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CITIZEN OUTSIDERS

***HOW THE STRUGGLES OF ROMANIAN ROMA IN
LONDON CHALLENGE THE CONCEPTION
OF CITIZENSHIP***

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Abstract

Conventionally citizenship has been understood as membership in nation states requiring certain rights and providing certain entitlements. Over the last twenty years, critical perspectives asserted that citizenship is not merely membership, let alone membership of a state. It is now argued that historically and theoretically citizenship involves a distinction between an outside and inside and often its boundaries become the sites of social struggle. Critical perspectives on citizenship invite us to think of citizenship as processes by which political subjectivity, understood as the right to make claims to rights, can be recognised and enacted. As these perspectives allow us to think critically about citizenship beyond membership and the nation state, in this thesis I focus first on the mechanism related to the logic of citizenship that dismisses political agency of those who do not count as political subjects and makes them into what I refer to as ‘citizen outsiders’. Second, I draw on critical perspectives on citizenship and ethnographic methods to examine how Romanian Roma in an East London borough, who are discursively constituted as lacking capacities to act as citizens, contest the ways they are problematised. By focusing on their everyday life struggles as acts of citizenship, I argue that Roma in London do make claims to rights and, in doing so, enact themselves as citizens. Finally I draw conclusions about the ways Roma are problematised and how Roma disrupt these positioning with various acts of citizenship.

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Chapter 1: Introduction – Roma at the Margins of Citizenship

This thesis looks at how Roma as citizens are problematised in UK authoritative discourses, and in particular, based on fieldwork carried out in East London, explores the ways in which Roma challenge these problematisations by making claims to rights in their everyday life. While the majority of Roma possess the legal status of citizens, they are often discursively constituted as lacking the capacities to act as citizens.

Aiming to challenge this perception, based on interviews and participant observations, I explore how people who are constituted as what I refer to as ‘citizen outsiders’ make claims to rights, and in doing so, enact themselves as citizens.

This introductory chapter provides an outline of how the situation of Roma, as a minoritised group in Europe, challenges traditional conceptions of citizenship. I use the term ‘minoritised’, as it reflects the active process of making individuals and groups into minorities. The chapter begins with an overview of the background of this research, followed by a discussion about the way the term Roma is used throughout this thesis. I then draw on Georg Simmel’s concept of ‘the stranger’ (1950) to elucidate the situation of Roma and their citizenship. In the subsequent section, emphasising the particular situation of Roma, I stress the need to transcend this concept of the stranger when trying to understand the situation of some ‘othered citizens’, including many Roma, who are not recognised as acting subjects despite having the legal status of citizens. In the final section, I indicate what transcending the concepts of strangeness and otherness may imply by introducing a discussion of Hannah Arendt’s (1968) conception of ‘the right to have rights’, which is developed throughout this thesis. I conclude by representing my research aims and revisiting the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to Research

In the year 2007 I was living in Italy, when after an offence committed by a Romanian migrant, allegedly Roma, in Rome the Italian government decided to expel so called ‘dangerous’ EU citizens (Newell, 2009). Suddenly, there was widespread hostility towards Romanians in Italy. Although no one knew whether the offender was Roma or not, he was discursively constructed as such. Roma camps were repeatedly set on fire (Sigona and Trehan, 2009), and those perceived as Roma were attacked in several Italian towns. Walter Veltroni, then mayor of Rome, argued that before Romania joined the European Union (EU), Rome was the safest city in the world, and suggested that ‘prefects must have the power to expel EU citizens who have committed a crime against property and persons’ (*La Repubblica*, 2007).

It was this series of events that sparked my interest in the situation in which many Roma find themselves across Europe. In particular, I wondered how one could articulate an injustice and claim or demand its redress from such a position, and became interested in what is happening at the ‘margins of citizenship’ – where groups such as the Roma articulate and claim the rights that are due. While many people find themselves in similar situations in Europe and elsewhere, Roma appeared to be an apt example of what I have since referred to as ‘citizen outsiders’ (a concept I will explain in greater detail in this and subsequent chapters).

When exploring how Roma challenge the ways they are positioned by enacting themselves as citizens, one of the first questions that comes to mind is ‘who are the Roma?’. Whilst this is not a new question, it is one that has historically been answered in very different ways, as David Mayall (2004) has illustrated. This thesis will not attempt to provide yet another answer to this question but will echo Mayall’s (2004) call to turn this search for Roma’s origins into a central problem of scholarship on Romani minorities. Clark (2013) argues that throughout North and South America, Europe, Oceania, Africa and Asia, there are communities of people who refer to themselves as

Gypsy, Roma or similar. Clark (2013) further asserts that such communities are connected by similar cultures, traditions, and languages (as well as common experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination), which set them apart from their non-Roma neighbours. There are heated debates about numbers and origins but also regarding the terms of Gypsy and Roma themselves. While I discuss the situation of Roma in Europe in more detail in Chapter Three, here I want to point to the work of Ian Hancock (2002). Hancock (2002) consistently stresses that central to such debates is a fundamental concern with (ethnic) identity and with the struggle for Gypsies and Roma themselves to take control of their identity and challenge the largely negative stereotypes that have served to fuel anti-Gypsism over the years.

Throughout this thesis, the term ‘Roma’ is used as an umbrella term for various groups and individuals, who self-ascribe as belonging in the broadest sense to this minoritised group, and who share similar experiences of discrimination. At the time of the fieldwork in 2010 it was mainly Romanian and Bulgarian Roma who moved to the UK following EU enlargement in 2007. In the specific borough of London in which the fieldwork was carried out mostly Romanian Roma settled down. Thus, due to the time and the place of the fieldwork the majority of the research participants were Romanian Roma, who used their right to freedom of movement to move to the UK. The background and some specific contextualisation of the fieldwork such as the period of the research and the situation of Romanian Roma in London are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four in the section titled, ‘Fieldwork Sample’.

1.2 Research Aims and Questions

Citizenship promises autonomy, equality and the right to make claims to rights to its citizens, but simultaneously marginalises and subjugates those who fail ‘to fit in’. It is this underlying, constitutive dilemma at the core of the modern institution of citizenship that is at the heart of this thesis. The ways in which Roma in the UK and elsewhere tend

to be imagined as failing ‘to fit in’ and the manner in which they are excluded as political subjects deserve exploration. While Roma are discursively constituted as the European subaltern (Sigona and Trehan, 2009), I am interested in uncovering how Roma are acting subjects that make claims to rights in yet undiscovered ways. In other words, the aim of this research is to displace Roma from the ways they are constituted and understand whether and how being political is possible in such a situation. To move away from simply imagining such acts, I conduct ethnographic fieldwork over a period of three months in a borough of London with a high population of Romanian Roma (in 2010).

The thesis will address the following questions:

How do dominant conceptions of citizenship serve to underpin the situation of Roma in Europe?

How are Roma discursively problematised in the UK?

Given their position as ‘citizen outsiders’, how do Roma in London make claims to rights? How can the everyday life struggles of Roma in London be understood as acts of citizenship?

1.3 Citizenship and its Strangers

Following EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, an increasingly intolerant and frequently discriminatory discourse has led to forms of physical violence against those perceived as Roma. The previously discussed case in Italy is just one example among others. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, for instance, France expelled thousands of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma, accusing them of living in illegal camps. In several French cities Roma settlements were attacked and, according to reports of the European Roma Rights Centre (in the following ERRC) (2012), local police did not intervene to protect the

victims. In 2011, 2012 and 2013 Germany expelled Roma who had lived in Germany since the early 1990s or had been born in Germany from Kosovo and the Balkans (Human Rights Watch, 2010). All of these deportations took place despite the fact the governments in question were aware of the high levels of discrimination and harassment against Roma in their countries of origin (Papadopoulou, 2014). In spring 2013, the German Parliament discussed the question of the authenticity of asylum claims of Roma from the Balkans. Due to fear of migration floods and supposed abuse of the asylum system, Germany's centre-right government suggested reintroducing visa obligations for citizens from Macedonia and Serbia as their claims to asylum were dismissed as inauthentic (Papadopoulou, 2014).

Yet, the situation of Roma in Europe goes well beyond exclusion and discrimination. It seems that although Roma live within the political communities of a nation-states and hold EU citizenship, they are often pushed to the margins of society (Bancroft, 2005; Liégeois and Gheorghe, 1995). As I discuss in detail in Chapter Five, in most British (as well as European) media and policy discourses Roma tend to be problematised as strangers and are treated as a 'problem' (Balibar, 2009, p. ix). While I will eventually argue that the situation of Roma is only partially illuminated by the concepts of 'strangeness' and 'otherness', here I want to explore Georg Simmel's concept of 'the stranger' to build up my argument for using the concept of citizen outsiders instead. Despite the fact that only a small portion of Roma is stateless, Roma tend to be homogenised as 'strangers' within any given European society (Clark, 2007). Although the majority of Roma no longer live a nomadic life, the assumption that they do continues to linger in public imagination. Often it seems locked within binary projections of resentment on the one hand and mystified exotic fantasies on the other. One way to comprehend the situation in which many Roma find themselves is to draw on Simmel's distinction between 'the stranger' (see also Sway, 1981) as someone who

is different from the group, and ‘the wanderer’, as someone who comes but goes again. Simmel describes ‘the stranger’ as the *potential* ‘wanderer’, as he ‘comes today and stays tomorrow’ (Simmel, 1950, p. 402). Like the position of many Roma in Europe, Simmel’s ‘stranger’ becomes fixed, but this position in the group is already determined by the fact that ‘he has not belonged to it from the beginning; that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself’ (Simmel, 1950, p. 402). The attributes of ‘the stranger’ are his or her difference to his or her time, place and origin; his or her not belonging; his or her independence of moving or staying and his or her conduct compared to majoritarian society. ‘The stranger’ is thus physically close but socially distant, and is therefore constituted as the other, as he or she exists within the group, but is not part of it. Thus, ‘the stranger’ is a person that is present yet unfamiliar, and therefore becomes society’s ‘undecidable’ (Bauman, 1995). Zygmunt Bauman, also writing about the figure of the stranger asserts that because the stranger cannot be controlled and ordered, he or she is always the object of fear (1991, p. 94): he or she becomes the potential deviant, a problematisation that is commonly used to describe Roma in Europe.

The relationship between what Simmel called ‘the group’ and ‘the stranger’ is complex and inevitably abstract, since it is determined by a perceived distance and strangeness, referring to the experience of ‘the stranger’ as an element of the group itself. ‘The stranger’, like many Roma, has a social position in the social structure of a given community, yet a position that is created by the structure itself. Roma are therefore in a paradoxical position of being both outside society – excluded – but also confronting it – being present – from within, that is, being part but not recognised in acting. They are, in other words, in the position that I refer to as citizen outsider, a concept that I will introduce here and explain in more detail in the following chapter.

In public discourses Roma are often positioned based on the assumption that in order to qualify as a 'legitimate' citizen and one who is recognised as a 'national', a 'homeland' (physical and figurative) is needed where he or she is not a minority (Smith, 1986).

Drawing also on Simmel, Sway (1981) notes that Roma are rarely, if ever, accepted as part of the locality or part of its meaning of place. In other words, they are constituted as not fixed within a spatial context. I come back to this aspect in more detail in Chapter Three. While it is to some extent insightful to draw on Simmel's concept of the stranger to comprehend the continued paradoxical situation of many Roma who have lived in Europe for centuries, there is also a danger of exaggerating this comparison.

On the one hand, such problematisations, as discursive practices, tend to enact or produce what they name (Butler, 1990; 1993). I want to point to the performative function of Roma as 'the stranger' in the social sphere in the sense that one could argue that what the behaviour of the figure of 'the stranger' supposedly describes, is in fact created by the act of its ascription (Butler, 1990; 1993). In other words, the performative function produces a series of effects: for behaviour consolidates impressions of what it means to be a stranger or what it means to be Roma, thus it is just a phenomenon that is produced over time. Drawing on Butler, I thus want to stress that Roma are constituted as what it apparently means to be Roma.

On the other hand, strangers are often those subjects who, while accepted into citizenship, are still considered strangers in the sense that they have not yet fulfilled requirements to act as citizens. By contrast, those groups that are deemed outsiders to citizenship may find themselves as migrants and refugees struggling for the right to be present in a polity (Isin, 2017). The difference between strangers and outsiders, Isin argues, is often contingent on disposability or deportability: strangers are sometimes accepted as indispensable yet corrigible (i.e. subject to/of discipline) whereas outsiders may sometimes become indispensable yet incorrigible (i.e. subject to/of punishment) (2017, p. 5). Thus in the following, I suggest moving beyond the concept of stranger

and suggest to draw upon ‘citizen outsiders’ instead. Drawing on the concept of ‘citizen outsiders’ I want to emphasise that there is something distinctive about the situation of Romanian Roma having taken up their European citizenship right of free movement. Contrary to other marginalised citizens like, for instance, the poor, Roma are repeatedly castigated and reproached for taking up their right of free movement. It is this distinct aspect that puts many Roma into a situation in which they seem to be citizens and outsiders at the same time – and it is this destabilisation that I want to look at in this thesis.

1.4 Situation of Roma beyond Strangeness

Similar to Bauman’s understanding of constituting the uncontrollable stranger, public discourse tends to depict people perceived as Roma as ‘intruders’ or ‘invading’ the society they live in. Examples from the UK include the ‘Stamp on the Camps’ campaign in the *Sun* newspaper in 2005; the case in Belfast in 2009 where Romanian Roma were attacked; and the case in Sheffield in 2014 when Combat 18 (a UK neo-Nazi organisation) drove Roma out of their homes. Another example is the ‘Roma ‘Invasion’ campaign’ in various British newspapers in 1997, when media and politicians immediately assumed that Romani arrivals were economic migrants, and referred to Roma as ‘bogus asylum seekers’ who were motivated solely by high UK benefit payments. The story ‘Giro Czechs hit London’ in the *Evening Standard* on 13 November 1997 was a word-play as UK benefit payments are generally paid by Post Office (Giro) cheques. The Foreign Minister explicitly warned that Britain was ‘no soft touch for Czech Gypsies’ (*Daily Telegraph* 28 November 1997). These pre-accession discourses reveal that Roma tend to be problematised as those who come to the UK ‘to gain’, such as receiving benefits and taking away jobs (see also Guy, 2003). Although many Roma migrating after EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 could no longer be easily and legally deported (though deportations still take place, as previously discussed in the

case of France and Germany), such problematisations persisted, revealing that Roma seem to be dismissed in their subjecthood to make rational choices, as, for instance, moving to a different EU country.

This positioning highlights not only the problem of exclusion of ‘the other’ it also raises questions about the meaning of being a citizen and the boundaries of citizenship. This very logic of citizenship that defines some people as members and some as ‘strangers’, undesired non-members, ‘the other’ or, as I argue, ‘citizen outsiders’, is explored further in Chapter Two. Drawing on Simmel’s attempts to analyse a ‘social type’ of modernity by emphasising the theme of the ‘marginal person’, I argue that due to fear of mobility, restrictive notions of membership and belonging are discursively used to justify exclusion. Citizenship is thus used as a boundary to draw the line between ‘them’ and ‘us’ and to constitute ‘citizen outsiders’, commonly justifying in turn that ‘without them, there can be no us, precluding the possibility of social solidarity’ (Krikorian, 2004).

The relevance of boundaries leads to a further point of this introductory argument. The citizen outsider can easily become a scapegoat who serves to generate a different sense of community amongst the ‘home’ culture (e.g., through racism, xenophobia). Dijkstra (2005) even argues that the rhetoric of ‘citizen versus non-citizen’ creates further tensions and divisions. Arguably, especially for the situation of Roma, these tensions and divisions have led to what Balibar refers to as ‘European Apartheid’ (2004, p.31). Balibar suggests that this European Apartheid divides nationals of member states from those of non-member states (those Europeans who are residents on a basis other than simple inheritance of nationality in a country that is a member) (2004, p.32). I argue that this European Apartheid also divides citizens from those citizens who are not ‘European enough’, that is, those who, despite their political and legal status, are simply not recognised as Europeans and as citizens. While it could be argued that the

EU has recognised Roma by encouraging, for example, the establishment of a ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015’, on the level of member states, symbolically, politically and physically Roma are still excluded and minoritised (Bancroft, 2005).

In this way I argue that the situation of Roma, as constituted ‘citizen outsiders’ is beyond otherness and challenges the conception of citizenship in several ways. The conception of modern European citizenship is not only unable to deal with its perceived ‘others’, but indeed, creates them. As suggested above, the conception of modern citizenship needs ‘the other’, for if there is no ‘other’ there can be no ‘us’. Edward Said suggested that ‘[T]he development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing alter ego [...] “others” whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from “us”.’ (1995, p. 332). Seyla Benhabib goes even further by recognising that ‘cultures are formed through binaries because human beings live in an evaluative universe’ (2004, p. 7). Besides notions of space and boundaries (see Barth, 1969), binary oppositions also probe citizenship’s universal applicability.

By exploring empirically how Roma in London are not only excluded, but also constituted as citizen outsiders, I investigate how those perceived as Roma supposedly ‘fail’ to fit into the category of recognised political subjects that make claims to rights and seem to be kept outside as they are not recognised as sharing the same values as the rest of the citizen community.

It is here that we encounter a problem. There are long established assumptions that Roma simply do not ‘fit’ (Lucassen, 2008) into the concept of the citizen and are therefore pushed outside to become both subject, as generator of the discourse, and object of state powers. So the question I want to raise is whether and how Roma can be recognised as political subjects and whether and how their daily struggles can be

understood as what Isin refers to as ‘acts of citizenship’. Acts of citizenship, Isin argues, are ‘the events through which subjects constitute themselves as citizens – regardless of their status and substance, and those to whom the right to have rights is due’ (2008, p.361). At the time of the research in 2010, there was very little empirical research that asked how Roma make claims to rights. Thus I was able to explore a rather unknown field, that is, the set of circumstances that underpin the ambiguous situation in which Roma, as citizen outsiders, find themselves and, through fieldwork in London, the manner in which Roma practically challenge their position, and indeed, traditional conceptions of citizenship by enacting themselves as citizens through everyday practices.

As noted above, part of the impasse of citizenship is perhaps that the modern conception of citizenship is still closely linked to nationality and the idea of membership in a nation state. In Europe nationalism is still able to claim the idea of community for itself (Gellner, 1981; Smith, 2003). New outbursts of nationalism, violent separatist movements, neo-fascism, religious nationalism and a subtle cultural nationalism that is part of most political discourses underscore this particular idea of the nation state and what it means to be a citizen (Anderson, 1983). If citizenship is aligned with nationhood the apparent lack of a national homeland adds to the anomalous situation of many Roma in Europe. Although state sovereignty has been reshaped, the boundaries of political communities continue to be regulated in terms of one principal category: national citizenship. The ‘lack of a homeland’, understood as an expression of political, social and cultural belonging, is still very present in public discourse on Roma, as this apparent lack interrupts the fictional narrative of understanding ‘citizenship as nationality’. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five, the perceived territorial mobility of Roma continues to be depicted as nomadism and welfare malfeasance, which are both represented as a threat – in terms security concerns, community

‘cohesion’ and behaviours (for anti-Roma statements of Blunkett and Clegg see also Gold, 2013) - to the modern conception of citizenship. I also illustrate that in public discourse on Roma an expandable understanding of membership, moving from one place to the other, having multiple attachments, ‘choosing’ citizenship or nationality is problematised as a distortion of the established natural order.

Yet there seems to be more than a binary construction of membership by birthright. Embedded in the conception of citizenship seems also to be an expectation of how one ‘ought to act’ as a member of a political community, which points to normative levels of citizenship. Based on these normative ideas, there are citizens who are constituted as lacking the capacity to choose and who are therefore denied the autonomy to act and the rights they are promised. In Chapter Five and Six I explore how Roma in London are on the one hand expected to make choices (for instance, find a place to live, find means to earn a salary, etc.) but are simultaneously positioned as victims or criminals, which embodies the wrongness of their choices. By continuously problematising their choices as wrong choices Roma are treated as if their autonomy to make these choices is withdrawn, which in turn, and in a circular manner, foreshadows their incapacity to choose and make claims.

Focusing on how constituted citizen outsiders become claimants of rights and enact forms of political subjectivity, in Chapter Six I show how the current situation of Roma in London challenges traditional conceptions of citizenship, given that legally as EU citizens Roma are promised the same rights as all other EU citizens. While Roma in London, mainly from Romania and Bulgaria, have the formal status of EU citizenship, they seem to remain excluded and dismissed in their choices and claims. This situation questions the promise of formal citizenship as precondition for political voice from even another perspective, as citizenship status also does not necessarily enable agency. By dismissing their autonomy to make choices and claims, some people are made invisible

and inaudible, at least as political subjects. I argue that if we were to understand citizenship as political subjectivity – and as political those moments when those who do not count make claims to be counted – we can investigate whether and how Roma in London can be recognised as political subjects. Then we can also observe whether there is space for being political when the practicalities of the social are so omnipresent. These questions point to a paradox that is at the core of my thesis: why does the conception of citizenship, despite its promise, not guarantee equality? Roma are repeatedly depicted not to be ‘as’ European as other Europeans, but are often obliged to make the same claims, physically and figuratively, and to access the same legal and political rights (Hammarberg, 2008). Given the situation of most Roma, it appears that the rights of the European ‘other’ seem to be different from those of the European ‘us’. Thus, the situation of Roma in Europe is not an external situation; it is part of the conception of citizenship itself. Being pushed aside into apparent invisibility is a denial of what Hannah Arendt (1968) termed the ‘right to have rights’ and a denial whose possible contestation I want to explore.

The current situation of Roma in Europe that I described, demonstrates that rights and claiming these rights do not seem to be accessible for everyone in full. Here we encounter another problem. Contrary to T.H. Marshall’s argument (1950), which I discuss in more detail later on, having formal and substantive citizenship status does not seem enough to be recognised as a political subject. Chapters Two, Three, Five and Six explore, with different foci, the structures and circumstances in which the current situation of Roma as citizen outsiders emerges. In Chapter Six I turn the tables and explore whether and how Roma in London contest this situation and argue that their struggles should be conceptualised as acts of citizenship. As such, I investigate the extent to which the situation of Roma can be linked to the unfulfilled promise of citizenship; whether denying political agency to some people is already inscribed in the conception of citizenship; and how Roma in London can be understood as political,

citizen subjects whose acts of citizenship bring into sharp relief the limitations and exclusions engendered by traditional conceptions of citizenship.

1.5 ‘The Right to have Rights’

When drawing on Arendt’s (1968) concept of ‘the right to have rights’, it is key to understand that Arendt was writing in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and with personal experience of statelessness (Arendt, 2007). For Arendt (1968), the addressee of the claim that one should be acknowledged as a member is humanity itself. Although she adds ‘it is by no means certain that this is possible’ (Arendt, 1968, p. 297). Arendt’s concerns can be visualised by looking at the situation of Roma in Europe, for the moral imperative to ‘treat all human beings as persons belonging to some human group and entitled to the protection of the same’ (Arendt, 1968, p. 301) does not seem to be met. Yet, key to what Arendt has famously termed ‘the right to have rights’ is that it can be realised ‘only in a political community in which we are judged not through the characteristics which define us at birth, but through our actions and opinions, by what we do and say and think’ (Arendt, 1968, p. 301). As I discuss in Chapter Five in the analysis of discourses on Roma, however this seems to be exactly what is happening today in regards to Roma in the UK and elsewhere. Roma tend to be judged and positioned by where they come from, what they apparently represent (see discourse analysis in Chapter Five). More important, as I explore in Chapter Six, is how Roma in London resist this in various ways by claiming what Arendt refers to as ‘the right to have rights’.

Thus the meaning of what counts as political is central to my argument. While Arendt argues that ‘man can act and change and build a common world, together with his equals and only with his equals’, she adds that ‘we are not born equal; we are born equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves

mutually equal rights' (Arendt, 1968, p. 301). Arguably, the situation of Roma, as EU citizens, is different than the one Arendt described when writing about the political in the wake of Nazi destruction. Yet, thinking about the political that seems limited to the public sphere and agency that is currently denied to some people without access to this public has urged me to reflect about whether and how Roma may make claims to rights. In other words, important to my thesis are the questions of how the mechanisms of citizenship, as they developed so far, underpin the situation of Roma in Europe and how Roma in London challenge these conceptions of citizenship by making claims to rights. If we take these described ruptures that are entailed in the conception of citizenship into consideration, we can better understand the circumstances in which the presence of Roma is discursively constituted as 'wrong' (McGarry, 2010) and in which Roma are reduced to citizen outsiders. In the British media, especially Eastern European Roma, are not only problematised as economic migrants in the 'hope of gain' but as people whose presence is undesired, who are dismissed in their right to exist and who should be 'kept out' (Clark and Campbell, 2000; Matras, 2000; Turner, 2002; Guy, 2003). Their presence and even potential migration within the EU tends to be constituted as an attempt to blur established citizenship boundaries altogether.

In practice, various individuals and groups are seen to not fit into the modern conception of membership and belonging and the idea of the citizen as a figure of the political. This other, unfitting, marginalised, subaltern figure of the political is not recognised in its ways to claim rights and its autonomy to make decisions. Ingrained assumptions about what constitutes a 'normal' way of life and legal principles, sedentarist discourses, bureaucratic agencies and occasionally paternalistic social care, work together to construct a deviant minoritised figure, which disturbs the modern public social order and is therefore dismissed as a 'legitimate' citizen. While Europe proclaims equality to all its citizens, this discourse establishes institutions, and, as Bancroft (2005) observes, through this, it clearly limits itself in allowing for 'othering'

and supporting ‘twenty-first century racism’. The paradoxical situation of Roma, to whom Balibar refers as ‘a nation in excess in Europe’ (2010, p. 17), who are not recognised within the public realm and apparently denied the right to have rights, depicts this discrepancy Bancroft describes. Part of the dilemma is that the very idea of what Europe *is* has been defined by the European discourse in negative terms: suggesting what Europe is *not* (Harle, 1994, p. 29), hence, in a classic ‘othering’ discourse. Considering the particular exclusion and treatment of Roma all over Europe, Roma seem to be constituted as what Europe is not and does not want to be. Yet, as Isin asserts, ‘the dispossessed, marginalized, subjugated, subaltern, nomadic, excluded, at least in intellectual and activist imaginaries, has become the figure through which the political is enacted, theorised and understood’ (2012, p.11).

I argue that the very way of the exclusion and treatment of Roma challenges the conception of modern citizenship itself. Considering the prevailing reports on the treatment and situation of Roma in several EU Member States (for instance European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, in the following FRA, 2012; etc), that Europe that is described in the Helsinki Act, the Convention of Human Rights and the Framework on Minority Rights does not seem to be the same Europe that is experienced by most Roma. Article 8 of the European Union Treaty grants equal citizenship to all Member State nationals. In the 2003 Human Rights recommendation the former Commissioner Alvaro Gil-Robles states that Roma are effectively non-citizens, since their rights in practice are not equal to those of other nationals (Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, 2003). In other words, it seems possible to be non-citizen in the EU, while holding citizenship of an EU Member State. While Balibar maintains that ‘Roma certainly live under the jurisdiction of states, but are seen as both unable and hostile to entering the institutional fabric of the modern state’, (2009, p. 11), Brubaker argues that ‘in global perspective, citizenship is a powerful instrument of

social closure, shielding the prosperous states' (1999, p. 27) from the undesired other. Guild et al are even more critical, suggesting that the use of integration by the branch of law dealing with nationality forces an active and corrective process of 'nationalisation' aimed at disciplining difference and making possible the endurance of the homogeneous nation, culture and identity (2009, p. 21). It endeavours to do what Foucault (2003) describes as turning the abnormal into the natural or naturalised citizen.

1.6 Outline of Thesis

The thesis contributes both to an area of critical citizenship studies by illustrating how Roma, on one hand, are problematised as citizen outsiders, and to Romani Studies by investigating how acts of citizenship of Roma in London disrupt this positioning. I argue that with a critical citizenship perspective that focuses mainly on political subjectivity and acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), the ways in which Roma have been problematized as citizen outsiders as well as what counts as being political can be challenged.

The second chapter of the thesis looks at different conceptualisations of citizenship in order to understand the structures that, to a large extent, seem to make possible the situation of the majority of Roma in Europe. In this chapter, I also suggest moving away from understanding citizenship as legal status or practice and towards recognising instead how it involves political subjectivity and acts of making citizens.

Drawing on these conceptualisations, Chapter Three then analyses the particular situation of Roma in Europe. I discuss contemporary anti-Roma discourses and EU policies and practices in which the situation in the UK and London is embedded. With this contextual focus the chapter gives a general overview of the situation of Roma that sets the background for the later empirical work.

Chapter Four discusses the methodological and ethical approaches utilised in this thesis. By analysing documents, interview data and participant observations with a

focus on acts of citizenship at a field site in East London, I aim to provide an account of how Roma have responded to their situation as citizen outsiders. I also lay out the specific contextualisation of the research, such as the period of the fieldwork, the sample, and the particular situation of Romanian Roma.

In Chapter Five I discuss how various discursive constructions, such as those utilised by local councils, social services, and in policy papers and national media in the UK problematise Roma populations. With this approach I also explore whether and how authorities tend to dismiss the agency Roma and how their choices are often constituted as wrong. Challenging who is recognised as a political subject, in the discussion of the fieldwork in Chapter Six I analyse everyday life struggles of Roma in London as acts of citizenship (Isin, 2008). I explore how Roma in East London, who often find themselves in precarious situations, challenge this positioning by becoming political through everyday practices and acts. Using critical discourse analysis, this chapter offers a thematic analysis of the findings of my fieldwork, where I investigated the moments of everyday life struggles through which Roma inhabit the political and social space in which they find themselves.

In the Conclusion, I summarise the main findings from the discourse analysis and the fieldwork, and draw conclusions about the ways Roma are problematised and how Roma disrupt these positioning with various acts of citizenship. I show how I have made a case for the need to challenge who is recognised as a claim making subject and what is considered a political claim. I conclude by repositioning my findings within the field of citizenship studies and Romani Studies as defined earlier in the thesis.

Chapter 2: Conventional and Critical Perspectives on Citizenship

This chapter provides a broad overview of the citizenship studies literature focussing on the articulation of rights as claims to recognition, as it pertains to the rights of those who have the legal status of citizenship, but find it difficult to access the rights that this status provides. The people who have been variously designated as Roma certainly find themselves in this paradoxical situation. By considering Roma as ‘citizen outsiders’ I have tried to capture their paradoxical situation. This chapter explores how this issue has been addressed in citizenship studies literature thus far by looking at conventional and critical perspectives on citizenship.

The chapter is divided into two parts. First, I look at the figure of the citizen within conventional literature and perspectives on citizenship. These conventional perspectives often draw inspiration from republican and liberal foundations, which inspire two basic ways of approaching citizenship. Republican perspectives often emphasise political obligations of individuals and liberal perspectives often emphasise the rights of citizens. I also look at the conception of citizenship in modern democracies. In the second part of this chapter the limits of these conventional perspectives on citizenship are discussed by exploring perspectives critically engaged with these conventional conceptions. While republican and liberal perspectives continue to hold great influence today, the chasm between ‘ideal types’ of republican and liberal citizenship, their contemporary legal, political and social applications, and the practices they engender seem to have widened. In order to make the inadequacies of these ‘ideal types’ become more visible, I scrutinise the four closely related notions of membership, recognition, participation and rights. A discussion of various critical engagements, such as feminist and diversity perspectives, make visible some of the shortcomings of conventional perspectives on citizenship and provide the context for my research question as to how Roma, as citizen outsiders, make claims to rights.

2.1 Conventional Perspectives on Citizenship

The articulation of rights for various groups has been a recurring theme of ‘Western’ political history, and the articulation of rights as claims to recognition has always invoked the ideal of citizenship (Isin and Turner, 2002, p. 1). As the field of citizenship studies has expanded considerably over the past two decades, various accounts of citizenship have been offered. In this section I offer my understanding of conventional perspectives on citizenship as ‘ideal types’, in the Weberian sense (1992). This is important to do because, as Lister argues, citizenship is an ‘essentially contested concept’ (2003, p.13). The two most prominent conventional perspectives on citizenship, that of liberalism and civic republicanism, define citizenship as sets of rights and obligations that tether members of a political community to the (nation-)state and to each other. At the same time they structure their interactions with the state, each other, and non-citizen ‘others’. These sets of rights and obligations are often conceptualised as existing (or not, as the case may be) at the level of status and practice (Oldfield, 1990). Thus, whilst certain civil, political and social rights and obligations are enshrined as part of citizenship as ‘legal status’, they may or may not exist (or be actually accessible to every citizen, or in the same way) in practice.

Republican and Liberal Conceptions of Citizenship

Since the two grand narratives of republican and liberal citizenship shape modern political subjectivities (Isin, 2012), it is worth taking a closer look at both perspectives. Republican perspectives on citizenship are often traced back to ancient Greece and the Aristotelian idea of the citizen as a political being for whom politics is a means of leading the good life (Robinson, 1997). Arguably, however, the primary source of inspiration for republican perspectives on citizenship is the medieval and post-medieval revival of the Roman conception of *civitas*.

It was this idea of the *civitas* that provided inspiration to civic republican perspectives on citizenship in the eighteenth century, and to which the American and French Revolutions gave an expression (Magnette, 2005). It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who gave it a philosophical expression. In his celebrated essay *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* ([1750], in Masters and Kelly, 1992), Rousseau advances the Roman concept of citizenship and calls upon the ideals of public duty, the courage of citizen soldiers as well as patriotism. In *The Social Contract* Rousseau chastises modern men for knowing only what it means to be bourgeois and having no notion of what it means to be a citizen (1762, Book One, Chapter 6).

The idea of civic republican citizenship emphasizes the character of individual citizens and their duties. The ideal citizen is an active political agent, who fights for his country, and prioritises the public good over his private interests. To simplify, from Aristotle to Rousseau there is an emphasis on active participation, civic defence of the city/state, and the civic and political dimensions of citizenship, with citizens being necessarily freed from the burdens of economic and social life both in order to be able to fully participate and to ensure that they are able to prioritise public over private interests. This is the basic premise of republican perspectives on citizenship. By contrast, emphasis on the legal dimension of citizenship, the private interests of citizens, and the protection of these interests became a central premise in the development of liberal perspectives on citizenship (Faulks, 2000).

Liberal perspectives draw mainly on ideas asserting that citizens are individuals whose primary concern lies not in the realisation of a common good, but in the realisation of their interests and passions (Espada, 2000). Modern, liberal notions of citizenship are intimately tied to the development of the liberal state with its rights-based focus. John Locke (1690) is often considered to have given expression to this premise of a rights-based theory of citizenship. With the development of a money

economy and a strong emphasis on the promotion of individual liberties, as well as a government that required very little participation, citizenship took on a different meaning, one that emphasized liberty instead of participation. The grounding idea was that citizens were guided by private interests and passions, instead of common politics and public good alone. Van Leeuwen (2010) suggests that, according to the liberal perspective, public space does not possess any moral supremacy since political power comes into being through the voluntary decisions of rational people. Several scholars (Frazer and Lacey, 1993; Pateman, 1989a; Coole, 1993) have argued that liberal perspectives on citizenship were non-universal, hierarchical and most citizens were excluded. From liberal perspectives, however, citizens enjoy passive liberty that is enshrined in law. In other words, of interest was not so much participation, but an undisturbed individual.

If liberal perspectives did not still shape contemporary assumptions of citizenship, with its focus on the pursuit of private life and interests protected by the state as rights, it would not have been necessary to bring their differences from republican perspectives into as sharp relief as I have done above. Both republican and liberal perspectives implicitly or explicitly continue to inform the debates over the rights and responsibilities of citizens (see for instance Brubaker, 1992; Marshall, 1950; Phillips, 1993). Yet in these debates the subject that often takes centre stage – the citizen – is already a subject with the legal status and a set of rights are associated with it. It is with this understanding in mind that I will now turn my attention to how citizenship is understood in contemporary democracies.

Citizenship in Contemporary Democracies

The claims for inclusion and belonging that we have witnessed – especially in the last three decades – in Western nation-states are not new, but are a recurrent, if not

fundamental aspect of democratic or democratising polities (Isin and Turner, 2002). In the process, the two aforementioned conventional perspectives on citizenship have become increasingly entangled with the development of modern democracies. As democracy and political participation have been institutionalised within the boundaries of a nation-state, in modern democracies the principle of being a citizen seems to imply that through membership the citizen is included in a national community, in which the citizen acquires some fundamental civil, political, social and economic rights and obligations whilst simultaneously retaining his/her autonomy in regards to certain claims and choices. This autonomy is reflected in rights and implies recognition of political agency. So it is the right of citizens to make claims to rights that differentiates citizenship from mere subjecthood. Yet, this claim making is also further complicated by who is recognised as citizen. I shall return to this idea of making claims in later chapters, but here I want to highlight a paradox that modern democracies have had to contend with, and for which republican and liberal perspectives on citizenship seem increasingly inadequate.

As a concept citizenship had the difficult task of integrating popular and legal rule by connecting political participation and rights with membership of a given political community. Citizenship as practiced in Western democracies is a product of the interconnected processes of state building, the emergence of commercial and industrial society, and the construction of a national consciousness (Anderson, 1983, Hobsbawm, 1990). Yet, universality of citizenship assumed that laws and rules apply to all citizens in the same way, ignoring the existing inequalities amongst them.

It seems as if inequalities are especially visible in relation to citizenship and class. Writing in post-war Britain during the early stages of the welfare state, T.H. Marshall focused mainly on the key dichotomy of citizenship and class. Marshall defined citizenship as ‘a status bestowing equal status on all full members of a national

community' and who thereafter 'are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed' (1950, pp. 28-29). He described the historical evolution of citizenship in three periods from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, arguing that the central point, the acquisition of civil, political and social rights, was a contingent and never-ending struggle. According to Marshall subordinate groups consistently fought to win over concessions from those in power in order to be treated equally (1950, p. 60). He saw the development of legal citizenship as constantly being altered to include new groups through the exercise of political citizenship. Emphasising mainly market structures in his account of citizenship, Marshall identified a tension between the egalitarian values of citizenship and the economic inequality that is inherent to capitalism (1950, p. 19). He thus advocated the development of tax funded social rights to offset the worst aspects of inequality. He saw the community as having a duty to provide for every citizen's basic needs. Marshall envisaged the state accepting this responsibility through the institutionalisation of social rights (1950, p.51).

However, Marshall was criticised on several points, partly due to the economic downturn and neoliberalism in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, which seemed to undermine his strong emphasis on post-war welfare settlements. Young (1989, p. 391) argues that citizenship does not suppress differences and inequalities:

'in a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens, people should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce that privilege, for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public marginalising or silencing those of other groups'.

Environmentalists criticised Marshall's emphasis on increasing economic production (Smith, 1998; Young, 1989), feminists for his concept's systematic ignorance of

women's subordinate role in the labour market (Fraser and Gordon, 1993; Lister, 1997), and as Bellamy argues, multiculturalists criticised Marshall for the concept's failure to incorporate issues of ethnicity and cosmopolitans for his focus on the nation state (2008, p.89). These criticisms only confirmed that attempts to reach equal citizenship for some simultaneously create new disadvantages and shortcomings for others.

Modern democracies obviously need to deal with these criticisms and therefore they are struggling to define what citizenship, political community, making claims to rights, political participation and being political might mean in the twenty-first century. If citizenship becomes increasingly independent from its political content then there might be a need to redefine how to reshape political communities with new incentives for an alternative, meaningful way to enact citizenship. Otherwise citizens might become more and more detached from membership or their means of being political. Current forms of globalisation have created an even deeper consolidation of the hierarchical structures in which the powerful are able to decide without the consent of those comparatively powerless (Miller, 2010, p. 60). In other words, all these developments invite us to think about what it then means to be a citizen.

As I have argued above, republican and liberal perspectives of citizenship seem to advocate two distinct conceptions of citizenship and the role of the citizen in society. While the liberal conception of citizenship can be said to dominate in contemporary Western democracies, both conceptions have shortcomings of their own. The size and complexity of modern states can hardly accommodate the kind of civic engagement a republican understanding of citizenship implies. Moreover, if individual's prospects of making a political difference and enacting citizenship are low, then it is likely that people focus on other things. Identity as a political citizen is then no longer very central; politics and being political forms only one among many interests and identities.

Moreover, it can be argued that the heterogeneity of modern societies complicates identification with the state and fellow citizens.

Another fundamental problem, which I discuss in more detail in the following section, is that both perspectives on citizenship presuppose a clear definition of what is private and what is public. Both in ancient and contemporary society, women have been denied full citizenship. Starting with the ancient city-state of Athens where citizenship was connected to the public sphere and limited to a select few, women along with servants, minors, elderly people, and outsiders to the polis were excluded from the political life of the polis and denied the status of citizen (Abraham, 2010, p. 31). This dichotomy of the private and the public has fundamental implications for making claims to rights and being recognised in doing so. In addition, and important for the later analysis in Chapter Five and Six, the history of citizenship presented thus far exposes the coexistence of democracy with social inequality and poverty, which tends to produce rather exclusive political structures in which only some citizens are recognised as political subjects that can participate and make their claims heard, whilst others remain unrecognised in the ways in which they enact themselves as citizens.

2.2 Critical Perspectives on Citizenship

Having touched on relevant aspects of the historical trajectory of Western conceptions of citizenship, I will now explore some critical perspectives in the field of citizenship studies. As I want to focus on those moments in which people struggle to enact themselves as citizens by usurping the right to claim rights regardless of their status, I look at critical perspectives on citizenship, which, since the 1990s, have come to challenge conventional perspectives inspired by liberalism and republicanism. To grasp the paradoxes of citizenship it is useful to understand citizenship not just as an outcome but also as a continuous process and struggle between citizens and non-citizens, and

between citizens, non-citizens and states. A focus on citizenship as a struggle values the struggles to gain new rights and negotiate the substance of existing ones.

In the past few decades, Western nation states have experienced a trend toward the formation of new claims for inclusion and belonging, with groups increasingly framing their struggles in the language of rights and recognition. While this was also the case in ancient Greece for Roman peasants and plebeians, Italian artisans and French workers, what is new are the economic, social and cultural conditions that make possible the articulation of new claims and the content and form of these claims as citizenship rights (Isin and Turner, 2002). Thus, understanding the paradoxes of citizenship as a social and political struggle was the prime mover of the development of critical perspectives on citizenship.

In the following I work with a notion of exclusion defined as a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined. Exclusion in this sense involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services and the inability to participate in normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas (Levitas et al. 2007, p.7). As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, Roma especially are caught in a poverty cycle that guarantees their exclusion from economic, social and political life (Horvai, 2010).

In order to illustrate this progress for the frame of my research I now look at contemporary conceptions of citizenship from the perspective of membership and belonging, recognition, participation and rights. I conclude by investigating how some critical perspectives on citizenship, such as feminist and diversity critiques, challenge the promise of citizenship discussed above. These concepts are key to understanding how the situation of Roma emerged and how Roma act to challenge this state. With the

notion of participation I refer to the ability to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state. Belonging is used to discuss how people and groups relate to and are treated by both the state and society. It encompasses and relates to both citizenship and identity, adding an emotional dimension, which is central to notions of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Citizenship as membership and belonging

Isin and Wood describe citizenship as both a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity (1999, p.4.) Thus to be a citizen seems linked to belonging to a given political community. Yet it seems that more and more people live inside political communities but are not recognised as rightful citizens or political agents. These people are only to be recognised as members on the condition that all differences between them and the majority are diminished. The connection between belonging and being recognised in the very performance of belonging renders citizenship a conditional selection procedure and makes it highly exclusive. As long as citizenship is conceptualised as membership, it supports a selection procedure over who is in and who is out. To be a non-member or a citizen outsider within a political community seems then to be an oxymoron. This is, however, in the case of many immigrant, minority and Roma populations.

To complicate the issue further, as Yuval-Davis points out, belonging is 'not just about membership, rights and duties, but also about the emotions that such memberships evoke' (2006, p. 189). It seems as if the necessity and unavoidability of living in a state as well as the complex notion of belonging makes the exclusivity associated with citizenship even more problematic. The selection of members in a political community is always based on who is recognised as a political agent and who is not. In this regard Weber remarked a century ago that while race, ethnicity and

nationhood apply to concepts such as citizenship, its components of membership and belonging have multiple dimensions that are not precise analytical concepts but rather vague vernacular terms whose meaning varies considerably over place and time (1978, p. 395). Moreover, citizenship as membership and belonging seems ineffective at including citizens that are ‘outside’ – i.e. legally or affectively not recognized as members of the political community – and who struggle for rights, recognition or both. Thus, in order to foster alternative thinking of citizenship, it seems important to identify variations of membership and belonging. As I will show in Chapter Six, it seems that new actors, sites and scales of citizenship have emerged that complicate the ways in which citizenship is enacted not only as membership but also as claims (Sassen, 1996; Soysal, 1997; Isin and Siemiatycki, 2002; Scholtz, 2006).

Recognition

Above I suggested how citizenship understood as membership tends to be intertwined with the more affective state of belonging, and thus also with recognition. This interdependency is key to understanding the underlying complexities of the situation of many Roma in Europe. Once an individual is recognised as a member of a given political community – i.e. as belonging to that community – the individual has the possibility to act, whether she makes use of it or not. This possibility determines how an individual regards her civic engagement, as in abiding by democratically passed laws, paying taxes but also in making claims to rights. The ability to participate is a mechanism through which to promote collective interests, but only if all citizens have a voice in the articulation of this interest.

The actual democratic aspect of this is a complex matter and in Western democracies voter turnout has decreased continuously since World War Two. Bellamy for example claims that citizens seem dissatisfied with the system of democratic

arrangements in their respective countries, for instance feeling misrepresented, unjustly treated by taxation systems, feeling that there are no consequences to their participation, and thus, feeling powerless, while at the same time the majority of people continue to endorse democracy (2008, p. 25). In countries where citizens lack access to participation entirely, they are often reduced to being mere objects of authoritarian and oppressive regimes. Yet, not only authorities and regimes or western democratic states, but also civil society excludes those who are not recognised as political agents. Therefore it is necessary to think about the processes in which citizens are not recognised as claimants by fellow citizens. We need to uncover when citizens are denied the autonomy to act, what counts as a political act, and how citizen outsiders, like Roma, are often not recognised in the moment of acting politically.

Participation

In liberal democratic nation states political frameworks regulate social and economic life and political institutions are constructed to implement the necessary regulations. In his lecture on '*Politik als Beruf*' Max Weber called this the *Gewaltmonopol des Staates*, referring to a power that legitimises the state as the entity that exercises authority or violence over a given territory (1919, p. 29). This exclusive right to violence concerns public and private forces. While aiming to maintain public order by way of police and military forces, the private life of citizens is also a concern of the nation state. The need for institutions to regulate the social order is based on an understanding that while rules and regulations cannot control all areas of life (e.g. the internal exclusion of certain citizens), it is not viable to rely on peoples' good will or 'acting well'. However, not everyone subject to regulations within a nation-state has the opportunity to influence them by participating. Hence democratic citizenship at its best can only promote 'a degree of equity and reciprocity among citizens' (Bellamy, 2008, p. 57).

On the other hand, a person can enjoy the benefits conferred through an equitable political framework without actually being a citizen. For instance, non-national residents can often (at least in many Western liberal democracies) enjoy the advantages of a country's legal system as well as its public services in much the same way as full-fledged citizens. Obligations, in respect to certain laws as well as social duties, are expected of residents in much the same way as citizens. This separation of powers points to the complexity of contemporary citizenship regimes, whereby some non-citizens enjoy greater rights and have greater access to participation than some citizens, including, as is the subject of this thesis, Roma populations (Caglar and Mehling, 2013, p.169). Both their citizen outsider status and the lack of the right to make claims point directly to the political dimension of citizenship. Participation and the political dimension of citizenship are rendered extremely important, and being denied the ability to participate in one's political community contradicts the very basis of every liberal democratic nation-state.

Thus, there seems to be a need to formulate alternative thinking about citizenship, in a way that renders possible the participation of different groups of citizens and non-citizens. One alternative conception of citizenship, and the practices it entails, is a performative conception of citizenship, articulated by Isin (2013) through the concept of the 'enactment of citizenship'. This notion seeks to draw attention to acts of citizenship, which Isin (2013, p. 2) describes as

'claims to multiple legal and political forms of access to rights, or recognition, made by a myriad of actors, be they formal EU citizens or not. We seek also to highlight cases and styles of enacting and contesting European citizenship which may be disaggregated in space, may arise from unexpected or surprising sources and pose distinctive challenges to conventional understandings of European citizenship'.

To put it another way, enactments of citizenship question and expose limitations as well as possibilities of citizenship. Looking at the situation of Roma in Europe challenges the given structures of inclusion within the existing liberal democratic framework of the nation-state, and thus, necessitates a different conception of citizenship that recognises when, for instance, Roma enact themselves as citizens.

Relating the complexities of recognition to the importance of participation, it seems increasingly evident that certain groups, for example, migrants, refugees or Roma, lack recognition and remain unrecognized in their claim making (Van Baar, 2012). Citizenship, the practice of participation and recognition of claims, determines the way in which power is exercised as much as it affects citizens' attitudes towards one another. A permanent guest or a citizen outsider is at best a tolerated subject. The denial of access and one's right to claim rights determines whether and in what way people are treated. It allows for control and exclusion of those whose speech and participation is unrecognized.

Membership and Rights

From the discussion above, we can see that rights are the substance of citizenship. Membership and rights still seem to determine how citizenship is conceptualised and, as I discuss in Chapters Five and Six, the space in which some citizens continue to be invisible and inaudible, and thus unrecognized.

