims of violence in a general sense, and some also stated that children are also affected by gender-based violence, specifically:

“Well, of course, it’s always us women who are most affected. That’s not to say that there isn’t a minority of men, of children [...] that women, children and men are all involved, but obviously women more. Well, there are lot of men who are psychologically affected: I know many cases, [of] psychological violence, manipulation. It’s not a large number but yes, the most-affected group are women” (interview no 12).

This demonstrates that there is some confusion about the gender-based violence and domestic violence concepts, given that they consider gender-based violence to include men and other members of the family, when really it concerns acts of aggression directly solely and specifically towards women.

Regarding women’s responsibility for provoking the violence, 73% concurred that women are in no way and under no circumstances responsible for such violence:

“The thing is, I believe that every human is free, and I don’t see anything bad in going out and coming home late: that’s each person’s free choice. If we reply in a rude way, we might have had a bad day, or we’re in a bad way, or we’re angry” (interview no 25). In this context, they often said that it’s better for men who are unhappy with their partners and their behaviour to leave them, rather than assaulting and abusing them. Only a minority (6) believed that there are certain cases in which women are responsible, by saying inappropriate things, or because patience has its limits “[...] I understand a lot of men who suffer psychological abuse until the provocation by the woman reaches such a point that the man assaults her. It’s often provoked by the woman”.

Additionally, some of the participants (13%) believed that women have a degree of responsibility in situations of gender-based violence. This is not for provoking the violence but for putting up with the situation of abuse and not stopping their partners or directly breaking the relationship off:

“We’re not guilty because I seek it out or [because] I deserve to be beaten. He can’t beat me because a meal doesn’t taste good. Though, more shocking things have been known. Not that, but I do think that if you know that someone is abusing you, why do we forgive it? I’m guilty for not breaking things off, or because we never get to the point of breaking things off completely” (interview no 9).

However, absolutely none of the women believe there to be any reason that justifies a man abusing a woman. Many concur that if a man is not happy with his partner, or if he doesn’t agree with what she does, he should leave her but in no circumstances abuse her. Moreover, all agree that gender-based violence is a crime, given that nobody has the right to abuse another person.

Variants of gender-based violence

On the variants of gender-based violence, most interviewees believed that it is not the same in one place as in another. Rather, they considered there to be substantial differences in its structure and the ways in which it is resolved. This, in their view, is due to variations in culture and customs, as well as legal differences. On this subject, one interviewee explained that gender-based violence “varies, depending on many factors, including ethnicity, cultures. In each culture, these cases are resolved differently”. Similarly, another commented: “I believe that, in some cases, the culture or tradition that a community has plays a part: there may be different ways of resolving this type of problem” (interview no 34).

Another variable identified is related to the level of development, meaning that differences continue to exist between disadvantaged areas and areas with greater access to economic, educational and information resources:

“Culturally, it’s resolved in different ways, from one place to another, as well. For example, it’s not resolved in the same way in a socially-marginalised place and in an area that isn’t socially marginalised. It’s not resolved in the same way in a European country as it is in another country” (interview no 27).

Like the differences between the various cultures in the world, some identified differences between the Roma community and the majority population. On this matter, an interviewee commented: “It’s not resolved in the same way in the Paya [non-Roma] community and the Roma community. It’s totally different; or in the Arab community, they’ll have other methods and other ways” (interview no 34).

The remaining interviewees did not consider there to be variation, or were not really sure because they were not familiar with the legislation in other countries.

5.2 The range of domestic violence commonly occurring in Roma families

Absolutely all of the women who were interviewed for this research concurred in identifying the existence of gender-based violence in the Roma community, going so far as to assert that there is a lot of violence within the community. They often pointed out that this situation also occurs outside the Roma community, given that it impacts women in all cultures and does not affect Roma women because they are Roma, but because they are women: “Yes, as I said, this isn’t about Roma people, this extends all over, like an illness” (interview no 38).

