'We Are a Roma Nation'

Support for Romani Nationalism amongst Britain's Romani Populations

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This study is a sociological analysis of Romani nationalism in Britain. It explores the extent to which Britain's Romanies support, and identify with, the notion of a "Roma Nation". It is guided by questions regarding how Britain's Romanies negotiate otherness, home and belonging within the context of increasing Roma migration to Britain. It looks for instances of "groupness" or "collective identity" between previously disconnected Romani populations who have been brought together by migration. Fifty-two Romanies participated in this research. They belong to three waves of Romani diaspora: Romany Gypsies who arrived in Britain in the 15th century; Roma who arrived as refuges in the 1990s; and EU Roma migrants arriving post-2004. The primary aim of this study is to explore their experience of otherness, home and belonging and how their identifications with the Roma Nation are conditioned by their positions and experiences. The participants' relationships to Britain are associated with both strong desires to belong and/or be recognised, and a bleak reality of exclusion and otherness. In their narratives there is no given homeland to which they all relate and with which they all identify. Roma maintain strong identifications with their countries of birth and Romany Gypsies assert a strong sense of British identity. The study shows that both Roma and Romany Gypsies have little interest in and limited knowledge of, an Indian homeland. The study also highlights the internal boundaries and contradictions that divide Britain's Romani population. The analysis shows that they remain largely divided by country of origin, national identity, religion and lifestyle. The study concludes by considering the implications of these findings on the prospect of Romani nationalism in Britain.

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Chapter 1

How the Romanies Became White (and Black Again)

Who am I and where do I belong? Throughout our lives we are all confronted with these questions. The answers shape our moral code, our norms and our values. They define our "roots", determine and anchor our identities, and fashion our relation to society. Why, at times, do questions of identity and belonging become more significant and contentious? Why do questions of identity, origin and national belonging become central to some situations but not others? How do nomadic peoples make meaning of notions of origins, homeland and nationality? How are the socio-political relations between ethnic groups shaped in a society in which, on the one hand, identity is used to rally political opposition and resistance to the status quo, and on the other hand, nations, nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures are hierarchically positioned?

It is evident that notions of identity, origins and belonging are not strictly "personal". They are increasingly political in nature, often manipulated by racist, exclusionist and nationalist political ideologies and movements. The Romanies are often the intended targets of such ideologies. Their identities are denied or redefined, their origins are questioned, and through a process of "otherisation" they are excluded from the national community. At the same time, Romani actors seek to counteract the stigmatising processes of ethnic exclusionism with their own nationalist ideology. A small Romani nationalist movement has emerged at a transnational level, at the centre of which lies questions of Romani identity, origins and homeland. Romani nationalism is

arguably a form of diasporic politics. It requires us, however, to "deessentialise" and deconstruct understandings of the nation because of the ambiguity that a Romani homeland adds to the seemingly fixed nature of the nation state.

The Romanies are a curious example of diaspora communities where origin and homeland have not, until recently, been of any political or personal significance. The consciousness of a Romani homeland - of a single origin, a land to return to - has never been central to the identity formation of the Romani people. Displacement, marginality and exclusion, however, are common experiences to the Romanies who are so often stigmatised and "othered". Romani nationalism goes some way to provide answers to questions of identity and belonging for a group of people who are so often excluded from a sense of national belonging. It remains, however, a struggling and marginal movement. This study will explore diasporic Romani nationalism and the extent to which Britain's Romani population support, and identify with, the notion of a "Roma nation".

Aims of the Research

The Romani nationalist movement has been comprehensively researched in the Central and Eastern European context. Rather surprisingly, however, there has been little research exploring Romani nationalism in Britain. In many ways the Romani peoples of Britain are an interesting example. Firstly, over the last decade there has been a substantial growth in Gypsy and Traveller NGOs (Cemlyn et al., 2009) engaged in various forms of activism. This has been a significant development as it is the first time that various stigmatised

"nomadic" populations have employed the concept of a seemingly united group identity, aiming to secure the interest of both domestic and international governments. This offers a unique case given that Britain's Romany Gypsies have traditionally aligned themselves with similarly situated travelling communities in Britain (more specifically, the Irish Travellers) as opposed to other Romani populations across Europe. Secondly, within the framework of the EU enlargement process and the subsequent increase in Roma migration to Britain, this case provides us with an opportunity to explore how "Romani", as a political identity, operates when applied to previously disconnected Romani communities who have been brought together by migration. By "Romani communities" I refer to two crudely defined subgroups of Romani peoples: (1) Britain's native Romanies, who are known as "Romany Gypsies" and (2) European migrants of Romani ethnicity who are known as "Roma".

The overall purpose of this research is to explore identifications with, and support for, the notion of a "Roma nation" and/or diaspora in the British context. The research aims to understand experiences of otherness, home and belonging and how identifications with the "Roma Nation" are conditioned by such experience. Through an in-depth qualitative analysis, this research will explore instances of "groupness", "we-ness" or "collective identity" amongst Britain's Romani population, particularly in relation to questions of homeland, origins and national belonging.

This research has an additional purpose. It aims to contribute to the discipline of Romani Studies. This research applies works on Romani identity, origins and nationhood to the British context, in order to contribute to an

understanding of Romani nationalism outside of a Central and Eastern European context. This will be achieved by stressing the differences, and similarities, between Roma migrants and Romany Gypsies and bringing them into the centre of the analysis. This is a qualitative focus group based study. The sociological intervention method is employed to gather individual and collective narratives. Fifty-two respondents from both Roma and Romany Gypsy backgrounds have participated and their lived experiences, knowledge and reflections are at the centre of this research.

The following questions have steered my analysis:

1. To what extent, and in what circumstances, do participants support, or actively adopt, a diasporic nationalist stance and/or identification with the "Roma Nation"?
2. To what extent do the participants' feel a sense of "belonging" to British society? How do their feelings of belonging differ and why?
3. What do "origins" and "homeland" mean to the respondents? How do their narratives of origins and homeland differ and why?

In the following, I will briefly introduce whiteness as an analytical concept. A short history of policy responses to the "Romani problem" and an overview of their exclusion from the race and ethnicity discourse will also be presented. Finally, I will give an outline of the remaining chapters.

Excluding the "Gypsy" from Race Discourse

Romany Gypsies - or as they're more commonly referred to, "the Gypsies" - are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Britain. They were first referred to in British records at the beginning of the 15th Century. In spite of this, there is little, if any, accurate data on the size of the Romany Gypsy population. They have been lost within official statistics where they have been positioned under the umbrella term of "Gypsies and Travellers"- a category that encompasses a variety of peoples, not all of whom identify as Romany Gypsy. Nevertheless, whilst the percentage of those that identify as Romany Gypsy remains uncertain, there are an estimated 300,000 "Gypsies and Travellers" living in the UK (Richardson and Ryder, 2012:4). The absence of the Romany Gypsies from official channels of ethnic monitoring is telling. Unlike other large ethnic minorities in Britain, primarily from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia, Romany Gypsies are not considered an ethnic group distinct from the white British populace, but as white "chavs" who *choose* to live in caravans.

State definitions of the ethnic status of the Romany Gypsies are often blurred. On the one hand, they are recognised as an ethnic minority group and granted the full protection of the Equality Act 2010. On the other, the boundaries of "Gypsyness" were recently refashioned under the 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) excluding any Gypsy and Traveller who is no longer nomadic, for whatever reason, from definitions of Gypsy ethnicity. There have been documented examples of MPs infringing the Equality Act, referring to Gypsies and Travellers in both an overtly and indirectly discriminatory manner, often without reprimand. What is clear is that, in spite of the Equality Act, the

state does not recognise that Romany Gypsies can be subjected to practices which are grounded in ethnic distinction and/or racist discrimination.

There is a substantial body of research that indicates the Romany Gypsies are amongst the most socially excluded ethnic groups in Britain. Of all "lower" socio-economic groups in the UK, they experience the poorest health and have a life expectancy which is ten years below the national average (Ellis and McWhirter, 2008). Romany Gypsy children have the lowest levels of educational attainment than any other ethnic group (DfE, 2012) and their participation in secondary education is significantly low. This is reflected in high rates of unemployment and poverty. Underpinning these inequalities is an incessant lack of culturally suitable accommodation or "Gypsy and Traveller sites'. Indeed, planning policy seldom advocates the development of local authority owned sites and instead encourages self-provision. When local authority sites are provided, they are often of poor quality, thus exacerbating ill-health. Such is the extent of their social exclusion that it cannot be explained by their socio-economic status alone and it has remained an unrelenting feature of the "Romany Gypsy experience".

Definitions of racism in the British context have been constructed upon a black/white dichotomy. They thus omit Romany Gypsies from understandings of ethnic or racial discrimination, given that they are palpably "white". This is replicated 'within the liberal academic classes [in which] certain forms of racisms are legitimised and others are not' (Bhopal and Myers, 2008, 209). Indeed, the scholarly recognition of the racialisation of the Romanies in Britain and of their experiences of discrimination are often overlooked. The exclusion

of Romany Gypsies from understandings of racism and discrimination appears to be largely grounded in the notion that: (1) Romany Gypsies are white and therefore do not experience racism and discrimination; (2) Romany Gypsies equate a social class; and (3) Romany Gypsies are ethnically British. When the inequalities experienced by Romany Gypsies are recognised, this is usually done so within a "hierarchy of oppression" which posits that white minorities cannot experience racism at the same intensity as people of colour. Such assumptions are reinforced by the fact that Romany Gypsies have remained largely absent from the discourse of immigration and have been constructed in Britain (despite their stigmatised position) as part of the national community of white Britons. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to challenge these assumptions.

The Invisibility of the "Gypsy" in Post-War Migration

The fact that Romany Gypsies have been largely absent from immigration discourse has rendered them somewhat invisible as an ethnic minority. Romany Gypsies have been visible as an ethnic minority in Britain, both phenotypically and culturally, to varying degrees since the 15th Century. Boundaries and definitions of "ethnic minority" are changeable and vary over time/space. Likewise, the criterions for entry to, and membership of, the nation vary in different contexts. The very ideology of the nation functions to divide the world into an "us" and "them". National boundaries have been maintained by "symbolic border guards" (Armstrong, 1982) that, throughout history, have called upon cultural, phenotypical and religious distinctions. This thesis argues that, owing to their absence from immigration discourse, the Romany Gypsies

of contemporary Britain have typically remained inside, although on the margins of, the parameters of Britishness.

It is of note that both pre-war, and to an extent post-war, white migration to Britain has largely been overlooked. An analysis of migration has instead centred on migration from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia. It is the arrival of the Windrush generation in 1948, rather than the arrival of Europeans, Irish or Romany Gypsies in the pre-war era, that is largely considered the crucial moment in the history of migration to Britain. It was with the advent of Windrush migration that phenotypical racial differences came to dominate the public discourse on migration. A letter sent to Prime Minister Atlee by eleven of his backbenchers, urged the government to take control of immigration from the colonies, arguing that:

> The British people fortunately enjoy a profound unity without uniformity in their way of life, and are blest by the absence of a colour racial problem. An influx of coloured people domiciled here is likely to impair the harmony, strength and cohesion of our public and social life and to create discord and unhappiness among all concerned (Carter, 2002, 118).

Their concerns echoed the prevailing attitudes toward Commonwealth migration that positioned black migrants as the source of a 'colour racial problem' which was otherwise unknown to the British populace and which could be avoided by implementing immigration controls. It goes some way to explaining why white ethnic minorities are so often overlooked in many

academic, state and popular understandings of racism and discrimination. In post-war Britain, despite substantial white migration from Europe, the notion of the "immigrant" or "ethic/racial other" signified black or Asian groups. As a result, white ethnic minorities in Britain – though the recipients of discrimination, marginalisation and hostility – became largely invisible. What is more, the ethnic and cultural differences among the white population, as well as the history and significance of white migration to Britain, were overlooked (Webster, 2005).

The equation of the "immigrant" and the "racial/ethnic other" with post-war black and Asian migration fashioned a characteristic binary of belonging which positioned Britons as white and "immigrants" as black. Within this binary Britain's European immigrants and white ethnic minorities became increasingly invisible – a position which became further engrained after the introduction of the free movement of persons within the internal borders of the EU. This binary fashioned the notion of a British nation that was otherwise ethnically homogenous and one which had been so in the pre-war era. The pre-Windrush history of immigration was consequently whitewashed and racism was viewed as an issue that did not exist in Britain prior to post-war black and Asian migration (Webster, 2008). The "anti-racist" paradigm has rather unquestionably accepted the myth of white British homogeneity. There has been little interrogation of the discourses and practices of the state which have concealed the internal ethnic, regional and national differences which divide Britain.

In much of the analysis of, and commentary on, post-war Commonwealth migration, the "newness" of racism is underlined (see, for example, Barker,

1981). Gilroy (1991. 60) states that in this "new racism", '"race" is seen instead as a cultural issue". Referring to this as "cultural racism", Hall (1989, 1) explains that 'differences in culture, in ways of life, in systems of belief in ethnic identity and tradition now matter more than anything which can be traced to specifically genetic or biological forms of racism'. "New racism" thus refers to cultural differences, such as language, religion, nationality, etc. as markers of racial difference. It is the belief that cultures are tied to national territories and, thus, the performance of culture outside its given territory will lead to hostility and tensions between newcomers and natives. As Modood (1997, 155) argues, 'cultural racism builds on biological racism a further discourse which evokes cultural differences from an alleged British or "civilised" norm to vilify, marginalise or demand cultural assimilation…' from racialised others.

The theory of "new racism" is difficult to corroborate if the history of racist and discriminatory practices in Britain is explored. As Gilroy (1987, 45) notes, "new racism" 'is primarily concerned with mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, it specifies who may legitimately belong to the national community and simultaneously advances reasons for the segregation or banishment of those whose "origin, sentiment, or citizenship" assigns them elsewhere'. Sociological studies of race and ethnicity have readily assumed "new" understandings of racism. Though the legislation employed to restrict undesirable immigration is new, it has been assumed such processes were not already in force in pre-war in Britain. The long history of anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism and anti-Irish sentiment in Britain illustrates that there is

nothing "new" about employing cultural difference as a means to which inferiorise and exclude groups from society.

The exploration of anti-Gypsy racism and the ever changing constructions of the "Gypsy" are particularly pertinent to understandings of the contemporary Romani experience. Both the racially loaded nationalism that arose with Enlightenment science and the enduring historical construction of the "Gypsy" as the "Other", have framed the experience of the Romanies in Britain. Historically, anti-Gypsy racism has encompassed elements of both "biological" and "cultural" racism. The Romanies have been constructed, therefore, as both innately inferior and as culturally deviant.

Policy Responses to the "Gypsy Problem"

An exploration of historic understandings of, and responses to, the Romany Gypsies uncovers that they embodied much of what was described as "new" about cultural racism. The attempted assimilation of the Romany Gypsies and other nomadic groups has a lengthy history. Policy responses have often been grounded in racialised understandings of the Romanies which accentuate their assumed moral deficit and the urgent need to civilise them (Vanderbeck, 2003). Notions of immorality and a lack of self-control, dirt, aggression, deviance, idleness, poor intellect and racial purity have all been employed at various times to rationalise discriminatory responses toward the Romanies, with these ascribed characteristics fashioned in contrast to the norms and values of the wider, "respectable", population.

State responses towards Romany Gypsies have often employed policies of spatial control and restriction of movement (Smith and Greenfields, 2013). They have been implemented under various guises throughout history with the 1530 Egyptians Act being one of the earliest examples. The Egyptians Act sought to rid England of all "Egyptians", that is "Gypsies", by barring any further immigration and demanding those already living in England to leave voluntarily within sixteen days or face the confiscation of their property, incarceration and deportation (Mayall, 1995, 20). The Act was revised in 1554 to pardon those "Egyptians" who adopted a sedentary lifestyle and abstain from their 'naughty, idle and ungodly life and company' (Mayall, 1995, 21). For Mayall (1995, 22), this revision to state policy was significant; 'the objective of complete removal, by deportation or death, was giving way to forced settlement and assimilation into the dominant, sedentary society and culture'. The aim was, thus, to obliterate the traditions and culture which characterised Romany Gypsy identities.

Another significant legislative change came in 1562 in which the Egyptians Act was amended to include "counterfeit Egyptians". Formerly, Romany Gypsies had been defined by the state as immigrants or a foreign people. Despite policies of deportation, they remained a fixed presence in Britain with the "Egyptian" population increasing in size and intermixing with other indigenous nomadic groups. Under the Egyptians Act, indigenous itinerants living the "Egyptian way of life" and native born offspring of the Egyptians were exempt from existing controls. The Egyptians Act was thus modified to impart a level of flexibility over definitions of "Egyptian". Under such revisions, the state could impose assimilationist policies against nomadic peoples whether they were "foreign" or not.

Efforts to assimilate Romany Gypsies intensified in the early 19th Century due to the impact of industrialisation (Mayall, 1988). The social changes instigated by industrialisation and the transition from a rural to an urban economy and society stripped commercial nomadism of much of its prior practicality and importance. Though many itinerants were able to adapt to industrialised society, many others were faced with declining employment opportunities. Romany Gypsies, and other nomadic groups, were thus positioned as a "social problem". By rejecting two of the key cornerstones of industrialised society – waged labour and a permanent residence – Romany Gypsies represented a challenge to modern society. As McVeigh notes, 'the continued existence of nomads and vagrants was a key symbol of the unfinished project of modernity and evidence of the survival of unwanted elements from the pre-modern' (McVeigh, 1997, p.18). Consequently, Romany Gypsies, along with other nomadic "undesirables", became subject to policies of assimilation and sedentarism (Mayall, 1988).

The main objective of post-industrial policy, therefore, has been to make nomadism increasingly difficult to sustain. For McVeigh (1997), opposition to nomadism is grounded in the ideology of "sedentarism" which signifies a:

> system of ideas and practices which serve to normalise and reproduce sedentary modes of existence and pathologies and repress nomadic modes of existence…[sedentarism] includes the active and intentional incitement of fear and hatred of nomads….[and] also includes a host of other less tangible ideas,

actions and structures which construct being sedentary as the only

possible mode of existence… (1997, 9).

For McVeigh, post-industrial Britain embodies the success of sedentarist hegemony and the emergence of British multiculturalism has done little to challenge this. The dominant model of multiculturalism in Britain has been liberal multiculturalism. According to Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992, 158):

Multiculturalism constructs society as composed of a hegemonic

homogenous majority, and small unmeltable minorities with their

own essentially different communities and cultures, which have to

be understood, accepted, and basically left alone since their

differences are incompatible with the hegemonic culture – in order

for the society to have harmonious relations.

Yet, Romany Gypsies have not been understood, accepted or "left alone". Legislation continues to constrain Gypsy and Traveller identity. For example: the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 removed the obligation upon local authorities to supply Gypsy and Traveller sites (Barclay, 2010); the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gave police and local authorities greater powers to evict Gypsies and Travellers (Casiani, 2004); the Housing Act 2004 reintroduced the obligation on local authorities to make adequate provision for Gypsies and Travellers, but was repealed by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (Central Bedfordshire Council, 2016); and changes to planning policy, introduced in 2015, prevent Gypsies and Travellers from settling on

permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites unless they can prove that they maintain a nomadic lifestyle (DCLG, 2015).

Arguably, the emergence of multiculturalism has failed to challenge the assimilationist and integrationist policies in place against Romany Gypsies. The emergence of British multiculturalism occurred simultaneously with commonwealth immigration, thus, omitting, again, Romany Gypsies from definitions which heavily focus on non-white minorities and immigration. Indeed, 'the whiteness of Gypsies (real or imaginary) impacts upon the position Gypsies are able to occupy within multicultural society' (Bhopal and Myers, 2008, 195). That said, even in multicultural Britain, sedentarism prevails and is grounded in both racialised and classed understandings of Romany Gypsies. I will now briefly explain both.

Racialising the Gypsy

The nineteenth century was a seminal moment in scientific thinking about race. The notion of race was by no means a new invention. As the Egyptians Act demonstrates, racial differences certainly informed policy before the 1800s. There was, however, a fundamental shift in scientific ideas about race throughout the nineteenth century. Referred to as the "Age of Reason", it was a time of great socioeconomic, political and religious uncertainty, the basis for which is grounded in the Enlightenment and industrial revolution. The Enlightenment demanded a scientific understanding of the world, thus necessitating rational and objective scientific categorisations. Though such categorisation led to many of the advancements which made possible the

industrial revolution, it was uncritically applied to human populations. Intelligence, personality, beauty, and criminality became objects of scientific study, in which phenotypical characteristics were employed to fashion distinctions between "races" (Pahl, 2002).

The Enlightenment was an acutely European project which transpired at a time when Europeans were eager to differentiate themselves from others whom they saw as inferior and less civilised than themselves. A hallmark of Enlightenment scholars was their unanimous agreement that Europeans were, by every measurement, superior to other races. The notion of European supremacy hinged on its opposite - the unenlightened, the culturally backwards, the uncivilised, or the savage - which generally referred to those defined as non-European or non-white.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, such reasoning was employed to position Europe's Romanies. With the intention of scientifically explaining the Romanies supposed deviation from standards of Western civility, attempts were made to scientifically determine their non-European origins. Linguistic research made links between the Romani language and Hindustani (Matras, 1995). The notion of an Indian homeland was thus introduced and utilised to explain the origin, identity and character of the Romani people. The theory was popularised by German historian Heinrich Grellmann, giving scholarly legitimacy to the long held idea of a distinctive Gypsy race. Grellmann regarded the Romanies as an uncivilised and non-European people. He was a proponent of radical assimilationist policy, declaring it the only means by

which the Romanies could be civilised. His work gave scientific justification to the marginalisation of the "Indian speaking" nomadic peoples, who by now has been racialised as a lost Indian tribe. Their deviance was no longer explained in terms of their impiety but in terms of their genetics – a philosophy that not only lingered but which later informed Hitler's "final solution" which saw half a million Romanies murdered in Nazi concentration camps (Acton, 2004; Saul, 2007).

In the British context, and following the English translation and publication of Grellman's works, his theory of Romani origins instigated an interest in the Romany Gypsy community from which an expanding body of research developed. Indeed, following the popularity of Enlightenment ethnography and anthropology, Britain's nomads became increasingly subject to the "orientalist" gaze. Orientalism – a way to conceptualise the dichotomy between the "civilised" West and "uncivilised" East - is a discourse in which the West's understandings of the East are intricately compounded with Western supremacy. For Said (1995), the "Occident" denotes the inherently held ideas of Western, European and white supremacy which are used to rationalise Western intervention and rule in the East. Orientalism often becomes a display of the West's 'projection onto and will to govern over' (Said, 1995, 95) another society, culture or minority, thus rendering minorities powerless to speak in a language of their own about a culture of their own. It is assumed that the "Orient" lacks the progressive values and knowledges of the West. The East is therefore essentialised, exoticised and inferiorised - a process facilitated by Western imperialism and the postcolonial preservation of hegemonic Western ideology.

Orientalism, when applied to the Romani experience, denotes the notions of incivility and exoticism that are central themes in Romani studies. By the late nineteenth century, fascination into Gypsy culture became the hallmark of the Romantic Movement. The literary and academic trend for romanticised Romany Gypsies positioned them as a 'foreign and mysterious race that are at home living a natural, alfresco existence in the highways and byways of rural England' (Holloway, 2005:355). The Gypsy had been appropriated as a quaint and exotic figure for scholarly study - a representation which relied on the 'generalisations about a fixed trans-European Gypsy "nature"' that had been popularised by Grellmann (Burke, 2004:58).

By the late 19th century, the scholarly studies of the Romany Gypsies had become, to a certain degree, 'formalised and institutionalised in the shape of the Gypsy Lore Society' (Mayall, 2010:58). The Gypsylorists propagated an image of Romany Gypsies as an exotic and enigmatic race from distant Eastern lands and aimed to protect and sustain the quaint world of the true Gypsy wanderers. This romantic depiction of Romany Gypsies, however, allowed the Gypsylorists to denounce the mass of Britain's nomads as degenerate vagrants as, unlike the "genuine" Romanies, they were not presumed to have derived from a noble Romani bloodline (Mayall, 1988). The Gypsylorist notion of the "true Gypsy" was an instrument exploited by policy makers, used as a means to condemn those they wished to subjugate (Acton, 1974). They claimed that the "true Gypsies" were a highborn and endangered race and thus set forth legislation which would constrain the growing numbers of vagrants who imitated the Gypsy way of life (Mayall, 1988). Hence, the

notion of the "true Gypsy" became an effective political tool used 'as an (unachievable) ideal against which to compare those they wished to repress' (Holloway, 2005:362).

For quite some time, Romani studies was wedged between a vague, and often amateur, combination of folkloristics and linguistics, which aimed to accentuate the distinctive customs and behaviours of the Romani people. It remained on the margins of the academic arena where it was positioned outside the 'traditional spheres of academic respectability' (Mayall, 2010:58). Contemporary Romani Studies, however, has begun to expand beyond the small and somewhat snubbed area of folkloristics and has emerged as a developing multidisciplinary field. Books about the Romanies have been published by an array of respected publishers and the field of Romani studies has become increasingly engaging for academics across disciplines (Mayall, 2010). Their contribution to Romani Studies has somewhat shifted the focus away from the romantic notions of the Gypsylorists. Contemporary Romani studies is instead concerned with challenging the entrenched negative understandings of the Romanies which invalidate the Romani people's right to equality and disregard the complexity of Romani culture (Tremlett, 2009).

The orientalising legacy of enlightenment racialisation, however, has left a lingering mark on the works of Romani Studies scholars. Indeed, Romani studies has been continually criticised for its homogenisation of the Romani people (Tremlett, 2009). Given the tendency for its scholars to unequivocally accept and propagate the theory of Indian origins, Romani Studies is often

considered instrumental in the construction and perpetuation of the "true Gypsy/ fake Gypsy" dichotomy (Willems, 1997). Scholars such as Willems (1997) have been critical of the way in which Romani Studies, in its absence of theory, has neglected the ways in which the process of racialisation has manipulated the social construction of Romani identity. He points to the earlier research of Okely (1983) which confronted the assumption that the narrative of Indian origins could be used to rationalise the contemporary realities of the Romani people. Indeed, Willems argued that "Gypsy" was a term imposed on a hugely diverse assortment of marginalised peoples. His critique has initiated a significant debate within Romani Studies. It confronted the tendency amongst Romani studies scholars to create a fallacious picture of the "true Gypsy" – a tendency which Willems believed brought about the 'splendid isolation of Romani Studies from other academic areas' (1997:305).

'Chavs Who Choose'

For Holloway (2005) the "true Gypsy/ fake Gypsy" dichotomy exists to this day, to the detriment of Britain's Romany Gypsies. The "true Gypsy", as set out by the Gypsylorists, has never been anything more than a romantic fantasy and exoticised myth, yet, society still relies on this fanciful figure to draw lines of ethnic distinction. In her research into the racialisation of "Gypsy-Travellers", Holloway observed the use of physiognomy as a means of differentiating between Gypsies and the wider population. Olive skin, dark hair and "traditional" clothing were all identified as signifiers of Gypsy ethnicity. Accordingly, just a small minority were considered "true Gypsies" whilst the remainder were branded 'hangers on' (p356). By amalgamating physiognomy with ethnic authenticity, argues Holloway, the white rural residents she

interviewed were employing the same "true Gypsy/fake Gypsy" discourse propagated by the Gypsylorists. The "true Gypsy" and 'hanger on' dichotomy operated as a mask; it allowed Holloway's participants to voice their anxieties and prejudices about Gypsy communities without appearing overtly racist. 'Hangers-on' were not considered a "race" but rather 'white pretenders' (p.364).

This brings us to the conception of Romany Gypsies as "chavs who choose". Comparable to the "trailer trash" of the United States, this understanding positions them as a degenerate white underclass that have chosen to live a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle. In other words, Romany Gypsies are not a "naturally occurring" racial or ethnic group – they were not *born* Gypsies – but an element of the white working class who have *chosen* to be Gypsies. Significantly, the designation of "whiteness" bestowed upon Holloway's (2005, 364) 'white pretenders' did not bring with it any capital. The concept of whiteness has been defined as 'a location of structural advantage, of race privilege…it is a "standpoint", a place from which White people look at ourselves, at others, and at society...[it] refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed' (Frankenberg, 1993, 1). Whiteness implies 'an idealised human being, a figure depicted in terms of its extraordinary qualities' (Bonnett, 2002 330) indicative of the white middle class. Whiteness is '…a supremacist identity…it connotes lack of exceptionality, the homely virtues of quietness, tidiness, cleanness, and decency' (Bonnett, 2002 330). This understanding of whiteness sits in contrast with perceptions of the Romanies as an uncivilised, dirty and lower class.

In whiteness studies, there has been a move toward defining whiteness and white identity not only in terms of its structural privilege, but in terms of a multiplicity of white identities with varying access to the capital of whiteness. Certainly, many scholars have explored the concept of whiteness as examining the varying "shades" of white; with some white groups (namely, the white working class) being denied the privileges of whiteness given their failure to achieve white respectability (Bonnett, 1998; Garner, 2007; Hartigan; 1997; Haylett, 2001; Webster, 2008). Hughey (2010, 1289) presents a link between these two conceptions of whiteness with his notion of hegemonic whiteness which positions whiteness as:

…a cultural process in which: (1) racist, reactionary and essentialist ideologies are used to demarcate interracial boundaries, and (2) performances of white racial identity that fail to meet those ideals are marginalised and stigmatised, thereby creating intra-racial distinctions within the category "white".

