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# A scoping review of social work with Roma and Traveller communities: introducing the ROMA model

Dan Allen <sup>a</sup>, Jackie Bolton<sup>b</sup>, Doreen Dove<sup>b</sup>, Allison Hulmes <sup>c</sup>, Chris Kidd<sup>b</sup>, Mairtain Moloney-Neachtain<sup>b</sup>, Ian Rees<sup>d</sup>, Michaela Rogers <sup>e</sup>, Alison Smith<sup>b</sup> and Peter Unwin<sup>f</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Although The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma presents a list of priorities that aim to address the social and economic marginalisation of Roma and Traveller people in Europe, the contribution that social work is making to efforts to achieve these aims is unclear. Therefore, a scoping review of current scholarship was conducted to summarise the existing body of knowledge and identify how social work can help to achieve The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma. The databases Academic Search Complete, SAGE Journals Online, ScienceDirect, and Social Care Online were searched resulting in the inclusion of 20 articles published between 2010 and 2024. Two themes were identified: (1) Antigypsyism and (2) Restorative Practice. The findings show that restorative practices could help to promote human rights and the social and intercultural inclusion of Roma and Travellers in Europe. Informed by the articles included in this scoping review, the 'Reflection, Objective, Movement and Action (ROMA) Model: A Framework for Restorative Practice is introduced as a solution to enable social workers to achieve The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma and future national strategic frameworks for Roma and Traveller inclusion.

## ARTICLE HISTORY



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## KEYWORDS

Social work; Gypsy; Roma; Traveller; restorative supervision

## Introduction

Throughout Europe, 10–12 million Roma and Traveller people are living with the effects of chronic political, social and economic marginalisation (The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 2014, 2020). Structural, institutional and organisational inequalities continue to undermine their human rights (Nuseibeh, 2021), impeding their full participation in society (Wasileski & Miller, 2014) and propagating antigypsyism, a specific form of racism that associates Roma and Traveller people with a series of pejorative stereotypes and distorted images (Council of Europe (CoE), 2020). Despite international efforts to tackle racism, dispel prejudices and advance anti-

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discrimination legislation, antigypsyism continues to reproduce structural disadvantage and lock Roma and Traveller people into a cycle of poverty and inequality (FRA, 2014).

Recognising an urgent need to address antigypsyism as a social determinate of inequality, The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010) presents a list of priorities that serve as guidance for remedial efforts needed to address the social and economic marginalisation of Roma and Traveller people in line with international treaties. Operationalised through two 'Strategic Action Plans' (CoE, 2020), the Council of Europe has further developed The Declaration to provide clear policy frameworks for restorative practices designed to repair structural and institutional inequalities caused by centuries of antigypsyism (Kostka, 2015).

Aligned to The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, the primary objective of the current action plan aims to reinforce efforts to eradicate antigypsyism in four sectorial priority areas: education, employment, health and housing (CoE, 2020). While some progress is being made to address social and economic marginalisation in these areas (Ghimisi, 2021), the exclusion of 'social work' from the sectorial priority target areas could mean that opportunities to improve social protections and child welfare services are falling behind (Allen & Riding, 2018). Although social work is a profession that utilises restorative practice models to promote social justice, social change, social cohesion, and the empowerment of people (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014), the contribution that it is making to eradicate antigypsyism and help support the realisation of The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma is unclear.

To present a more comprehensive illustration of the way that social work might be helping to focus efforts to address the social and economic marginalisation of Roma and Traveller people, in line with The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010), this scoping review aims to map available literature from January 2010 until March 2024.

## Methods

A scoping review provides a robust methodological opportunity to identify the nature and extent of research evidence and pinpoint areas for further investigation (Grant & Booth, 2009). A scoping review methodology was deemed most appropriate to answer the review questions. To help ensure a systematic and transparent approach to the review process, the scoping review followed the methodology for scoping reviews outlined by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) (Peters et al. 2021). It adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) and the protocol was developed and registered at the Open Science Framework on 20/03/2024 (DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/YRPVM). The following research questions directed this review:

1. How is social work with Roma and Traveller people being reported in current scholarship?
2. How can current scholarship on social work with Roma and Traveller people be used to support The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma?

## Ethics

This study is a scoping review of published literature and featured no human participants. The ethics panel of Liverpool Hope University (UK) provided ethical approval for its completion.