In the face of this issue, the ways in which situations of violence were said to be commonly resolved in the Roma community are interesting. It is important to underline that the difficulty with generalising was consistently noted, given that each family is a world unto itself and there is no single way or means to resolve this situation; rather, circumstances vary for each case, family and woman. Talking about this issue, one interviewee contended that:

“Nowadays, [it is resolved] in many ways. It depends a lot on the position the woman finds herself in. I’ve come across cases of very closed families that we thought weren’t going to report it to the police, and actually they did end up reporting it, and then, well, people who are more in touch with society and more open-minded who haven’t said anything and have perhaps resolved it within the family or have kept it quiet. It’s very difficult to generalise about that” (interview no 20).

Nevertheless, a thought frequently expressed in the responses was that “times have changed”, referring to the fact that women did not use to report such violence, as customs were more entrenched and traditional in nature, meaning that filing reports was looked upon in a very bad light. In this regard, the first Spanish Senator of Roma ethnicity, Carla Santiago,

has explained the great value placed upon freedom in the Roma community very well, this having been magnified by the systematic oppression the community has suffered throughout its history: “freedom is one of those values that is most intensely conveyed in Roma practices, primarily because it is a community that has historically been persecuted” (Santiago Camacho 1997). This is related to whether, in each case, they uphold a more traditional view, making them more conservative, or whether they have opened up and “modernised” to a greater extent.

However, the women described how the most common way to get out of a situation of violence today is to go to the police to file a report of violence (43%): “Nowadays, I think filing a report and [taking] legal action is the order of the day. They’re increasingly using those means” (interview no 12). The second most common way of resolving a situation of serious violence, according to interviewees’ comments, is through family intervention (35%) or, albeit less frequently, through the person of respect in the community or the Church. This would involve families attempting to mediate between the partners, to resolve the conflict through internal reconciliation and without having to turn to legal authorities. A final means of resolving such situations, which was cited less frequently, is for the woman to go to her parents’ or parents in law’s home for a few days as a way of punishing her partner or letting the conflict calm down, and moving back in with him after a few days. If the woman does not want to go back to her partner, the participants said that she leaves him, and that solves the problem: “Leaving your partner. In the Roma [community], we always prefer to leave our partner or husband than report him” (interview no 40).

In contrast, a third of the interviewees believed that, generally, women do not do anything and keep such situations quiet:

“A Roma woman is very unlikely to report abuse. The way she’s been brought up is totally different. To report it to the police, it would have to be something very serious, [but] even then she may not report it. Faced with their family, they try to put up with a lot, and keep many things quiet” (interview no 23).

Difficulties and barriers faced by Roma women in situations of gender-based violence

According to results of this research, based on the responses received in 40 interviews with Roma women in Córdoba, if a woman finds herself in a situation of gender-based violence,

there are many barriers she has to overcome to resolve the situation and thereby free herself of it.

The most common and formidable barrier identified by the women in this context is the family, in several fundamental respects. Firstly, over a third of the interviewees confessed to fearing that their family would not believe their account of being in a situation of violence, or would pressure them not to report their partner. One interviewee described such a case:

“I had to withdraw the report because of my family, because my family threatened me. They told me that the report would generate conflict between the families and that I had to withdraw it. [They said] that if I didn’t want to be with him, I should leave him, but that I had to withdraw the report. So I had to withdraw the report”.

But the main concern they described was the fear of confrontation between the families, whether because the woman’s own family goes to the other to protest or, more commonly, because the partner’s family reacts violently and what is described as “la ruina” [literally, “catastrophe”] is generated. This term was often used in the interviews to describe, in the words of one interviewee, “reprisals or feuds between the two families”. One of the interviewees explained: “The family is limiting, they’re often afraid that their family will react badly, [of] feuds between the families. They don’t want to create more problems” (interviewee no 11). Another mentioned her own fear: “That my family will get into a fight with him, that he’ll kill my brother, he’ll kill my uncle, that he’ll kill my children, that he’ll kill me if I let him”. It is striking that women who expressed fear of their families were much more numerous (38%) than those who mentioned fear of reprisals from their partner himself (23%).

