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Romani Exclusion in France

A Case Study in Ille-et-Vilaine

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Abstract

Social exclusion has affected the lives of Romanies for centuries. Today this continues in France and across many countries in Europe. In France, a large obstacle for inclusion has been the lack of education regarding Romani history, which has enabled stereotypes and misperceptions of the Romani communities to become prominent. Additionally, many Romanies have not received general education as is expected by the French norm, resulting in a disparity in education, which in turn has contributed to the social exclusion experienced by Romanies. To understand how Romanies are being excluded from the hegemonic French norms, the matters of education, employment, housing, mobility, deportations and gender will be explored through means of first hand interviews and fieldwork conducted in Ille-et-Vilaine, supplemented by media reports and previous research regarding exclusion and Romanies.

Key Words: Deportations, Education, Employment, Exclusion, France, Gens du Voyage, Gypsy, Ille-et-Vilaine, Romani, Roms

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1 Introduction

Stereotypes tell us that Romani[1] people are uneducated, depraved, mendacious, romantically nomadic musicians and thieves, who wear beautiful skirts. Yet how many of these stereotypes are based in mendacity themselves? When thinking about nomadic musicians and depraved thieves it is perhaps easy to misunderstand that those who may appear as indolent vagabonds are actually excluded from society and are consequently unable to access education or find reputable work. Romanies in France today have found themselves in such a position of social exclusion. Many live a life of poverty, unable to find employment due to lack of education and xenophobia. Some find work selling scrap metal or handmade goods, others have found no other option than to beg. As a result, many Romanies live in unsafe conditions such as temporary large scale camps, with no running water. While some choose to live in trailers, others have few options and sleep in cars or even on the street. This poverty has effected more than just housing, as social recognition and the capacity to contribute to the community are diminished by its presence. When the EU opened up to countries such as Romania and Hungary in 2007, Romanies fled circumstances of poverty and bigotry and continue to be able to legally move to France. Due to other regulations, France is also able to legally deport these immigrants back from whence they came. The Romani people have been excluded from French society, by means of structural bias, economic difficulties, and local discrimination despite being EU citizens (FRA, 2009, p. 15).

1.1 A Short Romani History in Europe and France

To understand the complexity of the ongoing circumstances of Romani exclusion in Europe today, it is pertinent to understand the historical aspects. Approximately 1,000 years ago Romani people emigrated from what is now Northern India and started to move west, through the Middle East and arrived in Europe for the first time, by landing in Greece 700 years ago (Belton, 2005, p. 12;

[1] Also known as Gypsy, Tzigane and Roma. The uses of these words will be further explored below.

BBC, 2009) From the time that Romanies left India, the Romani people have been subject to a life on the move. It was not long after the Romanies had arrived in Europe that laws were passed that forbade them from settling down in a single location, laws that continued to be enforced in France until the 1980s (Hancock, 2003, p. 59; Carina, 2011). In France today, authorities continue to destroy illegal Romani family housing, and deport foreign Romanies (Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). In addition to this, all throughout Europe, some local Gadzos (Gadzo is the Romani word for people who are not Romani (Williams P. , 2003, p. 87)) have refused to serve, sell to, hire, or educate Romanies, leaving Romani populations with insufficient basic resources (Hancock, 2003, pp. 54-55). While this is not as common today, refusals to work with Romanies still happen throughout Europe (Le Monde, 2011 (a)). Romanies have continually been forced to abscond from Gadzos for centuries and have subsequently adapted to, and even embraced nomadic norms.

Those that did not stay on the road have faced far greater travesties. For about 550 years, approximately half of all Romanies in Europe were being held as slaves in the Balkans; in 1721 the Emperor Karl the VI authorized an extermination of all Romanies on his land; again during the Second World War, extermination was called for, resulting in approximately 1.5 million Romanies being killed as part of the Nazi's agenda (Hancock, 2003, pp. 29, 32, 48). This history has affected present Romani culture, work habits, migration patterns, identity, and interaction with Gadzos. History needs to be remembered when considering the context of modern social exclusion. When considering this history, it comes as no surprise that a mutual mistrust between Gadzos and Romanies has been shaped and that Romanies continue to live separately from the hegemonic norm.

Whilst Romanies migrated to different regions across the European continent, new traditions were adopted, environments adapted to, religions embraced, languages incorporated, subsequently separate identities were developed. This has created a diverse group of people who simultaneously celebrate their common

history and culture, while still recognizing the broad differences that do exist. While the Romanies have small minority communities in many European countries, they are collectively the largest minority within the EU, an estimated 10-12 million people (BBC, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 14). Yet due to the fact that Romanies are quite spread out and often live a nomadic lifestyle, the large numbers of Romanies go unnoticed, and unrepresented in government.

As Romani communities immigrated into France, distinct group identities were created. In the north of France, including the geographic department of Ille-et-Vilaine these groups are collectively known as *Gens du Voyage,* French for People of Travel. Romanies have continued to migrate within Europe to this day. Some, whose ancestors had settled in Eastern Europe during earlier migrations, are now migrating into Western Europe, including to Ille-et-Vilaine. Most of these migrants are citizens of eastern European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria, and are not familiar with French language or customs. These Romani migrants are known in French as *Roms*. Despite that Roms do not have French citizenship and Gens du Voyage do, these two groups are often confused and misrepresented in media, literature, and daily Gadzo discourse.

1.2 Definitions: Romani, Rom and Gens du Voyage

Tzigane, Gypsy, Roma, and Romani, all refer to the same group of people, yet they carry with them different connotations. In recent years Romanies have preferred to identify with the terms 'Romani' and 'Roma' over Gypsy and Tzigane. This has been a part of an effort to create a new identity and cast off negative stereotypes which has become connected with the terms Gypsy and Tzigane. The term 'Roma' has gained popularity in Northern and Western Europe amongst both Romanies and Gadzos, but it is not accepted by all Romanies. While Gadzos use 'Roma' as an inclusive term for all Romanies, for some Romani communities, this term has come to represent a subset of Romanies, who accept and identify with the term. 'Romani' on the other hand, is accepted by all subgroups as a term to identify with (Hancock, 2003, p. xix). Within the French context, the term Rom is mostly used, but it is ill-defined, as the media,

politicians, French laws, Gadzos, and the Romanies themselves, all have different understandings of this word. Romanies tend to refer to themselves by the smaller kinship groups that they identify with, such as Roma, Sinté, Kalé, Manush, etc. The French law categorizes most Romani residents of France as either nomadic citizens (Gens du Voyage) or foreigners[2] (Roms). French politicians alternatively have deemed all nomadic people in France to be included within the term 'Roms' (*Carina*, 2011). The media and even academic articles, (which unlike the other sources are not solely aimed at a French public) take a similar approach and usually refer to all Romanies as one group: Roma. Even specialists have different conclusion for what is, or is not included within these terms. While no one questions whether Roms are a part of the Romani ethnic group, some experts do not consider Gens du Voyage to be a subgroup of the larger Romani community, whilst others insist that they are part of the same cultural, ethnic, and/or linguistic family. In reality both answers are correct due to that French people who choose to live in trailers (usually for economic purposes, and are also subject to social exclusion) are considered nomadic and therefore Gens du Voyage (*Francis*, 2011), just as the nomadic Romani French citizens are. Thus, while all Gens du Voyage are French citizens, not all are Romani. In addition to this, Romanies and Gadzos have intermarried[3], creating genetically and culturally mixed communities (*Carina*, 2011). Nonetheless, despite the difference in legal standing between Roms and Gens du Voyage, they are both swept to the margins of society of France, both facing barriers to adequate education, work, housing and social inclusion.

For the purposes of this thesis, three major categories will be used: Gens du Voyage, Rom (plural Roms), and Romani (plural Romanies). Gens du Voyage will be defined as the nomadic citizens of France, who have a mixed French and Romani heritage; Roms to be the ethnically Romani whom recently migrated to

[2] This is a bit simplified as foreigners from different countries have different rights in France. EU citizens have more rights than non EU citizens, but citizens of Romania and Bulgaria have restricted EU rights, which will be discussed below.

[3] Usually French/Romani marriages are between a French woman who marries and moves into the Romani community, and a Romani man. (Carina, 2011; Hancock, 2003, p. 76)

France from Eastern Europe[4] and do not have French citizenship; and Romanies be the all inclusive term encompassing Gens du Voyage and Roms along with Kalé, Sinté and other interrelated communities. While the focus of this thesis is exclusively on the Romanies of Europe, and specifically those of France, there are large Romani communities in Australia, North and South America, as well as in Africa and Asia (Hancock, 2003, p. xvii). Furthermore, Gens du Voyage and Roms are the predominant groups of Romanies in Ille-et-Vilaine and are therefore the focal point of the fieldwork conducted.

1.3 Commonalities between Roms and Gens du Voyage

Whether or not Gens du Voyage are ethnically linked to Roms, they do have shared common traits. These two groups have both been historically nomadic, in part due to laws, regulations and xenophobia of the hegemonic norms within the areas that Romanies have intermittently inhabited. Likewise both groups are connected to stereotypes of being loud, dirty, cheating, thieves, who create joyful music as they wonder from city to city looking for money as beggars, peddlers, musicians, and scrap metal collectors (Williams P. , 2003, p. 58; *Carina*, 2011). Perhaps what is most important about these stereotypes is that their origins are based on assumptions made by a populous that is mostly not educated about either Roms or Gens du Voyage, nor any Romani history.

Another commonality of Roms and Gens du Voyage is language, although this is only partially true. The Romani people have their own language, called Romani, yet as separate groups have continued to move across Europe for hundreds of years, this language has picked up new words, metaphors, and accents of local languages, as it adjusts to new cultures and location. In some cases the original Romani language has lost most of the older words and configuration, and has become more of a dialect of the local language. As different groups of Romanies have moved across Europe in different directions, some have picked up more Romanian words, others Spanish, French, Turkish, etc. This has resulted in

[4] Although Roms within the context of France will be the focus within this thesis, the majority of Roms reside in Eastern Europe.

people speaking versions of Romani that cannot be understood by other Romani speakers. While Gens du Voyage are fluent in French, many also speak a French dialect of Romani (*Carina*, 2011). Most Roms speak a Romani dialect as well, yet these dialects are influenced by various languages, especially their childhood vernaculars, such as Romanian, Bulgarian and Slovak. However, many Roms in France do not speak French (*Carina*, 2011).

Finally, poverty is felt by both groups. Both Gens du Voyage and Roms are commonly under-educated, and therefore often find income by working in the informal sectors. This work is by definition outside of legal regulations, and thus leaves workers vulnerable to inconsistent hours, low pay and no protection.