## Study eligibility

This review aimed to explore the core characteristics of social work with Roma and Traveller communities as reported in published empirical studies, specifically primary original research and case studies that were Open Access and reported in peer-reviewed publications. Scoping and systematic

reviews were excluded because this would lead to double-counting studies selected for the scoping review. Consideration was also given to using the criteria in the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (Hong et al., 2018) but limitations were not used as an exclusion criterion to ensure that the range of social work research referring to Roma and Traveller people is accurately mapped (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Our inclusion criteria in terms of language were restricted to English language studies as translation resources were not available for this project. No studies were excluded based on geographical location. We searched for studies published from 2010, a date that aligns with The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (2010), to March 2024.

The following databases were searched: Academic Search Complete, SAGE Journals Online, ScienceDirect, and Social Care Online. The search terms are presented in Table 1.

The titles and abstracts of retrieved papers were screened by two independent reviewers (DA and AH) and assessed against inclusion criteria utilising the Rayyan.ai platform, a web and mobile application designed for systematic reviews (Ouzzani et al., 2016). To be included, papers were required to meet the following criteria: (1) published in the English language between 2010 and 2024; (2) research articles reporting social work with Roma and Traveller communities. Papers were excluded based on the following criteria: (1) systematic or scoping reviews; (2) non-peer reviewed articles including protocol papers, commentaries, conference abstracts and thesis; (3) studies that did not report on social work with Roma and Traveller communities. Papers that met the inclusion criteria were retrieved in full and independently assessed in greater detail by two reviewers (DA and AH). Disagreements were resolved by consulting with a third reviewer (MR). Full-text papers that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded.

## Search results

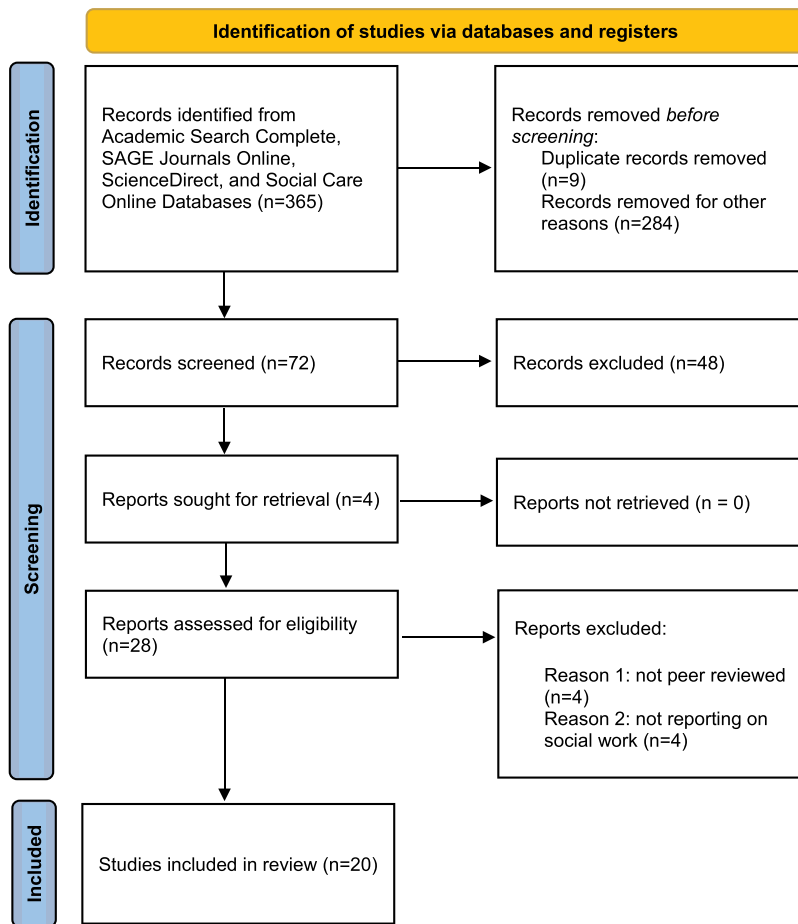
The search of electronic databases identified a total of 365 citations. 293 citations were excluded at this stage based on the inclusion of keywords in the title only ( $n = 284$ ) and the removal of duplicate records ( $n = 9$ ). 72 papers were screened at the title and abstract stage. In total, 48 papers were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. A targeted website search of key websites (Council of Europe and European Roma Rights Centre) identified an additional 4 reports. The full-text papers for 24 articles were assessed for eligibility. 4 of these papers were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. An additional hand search was performed of the reference lists of key articles but resulted in no new relevant material being identified. Overall, the search resulted in 20 peer reviewed articles for inclusion in the review. See Figure 1 for the flow of studies through the scoping review, adapted from Page et al. (2021).