Another reason mentioned was shame, the fear of society’s rejection, disdain and “what everyone will say”. They noted how, in conservative communities, above all, marriage is very important for a Roma woman, as is their role as wives. This means that separating from one’s partner is a failure and therefore, not looked upon well. In such circumstances, there is the possibility of being negatively judged by Roma society.

In parallel with the interviewees’ continuous references to the Roma custom of not filing reports with police, came allusions to “respect”. Seven believed filing a report to be an act of disrespect: their customs and the deep-rooted sense of family’s importance make this an obstacle. In this sense, they also described how it is not viewed favourably in this community

for a woman to end up “alone” or to have been “left” [dejada], the latter term being used to refer to divorce or separation. “It’s very difficult because, look, when a Roma woman gets married, it’s meant to be for life. If you leave that man, it’s like a disgrace. You keep quiet to avoid creating a problem” (interview no 6). As well as disrespect, the desire to avoid harming the aggressor was mentioned, often because it is common for there to be an additional family connection with partners, such as being cousins. The family unit and good family relations are therefore very important cultural values for the Roma population.

At an institutional level, participants noted the lack of people to turn to, the difficulty of identifying where to go or how to act, added to the lack of cultural mediators or people of Roma ethnicity working in such institutions that can understand their context, culture, customs and specific issues, which are distinct to those of the majority population. Moreover, the individual and institutional-level discrimination within state agencies that specialise in this topic creates a lack of willingness among Roma women to use these services. Added to this is the fact that the police have persecuted and harassed people from this ethnic group throughout their history, as a result of the laws mentioned earlier, making it common to consider the police an institutional enemy of the community. Three of the interviewees stated “that the police is no friend of the Roma” and that they did not trust in the legal system. One of the participants added:

“Perhaps [it’s] not trusting much in the legal system. You trust [it] but you’re left with some hesitance, in case they stigmatise or they prejudge you because you’re Roma. There’s a historical fear there, meaning you trust but you never manage to trust completely. Not like before, but we know that if there is a problem, you have to go like any other citizen, there’s no other choice. But, speaking for myself personally, a lot of us Roma people have that, not resentment, but doubt about whether [they’ll] act the same with us Roma or if we’ll receive some other type of treatment, better or worse, we don’t know” (interviewee no 18).

Added to all these difficulties is the economic problem of seeing oneself to lack resources and struggling to access employment. The situation is worsened if there are children to look after. A phenomenon mentioned in some responses, and which came up in many interviews, was that custom dictates that women cannot keep their family home, but must leave it: “Non-Roma women can keep their home. That’s more complicated for us because if we file a report, we’d need more help, we need to have help for housing and to leave our home” (interviewee no 8).

Cases and types of violence

When it comes to gender-based violence among close contacts or acquaintances, it is notable that 34 out of the 40 interviewees, or 85%, were familiar with cases of women who have suffered or are currently victims of some form of violence. Five of them described having suffered violence themselves. The most common form identified was psychological violence, followed very closely by physical violence:

“I have heard about several types of violence, from elderly women who have even been stabbed, to women whom I’m not sure whether [their aggressor] has gone as far as beating up. And I also know women who have started to go out with someone and were dealt a smack or a punch and nothing happened, they carried on as if nothing happened. I’ve also met women who have experienced such horrible psychological pressure, though they never laid a finger on her, that they’ve had to change their personality. A bit of everything” (interview no 20).

In some cases the women also mentioned sexual violence, although it is striking that this phenomenon was mentioned so infrequently in the research. That does not necessarily mean that it does not exist, as there may be other variables, such as: that the people interviewed may not have wanted to share this information during the interview; that sexual violence in affective relationships may not be identified, or that this act may have been naturalised. Naturalisation of the various forms of violence was also a common factor in the responses of the women interviewed. One of them commented:

“Most don’t see it as violence, as such. The key phrase is ‘he treats me well because he doesn’t hit me’ and that’s it, everything else they can put up with. So obviously, they don’t understand that they’re in an environment of gender-based violence. So that’s the way it goes. So he spends the money he earns out on the street and then we don’t have enough to eat, well that’s the way it goes, that’s what he’s like, I married him and now it falls to me to put up with it” (interview no 18).