As discussed above, one component of citizenship is membership in the sense of belonging to a political community. This concept of membership defines who is recognised as a member of this community. However, some citizens are still not recognised as political subjects by the political community. Some citizens seem to be dismissed as acting agents and their decisions and claims to rights are not perceived. They are effectively constituted as non-citizens (or at least, second-class citizens or citizens outsiders) due, for instance, to a lack of education, poverty, dress code,

homelessness, or unemployment, with their autonomy to make the right choices and claims questioned. Prisoners, people without a permanent address, and people considered as ‘anti-social’ (Duggan and Heap, 2014), for instance, remain unrecognised in various different ways. Writing explicitly about Roma in the *Prison Notebooks* Antonio Gramsci, however, asserts, that everyone can be what he refers to as an ‘organic intellectual’ (1971, p. 203). In other words, everyone can be an expert on her own localised situation and therefore able to develop autonomous and meaningful positions. Following this assertion, I want to focus on those changes that took place in the last few decades as to how subjects, particularly Roma, claim and enact their citizenship irrespective of whether they are recognised as citizens or not.

The component of rights within the concept of citizenship can be approached from two directions. Bellamy argues that, first, there are rights that citizens ‘ought to’ acknowledge if they are to treat each other as free individuals worthy of equal concern and respect (2008, p. 17). He argues, second, that there are those rights that are necessary if citizens are to participate in democratic decision-making on free and equal terms (Bellamy, 2008, p.18).

If rights are not only considered individual entitlements but as rights that have a collective dimension, the issue of citizenship rights can be understood from a different perspective. On the one hand, rights ensure that human beings can live a life determined by free choices and efforts, but on the other hand, they suggest that social interaction should be organised in such a way that everyone is granted those rights on equal terms. The meaning of ‘the collective’ as well as the political dimension of citizenship point to the importance of understanding rights as a commitment of a group of people who form a political community and who all agree on how to best ensure the provision of these goods on equal terms as well as in fairness towards one and another. The association of rights with the rights of democratic citizens makes citizenship itself the ‘guarantor’ of

the right to rights, or, as discussed earlier on, ‘the right to have rights’ (Arendt, 1968, p. 296).

This perspective is interesting for understanding the situation of Roma in the context of modern citizenship. As I argued in Chapter One, there are citizens whose ‘right to have rights’ is suspended, despite their legal status. Yet, Arendt argued that ‘the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself’ (1968, p. 296). Arendt sees the ‘right to have rights’ as a recognition of membership, the recognition that someone belongs to humanity and counts as an autonomous subject making choices and claims. Bearing rights seems dependent upon the recognition of one’s membership. In other words, for Arendt citizenship remained an essential basis of rights, and the right to have rights is the right to citizenship and to membership of a political community. In that sense Arendt’s work shows what happens when recognition is withdrawn, and humans are left stateless and thus rightless (Hann, 2013).

I am interested in how this ‘right to have rights’ can be understood in the context of the situation of Roma in London. As I have outlined in Chapter One, the majority of Roma in Europe are not recognised as members of a citizen community and exist in a state of limbo, unrecognised as political subjects. In the context of Roma in Europe, there are many examples of when, despite their citizenship status, political agency and right bearing is denied. One example is the case in 2009 where Romanian Roma camped in a central park in Berlin and claimed their right to stay in this park after the local council threatened them with expulsion, despite the council’s knowledge that they had no alternative accommodation at the time. In spite of their claim to the right to stay, as EU citizens, they remained unrecognized as citizens and were expelled after few weeks (Caglar and Mehling, 2009). The ongoing situation in France reveals a similar pattern where since 2009 Bulgarian Roma have been paid by the French government to

return to Bulgaria. Most of the Roma who arrived in France applied for residency because they were persecuted in the EU Member States they were coming from. Instead of being offered sanctuary, the majority was paid a return allowance by the French government and sent back to their countries of origin (ERRC, 2012).

Thus, while there are different and competing conceptions of the right to have rights, it seems to be based on more than legal citizenship status. It is also dependent on being recognised as a political subject with the autonomy to take decisions and make claims. Neither the Romanian Roma in the Berlin park nor the Bulgarian Roma in France were able to claim their seemingly inalienable human rights, and found themselves rightless despite being EU citizens. As I discuss in Chapter Three, this complexity highlights the paradox of the conception of citizenship, with its promises to grant rights equally to every individual but its fundamental inability to do so. This perplexity shows that there are citizens, who find themselves to have lost all human rights and the rights of citizens, despite their citizenship status. I argue that there are citizens who, like Arendt maintains about stateless people, experience ‘a loss of a community willing and able to guarantee any rights whatsoever’ (1968, p. 297). They find themselves in a situation in which their loss of citizen and human rights coincidences with their reduction to the very status for which citizen and human rights are supposed to provide. For some citizens the condition of having the right to claim rights is not fulfilled by obtaining citizenship.

As I showed earlier in the chapter, in the discussion on conventional perspectives on citizenship, the very assumption that the rights of citizens depend upon exercising the basic citizenship right to political participation in cooperation with fellow citizens is itself a paradox. To maintain the working order of a community, everyone involved needs to be willing and able to guarantee the rights of everybody else. A political community that seems based on the logic of denying political agency to some

citizens who are not recognised as autonomous political subjects is rather debilitating and exclusionary.

Kesby (2012) illustrates that Arendt believed that human rights flow from citizenship, such that the right to have rights becomes the right to citizenship. For Arendt, human rights are not the foundation but the outcome of politics. To be excluded from a political community is thus to be excluded from the sphere of rights (Arendt, 1968) – to have no voice in their content and no chance of claiming their protection – and ultimately, to become an ‘anomaly’ for which the law does not provide. For Arendt, central to rights is that each individual has a community, and ideally a state, to which to belong: ‘man it turns out can lose all so called Rights of Man without losing his essential quality as man, his human dignity. Only the loss of a polity itself expels him from humanity (1968, p. 297). Arendt argues that while other rights ‘change according to historical or other circumstances, there does exist one right which does not spring ‘from within nation’ and which needs more than national guarantees’ (Arendt, 1949, p. 34). Thus the right to have rights seems to be the right to belong to a community and a form of recognition. Arendt stresses that ‘man as man has only one right that transcends his various rights as citizen: the right never to be excluded from the rights granted by his community’ (Arendt, 1949, p. 36). For Arendt the right to have rights seems prior to other rights, yet, she asserts that it ‘can exist only through mutual agreement and guarantee (Arendt, 1949, p. 37). In the aftermath of the Holocaust she notes that the right to have rights is a dimension of rights that ‘we became aware of [...] only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation’ (1966, p. 296-297). At that time it seemed clear to Arendt that national sovereignty was predicated on the power to exclude noncitizens from access to whatever powers and protection it might afford its citizens.

While the concept of the right to have rights seems to be closely connected to recognition, there are cases in which it is not certain who is recognising the recognition

of, for instance, minoritised people like Roma. What about those who are not recognised as citizens or those who are citizens but are not recognised in making claims to rights? In addition to Arendt's powerful concept of the right to have rights I want to draw on Isin, who uses the formulation of 'the right to claim rights' (2012, p. 109). Employing this formulation 'highlights the idea that before there are any rights, there is the right to be political and that the right to be political can only exist by exercising it' (Isin, 2012, p.109). In my research I want to focus on how Roma, who are often not recognised as citizens despite having citizenship status, enact themselves as political subjects prior to being recognised as bearers of rights.

The concept of the right to have rights provides an important starting point for my analysis and I aim to think with and beyond Arendt to reach my own understanding of how and whether Romanian Roma in London *make* claims to rights in their everyday life. The object of my analysis is then the more active and dynamic right to *make* claims to rights as an analytical tool to contest categories and illuminate how minoritised groups like Roma can be recognised in being political through the things they do in their everyday lives.

On the Promise of Citizenship: Feminist and Diversity Critiques

While I attempted to give a view of citizenship that shows the complex and overlapping intersections of membership, participation, recognition and rights, I want to stress that these intersections produce different actors of citizenship, e.g. migrants, irregulars, foreigners or Roma. Feminist critiques of the conception of citizenship are most helpful in order to understand how Roma are often unrecognized in their autonomy and claim-making and simultaneously, how difficult it is to escape this position while being constituted as a citizen outsider. From its beginning, modern 21st century feminism challenged the exclusion and marginalisation of women in economic, social and political life. While feminists fought for equal rights and opportunities, these claims

were confronted by the different roles and identities historically ascribed to and adopted by women (Prins, 2006). Nowadays it is acknowledged that equality and difference are not opposite but interdependent strategies, such that political equality rests upon the recognition of difference, which in turn implies the recognition of equal value of these differences (Bock and James, 1992).

At least since the 1970s, feminists confronted modern liberal thought with the slogan ‘the personal is political’ Hanisch (1970, in Firestone) and feminist scholarship criticised the public/private divide embedded in conventional perspectives on citizenship. Dietz (1998) maintained that in both the republican and the liberal perspectives on citizenship the clear and guarded public/private divide has prevented women from gaining equal access to the public sphere. According to Pateman, the critique of the dichotomy between the public and the private ‘is central to almost two centuries of feminist writing and political struggle’ (Pateman, 1989b, p.118). Pateman criticises the private/public split, in which women inhabit the depoliticised private realm of the family, while men have control over the politicised public life as well as the private sphere. The concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ seem to be used quite differently in feminist debates, on the one hand, the dichotomy itself is criticised and on the other, the assumption of a clear distinction between the two is questioned altogether. At the same time, the assumption of the ideal of the civic public as impartial and universal has been challenged. While impartiality is proclaimed, some citizens, i.e. ethnic minorities, the poor, non-whites, non-Christian, etc., and in my research Roma, remain invisible in the depoliticised spheres of the everyday struggles that mostly take place at the privacy of the home. Some citizens, who I call citizen outsiders, are therefore rejected in their ways to make claims to rights.

Young (1985) asserts that the ideal of the civic public as expressing the general interest, the impartial point of view of reason, itself results in exclusion. In this

conceptualisation homogeneity of citizens is imagined so that those who do not fit the model of the rational citizen who can transcend body and sentiment are excluded. The distinction between the private and the public in political theory assumes homogeneity that necessitates the exclusion of many individuals and groups, particularly women and racialised groups like Roma, culturally identified with the body, wildness, irrationality (Young, 1985), and as I want to add, everyday life. Yet, Elshtain (1981) emphasises that feminist critiques of the exclusionary public do not necessarily imply a collapse of the distinction between public and private. Relevant for my argument is that Young (1985) stresses that contemporary social life itself has collapsed the public and that emancipatory politics requires generating a renewed sense of public life altogether. Following this claim I focus my ethnographic observations on everyday life struggles that mostly take place in the depoliticised place of the home. In this way I explore ‘ordinary claims’ as a political category and investigate their politicising potential.

Yet, feminist theorists do not only claim a more inclusive perspective on citizenship, they also demand recognition of how policies and laws structure personal circumstances (Lister, 2005). They argue that laws and policies that are decided by a privileged majority have a profound impact on everybody’s personal circumstances. Accordingly, the public and the private are not sealed off from each other. The very nature of the community in which citizenship is exercised is highly diverse. Many critics (Okin, 1979; Pateman, 1988; Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 2006) therefore assert that the boundaries between public and private have to be recognised as socially constructed and subject to change. Critical feminist perspectives maintain that boundaries and hierarchical structures need to be challenged in order to formulate a perspective of citizenship in which the citizen is situated not in a polarised but diverse social world full of differences (gender, language, race, class, ethnicity, culture, etc.). Also in this way the feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’ aptly summarises the endless ways in which not only the official-political realm, i.e. the state, but also the

spheres of civil society, the family and the personal are deeply political and pervaded by power (Prins, 2006).

The aim of my research is therefore not to dissolve politics from the political, but to challenge the demarcations of these categories and point to a politics of the everyday through which groups, such as Roma, enact themselves as political agents and citizens. So the challenge is not just about including dominated subjects into public and political life. If equality is demanded, the terms against which equality is measured need to be challenged. The very representations, which materially constrain the recognition of citizen outsiders as political subjects and actors, need to be contested. Otherwise we risk what Irigaray refers to as contributing to ‘a power that reduces all others to the economy of the same’ (1995, p. 74). In other words, the problem is to understand and contribute to citizen outsiders’ power to initiate what Rosi Braidotti refers to as ‘a change of forms of representation within which they can be recognised’ (1994, p.4). Braidotti’s argument helps to set the focus for this research by stressing the difficulty of contesting fixed forms of representations as long as the terms within which these representations emerge are not challenged. In other words, in order to change dominant subject positions, I argue, we need to reinvent ourselves. Therefore I aim to go beyond thinking categories in a binary and thus limited fashion. Moreover I aim to challenge representations by asking who is speaking and contesting what counts as speech.

For my research this also means that to speak and act as Roma is to speak and act from a ‘site of multiple, complex and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, determined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle, education, health and sexual preference and others’ (Braidotti, 1994, p. 3). As I will discuss in Chapter Five in more detail, stereotypically Roma tend to be represented either as criminals or victims. While Roma tend to be classified in a very narrow way, it is instead important to show the diversity and difference of Roma experiences and political interventions. With the interviews and observations of the everyday struggles discussed in Chapter Six

I also want to point to contradictions in what Braidotti refers to as narrow forms of representation and challenge them as already determined and fixed entities (Whitehead, 1979; Braidotti, 2006). Focusing on extraordinary moments as the place where the political takes place renders ordinary moments of everyday life struggles invisible. According to Neveu, 'approaching citizenship processes from the ordinary is a fruitful perspective from which the political dimensions of usually unseen or unheard practices and sites can be grasped' (2015, p.141). As such it opens up the analysis to sites, moments and practices that are usually considered as non-political and includes them in the frame. While especially Roma women are constituted as invisible in the depoliticised sphere of the home, through the interviews and observations this conceptualisation of the non-place as well as their subject position is challenged. This may also be what Braidotti describes as a 'gap between how we live and how we represent these lived experiences to ourselves in theoretical terms and discourses' (2011, p.4).

Thus, while the slogan that the private is political might be familiar, so is the depoliticisation of the private. It is not that Roma or other minoritised groups are invisible in the public domain, on the contrary, Tyler (2006) argues that 'immigrants' and the topic of 'immigration' are 'hypervisible'. Yet she stresses that it is 'precisely the visibility of the immigrant and particularly the production of the illegal immigrant as a national abject which screens the realities of migrant lives from view and silences migrants voices' (Tyler, 2013, p.3). Therefore I want to reconsider the potency of everyday life struggles, the private and the personal.

Another critical perspective on conventional conceptions of citizenship comes from diversity scholars. The universalist idea of citizenship emphasises mainly the legal status through which an identical set of civil, political and social rights is allocated to every member of a given polity. As previously discussed, Marshall famously argued

that the expansion of social rights was necessary to include the working classes into British society (1950, p.11). The securing of social cohesion in European post-war welfare states was always a strong argument for the universal idea of citizenship. Yet, the increasing pluralism of societies in the 1980s challenged this conception. Turner, for instance, criticised Marshall's conception of citizenship for failing to emphasise the notion of social struggles as the central motor of the drive of citizenship (1990, p. 203). Young (1989) and Williams (1997) argued that the extension of citizenship rights to formally excluded groups like women and migrants has not lead to equality or full integration. Others pointed to the problem of the causal relation between citizenship as a uniform legal status and its aim of civic integration. Young (1989) goes even further, arguing that a universalist concept of citizenship remains exclusive as long as it accepts the externality of particular standpoints in order to achieve only one common viewpoint and continues to invent laws and policies that are difference-blind. Other critics emphasised the importance and relevance of difference. They argued for a concept of citizenship that is on the one hand able to recognise the pluralist character of a democratic public and rejects prioritising an *a priori* point of view, and on the other hand, recognises when equal treatment also justifies differential treatment to protect minorities (Lister, 1997; Aziz, 1992).

Such a concept of differentiated citizenship has problems of its own since it demands definitions of when and for what reason the recognition of particular rights is either justified or illegitimate. It also brings up the issue of how to deal with 'minorities within minorities' as well as the issue of how tolerant liberal societies then have to be (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000; Spinner, 1994; Parekh, 2000). Young wrote extensively on the required common political practice such a concept would require. She envisaged a heterogeneous public where participants start from their 'situated positions' and attempt to build up a dialogue across differences (2002, p.7). The question is what kind

of government policies and institutions could possibly support citizens in such dialogues.

Writing on the idea of citizenship as a normative ideal of membership and participation Kymlicka and Norman distinguish between three types of citizens' demands: special representation rights (for disadvantaged groups); multicultural rights (for immigrants); and self-government rights (for national minorities) (1994, p.354). The first two groups demand inclusion into mainstream society, whereas the third group is making claims for self-governance. Kymlicka and Norman maintain that this may endanger civic integration and weaken the bonds to the larger community since these minorities want instead more political and legal power (1994, p.356). The demands to self-governance, according to Kymlicka and Norman (1994, p.361), contest the very nature, authority and permanence of the larger community. Critics questioned this somewhat overly optimistic position of Kymlicka and Norman, which assumes that these bonds exist and that the majority of national minorities identifies with the larger society (Okin, 1999; Modood, 2007). Yet, it seems arguable whether multicultural demands are in fact demands for inclusion into a given society. Policy making in most European countries is based on the assumption that integration can be 'secured'. Citizenship tests or the banning of religious symbols are just two examples.

Another point critics raise is citizenship's actual impact on civic integration. If democratic citizenship is understood as a set of civil, political and social rights and as a political practice that aims to provide a sense of identity and belonging to its citizens, citizenship seems always linked to nationality. Considering pluralism as the current condition of societies, nationality can no longer serve as the point of allegiance and identity. While nationalism is rising in most EU countries, some scholars suggest that the collective identity of modern democratic nation states should be based on something

that transcends cultural differences. While this issue is beyond the scope of the topic of my research, I want to stress that within these critical perspectives on citizenship, there seems to be a strong case for principles that are able to go beyond the identification with a nation state and nationality alone (Delanty, 2000; Sassen, 2000; Bosniak, 2000; Isin, 2008).

If citizenship is understood as legal status whose normative core is the principle that all citizens enjoy the same rights, it must also allow equal treatment, which in turn may justify differential treatment. Looking at the situation of Roma in Europe, it seems as if Roma face different scales of discrimination and persecution. One central part of this debate is reaching a balance between the recognition of difference and the affirmation of common principles to which all citizens are required to adhere.

Citizenship as a form of identity reached a different meaning in pluralist societies.

However, differential treatment comes at its own costs. It is likely that employing minority rights especially targeted at Roma risks reifying cultural boundaries, stimulating thinking in ethnic collectives, reinforcing stereotypes and hampering collective action. Framing the situation of Roma as a minority and identity discourse might create what Benhabib has called 'rigid and firm boundaries around cultural identities' (2002, p. 68). Although there seems to be a consensus on the inadequacy of the individual rights based EU anti-discrimination directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June, 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, OJ L 180 (19.07.2000)) for guaranteeing the equality of Roma in the exercise of their fundamental human rights (see same Directive), it is unclear, as Rövid (2009) maintains, whether it is possible and desirable to accord group rights to various communities labelled Roma – and if so what the content of such rights should be. This critical debate about equality and difference is clearly a core issue with respect to the situation of Roma and it highlights the difficulties that are inherent in modern conceptions of citizenship. For often also within

the difference, equality and sameness debate, the continuity of dominant forms of representation is sustained and still does not allow attempts for radical change.

To relate this debate to the modern conception of citizenship, it is important to note that citizenship is characterised by an ‘irresolvable tension’ (Soysal, 1994; Mouffe 1993). Isin and Nielsen (2008) assert that in its historic narrative citizenship seems to have been both, domination and liberation. At the outset, we cannot tell and citizenship can neither be defined as inherently inclusive nor exclusive. Instead it appears that which ‘side’ citizenship tends towards – domination or liberation – arises through struggles, the results of which are both contingent and reversible. Isin (2009) argues that whether citizenship is inclusive or exclusive, homogenising or diversifying, or positive or negative, is a result of struggle. In other words, in its historic narrative citizenship was neither inherently exclusive nor inclusive.

To return to citizenship as an universalist project, one approach is to abandon this aim altogether or to remind ourselves of Young’s distinction between universality as impartiality, ‘in the sense of the adoption of a general point of view that leaves behind particular affiliations, feelings, commitments and desires’ which she rejects as fiction, and ‘the universality of moral commitment to the equal moral worth and participation and inclusion of all persons’ (1990, p. 105). Lister argues that our goal should be ‘a universalism that stands in creative tension to diversity and difference and that challenges the divisions and exclusionary inequalities which can stem from diversity’ (1997, p. 13).

Drawing on contemporary radical political theory that seeks to ‘particularise’ the universal in the search for ‘a new kind of articulation between the universal and the particular’ (Mouffe, 2013, p.95), the principle of a differentiated universalism can be indeed useful. The application of this principle yields an enriched understanding of citizenship, both as status and as practice. From this perspective, equality and difference are not incompatible, nor do they constitute an ‘irresolvable tension’; they only become

so if equality is understood as sameness. The choice either-difference-or-sameness seems to lead to a dead end and a rethinking of citizenship needs to question why the concept cannot guarantee the kind of equality it promised in its original formulations, which have been discussed at the beginning of this chapter. How and through which institutional mechanisms citizens could exercise meaningful political agency in increasingly complex and plural societies still needs to be identified. But for a dynamic conceptualisation of citizenship, the concept must go beyond a legal status, and additionally, must have a significant political dimension (Benhabib, 2006; Delanty, 2000).

Both feminist and diversity critiques challenge in a powerful way the exclusion of women and minoritised individuals and groups from citizenship. Yet, some arguments remain paradoxical, As Scott, for instance, highlights, ‘in order to protest women’s exclusion, they [feminists] had to act on behalf of women and so invoked the very difference they sought to deny’ (1997, p. x). In terms of Roma this argument seems even more emblematic, for, as I discuss in Chapters Five and Six, Roma are hardly recognised as political subjects, since still mainly only speaking subjects are considered as political subjects. At the same time not speaking about and not recognising what Roma say as acting subjects (which may take place non-verbally in depoliticised spaces) seems to be part of their exclusion and reproduces a racialised discourse about Roma (see reports of the WB, UNDP, OSCE, EU in which Roma appear mainly as statistics). Voiculescu argues that it is not even easy to write about racism against Roma, since most of the time it is not what is considered as visible racism (2016).

In critiques of the concept of citizenship one crucial question seems to be to define what exactly distinguishes subjects from citizens. If there is such a distinction that marks a citizen as something ‘more’ than only holding legal status, we need to

define what exactly this 'more' is. If this 'more' is the differentiation between being a citizen and acting as a citizen, this needs to be closely scrutinised. The analysis of this 'more', in other words, how citizen outsiders can be recognised as political agents and constitute themselves as those to whom the right to have rights is due, is discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

2.3 Conclusion

While for conventional approaches (both liberal and republican) to citizenship the category citizen outsider is an impossible proposition, for a citizen by definition is an insider and equal to all other citizens, I argue that the term citizen outsider destabilises that assumption. In this chapter I showed that while there may be abstract equality amongst citizens, in concrete reality of power relations, citizens are still divided into various hierarchies of deserving versus non-deserving, normal versus pathological, white versus black, and so on. So it is this focus on the actual practices by which citizens are governed that distinguishes critical approaches to citizenship and for which citizen outsiders is not an impossible proposition but actual description of how power is exercised. I highlighted that what is distinctive about Roma is not that they are the only citizen outsiders, but that they have taken up a right (in this case freedom of movement) that they legally have, but that they are socially denied. In that sense, it is necessary to consider their (transnational) mobility not only as a social practice but also as a political terrain on which the limits of (European) citizenship are both contested and negotiated (Aradau et al. 2008, p. 4).

While the above discussion on conventional and critical perspectives on citizenship highlighted that citizenship has always been and continues to be, in theory and practice, ultimately about inclusion and exclusion (Abraham, 2010, p.3), I emphasised that this exclusionary logic means that struggles around citizenship are

struggles to be recognised and heard. Thus, the boundaries of citizenship are always on the move, expanding and contradicting:

‘Citizenship has always been a group concept – *but it has never been expanded to all members of any polity*. [...] Moreover, many members of polities are excluded from the scope of citizenship even if they are legally entitled to its benefits.’ (Isin and Wood, 1999, p. 20).

I also showed how critical perspectives on citizenship stress that conventional conceptions of citizenship tend to reinforce boundaries and binary thinking. Critical perspectives on citizenship highlight that conventional perspectives seem to presume and constitute ‘an other’ that is not recognised. This emphasis on difference seems based on the assumption that being a citizen is dependent either on status or practice within a given community.

Adding to these critiques on the conventional perspectives, I argued that critical perspectives also, at least partly, tend to assume the same categories as those taken for granted by conventional perspectives. Applying Scott’s critique of feminist discourses – as, ‘on the one hand [...] seem[ing] to accept authoritative definitions of gender, [whilst] on the other hand, refus[ing] these definitions’ (Scott, 1997, p. x), I argue that neither the vocabulary of feminist nor diversity perspectives on citizenship accounts for what Isin refers to as an unnamed figure of citizenship (2009, p. 367). Isin asserts that the attempts to interpret these new developments for citizenship by engaging already established approaches to political theory such as liberalism, republicanism and communitarianism have been inadequate (2009, p.370). Moreover, while the feminist debate in relation to the public / private dichotomy seems to be considered as an older debate, I would like to stress its topicality, for the consequences of the conferred invisibility (although they are not) in what is regarded as private spheres, still prevail.

Moreover, while this debate focused predominantly on power dynamics between women and men, I argue that also other dynamics still prevail for minoritised people like Roma. Therefore the focus of this research is not power relations as such but the visibility of minoritised people who tend to be made invisible and voiceless. In other words, the possibility of the enactment of citizenship as the right to make claims to rights by those who are treated as citizen outsiders. Building on this argument, I therefore stress that there exist citizens who are denied access to the ideological and geographical space of citizenship. Citizen outsiders are pushed into the depoliticised sphere of abjecthood, a place at the margins of citizenship. Due, among others, to the continuing prevalence of the association of the public and the political, Roma remain unrecognised as political agents who make claims to rights. For in conventional perspectives of political theory, abject places of the everyday life that exist in the private sphere are not recognised as political spaces. So, while feminist debates are critical of the private / public dichotomy, the framework is still used as an analytical concept – rejecting the mechanistic separation while not denying the consequences of the dichotomy.

Yet, my aim here is not to identify a new sphere or context in which citizen outsiders can make claims to rights. Rather, by means of interviews and participant observations my interest is to make the private visible and to politicise the depoliticised sphere of the everyday, for it includes both public and private issues. Challenging the vocabulary of citizenship discussed in this chapter, I investigate whether everyday life as a field of political struggles of Romanian Roma in London can be read as an enactment of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). I also examine whether the claims of Roma move beyond the above-discussed politics of difference and identity. For even as EU citizens, Romanian Roma tend to be constituted as citizen outsiders and remain unrecognized as political subjects. Thus, Roma as citizen outsiders remain unnamed,

not because they are ‘invisible, but because we have not yet recognised’ them (Isin, 2009, p. 367).

Focusing on the everyday life struggles that Roma engage in, I want to challenge the discussed conceptions of citizenship and their entailed categories of who counts as subject, what is political, and who can make claims to rights and be recognised as doing so. Moreover, investigating a ‘non-place’ like the everyday challenges the idea of posited places and spheres of rights bearing and claiming. Using the concept of acts of citizenship enables me to investigate citizenship in an alternative manner: as those moments in which subjects, regardless of their status, constitute themselves as citizens, or those to whom the right to have rights is due (Arendt, 1958; Balibar, 2004; Rancière, 2004; Isin and Nielsen, 2008). I draw attention to acts that may not be considered as political and demonstrate that their enactment does indeed instantiate political constituents (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, p. 18).

The above discussed perspectives on citizenship contain structures in which some people, among them many Roma, are spoken for and silenced, despite their status as citizens. Lister even argues that there is a mechanism of citizenship that promotes ‘subordination, domination, and hierarchy, in which one side of the binary line is valued at the expense of the other and relations of exclusion are legitimated’ (1997, p. 23). Thus, while feminist critiques of the depoliticisation of the private and their claim to politicise the private seem familiar news, investigating the struggles of everyday life of Romanian Roma in London forces us, for instance, to go beyond the public / private dichotomy because this focus does not separate the private from public but instead includes both. Taking into account places, spaces, acts and experiences of the everyday that are otherwise excluded from conceptualisations of citizenship enables us to deconstruct these discussed dichotomies in order to both rearticulate the categories that structure the situation of Roma in the UK as elsewhere and to rethink citizenship as political subjectivity while remaining critical about what counts as political.

Laying out the theoretical frame for this research, this chapter pointed to the need for a critical understanding of citizenship that is able to account for those citizens whose practical location remains precarious and whose ability to claim rights remains limited despite their legal status. I argue that recognising Roma as political subjects and their everyday life struggles as acts of citizenship require us to investigate enactments of citizenship. In order to appreciate the paradoxical situation in which Roma often find themselves in as citizen outsiders, Isin suggests that the unit of analysis is acts (2009, p. 377) by which and through which subjects like Roma become, or constitute themselves as, citizens.

Chapter 3: The Situation of Roma and Perspectives on Citizenship

This chapter provides a general overview of the situation of Roma in Europe while taking into account their great internal heterogeneity (Liégeois, 1986; Mayall, 2004; Tremlett, 2009). In doing so, it depicts the ways in which Roma are often constituted as what I refer to as citizen outsiders. While the discourse analysis and fieldwork of Chapters Five and Six are limited to a methodologically feasible area of the UK, and specifically, one borough in London, here I discuss contemporary anti-Roma discourses and EU policies and practices in which the situation in the UK and London is embedded. After a brief discussion of the legal status of ‘a true European minority’ (Parliamentary Assembly, Decision No. 1203/1993) and the situation of migrated Romanian Roma (Fosztó 2009; Gheorghe 2013 in Guy 2013) in the UK, I link the citizenship dilemmas discussed in the previous chapter with the situation in which many Roma seem to find themselves. With this contextual focus the chapter gives a general overview of the situation of Roma in Europe that sets the background for the subsequent chapters, in which I concentrate on the subtleties of discourses through which Roma are constituted as citizen outsiders, and the rights claims making through which Roma in London enact themselves as political subjects, and indeed, citizens.

While I give this overview I also want to emphasise the diversity of Roma in Europe. The situation of Roma differs across Europe. Vermeersch highlights the danger of representing Roma as a homogenous population: representations of Roma as a clearly defined, bounded and victimised group can have negative effects, even if it tries to serve an emancipatory goal (2008, p. 361). In this regard Van Baar (2011) also maintains that the articulation of a political claim for the recognition of Roma (as a homogenous group) is often built on essentialist and stereotypical assumptions of Roma identity. Building on these crucial points about representation and participation, and embedded in this overall context, my research focuses on recognition of Roma as political subjects and the ways Roma enact themselves, differently, in order to claim

rights. Yet, this chapter is primarily about stressing common experiences – those of historical discrimination, of being racialised, minoritised and othered, and of being pushed to the margins of citizenship – that distinctly situate Roma in many European countries, including the UK.

3.1 The Situation of Roma in Europe

The 2007 accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU has shaped the situation of migrated Roma in the UK. Both Romania and Bulgaria have a high percentage of Roma populations, some of whom migrated to other EU Member states after accession. As both Romania and Bulgaria are among the EU's poorest states, Roma have adopted the same strategy as large numbers of their non-Roma fellow citizens in migrating to Western Europe in search of better work opportunities (Guy, 2013). Many of the marginalised Roma in Romania and Bulgaria suffer deep structural poverty. A 2009 Fundamental Rights Agency report stated that racism and poverty are the main factors pushing Roma to leave their countries of origin ((European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (in the following referred to as FRA), 2009). Moreover, since 2007, a significant factor driving Roma migration has been a dramatic increase in hate crimes and hate speech directed at Roma in parts of Europe (FRA, 2012). Yet, while there is a heated debate about the free mobility of EU citizen Roma, Sardelic stresses that Roma are not in fact more mobile than other populations (2015, p. 159). Moreover, as Sardelic points out, in addition to asking why Roma become migrants we have to ask why most Roma, whether migrants or not, remain so immobile on the socio-economic ladder, why they live on the edge of poverty in most societies, and why they remain one of the main targets of hate crimes and discrimination (Sardelic, 2015, p. 159).

Sigona and Trehan (2009) stress that Roma have always been labelled a 'problem' community. McGarry (2014) similarly emphasises that Roma have been historically excluded, and lack meaningful routes to political participation. Lucassen,

Willems and Cottaar (1998) argue that this has resulted in the stigmatisation of Roma collectively across Europe and beyond. In addition to that, Roma, for the most part, have been thus far unable to effectively mobilise politically in order to adequately challenge this image (McGarry, 2014). Given that I argue that Roma are political actors, I want to stress that mobilising politically here means in traditionally recognised ways, i.e. in the public sphere. This mobilisation remains difficult since Roma communities tend to cross national borders and traditional political activity still remains perceived as nation state bound and directed. Also, as Roma act politically in ways that are often traditionally not recognised as acts of citizenship or political acts, their political actorship and mobilisation often remains unrecognised.

In addition to the aforementioned socio-economic issues and perceptions, the situation of Roma in Europe is shaped by a series of other complex and intersecting histories, contexts and developments. These include neoliberal policies (Sigona and Trehan, 2009; van Baar 2011; Fassin 2014); growing impoverishment after the collapse of socialist state regimes in 1989 (Pogany, 2004; Barany, 2002; Guy, 2001; Sobotka 2007); the rise in local xenophobic and racist discourses directed towards Romani minorities (Vermeersch, 2012; Stewart, 2012; Sigona 2014); government responses to this and governments' fear of westward migration (Haupt, 2012; ERRC, 2014); the salience of minority and human rights advocacy as well as their limitations; the racialisation of political space and the criminalisation of Roma all over Europe (Rancière, 2004; Bardits et al., 2014; Cottrell-Boyce, 2014). In many instances, citizens identified 'as belonging to Romani minorities have only limited access to the most fundamental citizenship rights, although these rights have been *de jure* granted to them' (Sardelic, 2015, p. 159). Cohen even argues that since Roma are 'not fully included in the body of citizenry in different contexts, they are frequently considered as semi-citizens' (2009, p. 72). As I have already noted in the previous chapter, and as is the central argument of this thesis, while Roma are citizens in the *de jure* sense, they do not

seem to be recognised as citizens. It is this tension that I want to capture with the term ‘citizen outsiders’.

At this point I want to come back to the concept of citizen outsiders and further contextualise it in the situation in which many Roma seem to find themselves. As I discussed in Chapter Two, citizenship is not only about legal status. Experiences of many *de jure* citizens, including Roma, point to the existence of second-class citizens who are simultaneously ‘citizens’ (in the *de jure* sense) and non-citizens (in the *de facto* sense): they are citizens who cannot fully benefit from being citizens. Anderson argues that what is fundamentally at issue is status, in the sense of worth and honour – that is, membership of the community of value (2013, p. 4). This community of value is seen as in need of protection from citizen outsiders, who are constituted as not sharing the same, or as Anderson suggests, the ‘right’ values. Constituted as citizen outsiders, Roma may thus possess legal citizenship status, but the normative quality of a ‘community of value’ continues to effect their exclusion.

I refer to Roma as citizen outsiders in order to focus on those moments when identities are blurred and destabilised by acts of citizenship that contest the ways Roma are constituted. If indeed citizen outsiders are imagined as those who are legally ‘inside’ but failing to make the ‘right’ choices and to claim the ‘right’ rights, how do we understand their struggles for recognition, voice, inclusion, and equality? Are they outside because they fail to live up to the values of the community around them? As I illustrate in Chapter Five, Roma are discursively positioned as ‘outside’ because they are constituted as others, nomads, criminals, victims, scroungers, or helpless, with too many children and too little money. Thus, as citizen outsiders, Roma are denied the right to make choices and claim rights. Yet, I argue that Roma do make choices and claim rights. I argue that despite being silenced and unrecognised as political actors, Roma act politically and enact themselves as citizens.

Although I have been stressing that European Roma are citizens in the *de jure* sense (apart from some Roma from the Balkans), the citizenship of many Roma is peculiar. Two of the core EU citizenship rights are equality and the freedom of movement, articulated in the Freedom of Movement Directive 2004/38. Additionally, Article 45 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights states that, ‘Every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States’ (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ 2007/ C303/ 01, 2007). Taking a closer look at the situation of Roma in Europe provides a different picture and underscores the discrepancy between what is articulated in European law and what happens in practice. On a theoretical level EU policy emphasises that EU laws, for instance the right to move and reside freely, apply to every EU citizen and citizenship is conceptualised as universal, public and culture-blind (Craith, 2004). Some critics, however, point to the shortcomings of these such, which often fail to acknowledge people’s diverse needs and existing inequalities (Young, 1989; Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995; Modood, 2007). As discussed in Chapter Two, citizenship as state membership is ‘inherently group-differentiated’ (Kymlicka, 1995, p.124), and the opposite of ‘universalist’ (Joppke, 2007, p.431). So it seems that despite obtaining citizenship, in several EU Member States Roma citizens are still not treated as full, equal citizens. EU Member States often fail to promote equal access for all their citizens to express their diverse interests.

Article 27 of the UN’s 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that, ‘in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language’ (UN, 1966, p. 27). However, even with this convention the rights of some citizens are still not protected and their access to claiming rights is not guaranteed. Linking these citizenship challenges to the situation of Roma, it is questionable whether the ‘right to one’s culture’ actually protects the rights

of those who ascribe to a Roma identity. Are minority rights for Roma, who are EU citizens (except for a small minority), needed at all? If minority rights mean being tolerated at the margins, or having ‘practical schools’, designed for children with mental disabilities in which Roma children make up 80% of the pupils (Amnesty International, 2010; ERRC, 2013), or exclusive schools for minorities, which again might reduce future education and employment opportunities, then liberal multiculturalism seems to be built upon the same categories of homogeneity and assimilation as other ideologies.

Ever since Roma arrived in Europe in the fourteen century they have faced marginalisation and persecution. Today, however, we are witnessing an increase in overt expressions of Romaphobia (I will return to this term in more detail later on) across Europe (McGarry, 2013). A stigmatised group’s presence in the public sphere is regulated by numerous institutions which construct a negative image of the group and then consolidate this representation over time, so the dominant images of Roma as nomadic, criminal or inadaptable persists unchallenged (McGarry, 2013). McGarry identifies the origins of this discrimination in the early history of the European nation state and argues that Roma, unfairly characterised as landless nomads, have been excluded from national communities because they do not conform to the idea of ‘belonging’ to a particular territory (2017). Understanding the prejudice against Roma as rooted in European notions of territoriality helps us to comprehend the contemporary situation of Roma in Europe. The notions of space and place are crucial issues in the discourses on Roma since both their struggles and ways of coping are often about negotiations over space and place, whether it is public or private, national or continental. There seem to be new situated forms of inhabiting space and new places are claimed in which Roma negotiate their relationship to the state, its institutions as well as their capacity and modes of being political.

The accession of new Member States in 2004 and 2007 assisted the collapse of what some politicians called the *cordon sanitaire* and enabled citizen's movements from these countries. While Europe proclaimed freedom of movement for all its citizens, the media described these movements as 'glaring' and 'unstoppable' (see Richardson, 2014). Control over movement that is expressed in work restrictions for EU citizens from Romania and Bulgaria and removal policies also impedes the proclaimed freedom of movement. Suffering first a school ban in many post-war European states and then subjected to compulsory education in special schools led to severe discrimination of Roma all over Europe (see Guy, 2013). Often without traditional education Roma are probably hit hardest by regulatory mechanisms like work restrictions and removal policies.

Roma, as a historically disenfranchised people (Guy, 2013; Rostas, 2013), are often denied access to participation on a local, national and European levels. As various studies argue, Roma tend to suffer discrimination in nearly all spheres of life, including education, housing, employment, access to health care and social services. From Spain to Italy to Greece and in nearly all of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, Roma are segregated from non-Roma populations (see e.g., ERRC Country Profiles, 2013). In the UK, Roma are primarily depicted as economic migrants. Research by *Člověk v tísni* (*People in Need*) on Czech Roma migration to Dover in 2000 argued that decisions by Roma to migrate are rarely made for one reason alone, and that typically multiple motivations are involved. Participants in the study stated that the main motives to migrate were: 'repeated racist attacks,' including both 'verbal and physical assaults on themselves or someone close to them to the extent that they were in fear of their lives'; 'indifference of the police' and 'the minimal sentences passed on perpetrators of racially-motivated crimes'; 'employment discrimination,' including 'lower pay than whites for the same work' and 'the impossibility of finding work due to their racial origin'; 'discrimination against their children at school,' particularly their 'assignment

to Special Schools’; and their ‘pessimistic vision of the future’ with the expectation that ‘the situation of Roma would continue to deteriorate’ in their homelands (*Člověk v tísni*, 2000). Whereas a poor economic situation surely contributes to a decision to leave, the results of the survey illustrate that it was never the primary cause.

People in Need also carried out a nationwide public opinion poll in the Czech Republic at the same time as the research was carried out in Dover. The poll not only revealed that many of those who were still asylum-seekers at the time were financially better-off in the Czech Republic than in Great Britain, but also that 62 per cent of the Czech public believed the main reason for emigration was economic improvement, with a further 32 per cent thinking that it had been organised by Romani activists to gain political advantages. Only 2 per cent stated that migration was a consequence of discrimination in the Czech Republic (*People in Need*, 2000). Although there was widespread migration of Roma to Western and Northern Europe during the 1990s it is important to note that at that time only a few individuals were successful in claiming asylum. Until mid-1999 asylum had been granted only to one Czech and five Slovak Romani families (Lidové Noviny, 1999).

EU enlargement legally changed the situation of citizens from A2 countries (those that joined the EU in 2007) and A8 countries (those that joined the EU in 2004), and the cross-EU movement of those citizens increased. Since then, citizens of A2 and A8 countries have the right of freedom of movement in accordance with Directive 2004/38 on the right of citizens of the European Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the EU. Simultaneously, however, the official discourse and the treatment of Roma worsened in many EU Member States since that time. What the *Economist* (2012) referred to as ‘Europe’s biggest societal problem’ has not disappeared following EU expansion. On the contrary, rights violation and discrimination are on the rise (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2015). Since the aforementioned enlargement the

European Parliament (EP) has passed resolutions annually, calling on the European Commission and Member States to improve the situation of Roma (EP 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015). Each year the European Commission also invites all Member states to submit specific National Roma Integration Strategies (EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, (COM(2011)173/4), April 2011). On May 19th 2012 the UK decided against submitting such a strategy, and instead, submitted individual documents on policies already promoting Gypsy and Traveller Inclusion (European Roma Policy Coalition, 2012). This example of governmental refusal to acknowledge the difficult situation of Roma shows how both the existence of Roma and the existence of the continuing discrimination and exclusion of Roma in the UK are denied. At the time of writing, no date was foreseen to submit this document.

Many Roma transgress borders in order to escape different forms of discrimination and exclusion, while simultaneously the rhetoric of governments and media tend to construct Roma as a homogenous group migrating for economic purposes. As a consequence of their migration, the situation of Roma has become a topic in most EU Member States (Vermeersch, 2010; CoE, 2013; ERRC, 2014). Although it is increasingly recognised that ‘Roma are among the primary human rights issues in Europe’ (Cahn, 2002, p. 18; Cahn 2010), new forms of exclusion have emerged that are closely related to the recent political developments described above. Due to spatial segregation and control of mobility on the continental level; spatial cleansing and ghettoisation on the local level; and the formation of a European identity and a European model of citizenship, most Roma find themselves in an ambivalent situation (Bancroft, 2005). Roma tend to try to escape exclusion in their countries of origin and yet the countries of destination often lack the political will to protect their rights. In other words, Roma seem to have uneven access to citizenship, although they hold the status. Sardelic even argues that this cannot be attributed to the positioning of Romani

minorities as the ultimate Other, as in other frameworks, but to their placement in a space of specific in-betweenness (Bhabba, 1994 in Sardelic, 2015, pp. 161). In this way, the question of how the EU is relating to Roma policies of Member States can be seen as a litmus test of a European 'area of security, freedom and justice' (EU Legislation, Tampere Programme 1999).

In addition to organisations like the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), and the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO), one of the organisations defending the rights of Roma in Europe is the European Roma Travellers Forum (ERTF). The ERTF is an assembly representing grassroots Roma organisations at international level, and works in partnership agreement with the Council of Europe. It was established in 2004 with the aim of promoting the effective exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for populations such as Roma, Sinti, Kalé, and Travellers, as protected by the legal instruments of the Council of Europe and other international legal instruments. All members of the ERTF self-identify as Roma (Vermeersch, 2006, van Baar, 2011). In an ERRC paper (1997) the former president of the ERFT, Rudko Kawczynski, maintains that human rights in Europe are always the human rights of the ethnic national majority (Kawczynski, 1997). The possibility of taking these human rights abuses of minorities to national courts is very limited. According to a 2009 ERTF report, the spectrum of state measures for 'the solution of the Roma problem' runs from criminalisation and expulsion, through the denial of the existence of Roma by not recognising them as a minority, to the denial of existential rights and forced assimilation.

Kawczynski (1997) contends that violence and discrimination against Roma is part of everyday life in Europe and governments rarely use any measures to protect Roma. As a *de facto* non-territorial minority in Europe, Roma occupy a unique position, both historically and politically (Vermeersch, 2010). Kawczynski, who is also a board

member and founder of the Roma National Congress, compares the situation of Roma to that of European Jews, since according to Kawczynski, Romaphobia is also a deeply rooted form of racism. He goes even further in arguing that ‘unlike the Jews, Roma do not have an independent national homeland state providing a framework of political sovereignty’, and so efforts to improve the situation of Roma in Europe must acknowledge this special position (Kawczynski, 1997).

Though the European Commission promotes its framework of national strategies for a better integration and participation of Roma and organises many high level conferences on the implementation of such strategies, violent right wing guards and militant vigilantes in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria propagate racial hatred against Roma (European Commission, 2014). Despite the efforts of the EU, particularly the situation of Eastern European Roma seems to have worsened in the post-socialist era (Van Baar, 2011). During the negotiation phases for accession to the EU, minority rights were taken up in the respective legal systems of the potential Member States, but after accession they were often not implemented. The question of minority rights came up again not least due to anticipated Roma migration to Western Europe. The particular situation of Roma, first mentioned during the Copenhagen negotiations in 1990, remained an issue throughout all accession negotiations (Vermeersch, 2002; Simhandl, 2006; Ram, 2009). The required minority rights that were not ratified in several old EU Member States created a paradoxical situation. Legally, most of the new EU Member States have better anti-discrimination protection than most of the older Member States. Yet Roma are still exposed to widespread discrimination and violent racism in Eastern Europe. Minority rights seem to fail to fully address the situation of Roma as they tend to be based upon the assumption that justice can be restored with normative sanctions and suing for non-discrimination. Yet, insisting on equity and overriding violations of norms does not seem sufficient as long as the underlying political conceptions are not challenged and rearticulated. For instance in various recent EU reports and conferences

the terms ‘nomadism’ and ‘the Roma lifestyle’ continue to be used as fundamental cultural traits of Romani communities and are named as causes for the abject situation of most Roma. The construct of ‘Roma culture’ is blamed for their situation. This set of traditions is sometimes represented as the cause of alleged Roma underdevelopment, at other times as a collection from which to choose which items to preserve and which to discard (Sigona, 2011). Another common refrain is that Roma are responsible for their integration but that they do not want to integrate (McGarry, 2013).

It appears that the dominant images of ‘who the Roma are’ are spread and owned by non-Roma who discursively constitute the Roma as ‘other’: as criminal, nomadic, deviant, and so on. McGarry (2014) notes that this otherness or difference and the relative absence of Roma voices in formal representations allow processes of stigmatisation to continue. He claims that political identity would need to be embraced by individual Roma who affirm their group affiliation, which can help challenge negative ascriptions of their group identity (2014, p. 770). Moreover, McGarry notes that governments across Europe, under pressure from the EU, have tailored policies and initiated measures in an attempt to foster the integration of Roma but these have failed because they have not been able to substantively address stigmatisation, overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards Roma, and the root causes of Romaphobia (2013). While the focus of the fieldwork in London (more closely analysed in Chapter Six) is not limited to the ways Roma challenge negative ascriptions, I analyse how individual Roma claim the right to have rights and thereby challenge the ways they are constituted.

3.2 Minority Status and Romaphobia

In addition to the question of whether minority rights help to address the situation of Roma, we have to ask whether the status of minority is at all useful in recognising Roma as acting subjects. In Chapter One I already spoke about Roma as minoritised people to emphasise the processes through which individuals or groups are made into minorities. While many minorities in Europe are ideologically or geographically excluded from the space called 'Europe', Roma seem to be excluded in a particular and continuous way. Wolfensohn and Soros (2003) assert that Roma have been among the biggest losers in the transition from communism. For instance, they were often the first to lose their jobs in the 1990s, and have been persistently blocked from re-entering the labour force due to their often inadequate skills and pervasive discrimination (Ladanyi and Szelenyi, 2001; Barany, 2002; Biro 2013 in Guy 2013). Roma have been the object of assimilation, state coercion, discrimination and racial violence for centuries (Nicolae, 2012). The very way Europe has constructed its understanding of space and identity excludes Roma from access to the 'place' of Europe. This form of exclusion not only challenges the notion that the common or pan-European identity, citizenship or rights are inclusive in nature, but also points to the difficulties of challenging the social and political structures that continuously propagate resentment against people perceived as Roma. Nicolae (2012) stresses that Roma are faced with a particular form of racism, which he describes as an ideology of racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and of institutional racism fuelled by historical discrimination. It is a complex social phenomenon that expresses itself publicly through episodes of violence, expressions of hatred, exploitation and discrimination, but also through the discourses and portrayals produced by politicians and academics, spatial housing segregation, widespread stigmatisation and socio-economic exclusion (2008, p. 1).

