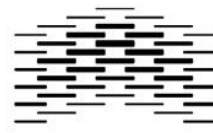Photo: Martin Holik, ROMEDIA

"THEY DON'T WANT TO INTEGRATE"

Field work with Roma Voices from Eastern and Central European Countries Living in the UK about Belonging, Othering, and Integration

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I am immensely grateful to all the Roma participants who have shared their stories and let me into their lives for the purpose of this thesis. You are amazing people and I am profoundly touched by your open hearted hospitality and the trust you have shown me. Thank you so very much for all that you have thought me about love, openness and humanity.

Thank you SHUSU and especially Phil Brown, who supported and advised me through my field study and time in England. Phil, I am really grateful for all the support you gave me, not only in terms of thesis feedback, but also making sure I had a place to stay and good time in England. I felt very welcome and appreciated. Thank you! The same goes for Phil Martin, Dan Allan and Orsi. Thank you so much for involving me and helping me make this thesis possible (and for the beer). And Danielle, thank you for lending me a work place at you kitchen table, an ear when I was frustrated and taking me to the nicest Pub in Mosley. You are great!

Thank you Marit Haldar for being my thesis advisor and always supporting me and cheering me on, however messy and chaotic the drafts have been. Thank you so very, very much for believing in me and the project and helping me to steer it in a sane direction. Your kind words, enthusiasm and professionalism has inspired me to carry on. Thank you!

Thank you Martina, for taking the time to push me and help me remember why we do this crazy job and keeping me focused on the importance of social work science. You are really a friend in need, thank you! Oda, thank you for proof reading my thesis, even though you had to write your own. You are cray cray! Thank you!

To the most important person in my life: Cosima, you are the best wife, partner and friend any person could ever wish to have. You supported me as I left to do field work in England and spent all your free weekends to fly over to me. You made home the best place to come back to. You helped me stay sane and loved me, even though I at times can only be described as a useless and egotistical master student with no relations to the outside world. You have supported and helped me in every decision we make. You have always believed in me and given me strength through this process. It will soon be over and I will make sure you can relax and take advantage of your huge collection of well-earned positive karma points. I love you.

Oslo, May 2017

Maren Stinessen Bøe

"I want to say regarding to your theme, "they don't want to integrate". I think (sighs) it's…it's…a bit amusing. Because when I hear this thing they don't want to integrate. Half of the people or more would say that is right. And the other half, who are already involved in the community would just laugh about it. Because they know this is not true. They know that this is a community that has been through a lot and it takes time for changes to happen. It needs a lot of work to integrate a community. And this can only be made in different levels and slowly. But otherwise it doesn't work. But you cannot say "they don't want to integrate. We tried it, but they do not want to integrate" and that's it! "- Romanian Romni

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Abstract

After the opening of the EU borders in 2004 and 2007, many Central-and Eastern European Roma have left their home countries permanently or for up to three months periods of the time, to search for better possibilities to support their families. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), some 80% of European Roma live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; every third Roma lives in housing without tap water and 50% of Roma between the ages of six and 24 do not attend school (FRA 2016, p. 3). The European public discourses about Roma are polarising. A statement that seems to permeate the discussions, is the declaration that Roma does not want to integrate, but rather sustain parallel societies and live "*in freedom and without rules, without laws and without jobs."* (Vermes 2017) In collaboration with the Manchester based project Supporting Roma Voice by University of Salford's Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit, I have conducted three months of field work in several locations in England with Roma from Central- and Eastern European countries who have migrated to the UK. The main research issue of this study is to explore how Roma react and feel about the declaration that they do not want to integrate, to provide Roma voices a platform to share their narratives and thoughts around the ongoing debate concerning them and what Roma would like social workers to understand, from their perspective. Werner Obrecht's (2009) theory of bio-psycho-social human needs is used as the main theoretical perspective in order to shed light on the complexity of Roma and integration. The Roma participants disagree with the statement that they don't want to be integrated. They strongly express that they want to be respected and be acknowledged as human beings with aspirations for the future as everyone else. They emphasise the elimination of an institutionalised stigmatisation of Roma as the main key to access to education, decent housing, employment, equal opportunities and an inclusive society.

Etter åpningen av EU-grensene i 2004 og 2007, har mange Roma fra øst- og sentral europeiske land migrert til andre euopesike land, enten for korte perioder opptil tre måneder eller permanent, for å søke bedre muligheter å støtte familien. Ifølge den europeiske unions byrå for grunnleggende rettigheter (FRA), så lever rundt 80 % av alle europeiske Roma under fattigdomsgrensen i sine respektive land; hver tredje Roma lever uten rennende vann og 50 % av Roma mellom seks og 24 år går ikke på skolen (FRA 2016, p. 3). Den europeaiske diskirsen om Roma er polariserende. Et utsagn som virker å gjennomsyre diskusjonen, er at

Roma ikke vil integreres, men heller vil opprettholde et parallellsamfunn der de kan leve i *«frihet, uten relger, lover og arbeid»* (Vermes 2017) I samarbeid med det Manschester baserte prosjektet Supporting Roma Voice, av Universitetet i Salfords Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit, har jeg gjennomført en tre måneders feltstudie på flere steder i England, sammen med Roma migranter fra øst- og sentral europeiske land som har bosatt seg i England. Hovedproblemstillingen har vært å undersøke hvordan Roma reagerer og hva deres tanker er når de blir konfrontert med utsagnet om at de ikke vil integreres; å gi Roma stemmer en plattform å dele sine tanker rundt debatten som foregår om dem og å finne ut hva Roma mener at sosionomer må forstå fra deres perspektiver. Det teoretiske hovedperspektivet har vært Werner Obrechts (2009) bio-psyko-sosiale teori om menneskelige basisbehov, for å kaste lys på det komplekse temaet Roma og integrasjon er. Deltagerne i denne studien er sterkt uenig med utsagnet at de ikke vil integreres. De utrykker at de ønsker å bli respektert og anerkjent som mennesker med ambisjoner for framtiden, som alle andre. Roma deltagerne legger trykk på en eliminering av institusjonalisert stigmatisering av Roma som hovednøkkelen til adgang til utdanning, bolig, arbeid, like muligheter og et inkluderende samfunn.

1. Introduction: why this topic?

Coming summer 2017 it will be 11 years ago, since I had my first meeting with the complex subject of Roma and integration. The occasion was a European conference in the city of Baia Mare, in the North of Romania. The beautiful city had whipped up a grand opening and welcome fest, in the middle of the town square, with music and fireworks. The locals showed up to join the delegates in the free celebration of the European collaboration that this conference marked. A local woman carrying a small child and holding another by the hand, stood near me while admiring the fireworks above with her children. We smiled at each other, when suddenly a uniformed man with a machine gun came running and showed the women away with his weapon. I was shocked and asked what was going on and if the ceremony was not open for everyone? The armed man said *«this is gipsy, they not real people»*. As a naïve 19 year old Norwegian woman, I could not comprehend this blatant racism and decided that I had to learn more. 6 months later, I had moved to Bucharest, where I did volunteer social work. Two years later one of my Romanian colleagues said annoyed: Maren, have you still not understood that these are second-class people? It is not our fault "*they don't want to integrate*".

Now, 11 years later, I am working with mostly Romanian Roma who have travelled to Norway to support their families at home, by means of begging and recycling bottles in Oslo, whilst rough sleeping and fighting harsh weather and stigma. After the opening of the EU borders in 2004 and 2007, many Central-and Eastern European Roma have left their home countries permanently or for three months periods at the time, to search for better opportunities to support their families. The Roma migrants are often very poor and with little education. The European public discourses about Roma are polarising, as the rest of Europe is reminded again about the biggest minority on the continent. A statement that seems to permeate the discussions is the declaration that Roma do not want to integrate. They are different and want to live "*in freedom and without rules, without laws and without jobs."* (Vermes 2017). The former French prime minister (2014-2016) Manuel Valls, explained the eviction and deportation of tens of thousands of European Roma from France with the impossibility to integrate them, as they have "*lifestyles that are very different from ours"* (Astier 2014). French President Hollande states that Roma are not accepted and are living under miserable conditions, because no laws are forcing them to stay in the country where they belong, namely Romania (Wigura 2013). Being Roma in Romania however, is also not

easy. A Romani representative in the Romanian Parliament made this following statement about the Roma:

> *"Our gypsies are stupid. They could at least be crafty but they aren't. They are just primitives and they manage to irritate the entire society which is already watching them closely [...] They run through the country and Europe barefoot, slimy and dirty, wearing clothes which are more likely to disgust you than make you feel sorry for them [...] Begging, soliciting and being disorganized will never bring them any advantages."* (ERRC 2003)

In Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia, violent attacks on Roma involving firebombing, shooting, stabbing, beating and other acts of violence, have already taken the lives of eight people and have left dozens of others with serious injuries. Many of the attacks have targeted families and children (ERRC 2012). Norwegian politicians are discussing a national law against begging, and one suggestion from a Member of Parliament has been for Oslo Municipality, in collaboration with the police to employ «city environment watchers» in order to disperse Roma who are gathering in areas in the City (Vermes 2017b). The Romanian Association in Norway (RFN) issued a press statement saying: "*RFN states that they consciously choose to use words such as*" gypsies "*because the terms Roma and Romani are misleading and create a too close link to Romania and Romanians*" (Vermes 2017). Before Brexit, UK newspaper *the Sun* wrote: *"Quitting the EU may be the only way Britain can get rid of Romanian gypsy gangsters swindling millions of pounds in benefits to build flashy houses back in their homeland."* (Pollard 2016).

Mike Dorothy, the editor of the Traveller Times, calls the discrimination of Roma the last acceptable racism and demonstrates by an example from a radio show where a Romany Gipsy man was invited to talk about unauthorised camps, only for the presenter to ask him: "But you don't pay your taxes, you don't educate your children, you won't integrate, so how can you expect your rights?" (Dorothy 2016). I found the statement "they don't want to integrate" so loaded and powerful still today, that I decided to research how Roma from Eastern and Central Europe who have migrated to the west react and feel about the declaration that they do not want to integrate and what we might learn from their thoughts and reactions to the statement.

1.1 Supporting Roma Voice

Supporting Roma Voice (SRV) was multi-agency Research Project that aimed to support the growth of grassroots community advocacy as part of the growth of an inclusive and engaged

Roma community in the UK (SHUSU 2017). The SRV project involved Roma advocates who were engaged in their Roma communities in different location in the UK, providing them with skills and knowledge to equip them for working towards social justice and in order to achieve long-term success and sustainability in the Roma grassroots movements (Ibid). Together with advocates and Roma coordinators, SRV provided important research and insight in the lives and every day situation of Roma immigrants in the UK. The main supporter and organiser of SRV was the Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford, Manchester, which is led by Professor and research unit director Phillip Brown. The social justice and human rights based approach SRV worked with, made it immensely interesting for me and I have been so lucky to be able to collaborate with SHUSU and SRV as I did my field work for this thesis in England. Professor Phil Brown has been so kind to assist and advise me during my stay in England and SHUSU colleagues and supporters have helped me orientate and find communities, participate in meetings and forums as well as throwing the first snowball.

1.2 Previous Research on Roma and Integration

Due to the fact that Roma constitute the biggest minority in Europe, there has been a large number of research studies on Roma and integration. Naturally, I will not be able to list all of these studies here, but will focus on some of the main and most relevant research from the last five years.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the situation for Roma in Central and Eastern European member states are embossed by intolerable discrimination and unequal access to vital services (FRA 2016, p. 3). FRA surveyed 34000 Roma and found that some 80% live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; every third Roma lives in housing without tap water and 50% of Roma between the ages of 6 and 24 do not attend school (Ibid).

Florin Moisă (2012) has studied the complexity of Roma integration in Romania and found that after ten years of European Union directives and plans for integration, the problems Roma in Romania are faced with remains relatively the same; with severe poverty, social exclusion and discrimination (Moisă 2012, p. 6) He reports from Romania that the problematic is massive and intricate and involves unwillingness from national and local government and institutional, public and private actors to engage against discrimination and exclusion of Roma in society, due to a wide spread and publicly accepted negative view on Roma as people (Ibid p .211). Severe poverty and lack of Roma participation in election

processes as well as difficult access to health- and other social services contributes to keep Roma away from participating in society (Ibid). Moisă states that Roma are in Romania familiar to everyone, almost anyone can issue an opinion, often categorical and negative, and based on anti-Roma sentiments, negative stereotypes and prejudges (Ibid. p 212).

Supporting Roma Voices released a research report in 2016 about their joint studies of Roma who have migrated from Central- and Eastern European countries and settled in the UK to create a better life for themselves and their families (Brown, Allen, et al. 2016). The participants in the study explained that reasons for leaving their country of origin were escaping pressures of Anti-Gipsyism[1] and enforced assimilation, with the main drive being opportunities of paid employment, something that featured as a dominant theme throughout focus group discussions (Ibid p. 36). Regarding education, Brown, Allen, et al writes, that even institutions like the European Commission have a perception that *"We need to convince Roma and non-Roma alike, of the indispensable benefits of good-quality education and training"* (European Commission; 2012, p. 13).This report did not place any weight on Roma's own perception of the value of education, but implies that Roma do not know or care about the value of education and training. The study conducted by the SRV group involves information from 19 focus groups of Roma migrants and the results are pointing firmly in the opposite direction, with the participants outspoken and clear wishes for the future of the next generation (Brown, Allen, et al. 2016, p. 36)

In Norway, Fafo Research Foundation (FAFO) released a research report about Romanian street workers and poor travellers in Scandinavian capitals, a large majority being Roma, who have been come to be known begging and recycling bottles (Djuve, et al. 2015). Scandinavians hold many widespread assumptions about these Roma street workers that this study aims to provide clarity in the backgrounds and motivations Roma on the streets of Scandinavian capitals have. The assumptions and beliefs are closely related to stigma and stereotypes concerning Roma in general, such as that they are not really poor, but only aiming to scam money from people; that Roma are not willing to work, but would rather beg money as a life choice; Roma are habitual liars, thus not reliable as participants in research and that begging is just a cover for criminal activity. These assumptions are mainly refuted as myths by this study (Ibid 138 pp), finding that Roma begging on the streets in Scandinavia are earning money to buy sorely needed food, clothes, and to pay for health and school expenses

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[1]Anti-Gipsysim is the hostility, prejudice, discrimination or racism against Roma people or people perceived as Roma (Holler 2015, p. 82)

for their children, while sleeping rough and enduring extremely precarious situations while staying in Scandinavia (Ibid p. 141).

The Norwegian (Engebrigtsen, Fraenkel and Pop 2014) study "*Streetlife* " of foreigners begging in Norway, show that most are Romanian Roma who come to Norway (Ibid p. 8) to earn money in order to improve their living situations at home in Romania (ibid p. 8). The research points out that Roma and other similar groups are the most vulnerable, stigmatised and excluded people in Romania, and that these people are living in precarious situations both when visiting Norway as well as back in Romania (Ibid p. 92). The migration is circular, meaning that the majority of the Romanian Roma who beg in Norway do not settle down, but stay for a period of time, before returning to Romania; travelling back and forth, whilst some groups might leave, others will arrive (Ibid).

There will be further research presented throughout this thesis.

2. Presentation and Demarcation of Research Issue and Questions

This thesis is built up using a methodological social work approach, as it aims to seek communities and experts with lived experience, build trust and gain an insight to how Roma express their reactions and thoughts when discussing the statement that they do not want to integrate. That means spending time with the participants, being involved in the community and listening to what people's concerns are, when they tell their stories. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) states in its ethical principles that all:

> *"Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful"* (IFSW 2004)

The data collection and outcome of this dissertation aims thus to be an instrument of social work, because it serves to shed light on and bring to attention what Roma voices express about their situation. Furthermore, social workers have "*an obligation to challenge social conditions that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatisation or subjugation, and to work towards an inclusive society* (IFSW 2012). By listening to which mechanisms Roma express as oppressing, social workers can have a tool in order to work towards a more inclusive society.

Previous research has shown that Roma in Europe are discriminated against and have limited access to labour markets, education, housing and health care, despite many efforts to close the

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gap between Roma and non-Roma (Moisă 2012, p. 6). What I have not found, is research about how Roma feel about, define and negotiate integration themselves. A critique to Roma policymaking on local, national and inter-European levels has been the lack of the Roma voices in policies concerning them. I therefore have decided to research which social conditions Central and Eastern European Roma express as contributing to social exclusion and stigmatisation and what they say we can do to work towards an inclusive society.

I have had two main questions:

- What are the reactions to the statement "they don't want to integrate"?
- What do the Roma participants want social workers to understand?

In order to explore these questions, I have spent 3 months in Manchester and travelled to several locations in England, meeting Roma who have emigrated from different Eastern and Central European countries and are from different generations and with as many different backgrounds as number of participants. Through their stories and lived experiences, the aim has been to learn from the Roma voices and gain a better perspective and understanding on how social work can support closing the gap between Roma and non-Roma in our European society, in terms of equal access and social justice. The amount of data collected for this thesis is very large, thus challenging me to focus only on the main topics approached by the Roma participants. The topics presented are therefore entirely chosen by the Roma participants as answers to the statement "they don't want to integrate" and what non-Roma have to understand before they make such a declaration. This has been a very hard project to close up, because of the ongoing discussions and the repeated public discourses around the subject of Roma integration.

2.1 Roma or Romani?

I have deliberately avoided defining or listing groups of Romani/Roma people (there are many more terms in use) in this thesis. The classification of Roma groups might have relevance in other situations, but not for this study. The participants do not symbolise a homogeneous group, nor do they claim to be one. Many of the names and categories of Roma definitions are tied to historical and geographical movement. The people partaking in this study are from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania and have migrated to the UK since 2004; and they use Roma in plural as a collective term to describe themselves. There are two exceptions -A Romanian Romni who calls herself Roma but speak of Romani people as a collective term, and a British police officer from the Gipsy Roma Traveller Police Association. The two people using the word Romani also use the word Roma, so to not induce

too much confusion, I will use that term Roma as a collective terms in this thesis. The terms Rom (man) and Romni (woman) in singular are used to support the reader in following the different participants in the analysis e.g. the *Slovakian Rom* and the *Slovakian Romni.* The findings chapter in this study will go more in detail about Roma identity and classification.

The next chapter will describe how social work is in principle a human rights profession, as this approach is of great importance for understanding why social workers are dedicated social justice and empowerment.