1.4 Differences between Roms and Gens du Voyage

Although Gens du Voyage and Roms share certain historical particulars, the two communities themselves consider the other quite distinct from their own, as the two groups diverged several hundred years ago, and have therefore had distinct influences since that time. It is not only Romanies who see a distinction between these two groups, as the French also law classifies them separately. While the media and most Gadzos do not differentiate between any Romani subgroups, the law distinguishes between the two subgroups of Gens du Voyage as nomadic citizens,[5] and Roms as (mostly illegal) foreigners. This legal standing allocates selected resources and assistance to Gens du Voyage such as housing assistance, housing plots, family financial assistance and legal protection which Roms have not been given access too. Due to the distinction in legal standing, the two groups do not have equal access to housing or other legal assistance. Subsequently Gens du Voyage have more resources and often reside in trailers on the outskirts of towns, while many Roms in Ille-et-Vilaine do not have such options, and sleep in their vehicles, tents, or even on the streets.

[5] Nomadic citizens are to be understood as separate from non-nomadic citizens, as different legal ramifications apply. Further explanations will follow in chapter four.

1.5 Thesis Question

How have Romanies been socially excluded in France and specifically in Ille-et-Vilaine, and how have these dynamics of social exclusion interacted with Romani education, employment, housing and migration? These aspects will be considered in detail to examine how circumstances impact the lives of both Roms and Gens du Voyage separately. It is important to include information regarding both Roms and Gens du Voyage, to understand the dynamics of each of their realities, as it interplays with their lives in Ille-et-Vilaine. Additionally, based on the information found, a case will be made for an approach to move past the current state of exclusion. To accomplish this, first hand sources from interviews with Roms and Gens du Voyage, as well as from interviews conducted with NGO and government officials will be used. Furthermore, second hand sources including research regarding Romanies in Europe, exclusion and poverty, as well as news articles and legal regulations presented by France and the UN will be used.

2 Theoretical Overview

To create a well rounded study, it has been important to integrate a variety of sources of research to supplement the fieldwork. Thus I have used information as presented by Hancock, a professor of Romani Studies to understand the broader concerns of Romanies with an emic view point; Williams, a French anthropologist to get in-depth insight from a French Gadzo viewpoint; the FRA to get a better understanding of the broader European context with a UN viewpoint; and European exclusion experts to understand how exclusion effects people's realities. Additionally I have used a number of sources for their knowledge of specific and applicable statistics such as the INSEE, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies which collects and analyzes information regarding the French society and economy, and the World Bank.

2.1 Hancock: A Romani Academic

Ian Hancock, a Romani himself, is a professor of linguistics and Romani Studies at the University of Texas at Austin (Hancock, 2003). In his book 'We are the Romani People' Hancock is able to reveal nuances of history and culture that continues to affect Romani Gadzo relations today. From stereotypes to exterminations, poverty and migrations, he presents the history of a people that has long been absent from the hegemonic educational forum. Hancock uses this history to ascertain that the current general perception of Romanies, or Gypsies, is indeed distinct from Romani reality and self identity. While this book does not focus upon the Romanies of France, it does give insight regarding Romani norms and viewpoints that hold true throughout Europe. Hancock's emic, historical and analytical perspective is invaluable in a field that is dominated by Gadzo reports, and as such, is a valuable source for this report.

2.2 Williams: A French Anthropologist

There are not many Gadzo researchers that have conducted fieldwork regarding Romanies, from a participatory perspective. This is in part due to that there are many hindrances to doing such fieldwork, such as language barriers, and mutual

mistrust between Gadzos and Romanies. Patrick Williams, a French Anthropologist, researched Romani culture by living and traveling with Romanies, in a subgroup of Gens du Voyage in central France called the Manush. He lived with them over separate periods of times, and is able to present both on older account of their life in France circa 1970, as well as a more current one that is relevant today. Williams paints a somewhat romanticized picture of a people who are connected to nature and their surroundings, rich in culture and tradition, who continue to live on the outskirts of Gadzo communities. Williams argues that the Manush intentionally keep a distance from Gadzo communities in an effort to preserve their own culture, traditions and identity. While he did not do his research in Ille-et-Vilaine, much of the broader information holds true for this region and the entirety of France as well. This ethnography helps to illustrate the daily interaction and misunderstandings between Gens du Voyage and French Gadzos.

2.3 The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

The European Union has many sub-organizations that support it for different purposes, including research focusing upon human rights. One such organization is "The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which is an advisory body of the European Union. It was established in 2007 by a legal act of the European Union" (FRA, 2011). The FRA conducts research across Europe, collecting information regarding fundamental right and using the evidence found on the field. Additionally the FRA provides advice to the European Union as to how they could improve different situations, although the advice is not compulsory. One such research account that the FRA has reported on is that of Roms and is called "The Situation of Roma EU citizens moving to and settling in other EU Member States" (FRA, 2009, p. 1). For this report the FRA conducted a qualitative research study to understand the experience of Romani migrants from the Eastern European countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic who moved to the Western European countries of France, Finland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom (FRA, 2011, p. 10). "The [FRA]

research team interviewed some 165 Roma EU citizens across the five research Member States, 37 local authority officials and 49 NGO officers. The research sample included 59 Roma women" (FRA, 2011, p. 85). This report looked into issues of Romani education, housing, healthcare, civil rights and more on a broad spectrum in the five countries listed above. They are able to take a broader view of Romanies in Europe, even with relevant information in France. The broad view taken by the FRA, which is beneficial when looking at the overall experience of Romanies in Europe, results in the information being a bit general, lacking specific contexts and not taking into account historical relations between Roms, Gens du Voyage and Gadzos, which is necessary to understand before creating viable solutions of change. As a result, their findings are a welcome complement for this report, yet leaves space for development.

2.4 European Exclusion Experts

What is actually entailed in social exclusion? To delve into this subject, several authors who have worked with and written about the subject of social exclusion within a European context in the book *European Citizenship and Social Exclusion*. Throughout the book, the authors discus the different aspects of social exclusion, and while it is not specific to Romani circumstances, the ideas and arguments are valid for most socially excluded groups, and it indeed holds true for socially excluded Romanies. Roche and van Berkel define and examine exclusion in a broad introduction; additionally, van Berkel also explores how policies interact with social exclusion, which is useful here to understand how exclusion can manifest in both intended and unintended ways. Pixley writes about employment and social identity, which is particularly useful when looking at Romani informal work and social acknowledgment. And finally Williams and Windebank delve into how the informal work sector interacts with social exclusion, which is helpful here when understanding how Romanies are affected by primarily working in the informal sector.

2.4.1 Poverty, Social Exclusion and Their Consequences

Social exclusion is akin to the idea of poverty, yet they can be mutually exclusive. According to the United Nations "poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making" (United Nations). While the manifestations of social exclusion overlap quite a bit with those of poverty, the former focuses more upon the social exclusion, and the later is often focused more upon material exclusion. The idea of social exclusion includes issues relating to income, unemployment, work[6], housing, education, healthcare, culture, race, gender, class, political representation and the social interaction (or the lack there of) that are dependent on these (van Berkel, 1998, p. 188). While it is often so, those who are socially excluded are not necessarily impoverished, and those who are experiencing poverty, are not always socially excluded. An example of this is when a community is hit by a natural disaster, it is possible that residents becomes impoverished, yet not become socially excluded. Alternatively, it is possible for a wealthier community to be socially excluded, but would not be considered impoverished. Social exclusion is often a result of poverty (and at times the cause of poverty), but in the case of Romanies the situation is decidedly more complex. Thus the ideas of social exclusion will be further examined below.

Poverty and unemployment creates a situation where people are not able to make the daily social connections and network that link a community together. This entails that it is more complex to get opportunities, as many are found by just knowing the 'right' people. With time, people who have been consistently socially excluded do not want to continue looking for work, due to that they have lost all hope of finding any. To make matters worse, it is these same people who

[6] I use all three terms (income, unemployment and work) here because while they are all related non are mutually exclusive. You can have income without work in the form of welfare, you can be unemployed but still make money through informal work, and you can have un-paid work in the form of housework, internships, volunteering etc.

are often ‘skipped over’ by hiring institutions, who often will hire the relatively more privileged unemployed (van Berkel, 1998, p. 191). Skipping over the relatively less privileged unemployed, intentionally or not, is an act of exclusion. But such acts of exclusion are not only limited to employers as “social exclusion may be the intended or unintended consequences of selection processes taking place in all kinds of social institutions” (van Berkel, 1998, p. 191). Even, or perhaps, especially political representation is effected by poverty and social exclusion. People who are socially excluded often do not feel that there is an adequate party to represent them. “Participation in political parties and the trade-union movement is low too, not only because low-income households cannot afford to pay contributions, but also because many are disappointed in the political system and the trade-union movement” (van Berkel, 1998, p. 191). This has obvious effects on a group’s ability to be heard, to bargain, and to change their own realities. All this is indeed a reality for many Romanies, and is thus a subtext of analysis to come.

A person who works within the formal sector of a community is likely to be acknowledged as benefiting that community in some way. For those who are outside the formal work industry, it is not only the pay that is affected but also the social standing of the individual, that is akin to being unemployed. “Chronic unemployment is an injustice of exclusion which brings not only poverty but also a crisis of social acknowledgment” (Pixley, 1998, p. 122). Continuing from this idea, much of the work that Romanies do in France is out of the public eye, based on informal work and only as a last option do Romanies receive support from social services (FRA, 2009, p. 15). The result of this has become a lack of acknowledgment of the entire Romani community by the hegemonic French society, which in turn has lead to further exclusion and negative stereotyping, mistrust, and prejudice.

Poverty and unemployment quickly affect housing possibilities, as housing type, size and location are also limited by finances (FRA, 2009, p. 7). Housing location can very much affect ones social inclusion possibilities, as poorer areas are often

kept ‘out of sight out of mind’. Poverty affects education, not only due to that the housing location may not be close to a good school, or any school for that matter, but also due to that children from impoverished households may feel obliged to financially assist the family and therefore drop out of school to help with a family business, care for the younger children, or find other sources of income. While formal jobs have requirements limiting the minimum age of workers, work in the informal industry can be more lenient (Williams & Windebank, 1998, p. 106). This in turn, limits future job possibilities, as many do not have the education required for most employment positions.