The failure to recognise Roma as holders of rights has led to research on the discrimination of Roma in different European countries. With regards to Roma and citizenship, Sigona and Monasta's (2006) report on the situation in Italy reveals discrimination in Italy as a twofold phenomenon: first, the widespread discriminatory policy and practice by institutional agents at national and local levels, and secondly, the public denial (and lack of acknowledgment) of the discriminatory nature of such measures. Sigona and Monasta (2006) define the position of Roma in Italian polity as an 'imperfect citizenship', wherein the boundaries of citizenship, as well as the entitlements, rights and duties attached to it are always fluid and subject to negotiation, producing amongst 'imperfect citizens' a sense of uncertainty of their rights and entitlements and, importantly, affecting also their perception of what discrimination is. In other words, living conditions and racism are separated and at the same time related phenomena.

Tackling racism is difficult and requires an understanding of how it is manifested. McGarry argues that it is not enough to simply create anti-discrimination legislation; only by challenging how the majority perceives Roma can discriminatory practices be redressed (2013). Romaphobia is what McGarry (2017) refers to as the last accepted form of racism. Demonised by the media and persecuted for hundreds of years, Roma communities are among the most persecuted groups in Europe (McGarry, 2017). A 2008 article in *The Economist* on the situation of Roma in Europe reported that everyday life for the estimated 10 to 12 million European Roma takes place at the bottom of the heap. The report stated that the majority of Roma live both physically and psychologically at the edge of mainstream society (*The Economist*, 2008). The UNDP's 2002 Human Rights Development Report noted that 'most of the Central and Eastern Europe region's Roma people endure living conditions closer to those of sub-Saharan

Africa than to Europe...[and] one out of six is ‘constantly starving’’, promoting demands for further initiatives (UNDP, 2002).

In many EU Member States, Roma seem to be denied access to the political, social and economic spheres of society and are targets of violence, discrimination and persecution. Unlike is often argued by the media, this phenomenon is not unique to Eastern Europe; anti-Roma sentiment is palpable throughout Europe. Moreover, racism against Roma does not only concern some extremist fringe elements. Opinion polls consistently show that Roma are held in lower esteem than other social and ethnic groups. Eurobarometer surveys from 2007 and 2008 stress how widespread stereotypes and prejudice about Roma are. Strikingly, 77 percent of European citizens deem it a disadvantage to belong to the Roma minority and 24 percent would consider it inconvenient to have a Roma as neighbour. In Czech Republic and Italy 47 percent make this statement, whereas only one out of ten state that they would have no problem living in close proximity to a Roma person (Eurobarometer, 2007; 2008).

Although outright expressions of racism are increasingly considered inappropriate, a deep hostility exists and is particularly directed towards Roma, who are positioned on the moral and political margins of society. Similar to anti-Semitism, Romaphobia (van Baar, 2011) is a historically developed social phenomenon that stabilises itself continuously through homogenising and essentialising certain perceptions and through the problematisation of certain groups and individuals under the term ‘Roma’. At the time of this research Romaphobia appears to be a legitimate form of resentment that is found across the political and social spectrum (Hancock, 2000). Nevertheless, despite the spread of intolerance towards Roma all over Europe, terms like Romaphobia have only recently entered Europe’s political language (Acuna, 2012). The first official report in which the matter of forms of discrimination against Roma was dealt with was the European Parliament’s resolution adopted on April 2005 (P6_TA(2005)0151) (European Parliament, 2005). In the document the European

Parliament invited the European Commission to intervene to combat Romaphobia across Europe:

Underlining the importance of urgently eliminating continuing and violent trends of racism and racial discrimination against Roma, and conscious that any form of impunity for racist attacks, hate speech, physical attacks by extremist groups, unlawful evictions and police harassment motivated by Romaphobia plays a role in weakening the rule of law and democracy, tends to encourage the reassurance of such crimes and requires resolute action for its eradication (European Parliament, 2008).

In other words, there is a long-term history of failing to recognise Roma as holders of rights. Bancroft (2005) calls this '21st century racism', as to him, the liberal construction of the EU discriminates not only on the basis of national origin, but on the constitution of a permanently inferior position in the hierarchical structure of Europe, that is 'the other', those who are not 'European enough,' those who are placed in the category of 'less than white' (*sous-Blanc*). Balibar asserts that European unification, far from counteracting tendencies towards re-colonisation, has intensified these tendencies (2004, p. 44). Other critics even argue that the EU, imbued with a civilising mission, categorises 'cultures' and 'ethnicities' in order to delimit and control the possibilities of moving from the status of not yet 'European enough' to that of a newly 'emancipated' citizen. Bancroft (2005) maintains that in a multicultural gesture of allowing rather than recognising 'the other' on national territory, this territory sees itself as a metropole, minimizing its differentiations and internal conflicts in order to represent unity by opposition. Only when respecting the terms of an assimilation 'contract', one in which 'the other' can never negotiate for him/herself, can he/she be able to receive similar treatment to that of a citizen. Balibar (2004, p. 41) contends that,

if not [respecting the terms of an (assimilation) 'contract'], other methods of the European recolonisation, both at the level of daily realities and at that of great effects of representation on the scale of humanity as a whole, the link between the two being more and more assured by the system of communication reflects for each human group a stereotyped image of its hierarchical 'place' in the world by 'virtually' projecting it onto the place it lives.

In regards to representations of Roma in Europe, McGarry contends that while no community retains an uncontested image of itself and its identity, Roma communities have little or no control over how they are represented in the public sphere (2014, p. 756).

Several reports of the last few years have shown that across Europe these negative representations and corresponding developments often translate into violence against migrants and particularly against Roma. Examples of this have been documented in the European Roma Rights Centre reports 'Roma Evicted in France as New Government Fails to Find New Solutions' (2012); 'Roma under Attack. Violence Against Roma surges in Central and Eastern Europe' (2012); the 'European Court of Human Rights Rules against Hungary in Police Brutality Case' (2012); the report 'Italian Authorities urged to investigate Destruction of Roma Camp' (2011); and the 'EU Office Letter on Roma Discrimination and Exclusion in Europe' (Amnesty International, 2010). Racist attacks and violence against Roma seem to be on the rise, including several cases of coercive sterilization in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2011, house firebombing in the Czech Republic and Hungary in 2009, and state-supported tearing down of shanty houses and burning of camps in Italy in 2007. The Amnesty and ERRC 'Five Years of Injustice' report in 2012 indicated that there is also persistent segregation in schools, housing discrimination and a general intolerance against Roma in all facets of life. The situation is reported to be particularly difficult in

urban or suburban settlements or camps into which Roma are often segregated and where public services tend to fail.

Cahn maintains that, 'in Europe, the exposure to human rights abuses to which Roma are subject to, is jarring' (2002, p.18). He explains: 'throughout the 1990s Roma in Central and Eastern Europe have been subjected to a wave of violence by ideological racists, by their neighbours and by the very police officers assigned to shield individuals from violent abuse. In some countries, such as Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and former Yugoslavia violence has risen to the scale of pogroms' (2002, p.18). Although Roma face different scales of discrimination in different European countries, it is crucial to not only point at Central and Eastern European countries for virulent hostility towards Roma. On the contrary, Thomas Hammarberg, the former Commissioner of the Council of Europe states in its *Viewpoints* 2008 that 'Roma in Europe have been repressed for more than 500 years, the methods have varied between enslavement, enforced assimilation, expulsion, forced sterilisation, internment and mass killings not only during the Roma Holocaust; these patterns and severe Romaphobia, which reaches through all levels of society in all European countries, are repeated even today' (Hammarberg, 2008). Thus, directing attention only to Central and Eastern Europe serves to 'orientalise' racism, just like Roma tend to be 'orientalised'.

McGarry notes that in the face of evictions, expulsions, ethnic profiling, hate speech, and anti-Roma protests, it is difficult to argue with Jovanovic's assertion 'we, the Roma, are the people mired in oppression' (Jovanovic in McGarry, 2014, pp. 763) meaning that self-representation, where it exists, must negotiate this negative ascription. Gheorghe (2013) argues that representations of Roma culture are often simply responses to other people's expectations of the performance of otherness. In other words, Gheorghe suggests that Romani self-representations are relational and require the recognition of others. This note on representation is crucial both for the analysis of the

fieldwork in Chapter Six as well the discursive analysis in Chapter Five, for claims and the way they are expressed are to some extent connected to expectations and the way Roma tend to be constituted.

As noted above, to understand the structural position of Roma it is important to take into account the long history of anti-Roma sentiments and the attempts to either altogether eliminate Roma from society or else to forcibly assimilate them. Yet, Roma have succeeded in withstanding the complete erasure of their diverse cultural and social identity, not least because of internal social structures (Okely, 1983; Lucassen, 2008). Barany (2002) claims that the structural position of Roma in the interstitial spaces of European modernity has also ensured their economic survival even in totalitarian states. In terms of representation and identity, McGarry (2014) argues that the negative ascription of Roma identity makes representation for Roma more difficult as those who speak on behalf of Roma must deal with widespread societal discrimination and hostility. If indeed, as McGarry stresses, identities are not fixed, then the real challenge for Roma is to reverse years of stereotypes and stigmatisation (2014, pp. 770).

Several linguists argue that there is linguistic evidence that Roma are descendants of nomadic groups expelled from India at the beginning of the 10th century (Hancock, 1998; Matras, 2004). According to this research, at this time Roma migrated through Anatolia, today Turkey, and Egypt mainly to Central and Eastern Europe (Mayall, 2004). Yet, contrary to one of the most persistent stereotypes, more than 80 per cent of Roma are sedentary (ENAR, 2012). The pervasive idea that the situation of Roma is caused by nomadism in a settled society is therefore severely misleading (Acton and Gheorghe, 2001). Barany (2002) maintains that the nevertheless strong cultural identity and intra-group identification amongst Roma is due to internal

processes and survival strategies developed in constant confrontation with a hostile environment.

Prior to EU expansion the focus in the UK was on restricting what was represented as mass arrival of Roma people, the process of EU expansion led to a gradual transformation of this approach. With the expansion in 2004 and 2007 around 5 million Roma (EU Framework appendix, 2011) became EU citizens and members of the largest European ethnic minority. Then, as Guglielmo and Waters assert, ‘social rights and security issues surrounding Roma became internal issues’ (2005, p. 776) and despite recent deportations in countries like France, Italy, Germany, the UK and Belgium it became more difficult to stop the mobility of Roma within the EU. Yet, other repressive and restrictive measures targeting Roma were introduced and produced what Huysmans (2006) called a segmentation of citizenship and of the rights associated with it. It is arguable whether this approach was introduced to encourage Roma to stay in their countries of origin in order to stop their migration beforehand. Pogany (2006) and Vermeersch (2003) even argue that the enforcement of human and minority rights framework and development initiatives are part of this approach. While the enlargement enabled many Roma to move freely within the EU, the right to freedom of movement also led to a further spreading of Romaphobia in public discourse.

Gheorghe (2010) argues that while Romanian Roma are the scapegoats within discriminatory discourses in the UK, Romania used the migration to Europeanise the ‘Roma problem’ and to pass on responsibility to EU institutions and other member states. The Council of Europe declared in 1993 that Roma are a ‘true European minority’ in Resolution 1203. While this terminology stresses the European dimension of the struggle for Roma inclusion, McGarry (2014) emphasises that as a political identity, the representation of Roma as European is a double-edged sword. Vermeersch

(2012, p. 1197) points out that Roma are presented as a special case, a particular puzzle which needs to be solved but ‘the new tendency to single out the Roma as a *European* priority and a special *European* concern has also, rather paradoxically, opened up new opportunities for nationalist politicians to plead against new national measures to help the Roma’. In other words, while the Europeanisation of issues concerning Roma and the terminology of Roma as European minority may provide new opportunities to formulate demands towards a broader European political audience, meaningful inclusion policies seem to be better implemented in a national and local context.

Brief Legal Background

To understand how Roma are problematised within institutional and legal frameworks, a brief overview of key EU policies that focus directly and indirectly on Roma is necessary. The 1957 Treaty of Rome created the ‘European Economic Community’ (EEC), whose initial focus was to improve living and working conditions by stimulating economic progress through the securing of the freedom of movement of capital, workers, goods and services across Europe (European Union Law, 1957). The 1992 Treaty of Maastricht created a new legal and political entity called, for the first time, the European Union. Maastricht committed member states to working towards an ‘ever closer union’, resulting in increasing co-operation on immigration, justice and home affairs, and thus providing a sharper focus on issues with human rights implications. In 1997, the then fifteen Member States signed the Treaty of Amsterdam, which strengthened EU powers to legislate anti-discrimination measures, and created the concept of European citizenship. The Treaty of Amsterdam amended both the Rome and Maastricht Treaties but did not consolidate them into one single treaty. This lack of consolidation made the law complex and difficult to understand. In December 2000 in Nice a new section on equality was adapted as the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Since the consolidation was considered necessary, Member States agreed in Lisbon in 2007 on

a text for a constitution of the EU, which would finally bring together the EU and EC treaties.

The Treaty of Rome addressed discrimination in relation to nationality and gender. Article 6 of the Treaty of Rome (now Article 12 EC) prohibited any discrimination on the grounds of nationality of a Member State. To supplement this, a regulation was introduced in 1968 – Regulation 1612/68 – which made detailed provisions in relation to all aspects of discrimination against member states' nationals and their families when exercising their rights to move freely within EU in order to work. Until the Treaty of Amsterdam there was no mention of a prohibition on discrimination in relation to age, disability, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. In 2000 the Race Equality Directive implemented the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin as regards employment and training, but also education, social protection and social advantages (including social security and healthcare), involvement in organisations of workers and employers and access to goods and services, including housing.

Another crucial agreement relevant to the situation of Roma is the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership, which states that, 'membership requires that a candidate country must achieve stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities [...]' (Copenhagen Criteria, 1993). However, there is no long-term requirement to effectively target minority issues. Of great importance also is the 1995 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). In 2009, the FCNM was signed by 43 (ratified by 39) of the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe. Article 3 of the FCNM states:

‘1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights, which are connected to that choice. 2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.’
(FCNM, H(1995/010)).

The often contested and problematic claim to the special status of Roma may also be a consequence of inadequate national and international legal instruments for improving the social status of Roma. For instance, following an unsettled murder case in Italy in 2007, a group of Roma from Romania were randomly expelled back to Romania despite the Directive 2004/38/EC. At that time the EU Justice Commissioner advised the Italian government to dismantle camps inhabited by Roma migrants to prevent their return after forcible expulsion (EP 2007). In July 2009, one and a half years after Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, the EU published a press release as a reaction to a Commission thesis of 29 April 2004 on the transposition and the application of Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of EU citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. With an eye towards Eastern enlargement, the Commission thesis concluded that the overall transposition of Directive 2004/38/EC of 29 April 2004 was ‘disappointing’ and new guidelines were written. Examples of these are: ‘Restrictions of the right to move and reside freely on grounds of public policy or public security. The right of free movement within the EU carries with it obligations on the part of its beneficiaries, which implies to obey the laws of their host country’ (Directive 2004/38/EC). This section updates the content of the 1999 Communication in the light of the recent case law of the court and clarifies certain questions concerning

possible restrictions of the right to move and reside freely on grounds of public security or public policy.

There are two conditions under which EU citizens can be expelled from a host Member State:

‘The first is that the personal conduct of an individual represents a genuine, present and sufficiently serious threat affecting one of the fundamental interests of the society of the host Member State. Restrictive measures on general preventive grounds are not possible. The second condition is that national authorities carry out a proportionality assessment to decide whether the person concerned can be denied entry or removed. The personal and family situation of the individual concerned must be assessed carefully with a view to establishing whether the envisaged measure is appropriate and does not go beyond what is strictly necessary to achieve the objective pursued, and whether there are less stringent measures to achieve that objective’ (European Commission Guidelines, 2009).

Another cornerstone policy that directly targeted Roma was the 2007 European Parliament Resolution on a Strategy on the Roma (B6-055/2007) (EP, 2007). This was followed by several EU Roma Summits, EU Platforms for Roma Inclusion, an EU Framework of National Roma Integration Strategies in 2011 and many meetings and recommendations on the progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, which proved to be difficult (EP, 2013; EC 2014)

The legal status of Roma differs across Europe and this difference is often related to the period during which they migrated as well as to the recognition of Roma as an ethnic or national minority. This status influences rights to social security and

health system, education, standard of living and access to participation in public and political life. Available data and surveys show that the general living and employment situation of most Roma is worse than it is for the majority population or other disadvantaged ethnic or minority groups. Racial and ethnic discrimination and stereotyping hinder the access to the labour market and result in much higher rates of unemployment and significantly lower levels of income. In turn, this has negative consequences on access to housing and social services (FRA 2012; Friedman, 2015). For the reasons named above, Roma tend to have lower levels of education and professional skills, at least those who self-identify as Roma and in particular Roma women. This makes clear that poverty among Roma is ‘multifaceted and results from a complex mix of historical, economic, and social factors that include the location of Roma settlements, low educational status, large family size, and poor labour market and health status’ (Ringold, 2000, p. viii). Ringold also points out that there is an added problem since ‘aspects of Roma culture and living conditions also reinforce stereotypes by limiting communication between Roma and non-Roma, and contributing to a vicious circle of isolation and marginalization’ (Ringold, 2000, p. 4).

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an overview of the situation of many Roma in Europe. This situation raises questions about citizenship and alternative ways of thinking about citizenship. Linking this discussion on the situation of minoritised Roma in Europe to the concept of citizenship and claiming rights, I want to recall some of the issues discussed in Chapter Two. I argued that the internal diversity of contemporary liberal democracies poses a challenge to a conception of citizenship that appears to value homogeneity over heterogeneity. I also explored how feminist and diversity critiques helped to shift the focus away from rights and duties of citizenship towards questions about the nature of a community in which citizenship is exercised. Moreover I

highlighted that phenomena like poverty, precarity, discrimination, racism and social exclusion all undermine the benefits and exercise of citizenship as well as the opportunities to make claims to rights. In Chapter Three I showed that these phenomena dominate the daily life experiences of European Roma today and constrain their opportunities for the future. While Romaphobia and poverty are different phenomena, they are interrelated and both determine the situation of Roma in Europe. Therefore, it is crucial to rethink those conditions that make citizenship meaningful and fulfil its promise to all citizens.

With this overview of the situation of many heterogeneous Roma communities in Europe I want to stress that the situation underscores the complexity of this citizenship dilemma. As citizens, Roma are situated at the EU's inner and outer margins. While there are many dimensions, which highlight the obstacles Romani minorities are confronted with when accessing citizenship (Sardelic, 2015), I focus on the situation of Roma in London, which demonstrates that the institution of citizenship is much more than just a legal and political status, for it involves highly complex ways of acting. I consider these acts as 'from the bottom up, of the abject forms of inequality and injustice' (Tyler, 2013, pp. 4). While Tyler focuses on revolting subjects, in other words, revolts by disenfranchised people – such as the protests of migrants in detention and facing deportation, the ongoing resistance of Gypsies and Travellers to eviction from their land and homes, and riots of young people across England that map the borders from the inside out (2013, pp. 3), I want to look at more subtle acts that are not yet recognised as political acts or revolts. Whilst protests and revolts are already recognised forms of political agency, exploring more subtle acts, often as yet unrecognised as political, enables us to comprehend other ways in which citizen outsiders constitute themselves as those to whom the right to have rights is due. Isin and Nielsen (2008, p. 2) also assert that,

‘whether the focus is on status or practice, it remains on the doer rather than the deed. So, to investigate citizenship in a way that is irreducible to either status or practice, while still valuing this distinction, requires a focus on those acts when, regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens or, better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due’

Isin and Nielsen thus suggest a shift in focus from subjects as such to acts (or deeds) that produce subjects. In order to focus on acts of citizenship as deeds, I look at how Roma, who find themselves in the situation I described above, are constituted as citizen outsiders and how we can recognise their ways of resisting as political acts of citizenship, and thus Roma themselves as political subjects. So this research on how Roma as citizen outsiders challenge the way citizenship is conceptualised through their acts raises also questions about how citizens are made and unmade and, as Butler and Spivak (2007) argue, how we might critically engage and intervene in this process of making and unmaking.

In Chapters Two and Three I showed how the relationship between citizenship and nationality is contested under the forces of pluralism. The situation of Roma in Europe as constituted citizen outsiders urges us to think about alternative ways to approach citizenship. Contemporary European society has to manage pluralism and accommodate perceived difference. Moreover, we need to rethink the role of the state when allocating citizenship as well as guaranteeing conditions in which all citizens are recognised as political subjects. A sound way to approach these changes is to develop a practice and attitude that is capable of doing both, that is, on the one hand supporting a strong sense of place and tradition and on the other hand recognising difference and otherness. In this way we can challenge the negative and closed features of nationalism, racism and fundamentalism (Isin and Turner, 2002). Thus research on how the situation

of Roma practically challenges the modern concept of citizenship can only be approached in relation to how the dilemmas of modern citizenship affect the situation of Roma. Both aspects are mutually inclusive.

Chapter 4: The Research Process

This chapter focuses on the methodological and ethical approaches utilised in this thesis. By analysing documents, interview data and participant observations with a focus on acts of citizenship at a field site in East London, I aim to provide an account of how Roma have responded to their situation as citizen outsiders. As previously outlined in the introductory chapter, the research questions guiding this project are:

How do dominant conceptions of citizenship serve to underpin the situation of Roma in Europe?

How are Roma discursively problematised in the UK?

Given their position as ‘citizen outsiders’, how do Roma in London make claims to rights? How can the everyday life struggles of Roma in London be understood as acts of citizenship?

In the context of these questions, the field research aims to shed light on how everyday struggles of Roma in London challenge dominant conceptions of citizenship. The research adopts a qualitative, ethnographic approach using participant observation and unstructured interviews with Roma in East London. This is supplemented by discourse analysis of selected problematisations of Roma in the UK. This chapter will consider the rationale behind this approach, its ethical implications, and lay out the research design, data collection and analysis. It will conclude with some personal reflections on the research process. Appendix [1] with the basic demographics of all participants, provides more detail regarding the fieldwork sample in East London. Appendix [2] includes a copy of OU ethics approval is also attached.

4.1 Rationale

As I discussed in Chapters Two and Three, Roma are constituted as an ultimate non-citizen ‘other’, the ‘illegal,’ ‘criminal,’ ‘anti-social,’ ‘victim,’ ‘gainer’ (Mayall, 1995; Clark and Campbell, 2000; McGarry, 2014) and, as I argue, citizen outsider. Little is known, however, about Roma’s everyday struggles, and even less about how these may well be understood and recognised as acts of citizenship. Consequently, in the context of the work of Delanty (2002), Stevenson (2003), Turner (2001) and Isin and Wood (1999), this research aims to focusing on the practical and everyday dimensions, experiences and enactments of citizenship. It explores new ways of claim making and new ways of becoming political through everyday struggles. In the empirical part of this research, I do not consider citizenship as ‘one identity amongst others’, but as a specific political practice through which marginalised populations make claims to rights.

Qualitative research

Empirical research on how Roma in London are constituted as citizen outsiders and in turn, how Roma resist those constructions through everyday political practices and acts of citizenship is scarce. The aim of this research is to go beyond interpretations of discourses and to understand how those who are problematised make claims to rights through their everyday struggles. An ethnographic approach that utilises unstructured interviews alongside participant observation is essential, since the theoretical debate on the meaning of citizenship is often ‘conducted in what is virtually an empirical void’ (Conover, 1991, p. 801). As I explain in more detail later on, my approach to citizenship takes place in communicative situations and arises out of narratives of rather ordinary life experiences.

Like in most qualitative research, concepts and methods were developed and refined in the process of doing research (Angrosino, 2007, p. ix). Starting the fieldwork involved a clear focus but not a formulation of a hypothesis from which to start, or

which could be proved or disproved. However, the fieldwork was based upon a clearly defined theoretical framework (see Chapters Two and Three) appropriate to what was studied. As the research process was reflexive throughout, there was always scope to adapt existing methods or introduce new methods in case existing methods or frameworks were found to be unsuitable (Flick, 1998, p. ix).

A qualitative approach was chosen as it seemed most appropriate to ‘measuring’ the kind of social reality explored in this thesis. Quantitative research questionnaires could not appropriately address everyday struggles or the meanings they had for participants. Since this study aims to ‘document the world from the point of view of the people studied’ (Hammersley, 1992, p. 165) a precise understanding of the two is essential. Moreover, with structured quantitative research questions the ‘variables’ could not be easily identified. I chose unstructured interviews because I am interested in everyday conversations as they arise, and in exploring within the emerging conversations and observations how the everyday life struggles of the participants can be recognised as acts of citizenship. In this context, a qualitative approach enables a ‘deeper’ understanding of social variables such as interdependencies of citizenship and the meaning of everyday struggles. The theoretical discussion, the nature of the research questions, the critical discourse analysis as well as the indispensable contact with the people in question demand a highly sensitive methodological approach that is here best achieved using a qualitative research design. Moreover, in order to understand the nuances and those acts of citizenship that were not ‘spoken’, an ethnographic approach in which I would also spend time in the everyday lives of the participants seemed most suitable.

I draw on two main sources of data for the thesis. First, I use governmental documents, media reports and notes and reports from a court hearing to investigate both the citizenship rights to which Roma are entitled, and to explore the ways in which Roma are problematised as citizen outsiders and denied access to those rights. The

discourse analysis I employ to analyse this data is based on Foucauldian discourse analysis and draws on the work of Wodak and Meyer (2009), Van Leeuwen (2008, 2010), Holstein and Gubrium (1995), Glassner and Miller (1997), Behar (1996), Della Porta (1992), Glaser and Strauss (1967). I employ concepts such as narratives, discursive formation, problematisation and social practice.

Second, I use field notes from participant observation and unstructured interviews with 25 research participants to understand how their everyday life struggles can be recognised as acts of citizenship (for more details on the participants, see Appendix [1]). I used participant observation and informal interviews to investigate how the participants experience their everyday life and enact citizenship. Initially this ethnography focused mainly on meetings between the participants and a local education consultant who was a well-known person of trust to the participants. During the time of the fieldwork I participated in these meetings daily, as well as in events that emerged through these meetings. In this way I could enter the field through the daily routines of the participants and observe the ways in which they experienced their situation and how they enacted their right to claim rights. Yet, while acts of citizenship were central to my research focus, I remained open about the meanings and connotations of concepts such as citizenship and acts.

For this research I adopt a broad interpretation of ethnography as a research process based on fieldwork using a variety of mainly qualitative research techniques but including engagement in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.2). While there is not one single definition of ethnography, 'its most characteristic form [...] involves the ethnographer participating in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on issues that are the focus of the research' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 1). In order to make the research manageable and deeper, I focused the

discourse analysis on the UK and the ethnographic fieldwork on one location in East London. Due to particular circumstances at the time of the fieldwork, which I discuss later in this chapter, the case study focused mainly on Romanian Roma who hold EU citizenship and live in East London.

4.2 Research Design

Access

During the three-month period of ethnographic fieldwork in East London I looked at the claims and voices of those who are problematised and that are often not recognised and heard. For various reasons, it was difficult to reach potential participants. Just as Walford describes, the process of gaining access to groups and becoming accepted by participants can often be difficult and time-consuming (Walford, 2001). The very few Roma organisations and community centres fortify the lack of public presence. The absence of community centres enforces a sense of invisibility and leaves the private sphere as one of the main places to encounter people. Thus, one of the only ways to meet potential participants was to contact persons who work with Roma and to be personally introduced. Initially I contacted several organisations that work with Roma in London. During the first weeks of my research, the responses to my enquiries were mainly negative since at the time only few organisations were officially working with Roma in London. The only two organisations that worked with Roma in Greater London were initially not able to introduce me to anyone. One organisation responded with a general suspicion of academic research. The other turned out to have no direct contact with Roma and to gather most of their 'data' from other organisations. Responses were overall rather defensive and protective. Often the 'representatives' of organisations closed off possible contact and in doing so decided for the people they were providing for. As Hammersley and Atkinson argue, gatekeepers may exert an excessive amount of control including effectively blocking research or 'shepherding the

fieldworker in one direction or another' (1995.p. 65). This was initially the case for my research.

I also contacted several academic researchers who work with Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in the UK. Responses to my inquiries were similar, since most of these people worked exclusively with Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. A professor and long-time Roma activist suggested that 'the only way is to hang out in front of the [...] Roma community organisation in East London' in order to get to know people' (P., 2009). Responses from other researchers similarly spoke to the difficulty of access.

As I made myself gradually familiar with the field, I also started volunteering at various Roma NGOs and support groups in London in order to establish first contacts. Most of the Roma I met through these organisations came to London in or after 1997 from Poland, the Czech Republic or Slovakia. I also contacted other researchers I had met during summer schools on Romani Studies at the Central European University in Budapest. Through these contacts I was introduced to a gatekeeper called Martin (name anonymised), an education consultant for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in East London.

I contacted Martin, who expressed interest in my work and agreed to meet. At our first meeting at the end of October 2009 he suggested that I accompany him in his daily work with Roma in East London. This way he could introduce me and I could get to know potential participants in a rather casual way. Martin began to work with Gypsies, Travellers and Roma fifteen years ago when he was still a teacher. At the time of my fieldwork, he had already worked for several years as a full time consultant, supporting mainly Roma in registering their children at schools and giving advice on any issues regarding schooling and education in general. He also gave awareness-training seminars to public institutions working with Roma. Since Martin worked with Roma in this London borough for many years, the people he worked with knew and

trusted him. In my presence, Martin was always sensitive to people's individual situations, very aware of the structures leading to certain situations, and supportive and honest. He was perceptive to people's concerns and always supported a solution that took the overall situation into account. Moreover, due to Martin's long-term work experiences with Roma, he was aware of the consequences, which, for instance, certain living conditions might bring with them. For the kind of data I collected, it is crucial to note that the participants perceived Martin as a long time person of trust. It was an advantage that I was introduced through him. The encounters were therefore more intimate and friendly than purely professional. Yet, although Martin was not a social worker, he was related to social services and thus represented potential support and knowledge of areas, the participants would have otherwise had difficulties to access.

Hence my fieldwork also offers particular insights into how Roma in London struggle to understand and access services and moreover how they struggle against the ways they tend to be constituted. Given these circumstances and given that social services often form one of the few contact points outside kinship networks, social services play a prominent role in my research and analysis. Encounters between Roman families and social services providers opened up a particular opportunity to articulate injustices and demand and claim their redress.

The position of social workers is thus crucial within the fieldwork as well as in the analysis. I use 'social worker' as an umbrella term that includes people who are employed to function as mediating agents between subjects and governments. Personal contact with representatives of other state institutions and local authorities, which most migrants inevitably encounter, is sporadic and often marked by lack of knowledge of one's rights and means that are available. Since inaccessibility played a crucial role from the beginning of the fieldwork, entering the field with an educational advisor (Martin), who had gained trust from the people he worked with and who enabled me to directly connect with people, was one way to work with people in an already established

environment. This context nevertheless influenced the encounters in terms of topics and setting.

Sampling

The relatively small-scale of the research project meant that theoretical sampling – as advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) – was most appropriate. Whom, where and how I interviewed also determined the data I collected next and where I looked next (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 45). Sampling, therefore, was an on-going process. It involved a type of data gathering in which concepts and knowledge evolve, and the purposes of which ‘is to go to places, people, or events that will maximise opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 201). This meant that I carried on collecting data, observing and interviewing until a ‘saturation of knowledge’ (Della Porta, 1992, p. 182) was achieved.

The idea of ‘theoretical saturation’ refers to the moment in which it appears that no new or relevant data is emerging from the empirical research, even after efforts are made to find instances in the field that might contradict or help develop further the emergent theory (Glaser and Strauss in Seale 2002, p. 227). In retrospect, more time might have been useful, as it took a long time to gain access to participants. Since the methodology of this study is not based on grounded theory, I see Della Porta (1992) as offering the most viable approach for my research. Overall the sample of this research reflects the heterogeneity of the people and places where the interviews and observation took place, and the heterogeneity of the texts and documents through which Roma populations are problematised.

Fieldwork Sample

As discussed above, access for this research was initially difficult. Therefore purposive sampling, based on the working context of Martin, was used. Participants were chosen because they were relevant to the project and they were from a particular ethnic background. At the time of this fieldwork in 2010 Martin worked primarily with Romanian Roma, who had arrived in the UK after Romania joined the EU in 2007. Given participants' limited amount of time in the UK (between 0 and three years), their situation was comparably more difficult than for instance that of Polish, Czech or Slovak Roma who, in 2010, were legally able to take up employment and whom I had met while volunteering in the support group. Due to the work restrictions the UK government (like many other EU governments) imposed on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens up until 31 December 2013, unskilled Romanian and Bulgarian citizens were only able to earn a salary through self-employment (EU Legislation, 2008). Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and The Netherlands applied the same work restrictions for unskilled Romanian and Bulgarian citizens. Before enlargement, EU states could chose whether or nor to impose work restrictions on new EU citizens from Romania and Bulgaria. The same legislation applied to the citizens of those states that joined the EU in 2004 (EU Legislation, 2008).

Between 2 September 2010 and 8 December 2010, I accompanied Martin on his daily visits to Roma families (the term family here is used as an umbrella term for people living together in one household) as well as related council and school meetings. Martin knew the majority of the families, some families we visited for the first time. We visited 25 different households in which people lived together. In one household a Roma family lived together with a non-Roma family who knew each other from Romania. Besides 25 Romanian families, I visited three families from Slovakia, two from Poland, two from Latvia and one from Bulgaria (of whom not all are quoted in Chapter Six). Whom I visited in this time depended largely on Martin's work and his

schedule. At the time of this research in 2010 he supported mainly Romanian Roma registering their children in schools. Therefore most of the research participants are Romanians, who needed immediate support after arrival in the UK. At that time the majority of people from A8 countries with whom Martin also used to work, were already more settled and no longer needed help with arrival formalities and school registrations (in 2010 work restrictions for people from A8 countries had already been lifted).

Usually the unstructured interviews and participant observation took place while visiting people in their homes. I interviewed 25 research participants: 22 participants came from Romania, one from Poland and two from the Czech Republic. All of the research participants held EU citizenship and lived in East London. A further 5 research participants were social workers, working within the Roma community in the same borough (see Appendix [1] for details). In addition, I attended the sentencing of a Romnia at a London court (8 November 2010), a core group meeting in a local school about a decision on ‘child protection’ of a child (5 October 2010), a council preparation meeting for a ‘Romanian Roma Information workshop’ (22 November 2010), a Joint Services Meeting on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (3 December 2010) and the ‘The Romanian Roma Information workshop’ (8 December 2010) that all took place in the London borough where I did the fieldwork.

Most of the Romanian Roma in London who became participants in this research found themselves in financial hardship and sub-standard accommodation that was often shared with other families. Frequently this led to poor health, and low school attendance and attainment by children. Those organisations or authorities that provided services often did not reach Roma and were therefore unable to provide suitable services. The aforementioned work restrictions in place in 2010 only underlined this situation.

Migration Watch (2013) states that while Roma in Romania and Bulgaria suffer from

widespread discrimination and poor living standards just as Roma in other countries, evidence suggests that comparably Roma suffer from less discrimination in Romania and Bulgaria but face equivalent levels of material deprivation. Details on their lived experiences are discussed in Chapter Six and further details on their representation in the UK are discussed in Chapters Three and Five. Here it is to note that also in the UK one essential part of the discourses on Roma is the process of homogenisation.

Although in the UK ‘indigenous’ Roma belong to more than one cultural and linguistic group, these differences usually do not appear in media narratives (Yuval Davis et al, 2017). The only significant distinction is made between the local and the migrant Roma and this ‘duality overlaps with a more or less subtle distinction made between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ (or accepted and problematic) Roma, and works to reproduce racialised discourses on the alleged criminality of the latter’ (Yuval-Davis et al, 2017, p. 1162). Nevertheless, Yuval Davis stresses that also the exclusionary discourses towards the former are often connected to anti-Gypsy stereotypes of dangerous ‘nomads’ (2017, p. 1162).

Text and Document Sample

The selected documents, policy papers and media reports were all published between 2006 and 2011. The material was selected from several sources to insure a qualitative and diverse overview of ways Roma are problematised. The media, government, police, social service authorities, NGOs, schools and civil society were preliminarily selected as the main actors who discursively problematise Roma. For the analysis I chose newspapers, policy papers, country reports, research studies, community reports, police press releases, media documentaries and local council papers as the locations in which Roma are problematised. While I carefully selected texts that problematise Roma, I deliberately chose a mix of various texts. This helped in developing a broader view of how Roma in the UK are constituted, and gave a lead what institutions to include.

At the time of the research most documents and reports on Roma addressed issues of cohabitation, migration, presence in the public sphere, living conditions, social benefits, criminality and poverty. Attention was also paid to the extent to which Roma were involved in these discourses. The selected media reports shed light on the ways that Roma are objectified, but also on a particular space of citizenship where agency is either denied or granted. I selected the articles on the basis of providing an overview of how Roma are objectified as citizen outsiders and whether or not the document contained claims and arguments related to Roma. Searching initially for articles that contained 'Roma' and 'citizen' using the online database NexisUK in the period January 2010 to January 2011 resulted in 1157 publications of newspaper and news transcripts. However, searching using the terms 'Roma' and 'citizen' rarely resulted in articles on Roma but instead on the city 'Rome'. Only when I added the word 'gypsy' to 'Roma' and 'citizen', 301 newspaper and news transcripts discussing Roma came up. The link to the term 'gypsy' seemed necessary to find publications that contained the word 'Roma'. This difficulty of access and finding relevant articles is necessary to stress since it also emphasises the problem of terminology, previously discussed in Chapter Three. I made a selection of texts for a closer reading, focussing on UK publications that dealt most closely with the interest of this research project. All of the selected newspaper publications are from major national dailies.

My search of official UK government sites for information on Roma in the UK revealed a similar pattern. There was little information available, and on the website of the UK government, 'directgov', there was not a single article that contained the word Roma (as of 2010). While there are also very few documents using the terms Gypsies or Travellers, in which also the category 'Romany Gypsies' comes up, these documents revolved almost exclusively around issues of accommodation and the allocation of caravan sites.

In addition I selected documents from governmental institutions. This selection was also based on texts that were relevant for my research questions. I chose two debates of the House of Commons for analysis, one debate on ‘Enforced Criminal Activity’ held on Feb 6th 2008 and one on ‘Anti-Slavery Day Bill’ from Feb 5th 2010, as well as reports on police investigations on the topic of Roma as child traffickers and a report by the European Commission from 2008. I also analysed the ‘Policy and Guidelines for the Education of Traveller, Gypsy and Roma children in Haringey’ and the ‘Gypsy and Travellers Strategy and Action Plan 2006’. I deliberately chose several recent authoritative documents (published by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (CoE), European Parliament (EP) and British Local Authorities) that focus on Roma in the UK – as that is the site of my fieldwork – and one explanatory case from the Czech Republic. On the basis of my experiences in various European countries, I argue that in most European countries Roma tend to find themselves in the situation of what the European Council referred to as an ‘unrecognised minority’ (Council of Europe, 1995). Moreover, I attended five borough council and core group meetings at local schools in East London and collected the documents I received at these meetings.

Field Location

In 2009 the London borough where I conducted fieldwork was presumed to have one of the highest Roma populations in London. Although Roma are not a census ‘category’, the 2001 census recorded ‘218,341 residents, 44% of who are from minority ethnic communities (i.e. not white British)’ (Gypsy & Travellers Strategy & Action Plan, 2005, p. 2). The Action Plan states that these population figures also ‘include Roma, Gypsies and Travellers who live in a range of tenure types and settled housing’ (Gypsy & Travellers Strategy & Action Plan 2005, p. 2). Recognising the increase in ‘Roma, who are most recently from Eastern Europe, [...] migrating to the UK during the last 15

years', the borough Equality Impact Assessment in 2005 further declares that 'the numbers of Roma in Waltham Forest and the nature of the issues have informed our decision to include the group in the Strategy' (Borough Equality Impact Assessment, 2005, p. 5).

There is little reliable statistical data on Roma who migrated to the United Kingdom. Possible sources, such as the Worker Registrations Scheme, record nationality but not ethnicity. Although reliable statistical data is not available, for the first time in 2011 'Irish Travellers and Gypsies' but not 'Roma' were classified as a category in the census. Clark (1998) explains the inconsistent, misleading and just plain wrong figures are deeply political symptoms of discrimination. As Clark suggests, 'prior to 1989 this was largely due to ideological reasons, in the 1990s it is much more to do with finances... If the figures do not show the Roma to 'exist' then why fund specific social policies directed at them?' (1998).

Having worked with Roma in different settings and places for some time before I started fieldwork in London enabled me to have some understanding of the context. Prior to starting my research, I conducted fieldwork in a Roma settlement in eastern Hungary, in a village in Transylvania, and volunteered for a Roma NGO in East London. I chose London as my research location for two important reasons. The first is accessibility. The contacts to Roma organisations in London and a Roma Support Group in London made it easier to get into first contact with people I could potentially interview. Moreover, since I am particularly interested in challenging 'othering' and exoticism, a great potential lies in the approach of the 'anthropology at home' (see Okely, 1996). Peirano (1998) maintains that 'for a long time anthropology was defined by the exoticism of its subject matter and by the distance, conceived as both cultural and geographic, that separated the researcher from the researched group' (1998, p. 105). This situation changed over the last years. I expected that research at home had the potential to contest the ideal of the radical encounter with alterity.

Peirano (1998) further stresses that ‘anthropology at home’ will, as always, incorporate many meanings. With respect to the particular setting of my research, the concept of ‘anthropology at home’ helped me to stay focused as I was in a familiar everyday context, ‘at home’, and it helped not to look for difference. Thus, the purpose of doing interviews in London for me was to make sense of social settings and ‘to make strange’ those contexts that are assumed to be understood by a ‘taken-for-granted cultural competence’ (Atkinson, 1992). The second reason I chose London is language. I speak English, Italian, German and basic Romanian. Lengthy conversations often happened with an improvised translator, for example a family member who speaks English. This was the socio-linguistic condition in which the exchanges took place. Drawing on a mixture of these languages facilitated the communication in a spontaneous manner, but mainly it helped to destabilise my position. However, while I chose London, my experiences in Romania, Hungary, Italy, Czech Republic and Germany made me aware of the similar struggles and experiences that occur in other European countries.

4.3 Data Collection

At least since summer 2010, there has been intense media coverage of Roma in European news channels, rarely departing from long-standing stereotypes and anti-Roma prejudices (Richardson, 2014; McGarry, 2017). While there are institutes like, for instance, the European Roma Institute, the Open Society Foundation or the European Roma Rights Centre, it is still striking that there is continued absence of Roma voices in the literature, research studies and governmental documents despite the attention to the topic, particularly since the Eastern European enlargement. At the same time, discrimination against Roma is still on the rise (McGarry, 2017), including ongoing state sanctioned forced evictions; ongoing uneven access to citizenship in former Yugoslavia; and threats and compulsory fingerprinting in France and Italy, specifically and very publicly targeting Roma. In Hungary and the Czech Republic mobs attacked

Roma in organised and unprovoked incidents. The collection of suitable documents for this research took place in this context.

Selected governmental ‘texts’ were used to identify data that had been recorded without my intervention, and enabled a mapping of the ways in which Roma were constructed and problematised. Creating both a small catalogue of interview participants’ narrative accounts of struggles, and statements of authoritative and governmental discourses on Roma promised to be revealing and of great value. In collecting these two sets of data I aimed to map and challenge the current conception of Roman citizenship and to point to yet unrecognised ways in which Roma subjects become political by enacting themselves as citizens through everyday practices and struggles.

Data Analysis

In order to analyse how discourses on Roma actually produce the subjects and reality they reference, I found it helpful to think in terms of what Michel Foucault called ‘problematisations.’ Foucault’s notion of problematisation, which I discuss here in more detail, provides a powerful tool for understanding how government and official discourse constructs certain social groups and positions them along the axis from normal to pathological.

Foucault (1984) suggests that a history of thought can be elaborated on three levels. The first is the level of *ideas*, where the history lies in the analysis of the systems of representations. The second is the level of *mentalities* – this history lies in the analysis of attitudes and types of comportments. The third level, problematisations, is situated in between the first two. Foucault (1984, p. 117) argues that,

‘Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather, it is what allows one *to step back* from this way of

acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions and its goals.’

The notion of stepping back is crucial here. For Foucault, stepping back is a kind of freedom to detach oneself. In this way, one is able to establish an act as an object of thought, to reflect upon it as a ‘problem’. As a methodological tool it might be difficult to step back since of course it is difficult to detach oneself from often long established ways of thinking. My interest in using this methodology is to question meaning, conditions and goals since it is at the same time freedom in relation to what one does. It is to treat the object of thought as a problem, so that one can pose questions *at* that object. The aim of analysing the documents and conducting the interviews is thus to establish something as an object of thought, as a problem. Yet, for Foucault, the object of thought cannot exist independently of political, legal, and social structures or institutions. In broad terms, these are, what he calls ‘the politics’ (1984, p. 117).

Koopmann (2013) argues that Foucault’s genealogies should be read as historical accounts of the emergence of particular problematisations. The idea of a problematisation, Koopmans (2013) states, has two sides: first there is the idea that the situation whose emergence a genealogy traces is problematic in the sense of being fraught or dangerous. Second, by tracing the genealogy, Foucault problematises the situation itself showing how it calls for attention (2013, p. 419). Foucault calls the method problematisation, an attempt to make problematic and to throw into question the practices, the rules, the institutions, the habits and the self evidences that have piled up for decades (in Gandal, 1986, p.126).

In this way, Foucault’s method enables me to pay attention to the procedural aspects of discourses on and by Roma and on citizenship. By exploring what is said about and by Roma I can assess how these statements also mutually condition each other. This helps in opening up and analysing the positions that are established between

subjects since it is assumed that the respective statements reveal something about the very way these statements produce subject positions. Following this approach it is possible to question what Rose has called the ‘disreputable origins and unpalatable functions’ (1984, p. 2) of these problematisations and to make, as Foucault urges, ‘facile gestures difficult’ (1988, p. 155).

Foucault’s political conviction that the subtle, shifting order of power legitimises knowledge and determines what is considered ‘truth’ is accompanied by the belief that such institutionalised power potentially fosters social inequality (1995). Thus, his modes of inquiry offer a way to examine political relationships, but do not constrain the researcher to any given political agenda. Rather, they provide analytical and systematic approaches to social, cultural and political functions, which may or may not serve neutral ends. I also chose to work with Foucault’s method of problematisations as it enabled me to select a problem rather than a historical period for investigation (Foucault in Gandal, 1986).

Some critics have argued that Foucault did not pay enough attention to the voices of those problematised (Habermas, 1987; Honneth, 1991; Taylor, 1990; Alcoff, 1990). While Foucault led a research group that investigated archival documents of prisoner’s writings and he started, but never finished, a project on ‘The Lives of Infamous Men’ (1977), Foucault’s emphasis was on the way in which dominant discourses depict the dominated. In *Orientalism* (1995 [1978]), Edward Said argues that such a depiction is also part and parcel of domination. Yet, like Foucault, Said has also been criticized for not paying enough attention to the voices of the dominated. Being aware of these criticisms levelled against Foucault and Said I combine an analysis of dominant discourses (expressed in government documents, media accounts and so on) with paying particular attention to the voices of those who are dominated, namely the Roma living in East London. Thus my aim is not to juxtapose the discursive and interview dimensions of the research but for them to complement each other, and

together, expose the problematic nature of dominant conceptualisations of citizenship. In this way this research approach goes beyond the work of Foucault and Said and pays attention to how the dominated may challenge their domination in yet undiscovered and diverse ways.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Rabinow argues that, 'Foucault's aim [was] to understand the plurality of roles that reason [or any idea], for example, has taken as a social practice in our civilisation, not to use it as a yardstick against which these practices can be measured' (Rabinow, 1984, p. 4). Hence there are strong grounds to believe that Foucault's mode of inquiry has the potential to contextualise several kinds of discourse data historically, politically and socially and to incorporate the multiple perspectives and unequal dimensions of analysis in order to grasp what is surely a very fragmented reality. With my analysis I do not aim to produce generalisations or transferrable conclusions but to provide various kinds of information with different constructions of reality.

Thus, in order to be able to get at the social processes of power, hierarchy building, and mechanisms of exclusion and subordination in the data I collected, I oriented my approach on critical discourse analysis (CDA), which I discuss in more detail here. In line with the tradition of critical theory, CDA aims to shed light on the discursive aspects of societal disparities and inequalities (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 32). In this way, it detects the means used by the privileged to stabilize or even to intensify inequalities in society. Yet, I also want to stress that CDA 'is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. [...] There are many types of CDA, and these may be theoretically and analytically quite diverse.' (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). In other words, there is not one single way of doing CDA. While some discourse studies are more based on linguistics, there are many other approaches closer to the social and the political (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 363). Due to the

topic of my research, my analysis of the various discourses developed in Chapter Five is closer to the latter way of doing CDA, i.e. it does not directly focus on linguistics, but instead, aims to depict the social problems, uncover the power relations that are present, and explore how Roma are constituted as citizen outsiders as well as how their agency is interpreted and framed in these contexts.