## Data extraction

Consistent with the advice of Peters et al. (2021) the research team developed a draft data extraction table that could reflect the two research questions. Data extraction was piloted at a stage with the research team independently extracting data from a random sample of five papers (Ibid.). Following ongoing discussion, the data extraction table was refined. Data extraction included details about the publication, country-specific focus, study aims, findings and recommendations. Through the data extraction phase, the research team met and refined definitions

**Table 1.** Search strategy.

	Search Terms
Social Work	'Gypsy' OR 'Roma' OR 'Traveller' OR 'Romani' OR 'Sinti' OR 'Manush' OR 'Calé' OR 'Kaale' OR 'Romanichals' OR 'Boyash' OR 'Rudari' OR 'Balkan Egyptians' OR 'Ashkali' OR 'Dom' OR 'Lom' OR 'Abdal' OR 'Travellers' OR 'Yenish' OR 'Gens du voyage'



**Figure 1.** PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews.

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71.

for the charting categories to ensure the definitions were clear and encompassed different dimensions of the concepts used in the studies. Four studies were used to pilot the extraction process to ensure inter-rater reliability between researchers (DA and AH). A basic synthesis of the selected studies is presented in [Table 2](#).

## Analysis

Content analysis was used to synthesise findings and identify key themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Following the advice of Bengtsson (2016), an inductive approach to analysis involved the exploration of data contained within the papers for emergent themes. Throughout the study, the research team allowed concepts to emerge and worked together to consider how social work with Roma and Traveller people was being described and understood. The analytical framework enabled the principles of antigypsyism to emerge through the perspective of Roma and Traveller people and their recommendations for restorative actions needed to limit social justice, social change and social cohesion in line with The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (2010).

**Table 2.** Full list of selected articles and synthesis of results.

Author, year, country	Aims	Methodology and data collection methods	Results	Recommendations
Butler & Gheorghiu, 2010, Romania	To consider the rights of Roma children vulnerable to institutionalisation.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 13) social workers	Social workers lack the skills, competence and support needed to protect Roma children.	Co-produce policies for social work practice.
Urh, 2011, Slovenia	To understand social work education and practice.	Theoretical analysis of literature.	Social workers lack sensitivity and reinforce stereotypes and institutional racism.	Develop anti-racist social work practice.
Lau & Ridge, 2011, England	To consider the impact of social exclusion on mental health.	Case summary.	Social workers are offering poor support in health and social care.	Promote community participation in policy and decision making.
Popoviciu et al., 2013, Romania	To examine the decision-making processes of social workers.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 89) social workers.	The negative perception of Roma people can lead to the forced removal of a child.	Align social work with human rights frameworks.
Roth et al., 2013, Romania	To examine the vulnerabilities of Roma children and youth.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 22) Roma young people.	Social workers can help to overcome poverty and discrimination.	Social work should promote community engagement.
Monteiro et al., 2013, Portugal	To understand the social representations of mental health.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 20) Roma young people.	Social workers are not promoting mental health alongside the welfare of the family.	Include Roma people in projects designed to promote well-being.
Wasileski & Miller, 2014, Slovakia	This paper examines the issues related to intimate partner violence.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 20) Roma women.	Roma culture discourages women from requesting assistance.	Improve cultural sensitivity.
Roth & Toma, 2014, Romania	To examine the barriers to effectively addressing the rights of the Roma.	Secondary Analysis.	Social workers show ambivalent attitudes toward Roma people.	Align social work with human rights frameworks.
Allen, 2015, United Kingdom and Ireland	To consider the cultural identity and experiences of state care.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 10) Roma and Traveller adults	The lack of cultural continuity leads to long-term negative impacts on their identity and well-being.	Develop reflective approaches to social work supervision.
Allen, 2016, United Kingdom	To understand how unexamined biases can influence decisions in care proceedings.	Theoretical analysis of the literature.	Understanding diverse cultures is essential to avoid decisions based on stereotypes or cultural misunderstandings.	Develop reflective approaches to social work supervision.
Daly, 2016, United Kingdom	To advance a reflective exploration of the dynamics between social workers and Irish Travellers.	Qualitative literature review and interview with (n = 1) Traveller woman.	Unconscious biases affect professional relationships and decision-making.	Develop reflective approaches to social work supervision
Sardelić, 2017 Multiple European.	To analyse EU documents addressing the situation of Roma children.	Document analysis.	The marginalisation of Roma children in the EU is a result of both systemic and everyday racism.	Align social work with human rights frameworks.
Kandylaki & Kallinikaki, 2018, Greece	To examine the role of social work in school inclusion.	Theoretical evaluation of services.	Safeguarding children's right to education is hindered by racism.	Align social work with human rights frameworks.
Nuseibeh, 2021, Jerusalem	To examine the social exclusion of the Domari society.	Qualitative interviews with (n = 15) Roma women.	The Domari community experiences systemic discrimination.	Align social work with human rights frameworks.
Allen & Hulmes, 2021, United Kingdom	To consider the issue of aversive racism in child protection practice.	Secondary analysis.	Implicit bias can lead to racism in social work.	Diversify leadership within child protection.