Culture and race play in to the entire ordeal as well. According to Roche and van Berkel “social exclusion should be understood as referring to racism as well as unemployment, and this to discriminatory dynamics in the cultural sphere in addition to the economic sphere. That is, it should be seen in a broad perspective, as encompassing both labour-market and wider cultural forms of discrimination, inequality and ‘second-class’ citizenship related to ‘race’, ethnicity, cultural identity and migrant/immigrant status” (Roche & van Berkel, 1998, p. xviii).

As we will see, Romani people, including both Roms and Gens du Voyage are experiencing social exclusion. Many are unemployed or work in the paid informal industry, do not finish basic education, are subject to widespread racism, and are indeed unacknowledged by the larger community. As indicated above, the circumstances of the Romani people are more complex than just being victims of the system. As in all cases, it is important to take into account the agency of the people in questions, as it has an effect on their choices, and therefore their life style. This is not to say that the reality that the Romani people live in is the one they would have chosen in an optimal world, but it has in part been shaped by the collective decisions of their community. Yet, one needs to be careful not to assume that all Romanies have the same agency. The Romani people are by no means a homogenous group of people, especially due to that they are extraordinarily spread-out and have many different influences across Europe, and even on other continents as well. While many Romanies are nomadic, others are

sedentary. This adds to the confusion and complexity of understanding the situation, and thus also when constructing feasible solutions. Therefore, a diversity of Romani interests, wants and needs, will be reflected within this article. These ideas of social exclusion and Romani agency will be further explored in Chapter 4.

2.5 The Big Picture

There have been a number of studies that have concentrated on Romani exclusion in Europe, yet most of these have focused on Eastern Europe and few have included information specific to France. Those that have included France have mostly been larger research projects that aim to get a broad understanding of Romanies throughout Europe. Furthermore, even in these studies regarding Romanies, all too often the voice of the Romanies is lost or forgotten. Thus it has been a challenge to find applicable previously conducted research. Hancock presents a Romani reflection to the current exclusion, yet is not specific to France. Williams speaks exclusively of Romanies in France, yet mostly ignores the situation of exclusion. The FRA gives a broad overview of Romani exclusion in Europe, even with mentions of France, yet lacks history and specifics by having such a broad view. The media gives just glimpses to the public of the current exclusion experienced by Romanies, and the European exclusion experts do not make any connection of their work to the Romani people. There is a gap of information, with little reflection of how history, culture, policies and exclusion jointly affect both Romani and Gadzo communities. Hence, I will connect these ideas and aim to fill the gaps of knowledge with the fieldwork conducted in Ille-et-Vilaine with specific information regarding Romani exclusion in France and focusing upon the policies of Ille-et-Vilaine, using historical background and firsthand accounts of both Gadzos and Romanies in addition to the sources named above.

3 Method

I have aimed to represent differing groups of both Romanies and Gadzos in a way that accurately reflects their needs and interests by speaking directly to multiple representatives from each group. By presenting views expressed by various participating groups, and discussing how these views interplay with each other, I aim to show the intricacies of this complex situation. While the vulnerabilities of Romani communities have already been discussed above, Romanies are, have been, and continue to be more than just an excluded community. They have aims and agency, traditions and culture, experiences and goals, all which affect decisions made. Romanies have been wary of Gadzo reporters and researchers, as many have presented the Romani community in a way that Romanies themselves do not approve of. I am aware of these issues, and have striven to present all parties, Romani and Gadzo, in a reflective manner.

3.1 Romanies in Europe at Present

The history of the Romani people in Europe has been one of hardships, racism, exterminations, and poverty. Even today much of this continues, many Romani people across Europe face a life on the outskirts of society, with little access to work, education or political representation, indeed creating social exclusion from the homogenous norm. In Romania nearly 70% of the Romani population live on less than $4.30 a day, while in Slovakia 30% live under $2.15 a day, the unemployment rate of Romanies in Macedonia is over 70% and the illiteracy rate of Romanies in Montenegro is over 40% (The World Bank, 2010). Europe's largest minority are Romanies, at an estimated 10-12 million people spread across the continent (BBC, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 14). Of the Romanies that immigrated to Western Europe, most now reside in France or Spain. An approximated 400,000 Gens du Voyage currently live in France (BBC, 2010 (d)), second in Western Europe only to Spain (Ringold, 2000, p. 4). Additionally there are an estimated 12,000-15,000 Roms who reside in France despite continuous deportations (BBC, 2010 (d); Le Monde, 2011 (c)).

Many Roms migrate to France seeking better economic perspectives, and in some cases even political asylum. “Estimates suggest that approximately 50,000 Roma [Roms] left Central and Eastern Europe for the West along with other migrants in the early 1990s when border controls were relatively lenient. Migration slowed as countries began to close their borders. Beginning as early as late 1990, some Western European states, including France […] began to repatriate immigrants and deport asylum seekers whose applications were refused […] The reasons for migration have been many. Some Roma [Roms] sought political asylum to escape ethnic discrimination and difficult economic conditions, while others such as Roma [Roms] from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, fled from conflict and crisis (Ringold, 2000, p. 8).” Among Romani migrants who are repatriated and deported from France, many do not hesitate to return, consequently creating a cycle of migration that is expensive for both France and migrants (Aljazeera, 2010 (a); Le Monde, 2011 (b)).

3.2 Why Romani Exclusion?

Romanies are a truly global people that have significant populations in Europe, North and South America, Australia, as well as smaller population in Asia and Africa (Hancock, 2003, p. xvii). While I have focused on France, social exclusion itself is a global issue, which affects minority and hegemonic communities alike. While circumstances and outcomes differ, social exclusion creates rifts between communities, enables discrimination, and limits possible contributions to society. Thus we have a global people affected by a global issue, and while this study focuses on Europe, Romani exclusion continues to be an issue in other continents as well. Despite the global ubiquity of exclusion and the Romani people, significantly little is taught in schools about either subject or even reported in the news.

When speaking to Gadzos about Romani exclusion, I was met with a variety of reactions. Many of these responses were based on stereotypes which were akin to: ‘if the Roma have lived in Europe for such a long time, why are *they not able* to integrate?’ ‘They do not want to be a part of our communities, so why should

we help them?' 'They are dirty beggars and thieves and cannot be trusted.' 'Be careful of your belongings when you interview a Gypsy.' 'Gypsies like to trick outsiders, so be ware'. These remarks, even if mostly unintentionally, apply indiscriminate negative stereotypes to an incredibly diverse group of people. Such remarks indicate that there is an underlying perception of Romani society that is based on a lack of knowledge of Romani Gadzo historical relations. Indeed, not a single French Gadzo who was asked, had been taught anything regarding Romanies in an academic setting.

As I started my fieldwork, it became clear quite quickly, that the situation in France is about more than just the deportations of supposed criminals. It is about a group of people who are not understood by the hegemonic norm, and who additionally are not able to access the same opportunities as other French residents. It was about people who were socially excluded in the entirety of what this means. I started to understand that remarks such as the ones above, mostly unintentionally, were part of a system which continues to keep Romanies separate from the hegemonic norms, and in a socially excluded position of French society.

To understand how Romanies have been affected by social exclusion I have utilized France, and specifically Ille-et-Vilaine as my field. By focusing on the department of Ille-et-Vilaine, within the larger context of France, I was able to see how both local and national regulations interact with the lives of Romanies. Thus I am able to consider both larger national issues such as deportations, and local issues such as housing, to evaluate how communities are affected.

3.3 Why France?

The idea of working with Romanies in France started in the summer of 2010, when media across the world started to report about mass deportations of Romanies from France to places such as Romania and Bulgaria. According to media reports, entire camps of people were rounded up and sent away (BBC, 2010 (a)). Individuals were initially given the choice to leave, and to provide incentive to these people the French government provided 300 Euros per adult, and 100 per

child for the inconvenience of relocating outside of France (Aljazeera, 2010 (b); BBC, 2010 (e)). If they did not 'choose' to leave on their own accord, they risked being forcibly deported by government officials with no financial compensation (Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). News outlets such as the BBC, The Guardian and Aljazeera reported that the French government wanted to deport Romanies from France, as they were behaving illegally and criminally, and were therefore a threat to the security of France. The security of the French people, from immigrants and their children, has become a large topic of interest in the media, not only focusing on Romanies, but also on Africans, Muslims, and Arabs (*Carina*, 2011). Seeing this, other media reports questioned if it were just another political move to try to gain the public's favor (BBC, 2010 (b)). Yet, the situation surrounding both Roms and Gens du Voyage in France is considerably more complex than just the issues of deportation that the media has portrayed. It is a situation of exclusion, poverty, and mutual mistrust, which continues to affect the wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of French residents today.

Despite that deportations of Romani families were vividly debated in the international media, the topic was not one of discussion in Ille-et-Vilaine. Gadzo civilians had mostly read about the deportations in the news as I had, and had little to say about it. Government representatives recognized that it was happening; however each one stated that it was not under the jurisdiction of their office and suggested that I speak to another, that office in turn would refer me to yet another. Of everyone that was interviewed, the person that knew the least about the deportations was Carl, a young Rom, whom felt that his position in France was legal and safe, as were his Rom friends[7]. Subsequently, the information presented regarding deportations has been collected from secondhand media and UN sources.

[7] Carl's confidence of his legal residence in France illuminates the issue that there are Roms whom are unknowingly illegally residing in France.

3.4 Ille-et-Vilaine

While the reasoning for doing fieldwork in France was linked to the media portrayals of Romanies in France, my reasoning for conducting research in Ille-et-Vilaine was mostly due to practicalities. I had been offered an apartment to use as a base when doing my fieldwork, which happened to be in the city of Rennes in Ille-et-Vilaine. Ille-et-Vilaine is one of four geographical departments in the province of Bretagne in the northwestern corner of France. The largest city in Ille-et-Vilaine is Rennes, which has a population of approximately 200,000 residents, out of the circa 1 million whom live in Ille-et-Vilaine, while the total population of France is circa 65 million (INSEE, 2009; INSEE, 2011). The official foreign population of Ille-et-Vilaine is roughly 19,000, out of the total 3.5 million official foreign population of France (INSEE, 2007). The department of Ille-et-Vilaine has been supportive of the socialist party, and friendlier to Romanies than the current state government has been (*Carina*, 2011; *James*, 2011). Thus, there is not always agreement between local government and state government as to what the best course of actions is when in regards to Romanies (*Carina*, 2011).