They also pointed out that it is difficult to recognise violence when you grew up in a home where your father abused his partner as well as his children:

“It’s like they hit you throughout your whole life. First you suffer abuse from your father and your brothers, because you are a woman, you’re a girl and what you have to do is learn to wash up and sweep the floor. That’s all; you’re no good for anything else. And you go from having that psychological abuse in your parents’ home to undergoing

it in your husband's home. Because you get married and you're no good for anything, you're good for what I say you are. You're good for sweeping, for washing up, and for doing what I tell you, when I tell you and how I tell you" (interview no 19).

Further, on numerous occasions the interviewees mentioned abuse towards Roma women, of which they described themselves as victims, caused by a triple discrimination that is rooted in their gender, ethnicity and economic situation. In this sense, Roma women are abused for being women, for being Roma, and for being poor. These conditions generate violence not only from their partners or ex-partners, but also from public and national institutions, reaching the level of structural abuse: "From rejecting you for a job because you're Roma, [to] denying you access to resources, companies, social services (which is where I think most violence is exercised) and even with the police themselves" (interview no 32).

5.3 The level of knowledge Roma women possess in regards to domestic violence, their rights, and how to seek help for themselves

On the subject of access to information and the level of knowledge about access to existing resources to assist with cases of gender-based violence, the vast majority of interviewees believed that information was available, and consequently were well informed about where to go if they needed help. Failing this, if they did not know the exact telephone number, they said they would know where to obtain the information if they needed it. The few women interviewed who were not aware of the information said this was because they had not needed it, and therefore had not been concerned about informing themselves on the matter.

However, the interviewees with training in social work thought that the information on the available support network for this issue could be much improved. The creation of an up-to-date document was proposed, including all the centres and services focused on providing a solution to this issue.

In some responses, the women noted that it is not a problem of a lack of information about services providing assistance and access, saying that when women do not call these services, it is not because they do not know who to call, but because they do not want to. The issue lies rather with fear of reporting violence, services that do not provide an adequate response to situations of violence, and other variables that will be analysed further on, regarding the

barriers Roma women face when trying to escape situations of violence and the other barriers mentioned earlier in this report.

5.4 The experiences of Roma women in accessing, or not accessing, support services

Half of the women interviewed have needed the information and services for themselves or for a woman close to them. The services they have used most frequently are the police (the Civil Guard or the local/national police force), and the Women's Institute [Instituto de la Mujer], while a minority have made use of shelters or some other type of social service. Perceptions of the quality and efficiency of the assistance received were rather polarised. Half of those who have used one of these services believed that they achieved a good result; however, the other half felt that resources were inadequate and that the results obtained fell short of the mark.

The women who considered the service to have been inefficient claimed that this was due to the inadequacy of the resources, which are not adapted to the context and diversity of Roma women. Additionally, they said that the measures taken are not effective, and restraining orders do not serve their purpose. One of them described her view of the situation more fully: "The legal system doesn't work either, it's not helpful for them to take us to a shelter, not in our situation, for us that's no good. The legal system doesn't work" (interview no 20).

The responses highlight the specific needs of the Roma community and its family structure. Given the importance of family and family-related values in this culture, as well as the appreciation of freedom, filing a report with the police is a very significant matter. This is because the relatives of the person reported, according to the information shared by the interviewees, may take reprisals. On this subject, one interviewee was of the view that:

"The legal system doesn't work. What we see on the TV is a lie: when I see news about dead women, I think that what they serve up to us on TV doesn't exist, it's not true. They can't detain a man for a verbal assault and then tell you that within 48 hours, they're going to let him go. And if they let him go, what do I do? Listen, I'm a Roma woman, but the thing is that they'll kill me and his family will kill my family. Perhaps I'll get out of it alive but the thing is, they'll kill my people. Nobody sees that, it's as if it didn't exist. There's this covering up [of the problem], a cloak that the government [...]"

and all this about us all being equal before the law, and that's right, but there are some of us that have more needs than others" (interview no 19).