2.2 Social Work as a Human Rights Profession

The International Federation of Social Workers' Statement of Ethical Principles defines social work as a profession dedicated to promote social change by empowering and liberating people in order to enhance wellbeing (IFSW, Statement of Ethical Principles 2012). Social work builds on the fundaments of the declaration of Human Rights and principles of social justice (Staub-Bernasconi 2007, p. 9). The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) founded a Human Rights Commission in 1988 in order to implement human rights in social work practice, as well as to protect human rights activists around the world (ibid.). In 1994, IFSW, together with the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the United Nations (UN), published a manual called *Human rights and social work. A manual for schools of social work and the social work profession* which stated that human rights are inseparable from social work theory, value, ethics and practice. It further states that rights corresponding to human needs are the body and core justification and motivation for social work action (Bamford, et al. 1994, p. 5). Even with such clear and outspoken mandate of protecting human rights, dignity and basing social work on ethics and human needs, social workers still risk blaming the client for their own problems. Keagle and Cowger conducted a study in 1984, and found that social workers often work after a specious logic, which might lead them to forget the core values and mandate of social work:

1. Identify the social problem.

2. Study those who are affected by the problem.

3. Discover how those who are affected are different from those not affected.

4. Define those differences as the cause of the social problem.

5. Devise humanitarian social action programs (interventions) to correct those differences

(Cowger og Keagle 1984, p. 347)

Step 4 and 5 in this logic leads, according to Keagle and Cowger, to "blaming the client" instead of searching for structural complications and implementing human rights. Social workers are in danger of sometimes understanding problems subjectively, thus resulting in an attempt to "cover up" contradictions and injustice in society, thereby functioning as "the bad conscious of a bad society" (Hollstein og Meinhold 1973, p. 207). Social work does thereby not only prevent social justice and solidarity, it represents the societal fear of social change by encouraging clients to adjust to the system instead of taking a critical look at the system. The well-known double mandate of control and support must therefore be subject to more reflection and the question is if two mandates are enough to support social workers to follow their own ethical aim of fighting social justice. Solely concerning myself as a social worker trying to strike a balance between those to mandates does not, in my experience, leave much room for reflecting on and carrying out my mission to implement human rights, fight social injustice and continuously keep a critical look at the system we are working within. According to Silvia Staub-Bernasconi, the double mandate must be expanded to a triple mandate which consists of a scientific description, a professional code of ethics and human rights (Staub-Bernasconi 2007). In that way, I, as a practicing social worker, can always weigh the two mandates of support and control up against the third mandate, asking myself the question of how far does the base of my profession allow or support me in this decision. There are many guidelines provided in order to assist me in my daily social work practice. These are a few of the main supporting lifelines social workers can hold on to if they are uncertain if their work is empowering people and insuring their human rights, dignity and needs or if the daily work is really contributing to injustice:

- International Federation of Social Workers code of Ethics
- National Association of Social Workers
- (When in Europe) The European Declaration of Human Rights
- The European Charter of Human Rights

The list is long. There is an important part of social work that I personally think is easily forgotten or at least in an unthoughtful moment put aside because social workers all over the world are often over-worked and assigned to carry out tasks and policies developed by different governments. That is the fact that we as social workers should

> "*act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status,*

> *political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability. (*NASW 2008: 7*) and "Social Work has to make every effort to preserve human dignity, guard the Convention on Human Rights and strive for social justice (*IFSW 2013*)."*

When we as social workers do our jobs in the field, it is difficult to always *act to prevent domination of, exploitation of and discrimination against any person or group*. Sometimes, it can be hard to detect the mechanisms that contributes to discrimination, and sometimes it can be difficult to *make every effort to guard the Convention on Human Rights*. That is why we have social work science to support us detecting these mechanisms and support us in understanding when and *how* the Convention of Human Rights is broken. This field work and research serves the purpose to learn which mechanisms contributes to discrimination against Roma, and through the theory of basic human needs, how that effects the implementation of the Convention of Human Rights.

2.3 Theory

The last ten years, I have lived, worked and studied in Romania, Republic of Moldova, Austria, Denmark, and England and now I am working and living in my native Norway. I am therefore privileged to be able to utilise theoretical perspectives from several countries and traditions, as well as exploring sources in German, Romanian, English and Scandinavian languages. I have contemplated the theoretic perspectives of many very relevant theorist in the making of this dissertation like Pierre Bourdieu, Paulo Fraire, Edward Said and Michel Foucault, just to name very few. Though all the above-mentioned, and many non-mentioned, would have been very useful and brought a lot of insight, I decided to go "back to the basics" of social work theory and use the theory of Basic Human Needs on biological, psychological and social levels by Swiss social scientist and Professor in Social Work Werner Obrecht (2009) as a tool of analysis and theoretical perspective in this thesis. I will en route visit other theoretical inspirations, like Goffmann (2016), but the thesis will revolve around an analysis built on an understanding of basic human needs and the fight to fulfil them, because IFSW states that *social workers should uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being.* (IFSW, Statement of Ethical Principles 2012). The central importance of a theory of basic human needs (TBHN) in social work was made clear by the first social work theorists like Ilse Arlt (1932). Basic human needs and the theoretical and practical social work assignment to acknowledge and secure the satisfaction of those needs, in order to diminish and eliminate discrimination and injustice became the main scope of a human rights oriented social work profession (Obrecht 2009, p. 63). Prerequisite for such a view, however, is a conception of human individuals as self-regulating components

of social systems. The theory of bio-psycho-social basic human needs, have according to Obrecht two main implications for the profession of social work. On the one hand, next to the psychobiological theory of knowledge and recognition (cultural codes) and the psychobiological theories of action, the theory of basic human need's core aim is to explain human motivation, a part of a three part integral psychobiological model of the individual. As such THBN is a core area of the *systemic theory* of social work which emerged from anthropology. This means that the purpose of social work is to see human individuals as components of social systems and social systems as composed by human individuals; thus the problems social work aims to solve, are social problems. Social problems are identic with psychological and/or social constellations that chronically impairs or block the satisfaction of bio-psycho-social basic human needs. In short, lack of basic human needs are the reason for social problems, which again is the raison d'être for social work (Ibid). The Human Rights refer to basic human needs and the correspondence have affected the development of the declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, from the point of view of institutionalized values, social work is a Human rights professions (Staub-Bernasconi, 1997 in Obrecht 2009 p. 64). The second implication of TBHN in Social work, and especially the bio-psycho-social aspect of Obrecht, is that it forms the basis of general ethics and the therein inspired ethical principles of social work. According to Obrecht, the process and utilisation of bio-psycho-social basic human needs in social work, enables social workers to focus not only on the individual (the client/addressee) and their basic needs, but also to work systematically against the accumulation of the blocking or denial of basic human needs in society (Obrecht 2009, p.64). The idea of basic human needs as a tool to understand human motivation makes it a very fitting theory to base this dissertation on.

2.3.1 Basic Human Needs

> „Here is the essential point: only a specific kind of human research – the research of needs – can explain the foundations for poverty research. The starting point is the human being. Every single case is the centre of investigation. The external factors that are essential for the human being are related to it and their influence analysed. Only such forms of investigation allow us to contemplate poverty as such and make it the subject of further research. "(Arlt 1932, p. 1638)

Ilse Arlt (1876-1960) is considered one of social work's pioneers, paving the way for the fundaments of social work as a scientific profession in the 20th century (Maiss und Pantucek 2008, p. 202). Working with social work's scientific understanding of poverty dynamics, Arlt developed a theory of basic human needs to explain and research how social work can

contribute to understand and fight poverty. Her empirical research started in 1902 and resulted in a list of 13 basic needs that form aspects of human flourishing and wellbeing (Maiss 2011).

> *1. food; 2. lodging; 3.cleanliness, 4. clothing; 5. recreation (including rest, amusement and exercise); 6. air; 7. education; 8. mental development; 9. legal aid; 10. family-life; 11. medical help and nursing during sickness; 12. prevention of accidents and first aid; 13.economic training; religion is summarized under mind and spirit, freedom under legal protection.* (Maiss 2011)

It is not hard to see that the needs of one human being is linked to the needs and satisfaction of others (Maiss og Pantucek 2008). Ilse Arlt writes about "*Grenznot*", which is the state of emergency reached when a person's basic human needs are not covered. Her theory is that if all the above-mentioned basic human needs are covered, there will be no poverty (Autrata und Scheu 2011, p. 75)

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) developed the hierarchy of human needs/motivations, which is still widely used and recognised as one of the main orientations on basic human needs in the western world. The theory, portrayed as a pyramid, symbolises different importance in needs and that one need can only be fulfilled if another more fundamental need is covered first (Schneider 2013, p.54-55). An example is the need of love and belonging, which can only be fulfilled if safety and psychological needs are already satisfied (Schneider 2013, p. 55).

This thesis will use the theory of basic human needs by **Werner Obrecht**. Obrecht is a Swiss social scientist and professor in sociology, philosophy and social work science at the social work department at Zürich University of Applied Science. Obrecht does not support a predetermined hierarchy of human needs and bases a new way of understanding human needs i.a. on the moral realism of Mario Bunge (Schneider 2013, p, 55). Obrecht writes that Maslow's hypothesis that all human beings need to first satisfy physiological needs, then the safety requirements, then those of belonging and love, then the need for appreciation and only then self-realization and transcendence must be wrong, because people can individually have different preferences (Obrecht 2009, p, 10). As examples, Obrecht uses a rock climber, who would put his or her safety at risk in order to fulfil his need of social recognition or for variation and self-realisation or the example of the political revolutionary, who subordinates his or her need for safety and physical integrity for structural autonomy and power (Obrecht 2009, p, 10). Instead, Obrecht suggests a non-hierarchal theory of basic human needs, where all of the basic human needs are important for a human being's wellbeing, but seen more as

connected to different aspects of a human's biological, psychological, sociological and cultural existence, therefore also "elastic" and open for people's individual preferences[2]. In this thesis, I will take a look at which basic human needs has to be sacrificed to make room for others and what the consequences might be, especially when a population, due to external or internal factors, are forced to choose which needs to fulfil and how this may be connected to the statement "*They don't want to integrate*".

Obrecht's basic human needs are divided into three main categories[34]:

1. Biological
2. Bio-psychological
3. Bio-psycho-social-cultural

17 basic human needs are divided between these three categories. Obrecht places four needs under the category biological needs. The first is the need for physical integrity, which means that people have the need to protect themselves from physical injuries, pain, and exposure to intentional violence that might harm their wellbeing (Schneider 2013). Other biological needs are things essential for autopoesis (water, food and oxygen), the need of regeneration (sleep) and finally reproduction. In the next category, on the bio-psychological level, are the needs of perception-related sensory stimulation; for beauty in the things we experience; for variation/stimulation; for information, guiding and orientation about things around us; for skills and social norms to manage new and repetitive situations; the need to have relevant goals, and for an aim and a subjective feeling of a purpose in life (Schneider 2013). The third category, bio-psycho-social-cultural, focuses on the social and cultural needs hat include the need for love, care and affection, for spontaneous help (the need to help), for sociocultural belonging through participation (membership in families, groups- meaning having rights and fulfilling duties), for non-interchangeable (distinct) identity, for autonomy and for the (exchange of) social justice (Obrecht 2009, p. 47).

As Obrecht explains in his texts, basic human needs are universal, but open for individual preferences in the order of fulfilling them. There are according to Obrecht (2009) different

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[2] The term preferences must here not be confused with wishful thinking or free "pick" at a buffet of needs, where some are not to one's liking. With preferences must be understood the order in which one's needs are thought to be satisfied first and which (depending on possibilities) must be prolongedprolongued. Obrecht's claim is still that the needs themselves are universal and all of them must be fulfilled if possible, in order to enhance a human beings wellbeing and existence.

[3] An English overview of all the needs can be found in the appendix

[4] I have indicated the needs used in the analysis in parentheses, so that they would be easier to track on Obrecht's overview.

consequences when we fail to satisfy the different basic human needs on different levels. As we are born with instincts to breathe, drink water and eat in order to stay alive, these biological needs cannot be opted out of or subordinated other needs for a longer amount of time. Failure to meet these needs results in immediate injury and death. A mentally sub-sensory stimulation leads to disorientation and possibly dysfunctional behaviour with serious physical consequences. Social isolation may also lead to depression (Obrecht, 2009 p.28). Obrecht further explains, that when a person can't meet his or her basic needs, he or she is forced to narrow down his or her orientation and is primarily concerned with finding urgent solutions to deal with a vital problem. At this point, rational thinking is limited because the person's attention is focused on fulfilling unsatisfied basic human needs (ibid.: 28). This will lead to pathogen stress when the person seeks ways to fulfil the lacking need and if this stress continues, it may lead to serious consequences in terms of mental and somatic disorder. The ongoing stress caused from searching to fulfil social needs leaves people particularly vulnerable for mental health issues caused by lack of coping strategies. The search for subjective and relevant aims, goals, and meaning in life suffers and skills for proper management of upcoming problems are no longer at immediate grasp (ibid.).

There are, according to Obrecht, two main reactions to prolonged stress resulted from unsatisfied basic human needs:

1. People might become depressed and apathetically resigned
2. People might become irritated, openly aggressive and take increasingly greater risks in order to come closer to the goal of reducing particularly oppressive emotional tension (Obrecht 2009, p.30).

In this thesis I will use the bio-psycho-social- cultural theory of basic human needs to shed some light on, and try to understand some of the very complex problematics that surrounds the chosen topic and the stories told by Roma migrants from Eastern and Central Europe. In the next paragraph, I will describe the thesis outline.

2.4 Thesis Outline

The first thing several participants made clear, was the importance of knowing Roma history, if one want to understand and deal with the statement "they don't want to integrate". The following chapter will therefore be a very short historical orientation concerning major political events concerning Roma over the past hundreds years. The next chapter will take a short glance at the current strategies to Roma integration led by the European Union. Following will be a methodology chapter entailing scientific, personal and ethical

considerations, as well as a clarification of my field work and interview approaches. Next is an introduction to the participants as well as how and where we have met. The findings are then thematically analysed, in an order that the Roma participants have felt necessary for understanding their journey and reactions to the statement "they don't want to integrate. The thesis will finally look at what the Roma participants feel must be done in order to move towards an inclusive society as well as their direct appeal to social workers, followed by the concluding chapter of summing discussion and a forward look into new questions raised by this study.

The appendix entails a field work story demonstrating how I found and approached the key family in this study, which should serve as a picture of observations of the surrounding environment in which this Roma family and I had our conversations and discussion.

3   A Short View on Roma History

Since the first Roma arrived from India to Europe, dominant groups in European societies has had different takes on the "*gipsy question*"; though the term first became commonly known during the uprising of National Socialism in Germany and Austria in the 1930', the *othering* of Roma has a long history (Miye Nadya 2011, p. 3). The participants in this field study have told me that it is of outmost importance to understand central parts of Roma history with the dominant majority. In this chapter I will therefore take a very short look at some of the major historic and political events concerning Roma in Eastern and Central Europe. From slavery to holocaust, assimilation and prosecution dominant societies have tried to find answers to the "Gipsy question" in their attempts to deal with Roma populations in Europe. Roma were enslaved in Romania for 500 years. The first documented cases of Roma slaves were in the 14th century and the abolition of slavery in 1856 came after European pressure on Romania and its treatment of Roma (Bangau 2014). The Roma slaves were assigned to different groups, serving different divisions of society, like the Crown, monasteries or farmers. Along these divisions, Roma slaves were split according to which occupation and artisanship they mastered. The division were also strictly determining which labour Roma families were supposed to do: the spoon-makers, working mostly with wood, the gold panners, *ursari* – training bears and making a living out of making them dance in villages, *laieshi* – who were usually settling at the outskirts of the villages, working with metal (Bangau 2014). The masters had the complete right of treating the slaves however they wanted to, and there were many reports of inhumane treatment and punishment such as flogging, cutting of lips and ears, whipping the sole of the feet, and public beatings (Bangau 2014). According to David

Crowe, the Romanian slavery of Roma and the thereby deep-seating, dehumanising view on Roma resulted in a socioeconomic caste system that he categorises as "social death" for Roma slaves. After the emancipation of the slaves, there has been an atmosphere and prejudice towards Roma that has caused them to be looked upon as worthless and "all-purpose scape goats" (Crowe and Kolsti 2015, p. 61).

During the Second World War, millions of people were systematically murdered by the national socialist regime in Germany and their allies. However, there has only been two official directives ordering the extermination of specific targeted groups: The Final solution of the Jewish Question and The Final Solution of the Gipsy question (Hancock 2006). The term Porrajomos translates to *devouring* and has been used by Ian Hancock, a renowned Romani expert who wanted to find a Romanes[5] term for Holocaust. Hancock explains that it is very important to understand the European Romani experience of the Second World War and that the Romani people needed an own term in order to step out of "*the shadow of another people's history*" (Hancock 2006). As a result of Nazi Germany and their allies' attempt to solve "the Gipsy question", the first "Gipsy camp" was established in 1936 outside Berlin and further camps were opened during the 1930s (USHMM 2017). The following years, Roma were deported to and killed in concentration camps, shot on sight in several countries and worked to death in forced labour camps (Ibid). There are still no absolute numbers, but according to the United States Holocaust Museum, Nazi Germany and their allies killed around 25 % of all Roma in Europe (Ibid).

After World War II, the Soviet Union formed Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Yugoslavia into non-Soviet Socialist republics or "soviet satellite states" which became the political nickname "Eastern Bloc" (Appelbaum 2012). Even though the countries did not have similar political background or history, the aim was to form identical political movements and state ideology supporting the Soviet Union. By the 1950's, the region was "patrolled *by the same kinds of unsmiling policemen, designed by the same socialist realist architects and draped by the same propaganda posters*" (Appelbaum 2012). In an example from the former Republic of Czechoslovakia from post WWII, it could seem at first glance that life was a bit easier for Roma in the soviet times. Roma's historic knowledge of manual trades like blacksmithing and tinkering, allowed them to take part in the re-industrialising of the Czech lands (Collum og Lucero 2006, p. 98). This way, many Roma were employed in factories and involved in rebuilding the country, which

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[5] A Roma Language

contributed to ease the extreme poverty many Roma had lived in for centuries. It did however not take long, before Roma workers were relegated to ghettos and their children sent to schools for mentally impaired (Ibid). The factory work also contributed to the loss of traditional Roma trades and occupations and have by some been described as forced assimilation (Ibid p.99) Both in the Satellite states and in Russia the story remained the same: Roma were marginalised, ridiculed, and abused, their poverty was enforced by the systemic racism surrounding them. According to Collum and Lecero (2006), there are still textbooks from in schools from Soviet times, stating that it is a health hazard to touch Gypsies (Collum og Lucero 2006, p. 99). The situation for Roma during the communist time in the "East Bloc" countries were sometimes a bit better as some were allotted lands or funds or social support, but considering that Roma were still coerced to be sterilised and Roma children taken from parents to be educated by non-Roma, the time remains shaped by ideas of extermination of Roma (Collum og Lucero 2006). After the fall of communism, Roma were the first to lose their jobs and houses and were sometimes even looked at as scapegoats for the failure of the communist system and the difficulties the countries had during the transition years, which led to an up rise in violence towards Roma (Crețu 2014, p. 116-118).