Hughey (2010, 1290) adds that while whiteness is a concept in flux, varying across different social contexts, many white identities, and processes of white identity formation, necessitate the positioning of 'those marked as "white" as essentially different from and superior to those marked as "non-white"' and the marginalisation of forms of whiteness and white identity 'that fail to exemplify dominant ideals'.

In Holloway's (2005, 364) study, participants did not recognise "fake Gypsies" as white equals but as white *others* from the 'socially excluded urban population'. In this way, Gypsies, despite being white, do not necessarily 'benefit from or enjoy the privileges attached to whiteness' (Bhopal, 2011, 327). In the study of whiteness, the white working class have played a central role. The ambiguous positioning of the white working class within the symbolic boundaries of whiteness has underlined the instabilities of whiteness, revealing it as a set of values and practices rather than simply a skin colour. Whiteness appears to operate performatively and is not simply inherited or an unconditionally assigned trait (Rhodes, 2012, 486).

Class is also central to McVeigh's (1997) notion of sedentarism, given that nomadism confronts capitalist conceptions of land ownership and private property (Greenfields and Home, 2008). Gypsy uses of land sit in sharp contrast with the sedentary population's relationship with land, hence fashioning a policy response focused on assimilation and settlement. Policies of settlement materialise in the form of spatial exclusion. Spatial exclusion has always been utilised as means to keep poor, white, marginalised groups apart from the wider, more prosperous population. 'The spatial confinement of marginalised white-ethnicity to the habitus of the white council estate' (Webster, 2008, 304) removes such groups not only from middle-class society, but increasingly from the more "civilised" ranks of the working class. The enforced decline of nomadism, and the confinement of the Romany Gypsies into permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites or into largely 'poor quality, stigmatised areas of social housing where they reside with other marginalised

and disenfranchised sections of the population' (Smith and Greenfields, 2013, 14), is greatly influential to class based understandings of Romany Gypsies.

For Hartigan (1999), the designation of whiteness is dependent on class identity. In his study of class and whiteness in Detroit, Hartigan presents the notion of *shades of whiteness* and argues that lower-class whites are excluded from the privileges and power of hegemonic whiteness. The white working class have become increasingly marginalised within contemporary public discourse and are often associated with backwardness and tawdry cultural practices (Hartigan, 1997; Haylett, 2001; Sayer; 2005; Webster; 2008). Webster (2008, 302-303) argues that 'the white working-class poor are blamed for a "decline" in the working class, pathological masculinities, backwardness, degeneracy, crime, over-fecundity, fecklessness and above all are seen as an anachronistic remnant of an industrial culture blocking a full move to modernisation and progress'. As Hartigan explains, such behaviours and characteristics are examples 'of what whites cannot afford to be if the propriety of their implicit racial privileges are to be maintained' (1997, 320).

The positioning of the Romanies as "lower class" is significant given that the white working classes largely maintain a marginal status within conceptions of whiteness. The relationship between whiteness and class, however, is an ambivalent one. The notion of a homogeneous white group, or even a homogenous white working class, is problematic given the ways in which class intersects with such things as ethnicity, culture, religion gender and sexuality (Bonnett, 2000; Hartigan; 1997; Haylett; 2001). Such ambiguities are

perceptible in contemporary anxieties surrounding a growing "underclass" of "abject whites" (Haylett, 2001), "chavs" in the UK (Nayak, 2006; Webster, 2008), and "white trash" in the USA (Hartigan, 1997). Nayak (2006) contends that "chavs" 'like many minority ethnic groups before them… [are] associated with street crime, disease, drugs, over-breeding…and the seedy underbelly of the "black economy"' (p.824). For Nayak, "discursively represented as a darkened underclass [chavs] appear as the new urban primitives…like black youth, [chavs] are represented as "gangstas", "rouges", "apes", society's "missing link" in the chain of human order' (2006, 824). Similarly, concerning the USA, Hartigan (1997, 115) remarks:

White trash is used to name those bodies that exceed the class and racial etiquettes required of Whites if they are to preserve the powers and privileges that accrue to them as members of the dominant racial order in this country. White trash is applied to Whites whose lifestyles, speech and behaviours too closely match the "marked" cultural forms associated with blackness or other symbolically informed forms of racial identity and difference.

As Smith and Greenfields (2013, 14) rightly point out: '…it is no coincidence that the term "pikey", which has long been a derogatory term for Gypsies and Travellers, has increasingly been applied to young white residents of social housing in recent years while "chav" (from the Romani word '"chavi" for child) has become a byword for "poor white trash" as the two groups have merged in the public consciousness into one criminally inclined, welfare dependent

and spatially segregated, incorrigible, "underclass".' The whiteness ascribed to "chav" and "pikey" allow these words to be used unopposed. Although designed to cause offense, these terms are not considered hateful within wilder cultural understandings (Bhopal and Myers, 2008).

We have seen, therefore, a transformation in the positioning of the Romany Gypsies. Once citizens of a foreign state, they are now considered "British subjects", albeit an underclass. Can this transformation be explained as an outcome of the gradual assimilation of the Romany Gypsies? Does it denote the diminution or erosion of racialised anti-Romani sentiment, and the acceptance of Romany Gypsies as British? Are the Romany Gypsies *white again?* The following section will explore a new dimension to the "Gypsy problem" brought to pass by EU freedom of movement. Here I will outline how the Gypsies became *"black" again*.

New Europeans, New Prejudices

Beyond Britain's Romany Gypsy population lies another Romani population, commonly referred to as the "Roma". This population is comprised of migrants from EU member states and has grown steadily throughout EU expansion. Research by the University of Salford uncovered that there are around 200,000 Roma migrants living in the UK (Brown et al., 2013).

Notions of incivility are a central theme in the Romani experience. Allegations of "cultural backwardness", however, stem not only from their position as Romanies, but from their position as Eastern European migrants as well. To

understand the position occupied by Britain's Roma migrants it is important to consider the precarious political context in which they arrived. As already discussed, the British approach to immigration control has, throughout history, been contingent on the identification of both racially desirable and racially undesirable migrants (Fox et al, 2012). Largely, it has been white Europeans who have been considered most desirable and the EU policy of freedom of movement has implicitly favoured white migration.

In 2004, the UK welcomed migrants from the EU's eight new member states. The government had expected arrivals to reach no more than 13,000 people per year; in view of this, they chose not to place restrictions on their new Eastern European arrivals. An unforeseen 500,000 migrants entered the UK in the two years which followed, triggering a significant public outcry. Restrictions were subsequently imposed on Bulgarian and Romanian migrants after their succession to the European Union in 2007 (Guskin and Wilson, 2007). These restrictions were not placed on Bulgarian and Romanian migrants because they were not white. Rather, the gap in the British labour market had already been filled. Whilst Fox et al. (2012) argue that these restrictions were not racially motivated, they did, however, create racialised effects. Romanians and Bulgarians 'were symbolically denuded of their whiteness by an immigration policy that refused to recognise them as full Europeans with the associated rights (and colour) that such a status would have otherwise availed them' (Fox et al., 2012, 6).

For Wolff (1994) the racialisation of Eastern Europeans predates EU enlargement. Just as Said (1978) maintained that the West has constructed the Orient, Wolff (1994) contends that they have also invented Eastern Europe. The notion of a divided Europe is a Western construction born from the Enlightenment. While the East was easily positioned as "inferior" to the West, Eastern Europe held an uncertain position. It was perceptibly European, yet, it was economically and socially underdeveloped compared to Western Europe. Eastern Europe was thus not considered fully European, nor was it as unequivocally uncivilised as the Orient.

In recognition of this, Todorova (2009:8) introduces the term 'balkanism' which she likens to Said's concept of orientalism. Orientalism she notes 'has had a tumultuous existence…' and whilst it has been '…popularised by intellectuals who find that it describes adequately the relationship of the Balkans with the West', this is not the case. Owing to the 'historical and geographical concreteness' (p11) of the Balkan regions and the way in which they have not been romanticised in the way in which the orient has, Todorova argues that balkanism is not simply a subtype of orientalism: 'The Balkans, on the other hand, with their unimaginative concreteness, and almost total lack of wealth [are] totally devoid of the mystery of exoticism.' (p14). This is significant, not only because a large majority of new Roma migrants have arrived from the Balkan regions, but because this assessment of the Balkan regions - as lacking progression and as appearing less appealing than the exoticness of the orient - encapsulates societal attitudes towards Roma migrants. The language of the EU immigration debate has reflected this

positioning of Eastern Europe. Migrants are portrayed as arriving from impoverished, corrupt, volatile and culturally backward nations and this is has had a significant impact upon how Roma identity has been conceptualized.

Fox et al. succinctly break down the three ways in which Romanian and Bulgarian migrants have been racialised. The first frame, the numbers frame, 'draws attention to and indeed amplifies the scope and scale of migration' (p.7). Here, EU migrants are referred to as "floods", "swamps", "hordes" and "invasions" as a means to incite concern, anxiety and fears that jobs, welfare benefits, and public services are either at risk or vulnerable to abuse. Such narratives 'depict the migrants as a nuisance at best, a menace at worst' (p.8). The second frame, the crime frame, suggests a close, even inherent link between migration and criminality. Eastern European migrants have been linked to an array of organised criminal activities, such as cashpoint theft, child trafficking, pick-pocketing and prostitution. When such associations are unrelentingly repeated Eastern European migrants are constructed in the British imagination 'not as upstanding workers trying to seek out a living but as dangerous criminals and social parasites preying on their well-meaning hosts' (p.8). For Fox et al. (2012, 8), the racialisation process becomes most pronounced in the crime frame given that the supposed immorality of the migrants is deemed part of their innate character.

Fox et al.'s (2012) third frame, the Roma frame, is of most use to an analysis of the positioning of Britain's Roma. The numbers frame and the crime frame, as well as Todorova's (2008) "Balkanisation", are emphasized and validated

when employed in relation to the Roma. The Roma frame is grounded in and reproduces stereotypes of the Roma as exemplifying and embodying cultural backwardness 'thus Romacising migrant "hordes" and their criminal tendencies, and in so doing insinuating and accentuating their supposed racial inferiority' (Fox et al., 2012, 9). It is particularly successful as it makes use of the long history of both home-grown and wider European prejudice against the Romanies. That said, it utilises existing prejudices toward British Gypsy and Traveller communities, 'acting as a local reference point to which understandings of newly arrived East European Roma can be meaningfully anchored" (Fox et al, 2012, 9).

The amalgamation of Roma with British Gypsy and Traveller communities recycles familiar fears, suspicions and concerns as a means to understand and position otherwise unknown new arrivals (Fox et al., 2012). The notion of the "Roma migrant" has been applied somewhat indiscriminately to all Eastern Europeans, regardless of their ethnicity. Linking EU migration to the "immoral behaviours" and "cultural backwardness" associated with the Roma (often accompanied by references to the Roma's alleged non-European origins) casts doubt upon their ability to integrate. This conception of the Roma is effective as an instrument for denying migrants both their "Europeanness", and their whiteness, thus aggravating their marginalisation (Bonnett, 2000).

Conclusion

In a study of Romani diasporic nationalism, notions of "belonging" and "otherness" are central concepts. By nature of being an ethnic minority,

Romany Gypsies can be considered the "other". They are among the most socially excluded peoples in Britain and regularly face discrimination in many guises. Yet, to the casual observer, they seemingly *belong* to Britain. Britishness, as defined in immigration discourse, denotes whiteness. Immigrants, on the other hand, signify blackness. Although Romany Gypsies are the descendants of 15th century migrants, their lingering presence in British society, compounded with their palpable whiteness, leaves them all but absent from understandings of racism and discrimination.

Romany Gypsies have been cemented, therefore, into the boundaries of white Britishness where they have since remained, albeit on the margins. They arguably "belong" to Britain, yet their cultural deviance renders them a social problem or an underclass, against claims of white British cultural homogeneity. They have, thus, been subject to policies of assimilation and spatial control, indicating that whiteness is more than a skin colour but a set of practices and ideals that Romany Gypsies seemingly do not possess. They belong to British society but only partially and are, to an extent, similarly positioned to Roma migrants.

The Roma, like their British counterparts, are considered culturally deviant. Deemed inherently criminal, they are accused of migrating to Britain en masse with intentions of taking advantage of the welfare state and public services. Largely migrating from Eastern Europe, their whiteness is called into question given their supposedly "backward" culture and socially and economically underdeveloped countries of origin. The implicit link between whiteness and

"Europeaness" cannot, therefore, be taken for granted. The Romanies have been whitened and darkened at various times throughout history by politicians, immigration policy and the media. Indeed, post-war Windrush migration whitened the Romanies while EU freedom of movement darkened them. Whiteness is not, therefore, fixed. Rather it is in a state of constant renegotiation in which it is defined in relation to the ongoing processes of racialisation.

Where might the Romanies find a sense of belonging, comradery and "home", if it's not within British society? This study asks whether it is within the so-called "Roma Nation" propagated by Romani diasporic nationalism. The notion of a Romani homeland has been popular since the 19th century in which linguistic research first suggested an Indian origin. Though this has been used to justify the supposed racial inferiority of the Romani people, the notion of an Indian homeland has become cemented within, and popularised by, contemporary Romani Studies. This remainder of this thesis will explore in more detail, understandings of belonging, home(land) and diaspora; seeking to shed light on identifications with the Roma Nation.

Chapter 2 concerns the politics of the Romani diaspora. It provides an overview of the Romani nationalist movement and the various claims made in the name of an essentialised Romani identity. It engages in debates about the paradoxes of identity movements which seek both to confront stigmatised identities while at the same time construct homogenised boundaries around cultural and ethnic identities. Chapter 3 presents the methodological and epistemological frameworks of the study and explains the research design,

my role and positioning throughout the research process and ethical considerations.

In chapters 4 to 6 the participants' experiences are discussed and analysed in line with the research questions. Chapter 4 looks at the participants' experiences of, and responses to, being the "other" in British society. This chapter serves as an entrance to the following two chapters. It contextualises the participants' responses and their articulations of belonging. Chapter 5 explores the participants' understandings of home(land). This is discussed in regards to the participants' experiences of, and relationship to, their countries of origin, the notion of "Britishness" and the idea of Indian origins. Chapter 6 discusses the participants' understandings of the "Roma Nation". Here the political dimension of their collective identifications is explored. Chapter 7, ending the thesis, presents a final discussion and conclusion to the study. It draws together the findings in relation to the research questions, offering an overview of the participants support and identifications with the Roma Nation.

Chapter 2

Between Identity and Ideology: The Diasporic Politics of

Romani Nationalism

This chapter explores the politicisation of the Indian origins of the Romani people. It begins from the premise that the Romanies constitute a diaspora and will delve into the nationalist political discourse inspired by this conception of the Romanies. It begins by engaging with critiques of nationalism and diaspora that underline the essentialism inherent in territorially rooted constructions of Romani identity and will end by problematizing the identity politics from which a crude reification of the Romanies results.

Before commencing this discussion it is necessary to define the Romani diaspora. Principally, I refer to the Romani people as a whole – the twelve million Roma/Romany Gypsies/Romanies who are thought to have left India in the 11th century. In the context of Britain, it refers to the first wave of Romani diaspora – the Romany Gypsies who arrived in Britain at the beginning of the 15th century. There are, however, a further two waves of Romani diaspora to Britain: the Romani diaspora of the 1990s made up of refugees from Czech Republic, Slovakia and Kosovo, and the post-2004 Romani diaspora characterised by Roma migrants from the EU. By waves of diaspora, I do not mean to imply that there were subsequent waves of diaspora from India. Rather, I mean a diaspora *within* a diaspora – that is, that Romanies who have for centuries been settled in nation states across Europe are again going through a process of dispersal from Eastern to Western Europe.

That said, what is a diaspora? How and why do diasporas materialise? These questions are not easily answered. Diaspora is a hotly contested concept and there is not a universally agreed definition within the literature on diaspora. Rather, diaspora studies has been characterised by debates regarding the extent to which diasporas are *territorial* – a descriptive tool in which a territorial homeland and the desire to return to a homeland are central features – or whether they are *deterritorial* – a socio-cultural process in which the formation of identities, primarily in response to mobility as opposed to territory, are the central focus.

Territorial Diasporas

In what was one of the first definitions of diaspora, Connor (1986, 16) describes it as 'that segment of a people living outside the homeland'. Safran (1991), with aim to bring clarity to Connor's broad description, offered a more precise definition containing six criteria that a group must fulfil to be considered a diaspora. First, the group or their ancestors must have been *dispersed* from their place of origin to two or more regions. Second, the group must preserve a *collective memory* or *myth* of their *homeland.* Third, they must have a collective sense of *alienation* suffered in their host society. Fourth, the group shares a longing to return to their homeland. Fifth, there is a collective commitment to maintaining or restoring the homeland. Sixth, the group holds a *collective consciousness* and *solidarity*. In short, a *collective identity* fashioned in relation to the homeland. Indeed, Safran (2003) argues that, unlike traditional immigrants, most of whom intend to assimilate into the culture of the host country, diasporas do not wish to detach themselves completely from their homelands. Rather, they choose to live between two

worlds, attempting to recreate elements of their homeland culture into the host country.

Cohen (1996) builds on Safran's definition. He describes diaspora as both involuntary – that is, a "traumatic" dispersal or "victim" diaspora, such as, the Jewish, African and Armenian diasporas – and voluntary diaspora which transpire through the search for work, the pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions. Cohen also emphasises the notion of a "return movement" which he argues requires the collective support of the diaspora in question. Safran and Cohen have often been criticised given the near impossibility of a diaspora fulfilling their rigid criteria at all times. Yet, in spite of this, Safran is critical of Cohen's broader criteria. He argues that a minority group that has been dispersed from its homeland cannot be considered a diaspora if they: 1) lack the resolve to survive as a minority; 2) no longer speak the language of their homeland; 3) have no clear idea of their homelands past or location; 4) have no desire to return to their homeland; or 5) have few barriers to integration in their host country.

Deterritorial Diasporas

Safran (2004) and Cohen (2007), in their later works, begin to problematise the notion of homeland by acknowledging the weakening of rigid national attachments. They are reluctant, however, to set aside territorial definitions of diaspora all together. The severance of homeland from diaspora is argued more insistently in, what I am labelling, the socio-cultural approach in which diasporas are considered transnational "imagined communities". From this approach, diasporas are seen as social and political constructions that are

thriving concurrently with the process of globalisation and increased mobility. Diasporas are not considered as naturally occurring bodies that simply materialise through territorial dispersal. Rather, they must be discursively constructed and mobilised. Diaspora is not, therefore, a mere descriptive term with rigid criteria but a proactive effort to establish and maintain a deterritorialised socio-cultural, political community.

Appadurai (1996), for example, notably diagnosed the demise of the nation-state via the process of globalisation. 'We are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiances and identity have taken its place' he argued, concluding that 'there will be a spread of national forms unconnected to territorial states' (1996, 189). We are experiencing then a 'decoupling of nation from state' in which 'globalisation is undermining the project of modernity in the specific sense of the dis-embedding of the political project of the state [state formation] and the cultural project of nationhood [ethno-national identity building]' (Delanty and O'Mahony, 2002).

Critiques of classical definitions of diaspora have often, therefore, disputed the centrality of homeland. Avtar Brah (1996), for example, argues that diasporic identity is not characterised by the desire for a homeland, but rather by '*homing desire'* – the need to belong to an identity rooted in historical origins, rather than a longing for a homeland and physical territory. For Brah 'home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination… it is a place of no return' (Brah, 1996, 192). She continues, 'not all diasporas inscribe homing

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desire through a wish to return to a place of "origin". For some, cultural identification with the [place of origin] might be by far the most important element' (1996, 193).

In a similar vein, Anthias (1998) criticises classical definitions of diaspora for their 'absolutist notions of "origin" and "belonging"'. She indicts diaspora studies of overlooking issues of gender and class, as well as intra/interethnic conflict and cooperation:

> …the lack of attention given to transethnic solidarities, such as those against racism, of class, of gender, of social movements, is deeply worrying…for a discourse of antiracism and social mobilisation of a transethnic (as opposed to transnational) character, cannot be easily accommodated, within the discourse of diaspora, where it retains dependence on "homeland" and "origin", however configured (Anthias, 1998, 577).

By the same token, Soysal (2000) argues that classical definitions of diaspora 'privilege the nation state model', thus ignoring contemporary 'practices of citizenship, which are multi-connected, multi-referential and postnational' (2000, 13). This is similar to Hall's understanding of diaspora which refers not '…to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return…' but to identities '…which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference…' (Hall, 1990, 235). Hall argues

that we cannot define diaspora identities with any precision or universalism - as 'one experience, one identity' - without recognising the differences and discontinuities which shape their uniqueness (Hall, 1996, 236). Groups are divided along lines of class, sexuality, gender, country of residence and other contextual factors and, in view of that, each individual navigates their relationship with society differently. Diasporic identity can be described, therefore, as:

> …a matter of "becoming" as well as "being"… cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation… subject to the "play" of history, culture, and power… it is always constructed through memory, fantasy and myth (1990, 225-226).

Hall questions, therefore, the plausibility of "return", arguing that the original homelands, from which diasporas are dispersed, have too been transformed over time. In reference to the African diaspora he notes, 'the original "Africa" is no longer there. It too has been transformed… it cannot in any simple sense be merely recovered… we can't literally go home again' (Hall, 1990, 223). That said, immigrants and ethnic minorities can define themselves as belonging to a wider transnational community that exist beyond a territorial state or homeland. This requires a shift in the way in which minorities are framed and involves the incorporation of the "transnational" or "global" into the "national". Diasporas are more, therefore, than minority groups living within a nation state. They are part of a global, transnational community.

In light of such critiques, Cohen (2007) reviewed his understanding of the homeland/diaspora relationship. In so doing he identified three types of home/homeland which he refers to as '*solid', 'ductile'* and '*liquid'*. A solid homeland refers to the traditional conception of diaspora in which there is a documented dispersal from a concrete homeland. A ductile homeland is one which is looked to as a source of identification and affiliation but not as a home to be returned to or restored. Lastly, Cohen describes liquid homelands as 'deterritoralised diaspora' that have 'lost their conventional territorial reference points, to have become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures with virtual or uncertain homes'. In so doing, he acknowledges the strategic processes of construction which result in the formation of diasporic identities. A diasporic identity is, therefore, a channel through which to assert political identity, which can be employed by minority groups as a source of agency and empowerment.

Framing Collective Identity

In an attempt to understand the nature of diasporas, I turn to social movement literature which underlines the strategic construction of collective identity through processes of framing. A collective action frame can be described as a collection of beliefs, values and meanings accredited to individual and collective experiences, social situations and events. They assist movements in constructing shared understandings, objectives and identities which incite, inspire and legitimate collective action. In their framing activities, movement leaders both utilize and refashion existing cultural symbols and meanings – as well as constructing new meanings and symbols – and transform them into "collective action frames", through which movement activists make sense of

their political environment (Tarrow, 1992).The formation of social movements is, therefore, a 'product of people seizing and making opportunities' (Tarrow, 1994: 81). In this way, diasporas are constructed by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who strategically deploy identity frames with the aim of constructing a shared collective identity or "imagined community". Diasporic politics therefore utilises identity as a means to unite disparate peoples into a coherent, and transnational, identity based community.

Diasporas can be defined, therefore, by a shared collective identity. Put differently, they are groups defined by a shared identity marker, such as, ethnic, national or religious identity. The popularity of the term "collective identity" has provoked an abundance of definitions. Melucci (1988, 342) defines it as:

> ...an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals and concerned with the orientations of action and the fields of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place… the process of identity construction, adaption, and maintenance always has two aspects: the internal complexity of an actor (the plurality of orientations which characterises him), and the actor's relationship with the environment (other actors, opportunities and constraints).

Others define collective identity as 'a shorthand designation announcing a status – a set of attitudes, commitment and rules for behaviour – that those

who assume the identity can be expected to subscribe to subscribe to'
(Friedman and McAdam, 1992, 157); a 'shared definition' that derives from
'common interests, experiences and solidarity…' (Taylor and Whittier, 1995;
172); 'perceptions of group distinctiveness, boundaries, and interests, for
something closer to a community than a category' (Jasper, 1997, 86); and 'the
mesh between the individual and cultural systems' (Gamson, 1992; 55). In a
nutshell, collective identity is the feeling of "we-ness". It is 'an individual's
cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community,
category, practice or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation,
which may be imagined rather than experienced directly' (Polletta and Jasper,
2001, 285).

Constructing a collective identity involves active ongoing negotiations of *who
we are* and *who we are not*. For Taylor and Whittier (1992), there are three
important elements of collective identity construction: boundaries,
consciousness and negotiation. They define boundaries as 'the social,
psychological and physical structures that establish differences between a
challenging group and dominant groups', and explain consciousness as 'the
interpretative frameworks that emerge from a group's struggle to define and
realise members' common interest in opposition to the dominant order' (Taylor
and Whittier, 1992, 510-512). Negotiation is understood as the ways in which
the group resists and/or redefines stereotyped and stigmatised
understandings and categorisations. Through these processes, a collective
identity develops and fashions a sense of "who we are" in order to fight for
political and social change (Taylor and Whittier, 1992).

Identity frames, thus, 'promote a heightened awareness of a group's commonalities and frame interaction between members of the in-group and out-group (Taylor and Whittier, 1992, 111). Yet, often a set of competing collective identities develop which unsettles the notion of "us" and "them". The "us", argues Gamson (1997, 80), is defined 'not just against an external *them* but also against *thems* inside, as particular subgroups battle to gain or retain legitimate *us* standing'. The construction and maintenance of collective identity transpires, therefore, not only vis-à-vis outsiders but also against those who assert insider status.

Nationalism as an Apparatus of Groupness

How then do we explain the variability of feelings of "we-ness"? Why at times are feelings of "solidarity", "unity" and "belonging" felt more or less strongly than others? Under what circumstances, or in which contexts, does collective identity become more pronounced? Brubaker introduces the notion of "groupness", encouraging scholars to consider collective identity as changeable and impermanent rather than fixed and continually felt. In doing so, we can explore, and perhaps explain, 'phases of extraordinary cohesion and moments of intensely felt collective solidarity, without implicitly treating high levels of groupness as constant, enduring or definitionally present'. For Brubaker, we should consider groupness as an "event". In this way, "groupness" or "collective identity" may or *may not* materialise regardless of the efforts, of what Brubaker terms, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. This prompts scholars to explore and explain unsuccessful attempts at ethnopolitical mobilisation. It must not be assumed, therefore, that the existence of a group or category, such as the Romanies, automatically results in collective identity,

solidarity or "groupness". Though Brubaker recognises that groups often do act based on crude categorisations (as will be discussed later in the chapter, when used strategically, it can be beneficial for them to do so), it is wrong to assume that groups are internally homogenous. That said, while it has been argued that the Romanies do not share a collective identity, it is unlikely that any group share an inherent sense of "we-ness" and/or solidarity. This is not to claim that groups cannot mobilise based on crude categorisations, but that "groupness" many not always materialise. That said, though it is recognised that the Romanies do not constitute a homogenous, bounded group, it is often convenient to refer to them in generalising terms. As Brubaker argues, however, 'these designations have a purely aggregative meaning. They refer not to solidarity or bounded groups but to sets of category members… who, if asked their ethnicity or ethnic nationality, would identify themselves as [Romani]'. Thus, while "Romani" clearly signifies something, it tells us little about the extent of their *groupness.*

One of the most prevalent political ideologies invoked to fashion a sense of "groupness" is nationalism. Nationalism has been particularly effective strategy of mobilisation given its particularistic and romanticised use of the homeland. A territorial component of national identity is of great importance given that it allows boundaries between the "national community" and "others" "outsiders" and "enemies" to be spatially fixed and observable as opposed to just conceptually constructed. What is more, territory, which is emotionally referred to as the *home*land, presents a tangible link to the history of the nation. Scholars of nationalism often emphasis, therefore, the importance of

shared roots and origins (Smith, 1986), and shared histories and traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983).

Nations, thus, are constructed on the basis of foundational myths of origins, traditions and histories. In the process of constructing nations, certain narratives of origins, traditions and history are selectively preserved and/or forgotten, thus, redrawing the boundaries of the nation. Nationalist entrepreneurs, favour particular myths, traditions, histories and cultural symbols over others in an attempt to fashion a common source of identification based on a 'legacy of memories' which engenders a 'desire to live together, [and] the will to continue to value the undivided heritage one has received' (Renan, 1990, 11). As Renan (1990: 19) notes, 'to have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people'.

The incitement of symbols, history and traditions is an effective tool for encouraging groupness given that they establish boundaries that delineate who is, and who is not, a member of the group. As Brubaker argues, however, nations are social constructions and not historic realities (2002) and are dependent on the choice of symbols and political goals of nationalist entrepreneurs. Scholars of nationalism such as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1991) have pointed to the constructed and "imagined" nature of the nation, observing the elements of artefacts and invention that play a central role in the formation of nations. Because nations are social constructs, nationalist entrepreneurs have to "invent traditions" to construct

the common heritage considered essential to the development of a sense of groupness (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983).

This had often made it difficult for nationalism to fulfil the vision of national community as a *homogeneous* entity. Nationalist leaders often enforce uniformity (over ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial etc. diversity) via the standardisation of language and law and the provision of standardised public education. Modern nation states surfaced as the only vehicle through which to create homogenous culture by expunging local and regional practices, languages and knowledge, by way of the formation and administration of public education and communication systems (Gellner, 1983). Nation states introduce and disseminate programs through which they aim to "regulate" the population, to manipulate and mould citizens/subjects and their identities (Foucault, 1980) and to realise uniformity.