*(Continued)*

**Table 2.** Continued.

Author, year, country	Aims	Methodology and data collection methods	Results	Recommendations
Valero et al., 2021, Spain	To analyse three practices related to social work.	Theoretical paper.	Social work should be more culturally sensitive.	Promote solidarity and respect, and the recognition of the Roma identity
Allen & Hamnett, 2022, England	To provide a comprehensive illustration of the overrepresentation Roma and Traveller children in child welfare services.	Quantitative per capita metrics and disparity ratios.	Targeted remedial action to improve data quality to understand and address the social injustice.	Governments to provide better data quality.
Temesváry & Drilling, 2023, Switzerland and Hungary	To examine the practice of critical social work.	Theoretical paper.	Neoliberal social work is used as a tool of social exclusion.	Improve social work practice and policy.
Kelleher et al., 2023, Ireland	To report on a study of a specialist social work service.	Mixed methods surveys and interviews with (n = 79) social workers and Travellers.	Social workers struggle to promote social justice in practice.	Anti-discrimination training for practice.
Samyn et al., 2024 Belgium.	To evaluate a community social work project.	Qualitative participatory observations, interviews with (n = 7) social workers and focus groups (n = 2)	The findings reveal tensions between communities and social work practitioners.	Improve anti-racist social work practice and policy.

## Findings

The 20 articles included in this review were published between 2010 and 2023. Twelve were published between 2010 and 2017 and eight were published between 2018 and 2024. Most of the studies were conducted in the United Kingdom (n = 5) with others in Romania (n = 4), Ireland (n = 2), Belgium (n = 1), Greece (n = 1), Jerusalem (n = 1), Slovenia (n = 1), Slovakia, (n = 1), Spain (n = 1), Switzerland (n = 1) and Hungary (n = 1). One study presented data from more than one European country. Qualitative approaches were used in nine articles. Quantitative approaches were used in 1 article and mixed methods were used in another one. The remaining nine articles consisted of theoretical research (n = 7) or secondary analysis (n = 2).

Five studies examined social work practice from the perspective of Roma and Traveller people, two studies examined the social work perspective, and two studies examined both the Roma, Traveller and social work perspective. The combined total of participants in the selected studies was 258. Of this number, 115 were Roma and Traveller people with experience of social work intervention. 143 social workers participated in surveys and interviews. Using content analysis, two themes were developed to answer the research questions, 'Antigypsyism' and 'Restorative practice'.

## Antigypsyism

Despite two 'Strategic Action Plans', and various national strategic frameworks designed to address antigypsyism, none of the articles included in this scoping review mentioned The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010). As a profession committed to achieve social change and social justice (IFSW, 2014), this finding suggests that social work research, policy and practice might be operating outside of or falling behind efforts being made to address the social and economic marginalisation of Roma and Traveller people in Europe.

Each paper included in this review explains that Roma and Traveller people experience specific forms of racism, discrimination, ostracism and persecution in social work, but only 25% (N = 5) draw attention to the impact of antigypsyism (Allen & Hulmes, 2021; Kelleher et al., 2023; Roth & Toma, 2014; Samyn et al., 2024; Valero et al., 2021). While Roth and Toma (2014) attempt to identify the root cause of racism, discrimination, ostracism and persecution in social work, Allen and Hulmes (2021) develop this theoretical position as they apply the concept of aversive racism to theorise unequal treatment as the phenomenon that exists when social workers allow negative and hostile stereotypes to determine the way that they work with Roma and Traveller people. As social work interventions, including the forced removal of children from their families and community (Allen & Hamnett, 2022), are often justified against negative assumptions about a 'Gypsy' culture, Wasileski and Miller (2014) and Nuseibeh (2021) suggest that social workers can normalise racism as they dehumanise Roma and Traveller people and associate their lives and cultural mores and nomadic traditions with risk, violence, crime and deviance.