Today, the European Union's Roma Information Office (RIO) is deeply concerned about the recent rise of anti-Gipsyism in Eastern and Central Europe (Pinto 2014). The RIO states that even though the EU have adopted several anti-discrimination legislations and specific Roma integration policies, extremist organisations, individuals, public officials and politicians continue to openly discriminate against Roma at an alarming rate (Ibid). In Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia violent attacks on Roma involving firebombing, shooting, stabbing, beating and other acts of violence, have already taken the lives of eight people and have left dozens of others with serious injuries. Many of the attacks have targeted families and children (ERRC 2012) There currently are strong, fascist-like parties on the rise, with proposed "solutions" to the "gypsy problem" (Mareš 2012). European Union's Roma Information Centre stated in 2014:

> *"Of particular concern is the increase of paramilitary and militia groups and extreme right-wing organisations targeting and terrorising Roma and using anti-Roma rhetoric (particularly in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Romania). These groups have the Roma as their target group. They use fear to intimidate Roma and they're extremely aggressive as they carry violent assaults and racially motivated violence against this group causing the death of many."* (Pinto 2014)

Anti-Roma march in Hungary: "YOU are going to die here," shouted members of a 1,000-strong march as they stopped at houses they thought were a home to Roma, hurling their water bottles and stones to emphasise their point (Devecser 2012)

Bulgaria: Roma under Siege. For over an hour the attackers ran amok around the neighbourhood, smashing Roma property and assaulting any Roma person who dared leave the safety of their home. The police sat back and watched – not one person was arrested. (Smith 2015)

In Romania, 78 % of Romanians report to have little-to very little trust in Roma people and 36 % consider Roma to be a major direct threat to the country in the future (CCSB 2010, p. 7 & p. 25). The current situation in Central and Eastern European countries are getting increasingly tense for the Roma population. The next chapter will look at what plans the EU have for Roma integration in Europe.

4. EU strategies for Roma Integration

The European Union (EU) Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 committed all member states to address Roma integration on a national level with four crucial priorities: employment, housing, education and health (Brown, Dwyer, et al. 2015, p.2). The Member States are asked to research how structural requirements are met, like cooperation with civil society, with local and regional authorities, monitoring, anti-discrimination and establishing of national contact point (Brown et al. 2015. P.6). The European commission did however find that even though several attempts on integration and inclusion in member states had been implicated, "*little has changed in the day to day situation for most Roma*" (Brown, Dwyer, et al. 2015, p.7) I want to find out what European Roma think about why little has changed, what the barriers are and if it has anything to do with the statement "They don't want to integrate" I will in the next chapters research three of these four topics, which has throughout my field work been raised by Roma participants as very important subjects and tools to explain their understanding of integration as well as the statement that "they don't want to integrate". Because the health topic was barely addressed directly by the participants, I will not use this topic as an independent category in this analyse, but will refer to health issues and consequences that rise during other topics and stories.

5. Methodology

In this chapter I will explain how I have proceeded to collect data in order to produce new knowledge and contribute to previous research regarding the subject of Roma integration in Europe.

5.1 Scientific and Personal Position and Role

I am a 30 year old "gadje" (non-Roma) woman who belongs to the ethnic majority (white) in Norway. I have worked many years with Roma, but I am not and cannot ever be an expert of Roma issues, as I am an outsider, looking in. The reason however, to why this Norwegian is looking in, is the very visible and daily discrimination of Roma in all the countries I have worked in on this continent. Also, because I speak Romanian and spent a few years doing social work on the streets of Bucharest, I often hold a position as translator at the soup kitchen where I work in Oslo; between rough sleeping Romanian Roma and colleagues, volunteers, media or any other non-Romanian speakers who tries to communicate with this specific group of immigrants in severely deprived and precarious living conditions. I often feel like a bridge trying to build understanding around a group of people that have something to say, are not listened to and are wildly misunderstood.

I did my bachelor in social work at the University College of Applied Sciences of Vorarlberg in Western-Austria. My academic upbringing is influenced by Swiss, German and Austrian social work scientists and social scientific theorists like Jürgen Habermas, Silvia Staub-Bernasconi, Werner Obrecht, Alice Solomon, Ilse Arlt, Lothar Böhnisch and Hans Thiersch, to name a few. Also international inspirations among which are names like Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Simone de Beauvoir, Karim Said, Jane Addams, Edward Said, Erving Goffman and Mary Richmond are fundamental for the understanding of social work. Radical social work, feminism and critical theory are central for the fundamental principle of social work. In other words, if social work does not *actively* contribute to social justice, wellbeing for all and an equal society, it cannot call itself social work.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this study have been central and contributed to the process and outcome of this dissertation. The first thing I wanted to avoid, coming from a research position and belonging to the dominant majority, was approaching Roma and risking firstly that the participants felt pried upon and studied in order to give me, the master student, the necessary data to hand in my dissertation and receive a degree and secondly making *them* a group in the process, defining and romanticising what it means to be Roma. I have attempted to solve these two issues by 1. Spend time in the field, build trust and ask the participants how

they would like this master thesis to carry their voices and how they think such a thesis could be helpful for social justice and 2. Open up the mode of interviews and put their lived experiences in focus, thereby letting the participants navigate the narratives and direction of this study. In addition to this, in order not to classify people, I have deliberately avoided listing different groups or categories of Roma or Romani people. These classifications might have relevance in other situations, but not in this study. The participants are themselves saying that they are Roma, so that is what I refer to them as. The second major consideration have been preserving the anonymity of the participants, as the Roma communities are small and the personal stories shared could be recognisable. I have informed about this risk in the consent sheets, where I state that:

> "*You will be anonymised as far as possible (…) However, because the Roma community (…) is small in numbers, there might be someone from the community finding recognisable traces of personal information (e.g. from a story). I cannot guarantee that this will not happen.*"

This information was also given verbally and thoroughly explained to each participant, who then signed the consent sheet. Thirdly, I did not want to over-analyse or interpret the narratives the participants shared, into something they did not mean or stand for, thus forcing their voices to represent a subjective view I hold. I believe that the unstructured conversations we had and the direct and authentic quotes provided in this thesis, deliver the necessary objective and genuine representation of the participant's stories.

5.1 Field Work

The choice to conduct field work is based on the social work theory "*Lebensweltorientierung*", which I have chosen to translate "*life- world orientation*", from Hans Thiersch, who is one of the most important and influential social work scientists in the German speaking social work tradition (Luzern University of Applied Sciences and Arts). Life –world oriented social work is in the horizon of the radical question of the meaning and efficiency of social aid from the perspective of its addressees (Ibid). Two of the aspects of the life-world dimension are the life world of the addressees and the social function of social work. The lifeworld of the addressees is concerned with the knowledge that the everyday life in social, temporal and spatial comprehensibility is determined by the fact that people perceive themselves as subjects in their own tasks, that they are in a social environment and that many tasks have to be mastered side by side. In order to enable addressees to achieve a successful everyday life , their problems, patterns of understanding and action have to be

understood (Reimann 2009, p.4). Social work also has a social function by supporting individuals in the resolution of their problems. To achieve this, social work should interfere in political and social affairs, stand up to the needs of its addressees, demand equal rights and human rights. Under no circumstances should it become the instrument of the powerful in the society (Ibid p.5). In order to deal with Roma people's own understanding and reactions to the declaration that they do not want to integrate, as well as to understand what Roma are sharing with me as a social worker, I found it important to experience as much of the life-world of the Roma participants as possible. Additionally, I found it easier and less threatening to introduce myself to the participants by meeting them where they feel at home, instead of e.g. conducting interviews in an office. One of the field work stories, where I find the key family, is attached in the appendix. This story paints a picture of surroundings, thoughts and observations before, during and after the meeting with a family that brought many central and important thoughts into this thesis.

5.2 Interviews/Conversations

The interviews have been based the method and construction of social work conversation with an exemption from confidentiality of the content and the clear mutual consent and understanding of the conversations being a part of a research project. The opening sequence of a conversation is where the conversation partner first gets an impression if the social worker is willing to respect him or her, thus defining the relationship between the conversation partners and in which direction the conversation could go (Pantucek 1998, p. 6). I know from experience that many Roma (for a good reason) are sceptical to social workers, so it is here of outmost importance that I express an honest and respectful approach were I state who I am and why I want to speak with that person. At this moment, I often feel that the expectations towards me are very low and that I must prove myself worthy of entering a conversation. I spend here quite a lot of time and effort, letting them ask me anything they want about my project or who I am, because I perceive this moment as very important to how much my conversation partners will be able to trust me. I always state my intentions, first at the beginning of a conversation, but also many times throughout the course of communication, so that my conversation partners does not get insecure along the way. I always try to remember that I am there to observe and listen, not to devalue, reject or oppose what my conversation partner is expressing. Because I have asked the participants to talk with me about Roma and integration, the next important step for me is to set a framework. I do not expect anyone to tell me anything, I am not searching for any right answer and I am solely there to listen, if they want express their thoughts around a topic which they find important

and which they want to educate me on. I am entering their world and want to be an active listener. Active listening is according to Pantucek (1998) an excellent way for social workers to support the conversation partner when he or she expresses something that is difficult for her or him to talk about (Pantucek 1998, p. 7). It is also a very important part on the exploration phase of a conversation, because the social worker concentrates on the narrative and refrains from offering own opinions or giving advice. The social worker is focused on the subject matter, the expressed feelings and centring the conversation partner and his/her expressions as the most important source of information (Ibid). Many of the Roma participants said that our conversations were helpful, comforting and sometimes even empowering, because they felt heard and respected, not just as informants for a data collection. I feel that this is a very good way to build trust in communication, provided that the social worker is sincere, interested and genuinely looking to learn something from the conversation partner. Patience and pauses are important when listening, in order to let the conversation partner have time to think about what is important for them to say, as well as finding a way to express their thoughts and emotions (Pantucek 1998). During the conversations, many of the participants expressed a lot of emotions while telling their stories. Some got angry and frustrated and some very sad, in one interview, we had to stop the recording because the participant broke down crying. I found it therefore very important and helpful to use social work techniques to avoid re-traumatisation and work with these emotions in order to support the participants to bring the story and the experience telling it, to an end, within the framework of our conversations.

Each conversation (after establishing trust and expectations) started with me asking if they could describe the place they grew up or tell me something that was important to them for me to know. I also asked participants what they would like social workers and policy makers to understand about Roma in Europe and if they would do research for this master thesis about Roma integration, what topics would they focus on? At some point, in each conversation, I asked directly the question "*how do you feel about the statement "they don't want to integrate*" or *what would you say to someone who would state that Roma don't want to integrate?* depending on the conversation partner and situation. Other than these three foci, the interviews have been conversations where people have told their stories and shared their experiences and I have listened and followed up with questions that came to mind, depending on what felt natural at the time the stories were told. At the end of the conversations, I sometimes went back to topics that were of special interest and asked following up questions. The language of our chats have been English. I found it risky to ask participants to speak English, as it could result in having conversations with only a part of the community.

Especially because Roma migrants who speak well English might have been asked to contribute to research previously and also because I wanted to speak to people who were representative for Roma immigrants from Central and Eastern European countries, where English speakers have traditionally not been very prevalent. However, I would have needed several interpreters/transcribers and I did not have the resources for that in this project. Using English as the main language did however work out, as I was able to communicate with people from several countries and with different languages, and we could find mutual ground in our common struggle with the English language. I have left quotes as they have been spoken, in order to not overanalyse or change the meaning behind the words. The interviews/ conversations lasted between 40 minutes and 2 hours. They have all been recorded and then transcribed. All participants have signed a consent sheet and have received verbal and written information about the project, use of collected data and their rights to withdraw their consent at any point. All the participants have received contact information to my thesis supervisor in England, Phil Brown, and I have specifically informed about the possibility to contact him if any of the participants felt I overstepped or conducted myself unethical in any way.

5.3 The Participants

The thought behind this has been is to let a focus group negotiate and generate ideas and topics which I would then choose to ask more detailed about in single "expert" interviews with Roma advocates and Intermediates. The only criteria for participating in this study was that they must be over 15 years old, define themselves as Roma and be first generation migrants from Central or Eastern European countries. A concern with interviewing SRV participants was research fatigue as well as my fear of "trained" or political aimed answers. A great effort was therefore made to locate focus group participants who have never been interviewed and did not hold key political - or societal positions in their own community. To gain an in, as well as trust from potential participants with no research experience, I decided to go to gatherings in any form like cafes, networking forums, church, debates etc. all over England in order to learn about communities and identify key people. It was very important to be seen and build familiarity with potential key persons. I had no other incentive to the participants then gaining their understanding for the aim of getting their voice heard in research and possibly contributing to policy making. Some of the participants have connections to the Supporting Roma Voice project and some have not.

There were 15 people participating in this study from Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Additionally, three participants from a focus group conducted by Migration Yorkshire on behalf of the Supporting Roma Voices project, have been included in this thesis,

as I have assisted with the focus group and the participants have consented to let me use the transcriptions.

The key family invited me to their home after a debate in Page Hall. I will in this analysis refer to them as Slovakian Roma family-The Son/Slovakian Rom, Father, Mother, Czech Aunt, and Czech Cousin. I met a mother and her son at a Roma café in Leeds. I will refer to them as Czech Romni Mother and her Czech Rom Son. At a Roma Forum in Leeds, I met a Slovakian Romni engaging in her community. I will refer to her as Slovakian Romni. In the context of Supporting Roma Voices, I met a Hungarian Romni activist. I will refer to her as the Hungarian Romni. Assisting at focus group with Migration Yorkshire, I met a Romanian Romni activist. I will refer to her as The Romanian Romni. At a youth club in Greater Manchester, I met teenagers from the Czech Republic, who had grown up in England. I will refer to them as Czech Teenagers and Rom/Romni plus their age. I assisted a focus group with Migration Yorkshire concerning Roma and Brexit. I will refer to them as Rom/Romni from Brexit study.

6. Findings

In the analysis of these findings, I have first read through the transcriptions and found categories which are approached in several or all of the stories and shared experiences and which seem to be of great importance for the participants. Many participants have said that in order to understand their thoughts, reactions and relationship towards the statement "they don't want to integrate", I will have to understand how these Roma participants are seen by non-Roma and the consequences that view and perception have on their daily life. The categories education, housing and employment were the most repeated main themes, and all participants repeatedly through their stories mentioned topics like stigma, discrimination, access, othering and security. I have therefore chosen to approach the topics the participants have highlighted in a thematic analysis where the reader may follow the tread of shared experiences as a journey of understanding. I have used Obrecht's (2009) theory of bio-psycho-social basic human needs as an analytic tool and theoretical perspective in order to analyse the impact of the Roma participant's stories on the research issue; to explore whether Roma integration strategies have failed because Roma don't want to integrate and what Roma want social workers to understand about Roma.

6.1 "They don't want to integrate"

The reactions to the statement "They don't want to integrate" has been many. All the participants in this thesis had heard the statement in one way or another and had a lot to say

about it. I will in this chapter first gather some of the statements concerning the headlined declaration and make space for Roma voices without interpreting too much. As with any other topic in this thesis, there are a massive amount of dimensions and categorisations possible from the rich statements gathered by these participants, but I will have to limit my analysis to the given frames of this dissertation. I will be using Obrecht's theory of basic human needs to analyse the main information given by the different participants to see *if* and in that case *which* basic human needs are addressed and how that may give an insight into a rather complex subject.

The term integration had many Roma participants upset, especially the young Slovakian Rom from the Page Hall family I started this journey with:

> *"Integrating? I hate the word! I can't stand it! Because that doesn't make sense at all! "They don't want to integrate". No…humans don't talk to them. They won't work with you. No place. You'll waste your time. We have been treated as the worst people ever, and it is still going on now. But the reason that I don't like the word integration, is that is shows a lot of bad thoughts and bad memories when it comes to my mother, my grandmother's story, personal story. That is the main reason why I don't like it. Because I know the history of Roma."*

When this young Rom says he hates integration, it could be interpreted that he is not interested in integration thus proving the hypothesis that Roma do not want to integrate. The aim of this study, is however to listen to Roma voices to try to understand where these emotions come from and what motivates the Slovakian Rom to say that he can't stand the word integration. Since he knows the history of Roma, the term integration is perceived as hostile and negative. The historical "gipsy question" and othering of Roma throughout history has left a permanent mark on the young man's life and has been something he has talked about in his family with his mother and grandmother. He continues to address the term integration and talks about generations of Roma in Europe:

> *"They have always tried to integrate, always tried to adapt. They have always tried to do best, to leave everything they have and have a good life and a better future. (…) Forget the culture, forget everything. Adapt. But that didn't work for them. It doesn't matter how much they tried to integrate, it will always end up badly. Like just only under a hundred years ago, during the World War II, they were killed. (…) Integration is not a proper word. At all. It is very negative. Why should I integrate? When I have been treated very badly? My history, everything. I can't! What people need to*

> *understand is that Roma people are humans just like everyone else! They have equal*
> *opportunities as anyone else. They need to make their own decisions. What they do*
> *need, is education like everyone else."*

I realised that he understood a criteria of integration as forgetting about one's culture and adapting to the majority. This young Rom has many negative experiences and I understand that he is angry with the dominant majority and their constant bullying of Roma people and is asking why he should "become one of them". The elasticity of basic human needs can be an expression of voluntary waiving of some needs in order to make room for the satisfaction or elevation of other needs, like when a person temporarily waves his or her need for social interaction and participation in order to retract in solitaire for a moment (Obrecht 2009, p. 50). However, a frustration resulting from the unsatisfied need of social satisfaction will follow after a while, as the person again will need social interaction (Ibid). If the wave of a basic human need is not voluntary, like Roma being denied social recognition from a larger society, this frustration will turn into aggression towards the actors or agency responsible for removing their possibility to satisfy basic human needs (Ibid). The young Slovakian Rom is pleading for equal rights and opportunities, and access to education for Roma "*as everyone else*", because people must understand that Roma are human and thus have basic human needs.

The teenagers that I met in the youth club have mostly grown up in England, but have also experienced that people say they don't want to integrate. A 17 year old young Rom from the Czech Republic shares his thought when he heard the statement:

> *"I know many people who say like this. That we are Roma, we are different. But you*
> *have got Roma working class people and you have Roma that don't work. They have*
> *got English people, white people who work and English white people who don't*
> *work."*

The 17 year old Rom associates integration with working and class. He wants to be a police officer but the background check for the police academy had stopped him fulfilling his dreams. The police didn't accept him after checking into his family, he says.