On the other hand, some testimonies given in the interviews told of the substantial help they received from the authorities, when the aggressors were put in jail. There are also cases in which shelters enabled the victims to find a place of refuge and protect their lives and those of their children, as well as receiving emotional support. These women added that they were looked after well, although they identified cultural divides that hindered communication and access for Roma women, so they suggested that cultural mediators should be present in all these care and support services.

Cultural mediation

The need for cultural mediators stood out clearly, their absence amounting to a significant gap in services. In response to this question, many women were not aware of the existence or role of a mediator or cultural mediator. There were answers such as: "Yes... Well, so now what can we call a cultural mediator? The question is, what is a cultural mediator? The work of mediation exists here, whether cultural or not, we mediate in everything" (interview no 27). This is due to the fact that no such figure exists in the public services. The people who come closest to this role are social workers. However, according to some of the Roma women interviewed in this research, the presence of this figure in support services and centres is vital, as they are the necessary cultural link between the Roma ethnic group and support services:

"I work with an intercultural mediator but I believe that mediator figure should be extended to more places: in the city council and in the various service departments of the social centres. Because I might be explaining something but you don't understand me because of a cultural divide. The mediator figure would facilitate getting help" (interview no 15).

Many of the interviewees associated the role of mediation with the person of respect in the community. While this figure is disappearing in the south of Spain, at the moment, it is usually occupied by the most elderly person in the community:

"Within the Roma community, [people] recognise the patriarch, although it's not good to use that word, I don't like it. The person of respect no longer exists, but what usually

happens is to gather together the oldest relatives and they discuss it between them. Here in Córdoba, there is no single mediator” (interview no 11).

Nonetheless, some interviewees considered this to be problematic as well because, if the community is very conservative, there is a risk that the person of respect will take an approach that is not neutral or fair towards women. For this reason, one of the interviewees noted that it is not necessarily beneficial to turn to them:

“Mediators... in what way? Listening to the Roma mediators is positioning yourself below the men yet again, so it’s like not asking for help. They might decide that the man is right and place the responsibility on us women. Women always have to be below the men” (interview no 10).

In other autonomous communities in Spain, agents called civic-community coordinators [coordinadores cívico-comunitarios] have been introduced to fulfil the mediation role, acting as a bridge to facilitate communication between the Roma community and public services. As one of the interviewees explained, they are:

“Roma people who, in the event of conflict, can act: civic-community mediation that operates between Payos and Roma people, and the council of the elderly that most often acts on cases involving Roma families, which is a much more powerful figure. Normally, when they act it’s [because] the families haven’t reached an agreement, and they act to impose some measures that have to be taken, but the families decide whether to take them or not” (interview no 36).

Differences in gender-based violence in the Roma community and the majority population

When speaking of the challenges faced when asking for help, most of the women interviewed considered it to be more difficult for a Roma woman to get help and access services or information about their rights. Only one thought it would be easier for them to achieve this. The main reason identified was the discrimination they receive from institutional bodies. One of the women commented:

“Also, the possibility of suffering institutional violence... I learnt about the case of a woman who suffered abuse, called the police, explained the situation of gender-based violence she was undergoing and they didn’t record it as gender-based violence, nor did they go over to see what was happening. And I believe it was because she was a Roma woman” (interview no 32).