In each article, reports of racism are far-reaching. According to Kelleher et al. (2023) and Samyn et al. (2024), racism means that projects of multiculturalism have failed to encourage the appreciation of difference and diversity for Roma and Traveller people. While The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma could arguably be used to enable social workers to consider ways to foster more positive intercultural relations, the evidence contained in current scholarship suggests that this agenda can be skewed as social workers blame Roma and Traveller people for not having the economic, cultural, or functional capital required to be considered equally in society (Roth et al., 2013).

Summarising the perspective of Roma and Traveller people who have experienced social work intervention, five studies describe social work as an oppressive act (Allen, 2015; Butler & Gheorghiu, 2010; Daly, 2016; Nuseibeh, 2021; Samyn et al., 2024). Although the word 'antigypsyism' is not commonly used, authors describe historical and contemporary experiences of oppression and inequality as creating a relationship between Roma and Traveller people and social work that is characterised by a dialectic of fear, uncertainty, 'concomitant trauma' and distrust (Daly, 2016, p. 343). According to Nuseibeh (2021), Roma and Traveller people often feel scared, ashamed, worried, or angry about social work, describing intervention and involvement as a breach of their right to private family life. Some families worry that their child is going to be taken away by social work agencies (Samyn et al., 2024) and others are concerned that their liberty is going to be restricted (Wasileski & Miller, 2014). Rather than offering reassurance through restorative practices, Allen and Hulmes (2021) explain that some social workers interpret conflict and fear as evidence of risk, harm and hostility leading to disproportionate responses to social protection as a specific example of aversive racism. A summary of current scholarship suggests that antigypsyism is present when social workers:

- minimise the value of community cohesion;
- assume that social work policies, procedures and systems are understood;
- operate from a position defined by poor leadership;
- allow actions to be decided by aversive racism;
- are defensive and confrontational;
- do not listen to and learn from the experiences of Roma and Traveller people;
- minimise the opportunity for strengths-based practice;
- blame individuals and families for factors over which they have little or no control;
- assume that individuals, families and communities lack parental capacity;
- focus on an individual at the expense of family and community;
- assume nomadism is deviant;
- ignore ecological approaches to social work;
- do not challenge social injustice; and,
- do not communicate effectively or verify that information has been understood.



## Restorative practice

To overcome racism, five articles advocate for the advancement of a human rights-based approach to social work (Kandylaki & Kallinikaki, 2018; Nuseibeh, 2021; Popoviciu et al., 2013; Roth & Toma, 2014; Sardelić, 2017). A further five recommend the development of anti-racist practice (Kelleher et al., 2023; Samyn et al., 2024; Urh, 2011; Valero et al., 2021; Wasileski & Miller, 2014). The remaining ten articles suggest the advancement of specific actions, including community social work and improvements in leadership and professional supervision, to achieve these aims.

According to Lau and Ridge (2011) and Samyn et al. (2024), Roma and Traveller people want social workers to be better equipped to promote their human rights and social intercultural inclusion through a rights-based approach to practice. To do this, there is a broad agreement in each article that social workers must be better equipped with the knowledge, values and skills needed to recognise and challenge racism, in all its manifestations, and build opportunities for restorative practices. In particular, several authors emphasise the need for social work practice that can build and maintain positive healthy relationships, resolve difficulties, and repair harm caused by centuries of racism (Allen & Hulmes, 2021; Burchardt et al., 2018; Daly, 2016; Kandylaki & Kallinikaki, 2018). Raising concerns about traditional methods of engagement that are often reactive and delivered at arm's length, Daly (2016) calls for a new direction in social work based on restorative policies, practices and procedures which Urh (2011), Popoviciu et al. (2013) and Allen (2016) highlight as essential processes needed to address institutional racism.