The Romni from Hungary reacts to the statement they don't want to integrate, with pointing out the otherness and the fact that it is a one-way statement.

> *"It is interesting, because, yeah, the otherness…and it is interesting, because when I*
> *read this, it means that we European countries, we have this gipsy problem. Because*

> *"they don't want to integrate", but nobody talks about the culture problem. We also have "they don't want to integrate us". They do not want to make an effort. It is interesting because if you just google gipsy problem…it is amazing how many hits you get. "*

She continues to explain that there is no common platform to discuss and create a dialogue, because there is no tolerance between the groups. The Hungarian Romni also states that integration of Roma in Hungary today can be good and bad. She feels that

> *"I don't want to catch up to one specific reference group. Do you know what I mean? That's what integration means today. That you as a Roma person have to catch up with the Hungarians, the dominating group"*

The Hungarian Romni says the title of this thesis implies that there is a Gipsy problem in Europe. She is also talking about otherness, and how "they", the majority, do not want to integrate the Roma. They do not want to make an effort. There seems to be a "Roma vs. Hungarian" mentality, instead of communication on a common platform. As a positive example of how integration could work, she mentions the way the Hungarians and Roma musicians communicate:

> *"They have different elements, (…) but throughout the years they have exchanged their ideas. They have been in touch and communicated with each other, you can see at some point that the Hungarian and the Roma musicians and the dance, even though it is different, there are some similarities. This is how integration should be. Both of the groups and styles are completely beautiful and there is no domination between the two. Nobody wants to be better. They are looking to make better music, not to win over the other group."*

A Romni from Slovakia tells me that she has a lot of experience from the Roma communities in the UK, and that they really want to integrate, but

> *"They don't trust no one. Because like I said, they are facing racism and everything back home and they come here for better life and it is still happening, the same here. So they try to build the trust but it is hard for them."*

According to Werner Obrecht, one bio-psycho-social basic human need, is the need for social and cultural belonging through membership (Ibid. p. 47). This means that human beings are inherently dependent on memberships in families, groups, society and/or geographical regions, to name a few. Being a member means that a person has duties and rights within the

membership (Ibid). When several of the participants address integration it is with statements that demonstrate an understanding that Roma who want to integrate into the dominant society do also have to choose between the membership and status they already hold, and a new membership in another group. Choosing the new membership (let's call it the larger society) and leaving the group they were a part of can have consequences for several other bio-psycho-social needs, like the need for a non-interchangeable and distinct identity (14) .In other words, the need to be recognised as an individual person and not "one of them", something many Roma experience who live together with non-Roma, but are not seen as equal human beings before they stop having "Romani traits" (McGarry 2017). Other needs also come into consideration, such as the need for autonomy (15), the need for social recognition in the terms of function (social status)position and achievements (16) and the need for social justice. When the dominant group says that the minority group members "don't want to integrate", they skip the reflection of these important motivations to defend oneself from lacking or losing the possibility to satisfy these basic human needs within a new membership. This makes it difficult to be a member of both groups as the dominant group defines the criteria for membership.

The Romanian Romni addresses the integration issues from her home country, showing the complexity of belonging and not belonging, and who decides when and who will have a membership:

> "*I want to say regarding to your theme, "they don't want to integrate". I think (sighs) it's…it's…a bit amusing. Because when I hear this thing they don't want to integrate. Half of the people or more would say that is right. And the other half, who are already involved in the community would just laugh about it. Because they know this is not true. They know that this is a community that has been through a lot and it takes time for changes to happen. It needs a lot of work to integrate a community. And this can only be made in different levels and slowly. But otherwise it doesn't work. But you cannot say "they don't want to integrate. We tried it, but they do not want to integrate" and that's it!"*

The discussion, reactions and associations to "they don't want to integrate", shows that there is a "we" and "they" mentality. But who are they? And what does that mean in terms of integration? In order to continue the investigation, the Roma participants are sharing their thought on who they, themselves, are or more accurately who they are not.

6.2.1 Who are "they"?

Defining who the Roma are and finding out when somebody can define themselves as Roma, proved in this field work to be quite difficult. The only thing I was certain of is that the definition of Roma can never be made by me. The topic of being Roma was approached by all of the participants and showed a vast diversity of understandings and backgrounds. The conversations left me confused to if there is anything at all that connects all these people and can one really call such a diverse group Roma? Some of the answer lies in how Roma are defined by others and how Roma react to that definition. There were two repeating storylines through their stories, the otherness and discrimination they met, and the way they reacted to this hostility with openness and hospitality. When the subject of "who are we, as a group" comes up, it becomes impossible to define someone based on collective values and thoughts internally. According to Hylland Eriksen (2007), ethnicity is not static and inherent aspect that persons or ethnic groups "have". There are cultural aspects of a group that become important in the eyes of "non-members" of the group. Ethnicity is thus socially and culturally defined. Basically, there are no ethnic groups alone, but as long as people both classify themselves and are classified as an ethnic group of others, social sciences cannot ignore the phenomenon (Hylland Eriksen 2007, p. 1-2). It is also important to remember that there are no groups that are "more ethnic" than others, although the dominant majority tends to describe minorities as ethnic groups (Ibid, p. 4). The participants in this thesis all define themselves as Roma and all have in common that they have migrated from Central and Eastern European countries to the UK after the EU opened its borders in 2004 and 2007. However, when the participants go a bit further in discussing *how* they are Roma or what makes them Roma, it turned out not to be so easy.

The Slovakia family found it important to point out, that they could not "prove" that they are Roma, because they had no identity papers of the belonging to this group. A son in the family said:

> "I am not proud to say I am Slovakian. But I am proud to say that I am Roma! Although I cannot prove to you that I am Roma. But I am a Roma. And that's one thing that is going to be important."

It was important to him that I understand that he is Roma, and also the father explained his point of view on this matter:

> "I am from Slovakia, yeah? I'm Roma, yeah? I show you now my passport. Never am (I) just deriving from Slovakia. It's (I'am) Roma, yeah?

Registration of ethnicity or social groups is not always easy and even though this family would have liked to be able to "prove" that they are Roma, they were reluctant to fill in forms asking their ethnicity as they arrived in England. The reason was connected to their experienced difficulty of "outing" their backgrounds, which they associated with political and historical events. The mother and son at the Roma café also approached the difficulties of registering their ethnicity. The son explains that is was not easy for him when he arrived in England and was asked to fill in a form and tick a box stating "ethnicity":

> *"I came to England 5 years ago and they gave me a form with Roma/Gipsy, and I thought oh, I will not put on Roma! Because still I have the experience from home. Somebody told me not to be scared it is different. I put it on, now I am Roma. And they accept more. In my country they do not accept. You don't have an ID card and put there Roma. (…) Nobody put on Roma themselves (…) I do have an ID card. It just says I am a Slovakian person."*

The son explains how it is very scary for him to "out" that he is Roma, especially on a formal registration form. He ties this back to both *"Germany, because we had war before. A long time ago. Germany was killing in Czechoslovakia. In special killed Jewish and gipsies. After the people grow up and are scared"* and the current treatment of Roma by authorities in the Czech Republic, especially the police: *"The police are very racist. They don't like the Roma people."*

The conversations shows that previous experiences make the Roma participants uncertain of how other people might perceive and treat them if they are open about their background and ethnicity. Obrecht elaborates some basic human needs like the need for power and need for control, which are not independent needs in terms of motivation, but rather refers to the circumstances where we need to control the satisfaction of our needs and have the power over available resources to do so. The need of power thus assists a person to guarantee or increase of his/her (relative) autonomy or social recognition (Obrecht 2009, p. 49). In other words, when these participants talk about "outing" their ethnicity, they are attempting to control the circumstances in case the admittance of being Roma means that there will be reactions from other people resulting in an decrease of social status and/or autonomy. The question of identity cards does not explain who Roma are, but points us to an important part of understanding: the way Roma are treated and defined by outsiders. The Czech/English Roma teenagers defined themselves as Roma as we met, and explained that they were hanging with other Roma youth on a regular basis. I was wondering what makes them Roma or how they

feel Roma are defined as a group. The group tried for a moment to define Roma what makes on Roma and one teen said *"we just…we feel like normal people"*. After a while, somebody mentioned music and the whole group lighted up. They had found something they agreed must be a Roma thing. The love of dance and music. Even though they see themselves as "normal people", they were careful of "outing" to others that they came from Roma families. They explain that in high school, there would sometimes be other students calling them Roma, but they *"don't really say it. In front of him. Because then we will be treated differently"*.

6.2.2 They Said I was Different

Zygmunt Baumann (1991) argues that we understand and classify ourselves in dichotomies of self and others and that this classification consists in including and excluding. He mentions some examples like women being the other of men, animals being the other of humans, strangers being the other of natives (Baumann 1991, p. 8). Many of the participants in this study said that in their home country one is either white or Roma and feel that Roma are seen as others[6]. Edward Said wrote that western metaphysics is based on binary oppositions such as light/dark or man/woman (Moosavinia, Lorestan og Ghaforian 2011, p. 105). The first, *the self* is perceived as a positive- a white European, and *the other* an opposing negative-the Roma. When a dominant group decides they are the "normal" and the rest the others, they create a hierarchy in which the first category is the desirable one (Ibid). In a hegemonial sense and tradition, Roma are branded by stigmas and negative portraits, which helps the *first*, the white eastern Europeans *to other* Roma. In this chapter, I will present some of the stories which demonstrated how the Roma participants are made *others* and different, and how that impacts their satisfaction of basic human needs.

Romanians describe Roma as *lazy* (42 %), *criminals* (37 %), *dirty* (36 %) and 1 % say that they believe Roma to be civilised people (CCSB 2011, p. 22). A Norwegian study of Norwegian's attitude towards Roma (begging in Norway, coming from Eastern Europe) showed a very similar result- *"Gypsies that do not work, but burden the society. Many of them steal or work illegally without paying taxes." - "A people unwilling to work. They always try to deceive you." - "People who beg and steal and are lazy human beings who are not interested in working."* (Lein 2016). The participants in this thesis come from various backgrounds and countries, however, they have similar stories to tell us about how they are met by non-Roma in their home countries. The Romanian Roma women tells from her

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[6] The topic of the dichotomies of Roma and White are covered more in the chapter" We have a chance here»

background growing up as a member of a traditional Roma family with conservative values, where Roma heritage has been central in her upbringing.

> *"In our family we talked the Romani language. We had the traditional Romani skirts as well. And my dad from the Romania side, he is working as a tin man. That is the traditional job that he is doing. And my mum is selling different things in the market."*

Another Romni, from Slovakia, grew up in a children's home, mostly with non-Roma children and with no ties to Roma traditions. She is happy to have had a nice childhood at the home:

> *"We grew up in a very educated environment. And we had knowledge about what was going on in the world! We were raised in a good, educated way, so… We had education and lot of fun there and we were very active and joyful. And because of that I am who I am!"*

The Slovakian Romni told me that she knew from early on that she was Roma, but did not learn anything about being Roma and did not grow up with any Roma traditions or heritage. However, she was early aware of that she was different and was told that

> *"I wouldn't have the same opportunities like other people. I was going to have to fight a little to show them I am good enough. (…) In Slovakia, if you are Roma you don't have the same opportunities like white people. (…) Because everybody just said it is dirty, you know (…) when I looked for work, they say you are not good enough, they choose white people. Or if you go to look for (a place to) rent and they ask for deposit or anything and you have upfront money they will tell you it is not good enough because you are already a Roma. So if you don't have friends in high positions, you have no opportunity.*

Both women were met with scepticism and othering from non-Roma in their respective countries. The Romanian Romni experienced that it became very difficult to follow her traditions and be accepted by the Non-Roma Romanians. The traditional Romani clothes made her stand out and it became very hard to hide her Roma heritage.

> *"When I was younger, I didn't like the idea of being Roma. Because I really just wanted to be like the others. I was different. (…) This became very frustrating for me, because the Romanians were treating me very different when I was dressed in the Romani clothes"*

To understand how deep the otherness goes concerning Roma in Romania, I want to take a look at how this Romanian Romni uses the term Romanians. Even though Romanian Roma have Romanian citizenship and have lived in Romania for many hundreds of years, they are often referred to as "*ţigan*" and not Romanian. In turn, Romanian Roma refer to white Romanians, as Romanians. The Romanian word *Rromi* is the political correct term for Roma, and has been used officially in Romania since the late 90' (Horváth og Nastasă 2012, p 7). However, there is an ongoing debate about changing the term back to *ţigan,* because white Romanians think the terms *Roma /Rromi* and *Romanian* are too similar and are afraid that the rest of Europe will confuse the terms, thus failing to comprehend the difference between white and non-white Romanians (Ibid p. 8)

The Slovakian family have also experienced what it means to be treated differently in their country. The father of the family explains how he experienced meetings with non-Roma in Slovakia, where he would have to wait outside of grocery shops, when there are non-Roma inside or how he would call companies looking to hire new people and how they would like him, but then turn him down as soon as they heard his Roma last name. He also described how he would never be allowed to drink coffee out of the same cups as the white people at a meeting "*the white people drinking from cups, for me give plastic*.

The Hungarian Romni experienced that her family did not want her to stand out or experience racism on behalf that she was Roma. Her grandparents therefore decided not to teach her the language or Roma heritage, in the hope that she would be seen as a Hungarian girl and thus have better possibilities for the future:

> "*My grandma and my grandparents were really keen on…they wanted to provide us with better opportunities. They felt that if you do not learn the language, if you don't follow our culture, our beliefs and values, then you would be in a better position*"

However, the result was that she was still seen as different and still experienced discrimination, because her skin colour and last name. She started school and realised that "*I am a bit different (…) to all the others (…) when I went to the school I just realised that something is different. Something is a bit wrong.*" Despite her family's efforts to protect her from being discriminated against, her school and the authorities would not accept her as a Hungarian girl, and "*When we went to the school the Roma students were marked. We had the letter G next to our name. So everybody knew it.*" Now the Hungarian Romni regrets not having learned the language and culture from her grandparents. The bio-psycho-social needs for social recognition (16), for social justice (17), for non-interchangeable and distinct identity

(14), for love, care and affection (11) and for socio-cultural belonging through participation (13) (Obrecht 2009, p. 47) are being denied when people grow up being told that they are different and must expect to always work harder in order to earn acceptance by a dominant group in society. The dominant majority indicate through these stories a deep-rooted conviction of fundamental differences between them and Roma. The universality of Basic Human needs are according to Obrecht transcultural and trans-individualistic (Obrecht 2009, p. 52). The specific forms of satisfaction and individual preferences can variate interculturally and inter-individually (Ibid).At the same time, all human beings have experience with Obrecht's bio-psycho-social basic human needs and the problems fulfilling them (Ibid). These shared experiences creates a basis of intercultural communication-provided the possibility of linguistic communication. Obrecht states that the doctrine of the existence of self-contained, locked and incommensurable cultures are fiction of idealistic and/or anti-realist philosophers and social scientists who base their world understanding on such teachings (Ibid). In other words, the belief that Roma do not share the same bio-psycho-social basic human needs with all other human beings because Roma belong to an incommensurable culture, thus sharing no common ground with other cultures and human beings is fictive and unrealistic. Treating Roma differently and systematically expressing a view of Roma as criminals, lazy and not interested in belonging to society, already from a young age, shows signs of institutionalised discrimination based on majority assumptions of Roma culture and has made intercultural communication difficult or impossible. Being Roma has always been connected with prejudice and prosecution, but some of the participants in this study point to what they call Roma values and heritage when confronting these prejudices. These seem to be rooted in reactions to the picture painted and political actions of non-members, as the son in the Slovakian family tells me while we are in the family's living room:

> "*People don't talk about how Roma are amazing!" Even the poverty, even after what they have been through. You know what is amazing about Roma? All though what we have been through very difficult times. We still have the heart to be very hospitable, very kind, very generous. Even to Non-Roma people.*"

The young man continues to explain how being a Roma makes him proud, because it means that he is a member of a great family of kind and generous people who meet hate with forgiveness. His story bears strong ties with historical events.

> "*They could say, no you have hated me, no I'll revenge myself on you, I will kill you. Im gonna do this. Never! Roma people don't think about this. What they do think, is*

> *forgiveness. Forgiving people and moving on. Not hating, but loving. Not showing bad, but showing good. Not just loving those who loves them, but love them who hate them too. And it takes a heart to do that."*

His father says that hospitality is a very important common value for Roma people, all over Europe. He says that it does not matter where you come from or who you are. Roma people will always invite you home, like the family did with me.

> *"I like everybody people. If you have good heart, I say like come in my house. If no have good heart, I say thank you, now go away"*

His son says that there is an expression saying that where a Roma stands on the grass, it will not grow. They also have another expression saying when we have a guest, we welcome them, feed them and count the blessings for being together. He elaborates that being Roma for him, means to have a big heart and to forgive and move on. He really admires his Roma heritage and community, because Roma

> *"Forgive people. All though they have been through a lot of bad things, they still forgive people and that's what we were taught. To be a good human, to be good people. "*

6.3 A Journey of Understanding

The year 2005 marked the beginning of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. European countries would work to eliminate discrimination of Roma as a joint effort to work towards Roma inclusion and integration in Europe (Roma Integration 2020 2017). However, the targets have far from reached and have left significant unfinished business in terms of inclusion of Roma in the Central and Eastern European countries (Ibid). The Romanian Romni is sceptical to the ideas and projects from local authorities and organisations. She says that the initiatives for Roma inclusion never involve the Roma communities or allow them to take part in decisions and legal procedures concerning the community. The Romni says that Roma inclusion without listening to Roma will never work, and in order to promote inclusion the Roma community must be empowered to organise activities themselves. She is asking how people think they can make decisions for a whole community

> *"When you actually don't know lot about us. Only reports. So by reading reports and following some statistics, doesn't mean that that is reality. The reality is out there in the community. So to make it work, the people who are involved have to be in the community with them. "*

The Romanian Romni continues to explain that we would all benefit from working with each other and that non- Roma have a lot to learn and understand before they start talking about inclusion and integration. Autonomy is a bio-psycho-sociological need which core principle is to free individuals from the power and control of dominant constructions of situations (Obrecht 2009, p. 15). That includes the possibility to control the fulfilment of needs like social interaction, participation, memberships and social recognition based own orientation and preferences, not on what dominant groups decide for the individual (Ibid).