As previously discussed, and in line with CDA, the analysis and the selection of discourse material is open and diverse but with a focus on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society (Van Dijk, 2007). In CDA evidence for the existence of discourses arises from the similarity between what is said and written about a given aspect of reality in different texts that circulate in the same context (Van Leeuwen, 2009, p. 145). Further, it is understood that it is on the basis of such similar statements, repeated or paraphrased in different texts, and dispersed amongst these texts in different ways, that we can reconstruct the discourses upon which the texts draw.

Within this kind of research ‘knowledge’ is understood as standing for a multitude of meanings that people use to interpret and shape their environment. Hence, ‘knowledge’ is understood as discursive. This ‘knowledge’ about Roma as subjects plays a crucial role, for it is necessarily conditional; its validity depends on people’s location in history, geography, and class relations, among others. One aim of this research is to identify the knowledge circulating in discourses that problematise Roma and the concept of citizenship and how this produced knowledge is connected to certain power relations within power/knowledge complexes. Link maintains that discourse, as an ‘institutionalised way of talking regulates power and reinforces action and thereby exerts power’ (1983, p. 60). In other words, discourse is not only an expression of social practice, but serves to underpin the exercise of power. For Foucault, discourses underpin the exercise of power in society because discourses institutionalise and regulate ways of thinking, talking and acting. By analysing the discourses that problematise Roma and

citizenship, as in ‘what is said’ and ‘how it is said’, I want to challenge these discourses in two ways. In line with CDA, the analysis reveals the contradictions within and between discourses, the limits of what can be said and done as well as the means which appear rational and beyond doubt.

It is important to note that my analysis is also discursively constructed. The critique and the stand I take are not ideological, they do not claim truth and they might be defended or modified. Unlike orthodox Marxist positions, which argue that societal existence determines consciousness, my critique builds upon Foucault to emphasise the opposite, namely, the materiality of discourse (Foucault, 1969; Jäger and Maier, 2009). So to acknowledge the connections between discourses and power it is crucial to understand how discourses are connected to reality. For discourses do not reflect reality, they rather enable reality. Like Jäger and Maier (2009) assert, it is a material reality *sui generis*. This material reality is not a false consciousness or a distorted view of reality. Instead Jäger and Maier (2009) maintain that discourse theory is not an idealist but a materialist theory. Discourse does not simply produce ideology; it produces subjects and reality. In turn, this enables the power of discourse: while it states ‘the sayable’, it inhibits a range of other statements, those which are the ‘non-sayable’. In doing so, discourse produces individual and collective reality (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 37). In other words, it is not the subject who makes the discourses, but the discourses that make the subject (Foucault, 1981).

My analysis identifies what kinds of knowledge are produced inside the power structures of constantly repeated statements and problematisations of Roma. Every discourse implies that someone exerts this power, as different people and groups have different opportunities to influence discourse. No individual can challenge or dictate a discourse alone. Instead, discourse is social and often takes on a life of its own. Foucault even argues that ‘people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is *what their doing does*’ (Foucault, in

Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). Therefore, while there might not be a conscious or manipulative intention behind every discourse, it is clear that certain groups produce more powerful discourses than others. Moreover this exclusion shapes and controls the structures of discourses and consequently subjects, human action and social reality and, most importantly, institutional conditions.

Thus, discourse in this thesis is understood as shaping subjectivity and as shaping regimes of truth. In other words, it is discourse that generates the subject rather than being the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing and speaking subject (Foucault, 1981, p.55). Consequently, Foucault argues, discourse can be understood as ‘a totality in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity from himself may be determined’ (1971, p.55). It is these discontinuities to which I want to pay attention in order to understand what it is we actually do when speaking about subjects like Roma. With the analysis of discourses on Roma, I want to show that the subject is what we say it is. The analysis of the various authoritative discourses on Roma lays out how Roma came to be talked about and treated, and in doing so the analysis lays out how Roma as subjects were manufactured.

Whether people are understood as citizen outsiders and subjects, is ultimately based on what they do or are able to do, can do, or are allowed to do (Van Leeuwen 2008, p. 145). Discourses need to be understood as transformative. By leaving out some aspects and emphasising others, thus representing not only what Roma do, but why they do it, they also determine what actions are seen as ‘illegitimate’. While this research is also based on social practice, on what people *do*, there is an inherent relationship between discourse and social practice. Discourses are understood as a ‘social cognition’, for discourses transform social practice. They are recontextualisations of social practices. Social practices are highly complex, as they do not only involve externally visible actions but the emotions and attitudes attached to these actions. In Chapters Five

and Six I describe how these practices and actions, as ‘doings’ or ‘meanings’, are differently construed in different discourses.

Above all I am interested in advancing an understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining hierarchical social arrangements. This interest is not merely an academic deconstruction of texts, but comes from an acknowledgment that the issues at stake have material and phenomenological consequences for people. CDA is known for its overtly political stance and is usually concerned with analysis of various forms of social inequality and injustice. Moreover, CDA is part of an emancipatory critical social science, which is openly committed to the achievement of a just social order through a critique of discourse. Fairclough (1999) asserts that CDA understands social practices as reflected in as well as constituted by discourse. Many social practices are far from being neutral (Jäger, 2001). In the analysis of discourses in Chapter Five I want to show the workings of power that sustain oppressive social structures and to some extent contribute to contest and change through what some feminist CDA scholars call ‘analytical activism’ (Lazar, 2007, p.145). As Van Dijk (1993) argues, critical discourse analysts take explicit positions, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. I am following a critical praxis oriented approach that cannot and does not pretend to adopt a neutral stance, in line with Lather (1986), who notes that it is scholarship that makes its biases part of its argument. Moreover, my research is in line with feminist positions that raised as problematic the notion of scientific neutrality itself, noting that it fails to recognise that all knowledge is socially and historically constructed and value based (Harding, 1986; Fairclough, 1999; Lazar, 2007; Stanley 2008).

Crucial for critical discourse analysis are the explicit awareness of the researcher of her role in society and an awareness of being part of and influenced by social structures and produced by social interaction. Reflections on this ‘situatedness’ are part

of this approach. This may then mean that discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups.

Interviews and Participant Observation

I will now discuss in greater detail the process of analysing the second set of data that derived from interviews and observations of the everyday life struggles of Roma in East London. In unstructured interviews and through participant observation, I investigate how and if these struggles can be read as acts of citizenship.

By treating the interview accounts as skilfully structured narratives, it is possible to seek the same textual features as in the analysed ‘texts’. Treating the few selected ‘texts’ in the same way, as skilfully structured narratives, I am able to stay true to the analytical approach of discourse analysis in order to achieve a lively, theoretically informed understanding of the interviews, observations and document data.

Within this set of data, I am interested in political subjectivity as a yet unrecognised performative force that, like Isin (2008) asserts, breaks habits or ways of doing things. Since only direct contact and conversational encounters enable me to understand the subject of research from the standpoint of those who are problematised, I conducted unstructured interviews and participant observation in an East London borough with a high proportion of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma inhabitants.

My research is also original in the way I recorded voices that are not necessarily spoken or put down in written words. Since I was interested in recording the voices of people whose autonomy to make claims and choices is suspended, I also focused on the unspoken and perhaps silent performative acts through the method of participant observation. Combining participant observation with unstructured interviews enabled the recording of verbal and non-verbal voices of people whose acts and claims are often not recognised.

Encountering personal narratives is necessary in order to understand how people deal with their own situation and the ways they are positioned as well as how they can be recognised in becoming claimants of rights. In unstructured interviews the chances are higher that participants are able to act as agents and not only as respondents answering questions asked by the interviewer. While I am aware that my presence influenced the situation, I tried not to influence the subject of conversations. Rather I was interested in how people deal with those struggles that are important to them in the moments we met. I expected that these struggles might differ from what I presumed to be relevant or important. Moreover, with unstructured interviews I hoped to create a situation in which the interviewee is treated as an active subject rather than a testifier of facts or experiences. While I was especially attentive to claims and acts, with this interview method the participants had the choice to tell or not tell their stories in their own way. As the collected data is essentially complex, and as suggested by Glassner and Miller (1997), I focused on observing before any conversations took place. I followed an impulse that is sensitive to how participants assemble their respective communications and to what is asked and answered (Boden and Zimmerman, 1991).

I expected that the participants would struggle and make claims in diverse and contradicting ways. Presuming that life comes to us in the form of stories, yet stories that are not told in a social vacuum, the status of my interview data is that of actively constructed 'narratives', involving activities which themselves demand analysis. As Holstein and Gubrium (1995, p. 143) explain, the construction of narratives in interviews is always a two-way process. In this way, the interviews are 'active interviews' in that they entail collaborative construction between two *active* parties. Consequently, the conversations are not treated as possibly distorted gateways to the authentic account, but as part of the process through which a narrative is collectively assembled (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). The interviewing itself is understood as a site of knowledge production. I assumed that these conversations would not always be easy

and smooth, and understood them also as an opportunity to conduct participant observation.

I anticipated that conducting the interviews might occasionally be difficult and that the participants might feel themselves sometimes in a more and sometimes in a less knowledgeable or powerful position, relative to the general discourse or me as a researcher, and that they might be reluctant to speak about proposed topics. In order to give the participants the space to talk about what they were actually struggling with and not impose on them my ideas of the challenges they might face in their daily life I decided to employ unstructured interviews. Unlike structured or semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews do not use a questionnaire or parameters but are more like a conversation that is 'naturally occurring'. However, as Davies suggests 'even in such unstructured interviews ethnographers have in mind topics they wish to explore and questions they would like to pose; thus they tend to direct the conversation with the research in mind, without imposing much structure on the interaction' (1999, p. 94). Adapting to the actual conditions of the field, it proved true that unstructured interviews were more suitable than the semi structured interviews that I had planned initially. The participants felt more comfortable to speak about what was concerning them in this particular moment. In this way we came to talk about issues and situations that I was not aware of. Gradually I also realised that recording the conversations with an audio recorder created an unfavourable atmosphere. In the beginning the interviews and conversations were recorded with an audio device, but quickly it turned out that the recording made some participants uncomfortable and that the act of recording changed the atmosphere into something staged. After recording 10 interviews at the beginning of the fieldwork I stopped the recording and instead took handwritten notes during and after the conversations.

When meeting participants together with Martin I introduced myself and described the nature of the research. I explicitly mentioned that I was interested in the

everyday life struggles of the participants and that I would like to be present and when applicable go deeper into the conversations. I outlined issues such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. The combination of being introduced by Martin and introducing myself in this way worked well and I was accepted as a person that would be present at all times. Only two families, who did not know Martin very well yet, were initially cautious until they got to know me better with time. Depending on the immediate concerns of the participants, the structure of these meetings and conversations varied a lot but most participants were actually very eager to speak and introduced me to other participants over time.

In order to establish validity and reliability of the data, I used other types of data to complement the interviews. Participant observation turned out to be the most fruitful and appropriate. Given the nature of the work of Martin, interviews with the same participants occurred frequently. In this way the validity was expected to improve, as participants opened up more over time (Breakwell, 2000, p. 247). Conversations with the same participants made the narratives more detailed and meaningful, and a better rapport allowed for an improvement in knowledge about the cultural, social and political background of the participants.

Given the time scheduled for writing up, I could not use all collected interview material in the empirical analysis in Chapter Six. I did not produce verbatim transcripts of the interviews, but instead selected certain sections (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, p. 211). I chose the interviews I analysed on the basis of the topics being most relevant to my research questions. I focussed on interviews that revealed the meanings individuals attach to their experiences of struggling to claim rights in their everyday life, and the ways in which these are unrecognised as political. For this kind of research it is crucial to stress what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) suggest: asking, listening, talking and hearing are important, but so are seeing and perceiving as means to understand the social world.

My analysis makes use of quotations out of the interviews to lead through the ethnographic and analytical journey that was undertaken. The quotations that were chosen for the descriptive analysis intend to show consistent but also contradictory patterns and themes that emerged from the data. In the theoretical analysis I tried to consider each pattern or theme in light of the existing literature and my research questions as in how Roma can be recognised as political subjects.

For the discourse analysis as well as for the interviews and participant observation in East London, data collection and record keeping was crucial. In order to refine the approach and methods especially for the fieldwork, the data was analysed continuously during and after the fieldwork. In field notes I wrote down what I saw and heard as well as what I did not understand and sometimes also what the situation did to my actions and myself.

The role of the researcher

Like all other researchers, I am to some degree connected to a part of the object of my study. Therefore reflexivity about the influence of my presence on the research process as well as on the results is crucial. While Denzin argues that ethnography should be both about the ethnographer and the researched (1997), qualitative research may also be challenged for its subjectivity. The balance between the need for objectivity and the intense interactions that are an integral part of the interviews and observation is a common challenge for qualitative fieldwork (Bhopal (ed), 2010). The social reality researched in this study is a discursive formation and as a researcher I am also positioned inside this formation, hence the objectivity of my approach is organised along the lines of a transparent inter-subjective accessibility (Bhopal (ed), 2010). The collected data does not mirror an external objective reality, but instead it represents components of shared social practices. Accordingly, the relationship between

interviewer and interviewee is considered as beyond a subject-object schema of positivism.

Emphasising the impossibility of 'knowing truth', Eisner suggests that in practice researchers do not believe that complete objectivity is possible (1992, p.9), so the researcher signals their research can only be 'as objective as we can' (Eisner, 1992, p.9). In regards to the question of the possibility of objectivity, Sarantakos suggests an individualised version of reality is the answer: 'researchers capture one aspect of reality - their reality - and this is what they can describe and present.' (Sarantakos, 2005: 94).

In other words, while I am aware I hold various separate roles within the research process and do not attempt to blur them, it is necessary to highlight that like in all qualitative research, I am not external to the field site. Instead the research process is a dialogue between myself, as a researcher and the participants. I am dependent on the cooperation and goodwill of those involved in order to accomplish the research process. Accordingly, the participants are active and autonomous research partners and collaborators. Thus also, the participants determine and re-determine the research design.

Positionality

While I was aware of how I am situated 'in the field', I found myself in a field that was often chaotic and hugely complex. Thus I constantly adapted and readapted my methods to the everyday circumstances of the field. Due to my constant presence in the everyday routines of the participants, I am researcher and participant at the same time. If I were asked to describe my identity, I would describe myself as a white woman; a German citizen of mixed ethnicity who fled from East Germany; from a working class background; and a non-native English speaker. If I were asked how I think I am perceived by others (Wakeling, 2010), I would say that I am probably seen as a white, middle class woman. Although the fact that I am not a British citizen and not a native

speaker deepened the relationship I had with the participants to some extent, being a woman created some distance at times (Skeggs, 1997; Walkerdine et al., 2001). Conducting the interviews and the participant observations together with Martin in a team helped to balance the overall interview situation in terms of gender (Tang, 2002; Hopkins, 2009). While occasionally it would have been difficult to conduct the interviews alone with a male participant, it was a support to be in a team of two with Martin. Topics like affection between the participants and me as a researcher also played a role. In this regard, I decided to omit some very personal aspects like extreme poverty and health conditions from the final analysis. The empathy I developed during the months of the fieldwork is part of the ambiguities of ethnographies, but the way I have incorporated it into the analysis does justice to my research.

It should be noted that the privilege of my situation and identity affected the research process and the way I interpreted the data. Yet, while I am aware that my research produces knowledge from this position, this research was always driven by my desire to challenge hierarchies of inequalities and to show how Roma can be recognised as political subjects. At the same time, I experienced issues of power in the field vis-à-vis the participants, the institutions that were involved, and also vis-à-vis the institution within which this research took place (Carter, 2004; Hall, 2004; Hopkins, 2009). Thus, as Denzin describes, in this situation, ‘my subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others’ (1997, p. 27) and this fact also impacted on my research. At the same time Reinharz (1992) asserts that in principle reflexivity supports the notion of non-hierarchical relationships in the research process. I found it important to ensure transparency in order to establish trust between the participants and myself. Reflecting strongly on these issues and adapting Haraway’s call for a more partial ‘socially situated knowledge’ (1991, p. 188) put me in a good position to examine everyday life struggles of Roma in East London.

As important as research transparency and awareness of the influences of my presence, it was important to apply some general ethnographic principles to establishing some common ground. It was crucial to listen carefully in order to pick up the nuances and be able to respond (Crang and Cook, 2007, p. 65). The willingness and interest of people to speak also depends on how they perceive their conversation partner. A two-way communication process is necessary to enable the participants to recognise themselves as actors (DeVault, 1990). Hence, the interviews must reflexively and actively engage the research partners in terms that can capture the complexities of their situation and experiences (Okely, 1996). Yet, as I have stressed above, an interview is not simply a verbal conversation that can be audio recorded. Every interview is situated within its particular context and both researcher and participants continue to be active participants in their environments and represent their experiences (Pink, 2015).

In line with the two-way communication process and considering the ‘active interview’ from a feminist perspective, the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent must be that of equal partners in a negotiated dialogue (Weston, 1998; Hertz, 1997). Hertz (1997) blurs the distinction between the interviewer and the respondent in that the interviewer comes to realise that she/he is an active participant in the interview, he/she must be self-reflexive, acknowledge his/her position in the interview, what she/he brings to it, and how the interview is negotiated and constructed in this process. However, with respect to the ethical problems tied to how much we are willing to become partners and disclose about ourselves (Behar, 1996), Hertz points out that we need to go beyond methodology (1997). Thus every interview and conversation includes ethical questions and limitations. In order to avoid using the narratives exclusively for the purposes of this research, I want to go beyond methodology and turn these narratives and their process of emerging into political acts (Denzin, 1999) to uncover how subjects can be recognised as political claimants.

I am aware that research itself is always entangled in issues of power and knowledge, and is therefore inherently political. I am moreover clear about my position, my intentions as well as my responsibility for how people participating in this research are presented in any account produced. Participants were assured of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality throughout. To avoid ‘othering’ and any form of essentialism, I paid highest attention to the power relations at work. As the nature of this research topic implies, I am above all interested in working ‘with’ the participants and to challenge perspectives.

Writing up

The analysis I offer is one ‘text’ among many possible ‘texts’. In order to keep the research focus, I had to make some omissions and choices and some informative and interesting material was cut out. Yet, these choices were deliberate. While the narratives as well the governmental documents are highly diverse, I was interested to get a sense of how they are operationalised and who is recognised to speak and claim. For this reason, the analysis is not exhaustive but selective.

Aiming to avoid any form of essentialism, while writing up I did not aspire to prove one particular standpoint out of the collected data and analysis. However, there are good reasons to believe that by deconstructing and questioning processes of ‘othering’ and constituting the narratives analysed have the potential to reveal different, not to mention important and thus far unknown realities about everyday claims to rights by Roma in London. These narratives also have the potential to reflect the plurality and complexity with which issues such as claiming and acting might be approached, understood and experienced. At the same time they provide information about the practices of citizenship on the level of the everyday. By combining discursive problematisation of Roma and their own individual narratives, it is possible to highlight

the subtleties and frictions of the conception of citizenship as well as the struggles to rights claims by Roma that challenge this conception.

4.4 Ethical Issues

The whole research process was inspired by a critical methodology, meaning that it was ‘driven [...] by a desire to challenge multiple hierarchies of inequalities within social life’ (Doucet and Mauthner, in Bryant and Peck, 2007, p. II 36). I feel an ethical responsibility towards the participants of this research, which means that all findings are particular to the context of this study. This research is a situated analysis that is grounded in the concerns of the participants I interviewed and accompanied.

Informed Consent and Anonymity

I found the 2009 Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association a useful guide for preparing and obtaining the informed consent (AAA, 2009, p. 3). The degree and breadth of informed consent required in the present project was also affected by requirements of other codes, laws, and ethics of the place or community in which my research is pursued. The AAA (2009) asserts that the informed consent process is dynamic and continuous; the process should be initiated in the project design and continue through implementation by way of dialogue and negotiation with participants. As a researcher I am ‘responsible for identifying and complying with the various informed consent codes, laws and regulations affecting my project. Informed consent, for the purposes of this code, does not necessarily imply or require a particular written or signed form. It is the quality of the consent, not the format, that is relevant’ (AAA, 2009, p. 3). As described above, I provided the participants with as much information as I could to enable them to make an informed decision about whether or not they wished to participate in this research. All participants were offered the opportunity to sign a consent form, but all preferred a less formal, verbal agreement. Most of them stated, that

it was for historical reasons that they preferred to give oral consent. Thus, informed oral consent was obtained from all participants. Those who gave oral consent were given the same information as that provided on the consent form. Confidentiality was particularly important for the participants of this research, given some of their past experiences with previous research (see also Bhopal and Myers, 2008).

My primary ethical obligation in this study is to the people who participated. Conducting this research, I ensured that nothing harmed the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people interviewed and observed or those who were in any way affected by the research. The fact that the participants did not want to sign an informed consent form did not annul their right to privacy. They were all informed that they may refuse to answer questions or opt out at any time if they should feel uncomfortable. I acted in accordance with the ESRC Research Ethics Framework principle, i.e. ‘confidentiality of information must be maintained and anonymity of participants respected’ (2005, p. 10). In the analysis in Chapter Six, pseudonyms are used and any specific details that could make participants identifiable are altered. I honoured the wishes of the participants at all times to the best of my ability. In August 2010 I received OU ethics approval for conducting this research. A copy of this approval can be found in Appendix [2].

4.5 Conclusion

This qualitative research adopts an ethnographic approach with which I want to challenge dominant discourses about Roma by investigating how everyday struggles of Roma in East London can be understood as political acts. The research was conducted within ethical guidelines that protected participants, and from a situated perspective in order to promote honest and truthful accounts. In addition to ethnographic methods, interviews and participant observation as well as discourse analysis were used to demonstrate how Roma in the UK are constructed and how Roma challenge these constructions by making claims to rights. The use of participant observation and

unstructured interviews during fieldwork enabled the gathering of particular qualitative data, which in turn, resulted in a deeper understanding of people's everyday lives. However, the data necessary for the research to be able to offer a subtle and refined account of the everyday struggles of Roma would not have been possible via participant observation and unstructured interviews alone. It necessitated an ethnographic approach, as being both fieldworker and analyst-author (Okley, 1994) enabled a nuanced and rich understanding of the politics of everyday life of Roma in London with gradually emerging themes. Spending time – 'hanging about' – formed a crucial part of understanding the everyday lives of East London Roma, and in turn, discerning the claims they were making and the politics they were articulating from positions and spaces of abjecthood. It enabled the fieldworker and analyst-author, for instance, to make visible claims made through silent and non-silent embodied practices and interactions (for more on the uses, and indeed, indispensability of ethnography to research such as this, see Okely, 1994; Emerson, 1995; Maanenn, 2011; Wolcott, 2008). Alongside, and often through their various survival strategies, Roma in London do make claims to rights. Ethnography captures this political canvas in ways that would be invisible in non-ethnographic approaches.

Chapter 5: Discursive Constructions of Roma in the UK

In this Chapter I examine how Roma have become problematised and constituted as a ‘target of government’ in various selected media and policy discourses in the UK. The media, government, police, social services, education authorities, NGOs, and civil society were selected as the main actors who discursively problematise Roma. These were selected because these are the actors whose discursive problematisations of Roma are most salient in the UK (esp. media, government), and the actors with whom Roma populations interact with and demand rights from in their everyday lives (esp. social services and education authorities, NGOs and civil society organisations). To unpick the content of these discursive constructions I analysed newspaper articles, media documentaries, government and policy papers, police press releases, country reports, research studies, community reports and local council papers. I also conducted interviews with the CoE vice chair of the ‘Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers UK’ Ian Naysmiths, superintendent Bernie Gravett of Metropolitan Police Operation Golf, Maria from a London based Roma NGO, Corrine from a London based Roma charity, Daniel, a Roma campaigner from London, and attended the court case of the Romnia activist Lavina Olmazu to explore how Roma are constituted in the UK. While I carefully selected texts that problematise Roma, I deliberately chose a wide range of texts, based on their content and relevance to my research questions. In other words, I chose texts and highlight interview data that provide an overview of how Roma are problematised in the UK (a more detailed discussion of the material selected and its analysis can be found in Chapter Four on Text and Document Sample and Data Analysis).

The analysis of the contents of these discursive constructions revealed that Roma populations are misrecognised in complex and distinct ways in these discursive constructions, which in turn, helped structure the argument in this chapter. Focusing on the content I want to show that Roma are misrecognised in both media as well as policy

discourses, yet, in different ways. Thus, in this chapter, using the method of critical discourse analysis and ‘problematism’, discussed in Chapter Four, I explore how Roma populations tend to be represented, grouped, classified and targeted and hence rendered as problematic ‘citizen outsiders’ through the aforementioned discourses.

The first section engages with one of the most common categorisation of Roma, namely, as nomads. I examine this first, as the conceptualisation of Roma as nomadic underpins the aforementioned discursive constructions. Sections two and three offer a critical analysis of UK migration policies before, during and after the EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 and explore how Roma are discursively positioned in the British media, government, and legal discourses. As indicated by this analysis, Roma have been constituted as a target of government for quite some time. A historical perspective on UK policies therefore helps to identify governmental motives for the restrictions imposed on Roma in the UK as well as the general neglect of the situation of Roma by the UK government. The analysis also reveals a discursive shift from a focus on the situation of Roma to a focus on Roma as citizen outsiders. Section four turns to discourses that enable the erasure of the social existence and abject situation of Roma populations, and thus enable authorities to make the issue nonexistent. Sections five and six focus on discourses of criminalisation that position Roma simultaneously as dangerous criminals and fraudsters, and victims of such crimes. The final section attends to the discourse on self-exclusion, which positions Roma as contributing to their marginalisation.

In analysing the content of these discourses, the chapter aims to deconstruct the so-called ‘Roma problem’ and to demonstrate that the current situation of Roma, as discussed in Chapter Three, is underpinned by these ongoing discursive problematisations of Roma. The discourse analysis highlights the links between the theoretical discussions of Chapters Two and Three and the empirical findings of my research. By asking how the situation of Roma in the UK challenges traditional

conceptions of citizenship in the two following chapters I analyse a situation in which Roma have the legal status of citizenship but still face oppression, discrimination, and marginalisation. The situation of the majority of Roma in the EU seems to show that European citizenship is not as emancipatory as it is described. Yet, it appears that citizenship can work both ways: in the present and the following chapter I analyse on the one hand how Roma are rendered as citizen outsiders and on the other hand how Roma, as claimants of rights deal with their situation.

5.1 'Roma as Nomads'

In Europe, Roma communities – whether self-defined as Sinti, Manus, Kale or otherwise – have historically been understood in terms of their (real, probable or imagined) nomadism (Sigona, 2008) (for histories and practices of nomadism in the UK amongst Romanichals, Nachins, or Minceir see for instance Okely, 1983 or Levinson, 2004). Preconceived notions of nomadism are used alternately as an excuse or a cause for constituting Roma as essentially 'different' or problematic. Those Roma who are migrants seem to be treated differently than non-Roma migrants, often based on the assumption that Roma are nomadic. The analysis also shows how the problematisation of Roma as nomads is used to justify the denial of social benefits, to draw moral limitations of the nation state and to constitute Roma as nomadic citizen outsiders that essentially do not belong.

One of the most common media panics at the time of this research in 2010 was one depicting migration as an invasion, especially the migration of Romanians and Bulgarians. Often the attribution of nomadism as a racial trait (see Clark and Greenfields, 2006) is used to explain migration instead of reasons of economic and political pushes and pulls. Whether in media or political discourse, positioning Roma as nomads is one of the most commonly used designations and particularly relevant since only a small minority of European Roma are in fact still nomadic. Among others, Fraser

maintained twenty years ago that modern stereotypes still characterise Gypsies as a wandering people, even though settled Gypsies are in the majority (Fraser, 1995). A historical perspective shows how the discourse on 'nomadism' has influenced discourses on Roma throughout history. Discursively, nomadism has not been distinguished from migration of Roma and thus influences UK migration policies towards Roma. Discursively Roma are constituted as the 'undeserving', who 'come, take and leave again' (Reid, 2012). My analysis of this discourse shows how migration of Roma from Eastern Europe tends to be depicted as nomadism and as a cultural pathology rather than as migration and a rational, economic phenomenon.

In official documents, in the media, in history books and in scientific and public discussions, Roma continue to be constructed as the European nomads (Mirga and Gheorghe, 1997; Acton, 2006a; Sigona 2009). The cliché of the 'eternal Gypsy' who is permanently moving around has solidified into one of the most effective and long-lasting stereotypes in Europe (Acton, 2006a). Consequently, most of the discourses that focus directly or indirectly on Roma problematise Roma's alleged nomadism. Deconstructing critically both the discourse and the concepts of nomadism and migration helps to expose this pressing social issue.

Acton terms nomadism as the recurrent exploitation of spatially and temporally discontinuous economic opportunities (2006a, p. 32). Emphasising its commercial aspect, he asserts that nomadic people do not live continually in the same place but move cyclically or periodically (2006a, p. 33). If one place does not offer continuous opportunities for productive labour, then movement is required. In other words, nomadism is not an unrestricted and undirected wandering. Moreover, nomadism must be distinguished from migration in that it is noncyclical. Sedentary lifestyles, in contrast, involve continuous production, albeit sometimes on an annual cycle in one place.

Some Eastern European Roma scholars point out that the very attribution of nomadism to Roma populations is a residue of scientific racism (Nicolae, 2002), and assert that nomadism is a retrogressive pathology caused by persecution itself. Yet this kind of argument is almost congruent with many of the EU policies aiming to restrict Roma migration from Eastern Europe.

Through public media discourse Europe's Roma are often associated with negative stereotypes, which draw upon notions of an alien and nomadic culture, criminality, antisocial behaviour, benefit dependency, and a lack of work ethic (Richardson, 2014). Such attitudes towards Roma invariably lead to their stigmatisation, marginalisation and segregation (McGarry, 2014). More recently, anti-Roma sentiments have reached new heights within the UK with high profile cases of a “Roma problem” as it is constructed in political discourse and the media, in Northern Ireland in 2008 (Clark and Rice, 2012) and more recently in Glasgow and Sheffield in 2013. The growing hysteria crystallised around the lifting of the UK's employment restrictions for Bulgarians and Romanians in January 2014. The media and public response to the lifting of employment restrictions could certainly be perceived as a moral panic (Clark, 2015), though one that needs to be situated within a much longer process of Roma problematisation that is discussed later in this chapter.

In Europe, Gypsy communities, whether self-defined as Roma, Sinti, Manu's, Kale or otherwise, have historically been understood in terms of their ‘(real, probable or imagined) nomadism’ (Sigona, 2005). Roma tend to be defined in regards to mobility even when sedentary and are positioned as ‘nomads’ in opposition to ‘settled’ society (McVeigh, 1997; Sigona 2003, 2005). Their presumed mobility is then considered proof of their rejection of the rules of sedentary society (Clough Marinaro, 2009, p. 273). When seen through the lens of mobility, Roma are constituted as ‘unproductive’ (Piasere 2008, p. 60; Vitale and Claps, 2009, p. 243), pre-modern (Piasere 2008, p. 125) and symbolically ‘stateless’ (Sigona 2007; Piasere, 2008, p. 107). Over the last

centuries these asserted cultural traits have been used in policies in the UK and elsewhere to control, manage, regulate or assist Roma. While some countries' policies aimed to sedentarise Roma, other states' policies aimed to protect their presumed nomadism by segregating Roma from sedentary populations. The UK based its policies mainly on this idea of 'protection' by providing dedicated spaces to camp (Bancroft, 2001) (imagined as a 'network' of sites in England and Wales), officially labelling Romanian and Bulgarian Roma as nomads who have become sedentary. Representing Roma from Eastern Europe repeatedly as nomads functions to produce and maintain distance between nomadic and sedentary populations, even though Roma from Romania and Bulgaria are not nomadic. This policy of segregation and its justification has been prevalent in the UK as elsewhere. Piasere (2008) stresses that it helped to develop and legitimise policies that, in turn reinforce the perception of Roma's nomadism.

The overwhelming majority of Roma throughout the world have been settled for decades, some for centuries. But the association of Roma with nomadism nevertheless remains strong (ERRC, 2000; 2010; 2012). Fraser argues that 'Settled people, on the whole, do not trust nomads; and in a European society where the majority were pressed into a life of piety, serfdom and drudgery, Gypsies represented a blatant negation of all the essential values and premises on which the dominant morality was based (1995, p. 126). On the other hand, in public discourse the Roma as nomad is wrapped in a cloud of romantic fantasy (Borrow, 1843) and a perception of freedom understood as carelessness that again justifies fears of Roma's unwillingness to work. In other words, the use of the term 'nomad' yokes ethnicity to mobility, rendering invisible and inaudible the majority of Roma who are sedentary by indicating that they are inauthentic or assimilated members of that group.

As mentioned before, during my fieldwork in 2010 in East London, I mainly interviewed Roma who had migrated from Romania to the UK within the last three

years. Despite enormous difficulties organising a life that was more than just survival, most of the participants planned to stay in the UK. Most of them said that even if life in the UK remains difficult and precarious, it is an improvement to their previous situation. The actual factors that motivate a minority of Roma to migrate need careful consideration. Most of the participants said that they moved to the UK because they want a life in dignity and a job. The majority stated to have left their country of origin due to extreme levels of poverty caused by unemployment, discrimination and racism. Discrimination and poverty were the two reasons most often given as forces to migrate.

In other words, if both, the former nomadism and migration were theorised as rational economic phenomena rather than an irrational cultural pathology, there would be a possibility to challenge current EU and UK migration policies. In order for this to happen it would need to be acknowledged that, first, migration from Eastern Europe, in this case Romania and Bulgaria to the UK, is in fact rather minimal (see for instance figures of OECD, 2009), and second it is a rational choice. The majority of Roma in Eastern Europe remain in their countries of origin and do not migrate. Aiming to curb the mobility of Roma as well as the right to live in another Member State contests one of the key pillars of the EU and calls into question the capacities of the EU to oppose nationalist demands and discrimination based on ethnicity by Member States. The discourse of the ‘nomadic Roma threat from Eastern Europe’ is politically instrumentalised to build up a ‘Roma problem’ (see Clark and Campbell, 2000). Concepts like nomadism and sedentarism (McVeigh, 1997) are continually employed to legitimise segregation towards Roma. The persistent positioning of Roma as nomads helped to solidify the perception that Roma have no homeland and no sense of belonging or loyalty to any nation state (see Sigona, 2003). Being problematised as nomads, Roma are considered to be inauthentic EU citizens (see Xhardez and Bigo, 2013) and therefore also not rightfully belonging in the UK. Thus, I argue that

constructing Roma as nomads contributes, and indeed, underpins their constitution as citizen outsiders.

5.2 ‘Roma as Unfounded Asylum Seekers and Undeserving Migrants’

In this section I consider the problematisation of Roma migration to the UK in the context of UK migration policies. I examine historical and contemporary policy making in regards to migration and asylum, and explore how specific policies affect Roma mobility, construct Roma identity and objectify Roma as citizen outsiders. I focus mainly on the employment and residence restrictions in place for A8 and A2 nationals in 2010, as these had a considerable effect on Roma populations.

As with all recent accession treaties, the Accession Treaty which enabled Bulgaria and Romania to join the EU made provision for existing Member States to maintain transitional controls on free movement beyond the initial transition period of two years ‘in case of serious disturbances of its labour market or threat thereof’ (Treaty of Accession, 2007) for up to five further years. The UK was one of nine Member States to exercise these controls for the maximum seven-year period. While EU and UK policies were put in place to restrict Romanian and Bulgarian citizen’s access to employment and consequently participation, at the time of research many of these citizens still claimed their right to stay in the UK and elsewhere in the EU.

How and why Roma from Eastern Europe have been problematised as ‘unfounded asylum seeker’ before accession in 2004 and 2007 and after accession as ‘undeserving migrants’ (see Balch, 2016) becomes apparent when looking at the history of asylum policy and Roma mobility. It could be argued that Roma do not fit the category ‘refugee’ since most EU states do not seem to recognise the social marginalisation and discrimination of Roma (see Caglar and Mehling, 2013). What is more, during the period of EU accession, Roma from associated EU states were subject to higher standards in proving their claims for asylum (Van Baar, 2015). Roma were positioned

as purely economic migrants, gainers and villains and not subjects that chose to seek asylum for political reasons (Van Baar, 2015).

The 1951 Geneva Convention provides the basic norms in this context: everyone has the right to apply for asylum and no one shall be subject to refoulement to another country in case s/he can expect to face persecution upon return (UN General Assembly, 1951). In this context, the so-called EU Qualification Directive is also relevant (Council Directive, 2004). Any person who is a citizen of an EU country, and who is forced to flee, will more than likely seek asylum in another EU Member State (Council Directive, 2004). Such a state will be relatively close to his/her home country and a place where s/he would expect protection. EU legislation, however, provides that, in terms of asylum, all EU countries shall be deemed safe countries of origin (EU Legislation, 2008a). This follows from the EU Treaty Protocol on asylum for nationals of Member States (EU Legislation, 2008a).

The conflicting demands of the UK's role as a European island, a liberal democracy and a free market welfare state (Stevens, 2004) shapes responses to Roma mobility. Discourses on Roma migration in policy and British media show little understanding of the complexities of the situation of Roma in the EU (Balch, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2017) (although at present there are also some more positive, nuanced debates for instance the House of Lords Debate on International Roma Day on 2nd April 2014, see Richardson, 2014, p. 61). The anxiety and fear of 'Roma floods' from Romania and Bulgaria dominate public discourse (Benedik, 2010). Roma are often depicted as unskilled and poor, so the discourse on migration is also a discourse of migration management and thus a call to control the mobility of the poor (Bigo, 2002, Huysmans, 2006).

While the predicted massive increase in migration from Romania and Bulgaria did not occur (Vargas-Silva and Markaki, 2015), the CoE vice chair of the 'Committee of

Experts on Roma and Travellers UK' Ian Naysmith outright denied the situation of Roma in a personal interview in February 2011. Naysmith argued that 'there is no problem with the situation of Roma in the UK and if there was, people would simply return after three months' (2011). Naysmith's arguments seem to follow a discourse that on the one hand renders Roma invisible and on the other hand shifts responsibility to 'someone else' if there were indeed issues about their situation.

Although Roma migration is at least in part motivated by racial discrimination, as EU citizens, Roma can no longer claim asylum in another EU Member State, as all EU Member States are expected to fulfil the political criteria of guaranteeing human rights and respecting and protecting minorities. Roma have also been adversely affected by structural changes beyond their control due to the frequent changes in the UK migration system related to EU enlargement (see Van Baar, 2016). Since the fieldwork conducted for this thesis is informed mainly by the experiences of Romanian Roma, I can argue that the effects of the work restrictions that applied to Romanian and Bulgarian citizens until 31 December 2013 (Home Office, 2013) played a key role. Yet, policy decisions also affected Roma from other countries. The discourse on 'Roma migrants that sell flowers, collect scrap metal or work as cleaners but don't do proper work' (Leeming, 2011) contribute to negative representations and perceptions of all Roma. This problematisation of the 'unfounded' asylum seekers and the 'idle' migrants has only served to reproduce common stereotypes.

Roma have been constructed as 'undesirable immigrants' in the UK for decades (Tervonen, 2017). As in most European countries the persecution of Roma during the Second World War was never given sufficient attention in post-war migration policies. Moreover, there is also little awareness of the historically discriminatory policies towards Roma in Europe, including efforts to enforce a sedentary lifestyle, Roma enslavement in Romania, and assimilationist policies under communist regimes (Fraser,

1995; Hancock, 1987). Some did benefit from the UK post-war immigration system, i.e. the system favoured Roma simply by virtue of their provenance in communist Eastern Europe. However, this was rarely connected to the consideration of Roma as a marginalised minority in those countries. It was rather a move to support populations fleeing communist regimes. It did not contribute to a more positive positioning of Roma nor did it contribute to an understanding of the lives and history of people in Central and Eastern Europe.

In recent migrations from Eastern Europe four separate periods can be identified and each is characterised by a different set of rights and restrictions (Matras, 2000). The present legal categories of Roma migration are: those who were granted asylum before 2004; those from A8 accession countries who were in the asylum system in 2004 and granted amnesty; those from A8 accession countries who migrated after 2004; and those who migrated from A2 accession countries after 2007.

During the first period, 1989 – 2004, the only viable route to settlement in the UK for Roma migrants was through the asylum system. Ever since, Roma asylum claims have been met with deep scepticism (Townsend, 2013). Focusing only on poverty, it was easy for the press to brand Roma as economic migrants who were falsely claiming to be refugees. This discourse was particularly strong in 1997 when the apparent ‘Roma invasion to the UK’ was blamed on a Czech documentary on the benefits available in western countries (Clark and Campbell, 2000). The documentary was broadcasted on 30 September 1997 on an independent Czech TV station. Asylum applicants did begin to increase in 1997, but there was no evidence that the increase in asylum applications in 1997 was related to increased applications from Roma, which had peaked two years earlier from Poland and Czech Republic. Restrictions were also increased on carrier liability and visa restrictions for Slovakia (Tuitt, 1996). Little space was given in the UK press to arguments provided on the actual situation of Roma in the

Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Instead, the public was constantly exposed to negative depictions of asylum seekers, making Roma particularly vulnerable to attacks in the media. Many articles appeared informing readers about how Britain was about to be 'over run' by thousands of East European Roma and that tax payers were facing £10 billion in costs for those people. Titles like 'Town's tolerance snaps under Gypsy invasion' in the *Daily Telegraph* on 25 October 1997 or 'Port under siege' in the *Daily Express* on 21 October 1997 constructed images of 'war' and 'defence of the British nation' rather than a society willing to offer sanctuary to a persecuted ethnic group (Clark and Campbell, 2000). The Home Office responded to the media pressure by reducing the period in which asylum seekers had to prove they suffered discrimination from 28 to 5 days.

The Sunday Times quoted Mike O'Brien, the Home Office immigration minister, to describe the coming of the refugees as a 'deliberate attempt to breach Britain's immigration controls and abuse the asylum system' (*The Sunday Times*, 1997). Some articles stressed in quotations that refugees were 'tourists' (*The Times*, 1997), others framed migration reasons as 'claimed' discrimination (*The Guardian*, 1997) in the home country, mocking the living conditions that have led to poverty, begging ('even their babies have learnt to stretch out their hands'), and ultimately to the migration of 'this huddle of nomads' (*The Times*, 1997). *The Guardian* wrote 'we warn everyone who is planning to come to the UK and apply through the asylum system to think twice. You won't be welcome and we will deal strictly and quickly with you so we could return you where you came from as soon as possible' (*The Guardian*, 1997).

Most asylum claims were based on the deprivation of certain rights in the country of origin as a discriminated ethnic or racial minority (Helton, 1997) rather than as persecuted individuals. The argument that Roma needed protection from discrimination appeared invalid in relation to the key precedents that tried to define on what basis Roma could legitimately seek asylum in the UK. Some examples at the time

were: *Horvath v Secretary of State for the Home Department* (UKHL 37, 2000); *Koller v Secretary of State for the Home Department* (EWCA Civ 1267, 2001) and *Harakel v Secretary of State for the Home Department* (EWCA Civ 884, 2001). It was a politically sensitive topic since one condition for EU accession was that the sending countries of asylum seekers had to take measures to protect their minorities and actively confront forms of discrimination. Politically the UK could not accept and confirm that Roma as a group were persecuted in another EU Member State. There was also no obligation under international human rights law to provide people with EU citizenship with surrogate protection.

However, the applications contradicted the fact that the sending countries were 'safe and stable'. 'Safe Countries of Origin' are countries that are considered to have adequate human rights records. Many countries with large Roma populations were considered safe countries. If a claimant is from a country on the SCO list, this raises the standard of proof needed to gain asylum status. During the period of accession, removal rates for Czech Roma migrants claiming asylum were therefore 100 per cent. This was done despite evidence of police abuse and racially motivated violence against Roma, the segregation of Romani children in schools, and discrimination against Roma accessing employment and social services in their countries of origin (Petrova, 2004).

At this time most of the EU asylum seekers in the UK were dispersed across the country to relieve pressure on local authorities in the southeast (Fremlova, 2009). This situation often left families without support networks, legal advice, language assistance or interpreting. New arrivals were not aware of services available in the UK and were often anxious, especially if they had previously suffered discrimination in their home country (Fremlova, 2009). In 2002, when employment rights were lifted, asylum seekers became even more isolated especially because they were not given free English language classes (Anderson and Rogaly, 2009). These policies were most detrimental to Roma because of their reliance on family members for support. The experiences of

persecution from state services in the sending countries often meant that people remained distrustful of the already limited provisions that were available to them in the UK (Fremlova, 2009).

The dependence on the National Asylum Support Service for subsistence meant that many Roma could not access any broader public services and thus ‘disappeared’ even more from public life (Martin, 2010). A fear of discrimination and deportation added to their isolation so much so that some would not open the front door or read letters (Ewa, 2010). There was little interagency collaboration, so even when support services did exist often times the services did not effectively reach people. Most people suffered enormously due to the uncertainty and psychological stress of the asylum process. This situation created even more barriers to accessing services, engaging with the wider community and gaining employment (Maria, 2010).

Several UK newspapers furthered the fear of Roma migrants during the time of EU accession, stating that Eastern European Roma would have the same freedom of movement as other new EU Member State citizens (*The Express*, 2004; *The Mirror*, 2004). In early 2004, several tabloids conducted a campaign against potential Roma migration from Eastern Europe. Some newspapers openly calculated the numbers of Roma that would become EU citizens. This debate seems to have contributed to the sudden decision by the government to review migration from EU accession countries. On 20 January 2004, the *Daily Express* began the campaign, claiming on the front page that ‘1.6 million Gypsies’ are ‘ready to flood in’. The *Daily Express* predicted a ‘great “invasion” in which ‘Gypsies would head to Britain to leech on us’. Home Secretary David Blunkett announced that migrants from accession countries could work legally in Britain as long as they registered with the authorities. At the same time, the government declared that if numbers exceed the official forecasts of around 12,000 a year, it would follow the lead of the other states that had imposed work restrictions (Glennie, 2013). The government had already banned migrants from claiming benefits for up to two

years, extendable to seven years if it could be proven the system was being abused. Despite surveys that confirmed that Eastern European migrants did not significantly influence the British labour market, the benefit ban was extended to seven years (Glennie, 2013).

Depicting Roma movement as ‘extreme migration floods’ (*The Sunday Times*, 1997) that had to be stopped was supported in a high profile act when UK Border Controls were stationed at Prague Airport in order to stop Roma asylum seekers from boarding planes to the UK. The political context in which Roma from ‘safe’ Eastern European countries claimed asylum in the UK increasingly contradicted the notion that these countries were ready to join the European Union. The number of asylum applicants from the Czech Republic had increased between 1998 and 2000 (Glennie, 2013). The vast majority of the applicants were Roma whose situation in the Czech Republic was known to be extreme. Although the lawyers admitted in the *Regina v Immigration Officer at Prague Airport (UKHL 55, 2004)* trial to have been aware that many of these applicants were persecuted, this awareness did not have any influence on the decision to grant asylum. The UK made it difficult for asylum seekers from accession countries to appear in their statistics, for guaranteeing human rights and respect for and protection of minorities are political criteria for membership (Glennie, 2013). As stated in the ‘*Regina v Immigration Officer at Prague Airport and another (Respondents) ex parte European Roma Rights Centre and others (Appellants) (2004, p.2)*, ‘in February 2001 the governments of this country and the Czech Republic made an agreement. The effect of this was to permit British immigration officers to give or refuse leave to enter the UK to passengers at Prague Airport before they boarded aircraft bound for this country. The agreement was first implemented on 18 July 2001’. A survey carried out between January and April 2001 by the European Roma Rights Centre, an international organisation that monitors and defends the human rights of

Roma, showed that 68 out of 78 Roma were stopped from boarding flights to the UK. In contrast, only 14 out of 6170 non-Roma were prevented from travelling (ERRC, 2001).

In the 2004 House of Lords court case ‘Regina v. Immigration Officer at Prague Airport and another (Respondents) ex parte European Roma Rights Centre and others (Appellants)’ (UKHL 55, 2004) Lord Carswell stated that:

It is not legitimate to apply a stereotype and commence with the assumption that applicants from Roma [wording exact like this] may be making false claims and that for that reason their claims require more intensive investigation [...] it is in law discriminatory to subject all applicants from Roma to longer and more intensive questioning because so many of them have been known in the past to merit such treatment. What the officers must do is treat all applicants, whatever their racial background, alike in the method of investigation, which they carry out until in any individual case sufficient reason appears to prolong or intensify the examination.

Although the House of Lords deemed this policy discriminatory and declared that ‘the UK government had discriminated against Roma on racial grounds and that the practice employed by the UK government was inherently and systematically discriminatory and unlawful’ (‘UKHL 55, 2004, p. 5), arguably, considering the discourse of the following years, the judgment had little impact on representations of Roma identity in the UK.

This is one of the most important decisions in condemning racial discrimination in UK immigration and asylum policy. The Home Office responded that it had no intention of discriminating against anyone and was disappointed with the House of Lords decision. Instead, the Home Office argued that the policy was meant ‘to sent a clear signal that abuse of our asylum and immigration system would not be tolerated. It was always intended that pre-entry clearance arrangements would be operated in a non-

discriminatory manner and in fact it was a precondition of our agreement with the Czech authorities' (UKHL 55, 2004, p. 6). The message suggested strong official prejudice towards people perceived as Roma, and that the UK government was openly suspicious of the asylum claims of people it perceived as Roma. Despite the fact that human rights abuses of Roma in Eastern Europe were well documented at the time, and despite the fact that the House of Lords had deemed the measure to be discriminatory, the UK government agreed to deny entry to the majority of people perceived as Roma.