While the depiction of national identities as fixed, unified, and homogenous prevails, in reality most nations are culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse. As a result, unification efforts have employed processes of homogenisation and/or the forcible suppression of cultural difference. As Hall (1996: 616) notes, 'most modern nations consist of disparate cultures which were only unified by a lengthy process of violent conquest…these violent beginnings which stand at the origins of modern nations have first to be "forgotten" before allegiance to a more unified, homogeneous national identity could begin to be forged'. National identities are, therefore, unstable, unfixed, relational, and most significantly, contested. Nations can be seen as historically situated and produced, as unfinished projects, and as contested

terrains. Indeed, projects of nationalism are always in process, regardless of the naturalising and normalising discourses that conceal their politics (Pettman, 1996: 48).

A Nation Without A State

The task of Romani political entrepreneurs engaged in diasporic politics is to construct a collective Romani identity that can be used to build a transnational Romani community. This necessitates the construction of an identity that is particularistic – it is constructed upon ethnicity, roots and origins and functions as a boundary mechanism. As will now be discussed, the formation of a Romani diasporic identity is, to some extent, a political end in itself. Romani political entrepreneurs have adopted the term diaspora not as a means by which to describe the Romani population, but as a political aim in itself. They endeavour to instil and inspire a diasporic consciousness, or sense of groupness, via the employment of nationalistic rhetoric which allows for identifications, alliances and political action to transpire on a global, as well as national and local, stage.

The roots of Romani nationalism can be traced back to 1971, when Romani activists converged in London for the first World Romani Congress. It was during this event that the "Gypsies" chose to self-designate as the "Roma". This was the launch of a politically constructed narrative which aimed to conceptualise, or *reconceptualise*, the Romani people from the "Gypsies", as a social problem, to the "Roma", as a distinct ethnic group of Indian origins and a transnational political constituency. The congress was one the first examples of self-organised international Romani activism, and arguably the

birthplace of a Romani nationalist movement. It signified the beginnings of a politicised diasporic consciousness underpinned by historical and cultural similarities which connect the deeply fragmented Romani people. It was at this congress that Romani nationalism was institutionalised in the shape of the International Romani Union (IRU).

The "reunification' of the Romani diaspora has since become a priority for the Romani political class and central to this has been: (1) the notion of a Romani homeland in India; and (2) a nationalist/diaspora discourse which positions the Romanies as a "nation without a state" (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). The politically constructed "Roma Nation" defines the Romanies as both a diaspora and a *non-territorial* nation. By defining the Romanies according to such discourses, Romani activists and intellectuals are implying that Romani populations across Europe possess a common history and, specifically, a *common origin*. The IRU does not, however, make any claim to statehood. Rather, activists are searching for their place in the modern world without being bound to a specific, and already established, nation. As stated in the Declaration of a Roma Nation (IRU, 2001: no pagination):

> Individuals belonging to the Roma Nation call for a
> representation of their Nation, which does not want to become
> a state. We ask for being recognised as a Nation, for the sake
> of Roma and non-Roma individuals, who share the need to
> deal with the nowadays new challenges. We, a Nation of
> which over half a million persons were exterminated in a
> forgotten Holocaust, a Nation of individuals too often

discriminated, marginalised, victim of intolerance and persecutions, we have a dream, and we are engaged in fulfilling it. We are a nation, we share the same tradition, same culture, the same origin, the same language; we are a Nation. We have never looked for creating a Roma state…

The Roma Nation is a greatly contested narrative given the deep fragmentation of the Romani diaspora. By consequence of their interaction with various other European populations, the Romanies have developed varying lifestyles, customs and relationships with their countries of residence and speak varying dialects of the Romani language (Hancock, 1998; Marushiakova and Popov, 2004). Marushiakova and Popov (2004: 88) therefore ask just 'how realistic is it to use the concept of community (let alone nation)' to describe a group of people who are divided by such clear cut distinctions. Accordingly, the IRU (no date) have stated that 'their participation process needs to draw on common roots and common perspectives beyond citizenship, group affiliation, or country of residence' (no pagination). The reunification of the Romanies as 'a nation without a state' (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004) is only plausible, therefore, by employing something that can exceed the nation states that fragment the Romanies linguistically, culturally and geographically.

Many Romani activists have, thus, employed the symbols of nationhood. During the first World Romani Congress, for example, a national flag and anthem were adopted (Hancock, 2007). What is more, 8th April was declared

International Romani Day (sometimes referred to as Roma Nation Day) during the fourth World Romani Congress in 1990. It has been references to an Indian homeland and common tongue however that have become the most significant elements of the Roma Nation, and by extension the project of reunification. For Hancock (1997) the recognition of an Indian homeland is crucial as it unites the Romanies as a diasporic people, distinct from other Europeans. The only 'alternative is to create a fictitious history and to have, again, [their] identity in the hand of non-Romani policy-makers and scholars' (1997, no pagination). The Romani nationalist movement has, thus, established itself as a channel through which to unite disparate Romani populations into a single historical-political imaginary.

Diasporising the Roma Nation

Brubaker contends that, despite the contested nature of diaspora, there are 'three core elements that remain widely understood to be constitutive of diaspora' (2005, 5). These are *dispersal* (whether forced or voluntarily); *homeland orientation* (whether a real or imagined homeland); and *boundary maintenance* (in which collective identity is mobilised and maintained). In what follows, the ways in which Romani nationalists have attempted to meet these criteria will be discussed.

Dispersal

As previously discussed, dispersal from a homeland is a commonly accepted measure of diaspora. As examined in Chapter 1, it is thought that the

Romanies originated in India. Ian Hancock (1998), an esteemed Romani scholar, explains that the Romanies were originally soldiers in Northern India. Around the start of the 11th Century, argues Hancock, India was invaded by the Muslim general Mahmud of Ghazni who was making attempts to establish Islamic rule in the predominantly Hindu India. Hancock suggests that troops, who we now know as the Romanies, had been assembled by the Indian rulers to protect Northern India from invasion. When their efforts were unsuccessful, however, they fled through the mountains and into Persia. As the conflict continued, the troops journeyed further and further West until they reached Central and Western Europe during the course of the Middle Ages.

Hancock's account of Romani history depicts a victim diaspora who were forced to flee to Europe where they were once more driven into a maligned and marginalised position. He highlights that the Romanies have been historically and repeatedly expelled or oppressed, thus, propagating the narrative of a subjugated Romani people, driven to flee every region on their migration westward. In this way, they are comparable to the Jewish diaspora of Safran's classical definition.

Homeland Orientation

Brubaker's second criterion – homeland orientation – is closely linked with the notion of dispersion. For diasporic groups dispersed from their place of origin, the homeland– or the idea of a homeland – is an elemental source of solidarity, community and identity (Brubaker, 2005). A homeland orientation involves collective efforts and commitments to the maintenance and restoration of the

homeland and a myth of return. It is 'a culture and collective identity that preserves the homeland's language, or religious, social and cultural practise either intact or as time passes as mixed, bicultural forms' (Toloyan, 649).

Attempts to restore the Romani homeland have been made throughout history. During the early 20th century, the Kweik dynasty (self-proclaimed "Gypsy Kings" of Poland) advocated the creation of an independent Romani state, *Romanstan.* In 1934 a delegation was sent to the League of Nations to solicit land in Southern Africa in order to establish a Romani state. At the same time the Kweik dynasty travelled to India to specify the location of the Romani homeland and future state. In 1936 a delegation was sent to Mussolini to petition for land in Abyssinia where the Romanies could create their own state and in 1959 the "World Gypsy Community" asked for land in Somalia. In the 1970s, they even issued passports for the future Romani state (Marushiakova and Popov, 78).

Since the 1990s, however, the IRU has adopted the language of transnationalism, describing the Romanies as a trans(border)-national minority or a nation without a state. While the Indian origins of the Romani diaspora have remained central to Romani political identity, the IRU do not actively pursue the establishment of a Romani state. The IRU instead aims to preserve the homeland culture through actively lobbying for standardisation of the Romani language, cultural preservation and the rejection of assimilation.

Research suggests that the homeland narrative, has in many respects failed to resonate beyond a 'relatively restricted circle of the so-called "international Roma" activist' (Marushiakova and Popov, 2004:91). According to Stewart (1997) the employment of an ethno-political narrative is yet to be embraced by the wider Romani population: 'for them, identity is constructed and constantly remade in the present in relations with significant others, not something inherited from the past' (p.28). While the linguistic study of Romani language has established a link between the Romanies and India, an Indian homeland has never been central to the oral history of the Romani people. As Hancock (1997, no pagination) illuminates, the narrative of Indian origins has been lost since the arrival of the early Romani populations. It remains largely unfamiliar to a considerable majority of Romanies, 'many of whom have internalised instead the notion of an origin in Egypt'.

While connections to India may have been factually proven, the Romanies do not possess a collective memory of their Indian origin, nor has the account of their Indian heritage been passed down through oral tradition (Fonseca, 2011). Its reappearance on the Romani nationalistic schema is a clear illustration of what Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) refers to as "invented tradition". It exploits 'not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularised and institutionalised by those whose function it is to do so' in an attempt to legitimise nationalist action and strengthen cohesion (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983:13). It could be argued, therefore, that the narrative adopted by the nationalist movement

fails to strengthen, or create, a united transnational Romani identity. The recovery of a homeland is simply a new invention.

Writing in 1991, Safran (1991, 86-67) argues:

> The Gypsies are a truly dispersed and homeless people… [but] their homelessness is characteristic of their nomadic culture and the result of their refusal to be sedentarised. Moreover, diaspora consciousness is an intellectualisation of an existential condition: the Gypsies have had social and economic grievances… but they have not been asking themselves questions about "the Gypsy problem"… the Gypsies have had no myth of return because they have had no precise notion of their place of origin, no geographical focus, and no history of national sovereignty. The absence of such a myth might be a consequence of… the absence of a Gypsy intellectual elite…

At the time of writing, Safran was correct in his hypothesising; there were no visible Romani intellectual elite (though one arguably slips into orientalist musings by denying the existence of a pre-21st century intellectual Romani voice). Over the past three decades a Romani academic circle has emerged, thus, demonstrating that what was once, perhaps, "true" is no longer. Romani intellectuals have rejected the orientalising works of the Gypsylorists (see chapter 1) that positions the Romanies as inferior, and have instead fashioned an account of their origins which (1) gives precedence to the Indian origins of the Romani people and, (2) chronologically documents their persecution and suffering. The intention is to aid the growth of a shared historical

consciousness. Whether or not they have been successful in their aims is contentious – the Romanies are still disproportionally excluded from education and by default the works of Romani intellectuals – yet, the very existence of a Romani academic circle unsettles Safran's claims.

Boundary Maintenance

Brubaker's third criterion – boundary maintenance – involves the maintenance of a distinct collective identity, or sense of groupness, that connects members of a diaspora to the transnational community and engenders internal solidarity. Indeed 'boundaries can be maintained by *deliberate resistance to assimilation* through self-enforced *endogamy* or other forms of s*elf-segregation* or as an unintended consequence of social exclusion' (Armstrong, 1976, 394-5, emphasis added). Boundary maintenance is, thus, a constant negotiation of who belongs and who does not.

Remarking on assimilation, Bauman (2001: 93) says 'the purpose of the assimilatory pressures was to strip "others" of their "otherness", to make them indistinguishable from the rest of the nation's body…". For Bhopal and Myers (2008, 110) the alternative is to be excluded:

> It is suggestive of being cast out and ghettoised, but it also suggests that the minority group have a certain strength in the face of hostile set of circumstances which allows them to maintain an identity and not become subsumed within an assimilatory process.

Under such circumstances, notions of community might become stronger and more resilient as groups are forced to make a choice between defending what they value or surrendering everything.

It is through acknowledging this potential for resistance that the boundary maintenance of Romani culture and identity can be understood. The fact that the scholarly study of the Romani people is still a viable and emerging field of research demonstrates that the Romani people have, and continue to, resist assimilation. This implies that Romani communities do not feel obliged to 'mimic ideals of community held within the western nation state and, by not doing so, [retain] a type of community that belongs wholeheartedly to a Gypsy nationhood' (Bhopal and Myers, 2008, 114). Crudely understood, it can be argued that via a process of self-exclusion the Romanies have excluded themselves from wider society. Yet, this interpretation conveniently overlooks a long history of oppression endured by the Romani people. Alternatively, self-exclusion can be understood as a process through which Romani cultures and ways of life can be protected from, and outside of, the nation state (Bhopal and Myers, 2008, 15).

In Castells' (1997) greatly sited work *The Power of Identity,* he distinguishes new social movements by the type of identity that they produce: resistance or project identity. To the first type of identity belongs social movements which are distinguished by their resistance to dominant society and the ideals embodied therein. Such movements are steered by 'actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination,

thus building trenches or resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society' (Castells, 1997: 8). Such movements pertain to those whom believe that dominant institutions offer them little advantage. For them, it is either cultural eradication - that is assimilation - or accepting the structural disadvantage imposed upon them. The only alternative is resistance to domination and oppression by widening the gap between the stigmatised group and wider society. Castells refers to this strategy as 'the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded' (Castells, 1997: 9). Such groups position themselves as exterior to dominant culture and society, preserving something they regard as valuable – the basis of their identity – which exists only within their own community. They do not call for integration but separation.

Eid (2007) refers to this strategy as 'reactive ethnicity', which he describes as a defensive ethnic consciousness which emerges in response to ethnic based discrimination, oppression and exclusion:

> …groups that have been stigmatised often have the power to turn negative stigma into a badge of pride. But they can hardly define themselves without reference to the ready-made categories bestowed upon them by the majority group. They rather engage in counter discourses of resistance by making use of the very same essentialising categories which the majority group defines them (Eid, 2007: 32).

Eid argues that groups that have been stigmatised have the capacity to transform negative stereotypes and attitudes into a badge of pride or honour. His theory is helpful in the analysis of Romani identities as 'resistance identities'. It can be argued that Romani communities in the UK, which attempt to resist the assimilationist pressures of the non-Romani societies by building trenches of resistance and survival and withdrawing from the wider society, can be seen as an example of resistance identity *and* reactive ethnicity.

A Territorial or Deterritorial Diaspora?

For Toninato (2009), definitions of diaspora will always be problematic when applied to the Romanies. She states, 'the problem of analytical interpretations of diaspora is that they are written from the perspective of sedentary societies an encounter difficulties in grasping the deterritorialised an spatially unbounded culture of Roma/Gypsies who are "at home" anywhere…yet nowhere, since wherever they go they are constantly reminded of their difference and their inability to 'fit in' and to be identified with a well-defined national territory' (2009, 3).

Nomadism connotes rootlessness, yet, through a focus on the return to and/or (re)establishment of a territorial homeland, diaspora becomes politicised to mobilise a nationalist cause. One of the fundamental criticisms of classical definitions of diaspora is that they too easily slip into the language of ethnic essentialism. Indeed, both Safran and Cohen reproduce the notions of fixed and homogenous ethnic groups and the territorial basis of ethnic identity. Somewhat ironically, such definitions depreciate the centrality of dispersal and mobility to diaspora and instead fix diaspora to ideas of nation and territory

which legitimises the notion of homeland as the source of ethnic identity. By focussing on the desire to return to, or re-establish, the homeland, diaspora becomes embroiled in the rigid framework of the nation state. Diaspora is considered a condition to be corrected with the return to and/or (re)establishment of the homeland/nation.

In the case of the Romanies, "place" and "territory" are greatly problematized concepts. The Romanies *are* a geographically dispersed population - a diaspora of some sort, yet they are also commonly characterised as a "nomadic' people" – mobile, *rootless*, communities wandering from one place to another without permanent abode (Gilbert, 2014). In stark contrast to the borders and boundaries of the traditional nation state, nomadism functions as the dispersal of individuals and groups across an unrestricted and indeterminate territory.

 The Romanies may, therefore, be described as a "deterritorialised" people, with their diasporic politics more closely mirroring cultural theorisations of diaspora. By defining the Romanies as an essentially deterritorialised people one is not necessarily implying that they are without attachments to territory. Rather, it is to denote that their relationship with, and understanding of, territory differs to that of other diaspora groups. The Romanies *do* have territories which they are often unwilling to leave unless ejected, as they so often are under the strain of competing claims to ownership, or the legality of settlement, but these territories do not amount to a homeland, nor can they be exploited to authenticate their existence as an ethno-national people.

Why, then, does the Romani nationalist movement define itself according to the tenets of classical definitions of diaspora when cultural theorisations of both diaspora and the nation state suggest the loosening of identities from territory? Firstly, despite the process of globalization, and the deterritorialisation of culture, the world remains dominated by nation-states. The nation-state continues to be the most powerful actor in global politics and, despite the rise in non-state actors and supranational unions that undermine the sovereignty of the nation state, the nation state continues to be influential at the global level. There is political power attached to territory and territorial boundaries determine the limits of state sovereignty. The nation state has a monopoly over resources which are used to further its political and economic interests, thus, without territory, stateless nations are rendered powerless. Within the nation state model of global politics, therefore, the recognition of a homeland – a territory – affords the Romani nationalist movement 'legitimacy and a measure of security' (Hancock, 1997, no pagination).

Secondly, I argue, perhaps somewhat controversially, that a deterritorialised conception of the Romanies is yet another example of the romanticisation of these once nomadic peoples. As is discussed later in this thesis, nomadism, in the physical sense, is no longer a defining characteristic of the Romani people. Describing the Romanies as a deterritorialised people, with little attachment to land or the nation states in which they live, not only reinforces their otherness and exteriority to the state, but ignores the contemporary socio-political contexts and realities in which the Romani people are currently living, and have been living, for many years. The Romany Gypsies of Britain,

for example, have been settled in the nation states that make up the United Kingdom for hundreds of years. Their nomadism unfolded within the boundaries of the nation state. It had no transnational element once they reached the shores of the United Kingdom in the 14th century. By suggesting that still, after seven hundred years, the Romanies have not formed attachments to the nation states in which they reside, is to comply with the orientalist logic that renders them as non-European others and drives feelings of non-belonging.

The Contemporary Politics of Diaspora

This leads us to the question of how to characterise contemporary forms of diaspora politics which employ a frame of Romani identity as means by which to mobilise a transnational constituency. Across Western Europe, and indeed elsewhere, the category of "Roma" is arguably becoming increasingly salient and politicised. It is employed by political entrepreneurs as a boundary marker and as a method of establishing a transnational Romani identity – the Roma Nation – in a way that undermines other national identities (such as, British, Bulgarian, Romanian, etc.). The Romanies are not a new addition to Europe's socio-political stage. As discussed above, there has been large numbers of Romanies living in Europe since the Middle Ages. What is new, however, if the emergence of "Roma" as a salient political identity or categorisation that is utilised by the Romanies and national, international and supranational institutions as a discourse that shapes both strategies of ethnopolitical mobilisation, and strategies of so-called integration.

The employment of "Roma" as a political identity allows Romani political entrepreneurs to make stronger symbolic links between Romani peoples across Europe. The contemporary geopolitical context, since the introduction of EU freedom of movement, has aided and accelerated the politicisation of the Romanies as a diaspora and has been deployed as a means by which to unite disparate constituencies from across an array of nation states. The "Roma Nation" can transcend other categories of identification, such as national and religious identities. This is not to suggest that there is universal agreement over the use of the terms Roma/Romani/Roma Nation by political entrepreneurs. Indeed, one of the most interesting conflicts is that "Roma" is being employed as a rigid boundary marker while at the same time there is debate regarding the extent to which the Romanies should be viewed as part of a wider constituency of nomadic peoples and/or antiracist movement. In the UK, these conflicts are apparent in the very different types of political activities directed by organisations using "Romani/Roma/Gypsy" identity frames to mobilise political constituencies.

To demonstrate this one can briefly look at two very different examples of organisations in the UK – The Traveller Movement and 8 April Movement. In the case of The Traveller Movement, its aim is to 'involve the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community with decision making processes at a national policy level'. It attempts to construct a British "Gypsy, Traveller and Roma" identity, thus collectively representing the interests of a broad and changeable nomadic constituency. Like The Traveller Movement, the vast majority of organisations in the UK aim to represent the entire spectrum of nomadic

communities in the UK. What is important, however, is that the category of "Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers" is being deployed as a political identity and means of claims-making on a national level. The 8 April Movement also promotes the notion of a united Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community in the UK. With its focus on "Roma Nation Day", however, it relies on essentialist symbols and language to construct a Romani community not only within the context of Britain, but in the context of Europe. As it states in one of its publications, 'Our status has been defined as that of a nation without territory; a nation of l0 million in Europe alone, a figure that will double by 2050. The 8 April Movement believes the building of an electoral mandate is the next essential step towards realization of a greater level of individual empowerment and of collective self-determination'. It is an explicitly political organisation with its ultimate aim being Romani self-determination and the recognition of the Roma Nation on an international stage.

Both The Traveller Movement and 8 April Movement utilise the category of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma as means of constructing a political constituency that transcends ethnic, national and religious divides. That said, they both present examples of how Romani identity is increasingly being used in the UK as a politicised identity. Both organisations employ identity frames for very different political aims, with 8 April Movement being far more diasporic than the Traveller Movement in its efforts to focus on the transnational community, or the Roma Nation, as an imagined community that presents a viable alternative to that of the nation state.

The extent to which these organisations have been able to successfully convince their "constituency" of their aims and conception of Romani and/or Gypsy and Traveller identity is unknown. Neither is it known whether such movements are necessarily welcomed by the communities in question. Strategies that will possibly be convincing for governments and international audiences may be regarded as counterproductive and unconvincing at a micro level. Romani activists and organisations, for example, are often inclined to present the Romanies as victims of discrimination, hostility, inadequate schooling, unsatisfactory housing, poor health, unemployment and so on. This is of course true, however it maintains the understanding of the Romanies as perpetual victims of state sponsored negligence. Or, in the words of Popov (quoted in Alexandrova, 2004: no pagination), it 'serves to increase the negative stereotypes of the Gypsies, which in the long run [acts as an] obstacle to the solutions of their problems'.

Evidently, Popov has observed what worryingly appears to be a double quandary: Romani activists can successfully have their voices heard by participating in identity politics and emphasising Romani identity as the central focus of political action, but in doing so they are in danger of reifying, politicising and imaginably even deepening the gap between minority and majority identities. This problem is by no means a new one, and is most definitely not unique to the Romanies. Since the publication of Goffman's work on stigma, scholars have come to recognise the challenges confronting any would-be minority activist: 'in drawing attention to the situation of his own kind he is in some respects consolidating a public image of his differentness as a real thing and of his fellow-stigmatised as constituting a real group. On the

other hand, if he seeks some kind of separateness, not assimilation, he may find that he is necessarily presenting his militant efforts in the language and style of his enemies' (Goffman, 1986: 114). As Scott (1999: 3) has neatly explained, 'Claims for equality involve the acceptance and rejection of the group identity attributed by discrimination. Or, to put it another way: the terms of exclusion on which discrimination is premised are at once refused and reproduced in demands for inclusion'. Activists call for equality and, thus, demonstrate against those who view marginalised groups as innately different. Yet they simultaneously, for political purposes, must reiterate the differences between marginalised groups and the cultural or ethnic majority.

Can this predicament be resolved? Is there another way? Is it practical and desirable, for example, to anticipate a diaspora politics that omits every reference to cultural and ethnic identity? With this in mind, it is necessary to explore the discussions that underlie the critique of identity politics.

Identity Politics

Influenced by a Foucauldian interpretation of identity, Judith Butler contests not only the employment of identity as a political claim but the epistemological and ontological assumptions that lie behind it. Identity, argues Butler (1999), is deeply imbricated with power. Indeed, she proposes that identity is an explicit formation of power as while power may seem to control pre-existing subjects by constraining them to legal, cultural and institutional norms, these subjects, by reason of this subordination, are not simply "given". Rather, they are fashioned and defined according to these norms. As opposed to the

traditional interpretation of pre-existing political subjects parleying with the state, Butler offers a *performative* account of subjectivity – one that understands it as embodied through the iterative enactments of state structures. Put differently, political actors do not merely interact with power but are created by power by accepting the terms of recognition that power offers. In acknowledging these terms, subjects are given recognition as right-holding citizens entitled to make claims on state resources. In this respect, identity is not merely "who I am" (and what, in turn, influences and positions political goals and objectives). Rather, identity is the *effect* of power and, therefore, to make claims on behalf of identity is to make claims on behalf of power.

Butler's interpretation of the relationship between identity and power raises a significant question. To be precise, what happens when identity becomes the main method of political participation and the only channel through which groups are given recognition and afforded rights? As this chapter has discussed, the notion of the Romani diaspora, specifically as executed by the International Romani Union, relies heavily on the construction of an essentialised and territorially rooted Romani identity and the desire for such an identity to be recognised in the international political arena. Attached to such a claim, however, are two fundamental dangers. First, the political performativity of identity, as a channel to secure power, inadvertently partakes in the process of discrimination it aims to redress. This is far more than the typical criticism that Romani nationalism, and indeed Romani Studies, entrenches existing group divisions. Rather, Butler (2004) argues not only that identity politics preserves a history of division, but that so far as identity is the channel through which one becomes a political actor, then identification can

be understood as a means by which power discerns between those sanctioned to make claims and those who are not. As Butler's work explains, for example, it is not solely that a feminist movement premised on the identification of a united, shared and intelligible classification of "woman" preserves the male-female division even as it claims to dismantle it. More importantly, this classification fashions exclusionary gender norms (e.g. white, heterosexual, middle class) that impede other experiences of femininity (e.g. BME, lesbian, working class) and sexuality (e.g. transgender) (Butler, 2004). In other words, given that identity is a product of the logic of power, it unavoidably upholds power's propensity to exclude.

This speaks to the "true Gypsy/fake Gypsy" dichotomy of the early anthropological studies of the Romanies (see chapter 1), which have ultimately shaped the Romani nationalist narrative. The notion of a "Roma nation" is one which has been constructed and championed by the Romani "elite". It has been argued that it highlights more than anything, the poor political communication amongst the Romani population, whom for which the aim to be recognised as a nation, is by no means universally shared. Indeed, Romani politics are arguably "elite" politics, dominated by a handful of Romani intelligentsia (Willems and Lucassen, 2000; Barany, 2002). For Kovats (2003), Romani politics can only be sustained at an elite level, detached from democratic control by the Romani people.

> Roma nationalism does not represent the emancipation of a
> suppressed people in the tradition of anti-colonial struggles, but the
> promotion of an authoritarian nationalist tradition in which a political

community is constructed through the manipulation of vulnerable people, to secure the interests of an unaccountable elite. (Kovats, 2003: 4).

These arguments allude to Butler's caution of the exclusionary nature of identity movements. The pursuits of the IRU are an attempt to directly challenge the diversification of the Romani population. Romani nationalism infers that sub-ethnic divisions are the result of aggressive external factors, such as assimilationist policy, as opposed to naturally occurring internal ones (Hancock, 2007). It is for that reason that great efforts have been made by the IRU to determine and universalise a standardised Romani language (Acton and Klímová, 2001) given that the promotion of a common language is vital to the nation building process (Kymlicka, 1997:28). Whether we define Romani as a collection of strongly related tongues or as a distinct language containing various dialects, what is certain is that there has never been a standardised or homogenous, Romani language nor has there been a homogeneous Romani culture or identity. The employment of both the diaspora and nationalist frame therefore raises questions about what counts as Romani identity and culture, what kinds of Romani identity and culture should be supported and who should decide such matters. There is a danger, therefore, that a pursuit of the resurrection of "authentic" Romani identity and culture might be enacted at the expense of movement inclusivity and the heterogeneity of the Romani diaspora. What may be crucial to explore in this research, therefore, is whether a nationalist/diaspora frame restricts Romani identity to only those duly certified by a political elite.

These dangers appear to be somewhat unavoidable given that the politicisation of Romani identity will always involve negotiations and renegotiations of what is, and what is not, Romani identity. Nevertheless, for Butler (1997) – and this is the second hazard of identity politics – in jeopardy is not merely the subordination of others, but, more importantly, the subordination of ourselves. The political performance of identity does not only impede or exclude others from acquiring access to the political arena, it make us accomplices to our own subjection by virtue of our own reliance on the structures of power. Indeed, Butler argues that one readily responds to the dictates of power given that power's interpellation guarantees identity (Butler, 1997). Put differently, power does not simply constitute political actors by acknowledging them as such; it creates and utilises the need for recognition, as an assurance of survival, so that subjects begin to long for their own subjection.

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to my existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. The self-colonising trajectory of certain forms of identity politics are symptomatic of this paradoxical embrace of the injurious term (Butler, 1997: 104).

In her critique, Butler's objective is not to postulate a fatalist impression of the subject as merely an upshot of power. Rather, Butler's argument attracts attention to the form of politics that such a longing for identity can induce.

Brown conceptualises this as the 'politics of ressentiment' (Brown, 1995: 27). Such politics transpire when the only feasible admission to the political sphere is via the necessity of being acknowledged as historically subjugated and, thus, in need of reparation or protection. This confines individuals and groups into positions of victimhood, imploring them to be invested in their own marginality. Identity based claims, argues Brown, ultimately employ moralistic forms of reproach, reducing politics to the logic of retribution. 'Politicised identity', Brown argues, 'thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain into politics; it can hold out no future – for itself or others – that triumphs pain' (Brown, 1995: 74). Thus, by making subordination the focus of political claims, identity-based politics fix 'the identities of the injured and the injuring as social positions and codifies as well the meanings their action against all other possibilities of interdeterminacy, ambiguity, and struggle for resignification and repositioning' (Brown, 1995: 27).