There are an approximated 400,000 Gens du Voyage who live in France today, of which circa 700 families reside in Ille-et-Vilaine (*Grégoire*, 2011; BBC, 2010 (d)). Of the 12,000-15,000 Roms who reside in France, there are an estimated 30 families whom live Ille-et-Vilaine at any one time (*Grégoire*, 2011). The population of Roms and Gens du Voyage in the area are both quite fluid, due to nomadic practices and search of a better work (*Bernard*, 2011; BBC, 2010 (d)). As an example of nomadic practices, Ille-et-Vilaine has a variety of landscapes that can be enjoyed at different times of year, such as the beaches and seacoasts in the north that lie on the English Channel which both Gadzos and Romanies often visit during the summer. It is common for Romanies to migrate to the seacoast with their trailers for the summer, and as fall returns many Romanies prefer to go inland again (*Carina*, 2011).

Due to the accommodation found in Rennes, most of the fieldwork was conducted in Ille-et-Vilaine between February 2nd and March 16th 2011. However I also did attend a conference in Paris which focused on the nomads of France. At this conference I was able to meet with academics and Gens du Voyage from all around France. Additionally, I have maintained contact with several informants through August of 2011, and have thus been able to gather additional information even after departure from France.

3.5 Actors

From the beginning it was clear that it would be necessary to gather information from multiple viewpoints to understand the different aspects of Romani exclusion in France. The main actors that influence Romani exclusion in Ille-et-Vilaine are Gens du Voyage and Roms, local government officials, state government, NGOs who work with the issues, and the local Gadzo civilians. With exception to state government representatives I was able to meet first hand with individuals from each of these groups to gather information. Thus for information regarding the state government, I have relied on second hand sources such as French and EU documents as well as news media reports. The methods of collecting information first hand were flexible depending on the source, as to best fit the situation and/or individual. Interviews with local government and NGO representatives were comparatively more formal as to gain results that could be evaluated in contrast to other sources, whilst interviews with Romanies and Gadzo civilians were more informal enabling more personal experience of the informants to be shared. In both cases informants were encouraged to lead the conversation in an effort to gain unforeseen results, as they might offer information I would not have thought to have asked for. While I have kept the names of the organizations and offices I have worked with, the names of all individuals have been changed.

3.5.1 Romanies

Roms

There are approximately 30 Rom families in Ille-et-Vilaine at any one time (*Grégoire*, 2011). Some of these Roms are passing through the area on the way to other locations, whilst others have chosen to stay in one place, and still others have no financial option other than to stay where the currently are (*Carina*, 2011; Carl, 2011; Bernard, 2011). Roms are commonly seen within the city center of Rennes, often requesting money, yet are seldom seen in other circumstances. I was able to speak with two Roms, Carl and Marela, who provided me with much valuable information regarding their circumstances and personal history.

Gens du Voyage

There are approximately 700 Gens du Voyage families Ille-et-Vilaine (*Grégoire*, 2011). Of these I was able to speak to two individuals, Bianca and Manny, currently living on a government provided plot. They were both enthusiastic to show their living situation and working skills. Additionally I met with a young Gens du Voyage male, David, who was keen to share information regarding how the government issued identification booklets had affected the lives of members within his community, which will be further discussed in chapter four.

Conference Attendants

While most of the fieldwork was conducted in Ille-et-Vilaine, I also attended a conference in Paris which focused upon the current French record keeping methods of nomadic people within the country. As this conference was held at the beginning of my fieldwork, it became an introduction into the field, where I was able to make contact with a variety of people, including Gens du Voyage, academics, and artists who were knowledgeable about both Roms and Gens du Voyage.

3.5.2 Local Government

Besides Roms and Gens du Voyage, there are several actors in the geographical department of Ille-et-Vilaine who influence the current Romani situation. Each

one has different instructions and aims, which results in different aspects of Romani exclusion being addressed.

Rennes Métropole

Under the direction of the local government (and therefore also by state government) Rennes Métropole has a department to work solely with Gens du Voyage, and another department that works with homeless populations including Roms. Both of these offices are under strict orders from state government regulations as to what is permissible, what is stipulated, and of course what is prohibited. In both of these offices the employees are working to create cohesion and better the lives of the people involved, but are able to do so at varying stages of success due to the restrictions set by state government. The workers in these offices of Rennes Métropole, expressed a bit of frustration due to that they wanted to improve the situation, yet were bound by the regulations set forth by French state lawmakers.

Office of Gens du Voyage

The representative from the Rennes Métropole office for Gens du Voyage affairs that I spoke to was Francis. Francis oversees 21 government provided plots, solely for Gens du Voyage trailer residence; each plot hosts 8 to 44 families. Francis, in conjunction with a few colleagues are responsible to care of these plots, upgrade them, and build new ones when necessary. Francis was knowledgeable about the living norms of Gens du Voyage as experienced on the government plots, and their relations with the French Government.

DGPCS

From the Direction Generale Proximite Cohesion Social Rennes Métropole (DGPCS) office I met with Bernard. DGPCS is the Rennes Métropole office which aims to assist homeless people by providing access to free or low-priced clothes, food, healthcare, and more. Owing to that Roms are not French citizens, and since it is not illegal to live on the streets, the state feels that it does not have much responsibility to assist this group (*Bernard*, 2011). Additionally, due to a

long arduous history, Roms are often quite mistrusting of the French government representatives and do not want to accept their help, unless it comes in the form of cash (*Bernard*, 2011). This mistrust lies not only in history, but in the present as the French government has an ongoing practice of deporting Roms. The DGPCS office also works in conjunction with the police regarding deportations of Roms, although they denied any responsibility of this, as it is not their decision who is to be deported (*Bernard*, 2011).

Police

At a central Rennes Police station I was able to meet with two police officers, Vincent and Alice, and who provided their insights on Gadzo Romani relations and Romani criminality (Alice and Vincent were mostly sympathetic to the Roma situation and did not report high levels of Romani criminality). The police in Ille-et-Vilaine are responsible for keeping all residents safe, as well as assisting with deporting Romanies, although the final decision of which individuals are to be deported from Ille-et-Vilaine was left to one person, the Prefect of Police, who was unavailable for questioning.

3.5.3 NGOs

CAO

Another office that helps homeless people is Coordination pour l'Accueil et l'Orientation (CAO). Like DGPCS, CAO is an office which helps disadvantaged and homeless people (such as Roms) in Rennes. Yet CAO is able to reach and assist Roms more than DGPCS has been able to, as CAO is not associated with the government to the same extent. CAO is connected to the government in that they are a middle man of sorts, between the people they are helping, and the government. This means that they have more flexibility, yet are trusted by both Roms and the government. At this office I met with Cecelia who assists impecunious residents of Rennes by providing information and assistance to access of clothing, food, work, healthcare, etc. Although the members working at CAO were able to do more to assist Roms than those at DGPCS, Cecelia still felt

that they were not able to assist Romanies to the extent that CAO would have liked to, due to the austere restrictions of the state.

AGV

Coordonner l'Accueil des Gens du Voyage (AGV) is an NGO that works throughout the region of Ille-et-Vilaine. Their main focus is to assist Gens du Voyage, and advocate for their rights. AGV is well versed in the state laws, and use this to assist Gens du Voyage for land and housing rights, assistance for settled housing if wanted, as well as education, and work. They are also aware of, and assist with exclusion, gender, and children's issues. From AGV I interviewed Carina, who is an advocate for rights, especially land rights, of Gens du Voyage. She was particularly knowledgeable as she had worked for many years with both Roms and Gens du Voyage in France and in Eastern Europe, although her current work at AGV was focused on Gens du Voyage.

3.5.4 Gadzo Civilians

The final group is Gadzo Civilians. For the purposes of this article, Gadzo will be referring to hegemonic French citizens. I met with several Gadzos who had no working connection to Romanies. Some of these informants were residents of Ille-et-Vilaine in addition to others from varying regions across France. I spoke with both male and female Gadzos, including James, Matheo and Selma whose understanding of Romanies was mostly gathered from news reports, glimpses of Romani camps and exposure to Romani beggars.

3.5.5 Media

As the media is the main source of information for most Gadzos to learn about and make opinions regarding Romani people, as well as policies that may affect the Romanies, it is an important tool to help understand the larger context of Romani people in France. The media presents the first glimpse at the surface of issues, at times more in-depth reporting, and often have access to statistics and politicians that can be difficult for others to access. Thus, the media reports have been used to understand how the situation is being dealt with in the public forum

including the published statements of French government authorities. Through these means, the media has been undeniably useful for this article. I chose three news outlets: Aljazeera[8], BBC[9], and the Guardian[10], based on their current and relevant reports written in English regarding Romanies. Additionally I found Le Monde[11] to have valuable information from both Romani and French governmental view points. Due to that newscaster from different countries tend to cover different aspects of the same cases, it became valuable to use multiple news broadcasters from different countries to fully understand circumstances as hand. Since three of the news casts were designed to be broadcast in countries other than France, it is perhaps important to remember that those reports are made for an international audience. This can be useful, as the reports are more likely to explain that which may seem obvious to a French individual.

3.6 Limitations

There are many hurdles when trying to find accurate statistics regarding Romanies in France due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the French government does not recognize ethnic minorities. According to the French immigration minister Eric Besson "The concept of ethnic minorities is a concept that does not exist among the government" (Guardian, 2010 (b)). Additionally, collecting information about people who are often on the move can be quite complicated. Furthermore, the mutual mistrust of Romanies and Gadzos has resulted in Romanies avoiding the French authorities, which has not lent itself well to taking accurate statistics (FRA, 2009, p. 14). Yet another obstacle has been that national and international agencies often use individuals as a base count for statistics, while locals of Ill-et-Vilaine consistently used families as a base, resulting in families being counted instead of individuals. Thus we get statistics of 400,000 Gens du Voyage living in France, and 700 families living in Ille-et-Vilaine. Consequently it been difficult to determine, and in cases impossible to know, how many Romanies are living in

[8] http://english.aljazeera.net/
[9] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/
[10] http://www.guardian.co.uk/
[11] http://www.lemonde.fr/

an area, how many are currently living in sedentary locations such as apartments, how many have formal jobs, how many have committed crimes, and how many are avoiding the authorities all together. It is possible to keep statistics regarding how many French citizens live in trailers or in a nomadic fashion, and thus statistics regarding Gens du Voyage are more reliable than those regarding Roms.

The fact that the French state does not use ethnicity as base for statistics, but does use housing means that it is known how many French citizens are nomadic, and how many are sedentary. Consequently, the Romanies who are most easily identifiable, are those who are visibly excluded from society. There are Romanies in France who have found formal work, live in apartments, speak fluent French, understand the local culture, make meaningful and acknowledged contributions to the local community and perhaps even blend in with the local population. Yet, the very fact that these Romanies blend in, makes it more difficult to identify who they are, or to get information regarding their circumstances. While I was not able to make direct contact with this group of Romanies, it is important to include their viewpoint, thus, I have included information regarding this group as collected in the FRA report (FRA, 2009, p. 86).