Although The Strasbourg Declaration of Roma is not mentioned, Sardelić (2017) and Temesváry and Drilling (2023) explain that restorative approaches could shift the focus from a deficit and risk-averse model of social work to an approach to practice that is less adversarial and more focused on the shared interests and strengths of individuals, families and their communities. Some studies describe positive developments in the form of specialist teams, projects and individual social work initiatives (Butler & Gheorghiu, 2010; Kandylaki & Kallinikaki, 2018; Nuseibeh, 2021; Samyn et al., 2024), but these are modest in number highlighting the wider failure on the part of social work to engage with Strategic Action Plans (CoE, 2020). The articles that focus on ways to promote human rights and the social and intercultural inclusion of Roma and Travellers in Europe suggest that restorative approaches can be used to address antigypsyism as social workers can begin to:

- understand the damage caused by structural inequality;
- demonstrate cultural humility;
- promote the diversification of leadership within social work;
- establish a strategy to build a multi-racial movement that can combat antigypsyism;
- stand together in solidarity with Roma and Traveller people;
- build effective partnerships;
- enable individuals, families and communities to engage to talk about and lead on issues that are affecting them;
- raise public awareness of environmental hazards and the social determinants of inequality and the right of families to live in safe and healthy environments;
- centralise the ability of Roma and Traveller peoples to transform the system and the policies that affect their lives;
- engage in programmes of authentic co-production and a decolonised approach to practice; and
- raise public awareness of oppression and the many ways that racism is limiting the choices that are available to some individuals, families and communities.

## Discussion and recommendations

The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010) requires Member States and Enlargement countries to provide restorative practices designed to reduce antigypsyism, tackle structural racism, dispel prejudices and ensure that Roma and Traveller people are recognised as equal citizens in European

societies. In response to the first research question, '*How is social work with Roma and Traveller people being reported in current scholarship?*' the reported presence of antigypsyism and reciprocated feelings of fear and helplessness indicates, on the one hand, that social work has been slow to adopt this ambition in research, policy and practice. The recommendations for restorative practices, designed to build and maintain positive, healthy relationships between Roma and Traveller communities and social work shows, on the other hand, that progress can be made to realise rudimentary aspects of The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, even though this policy is not being explicitly mentioned.

While it is easy to argue that listing social work as a fifth sectorial priority area might help align social work research, policy and practice with strategic priorities to address inequality (Ghimisi, 2021), the unilateral agreement needed to implement this change may not be forthcoming. What is urgently needed is some knowledge about what social work can do to support The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010) as a more obviously allied professional group. With no comprehensive guidance on how this could be done, the analysis of the articles included in this review offers a unique opportunity to consider the second research question: *How can current scholarship on social work with Roma and Traveller people be used to support The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma?*

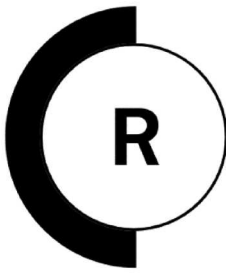
### **Restorative supervision**

In social work, restorative supervision is the process used to support good practice and take account of professional values, codes of conduct and continuing professional development (Wilkins et al., 2017). Unlike traditional models of supervision that focus on monitoring and evaluation, restorative supervision emphasises building relationships, fostering learning environments, and addressing the well-being of social workers and the communities they serve (Wachtel, 2013). As such, a crucial component in the provision of restorative practice emerges as leaders and managers enable social workers to identify oppression within the existing socio-political order of public protection and child welfare (Cohen & Prusak, 2001).

In restorative supervision, leaders and managers create safe spaces for social workers to explore their experiences, challenges, and successes in their work with Roma and Traveller families and communities (Allen & Hulmes, 2021). Leaders and managers can encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, and the application of restorative principles to address conflicts, repair harm, and promote opportunities to heal the social divisions caused by centuries of racial inequity (Burchardt et al., 2018). Restorative supervision in social work with Roma and Traveller people aims to empower social workers, strengthen their professional identities, and enhance their ability to support individuals, families, and communities in need (Samyn et al., 2024). Therefore, informed by the findings of this scoping review, the 'Reflection, Objective, Movement and Action (ROMA) Model: A Framework for Restorative Practice' (See Figure 1), has been developed to enable leaders and managers to support social workers to achieve The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma and future national strategic frameworks for Roma and Traveller inclusion. Although Wilkins et al. (2017) suggests that restorative supervision can be conducted in more than one format, the model advanced is based on current scholarship which suggests that it should consist of four stages (See Figure 2).