As this chapter has explored, the issue of heterogeneity brings an element of uncertainty to the notion of a Romani diasporic consciousness. Romani nationalism seeks to (re)discover a "we" amongst a dispersed population, yet the notion of a homeland has not been successful in achieving this. As a movement strategy, the documentation of oppression has played a leading role. Indeed, outlining the history of the Romanies as a persecuted people has become somewhat of an important function within the production of group consciousness and cohesion. The "victim" narrative, which places the Romanies as a perpetually subjugated population, is a significant aspect of group mobilisation. It presents a strong case for standing united against the

societies and institutions implicit in their persecution, and is the basis from which to submit a range of demands - from financial reparations, to official acknowledgement of the Romanies as an ethnic minority or nation.

The historical documentation of persecution plays a crucial role for several reasons. Firstly, the persistent stigmatisation of the Romanies, due to their supposed ethno-cultural characteristics, has led to the classification of the Romanies as a single, united group. Secondly, the atrocities experienced by the Romanies have become a symbol of a shared, and on-going, oppression that has presented them with a foundation for solidarity. It has been argued, therefore, that the historical and on-going persecution of the Romani people brings together typically disparate Romani populations into a single group and, to some extent, allows for them to recognise that they have more in common than they may have considered (Kapralski, 1997):

> The centuries-long persecution of the Gypsies by states and societies in a variety of historical contexts is Romani history. Given the chronological proximity of Porajmos[1], it is especially important to make Roma cognizant of the indiscriminate slaughter of their forefathers during World War II, because this understanding can create a sense of belonging, a feeling of shared suffering. (Barany, 2002:205).

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[1] Romani word for Holocaust.

Though victimhood can be exploited as an effective means to obtain resources from the state, 'through the manipulation of guilt and social responsibility', there is a risk that the group in question may internalise their victimhood as an 'unchanging reality of life' (PER Report, 1992, no pagination).   In this vein, Brown sees a need for 'loosening identities' attachments to their current constitutive injuries' (Brown, 1995: 134). By taking this line of argument, she does not completely dismiss the claim to identity but endeavours to reconfigure the risks concerned with such a claim. This, she contends, may be accomplished if one shifts away from the understanding of identity as an assertion of whom one is and towards one that comprises of "what I want for us". Here "want" is not to be misinterpreted as a manifestation of self-interest, but should be observed as an indication of collective goals (Brown, 1995). Brown defines this repositioning as a shift from identity as an ontological claim to identity as an explicitly political one (Brown, 1995: 76). Such a reimagining provides the capacity to undermine what identity supposedly is and transform identity politics into a practice through which issues can be discussed and challenged both within the group and in its interactions with power. Thus, 'the replacement – even the admixture – of the language of "being" with "wanting" would seek to exploit politically a recovery of the more expansive moments in the genealogy of identity formation, a recovery prior to its own foreclosures against its wants, prior to a point at which its sovereign subjectivity is established through such foreclosures and through eternal repetition of is pain' (Brown, 1995: 76).

Brown's bid to reconceptualise identity claims as negotiations of 'collective good' as opposed to conclusive affirmations of shared identity, moves the

debate somewhat towards amending the more destructive tendencies of identity politics. What is particularly valuable is her understanding of identity based claims as declarations that initiate rather than foreclose discussion. Nonetheless, Brown's critique still presents a challenge for Romani nationalism given the distinction she makes between identity as an ontological claim and identity as a political one. Indeed, is it realistic to draw such a distinction, particularly in cases like the Romanies in which political goals are precisely to secure whom one is (and likewise, "who we are")?

In Defence of Identity Politics

The formation of a Romani diasporic consciousness will always invoke ontological claims. Nevertheless, this does not imply that it should support the reestablishment of an essentialist subject. It simply calls for the acknowledgement of the fact that individuals are prone to act upon dominant processes of categorisation. Indeed, movement leaders cannot produce identities from nowhere; they have to begin with existing group identities, and these typically mirror the dominant forms of exclusion in society. How should Romani nationalists thus negotiate the ontological and political aspects of diasporic consciousness? Some theorists have indicated that "strategic essentialism" might be an effective approach (Spivak, 1987).

First introduced in her 1985 essay, Spivak points out the conflict and disputations intrinsic to the ontological and historical accounts of identity and its political worth. Though she accepts the value of such an account, Spivak argues that a shift away from identity politics is not a viable means of

resistance accessible to the formally colonised world[2] and to those still struggling under the current coloniality of power[3] (Spivak, 1985). What such a shift neglects is the ways in which non-representation also operates as a form of power, particularly given that modern Western states were somewhat consolidated via hegemonic projects of imperialism. In other words, considering the constitutive affiliation between the notion of the modern political subject and its colonial "other", it should not be too readily supposed that subjugated individuals can act outside of the subject positions dictated and acknowledged by power (Spivak, 1988). In this regard, strategic essentialism should not be considered as the acceptance of identity as fixed, but as a mobilising categorisation.

Spivak's proposal offers new ways of thinking about the issue of how the Romani diaspora may preserve a notion of territorial identity without resorting to an essentialist stance. First, it highlights the conditions of coloniality that frequently typify the longing and struggle for collective self-determination. According to Spivak, the stigmatised subject, by virtue of their historic position within a regime of imperial power whose governing systems and knowledge

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[2] Spivak is writing here in the postcolonial context. The Romanies are not easily situated as postcolonial subjects given the absence of an obvious or universally agreed homeland. They are a dispersed people whose presence is not limited to any specific nation state or territory. By definition, therefore, they cannot be considered postcolonial in the literal sense, as a people without territory are exempt from colonisation.

[3] That is, the continuance of colonial and Eurocentric structures, mentalities and social relations of inequality and domination after the defeat of colonialism, that are racialised (that is, understood as inherent or essential to the groups involved), and are founded on, and serve to justify, colonial domination.

production remain to hold epistemic and institutional leverage, find themselves in a position in which they "cannot not want to inhabit these very same techniques and knowledge' (Spivak, 1993: 44). This is arguably an important counterargument to Brown's suggestion to see identity as a political, as opposed to an ontological, claim. Spivak's interpretation of identity as "something one cannot not use' (Spivak, 1993: 5) calls attention not only to the ways in which one's ontological and historical circumstances influence the capacity to make political claims, but how the historical and lived experiences of identity reveal the degree to which one is able to consider their identity as political at all. Thus, whilst Brown's reworking of identity claims relies on the murky distinction of ontological and political aspects of identity, Spivak's strategic essentialism underlines their relationality. The political saliency of identity is, therefore, dependent on its "security", which is in turn dependent on one's relation to power. Does this, as Brown and Butler argue, make the Romanies willing participants in the exclusionary logic of power? Spivak argues that such complicity is, on occasion, regrettably essential to our survival. Strategic essentialism therefore makes evident the political, ontological and historical aspects of identity and the ways in which they interconnect and determine one another.

Secondly, strategic essentialism enables the assertion of identity within a poststructuralist critique. Spivak's argument is interesting given her affirmation that the reconstruction of identity is compatible with, and in effect instigated by, the goals and principles of deconstruction. 'A strategy', Spivak emphasises, 'is not a theory' (Spivak, 1993: 4). Rather, it is 'a persistent

(de)constructive critique of the theoretical' (Spivak, 1993: 3). In that regard, the implementation of identity is, in effect, the constant questioning of what identity means within any given context. What Romani nationalists and intellectuals may obtain from this is a case for how affirmations of group interests and objectives can be made without a conclusive explanation of what identity is. As opposed to a claim that identity is given, claims to group rights can instead be understood as on-going negotiations of what group identity involves.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified two understandings of diaspora: territorial and deterritorial. In territorial definitions, diaspora refers to marginalised, dispersed peoples who share: a collective memory of their homeland; the will to maintain the culture of their homeland; and the desire to return to their homeland. Deterritorial definitions, on the other hand, recognise that, through the process of globalisation, the performance of culture is no longer tied to the territory of the nation state. Though diasporic identities are still rooted in historical origins, they have been dramatically transformed post-dispersal and are, thus, no longer accompanied by a longing to return to the homeland but a need to maintain cultural identification with the homeland. Definitions of diaspora, thus, place emphasis on either homeland (territorial) or homing desire (deterritorial).

Romani diasporic nationalism has been, at various times since the 20th century, both territorial and deterritorial in nature. Throughout the 20th Century, Romani nationalist made various claims for territory in order to establish a

territorial Roma nation. Contemporary Romani nationalism, in the form of the International Romani Union, has referred instead to a non-territorial Roma nation of Indian origins. Here, the desire to return to and/or establish a Romani state has been replaced with the desire to inspire a diasporic consciousness which will reunify the greatly dispersed and dissimilar Romani peoples into a single collective identity rooted in the politics of origins and home(land). Nationalistic symbols have, thus, been employed to invoke groupness, including: a national Romani flag and anthem; the standardisation of Romani language, and the documentation and dissemination of Romani history and persecution.

Romani nationalists have been criticised for its attempts to homogenise the Romani peoples. Ultimately it falls into the trap of identity politics in which group differences are overlooked in an effort to present the group as a strong, unformed and united political constituency sharing a robust collective identity. Romani political entrepreneurs are, thus, given the power to define "authentic" Romani identity and make political claims in the name of this identity. They have relied greatly on the politics of "victimhood" – cementing Romani identity into a long history of discrimination and marginalisation, in order to make claims for rights and recognition. In doing so, they fix Romani identity to an unchanging reality of victimhood.

Critiques of Romani nationalism have stressed the essentialising rhetoric employed to validate group identity, yet, these critiques arguably do little but demobilise the attempts of Romani activists and organisations to make claims

and demands in the name of the Romanies. Spivak, on the other hand, recognises the struggle for marginalised groups to act outside of externally imposed essentialised categorisations, and suggests "strategic essentialism" can be beneficial. Rather than speak of Romani nationalism as an ill-fated and misinformed ideology caught in the regressive clutches of identity politics, it may be more fruitful to consider it a strategic stance or project. Exploring the "Roma Nation" with this in mind, we can study to what extent, and in what circumstances, the Romanies actively support the employment of such a strategy. This change of focus from disproving Romani diasporic claims and towards the dynamics of groupness, shifts attention away from whether Romani diasporic nationalism is "right" or "wrong", and towards how the Romani people identify with diasporic narratives.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Attempts by non-Gypsies to define the features of Romani culture and ethnicity have often been based on stereotypical, prejudiced and destructive conceptions of the Romani people. Indeed, the Romanies often find themselves excluded from the process of the construction and negotiation of ethnic boundaries. Non-Gypsies are poorly situated to understand Romani culture and ethnicity, both in the form of its historic foundations and the way it has transformed and adapted to contemporary society. It is for this reason that the politicisation of Romani identity has become so central to Romani nationalism, with ethnopolitical entrepreneurs eager to gain control over the (re)construction and negotiation of Romani identity. It is of great importance to this research, therefore, to consider the ways in which social research can replicate the disempowerment of Romani people by perpetuating archaic, fictitious and negative notions of Romani identity. This chapter will thus explore the exclusion of Romani people from the process of research, drawing on postcolonial and feminist critiques of the academy. It will advocate the greater involvement of Romani people in research about their lives, and outline how this was attempted in this research project through the employment of a participatory approach.

The research is informed by a focus group based research method called sociological intervention which was introduced by Alain Touraine and later reworked by Alberto Melucci. This chapter will provide a discussion of the processes involved in sociological intervention and will outlines my attempt to

employ Touraine and Melucci's methods to explore Romani diasporic politics, whilst maintaining a commitment to participatory ideals.

Others, Outsiders and Plastic Gypsies

> Voice can be defined as inclusion and participation in social, political and economic processes, meaning making, autonomy and expression. We can think of 'voice poverty' as the denial of the right of people to influence the decisions that affect their lives, and the right to participate in that decision making (Tacchi, 2008:12).

Voice poverty is a term usually reserved to describe the exclusion of people with experience of poverty from the discursive construction of poverty. When applied to this study it denotes the exclusion of Romani communities from the academic discourse on Romani, Gypsy and Traveller communities and the consequent impact this has had on the nature of both debates and policy responses. With the vast majority of Romani communities largely detached from mainstream education, they remain underrepresented within the academy. "Knowledge" of the Romanies is, thus, produced, interpreted and disseminated by non-Romani academics. Their interests, concerns and priorities have, therefore, been eclipsed by the curiosities of academics, which has, in turn, exacerbated voice poverty.

The impact this has upon research is debateable and is, perhaps, dependent on one's epistemological stance on the nature of knowledge. Should the absence of "marginalised" communities, from the academy, be a matter of concern for academics? Arguably, the qualitative researcher, by nature, seeks

to represent the "voices" of informants. They describe, interpret, and fashion an understanding of a phenomena, presenting knowledge of a community in their own words; but is this enough? Academics are unavoidably implicated in the processes of speaking for and representing others. These processes of representation are inescapably tied to the production of knowledge and power and have, therefore, both ethical and political implications. That said, the practice of representation presents a particularl issue for scholars researching "marginalised" groups. Indeed, for researchers concerned with the process of transforming power relations, both within and beyond the boundaries of social research, the research process is complicated by the contradictory and intricate difficulties of representing the subjectivities and identities of "others". With this in mind, a discussion on how representational processes are connected to epistemological debates within the social sciences is necessary.

Central to debates on representation is the construction of the "other" and the resulting relationship of power in which the West imagines a lack of agency on part of the "subordinated". This research draws upon Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism, in which:

> Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views on it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it – in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over it (p3).

Said discusses Orientalism as the production of western understandings of the East, and exposes the assumptions behind this construction of the "other" as being compounded with ideas of western supremacy. He warns of the historical, political and philosophical implications for research; historically, marginalised peoples have been silenced (or have chosen to be silent, hence exercising the agency the West assumes they are lacking), whilst academics have produced and disseminated knowledge on them, on the basis of brief encounters.

The acknowledgment that speaking for, or representing others, is problematic has developed from two related points. First, that a 'speaker's location' (i.e. social location or social identity) is epistemologically significant and second, that particular privileged locations are 'discursively dangerous' (Alcoff, 1991, 7). In Alcoff's opinion, both speaking *for* and speaking *about* others presents a problem, primarily because these both participate in the process of representing others (Alcoff, 1991). That said, any research which entails 'subject construction' (Spivak, 1988, 306) is embroiled with the process of representation and, therefore, cannot be separated from the issue of power inequality.

Ultimately, for Alcoff, the question 'of speaking for others bears crucially on the possibility of political effectivity' (Alcoff, 1991, 11). Political effectivity should facilitate the empowerment of oppressed and marginalised peoples. Nevertheless, Alcoff's claim rather crudely jumps from highlighting the problem of speaking for others to somewhat arguing that it may be ethical to speak for others as long as it is "empowering". This assumes that scholars

have direct knowledge of who "oppressed people" are; what is in their interest; and how they can be empowered. Alcoff's argument is thus at risk of employing essentialised categories of identity (such as the "Gypsy"), in which oppression is assumed inevitable.

Alcoff's argument exemplifies Spivak's concern with regard to how scholars construct the interests of "oppressed" peoples with apparent ease (Spivak, 1999). This is not to say that Alcoff herself is guilty of this, but rather that the employment of political effectivity to empower oppressed people needs to be subjected to the same level of scrutiny as claims of representation as they are unescapably linked. Spivak effectively unmasks the problematic ways oppressed peoples are constructed by highlighting the contradictory ways in which academics claim to deconstruct the subject whilst also claiming to know and speak for "others". In considering "others", Spivak contends that academics too readily position themselves as representatives of the voices of oppressed groups. Accordingly, Spivak argues that scholars must pay close attention to how their research is bound up in the processes of representation. She advises us to 'suspend the mood of self-congratulation as saviours of marginality' (Spivak, 1992, 204). In other words, researchers must not presume to know, or have direct access to knowledge of "others". Rather, Spivak argues that full and comprehensive knowledge of "others" is in fact an impossibility (Spivak, 1999, 283). That said, ethical ways of representing "others" need to be grounded in recognising and employing responsibly within this impossibility, not attempting to bypass it.

It is critical therefore for researchers to reflect on their positionality, given that this can impact upon and manipulate the process of representation (Reinharz and Chase, 2002). Arguably, power inequalities will always be present due to differences in race, ethnicity, class, gender or age etc. Reflections on positionality, however, should surpass the mere weighing up of the advantages and disadvantages of the "insider" and "outsider" researcher. Since notions of identity are at the centre of this research, the initial stages of selecting a suitable methodology were grounded in the ontological questions such as *"what is identity and how is it constructed?"* and *"how do we experience identity?"* In this research I employ the participants' narrated experiences as a source of knowledge, but recognise, like Spivak, that their narratives do not provide a full and comprehensive knowledge of the Romani experience. I borrow from feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1991; Hartstock, 1983) which underlines the "situatedness" of knowledge production. From this perspective, knowing is always partial and relative and is contingent on contextual factors such as history, race and ethnicity, nationality, religion and social class.

The way a researcher is positioned – their gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, culture, etc. – also influences knowledge production and has an effect on all aspects of research methodology (Mullings, 1999). A researcher's positionality influences the choice of research area, motivations for selecting such a research area, the methods of conducting research and the knowledge that the researcher aims to produce (Hartstock, 1997; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1991). The issue this raises, however, is not whether the researcher influences the research process, nor how this can be avoided, but rather how

to direct 'this methodological [issue]…into a commitment to reflexivity' (Malterud, 2001: 484). It is important, therefore, that I reflect on my own identity and situate myself accordingly.

I will also seek to understand and appreciate my positionality from the perspectives of the research participants. Brought to mind is Smith's (1999: 1-3) caution that:

> scientific research is implicated in the worst excess of colonialism…Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions, and questions about researcher's subjectivities, posturing and interpretation arise.

From the standpoint of ethnic minorities, immigrants or colonised peoples, research is arguably linked to ethnocentrism, colonialism, and white western hegemony. The centrality of research to the greatest extremes of racial, ethnic, or western supremacy goes a long way to explain the incessant mistrust of the academy. Indeed, the roots of mistrust are situated in the ways in which knowledge about marginalised peoples has been gathered, classified and represented through the eyes of the West. The ways in which the outsider researcher is perceived by participants are, thus, historically loaded with 'socio-political divides of black/white, east/west, colonial/imperial, developed/developing, and others' (Shah, 2004, 565).

Research is increasingly indicating the deepening levels of mistrust felt towards "white" or "outsider" researchers (Shah, 2004). Consequently, ethnic minorities are often referred to as "hard to reach" – a label which positions them as "vulnerable" or even unwilling to cooperate. "Hard to reach" is, of course, a contested term and is arguably racially loaded. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are frequently referred to as "hard to reach" despite the extensive body of research on these groups that already exists. Myers (2015, 213) argues that "hard to reach" reflects a 'universal ambivalence towards Gypsies' which indicates 'something closer to feelings of distaste about Gypsies, or of uneasiness in dealing with them, rather than specific hurdles that are difficult to surmount...' The term reflects, therefore, the inherent ethnocentrism of outsider research. Too often marginalised "others" are branded "hard to reach", yet seldom do academics acknowledge that their own ethnocentrism, prejudice, and often sense of entitlement, makes their presence *hard to want.*

Pertinent to the approach of this research, are the words of Roy Wells who at the time of speaking, in 1975, was the President of the National Gypsy Council:

> Your clever academics befriend us for a few months, they come down to our site, eats our food and drinks our tea. Some of them even lives amongst us. Then they disappear to their nice homes and university libraries. Next thing we know they're giving lectures on us, writing books about us...what do they know about our struggles? How can they know our pain? We live it all the time. Our persecution lasts a life-time, not just a few months. Give us the

tools to say it right and we'll tell you like it is. You know what we call them on our site? Plastic Gypsies. (Quoted in Bhopal and Myers, 2008, 36).

And the powerful words of bell hooks:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk. (hooks, 1990: 151).

Their words act as a powerful reminder of the ethical responsibilities that researchers must acknowledge: the matter of the participant's control over the research, and the need for a relational dimension, which is too often absent from research. It is imperative for researchers to recognise the potential imbalance of "loss and gain". More often than not, it is the researcher who has the most to gain from academic study - peer reviewed research is central to academic recognition and career advancement. As a non-Romani, postgraduate, I will profit substantially more from this research than the communities I will be studying. It is unlikely that the research will have any immediate or far reaching benefits for Romani communities, yet it is likely to significantly aid my professional advancement. I could be easily positioned,

therefore, as Wells' 'plastic Gypsy' – the academic who departs as abruptly as she arrives, disseminating knowledge of the "other" from the safety of the ivory tower. I accept and acknowledge my privileged position within the research relationship, however, like Merton (1972), I recognise that the insider/outsider dichotomy is often overly simplistic. Our identities are complex and not easily placed within a single affiliation. Rather, we have a set of identities meaning we are all at time both insiders and outsiders.

My interest in Romani communities did not emerge from an academic engagement with literature and documentaries nor was it informed by my undergraduate studies. Rather, it emerged through my day to day interactions with these communities. As a result of a shared socioeconomic status, the Romanies and the working class are often "confined" to specific, and often stigmatised, geographical areas (Liégeois, 1994). I grew up in several areas of low socio-economic status, in which there were sizeable Gypsy and Traveller populations. On account of this, a considerable fraction of my friends are from the Romani community. This by no means positions me as an "insider"; however, I approach this research not as a "neutral" outsider but as one acquainted with the Romani community on a personal, rather than professional level.

Confronting the Orientalist Legacy of Social Research

Although some writers make it sound as though there is a separate "participatory" research method, this is misleading. The idea of participation is more an overall guiding philosophy of how to proceed than a selection of specific methods. So when people talk

about participatory research…on the whole they are not discussing a self-contained set of methodologies, but a situation whereby the methods being used have included an element of *strong involvement* and *consultation* on the part of the subjects of the research [emphasis added] (Pratt and Loizos, 1992).

Where possible, this research aims to embody the principles of participatory research – an approach which is guided by the values that move the social sciences away from the orientalist and colonial legacy of social research. There is an increasing presence of participatory studies within the field of Romani studies (see Greenfields and Ryder, 2012). This is a welcomed development that will, perhaps, help to lessen the justifiable mistrust that Romani communities have had towards social research.

The roots of participatory research lay in the notion that research should 'contribute something of value to the community in which the research is being conducted' (Kirby et al, 2005, 32). It is an approach greatly influenced by the works of Paulo Freire (2000) who argued for the development of counter-hegemonic approaches to the production of knowledge in order to confront the authority of powerful majority interests. The participatory researcher argues, therefore, against the reproduction of unequal power relations in research (Durose et al, 2012). Participatory research is a 'more open and democratic process of knowledge production' (Brock, 2002, 8). It aims to reduce the gap between the researcher and the researched and, therefore, advocates the coproduction of knowledge.

Participatory research directly confronts "voice poverty". It embodies the belief that marginalised communities have a fundamental *right* to contribute to the analysis of their situations and the *right* to a voice (Lister and Beresford, 2000; Bennett and Roberts, 2004). This is particularly important for communities, such as the Romanies, who have historically been victims of the imbalance of power in social research. The perspectives and ideas of the communities themselves are, thus, seen as crucial to achieving a more inclusive and in depth understanding of the issues under study (Bennett and Roberts, 2004). This research considers it a *right* for Romani communities to take part in the debates and discourse of Romani Studies, and acknowledges their expertise in doing so. The authority of Romani communities is respected and their knowledge is deemed legitimate. Consequently, this research is committed to presenting greater control to Romani communities over the research process and the ways in which the data is interpreted, disseminated and used.

For Park (1999), participatory research should always be instigated by issues identified *within* a community and the need to seek solutions, as opposed to the researcher's own curiosities. As Park points out, the 'communities involved in participatory research more often than not suffer from problems ranging from material deprivations, to deteriorating social relations, to political disenfranchisement', however, these conditions alone do not instigate research. Rather, participatory research is typically carried out as a result of a catalyst which instigates discussions and debates within the community. The aims and focus of this research can be considered as an extension, "follow on", or in-depth response to the findings of an earlier participatory project Our

Lives, Our Fight, Our Third Sector. This participatory study, which I conducted collaboratively with six individuals from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, explored the 'service provision of Gypsy and Traveller organisations from the perspective of service users' (Webb et al, 2013:1). The research identified:

- A lack of cohesion between British Romany Gypsies and Roma migrant communities, signifying the complexity of Romani identity.

- The limited presence of community members in the leadership of 'Gypsy and Traveller' NGOs and activism.

These findings can be considered the "catalyst" for this research and form the basis for determining its focus.

This process alone does not make the study participatory. Indeed, a greater element of community involvement and consultation, at all stages of the research, is central to participatory approaches (Park, 1999). This becomes problematic, however, within the context of doctoral research where there is an arguable conflict of interests between the objectives of doctoral programmes and the principles of participatory research. The foremost purpose of doctoral research is to attain an academic award and, thus, there are rules and criteria to follow which greatly restrict opportunities for collaboration. I recognise and acknowledge that this research has a limited capacity to implement participatory principles. Reasonable restrictions must be placed on the involvement of Romani communities, as in the absence of

such restrictions they would irrefutably need to be acknowledged as co-authors. This research can, therefore, be described as adopting *elements* of participatory research.

Following the success of the previous participatory project, this research was guided by an advisory panel. Advisory panels are increasingly becoming a favoured approach to research with Gypsies and Traveller. In an attempt to undo previous bad practice, Greenfields and Home (2010) assembled an advisory panel in their research, considering it "important to ensure that respondents considered themselves as stakeholders in the research and could identify specific ways in which the wide-ranging study would prove of benefit to the travelling population" (p.121). This was an initiative also adopted in research by Ryder and Greenfields (2010), in which Gypsies and Travellers sat on the project steering group.

The advisory panel drew its membership from the Romani community. Three members of the original advisory panel, established during my MA research, resumed their roles. Keen to engage with an array of stakeholders, and given that all three members were from the Romany Gypsy community, the remaining three members were recruited from the Roma community using connections I had established during my previous research. The advisory panel played an important role in the research, acting as advisors and "sounding boards" during the development of research questions and methodologies. They can be described as "critics" of interim reports and ongoing data analysis, and they identified issues that had been either

overlooked or overstated, or aspects of the research that were of little benefit to the communities as a whole (see Appendix 5). The panel will also be encouraged to contribute to a co-authored research report, separate to the doctoral thesis, which will present research findings in an accessible format to be disseminated to Romani communities and organisations.

To some extent, they can be thought of as "informal" peer reviewers. Participatory researchers consider those with direct experience of the phenomena under study as holding particular expertise (Bennett and Roberts, 2004). They are arguably well placed to assess the credibility and legitimacy of research about *their* lives and experiences. As Walker (2010) rightly points out, academic procedures can act as a shelter from the need to engage with communities under study. Peer review acts as a form of epistemological protectionism which upholds the academy's monopoly over defining and legitimating knowledge:

> But how far is academic peer review epistemological protectionism? It is a mode by which universities assert their monopoly of rights to defining what counts as knowledge. If [community members] were allowed to count as peers for the purposes of review, knowledge could be co-produced in a strong sense. But the ranks of peers are closed to all but "fellows" – cognoscenti, initiates in the discipline. (p205).

Indeed, the participatory researcher cannot simply bypass the processes of the academy in which they are, by definition, positioned. They can, however, bring accountability to research by directly involving community members in the decision making and "quality assurance" processes of knowledge production.

Focus Groups as Collective Testimony

As key readings suggest (see, Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997; Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999; Bloor et al., 2000; Macnaghten and Myers, 2004; Della Porta, 2014) focus groups have become one of the foremost methods of qualitative exploration in social sciences. They have been used in a wide range of qualitative research settings (Lloyd-Evans, 2006) and have, thus, been defined in various ways. While some researchers, such as Hughes and DuMont (1993, 776) characterise focus groups as 'in-depth interviews employing relatively homogeneous groups to provide information about topic specified by the researcher', others define them as 'group discussions exploring a specific sort of issues' (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999, 4). In this research, however, focus groups are defined as 'loosely structured conversation conducted with a group of interviewees that, through a focused debate upon certain topics, aims at investigating collective opinions' (Della Porta, 2014, 290).

A focus group is generally understood to involve a group of six to twelve participants who are guided by a researcher to attain knowledge and information about a specific topic (Blee and Taylor, 2002). They can be 'formal or informal, preorganised or occurring in natural settings, guided to a greater

or lesser degree by the anthropologist/facilitator, and more or less open ended' (Schensul and LeCompte, 2012, 195). Unlike in-depth interviews, focus groups do not require participants to respond individually to a variety of questions devised by the researcher. Rather, they are invited to discuss, challenge and confront each other *collectively* on the issues that the research is exploring (Della Porta, 2014). Focus groups offer, therefore, a valuable tool for researching group behaviours, interactions and norms.

Indeed, what is unique to focus groups is the 'explicit use of group interaction to generate data' (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999, 4). Morgan (1988) regards the hallmark of a focus group as 'the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insight that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group' (Morgan, 1988, 12). This is one of the main strengths of focus group methodology as it makes it possible for research participants to develop ideas collectively, presenting their own priorities, concerns and perspectives, 'to create theory grounded in the actual experience and language of [the participants]' (Du Bois, 1983). As Della Porta (2014) points out, the aim of the focus group is to explore the ways in which issues are collectively framed and to 'discover the meaning behind the positions of a certain group, and the collective process through which this collective meaning is formed'. They provide an insight into how participants think, reason and reflect with the specific advantage of mirroring the natural course of conversation and interaction (Morgan, 1997).