Along the same lines, the media constructed the situation as a problem of a Roma migrant 'flood' (Dixon, 2013). As 1 May 2004 fast approached, and with it, the prospect of ten new countries being admitted to the EU, stories appeared in many British newspapers about 'hordes of central Europeans' preparing to descend on the UK eager to take advantage of the NHS and welfare benefits. In an article 'Walking right into Britain' the *Mirror* (2004) warned of immigrants who lived illegally in Poland entering the UK, and wrote on 25 April that, 'The tidal wave of illegal immigrants who sneak into Poland from former Iron Curtain countries can easily buy a stolen or forged passport ... From next Saturday, they can enter Britain ... and help themselves to our free health service, education system and after a while, state benefits.' With the title '700,000 That's how many Eastern Europeans came LAST year', *The Sun* (2004) wrote on 30 April, 'Early predictions are that the total could DOUBLE to almost 1.4 million this year'. On 3 May 2004 *The Express* wrote:

It was third time lucky for Marek Gorol, who had twice before tried to seek sanctuary and a salary in Britain, leaving behind a life of abject poverty in Slovakia. Both his earlier claims for asylum were rejected, but now, as a citizen of the expanded European Union, there was no one to turn him away on his arrival at Heathrow airport. Despite a lack of definable skills, and having never

held down a job in his life, Marek was full of expectation for his chances in Britain. It is now legal for the father- of-three to start a new life in the UK.

The majority of British press releases at the time of accession placed Roma in two categories: false asylum seekers or undeserving criminal migrants (Stevens, 2003). The various statements outlined above show how those constituted as ‘Roma from Eastern Europe’, who were now ‘legally’ European citizens, did not deserve to belong to what is imagined as modern European society and the British political community. Both terms, asylum seeker and migrant, transformed into terms connected to abusing the system and no real distinction was made between the two. Whether as unfounded asylum seekers, illegal immigrants, or EU citizens, Roma from Eastern Europe were not seen as having the right to move to the UK, to legally live there and to become part of the community of UK citizens (Fremlova, 2009). It turned out later that the predictions of the migration floods were wrong not only in numbers. However, these claims had an effect. As a subsequent MORI poll showed, people in Britain over-estimate the number of first-generation immigrants by four times their actual number (Duffy and Frere Smith, 2014). The Home Office released figures in November 2004 which showed that only ‘91,000 nationals from eight accession states registered for work in Britain between May and September, and as many as 45 per cent of those were already here before 1 May 2004. Fewer than 500 had tried to claim benefits for being out of work, and 97 per cent were immediately refused’ (Heath and Cheung, 2006).

Thus, prior to the accession of A8 countries there was a dramatic increase in the removal of asylum applicants from EU accession countries. There were almost one hundred per cent refusal rates, and increases in detention and removals for Polish, Czech and Slovak applicants (Fremlova, 2009). Perhaps motivated by the same pressures to be ‘tough’ on asylum and following the agreement with the Czech government to prevent asylum seekers from leaving the Czech Republic and entering

the UK, in the months leading up to May 2004 the UK Labour government tried to keep the numbers of asylum seekers from Eastern Europe low (Mitchell, 2005). The Home Office sent out letters to all asylum seekers from the new EU Member States that required a response within three days. The letter stated that failing to respond was a legitimate reason for removal. Arguably this was a move targeted at Roma, assuming the falseness of their asylum claims without looking at the individual cases (Mitchell, 2005). There were only isolated cases of asylum seekers from Russia, China and Lithuania, since most people at that time had come from Poland, the Czech Republic or Slovakia (Mitchell, 2005). Only one East London based Roma charity offered help and advice for the people who had claimed asylum. Maria, the director of this charity stated that in the last weeks before 1 May, ‘the Home Office visited hundreds of families to tell them they would pay for the families to go back home. Families told us that they were told that Gypsies do not integrate very well in this society so why should you stay here?’ (Maria, 2009).

By 1 May 2004 after long discussions about the status of current asylum seekers from Eastern European countries who would enter the EU, British authorities terminated the asylum process for those Roma who were already in the UK, granting them amnesty with indefinite leave to remain (Fremlova, 2009). With leave to remain they were expected to find work and to support themselves, and welfare provisions were terminated as soon as leave to remain was granted (Maria, 2009). Letters from the National Asylum Support Service advised families to leave the houses they currently occupied by 1 May as they would no longer be eligible for benefits and could work from that date. Thus, in the months following accession many of the Roma, now new EU citizens, ended up homeless as all help was cut from one day to the other (Maria, 2009). Despite the knowledge that most people did not have formal education and did not speak English well enough to find work, all assistance was cut (Foster, 2012). With this measure the authorities positioned Roma people as false asylum seekers, whose life

situation was irrelevant, but who needed to disappear from the figures (ERRC 2004, 2005).

During a local council meeting on Roma families in a London borough in November 2009, Daniel, a Roma campaigner who represented some of the Czech Roma in Newcastle in 2004 that were left in a state of limbo after having been granted amnesty but without the right to benefits, argued that in 2004 ‘the government’s reasoning was that, as their [Eastern European asylum seekers’] nations were now part of the EU, those affected could either go home or support themselves through work. But [...] we had been banned from seeking work until May 1 – it was a breach of our human rights not to allow us sufficient time to find work and move into new homes’ (Daniel, 2009). With this measure the government created a situation in which people became homeless at the moment they were granted EU citizenship.

Due to these circumstances, many Roma were forced to move back to the countries they had initially left because of persecution (Foster, 2012; Fremlova, 2009). At this time, Daniel had told me that he went to social services and asked ‘how can we work legally without a National Insurance number or other documentation saying we are legal – we keep saying [to officials] give us the documentation and we will find ways to provide for ourselves. Somebody must provide this basic help’ (Daniel, 2009). Daniel said that he received no advice or help, and was subsequently sent away and told he was lucky enough to have EU citizenship (Daniel, 2009) (see also Poole and Adamson, 2007).

As EU citizens, Roma in the UK faced more difficulties than as asylum seekers (Caglar and Mehling, 2013). This reflects a situation contrary to what the British press and the government foresaw. Following some pressure from the NASS (National Asylum Support Service), several charities recognised that ‘there had not been sufficient time for the thousands affected to make the change from welfare to work over night’ (Corrine, 2010) and local authorities started offering limited support. However, in the

context of EU accession, local authorities often did not understand the complex set of legislations, such as the special exemption of Roma from the workers registration scheme (Corrine, 2010), and could not offer the right advice. Countless errors and misunderstandings on the part of local authorities resulted in incorrect withdrawal of social support, since people from the same country suddenly had different statuses and rights (Foster, 2012). Most Roma were not in a position to represent their cases to the authorities when problems arose but instead retreated further into the invisible privacy of family life in abject living situations. Yet the British press continued to depict them as being ‘on the gain’ and ‘undeserving’. *The Sunday Times* (2005) wrote ‘Immigrants can relieve labour shortages in crucial areas [...] imposing restrictions would let people with skills, health and talent head West, but not those unprepared to contribute’ (Maguire and Bushe, 2005).

After EU accession in 2004, many individuals and families from Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia moved to the UK and elsewhere in Europe (Fremlova, 2009). Unlike those Roma who were already in the UK and in the system during the time of accession, as EU citizens these new Roma migrants were subject to the ‘workers registration scheme’ that required them to have worked continuously for twelve months before being able to receive benefits (see for instance EURES, The European Job Mobility Portal). Even at the time of this research, more than 5 years after the introduction of the scheme, I experienced in many conversations I had during the time of the fieldwork that neither the local authorities nor the people affected were aware of the different schemes and policies. Different rules applied to different European citizens and in some cases rules even depend on the time of arrival. The system was highly complex, subject to constant changes, and thus, exceptionally difficult for Roma to negotiate.

Similar to 2004, the years leading up to the EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 saw an increased removal of Romanian Roma applicants, much like

what happened with Czech, Polish and Slovak applicants before accession of these countries in 2004. Numbers decreased for Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia just before 2004, and the same happened in the case of Romania and Bulgaria just before 2007 (Glennie, 2013; Fremlova, 2009). When Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in January 2007, the increase of migrants arriving in the UK who were subject to working restrictions engendered a situation of extreme poverty for the majority of these EU citizens since they also had no access to public assistance. As EU citizens, they had the right to travel freely, but could hardly make a living. Already two years before the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, the House of Common debated about 'having to accept [these countries] despite one's wishes' (Parliament UK, 2005). Like in 2004, the British Government was wary of causing controversy by opening up UK labour markets to the two new Member States and thus imposed tight restrictions on employment opportunities for Bulgarians and Romanians, or 'A2 nationals', coming to the UK. At this moment a tangled web of policies and procedures was spun, differentiating the rights and entitlements of some European citizens from those of others.. Since November 2009, a Tier 2 of the points based system replaced the skilled work permit system for all non-EEA citizens. A2 nationals, however, had to apply for work permits under the old system, adding another messy layer to the regulation of employment restrictions for A2 nationals.

In a 2008 report titled 'Bulgarian and Romanian Accession to the EU, Twelve months on', the Home Affairs Committee stated that in regard to benefit claims, 380 child benefit claims and 137 tax credit claims from Bulgarians and Romanians residing in the UK were approved in the period July-September 2007. In total, 1322 child benefit claims were approved in the period January-October 2007. On 31 October 2007, seven children receiving benefits were not residents in the UK. The Minister of State acknowledged the potential risk of migrants continuing to claim benefits fraudulently on return to their native

countries, but [also admitted having] no knowledge that this is a genuine problem' (Parliament UK, 2008).

Despite this statement, the fear of potential fraud seemed to motivate the discourse on 'undeserving' Roma in the UK. *The Express* claimed that the Roma fraud case of Lavinia Olmazu 'exposed [the] absurdity of benefits system' (Clark, 2010), while *The Guardian* reported on the arrest of a 'Romanian masterminded fraud' of a Roma criminal gang for trafficking children to Britain (Booth, 2011).

The government justified its decision to continue applying restrictions with 'the need for a balance in immigration policy in recognition of the fact that the impact of immigration on British public life is wider than simply economic.' (Parliament UK, 2008). Mr. Bryne, Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, argued that, 'When there is evidence of specific, isolated pressures my sense is that we just should not take risks. This is not about Bulgarians and Romanians; it is about getting the right balance for Britain's immigration policy' (Parliament UK, 2008, p.11-19). While the Minister of State repeated that there was no need for further schemes for unskilled migrant workers, owing to native unemployment rates, this was contrary to the views expressed by the agricultural industry as well as the evidence of labour shortages in the constituencies at the time. The Romanian Under-Secretary of State for European Affairs and the acting Romanian Ambassador to the UK expressed that 'the Romanian Government was surprised and disappointed by what it regards as a discriminatory decision to continue restrictions, given the UK's support for enlargement and the expectations it places on its Romanian ally' (Parliament UK, 2008, p.11-19). It was further stated that in the Romanian view, the restrictions were unfounded and politically motivated (Parliament UK, 2008, p.11-19). On the side of the UK government, the debate was fuelled by fear and suspicion and a need to secure borders by applying restrictions and control, although no evidence of misuse was given (Drew, 2007).

The problematisation of Roma from Eastern Europe as ‘illegal migrants’ was also a persisting theme in the British media as well as in government discourse. Palidda (2011) defines the criminalisation of migrants as all the discourses, facts and practices made by the police, judicial authorities, but also local governments, media, and a part of the population that hold immigrants responsible for a large share of criminal offences. Research of FIDUCIA on ‘New European Crimes and Trust Based Policy’ and statistical data in 2013 revealed a paradox: over-representation of foreigners in the criminal justice systems of European Member States and strong public perceptions linking migrants to crime, are contrasted against the lack of any concrete empirical evidence substantiating a correlation between immigration figures and crime rates. Over the last decades an anxiety on the part of the media, public and political establishment regarding migrant criminality can now be seen to form a shift in the discourse of the European Union towards the so called criminalisation of migration.

Similar as for most other discourses, but explicitly for the discourse on illegal migration, terminology plays a key role. Maneri (2011) states the use of collective categories that lack any descriptive coherence or precision but are nevertheless replete with connotations and implicit associations, like clandestine, Muslims, gypsies, Roma, etc. provide the raw material for the discourse on immigration. The term illegal migrant is a prime example of such a collective category. Guild (2004) asserts that this term is not only misleading in that it confers a criminal status on individuals whose only crime is the administrative misdemeanour of lacking the proper documentation to authorise their presence and administrative status on a territory. Moreover it collapses a highly complex question of who is illegal into a simplified construct. This is especially the case for the discourse on Romanian and Bulgarian Roma in the UK, for both groups are EU citizens and nevertheless they tend to be constituted in the context of illegal migration.

5.3 The Need to Restrict Roma

Public discussions on Roma as undeserving migrants that come ‘to gain’ serve to problematise Roma as ‘scroungers’ whose entry needs to be restricted. Channel 5, for instance, represented Roma as ‘Roma Gypsies on benefits and proud’ in a one-hour documentary (2014). Syal (2013) reported in *The Guardian* that ‘ministers consider[ed] launching negative ad campaign in two countries [Romania and Bulgaria] to persuade potential immigrants to stay away from UK’.

In reality, the participants from my fieldwork in East London who had recently arrived in the UK experienced long bureaucratic delays when applying for assistance of any kind. The lengthy applications for the only available support of Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit often took up to 20 weeks to be actioned. In the meantime parents often lived on crisis loans, unable to get free school dinners or financial help to buy a school uniform. These circumstances sometimes hindered families from sending their children to school or being proactive in relations with schools and teachers. The discrimination most parents experienced in their countries of origin, where the majority of Roma children are forced to go to separate schools (ERRC, 2002) and are often exposed to open racism, also impeded a trustful relationship with schools and institutions in general. Yet the parents who had problems sending their children to school for a multitude of reasons mainly tied to discrimination and poverty were often problematised as unwilling to send children to school and as abusers of the UK welfare system.

During the time of my fieldwork in East London, I learned that services for Roma adults were virtually non-existent. While social services seem to be focused on children’s needs, there was hardly any help available for issues of employment, housing, health or adult education. While few models of good practice exist, needs far exceed capacity. Arguably because political repercussions are unlikely local council budget cuts start with support services for Roma and Travellers.

At the time of research little effort was made to accommodate for Romanian Roma that had recently arrived. Although there is the Gang Master's Licensing Authority, the Citizens Advice Bureau and a few welfare rights organisations, none of the Roma I spoke to were aware of these services. Very little signposting of these services was available, thus awareness and access was difficult. Moreover there are only few situations in which adult Roma were put in contact with authorised people who can advise where to seek the right help. According to a 2009 report, many Roma had experienced problems using Job Centre services, not only because of language difficulties and the increasing unavailability of translators, but mainly because they found the system complicated and the staff unhelpful, with the advisors not clear about the status of A2 and A8 nationals themselves (Fremlova, 2009). Positioning Roma as people that need to be restricted takes place through both the structured inaccessibility of services and the fear that services could be abused. While adult Roma seem to be the focus of state restrictions, children seem to be the focus of state interest and assimilation. For children this takes place mostly in form of education services, control and protection because of supposed neglect by the parents. For adults this takes place in the form of control and restriction.

5.4 Neglecting Roma

In this section I argue that the continuous reference to the law and existing policies neglects the social existence and abject situation of most Roma, and enables authorities to make the issue nonexistent. I want to stress that by not looking at and not talking about the situation of Roma in the UK on a political level, the situation of Roma is made politically invisible. In that way this discourse is not contrary to the ubiquitous presence of Roma in the media. Dismissing the issue is rather another way of positing Roma as dispensable. This means that in addition to the issues analysed above, even further challenges emerge for A2 and A8 nationals. For instance, the use of public

services is often used as a key indicator for measuring poverty and deprivation. The very fact, that Roma do not appear with claims in statistics is often used by the government as evidence that there is no problem. This assumption serves to construct Roma as even more invisible.

Similarly, the recent London poverty profile does not include Gypsy/Roma as an ethnic category. Therefore Gypsy/Roma are not included in the report and are lost under the category 'white'. Moreover, while local authorities are responsible for protecting minorities under the Equality Act 2010, only few record complete statistics of minorities in their jurisdiction, putting socially marginalised groups, such as Roma, at an even greater disadvantage. For these reasons, the invisibility of Roma and the repeated problem of Roma falling through the gaps of service provisions may itself be used to dismiss the situation and to perpetuate the marginalisation of most Roma, since they are often not represented in national or local service measures of poverty and exclusion or do not use such services. The lack of numbers only encourages officials to report that there is no need to take political action. The fact that from April 2011 onwards several Roma support services closed due to government cuts further supports this trend (own observation from the fieldwork). With the lack of the few workers that focused explicitly on the support of Roma, very few services and service providers reach and meet actual people. In the coming years of government cuts, it is likely that Roma in the UK will be increasingly rendered into invisibility and voicelessness.

This was confirmed by an interview with the British Head of European and International Policy, Race Equality and Diversity Division, who is also the Council of Europe vice chair of the 'Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers'. In the interview in February 2011 he claimed that unlike France, the UK has no 'Roma problem'. During the events of the summer 2010, where hundreds of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma were expelled from France after the French government claimed that crime rates had apparently risen in areas with Roma camps the Vice Chair argued that

‘the UK could never have these kind of problems’, because the UK does not ‘consider ‘the Roma’ as a group anyway’ (Naysmith, 2011). Thus, whereas the minister recognised discrimination against the group of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, he did not include Roma. He argued that, ‘in the UK Roma are not even perceived as an extra group’ so ‘in the UK Roma cannot be discriminated’ and therefore ‘there is no problem in the UK’. He also argued that, unlike France, the UK has no *banlieues*. When questioned on this he replied that ‘Roma people in the UK are more invisible and tensions are subsequently rather unlikely’ (Naysmith, 2011). At the same time there was a moral panic about the possible arrival of Romanians and Bulgarians in Sheffield that led the former Home Secretary David Blunkett to predict riots (see Townsend 2013).

The stress on invisibility suggests that not seeing ‘the Roma’ and not perceiving Roma as a marginalised group makes their situation unproblematic. Stressing the fact that Roma are not considered ‘a group’, Naysmith suggested that discrimination does not happen. When I referred to the extremely difficult living situations of a great number of Romanian Roma in East London, he replied that ‘the UK has certain employment restrictions in place for A2 [and A8] nationals which ensure that if people have not managed to be self-sufficient, registered and working self-employed after a three months trial period, they move back to their country of origin’ (Naysmith, 2011). From other interviews I collected at the same time I knew that, to the contrary, people do not leave again after three months. Instead, many people try to manage in any possible way. Very often this fight for survival placed the participants firmly on the margins of society. The motivating factors for leaving their country of origin did not change after the three months trial period in the UK or elsewhere. Without any opportunity to earn money through regular employment or to claim benefits, and most often without speaking the language, just getting by was extremely difficult.

In answering the question of what the government is doing for the Roma that live in the UK, the Vice Chair referred to a successful joint investigation team of

Romanian and UK Police called ‘Operation Golf’. Together this team is protecting ‘those vulnerable Roma, mainly children, who are getting trafficked into the UK by their own people to be exploited by being forced to beg on the streets of London [...] This team managed already to return back to Romania safely many of these poor children’ he argued (Naysmith, 2011). On the one hand, UK Roma experts problematised Roma in the UK as ‘vulnerable people who need to be protected from themselves,’ and on the other, as neglecting their own situations (see also interviews with Daniel and Corrine as well as Poole and Adamson, 2007). Naysmith’s views reflect a particular standpoint of authoritative rejection as a means to make the situation non-existent, thus it is also a form of problematisation. Positioning Roma as ‘the vulnerable’ and at the same time absent and invisible raises the question of why the UK nevertheless maintains employment restrictions on A2 and A8 nationals.

The employment restrictions for A8 nationals are not as rigid as those for A2 nationals. The British charity *Shelter* notes that ‘A8 nationals have similar rights to people from other EEA/EU countries but there are restrictions on their rights to work, apply for benefits and/or get help with housing. These restrictions do not apply to people from Malta and Cyprus, which also joined the EU in May 2004’ (Shelter UK, 2011). The unlawfulness of the continuation of the scheme in place for A8 nationals is neither discussed nor challenged. Part of the accession regulations (EEC, No. 1612/68) in 2004 was that restrictions on A8 nationals could only continue after May 2009, as a proportionate response to ‘serious disturbances in the labour market’. This disturbance was never proven. Although the scheme is not proportionate, two years after its final expiry date it was still in place. The European Commission has not brought forward any infringement proceedings. Moreover, many A2 nationals who are required to be self-employed in order to receive benefits are former asylum seekers. While many are eligible for asylum because of persecution in his/her country of origin, under the Amsterdam Treaty, these applications are viewed as ill founded.

Despite their status as EU citizens, the right to reside in the UK for A8 and A2 nationals is linked to employment. HM Revenue & Customs state that:

A claimant will not be treated as having a right to reside in the UK if they are an A8 or A2 national who is looking for work, including an A8 or A2 worker who loses his or her job before having worked in the UK lawfully and uninterruptedly for 12 months or more and is without another job for a period of more than 30 days. An A8 or A2 national who is economically inactive. An EEA national except UK or Irish nationals but including nationals of Cyprus and Malta who is economically inactive (HM Revenue & Customs, 2006).

Further, HM Revenue & Customs states that if the claimant falls into one of three categories outlined above, 'the claimant would only have the right to reside in the UK if he or she has sufficient resources to avoid becoming an unreasonable burden on the social assistance system of the UK. All the claimant's personal circumstances would be taken into account when deciding whether he or she is self-sufficient' (HM Revenue & Customs, 2006). The interest is not to guarantee equality and to enable a life in dignity and humane conditions but to shake off those who are 'unreasonable burdens on the social assistance system of the UK' (HM Revenue & Customs 2011). Working closely together with the joint police team 'Operation Golf', the UK Border Agency has new powers to detain and deport EU migrants who do not have a right to reside. In light of the response of the UK government and judiciary, A8 and A2 nationals without recourse to public funds do not have many legal remedies in the UK, except in very specific borderline cases. While advocacy at EU level seems necessary, mass deportation events like, for instance, in the summer of 2010 in France, have shown that the outcome is ambiguous.

My analysis of the interview with the British Roma expert points to the lack of political will vis-à-vis the situation of Roma. Neglecting their situation to some extent also implies that their social existence is denied. Thus, the way Roma and their situation are misrecognised and made someone else's responsibility, points to a new citizenship vacuum, as Roma are made politically invisible. Roma are constituted as people who live in a situation that Rancière might refer to as 'the part that has no part' (2004, p. 4). While they are European citizens they are unrecognised in their situations and struggles and moreover often lack the means to live a life beyond survival. It could even be argued that some of the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma were better off before Romania or Bulgaria joined the European Union, when at least some could claim refugee status due to persecution in their country of origin and were recognised in these claims, which entitled them to social assistance. Although Roma are still persecuted in their countries of origin as EU nationals they can no longer claim asylum. Rigid work and residency restrictions have degraded the majority of Roma in the UK and elsewhere to citizen outsiders.

This discursive construction and the situation challenge Arendt's understanding of having the 'right to have rights', which Arendt saw protected as long as a person holds citizenship. Paradoxically having citizenship of a EU Member State seems to put Roma into an even more vulnerable and precarious situation since they have the right to move freely but are not recognised in their claims to the right to live a life protected from discrimination. Unlike T.H. Marshall (1950) suggests, as I discuss in Chapter Two, what enables people to make claims to rights is not necessarily linked to citizenship status. Despite its promise, citizenship status does not guarantee equality and autonomy to make claims to rights. Roma from Romania or Bulgaria have official citizenship status but are denied the autonomy to express themselves as political beings. Isin argues that the reasons are not necessarily particular laws; the problem is as conceptual as it is legal for 'historically citizenship has been the identity through which

claims to political being are enacted' (2009, p. 162). The analysis of this section shows that Romanian Roma in London hold EU citizenship but their situation is nevertheless rendered politically invisible. Thus, like media discourses government discourses on Roma then tend to speak for and silence Roma. In the section above this is shown to take place within official statements arguing that there is no 'Roma issue'. It also follows that citizenship, as it is conceptualised, seems no longer the identity through which a person can enact the right to make claims to rights. What is more, and as I discussed in Chapter Two, those acts through which marginalised people constitute themselves as those to whom the right to have is due are often not recognised as acts.

5.5 'Roma as Criminals'

In the past years the criminalisation of Roma has intensified significantly in the UK as well as across the European Union (Sigona and Trehan, 2011; Palidda, 2011). An analysis of the discourse on the criminalisation of Roma shows that by essentialising, both media and governmental discourses aim to identify Roma as a group that is dangerous 'by nature'. Throughout history, societies have been marked by periods of persecution and violence directed at the 'outsider', i.e. the 'enemy of the time' (Foucault 1977; 1979). Over the last two decades in Western Europe there has been a significant increase in the arrest, imprisonment and detention of migrants. The criminalisation of migrants has led judicial authorities, local governments, the police, mass media and the general population to see migrants, and as I illustrate in the next Chapter, Roma in particular, as responsible for a wide range of offences. In Chapter Three I portrayed the intensification of the persecution of Roma during recent years. Here I focus on how Roma are criminalised. While there is history of the criminalisation of migration (Anderson, 2013), the most emblematic figure of this trend are probably Roma, who have come to embody the mobile, 'vagrant', 'outsider' and the consequent threat of social disorder that these qualities imply (Parkin, 2013).

The theme of Roma trafficking was the focus of the investigation team ‘Operation Golf’ mentioned earlier in this chapter. At the time of this research trafficking was a dominant concern in the UK, although no evidence was given for even one case of trafficking. Through a Freedom of Information Act request, I obtained and selected for further analysis six MET police press releases problematising Roma and trafficking in the UK published between 29 July 2010 and 19 November 2010. Already in 2007, the MET police set up an international investigation team called ‘Operation Golf’. On the MET police website it is described as ‘a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) between the MPS and the Romanian National Police (RNP) tackling Romanian Roma Organised Crime Networks (OCNs) that ‘traffic and exploit children from the Romanian Roma community, one of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in Europe’ (MET police, 2011). Europol, Eurojust, the UK Crown Prosecution Service and the Romanian Prosecutors Office (DIICOT) support the investigation team, and ‘the JIT is currently 70% funded by a grant from the European Commission and the remainder by the Met Police.’ (MET police, 2010). The first short statement reveals the ways in which the MET police problematises Roma as citizen others. ‘Roma’, presented as a homogenous group, are linked to criminal acts. Trafficking is not depicted as an individual act, but as part of culture of an essentially criminal group. At the same time Roma are victimised as a subaltern group, being repeatedly described as one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people that need to be both sympathised with and protected from themselves. After the sentencing of a Roma activist in London in November 2010, superintendent Bernie Gravett of Metropolitan Police Operation Golf declared in a personal interview at Southwark Crown Court that ‘the Roma need to be taught a legal lesson’ (Gravett, 2010). He implied that Roma act in ways that are effectively wrong, and therefore, need to be protected from themselves by the state, and in this case, by the police. Roma need to learn that they cannot behave in this way, that is, they need to be educated and civilised.

On 12 October 2010 BBC News London reported in an article ‘Roma children ‘fund gangster luxury’’ on how British police took more than ‘two dozen Romanian Roma children as young as three into protection [on Tuesday] after raiding houses in London as part of a joint child trafficking investigation with Romanian authorities’ (Davey, 2010). Chief inspector Colin Carswell said that officers ‘raided 16 properties in East London in an operation to safeguard potential victims of a Romanian-based Roma gang of child traffickers’. On the one hand, this report depicted Roma children as vulnerable and having ‘been forced into a Romanian-based Roma gang of beggars and pickpockets’. On the other hand, there are the criminal ‘Roma gangs’ that ‘can generate £100,000 annually from their activities, according to the police’ (HM Revenue & Customs, 2006). As a group, Roma are positioned both as victims of their own people and as gang masters illegally ‘on the gain’ and exploiting ‘their own children’.

Davey states that, ‘virtually all of the proceeds [from such activities] make their way back to southern Romania – to towns where huge houses have sprung up and prestige cars line the streets’ (Davey, 2010). In the report, John Cameron, Head of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children said ‘Unscrupulous traffickers control and terrorise vulnerable children within the UK. When the police find these children, they need to provide immediate protection to help them overcome their ordeal.’ Chief Inspector Colin Carswell of Operation Golf added, ‘These children are exploited by gangs and in some cases their own parents, who paid criminals to bring the youngsters to Britain to earn money’. The words exploitation, trafficking, vulnerable, victim and protection are repeated and underlined with photographs of children that live in poverty. In the entire report, no evidence is given for these assumptions, and not one supposed ‘victim’ or ‘trafficker’ is interviewed. Up until May 2011 only four out of 85 UK convictions [of Romanians] were for trafficking (Booth, 2011).

Superintendent Bernie Gravett of Operation Golf believes he found the answer to ‘how these youngsters can fall into the hand of organised criminals’ in ‘Roma’s

poverty and their struggle to get out of it'. This struggle is visualised with a photograph of a heavily loaded horse drawn carriage. Gravett problematises the situation of Roma as 'nineteenth century fagnism' (Fagin is a character in the Charles Dickens novel *Oliver Twist*, who is a receiver and trader of stolen goods). 'Roma in Romania fall for false promises their children will make money overseas', he argues, initially describing the situation as one of 'false promise', but then emphasising the 'astronomical sums' forced beggar children actually generate, noting that 'some children earn £300 a day. The gangs value one child at £100,000 a year' (Davey, 2010). Here Gravett problematises Roma as a group of criminal traffickers who exploit their own children to create 'luxurious lives'. To depict the unjust improvement, two dichotomies are established: on the one hand is the extreme poverty and carriages loaded with scrap metal and on the other hand is the 'life of luxury'. To problematise both the undeserved wealth and the exploitation, Tandarai, a town in Eastern Romania is often used as the main example of this duplicity. A team of Operation Golf visited Tandarai to search for the 'ringleaders' that they suspect are based there. Standard status symbols, such as big houses and high value cars serve as proof of the owner's criminality. Garvett further states that 'it is a show of wealth – they want poor people to think, 'If I send my children abroad, I could live in a place like this''(Davey, 2010). The link between the suspected criminal gang crime, these houses and cars in Tandarai, and some Romanian children begging in London was only established at the end of the coverage.

Garvett's depictions of supposed Roma criminality support the position of government discourse at that time, which suggested that Roma should not be allowed to enter the UK in order to make money begging on the streets. As a police expert Garvett's maintains, the idea is that Roma should not be able to live the kind of life in the UK that would enable them to send money to relatives in Romania. Operation Golf constructs Roma simultaneously as victims and criminals: they are poor and vulnerable and they are wealthy and criminal. The reasons for begging are depicted as both a

matter of wrong choices by vulnerable and impoverished Roma, and as calculated and criminal. Begging itself is constructed as an essentially criminal act, irrespective of whether it is aggressive begging or not, and those Roma who are begging as they might have no other way to earn money that day are dismissed in their choice to beg. While begging was made a recordable offence in 2003, it is questionable how criminalising Roma as beggars helps to tackle the root causes of begging. The coverage constructs the idea that Roma children must be taken off the streets by the MET police to then be safely returned to Romania. Thus, Operation Golf represents itself as a warning shield against the migration of particular EU citizens that are constructed as threatening criminals. By constituting Roma as an essentially criminal people Garvett justifies the idea that the British police should ‘teach Roma a legal lesson’.

In other words, it is not so much the point whether there are or there are no isolated cases of trafficking. The discourse constructs a link between child begging and gang exploitation and therefore constitutes Roma as a group of criminals. Establishing EU free movement was always underpinned by a strong discursive component driven by police (and security experts, who asserted that the lifting of border controls would create a major security deficit (Bigo, 1996)). This shared belief in the increase in crime and mobility of organised criminal groups served to justify the proliferation of a range of compensatory security measures and transnational cooperation in policing and border enforcement (Faure-Atger, 2008). These include Europol and Frontex, but also pan-European police projects like Operation Golf, which have contributed to the creation of knowledge on migration related risks and the establishment of official EU discourse linking migration to a consortium of threats such as trafficking, human smuggling and terrorism. A detailed examination of this is, however, outside the scope of the thesis. What is important from the perspective of this thesis is that the knowledge and activities generated by these actors in the criminalisation of migration serves to legitimise pan-

European projects like Operation Golf and others, which in turn contributes to the criminalisation of Roma populations.

The recurring representation of Roma adults as criminal traffickers and Roma children as trafficked victims constitutes a strong image of Roma in the UK. Discursively, special police operations combating trafficking and street begging have then become the strategic priorities in securing public order. Ever since the media reported on the ‘successful’ police raid in East London in October 2010 and the BBC aired the documentary about ‘Gypsy child thieves’ (Bagnall, 2009), Roma were repeatedly constructed as criminal traffickers. On 21 May 2011, *The Telegraph* published the article, ‘Romanian families use Big Issue loophole’, accusing Romanian families of abusing the opportunity to sell the paper *Big Issue* to gain access to jobs and benefits. The newspaper stated that ‘Many of those who have benefited from the system are members of the Roma gipsy community and are also Romanian nationals’ (Leach, 2011). Leach tells the story of someone he describes as a Roma man who used to live in a ‘ramshackle hut in a Romanian village with only a handful of farm animals to his name. Then the man was told about a loophole to bypass a pledge of Blair’s government’ in which ‘unskilled migrants from the former Communist country would be restricted from working and claiming benefits in the UK’ (Leach, 2011). The man is said to have registered as self-employed to sell the *Big Issue*, which is one of the few ways for A2 nationals to work in the UK, and was depicted as ‘one of the many Roma who are becoming *Big Issue* sellers solely to gain benefits and rights to work for their families through the loophole’ (Leach, 2011). Instead of clarifying the restrictions, *The Telegraph* criminalises the man by referring to his family’s house: ‘now the 24-year-old immigrant lives in a brand new house in Manchester, with eight of his relatives, with the help of the British taxpayer’. The author speculates on how much money the ‘extended family’ receives per year and points to fact that other members of the family are working.

The article constitutes Roma as essentially criminal, whether they are employed or not. If Roma, after twelve months of self employment legally apply for benefits, they are depicted as fraudsters; if they are self employed, they are depicted as bypassing the law via a loophole; if after the twelve month limit on self employment they take up regular employment, they are depicted as undeserving of a legal salary as they are taking jobs away from British citizens. The article constructs the man in question as a criminal who abused the system through a loophole, although his work for the *Big Issue* is legal and complies with the employment restrictions in place in 2011. What is more, while the director of the *Big Life Company* states that instead, ‘many [Roma] are homeless or living in overcrowded accommodation and we help those who need it by letting them sell the Big Issue’ (Leach, 2011), Leach concludes by quoting a Home Office spokesperson arguing ‘we are determined to protect the interests of the taxpayer and the benefit system from possible abuse. This government will push for stringent controls on workers from new Member States being able to access our labour market’ (Leach, 2011).

The analysis illustrates that Roma adults are positioned simultaneously as active subjects and criminal traffickers on the one hand and as passive objects and vulnerable victims needing protection on the other. The analysis further highlights that Roma targeted policies and operations often dismiss the full account of the actual situation and instead discursively construct a threat and a need for more security. Constituting Roma as criminals justifies the surveillance and embodies forms of exclusion inscribed with specific notions of otherness and suspicion. As Aradau argues, ‘a whole series of connections are drawn between the Roma and a series of more or less minor ‘illegalisms’ such as theft, welfare fraud and cultural difference [...]’ (2013, p. 98).

5.6 'Roma as Welfare Fraudsters'

Problematizing Roma as those who abuse their position as rights-bearers by deceiving the welfare system contributes not only to the securitisation and criminalisation of Roma. It likewise positions Roma as anti-social. Individual examples are often used to constitute an image of Roma from new Member States as evidence of the problems brought about by uncontrolled migration, namely crime and abuse of social welfare (Aradau, 2013). Yet, this is not a new discourse, and as Hancock (1997) asserts, it is the vagueness of the Romani identity that gives political entrepreneurs opportunities to use Roma as easy scapegoats. It seems possible to constitute Roma as scroungers who traffic their children and exploit the generosity of the state. Cashman and FitzGibbon (2014) even assert that because this is so easy, politicians have learned that they may link Roma with issues such as criminality, migration, and social welfare fraud with impunity.

I will now take a closer look at the case of Lavinia Olmazu, a Romanian Roma activist who in 2010 was convicted of fraud for helping to produce forged work documents for Roma who were then able to obtain National Insurance Numbers. It is not the point whether or not her act was unlawful; relevant for this analysis is the content of the discourse that emerged around the case, including around the choices Roma make, and in this case, Olmazu's autonomy to take a political stand. In July 2010 the Metropolitan Police Service reported that a 'gang who devised an elaborate scam to register hundreds of Roma families for illegal benefits in a bid to siphon off an estimated £12 million from the UK system has been sentenced to a total of more than nine years at Southwark Crown Court' (MPS FOIA, 2010). The press release also names Olmazu, who was employed as a Roma advisor by two London councils. At the time Olmazu, who 'uses a company she set up called Roma Concern as one of the fronts for her fraud' (MPS FOIA, 2010) pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to supply articles for use in fraud. While the *Express* headlines 'Roma fraud case exposes

absurdity of benefits system' (Clark, 2010), Clark describes 'Fraudster' Lavinia Olmazu as 'Young, attractive and eloquent, the 31-year-old Romanian immigrant appeared to be the perfect role model to challenge the negative image of Roma gypsies'. Within this statement Clark problematises Roma as the opposite of the eloquence Olmazu represents to him; a way of positioning to which I come back later on. The press release talks about 'criminal gangs suspected of trafficking poor Roma families into the UK with the intention of exploiting them', of 'created fake companies' and of 'bogus work references'. It was reported that forged documents allowed 'more than 350 Romanians to gain national insurance numbers by indicating that they would become self-employed and contribute to the UK tax system' (MPS FOIA, 2010). At the end of the press release it is stated that only 172 out of the 368 Roma who had fraudulently obtained national insurance numbers actually claimed benefits. Of those 172 people, the police only proved that 6 people had committed fraud. Yet, authorities stirred fears by listing amounts of money that potentially could have been stolen from UK taxpayers if measures like Operation Golf would not have stopped them.

In addition to representing Olmazu and the other persons involved as an 'organised criminal network', Detective Constable Melanie Groves adds that 'this is a clear case of Roma families who wished to improve their lives but were prevented from doing so by being exploited by their own people' (MPS FOIA, 2010). On the one hand the discourse constitutes Olmazu as an exception, as she is 'an educated Roma lady who abused her position of trust and purported to be trying to help Roma people integrate into this country' (MPS FOIA, 2010). In her sentencing in September 2010 it was repeatedly emphasised that her action was particularly condemned because she is an 'educated' Romnia. While such discourse constitutes Olmazu's education as an exception, it is simultaneously used to exacerbate the gravity of her actions. Olmazu is a known political activist, she has worked for several NGOs and councils to promote the rights of Roma since she was a student. Whether or not parts of Olmazu's activities in

the above reported case may have been illegal is not the topic I want to pursue. I want to stress that Olmazu chose to act in the way she did because of a perceived injustice. By showing other new Roma migrants how to produce invoices and get national insurance numbers, she was enabling them to leapfrog the impossibility of employment directly into the possibility of self-employment (Bowers, 2010). Olmazu wanted to help other Roma to escape poverty to have a chance of being equal citizens in Britain (Bowers, 2010). Her actions were a form of resistance and, I argue, an act of citizenship. Yet, within the discourse of the media, the police and later during sentencing, she is dismissed in taking these choices and in acting politically, unlawfully or not. Olmazu's choices and acts are constituted as wrong choices and acts. The political stand she takes is dismissed as simple fraud. I want to stress that she does not seem to be recognised as an autonomous political subject making claims. Olmazu and her choices are constituted, one-sidedly, as simply criminal.

In the media, Olmazu figures as a Romanian national: 'Young, attractive and eloquent, the 31-year-old Romanian immigrant' (Clark, 2010); as a Romnia: 'the perfect role model to challenge the negative image of Roma gypsies' (Clark, 2010); as criminal and as such, a single case that is supposed to stand for a whole group: 'she was a criminal who managed to defraud the British taxpayer of £2.9 million in illegally claimed benefits over a two-year period (Clark, 2010); as a proof of how the British welfare system may be abused: 'That the system is an open invitation to fraud has been amply demonstrated by Olmazu' (Clark, 2010); and as a justification of heightened securitisation and the need to curb future migration of Roma:

How is it that we have ended up with a situation in which benefits are handed out willy-nilly to any immigrant who can get their hands on a national insurance number [...] If we are going to allow migrant workers from Eastern Europe the freedom to come to look for work in Britain we

can't offer them welfare from the day they arrive, otherwise we will be placing an open-ended burden on the benefits system' (Clark, 2010).

While both the media and some police reports claim to be genuinely concerned with the difficult issues Roma people face throughout Europe, no single article at the time portrayed Olmazu as a political activist or her actions as controvertible political claims. By problematising Roma as fraudsters and victims at the same time, media reports as well as the reports of and around Operation Golf suspend the agency of the people concerned by suggesting that Roma need to be protected from themselves. On the hand, Olmazu is expected to make autonomous choices as a 'role model' and as an educated 'Roma lady' but her choices are constituted only as wrong. Through this positioning Olmazu's constituted incapacity to make the right choices is used to justify denying her the autonomy to make choices in the first place. More control and securitisation is thus seen as needed to ensure protection (Palidda, 2007). Although Olmazu 'speaks', both with her political actions and claims as well as through the explanation of her motives after her arrest, her political motives are disregarded. Olmazu is portrayed as a victim of international crime networks and simultaneously as a criminal, incapable of making political choices.

BBC News UK at 10 o'clock reported on Olmazu's sentencing on 8 November 2010. The heading reads 'Gypsy campaigner jailed for 2.9£m benefits scam' (Hughes, 2010). In this news report, Olmazu is positioned as a fraudster being 'employed by two London councils to help her fellow Roma but [...] also involved with a criminal gang that was behind a multi million pound fraud' (Hughes, 2010). The documentary then shows a sequence of passport size photos of people perceived as Roma together with fictitious work references 'that allowed Romanians to get National Insurance numbers' (Hughes, 2010). Hughes constitutes Roma as necessary members of criminal gangs by showing a part of series of operations carried out over the last years and by pointing to

‘the destination of the stolen UK taxpayer’s money’ (2010), showing houses in Tandarei alongside poor, rundown housing (Hughes, 2010). In the last part of the news documentary another nightly police raid is shown while the reporter states that ‘Roma are among the most deprived people in Europe and for centuries they have been persecuted. The persecution continues today. Only now it is organised Roma gangs that are exploiting their own people’ (Hughes, 2010). The BBC documentary Roma concludes that Roma are fraudsters and willing to exploit ‘their own people’.

The link between Olmazu’s sentence for benefit fraud, the images of children carried away by policemen from a house somewhere in the UK that appears like footage from an archive, and the rather theatrical footage from Romania is not supported by evidence but gives a clear message of interconnection to the viewer. Like many other public institutions, the BBC documentary also positions Olmazu and Roma in general as criminals and fraudsters that must be controlled. Olmazu’s voice is absent from the documentary. In response to a reader complaint about the bias and the suggested link between Olmazu, random police raids and child trafficking entailed in the news coverage, the BBC replied it ‘sought to explain this case amidst other such criminal activity [and that] the footage did not seek to provide stereotypical representations of Romany people [...] it was clearly stated during the report that the footage was of recent raids by Romanian and British police following joint investigations into child trafficking and benefit fraud, this included footage from both Romania and the UK’ (BBC FOIA, 2011). Linking unrelated criminal activity to the sentence of a Roma political activist, this BBC news documentary suggested that all Roma are essentially fraudsters.

It is repeatedly claimed that there is an awareness of the difficulties Roma are facing. However, for instance, begging is not considered as a matter of poverty, but a matter of fraud, trafficking, forced labour, personal profit and exploitation. In 2010 Olmazu was serving her sentence in prison. As a human rights graduate and long time

Roma activist, her help in obtaining National Insurance numbers for people who would have had otherwise almost no chance to legally work or claim benefits in the UK as an act of empathy, justice and conscious choice was not a line of argumentation in the trial. Olmazu's act was problematised as an act of exploitation and criminality. On the one hand, Olmazu is expected to make personal choices as an expression of her freedom and to consider herself as a subject of rights. Yet at the very moment Olmazu made a 'wrong' choice, she was denied the decision to fight for what she understood as justice. During the sentencing she was dismissed for having decided to deliberately challenge a legal system in order to help other Roma 'to have a chance of being equal citizens here in Britain' (Bowers, 2010). Olamazu's case is complex and most readers of the British tabloid press and the BBC might understand Olamazu's action as definite fraud. Yet, there is also Olmazu's side of the story, which was only printed in *The Traveller Times*, a website featuring news, pictures, films and information from and for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. There she claimed to have had 'no part in the fraud and just wanted to help other Roma who were less fortunate than herself' (Bowers, 2010). Bowers (2010) described Olmazu as 'a modern Robin Hood helping the poor and persecuted get what they were morally entitled to – a new life and a new chance'. Yet this narrative never appeared in the mainstream media and has remained silenced ever since.

Another case where the discourse of fraud is used appears in a Met Police Press release from 30 July 2010, which has the headline: 'Romanian Roma male and female who forced six children to beg on the streets of London are sentenced today'. The press release reported that the woman was sentenced to 30 months 'for one count of child neglect relating to failing to educate the children and 30 months for one count of child neglect relating to exploiting them for begging. Three further charges relating to trafficking [her own] seven children into the UK will lie on file' (MPS FOIA, 2010). As Roma, and poor, the couple was positioned as fraudsters and exploiters. To

problematise poverty in this way seems to suggest that poor parents struggling for survival are necessarily unable to care for their children. As I discuss in the following chapter, many of the participants I interviewed during my fieldwork in East London are confronted with issues of child protection as they are suspected of exploiting their children. The MET press release argues that taking the children away from the parents is the only way ‘to rescue them from a life of crime’, and that ‘the trafficking and exploitation of children for forced criminality, including begging is a gross violation of their human rights’ (MPS FOIA, 2010). The structural circumstances underpin this situation are not discussed as a violations of human rights. Thus, whilst human rights are invoked in relation to the child’s lack of attendance at school, they are not invoked in relation to the child’s poor health and living conditions, in a ‘house that was sparsely furnished with a broken fridge containing few items and no sign of a single toy’ (MPS FOIA, 2010). The causes for the situation are neither recognised nor targeted. The situation is problematised as a fault and the essence of the people themselves. Poverty, welfare and citizenship are not linked within this discourse. Poverty is not addressed as a citizenship or rights issue. Instead it is used against parents who fail to provide the children with furniture, a modern fridge, the right amount of food and toys.

In May 2011 an involvement officer from the family information service asked for support for a Roma family ‘that does not meet social care threshold from the referral and assessment team. There are several welfare concerns, house environment, mum has cancer, children are not in school, obesity, [...]. The family has been evicted from xy and has moved to xp but children are not registered for a school place.’ (Letter from involvement officer, 2011). Roma children are the main focus of human rights discourses. Child welfare, education, decent living conditions and access to healthcare are rights for all children in the UK. In regards to the situation of Romanian Roma children, these rights are often constructed and narrated differently: if parents do not have the means to provide children a standard of life in which they can attend school

regularly, the parents are suspected of child neglect; if parents beg together with children, they are suspected of trafficking, child labour and exploitation. Yet the parents are neither in a position to claim the above named rights for their children nor are they able to provide much else. They try to survive by whatever means are available, which means that attending school becomes an effort that it is much more difficult than for families who do not struggle for bare survival.

The official approach of most UK authorities, whether the Met Police or social services, sees the solution to be the removal of children and their placement in foster care, where they ‘flourish, [and] have not once come to the attention of the police and had have many opportunities they would never have been afforded’ (MPS FOIA, 2010). This approach denies the agency of parents, as it does not acknowledge their good intentions, and manifests the sheer impossibility of change once people live in poverty. It does not aim to improve the circumstances, but confirms them. If Romanian Roma in London live in abject circumstances in which parents are unable to provide their children with what the welfare authorities demand but at the same time authorities do not support the parents in changing these circumstances, the process ends up constituting people as fraudsters and politically immature.

Not one of the analysed press releases involved the people affected, nor did the reports consider their situation in any way. The voice of those who are being problematised was absent. Reports that did quote some of the convicted people ended up silencing them by depicting their views as implausible and part of the fraud. In line with the results of surveillance on the male defendant that ‘did not show any evidence of him working’ (MPS FOIA, 2010) and the description of a meagre house, the mother is quoted during the police interview as follows: ‘The woman admitted taking the children begging but denied she was exploiting them or not enrolling them at school. She stated that she had brought them to the UK for a better life and the begging was to make extra money to buy things for the children’ (MPS FOIA, 2010). Her

understanding of her own situation has no relevance for the story, as though it is irrelevant what she has to say. The parents are positioned as criminals from the very first moment. The quote at the end of the press release just confirms that the parents are trying to deceive the police. The report concludes by stating how much better the children are since they were taken in foster care.

The same kind of silencing was present in the previously discussed case of convicted Roma activist Olmazu. From the beginning of the trial Olmazu was neither granted the autonomy to make decisions nor to express her voice. She was positioned as a trafficker, exploiter and fraudster. At no time between her arrest and the trial was she granted space to speak. During the duration of the court case, no one was interested in why Olmazu wanted to help people obtain National Insurance numbers and in whether Olmazu wanted to make a political claim by doing so. Like the discussed narratives of the convicted parents and the ‘gang members’, Olmazu was also constituted as a voiceless fraudster that is politically immature and makes wrong choices.