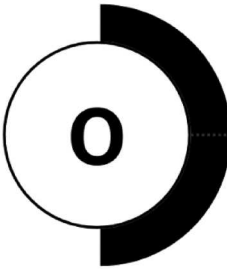
#### **Stage 1: reflection**

According to current scholarship, Stage 1 should entail an approach to critical reflection that includes identifying and analysing possible social inequities and the power structures that maintain them. For this reason, the dimension, 'Reflection', encourages a discussion about antigypsyism as a basis for thinking more critically about the impact of assumptions, values, and actions. To support the Declaration of Roma in the first stages of the conversation, attention should be given to the reason for social work involvement and the presence of interlocking structural inequalities, including the intersectional impact of antigypsyism, ecological and social injustice, poverty and sexism and gender-based violence.



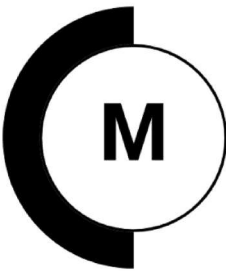
**STAGE 1: REFLECTION**  
**ARE WE....**

- Clear about why social work is involved?
- Clear about what has happened?
- Finding it hard to engage and support the individual, family or community?
- Being open and honest about the negative and perhaps hostile views that exist about the individual, family or community?
- Recognising the individual, family or community as victims of racism?
- Being sensitive to how the individual, family or community might describe and respond to our involvement in their lives?
- Supporting the individual, family or community needs?



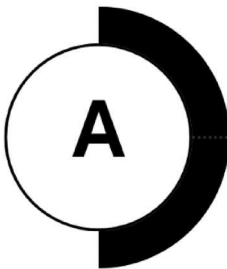
**STAGE 2: OBJECTIVE**  
**HOW CAN WE BETTER UNDERSTAND...**

- The experience of the individual, family and community?
- How the family feel about our involvement?
- The way that various legal and policy frameworks impact the lives of the individual, family or community?
- The way that racism and oppression might impact our ability to engage the individual, family or community?
- The way that our views and values about the individual, family or community impact accessibility and service delivery?
- The lived experiences of the individual, family or community, such as their traditions, family bonds and relationship with non-Romani or Traveller people?



**STAGE 3: MOVEMENT**  
**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY TO...**

- Positively explore commonality and difference?
- Identify and challenge racism in our own recording and reporting systems?
- Promote a better understanding of the needs and experiences of the individual, family or community?
- Provide effective and proportionate services?
- Develop an approach to practice using national and international models of best practice?
- Improve the quality of life for the individual, family or community?
- Advance community-based partnerships?



**STAGE 4: ACTION**  
**WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN FOR US TO...**

- Promote anti-racist practice?
- Engage and support the individual, family or community?
- Work effectively to make the situation better?
- Promote the safety and well-being of the individual, family or community?
- Ensure that negative and perhaps hostile views do not influence the assessment?
- Protect the individual, family or community from racism?
- Understand how the individual, family, or community describes and experiences our involvement in their lives?
- Challenge structural inequalities?

**Figure 2.** The Reflection, Objective, Movement and Action (ROMA) Model: A Framework for Restorative Supervision.

## **Stage 2: objectives**

Whilst Stage 1 of the model emphasises the importance of turning an analytic gaze toward the hidden presuppositions that can shape the relationship between Roma and Traveller people and social workers, the identification of 'Objectives' in Stage 2 is designed to enable conversations about how to tackle antigypsyism and enable detailed discussions about social work involvement. According to current scholarship, this Stage should be used by leaders and managers to facilitate opportunities for the social worker to articulate and gain some control over inequalities and uncertainty, thus creating the chance for positive engagement, clear explanation, expectation clarity and momentum for change.

Where social workers realise that actions used to exclude and marginalise Roma and Traveller people can create a fearful response toward social work, Stage 2 could enable a closer analysis of the differences created and maintained by hierarchies of oppression. When achieved, objectives can be set to establish a strategy to effect social change and justice through individual and/or collective activism. The inclusion of the 'Objective' Stage is, therefore, an important precursor to 'Movement', allowing individuals to locate and scaffold their ability to affect change, both at an individual and collective level.

## **Stage 3: movement**

The ability to challenge systems of oppression is congruent primarily with critical action, especially at the structural level. Stage 3 advances a framework for accepting antigypsyism and the views, options and experiences of Roma and Traveller people whilst building momentum for movement and transformational change in line with The Strasbourg Declaration for Roma.

To promote conversations that are cooperative and productive, Stage 3 is informed by the literature and is designed to encourage the social worker to think about ways to develop community, manage conflict and repair relationships that have been damaged. Throughout Stage 3, the conversation should focus on the importance of confronting racism through the recognition that Roma and Traveller people must have access to the resources they need to live healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives.