As my different Roma conversations partners reflected upon the statement that they do not want to integrate, they all felt that this cannot be easily explained without taking me on a journey to understand their experiences. The Mother in a Roma Café demonstrates the complexity when confronting the often heard stereotype that Roma are dirty people:

> *"We are dirty? When in a poor area, we are hot, we are hot. There is no house. No electric. No light. No water. Of course dirty!"*

Obrecht writes that a common misunderstanding of his theory of basic human needs, is that it could be perceived as a concept describing the individual's search for desires and wellbeing thus a "meaning in life" (Obrecht 2009, p. 53). This impression is however misleading, because Obrecht's theory of basic human needs are no descriptive doctrine of subjective world views and morals, but rather the development of such views to behaviours that take part in the dynamics of social systems (Ibid). The theory of basic human needs understand individuals as (bio) systems, which forms physical, energised or informational exchange; which in turn forms social systems (Ibid). This means, that each person are in themselves a system, which interact with larger systems on biological, psychological and sociological levels, thus creating social systems. When an individual's search for satisfaction of that persons basic human needs is hindered or blocked by other parts in this system, it creates social problems. The motivation to block other individual's fulfilment of human needs, maybe powered by lack of perceiving or understanding that basic human needs are shared by all individuals, thus being universal (Ibid p. 52). Such a misunderstanding could be fuelled by stigma. In the next chapter, I will look at the consequences stigma and romaphobia [7] have for the participant's daily life, as well as what it means for their satisfaction of basic human needs.

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[7] Romaphobia is the hatret or fear of individuals percieved as Roma, Gypsiy or traveller (McGarry 2017, p. 1).

6.4 Stigma

Saying that somebody is not interested in integrating, or partaking in society, is a bold statement. The Romanian Romni explains from her home country, that she has seen people raising their children to be scared of the Roma community. Non-Roma would tell their children that Roma people are evil and associated with the devil. On top of that, they tell their youngsters that Roma like to eat children, and when the kids do not behave, the parents might give them to the *gipsies.* She says that

> "*I understand that this is how they grew up and you cannot judge them for that (...) but associating Romani with the evil is something that is not mean, it is something that is a lot more than that*"

During my conversations with Roma participants, a large amount of stories about discrimination and palpable stigmatisation were told. Not mainly as a topic of discussion, but often as a natural part of sharing experiences from the different countries of origin. There were so many mentions of racism and discrimination that I have no possibility to reflect upon all of them within the frames of this thesis. I will therefor share a small collection of stories and experiences, because it is very important to understand the stigma Roma are faced with in Europe.

6.4.1 Out for Bread and Milk: Living with Stigma

To paint a picture and share some experiences on how living with stigma is manifested and how the participants react to these experiences, I have chosen to elect a small amount of stories and a narrow topic, focusing on the challenge it can be for Roma to buy bread and milk.

In the living room of a Slovakian Roma family in England, I listened to the father of the family share his thoughts from Slovakia: *"for this year 2016, the mobile smart, TV smart, just everything just people no changing just racist."* The family father continues to talk about how difficult it was living in Slovakia, where he had to wait outside the shop if there were white people inside. He was not welcome inside, because he was Roma. Similar incidents happened in a grocery shop in the neighbouring country, where one of my Czech Rom conversation partners went shopping for "*bread, milk, you know. And when we finish, there is somebody saying "fuck off Roma" to me, you know. I said why this talk? They say go out, go out, go out. Like that. Racist, you know. "*In Hungary, a Romni went to buy a snack at a kiosk on the train station in Budapest, on her way to a catch a train.

> *"But I wanted to enter, the security guard just came out and said "it is closed". How come the others are inside? (…) That shop is never closed! You know? I knew it because I have been living there for 10 years or more and it have never been closed."*

Several people, from different countries, with different backgrounds told me about how buying bread and milk could be a challenge. Goffmann writes that an individual who carries a stigma and would otherwise easily be able to blend in every day social contact, is hindered because people not carrying this stigma (in this case non-Roma) react with aversion and avoidance of that person (Goffmann 2016, p. 13). The people avoiding the person with a stigma believe, that he/she is not quite human and which thus legitimatises a variation of discriminating behaviour, which decreases the stigmatised person's chances of living and existing (Ibid p.13-14). The everyday labelling of people as "gipsies", contributes to an understanding of differences, which makes a long chain of imagined shortcomings and imputed characteristics concerning the stigmatised individual possible, without ever stopping to fact-check the truthfulness of these shortcomings (Goffmann 2016, p. 15). In other words, when non-Roma react to the physical characteristics of a Roma person in a shop in a society where being Roma means carrying a stigma, the non-Roma follows up with a whole range of expectations and assumptions about that Roma person's intensions and behaviour; like the stereotype that Roma steal and are criminals. This reaction blocks the Roma person's human need to be accepted as a person with a non-interchangeable and distinct identity (14) (Obrecht 2009, p. 47).

The Gipsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA) are working to fight racism and discrimination against Romani people. On their website, several Romani police officers tell their stories from everyday duty and testimonials of how the police and other people react negatively when Romani people enter shops. Some of the stories that are shared are based on the assumption that Romani people inherently steal. One police officer was infuriated as he witnessed how shop workers treated people:

> *"The checkout woman replied "I'm staring at that Gypsy woman at the self-service, she's trying to steal, they tried it on at another store the other day (…) The Checkout woman then called over a colleague and told him "watch the Gypsy woman she's trying to steal", so the colleague walked right over to the self-service checkout and started staring at the female customer."* (Jim k. GRTPA 2015)

The Police officer states that no crime had been committed and says that this was all due to the prejudice and discrimination of one employee, who had involved others in her racist behaviour (Ibid).

The assumption that Roma are stealing and are dishonest is wide spread [8], but unfortunately not the only stigmas concerning the largest minority in Europe. According to Commissioner for Human Rights Anti-Gypsyism, and it's expressions of biases, prejudices and stereotypes motivating dominant majority groups and their behaviour towards Roma, is so deeply rooted in Europe, that many who have never interacted with Roma are ready to give detailed stereotypic descriptions about who and how Roma are (Commissioner for Human Rights 2012, p. 39). Anti-gipsism and the following consequences are not only making it hard to buy milk and bread, but has spread to all parts of everyday life for Roma in Europe. A Czech Romni relative in the Slovakian family's living room says

> *"they don't take us serious, because we are Roma. Whatever we say, whatever we do, they don't take us serious. We are no people, they don't take us serious. They don't take us serious like Roma. If white person say something, they take it very serious. But if Roma said something, they no take them serious "*

The stories of difficulties for Roma to enter a shop and the feeling that nobody would take Roma serious results in a serious lack of bio-psycho-social need for non-interchangeable and distinct identity (14), the need for social recognition and the need for social justice (Obrecht 2009, p. 47). A core issue in racism is based on denying other people their need of being recognised as distinct individuals, and rather place them in a category of people with assumed attributes and motivations. The shop keepers, cashiers and security in the different stories didn't recognise the Roma as individuals wanting to buy bread and milk, but rather based their perceptions on a skin colour and a set of assumptions based on what they think the motivations of these Roma were. This behaviour results in huge consequences for Roma and their ability to function in a society where their need of social recognition and social justice are denied on a daily basis. One of the participants told me a story about a time when Roma actually did steal and what she thought about it. At the Roma café, the Czech Romni tells me that she used to own a shop I the Czech Republic. At times, some people would come in, with no clothes. For these occasions, she had a little charity, so that she could help people. Sometimes there where sick people or children, so she put aside groceries that were a bit damaged, and give them away for free to people who needed them. One day, she caught some

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[8] (CCSB 2011, p. 22)

Roma stealing something in her shop. She was angry and surprised and asked why they would steal from her. They said they were very hungry and would sell the item to buy bread. She decided to help them out. The Roma Mother explains:

> *"Why people go sometimes steal? People just very small steal, not going big. Not going to bank. Just people going to steal because children are hungry. They have no job. They are going to shopping and something because children are crying and no one will give them a job. Because Roma no give job."*

In that situation, some Roma had stolen so that they could eat. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), some 80 % of Roma surveyed live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold and every third Roma child goes to bed hungry at least once a month (FRA 2016, p. 3). In some cases, some people will steal, but the stigma that all Roma steal, because it is a part of their culture, has a very negative effect on the everyday life of Roma in Europe. The Romni Mother explains that when it comes to stealing: *"Never ever did my mama teach me that. When you are in a good family, and you are growing up. I am teaching my children. This one not Roma culture! Definitive not! "*

The following chapters will take a closer look into some of the main themes that the participants in this study have elevated in their stories. After the Decade of Roma Inclusion failed in its aims to eliminate discrimination and integrate Roma in society, the EU took over the plans and developed a new integration strategy, this time with the timeline 2020 (Roma Integration 2020 2017). With an understanding of the stigma back drop and the diverse backgrounds of the Roma participants, the thesis will now focus on the topics: education, housing and employment from the perspectives of the Roma sharing their perceptions and experiences.

6.6. Education

The 2014 report on the implementation of Roma inclusion and integration, states that the member states must ensure the minimum of primary school completion for Roma children (European Commission; 2014, p. 3). The commission calls upon the members states encouragement of Roma children to participate in secondary and tertiary education as well as seeing to that the mainstream educational system becomes more inclusive and tailored to Roma pupil's needs (Ibid). The commission further recommend reducing early school leavers by providing extra curriculum activities and close cooperation with the families (Ibid). Though also mentioning the inclusion of Roma culture in school curricula, and the need for Roma mediators and pedagogues, the focus of the EU Commission's main points of

intervention seems to rest on how the Roma should and could integrate and not what the majority non-Roma children and their families can do to ensure the inclusion of their fellow classmates. The Romanian Romni says that integration takes longer and that the problem with school attendance for Roma children could increase if the children felt well and happy being at school. She says that it takes small steps to ensure children's well-being in the educational system and if the schools focused on treating Roma children with dignity, "*they don't want to be at home, they would just be very happy at school and the attendance wouldn't be an issue any longer.*" In the next sub chapters, I will look at the different school experiences the Roma participants have shared with me, and what that means in terms of integration in school.

6.6.1 Too hungry to learn

At a Roma Café in an English city, sits a mother and her son. The Mother had her experiences with the educational system in the Czech Republic and she explains that "*education is very important!*" but that there are several difficulties and barriers that are connected structurally that we must understand when looking at why not more Roma children are in school. One of them is the poverty children and families are facing.

> "*This is normally a problem with this education here. Because in the Czech Republic for example, there is no money. You maybe have 30 pounds for a month. Or 60 pounds for the children. People give a little and put in food. After there is no money for the bus, no money for the school books or dinner. So the children are not going to school because of no money. Not even 1 p in their pocket.*

According to the European Commission report on discrimination of Roma children in Education from 2014, approximately 90 % of Roma children in Europe live in households under national poverty lines and 40 % of Roma children live in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry because the family could not afford food (Farkas 2014, p. 5). The Mother at the café shares her view on the Czech Republic's social policies when it comes to school and food:

> "*In my country no putting the children in school because no money for bus. No money for bread. Going hungry to school. School does not give you food for free. No give you milk. Children are hungry after seeing the other children having some bread. After they see, maybe they would go and thief. Poor children. Why not the government in my country say ok, if we give the children little bit of milk, every child. Maybe a little bit of sandwich. Just a small sandwich, they are small children. They go to their first*

> *school. No, we don't have a lucky system. No, there is nothing for free for the*
> *children."*

Another family, from Slovakia, have also experienced how poverty can be an obstacle to higher education. The adult son in the family explains:

> *"We had no heating. We had no boilers. We had nothing. So everything was manual.*
> *In order to prepare food, you had to get wood from the forest. And get the water. So*
> *my mom had to work really, really hard. And my dad had the time to get a job. But,*
> *this in the new generation, is different. Everything is provided. So we adults now work,*
> *but also our children, every female, they go to university, they go to college"*

A Romanian Romni advocate explains how her extended family did not have to possibility to attend school in her home country, because they were forced to work in order to survive:

> *"I would say my entire extended family from my dad's side, they lived in poverty. My*
> *extended family. Like cousins, I think they had to for work their food. The children*
> *themselves, they had to work for their food. To get it on the table. For them it was*
> *really, really hard because I believe from 8 years old they had to do work in the sun*
> *and land work."*

Children, as all other human beings, have basic biological needs. Biological needs are the part of the bio-psycho-social theory of basic human needs, that is least elastic (Obrecht 2009, p. 47). The first is the biological need of physical integrity like prevention of polluting elements like dirt and filth, reducing well-being through (painful) physical impairments like over-heating, freezing and being wet, avoidance of physical harm and exposure to violence. The second is the biological need of autopoiesis, the need for food, water and oxygen to stay alive. The utter consequence of unsatisfactory fulfilment of these biological needs are detrimental and harmful to the individual and can cause death and injury (Ibid p. 10). The lack of these basic human needs force children to concentrate on fulfilling these urgent needs and leave little room for learning new subjects at school. Insufficient funds to pay for school is according to Save the Children both the main reason to leave school (41.8 %) and not to start school (55.8%) for Roma children (Salvaţi Copiii 2011, p. 1). According to the World Food Program, children who cannot afford to eat during school can have irreversible damage done to their growing bodies (WFP 2017). Providing children with nutrition at school, allows them to focus on their studies rather than their stomachs, helps to decrease drop-out rates and improves cognitive ability (Ibid). Children who do not have appropriate clothes to protect

them against heat and cold, are both more exposed to the environment and focused on fulfilling their needs to stay warm, as well as adding to the embarrassment of not "fitting" in and living the stigma of poverty at school. The latter also interferes with the bio-psycho-social need of socio-cultural belonging (13) and social recognition (16) (Obrecht 2009, p. 47).

6.6.2 I want education, but does education want me?

The first recorded conversation I had with one the participants in this study, was a young Slovakian Rom. At a table at Starbucks, somewhere in England, he tells me about how he is hoping to "*have a good life and a better future*". He emphasises many times, that education is a key and that Roma need education "*like everyone else*" in order to have equal opportunities. However, getting equal access to education is not always easy, if you are Roma and live in Europe:

> "*And if you look at the system now, in Europe, we have schools, just manly for the Roma. Only for Roma schools. We have school for only white Eastern Europeans. There is no…there is a lack of opportunities for Roma people to go and be proper educated. So the majority of us did go to school, but only because the law said. We have no future, even if we have an education, because no one would accept the students to go to university. Because we are gipsies, we are Roma.*"

Amnesty International, in collaboration with European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) in Budapest, released a report concerning the discrimination and segregation of Roma children in Slovakia in 2017. The two organisations are deeply worried about the segregation of Slovakian children into Roma-only schools or Roma-only classes (Amnesty International & European Roma Rights Centre 2017, p. 7). It is not the preference of Roma parents to segregate the children, but a consequence of what the report describes as "white flight", when non-Roma parents move their children out of schools because there are "*too many Roma pupils*", leaving the schools only populated by Roma children (Ibid p. 8). Amnesty and ERRC criticise Slovakian authorities at the national, regional or local level for

> "*Not even attempting to intervene and incentivise non-Roma parents to enrol or keep their children in mixed schools or facilitate the enrolment of Roma in mixed or majority non-Roma schools*" (Ibid).

The result is that Roma children receive lower quality education and have limited prospects of continuing an educational path after the age of 16. The ones that do continue usually do it in vocational schools, without the possibility of accessing university education later. (Amnesty International & European Roma Rights Centre 2017, p. 8) . The European Commission for

culture and understanding emphasise that there is little hope for meaningful integration of Roma children in school when they miss out on education (European Commission and Directorate- General for Culture and Understanding 2012, p. 7). The commission states that Roma children's access to education have often been hampered by discrimination based on ethnic origin (Ibid). The discrimination of Roma children often start in kindergarten, as the Roma children are stigmatised from a young age, as the following story will demonstrate.

In Sibiu, Romania, an angry mother wrote a letter to the local newspaper after discovering that her 3 year old daughter would have Roma children in her kindergarten class (Nitu 2014). The concerned mother could not understand how the authorities would allow Romanian children in the same room with *gipsy* children, "*known to fill hospitals with hepatitis and who were dirty and disgusting*". The perceived health threat from always having to keep the windows open in the classrooms, because of the foul smell from *gipsy* children, was enough for her to remove her child from kindergarten. The letter is both a critique to the local authorities on letting Roma come to school and kindergarten, as well as an open question to where the next all white kindergarten is. She says that she understands that NGO's are trying to integrate Roma children, in order to make appearances for the rest of Europe, but that these "experiments" should be done in special institutions only for Roma children (Ibid). Though this letter is somewhat extreme and sparked a discussion in the newspaper, majority parents who take their children out of school and kindergarten because of the presence of Roma children in class, are often very concerned about the quality of education their children would get, when they had Roma children in class. This concern is often tied to the assumption that Roma children are "deviant" and that their parents do not see the value in education (Bennett 2014, p. 42) According to a report by Unicef, Open Society Foundations and Roma Education Fund, parents "*regardless of their ethnic affiliation, they (parents) think that school is an extremely important educational institution in the life of their children.*" (Bennett 2014, p. 42) However, one of the main reasons for Roma parents not to send their children to kindergarten is the fear that their children will be bullied and discriminated against in majority institutions and by other majority children (Salvaţi Copiii 2011, p. 3). In 2011, 12,5 % of Roma families said their children left school early because of the unequal and disadvantageous treatment their children were subjected to by other children, their parents and the teachers in school (Ibid p.1). The Romanian Romni says that it is

> "*Extremely difficult for a child to grow up in a school in this type of countries where we come from, like the eastern European countries. I don't think it would exist a single*

> *child that never faced racists when it comes to the ethnicity. I am 100 % confident that that exists."*

According to Laura Surdu, Goffman describes how children from stigmatized families are being protected by their families against the stigmatising agents (Surdu 2010, p. 67). The families try to control the outside information and discrimination, thereby sheltering and "encapsulating" the child in order to create an atmosphere where the child feels safe and is considered a human being. More often than not, the Roma children are revealed to the discriminatory outside and the stigmatic truth when entering the educational system, where they are left to protect themselves from racism, discrimination and stigma (Ibid).

The Czech Romni mother at the café in England, explains that the situation for Roma children in school is very bad in the Czech Republic. She says that schoolbooks are teaching the children that *"Roma people are smelling and no good. They don't work, they are just stealing"* and that the children come home from school learning that their parents are belonging in certain categories of people, which are just negative stereotypes. The Czech mother is saying that children are children and will learn bad behaviour from their parents, but is angry at the lack of action taken from the school and teachers part.