4 The Manifestation of Exclusion

4.1 Gadzo Romani Relations

When preparing for inclusion of a minority within a hegemonic norm, there is always more involved than just providing legalized equal opportunities to succeed, there is interlinking history and culture which affect how groups perceive each other, how they interact, and also effect what is socially accepted or tolerable between the groups. When looking at the circumstances of Romani inclusion in France, it is more than two distinct cultures trying to co-exist. The Romanies in France today come from families who have persevered through extraordinary hardships, slavery, exterminations, and poverty. Lessons of survival learned from these experiences are passed on from generation to generation, some of which may include mistrust of Gadzos. Meanwhile, French locals have not been educated about these hardships in Romani history, or any Romani history for that matter, leaving them questioning why Romanies are not *able* to integrate. The resulting separation and distance created between the hegemonic French norm and the Romani norm, along with lack of education can itself lead to xenophobia and mistrust. Thus, the mistrust between Romanies and Gadzos is no trivial matter, which continues to affect relations today.

4.2 Romani Poverty

Poverty affects many different aspects of life, from possible housing and migration to education and social acceptance which are all large influences within the lives of Romanies. Poverty has affected Roms twice over, as most have not only experienced poverty in France, but also in their countries of birth. Many Roms left their home countries due to high levels of poverty. Many faced bigotry in classrooms, prejudice on the street, intolerance by the local police, and were not able to attain work, formal or other (FRA, 2011, p. 18; *Carl*, 2011). Attaining an income with which to support their families seemed out of reach and as a result tens of thousands have moved to France in hopes of receiving an income that could support themselves, their family and create a better future for their children

(BBC, 2010 (d); BBC, 2010 (c)). A life on the streets, in unsanitary rundown camps or living in their cars is not what they had in mind. While blatant less bigotry was experienced in France than in Eastern Europe, the social exclusion experienced still dictated their position of poverty (*Carl*, 2011). Additional hardship is incurred in France due to the Roms lack of French citizenship. While Gens du Voyage do have access to some government assistance, Roms have access to very little, thus making their position of poverty and exclusion all the more vulnerable.

4.3 Housing and Mobility

It might seem useful to discuss housing and migration in separate sections, but when referring to nomadic groups, it is impossible to split the two. For many Romanies, their home is indeed a vehicle. Gens du Voyage often live in trailers with cars to pull them (as replacements for the old wagon and horses) (Williams P. , 2003, p. 59)), while many Roms in Ille-et-Vilaine have little choice but to live in their cars, trucks or vans (*Carl*, 2011), while still others sleep in parks or under bridges (*Bernard*, 2011). As such, for most Romanies in Ille-et-Vilaine home and mobility have become linked and that which affects one, affects the other as well.

4.3.1 Housing and Mobility: Gens du Voyage

Despite that Gens du Voyage have lived in France for hundreds of years, they have maintained a position on the edge of society, and to a large degree have not been accepted by the hegemonic norm. Their often nomadic way of life is not well understood by Gadzos, and has become the root of many intercultural issues. According to Carina, a French aid worker who has worked to facilitate rights for both Roms and Gens du Voyage through AGV, the Romani's nomadic way of life, has been one of the bigger hurdles for inclusion into the mainstream French society. Yet, it cannot be forgotten that the nomadic lifestyle, is tied to a long history of local xenophobia and laws that had prevented Romanies from settling in one single location. According to Carina of AGV, due to the nomadic life style and that Gens du Voyage housing is often on the outskirts of town, it is more

difficult to include the nomadic Romani population into French society than Muslim or African immigrant populations (*Carina*, 2011). Despite that Muslim and African immigrants often travel farther distances, and hail from cultures that seemingly have larger cultural differences, it is easier for them to become included in the local society, as sedentary lifestyle is expected and accepted (Carina, 2011). Even though many Romani families are nomadic, not all are. Those that are nomadic, often keep within certain boundaries (*Carina*, 2011). These boundaries may have to do with proximity to cities, political borders, location of family and friends, school, work etc.

The culture clash of the sedentary and nomadic people in France has been explored by the French Anthropologist Patrick Williams in his book *Gypsy World*, who notes how local residents observed a caravan of impecunious Manush, a subgroup of Gens du Voyage, who made their way through the towns: "…were they [Gadzos] seeing only the torn and dirty clothes, the dilapidated state of some of the wagons, with their flaking paint of clashing colors, sheets of metal poorly attached to the roof to cover spots where the shell had rusted, and the panes missing from some of the windows and the hinges from the front doors? Women kept on begging and men did not know how to talk inside the stores; they were yelling as if they were outdoors, as if (and this was indeed the case) they had never lived in a house. There were disabled people among them, individuals missing a limb, limping, or feeble minded, and they were not kept hidden" (Williams P. , 2003, p. 57). What Williams shows here is that the Manush and indeed most Gens du Voyage, are at times not only visually distinctive but the also have dissimilar cultural norms, all of which may come off as a bit harsh and 'uncultured' to many Gadzos who are un-aware or uneducated about Romani poverty, history and culture (*Carina*, 2011).

Government Provided Plots

The government in Ille-et-Vilaine is now responsible for providing plots of land solely for Gens du Voyage trailer residence in cities that have a population of more than 5,000 people. There are currently approximately 700 plots in Ille-et-

Vilaine, which are found in groupings of 8-44 (*Francis*, 2011; *Grégoire*, 2011). Each plot provides space for one family, living in their own trailers (*Bianca*, 2011). The families often have several trailers, as families can be quite large. Often there is one trailer for the parents to live in, one for the children, one for a kitchen and common area, and sometimes more to provide for extended family if needed (*Bianca*, 2011). The plots are cemented over and each one has a small cement building which includes electricity, a sink and bathroom facilities (although amongst the ones that I saw, the buildings were being used for storage, as the families preferred the facilities in their own trailers (*Bianca*, 2011)). These plots were not designed for long term or permanent residence, but rather for only one to three months per stay (*Carina*, 2011). That which is included is rather meager, and not able to be individualized. The plots are made of gray concrete, with no paint, decorations, or individuality. Perhaps this is in accordance with the intent to limit the time in which a family lives in one place. Despite this, while some families stay for shorter periods, there are many who stay for 10 months, a year, or even several years (*Carina*, 2011; *Francis*, 2011). There are even many who are considered sedentary, only moving for seasonal agricultural work, religious events, and funerals. Yet many Gens du Voyage who could be considered sedentary, are still often on the road, some even traveling more miles than when officially nomadic; the difference lies in that now, they often return to a single location (Williams P. , 2003, p. 61).

When a family rents a plot from the government in Ille-et-Vilaine, check-ups by local authorities are included. A representative from the local government offices that work with Gens du Voyage stop by on a near daily bases to check in with the people living there (*Francis*, 2011). These representatives help with care-tacking of the location, such as keeping the road in decent shape, the water and electricity working or help with other concerns. It also serves as a mean of communication between the tenants and the government (*Francis*, 2011), and I suspect as a way to keep an ‘overseeing’ eye on the tenants.

Pros and Cons of Government Plots

The plots supplied by the government are providing Gens du Voyage with services that were not previously easily available, such as designated places to park their trailers on sturdy ground (fields can become quite difficult to manage after a rain (Williams P. , 2003, p. 59)), access to water and electricity, and regular check-ups by local authorities to assist with maintenance and other needs (*Francis*, 2011). Yet a negative aspect of this is that Gens du Voyage no longer have the same freedom to stop and set up where they like. The plots are often located far from city centers, schools, shops and other facilities, which keeps the plots and their residents 'out of sight out of mind' (*Carina*, 2011). Additionally for every town in Ille-et-Vilaine which has a population over 5,000 and which have built plots for Gens du Voyage, it is only legal for them to stay on these plots. This means that they no longer have the freedom to stay in open fields, forest clearings, seacoasts, or any other location not provided by the government, as they had been accustomed to doing for hundreds of years (Williams P. , 2003, p. 61). What this also means is that towns with over 5,000 inhabitants that do not provide plots, do not have the same restrictions on the Gens du Voyage (*Carina*, 2011). Due to this, it has become a mixed blessing to Gens du Voyage, that certain areas on the northern coast of Ille-et-Vilaine do not as of yet have government plots for their trailers. Taking advantage of this, many like to set up camp by the coasts and beaches during the summer, much to the dismay of local city authorities (*Carina*, 2011).

Settled Housing

While many Gens du Voyage of Ille-et-Vilaine live in trailers on the government provided plots, some, mostly women, are opting to live in apartments. This move is not as simple as it may seem, as many Gadzos are resistant to rent out their apartments to a Romani due to worries of insufficient funds, and at times even due to xenophobia (*Carina*, 2011). AGV is helping with these maters by finding apartments, and working with both land lords and Gens du Voyage as they make the transition to living in an apartment. In such cases, AGV does not only help

with the original move, but also makes regular visits after moving in, to assist with tenant land lord communication, and to ensure the rights of each are respected (*Carina*, 2011).

Identification

The government of France tries to keep track of the location of their citizens, yet due to that Gens du Voyage tend to be, to a certain extent nomadic, this can be a difficult subject. While sedentary French citizens report their address of residence, many Gens du voyage are not able to do this due to a lack of an address to give. In an effort to keep track of these nomadic citizens, the French government provisions each non-sedentary individual over the age of 14 with a special form of identification. While identification for sedentary French citizens a standard ID card, the identification for Gens du Voyage is a booklet that is required to be held on the person at all times, with penalties applied if found otherwise (*David*, 2011). Additionally, holders of such books are required to regularly check in with local police, so that the authorities could keep track of where the Romanies are, and have been (*David*, 2011). In the past, these booklets not only noted the general information such as names and birthday, but also detailed physical characteristics of each individual such as "height, chest size, biometric width of the face, width and length of the head, the length of right ear, width of the middle and little fingers of the left hand, the width of the left elbow, and eye color" along with two photos, and a list of where the person had been (Williams P. , 2003, p. 64).