Schensul and LeCompte (2012, 107) argue that this is particularly valuable for social movement research as, opposed to one-to-one interviewing, they

permit the researcher to observe interactions, which can illustrate the ways in which participants 'collectively frame issues and construct group solidarity'. Blee and Taylor (2002, 109) agree, arguing that 'in contrast to individual interviews, they allow the researchers to observe the group interactions that underlie the construction of collective identity, collective action frames, and the emotional dynamic involved in the creation of oppositional values' (Blee and Taylor, 2002, 109).

With the research questions in mind, the election of focus groups seems an obvious and advantageous choice of methodology for a study concerned with "groupness". From a participatory perspective, one could argue that focus groups are participant-powered; the participants are able to guide the interaction as opposed to it being led by an interviewer. The interviewer is as much a participant as researcher, thereby encouraging collaboration. It is imperative, however, that focus groups are employed in a way that will be effective in obtaining rich data. It is wise, therefore, to explore the ways in which focus groups have been previously employed in social movement research. I will thus look to Alain Touraine's sociological intervention, and the revisions to this method proposed by Alberto Melucci.

What is Sociological Intervention?

The capacity to study action as it occurs is, according to Touraine, fundamental to understanding social movements. It was for this reason that Touraine developed the method of sociological intervention, arguing that existing methods, such as questionnaires, impart only a 'static picture of social facts' (Munday, 2006: 92). Sociological intervention seeks to identify the

'will to act and [the struggle] to be recognised as an actor' (Touraine, 1995, 207). In other words, it is the study of what Touraine (1995) refers to as "subjectivation" – the process by which one becomes aware of their capacity for empowerment, revolt and social action.

In *The Voice and the Eye* (1981), Touraine provides a detailed outline of the intervention method. The basic premise of a sociological intervention is a series of focus group style sessions with a group of social movement actors. Touraine takes the group through a series of intervention stages on a journey of, what he refers to as, the "self-analysis" of the movement. This involves the group defining itself in its own terms; the group engaging in discussion with movement supporters and critics, before finally reaching a stage of self-analysis and reflexivity in which the group and the researcher come together to elect an understanding and meaning of the movement (North, 1998; Munday, 2006).

In many ways sociological intervention is similar to the focus group method. There is, however, an important point of departure. Unlike focus groups in which consensus is the norm, conflict plays a central role in the intervention method. Researchers often seek to identify the difference in the group and, therefore, staged interactions with actors from and outside the movement are employed to prompt and encourage disagreement and debate (Brincker and Gundelach, 2005). What is more, both methods entail very different processes. While focus groups meet on only one or two occasions and are often used in conjunction with other methods, the intervention method requires prolonged engagement with a group and is the only method employed. In

Touraine's original imagining, the process of sociological intervention could take several years. In more recent studies, however, the process usually lasts around six months and entails around six to eight meetings (Brincker and Gundelach, 2005; Munday, 2006).

Sociological intervention remains a largely unfamiliar and uncharted method. In fact, notwithstanding *The Voice and the Eye* in which the technique and theoretical framework are set out, there is very little literature concerning sociological intervention. This is, perhaps, due to the debates, which will be discussed later in this chapter, which arose at the time of the first intervention studies. Nevertheless, while the method may no longer be at the forefront of methodological debates, sociological intervention has proven flexible, adapting to a wide range of research interests and usages. Though primarily developed to explore the meaning of collective struggles, sociological intervention has been used to analyse other forms of action and social actors, as well as issues entirely unrelated to social movements and collective action (McDonald, 2002; Cousin and Rui, 2011).

The method was most notably adapted by Alberto Melucci. Though critical of Touraine, Melucci recognised the potential and value of Touraine's sociological intervention, adapting the method for his own research. Melucci agrees with Touraine that the study of groups is critical to the effective analysis of social movements (Munday, 2006). Indeed, the study of groups enables the researcher to collect rich data on the processes through which collective identity is constructed and maintained (Melucci, 1989; North, 1998). In many ways Melucci's approach is similar to Touraine's method, closely resembling

the first two stages of Touraine's intervention. Melucci's adaptation was careful to avoid any efforts to attain total consensus between the researcher and participant's vis-à-vis movement meaning (North, 1998).

Sociological intervention has seen a relatively low uptake and remains a mostly unexplored methodological approach (McDonald, 2002; Cousin and Rui, 2011). McDonald (2002) makes a convincing case for the advantages of employing sociological intervention in research. For McDonald, the method is pertinent to questions surrounding narrative, experience, reflexivity and agency that are ever more central to debates in contemporary sociology and participatory research. As he explains:

> Participants in a sociological intervention do not discuss a topic; they construct a story of their experience…the research participant does not simply tell a story or construct a narrative in relationship to a researcher – he or she struggles to construct a narrative in relation to other social actors (McDonald, 2002, 257).

What makes sociological intervention so central to this research, and indeed any research exploring groupness or employing a participatory approach, is its entanglement with the struggle for recognition (see Fraser, 1997). As McDonald (2002, 257) continues, 'research participants may find that their narrative is dismissed, turned around, or broken apart as they strive to be heard by their interlocutor'. The political struggle for recognition, which has characterised the Romani Nationalist movement and underlines the argument for greater collaboration between researchers and research "subjects", is

replicated in the interactions between participants and interlocutors in a way that mimics not only relationships of power, but the struggle to transform these relationships. McDonald argues that by 'placing narrative within relationships, the interpretive process of research participants becomes framed within a struggle for recognition' (2002, 258). Sociological intervention thus positions narrative within a struggle for agency. Here is where the greatest strength of sociological intervention lies; as opposed to conventional methodological approaches which are focused on telling stories to researchers, the sociological intervention engages participants in a struggle to give a narrative of themselves to other social actors.

Research Design

A sociological intervention is composed of a series of focus group discussions with participants who represent various key actors of the social movement or experience being researched (North, 1998; McDonald, 2002). An intervention typically requires at least two research groups of between eight to twelve participants (McDonald, 2002). Touraine (1981) argues that sociological intervention should involve more than one group in order to determine whether they will all arrive at the same conclusions about the issues or experience under research. Interventions were conducted with five groups of participants. The first group, consisting of twelve participants based in West Yorkshire, met five times. The second group, consisting of nine participants based in South Yorkshire, met three times. The final three groups based in West Central Lowlands, Midlothian, and Derbyshire met once for a focus group that was structured around the stages of the intervention method. Regrettably,

sustained involvement with these groups was not feasible due to cost and time restraints.

Participants enter the intervention process with a shared struggle or experience. They have, perhaps, been involved with the social movement to an appreciable degree. Participants are not, however, part of the same social movement group or organisation, nor are they the leaders or representatives of particular organisations within the social movement (North, 1998; McDonald, 2002). The latter, Touraine (1981) argues, are prone to speaking on behalf of their particular organisations - simply reiterating the organisational goals and ideology without engaging in the reflexive and self-analytical processes of the intervention. This research is not a study of the Romani Nationalist movement and its activists. Rather, its focus lies in the extent to which Romani nationalism has successfully or unsuccessfully been able to invoke groupness amongst "ordinary" Romanies. The participants need not, therefore, be involved in activism. They instead came to the focus groups with a shared experience of being Romani in Britain.

The intervention group should, as far as possible, include actors from the full spectrum of organisations and ideologies that make up the social movement. Intervention groups do not, therefore, exist naturally. As McDonald (2002, 251) explains, they '…do not exist naturally, are not located within existing structures or networks, and don't have a history of working together, and the research process does not bind them to implementing decisions'. The intervention group is not, therefore, intended to represent the population, but to reflect issues and tensions that were uncovered in preliminary fieldwork

(McDonald, 2002). Touraine (1981) argues that this makes easier the exploration of the group's experience in regards to the social relationships that shape it.

The research can be considered a continuation of my earlier MA project - 'Our Lives, Our Fight, Our Third Sector'. One of the key findings of this research was a noticeable lack of cohesion between Romany Gypsies and Roma migrants. It was important, therefore, for the focus groups to reflect this division. A purposive sampling frame – in which individuals from pre-specified groups are purposely sought out and sampled – was therefore employed to capture a sense of the diversity within these communities. Given the enormous variety of sub-groups that fall under the category of "Romani", this was applied in its crudest sense. The focus group sample was thus comprised of twenty six Romany Gypsies and twenty six Roma migrants (see, table 1). It is important to also highlight that the sample of Roma migrants came to represent three main waves of immigration: migration from the Eastern Bloc during the 1980s; asylum-seekers and refugees arriving in the mid-1990s from Kosovo and the Czech Republic; and "economic migrants" from Eastern Europe arriving since the post-2004 EU expansion (see, appendix 1).

Table 1: Sample

	Location	Size	Romany Gypsies	Roma	Age	Male	Female
Intervention Group 1	West Yorkshire	12	6	6	19 - 68	6	6
Intervention Group 2	South Yorkshire	10	5	5	18 - 47	4	6
Focus Group 1	Midlothian	7	6	1	20 - 52	2	5
Focus Group 2	West Central Lowlands	8	2	6	22 - 49	2	6
Focus Group 3	Derbyshire	8	4	4	19 - 48	3	5
Interviews	UK wide	7	3	4	29 - 74	2	5
		52	26	26	18-74	19	33

The recruitment of participants entailed entering the Romani communities at the centre of this research. Though my primary purpose was to recruit participants for my study, it was also the beginning, or continuation, of a process of rapport building with Romani communities, activists and leaders, and the research participants themselves. Building rapport refers to the

process of establishing a relationship of mutual trust with Romani communities. This undoubtedly starts with the way in which one enters the community. For example, when using a participatory approach one is likely to enter at a community level and begin building rapport with community members directly, while a researcher that employs gatekeepers is more likely to begin this process with community leaders and organisations. This is significant in regards to researcher positionality, that is, the way in which participants and the community in general view the researcher. This can potentially have bearing on the establishment of rapport with participants and what they may or may not chose to share with the researcher.

It is vital then to reflect on my own entrance to Romani communities. I have both personal and professional connections with the communities in West Yorkshire and Midlothian. I have regularly socialised with members of the community based in these areas and was thus able to utilise my own personal networks to gain access to these communities. What is more, I have previously conducted research in both these areas. It is important to note, that my previous participatory research was based in same West Yorkshire neighbourhood. Initially, therefore, participants for the West Yorkshire and Midlothian focus groups were recruited from my existing personal networks. Of the twelve participants in the West Yorkshire intervention group, six were recruited from my personal networks – one of whom participated in my MA research. Similarly, I recruited four of the Midlothian focus group participants from my personal networks – two of whom were participants in my undergraduate research.

The use of personal acquaintances had both its benefits and drawbacks. Given that I had already built rapport with these participants, the focus group discussions were somewhat effortless to initiate which, in turn, encouraged the remaining participants to get involved more quickly. The participants felt confident in posing questions about the research and challenging any assumptions I may have made. Indeed, at various points during the focus groups, they provided critical feedback. For example:

> Tony and Nathan joked that I was being "politically correct" by avoiding the word Gypsy. They suggested I should refer to them as Gypsies, or Romany Gypsies, as opposed to Romani or Romanies. Simeon agreed, explaining that many Roma will refer to themselves as Gypsy too. He deemed "Roma" the "politically correct" term. (Interview Notes).

Given that I have known these participants for many years, they were knowledgeable of my research interests and were arguably "invested" in my success. I was, of course, aware of the ethical concerns that this raises. Their readiness to participate may have been driven by a sense of obligation, as opposed to a readiness to be a subject of my research. I did not want to coerce them into participating and made it transparent that they were not obligated to participate and that they may withdraw from the research at any time without damaging our friendship in any way. I believe that their willingness to participate was largely motivated by a desire to support me (their friend) in my chosen career.

I was also mindful that by using my personal networks I may impair my objectivity, for example, by selecting participants that I believed would provide the answers that complimented my own ideology or outlook on the issues under discussion. I believe that I largely avoided this given that I have rarely discussed Romani nationalism in a social setting. I was conscious, however, that, owing to our already established rapport, I did not always engage as well with the remaining participants. Though my intention throughout the research has been to uphold a critical and objective view of all the participants' narratives, I must acknowledge that elements of my fieldwork may have been affected by my close affiliations with some participants, and as I have noted, I admittedly spent more time conversing with the participants known to me and found it easier to have discussions with them.

I, thus, made certain that, in order sharpen my objectivity, I also conducted research with participants entirely unknown to me. I used snowball sampling to widen the recruitment process. Snowball sampling is a method of participant recruitment which involves asking participants whether they know of anyone else in the community who meets the criteria of the study. The number of participants thus increases with each new participant recruited. The advantage of such an approach is that potential participants are typically referred to the study by a familiar and trusted person who can "vouch" for the research process and ease any concerns. It is important, however, to consider the ethical implications of the snowball method. To solicit the contact details of potential participants without their permission can be considered an invasion of the right to privacy. With that in mind, initial contact with potential participants was always made by the referring participant. I made contact with

potential participants only once permission to share their contact details had been established.

The snowball method relies heavily on social networks. A limitation of this method, therefore, is that recruited participants are likely to from the same social network. I recognise this as a weakness of my sample, however, in an attempt to counter this, I used two different starting points for snowball recruitment in the West Yorkshire focus group. The first stream of snowballing began with a member of the Romany Gypsy community, while the second began with a member of the Roma community, the aim of which was to widen the range of participants by utilising two different social networks.

The recruitment of participants for the West Central Lowlands, Derbyshire and South Yorkshire focus groups was a somewhat trickier process. The neighbourhoods were unfamiliar to me and I did not have the same advantage of already established personal and professional networks. I entered the community as a stranger and was required to take a different approach to recruitment. I made contact with a local organisations that worked closely with the Romani communities in these areas, outlining my research and requesting their help in recruiting participants. The organisations acted, therefore, as gatekeepers. Using gatekeepers to assist with participant recruitment is a common approach in social research. The term gatekeeper refers to people or organisations who occupy a prominent and recognised role in the community and 'typically have knowledge about the characteristics of community members and are sufficiently influential to encourage community members to participate in a study' (Hennick et al, 2010, 92).

The benefits of employing gatekeepers are twofold: first, a gatekeeper can offer important information and characteristics about the community that can assist in the recruitment process. Secondly, a gatekeeper essentially becomes an advocate of the research within the community. They often hold a substantial influence over whether community members participate in the study or not, which can either impede or assist the studies success. Indeed, the process of rapport building and recruitment becomes much easier when the study is endorsed by a trusted gatekeeper. There is, however, a significant drawback of employing gatekeepers given that they have control over the selection of participants. This is a potential weakness of my own sample as the gatekeepers selected participants that were all proficient in English, thus excluding Roma with a weaker grasp of the language.

Sociological Intervention in Practice

In Touraine's (1981) sociological intervention, the first stage of the research process is best described as an exploration into the collective existence of the group in question. Melucci refers to this as the '*who we are'* phase (1989, 245), or in other words, it can be described as an exploration of collective identity. According to McDonald (2002), this usually involves one focus group which last approximately two hours (see appendix 2 for a more detailed breakdown of the fieldwork). Such discussions are thought to shed light on group identity and solidarity and act as an opportunity to go beyond the traditional harmonising and homogenising representations of the group's identity, allowing for a multiplicity of voices, histories and understandings of identity to be heard. After reviewing previous literature I identified three key

aspects of the Romani experience that informed the development of the topic guide for stage one of the intervention. These were: belonging, home(land), and otherness (see appendix three for a more detailed guide). The purpose of these discussions was to uncover the similarities and differences between experiences of "being Romani" in Britain, and account for moments of "groupness".

The decision to conduct focus groups with a mixed sample of Romany Gypsies and Roma migrants was arguably somewhat ambitious and in hindsight I would have conducted the first stage of the intervention with each of these groups separately. In my eagerness to find (or, as it may be, not find) groupness between these two groups, I was not prepared for the reality that they have very different experiences of being Romani, which required different topic guides. We discussed, for example, the Roma participants' pre and post migratory experiences, thus, limiting the input of Romany Gypsies. Similarly, during discussions on nomadism, there were few opportunities for participation from the Roma, given that they did not have experience of the Romany Gypsy "travelling" lifestyle. As a result, I was not able to discuss these experiences in as much detail as I would have liked to. It did, however, highlight the multitude of experiences that greatly contradict the prevailing homogenising discourse. The participants were able to ask each other questions, compare their experiences and, in doing so, reveal the difficulties in defining *'who we are'*.

The second stage of a sociological intervention involves the introduction of what Touraine refers to as "interlocutors". These are the opponents and allies

of the social movement whom are asked to join the research group in a discussion about its claims (North, 1998). Interactions with interlocutors can both confront and reinforce notions of collective identity and unity. According to McDonald (2002), these interactions often call into question the identity described by the group during the first stage of the intervention. In so doing 'they present the research group with new questions, challenging the group to rethink critical dimensions of its action, identity or experience' (McDonald, 2002, 254). In Melucci's adaption, this is known as the '*who you are*' stage. As opposed to using interlocutors, the group 'compares itself with video pre-recorded definitions proposed by three types of outsiders: "spokespersons", i.e., people who speak on behalf of the movement; "observers", i.e., people such as journalists who are close the movement but not involved directly;' (Melucci, 1989, 246-247) and finally the movements opponents.

I used this stage of the intervention to introduce the ideology of Romani nationalism and the scholarly research of Romani origins that is integral to the notion of a Romani homeland in India. An obvious interlocutor would have been Romani activists advocating a Roma Nation and their opponents. Locating a "Romani Nationalist", however, proved difficult. The one organisation that explicitly referred to the "Roma Nation" was led by non-Romani allies. What is more, the intervention groups were widely spread geographically and it would have been both costly and time-consuming to invite interlocutors to each focus group. I, thus, followed Melucci's recommendation and performed the role of surrogate interlocutor, presenting alternative conceptions of Romani identity to the group.

Following Melucci's three types of interlocutors, I presented to the group: "spokespersons" -in which I read statements from the International Romani Union and smaller organisations, such as the Roma Nation Movement and the European Roma Movement, played videos from International Romani Day/ Roma Nation Day events, and presented a Romani flag; "observers" – in which I summarised scholarly research on Indian origins, played a video that illustrated the origins, migratory roots and history of the Romani people, and read extracts from journalistic articles on the collective suffering of the Romani people across Europe; and "opponents" – in which I summarised scholarly critiques of nationalism, and read mission statements from UK based Gypsy and Traveller organisations which advocate unity between Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. The groups then discussed these sources, the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with then, and what issues, conflicts, or opportunities these conceptions of Romani identity presented.

These discussions produced an abundance of data. Participants were enthusiastic, reflecting on and engaging with the debates, uncertainties and conflicts which are often provoked by Romani nationalism. The issue of participant retention, however, proved problematic for intervention group 2, in that beyond the second meeting it ceased to be an intervention group, and became instead a "nationalist" group. The participants who attended were more politically motivated and saw this stage of the intervention as an opportunity to "convert" rather than "converse". Owing to this, other participants chose not to attend future sessions and their narratives and opinions were regrettably not reflected.

To some extent, I was frustrated with this situation and felt the group had been colonised by nationalist voices. I was excited, however, to have unwittingly located this stream of nationalistic thought which went largely against the prevailing narrative. Nevertheless, I was concerned that I was getting only one side of the debate and the data from these focus groups arguably did not represent the entirety of experiences. I experienced similar problems in other focus groups in which louder, more confident members of the group dominated the discussions at times despite my efforts to include everyone. I suffered similar issues of retention in Intervention Group 1 with one participant explaining she felt somewhat intimidated by "rowdier" members of the group. I recognised that these silenced voices needed to be heard and, breaking with sociological intervention tradition, I did some short follow up interviews, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

In the second stage of the intervention my role as researcher changed. In the initial stage my role was that of a focus group facilitator, joining the discussion only briefly to prompt or question the participants. In the second stage, however, I became an active participant in the research. Ultimately, I was playing the role of interlocutor - introducing counter narratives and acting as "devil's advocate" to ensure that the participants' discussed a range of views. In this way, the focus groups became more structured and I exercised more control and influence over the direction of the discussion. The discussions, therefore, very much followed my own agenda which arguably indicates a shift in power relations. Nonetheless, this stage of the intervention provided the opportunity to present to the participants academic research, journalistic reports, and political claims, that are too often inaccessible and that are

produced almost exclusively by outsiders and/or more "powerful" insiders. Too often research concludes the Romanies are apathetic on matters regarding homeland and origins without first presenting knowledge in an accessible format. By playing the role of interlocutor, I was able to go some way to resolve this.

The final stage of Touraine's sociological intervention can be described as a dialogue between the researcher and participants, in which the researcher presents the group with various interpretations of the data collected, prompting the participants to engage in a process of self-analysis (McDonald, 1999). Melucci refers to this as the *how* phase, the researcher feeds back to the group 'the terms it has used to define itself' (p246). Participants are then asked to select the terms which most effectively represent the positive and negative characteristics of the group and its action, and each participant is encouraged to give their final thoughts on the group in their own words

The identity constructed by the group in stage one of the intervention is likely to have transformed throughout the intervention. Interactions with interlocutors often confront constructions of identity thus raising new questions and often highlighting tensions within the group. It is now the role of the researcher to present their own analysis of the issues researched, encouraging them to focus on the questions and dilemmas raised throughout the research. The researcher will often replay audio recordings of the discussions or provide extracts of the transcripts. It is the objective of the researcher to facilitate a process of reflexivity with the intention of encouraging the group to produce an account or narrative of the research process, and to

accept, reject or modify the researcher's analysis. The third stage of the intervention, thus, assists the group to move beyond simply reliving its experience, towards analysing its experience (Touraine, 1981; McDonald, 2002).

I returned to the intervention groups, after supplementing them with interviews, when I was writing up the analysis of the data. Touraine and Melucci both stress the importance of the researcher and the participants developing a shared analysis. It is arguable, however, how successfully I was able to achieve this. Due to time constraints I was unable to return to the groups in West Central Lowlands, Midlothian and Derbyshire. I had asked in the focus groups, however, if any of the participants were willing to speak to me at a later date, via telephone or email, should I need to clarify and/or expand on any of the data. I was able to contact a small number of participants from each group to discuss my findings and ask for their input. This was somewhat problematic in that the majority of the participants did not respond and arguably it was the most "educated" and "political" participants who did offer feedback on the analysis. In a similar vein, when I returned to South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire to present my findings, the sessions were poorly attended.

The participants were presented with a summary of my findings. In order to test the veracity of my analysis I asked the participants a series of questions: What are your overall thoughts on the findings? To what extent do these findings accurately/inaccurately reflect your experiences? How accurately/inaccurately have I interpreted your responses? Is there any data

that should be included/excluded? The participants' feedback and suggestions were then incorporated into my analysis.

Overall, I found it was difficult to engage participants in the task of data analysis. Largely, the participants agreed with the entirety of my findings but I was unconvinced that I had produced a "perfect" analysis. I believe the participants were somewhat overwhelmed by the task at hand and/or overly convinced of my academic "authority" or "expertise" and, thus, hesitant to offer feedback. When participants did offer feedback it was often accompanied with phrases such as, "I know I'm not an expert" or "I'm not that clever", in spite of my assurances that there were no right or wrong answers. Other participants were more explicit about their disagreement, for instance, some believed I had portrayed Romani nationalists as "villains" and misinterpreted their narratives. This was discomforting, particularly as I recognised that I had allowed, to some extent, my own opinions of nationalism and identity politics to manipulate my analysis. At the same time, I recognised these participants had their own objectives which were did not necessarily correlate with the objectives of the research. We engaged, therefore, in a negotiation in which we were able to agree on an analysis that took into consideration their critique without completely overriding my own analysis.

The Interviews

In the early stages of this research, it was my intention to gather the narratives of Romani activists in a bid to reveal the workings, and critiques of, Romani nationalism at an organisational level. As this research progressed, specifically at the fieldwork stage, I became increasingly more interested in

the individual experiences of otherness, home, and belonging. It necessitated the study of these processes "from below", by means of the respondents' lived experiences and their identifications with nationalist ideology. By this point, however, I had already identified and interviewed leading Romani activists across Britain and their narratives remained incredibly relevant and beneficial to the research. Breaking from Touraine's intervention guidelines, my focus groups were supplemented by semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with three Romany Gypsy and four Roma activists. Short follow up interviews were also conducted with three participants from intervention group two.

In the place of a predetermined list of questions, as is the case in traditional structured interviewing, a semi-structured interview employs an interview guide that includes a set of questions, issues and topics, but the interviewer, and the respondent, have the freedom to interject additional questions, comments and answers throughout the interview process (Blee and Taylor, 2002). Bernard (2011) suggests that semi-structured interviewing is an appropriate approach when it is *unlikely the researcher will have more than one opportunity to interview the participant*. He argues that semi-structured interviewing is of particular use when 'dealing with…elite members of a community – people who are accustomed to efficient use of their time' (Bernard, 2011:158). By utilising semi-structured interviews, relatively in-depth data can be collected in a shorter period of time. This is beneficial to both the researcher with limited access, and the interviewee who can choose the extent of their participation.

Blee and Taylor (2002) outline a number of benefits for applying in-depth interviewing to the study of social movements. First, it provides an insight into the 'motivations and perspectives of a broader and more diverse group of social movement participants than would be represented in most documentary sources' (Blee and Taylor, p94). Moreover, it allows the researcher to grasp the way activists understand their participation and their social word, thus giving access 'to such nuanced understandings of social movement outcomes as the construction of collective and individual identities' (95). Finally, it is a method that 'brings human agency to the centre of movement analysis' (96), while allowing the researcher to examine the ways in which the messages of social movements are received by actual and potential constituents.

Negotiating access to activists was more difficult than I had expected. Again employing purposive sampling, I aimed to interview activists from both the Romany Gypsy community and Roma communities. Initially, I contacted well known activists, who worked with and for prominent Gypsy and Traveller based organisations, via email. Unfortunately, I did not receive any responses and found myself without access. Upon discussing this setback with the advisory panel, I was afforded a wealth of information about various activists in the community who had previously been unknown to me. The advisory panel acted, therefore, as gatekeepers and were able to negotiate me access to two activists. From there, I again employed the snowball method and was able to interview a further five activists. Four of these interviews were conducted via telephone, and three conducted face to face. Follow up interviews with participants from intervention group two were conducted by telephone.

Ethical Considerations

The research posed ethical as well as methodological challenges. My approach to research ethics was informed by the guidelines produced by the British Sociological Association, the Economic and Social Research Council, and the University of Leeds. I will focus my discussion of ethics on five key areas: informed consent; privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality; avoiding harm; building and maintaining rapport; and managing expectations.

Informed Consent

It is critical in social research, to make certain that the participants understand the purpose and aims of the research, its likely outcomes, and how the findings will be used (De Vaus, 2002). The BSA (2002) emphasise that 'research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied', thus, the researcher has a responsibility to present comprehensive information about the research, its aims, and its purpose. The literacy rate among Romani communities is considerably lower than that of the wider population and it was, thus, imperative that information about the research was accessible to potential participants. The issue of literacy was compounded by the language barriers faced by Roma migrants participating in the research. It was for this reason that detailed information about the research was provided in both verbal and written form. A translator was offered to all participants whose first language was not English, however, none of the participants requested one.

Participants were first approached via telephone or email, through which I provided a detailed outline of the research and explained what their

participation would entail. A detailed information sheet, which included a copy of the Research Ethics Committee confirmation of ethical approval and the contact details of my supervisors, was then forwarded by email or post. The participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and time to consider whether they would participate in the research. Consent forms were signed before each focus group and interview (see Appendix 4), with participants of telephone interviews given consent verbally which was recorded before the interview commenced. This included gaining their consent for the focus group or interview to be recorded.

Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Whilst conducting this research, I was guided by the principle that all social research should maintain strict confidentiality and 'the identities and research records of those participating in research should be kept confidential…' (BSA, 2002). I assured participants that all research data would be treated as confidential and would be anonymised prior to publication. The BSA recommends that 'appropriate measures should be taken to store research data in a secure manner'. All audio recordings of focus groups and interviews were, thus, deleted after transcription, and transcripts and field notes were stored on the University of Leeds M-Drive.

For the most part, I was the only person to view the data. The only exceptions to this were when I discussed anonymised transcripts with the advisory panel. The advisory panel were made aware of the confidential nature of the data and were asked to sign confidentiality agreements (see appendix 4).

In addition to the secure storage of data, my main approach to upholding confidentiality was to anonymise research participants. As Spradley (1980) points out, it is hugely crucial to ensure that participants are not easily identifiable in any publications of the research findings, therefore, all participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms. Initially, I believed that the use of pseudonyms would be a sufficient measure to protect the participants' identities, however, an unanticipated ethical dilemma arose when recruitment patterns situated my research in five geographical areas: West Yorkshire, the West Central Lowlands, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Midlothian. The dilemma in this case was whether or not to name the exact cities and towns in which the fieldwork took place or to anonymise them. The point of debate here, of course, is to what extent naming the city or town in which they reside (or have association with) might threaten the anonymity of the participants. I came to the decision that despite the large size of the areas in question, their anonymity would still be at risk given the small size, and close knit nature, of the Romani population in these areas.