The above analysis shows that Roma are portrayed as ‘problems’ in need of intervention, as people who don’t have the autonomy to decide and act. Roma are not recognised as claimants of rights. In line with ‘trafficking’ and ‘benefit fraud’ discourses, UK politicians, as well as members of the European Committee of Experts of Roma and Travellers name ‘Operation Golf’ as success story for dealing with Roma in the UK. Neither the media nor the police press releases discuss the effects of the employment restriction for A2 and A8 nationals in the UK and the deadlock it creates. Roma are positioned neither as European citizens to whom the same rights are due nor as European citizens still largely excluded from the benefits of non-discrimination, democratic freedom and access to education.

Most of these discourses are underpinned by essentialised and ethnicised understandings of Roma. However the analysis shows that ethnic discrimination is only one factor in understanding the situation of many Roma in the UK (as elsewhere), yet,

one that has numerous consequences. Local authorities, national governments or European funding do not address poverty and its consequences in the UK. As I discussed above, poverty is constructed as the responsibility of people who, in this case, essentially do not adjust and do not want to work. At the same time, poverty is no longer invisible and at the margins of society, but is constructed as a public threat. Poverty and poverty migration is constituted as a severe burden for the welfare state and the individual taxpayer. During the time of the fieldwork many people complained to social services that Roma children would ring and beg at the door and go through other people's rubbish bins. One woman I interviewed said that she feels uncomfortable living now close to people that are so poor when she is doing well financially. She wondered why the parents at all allow their children to rummage through garbage. So, it is also the close confrontation with poverty and suffering that is uncomfortable, as it challenges life standards, equality and feeling of safety in general. Another consequence of this discourse is that it constructs people in a way that hardly allows to them to freely make claims to rights.

The unemployment rates, criminal records, living below the poverty line for unskilled Romanians in the UK do not differ from those of British unskilled workers. Yet police investigation teams of Operation Golf only investigate Romanian or allegedly Romanian Roma cases (see European Commission, 2007). In 2011 the team reported that after initial investigations they could not confirm one case of organised trafficking. Also the numbers of Romanians who actually abuse the benefit system in the UK are minimal. Social services in East London did not find one case of child neglect in the form of domestic violence. The court case of Olmazu is one case, but is depicted as though benefit fraud is part of Roma culture. The discourses of the media, the police and politicians may be driven by diverse but overlapping reasons. However, they each tend to shift the responsibility for heightened securitisation to other levels, the media by claiming that 'Benefits should be available only to workers who have been

here for several years and have proved their commitment to Britain in order to qualify for citizenship' (Clark, 2010) and the police by claiming the need for pan-European control and security measurements.

5.7 'Roma and their Self-Exclusion'

Another dominant problematisation is how Roma contribute to self-marginalisation. To add to the discourses analysed above, this discourse is crucial, as it constitutes Roma as those to blame for their own situation and as people whose decisions are inherently wrong and who are therefore to be dismissed as political agents (see also Van Baar, 2011; Kocze, 2013; McGarry, 2014, Biro, 2013). I focus mainly on the discourse on schooling and parenting that is embedded within a broader discourse of local authorities and government. Most of the data of this section was collected during the fieldwork in East London.

One of the most common prejudices is that Roma parents do not send their children to school. The prevailing lack of education of many adult Roma from Eastern Europe has historical reasons, as many were and still are excluded from the school system. Nevertheless, problems in school or absence are often used as indicators of a devaluation of the importance of education that is part of Roma culture, and therefore, Roma are constituted as those to blame for their own exclusion. Several research studies suggest that many Roma from Eastern Europe struggle with fear and trauma that are associated with schooling and education once they arrive in the UK (ERRC 1998; Fremlova and Ureche, 2011; Ryder, Cemlyn and Acton, 2014). Yet these findings, or the contribution that Roma's precarious economic situation makes to this issue are often unacknowledged by social services. When I attended meetings at local councils, schools and social services during the fieldwork in East London, I noticed that in discussions over measures for Roma children with high truancy rates or those who appear tired in school or are dressed in 'inadequate clothing', the individual situation of the child is

rarely considered. The life circumstances that may lead to such conditions are hardly acknowledged. In the discussions as well as in the reports that inform the discourse of social services who report to the government, these circumstances are often constructed as a matter of choice and are problematised as child neglect before any conversation with the family even takes place.

In October 2010 I attended several discussion meetings with the head teacher of a local school. The teacher had called Martin to investigate a case in the borough where a child was absent from school after having had problems in this school for a long time. The mother of that child had applied for the child to be transferred to a different school several months before, but nothing had been initiated. The school tried to talk to the child's mother several times, but without a translator communication was difficult. Lisa, the head teacher, explained that she had also sent people from social services to speak to the family, but they were unsuccessful as 'really none of the family speaks any English' (Lisa, 2010). While it might have been clear that language was one of the main reasons for which no communication could take place, the head teacher finally asked me to speak to the mother, as she found 'the mother often very angry' (Lisa, 2010). When I asked Lisa why no interpreter accompanied the teacher and social workers, Lisa responded that it was 'too much of an effort at that time'. Instead she asked me to go and see them, as 'with you they seem to speak', mystifying the act of speaking to the mother and constituting the mother as the person causing the issues at stake (Lisa, 2010).

The head teacher stated that she needed someone 'to confirm to have seen the child. I only need to know that the child is alive [...] you never know with these people' (Lisa, 2010). The child and the mother do not matter as citizens who have equal rights, or as political subjects acting on their own behalf. The child only matters as a human rights concern, suggesting that as long as the school has confirmation that the child is alive, the matter can be closed. The reasons why the child might have problems in

school, why the child is absent, why it seems distressed and comes to school with inadequate clothing were not addressed. Instead the situation was used to constitute Roma as those to blame for their precariousness, their state of education and moreover – as the statement ‘you never know with these people’ indicates – as potential criminals whose children need to be protected by British social services.

In a similarly revealing case, the Child Protection and Safeguarding service and one school in the area initiated several core group meetings about a Romanian family that I interviewed around the same time. Employees from social services, teachers from the schools the children attended, employees from the Education Welfare Team and the Children Centre, a Health Advisor, a school nurse, a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller consultant and a Family Support Advisor attended that meeting on 6 October 2010. Anita and Sorin were invited but did not attend. A child protection plan was discussed. The parents, Anita and Sorin, were held unable to take care of their children and accused of having actively contributed to the circumstances in which they found themselves due to their culture. All of their children who were of school age were registered in school but had high truancy rates. The parents were taken to court in September 2010 and fined for the continuous absence of their children from school. The core group ordered social services to make announced and unannounced visits at the family’s home every fortnight.

A list of ‘needs to be met’ had been prepared for the meeting and the results were discussed. In regards to ‘children’s health and developmental needs’, it was suggested that the parents need professional advice on how to feed and wean the children, when and what to feed. The paper stated that Anita was encouraged to take her children to the ‘Children Centre’, where the children ‘can participate in age appropriated activities’ (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Under the heading ‘Ensure that Ana’s and Catalina’s educational needs are met to enable them to achieve their full potential’, it was stated that the ‘Children’s hygiene as well as the physical

appearance is monitored' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Because of their poverty, the parents are dismissed in their agency to struggle for a life together with their children, and are constituted as the ones to blame for the precariousness of their situation. The perception seemed to be that they chose to harm their children. That the children do not have 'an appropriate number' of toys and 'age appropriate' toys is used as indicator of the carelessness of the parents. Under the header 'parents to ensure that the children's educational and developmental needs are met' the parents are advised that their 'children have to be provided with breakfast before they leave for school' and that they 'need to attend with clean appropriate uniforms' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Anita and Sorin were constituted as unable to take care for their children. A social worker was appointed to identify on-going risks and the parents' ability to safeguard the children. The number of people staying at the family home was also problematised. 'There should be no one residing at the home apart from parents and the 5 children' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Both Anita and Sorin were made to sign and adhere to a clear safeguarding agreement. In a footnote it said the agreement had to be translated into Romanian.

The measures in regards to 'risks to the children by the parents' were discussed without any awareness of the family's current situation. The paper also stated that the family has been evicted from their property and both parents have no income. The very last section of the paper concerns the voice of both the children – 'how will the child's wishes, views and involvement in the plan be established before the next conference' – and that of the Anita and Sorin: 'how will the parent's wishes, views and involvement in the plan be established before the next conference'. The section on the children is blank, indicating that no direct talks with the children took place until that moment. The section on the parents, states 'continue direct work with parents. An interpreter is needed to obtain their views for future reports' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010).

In the minutes of a follow-up core group meeting, which Anita (in the paper referred to as Mrs L) attended in November 2010 it is stated that ‘the parents, Mrs L. in particular, is finding it difficult to understand the child protection and pre-proceeding processes and has mentioned that there are too many meetings to attend with nothing to show for it’ (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Both parents mention their frustration with the slow process of getting support of any kind, but in particular, with their withdrawn child tax credit and their housing issues, which makes everyday life routines like schooling very difficult. The parents stated that they do not understand the necessity and the motivation of the child protection plan and claim that their situation as well as that of their children could be helped much more efficiently by sufficient support, both material and immaterial.

The minutes from the meeting stated that ‘social workers endeavour to reiterate Children Safeguarding concerns for the welfare of the children and in meeting their developmental needs’ (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). Anita and Sorin are constituted as ‘anti-social’ because they do not take their children ‘to the park, cinema, ice skating, weekend activities, etc.’, and because the children do not eat what is considered an ideal diet. Although the financial hardships of the family are known, and unlikely to change in the near future, the parents’ attitude was blamed for the situation. The question of why the parents do not provide their children with the mentioned activities and a more variable diet was not adequately considered, as it was pre-emptively assumed that it was due to their deliberate unwillingness. Within this discourse of self-exclusion it was assumed that the parents have the choice of taking their children ice-skating, swimming and so on, but simply choose not to. It is imagined that the parents deliberately choose to put the children in the situation of abjecthood.

The parents were eventually fined for the low school attendance of their children, evicted from their house and were threatened to have their children taken away. During the meeting, which only Anita attended since Sorin was working

collecting metal, she listened to the discussion about her parenting and the way she educated her children through an interpreter. During the discussion she often nodded and promised to try to do the things she was advised to do, until the moment she was reminded that the family was in 'pre proceedings and that it is very likely that the children would be removed from the parents' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010). In this moment Anita got visibly upset and claimed that she is 'a good mother and that the children are well cared for, now attend school regularly and are no longer begging on the streets' (Anita, 2010). She claimed to be,

tired of the many meetings both my husband and I have to attend. My family would like the child tax credit to be re-installed and get help with new housing accommodation. We cannot understand the usefulness of all these meetings about our children and just need support – not more problems through your punishments because we are poor. I am a good mother with what I have and won't accept your treatment any longer' (School Core Group Meeting List, 2010).

This was the first moment in which Anita enacted resistance, was heard and ruptured the way she was problematised. After claiming her agency and dissenting the suggestions of the core group, Anita stood up and walked out of the meeting. Anita was acting politically in claiming her right to be the mother she wanted to be and to end this kind of treatment by social services. While Anita was constituted responsible for her own exclusion, she ruptured the ways she was problematised and enacted herself as a political subject to whom rights are due.

This incident shows how the discourses in which Roma are problematised are interlinked with the analysis of the fieldwork, when acts of citizenship take place. Anita and Sorin were problematised either as subjects of negative actions or unable objects,

but always in ways that affirmed the status quo and the idea that they made a choice to exclude themselves. At the same time the parents were constituted as objects of social intervention, administrative acts and policies of control that need to be identified (by the school), changed (by measures taken by the social institutions of the state) and in case the measures are unsuccessful, punished. The underlying causes for their situation were not addressed, and the parents were given little space in which to explain them. The situation was constructed as stemming from what were essentialised as ‘Roma’ problems of self-exclusion, which in turn, necessitated administrative intervention. As Anita and Sorin have far less access to the means by which they may direct their own representation, they could hardly voice their resistance in ways that would be heard by the core group in this East London borough.

5.8 Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from how Roma are discursively constructed as a ‘problem’ within the UK. I illustrated how individuals perceived as Roma are repeatedly subsumed under different marginalising categories of modern society. The content of the discourses circulated by media, government, police, social service and education authorities show how essentialised categories of ‘the Roma’ as citizen outsiders are produced by constructing Roma as nomads, illegal migrants, criminals, fraudsters, victims or as self-excluding. It appears that various mechanisms are applied to both control and produce the Roma as the ultimate citizen outsider. In their differences, the analysed discourses seem to make evident that Roma have become a population that is increasingly targeted, and one onto whom people can project their frustrations and fears (Stewart, 2012). Stewart (2012, p. 4) points out that it is not only an issue of the direct targeting, but also, a more subtle form of domination which represents Roma culture as an aberration, and thus, as in conflict with the majority’s culture: ‘it is no accident ... that it is the image of “criminal Roma” or “workshy

Roma’’ – rather than Roma per se – that provides one of the clarion calls of the new xenophobic politics’. Thus, the above categorisations of Roma (what Stewart calls ‘images’) construct Roma not just as different, which multiculturalist policies should be able to accommodate, but as ‘agents of disorder or bearers of an unspecified “threat” to national identity’ (Stewart, 2012, p. 5).

All analysed discourses seem to illustrate that these categorisations enable constructions and sustain images of Roma often without explicitly targeting them. So in line with CDA, I argue that it does not seem to matter whether such problematisations are ‘true’ or could be proven. Rather, what matters is that they exist in public discourse and become tacitly accepted. Moreover the condition of this positioning renders Roma discursively voiceless and suspends their right to make claims to rights. The analysis of the problematisations of Roma in British media and policy discourses also shows that the established premise ‘no citizenship no welfare’ is no longer simply dependent on citizenship status, but on access to and recognition of participation. Having the status of citizenship does not necessarily mean that a subject can actually claim and demand rights. The forces that prohibit access are often not addressed. Considering the situation of most Roma in Europe, being an EU citizen from an A2 or A8 country in practice does not seem to enhance their rights – and in fact, as previously argued, it can actually have the opposite effect, as it precludes Roma from, for instance, claiming asylum. Instead it highlights the current dilemmas of liberal anti-racist policies in Europe and the political dilemma that emerges across the whole of Europe out of the discord between declared ideals of universal citizenship and actual access to civil, political and social rights. The asymmetric power play produces citizen outsiders as a consequence of specific struggles and tense constellations of power and resistance. I will come back to this point in Chapter Six.

Mezzadra and Balibar argue that currently we are confronted with the problem of ‘the possibility of a crisis of tolerance considered as a founding value of the

European way of life, of the European social model, in a situation where a new constitution, a new citizenship, is in the making' (2006, p. 14). While European citizenship has been in the making (though is now increasingly under attack), Roma from Eastern Europe are discursively demonised. The ways in which Eastern European Roma in London are positioned as a 'target of government', without explicitly naming them as such, underpins the very situation in which Roma find themselves.

The discourses and problematisations that are analysed in this chapter demonstrate that Roma are reluctantly pushed into a list of ever repeating positions, which over time are publically perceived as 'neutral' and remain unchallenged (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). For instance, while there was a vast discussion of social welfare abuse and illegal migration, there was no media coverage or discussion of the consequences of the employment restrictions for EU citizens living in the UK. Instead, Roma from Eastern Europe were problematised as essentially unwilling to work and therefore blamed for excluding themselves. As the above analysis reveals, within the UK, an essentialising idea of 'Roma conduct' seems to have been taken as an independent variable.

This strategy of dealing with Roma seems based upon an abstract idea of what citizenship is, who counts as a citizen, and foremost, who is the 'other' in all of this. It seems based on an imagination of political space with a fixed social structure and types of juridical ideological traditions. Discursively Roma are one of the perceived 'others' and certain practices of UK authorities, some of which I also discuss in Chapter Six, might even hinder Roma from actively claiming justice, rights and equality. Authorities tend to speak for and simultaneously silence Roma, often dismissing them as rights claiming subjects. The continuous references of, for instance, local authorities and politicians to policies, rules, regulations and the law, to which I pointed, neither address nor solve the situation. The voices and what counts as voice of the people concerned seem to be dismissed in the first place. Thus, as this analysis shows, citizenship is not,

as discussed in Chapter Two, the guarantor of what Arendt termed the ‘right to have rights’ (1968).

Instead, the analysis of the diverse media and policy discourses suggests that persecution, criminalisation and victimisation of Roma seems written into policy making, media representation, humanitarian actions, struggle against human trafficking, concepts of social (re-) integration or rehabilitation, police preventions, prosecution and penalties. Dal Lago (2009) goes so far as to refer to non-citizens as non-persons, thus similar to what the above analysis of the discourses on Eastern European Roma in the UK shows. Dal Lago (2009) argues that non-persons are those immigrants who are seen as having no social or personal history, and who are reduced to administrative categories, to the sub-human. I demonstrated that Eastern European Roma in the UK tend to be rendered voiceless and abject by processes of state administration and discourse. It seems as if it is through the very process of positioning that categories of what I refer to as citizen outsiders are established and, by extension, used to justify a social and legal definition between ‘them’ and ‘us’, what can be said and seen, and who qualifies and who does not. Adding to the discussion on conventional and critical perspectives on citizenship in Chapter Two, the analysis in this chapter thus points to a paradoxical citizenship situation in which most Roma find themselves as citizen outsiders despite the promise that citizenship guarantees rights, justice and equality. However, wanting to go beyond this, in Chapter Six I investigate how Roma in East London may contest these categories, and explore how Roma act and become political through the things they do in their everyday life and moreover, how they articulate injustice and demand and claim its redress in yet unrecognised ways.

Chapter 6: Claims of Roma in London

In Chapter Five I highlighted how authoritative discourses in the UK tend to position Roma as a ‘problem’. I argued that this way of problematising seems to dismiss Roma’s political agency and subjectivity in constituting their choices repeatedly as wrong.

Effectively they become what I referred to as citizen outsiders. In this chapter I therefore explore how Roma in East London, who often find themselves in precarious situations, may challenge this positioning by becoming political through acting in still unrecognised ways (or indeed, by refusing to act). Using critical discourse analysis discussed in Chapter Four, this chapter offers a thematic analysis of the findings of my fieldwork in East London, where I investigated within the moments of everyday life struggles how Roma inhabit the political and social space in which they find themselves. I look at such moments as ‘acts of citizenship’ (Isin, 2008), when ‘regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens – or better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due’ (2008, p. 161).

The chapter thus explores whether and how Roma in London make claims to rights, paying attention also to the extent to which struggles for bare survival might prevent the development of what conventionally ‘counts’ as being a citizen and being political (see Chapter Two). Divided into thematic patterns and claims that emerged through the course of the fieldwork, the chapter discusses how the participants enact themselves as citizens in situations of bare survival, thus challenging ways of being a citizen and what counts as political in conventional perspectives. Analysing participant observations and interviews, the chapter illustrates along the emerged themes, how Roma in East London perform ‘acts of citizenship’: first by struggling for bare survival and with or against dependency; second by claiming not to need to *become* citizens; third by contesting the ways they are problematised; fourth, by struggling to constitute themselves as actors; fifth by enduring in abjecthood; sixth, by resisting authoritative

decisions; seventh, by engaging in acts of contestation, barrier crossing, and rights claiming; and finally by escaping situations or by hiding their identity. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings in light of the literature discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

The context of the fieldwork (for a more detailed discussion see Chapter Four on Fieldwork Sample) enabled me to accompany the participants in London in their day-to-day life without creating a rather artificial setting in which we could meet and talk about things that were relevant from the perspective of the participants. Focusing in particular on everyday struggles allowed me to explore the ways in which the participants re-appropriate their activities in everyday situations (De Certeau, 2011; Pink, 2012; Bennett 2005). Moreover, focusing on the everyday life enables me to highlight the disjuncture between the content of the discourses explored in Chapter Five and the everyday claims of Roma in East London that are explored in this Chapter.

6.1 ‘We cannot live like this’ – Everyday Bare Life and Dependency

Although most of the participants in this research were of heterogeneous backgrounds (e.g. age, gender, class, length of stay in the UK – for more details, see Chapter Four) the habitat in which most found themselves in generated common struggles, for instance to enrol children in school, obtain or pay for electricity, fill out the necessary papers and earn enough money to survive. Depending on the time when they arrived in London, the greater part lived in very poor housing conditions. Many of the participants had neither electricity nor heating and struggled to get by financially.

On many occasions when I accompanied the education consultant Martin on his daily visits the few people who had electricity and heating often asked Martin for help to cover the bills. Rather than claiming these necessities from the authorities, they asked Martin to help them organise it. When we visited Andrei, a 26 year old man who, at the

time, had lived in the UK for 14 months, and his family to help fill in the school registration form for Andrei's youngest child, he asked:

Please Martin, help us to get heating. We cannot live like this with the children. Everyone is cold and gets constantly sick. These are unbearable living conditions. All the neighbours have electricity and heating. Why do we have to live like animals? We are also humans. Please help us. I don't know where I can ask for help plus I would always be sent away like in Romania. (Andrei, 2010)

While Andrei realises that living without electricity and heating is inhumane, he asks Martin for help because he does not know where to address his claims to and he fears discrimination. Most importantly, Andrei does not believe his claims and requests will be taken seriously. His former experiences have led to mistrust, which in turn reinforces a habit of dependency on people that can be trusted. None of the participants who lived without electricity and heating ever told me that they had tried to speak to the landlord or to seek help at the tenants rights association. These institutions are not the sites where the participants claim their rights or try to redress experienced injustice. Fear of discrimination and lack of knowledge about entitlements and rights restrains the participants from claiming things themselves. Many participants named language difficulties (not speaking English) as a barrier. Arguably language difficulties added to their insecurity. Thus, unwanted or not, many of the participants developed a dependency on Martin, contributing to a situation in which they become virtually unable to change their habitat themselves. This particular constellation creates a habitat that inhibits a sense of political subjectivity and awareness of the possibility of change. Simultaneously, it reproduces the very dependency position in which Roma are constantly put and blamed for.

As discussed in Chapter Five, very often those who are perceived as Roma are positioned and treated as unable, unwilling and helpless. Agency is often denied to Roma in their countries of origin (Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995; Sigona 2008; Nicolae 2004) and, as this section shows, this has had an immense impact on people's political subjectivity and awareness of their own ability to act. For example, social services with their improvement aim, may well be a helping, but also carry out assistance with a repressive hand. The dialectic of having been denied and therefore repressing agency resulted in a habit of repeatedly experienced dependency, in other words an indoctrinated inability to act. When asked if they had tried to find answers to their questions elsewhere, many of the participants said that they feel they have no chance to speak to institutions themselves, that they would not be able to achieve anything, that they do not feel secure enough to speak up in meetings, and that therefore they prefer when Martin sorts things out for them. The experience of long time discrimination has resulted also in a deep mistrust of state institutions in general.

Most of the participants in London live in precarious housing conditions and often next to houses of middle-class families. In this habitat, the participants are constantly confronted with a kind of life that seems to remain unreachable for them. The houses, with broken windows and doors alongside well-kept homes, are constitutive of the challenge the situation of Roma poses to the current conception of European citizenship. In December 2010 Martin and I visited Olga, a Romanian Romni, who had just arrived in the UK. Martin received her address from another family, who asked Martin to help her register her children in school. The address led to a house on a main road without windows and a front door without locks. Although it was freezing cold outside, the door stood wide open when we arrived and could not be locked. The house looked abandoned and burgled. Often participants live in squats without being aware that the houses are squats. I was told several times by participants that someone

pretended to be landlords and rented out the houses for high prices. Eviction letters were often the first moment at which families realised that they have been tricked.

Yet, in their shabbiness, their simultaneous centrality and their proximity to the 'other' desired life, these houses become a medium of the people who live there as well as a site of enactment. As EU citizens these people enact their right to freedom of movement, and by enduring in these abject conditions and run down houses they make their claim the right to have rights publically visible. At the same time, however, these abject conditions keep Roma in a circle of repression and dependent on the help of others.

The houses, as sites, become a medium, as they are constitutive of everyday bare life and the ambivalence and anomalies of the people who live there. This reflects a position of a part that has no part (Rancière, 2004), of being within and outside at the same time. Hence a position that transgresses this fixed inside and outside and therefore challenges the assumption about the inside and the outside of citizenship understood as membership, discussed in Chapter Two. In this way, as EU citizens with the right to move freely within EU borders but very limited rights to participate in the social, political and economic life, with their everyday bare life struggles, many Romanian Roma in London blur the distinctions of citizens and non citizens and point to the boundaries of the conception of citizenship. As EU citizens they no longer enjoy the advantages of Third Country Nationals who can claim asylum. Instead, Romanian Roma often remain in bare life situations with very limited rights to social benefits and dependent on external support. They do not enjoy the advantages of being EU citizens, as they are often positioned and treated as rightless, threatened with deportation within or after 90 days. This situation also underlines that whilst the participants may possess formal citizenship they nevertheless lack substantive citizenship.

The everyday bare life of some of the participants reflects how most Roma occupy multiple subject positions, inscribed by ambiguity and abjecthood. Nicolae (2010), a 32-year-old man with four children makes this point when he said:

You know, of course, I don't feel overly happy to be here. Look at us how we live. This is inhumane and I cannot even speak to anyone, but we still manage, we still survive. Going back to Romania would mean to give up now. I can take it – and I want to take it. I have a right to be here and although I am sometimes ashamed that people see I live like this, I also think it is a sign for people that we still don't give up [...]. (Nicolae, 2010)

Nicolae stresses that they won't give up, referring to moving back to Romania and to hiding away. By drawing attention to their visibly precarious condition and abjecthood, Olga, Andrei and Nicolae enact the very contradiction the concept of EU citizenship embodies. As such, Romanian Roma in London pose a challenge to the assumptions and principles on which EU space and citizenship are based. The struggles through everyday life I described here especially in terms of struggles around housing and housekeeping, show that in enduring in this abject position and fighting for bare survival these Romanian Roma actually enact themselves as citizens, demanding the right to have rights precisely by publically revealing their exclusion from it. This position of persevering indicates how tense and conflict driven the process of claiming actually is.

Such a position of persevering that many Romanian Roma have manifestly embodied in their housing habits is counter-intuitively combined with what is perceived by social services as an attitude to be 'used to seeking assistance and live in a culture of dependency' (Social Worker 1, 2010). At a local council meeting that prepared a 'Roma Information Day', several social workers discussed this assumption in a meeting:

Most of these Roma families really do not know how to do things in the UK. They always think that they can receive help for everything, but they cannot, no one can. They have to do things themselves. The state cannot do everything for them. Well, it is a different culture I guess. They grow up with the idea that everything is done for them. They don't want to do things themselves. So we should try and think what we need to teach them on the Roma Information Day - but with great care, so they don't abuse the system in the end. (Social Worker 1, 2010)

As I showed in Chapter Five, dominant discourses often construct Roma as either (or indeed, simultaneously) helpless victims or perpetrators who are to blame for their own situation. Either way, authorities act upon Roma to represent them as a helpless, dependent and marginal group needing to be governed, assisted and controlled. The habit of dependency is produced through discourse and as a result of constant experience of restriction. As Bela, a 34-year-old Romni made clear:

I am so tired to fight these constant discriminations. Even if I would have liked to speak up or to sue people for what they do to us back in Romania – I could not do it. I don't have the education to do it, I cannot write good letters of complaint and I cannot speak well. Martin can do that much better for me. And to be honest, I don't even know which rights I have. These institutions are your institutions, they have nothing to do with my life. (Bela, 2010)

Thus, the mode of dependency is always tied into governmental practices through which conduct is (re-)produced. Oteg stated that:

The landlord came last week to tell us that we have to leave the house. He said, he didn't want Gypos in this house and if he had only known... Then he took away all the fuses, so we have no electricity. I cannot talk to him by myself. It is better if Martin talks to him or social services gives us other housing (Oteg, 2010)

Dependency is also a result of not knowing what rights one has and which claims can be made. Above all, the fear that is experienced by most people influences acting. Silvio, a 37-year-old Romanian reflects this problem:

'I did not finish school back home. Why would I? As a Rom I would never get a normal job anyway. As soon as I would apply for a job and people actually see me, it would be over. I have experienced it so many times [...] (Silvio, 2010)

In other words, due to the lack of knowledge of the things one is entitled to and the way social work tends to be organised, many things remain inaccessible to most of the participants. Dependency is thus a conduct that is foremost produced through governmental practices and racial discourses. In a way, Bela, Silvio and Oteg tried to avoid constant discrimination and actively battle against it by refusing to seek information and education. Mute visibility and non-compliance with the system by acting out dependency are two ways of the same mode of enacting their ambivalent position as citizen outsiders.

6.2 'I want to be respected in the way I am' – No Need to *Become* a Citizen

In exploring how Romanian Roma in London become political subjects through the things they do, it is important to note that none of the participants tried to become a citizen in the sense of national belonging to a bigger imagined community. In their

everyday struggles, most of the participants enact themselves as subjects to whom rights are due. One recurring claim is the demand for integrity and to have one's own space in which one can live in a self-determined way. A majority of participants said that they no longer wanted to be bothered by social and health services whose approach and purposes they often do not even understand. Adina, a 43-year-old Romni with 4 children does not claim to be integrated or to become a citizen, she claims that she wants to be respected as the citizen she already is:

I just want to be left alone. Have my own space for my family and me. There are all these people telling my family how to live, how to do this and that. They tell me how and what I should feed my children ... even what to dress them. No - I want to be respected in the way I am, without having to change first. (Adina, 2010)

Despite the abject conditions in which most Roma live after arriving in the UK, all participants said that they want to stay. It seems that despite being unable to exit the poverty circle in the UK either, everyday life in London appears more bearable than in Romania. Romana, a 35-year-old said:

You know, of course we live very bad here. Look, we have nothing, no heating, no electricity, no money. I sleep with my 4 children in 2 single beds. It is the same like in Romania. But I want to stay in London. We don't have more money than back in Romania, but here the people do not discriminate us in the way they do back in Romania. I don't think they like us here very much either, but still, I feel safer. (Romana, 2010)

Anna, a 29-year-old Romni stated that:

I feel safer here and I know my children are safe in school. In Romania I was always so afraid when they were in school, because so many bad things happened. Sometimes they stayed at home, because I was too afraid to let them go to other places where I could not protect them. Here I know these things would not happen so easily. Though I don't think it is impossible. Everyone hates us. I am afraid. I cannot forget all these things that have happened to us and my family. (Anna, 2010)

In many households we visited there were piles of official letters kept unread until the day Martin came to visit. People received letters from social and health services, the local school and the council. The letters were always written in English, which most people could not read. Some of the older participants who had been expelled from school in the times before communism were illiterate. Since Martin could not visit everyone on a regular basis, by the time he read the letters, important deadlines had already been missed, huge fines had been incurred, or families were about to be evicted with no time left to prepare or look for alternatives. Communication and interaction between the authorities and those affected clearly failed. Authorities tend to categorise, control and survey and those concerned live in constant fear of eviction, punishment and surveillance and do not have the confidence to act. The experience of voicelessness is produced in large part by the way Romanian Roma in this East London borough make experiences with borders, which are not crossed or overcome. In this sense, the letters become sites of practices, for hardly anyone can read these letters and understand the content, people become involuntarily double offenders and reproduce the categories in which they are put. This mechanism makes it even more difficult to escape the circle of problematisation while reproducing the categories in which people are placed.

During my fieldwork I met Dana, a single mother of six, several times. Dana could neither read nor write, or understand or speak English. She had Romanian citizenship,

and was not highly skilled or self-sufficient. She would need to be self-employed for one year to be able to apply for a National Insurance number in the UK. Until then she had very limited access to social benefits and employment. This situation gave her only limited options for taking care of her children. Because of her abject living conditions, she was threatened several times to have her children taken away by the child protection team. Social services imposed strict measures on her for how to take better care of the children if she wanted to keep them. She was obliged to attend various meetings with social and health services in which her behavioural developments were discussed without her being in a position from which she could actively participate. She received letters about these meetings in English, even though social services knew she is illiterate, so she often missed meetings and was later penalised for not showing up. In the first meeting with a Romanian translator, in which I was still using a recording device, Dana was informed that her children would be taken into care if she did not fulfil the imposed measures. Dana stood up, started to cry and said:

I am tired of all these meetings whose purpose I do not understand and which do not help to solve the actual problem, that you think I am too poor to take care of my children. I cannot earn money to take care of the children in the way social services would approve it. It is a vicious circle. Don't you think I want the best for my children too? I came all this way to the UK so that my children can have a better life than I had and that they can attend school higher than special school. Only because I have no money you tell me I am a bad mother? You are turning things around! (Dana, 2010)

Social services in the fieldwork site in East London treat Romanian Roma in a way that hardly allows them to act in a self-determined way. Irrespective of people's capacities, they are penalised if they do not function according to a set standard. Dana can hardly

provide her children with a higher living standard from her current position. She has already made an enormous effort by leaving for what she calls ‘a better future’ (Dana, 2010). The autonomy, personhood and capacity to assert oneself as a political being are not recognised. The conceptions of citizenship I discussed in Chapter Two do not provide for a figure of citizenship like Dana.

At first sight, most of the Roma I interviewed do not countervail this authoritative dynamic of ‘keep them outside by denying agency’ versus ‘want them to function by enforcing assimilation’. Yet, I argue that this non-reaction is a protest in the form of in-action, only it does not take place in what is understood as the public domain. Reactions to these letters and demands are efforts completely in discord with everything else that is taking place. So it is a form of political in-action insofar as it unhinges the political order of things not by openly opposing it, but rather, but unsettling its rules through affirming one’s presence. This way of in-action constitutes the moment in which Roma are political in the very particular positions in which they find themselves in East London. While it is the loud reaction by Dana that mostly resembles the expected political stance of claiming rights, it is the circumstances and the modes of its happening that confirm the very unsettling nature of such a manifest speech. Dana’s speech takes place in a meeting amongst a social worker, an interpreter, Martin and me, thus it is not a protest that is visible in what is traditionally conceived of as public space.

Even with the help of an interpreter, many participants said that they often do not understand the content of the official letters or documents they are sent. The ideas and concepts employed by social services are not in touch with the reality of their clients or target communities. Therefore most people kept asking Martin to organise things or to help sort out problems. The majority of people said they do not understand what they have to do, what their rights are, where they can work, if they can work, and to what kind of support they are entitled. As Dana made clear:

I don't understand why these people are interfering in how I handle our poverty instead of supporting me to be able to offer more. I don't understand these letters nor these meetings and to be honest, I don't care so much. I know who I am and that I love my children as the person I am. I don't have to become somebody else. I am already someone. (Dana, 2010)

Non-reaction and enduring in unliveable conditions challenges the idea that migrants are or want to be in the process of becoming citizens. It supports the account that many of the Romanian Roma in this London borough act as citizens and insist that they are already citizens, without needing to integrate into an already existing legal and political framework. In turn, these described struggles and claims indicate that citizenship needs to be understood as an 'institution in flux' (Isin 2009), that is embedded in the respective social and political events that constitute it. Thus, non-reaction, in-action, bearing and enduring are the unrecognised acts of citizenship that arise out of the analysis of these everyday life struggles through which Dana, Ana, Romana and Nicolae contest their situation and claim the right to have rights.

One day we visited Iancu and Lenuta, a couple with four children. Martin came to pick up Nicoletta, one of the daughters, to go to school for her entry-level test. It was very cold inside the house. Lenuta told me that the landlord took away the fuses and that she is very angry, as all the children are constantly cold. I asked whether she spoke to the landlord, but Lenuta told me that they did not dare. She then told me, 'I rather wait for Martin to help us. Who knows what the landlord would do. I have seen it all – you have no idea' (Lenuta, 2010). Lenuta usually waits until Martin comes by to tell him that they are cold and have no light and that this situation needs to change. Arguably, to take away fuses from an occupied house and deliberately cut off electricity and heating is an illegal act. But due to a complex interplay of long-term fears and being constituted

as undeserving objects, the enactment of political voice is formulated mainly through Martin.

Very often the participants did not take any action themselves if a situation involved interacting with other people. In situations in which the participants were obviously unjustly treated, faced ad hoc evictions or mistreatment in public institutions, hardly anyone enacted the right to oppose by speaking up and openly refusing. If, as I discussed in Chapter Two, political voice is defined as spoken or written word expressed in what is conceptualised as public domain, then this is not the kind of voice the participants use. The way voice and speech are currently conceptualised distorts the way hearing, visibility, listening and positioning is conceived and frames what is visible, what can be said and who can speak.

Romanian Roma in East London are pushed from sharing the stage with other political actors (see Goffman, 1978). They are not even recognised as actors and subjects capable of making claims and demanding rights. As a result of fears this perception is to some extent reproduced. Yet, while it is still debated whether a person needs to be a formal citizen in order to be heard and seen in a political sense, the situation of Romanian Roma in London indicates that it is not necessarily citizenship as status that enables people to act and speak. As Rancière argues, politics actually means ‘that you can speak at a time and in a place you are not expected to speak’ (2006, p. 5). So, the task in interpreting the interviews is also to theorise what it is to speak and what it is to be political in relation to the unrepresentable. In this sense these Romanian Roma in East London take on a complex stand. While they have the status, they are not acknowledged as political subjects by state authorities. While Roma demand acknowledgment and equality they appear unrecognisable and unrepresentable in their claiming despite their citizenship status. The majority of the interviewees do not deal with authorities like the council, doctors, social workers, the police or school. Many

participants named language problems, fear of discrimination and not to be able to constitute oneself as a rights bearer. As Silvio puts it:

I don't trust these institutions; I was never helped by a public institution, why would I go there to claim help? I cannot speak like they speak and they will send me away anyway when they see me – it has been like this all my life. I can only show everybody that I will never give up – that's my fight! (Silvio, 2010)

This was the main reason why people asked Martin to deal with authorities and how this form of dependency was reproduced. The way to make claims to rights and to be political is to be present and hold strong to their lives and struggles. Silvio, Lenuta, Ana, Dana and Ramona are present, no matter how much they are pushed into invisibility and away from any access to a public sphere.

While much effort is made to securitise those perceived as Roma, state authorities do not make a real effort to understand their actual situation. While this thesis is not about judging whether and how authorities try to represent the interests of the Romanian Roma in London, by highlighting the divergences between the authoritative discourses explored in Chapter Five and the enactments explored in Chapter Six, I want to stress the omnipresent interest of authorities to securitise Roma in London and to keep Roma in their often precarious position while at the same time problematising them for it. As I discussed in detail in Chapter Five, Roma are constituted as a collective threat, so that authorities can justify their securitisation. When people are constituted as citizen outsiders, it does not seem to help a lot to be bearers of human and civil rights. When people are kept dependent and in abject conditions, enacting and claiming human and civil rights also requires assistance. It requires trust in such institutions as well as a level of assertiveness to be able to take a case to court.

Moreover, the above named participants are not politically illiterate, as they sometimes claim. In their discussion they framed their struggle with explicit words of mistrust, misrepresentation, misunderstanding, discrimination and their will to stand somewhere. They show that they are active and willing to struggle to make claims to rights in their very own ways, even if in this moment the struggle is simply bare survival or presence. When the participants resisted against the work ban, they also resisted against the structural violence the ban had for their personal lives. Importantly, they do this from a position in which they claim the right to live like everybody else instead of claiming the right (or desire) to become part of an imagined national community (Anderson, 1983). They repeatedly re-adjust themselves to the reality of their immediate situation and in doing so enact themselves as actors to whom these rights are due. In other words, they consider themselves as already ‘in place’ and not ‘out of place’, as they tend to be constituted in public discourse.

6.3 ‘We have a right to live’– The Difficulty of Becoming an Actor

This section is about the struggle for the participants to even make citizenship itself a site of struggle. It shows how difficult it is to become actors in a situation of bare survival. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, social services and social matters play a crucial role in shaping the situation of Romanian Roma in London and thus also in claim making. Encounters with other people occur almost exclusively through interactions with social services. Social workers, however, often do not respond to the actual situation of Romanian Roma in this London borough. At the time of this research the majority of the participants were simply trying to survive. Managing to survive from one day to the other is one of the most dominant positions they take on. When asked for aspirations most participants told me that they just wanted ‘to live like everybody else’. Most of them want a house with heating and electricity; some want status symbols. The interviewees’ aspiration for material stability is also a political position, as it is always

expressed in relation to others – i.e. wanting to have equal access to things other people have. In other words, I want to stress that the aspiration is the claim to live a life like one's fellow human beings in an economic and material sense but also free from discrimination. In this way it is to act as a citizen and insist on already being a citizen instead of becoming one. The claim is what is due to other people should be due to everyone.

Most participants told me that they experienced discrimination and were treated as rightless in their encounters with state authorities. All of the participants that I repeatedly visited struggled continuously to get by – which meant trying to survive. During the three months of my research very few individual situations changed. Life circumstances for the Roma families I visited remained the same, also when I visited participants after the research. Basic everyday struggles were continuously reproduced through the abject living conditions, and stand in contrast to the categories analysed in Chapter Five. This contradiction also reveals how given state structures and authorities dominate certain people by supporting their dependency and simultaneously denying their status as political subjects. My observation during the time of the fieldwork was that Romanian Roma in East London are spoken for and silenced at the same time.

I met two families that lived in very precarious conditions in comparison to most other participants. To witness their everyday life points to a different form of enactment of rights. Aurel, the father of one of the families said:

What choices do I have? I have to feed my family and – you know what – I will, no matter what. Of course I would like to have a proper job, like everybody else I would also like to be able to earn my own money for my family [...] but I am not eligible for the work permit in the UK. In Romania I don't get a job because everybody hates Roma and would not employ us. We are discriminated there on every level. This is not a life. No one protects us there. So I have to take the risk

here. This is the only way I have. We have a right to live, just like everybody else. (Aurel, 2010)

Aurel claims that he has the right to live, just like everybody else. He would prefer to work legally in London yet he feels he has no choice but to work in illegal trade. In Romania he does not feel safe or protected by the state. In other words, Aurel does not feel to be a recipient of the benefits of laws and regulations. It appears, that not being able to enact one's rights can sometimes result in not enacting rules either. Aurel does not work illegally for personal gain, to him it seems the only means to survive and support his family. Aurel, his status notwithstanding, constitutes himself as citizen who has a right to live a life in which he has the possibility to feed his family. By working Aurel challenges with his status as an EU citizen from an A2 country who is not allowed to work and thus barely able to feed his family. He ruptures this situation and position and in doing so, enacts himself as a political subject.

In October 2010 Martin and I were on our way to meet a Romanian family who needed help registering one of the children at a local school. On our way there we saw Bogdana, a Romanian woman we both know, crossing the road in front of us, looking very disturbed. When she recognised us she looked relieved and came over to the car and said:

Things are very, very bad. I have many, many, big problems. The people from child service came to my house again. They want to take my baby away. I don't know what to do. I am always alone with the children, so can I possibly earn money? Sometimes I have to leave the children alone for few hours to collect metal with the others in the street. Otherwise we have no money at all to survive, Martin. Nothing. Last week a woman from child service came to my house

again. Alina, my oldest daughter looked after the children in this moment. I was outside collecting metal. Now the woman says they will take my baby away because I am not a good mother, leaving my baby at home alone. But the baby was not alone! Alina – she is thirteen now – looked after the baby. What can I do, Martin, we need some money to eat! I have to collect metal and I will continue to do so! This is so bad. So bad. (Bogdana, 2010)

Bogdana expressed her despair about her precarious status that she feels unable to change without bypassing employment regulations for A2 citizens. Social services represent just another border in Bogdana's life. Like most other Romanian citizens in East London, in 2010 Bogdana could only work self-employed and receive child benefits. She is a single mother of six and lives in poor housing conditions. She articulated her demand to Martin and not to social services, whose surveillance she fears. Her activities are constantly surveyed and at risk of being problematised as criminal and illicit acts, with harsh consequences like having a child taken away. While social services monitor and observe Bogdana's behaviour out of a motivation to secure certain life standards for her children, Bogdana feels controlled instead of helped. What begins with working to be able to feed her family ends with punishment and threat to have the children taken away. Declaring that she collects metal is performing the claim and enacting the right to live a life in which she can live somewhere safe and feed her children.

The same day we visit another Romanian Roma family. Martin tells me that they have housing problems, but that otherwise they are doing exceptionally well. Petru, the father, is one of the very few Romanian Roma who succeeded in receiving a "blue card", permitting work, which, in 2010 Romanian and Bulgarian citizens could obtain under certain circumstances in order to legally work in the UK. It used to be issued by

the Home Office on the basis of skills. Petru found a job working for a local cleaning company in the same borough. Obtaining a blue card was possible in the first years after Romania's EU accession. Martin also invited two other people, Mary and Isabel from social services, who were supposed to help the family find better accommodation. When we arrive at the house that stands very remote and looks run down, Martin, Mary and Isabel discuss a joint meeting they had and the protection of a child of another Romanian Roma family. The majority of the team in the joint meeting wanted to take the child into child protection. Only Martin, Mary and Isabel pleaded against protection and suggested instead help at the family's home. They did not succeed in their arguments. Recently many children were taken away from Roma families Martin works with since the police suspect child trafficking amongst Roma families (see MigRom, 2015). During the time of this research I never saw indicators of trafficking, but I witnessed that the families were increasingly scared of asking social service for help for fear that their children might be taken away.

Many participants fear social services to such an extent that often, rather than asking for support, they hold out in a situation of despair or break with norms completely. Romana, a single mother of four children was so fearful of social services that she sent one of her children back to Romania when social services knocked on her door to ask why the child was not attending school. For Romana, managing the side effects of abject living conditions resulted in the threat of losing the child she wanted to protect and keep close to her. She acted by sending her child back to Romania instead of having it taken away. This was Romana's act of political contestation and citizenship. Through this act she reclaimed her autonomy to decide what was best for her child. Yet, Romana is now separated from the child she wanted to live together with. This shows that even the institution of child protection, which supposedly aims at bettering the situation of both the child and the family, is perceived as disrupting and dangerous. The

fear and misunderstanding is so deep that it compelled Romana to go to such extremes to escape state protection.

The living standards of most of the Roma families in East London do not comply with those demanded by health and child services (see Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). Their limited resources, however, hardly allow for a life beyond abjecthood. By taking an increasing number of Roma children into care that do not live according to the demanded standard, Romanian Roma in London get punished for the abjecthood they can hardly escape.

Mary, the social worker who accompanied us to the family we visited that day told me that she ‘started a course on Roma since now there are so many of them and the problems with them are quite different compared to other migrants, as they really are excluded and exclude themselves’ (Mary, 2010). When we enter the house, there are many rooms, the family we want to visit lives upstairs in a small room of about 10 square meters. Martin introduces Petru to us who offers us a seat on the family’s bed. Petru tells us that he lives in this room with his two children and his wife who is pregnant. Petru says that they need help to find their own place, where they have more space and can live by themselves. Petru has a blue card as do the children, but Petru’s wife has a yellow one. The cards are handed around like entry tickets. Petru exclaims:

I am working 7 days a week. I only get the minimum wage, so I always ask for weekend shifts that I can actually feed my family from my salary. I pay £100 a week for renting this small room to the guy downstairs and have to help him occasionally with some building works. He has this house from the company we both work for and he sublets some of the rooms since the house is so big [...]
(Petru, 2010)

Mary interrupted to show her astonishment that Petru is paying so much in rent and wonders whether it is legal to sublet these rooms. Petru is surprised by that question:

I don't know whether it is legal or not that he sublets - it is fine with me. I am thankful that he lets us stay here. I would not have known where to go otherwise, perhaps we would have been on the street. So we are fine with the amount we have to pay, do not worry. What we need is more space with the three children – five of us in this small room is difficult. But the biggest problem is that we cannot pay the deposit for a new house, and no one will give us a house without deposit. In few a months, we will have another baby - I don't know what to do, I cannot work more than 7 days a week. (Petru, 2010)

A complex discussion about the possibility of support in form social benefits started between the social workers. Mary and Isabel call services to check the possibilities in the system. They find out that the system contained incorrect data about the family and that the deposit for a new house could actually be paid. Petru translates for his wife who does not speak any English. The children come in and out, they want to play but they have no space to do so. They are also ill and cold. Isabel needs to fill in a questionnaire with Petru, and while Petru is still standing in front of everybody all the others are sitting on his bed. He wears a red fleece jumper from the company he works for and says it is the warmest thing he owns. Isabel asks how many other people live in the house. Petru laughs and says:

Several families and many children. I don't know. Many. We all share one bathroom, one toilet and one kitchen downstairs. (Petru, 2010)

He nods to assure everybody that he may not enjoy this situation, but that he handles it. Isabel goes down a long list of assessment questions some of which are very intimate. Petru's wife is referred to as 'mum'. The questionnaire contains questions such as: 'How much time do you spend alone with mum?', 'How much time do you have to play with your children?', 'Do you have any friends?', 'Does mum have friends?', 'Do you sometimes feel lonely?', 'Do your children have time for hobbies?', 'Do you drink or take any drugs?'. Petru is obviously embarrassed to have to answer some of the questions, especially the question about his wife Doru. He answers without asking her. Petru excuses himself and says that Doru has to learn to speak English. The questionnaire lasts for a further 30 minutes. When it is finished, Petru revises one of his answers: 'It is not true that I have no friends. I do have some friends at work.' (Petru, 2010). Isabel apologises about the questionnaire. Petru says in response:

Although we are Gypsies, we are different than the other Gypsies you know. I do not want to talk badly about Gypsies, but there are some bad ones. There are always such and such people. But we are not bad. We are working. We are honest and good people. Look, I just want good for my wife and my children. I want the kids to be able to go to school and to do some sports outside, it is unhealthy for them to stay inside all day and never exercise. (Petru, 2010)

Trying to justify his position Petru reproduces to some degree the pejorative discourse I analysed in Chapter Five. While claiming an appropriate space for his family, he also points to their difference by reproducing the stereotype of the criminal Roma. Petru states that they are good people and that they are different from the others in order to reassure social services that his family truly deserves help. Petru reproduces the same problematisation he himself experienced in order to receive financial help to find an apartment.