As of 1969 the booklet is no longer as comprehensive with physical measurements, nor is it limited to Romani people. While all nomadic people of France now are required to go to the police and 'check in' with their booklets, or else receive a fine, the amount of time between check ins differs (*David*, 2011; *Francis*, 2011). If a person works in a traveling fair, carnival, or other mobile entertainment industry it is required to check in once every 5 years; if one is required to consistently move based on other employment reasons, one must check-in once a year, and if you are nomadic and do not fall into the above

categories (i.e. most Gens du Voyage) you are required to check in every 1-3 months depending on the region (*Francis*, 2011); while sedentary French citizens are required to renew their identification cards (in what could be compared to a check-in) every ten years. According to the French government, this is a way to know where its citizens are. Yet according to Gens du Voyage, this practice is akin to a criminal checking in with their parole officer, who try to make their lives in France "impossible" (Williams P. , 2003, p. 65; *David*, 2011). From this we can see that the French government is unequally concerned with the whereabouts of Gens-du-Voyage, as compared to their sedentary citizens. While an address is posted on the sedentary persons ID card, it is easy to move within a ten year period, and therefore quite possible that it might not be up to date. While it is true that nomadic people usually move more than sedentary people, many nomadic people live in one place for longer than one year, and certainly mostly stay longer than one month. These check-ins, according to many Gens du Voyage, seem to just be a way of the French government to control and harass the Romani people, as Gadzos who are nomadic[12] are mostly able to expect longer breaks without check-ins (Williams P. , 2003, p. 65; *David*, 2011).

4.3.2 Housing and Mobility: Roms

Roms do not receive the same assistance or security as the French government provides for Gens du Voyage. This is due to that the French government views Roms as illegal residents after an initial three months as visiting foreigners (which is the tourist visit limit without additional visas) is over and therefore the government does not feel obliged to assist Roms with housing. Additionally, the Roms mistrust of the French government officials, results in assistance through these channels being mostly avoided (*Bernard*, 2011). Many Roms in Ille-et-Vilaine live in their car, van or truck if they own one. Those who have been able to acquire a vehicle, often seek out other Roms in the area and park near each other. By doing this, Roms are able to look out for each other. For example, they

[12] Example: a carnival attendant or traveling salesman

can notify each other if it is necessary to move their vehicles to a new location, help keep each other informed of income and work opportunities and to keep each other safe; in general, to create a little community (*Carl*, 2011). The most important resource for many Roms are their connections; family or friends that have already been in the area, which can give assistance in finding shelter, income, and local knowledge. While they may help each other by forming groups and networks, these groups are rather fluid, as people come and go quite quickly, following their next lead. Roms who are able to, move around quite easily, and stay in one place, in this case Rennes, for a few days or maybe a month before continuing to a new location (*Bernard*, 2011).

Not all Roms have enough resources or income to own a car. As a result, they find shelter where they can, at times even under bridges (*Bernard*, 2011). The media reports that some Roms build shelter in camps outside of cities (Aljazeera, 2010 (c)), but not once did I see one, or hear mention of one in Ille-et-Vilaine. These poorest of the Roms, do not have the economical resources to move from city to city, and are therefore sedentary (*Carina*, 2011).

There are services available to assist the homeless populations of Ille-et-Vilaine. They provide access to food, clothing, some healthcare, showers, laundry services, help for battered women, contraceptives, help for psychological issues and more for lesser costs, or at times even free; in certain cases cash is given out. Yet, little of this is taken advantage of by Roms as they do not trust the government. According to Bernard, the only assistance Roms choose to accept is in the form of cash. This avoidance of authorities is in part due to the fear of being sent to a detention center or deportation, as most are in the country illegally (*Bernard*, 2011). This fear seems to be substantiated, as tens of thousands of Roms have been deported in the last years. In 2008 and 2009, 10,000 to 12,000 Roms were deported to Romania and Bulgaria each year, yet many of these deportees return to France (BBC, 2010 (d); Aljazeera, 2010 (b))

Gender and Mobility

Gender plays into the migrations of Roms from Eastern Europe to France to a great extent. Before migrating, and even after, it is expected within communities of Roms that one should get married at a young age, and women quickly become pregnant (*Carina*, 2011). Along with this, women are often responsible to stay at home to take care of the young and the home and are expected to go unpaid for this (FRA, 2009, p. 47). Additionally, unmarried older daughters often assist in childcare and housework starting from a young age. Older unmarried sons and young fathers on the other hand, have high expectations to bring home an income. As a result of lack of job possibilities in some Eastern European countries such as Romania, some of these young men try to find work in other countries, such as France (BBC, 2010 (c)). After hearing about other migrants and their relative success, some Roms make their way to different countries, depending on their personal networks (FRA, 2009, p. 18). As these men find income, much of it is sent in the form of remittances to support the family who is still in the country of origin (*Carina*, 2011; *Carl*, 2011). Then, only if the man has found a way to support himself and family, in addition to finding living conditions that he believes to be acceptable, does he bring his family to the new location (*Carina*, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 27). In most cases, this will not mean an apartment or house, but rather a van, tent, or shack. The outcome of this is that there are more Rom men in France than women. This is not to say that there are no women, as families often join the men quite quickly (FRA, 2009, p. 27). Indeed in Ille-et-Vilaine the most visible of the Roms were the women, due to their respective forms of collecting income, which will be further discussed in the section below.

4.4 Income and Education

There is a common misperception among Gadzos that Romanies do not want to work, yet everything that I have found has shown otherwise. Many Gens du Voyage and Rom alike work long hours, often to bring home a rather meager pay. Just about every Romani I spoke to, was eager to show off their working skills and/or wanted to find a better job (*Bianca*, 2011; *Carl*, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 20).

The perception of lack of employment is tied into social exclusion as well as the lack of acknowledgement of Romani work conducted within the informal sector.

4.4.1 Income and Education: Roms

Education

Education is highly valued in France, and there are no restrictions on administrative status for children to go to school (FRA, 2009, p. 58). This means that all Romani children are allowed to attend school, which allows them to learn not only all the basic topics, such as reading and math, but also learn French and French culture. This enables children to better integrate into France, and will allow them to find better jobs, housing, etc. In the words of one Romani man "Our children are developing themselves in a way that I cannot believe. For example one of my daughters, is disabled; she did not speak. Now she has excellent performance at school" (FRA, 2009, p. 57). For those who are able to attend school, this has become a clear advantage to their future, which benefits themselves, their family, and the local community (FRA, 2009, p. 58). School becomes a place not only to learn academic material, but to learn the French ways of conducting relationships, negotiating power, and other French norms of society. Unfortunately, despite that there are no regulations limiting attendance in schools, in practice most Romani children are not able to attend, or may not perform up to expectations due to poor or instable housing conditions (FRA, 2009, p. 58). Many youth may feel the need to assist the family by finding income, or helping with other children in the home (*Carina*, 2011). Additionally, parents may feel that education is a waste of time and energy due to the historical limited opportunities of employment[13], and at times may even be harmful due to prejudices experienced by the children at school (Aljazeera, 2010 (a); *Carina*, 2011).

While children have free access to education, adults have a more difficult time in this matter, and have often not had a high level of education in their country of

[13] The idea lies in that if it is only possible to attain an income through selling scrap metal or handmade goods, or by begging, there is no use of a formal education.

origin. This is an obvious disadvantage when trying to find legitimate work in France, as many have not finished secondary school, and may even be illiterate (*Carina*, 2011). Many have not learned French, and do not have the time or income to learn French when they arrive. While it seems that is will continue to be difficult for new immigrants to find jobs due to their lack of education, the future prospect of their children that attend school looks higher.

Legitimate Work

Roms are required to show proof of income to be able to receive a legal resident status. It is technically possible for Roms to find authorized work in France, yet in practice it becomes near impossible. Firstly many Roms are new in France and do not speak French, and neither are they familiar with French customs, making it difficult to make new networks, find prospective jobs and apply for them within the new French community. As discussed above, many Roms do not have the education that French workplaces expect. Thirdly, many Roms who have newly arrived in France, do so to escape poverty and racism in their country of birth (FRA, 2009, p. 6) and thus many do not have housing, which means no regular access to showers or laundry, making it difficult to make a good impression on employers. Unfortunately, racism against Roms is quite prevalent, and even this alone can make it difficult to find a legitimate job (FRA, 2009, p. 15). Despite that many Roms in physical appearance do not differ much from the local population, the clothing trends, especially of the women, can be visibly different. This makes it easier to distinguish who the Roms are, and easier to be biased against them. Even if the Roms in Ille-et-Vilaine are able to overcome all this, it is required by French law that Roms shall receive proper authorization for work before being hired. To receive this authorization the Romanies have to show that they have found a job with an income of at least 1,400 Euros a month, which is just above the national minimum wage for fulltime work (INSEE, 2010), additionally they have to pay 300 Euros monthly in health insurance (*Cecelia*, 2011). Yet this in itself can be difficult to find, as employers are urged to hire

French residents first, and only if this is not possible should they hire non residents (*Cecelia*, 2011). This authorization is only a concern for formal work.

Income and Gender

Due to the hardships in finding legitimate work, Roms often have to rely on other means to find an income. Roms frequently find work through their personal networks, often involving working with their hands. Both men and women participate in collecting income but often through different means. Women (more so than men) are commonly seen in bigger cities such as Rennes, asking for money on the streets (FRA, 2009, p. 50). While the majority of those who beg are women, men also do so, although in a more passive manner. Female Roms in varying ages will walk up to people on the streets or in town squares and ask them for money. It is not uncommon for a woman to perhaps tell the passerby of her hungry children and their lack of resources, even asking people to get additional money from an ATM[14] to give to her (*Mirela*, 2011; *Thomas*, 2011). Men who were begging were much less aggressive. They might sit on the sidewalk, leaning against a building with a cup to collect money, only speaking to the Romani women who were collecting in the same area. Yet this income is not sufficient to sustain a family, and is, in all likelihood, the secondary source of income.

Despite that begging has become a common source of income for many Roms in France and throughout Europe, especially during the recent economic downturns, it is not a desirable source, it is a last resort. Begging is only used as a last resort for many reasons: it is not a reliable source of income, it is not respected, it leaves one vulnerable to abuse, it can be physically stressful especially in cold or hot weather, and it is not recognized as a form of income by authorities, which means that it cannot be used to fulfill requirements to receive work authorization (*Carl*, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 50). Thus the ramifications of begging, and indeed all informal work, goes beyond income, as it also affects ones residence possibilities. As described by the FRA report "Roma respondents involved in begging or

[14] ATM is short for Automatic Teller Machine. It is a machine used to access cash from one's own bank account.

working in the informal economy reported difficulties in meeting the 'sufficient resources' requirement for registering their residence and staying in the destination country, because the income earned from informal activities is not recognized [by local authorities]" (FRA, 2009, pp. 50-51).