In a similar vein, it was important to also protect the anonymity of any individuals or organisations mentioned by the participants, given that they had not consented to take part in the research. There is, of course, a tension between providing contextual information within the analysis and protecting the anonymity of the participants. The exclusion of personal and contextual information to a certain degree compromises my analysis. For example, some participants has spoken in great detail about an ongoing disagreement between various Romani activists which had taken place on Facebook. The disagreement in question was enormously relevant to my research, however,

given that it referred to specific Facebook posts, it would have been difficult to guarantee anonymity had I included the data in my research. Nevertheless, the same disputes materialised within my fieldwork and I was thus able to replicate these discussions and avoid making reference to this particular online dispute.

In spite of the measures outlined above, there are limits to the anonymity that I had promised the participants. As Sensing (2011, 36) points out, 'in a group setting, the researcher and those connected to the project may pledge confidentiality; while they cannot make that promise for others, they should encourage discretion.' Indeed, when using focus groups there is always a risk that participants may disclose confidential information to others. That said, following Sensing's advice, I emphasised 'at the beginning and ending of the session that everyone should respect each other's privacy and anonymity' in the hope that outside the focus group setting they would 'not reveal the identities of other participants or indicate who made specific comments during the discussion' (p36).

Upholding confidentiality also required careful consideration of the content of the data. Kirsch (2005) argues the researcher should remain cautious, warning that 'undivided attention, sincere interest, and warmth shown by skilful interviewers' may lead to participants revealing 'intimate details about their lives that they may later regret having shared' (p2164). She continues 'participants may forget – or repress – the knowledge that what they are sharing is being recorded and will be analysed and published in some form or another' (p2165). For this reason, all participants were offered a copy of the

transcript of their interview or focus group so that may review what had been said and have the opportunity to request that certain information was not used in the data analysis. Mindful of the literacy and language barriers I have already discussed, participants were also given the opportunity to go through the transcript with myself.

Harm

Protecting the participants from harm was a priority at all stages of the research. Throughout my data collection I was cautious that the focus groups and interviews had the potential to cause distress given that they were likely to touch upon experiences of racism and discrimination. Such topics were therefore approached sensitively, and discussed only when it was absolutely necessary and pertinent to the research. Kirsch (2005) explains, it is not always possible to predict how participants will react, and sometimes even the most seemingly harmless questions can bring about painful memories or reflections. For the most part, the participants did not appear significantly distressed; however, there were some instances where my questions unintentionally triggered somewhat painful memories. For example:

> Shannon spoke of the barriers impeding Romani children's access to education and her determination to confront them, yet, she also spoke of her own children's experience of education. Shannon sounded upset when she explained that her daughter, who had been bullied, developed post-traumatic stress disorder. It was not my intention for the interview to be painful or intrusive and it made me feel quite sad for her and her daughter. (Interview notes).

Potential for harm and distress is not only limited to the fieldwork process itself. Rather, there is potential for participants to experience distress as a result of what is written about them in the completed research manuscript. This can result from both my own interpretations of the data and the comments and observations made by other participants. While writing this research I have had to strike a balance between the need to present an in-depth, authentic and critical account of the groups at the centre of the research, and the need to avoid unnecessary harm to participants. It was, thus, also important to consider how the research may impact on the existing and ongoing relationships between participants. I sought to avoid creating tension between participants, as well as tension with the wider Romani, Gypsy and Traveller community, by trying to collect, represent and understand a wide range of opinions and perspectives and drawing attention to both the similarities and differences between them.

In regards to the dissemination of this research, I have also had to take into account the potential impact of the research on the wider Romani movement. Though I aim for the research to be a useful resource for the Romani people, there is also potential for it to justify certain practices, such as either including or excluding Traveller communities from Romani activism. With that in mind, I have aimed to write about such issues in a fair and responsible manner and representing a range of attitudes and perspectives.

Rapport and Reciprocity

Efforts were made to build and maintain rapport with participants. Rapport can be described as a relationship built on mutual trust, respect and empathy which, in turn, fosters a shared understanding (Springwood and King, 2001). Rapport can be established in various ways, for example, I accepted social invitations from the participants in order to cultivate relationships outside of the research space. Rapport necessitates openness on the part of the researcher regarding his or her own beliefs – a task made far easier when the researcher and participants hold similar values and outlooks. The majority of research on social movements has been conducted by researchers who are sympathetic to, or actively involved, in the movement under study (Munday, 2006). As I have already mentioned, I approach this research not as the neutral researcher but as one acquainted with the Romani community on a personal level. Nonetheless, I remain an "outsider" to the Romani community, with a different, and sometimes conflicting, worldview. While I maintained openness and honesty in my views and responses to questions, I also maintained a measure of professionalism in order to remain somewhat conciliatory. These more personal exchanges have continued with participants, since the completion of the fieldwork, by way of discussions on social media. Furthermore, I have made a promise of reciprocity to the participants, including issuing copies of the research upon its completion and, when requested, providing advice regarding issues such as housing and education. My intention is to produce a co-authored research report upon completion of this thesis in order to present the results to the Romani communities who played such a critical role in the research. Practicing reciprocity thus becomes a method of further developing long-term rapport.

Managing Expectations

As well as gaining informed consent, there is the additional matter of managing the participants' expectations of the research. Research has the potential to inform policy and enhance knowledge; however, it is it crucial to keep in mind that not all research will bring a direct change or improvement to the lives of the participants or to the communities to which they belong. It is important for the researcher to be open and realistic about their expectations of the research. This is especially important when conducting research with socially excluded groups as if there is a misguided belief that the research will bring about an improvement to their lives and if this improvement does not materialise, it is likely that it will incite disillusionment with research.

This research is a relatively small scale project and for that reason it is important to make clear the restrictions this brings to its potential impact. It is written for a predominantly academic audience and, in its original form, it unlikely to be disseminated beyond a fairly restricted academic circle. Nonetheless, an accessible co-authored research report will be disseminated to Romani communities and organisations. The research does, therefore, have the potential to assist Romani communities in their efforts to mobilise politically.

Analysis

The principle method of analysis employed in this study is one which often used in qualitative social research - thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This method was used in conjunction with a comparable analytical

approach - cross-sectional analysis - as set out by Jennifer Mason (2002) and the thematic framework approach of Ritchie et al. (2003).

Braun and Clarke (2006) acknowledge that the method of thematic analysis is not necessarily unique. Rather, it is a process that is common in many analytical approaches to qualitative research. Indeed, the process of thematic analysis as defined in this research bears a strong similarity to other analytical approaches, such as phenomenological analysis. Nevertheless, Braun and Clarke (2006, 16-23) contend that a thematic analysis is comprised of the following stages:

- 'Familiarising yourself with the data', transcribing the data, immersion in the data via repeated reading, taking notes of initial ideas, meanings and patterns through a process of 'active' reading.

- 'Generating initial codes': coding interesting and relevant features of the data methodically across the entire data set, organising data related to each code. Themes may be 'data-driven' or 'theory driven' – in the former themes will emerge from the data while in the latter the researcher will approach the data with specific questions in mind.

- 'Searching for themes': organising codes into potential themes, grouping together different codes to form overarching themes, drawing together all the data relevant to each theme.

- 'Reviewing themes': refining the themes, excluding themes without enough data to support them, collapsing similar themes into a single theme, ensuring themes are representative of both the coded extracts and the data set as a whole.

- 'Defining and naming themes': ongoing refinement of themes, analysis of the collated data extracts for each theme, organising themes into a coherent and consistent account of the data which tells an overall story or narrative.

- 'Producing the report': the final analysis and write-up of the research.

The initial three phases of thematic analysis can be referred to as the data management phase (Spencer at al., 2003). The purpose of coding is to systematise the selection of data extracts for the purpose of cross-sectional analysis (Mason, 2002). For instance, the codes were arranged under a hierarchy of headings and subheadings which echoed the structure of the issues discussed in the focus groups and interviews (e.g. origins, migration, Britishness). Though this process was largely theory-driven, data-driven codes were allowed to emerge from the data. As the process of coding transcripts developed, additional codes were added, some codes merged together, and others were refined, resulting in around fifty codes. Their position on the hierarchy shifted as codes began to emerge as more or less pertinent.

The final two stages of analysis – reviewing and defining themes – can be referred to as 'descriptive accounts' (Ritchie et al., 2003). This necessitated a careful exploration of the transcript extracts assigned to each code, making comparisons between different cases, and identifying common themes, connections and conflicts. Themes and links were initially illustrated by diagrams and later expanded upon in writing. This developed into a process of looking for descriptive accounts of the themes which were emerging from

the data. There are two types of descriptive accounts at an analytical level: those grounded in the explicit explanations given by the participants themselves; and those emerging from implicit explanations which are suggested by the analyst (Richie et al., 2003). Braun and Clark (2006) refer to these approaches as semantic and latent analyses, respectively. Different types of evidentiary support were used for explicit and implicit accounts. In the explicit accounts, evidentiary support overtly emerged from the reasoning within the participants' own accounts. In the implicit accounts, I employed a number of strategies put forward by Ritchie et al. (2003, 224-225): uncovering underlying logic in what participants had said; using common sense assumptions, such as patterns commonly known to exist, to explain patterns within the data; drawing on the findings from other empirical studies; and relating findings to the broader context of the theoretical framework. Attempts have thus been made to link the findings of the research to relevant theories and empirical studies already discussed in earlier chapters.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Sociological intervention is an effective tool for an exploration of collective identity construction. The contributions of Touraine and Melucci were employed to deconstruct the construction of collective identity by Romani communities and activists; to explain the strategic employment of collective identity; and to examine the conflicts and convergences that an identity based movement initiates. In adopting a primarily focus group based approach to exploring collective identity, sociological intervention was a valuable starting point. Moving through a process of exploring who the participants thought they were; the extent to which the agreed and disagreed with the constructions of

collective identity proposed by opponents and allies; and the extent to which they had developed a coherent and shared understanding of collective Romani identity, paralleled the research questions and provided an effective structure on which to build an analysis of politicised constructions of collective Romani identity.

It is pertinent to considered, however, whether 1) sociological intervention is compatible with a participatory approach, and 2) whether I did enough to foster a collaborative research environment. I was concerned that my commitment to participatory research started and ended with the inclusion of the advisory panel. To some extent, sociological intervention is merely a glorified series of focus groups, and beyond the reasoning that focus group discussions are participant led, I questioned whether I was doing anything different to a researcher not engaged in the politics of participation. There is a danger that this research could be considered participatory in name only. However, sociological intervention does propose some interesting points of departure from traditional research methods.

Firstly, in the second stage of the intervention the groups were presented with the opportunity to explore and discuss the documents, articles and academic texts that are so often written about them, yet remain so inaccessible to their communities. Secondly, sociological intervention places great emphasis on collaborative analysis of data. This was not a typical example of conducting research in which one simply enters the field, collects data, and returns to the confines of the ivory tower to bury oneself in analysis. Rather, sociological intervention encourages a prolonged engagement with the participants that

continues long after the completion of data collection, and which fosters

debate, discussion and collaboration at the analytical level.

It is for this reason that I remain confident in sociological intervention as a

method for exploring collective identity and implementing a participatory

approach and I am somewhat surprised that it has not been used more

extensively in social research. I employed an approach that has never been

used in the context of Romani identity and activism and as a result encouraged

much needed and frank debates and discussions between various fragmented

Romani communities who, up until that point, had had little if any opportunity

to discuss the issues and tensions that they had encountered. I would not go

as far to claim, as Touraine did, that the process somehow radically takes the

development of the Romani movement further, however, the discussions

indicated directions in which development might be fruitful. The co-authored

research report should, therefore, contribute someone of value to Romani

communities.

Chapter 4

Belonging

It is not possible to explore a Romani diaspora without first exploring the participants various positioning's within society. The participants' experience of, and response to, being the "other" in British society are important points of reference for feelings of belonging and the materialisation of "groupness". The focus of this chapter lies on the participants experiences of "being Romani" and/or "migrant" in Britain. This chapter can also be regarded somewhat as a context chapter, seen through the participants' eyes. It serves an as entrance to and a background for the following chapters, and contextualises the participants feelings of belonging. The chapter will first focus on the experiences of Romany Gypsies.

Encountering Otherness

> Max (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): People are suspicious of Gypsies. Like, when you go down to the shop and the shop assistants are looking at you suspiciously…they just decide that because you're a Gypsy, you'll chor[4] something. I mean it gets to you, it bothers me. They don't know me, they know nothing about me. The way they look at you, it cuts deep.

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[4] Steal.

The stigmatisation of "Gypsyness" has left a profound mark on the identities of Britain's Romany Gypsies. As discussed in Chapter One, the Gypsies of Britain have, throughout history, been simultaneously exoticised and dehumanised. As we can see in the works of the Gypsylorists, Gypsies are romanticised as a quaint and mysterious people compelled by their wanderlust, while at the same time reviled as animalistic, criminal, deceitful, idle, and parasitical. It is the latter conceptualisation of Britain's Gypsies that most acutely characterises the everyday lives of the participants. Like Max, they are often subject to surveillance by reason of their supposed criminality. Nathan (M: 26: Romany Gypsy) explained that shops and pubs often close during Gypsy fairs - 'they'd rather lose a week's takings than let us in. They think we'll cause trouble' – while many of the other participants revealed they had been refused entry to pubs, clubs and shops simply for being "Gypsy". Overt discrimination on public transport is common. As Naomi (F: 18: Romany Gypsy) explained, bus drivers had purposely missed the stop adjacent to her site and fellow passengers have avoided sitting next to her. Chloe (F: 22: Romany Gypsy) was asked by a fellow passenger on the train why she and her friends 'dressed like slappers'.

Romany Gypsies are a phenotypically white minority, yet, as the participants' experiences illustrate, they remain an identifiable other. It is important, therefore, to ask – how do Romany Gypsies become visible as a "white other"? For what reason are Chloe and Naomi identifiable as "Gypsies" on public transport? Why are Max and Nathan singled out for surveillance in shops and bars? When white groups exhibit lifestyles and behaviours that too closely resemble the marked cultural forms of blackness, they are often stripped of

their whiteness (Hartigan, 1997). As Hughey (2010) explains performances of white racial identity that fail to meet white ideals are marginalised and stigmatised. For Melody (F: 30: Romany Gypsy) clothing is a signifier of "Gypsyness": 'if I go down shops in the stereotypical Gypsy clothes I'm followed round by security. If I go dressed like a gorjer[5] I get left to it'. As discussed in chapter one, Holloway (2005) observed the use of clothing as a means of differentiating between "Gypsy-Travellers" and the wider population. Access to whiteness is not, therefore, dependent on only *looking* white, but *dressing* white. Whiteness is performed and commodified through clothing. By presenting herself as 'a gorjer' she constructs a costume of whiteness which enables her to "pass" more successfully. By wearing the "right" clothing, she can access the privileges of whiteness she is routinely denied when wearing "Gypsy clothes".

Location also acts as a signifier of otherness. The Gypsy and Traveller site and Gypsy fair are racially marked spaces. They are an example of the spatial segregation of Gypsy and Traveller populations and a means by which to contain and control "Gypsyness". Racialised spaces serve to make racialised others visible. When public transport failed to stop outside Naomi's Gypsy and Traveller site, or when businesses closed their doors to Nathan during Gypsy fairs, it was precisely because their otherness was signified by their occupation of a racialised space. The socio-economic demographic of areas in which the participants lived were decisive to the visibility of their otherness

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[5] Non-Gypsy

and resultant discrimination. In areas typically marked as white, the spaces occupied by Romany Gypsies become more visible. The participants noted they experienced the most discrimination in white rural areas:

Peggy (F: 47: Romany Gypsy): It's really been in more rural places, you know, where people are richer, snobbier, that I've seen the most racism. I mean of course it happens elsewhere, but it's more intense, it's more organised in the rich areas.

The presence of Romany Gypsies in white rural areas is deemed disruptive. Gypsy and Traveller sites are viewed as an invasion of white spaces. Shane referred to this in terms of "nimbyism":

Shane (M: 38: Romani): People don't want you in their proximity, especially in greenbelt, you know, picture perfect villages… you're very aware of it from a young age really, you're hidden from view, there's certain parts of your own country you ain't welcome in, you know, well-to-do areas…when you hear what excuses people actually give to say why you shouldn't be allowed to live in their area, you know a Gypsy site, I mean it can make you angry, it can be upsetting. Nimbys we call them. These people can suddenly be more compassionate for the local snail population, you know because that's the kind of excuses they use.

For Frank, the media are instrumental in shaping such attitudes towards the Romanies and he is critical of the media for representing the Romanies in a

negative and generalised way. He acknowledges that there are individuals within the Romani community that commit crime, yet, he argues the entire community is held responsible:

Frank (M: 49: Romany Gypsy): If someone who ain't gorjer, or British, commits a crime then they talk about Gypsies, Roma, Eastern Europeans, Asians, Blacks, Muslims. When someone white and British commits a crime, it's just John Smith, Joe Blogs, has done it. The person who's done it is responsible for what they done, not every gorjer, but if a Gypsy or an immigrant commits a crime, the whole community is getting the blame. You won't even know their name; they're just a Gypsy, Roma, Arab, whatever. It's bad.

Criticism of the media frequently emerges in the participants' narratives. All the participants stressed that impressions of Romany Gypsies in the UK are generally negative. They were critical of generalisations which present Gypsy men as violent, sexist and criminal and Gypsy women as oppressed victims. Johnny spoke of the negative portrayals of Romany Gypsies both in print media and on television:

Johnny (M: 45: Romany Gypsy): TV, newspapers, they show us in a bad way. Like, recently there's been a bit going round about Gypsy men mistreating their women. You know, like in *Big Fat*

Gypsy Weddings, this grabbing[6] malarkey was made out to be a part of our culture. It's just not true, it's not how Gypsy men behave. Even the Irish Travellers were baffled by it…It felt like such a big deal was made out of the women staying home, cleaning, looking after the kids. It's their choice. You don't see everyone getting in a tizz when gorjer women are stay at home mums, or when gorjers are all raping their woman…no one says it's part of gorjer culture…they show a misrepresented picture of us. There's bad in every society, you can't say it's the whole culture.

Portrayed as backward and immoral under headlines such as 'the bizarre secrets of courtship in My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' (Daily Mail, 2011) and 'Gypsy teens in TV "assault" to wed' (The Sun, 2011), "grabbing" was explained as fundamental and traditional Gypsy courtship method. As Johnny points out, the obvious risk, that this may lead to a collective stigmatisation of Gypsies and Travellers, was overlooked, with persistent references to "the fact" that violence against and oppression of women was entrenched in Gypsy culture and tradition.

Concerning how the Romanies are considered in the media, Melanie and James spoke of the employment of stereotypes, such as "child abductors" and "perpetual victims":

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[6] A "courtship" method shown on *Big Fat Gypsy Weddings* in which Irish Traveller men attempt to obtain a kiss from a girl by "grabbing" her by the arm away from her friends.

Melanie (F: 34: Romani): They love to play on the stereotypes, like the case of the little albino Gypsy girl Maria, and the Roma kids in Ireland. Innocent people accused of stealing children because they're Gypsy. Its madness…and it was just this confirmation of the old myth of the Gypsy child snatchers. You see it in the paper four, five times a year – it was the Gypsies who took Ben Needham and Madeleine McCann, don't even investigate the families, it must be those Gypsies again.

James (M: 20: Romani): Don't get me wrong, some of the more left wing papers, The Guardian, The Independent, they've been more favourable of us but they only sort of see us as like victims. I mean, lefties, they love a good victim story. Then you have the right wing ones, you know like The Daily Mail, they won't even spell Gypsy right, they call us gipsy with an "I"… as if they're trying to say 'ha! We won't recognise you'…

These narratives refer to the experience of being defined according to negative depictions and prejudices and being positioned as society's "other". As James points out, in spite of the political differences that influence how different newspapers describe and portray the "other", generally there is a tendency to define an "us" and "them" in terms of racialised boundaries which emphasise identity as some form of cultural property which, in an innate way, marks boundaries between human collectivities. The cultural boundaries are based upon notions of development, progress, and education, against which cultures and peoples can be measured by reference to their level of

civilisation. Such boundaries employ assumptions of the "other", which are related to specific places and cultures. "Grabbing", crime, migration, begging, benefits claiming etc. are represented, by the media, outside their context and, thus, culture becomes their only explanation.

The Other "Others"

At the same time as emphasising their otherness in British society, the participants spoke of their invisibility within policies of multiculturalism. Within their lifetimes, participants have witnessed very little improvement to their socio-economic status. Rather, they felt ever more restricted in their ability and freedom to maintain their cultural way of life and consider Gypsies and Travellers excluded from the multicultural project.

> Frank (49: M: Romany Gypsy): Well they say we live in a more tolerant society these days but I say if that's the case then why when I was a boy could I travel with, you know, a certain amount of ease if you will, but since the 80s, definitely since then it's got more and more hard to do the simple things that set us apart as Gypsy people.
>
> Emily: …What is it that's happened to, shall we say, curb the Gypsy way of life?
>
> Frank: Look I could sit here and run off this policy and that policy and this law and that, but let me just summarise here, the government, no matter if they're Tory or Labour, they make it as hard as possible for us to live our lives the way we want. They stopped us from travelling, they're forcing us into houses, trying to

kill our trades, all of these types of things and what that does is, you know I'm not saying it's eradicated us, we're still here fighting, but Gypsy life isn't what it used to be.

Frank's experience exposes the paradoxical nature of British multiculturalism. One the one hand, multiculturalism has delivered official state recognition of "Gypsy and Traveller" ethnicities and has necessitated strategies of social inclusion (whether such strategies have been successfully implemented is a matter for debate). On the other, the multiculturalist rhetoric of the recognition and celebration of cultural and ethnic difference contradicts the assimilationist policies applied to Gypsy and Traveller communities. Romany Gypsies are supposedly "free" to practice their culture in a multicultural society, but assimilationist policies are simultaneously put in place that restrict nomadism, hamper traditional occupations, and redefine the boundaries and definitions of Gypsy and Traveller identity in order to evade obligations of social inclusion. The participants' frustrations materialise in terms of inter-ethnic competition. Multiculturalism is considered a policy reserved for "non-British minorities" who are believed to be the recipients of preferential treatment by the government. British multiculturalism thus sows dissension between ethnic groups in a competition for resources, power and recognition.

In Shauna's opinion, other migrant and ethnic communities are not subject to processes of assimilation:

Shauna (F: 27: Romany Gypsy): Meanwhile we have every Tom, Dick and Harry coming here from Pakistan, Africa, Poland, and the

government is falling over themselves to accommodate them and their ways. Us lot, we've been here our whole lives, can't even stop overnight on land no one bloody uses, but if we'd just arrived from bloody Timbuktu they'd leave us to it cause then of course our human rights would matter, they'd be scared to offend us.

In Shauna's account, place of birth is employed as a means to distinguish between a deserving and undeserving "other". Shauna contrasts herself with a "non-British" other, differentiating Romany Gypsies from migrants perceived to be the recipients of preferential treatment. This sentiment is echoed throughout many of the participants' narratives. Jessica (F: 20: Romany Gypsy) stated, 'multiculturalism… [is] about foreign people or like black people, people that ain't white'; Johnny (M: 45: Romany Gypsy) argued, 'I'm an English Gypsy, born and bred, but I have no right to practice my culture in peace, not like Muslims and that lot'; and Dale (32: M: Romany Gypsy) contended, 'build a mosque, Polish shops, what have you, but buy a bit of land for your trailer and you're a threat to British culture'.

This perception of "non-British" migrants as the recipients of "special treatment" links multicultural policies to Windrush immigration, as discussed in chapter one. Their narratives imply the absence of Romany Gypsies from British multiculturalism where they are again overlooked given the equation of immigration to racial/ethnic otherness. When considering their exclusion from the multicultural project, they expressed a sense of unfairness concerning the entitlements they believed to be presented to "non-British" minorities by multiculturalism. Being "British born" was invoked specifically by the

participants to draw boundaries between a deserving "us" and undeserving "them", thus, discursively positioning themselves into the category of whiteness shared with the British majority.

Strategies of (In)visibility

Concealing Otherness

The participants manage their otherness through different strategies, namely, through attempts at "passing" - that is, attempts to "blend in" to British society, and to disguise or underplay their Gypsy backgrounds in particular contexts - or through an amplified process of self-ethnicisation and self-exclusion which operate as a means of resistance against British society as well as a form of empowerment which allows them to demand recognition. These strategies are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are often used in conjunction with each other.

Efforts to "pass" as non-Gypsy are done so strategically and are not an attempt at ethnic distancing and denial or grounded in internalised racism. Rather, participants are aware that, by concealing their "Gypsyness", they can access more freely the privileges granted to them by the colour of their skin. Naomi (F: 18: Romany Gypsy) explained, 'I ain't going to work in my horse and trap and Swarovski hot pants… I dress for the occasion'. Similarly, Rhiannon (F: 27: Romany Gypsy) stated 'I dress more gorjer, you know, when I'm out and about, so people aren't always like pointing me or owt' and Billy (M: 27: Romany Gypsy) said 'I can spot another Gypsy a mile off, but a gorjer won't spot me unless I want them to'. Becky, who argues her name and

address make her visible as a Gypsy, uses passing in an effort to avoid employer discrimination:

> Becky (F: 29: Romany Gypsy): I called one place saying I was interested in the job they had, and they ask me my name and address. So the minute they hear my name they know it's a Gypsy name, you don't get gorjers called [Participant's name], and then all that's confirmed when I give them my address on a Travellers site. So I waited for the application and I didn't get anything through and I phone them back up asking where it is. They tell us, sorry someone got the job already but it was still advertised, I seen it. So I decided I'd call back up, change my voice, and say a different name and address and funny enough the job was suddenly available again…I don't know, maybe I'm paranoid but I think they knew I was a Gypsy…I use a different name now, I "degypsyfied" my name… but I'm not ashamed to be a Gypsy, it's not something I hide unless I have to.

Becky's otherness became visible through her "Gypsy name" and stigmatised addressed. She conceals these signifiers of otherness in order to "pass" for non-Gypsy and avoid discrimination. This is interesting as it implies that Romany Gypsies are assumed white until they "reveal" themselves as not. Gypsy names, clothes, addresses etc. deviate from the normalised state of whiteness. By concealing her otherness and passing as white, Becky is guaranteed a level of social assimilation and is successful in achieving this given that, as a white person, she is not physically marked as different.

Becky's "degypsification" is executed out of necessity. She conceals her otherness only in specific contexts and remains "proud" of her Gypsy identity.

Reactive Otherness

"Pride" was often equated to strength and resistance. Participants amplified the differences between Gypsy and non-Gypsy communities and took a stance against discrimination by making their otherness visible. Rejecting the identity of dominant society in favour of a robust Romani identity is, for Billy, the result of a continual negotiation of barriers:

> Billy (M: 27: Romany Gypsy): I think we spend a lot of time just trying to be accepted but you're meeting brick wall after brick wall and I think at some point you get to a turning point and think, fuck it, I'm a Gypsy and I'm going to live my life the way I want. They build these walls and you get sick of going around them, you got to find a way to jump over it and I do that by not giving a fuck, just being Gypsy to piss them off.

As Billy suggests above, discrimination can lay the foundations for a reactive Romani identity in which one asserts and invests in their Romaniness in a stronger way as a method of dealing with discrimination. As already discussed in chapter 2, (re)discovering one's origins and roots can become an effective strategy for constructing an alternative source of identification and belonging. This reactive identity is the result of the proactive British identity that labels certain groups as "other" and denies them an equal position in society. The

participants displayed a robust pro-Gypsy identity. They often emphasised their ethnic identity reactively by stressing the unequal treatment they have received owing to their otherness. Many of the younger participants spoke of the unequal treatment they had experienced at school:

Naomi (F: 18: Romany Gypsy): When I was at school like sometimes I'd be late and that and my teacher was a bitch, she'd come down on me hard, put me in detention, try and keep me after school. When it was gorjers, she'd be fine with them, like its okay, just sit down, no detention or that. Like we're not thick, we saw it, and we knew she'd let them off with everything, but punish us.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) contend that collective marginality and entrenched inequality racialise the identities of minority ethnic youths, thus reinforcing and tightening group boundaries. The belief that they are discriminated against because of their ethnicity appears to offer a collective dimension to the participants' marginality. Naomi's narrative demonstrates this by showing how an awareness of bias – 'we knew she'd let *them* off with everything, but punish *us*' – generates, somewhat, a shared fate for Romany Gypsies, and serves as leverage for strengthening group consciousness.

The participants displayed what Eid (2007) refers to as a reactive ethnicity, which he defines as a defensive ethnic consciousness which emerges in response to ethnic based discrimination, oppression and exclusion. This reactive identity provides the participants with a positive collective identity, however, reactive ethnicity may develop into resistance identity due to the

belief that dominant institutions negatively frame minority ethnic cultures (Nagra, 2011). Unlike reactive ethnicity, which involves the defensive maintenance of ethnic culture, resistance identity involves actively widening the gap between the stigmatised group in question and wider society (Castells, 1997). It can, thus, be described as a subculture, developed as a result of marginalisation and rejection by dominant society, which rejects dominant culture (Willis, 1981).