Isabel gives him further advice, promises to help and to come back tomorrow with some other forms to fill in, and confirms that 'it looks good'. Petru and his wife gratefully shake everyone's hands. Even with a full time job and citizenship status that entitles Petru and his family to stay, they do not seem to be able to cross the border of dependency on social services. In this example, the family enacted their right to housing by asking for this meeting and having people who could potentially help them to change this abject living condition coming to see them. So the demand entailed both a reproduction of the pejorative categorisations discussed in Chapter Five and a demand for equal access to the rights of social citizenship and for the status of a subject with recognised legal and moral standing.

In November we accompany Stella, a Romanian Romni, to register her two sons Ion and Gheorghe in school. In the hallway of the school Ion says good morning to everybody passing by. In her hands Stella carries nothing but the passports of the two children. She speaks little English and whenever she is asked something, she hands over the passports to prove that everything is legal and that they have the right to be there. In summer 2010 Stella moved to the UK with her husband and children from Romania. She is 31 years old and has 5 children. I asked her how she was getting along and she replied:

It is very cold to collect metal in the streets and it is not very good at the moment. But it is OK. In Romania life is very difficult, my children got beaten in school because they are Gypsy. Here in London this is better. But last week my daughter had problems in school. The other children saw that I was collecting metal in the streets and they laughed about her to have a Gypsy mother that collects metal. The teacher did not say anything. This is not good, it is not OK. Martin has to speak to the teacher. It is not OK. (Stella, 2010)

I asked Stella whether she feels her situation has improved since she moved to the UK.

She nodded and said:

For us it is very hard to survive here too, but it was right to move here. Life is better here. There is still discrimination and we are treated like animals but less than back in Romania. (Stella, 2010)

Stella and her family live precariously in a squat in East London. They fall into the category referred to as unskilled with no higher education. Stella states that while she suffers that her children are bullied in school, she would never speak up to the teacher. She speaks and makes her demands through Martin. Stella fights hard to collect enough money with her husband to feed her five children. She takes charge of her own life and that of her children despite all the obstacles. In this way Stella re-negotiates the space in which she is positioned. She uses her citizenship to practice the newly included right to free movement across European national borders to start a new life. At the same time Stella demands recognition and respect for the dignity of Roma as human beings. Stella's political subjectivity is both enabled and constrained by her concrete position within a framework of ethnic and social hierarchies and inequalities in contemporary UK.

Yet, Stella's and Petru's acts of citizenship are flexible. For most participants citizenship appears and disappears from view; changes in character, intensity and effect; is at times an ideal right, never to be fully realised, and at others a firm, unavoidable and fully practical way of dealing with the world. Through their demands, Stella and Petru position themselves as political subject to whom rights are due. Romanian Roma in London are, what Isin termed, 'new figures of citizenship' (2009, p. 367). Clearly, Roma in Europe are not new citizens, the newness is their visibility and mobility and the challenge their situation poses to the conception of citizenship. In Chapter Five, I

showed how Roma in London are categorised within authoritative discourses. In the present chapter I show that Romanian Roma in London, as new figures of citizenship, so far ‘resist these categories not because [they have] an agency as such but because [they] unsettle the very attempt to fix it’ (2009, p. 367). In other words, the way the participants do not position themselves in relation to the categories into which they are positioned (see analysis of Chapter Five) is itself a form of positioning. In the previous and the present section I have also shown various ways in which the participants refuse to become something they feel they already are. They do not aim to become something else. This refusal indicates a form of objection towards the principles that are supposed to govern and to administer the participants. However, I am not in a position to argue whether this position is self-conscious or not. Rather I want to stress that the intention is neither irrational refusal nor to become ungovernable. Rather it is a form of claim making that is contentious, as it construes the apoliticised participants as rights bearing subjects on the basis of the deeds that position the subjects anew (Caglar, 2009).

Most of the Romanian Roma in London live in a situation, in which they just try to save their lives by flight and survival mechanisms, a situation that Agamben might call ‘bare life’, which is captured by the political in the form of exclusion from the polis and in the form of unlimited exposure to violence (1998). Many of the participants were banned from education in their country of origin and grew up discriminated and excluded from social and political life (Nicolae, 2002; Hancock, 2002). During the interviews I noticed that this experience is internalised to a great extent. Most of the participants never partook in the rites of majoritarian society and are not aware of the rights they have. As such they do not claim formal entitlements, redistribution, or recognition. It is in the described ruptures i.e. in the flight, the bare survival, the enduring in sheer abjecthood, the distancing from authorities, the talking through Martin, the partial reproduction of a pejorative discourse, and in choosing rather unrecognised sites of contention that the participants challenge existing categories,

subject positions and thresholds. Romanian Roma in East London do not always have easy access to traditional resources like education and social standing, i.e. they need other resources to constitute themselves as right bearers. In the current situation in East London I observed that Romanian Roma stand in a constant relationship to the very powers that have marginalised them insofar as they are at every instant exposed to an unconditioned threat of abjection. Thus also in this way the situation of Romanian Roma in East London challenges the meaning of citizenship, as despite their citizenship status, these Roma are reduced to what Agamben refers to as 'bare life'.

If citizenship is considered a site of struggle (Isin, 2009), for the participants it is already a fight to make citizenship itself a site of struggle. For citizenship to be enacted, Roma in East London have to become actors that are seen and heard. However, for various reasons described above, in their current situation it is very difficult for them to constitute themselves as actors. Most of the participants are problematised as non-citizens, yet simultaneously they act as subjects who are already citizens, in other words, they do not fight to become part of a political community. To some extent then, the moral paradox of the situation of Romanian Roma in East London lies in the tension between abjection and subjection. The narratives I analyse show that for the participants it is difficult to become political subjects while they are caught in the ban that requires and produces their abjection (Agamben, 1998; Kristeva, 1982). With the concept of the ban I refer to a mechanism of citizenship discussed in Chapter Two that functions as a boundary to draw the line between 'them' and 'us' and to constitute citizen outsiders, commonly justifying in turn that 'without them, there can be no us, precluding the possibility of social solidarity' (Krikorian, 2004). Abjection is discussed in more detail in the following section. Here I want to stress that the situation of the participants in this East London borough indicates that it is an illusion to assume that all citizens can make themselves seen and heard solely on the basis of their citizenship status.

The various examples I drew from my fieldwork on child protection cases depict this paradox. Up to the moment of this fieldwork the participants needed advocates to speak from the position of their situation. Yet, this does not mean that they cannot speak and act, rather it is the situation in which they are positioned that hinders speaking in recognised ways and places. Most of the participants find themselves in a situation of systematic disempowerment that makes it very difficult to effectively enact claims within and to express political voice. Like I argued earlier on, as a result of this situation, at first sight, many participants appear alienated from their political subjectivity because they are rarely perceived as agents capable of making autonomous choices. Yet, I observe and show above that the participants in East London do make claims to rights, contest authoritative treatment and reclaim autonomy – only in ways that may not yet be recognised as such.

6.4 ‘I don’t give up. This is my protest’ – Abjection

Another striking phenomenon is the apparent replaceability of the life situations in which most of the participants find themselves. The extreme and often abject situations seem to be the day-to-day reality of most of the participants. This condition hints at the sheer impossibility of escaping this state of abjection. While I described abjection earlier as a place at the margins of citizenship, I draw on the notion of the abject as a place connected to the private, the excluded, the body, the feminine and the mother (Bousfield, 2000, p. 331). To speak up from such a place is immensely difficult, as within the private sphere of abjection claims often remain unseen and unheard. As such claims also tend to be silenced by the externally imposed powers a life in abjection entails (see also Tyler, 2006). Language difficulties of many of the participants only add to this situation. Yet, speaking up in such a situation may also involve being silent and therewith refusing answers and protesting against the ways one is positioned. Thus by the difficulties of escaping abjection I refer to the process of

becoming political when caught in the ban that produces and requires this abjection (see also discussion on Butler, 1993 in Chapter Two). Imogen Tyler asked what it means to be (made) abject, to be one who repeatedly finds herself the object of the other's violent objectifying disgust (2009). I follow Tyler by conceptualising social abjection as a resource that enables us to consider states of exclusion from multiple perspectives, including the perspectives of those who are 'obliged to inhabit the impossible edges of modernity', those border zones within the state, in which the overwhelming imperative is not transgression, but survival (McClintock, 1995 in Tyler, 2013). As discussed in Chapter Two on the feminist critique on the public / private dichotomy, the Roma participants of my research then live in a seemingly depoliticised grey zone, included by citizenship status while excluded by the way they are made abject – hence, 'citizen outsiders'. Yet, while some might be silenced, Crary also stresses that 'silence should be understood, not as the silence of those with no political power to express and no forum to discuss some of their most pressing concerns (although women also often lack such political power and forums of discussion), but as the silence of those who in some sense lack words to do justice to certain of their experiences (2001, p. 393). So silence can have various complex reasons.

One day in November Martin and I met Alexandru, a 9-year-old boy from Romania, to act as mediators between him and his school. The week before the head teacher had called Martin because Alexandru had not attended school for over a week. When we arrived at the house where he supposedly lived with his family a woman opened the door. Martin told her that we were looking for Alexandru and his mother. The woman told us that Alexandru's family had moved back to Romania a couple of days before. When we met the family the week before, they had not mentioned anything about a possible move back to Romania. Instead Martin tried to find a school place for Alexandru's little sister. When we leave, the woman asked us whether we could perhaps

help to find a place in school for her children and help to obtain a National Insurance number. She then mentioned that they have no electricity and no money at all.

Alexandru's family was replaced by a new family, who lives in the same run down house without electricity and heating. Even their struggles are similar. The parents do not know the procedures to get the children into school and could not do it without external help. They live in severe financial hardship in abject conditions and with the hope of obtaining a National Insurance number. A family that encounters almost identical difficulties replaced Alexandru's family. This is not to say that Romanian Roma in London are a homogeneous group, instead it stresses the sheer impossibility of escaping abjecthood when caught in a situation in which most Roma in London find themselves. Alexandru's family moved back to Romania without anyone from social services or school knowing or suspecting that they would do so. In this way, they acted politically, since they enacted their right to move back, which they could not have done as refugees, without making any contact with the local official networks. I argue that even this move away from the institution of 'help' and 'network contacts' is political.

Our next visit that day is Sonia, a Romanian Romni who asked Martin to help register her 4-year-old son in a local school. Sonia opened the door and although she knows Martin and she asked for this help herself, she was still very cautious and unsure whether to let us inside. The house is in good condition compared to the houses we mostly see. Sonia speaks broken English and when Martin tries to speak a few words in Romanes Sonia does not react. I speak very slowly in English and ask her how she is:

I am in England for one year. In Romania too many problems, people hate us. It is much better here. Here I can be a normal human. My mother, father and brother live in this house here too. (Sonia, 2010)

Martin spoke again in very broken Romanes and suddenly Sonia started to laugh. She looked surprised and somehow relieved. Martin reassures her and tells her that we want to help her. Sonia smiles and nods,

We need help. We came to England for our children. Here they can go to school. But one year now and nothing happened. No school. Not good. When can they go to school? My husband collects metal, but it isn't enough money. Not for one family. He needs a national insurance number. How can we get it? Why is life so difficult for us? I am sorry. We are also humans and we are also here – whether other people want or not. My husband works for 12 hours just to buy some bread. What life is that? (Sonia, 2010)

From this perspective the narratives of fieldwork participants in this East London borough are arguably to some extent replaceable. In a way, trying to receive a National Insurance number replaced the desire for citizenship in a EU Member State. In other words, for Romanian Roma in London having EU citizenship does not guarantee access to a life standard beyond survival. Due to the work restrictions in effect until January 2014, Romanian Roma in London can hardly support themselves and without a National Insurance number they have no access to social welfare, other than child benefits. Without the right to employment they often fall in the trap of exploitative work on the black market or long hours of collecting metal without being able to feed a family from it.

We filled in the school application form and Sonia smiled. When we were standing next to the door about to leave, Sonia held her pregnant belly and said 'I am happy my baby is born in the UK' (Sonia, 2010). Despite her situation it is important for her to give birth in the UK, although she lives an invisible life inside the house with no contact with other people. By the time we leave, she had opened up much more and

looked at us in a determined way. Yet, her life seems confined to her house. Her claims end by speaking to Martin and me. Sonia is hardly in a position to be able to cross the threshold her situation enables. No one else sees or hears her. Sonia is inside and outside at the same time. She lives in a grey zone included by her citizenship status and excluded by her position and not recognised as a subject.

The last people we visited that day live in an old bungalow. The living room window is smashed and roughly fixed with cardboard and cellar tape. Diona opened the door but did not recognise Martin. It is the children in the back who remember and say 'Hello Martin. Hello Martin'. Martin asks for Eugenia, while Diona still looks at us with caution. Finally she asks us to come inside. It is cold in the hall but like in many houses, the hobs in the kitchen are all burning, as there is no electricity or heating. All the children seem very happy to see Martin, it seems to be exciting that other people come to the house. Martin tells me that none of the children have places in schools yet and they are at home the whole day. Eugenia is sitting on the sofa and recognises Martin when we come in. Immediately she starts talking, while Diona translates:

We have big problems, very big problems. Our situation is very bad. We two are alone with 11 children. We have no income and cannot work and all our men are gone. Mine went back to Romania. Her husband is still here, but - he had problems in Romania since a long time. Now the police took him and he is in prison here in the UK. There are so many problems in Romania. It is such a racist country. It is not good. We cannot live there. It is not safe. Here it is much better, of course we also don't have more money and live like this [...] but at least the police is much better here in the UK. We had so many problems in Romania. I reject to live such a life. Diona's 15-year-old son died last year in Romania, he disappeared one day and the police did not look for him afterwards. For one year the police did not tell Diona that they knew he is dead. It is so bad

in Romania, I don't want to live like this and I don't have to. I can leave, as you see. Now her husband suddenly has to go to prison because of things that happened many years ago. Why now? Why did they not imprison him back then? I think they want to punish us for having left Romania. Maybe they fear that we tell the rest of Europe how they treat us. Diona does not know what to do. Now she is sewing clothes for him. We both don't know what to do. We are alone with all the children, there are no more men in the house and we cannot work and earn money. What shall we do? Do you see that we can hardly escape for what we are always blamed? The worst thing is that I don't know where I could protest? I think I just fight, I stay here, I don't give up. This is my protest. (Eugenia, 2010, recorded)

The situation seems rather hopeless. Legally the two women cannot take up employment, currently the children have no places in school and everybody has to stay at home the whole day without heating and electricity. The welfare system does not provide for Diona, Eugenia and their children, who find themselves in a situation that is created by very same system. While the women can apply for child benefits, no other help is available. They suffer and reject the situation in which they find themselves and rupture the thresholds that are imposed on them by speaking up to Martin and by braving their abjecthood.

Eugenia mentions 'Europe' as if 'Europe' could do something, in case Europe would know that Romania treats Roma badly, but at the same time she experiences that Diona and herself do not count much in this moment either. Still Eugenia has a positive image and expects 'Europe' to take some action, which is probably also one of the driving motivations for her to have moved to the UK in the first place. Eugenia and Diona make claims to rights in exercising their right to move within Europe to escape a situation in Romania in which they suffer and which they know can be condemned

officially too. There is a sort of political expectation that breaks with their actual situation, as they nevertheless have this idea of Europe as a democratic and equal place. While the narratives of the participants above are all unique, the situations tend to be almost replaceable in their hopelessness and resignation of the people who experience this abjecthood and have very limited means to speak and be heard. For it is doubtful whether their claims are heard and recognised by anybody other than Martin and me. Yet, I assert that while Eugenia's and Diona's day-to-day life in abjecthood is confined to the depoliticised privacy of a house (see also the discussion on the private / public dichotomy in Chapter Two), their claims are more than pleas for betterment. Their claims are the beginning of a process through which they enact themselves as citizens. This takes place, as Isin (2008) and Nyers (2008) suggest, without articulating directly their reasons for acting this way. Claiming from a position of a life in abjecthood unsettles binaries of private and public, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, abject and citizen. While Sonia, Eugenia and Diona seem to live their everyday life cast away and 'outside of the order of citizenship, they make claims to it' (De Genova, 2010, p. 5) – whether in silence or with words.

6.5 'I want people to listen to me' – Contestation

Contestation is an important concept that emerged in various scenes of the fieldwork. Isin suggests that 'performing citizenship involves claiming a right: this necessarily involves contestation, but such contestation is not necessarily transformative' (2016, p. 21). Due to the increase in migration from Romania in East London, the local council organised a 'Roma Information Day' in December 2010. After attending the organisational meetings I also participated in the event to see how people embrace such an occasion. On the way, we meet Markus, who is about to be evicted from his house while his ill wife is waiting for life saving surgery. At the community centre, Fabian, a Polish Roma teacher from a local school arrives with six other people. Ten people are

already inside the big room that has various stands about schooling, health and disability issues, housing and national insurance applications. There is one extra stand from a London based charity and the council initiative 'More 4 You'.

People stood in small groups in the corners of the room. No one looked at the stands. The event seemed quite staged and the atmosphere rather stiff. The stereo played Balkan music. There was little communication between the organisers and the attendees. The translator asked me what is going on because people started asking her how the event works. The organisers were busy setting up the stands but the visitors did not come forward. Markus tells me that he wants to ask whether he can claim carer's benefit while his wife is waiting for a kidney transplant. When the translator explains that Markus requires this information, the lady behind the health stand hands over a 30 page application form without saying anything. Markus and the translator go to a separate table to fill in the application form together. Markus can hardly act as a claimant within the structures of this event, as he is always dependent on someone else's help. He does not know which entitlements are available, he does not speak English, and is reliant on the help and will of the people surrounding him in a moment when his own claiming plays such a crucial role. In this situation Markus has very limited means to act and therefore appears alienated from his own political subjectivity.

Petru and his wife are sitting at the stand that provides information about housing. A few weeks before, Martin and I had visited them at their house together with some social workers. Now Petru and his wife came to ask about the possibility of moving out of their shared house. The housing officer explained that they need a letter from the landlord stating that they must move out and will be homeless within 28 days. Otherwise, he says, there is no possibility of receiving help. Petru's wife looked confused, she did not understand. The conversation went back and forth. The couple is also told that they would have to pay in full for a new house, as the husband is drawing a salary. Petru looked at me, and asked:

We applied for housing benefit before and were rejected because I earn too much money for the fact that we only pay 400£ rent for the room for one month. I don't understand. We do everything the way we should – I work, I have a blue card, I speak English, I feed my family, I would do anything – and I am grateful to be here. But there always seems to be a border that I cannot cross. This is simply so unjust. (Petru, 2010)

The accommodation officer apologised and asked whether there were any further questions, although it is obvious that nothing has changed after this conversation. The situation of this family is the same as before the conversation took place. The couple thanked the person and left. The couple continues to share the house with 20 odd people and live with their soon to be three children in one small room. Despite the awareness of injustice and the need to be heard, Petru and his wife do not feel like they are in a position from which they can really act and change the scene.

In this moment Laura, one of the organisers, asked me whether I could drive someone to the shelter house. She explained that the man passed the community centre by chance and just entered. Laura told me that he has been sleeping rough the last weeks, first in a garage and the last days on the street. While Laura talked to me, he stood at the buffet but did not participate in the conversation. The people around him tried to speak to him in Romanes and in Romanian but he did not react. He looked tired and numb. I told Laura that I could drive him to the shelter home, whenever he would like to. He nodded without looking at us. The man never asked for a ride to the shelter home, nevertheless it is presumed by the organisers that this is what he needs and he does not refuse.

At the education stand, a young woman registered for college. A photographer was ordered by the council to take photographs of a very old man. When the photographer asked for the man's signature afterwards, the old man opened his hands

asking for money for having his picture taken. The photographer seemed ashamed and the old man started to laugh. At the end of the event, the employees of the council handed out questionnaires on the usefulness of the event. Everybody who attended sat down and patiently filled in the forms together with the translators. People only spoke to the people they already knew.

The people who attended this Roma Information Day were the ones who already have access to this kind of information, money and time. There are a lot of people who came with the others and now sit in a corner and drink tea. Although this is an outreach event organised to provide information on different support networks, no one actively looked to speak to the people who came and the attendees do not look for a conversation either. The room was full of advice about parenting, schooling, working, accommodation, health, etc., everything was laid out on the tables and explained in written form. There were several stands about how to do things and how to behave according to set standards. Yet, no one read it. This format did not facilitate conversation or a productive exchange. The woman behind the health information desk said to me, '[...] the reasons are cultural. It is not easy to tell people how things are done in this country' (social worker, 2010).

The employees started a discussion about what people did, how they behaved wrongly, how they breast feed and where, what time children can and cannot walk down the street. The attendees are present but do not understand and therefore cannot oppose. It is not an event where they are treated as citizens.

Martin and I leave to take the man who had been sleeping rough to the housing department. When I tried to speak to him in the car, he was somehow numb and nothing evoked a reaction. He only tells us that he is called Florin. When we arrived, the waiting room for the emergency cases was very full. Without being asked, Florin hands over his passport and a little flyer of the car wash station as a proof of his most recent address.

We are waiting for the interview. When I speak to him he is bitter, he stares at the floor and tells us he is from Bacau in Romania:

Romania is bad. People are bad, very bad. There is no work, there is nothing.

And I have nothing there – no wife, no children, no future. Here on the street it is better than life in Romania. (Florin, 2010)

He tells us that he arrived already two months ago and that he worked in a garage as a car cleaner. The owner allowed him to sleep in the garage and paid him 100£ a week for the cleaning. But a few days ago the owner told him that he no longer needs him. Florin asks me where I come from. He smiled for a moment but then became angry:

Germany is a good country. Not like Romania where there is nothing and where the president is very bad. I had nothing in Romania. Nothing and no future. As Rom in Romania you are less than nothing. That is why I am here. I want people to see me, I want people to listen to me. I exist and I have a right to exist.

(Florin, 2010)

We were not allowed to accompany Florin to the interview so we waited for him in the lobby. When Florin came out, he looked bitter and said that he could sleep in the shelter house for a few days since it is below 0 degrees outside.

Florin lives in one of the most abject situations of all of the participants. He escaped discrimination in Romania and is now homeless and penniless. Florin decided to leave Romania to live in a country where he is not allowed to work, although we do not know whether he was aware of this before. He expresses resistance against the positioning he experienced in Romania by leaving and wanting to be seen and heard. Florin openly expresses his anger about the treatment he experienced in Romania but

struggles enormously in the UK too. Yet, Florin is beginning something new with his life in East London – he tries to subvert his situation. In this way he articulates a form of resilience and resistance. Florin is political in his presence; he uses the resources that are available to him. Speaking in public and being recognised in that sense are not resources Florin uses. The act of leaving and being present in the streets of an East London borough changes the scene and produces Florin as subject. Being present against his abjection is Florin's claim making and rights taking. Like the other participants mentioned in this section, Florin enacts himself as political subject without articulating this directly; rather, he constitutes himself in this form of counter-political speech. So while contestations are not necessarily transformative, they do take place at various levels.

6.6 'I rather say nothing' – Crossing the Barrier

In this section I focus on the claim to cross those seemingly fixed barriers a certain situation, such as precarity, language difficulties or work restrictions may predefine for the participants in East London. Precarity, understood as the mode of exploitation of life and labour and as Lorey describes it, a category of order that denotes social positioning of insecurity and hierarchisation, which accompanies processes of othering (2012, p. 165), plays a crucial role for many of the participants. In December 2010, Martin received funds for a few care packages from Caritas for families in real need. We knock on the door of a Romanian family I had never met before. Three children are at home because they are all ill. Adina, the woman we came to see, lets us in but is very shy. Adina wants to speak but constantly apologises for her bad English. She tells me she is from Romania and how happy she is to live here in her small room. She separated from her husband and lives with her brother who works collecting metal to feed her children. Adina tells me that she is at home all day and never speaks to anyone and that this is the reason why she speaks such bad English. Martin asks her to sign a form confirming that

she would like her children to get new clothes paid for by the local school. She signs and thanks Martin for his help. When we leave Martin tells me that, like many others, he met this family through a complaint by neighbours. The neighbours had called the council since children were going through rubbish bins in the front gardens of people's houses. At the time, Adina did not really understand why people would complain about this. She said that they simply had no money and no choice.

Martin told me that Adina's family is now a success story. All three children go to school now, they live in a small flat, and the brother collects metal to survive so that the children no longer have to go through the rubbish bins in the street. The experiences of Adina's family reveal how seemingly arbitrary it is to manage or not to manage. Once the family were put in touch with Martin, they received access to help other people do not even know about. This family does not arrange their daily life in a fundamentally different way than most other people in this borough but to some extent Adina managed to escape the abject situation in which she lived. But she managed this only because she had access to a form of support: Martin was there at the right time and provided her with the support she needed in that very moment.

The head teacher of a local school asked Martin to mediate between the school and 16-year-old Jona. The head teacher does not want Jona to go directly to college. Because of his low attendance the teacher wants Jona to do a year-long preparation course for college first. The school tried to set up meetings but neither Jona nor his mother attended. Martin is sent to mediate and to bring the news to the family. It is a Polish Roma family who live in a newer housing block. The woman who answers the door does not want to open. She is scared and only when Jona comes and recognises Martin does she ask us to come inside. The flat suggests a different life standard to the flats we usually see when we visit people from Romania. On a material level, Jona's family seems to be established. The four children are playing with toys and three men are watching TV. Although we are all sitting in the same living room, apart from saying

‘Hello’, they do not take much notice of us. Martin asks Jona what he wants to do.

Martin promises to support him either way. Jona is determined, he said:

I want to go to college. Of course. That is why I am here in the UK and not in Poland. I don’t like my current school, because the head teacher treats me like a small child. But only me, with the others she is not like this. I did not even know about those meetings – so how can I possibly attend something I don’t even know about? To some meetings we went but my mother does not like these meetings with school very much, she said she won’t come anymore. But OK, I want to go to college, so if it is necessary, I come with you to these meetings, of course. (Jona, 2010)

The family has lived in the UK since 2004. Jona’s sisters speak very good English and this example underscores what difference the ability to speak English makes when trying to access services. The family is more settled than most of the Romanian participants. Their main problem is Jona’s low attendance record at school. The situation of this Polish family suggests that the right to work and access to education allow for a much more self-determined life. It is Jona who decides that he wants to go to college, and it is Jona’s mother who consciously decides that she does not like these school meetings. Although Jona and his mother might still struggle, in comparison to most of the Romanian Roma they are in a much more settled and therefore visible position to make claims from.

Melia, a Romanian woman who also lives in East London has called Martin for help as the school of her child had sent social services to judge whether it is necessary to take her child into child protection. The school complained about low attendance, and the apparent poverty and state of health of the child. This was a recurrent narrative during the time of my fieldwork. The schools encounter children who live in severe

poverty and often fail to recognise the situation of these families. The parents are fined for the low attendance record of their children and since the parents do not have the resources to pay the fines, the schools send social services in suspicion of child neglect. This is most often the moment when parents call upon Martin for help.

Melia's house is very difficult to find. When we arrive, a man is kneeling on the floor trying to put money into an electricity meter. A neighbour tries to help him, but since the man does not speak English, he does not understand what he needs to do. When we ask for Melia, the man becomes suspicious. He tells us that she is not at home and asks whether there is a problem. Martin assures him that there is no problem that he is a teacher who works with Roma families in this area and that Melia has called him for help. The man seems relieved and immediately asks us to come upstairs, calling for Melia and Nico, Melia's child. He laughs now when we walk up the stairs. An older woman Zina, the mother of Melia and Melia's son Nico welcome us inside the flat. It is a kitchen with three beds put around a kitchen table. The only other item in the room is a small plastic Christmas tree. The man introduces himself as Gheorghe and repeatedly apologises for the standard of the flat. Zina is trying to switch on the boiler above the sink but cannot read the instructions. Gheorghe is searching for things to offer to us. He apologises for the cold:

All the money Melia earns goes into the electricity meter. It eats the money, so we usually don't use the heating and use candles. We are from Transylvania in Romania. But Romania is not good. At least it is not good for us people. We came to the UK two years ago and look around, daily life is still so very difficult. Melia has work. In that sense we are lucky. She works in a hotel, cleaning. But this money is not enough for four people. I also send money home to my wife and my three children who are still in Romania. They are not here

because I cannot afford them a life here. It feels so wrong to be away from them.

But nobody asks this question to me. (Gheorghe, 2010)

Gheorghe showed us Melia's blue card and national insurance number. Martin explained that with this blue card they would be able to claim child and housing benefits. Gheorghe looks perplexed:

I don't know these things. I don't know what we are entitled to. I don't know. You know, I am just happy we can be here in the UK, away from Romania. I feel so much safer, even if I know that also here we are seen like people who don't deserve to have rights. (Gheorghe, 2010)

Gheorghe looks at the floor. He has no access to information about his rights and entitlements. Most of the existing institutions are not designed to accommodate those people who desperately need help. Authorities and services do not seem to be the places where the participants claim rights. Gheorghe does not know where to retrieve that kind of information. He is grateful to feel safer than in Romania and to be able to send some money home. He feels anxious about the child, Nico:

I don't want to go anywhere. I am so scared they will take the child away, that I rather say nothing. I am poor. Yes. I have no education. My parents could not write and I cannot write. But Nico will learn to write and hopefully my children too one day. What can I do? I would like to work, of course, but I am not allowed! Who needs people like us? Nico is ill because of the cold. We have not enough money to put in the electricity meter. Now he cannot go to school and the school called other people to take Nico away from us. They think we do not

take care of him. I will do anything to keep him with me. He is the main reason why we are here. That he can have a better future. (Gheorghe, 2010)

Like many other people in this London borough, Gheorghe lives in precarious conditions and has little means to change his economic situation. He finds himself in a situation in which he reproduces this condition of living his day-to-day life in poverty and is simultaneously punished for the consequences of his precarious situation. For Gheorghe, state institutions are not places to seek support. Complaining to and demanding from state institutions is not an option Gheorghe feels he has. Due to his experiences in Romania, state institutions and services are not obvious places to seek support, as Gheorghe never experienced positive encounters with such institutions. Gheorghe manages the situation like it is in the very moment. Instead of a radical desire to change the situation, there is a sense of indifference towards the possible decision of authorities that allows Gheorghe to oppose, in case authorities take Nico into child protection. It seems as if Gheorghe lives at a distance from his own precarious day-to-day life that is caused by the structures of his exclusion. But this degree of distance keeps him also alive in his precarious situation and away from giving in to decisions that are made for and about him. While within these structures Gheorghe is not able to cross the barriers to exit precarity in London, he is crossing the border out of his otherwise predestined life in Romania by living a new life in the UK.

Unless they have a permission to work, adults have very little contact outside kinship networks. Contact with state institutions often takes place via the children, as they usually learn English in school much faster than adults who, due to their situation, are often forced to be at home. While access to education may well be a powerful way to break the circle of poverty, it seems to be used as a tool to which access is either allowed or denied by authorities. Since adults from A8 countries are not entitled to language courses and have no right to take up employment, they have little contact with

anyone apart from the closest kin at home or in the neighbourhood. As discussed in Chapter Two, action and speech play a vital role for accessing the public sphere and articulating what is referred to as political voice. Yet most of the parents I met could not speak English very well. Consequently they were not able to command this kind of speech and were thus alienated from this form of public interaction.

Most participants provide their children with the little money they get together and it is the children who translate and talk in public. In such a situation most of the participants do not have access to institutions or the public space to claim justice and rights. For most of the participants, including Gheorghe, crossing the barrier to access the public sphere is hardly possible. As analysed in Chapter Two politics has emerged as a practice in which it is mainly the use of voice that makes it possible to perform certain acts of citizenship. This conception does not seem to provide for people who are produced as non-citizens or citizen outsiders. Thus the enactment of citizenship is performed on a different level for Gheorghe. It is his distancing that enables Gheorghe to oppose authoritarian decisions and to re-claim his own space.

Nico is growing up in very precarious conditions. He says that some days they have something to eat, most of the time not. He puts on his school uniform and goes to school, thus entering a place that is very remote from the place where he spends his evenings and nights. Whenever there is a problem at home, Nico cannot go to school. Nico's low attendance record in school is thus a direct consequence of the situation in which his family lives. However, Nico's teacher sees only his appearance and attendance record. Nico has additional needs and perceptions. Sometimes he has more immediate concerns than school, as his life is determined by the daily struggle around the severe poverty of his family and the coping with its consequences. For Gheorghe and Nico's grandmother, there is no life beyond the private divide.

The narratives of Adina, Jona and Gheorghe show that authorities are not able to guarantee equal access to opportunities and do not perceive the participants as agents. Moreover, Gheorghe's narrative reveals that we have to 'seize the silences, the refusal and the flight as something active' (Moulier-Boutang, 2001, p. 227). For it is not only Gheorghe's abjection and exclusion that determine his position, it is also the negotiation with this position through which he struggles in order to survive. It is immensely difficult to cross barriers when Gheorghe does not even know that a blue card means access to the labour market and therefore access to claims. It is also difficult to cross barriers when one is constantly ill and the nights are just about organising how not to freeze.

The team of social workers I encountered in East London want to ensure the personal responsibility of the parents, so that if this responsibility is violated, they tend to act upon the parents with means of punishment. The consequences of restrictions on work seem to be ignored by the authorities. During the time of the fieldwork I did not come across joint work projects with minority institutions or self-organisations that worked to develop useful strategies to fight the cycle of poverty or to create possibilities in which people can participate, become aware, and claim their rights. Rather the situation appeared as if the conception of the welfare state is fixed within a framework in which people are supported only as long as they are considered to fully grasp their potential opportunities. This manifests the marginalisation of the participants, is then constantly reproduced, and sites to claim and act are seriously limited. Official frameworks mark the sites and possibilities of political mobilisation by defining both the apparent problem and its solution. This setting creates a highly ambiguous situation. Although Gheorghe's life standards are similar to those in Romania, he says he is still grateful to live in the UK, as to him it feels generally safer than life in Romania. Yet, although Gheorghe is not recognised as political subject in the UK either, he negotiates this ambiguity by his flight and by fighting for daily survival and by refusing to give up.

The participants already experience themselves as citizens who have to bear with constant injustice. The injustice they might experience in London is therefore not experienced as something new or as something that breaks the norm. Thus rupturing this life long experience is not accomplished through groundbreaking acts. It is much more subtle; difference is made in the enduring.

Some of the participants may well speak from the position of ‘the other’, but the mistreatment and injustice they mention is rarely framed in relation to being Roma. While this may have various reasons, the experienced injustice is very often formulated as a result of abjecthood. Being poor is understood as something one is born into, a situation that is rarely questioned or challenged in its essence. The possible causes for the poverty are not contested. Many of the participants apologise for being poor and for having nothing to offer. However, this position also indicates that for the participants in East London minority claims and ethnicity do not play a crucial role. In a way, the situation is de-ethnicised by Roma themselves. Self-positioning appeared to be mostly about enduring in a position of rather passive but continuous resistance. Bearing, distancing and not giving up, I argue, are acts of citizenship, regardless of whether they are intended or formulated as such.

As the narratives in this section have shown, people often point to their daily struggles for bare survival and to barriers are immensely difficult to overcome. The practicalities of a precarious life make it extremely difficult for Gheorghe, Melia, Zina and Nico to cross the threshold of precarity and escape that kind of life. Yet, despite the poverty, marginalisation and lack of prospects many participants said that their situation in the UK is still better than the one in the country of origin. While they are still marginalised to an extent that barely allows a life beyond the barriers of abjecthood, most of the participants said that they live much freer as they feel less threatened by discrimination in the UK. This highlights that the participants hold various subject positions, which actually blur the boundaries between claiming and enduring. While

they constantly try and often also fail to cross the barriers that their abject situation dictates, performing the enduring becomes their claim. This performing is an interruption of the political, as the participants from this perspective emerge as something more than other claim making and rights taking political beings.

6.7 'We came here to have a better future, to have *a* future' – Claims to Rights

This section provides an account of the narratives of a family that I have seen the most out of all participants, as well as the only example of a woman who directly talks about being Roma. The narratives focus on the claims to rights by fighting to make their otherwise unseen struggles visible. Together with Martin and a social worker, we drove to the house of this family. From the outside, the house looked very run down. The other social worker pointed to a TV lying outside the house and said, 'it must be the right house since it looks as if the people who live here collect metal and there is a lot of metal inside a TV'. At this very moment two other men with forms in their arms arrived at the house. The two men were from a local social health care service. Although they say they have never seen the family, they said that 'the family seems to be a very complicated case and the mother is very problematic' (Social worker 2, 2010). In front of the house they are waiting for a third colleague. When the colleague arrives, a total of six people are standing in front of the house discussing the problems of the family inside. No one has knocked on the door. The woman from health care explained to her colleagues:

One child is physically and mentally disabled. The problem is that the school bus does not come directly to the house to pick her up. It stops at the main road only. The child has no wheelchair and is dragged to the bus stop by her sisters and brothers. By the time she arrives at the bus stop, she is physically already too exhausted for school. For this reason she has not been to school for a few

days and the school called social and health services to see the family. I went there and found the child in an alarming state of health. The child is prescribed to take lithium carbonate, which has to be taken with great care. A wrong dosage can be fatal. (Social worker 2, 2010, recorded)

The five social workers then started a discussion on how to solve the problems of the family without those affected even present. The social workers concluded that they do not know what to do, since there is no money available to support the family. One social worker says that it is very difficult to communicate with the mother, and it is clear that none of the social workers can properly communicate with the family, hence it is not even really clear what kind of help the family might need and who finally defines help. The health worker that has seen the family once takes on the position of classifying the alarming state of health and opts for the child to be taken into a state institution. The social workers are discussing outside the house what is happening inside. Outside, the social workers agree that the mother is unable to take responsible care of her children and knock on the door.

When we came back later the same day, Ana, the mother, was desperate and angry. She tells us that health services took her daughter Marcela away to the hospital since she was really unwell because of the drugs she took. Although they acted against her will, she said she could not do anything to impede. The living room is sparsely furnished. In the kitchen the hobs of the gas oven are lit to heat the house. The windows have no glass. Three children are sitting on the sofa and look rather indifferent. The house is in a poor state. Ana apologised and said:

I collect fruit and vegetables on the street after the market has closed. But I have no cupboards, so I have to put everything on the floor. Now these animals are everywhere. Are you also a teacher? Or a social worker? (Ana, 2010)

When I tell her that I am writing a doctorate thesis, she smiled and seemed relieved. Then she shook my hand since she realised that I am not someone to fear. At the same time I am not a person to whom she needs to prove something. Ana tells Martin about the school bus that does not come to her house to pick up her disabled daughter. She starts crying again, and tells us that she wants her daughter back. When we left Martin promised to find out about her daughter Marcela.

When we came back a few days later with a translator, Marcela was back home. Ana told us that the neighbours called the police because Marcela screams all day long. Ana told her side of the story:

After the neighbours called the police these people from health services came again and told me that Marcela has to live in a home for disabled children and that she can no longer live with us. I don't want this! Why does no one accept my will? I am her mother! I want to take care of her – but it is not easy? Look at my house! This is what I offer my children! I know it is not good, but it is all I have. You don't allow me to work! Only because I am poor does not mean cannot love and take care of my children. I want her to go to school but the school bus does not pick her up. Listen how she is screaming! It is awful! I don't know what to do. These drugs are not good for her; she was not like that before. Now she screams all the time. I want to have a lawyer! I cannot stand this situation any longer. I came to the UK to live a better life with less discrimination and better opportunities, but here I feel just punished for the poverty we live in (Ana, 2010)

Marcela, her disabled daughter, was on the same bed where we all sat. Ana tells me that Marcela is only 16 years old and that she had never been in such a condition. She screams and moves constantly. It is obviously difficult to take care of Marcela with the

means Ana has. Marcela cannot walk by herself but is not entitled to a wheelchair. Ana tells us that the pharmacist offers her nappies for free.

Ana expressed her rage and hopelessness of her situation and made claims for change inside the private sphere of her house to Martin and me. In her living room, no one else apart from us sees and hears her make her claims, but her living room is the space Ana has access to, so inside the house is the space in which she claims. When Marilena, Ana's eldest daughter, came inside, she saw us and shouted at her mother immediately. We left and Martin told her that he will try his best to come back. Ana was confused:

Yes yes every day the same. So many people come here every day but in the end no one helps us. At the same time I am locked inside this house unable to fight for my rights outside where people can see me. (Ana, 2010)

When we returned a few days later Martin has colour pencils for the children. Ana sat on the sofa looking dispirited. She tried to pull herself together. Marilena was there as well with her two daughters. When Marilena learns that I am at university, she immediately looked at Martin and said:

I want to go to college as well and I want to do a language class. I have no work, nor a National Insurance number. I am just here at home the whole day long with my mother, my two disabled sisters and my two children. I clean and tidy up all day. We came here to have a better future, to have a future! How could I change my life? In Romania I have been to school for 8 years. I have a right to live as well! (Marilena, 2010)

Ana proudly proclaimed, 'I was in school for 11 years'. I asked Ana whether she is able to work sometimes here in London to earn some money at all. Ana says 'I used to work also to be outside the house sometimes. But now - ...' she points to Marcela who crawls behind her on the floor screaming. Ana takes Martin to the kitchen to show him the state of the house. The lit hobs are keeping the house warm. A small blanket is covering the broken window glass to keep the cold air from coming in. Marilena and Ana both show us how unbearable it is to live in this house and to lead such a life.

The settlements I visited in Romania, Hungary and Czech Republic were in similar conditions to this house in East London. In that way, their housing standards have not greatly improved. Ana left Romania with her children to seek out a better life but she has not yet found it in London. Martin promised to come back next week with two other people who might be able to help. He then reassured her that no one should live like this. Marilena agreed, 'no one should live like this. Also not us!' (Marilena, 2010). On the one hand Marilena makes claims to a different life and through this interrupts the irreversibility of her situation while at the same time she reproduces the stereotypes for which she is discriminated. Yet, the way they both presented their state of abjecthood challenges the public/private divide, since they hope to bring the inside to the outside. Their forceful presentation contests the inability to speak up. It is an enactment that temporarily ruptures the narrative and gives them a position that is otherwise invisible. The atmosphere feels heavy. I ask them about Romania. Ana says that:

Also in Romania we lived similar to this. In Romania we Roma are not considered as people. When we arrived here in the neighbourhood, we met a man on the street. He gave us this house. We pay a lot of rent. (Ana, 2010)

In this borough, people pretending to be landlords let flats illegally for large sums of money to people who just arrived in London. This happened to many of the participants. I ask Ana whether she considers suing the landlord but she says she is too afraid. Ana tells us:

Now, where we live in London I think under communism everything was better. Back then everybody had a job, we all had flats. Ceausescu was a good person. Under him even I went to school for 11 years. Now I gave up my life because I had to change, I could not have lived like this for any longer. I am here to fight for my rights to a normal life. (Ana, 2010)

Suddenly Marcela started to scream and it felt inappropriate to ask any further questions. The situation of Ana and her children illustrates that, in their case, social issues seem so present that they become political. Yet, the practicalities of an extremely poor material life hardly leaves space to make claims to rights and ‘to break away from norms, expectations, routines, rituals, in short their habitus’ (Isin, 2012, p. 110). Standing in front of the house I ask Marilena what happened to the windows. She shrugs her shoulders and says that few weeks ago a man threw stones at the house. Ever since I visited this family nothing visible out- or inside the house changed, although many people from social and health services had been there and tried to improve the family’s situation. Ana has angrily expressed the injustice but has no access to other spaces or listeners. Ana formulated these claims for justice with rage. It is this form of critique of the structure and the positions Ana feels locked into that is a form of resistance to giving in to hopelessness and resignation. Within this consolidation of habits, habitat and fear, for Ana, rage and refusal as performance are possibilities of enact citizenship.

As I discussed in Chapter Five, people like Ana are not recognised as bearers of politicalness, referring to a term that aims to withstand the demarcated space the notion of the political seems to suggest (see Chambers, 2013), by not understanding what they say and by not hearing that it is an utterance that they are expressing. It is immensely difficult for Ana to cross the barriers as she speaks from a place that is not recognised as political space and from a place that is separated from public life. It is within the conception of citizenship that her claims and the abject place she speaks from are dismissed as apolitical. Yet, in fact, Ana is crossing the barriers out of her positioning and claiming rights by trying to make the unseen visible. Moreover, not responding, whether in form of silence, withdrawal or just in not acting as expected is also a protest against one's positioning and therefore a political enactment (Marciniak and Tyler, 2014).

6.8 'Being Roma is not good for anything' – Assimilation

This section highlights a claim to belong by hiding one's identity within situations of attempted assimilation. Three times I met a family from the Czech Republic, which was rather unusual, since most of the people Martin supports arrived from Romania and Bulgaria shortly after 2008. The couple lives with their two children in a 1.5 bedroom flat. When we enter the flat, both of the parents are very happy to see Martin again. Michael speaks good English and invites us upstairs to have dinner together. Their living standard is basic, but still much higher compared to the Romanian families we usually meet. Michael tells me:

I was born in Brno, in the Czech Republic, but later, when Czechoslovakia separated, most of the Czech Roma were evicted to Slovakia. The Czech deprived us of our Czech citizenship and we had to take on the Slovak one. Then I moved to Michalovce, where many Roma people live. It was awful there. It is

a Roma ghetto, where people live excluded in very poor conditions without any perspective. My wife Melita was born in Kosice in Slovakia. Around Kosice are many huge Roma settlements. This is where we met. Now we are married and managed to escape this ghetto life in Slovakia. We have two children who are going to school in London. I cannot possibly tell how happy I am about this. They will be able to live a life in dignity, I hope. (Michael, 2010, recorded)

He smiles and points to his children playing in the background and is obviously moved and proud. When I tell Michael that I have been to Brno and Košice many times, he is touched. When I tell him that I met many Roma families in Košice, Michael replies:

You know, both Valentina and I are Roma, but we would never tell this to anyone. We tell it to Martin, but otherwise we never say it. It is not good. Valentina and I also do not speak Romanes with each other, and do not teach it to the children. It is better for them and less dangerous. I cannot even speak Romanes very well myself. The Roma in Czech Republic were all subjects to forced proletarianisation. It was a constant moving. After WWII all the Slovak Roma were moved from rural places to the urban areas in Czech Republic. Many people lost their language through this and were after the separation in 1993 evicted back to Slovakia. Valentina and I met at one of these Roma settlements near Košice. (Michael, 2010, recorded)

From research trips to the Czech Republic and Slovakia I learned that the loss of language had a substantial influence on Roma identity in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Michael and Valentina are the first participants I met in London who speak about ascribing to being Roma and who deliberately do not teach their children to speak Romanes. This is a powerful statement since Romanes, as a spoken language, is often

one of the only traditions parents can pass on to their children. Michael justifies their decision:

It is better like this for the children and for us too. Everything is difficult when you are Roma. And who tells you that I feel Roma? I never spoke much Romanes with my parents either. Perhaps I don't feel Roma even myself. There are many bad Roma people around, I don't want to be associated with them and neither my children. So it is better like this. Like this, they can achieve something. Valentina and I were in a difficult situation in Slovakia. Because we did not want to join the whole internal Roma family business, Valentina's family was very angry with me. But according to me, being Roma is not good for anything. What does it help me? It is only dangerous! And being Roma in Eastern Slovakia in these settlements is difficult on almost every level. So we decided to leave this hopeless life in Slovakia. Now things are much better. Not perfect yet, but better! (Michael, 2010, recorded)

He points to the flat around him. The flat has little furniture, but there is everything that is necessary. Valentina stands up and checks whether the food is ready. Michael says:

I am at home at the moment. I bring the children to school and pick them up. Valentina is employed as a cleaner in their school. The school segregation in Slovakia was one of the biggest problems. The children are rejected in the normal schools, they are immediately sent to the schools for disabled children. These special schools are full of Roma kids. These schools are awful, the teachers are awful, the children do not learn anything there. The children are made to feel useless and stupid. On the way home the children from the other school attack them. Here in London both of our children go to school. A good

and normal school where they can learn something. And they are doing really well! Sometimes I think I could have fought for our rights back in Slovakia, but it would have been hopeless alone. None of the people in the settlement would have got organised to rise up. They stagnate, invisible in these ghettos. They are all enclosed; feel safe only amongst each other. There was no spirit of departure. And where would we have demonstrated? No, people have become very passive in the settlements. The treatment of the state really made them believe they have no rights and they have no means to change things. (Michael, 2010, recorded)

Valentina tells us that the food is ready and that Michael should set the table. As

Michael gets up, he continues:

Of course it is incredibly expensive here in London and this flat is not good. But we cannot afford anything better. It is dangerous here and there are many bad people on the street. The landlord is not good, the neighbours are not good, the surroundings here are not good. I always have to walk Valentina to work. But all this is still much better than the life we had in Slovakia. (Michael, 2010, recorded)

Michael articulates the injustice his family has experienced and is afraid to identify as Roma. He is not fighting for a life in which he can publicly ascribe to being Roma. He broke with an identity in order to escape what he connects with it: marginalisation and injustice. In this way Michael formulates what are for him the tensions between citizenship and identity. Michael claims that as long as he ascribes to being Roma, he cannot live a self-determined life in dignity. Michael does not withdraw or endure in abjecthood in order to passively resist like Gheorghe or Ana. He acts by contesting and neglecting that for him troublesome conception of identity, which according to him 'is

not good for anything' (Michael, 2010). Simultaneously he reproduces the same paradox in which access, agency and a self-determined life could not be achieved while ascribing to being Roma. Michael follows an already existing path that is tied to authoritative practices of assimilation. Discriminated and criminalised by governmental and social practices, Michael decided to eliminate what is perceived as difference in order to assimilate to those who are recognised as citizens and agents. The elimination of identity is Michael's claim to justice. Michael claims to belong by taking on a different agent position than the one he was previously positioned in.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter illustrated how empirical fieldwork on 'acts of citizenship' enables us to move beyond the level of official documents and discourses through which Roma populations are constituted, problematised and governed. Moreover it allows us to move beyond the discourses and knowledge produced by the media and social services about Roma – all of which I discussed in Chapter Five. The analysis of the fieldwork suggests that day-to-day struggles for survival can be understood as 'acts of citizenship'. I illustrated how the participants do constitute themselves as those to whom the right to have rights is due. These struggles over rights just take place within seemingly imperceptible sites and places.