Another, more desirable source of income that has become quite common for Roms, is to collect discarded metal (such as old washing machines) strip it down, and then sell it to factories that are in need of such metals (*Francis*, 2011; *Carina*, 2011). Certain metals are especially sought after due to their higher value, such as copper and brass. Other sources of income include street performance (especially music), selling item at markets, washing cars, and sex work (Aljazeera, 2010 (c); *Carl*, 2011).

4.4.2 Income and Education: Gens du Voyage

While it might seem that Gens du Voyage and Roms would be natural allies due to their common ancestry and vulnerable positions, it has become quite the opposite. Gens du Voyage and Roms are often under competition for the same resources. It is quite difficult for the Gens du Voyage to find work for similar reasons as Roms, although the circumstances are not quite as harsh. As discussed above, despite that the Gens du Voyage have resided in France for quite some time, they are still considered to be outside the French 'norm'. The 'otherness' that results from this has become the root of much bias against Gens du Voyage., which has made it difficult to work outside of their own networks, due to common prejudices of them being "dirty, thieves, and untrustworthy" (*Carina*, 2011). These prejudices start early, and many Gens du Voyage, as well as Rom children, do not feel welcomed in schools, by teachers or fellow Gadzo students, which has been connected to children dropping out at a young age (FRA, 2009, p. 15). Additionally, due to nomadic life styles, keeping the children in school becomes difficult as they have to attend a different school every time the caravan moves to a new location. Parents will also pull their children out of school at a comparatively young age, because they do not want their children to be influenced by the negative pressures of the wider Gadzo society (*Carina*, 2011). This in turn

keeps the gap between the two societies in place, making it more difficult for Gens du Voyage to find jobs and be included in social activities.

Gens du Voyage do not have to deal with the legal hardships of finding work that Roms do, yet due to the above reasons, it is still quite difficult. Many prefer to work for themselves, doing many of the same things that Roms do, hence creating a competition between the two groups. While men collect metal from scrap yards, work sites and villas to strip it down and sell it; women peddle items such as blankets, sheets, and homemade items at markets, or by going door to door (Williams P. , 2003, p. 62; *Francis*, 2011). Other sources of income include repairing vehicles (*Bianca*, 2011), cleaning and painting houses (*Carina*, 2011), and family allowances distributed by the government to families with children in school (Williams P. , 2003). While Roms are quite limited to working with such commerce in an informal manner, Gens du Voyage are more likely to be 'on the books', meaning that their housing and work is recognized, to a certain extent, by the French government. Gens du Voyage do not fear the authorities to the extent that Roms do, as there is no risk of being deported. In order to rent the government provided plots, as well as receive the family allowance, Gens du Voyage need to be 'on the books'. Being legitimate allows Gens du Voyage to work within formal industries within cities, although as explained above, it can be difficult to find such employment.

4.4.3 Employment and Education: Gadzos

While it is clear that the Romani's lack of education affects their chances of finding employment, what is not discussed is that the Gadzos lack of education also negatively impacts Romani people. More specifically, most Gadzos have no education regarding Romani history, culture, language or traditions, and many Gadzos may not realize that the nomadic ways of the Romani have developed, in part out of necessity to survive (*James*, 2011; *Selma*, 2011; *Matheo*, 2011). Thus, Gadzos are unaware that for hundreds of years, until only a few decades ago, it was illegal for Romanies to stay in one place, that it was illegal for Romanies to settle, much less integrate. Gadzos are not taught how the Second World War

affected Romanies, when Romanies were not only killed in gas chambers along with homosexuals, handicapped, and Jews, but were also shot on-site, often in the woods were there was no one to keep count (Hancock, 2003, pp. 29, 32, 48). Gadzos may not have learned about the centuries of Romani slavery, or that it in some places it was legal to kill Romanies, or that in other places it was illegal for a Romani to be born (Hancock, 2003, p. 32). Neither are Gadzos taught about positive Romani contribution, such as flamenco dancing, vibrant story telling or colorful art; nor that Romanies hail from India and that the cultural traditions which may seem so foreign are adapted from India or one of the many lands that they crossed during the past 1,000 years. Many Gadzos do not realize that all these events affect how the Romani culture developed and how Romanies interact with Gadzos today (*James*, 2011; *Selma*, 2011). Instead, the understanding that most Gadzos have of Romani people is lead by modern media and political portrayals, which all too often consists of xenophobic and nationalistic rhetoric[15]. Roms and Gens du Voyage alike are portrayed as dirty, poor, backwards, savages, and thieves, that are unable or unwilling to integrate[16] (Williams P. , 2003, p. 35; *Carina*, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 7). As a result of this image of Romanies being dirty thieves, Gadzos mistrust Romanies. As a result of this mistrust, Gadzos are less likely to hire Romanies, rent property to Romanies, or even let their children share a classroom with Romani children. Gadzos lack of education regarding Romanies leads to the possibility of xenophobia, mistrust and prejudice.

4.5 Local and State Divergence

It would not be correct to assume that all of the French NGOs and differing Government authorities agree over how to best work with the Romani populations who reside in France. Most local government officials in Rennes did not concur with state government decisions regarding Romanies, as being in the best interest of the local population of Ille-et-Vilaine. Every government office as well as NGOs contacted in Ille-et-Vilaine critiqued that their work aimed at benefitting

[15] Example: (Le Monde, 2011 (b))

[16] I use the word 'integrate' here in a purposefully drastic way. Assimilation, integration and inclusion are all different ways for multiple cultures to work together, or to conform to one norm.

Romani people, was made increasingly difficult due to the decisions made by the state government which limits movement, residence permits and working permits for Romani people. Offices working with Roms expressed their disapproval while explaining that, Roms are required by French law to provide proof that they have found authorized employment with a minimum income of 1,400 Euros per month, in addition to the 300 Euros required for health insurance, yet they do not have access to most jobs, as the French government also insists that employers should hire French citizens before nonresident immigrants (*Cecelia*, 2011). Additionally government representatives have repeatedly expressed that they were limited in what they are able to do to assist Roms (*Bernard*, 2011; *Cecelia*, 2011). This is due to that they are required to follow only what the state government directs, and cannot make their own decisions based on experience. Offices working with Gens du Voyage noted that the government provided plots for Gens du Voyage residence, were lacking in number, quality and location (*Carina*, 2011). Additionally local authorities expressed the difficulties that this group faced regarding the political 'check in' every few months due to their lack of sedentary housing (*Carina*, 2011).

4.6 Roms, the Unknowingly Illegal Residents

As discussed above, many Romani people do not have a high level of education, and many are not literate. This coupled with the general mistrust that many Romanies have for governments, creates an environment where it is difficult to inform Roms of their rights as migration laws across Europe change. This effort becomes even more difficult as Roms travel to new countries with unfamiliar languages, such as France.

There are Roms in France are under the impression that they have the right to live and work where they like within the EU because they are EU citizens (*Carl*, 2011; FRA, 2009, p. 18). That which is perhaps not understood is the regulations as described above, and the rules of the Schengen area (which currently does allow open access to work and residence) does not apply for the non Schengen countries, even those within the EU (*Francis*, 2011).

This misunderstanding of French migration law could be seen as I was talking to Carl who stated that now that his home country Romania is part of the EU, he has the right to migrate, work and reside anywhere within the EU (*Carl*, 2011). When asked if he had had any trouble with authorities due to his legal status, he replied: no, he is an EU citizen, he has the right to live and work where he likes within the EU (*Carl*, 2011). This means that since 2007 when Romania joined the EU (BBC, 2007), Carl has been residing and working outside of Romania, believing that he was legally doing so. This is in spite that he has lived in several different countries including the UK, Ireland and France. This was presumably possible due to his avoidance of authorities since he left Romania. Based on Carl's confidence in that he was legally residing in France, it could lead one to believe that this is a common misunderstanding.

Many people rely on their own personal networks to receive and understand information about regulations and laws, but this becomes particularly important when one is illiterate or does not know the local language (van Berkel, 1998, p. 192; FRA, 2009, p. 18). As was the situation with Carl, this can also lead to misunderstanding, which in turn can lead to unknowingly committing illegal acts, such as illegally residing in France. As all these things come together, we can see that we have a population of Roms who are unknowingly illegally residing in France, who avoid the local authorities; coupled with a French state that does little to contact Roms unless it relates to deportation. This has resulted in severe social exclusion of Roms in France.

4.7 Deportations

Between 8,000 and 12,000 Roms have been deported from France to Romania and Bulgaria yearly since at least 2008 (BBC, 2010 (d); Guardian, 2010 (a)), yet the Rom population in France has sustain a population of 12,000-15,000 people (Le Monde, 2011 (c); Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). Migration, deportation and return migration have become an ongoing cycle for Roms in France. This cycle continues to occur due to the discrepancy in viewpoints of the actors.

In the summer of 2010, the international media began to take notice that France was deporting large groups of Roms. While many Roms felt that they have the right to live in France due to being citizens of countries which are now part of the European Union, the French government regards Romanies as a threat (*Carl*, 2011; *Carina*, 2011). Due to that Romanies and especially Roms are considered to be dirty and thieves by Gadzos, when something goes wrong, they easily become the black goat, which is convenient as they have little to politically defend themselves with. The media coverage of the mass deportations started after a young Romani man was shot and killed in his car after not stopping for the police. As a response to this, a group of Romanies protested at the local police station, and even set some cars alight. The French used this event as reasoning to deport entire groups of Romani families, due to participating in illegal behavior (BBC, 2010 (a)). The French Interior Minister Brice Hortefeux explained that the deportations were "not meant to stigmatise any community, regardless of who they are, but to punish illegal behaviour" (BBC, 2010 (d)). Yet that which was left out of media reports was that the Romani who was shot was Gens du Voyage, the Romanies who protested where Gens du Voyage, the Romanies who were deported were Roms (*Francis*, 2011).

The reports of the deportations were quite striking, as one could see pictures of families being forcibly removed from squalid conditions that they had tried to create a home in, what was missing from the reports was that deportations of Romanies is no new occurrence. The phenomenon which was new, was the media attention which was paid to the events (Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). In both 2008 and 2009, more than 10,000 Roms were deported from France to Romania and Bulgaria, where some of these Roms were once again deported further south (BBC, 2010 (d); Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). At of the end of August 2010, more than 8,000 Roms had been deported from France (Guardian, 2010 (a)). International media began reporting about the deportations of Roms from France in the end of July 2010 and continued to report about the subject through October 2010. During this time, the media reported how the French government justified the

deportations as a matter of national security for French citizens; how the EU commission condemned these actions; and in a few cases, reported on how Roms were being affected by the deportations. The media stayed on the story for a couple months, but have now moved on.