Obrecht points out that the denial and blocking of an individual's basic human needs within a social space would at first glance appear subjective and contained within that space, but has actual consequences far beyond the values and aims of the subjective actors (Obrecht 2009, p. 55). These consequences are of societal, cultural and socio-structural nature and contributes to form motivations for people's further actions (Ibid p. 56). That means that the denial of these children's integrity, social recognition and distinct identity contributes to force the Roma children to focus on satisfying these needs themselves, which puts the children at risk of dealing with consequences of unfulfilled basic human needs. Some of these consequences are aggression, apathy or depression, which in turn makes learning processes very difficult for these Roma children. Teachers and school staff carry a specific responsibility to make sure children are safe at school and to work systematically against bullying and racism, so that children can feel well and focus on learning (Utdanningsdirektoratet). In the next sub chapter, the Roma participants share stories about their teachers.

6.6.3 Reinforcing Stereotypes in School- Where is the teacher?
> *"School is one of the principal agents of symbolic violence in modern democracies"*- Pierre Bourdieu (Garret 2007, p. 228) .

The mother from the Roma café tells a story about her daughter, who had her hair lit on fire by a boy in her class when she was just nine years old. The Roma mother was shocked and had gone to the school to ask what had happened. *" I am not thinking it [9] was racist. I said where is the teacher? "* The teacher had answered that it was not her responsibility and didn't seem to care too much. The mother of the boy was a customer at the Roma mother's shop and had come running to apologise for what her son had done. The Roma Mother said that the boy did not learn to be hostile to Roma at home, but asked herself what the role of the school and teacher is to set an end to this:

> *"Why is this happening? Because when children are growing, they are understanding very quickly. They see black eyes. Quickly understand "oh this maybe a tigan" pfui, pfui! He is thinking bad smell. Who is teaching this?"*

The Hungarian Romni said it was difficult to expose discrimination in school, but sometimes she experienced how Roma stereotypes found their way into the educational system. She tells about how she was doing very well in school, especially in the subjects of reading and math, her favourites. Up until the third grade, she got great marks in maths and reading, and was quite proud of herself. She admits not to have being doing too well in sports and music, something that she had not cared too much about back then. She says that

> *"It is interesting, because when you go back to Hungary, everybody would say that Roma people or Roma students are really good in these two subjects and not the others"*

As she started the third grade, the class had gotten a new teacher.

> *"At some point after the half term I had really bad grades from these normal subjects like math, literature and so. But I got really good grades in sport and music. (…) Within one year, how can this change?"*

It turned out that the new teacher also had her views on what Roma can do and not, which resulted in that the Roma students in grade three suddenly got similar grades- good in music and sport and bad in literature and maths. My conversation partner said that she failed her favourite subjects that year and had to redo the exams. The Romni from Romania tells a similar story, where not only her, but also all the Roma children in her class were never

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[9] In context, this mother meant not it, the action, but him, the boy.

awarded with a high grade when they did well in school. She thinks the teacher deliberately handed out worse grades to the Roma children, only based on the fact that they were Roma.

> "*She would always give me lower, only because I was Roma. That didn't only happen to me, you know, to all the Romani children. If you were doing the best in the school, you could never get the maximum grade in education. You would always get, you know, a pass grade. So not the maximum one.*"

She also says that she had never read or seen anything positive about Roma in the school books in Romania, on the contrary, she says the perceived mentality of the professionals/teacher were that if anything negative or bad happened, it was associated with the Roma.

6.6.5 I was angry

When parents of non-Roma are leaving schools, because they do not want their children to study together with Roma children, a reason they often give is that the Roma children are noisy and not interested in school (Gavriliu 2010). Thus creating a bad learning environment for the non-Roma children. One non-Roma child in Romania explains to a newspaper why she changed schools: "*It wasn't good at the school in Ineu. Always loud and chaotic. We couldn't learn[10]*" (Ibid). The young Rom from Slovakia said he had problems in school. *"I got kicked out of school. Because I had a very bad attitude. I was a really confused and angry teenager."* He explains that it was very difficult to grow up in a "*shack"* without any running water or electricity and that it was very hard on him that the family didn't have any options for a better future. The lack of food, security and acceptance contributed to his frustration and he started to fight in school in order to deal with his aggression. Obrecht (2009) explains that lacking basic human needs might push people to become irritated, openly aggressive and take increasingly greater risks in order to come closer to the goal of reducing particularly oppressive emotional tension (Obrecht 2009, p.30).

6.6.6 We have a chance in the UK

All of the adult participants said one of the main reasons for migrating to England was the hope for access to education and thus creating a better future for their children, and all of the participants who came as teenagers state their parents had the same objective. The young Slovakian Rom has continued his educational career in England, after seeing that it would be possible to get an education and not be excluded on the behalf of his ethnicity. He has worked

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[10] Own Translation from Romanian: *Nu era bine la şcoala din Ineu. Mereu gălăgie, dezordine. Nu puteam învăţa*

as an assistant in primary school in the UK and has talked to Roma parents who have their first experiences with English education and equal possibilities for their children.

> *"Every time I had a parent evening with the Roma, (inaudible) and when we show them the books to the parents, they could not believe it. They were shocked and said "that's not my son's work, he can't write like this! Amazing! Wow! (…) they didn't know what their children are capable of doing. Because obviously British citizen's education is really good. (…) What I really have to pass the message on to them is, look, this is England, you are not segregated here, you can go to university, and you can become anything you want. It is a freedom culture. It is not Slovakia, this is a different culture. (…) now I know a lot of teenagers who aim to go to university. So, like I said, the new generation is coming. "*

In a 2011 strategy report to the EU anti-discrimination committee, the key findings in Roma education research in the UK showed that 85 % of the Roma pupils studying in the UK, had been placed in segregated and/or special school in their country of origin, even though most did not require special education (Equality and Roma Education Fund 2011, p. 9). After starting mainstream schools in the UK, a large part of the students received better help and education. The report further found, that while the large majority of the Roma children had experienced racist bullying in their home country school, seven out of eight pupils reported that they were not experiencing any form of racism in the UK (Ibid).

The Mother at the Roma Café met with her daughter's teacher in England. She expected the teacher to complain about having Roma in her classroom, but was very surprised when she heard the teacher's reaction:

> *"She said to me, "Roma people are beautiful". "Children are nice and clean". It was a big surprise for me. "Nice smell. Lovely parents". She said oh hat down for Roma people. I am very proud and listened. "Are you from Slovakia? " I said yes, and was scared. She said you have lovely people, lovely education. Oh, I am very happy!"*

The Czech Rom cousin at the Slovakian Roma family home, explains that his twin daughters and their brother are going to school in England. His daughters are currently at the top of their class and he says that he spoke with them about how it is to be Roma in school in the Czech Republic. He says that it was met with astonishment and disbelief: "*no, never, no, they don't believe me for my country like that*" and says that they reacted like that because they are used to have possibilities in England and could not believe that their father's native country would

deny him or them the same. The Czech Rom is immensely proud of his children and their accomplishments and says: *"Who dad no happy for children? Or maybe my children for doctor? Maybe minister? I don't know! Yes, I am very happy! Who no happy? "*

Most of the participants tell similar stories of having possibilities in terms of education that they never had in their home countries. The Slovakian Romni is in contact with many Roma who have migrated to the UK the last 10-15 years. She says that most of them came with very little education and that they in the UK *"try to gain more skills and learning things that could help them to get a better job. "* A 17 year old Czech Rom says that his father wanted him and his siblings to have a chance for a better future, which meant they'd have to invest in education. His father had managed to get a degree in the Czech Republic from a private institution, but could never find someone to hire him, because he was Roma. He therefore decided to move to England because *"as my dad told me: I'll pay for private school but it will be useless because you guys are brown."* The most prevalent reasoning the participants offered to why access to education for Roma in the UK is easier than in Central and Eastern European countries, is the escape of binary race codes in society. The Roma I talked with had grown up knowing only that if you are not white, you are Roma. The young Slovakian Rom at the family home shares his first experience at English school:

> *"So for me seeing a mixed race, speaking other languages, for me that was like…wow! Who are they? I had no idea! And all the differences (inaudible) to what I was used to only see a Roma or a white eastern European. That is the only people I knew. Moving to England is the first time I saw an African and I said…wow…"*

His Czech aunt continues by saying that in England they do not care whether you are white or black, they even have different races in the UK. She tells me with a hint of astonishment: *„You can work. Doctors. Even black doctors. We have more changes. And opportunities to live here than in our own country. "* At the Roma Café, the Czech Romni Mother says that things are different in England, because they have people from all over the world and are used to everybody. That means to her, that the English have open and beautiful hearts, which comes with having a diversity of people in the country. Her son follows up and says:

> *"Yes, it is the freedom. If you are fat, if you are slim, if you are white, if you are red. The freedom. The people in my country, it is not safe. In the country, they are scared for their families and children. They are coming here, because the reason is a family life in England is a better life."*

He explains that Roma in England are finally free to pursue education, without racism and assumptions about Roma not wanting to learn. The Slovakian Rom father also shares his thoughts on Slovakian education for Roma, where the children are segregated into all-Roma school; the quality of education is low and they mainly speak Romanes[11] between them and are not properly educated in the Slovakian language. He says in this way, they will never learn. His 12 year old son is however lucky to be in English school where in *"this country going to school, mixed people. White, black, yellow…"*both he and his Czech cousin emphasise how important it is for children to have friends other than just Roma in school, so that they can learn together.

I understand that the Roma participants have more possibilities than before, as they are perceived as "just another immigrant" and that they have escaped the binary race code of Central and Eastern European countries, where they felt that you are either Roma or non-Roma. The Roma specific stereotypes are chiselled deep into the majority's cultural minds and are a huge obstacle to free and quality access to education for Roma in central and Eastern European countries. The next chapter will look at the housing situation for Roma in Europe.

6.7 Housing

Contrary to common belief, 95 % of European Roma are not living a nomadic life, but have fixed housing (Save the Children Resource Centre n.d. & ERRC 2013 p .1). However, the housing situation for Roma on the European continent is very poor. The European Union's report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies (2014) states that housing interventions have been the weakest part of the national strategies (European Commission; 2014, p. 8). The EU framework calls for closing the gap between Roma and non-Roma when it comes to housing and non-discriminatory access for Roma, including social housing and public utilities like water, electricity and gas (Ibid). The main causes of the problems have been grey zones concerning legalisation of existing housing and halting sites, and a failure to establish dialogue between "mainstream" and local Roma communities (Ibid).

6.7.1 "In one Room Living with Seven Children Inside"

When discussing integration and Roma, the son in the Slovakian Roma family said that integration depends very much on where Roma lives. He explains that if one were to visit Bratislava, one would find many Roma living in flats in the city and who do not know how to

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[11] A Roma language

speak a romani language, because they have been forced to speak Slovakian. However, if one would go to any of the villages in the east, the story Roma would live very different:

> "*It's not actually a town. It's not a place where you would say this is nice. It's actually living in the forest (…) and establish there. Building, I can't say house, maybe a shelter, and shacks from the wood. In one room living with seven children inside. So that's poverty! That is very poor.*"

The young Rom emphasises that these living conditions has nothing to do with Roma culture. He grew up in a village like this with no heating, electricity or running water and says that people are just trying to survive and that nobody would choose to live like that if they had other possibilities.

> "*Very poor hygiene. Very poor nutrition. Very poor shelter. Very, very poor. I have survived. I have been through it. I lived there. My parents went through it. I know. It is different(…)We never thought about going to university. That wasn't important to us. What was important was to live. To survive.*"

He continues to explain that if all the people had the possibility to go to England and find a job to earn their own money, they would be able to go back, demolish the shelters, and build new houses. Some people have worked on the infrastructure in the village after finding employment in other countries. He shows me some pictures of his native village before and after 2004, the year the EU opened its borders to Slovakia. The before pictures shows run down shacks which reminds me of the infamous South African townships or Brazilian Favelas on the outskirts of the cities. The newer pictures show houses in the making, with new walls and roofs and looks much more habitable. The Roma needed to find work outside their country in order to take care of their own community because the country they lived in did nothing to improve their housing conditions. The young Rom says

> "*All this time, the changes which are happening now, never happened in hundreds of years. So it is not people's choice or culture. It is that they had to survive. They would never get a job. No education. Nothing.*"

The Slovakian Rom points out a very important issue, that without decent housing and access to sanitation public facilities like running water, people are concentrating their effort at fulfilling these human needs and are have less energy or possibilities to simultaneously satisfy the less urgent needs of subjective goals, aims and hope (9) and the requirement of new skills and competences (10) (Obrecht 2009, p. 47). In other words, when the satisfaction of

biological needs like avoidance of dirt, heat, cold, pollution and injuries (1) is a large part of daily life, it becomes very difficult for these families to prioritise education or employment (Ibid).

6.7.2 We are here to be mixed

The Romni from Romania explains that she grew up in a flat, which was very unusual for traditional Roma in her country. Because her father had married a town girl, he had the possibility to move out of his Roma village. He broke with traditional Roma culture saying that the wife should move to the husband's village, and secured a government funded flat for the family in his wife's town. The Romni says that her father had deemed it impossible for his family and children to have a future in to Roma village, so he gladly took the chance he had through marriage gotten to move out. Due to the move, her upbringing was very different from her relative's, whom she visited on a regular basis. She says they thought about

> "*Our future and their future as well, I think. Because my dad grew up in a family of ten, working since he was young, I don't know, 8-9 years old. They had to work and help. When he became a teenager he realised "I have to leave this village".*

Growing up in a flat in the town, the Romni was surrounded by non-Roma and had a better opportunity to go to school. Where her relatives had few options to find a school to go to, as offers were geographical limited. In addition, since her family had water, electricity and heating, they had the possibility to focus on other parts of life, such as education. Her cousins on the other hand, had to stay at home and work on the land instead of going to school. She has today a law degree, whereas many of her cousins cannot read or write. She contributes her success to being able to live in a flat and not in the segregated and very poor Roma village. A Romanian study from 2008 shows that 70,6 % of Romanians were of the opinion that Roma should be forced to live separately from the rest of society, because of they are considered impossible to integrate (Surdu 2010, p. 58). These numbers have gone up by 13,6 % since 2003, which means that there is an increasing view that Roma don't want to integrate and should live in isolated areas (Ibid).

The Czech mother at the café thinks the politics around Roma and housing is not going well in the Czech Republic. There are "*Too many people homeless!"* and without basic access to public utilities. She thinks that if the government "*put something like a house, just very basic house for the people, people go to work and pay you rent!"*. Because it is in her eyes not possible for people to work and contribute to society when they have no starting point, no roof over their heads. If the government would assist in securing housing for Roma and ensure that

Roma have the same basic living conditions as non- Roma in the country, then Roma would also be able to work and build up a life for themselves. However, as it now is, they need help from the government to do so. The Czech Romni mother says give the Roma housing and they could contribute more in society. "*Simple decision! "*she states confidently.

I understand from the participants that there are two main problems with the current housing situation in their countries of origin. The first is the battle against homelessness and the poor, sub-standard housing that many Roma live in. The second is the segregation of Roma to isolated places, because they cannot afford to live together with the rest of the population. The Czech aunt at the Slovakian family home, says that they moved to England because they did not want to be segregated in a Roma community. *"We have this back in our country and we don't want to have this here again. We are here to be mixed and with all different cultures."* She says that she and her family just want to live the same life as everyone else and have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Dr. Aidan McGarry (2017) at the University of Brighton, explains in his book *Romaphobia: the last acceptable form of racism* that a potent stereotype about Roma is that they do not belong to society because they choose to live in temporary settlements, camps and ghettos. This stereotype contributes to the idea that Roma do not want to take part in, or belong to a mainstream society and enforces the conviction that their way of living is fundamentally different to non-Roma (McGarry 2017)[12]. The national states that are responsible for ensuring human rights and securing safe housing for all, are according to McGarry ignoring the Roma housing problems, because society deem Roma a burden who are not socially, economically and political significant enough and considered "unproductive" and useless" citizens (Ibid). The participants in this study explain that they do not want to be isolated, nor do they wish to live in substandard housing. The participants who grew up in camps or temporary and isolated Roma settlements, say that they could not think of anyone who would like to live like that, and emphasise that it solely has to do with survival. The fulfilment of many basic human needs are in jeopardy when people do not have access to decent and safe housing. According to Obrecht (p.44-45) the long term consequences of unsatisfied human needs like social recognition (16); autonomy (15); social justice (17); socio- cultural belonging (13); variation and stimulation (7);the need for beauty and aesthetics in our environment (6) and the security of physical integrity (1); can result in a break-down of interest and initiative (depression,

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[12] The version of this book available to me at the moment, does not have page numbers. The citations are from the sub chapter "from separation to segregation".

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post out.'' His sons adds that he thinks the whole discrimination on the labour market is absurd, and shares a story from Slovakia where two Roma women had come to a job interview at a shop, but that the shop owner had rejected them immediately after realising that they were Roma. The meeting between the shop owner and the two women had been caught on tape and the shop owner had to defend her actions to a news channel. The young Rom says that he was not surprised by the fact that the women were rejected on the grounds of their ethnicity, but that the shop owner had chosen to be honest to the TV reporters asking her about it. "*She actually said to everybody: why should I employ them? There are gipsies. They don't want to work, they don't want to integrate.''* The Slovak Rom says that this shows the absurdity in the situation; that somebody would show up to a job interview, only to be rejected because the person hiring thinks they are not interested in working. His Czech Rom uncle had similar experiences: "*For example, I go in my country to ask for a job, yeah? No chance. They tell you to stay away. You gipsy, don't like you working''*. According to Obrecht (2009), the bio-psycho-social needs are elastic, which means that people have the possibility to elect the stages of importance or which need must be fulfilled first (Obrecht 2009, p. 10). That does however not mean, that people have the freedom to choose *if* the basic human needs have to be fulfilled, rather it indicates the amount of time one person can refrain from the fulfilment of a need before the consequences of a lacking basic human need becomes unbearable for the person (Ibid). If hypothetically, there would be social status and points of achievement to harvest within a Roma community by not pursuing employment, but rather do nothing (referring to the popular belief that Roma are "lazy") that would mean that the bio-psychological needs for variation and stimulation (7), for subjective relevant aims, goals and achievements (need for a subjective meaning in life) (8) and the need for actual skills, rules and social norms to manage new and repetitive situations depended on the relevant goals(9) and the bio-psycho-social need for autonomy (15) are all set aside in order to achieve social status (16) and belonging (13) within a group. If this would be a correct assessment of how Roma prefer the order of the fulfilment of basic human needs, it would only mean that the fulfilment of all the basic human needs have been prolonged, not dismissed (Ibid). However, the participants in this study are pointing out the opposite, that Roma are desperately trying to pursue employment, but are hindered by other factors such as members of the majority and systematic discrimination on the labour market. The assumption that there is social status to be harvested within the Roma community by not wanting to work, are according to these participants not true.