Thus in the analysis above I illustrated how Romanian Roma in East London do enact citizenship in the everyday, by struggling for bare survival, by contesting the ways in which they are problematised, by resisting authoritative decisions, by enduring in abjecthood, by escaping a situation or by hiding their identity. Their struggles to reclaim autonomy are heterogeneous, partly contradictory, sometimes momentary, and sometimes accidental.

Chapter Three's description of the situation of most Roma in the EU and the analysis of Chapter Five showed that Arendt's (1958) theoretical opposition in *The*

Human Condition, which assumed on the one hand stateless refugees deprived of speech and polity and on the other hand world forming citizens, is challenged by the situation of Roma. The participants in East London do hold EU citizenship but still seem to be relegated to the status of bare survival. Whereas Arendt (1958, p. 294) assumed that citizenship rights institutionalise an equality that is constitutive of the public sphere, the analysis above shows that this is not the case.

Yet the analysis also indicates that Roma in East London do challenge this situation by becoming actors in various, often unrecognised ways. The participants enact themselves as citizens through everyday struggles – which are the core of political life since they entail the enactment of citizenship in new sites of contestation. The daily, lived experiences of citizenship are day-to-day life struggles in the form of negotiations, demands and claims. Such sites of contestation are the struggles of Ana, to make the otherwise unseen situation of her family visible; the struggles of Gheorghe and his family not to give in but to endure in abjecthood and Florins struggles for resistance against authoritative decisions, etc.

In regards to the literature discussed in Chapter Two and Three, it is important to note that all the narratives from the fieldwork fundamentally point to questions of what counts as politics and who counts as political subject. I showed how the narratives challenge what is at stake when trying to determine what kind of choices and claims are recognised as right choices or claims.

Therefore my aim is not to look for one single answer within the discussed narratives. Rather they all demonstrate that it is key to rethink conceptions of the political, the social, the private and the public in a way that does not predefine in advance what counts as politics and what counts as claims and how and where they are enacted. I argue that Roma in East London do position themselves as political subjects and show that citizenship needs to be understood as enactment. Then, for instance, the sudden movement from one place to another and the enduring in seemingly unbearable

situations of the participants can be seen as enactments of citizenship. While Roma in East London are to some extent made abject by authorities and, as I discussed in Chapter Three, on a larger scale by European law, their acts of citizenship can be interpreted as opening up this positioning.

In Chapter Two I also discussed how citizenship is mainly conceptualised in terms of rights and responsibilities. The narratives indicate that such an approach is unsuitable for interpreting the acts of citizenship of people who find themselves in a situation like that of the Roma in East London. Conventional perspectives on citizenship tend to focus on things that are visible and can be named e.g. demonstrations, strikes, etc. These approaches politicise already what it means to be a citizen. I want to stress that these approaches are not sensitive enough to perceive moments like the ones I described from the fieldwork, in which acts are performed that do not yet have a name, or are as yet unrecognised as political. It is in these ways that the acts of citizenship of the participants in East London confront both what it means to be a political subject and the positioning of control and securitisation that I discussed in Chapter Five with something transformative that cannot be ignored. While Roma in East London might not transform their situation to that known end point in form of revolt or strike or demonstration, I showed that they struggle to even make citizenship itself a site of struggle. By resisting restrictions, by enduring in seemingly hopeless situations, by claiming a space to live and often despite the huge barrier of language, they begin new forms of transformation – which can be taken, for instance, as first moments of refusal to subscribe to some aspects of the social order. The moments in which these acts in East London take place indicate change and contingency that can only be recognised if we understand citizenship as enactment in which people claim rights despite being denied doing so.

While the analysis of Chapter Five stressed how Roma are affected by the positioning and treatment that constitutes them as citizen outsiders, Chapter Six demonstrated how Roma in London begin to confront this positioning by engaging in political acts, such as resisting authoritative control, escaping governance, claiming to be already citizens and political subjects, sometimes also by failing to cross barriers and sometimes by refusing some aspects of the social order. Thus Roma in London contest the ways state authorities problematise their existence and claim recognition as political subjects, independently from whether their political subjectivity is conferred or recognised by the state or not. They become political by assigning a place upon themselves in this East London borough and simultaneously reconfigure that place by challenging who is considered to count as a political subject and member of the political community.

Chapter 7: Conclusion – Everyday Struggles as Acts of Citizenship

This research was conducted at a time of crisis, in the years following the deportations of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma from France in 2010. Ever since, there has been heightened interest in the mobility of Roma, particularly due to the fact that Roma were deported from one EU Member State to another, despite being EU citizens (Severance, 2010). The events in France revealed a situation in which Roma seemed to be reduced to a status of what appeared as rightless citizen outsiders, a situation that raised fundamental questions about the content of citizenship, and European citizenship in particular.

When deportation cases emerged in 2011, lawyers from the European Roma Rights Centre in Budapest were looking for deportees to litigate in a court case against France. However, the majority of deportees refused. They did not want to sue and stated they could not trust and identify with the same system that made the deportations possible (ERRC, 2011). This situation pointed to a citizenship paradox that initially influenced my core research questions: how do those who are denied access to their citizenship rights claim the rights that they are due? How do Roma, as citizen outsiders, struggle for their rights?

Discussing perspectives on citizenship and describing a situation of abjecthood in which most Roma find themselves as citizen outsiders, in this thesis I have tried to make a case for the need to extend our understandings of who is recognised as a claim making subject and what is considered a political rights claim. I have demonstrated that we still seem to draw on conventional conceptions of citizenship, according to which all citizens, if not substantially equal, are at least equally recognised as rights-claiming subjects with relatively equal access to mechanisms through which those rights claims can be made. As the case of Roma indicated, this is not actually the case, as despite their citizenship status, Roma are often unrecognised as rights-claiming citizens, and at the same time have limited access to traditional ways of rights claiming.

As I have shown, Roma are often problematised as those to be controlled and governed, and as incapable of making ‘the right’ choices. As I have argued, this problematisation also works to depoliticise Roma populations, contributing to their positioning not as citizens, but indeed, as what I have referred to as citizen outsiders. By pointing to the everyday life struggles of Roma in London, I have pointed to the unravelling of conventional conceptions of citizenship. I have also challenged these problematisations by showing how Roma in London do enact citizenship and claim the rights that are due. I have illustrated that the acts of citizenship of Roma in London take place in their everyday life struggles and thus challenge conventional perspectives on citizenship. Roma in London enact citizenship in their resistance against authoritative decisions, in their resilience in abjecthood, by hiding their identity or by making a place for themselves. The ways I described their being political, their ways of expressing their voice (or indeed silence), their ways of claiming rights challenge what conventionally count as political, as voice, and as ways of making rights claims.

7.1 Summary

Chapter One of the thesis introduced the subject of Roma and citizenship, raising questions about a situation in which a minoritised people, such as Roma, seem to be constituted as ‘outsiders’, despite possessing the status of citizens. Drawing on Georg Simmel’s work on the stranger, the chapter stressed that the situation of many Roma is not adequately characterised by the concept of ‘otherness’, and suggested that the concept of ‘citizen outsider’ more adequately reflects their situation. The chapter then proceeded to argue for the need to explore the ways in which such ‘citizen outsiders’ make rights claims, and in doing so, enact their citizenship. The chapter thus finally outlined the core question of the thesis, namely, the question of how Roma, as citizen outsiders, make claims to rights and enact themselves as citizens.

In order to contextualise the concept of citizen outsider and demonstrate its relationship to existing conceptions of citizenship, Chapter Two explored conventional and critical perspectives on citizenship. It noted, in particular, how citizenship literatures, discourses and practices tend not to account for ‘new actors, sites and scales [that] have emerged...[and] that complicate the way citizenship is enacted not only as membership but also as claims’ (Isin, 2008, p. 370). As I was planning on exploring those kinds of claims through subsequent empirical work with Roma in London, in Chapter Two I stressed also the concept of voice. I argued that the modern concept of citizenship assumes a citizen figure that has the means to articulate injustices and claim rights within the public sphere. I discussed how this conception presupposes a way of expressing voice, illustrated that the very idea of what it means to be political assumes a certain way of speaking, a certain way of appearing in public, and thus indeed, a certain way of making rights claims and enacting oneself as a citizen. As Roma populations often do not conform to such norms and expectations, they find themselves in the paradoxical situation of citizen outsiders – despite possessing the status of citizens, and the promise that the status of citizenship guarantees equal access to making rights claims, Roma are often excluded from such ‘benefits’ of citizenship and unrecognised in their ways of claims making. In order to conceptually account for this paradox, I have not only suggested the concept of ‘citizen outsider’, but also, the need to move towards an understanding of citizenship that accounts for its everyday sites, scales and enactments.

Prior to exploring the ways in which Roma are discursively constituted (Chapter Five), and the often unrecognized ways and sites at which Roma enact themselves as citizens from their position of citizen outsiders (Chapter Six) the third chapter provided an overview of the general situation of minoritised Roma in Europe, linking it to previous discussion of conceptions of citizenship. Drawing on Romani Studies literature, the chapter demonstrated that Roma still face fierce discrimination across

Europe, but can neither claim asylum in other EU Member States nor move across internal EU borders in ways other EU citizens can. The chapter explored how, despite their citizenship status, Roma appear excluded from the benefits of contemporary European citizenship, constituted instead as citizen outsiders. By highlighting that their right to make claims to rights seems to be suspended, I stressed the necessity to explore empirically both how Roma in the UK are discursively problematised and how Roma challenge these problematisations by enacting themselves as citizens in distinct ways.

Following this general overview of the situation of Roma in Europe, Chapter Four explored the methodological approach and methods I deployed in the thesis, including the research design, sampling, field location, and processes for data collection and analysis. It also attended to some of the ethical issues that arise in this kind of research. Finally, the chapter explored how the conceptual and theoretical framework explored in Chapters Two and Three was used in framing the empirical research I conducted with Roma populations in East London.

Chapters Five and Six presented and analysed the data gathered as part of this thesis. Inspired by Foucault's notion of 'problematisations' Chapter Five focused on the discourses through which Roma populations are problematised and become targets of government. The chapter presented and analysed the content of various authoritative discourses, such as media, policy documents, a court case and material from local authorities in East London, illustrating the ways Roma in the UK are constituted. It argued that Roma tend to be problematised as criminals, nomads, illegal immigrants or victims. The chapter also demonstrated how Roma are often depoliticised, problematised as making the 'wrong' choices and thus as not deserving the right to have or claim rights.

Chapter Six proceeded to present and analyse the data gathered as part of my fieldwork with Roma populations in East London. Whilst Chapter Five focused on the ways in which Roma are problematised and constituted as citizen outsiders, Chapter Six

focused on how Roma populations struggle to enact themselves as citizens and claim rights through their everyday practices and in their everyday lives. Analysis of the fieldwork revealed that the earlier discussed conceptualisations of voice and the political are at odds with the precariousness of the participants' given social and economic situation, and what I called their abjecthood. Moreover, the chapter illustrated how Roma, who are often positioned as lacking political voice, actually make themselves heard, though in often misrecognised ways. In doing so, they challenge traditional conceptions of what it means to be political (and have a political voice), as well as the traditional assumption that citizenship is enacted, and rights claimed, within the public sphere. The chapter showed how Romanian Roma in East London enact themselves as rights claimants and citizens by struggling for bare survival; by contesting the ways in which they are constructed; by claiming a space to live; by resisting restrictions; by enduring in abjecthood; and by escaping governance or hiding their identities. Their struggles to re-claim autonomy are heterogeneous, sometimes contradictory, and sometimes momentary. Nevertheless, they constitute ways of enacting citizenship and being political from the position of citizen outsider.

In Chapters Two and Three I argued that the situation of the majority of Roma across Europe shows that having citizenship of an EU Member State is not a sufficient precondition for being political in the ways that are expected by a citizenship model based on status and membership. With the analysis of the fieldwork I illustrated how for instance Eugenia, Diona and Gherorghe, whose citizenship is precarious and contested, act as citizens to re-claim justice, rights and equality by moving across borders, by claiming to not actually need to *become* citizens (as they already *are*) or even by enduring in abjecthood.

7.2 Main Conclusions

The main conclusions of this thesis can be subsumed under two broad categories. The first set of conclusions relates to the ways in which Roma populations are constituted and problematised. The second relates to the ways in which Roma resist and challenge the ways in which they are constituted and problematised. I discuss each of these in turn. When exploring how Roma challenge the ways in which they are constituted, I subdivide their practices of resistance into different kinds of acts through which they simultaneously challenge dominant discursive constructions and enact themselves as rights claiming, citizen subjects.

7.2.1 Ways in which Roma are constituted and problematised

The discourse analysis presented in Chapter Five revealed how problematisations of Roma tend to exploit long-standing stereotypes about Roma populations. These problematisations are reflected in the focus and content of government policies targeting Roma populations and in media reports on Roma populations. Migration, and the perceived problems generated by Roma migration, seem to be the context within which most policies are grounded. The chapter revealed that the repeated positioning and labelling of Roma as nomads, criminals or victims constitutes an abstract subject towards whom policies are targeted. The chapter also suggested that a distinction is made between those who are deemed essential, valuable, authentic and count as autonomous political agents and those who are dismissed as less worthy and dispensable, undesirable, less authentic, passive and abject.

By defining ‘the Roma’ as a homogenous group to be helped, restricted, securitised, educated, evicted or empowered, different authoritative discourses ideologically demarcate ‘the problems’ to be solved and the remedies to do so. As the analysis in Chapter Five also indicated, these discourses are constructed in the absence of the very people concerned. On the one side, discrimination and poverty are

constructed as problems that need to be solved. On the other side, the fear of migration floods, criminality, unprecedented otherness and failure to assimilate are emphasised in order to justify the securitisation of Roma.

The analysis also illustrated how the persistence of cultural myths and stereotypical images, such as nomadism, position Roma as the citizen's 'other' and moreover, as McGarry points out, the presence of Roma is discursively constituted as 'wrong' (2011). In the British context, cultural rights based approaches tend to feed negative identity constructions more than that they empower the people with special rights. On a European level, some Roma activists refer to Roma as a nation without a state, as a national minority or as an 'ethnic class'. Some critics have argued that these standpoints also support discourses that position Roma as 'other' and shift responsibility towards international actors, such as the EU. Focusing on minority rights seems inadequate to effectively address precarity and social inequality as minority rights entails the concept of otherness. Therefore, many discourses of NGOs and pro-Roma initiatives are prone to depict Roma as victimised 'others,' rather than acting subjects. Local councils, on the other hand, tend to reduce rights to tools that are employed to solve the 'problems' that are recognised and acknowledged by the councils. As I showed, pre-existing notions about who the Roma are and who they are meant to become are key trajectories in the making of the 'Romani issue' as well as in the approaches deployed to solve it.

Constituted in this way, Roma appear to be excluded both from taking part and being present, despite their citizenship status. The way they are problematised seems to condemn many Roma into what I call abjecthood, a place at the margins of society, a place that Rancière might refer to as 'not considered as a site of politics' (2011, p. 4). Yet, as Rancière also argues, a different kind of politics takes place 'when the boundary separating those who are born for politics from those who are born for the 'bare' life of social and economic necessity is put into question (2011, p.3). Thus with the fieldwork I

explored what Rancière might call ‘blurring the boundaries’ of what belongs or does not belong to ‘politics’, since there is ‘politics when there is disagreement about what is politics’ (2011, p. 4).

7.2.2 Ways in which Roma challenge their positioning

The analysis of the fieldwork data presented in Chapter Six explored the different ways in which Roma in London challenge the ways they are constituted. In the context of previously discussed literature on enacting citizenship (Isin and Saward, 2013), the analysis also demonstrated how everyday life struggles of Roma can be understood as rights claims and thus acts of citizenship. As I noted previously, a conceptual starting point of my research was Hannah Arendt’s conception of the rights to have rights. In Chapter Two I discussed how Arendt stresses that ‘man as man has only one right that transcends his various rights as citizen: the right never to be excluded from the rights granted by his community’ (Arendt, 1949, p. 36). For Arendt the right to have rights seems prior to other rights. Yet, the situation I described in Chapters Five and Six reveals that the promise of citizenship – i.e. that it serves as a guarantor of access to rights, or in other words, is a status that guarantees the right to have rights – is not experienced by many Roma in the UK and elsewhere. All of the research participants I interviewed in East London are citizens of an EU Member State, yet they don’t seem to be recognised as those who have the right to have rights.

In previous chapters, I also discussed that Arendt suggests that freedom consists in acting (1977, p.145), which in turn is dependent on speech. For Arendt, the sources of agency and equality are the polity and community. Yet analysis of the fieldwork presented in Chapter Six suggests that as long as political speaking and claiming are only recognised in public spaces, most participants in East London will remain unrecognized as political subjects and rights claimants. However, if we understand politics as moments when those who do not ‘count’ make claims to be counted, the

Roma population of East London would be recognized as political, and indeed, as enacting citizenship. Thus, the fieldwork also indicated that there are other possibilities for the enactment of citizenship and for being political than those discussed in Chapter Two.

It follows that what is at stake is also the question of how a political community constitutes its subjects and spaces. At the beginning of the thesis I also discussed Arendt's assertion that 'we are not born equal, but become equal through human organisation as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves mutually equal rights' (1958, p. 301). In 'The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man' Arendt (1951) argues that statelessness calls into question the utility of human rights, creating a section of humanity that is stripped of all political status. For Arendt, human rights derive from citizenship, just as the right to have rights becomes also a right of citizenship. My analysis of the situation of Roma in East London indicates that it is necessary to move beyond such conceptualisation. The situation of the Roma research participants demonstrates that citizenship status neither guarantees access to the right to have rights, nor equality nor the autonomy to make claims. On the contrary, as the analysis in Chapter Five reveals, Roma populations remain discursively unrecognised as rightful citizens despite their citizenship status. Yet as the fieldwork analysed in Chapter Six reveals, even those who are unrecognized as rightful citizens, and indeed, constructed as 'citizen outsiders' challenge this order through the everyday life struggles in which they engage, and through which they assert themselves as political subjects.

The analysis in both Chapters Five and Six made clear that Roma are constructed as what Isin and Rygiel call 'neither subjects nor objects but objects' (2007, p.182). It follows that, going beyond Arendt's conceptualisation of the right to have rights, Roma in East London are those whose right to have rights is suspended or 'who have not the rights they have' (Isin and Rygiel, 2007, p. 183). I argued that both the way

Roma in the UK are positioned and how they position themselves in East London indicates that not only the conception of human rights, but also the conception of citizenship deteriorates at the very moment authorities are confronted with people who are citizens, but for various reasons are not recognized as such. Whether as victim or as criminal, Roma were positioned as incapable of making autonomous choices about the ways to take care of their children, to move, to work or to endure in a certain situation.

Yet, as I showed in Chapter Six, within this complex political landscape struggles for rights are taking place. As Chapter Six illustrates, the Roma of East London contest the ways state authorities problematise their existence as citizen outsiders through distinct – intended and accidental – ways and avenues of making rights claims. Some do so by resisting restrictions, some by enduring in seemingly hopeless situations, some by escaping governance, some by claiming a space to live, and others by assimilating to become eligible for more conventional citizenship paths. The outcomes of these claims are not fixed or predetermined, but rather, change the conditions of social existence, even if sometimes it is only for a moment. It is in these ways that the participants in East London challenge the ways they are constituted and it is these struggles that can be interpreted as acts of citizenship.

A central observation I made during the fieldwork in London is that the subject positions of the research participants remain precarious and that the contestations I just described take place in what I referred to as a situation of abjecthood. Isin and Rygiel argue that ‘abject spaces’ are ‘spaces in which the intention is to treat people neither as subjects (of discipline) nor objects (of elimination) but as those without presence, without existence, as inexistent beings, not because they do not exist, but because their existence is rendered invisible and inaudible through abject spaces’ (2007, pp. 183-184). While I observed that many of the participants might neither be aware of rights in legal terms nor aim to reach a fixed outcome with their struggles, they make personal choices and rights claims that can be read as expressions of freedom and

autonomy. Thus, I argue that despite the fact that in the UK most Romanian Roma still find themselves living in abject spaces and positions, they find spaces and sites from which to make claims to rights. For instance, they resist state decisions in local council meetings, or endure in abjecthood in a London neighbourhood despite being evicted or living in unliveable conditions.

In Chapter Five I also indicated how authoritative discourses produce abject subjects. What I want to stress is that such discourses constitute Roma as those who are rendered as neither subjects nor objects but abjects who are inexistent insofar as they are made invisible and inaudible. In Chapter Six I described several instances in which participants were not invited to attend meetings of social services, where fundamental decisions about their lives were being made. Important meetings took place in which those who were affected were not seen or heard. Decisions about child neglect were often taken without speaking or consulting with the parents of the child in question. This situation underlines how the autonomy of Roma to make decisions and claims was unrecognized whilst they struggled for survival. It is through this misrecognition and the discursive constructions that underpin them that power is also exercised, both by constituting Roma as citizen outsiders and by manifesting knowledge about who counts as political subject and who does not.

On a related note, the fieldwork discussed in Chapter Six also revealed that Roma often associate institutions such as schools, social services and local health services with the state, and thus also, with social control. Some research participants found themselves vacillating between disengaging from such institutions and wishing to escape abjecthood with the help of those institutions. A few of the participants even indicated that they were prepared to live a life without the arrangements authorities wanted to create for them. In other words, some of the participants rejected even the idea of participating in a politically coercive world. Arguably, the fact that most of the participants delegated their communications with institutions to Martin suggests that

they felt unable to act on their own behalf for various reasons. This is to say that most of the participants were well aware of their current situation, which is characterised by misrecognition and precarity. One of the reasons that Martin gained trust over time might be that he recognised the claims and choices of the people he worked with. Therefore, in this particular situation Martin was to some extent consciously chosen as the addressee of his clients' rights claims. While this situation of claiming rights in abjecthood highlights the complexity of representational practices, I suggest that it also underscores that anyone opting to speak on behalf of persons or groups first needs to be recognised by that person or that group as an agent of trust.

Resistance as act

Exploring the ways in which everyday, bare life struggles of Roma in London can be understood as acts of citizenship I showed that resistance is one such struggle. Analysis of the narratives of Roma in East London demonstrated that they were both active and passive in becoming claimants of rights. Many of the acts that I described as resistance are moments in which the participants expressed and registered resentment with the way they were constituted and the way the 'solutions' and support offered them did not effectively address their precarity, but rather, focussed on their resultant conduct.

As previously noted, participants in this research resisted in conditions of precarity. Therefore the content of their acts of resistance, as well as the ways in which they were enacted are connected to life in abjecthood. Thus, when the participants expressed discontent with the ways in which authorities tried to govern their daily lives, their claims often did not refer to particular rights. Rather, participants voiced discontent about the suspension of their right to have rights, in the sense of self-determination to live how they chose to live (in the situation they found themselves in) and autonomy to make their own decisions. In other words, I argued that their claims to rights are more of a process than an event. Roma in London are practicing forms of endurance and

resistance, although they are situated in abject positions. The partial withdrawal from the control of authorities can be read as a tactic of resistance against authoritarian practices that are often experienced as abasement. Some of the participants moved houses several times in a short amount of time to confuse authorities about their whereabouts so that they could feel safe and away from social control (mostly out of fear of having their children taken away). These acts can be read both as signs of a refusal to be criminalised and a refusal to be put under the tutelage of authoritative administration that is often experienced as discrimination and a threat to safety.

Moving as act

There are two ways of moving that I observed during the fieldwork that I interpret as acts of citizenship. All of the participants in East London decided to take up their right to move to the UK, so this moving as act is already a rights claim. As discussed in Chapter One, I highlighted that what is distinctive about Roma is not that they are the only citizen outsiders, but that they have taken up a right - in this case freedom of movement – that they legally have, but that they are socially denied to have. In that sense, it is necessary to consider their (transnational) mobility not only as a social practice but also as a political terrain on which the limits of (European) citizenship are both contested and negotiated (Aradau et al. 2008, p. 4). The second type of movement is movement in the form of escape from continuous discrimination and government, which can be understood as an act of citizenship, as it ruptures the everyday life experiences of the participants. By moving in this manner (as discussed above, for instance, by moving to confuse authorities about one's whereabouts), the participants in London tried to exit from a given organisation of social life. Yet, though an act of resistance, as I discussed above, this kind of mobility is also often used to problematise Roma as nomads, who, as discussed in Chapter Three, are seen to be inherently unsettled and unfitting as citizens (McVeigh, 1997; Acton, 2010).

Inverting marginalisation as act

Another conclusion to be drawn from the fieldwork is that some participants managed to effectively use their marginalisation by inverting it in the struggle for rights. While I described how the practicalities of a life in abjecthood (see Tyler, 2013) make it difficult to overcome the barriers to taking and being part in the ‘social order’ (McGarry, 2017), I also argued that long term frustration with state institutions needs to be dismantled before Roma formulate claims directly towards institutions and develop trust that their interests will be represented and recognised. For the participants in East London Roma representatives in the UK did not play a significant role (McGarry, 2010). Instead, there was a sense of disappointment, mistrust and frustration that might not be articulated as such, but influenced a possible mobilisation. Therefore, alternative ways of living, such as inverting the marginalisation and creating one’s own sense of autonomy out of it can also be seen as acts of citizenship. Being underrepresented in political life, the participants in East London created alternative structures of claiming and representation at new sites and scales. However, most of these sites and scales were located in what are often considered the depoliticised spaces of the everyday and of, for instance, kinship networks. While Roma in East London are struggling through their everyday life, they draw upon alternative social identities such as kinship structures. Arguably, Roma in East London politicise this alternative identity also in the form of passive resistance against most things connected to authorities and institutions.

Living in the everyday as act

As discussed in Chapter Two, I focused on everyday life struggles in part also to challenge the conventional perception of their apoliticalness (see discussion on the public/private dichotomy in Chapter Two). At that point I discussed how according to Neveu, ‘approaching citizenship processes from the ordinary is a fruitful perspective from which the political dimensions of usually unseen or unheard practices and sites can

be grasped' (2015, p. 141). During the fieldwork, I found that the commitment to live each day as it comes is itself an act of citizenship, in which people to some extent invert their abjecthood and struggle to position themselves at the centre of their own autonomy. Although all the participants in London had decided to migrate, seeking better life conditions in the UK, most of their claims concerned neither the past nor the future. Their everyday struggles seemed to take place in a permanent present that could nevertheless change at any moment, for instance, with a sudden move. The participants did not project their claims into the future, but rather, their rights claims concerned a betterment of the present. Thus, next to the alternative identities of kinship structures, I found that the participants created alternative places of equal and autonomous individuals also in the form of living in the everyday. Therefore, while living in abjecthood might be perceived as difficult, it was also perceived as temporary. Moreover, some of the stances I observed could be interpreted as stances of non-engagement that aimed to create autonomy in the spaces the participants shared only with those who recognised them as autonomous subjects. This stance can itself be a politically effective position of protection, even though it might not be transformative in its aim.

The claims to rights that I describe as acts of citizenship in East London are diverse and at times contradicting. While some Roma in East London endure and others resist, they all struggle on a daily basis from the position of citizen outsiders. Arguably, this focus on daily life presents a claim to a right and the means with which experienced dependence can be translated into autonomy. For even to pin hopes on changes in the long-term future depends on being in a position of power in order to name and change things. I argue that it is these fugitive occurrences and processes, which create change in ordinary life, that we need to focus on. Focusing on the everyday is a form of articulating injustices people suffer and breaks with the convention of concentrating on the future.

Nevertheless, as the discourse analysis in Chapter Five demonstrated, this focus on the present also makes people vulnerable to misrecognition by others and by authorities, who judge people by their success in retrospect or the possibility of achieving such success the future. As the discourse analysis illustrated, these politics of the present are often also used to problematise Roma, or are used to romanticise Roma for instance as the ultimate ‘free’ people (Cahn, 2002). Nicolae (2007) even states that with this problematisation Roma are constituted as somehow not fully human, at best child-like. Yet, by focusing on everyday practices, Roma use for themselves the potency of the present, ‘the practices employed to navigate daily life and to sustain relations, the practices which are at the heart of social transformation long before we are able to name it as such’ (Papadopoulos et al, 2008, p. xii). While such imperceptible moments of everyday life are commonly neglected in accounts of political acts, I argue that such moments of everyday life struggle are the starting point of contemporary forces of change.

7.3 Contribution

Arendt’s (1968) concept of ‘having the right to have rights’ served as one of the key starting points of this study. Yet, over the time of the research, I realised that the Roma I worked with in London often did not actually have ‘the right to have rights’. Over the course of the fieldwork I understood that the ‘right to have rights’ is not secured by the status of citizenship, and moreover, that the struggles in which Roma engage are not simply about having those rights. Rather, they are about making *claims* to rights. Therefore, in this study, I extended the conceptual framework of citizenship to an analysis of current forms of claim making of minoritised people, and those of Roma in particular. In this way, the thesis contributed to insights about citizenship as a precarious and contested concept and sheds light on the difficulties for Roma in London to access rights and to make themselves heard. The thesis also contributed to the debate

about the categories of citizenship, such as what counts as political, what counts as political claims, who counts as a political subject and who is recognized as a citizen.

Speaking and spending time with those who are usually made invisible and inaudible offered a unique insight into one my central research questions, namely, the question of how minoritised people like Roma can be recognised as acting subjects. By analysing seemingly imperceptible struggles of Roma in London as acts of citizenship I tried to contribute to an area of critical citizenship and Romani Studies that was relatively underdeveloped at the time of this research. At this time, research existed on, amongst others, the recent migration of Roma in Europe (Cahn and Guild, 2008), Romani politics (Sigona and Trehan, 2009), Romani movement (Vermeersch, 2006) and Roma representation (McGarry, 2010). Yet there was little research on how Roma made claims to rights and could be recognised as acting political subjects.

In my research I pointed to ruptures between conceptions of citizenship and processes of becoming political through the everyday life struggles of the participants. I was able to pursue an approach that interlinked theoretical reflections on perspectives on citizenship and empirical observations of everyday life struggles. So while I drew on Isin's (2008) work on acts of citizenship, I worked ethnographically with one particular community, Romanian Roma in East London, thus focussing on a particular place and a particular moment. I thus developed interpretations that are unique to my subject matter and its place and time. However, my analysis of the acts of citizenship that I witnessed in this place and time enabled me to argue that we need to look for the these kinds of often imperceptible everyday practices rather than grand events and pre-formulated, public claims.

At the outset of this thesis I also drew on Agamben, who argues that it is the very distinction between bare life and qualified life that enables a situation in which those struggling for bare survival are not recognised as political subjects (2000, p. 5-6). In line with this argument I showed that the lack of recognition as acting subject

impedes, at least on a visible scale, the very access to this qualified form of life, which promises the possibility of participation and guarantees membership within society, as discussed in Chapter Two. Yet, in the analysis of the fieldwork I also demonstrated that those who are dismissed as political subjects do make claims in new ways and therefore, within these very processes, Roma can be recognised as political agents. These processes, in turn, challenge the very distinction between mere and good life named above.

Throughout this thesis, I pointed to misrecognitions about who counts as a political subject and who does not as well as to those categories that are embedded in the conception of citizenship and that need to be articulated anew (Chapters Two, Three, Five and Six). I stressed the need to be critical of the ways in which particular conceptions of citizenship are used to evaluate Roma and their practices, and fail to understand the kind of citizenship that Roma in London are enacting. If citizenship, as I suggest, is conceptualised as political subjectivity and as a way to make claims to rights, Roma can be recognised as political acting subjects through the very things they do (or do not do) (see Chapter Six's sub-sections of Contestation, Crossing the Barrier, Claims to Rights, Constituting Oneself as Actor). Otherwise we cannot expect those who are constituted as citizen outsiders to magically transform themselves into that figure of citizens that conventionally is imagined as white, masculine, occidental and Christian (Isin, 2009). For as long as cultural social and political membership is seen as a precondition for being heard, some individuals and groups will remain minoritised, marginalised, racialised and subjugated.

I argue that the acts of the Roma in East London may be contradictory, contested, momentary, accidental and heterogeneous – the daily struggles and the ways the participants handled and expressed them were disparate and hybrid. But Roma in London are claimants of rights and by doing so challenge the boundaries of the political, conceptions of what counts as political voice, and the public-private distinction that

continues to underpin dominant conceptions of citizenship. In doing so, they reveal that citizenship can be considered as political subjectivity.

While I showed how most of the participants indeed resist official or authoritative attempts to assimilation and struggle to establish their own spaces of autonomy, I also stressed that abjecthood is omnipresent for most of the participants and limits the space to make claims to rights beyond survival. It follows that the interrelation of the social and the political is at stake. While I argued that the resistance towards authorities, the resilience to live in and with abjecthood, and the simultaneous resignation are political acts, I also emphasised that these acts are often not recognised as such since they are mostly taking place within what would be traditionally classified as the social. In Chapter Two I drew on Aristotle's understanding that speech is what sets 'man' apart from other animals. Aristotle makes speech the defining feature of the political as the political being is the speaking being. While Roma in East London speak by claiming various rights, social issues play such an omnipresent role, that they do not perform their acts in the spaces that are considered political spaces. In that way, their acts of claiming rights challenge the fixed categories of the social and the political, for within conventional concepts of citizenship an act is recognised as political depending on who is being addressed and where the claim is made. This finding then also reflects Braidotti's (2006) earlier raised argument stressing the difficulty of contesting fixed forms of representations as long as the terms within which these representations emerge are not challenged. In Chapter Two I suggested that in order to change dominant subject positions we need to 'reinvent ourselves'. Most of the acts of citizenship I observed in East London do not have a direct addressee and the spaces in which these acts of resistance and endurance occur, are not yet considered as places in which politics takes place. I argue that while the ethnographic narratives showed that the political takes place within the social for the Roma in East London, they also challenge this distinction altogether.

One of my interests in this research was to make the private visible and to politicise the depoliticised sphere of the everyday, for it includes both public and private issues (see Chapter Two). With their described struggles and efforts to voice their claims, Roma in East London do challenge both the boundaries of the political and the public. In this way, the situation of Roma in East London highlights the nature, tensions and anomalies that are entailed in the conception of citizenship and challenges what counts as political space. Also in this way the earlier discussed feminist slogan ‘the personal is political’ aptly summarises the endless ways in which not only the official-political realm, i.e. the state, but also the spheres of civil society, the family and the personal are deeply political and pervaded by power (Prins, 2006). Thus the analysis of the authoritative documents and fieldwork observations also demonstrates that certain mechanisms related to the logic of citizenship underpin the situation of Romanian Roma participants in East London. The categories and vocabulary that are currently embedded in the conception of citizenship leave little space for recognition of these struggles as political acts.

I have also shown that Roma in East London are, arguably, what Isin terms a ‘new and unnamed figure of citizenship’ (2009, p. 367). Isin (2009, p. 367) argues that while,

this figure is unnamed, because it has not been recognised yet, and while it is inarticulable, because the figure escapes the categories authoritative discourse defined for it, and while it is unsettling, because it belies the modern figure of the citizen with singular loyalty, identity and belonging, there is little account of the ways in which these figures develop their identifications and subjectivities.

One of such accounts is this thesis, in which my analysis illustrated that the concept of being political for Roma in East London is inseparable from claims against social

injustice. In the discussions of Chapters Five and Six I showed that the very situation of Romanian Roma in East London challenges the conception of citizenship not only in terms of political ruptures, but also in terms of social ruptures. By looking at citizenship's institutional as well as anthropological functions, my work investigated not only one of the 'other scenes' of citizenship; it also highlighted the paradoxes of the places of citizenship. This thesis shed light on narratives from Roma in East London, in which the conception of citizenship is burdened with notions of the political and the social and clouded with various ideas, expectations and realities, which with this research, I started to rethink.

At the core of this thesis was the question of how Roma in East London can be understood as political subjects through the things they do and do not – against the ways they are continuously constituted as citizen outsiders. The premise for this research was to ask how the struggles, claims and choices of Roma in East London challenge the promise of citizenship and its predefined categories. The analysis of the documents and the fieldwork of my thesis extend the debate on conceptions of citizenship beyond status, rights, recognition and membership. It goes beyond the perspectives on citizenship discussed in Chapter Two. In their diversity, the narratives presented in Chapters Five and Six open up various questions of what is at stake when trying to determine what kind of voice and claim might count as an expression of autonomy (which is an expression that is noted as a precondition of being considered as subject with rights). Through the narratives of Chapter Six I indicated that we also need to un-name the subject that is supposed to have the right to make claims to rights, for otherwise this right might be reduced to one particular and limited conception of the subject of rights itself, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of those whose right to have rights is suspended despite holding citizenship.

Focusing on how people like Roma in East London can be understood as political subjects-as-citizens, the overall goal of this study was not to look for one single answer but to challenge and redefine dominant conceptions of voice, the political, the social, and the private and the public in a way that does not predefine what claims can be made, how they can be expressed, and by whom.

Through the analysis of the narratives from East London, I showed that Roma in East London express diverse and contradicting claims to rights that are at times momentary and at times accidental. While some break with norms in order to reclaim autonomy, Roma in East London are often not recognised in the ways they do so. Their voices are not recognised as political, and the sites of their struggle are not recognised as political sites. I argue, however, that the political subject is whoever enacts the capacity to claim and hold the rights that have been denied. I clarified that these claims do not happen in the ways and at the places that are conceptualised in conventional perspectives of citizenship I discussed in Chapter Two. Instead I showed that they take place in seemingly insignificant occurrences of life, such as refusing to subscribe to the stereotypical categories into which one is positioned; sustaining the capacity to work in precarious conditions and against work restrictions; developing alternative networks on which one can rely; or enduring in abjecthood, focusing on the struggles of the present.

With the analysis I thus demonstrated that any re-articulating of what is conceived as political needs to incorporate experiences of people like Roma in East London. Their acts of citizenship might be moments that do not necessarily entail formulated claims such as ‘I have been wronged’ (Dolar, 2006, p.105), but ones in which people subvert their existing situation without naming their claims or having them named. Conceptualising acts of citizenship in that way also allows us to imagine, see and interrogate those ordinary moments when people’s acts put processes in motion, or, in other words, drawing on Isin, to understand that ‘to act is to put something into motion, to create something new’ (2013, p.146)

While at the outset of this thesis I drew on Arendt who described the political as world-disclosing public action through which individuals reveal their humanness in the presence of equals (1990, p. 60), I have demonstrated how Roma as citizen outsiders, who are seemingly deprived of the access to public spheres and actions in the presence of equals become political in other ways. Analysing diurnal struggles of the everyday, I have shown how Roma in London, who are discursively constituted to lack speech, make themselves heard in often unrecognised ways that challenge the conception of citizenship and its notions of political voice, the public and private divide, as well as the demarcations of the social and the political.

Appendix

Basic demographics of the fieldwork participants in East London

Adina, female, 43 years old, 4 children

Andrei, male, 26 years old, 3 children

Ana, female, 35 years old, 6 children

Anna, female, 29 years old, 3 children

Anita, female, 30 years, 5 children, married to Sorin

Aurel, male, 32 years old, 4 children

Bela, female, 34 years old, 2 children

Bogdana, female, 40 years old, 6 children, single mother

Dana, female, 35 years old, 6 children, single mother

Daniel, male, Roma campaigner

Diona, female, 36 years old, 5 children, single mother

Eugenia, female, 35 years old, 6 children, single mother

Ewa, female, social worker

Florin, male, 26 years old, single, living rough

Gheorghe, male, 30 years old, his wife and 3 children stayed in Romania while he is in London

Jona, male, 16 years old, from Poland

Lenuta, female, 29 years old, four children, married to Iancu

Lisa, female, head teacher at a local school

Maria, female, social worker

Marilena, female, 19 years old, daughter of Ana

Martin, male, education consultant

Mary, female, social worker

Michael, male, 33 years old, from Czech Republic, 2 children, married to Valentina

Nicolae, male, 32 years old, 4 children

Oteg, male, 35 years old, 5 children

Petru, male, 30 years old, 2 children, married, couple obtains work permits: Petru a blue card, his wife a yellow card

Romana, female, 35 years old, 4 children

Sonia, female, 28 years old, 3 children, married, lives together with her father, mother and brother

Stella, female, 31 years old, 5 children, married

Social Worker 1, female

Social Worker 2, male

HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND MATERIALS ETHICS COMMITTEE (HPMEC) PROFORMA

Please complete and send to:

John Oates (j.m.oates@open.ac.uk), Chair,
Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC)
Centre for Childhood Development and Learning (CHDL),
Briggs, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

Also send a copy to Research-ethics@open.ac.uk

If you have any queries before you fill in this form please look at the
Research Ethics (intranet) web site: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>

Title of project

A short, descriptive title.

Internal Outsiders

Roma and the modern concept of citizenship

Schedule

Time frame for the research and its data collection phase(s).

Field research planned for autumn 2010, approx September to January

Abstract

A summary of the main points of the research, written in terms easily understandable by a non-specialist and containing no technical terms.

The present research aim is to examine to what extent the situation of Roma and Roma as 'othered' and marginalised European citizens challenge the modern concept of citizenship. The study aims to analyse this dilemma in two steps. At a theoretical level, it will first open up the key components of modern citizenship that are understood as a construction of modern liberal thought. In a second step it will show how the concept of modern citizenship conditions the deeply entrenched marginalisation of Roma from the space of Europe. At the empirical level the study proposes to first examine how the British authorities' discourse problematises Roma in the UK and frames the situation of Roma as a 'problem for citizenship'. With a citizenship perspective that focuses mainly on membership and belonging, the second aim is to explore how individual experiences of Roma in London question the ways in which state authorities problematise their existence as citizens. It will do so by asking what citizenship and membership might mean to Roma (in London) themselves.

With regard to methodology, the research follows two main methods: critical discourse analysis of selected authoritative papers and semi-structured interviews with Roma in London. These methods enable the institutional problematisations to be merged with narratives on how these issues are experienced and articulated by Roma in London.

Source(s) of funding

Details of the external or internal funding body (e.g. ESRC, MRC).

PhD scholarship ENACT

CONFIDENTIAL

Justification for research

What contribution to knowledge, policy, practice, and people's lives the research will make?

Despite long established assumptions that Roma do not 'fit' (Lucassen: 2008), there is hardly any empirical research carried out that asks how Roma understand themselves as citizens. I will therefore explore a relatively unknown field - the set of circumstances of how Roma find themselves in the situation of being the constituted internal outsider and how Roma perceive their situation as European citizens 'inside out' the political community.

This study aims to shed light on how individual experiences of Roma as citizens in London will reflect a possible gap within wider cultural and socio-political discourses. The focus is on human experiences: on how Roma act and articulate their situation in order to depict how they claim rights and how they interpret their place within society. With a necessarily qualitative research approach, the study then allows to analyse how Roma enact, articulate and experience issues of citizenship identity and membership, as well as other components such as participation and belonging. These new insights will enable the development of narratives through which 'ordinary' claims of Roma can be comprehended from an emic perspective.

Further it is believed that these individual experiences of citizenship are then indeed not only individual narratives but also social constructions. As narratives they shape a progressive discourse, which has the potential to give incentives for a collective learning and finally a realisation of these in social and political institutions and policies. In this way this study will provide research institutes, NGOs and academia with important insights about experiences of Roma and acts of citizenship as well as about the extent to which discourse formulators operationalise subject formation processes.

Investigators

Give **names** and **units** of all persons involved in the collection and handling of individual data. Please name **one** person as **Principal Investigator** (PI).

Juliane Solf

Published ethical guidelines to be followed

For example: BERA, BPS, BSA (see Research Ethics web site for more information).

BSA, BERA

Location(s) of data collection

Give details of where and when data will be collected. If on private, corporate or institutional premises, indicate what approvals are gained/required.

Data will be collected in and around London in autumn 2010. Regarding the interviews, I will cooperate with NGOs and Support Groups, which work together with Roma. Volunteering for these organisations will enable me to establish contact to possible research participants.

I will also identify certain authoritative documents, which will then be analysed.

Data will also be collected from the Museum of London archive, which holds older interviews with Roma from London about belonging. These interviews were held for an exhibition in 2006. I have contacted the Museum and the responsible person has allowed me to use the material for research reasons.

Participants

Give details of the population from which you will be sampling and how this sampling will be done.

A methodology that focuses on interviewing and participant observation is essential since most of the theoretical debate about the meaning of citizenship is 'conducted in what is virtually an empirical void'. This approach to citizenship and acts takes place in communicative situations and arises out of narratives of rather ordinary life experiences. Through the conducted interviews, a database of narratives of still unknown trajectories will be created.

Whom exactly I will be able to interview depends finally on several factors. As I will make myself gradually familiar with the field, which will mainly be families engaged with the few Roma NGOs or Support Groups in London, I will be able to learn who would be interested to talk to me or allow me to record conversations about relevant topics amongst them. My interest is to speak to ordinary people, not to activists. As a total figure, initially I do not aim to interview more than 20 people, ideally varying in terms of gender and age.

I do not intend to interview people under 18 years of age.

Recruitment procedures

How will you identify and approach potential participants?

Volunteering for Roma NGOs and support groups will help me to meet and establish contact with Roma and possible participants. As I am interested in acts of citizenship of those who usually do not count as political subjects, I am not interested in interviewing activist. This is a small-scale qualitative research study.

Consent

Give details of how informed consent will be gained and attach copies of information sheet(s) and consent form(s). Give details of how participants can withdraw consent and what will happen to their data in such a case (see the Research Ethics web site for an advisory document).

In line with the 2009 Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association, I will 'obtain in advance the informed consent of persons being studied, providing information, owning or controlling access to material being studied, or otherwise identified as having interests which might be impacted by the research' (AAA 2009: 3). However, the degree and breadth of informed consent required in the present project may be affected by requirements of other codes, laws, and ethics of the place or community in which my research is pursued.

The participants will be provided with as much information as needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in the study. I will offer the participants so sign a prepared consent form that will also ensure the possibility for them to withdraw at any stage. The collected data from participants who subsequently withdrew their consent will not be used in the analysis. In the analysis all participants will be made anonymous.

A preliminary consent form is attached.

Methodology

Outline the method(s) that will be employed to collect and analyse data.

The research follows three main methods: critical discourse analysis of selected authoritative papers, semi-structured interviews and participant observation of Roma in London. These methods enable the institutional problematisations to be merged with

narratives on how these issues are experienced and articulated by Roma in London.

Depending on the wishes of the participants and the overall situation, the interviews will be audio recorded and selected parts will be transcribed.

Data Protection

Give details of registration of the project under the DP Act and the procedures to be followed re: storage and disposal of data to comply with the Act. Please note OU guidance on the Research Ethics FAQ page - <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/strategy-unit/offices/ethics/faqs.shtml#p6>.

Independently whether the participants want to sign an informed consent form, they do not abrogate their right to privacy. While they will be informed that they can refuse to answer any question they might feel uncomfortable with, anonymity and confidentiality in relation to the recording of information and the maintenance of records will be ensured. In the thesis, pseudonyms will be used and specific details that could make a participant identifiable, such as the area they live in, etc will be altered. Hence, the wishes of the participants are honoured at all times. The study therefore acts according to the ESRC Research Ethics Framework principle: 'confidentiality of information must be maintained and anonymity of participants respected'.

Recompense to participants

Normally, recompense is only given for expenses and inconvenience, otherwise it might be seen as coercion/inducement to participate. Give details of any recompense to participants.

Currently it is not planned to recompense the participants.

Deception

Give details of the withholding of any information from participants, or misrepresentation or other deception that is an integral part of the research. Any such deception should be fully justified.

Currently it is not planned to withhold any information from the participants.

Risks

Detail any foreseen risks to participants or researchers and, based on a risk assessment, the steps that will be taken to minimise/counter these. If the proposed study involves contact with children or other vulnerable groups, please confirm that an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure has been obtained for each person involved in these contacts.

Currently no risks are evidentially foreseen. From my current experiences there are no safety issues for the participants nor myself working within this field.

Debriefing

Give details of how information will be given to participants after data collection to inform them of the purpose of their participation and the research more broadly.

If the participants wish to do so, they will be given access to the research study, in particular the data collection and analysis part, to read through it and possibly make me aware of parts they might disagree with.

Declaration

Declare here that the research will conform to the above protocol and that any significant changes or new issues will be raised with the HPMEC before they are implemented.

A **Final Report** form will need to be filled in once the research has ended (you will be contacted by HPMEC on the date for final report below).

Contact details

Name **juliane solf**

Unit **POLIS**

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Signature(s) **juliane solf**

(this can be the typed name(s) of investigator(s) if electronic copy is submitted (which is preferred))

Date **23.03.2010**

Proposed date for
Final Report **01.06.2011**

CONFIDENTIAL

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