The common understanding among Gadzos in Ille-et-Vilaine was that the government used the opportunity as a seemingly political tool to gain popularity in a country which has become more conservative (*Carina*, 2011). According to the FRA report, most policies regarding Romanies in Europe, are political moves that try to protect the local populations from the perceived threat of the Romanies (FRA, 2009, p. 64). "At worst, this kind of negative [policy] response involves racist stereotyping by the authorities or NGOs involved. At best it is the antithesis of promoting freedom of movement and residence, when it considers 'returning' or 'moving on' Roma from other Member States as the most appropriate policy response" (FRA, 2009, p. 64).

France is defending the deportations as legal, noting that they have signed a special clause in the EU that allows any EU citizen to stay for a 3 months tourism visit, but citizens of Romania and Bulgaria who would like to live in France for a longer time, need to receive authorization, which, as discussed before, can be difficult if not impossible to receive (BBC, 2010 (d)). In fact most of the 15 original EU countries placed a similar clause in their EU agreements, in regards to Romanian and Bulgarian citizens, which the exceptions of Sweden and Finland (BBC, 2007). This means that most Roms who live in France are living there undocumented and illegally.

4.8 French and EU Divergence

The French government considers most Roms living in their country as illegal residents who are a threat to the larger population, who do not have sufficient means to provide for themselves and their family, and are therefore a burden on the French tax payers (Aljazeera, 2010 (b); BBC, 2010 (d)). The French government has an obligation to protect their people from threats and a right to

guard their social benefits from those who abuse the system. According to the government officials, deportations of Roms is not only to benefit the French citizens alone, as the conditions that the Roms are living in are squalid, do not have electricity, running water, and are a place of crime. Lack of water has led a lack of hygiene, which in turn has lead to a massive increase in avoidable diseases (Aljazeera, 2010 (c); BBC, 2010 (e)). The office of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, reported that the Romani camps were “sources of illegal trafficking, of profoundly shocking living standards, of exploitation of children for begging, of prostitution and crime” (BBC, 2010 (d)). In response to these conditions, the government has provided access to health and legal services, deported illegal residents found, destroyed the homes within the camps, and made it clear that they do not intend to change their policies (Aljazeera, 2010 (c); Le Monde, 2011 (c)). The government did not take any responsibility for the poverty, lack of facilities or human injustices that were reported in the camps.

The EU commission, condemned the mass deportations to be against the EU charter that states “every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States” (The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, 2000, p. 19) and that “collective expulsions are prohibited” (The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, 2000, p. 12). In a response to these EU claims, Eric Besson, the French immigration minister stated: "Free movement in the European area doesn't mean free settlement. What has been forgotten is that each of the European countries is responsible for its own national citizens" (Guardian, 2010 (b)). Besson’s statement brings up the sentiment that the country where individuals hold citizenship, should take responsibility for their citizens’ wellbeing, shifting responsibility for Roms back on their country of birth, and away from France.

The deportation process is more than just being put on a train, plane or bus back to the country of birth, it also includes signing paperwork (which entails more difficulties than might be expected due to lack of knowledge of the French language, and at times illiteracy); additionally, the French government is now

taking fingerprints of individuals to keep track of who has been deported, and perhaps more importantly who is returning (Aljazeera, 2010 (b)).

4.9 Return Migration

Thousands of Roms are deported from France every year, back to their country of birth. Yet, the number of Roms in France has not changed for many years. Over 10,000 Roms were deported in both 2008 and 2009, yet the population of Roms in France has remained between 12,000 and 15,000 people (Le Monde, 2011 (c); Aljazeera, 2010 (b)). What can be seen from this is that the number of Roms deported each year is close to the number of Roms who migrate to France each year. Indeed, many deported Romani migrants return to France if they are able, as economic prospects are seen as better in France (Le Monde, 2011 (c); Aljazeera, 2010 (a)).

4.10 Inclusion

We have seen that Romanies are indeed socially excluded from the French hegemonic norms in education, housing, job opportunities, and have been highly affected by poverty and migration. But why should it matter to the French government that Romanies are socially excluded? If French Gadzos work together with Romanies to create solutions where both Romanies and Gadzos are able to receive good education and meaningful work, Romanies will be able to contribute to the French society through their work, taxes, and improved purchasing power, etc, and thus not be a burden on the state as many Gadzos fear. Bringing Romanies out of exclusion would not only improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of Romanies in France, but also of Gadzos. Less social assistance would be needed and less money would be spent on deporting (and re-deporting) individuals and families as "exclusion is much more expensive than integration" (BBC, 2010 (a)). As Romanies became more affluent, they would be able to purchase more and contribute more. Romani inclusion in France, would not only benefit Romanies, but the French state and economy as well.

It is important to take note that there are people and programs which recognize the issues of socially excluding people, and are working to make the situation better. In recent years, the French government as well as local NGOs, have made efforts to improve the situation. Examples of this, as we seen above, is having government offices and NGO organizations which are completely dedicated to working with Romani communities, laws which oblige cities to provide space for Gens du Voyage to park their trailers, assistance with housing, health care, food and clothing. While all this is a step in the right direction, it is not enough. The French government is assisting Romanies through offices such as those at Rennes Métropole, while simultaneously oppressing them by deporting families, destroying housing and not teaching Romani history.

5 Conclusion

We can now see that Romanies continue to be excluded from the hegemonic French society in education, employment, housing, and mobility. In regards to education, it is legal for both Gens du Voyage and Rom children to attend schools in France, in practice it has not functioned well as Romanies may not feel welcome, may fear that their children will learn bad behaviors, and the children may feel the need to support the family. The educational system teaches more than just the subject courses (such as math, literature, chemistry etc) it teaches the students French culture. Thus, there are Romanies who are not only missing the education which would teach them the expected basics, but are also missing education regarding French history, relations and social structure. While laws allowing Romani children to attend schools are crucial for inclusion to happen, they alone will not be sufficient. Additionally, Gadzos lack of knowledge regarding Romani history and culture has lead to the possibility and indeed the implementation of xenophobia and prejudice. Subsequently Romanies are unprepared and undesired in the work place, thus formal employment becomes increasingly unfeasible to find. This is especially true for Roms who are required to fulfill rigid requirements to receive the authorization for (formal) work. Consequently, the work that is found is informal, separate from the normalized French work, and which does not provide any security for the workers. Thus Romanies have become excluded in the work place as well. As housing options are limited by the income available, the options available are quite limited for many Romanies. As a result, many Romanies live in trailers, cars, tents or even without shelter, with no address of residence. For the Romanies who have been able to attain a steady working position, it is not even then easy to find a place to rent, as prejudices come through when landlords consider renting their locations to Romanies. Hence, Romanies are excluded from the French normative housing. When it comes to mobility, Gens du Voyage have the freedom to move and travel as they like within France, but are required to check in with local police every 1-3 months, which other Gadzos are mostly exempted from. Roms on the other hand,

are not tracked as they move around in France. Due to the negative images that the local authorities have of Romanies and vice versa, Romanies avoid the authorities at high costs of social exclusion. While there have been Romanies who have been able to elude such circumstances of social exclusion, it is a reality for far too many.

The exclusion which faces Romanies today is in part due to divergent ideas as to what the most important issues are. For Romanies, there is importance in finding an income and to provide a safe home for their families. For the state government, it is to keep the French people safe and to protect their social services from those who may abuse them. For the local government it is to create a cohesive society within the boundaries that the state government has provided, and for the Gadzo civilians it is to provide as best they can for their families.

We can also see that people are working to improve the situation of Romani exclusion in France. Some of these improvements include that all children are allowed to go to school; there are family stipends for citizens with children who attend schools; there is assistance with housing and access to cheaper food, clothing, health care and more; there are NGOs who solely work to improve Romani lives; and there are local government offices which are focused on helping Romani people. These are all very important to creating a sustaining Romani inclusionary environment in France, but they are not enough. The cultural and historical setting and understanding of Romanies needs to be taken into account. Both Romanies and Gadzos need to be educated as per normal standards, additionally both need to be educated about both Romani and French history and culture.

5.1 Recommendations

It is easy to see that there is a problem in France regarding Romanies. What is more difficult to conclude are the identifying sub-issues that together create this larger problem; how do these sub-issues interact; how will manipulation of one issue affect others? Each obstacle facing Romanies today is quite complex; from

poverty, education, employment, housing, migration, to gender equality, each affects the other, and each deserves focused attention to create lasting solutions of inclusion. While there are many possible methods to facilitate better circumstances between Romanies and Gadzos, that which affects every part of Romani exclusion is the mutual mistrust and mutual lack of education. Thus, for inclusion to be successful not only is it pertinent to create solutions for housing and employment but also mutual education and mutual involvement. By mutual education I denote that it is essential to provide education for both Romanies and Gadzos. Both Gadzos and Romanies need to be educated on the subject of Romani history in Europe, to understand how conditions have evolved and lead to the current situation. With education, it is possible that the current mutual xenophobia and mistrust could be replaced with understanding and acceptance. This in turn could enable higher intercultural communication, job placement, contributions to society, and Romani general education. Romanies need to have equal access to educational opportunities. To achieve this, more is needed than the laws that allow all children to attend school, it is additionally essential to have educated teachers who understand the children's perhaps foreign background and needs. In this case, this means that even elementary teachers should have at least a rudimentary understanding of Romani history and culture. Basic education of both Romanies and Gadzos can lead to higher cultural cohesiveness, job eligibility, and therefore better housing and the ability to make meaningful contribution to both French and Romani societies. Secondly, it is crucial that all parties affected are involved when creating solutions. Both Romanies and Gadzos need to participate while making decisions, designing development plans, emplacing those plans, and when following up to judge their success.

Of all the issues, mutual education and involvement are of the upmost importance to improving Romani inclusion, as without these, exclusion will continue, Romanies will continue to not be eligible for job positions, and all will continue to mistrust. If Romanies are not included in the plan making process to include Romanies in to the constructs of the larger French society, how can we expect the

plans to resonate with the needs and agency of Romanies? Additionally it cannot be forgotten that Romanies are not a homogenic group. Even within France, Romanies have differing agency, viewpoints, and needs. Thus, to include Romanies within the larger society of Ille-et-Vilaine, differing viewpoints of both Roms and Gens du Voyage must also be acknowledged, heard, and included for meaningful change to occur. If France continues to deport Roms without taking into account the other aspects of Romani exclusion, deported Roms will continue to return to France. While providing areas of residence for Gens du Voyage is a step in the right direction, housing alone will not fix the issues. Mutual education and mutual involvement are central to decreasing stereotypes, mistrust, xenophobia, poverty and illiteracy, and are thus key to enabling social inclusion.

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