Hand in hand with racism comes discrimination because of the preconception that Roma women are more problematic, or are used to a certain way of living. Therefore, the treatment they receive is worse than that a woman from the majority population would receive. This is how the participants explained it:

“I don’t know, sometimes I think that, because of the question of racism, it’s more difficult for Roma women. Maybe, as they don’t see me as a Roma woman, they tell you they don’t think of you that way, but the thing is, that’s what I am. Or when [Roma women] file a report, they think that we, Roma women, are used to our husband hitting us. So I do think that, because of the question of racism, [Roma women] have more problems because they don’t pay them as much attention, in that sense” (interview no 17).

Moreover, there is the sense that Roma women are not victims of only one type of discrimination, but that they suffer from multiple forms of discrimination: for being women, for being of Roma ethnicity and, in many cases, for being poor. This is what one of the participants pointed out:

“Listen, the violence can be the same. But within the Roma community, a Roma woman who suffers gender-based violence has triple the discrimination: for being a woman, being Roma, being a victim, and [it’s] worse still if she lives in a marginalised neighbourhood” (interview no 14).

Another barrier that impedes Roma women’s to the services that can help them put an end to situations of violence, according to the participants, is the lack of influential Roma figures who can act as cultural mediators in public centres: “[in] those places where non-Roma women go, there are no influential Roma figures, who should be there”. Similarly, some described a feeling that the resources are not for them that the resources are not for their community:

“I think it can often be more difficult because of the perception that Roma women have of the services, and that sense of otherness the Roma woman has about the services, like, this doesn’t belong to me, this is a service that exists for Payos. I’m not going to use it, they’re not going to accept me as just another regular user” (interview no 36).

Those who considered it to be more difficult for Roma women to access resources believed that this is related to a lack of education, which makes it impossible for a woman to obtain information:

“Accessing resources would be more difficult. Today, you can still come across a young woman who doesn’t have the ability to access these resources: the literacy and knowledge about these resources... So, if you haven’t had a normal education, you can still come across a woman of 30 who doesn’t know how to use the internet. And therefore, [there’s] a greater likelihood of suffering that type of violence” (interview no 32).

Finally, almost half thought that access to resources, services and information would be the same for a Roma woman as for a woman from the majority population in Spain, given that the challenge isn’t related to ethnicity or culture, but to each woman’s income and economic situation. The worse a woman’s socioeconomic situation, the more difficult it will be to inform herself, find out about the resources and assistance available, and learn about her rights.

5.5 The skills Roma women may lack in order to claim their rights

It is clear that the most recommendable resource available for resolving a situation of gender-based violence is reporting one’s partner to the state agencies. Of all the interviewees, 58% claimed that they would advise their friends to report such a situation, and 25% would suggest that they turn to professional services and support. On the same topic, 35% would advise that their friend leave her partner, 23% of whom would advise doing so without reporting him. Only three interviewees said that they would tell her to ask for help from her relatives. Six mentioned the importance of listening to the victim, learning about what she wants, and giving her emotional support and resources. What was present in all the responses was that the women would tell their friend not to keep it quiet, not to carry on in that situation.

Nevertheless, the difference between the advice the interviewees would give and their answers about the ways in which cases of violence are resolved is striking. When it comes to actually resolving situations of abuse, the use of mediation between the families is much more common.

Most of the interviewees agreed that gender-based violence directly affects and violates the rights of women, as a form of humiliation, abuse and a restriction of freedom. Frequent mention was made of this type of violence being a way to crush women and deprive them of

their dignity: “The thing is, it’s a humiliation: you feel inferior, humiliated. It crushes you” (interview no 12). There was a limited number of responses which, in contrast, expressed the belief that gender-based violence does not impact or affect women. Finally, some women had difficulties understanding the question, which leads us to believe that they are not familiar with the concept of women’s rights.

6. Conclusions

A wide range of conclusions have been obtained through this research, thanks to having been able to collect the perceptions and experiences of the Roma women who decided to participate.

Absolutely all of those women believed that cases of violence are a problem that also affects the Roma community. Additionally, 85% of the interviewees know women who have been victims of violence because they are women, or have suffered such violence themselves. One in every two of the women interviewed stated that she had needed to use some kind of gender-based violence support service for herself or for a woman who is close to her.