By seeking opportunities to use the 'ROMA model' as a tool to stand in solidarity with families and raise awareness of racial inequalities and injustice, it is hoped that the conversations in Stage 3 could also be used to raise awareness of the rights of individuals, families and communities to live in safe and healthy environments with respect for different ways of life, norms and practices. Conversations in Stage 3 should incorporate the intersectional impact of marginalisation, economic, social, and health inequality described in Stage 2 to raise awareness of oppression and the many ways that racism is limiting the choices that are available to some individuals, families and communities.

## **Stage 4: action**

The 'Action' stage requires a great deal of courage as leaders and managers engage social workers in the struggle for racial justice while concurrently understanding racism, discrimination and antigypsyism. Although the literature suggests that social workers might struggle to repair relationships that have been damaged by prolonged oppression and racism (Rovid, 2022), it is hoped that by moving through Stages 1, 2 and 3, the 'Action' agreed at Stage 4 should enable social workers to stand together in solidarity with Roma and Traveller people in the evolution of a pro-Roma and Traveller rights-based approaches to social protection and child welfare.

To facilitate opportunities for all involved to be positively motivated, it is important that leaders and managers provide sufficient time to discuss the reasons for social work interventions and decide on a fair and proportionate solution. At all times, the conversation should centre on the principles of participation, collaboration and restorative justice. Once the actions have been identified and agreed upon, the conversation can move on to review and evaluate the 'action plan' with respect to safety, legal concerns, and associated resources, moving back to Stage 1, as and when required.

## Limitations

A problem in the search for relevant articles has been the use of the term 'social work'. Concerning the work that undertaken with Roma and Traveller people, the role of a social worker is multifaceted. The narrow focus may have created difficulties in machining effective searches in research databases for this type of review. In combination with time and resource restraints, the inclusion criteria only included peer-reviewed articles that were freely available through institutional subscription. Since a criterion for inclusion was that the article must be peer reviewed, we excluded grey literature. There is a risk that results from other databases and journals not included in institutional subscriptions, or available Open Access, have been missed.

A further limitation of this study relates to the conceptualisation of the key term 'Roma and Travellers'. In this study, these terms have been broadly grouped together, following the example set by the Council of Europe (2020). However, it is important to note that this terminology is problematic. It homogenises a diverse set of communities, including those listed in Table 1, who often distinguish themselves carefully from one another. This generalisation also constrains the examination of diversity within the current body of scholarship, which does not always differentiate between specific ethnic groups. As a result, it is unclear how the recommendation for implementing the ROMA Model can account for the diverse characteristics and differences among the various communities listed under the term 'Roma and Travellers'.

Although the ROMA Model emerged from the study's findings and was designed as a partial solution to address and reduce antigypsyism, a systematic pilot and evaluation is now required to assess its practical effectiveness. This evaluation should focus on the unique circumstances of individual children, families, and communities, including their language, ethnicity, culture, heritage, traditions, and their relationship with social work. Additionally, it must consider the geo-political and relational contexts of social work across Europe, ensuring that efforts are directed towards addressing the marginalisation of all communities included in the The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010).

One further limitation of this study is in the scale and reach. We do not expect the 'ROMA Model' to eliminate antigypsyism or achieve The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CoE, 2010) on its own. Most Roma and Traveller people experience extreme socio-economic deprivation and inequality. Generations of people have experienced chronic social inequality. As scholars have emphasised, communities in the areas of concentrated disadvantage have a much lower regard for social work and social workers (Morris et al., 2018). Such communities might experience conflict with social work because they are blamed for hardships that stem from structural inequalities over which they have little or no control (Allen & Hulmes, 2021). For this reason, it is recognised that developing a model for restorative supervision can only partially address the conflict and tensions reported in the current scholarship and it is for this reason that the Council of Europe is encouraged to consider amending The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma to include 'social work' or 'social care' as a fifth priority area.

## Conclusion

Although social work seeks to promote social justice through social change, social cohesion, and the empowerment of people, current scholarship suggests that these ambitions are not being achieved with Roma and Traveller people. Seeking to align the findings and recommendations contained the current scholarship with The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, the 'Reflection, Objective, Movement and Action (ROMA) Model: A Framework for Restorative Practice' has been introduced. By developing this model based on a close analysis of existing research, it is hoped that practical opportunities can be adopted to address antigypsyism in social work practice.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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