Participants frequently referred to negative views of Romany Gypsies that are expressed in public discourse and the ways in which anti-Gypsy sentiment influenced their interactions with wider society. When asked how their non-Gypsy friends view the Romany Gypsy culture, the majority of the participants stated that they had no non-Gypsy or non-Traveller friends. They explained, however, that dominant society "looks down" on, and is frightened of, Romany Gypsy culture, making reference to common anti-Gypsy stereotypes, such as, cultural backwardness, criminality and violence. When asked how they knew that wider society considered their culture negatively given they had stated they had little contact with non-Gypsy people, the participants referred to both explicit and subtle experiences of discrimination.

> Dale (M: 32: Romany Gypsy): You know you'll get gorjers that will come smash your windows, fire bomb you, fight you, but I don't know, it's more everyday than that…I work in construction, when you're on a job with a Gypsy boss they see you as their own people, but if it's a gorjer they don't see you like they see the gorjer labourers…when a Gypsy speaks to me, he speaks with respect,

because I'm one of his lot, get me? But when gorjers look at you, they look at you like you're a lazy cunt. They treat you and gorjers different.

Emily: What do you mean by that, I mean, I wonder why?

Dale: Like, I was working a job for a guy recently…he kept say all this shit all the time like "we know how to treat our woman and you Gypsies treat them like slaves". He'd seen it on Big Fat Gypsy Weddings apparently. Made me want to knock him out.

Dale felt bitter towards his boss for his essentialisation of the mistreatment of women as an innate part of Romani culture. He separates himself from wider society and moulds the boundaries of his own ethnic identity by referring to an "us" and "them" - 'I'm one of his lot'. Dale has grown to mistrust his non-Gypsy colleagues, which became tangible in his countless disputes and conflicts with them. When asked whether such tensions troubled him, he said:

Dale: No, not at all. You know, confrontations they tend to blow over pretty quick. They're pussies basically, gorjers you know, they pussy out and won't fight me or owt. They're all sucking up to the boss and that, but me, I wouldn't dare. If they start with me, I'll give them it back. Even the bosses like, they'll pussy out…when I'm in a mard, I just don't give a shit. I don't care if they sack me.

Claiming a resistant Gypsy identity often involves defying authority and challenging institutions, such as, the council, schools and the police – actions that the participants endorsed as "cool", "macho" or "valiant". The participants'

endorsement of such attitudes is little to do with the maintenance of Romany Gypsy culture. Rather, it signifies a subculture in which such bravado and ethnic pride equals empowerment, despite the fact it often comes at the expense of such things as employment or even freedom. Indeed, towards the end of the fieldwork, Dale informed me that he had lost his job and was facing prosecution after physically attacking his boss.

Like Dale, many of the participants expressed their anger with the portrayal of Gypsy culture as "backwards". Whether real or imagined, this portrayal mirrors the research findings of many studies that suggest the public view of Romany Gypsies as thieves, con-men, sexist and violent. Their awareness of the systematic devaluation of Gypsy culture does not estrange the participants from their ethnicity. Rather, it contributes to the construction of their resistant and oppositional self-identifications. This is illustrated in Sam's narrative:

> Sam (M: 28: Romany Gypsy): You know, they'll say shit to you, provoke you. Some will go to the council, try and get you gone, get the council to shut the sites…I mean, these are people who really hate *us…* I fucking hate *them,* I can't stand *them.* I mean, if they caused me any shit, I'd finish *them* off… What the fuck do *they* even achieve? It's not like *we're* going anywhere. *We're* not going to be like ok pal, I'll stop being a Gypsy then… it makes me more proud to be a Gypsy.

The nuances in the processes of both reactive and resistance identity construction are illustrated in Sam's narrative. Like Sam, many of the

participants asserted their ethnic identity by using the terms *they/them* and *us/we* in their accounts. Though often referring to incidents that appear to be individual conflicts, they promoted them to a group level as they believed that non-Gypsies despised and disrespected "their people". The participants reactively adhere to their ethnic identity, yet, they transform this identity into an oppositional vehicle from which to resist perceived discrimination against Romany Gypsies.

Not only in their narratives, but in their interactions at the research sites, I observed oppositional and resistant practices. Whilst they mostly used a mixed language of English and Anglo-Romani with each other, the participants often switched to only Anglo-Romani when in the presence of non-Gypsies. When I probed their reasons for doing so they revealed that in this way they could speak about non-Gypsies, thus, making them suspicious and unable to determine whether they were the focus of the conversation. What is more, one of the intervention groups would occasionally speak to each other in Anglo-Romani during the focus groups. I later discovered that the participants were discussing what information they should or should not share with me. The participants are thus using language to engage in what Castells refers to as 'the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded' (1997, 9).

Participants made frequent references to various practices of resistance and opposition. According to Taylor and Whittier (1992, 113), 'maintaining oppositional identity depends upon creating a world apart from dominant society'. This certainly rings true for Romani culture which, as discussed in chapter one, has often been described in terms of its exclusivity. Indeed, just

as the Romany Gypsies are excluded by dominant society, there is also a sense that Romany Gypsies are excluding wider society from Gypsy culture and community, thus, living in perpetual opposition. It is, perhaps, unsurprising then that some participants found a life without opposition hard to imagine.

> Tony (M: 26: Romany Gypsy): …if I woke up tomorrow and suddenly the world accepted us, they accepted our culture, we were free to live our lives without anyone discriminating, I wouldn't feel, like I wouldn't be a Gypsy anymore…being a Gypsy, to me anyway, is about that constant fight between us and them, without it, I wouldn't feel like a Gypsy, it wouldn't be the same culture.
>
> Nathan (M: 26: Romany Gypsy): When you've been brought up your whole life with people hating you, with them trying to stop you live your life the way you want, then I think it's a big part of your identity, like being a Gypsy is like being hated, being on the outside…so if you're not an outsider anymore, if all this pays off, and we're accepted and not outsiders anymore, then yeah we'll still have our ways, but we won't be the same people we were.

Tony and Nathan consider their otherness as fundamental to shaping their identities. Without otherness, they argue that Gypsy culture and mentality would be transformed into something almost unrecognisable. For Tony and Nathan, resistance identity is not actively or strategically employed - it is not a resistance for change. Rather, otherness is an inherent part of Romany Gypsy culture. This is not to say that Romany Gypsies do not exercise agency when

excluding the dominant society from their cultures and communities, but it is not resistance in the traditional, academic sense of the word.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the experiences of the Roma who, by virtue of their migration, experience a different type of "otherness" to that experienced by Romany Gypsies.

Migratory Motivations

In order to begin to explore how Roma participants understand and experience Britain, it is essential to take into consideration their reflections on, and reasons for, migrating to the UK. In chapter two I refer to Roma migrants as the post-2004, or third wave, Romani diaspora. This wave of Romani migration to Britain differs from previous waves in that it can be described as a voluntary, as opposed to involuntary, diaspora which transpired through the search for work (see Cohen, 1996). Largely, the participants understood their migration as a means by which to improve their material and social situation. The appeal that Britain holds for many of the participants was summarised by Rozalina who moved to Britain in 2014. She emphasises the improvement to her socioeconomic status:

> Rozalina (F: 38: Bulgarian Roma): I am so much grateful for England. My life and my children, we have improved here very much. In Bulgaria you must be very ashamed to be Gypsy. They keep us away from the world, no school for children or medicine for if they are sick. Here it is ok to be Roma, you say you are Roma

you still have school, NHS, house next to not Gypsy people. I have improved, now I am happy, I have freedom.

Similarly, many participants explained that their countries of origin could not provide an adequate standard of living, as offered in Britain. Petra, who has lived in Britain since 2006, stated:

Petra (F: 49: Slovakian Roma): I miss Slovakia but I'll never go back. My children have really good lives. They have school, they are healthy, we have a home, electricity, water, they don't go hungry. They cannot have that in Slovakia. They cannot be safe in Slovakia.

For female participants in particular, living in Britain offered them experiences and opportunities that they were previously denied and which were often at odds with their parents' beliefs. Anastasija spoke at length about the conflict she has had with her parents about education. She comments:

Anastasija (F: 19: Slovakian Roma): In Slovakia it would not have been possible for me to go to school…my parents would have liked to see me marry very young, fourteen, fifteen, well in England this is not possible, children must stay in education…In Slovakia they would never encourage a Roma girl to study at high school, or college, but here I can go to college, or university, it doesn't matter that I'm Roma.

Madalina (F: 22: Romanian Roma) commented, rather similarly, that 'living in Scotland means having more opportunities and freedom…I'm a Roma woman and I can vote, study, have an opinion…I do not just have to be someone's wife, I can talk very freely like I am now'. Indeed, for Ioana (F: 24: Romanian Roma) and Marija (F: 24: Slovenian Roma), like Petra, it was hard to imagine returning to live in their home countries. 'I'm very settled here, I'm used to having freedom and opportunity…it's my home, I can't go back to Romania now' said Ioana, while Marija remarked 'When I go back to Slovenia I don't fit in anymore. I'm too different from them…I feel sorry for them, they don't have all the opportunities I have in Scotland'.

One of the prevailing views held by the participants was that Britain offers them, or their children, a better education and thus a more prosperous future. Anastasija, through her new educational opportunities, explained she had developed an interest in politics and human rights:

> Anastasija (F: 19: Roma): In Slovakia my future was poor. Roma are not worthy of education, it is a second rate education for second rate people. I come to England and I have a very good education, I am thankful, and now I see myself as intelligent person. I know many new things about society and politics…my interest is in human rights, in Roma rights.

It is of note that Anastasija accredits her interest in Roma rights to her increased educational opportunities in Britain. Education is often associated

with increased political participation and engagement and, as will become clear in the following chapters, Anastasija is among the participants most invested in a political narrative of Romani identity. In Britain, the participants feel freer to express their "Romaniness" publically. In their countries of origin, they had often hidden their Romaniness through fear of stigmatisation, or been denied their Roma identity through policies of assimilation. In Britain, they consider themselves recognised as an ethnic group and, for many of the participants, this signified a strengthening or reawakening of Roma identity.

When Teodor arrived in Britain as a refugee from Kosovo (during the second wave of Romani diaspora in the 1990s, which can be described as an "involuntary" diaspora), he could not speak fluent Romani. His family, through fear of persecution, had discouraged the use of Romani in favour of Serbian. Britain represented to them a society where one may be open about their ethnicity. In Britain, Teodor had once again felt safe to speak his native tongue and it has become important to him that his own children speak Romani, given that he was denied this right in Kosovo. He explains:

> Teodor (M: 27: Kosovan Roma): I talk Romani with my children because I want them to know it. I know of Roma children who go to classes in Romani and can now read and write in Romani. I can't read and write in Romani but my children have the possibility to learn it here in Britain. In Kosovo that was almost illegal, it didn't happen….here you become more aware of your culture and your ethnicity.

In a similar vein, Michal spoke of his surprise that the Romani language is recognised by British authorities:

> Michal (20, M, Czech Roma): The first time I am trouble with police they ask where I from, do I want Czech or Romani translator. This is important in Britain, I'm very surprised…living in Britain has been very good, I find my identity here. It is very important. More freedom to be Roma, to meet many different people, to talk and debate. It is very important to go wherever you want and no fear of attack. It's a very nice country. It has been very good country to me.

Overall, the deprivation and discrimination the participants had experienced in their countries of origin, together with their long-term educational and socioeconomic goals were at the centre of how they rationalised their migration to, and settlement in, Britain. This is significant in that the struggles they have faced since moving to Britain (i.e. racism and discrimination, integration, separation from family and friends) were compensated by their lived and perceived future improvements to their socioeconomic situation.

Otherness as Multiple

In Britain, Roma participants face a different kind of otherness than they used to experience. In their home countries their ethnicity was stigmatised, leaving them subject to anti-Roma prejudice, discrimination and violence. In Britain, however, they suffer the double stigmatisation of being Roma and a migrant. As Lenka (F: 36: Czech Roma) asks 'I think what is worse? To be Gypsy or to

be Eastern European?' while Madalina (F: 22: Romanian Roma) explained 'if I wasn't Roma I'd still be hated for being Romanian'. This stigmatisation is based principally on two factors which were discussed in chapter 1: (1) the supposed cultural backwardness and inherent criminality of the Roma; and (2) the racialisation of Eastern Europeans.

Double stigmatisation is a recent phenomenon tied to freedom of movement and the increase of Eastern European migration to Britain. Simeon, a second generation Roma migrant, has witnessed the intensification of Roma stigmatisation in Britain. He said:

> Simeon (M: 19: Bulgarian Roma): I think its [EU migration] been bad for us in the way that before I was just a Gypsy and now I'm a Bulgarian Gypsy… Roma who moved here in the 80s, like my family, didn't get the same shit that Roma moving here now do and like I guess we've become more noticeable than we were, like it's suddenly quite a big deal that we're Roma and Bulgarian even though like I was born here.

Mounting concerns over EU migration have increased hostility towards Roma and EU migrants. Roma participants are, thus, arriving in an already hostile society. Rozalina migrated from Bulgaria in 2014, just weeks after EU migration restrictions were lifted. She is critical of the restrictions placed upon Bulgarian and Romanian citizens which enabled politicians and the media to arouse public fears. She said:

Rozalina (F: 38: Bulgarian Roma): I feel looked down on. Spanish, French, German migrants are respected, but Bulgaria and Romania, the poorer countries, aren't respected and I moving to a country where people already not respected me because I'm Bulgarian, because I'm a Gypsy.

As discussed in chapter one, the restrictions placed on Romanians and Bulgarians produced racialised effects which symbolically stripped new migrants of their "Europeaness". Rozalina refers to the disparity in the way in which "Western" and "Eastern" Europeans are constructed in the British imagination. "Eastern Europe" has been characterised as economically and socially underdeveloped in comparison to the West. Eastern European states are portrayed as impoverished, corrupt, and socially and economically backward. Such portrayals are nothing new. Pavel, whose family claimed asylum in Britain in 1999, spoke at length in the ways in which such characterisations of the Roma and Eastern Europe marred his early experiences of Britain. He explained:

Pavel (M: 25: Slovakian Roma): When we got asylum and we were learning the language, I just remember the teacher completely looking down on us. She would ask us questions like did we live in huts in Slovakia, did we have bathrooms, did we know how to count? She thought we were from another planet or that we came to England because we were feral…I was eight years old, can you imagine how I felt?

The media have been particularly influential in shaping such stigmatising attitudes towards Eastern Europeans. Commentaries have excessively focussed upon Roma migration, with the term "Roma", and associated stereotypes, being loosely applied to all Eastern Europeans. Utilising existing prejudices towards Romany Gypsies, the media has been successful in calling into question the "Europeanness", and thus whiteness, of both Eastern Europeans and Roma.

Ina argues the media have exploited the Roma's low socio-economic status to fashion negative depictions of Eastern European, and specifically Roma, migrants. She says:

> Ina (F: 26: Romanian Roma): Generally they have recognised the terrible situations we've left behind but they use that against us. There is a lot of scaremongering, look at the poverty they are leaving behind, they will come here now to claim benefits, or to pickpocket and beg. The newspapers only write about negative things.

Ina's argument corroborates Fox et al.'s (2012) number, and crime frames, discussed at length in chapter 1, in which the scale of EU migration is amplified to exploit concerns about the risks to jobs, welfare benefits and public services, and which identifies criminality as an innate part of the character of Eastern Europeans and Roma. As Ina points out, by highlighting the socioeconomic status of Europe's Roma, the stigmatisation of the Roma as

socially and culturally backwards is validated, as suggested in the Fox et al.'s (2012) Roma frame.

In reference to the Channel 5 documentary *Gypsies on Benefits and Proud,* Deshka said:

> Deshka (F: 35: Bulgarian Roma): I move to UK to make a good life for myself, my children. How can I get rid of discrimination where the TV says that we come to get thousands of benefits and never work a job? People believe what they see on TV. Gypsy thieves, lazy, that's all the British people think and this is not true. The TV is very wrong and very bad to say these lies.

The Channel 5 documentary followed the lives of recently arrived Roma migrants, revealing and emphasising the sum of their welfare payments and joblessness. Broadcast in early 2014, it fed into wider anxieties and tensions surrounding the Roma. In late 2013, just months before the removal of transitional employment restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian workers, former home secretary David Blunkett warned there would be race riots should the Roma fail to integrate (BBC, 2013). Just weeks earlier, the Roma had been at the centre of a global media storm after police discovered a blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl named Maria at a Roma camp in northern Greece. Maria was removed into state care and her parents arrested, despite telling police they were caring for Maria on behalf of her Bulgarian Roma parents who, due to poverty, was unable to raise the child themselves. In the moral panic that ensued, the Roma were vilified by the media and in a knee-

jerk reaction a seven year old blonde girl was taken from her Roma parents in Ireland. Playing into long held stereotypes of child-stealing Gypsies, Maria was positioned as a non-Roma victim of child abduction and exploitation; this was, of course, until DNA results confirmed she was in fact the child of Bulgarian Roma.

The exposure these stories received has had lasting effects. The notion of feeling under constant suspicion was recurrent in the participants' narratives:

Petra (F: 49: Slovakian Roma): I know two, three, families of children taken by child services here in UK, and I think because they are Roma. We are on the edge, Maria made us very afraid. A lot have fair-haired children, they will be next?

Janka (F: 26: Slovakian Roma): We are not the problem, they are the problem. They believe what they read, suspicion is everywhere. Are we child snatchers? Are we thieves? Mr Blunkett, if the British riot because Roma stand on the street then it is the British who need change their culture, not us.

The upshot of heightened anti-Roma and/or anti-Eastern European prejudice has been the increasing levels of racism and discrimination experienced by participants in their everyday interactions and in a wide array of environments, for instance, in shops, the bank, the work place, on public transport, etc. The extent to which participants are subject to racism and discrimination, however, is dependent on the "visibility" of their otherness. Various signifiers of

difference, such as, physical appearance, accent and command of language, religion, and even the area in which one lives, were acknowledged has having an impact on how the participants were perceived by wider society. The visibility of otherness, or put differently, the participants' ability to "perform" whiteness, greatly impacts the extent to which they undergo racialisation processes. In the case of second generation Roma, for example, accent and command of language did not project otherness, given that they spoke English with regional accents. Muslim participants, on the other hand, spoke of bearing the triple stigma of being Roma, migrant and Muslim, thus, enduring Islamophobia on top of the already damaging forces of xenophobia and anti-Roma prejudice.

Anti-Roma and anti-Eastern European prejudices are most pronounced in areas knows for their high Roma and Eastern European populations. Participants referred to the stigmatisation of "Roma" neighbourhoods through which postcodes become a signifier of Roma identity. 'I avoid telling people I live here' explained Janka (F: 26: Slovakian Roma) 'only Gypsies live here now'. Beyond these ethnically marked neighbourhoods, participants had been subject to a "generic otherness" or misidentification. Natalia (F: 29: Slovakian Roma) explained 'I don't think people look at me saying look at that Gypsy, look at that Slovak. I'm just some kind of foreign'. Marija (F: 24: Slovenian Roma) elaborated:

> I don't think British people can pick out Roma. In Slovenia, there's
> less diversity, so if you have dark skin you're definitely Roma… in
> Britain they know you are foreign… because we sound foreign, our

skin is darker… it's a guessing game of what type of foreign… if you're lucky they'll think you're Italian, Spanish, Greek, but I've had Paki, Asian, Arab…

In general, nearly all of the participants believed that the majority of the discrimination they had encountered in Britain was the product of their generic "foreignness" and not because they were easily identifiable as Roma or Eastern European. Their otherness manifests through non-specific embodiments of ethnicity, for example, accent and skin colour, which marks them, at best, "white others", or, at worst, non-European. This can work to both their detriment and advantage. To some extent, it acts a safeguard against the negative stereotyping of Roma and Eastern Europeans, given that Roma can "pass" as Western Europeans. Regrettably, this does not mean that Roma are not subject to racialisation, for example, when they are mistaken for Asian or a generic non-European other.

Strategic Invisibility

Many of the participants spoke of their efforts to integrate into British society through adopting British social and cultural norms while simultaneously discarding elements of the Romani culture perceived as undesirable. Efforts to "fit in", and by extension mask or lessen otherness, were understood differently among the participants; in some instances they were considered a positive and rewarding experience, but in others, they were articulated in the language of internalised racism.

The adoption of British social norms and values were understood, on the whole, as a method through which to demonstrate that one could be both "British" and "Roma". Ivana stresses her willingness to embrace British culture:

> Ivana (F: 52: Bulgarian Roma): …all cultures have good and bad, I always have taken the good and bad from British and Romani culture and hoped that my children, my grandchildren, will too so that they don't feel like outsider to Gypsies or to British people. I live British life and Gypsy life, I'm both.

Here, Ivana makes a compromise. She is unwilling to surrender her Romani identity but does not desire "outsider" status either. Her strategy is to adopt elements of British culture while simultaneously discarding elements of the Romani culture that she perceives as undesirable. In so doing, Ivana constructs sameness with British society, thus, "whitening" herself and hoping to evade the "othering gaze". Similarly, Anastasija emphasised the similarities between British and Roma values:

> Anastasija (F: 19: Slovakian Roma): We have our cultural differences but I think we have similar values. British values, European values, Christian values, multicultural values. I don't feel like I am less Roma for integrating well into Britain and enjoying British culture as well as Roma culture because we are not that different morally… other immigrants, Arabs, Muslims, don't integrate as well and are unwilling to accept British values.

Anastasija's claims of sameness are strengthened when contrasting the shared "European" and "Christian" values held by the British and Roma with the "Muslim", "non-European" other. By juxtaposing European and non-European values, Anastasija relies on the same orientalist logic discussed in chapter one, that constructs the Roma as a non-European other. In emphasising her sameness with British society, and by extension emphasising her whiteness, she constructs the Roma as more desirable than visibly non-European minorities.

In emphasising sameness, Ivana and Anastasija are not attempting to "pass" per se, but they are, whether consciously or unconsciously, attempting to acquire whiteness through the adoption of "white British" values. The desirability of whiteness is grounded in the greater economic, political and social advantages such a status secures. By "acting white", they stand to gain access to "white privilege" and is a means by which to avoid otherness. Such a strategy is employed, in a more active sense, by participants engaged in the process of internalised racism. In their opinion, the Roma and other nomadic peoples who face discrimination should blame themselves for their failure to integrate into British society. Though these participants identify as Roma, their relationship with the wider Roma community is complex. They are largely well educated migrant Roma and being accepted by British people is of great importance to them.

In his study of Jewish self-hatred, Gilman (1990) illustrates how dominant ideologies earn compliance by stirring a desire among oppressed people to

become like their oppressors. Gilman draws attention to the commonly held view that oppressed groups, such as ethnic minorities, can gain equality if they mimic the dominant group and abide by their rules and values. The more the oppressed group identifies with their oppressors, however, the more they accept the ideologies and structural inequalities that keep them subjugated. Gilman refers to this situation as a double bind: the myth of the oppressed breaking free form their "otherness" by rejecting that which makes them different, leads them into defending and maintaining the very systems that position them as the "other". Though they are promised acceptance and equality, this is rarely the case.

Igor judges Roma migrant communities somewhat severely as according to him they make little effort to integrate into British society. His position is somewhat uncertain. On the one hand he is proud of his Roma identity and wants to emphasise his "Romaniness". On the other hand, he keeps his distance from Roma who he deems as not behaving according to British norms and values. His narrative demonstrates strong ambivalent feelings, positionings and identifications. He says:

> Igor (M: 21: Slovakian Roma): I see garbage left in the street and young Roma people congregating to very late in the evenings and I feel ashamed of that. This is the life of Victorian Britain. Very bad cleaning of streets and child not a home, being very threatening to local people. The British people do not live like this. This is life of Roma in Slovakia or Romania because there it is ghettos but this

is very nice streets, nice houses and neighbourhoods that they treat as ghettos. It does not show progress if they don't develop from what they were in Slovakia. If they can't do this then they must not come here. We ask why are we oppressed. This is simple, no change then no progress.

Igor relies on the same stigmatising logic employed by the media and politicians which constructs the Roma as socially and culturally backwards. In so doing, he distances himself from "bad" Roma migrants and constructs himself as "good" or "desirable" in comparison, given his willingness to 'progress' and 'develop'. There is a sense that, as Roma, he feels inferior in relation to the British people, yet superior in relation to other Roma migrants. He describes British society as progressive and modern, which according to him is the opposite of Roma society:

We do not learn anything when we only complain about racism or oppression. I don't want to see all Roma as my family because we all live here in Britain and this is why I respect Roma who come to Britain and socialise with British to learn the British life. It is good thing to learn, and now I prefer to socialise with British, not Roma.

Igor is engaged in the process of "defensive othering" which Schwalbe et al. (2000, 425) define as 'identity work done by those seeking membership in a dominant group or by those seeking to deflect the stigma they experience as members of a subordinated group'. It refers to the actions taken by members

of an oppressed group to *distance* themselves from fellow members of their group. By attributing negative stereotypes that the dominant society associates with the Roma to "other" members of the group, Igor is distancing himself from the negative stereotype and marking himself as superior. What is more, the process of defensive othering allows Igor to emphasise his sameness and make claims to whiteness. According to Schwalbe et al. (2000), by demonstrating that they share the same feelings of contempt towards their co-ethnics, they attempt to join and gain acceptance from the dominant group.

Similar to Igor, Ioana describes British society in terms of progress. British people are presented as modern and progressive and she makes use of popular stereotypes which stigmatise the Roma as a "backwards" people. What is more, she sees racism against the Roma as justifiable given the supposed behaviour of Roma people:

> Ioana (F: 24: Romanian Roma): I live in [neighbourhood name] and this is the worst neighbourhood in [city name] and in all of Scotland. I tell you that I am the worst racist in my neighbourhood because I see many times the bad things from foreigners, from Roma. This is why I say that British who hate Roma are right, because Roma treat the country very bad and have very bad respect for their neighbourhoods. If Roma treat their neighbourhoods with respect and their neighbours with respect then this will make good impression for British. I do not think British hate Roma if they have

respect because they see that Roma living here because they want
to learn to improve themselves, but when Roma attacks British on
the street and steal wallet on the train, then how will British think
about Roma?

Both Igor and Ioana appear to consider themselves as true representatives of
the Roma and Roma identity. The behaviour of other Roma is, in their opinion,
damaging for the image of Roma and does not make a good impression on
British people. Igor and Ioana judge themselves and other Roma by their
degree of integration. They have internalised and accepted conceptions of the
Roma as inferior, uncivilised and unmodern, thus, they wish to distance
themselves from this group. At the same time they emphasise their Roma
identity. This can become somewhat dangerous as it is reminiscent of the "true
Gypsy"/"fake Gypsy" dichotomy discussed in chapter 1 and implies a
distinction between desirable and undesirable Romani behaviours. While Igor
and Ioana employ defensive othering as means of resisting the infliction of the
negative "Gypsy" identity, they do so in a manner that furthers the
reproduction of inequality (Schwalbe et al. 2000). Defensive othering can,
thus, be considered a form of internalised racism.

Defensive othering also transpires at the collective level with the formation of
derogatory sub-group identities which are widely recognised and commonly
employed by the group, thus constructing internal group conflict and divides
(Anzaldua, 1993). Many of the participants referred to the sub-group identity
of Romanian Kalderas in ways that echoed the anti-Roma stereotypes of

dominant British society. The terms 'Romanian Kalderas' and 'Romanian Gypsies', were employed to "other" sections of the Romani population:

> Velislava (F: 19: Bulgarian Roma): Most the Roma that come to England come to find better life, to work hard and have good life for family. In the newspapers it is very bad words they write about us, these are not true stories, it is Romanian Gypsies, they come to UK for claiming benefits and begging on the street.

> Katarina (F: 21: Slovakian Roma): I try very hard to adjust to British life and be a good citizen, some Cigan[7] do not want this…you will see the Kalderas in the cities begging, they dress very traditional, old-fashioned, they come to Britain for only three months from Romania to beg…they sleep outside, they have no homes…they give bad idea of Roma people.

Velislava and Katarina strategically employ the terms "Romanian" and "Kalderas" to criticise and belittle co-ethnic "others" for exhibiting the characteristics that embody anti-Roma stereotypes and prejudices. By this means, they employ defensive othering. While Schwalbe et al. (2000) argue this is an adaptive response to oppression, such strategies rationalise anti-Roma stereotypes by suggesting they are true, though only for certain sub-groups of the Britain's Romani population.

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[7] Gypsies

The terms "Romanian" and "Kalderas" act as a vehicle through which anti-Roma stereotypes penetrate and mould definitions of appropriate Roma behaviour, deeming some supposedly "ethnic" behaviours, such as begging, claiming benefits and wearing traditional Romani dress, as incompatible and undesirable with the British way of life, while endorsing desirable "white" behaviours. This demonstrates that the employment of defensive othering as a strategy of sameness can generate simultaneous acceptance of white hegemony and the veneration of whiteness.

Summary

The focus of this chapter has been the participants' experiences of, and responses to, "otherness". Experiences of stigmatisation were central to the participants' narratives, with racism and discrimination acknowledged as commonplace. The Roma, who are doubly stigmatised, frequently face xenophobia which has been exacerbated by the media's sensationalist and fearmongering response to EU migration.

For Romany Gypsies, entrenched societal intolerance to Gypsy culture has led to an increase in assimilationist based policies aimed at restricting the Gypsy way of life. Romany Gypsies feel abandoned by multicultural ideologies which, in their experience, afford "special treatment" to non-British minorities. Indeed, Roma migrants held generally positive views of multicultural Britain. They felt freer to observe and express their culture and believed Britain offered them better opportunities in terms of equal access to education and employment. The differences in which British multiculturalism is experienced is important. While Roma have seen vast improvements to their

socioeconomic positions, Romany Gypsies have experienced a deterioration. This has led to animosity towards migrants and other minorities, as Romany Gypsies consider themselves more deserving of multicultural rights and freedoms, given that they are British. In a similar vein, Roma consider themselves as more "desirable" than non-European migrants. They emphasise their "sameness" by noting their shared "European vales" with the British public, which make them better positioned to successfully integrate.