Further, we have been able to establish that, while there are cases of women within the Roma community having naturalised certain forms of less evident gender-based violence, such as its psychological variant, in general, they are aware of and can easily identify what gender-based violence is, as well as the resources and organisations available for them to file a report or receive other kinds of assistance. Two main forms of violence figure within the consciousness of these women – physical and psychological violence – whereas there is much less recognition of other variants, such as sexual, economic, symbolic and institutional violence. This is despite the fact that, according to their statements, these forms of violence also affect them. All the interviewees clearly recognised that violence and abuse is not justified in any circumstances. Nevertheless, there was some confusion about the concepts of domestic and gender-based violence, in that many understood gender-based violence to affect men and other family members as well, whereas this is actually an action directed specifically against women. We have also seen that some people had the impression that, while gender-based violence exists within Roma communities, it does not go so far as the murder of women. This idea was raised alongside the argument that almost no cases are seen in the media. However, given that the information collected on these crimes is not disaggregated by ethnicity, there is no disaggregated data available on this matter.

Whereas the social structure based on family relations provides the community with a support network operating on multiple levels, this can also create significant barriers for women who find themselves in situations of gender-based violence. In this regard, the main difficulty the women expressed was fear of internal family conflict, such as the confrontation between families that can arise from reporting violence or from women sharing their

situation with their family members. Such is the scale of this problem that the interviewees expressed greater concern and fear of reprisals from families than from their own partner. As a result, they often prefer to keep situations of violence quiet, so as to avoid generating greater conflict. On the other hand, mediation between families is very common as a means to avoid entering into legal proceedings, but it is not always objective or favourable towards the woman who has suffered from the violence. Through the interviewees' statements, we may therefore identify a need for agency, enabling them to make decisions about their own lives without social or culture pressure.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative for the state to incorporate protection strategies into its standard procedures that consider the customs and social structures of the Roma community. On this same matter, it is an urgent priority to introduce the figure of cultural mediators, who can make accessing public services and agencies a smoother, more viable process for Roma women. This should be implemented at all levels, but focus particularly on supporting cases of gender-based violence, in which the levels of urgency and vulnerability are amplified. This would simultaneously strengthen the link with the Roma community, for whom such public agencies have so far represented an oppressive institution rather than an ally, due to the history of the Roma people.

The research also shows that the resources available for taking in and supporting people who find themselves in situations of vulnerability, caused by the violence inflicted by their partners, are useful and have provided support and assistance. However, they need to be strengthened and to take inclusive measures, considering the multiculturalism of users in Spain.

An important conclusion this research has enabled us to reach is that it is very difficult to determine whether Roma women are victims of more or less violence than women from the majority population. Gender-based violence is structural in all societies and has an impact on women, regardless of their culture, ethnicity, religion or class. What can be observed is that this violence affects the participants as women, but they also experience vulnerability as a result of exposure to other forms of violence, linked to discrimination based on their class and ethnicity. In this sense, poor women of Roma ethnicity do not enjoy the same conditions, privileges, treatment, resources and access as upper-class women from the majority population. This is further reinforced by the difficulties they experience in accessing employment, which is exacerbated by their low level of academic education.

Finally, in order to combat gender-based violence, it is necessary to act at several levels. Action is needed: at an educational level, by fostering training and secondary-level education for Roma women; on a personal level, to raise their awareness and empower them in the face of this issue; at an institutional level, by implementing and strengthening the work of social workers and cultural mediators; and at a societal level, by combating racism and discrimination, and working to give Roma women the autonomy and agency to make decisions about their lives with freedom.