6.8.1. Manual work: *"Only Roma do that"*

Traditionally and enforced through the slave times, Roma have been known to excel in manual crafts, farming and traditional Roma work like pottery, tin- and basket making (Bangau 2014). After the abolition of slavery, it got very hard for Roma to find payed labour as they were seen as outcasts with no rights (Cultural Survival 1995). During the Soviet time, in the socialist satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, Roma were encouraged to support the build-up of their socialist states and many were offered jobs in factories and warehouses (Barany 2000).

In the Slovakian family's living room, the father in the house tells me that he originally came from Slovakia in order to find work in in the Czech Republic, back when Czechoslovakia was one country. There were more factories in the Czech Republic, which meant better opportunities to work and thus have either the company or the council provide them with a house. The sudden access to work opportunities meant, *"All Roma people go to Czech Republic (...) Because 30 years ago, go to work and the company gives people house."* It meant leaving their relatives and home behind, but the most important aim for the Slovakian Rom Father was that *"we are getting jobs"*. His son agrees, and says it is better to get a job in the Czech Republic, because it was impossible to find work in Slovakia. During communism, all citizens had to have work, if not they would be arrested, as the Father of the family tells me:

> *"In the communist time, you have to work! If 15 years old, the people, they (are) catched by the police in the streets, in town, (police) ask for ID. Where you working? If you don't work, they send you to jail.*

The Czech Romni Mother at the Roma café tells me that Roma people were forced to work from the age of 14-15, during the communist times. The laws in the communist Czechoslovakia prohibited people from not going to school or having a place to work. She says that it was very difficult for the Roma, because they were not in the position to choose education over work, as *"they needed the money for family, for food. No study."* Because people from Roma communities did not have the opportunity to choose education and vocational training, generations of Roma were bound to work with hard manual jobs, that other non-Roma did not want. The Slovakian Rom Father says that there used to be traditional Roma work, but that during the communist times and the forced assimilation during 40 years, the know-how of traditional trades were forgotten. He says as the Soviet system collapsed, it left Roma with little to no education, no vocational training and a labour market that was not

interested in Roma labour anymore. Suddenly there was no more work for Roma and Anti-Gipsyism rocketed, as the Czech Son at the Café told me: *"This work is not here. I don't know why."* He says that Roma lost their jobs and were attacked on the streets *"I don't do nothing. You Roma!"* The Slovakian Father tells me that all the hard manual jobs, like laying the railroad from the Czech Republic to Slovakia, were done by Roma. His Czech cousin agrees: "*Manual jobs, yes! Just always Roma people"*. They explain that it has been very hard for the Roma, because they are always seen as manual labourers without training and education, as they had no possibility to follow an academic career, due to the immense poverty. The father is annoyed and points to the cable lines running from the masts outside his house in England. He explains from his country: "*You know phone line, you know cable and so…only Roma do that"* instigating the spontaneous comment "No *Education! No Education!"* from several members of the family at once. The family father wanted to become a TV installer, which meant that he had to get vocational training. Since his father was not a communist, the school rejected his application. He then became a builder, like *"the Roma, every second man my age, builder. Just making house. Why only Roma doing that? In my country?"*

In modern societies based on contract work, the competition for jobs are not only characterised by bio-psycho, bio-social and monetary work satisfaction, but also concerned with the quality of living environment, communal infrastructure etc. (Obrecht 2009, p.58) The competition on the labour market doesn't remain solely concerned with finding jobs, but the outcome also decides the possibility individuals have to satisfy their social needs, in particular the need for social recognition (16) (Ibid). In other words, the vertical differentiation in the sense of unequal distribution of goods and resources which are relevant for the satisfaction of human needs like social recognition, is not neutral. Obrecht demonstrates an example of how an unskilled factory worker does not only have a physically burdening job which have effects on her/his body (e.g. degenerative diseases), immissions (fatigue and central nervous system) and can involve dangerous work (accidents), but on top of that (or even because of that) the work position is socially downgraded and carries little social status value (Ibid). In short, when Roma are discouraged to do any other jobs than manual labour and factory work, the work they are doing is contributing to an increase of the satisfaction needed for social recognition.

6.8.2 No certificates

Many of the participants in this study talk about how they would love to work, but lack the certificates to do so. In a formalised labour market, it becomes more and more difficult to find

jobs that do not demand some kind of certified education or vocational training. For abovementioned reasons, it has been hard for the participants to find the possibilities to achieve the formalised training that is needed in the UK and the ever more competitive labour markets in their countries of origin. The Czech Romni Mother at the café says that she got an idea for the un-or low employed people at her Roma community in the UK, proposing for the city council that they could assist to clean the streets and parks.

> "*They could go and take a brush and clean a little bit outside. For two hours. Everybody have a job and a little bit of activity. After the government can say oh, how nice is this area, how clean it is.*"

But the council asked if they would have the necessary certificates to clean the streets and pick up paper. The Mother was surprised, thinking she had found a win-win solution to an unemployment problem in the Roma community, as well as assisting the council in their responsibility to keep the streets clean.

> "*Do you have NVQ1? Do you have NVQ2? Cleaner? I said just for paper outside? Oh, no,no,no you need it! I said oh my god! There is no chance! Taking outside paper and clean. And then this job is very (easy)*"

A Slovakian Romni tells me about a typical family of Roma migrants that she is working with in the UK. In order to pay the bills and make sure the children get to school, the parents have several low paid jobs and relies on help from relatives and neighbours to take care of the kids when they come home from school. The is little to no time to partake in English classes in the evenings, let alone to attend courses to get the needed certificates and training to get out of the working poor[13] circle. The Slovakian Family have a similar story, and explains that they are working many different job, and long hours, but since they lack the formal training, the salary is very low. The son in the family explains that his whole family works, but that there is just not enough to pay the bills: *"You can work, but how will they be able to survive just working?"* Because "*they have no education, no degree*" they get minimum wage or less and it becomes very difficult to find time to attain the certificates needed to secure higher paying jobs.

The traditional Roma trades were taught for generations and were a form of self-employment. The Slovakian family father tells me about his father who was a traditional basket maker and

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[13] There is no explicit definition of when somebody is working poor, but the term is used for someone who despite being employed are living under the poverty line or existential minimum in their country (Streuli og Bauer 2001)

how he could make tables, chairs or pretty much anything with his craft. However there was no market for the basket maker's son to continue the trade and the son had to find himself a new line of work. After his attempt to enter vocational training at a school was blocked by the director, he did like his father and learned a trade from other professionals, who thought him the necessary skills to become a car mechanic:

> *„I'm doing car mechanic, yeah? I have no certificate. (…) Yes! Because I'm doing that job myself. So nobody give me certificate as car mechanic. I'll tell you something about the Roma history. The Roma people very clever".*

The family father tells me about how Roma have met obstacles and barriers when trying to attain certificates and schooling, but that they have always been great craftsmen-and women have therefor found many clever ways to work and survive. He is however sorry that the market for good manual workers without certificates is decreasing and the opportunity to attain those certificates are rare, and also points out that Roma people want to do more than just manual jobs, that nobody else want: *"Why only Roma doing that? ".* He ends his story about employment with hope, because as the family got a new start in England and even though they are working poor, there are many more possibilities for his children and grandchildren to learn:

> *"So new generation all clever people, for example. For my age, when I was small, 2 years old, there never was a mobile. Today is new mobile. Internet inside! You have everything! So if you passed the children mobile, 2 seconds she working too! (Smiles and laughs)"*

Seeking an escape from the tense field of labour market certification by quitting a low paid and unskilled work position without having a possibility to acquire higher education and vocational training is paid for with social isolation and the loss of social recognition (Obrecht 2009, p. 59). The solution the participants have found is to leave the context (home countries), where social mobility and satisfaction of human needs were not possible, and start new in another country, less concerned with their ethnic heritage in order to provide better chances for their children.

6.9. A New Start- Away From Home

All of the participants in this study had heard a version of, or the exact statement "they don't want to integrate". Throughout conversations, they have taken me through important aspects of their lives and barriers they have met trying to live with a stigma connected to their ethnicity. These participants have migrated to the UK, because they did not see the possibility

for education, housing or employment in their countries of origin in Central and Eastern Europe. The son in the Slovakian family living room tells me about his first impressions coming to England:

> *"we were excited to escape from the poverty. And we were happy that we were going to have different opportunities. We were happy to be able to have a shower. We were happy that we could have food every day. Have a shower, have a proper roof, that we don't have to be scared that will fall on us and someone will die. We were saved (...) For us it was amazing when we a flushing toilet. I don't know how much that means to you, but for me was...wow! Seeing this flushing toilet, seeing lights. Because we lived on candles and no proper light. No heating. You had to go the forest to get the wood to burn in order to eat. If you wanted to have a bath, you'd have to get the water miles away, get the wood, put together and heat the water, get everybody out of the house and have a privacy shower."*

The Czech cousin at the Slovakian family home says that coming to England was a breakthrough for him and his family, as he could find work and the children could go to a normal school and get an education. He is asking: *"Normal life. I'm living there. Coming for changing everything life (...) Why give England everything? Why my country no give me house nothing. Just give me normal job. Normal for my children school."* The Slovakian Romni says that she was running from her country because she was pregnant and she wanted her child to have a chance in life. At the Roma café, the Czech Romni Mother says that she is very happy in England and feeling secure in her new country, and that she could not have stayed in the Czech Republic

> *"Because we don't have a chance at home. If you are Roma, you don't have a chance to get a better job. If you a Roma, you don't have a chance to go to study (...) I have no security in my country. Sorry."*

The teenagers at the youth club are happy that they did not grow up in their native Czech Republic. As the 17 year old Rom puts it when talking about his experience when visiting his parents' home country: *they look at you like animals, innit? Worse than animals! They look at you like rats! (...) I don't live there. I am glad I don't live there.* He is also very happy that UK is his home now and says:

> *"You see, I feel that we don't really face racism and discrimination. Because UK, is you know, that is why it is called UK. It is United Kingdom, you know. It unites everyone."*

The Czech Aunt of the Slovakian family home says that she and her family came to England because they did not want to be segregated. She wished for the ability to be a Roma family among other people, and to share a community with people of different backgrounds. She also emphasises that it is very important for the children to get a good education, which they could not have received in the Czech Republic. They want to have a new life, without stigma, segregation and racism:

> *"We have this back in our country and we don't want to have this here again. We are here to be mixed and with all different cultures. To live the same life as everyone else and to have the same opportunities as everyone else (…) that's why I came to this country. For my children to have more opportunities. Because they didn't have that back home. That's why we came here, so that they can study. So they more opportunities. And back home children does not probably (inaudible), but because they see different colours, Roma don't have any opportunity. "*

The main factor, provided by the participants in this study, for Roma to move to other countries in the EU is to escape segregation, poverty and racism in their home countries in order to access employment, secure education for their children and build a better future for the coming generations. This finding supports the research from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights   (FRA 2009b, p. 6), Commissioner for Human Rights and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities (Cahn og Guild 2010, p. 5-6) and Brown et al (2016 p. 36).

6.9.1 I don't know if we will have this Brexit, yeah?

In the wake of the Brexit referendum in June 2016, many of the participants are scared that they will have to go back to the countries they had left for a better shot at the future. Some have stayed in England have worked their way up, and are scared that when they have to go back, it doesn't matter what they are or have become, as the Roma intermediate at a Brexit chat explains when asked what job he sees himself doing in the future:

> *"Well if I stay here then chief exec of Doncaster Council or a councillor. If I go back to the Czech Republic then I'll be a bus driver."*

The Czech aunt at the Slovakian home is scared for her children, because they would have to start school in a country where they would be racially targeted, segregated and discriminated against and she says the children *"have no…an experience…"* with this kind of oppression. The Slovak Rom son shares how lucky he was to move to England:

> *"I am probably the luckiest teenager, I came to England when I was 13. But I still survived. I still know more about what is hunger. I know what segregation is. I know what it is to be a racist. I know how it is to be beaten by skinheads. I know what it is like to be treated very, very badly. I know. I know. I was one of the children who was very isolated."*

At the time of writing, the United Kingdom has yet to decide how they will approach Brexit, in terms of laws and policies concerning immigration. However, the Roma participants are frightened of the consequence being that they have to leave the country, as they have felt a chance in how they are treated by English people since the referendum. The Mother at the Roma café tells me about her drive to work, the morning after the results of the Brexit referendum was clear:

> **"**When this happened, this win in England to stop being European, I was driving. English people were throwing eggs at my car. I was scared!"*

She says that she has heard that people from the Roma community are sending things back to their country of origin, scared that they would soon get deported. She is herself frightened and wondering how long she should wait with leaving, because she would be very embarrassed if the police would suddenly show up at her work at the NHS to deport her from the country. The referendum has made her scared an in doubt if the British people have thought of the Roma in their country who have come to start a new life and who are doing nothing wrong. The Czech Romni Mother does not know if the British leave voters care about the Roma children and are asking how they, if sent back, would have a chance of education?

> *"I am in big shock! I am not comfortable, seriously (…) Just because I am speaking for Roma people. How are children going to school? How little bit is he your priority? No criminal record. Give him please a chance! To the people who are still here."*

The Czech cousin at the Slovakian home thinks the UK as well as the EU does not understand the situation Roma are faced with in Eastern Europe. He said that he has been crying about the situation in his home country and wondering what he should do. He ties the problems with education, employment and housing to racism and discrimination and says that he felt

helpless seeing right winged anti-Roma parties winning votes in the Czech Republic: *"I just after go to Brussel and say my country now racist? For political Hitler!"* The Czech Rom decided to leave for England because

> "*maybe England give more chance for my children. I'm now scared. I don't know if we will have this Brexit, yeah?*

The son in the Slovakian family says that his family works and has become integrated in English society, but because they have low paid jobs and are forced to be a part of the working poor, the family still has to rely on benefits to keep their house. Therefore, if a consequence of Brexit would be to deny immigrants benefits, it would be a way to force working poor Roma to leave the UK without seeming overtly racist:

> "*So even if they would not force us to go away, if they change the system, in other words, they will still throw you out, but in a clever way. The politician way. I'll get rid of the tax (unintelligible) but you will go away yourself. Instead of them saying, hey, I'll throw you out!*"

Roma immigrants now face insecurity of existential proportions, not knowing if everything they have built in England will be lost and they would have to move back to their countries of origin, because of Brexit. Obrecht writes that knowing that a human need can be secured in the future, can have a calming effect on people's immediate frustration and stress onset by the lack of satisfaction of one or more needs (Obrecht 2009, p. 41) The behaviour which is oriented towards safeguarding future needs is also motivated by prevention of need frustrations (Ibid). Not knowing if human needs can be fulfilled in the future, and especially the concern the families have for their children if they have to go back to their countries of origin, is a major factor for stress and frustration for the Roma immigrants in post-Brexit UK.

6.10. "We Are All Humans…"

The Hungarian Romni talked about how she did not want to catch up to a reference group. She said that the dominating group, the Hungarians, are expecting the Roma to be like them and to act like them. She feels like integration is a one way act, where one has to rid one-self for own traditions and culture to be "integrated". The Slovak Rom has a similar feeling, when he says that he hates the word integration, because it represents the oppression and forced assimilation that Roma have gone through for many hundred years. The Roma participating in this study all want to have the same possibilities and opportunities as other people. Like the young Slovak Rom said:

> *"Never treat people the same, treat people equally with respect and dignity. And that is what we Roma people want, to be treated equally as everyone the same. Because people are with different colour, different race, different gender it doesn't make any difference. We are all humans"*

The Romanian Romni says that with integration must come the acceptance of people having different cultures and traditions; something she thinks can only be combined if one wants to empower a people.

> *"We cannot become empowered and leave all the old what we had behind. It has to be together! We have to take in account both of them. Our traditions together with the new things we learn in life which makes us empowered."*

The Romanian Romni says that the difference between Romania and other European countries, is that in the latter, Roma people are proud and working to make positive changes in the community. In Romania it is very difficult and the country once tried to integrate people, which didn't work, so they quit and say that Roma don't want to be integrated. She empathises that things cannot change immediately, but needs time and persistence. The young Slovak Rom says that the work Roma people are doing in their communities is making changes and aim to make the discrimination and racism stop. He says that is important to stop the atrocities from the past and look towards the future, but

> *"What more important is, that people should start thinking, that the Roma people are humans, they have their own lives, they can make their own decisions."*

In order to change and work for a better integration and inclusion of Roma in Europe, the participants of this study say that politicians have to stop talking about Roma and start talking with them. The Czech Rom cousin at the Slovak family says that the government and authorities have to talk with the Roma communities in order to understand what the needs are, and not make decisions on behalf of what they think Roma believe or want. These decisions are often based on assumptions and not on what people really are saying. The Czech Rom has a plea for the authorities and politicians trying to integrate Roma:

> *"Just please, please. I am people! I have heart, everything! Don't talk for everyone. One people good, one people bad. Give chance, more chance! Give life! Different life. Give some chance for example. Not just one community for Roma. Roma- go this place. This for white people, this for black people, green people, this for yellow people."*

An important step towards integration and inclusion in the Central and Eastern European countries is the representation of Roma in political bodies on local, national and international level. The Slovak Rom Father says that everybody are talking about the Roma, but he never saw Roma voices in the news talking about the issues concerning them or Roma representing the communities in the European Parliament *"If inside Roma, so cover (...) lot white people, You never see Roma people inside!"*. A 21 year old Czech Rom from the youth club says that Roma people need a person who have experience in both politics and the problems Roma are facing on a day-to-day basis. "*So then you can combine this in the outcome in politics"*.