7. References

- 20Minutos. “Todo un clan gitano huye de Galicia tras la muerte de una mujer a manos de su marido [A Whole Roma Clan Flees from Galicia after the Murder of a Woman at the Hands of her Husband]”. 20 Minutos, 27 February 2014.
- Álvarez, Pilar, and Isabel Valdés. “Derogar la ley de violencia de género y otros planes de VOX contra las mujeres [Repealing the Law on Gender-based Violence and Other of VOX’s Plans Against Women]”. El País, 3 December 2018.
- Dirección General de la Policía [General Directorate of Police]. Código de Violencia de Género y Doméstica [Gender-based and Domestic Violence Code]. Boletín Oficial de Estado (BOE), 18 November 2020.
- europapress. “¿Es contitucional la Ley de Violencia de Género? [Is the Law on Gender-based Violence Constitutional?]”. 4 January 2019.
- Gimeno Reinoso, Beatriz, and Violeta Barrientos Silva. “Violencia de género versus violencia doméstica: La importancia de la especificidad [Gender-based Violence Versus Domestic Violence: The Importance of Specificity]”. Revista Venezolana de Estudios de la Mujer 14, No 32 (June 2009).
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística. “Estadística de Violencia Doméstica y Violencia de Género (EVDVG) [Statistics on Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence (EVDVG)]”. 2019.
- Laparra, Miguel. Diagnóstico social de la comunidad gitana en España. Un análisis contrastado de la Encuesta del CIS a Hogares de Población Gitana. Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad [Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality], 2011.
- Lorenzo, Sergio. “Maltrató a su primera mujer y a la segunda la mató [He Abused his First Wife and Killed the Second]”. HOY, 13 March 2015.
- Minder, Raphael. “Ana Orantes, la mujer cuyo asesinato atroz hizo que España cambiara sus leyes [Ana Orantes: the Woman whose Appalling Murder Made Spain Change its Laws]”. The New York Times, 17 January 2020.
- Ministerio de Derechos Sociales [Ministry of Social Rights] and Agenda 2030. Población Gitana [Roma Population]. 2005.

Ministerio de Igualdad [Ministry of Equality]. “Macroencuesta de violencia contra la mujer [Large-scale Survey on Violence against Women]”. 2019.

Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática [Ministry of the Presidency, Relations with Parliament and Democratic Memory]. Ley Orgánica 1/2004, de 28 de diciembre, de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género. BOE, 29 December 2004.

Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática. La Constitución Española [The Spanish Constitution]. BOE, 1978.

Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática. Constitución Española [Spanish Constitution]. BOE, 27 September 2011.

Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática. Ley 27/2003, de 31 de julio, reguladora de la Orden de protección de las víctimas de la violencia doméstica [Law 27/2003 of 31 July, Governing the Protection Order for Victims of Domestic Violence]. BOE, 1 August 2003.

Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad [Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality]. “Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España [National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma Population in Spain]”. 2012-2020.

Nogueira, Charo. “El Congreso aprueba por unanimidad la ley integral contra la violencia de género [The Congress Unanimously Approves the Integrated Law Against Gender-based Violence]”. El País, 8 October 2004.

Quesada, Juan Diego. “Un hombre mata a tiros en Aranjuez a su cuñada y deja herida a otras dos familiares [A Man Shoots his Sister-in-Law Dead in Aranjuez and Leaves Two Other Female Relatives Injured]”. El País, 11 June 2019.

Santiago Camacho, Carla. Nuestras culturas [Our Cultures]. Teaching Unit Vol No 9. 1997.

Toscano, Carla. “VOX grupo parlamentario [VOX Parliamentary Group]”. 4 March 2020. https://www.voxespana.es/grupo_parlamentario/notas-de-prensa-grupo-parlamentario/vox-pide-sustituir-la-ley-de-violencia-de-genero-por-una-de-violencia-intrafamiliar-20200304.

Ultimahora. “El asesino confeso de Remedios Cortés pasa a disposición judicial [The Self-confessed Murderer of Remedios Cortés is Taken into Custody]”. 3 December 2020.

Vargas, Dolores. "Finaliza el comité de crisis [The Crisis Committee Comes to an End]". Diario de Madrid, 4 June 2018.



LEARN MORE:
projectpattern.eu