Another important step are Roma role models working in the communities. The Romanian Romni is working in traditional Roma communities with women empowerment. She is very clear on the fact that old Roma traditions and heritage are central values for Roma integration and empowerment and states that only by combining Roma tradition and values with modern society, can Roma truly be integrated. Traditional Roma communities are very often patriarchies where the women traditionally have less to say in decision-making. Empowering women in these communities is not easy, but according to the Romanian Romni, it is the first step towards a positive change. The Romanian Romni says that Roma role models have a huge impact on the communities:

> *"It is difficult to empower a women, when she is refusing to be empowered. But through positive examples, the women can be attracted. Because, setting up positive role models is always attracting to people when they actually see it with their own eyes. They can say to themselves, well, actually she made it. Then I can make it as well. So I would say a positive model makes a huge change! If you want to empower someone, you have to show them a specific example. This can be an example for them to take action. "*

The Romanian Romni says that her focus on feminism and women empowerment is a key to empowerment and emancipation for the whole community, because she believes that

> "*an educated Roma woman will not only change herself for her family, but she will change an entire generation. Because an educated woman won't just stay and keep for herself. She will always want to share with everyone what she has been thought and what she is learning. So she would want to change her whole generation and that is why it is important to me. "*

The Romni activist says that her main aim and dream is to see that her community is viewed upon differently, and that the community can both be proud of their heritage as well as be educated and take part in a larger society. The Slovakian Rom says from the family living room, that "*it has already made an impact to see Roma role models.*" The young man was impressed and surprised to see Roma police officers in England. He says that on the European mainland, Roma could never be police officers "*Never! Because of the race, everything.*" He states that in England people can become whatever they want, and seeing that Roma have become police officers and academics really inspired him. Coming to England and experiencing Roma role models inspired this young Slovak Rom to work with the Roma communities in England and to turn around his life. Before seeing Roma role models, the young Rom thought society had a limit to what a Roma could and could not do, and how a Roma are to be treated. The young Roma saw that people cared about Roma as human beings, and that his hero, the Roma police officer had been knighted by the Queen of England. The participants are saying that Roma representation in politics and mainstream society as well as Roma role models in the communities are main factors for positive integration and social inclusion of Roma. Ending segregation, isolation and discrimination and empowering Roma to make positive changes are also central for integration. The participants are explaining that the human needs for social recognition (16), for social justice (17), for non-interchangeable and distinct identities (14), for socio-cultural belonging (13), for aims, goals and hope (9), for skills and competence (10), for physical integrity and wellbeing (1) and for access to substances essential for autopoiesis (Obrecht 2009, p. 47) all have to be satisfied in order to be able to make a change towards Roma integration.

6.11. Roma appeal to social workers

I will conclude with direct and unfiltered appeals from Roma participants to social workers, addressing what the participants wish social workers would understand and how they could be a positive support:

Hungarian Romni: *I have met so many racist social workers and social politicians. I said, something is wrong! They totally misunderstood history. They totally misunderstood the whole situation. Because there is no such a system, like critical thinking in education. It might be also other things, but I would say the key is critical thinking. That is missing.*

Slovakian Romni*: I would say, be patient. And try, like you do, to have some people to tell their stories to help you to understand. Because working with these families and having no*

knowledge about what they are is really hard. Build trust and everything. Even if you are leaving them. Don't leave them today. Because they will not trust someone else. You know.

Czech Rom, 17: *we are normal people, same as everybody else. It is just that we've got …You've got normal people, you've got dirty people, you've got people that don't work and it is all same in each culture, in each country.*

Romanian Romni: *If there is something to do for that community it is to take action and propose further actions so that things get changed. So that when you see people begging in the street, you don't say this is how they are and what they do. You can help by proposing some actions, future actions and have some open questions, find out the answer and then you can reflect on you views. Because it is not like it appears, always. It is not what you think. There is a story behind each person's life. : try to approach the community by showing interest when it comes to their culture, tradition and their way of thinking. You must try to respect that. They will just take it as a like, it is nothing serious. If you try to approach them like that and try to see if you can organise a community base for the Roma community, this will make them feel like they are integrated.*

7. Summery and conclusion

This thesis was led off by a quote from a Romanian Romni, saying that people involved in the Roma community know that the statement "they don't want to integrate" is not true, but it takes time to make change happen. Research has shown that Roma are systematically disadvantaged in areas such as education, employment, housing and healthcare and the European Union has taken action against the gap between Roma and non- Roma, and are aiming to integrate Roma in Europe by 2020. A Czech participant said that he thinks the EU and the UK do not understand how Roma feel and how their situation is in the east of Europe because nobody asks them how they perceive the majority society and they don't have enough Roma representatives in politics. I will here sum up some of the thoughts and reactions the Roma participants had to the statement "they don't want to integrate".

The participants expressed that in order to understand how they perceive and react to this statement, I must firstly educate myself on how the majority have treated Roma in the past 700 years. Several participants said that Roma have historically been mistreated, abused and misunderstood by the majority in Europe. The participants said that I must listen to their stories of their own lived experiences, in order to grasp why the participants feel it is wrong to say that they do not want to integrate. The stories the participants shared showed traces of similarity, even though the participants came from very different backgrounds. In the chapters

They said I was Different and *Out for Bread and Milk*, several Roma participants express that they felt treated differently, because they were Roma. In the first chapter, three Roma women shared their experiences with expectations communicated to them by the majority. One had a traditional Roma background and a symbolic expression of being Roma (clothes), one had grandparents who thought it would be best for her to deny her Roma heritage and one grew up without her biological family, together with majority children in a majority setting. However different their backgrounds are and the fact that these experiences took place in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia, respectively; all three participants say that they were told that they were different from other children and would have to expect to work harder to earn the same opportunities as other children. All three participants expressed that they had been treated differently, because they were not white and the majority had certain expectations to them as Roma. In the chapter *Out for Bread and Milk,* I put together many of the experiences the Roma participants have shared, despite different nationalities, ages and backgrounds, the Roma participants have expressed similar experiences. They express the negative way they are perceived by the majority makes it challenging for them to carry out an everyday task like shopping for bread and milk. Several of the Roma participants feel frustrated because they are given the impression that the majority are expecting them to steal when they are in a shop. Many express in this way how they are living with a stigma where the majority demonstrate constant expectations to their behaviour. The participants express that the perception of stealing and dishonesty as parts of Roma culture are very negative stereotypes which contributes to make their everyday more difficult. The participants have told me these stories because they said that if I understand how they feel when met with stigma, I would be a bit closer to understanding why the statement "they don't want to integrate" makes the Roma participants feel sad, angry and misunderstood. Further, the participants have shared their experiences with the education system and expressed how they are met by the majority. The participants point to issues such as poverty, segregation, institutionalised discrimination and stigma, as barriers to Roma getting a good and equal education. All of the participants have stated that education is very important to them and that the lack of access to a decent education contributes to Roma having less chances and opportunities compared with non-Roma from their home countries. Most of the participants said that providing an educational setting for their children where they would not be stigmatised because of their ethnicity, was one of the main reasons for them to move to England. Most participants also stated that it is very difficult or even impossible for Roma children to go to school in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, without having to face prejudice and racism on behalf of

their ethnicity. Many participants said that because their children do not have to experience the same extensive romaphobia and stigma in England, they have better possibilities to succeed with their education and thus have better future opportunities.

Many of the participants talked about their previous housing situations. These participants expressed two very clear messages. The first was that they do not want to live in sub-standard housing because they feel it is unworthy and very difficult to concentrate on school or employment. One participant said that he couldn't imagine anyone who would prefer to live in such poor standards as he did with his family in Slovakia, where they lacked access to basic sanitation, heat and water. The participants express sadness and anger when they hear someone saying that it is Roma culture to live in these conditions. The participants say that the housing situation for many Roma in Eastern Europe is a consequence of immense poverty, and they state very clearly that it has nothing to do with culture. Secondly, many participants expressed that it was very important to them not to be isolated in Roma areas, where they would not mix with other people and where some expressed that the access to education was poorer or non-existent, compared to places where Roma live together with non-Roma. Many participants feel that living isolated contributes to having less opportunities than the non-Roma majority.

On the topic of employment, many participants said that Roma used to have traditional work, but that this has both been partly forgotten and that there is no market for Roma in the modern society to continue these trades as a main source of income. Several of the participants expressed a frustration over that Roma are often seen as mainly manual labourers, even though many would have wished to rather pursue other professions and/or higher education. Many participants point to the combination of communist policies, poverty and stigma as reasons to why it has been challenging for Roma to attain education, vocational training or certificates. Another central issue concerning employment raised by the participants, was the difficulties securing jobs in their home countries. The participants said they have tried to conceal their ethnicity as far as possible before a job interview, because they were mostly rejected as soon as the employer understood that they are Roma. The participants express through all these topics, that being Roma in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic means they have to face stigmatisation and othering on a daily basis, something that makes it very difficult to obtain equal access to opportunities that would support to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma.

This thesis used Werner Obrecht's theory of bio-psycho-social basic human needs to emphasise the complexity of problems connected to Roma integration. This thesis analyses the possibilities Roma have to satisfy their basic human needs in all the approached aspects, and show that the topics of housing, employment and education are intertwined on biological, psychological and sociological levels. The lack of possibility to fulfil basic human needs therefore creates social problems, as the consequences are harmful for both the individual and the rest of society. These consequences are hindering Roma to participate equally, as they are forced to concentrate their motivation on fulfilling other, more urgent needs. This includes protecting themselves from injustice, satisfy the need of social recognition and the need for a distinct identity, or fulfilling the missing biological needs caused by poverty, like food, water and physical integrity.

The Roma participants say that it is not true that they don't want to be integrated. They strongly express that they want to be respected and be acknowledged as human beings with aspirations for the future as everyone else. They emphasise the importance of access to education, decent housing, employment and the end of stigmatisation of Roma as they key to equal opportunities and an inclusive society.

What can social workers do to support? First of all, social workes can listen and learn from Roma experts and remember that one of the core principles of social work is to stand up to and act against social injustice. This study points to societal mechanisms that contributes to social problems. By detecting these mechanisms, social workers can support Roma in their struggle for emancipation and equal opportunities. Social workers can also support Roma by directing our attention to where the satisfaction of basic human needs are systematically hindered or blocked. Because

> *"Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful"* (IFSW 2004)

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Appendix

I English Overview of Werner Obrecht's Basic Human Needs (Schneider 2013, p. 56)

I. Biological Needs	II. Biopsychological Needs	III. Biopsychosocial-cultural Needs
1. *For physical integrity which means avoiding:* dirt, physical pain that reduces wellbeing (heat, cold, wet), injury and exposure to intentional violence; 2. *For substances essential for autopoiesis:* 1. Digestible biomass (metabolism), 2. Water (maintain fluid balance), 3. Oxygen (gases exchange); 3. *For regeneration;* 4. *For sexual activity and reproduction;*	5. *For perception-related sensory stimulation through* a) Gravitation, b) Sound, c) Light, d) Tactile Stimulus (sensory needs); 6. *For beauty in the things we experience* (landscapes, faces, body integrity (aesthetic needs; need for aesthetic encounters); 7. *For variation / stimulation* (need for change); 8. *For information guiding orientation and action that can be assimilated;* 9. *For subjective relevant aims, goals and hope for fulfilment* (need for subjective meaning of life); 10. *For actual skills, rules, and social norms to manage new and repetitive situations dependent on the relevant goals* (control or competence need);	11. *For love, care and affection* (love, friendship, active and passive), (need for love); 12. *For spontaneous help* (the need to help); 13. *For sociocultural belonging through participation* (membership in family, group, society (clan, tribe, ethnos, religion, nation state) (to be a member means having rights and fulfilling duties) (membership need); 14. *For non-interchangeable (distinct) identity* (need for biopsychosocial identity); 15. *For autonomy* (autonomy need); 16. *For social recognition* (function, achievement, position) (recognition need); 17. *For (the exchange of) justice* (social justice need).

II A Field Work Story: Finding the Key Family in "The Boiling Pot Ready to Explode"

I first heard of Page Hall in Sheffield, from a VICE documentary called *The Struggle for Survival of the Roma People: Europe's Most Hated[14]*. The area is broadly discussed in UK media as having major problems with Slovakian Roma.

> "*The town where even immigrants are fed up with migration: failing schools, filthy streets and benefit fraud-a Robert Hardman dispatch which those who accuse Brexiteers of being racist MUST read (...) in this area, the only complaint about Brexit is that it will come too late*" (Hardman 2016)
>
> "*Slovakian Roma in Sheffield: this is a boiling pot ready to explode*"[15]
>
> – The Guardian, 2013

The picture painted is of a chaotic and disintegrated area where Slovakian Roma are portrayed as a burden to society who wants to sell their babies[16] on the street and is supposedly a confirmation of why Brexit was the right thing to do. Some of the main complaints were about Roma hanging out on the streets, which was threatening the local community and how they were throwing their litter on the streets while not caring for anyone, or as the local man interviewed by the Daily Mail put it: *'Sometimes, you see them throwing away stuff in the middle of the night and you tell them not to and they just say the f-word,'* (Hardman 2016). I was quite excited to meet these people in the all to ready to explode boiling pot.

The bus ride to Page Hall was filled with interesting change of scenery. The English inner city with shops, pubs and the University of Sheffield quickly changed into stores with Arabic names, people shopping and enjoying the afternoon sun and shortly thereafter a Caribbean area, then African and in the end a very English looking suburban area with only a few small kiosks. I later learned that the short bus ride across the city also marked a 10 year decrease in life expectancy and that by the end, infant mortality was at least two times higher. The citizens were alarmed and wanted to improve their community.

Just minutes after arriving in a quiet and very English looking neighbourhood in Fir Vale, my contact picked me up and took me to a Slovakian/Czech Roma family home in the heart of Page Hall. It was within walking distance to his house, where we had met. After hearing so

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[14] YouTube: VICE: The Struggle for Survival of the Roma People: Europe's Most Hated
[15] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/15/sheffield-page-hall-roma-slovakia-immigration
[16] YouTube: VICE: The Struggle for Survival of the Roma People: Europe's Most Hated

many negative things about the area, I was wondering where these problems are. The only things I saw on our short stroll were quiet, nice houses and clean streets. Everywhere people greeted us and smiled as we passed them. My contact had spoken to the family about the guest he was bringing, but as I arrived I understood that they weren't entirely sure why I took interest in meeting them. The family was preparing to join a local debate in a church, about fairness and community issues in Fir Vale, Page Hall. Even though they weren't filled in with all the details of who I am or want I want, I was immediately welcomed in, asked to sit in the best chair and was offered dinner. The whole family greeted me as if I was an old friend. I felt very warmly welcomed and as if I had just returned home.

After a couple of cigarettes and dinner with the family, we suddenly got up and had to run out the door. Not on English time, I thought. I had tried to explain that I would love to interview the family, but there was no time. The father said I could join them after the debate.

The night before, there had been another debate with the topic the importance of voice in the Roma community, and over 100 Roma immigrants had shown up to partake. This night, at the St Cuthbert's church, the topic was *forging fairness in Fir Vale.* The aim was to explore ways that Page Hall can work together to create a fairer city, and to discuss if some areas are just destined to remain "deprived". The turnout of Roma inhabitants was smaller than expected, much due to the lack of interpretation. However, many did show up, as well as members of other minorities, British citizens, representatives from the mosque and other religious congregations and other concerned local people who together made the diverse community of Page Hall.

It was very important for the community to learn more about access to and information about the democratic-, social- and health system; how to make petitions, how to get involved and heard by local politicians and decision makers, how to communicate and where to meet. The main concern was that Sheffield is a much divided city with the wealthier west having better health, housing and possibilities than Page Hall inhabitants. A reason for lower health and life expectancy was the fact that a majority of inhabitants in Page Hall worked in low paid and hard jobs as taxi drivers, care workers and other services demanding long hours and night shifts. The community discussed how the level of education could be elevated, as many are working poor and there is little possibility to study at the same time. Some of the local non-Roma inhabitants also mentioned that other people see the area as problematic, because young Slovakian Roma teens are hanging around at night being loud and maybe fighting with other teens. The non-Roma part of the community talked about that it is difficult for the teens as

they have no youth clubs or other places to spend their time in the evenings. Some thought the kids might also struggle as they are the newest ethnic group and come from difficult backgrounds. There was a consensus to support these teens, not to turn ones back on them.

At the end of the debate, one of the Slovak Roma women, with the linguistic help of another Roma community member, stood up and said: "*we want to contribute to the community. We want to mix in and support the people around us. But we are so scared to be sent back after Brexit, some people wonder if there is a point to anything anymore. There is nothing to go back to anywhere for us*". The moderator of the debate, a young Muslim leader of a refugee women's association, got up, took the mic and stated: *"You are not going back. We will stand by you, because you are Sheffielders"!* The church filled with supporting voices and people agreeing.

After the debate, it was dark and late and I was thrilled to have been able to join the lively discussions. It was very interesting to see how a community which often was demonised in national and international newspaper headlines, got together to find new solutions to their problems. I had never experienced such a feeling of togetherness and mutual respect within such a diverse area, and was amazed about how important is was to everybody to do whatever they can to have a fair and open community for all inhabitants.

A Warm Welcome into a Slovakian Roma Home

As we stood outside the church smoking a cigarette, it was already around 9 pm, and I thought I should not bother the family at such a late hour. The family still invited me to their home to have supper and asked if I did not want to talk with them about something? Yes, of course, thank you! – I smiled.

Back at their house, I was given supper and something to drink. I was again warmly welcomed, as we all crammed into the living room. After we ate, people scattered and I sat alone with the father of the family as well as my contact, who had joined us. I asked if it was possible for them all to gather again in the living room if they had time and interest, so that I could explain why I was there, and then they could decide if they wanted to join a recorded conversation. After some minutes with confusion and language barrier related problems, five people came to listen to what this strange Norwegian wanted in their house. The group consisted in a father and mother, the cousin of the father and his wife as well as my contact. A 12 year old son was playing on the floor. The room was packed.

I started to introduce myself as a social worker and wanted to explain my road up to the master I was now writing. As soon as I had said social worker, the lady next to me shrugged

and made herself as small as possible on the couch. She looked terrified! I understood why she was so scared and shook my head firmly as I quickly said I was not there as a social worker tonight! She did not speak any English and in the emotional confusion that arose, I was sure they would ask me to leave at once. Luckily, my contact translated and was able to calm her down. Other family members explained that she, as the rest of them, were petrified of social workers, as they only know them taking Roma children from Roma families. I said that I could very well understand their feelings and that this is exactly why I was there. So that we, social workers, can listen, learn and understand what Roma families want to tell us so that we can communicate better. Because no matter how local social workers do their job, if this is the reaction, we are doing something very wrong! I completely understood the lack of trust, but asked if they would give me a chance to listen to them this evening, so that they could tell us what we need to know and understand. I also said that I do not have many questions for them, as I solely wanted to ask them what they thought would be a good idea for me to research and how their voices could best contribute to a better understanding. They said that they are very often misunderstood, and did appreciate the effort. I was merely to be a megaphone for their voices. Having my contact present had already proven essential for gaining trust in the situation.

We talked and talked and I realised that not having any questions and a very open frame not only made it difficult to end the conversation, but also opened for some rather heated political discussions. It was my first experience with this kind of group chats, and I noted for later times that making a point not to dominate the conversation and just to listen, firstly is something I must personally work on and secondly does not mean that we should chat until 1 AM, which we did. At the end, we were all very tired and I had to get back to the hostel in the city centre. The cousin and his wife insisted to drive me home, even if it was in quite far in the opposite direction. Because as they said, we always treat our guests with love.

Through discussion and stories, this family had stirred up many questions and perspectives. They became a key to further investigation and after having lend me their eyes for a moment, I was determined to see if any of the subjects they had addressed, were also relevant to the experience made from other Roma in the UK.