In response to stigmatisation, the participants adopt various strategies of invisibility. Romany Gypsies spoke of concealing their otherness by supressing observable markers of "Gypsyness", such as particular styles of dress, accommodation or even names. Roma, too, attempted to conceal their ethnicity by utilising their "generic otherness" and passing as less stigmatised European others. Although maintaining their culture, the Roma were keen to integrate and hoped to disguise their otherness by adopting British culture and values. In a minority of Roma participants, this gave rise to internalised racism. These participants distanced themselves from, and were greatly critical of, the wider Roma population, reaffirming stigmatising attitudes in order to gain acceptance into British society.

The Roma's pro-integration response is markedly different to that of the Romany Gypsies, who instead emphasise the differences between Gypsy and non-Gypsy communities. For Romany Gypsies, otherness is a source of pride. Racism and discrimination strengthen feelings of groupness and collective identity and, thus, rather than conceal their ethnicity, Romany Gypsies invest more strongly in a sense of "us" and "them". They recognise that inclusion is

dependent on assimilation and, unwilling to give up their culture, they become engaged in the process of defensive maintenance. In this way, Romany Gypsy communities become as exclusive as they are excluded.

Overall, Britain's Romanies can be described as sandwiched between their feelings and claims to belonging, and a bleak reality of exclusion and otherness. There appears a willingness amongst Roma, to integrate, or even assimilate, into British society. Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, stress their otherness and negotiate their relationship to British society accordingly. The following chapter will explore in greater length the narratives of belonging (to British society) that have unravelled in this chapter, locating them in narratives of home.

Chapter 5

Locating a Home(land)

This chapter will explore the participants' understandings of home and homeland, which are central to diasporic identity frames. It will continue to explore feelings of belonging, specifically in relation to the participants' experiences of, and relationship to their countries of origin, and in the case of the Roma, their country of residence. It will consider the notion of "Britishness" and how identifications with Britishness impact upon the participants' sense of belonging to the nation. It will also explore the participants' identifications with an Indian homeland. The chapter will first explore the experiences of Roma participants.

Considering Countries of Origin

Most Roma participants expressed a strong connection to their home countries and national identities, irrespective of how long they had lived in Britain. Such expressions were most explicit when participants discussed their feelings of "Britishness"; these discussions were often accompanied by assertions of strong feelings of their own national identity.

> Katarina (F: 21: Slovakian Roma): I lived here four, five, years, but no I would not say I feel British now.
> Emily: Do you feel Slovakian?
> Katarina: Yes. I'm definitely not British, I like to stay here now and be part of society, but I'm Slovak. My heart is in Slovakia, it will always be my home.

Madalina (F: 22: Romanian Roma): I'm only a little bit British… I am Romanian. Romania is my home. My memories are in Romania, my family, I will never have the same feelings for Britain.

Yuliyan (M: 45: Bulgarian Roma): I live here, I work here, I have good life here but always I will be Bulgarian. I was born in Bulgaria, my family are there… I will live here until I die maybe but I will still feel Bulgarian.

These feelings were again expressed when discussing participants' visits to their home countries. In which several participants spoke of a strong attachment to their country of birth.

Ivana (F: 52: Roma): I love going back, I wish I could go back more… to see my mum, my brothers, even after all these years I miss them so much… I miss my village, the community… I love to show my children and grandchildren where I am from…
Emily: Would you ever move back to Bulgaria?
Ivana: No, because I am disappointed when I go back that nothing has changed. It's still poor, it's still a bad place for Roma to live and I know it will never change… but in my heart I am Bulgarian, I was born there and it will always be home, I will always call it home.

These attachments were discussed in reference to the fact that the participants were born, and spent a considerable amount of their lives, in their

countries of origin. What is more, familial bonds and memories were prominently featured in their narratives. Their strong affiliations with their home countries are interesting given that it implies that national attachments remain central to the multifaceted identities of the Roma participants. This is hardly surprising given that the majority of these participants were born in former Eastern Bloc nations. Socialist-state regimes across Eastern and Central Europe operated on the premise that the Roma were not an ethnic group, but an underprivileged "social class", fated to forceful assimilation. Under these regimes, ethnic groups were deprived of their culture, frequently by preventing them from speaking in their native language, or through the forceful assignment of "ethnically neutral" surnames. A process of cultural homogenisation was thus employed to mask national heterogeneity. For Marushiakova and Popov (2013), cultural homogenisation had an enormous bearing on processes of social integration and the formation of Roma identities. They argue that Roma in Central and Eastern Europe are much more socially integrated and have a far stronger attachment to the nation state in comparison to other Romanies in Western Europe and other parts of the world. The effects this has on the construction of a Romani diaspora consciousness or transnational identity will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, however, it suggests that the participants' notions of home and belonging are territorially bound to the nation state.

Interestingly, the participants' attachment to their home countries does not extend to their co-nationals living in Britain. Many of the participants noted they felt little connection to the wider migrant community, stating that the

negative attitudes towards Roma, held by their co-nationals, are replicated in Britain:

> Emily: Are you involved in any way with the Romanian community here in Yorkshire?
>
> Ioana (F: 24: Romanian Roma): No. It is sad, they see us very much like they saw in Romania, not equal, real Romanians. They distance, because they are scared to be associated with us, they will look like Roma.

As discussed in chapter one, the notion of the "Roma migrant" has been applied somewhat indiscriminately to all Eastern Europeans, regardless of their ethnicity. In Grill's (2012) study of Slovak and Czech Roma migrants living in Scotland, he discovered that "white" Central and Eastern European migrants play a fundamental role in identifying certain migrants as Roma. He notes, that 'equipped with some kind of "common-sensical wisdom" about "our Gypsies"… many of them felt obliged to explain the differences between Roma/Gypsies and non-Roma Slovaks and Czechs in the area… [because] the thought of being classified by Scottish persons alongside of Roma/Gypsies through one unifying national category of Slovak was a source of embarrassment'. As a result, non-Roma migrants avoided interactions and symbolic associations with Roma migrants, thus maintaining the exclusive ethnic boundaries constructed in their home countries. This was certainly echoed in the narratives of the participants. Anastasija (F: 19: Slovakian Roma), for example, stated, 'It angers them that Roma have come to Britain because it reminds them that regardless of how they treat us back home, we

have the same right to come here and better our lives as they do' and Efraim (M: 68: Bulgarian Roma) explained, 'they move yes, but they don't leave their bigotry at the border'. By distancing themselves from Roma co-nationals, non-Roma migrants implicitly make claims to whiteness and Europeaness while simultaneously stripping their Roma co-nationals of theirs.

Feelings of Britishness Amongst Roma

In this section, the participants relay their experiences of "Britishness" and the barriers that obstruct them from exercising full citizenship rights which they legally possess but are informally denied. On the basis of this, it is possible to locate the participants' experiences of Britishness within Jacobson's (1997) three boundaries of Britishness: civic, racial and cultural. The "civic boundary" refers to the official or legal definition of Britishness in which one is considered British if they hold British citizenship. The "racial boundary" bestows Britishness to only those who have British ancestry; here, Britishness is dependent on one's ancestral roots or "blood". The third boundary, the cultural boundary, defines Britishness 'in terms of values, attitudes, and lifestyle: that is, Britishness is regarded as a matter of the culture to which one adheres' (p193).

The Civic Boundary

As discussed above, many participants maintained a strong affiliation to their home countries. "Britishness", or British citizenship, was often seen, therefore, as a legal necessity as opposed to an integral part of their identity.

Petra (F: 49: Slovakian Roma): I'm going to apply for my British citizenship. I've been here six years now and I'm entitled to residency.

Emily: Will you consider yourself British?

Petra: No. It is just to make my life easier. To get a passport, to make travelling to and from Britain easier.

Igor (M: 21: Slovakian Roma): I will get British citizenship, just to be sure, because of this referendum, when Britain leaves the EU. So I need to get my papers, maybe I will not need it.

Emily: Will you consider yourself British after that?

Igor: No, it's just for convenience. My life is here, work, family, house. I just need the papers.

By applying for British citizenship, the participants do not expect to inherit a "British identity". Rather, claiming British citizenship is considered a means by which to secure certain rights, protections and privileges without surrendering one's ethnic or national affiliation. Acquiring British citizenship offers the participants a sense of security given that EU freedom of movement leaves Roma migrants in an ambiguous position. EU migrants are not required to hold nor apply for British citizenship. Rather, like many of the Roma participants, EU migrants remain nationals of their home country.

Feelings of liminality, an "in-betweeness" and uncertainty, were common in many of the participants' narratives. They felt "British", or were at least eager to acquire British citizenship, but questioned the "legitimacy" of their claim to

British residency. These anxieties arose around the upcoming referendum on European Union membership.

> Anastasija (F: 19: Roma): I've grown up here; I came from Slovakia when I was eleven. I feel British but I'm not in the eyes of the law and it's scary…Britain don't want Roma here, if they leave the EU what happens to us? Will we be allowed to stay? Will we have to fight to stay? We'll have to apply to the government just to live in our own homes and carry on with our lives.

Others argued that EU membership offered the Roma little protection in terms of citizenship given the French government's repatriation of tens of thousands of Bulgarian and Romanian Roma since 2009. Deshka (F: 35: Bulgarian) explained, 'we are not citizens; look at France, deporting Roma from Bulgaria, Romania, back to their country' while Simeon (M: 19: Roma) expanded 'no one bat an eyelid and I doubt they would if Cameron started deporting Roma beggars from London'. France's mass deportations of Roma were a direct contravention of EU anti-discrimination and freedom of movement directives. The expulsions undoubtedly raise questions over *who* is entitled to "European citizenship". By denying the Roma the right of freedom of movement, they are symbolically stripped of their "Europeanness", and by extension their whiteness. For Ioana (F: 24: Romanian Roma), the insecurity of EU citizenship acts as a barrier to a sense of "Britishness". She stated, 'in the EU we don't need to be British citizen so we will never be British, we are Romanian, Slovakian, and I don't think it makes people feel British, or feel a member of Britain. If we leave EU we will get citizenship and it will feel permanent, it's the

opposite of that right now, we are guests.' Whether or not "Britishness" remains important in the context of EU or European citizenship and/or identity is, of course, greatly contested. Nevertheless, the notion of European citizenship does not provide, for Anastasija, Deshka and Ioana, a sense of security. This is compounded by the racial and cultural boundaries, which will now be discussed.

The Racial Boundary

The "racial boundary" defines Britishness as those people who have British "ancestry" or "blood". This is somewhat contrary to the civic boundary; while the civic boundary is relatively inclusive, the racial boundary is by its very nature exclusive. Under the racial boundary of Britishness one cannot "become" British as a result of migration or legal right. Rather, Britishness is a question of one's genetics, heritage or "blood". While the civic boundary, as a legal definition of Britishness, is somewhat unambiguous, the racial boundary is uncertain given there are no explicit markers of British ancestry. Nevertheless, whiteness may be deemed an obvious indicator of British ancestry. That said, exclusion for the racial boundary was more pronounced for the Roma.

Many of the participants stated that ethnic minorities were largely not recognised as "fully" British by dominant society. For the most part, they deemed racial definitions of Britishness as bigoted and prejudiced, yet, found it difficult to challenge such understandings of Britishness given that they are so deeply entrenched. Pavel (M: 25: Roma) explained that being Roma

signifies being 'a leech who will never be seen as British', while Velislava described altering her appearance in order to gain acceptance:

> Velislava (F: 19: Bulgarian Roma): When you are Gypsy they know this very quickly that you are not British. For me is this through my accent, and my hair and the colour of my skin. You don't be British by living here and working here. If I was accepted as British, why you do think I talk about colouring my hair blonde and learn an English accent, is it because I am not accepted and want to be accepted. They look at you in a very bad way when you are Gypsy, they look down on you.

Miroslav's neighbourhood has seen a substantial inflow of Roma migrants in recent years, resulting in heightened tensions between white British and Roma residents. He described an incident he and his friends had had with a local resident in the employment centre. The man had pointed at them and shouted, 'This lot are coming here and stealing our jobs. These fucking Gypsies have destroyed [the neighbourhood]…this is our neighbourhood, we're Scottish, go home'. As discussed in Chapter One, the public and political anxieties, which arose from post-2004 EU migration patterns, have had major repercussions for Roma migrants. The Roma have been framed as a "problem" and "invasion", and have been used by politicians and the media as means through which to fuel fear and anxiety, predominately by conveying the notion that the Roma from Eastern Europe could "swamp" the UK welfare state and "steal" jobs from British people.

Such experiences were common amongst Roma participants. Many spoke about a regression from a more positive initial contact with British society as a hospitable and exciting society, to a more negative and harsh reality of otherisation and social exclusion:

Miroslav (M: 28: Slovakian Roma): When I came to Scotland it was very exciting, a new country, new life. I learn English very quick and I feel very much belonging to Scotland at the beginning. But when I go to college to learn on a course I start to feel and think about not belonging to Scotland when my classmates say things to me – you fucking pikey, you fucking gypo. That hurt me very bad; I think why can they not accept me? When I ask them, why do you say these things to me, they say go home, go back to Slovakia, if I am so oppressed in Scotland then I go back then to Slovakia or become more Scottish.

Miroslav's experiences suggest that a sense of non-belonging is not fashioned in a political vacuum but is related to exclusionary practices that identify insiders and outsiders within the political boundary of the nation-state. Exclusionary practices can include Miroslav's experience of being labelled a "gypo" or "pikey", and his exposure to racist taunts. Even when he has challenged these exclusionary practices, he is encouraged to leave Scotland or accept his inferiorised position. His experience can be best understood by employing the guest/host allegory in which migrants are considered guests who should show appreciation for, not criticism of, the "generosity" of the host.

When Miroslav challenged racism, his classmates demanded he leave Scotland or stay on unequal terms. The host society, in this case, consider themselves as "natural" members of British society whose power and authority should not be questioned by migrants or "guests". Consequently, an "inherited" British citizenship is often connected to unequal power relations that define the boundaries of identity and entitles bearers to make powerful claims in the name of identity.

There was an agreement amongst the participants that "Roma migrant" is a racialised identity which signifies a non-white and non-European group:

> Marija (F: 24: Slovenian Roma): I feel different, you see my looks, my skin, my culture, this really stands me out. I have an easier time here if I was whiter European. A Polish girl does not look foreign, Polish are very white like Scottish people…Scottish people look one way and the Polish are like this too. Skin colour changes your way of treatment….you will be Scottish when you look Scottish and if your country is very close to Scotland, you will be Scottish easier.

Marija refers to the Roma in terms of visibility, culture, geographical proximity, and race, identifying these as the criteria through which a person will be accepted as Scottish. She suggests that whiteness is fundamental in constituting the boundaries of the British identity. The concept of race is still crucial to understanding how imagined racial differences are constructed and used to justify the inferiorisation and exclusion of people of colour.

Additionally, cultural differences have been employed to explain the successful or failed integration of migrant groups into British society. When this ideological construction of difference is implemented in public institutions (for instance, in the labour market, criminal justice system, housing, mass media, or education system), a continuum of desirability is fashioned in which the dominant group represents the normative measure of difference. This has serious consequences for ethnic minorities who are assigned different expectations and levels of power according to how culturally similar or *dissimilar* they are. For ethnic minorities with the darkest complexions, and whose "origins" are furthest from Europe, the greater the possibility for discrimination and otherisation.

Certain physical attributes, as in the case of the Roma, have become a signifier of otherness and difference. The extent of this otherisation is dependent on various other factors, for example, place of birth, nationality, religion and spatial belonging. Some of the participants explained that they had "passed" as Spanish or Italian, however, once they had disclosed they were Roma they were treated less favourably. This suggests Southern Europeans are better received and more welcomed by British people, than Eastern Europeans, and particularly Roma. This construction of difference in terms of their desirability and similarity to "us" (hence, acceptance and tolerance) and undesirability, difference and remoteness from "us" (hence, non-acceptance and intolerance) are employed as thresholds to include or exclude ethnic minorities from the boundaries of Britishness.

The concepts of "Eastern European" and "Roma" are used in the same manner as the notion of "blackness" to signify the wealth of difference and otherness in relation to the white British identity. This is not to claim that whiteness is homogeneous and unambiguous or that white people are instilled with "horizontal comradeship" (Anderson. 1991, 7). We can begin to unravel, however, the binary of the "Brit" and the "immigrant", "us" and "them", through showing that not all immigrants are marginalised and excluded from British society. Rather, in the UK the category of "immigrant" has been historically contingent on understandings of Europeanness.

Some participants, despite being born in the UK, referred to being considered as British 'on paper' only:

> Simeon (M: 19: Bulgarian Roma): I feel British and I am British if I'm allowed to say that…because people are always suspicious when I say I'm British like I'm lying or something. Like if I say I'm British they always ask like "but originally though?" Originally? Like what does that mean? I was born here in England but they only see me as British on paper and not as *British* British.

Being born in the UK is not regarded, therefore, as tantamount to being recognised as British. Simeon points out that despite having a strong sense of belonging to the British identity, his Britishness becomes an object of suspicion and his entitlement to this identity is challenged. This evokes questions of who can be considered authentically British (an inherited Britishness) and who can be considered as British on paper only (an acquired

Britishness). Notions of an inherited membership to a collective British identity inhibit formal citizenship rights from functioning as a symbol of belonging.

Despite the fact that Simeon was born in Britain, his claim to Britishness is challenged as his Roma and/or Bulgarian/Turkish ethnicity is assumed to be his "real" or "original" identity. As a result, even when Simeon states Britain as his place of birth, it is not regarded as a strong enough argument to justify his claim to British identity. The construction of the British identity is executed on a daily basis through a method of interrogation that commands answers to specific questions: Where are you from? Originally? Why don't you *act* British? These questions are not unintended. Rather, they signify issues of questioned belonging and illusions of "other places" as the Romanies original place of belonging. As the quotes above indicate, the sustained questioning of one's origin is often a disciplining device to establish, and make distinctions between, an "us" and a "them". It, thus, legitimatises the unequal power relations between dominant groups and minorities. This raises many issues about the discriminatory nature and understanding of Britishness and citizenship. This is greatly significant in the context of Romani nationalism, which offers a "home" or sense of belonging to those excluded from Britishness or, as discussed above, "Europeanness".

The Cultural Boundary

The cultural boundary marks as British 'those individuals whose behaviour, life-style, and values are perceived as typically British' (Jacobson, 1997, 193). Defining precisely what "British culture" is, however, is by no means uncomplicated. To be culturally British might indicate, for instance, that one is

'attached to the majority language, established religion and cultural heritage of Britain; or to exhibit supposedly "typical" British moderation, tolerance, reserve and modesty in one's day-to-life; or to have knowledge of the famous people of contemporary Britain, and of currently popular modes of speech, dress and food; or to be familiar with the key social and political institutions of modern Britain, and the essentially rationalist, individualist norms which underpin them' (Jacobson, 1997, 193). Cultural Britishness, thus, has multiple meanings and can be imagined as a continually shifting blend of the above components.

The participants' strong affiliations with their home countries and exclusion from "racial" Britishness and Europeanness, did not preclude acknowledgments that they had adopted elements of British culture to such an extent that it had become part of who they are. 'I've changed many ways in Britain. The clothes I wear, I like to go out to party, have fish and chips, cheesy chips [laughs] I do the same things as my British friends' explained Velislava (F: 19: Bulgarian Roma) . Similarly, Ina (F: 26: Romanian Roma) said 'I say sorry all the time now [laughs]. When I first moved here I was wondering why are British people so polite? Why do strangers say hello? Now I smile, I say 'hello, how are you?' I've become very British in that way.' Unlike the conscious efforts to assimilate discussed in chapter four, which were employed as a means to which avert otherness, in this case it was due to the fact that they have lived in Britain for some time that these attitudes, values or cultural characteristics have become important to who they are. They can be described as an unconscious by-product of their post-migratory lives in Britain.

The participants adopted these "British" behaviours and, as a result, felt often as attached to Britain as they did to their home countries.

Cultural differences remain, however, at the root of "everyday" hostility in the participant's neighbourhoods. Many of the participants noted that their non-Roma neighbours were unhappy with the practices of the Roma community. Ina (F: 26: Romanian Roma) noted, 'you will see very often Roma socialising in large groups on the street and this has become a big issue for local residents, they say it is threatening, noisy… in our countries it is very normal to socialise in this way in our villages'. Natalia (F: 29: Slovakian Roma) added, 'there has been issues between Roma and other locals about rubbish… where most Roma have come from, they don't have the bin service like we have here and so at first they were leaving rubbish on the streets and it caused a lot of anger'. Such tensions have been the subject of media attention and there have been numerous articles and documentaries which have drawn attention to the "clash of cultures" in neighbourhoods with large Roma populations.

Katarina and Monika live in an ethnically diverse suburb of South Yorkshire with a large Pakistani population. They have both experienced conflict with and hostility from their neighbours which has been rooted mainly in cultural differences. Their neighbourhood has frequently featured in newspaper articles and has featured on television documentaries which sought to highlight tensions between the Roma and Asian communities:

Katarina (F: 21: Slovakian Roma): I know that I try very hard with them [Pakistani community] but there no be harmony for us. When I see them its provokácie [provocation], never ending. They know you Cigán, Gypsy, they see you, they know. They provoke you because you Gypsy. They want to make you feel very little and it make me very angry.

Monika (F: 47: Czech Roma): It's very painful to see neighbours in newspapers, the news of the television, saying very bad things about us, lies about us. I've been told the British say very same things about them when they move to England. I think they would be more welcome to us, more pleasant, but they are nasty people, they hate Roma. I say I'll be more Roma, I'm not coming invisible because they do not like Gypsies moving to their small Asia.

These tensions undoubtedly have an impact on the participants' sense of belonging or "feeling at home". Many of the participants noted that such tensions had brought them closer together with their Roma neighbours from other parts of Europe to whom they considered having a cultural "connection" with. Pavel (M: 25: Slovakian Roma) stated 'we can become quite segregated in our areas because we have no connection with the other communities in the neighbourhood' and Marija (F: 24: Slovenian Roma) added 'they [other residents] don't make you feel welcome so you tend to stick to your own'. While participants considered cultural exchange a positive feature of living in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, they believed that the various cultural traditions and behaviours attached to different ethnic groups, acted as a barrier to social

cohesion. For example, Janka (F: 26 Slovakian Roma) noted that Muslim residents had been unhappy with groups of young Roma drinking on the street, while Velislava (F: 19: Bulgarian Roma) indicated her parents felt it inappropriate for her to socialise with non-Roma residents given that she is expected to marry within the community. Nonetheless, the majority of the participants expressed a desire to build relationships with other local residents, albeit they felt the onus was on non-Roma residents to initiate interaction. Nevertheless, Ina remains positive that the tensions between Roma and other minority ethnic communities will in time reduce, stating:

> Ina (F: 26: Romanian Roma): At first it was very hard for both communities to get along but many Asian people are reaching out to us, who recognise something of themselves in us and I do think we will learn to co-operate, to get along.

Roma Notions of Homeland

As explored in Chapter Two, the (re)discovery of an Indian homeland has been central to the Romani nationalist movement with the IRU (no date) drawing on common roots to establish a sense of groupness. The idea of shared Indian origins has been employed in an attempt to fashion a collective identity which can transcend the geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries that divide the Romani population. Romani nationalists, thus, seek to cultivate a diaspora consciousness to which a collective memory, myth or idea of a homeland is elemental (Safran, 1991; Brubaker, 2005). The notion of an Indian homeland was central to the narratives of participants who identify as Romani nationalists. Zusana (F: 48: Roma) explained, 'India is our

homeland, it is the birthplace of our language'; Anastasija (F: 19: Roma) added, 'We are from India, we travelled through the Middle East to Europe'; while Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma) suggested 'we are stateless people of Indian origins… India is our motherland'.

The majority of Roma participants, however, had little, if any, knowledge of the Romanies' Indian origins. Rozalina (F: 38: Bulgarian Roma), for example, explained 'I didn't know this, I learn this today. This is very interesting'. Monika (F: 47: Czech Roma) added, 'I heard India before but I don't know a lot of things about this'. Others explained they had become more aware of their ancestry since moving to Britain. Katarina noted 'I come to UK and I learn many things. I learn about India and this makes much sense to me'. Similarly, Miroslav (28: M: Slovakian Roma) stated '…we learn much about the journeys of Roma from India to Scotland. This is very interesting to me; I did not know these histories before'. The relatively recent increase in the consciousness of Indian origins amongst the Roma suggests that collective Romani identity is rooted in neither myth nor memory of a homeland.

Their narratives echoes the research of scholars, such as Marushiakova and Popov (2000), who argue that the Romanies have defined their homeland in various inconsistent and conflicting ways, with the narrative of Indian origins rarely being passed down from generation to generation. Ivana, for example, situates the Romani homeland in Egypt:

Ivana (F: 52: Roma): I don't believe this Indian thing, this is new, it

isn't the story we know. To me, the Gypsies were Jews that

followed Moses from Egypt and were separated and continued to travel away from Egypt. Gypsies and Jews have very similar culture, music, journey through Europe, and very same experience of hate and suffering. Gypsies are chosen people….Gypsy comes from Egyptian.

Her account of Romani origins was shared by many of the participants. Indeed, in response to questions about the Romani homeland, Egypt was cited more often by the participants than India. The participants do, therefore, appear to ascribe to a notion of diaspora and were largely aware of their history of dispersal. They nevertheless were unable to locate an agreed land of origin and had no clear account of their ancestry let alone their Indian origins. Petra (F: 49: Slovakian Roma), for example, spoke of the Roma as a "scattered" people but did not locate a homeland:

I can see Roma as people scattered throughout the world, so yes, we come from the same. I don't know where this place is the same – you say India, she say Egypt, I think just I am Slovak. I know our home start somewhere else. We scattered across the world over history.

As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars such as Hall (1990), Gilroy (2000) and Clifford (1994) argue that diaspora consciousness does not necessarily entail an emotional investment in a territorial homeland. Rather, the processes of dispersal, displacement and suffering can play a significant role in the formation of diasporic identities. It is clear from the narratives that the

participants have a sense of "we-ness" regardless of their awareness of an Indian homeland. As Petra's narrative suggests, the dispersal of the Romani people does not have to be understood as rooted in a defined geographical territory. Indeed, the location of a Romani homeland was of little importance to the participants.

Teodor (M: 27: Kosovan Roma): I mean it's interesting to read about our history but it doesn't really change the way I think about myself. I'm Kosovan, like for me that is my homeland, and now I live in England and I tell my children about our past in Kosovo, Serbia, because it's fact and proven, I was there. India is not part of my history and I don't even think it is proven without a doubt.

Efraim (M: 68: Bulgarian Roma): Roma, especially now, we don't need very long histories because like myself I was born in Bulgaria, I have worked in Germany, I have been here in England a long time. I know I have grandparent from Turkey. Here I trace my origins to more recent places and these I see as homelands… we have had many homelands.

For Teodor and Efraim, the Indian homeland is a remote past and somewhat irrelevant to the present. Their identities are rooted in lived memories and homelands are traced back only a few generations. As Efraim implies, the increased mobility and migration of the Roma has meant that understandings of home are rooted in the present and recent past, with their home countries being considered their homelands. A notable divergence from this is

observable in the narratives of Velislava and Simeon, both of whom are Bulgarian "Muslim Roma". As opposed to seeing Bulgaria, or indeed India, as a homeland, they consider Turkey their homeland. Velislava (19: F: Bulgarian Roma) explained:

> You visit my village in Bulgaria, you see that we very like much Turkish culture, speak Turkish. The big satellite to get the Turkish TV and music. We think really we are Turkish people, that we come from Turkey, so Turkey maybe homeland and not India.

What is clear is that the Roma's understandings of homeland are not heterogeneous. Hall (1990) urges us to recognise the differences and discontinuities which shape diaspora identities (see Chapter 2). Groups are divided along lines of class, sexuality, gender, country of residence, country of origin etc. and, thus, each participant will navigate feelings of "home" differently. Indeed, the above narratives suggest that the participants' understanding of homeland differs depending on their country of origin, religion and migratory history and, as Hall suggests, they are under constant transformation. The Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, do not have a history of migration which poses the question of whether they will have stronger identifications with the notion of an Indian homeland. The remainder of this chapter will explore the concepts of home and homeland in relation to Romany Gypsies.

Home is Everywhere and Nowhere

The term "Gypsy" infers that mobility and rootlessness are central to Romany Gypsy identity thus distinguishing them from the settled population, to whom home is a physical space within fixed regional and national boundaries. Nomadism, however, does not signify that Romany Gypsies do not have a home, or indeed "homes", but it does imply that understandings of diaspora and homeland will be problematic when applied to the Romany Gypsies (Toninato, 2009). Scholarly understandings of nomadism and mobility tend to prioritise their physical aspects, given that they are written from the perspective of sedentary societies (Toninanto, 2009) and often, therefore, overstate Romany Gypsies detachment from place.

In response to the question "where is home?" the participants referred to a multitude of physical locales. 'My grandparents were from down south, round Dorset way' said Max (M: 20: Romany Gypsy). Dale (M: 32: Romany Gypsy) explained 'I've lived in Doncaster, Hull, Salford… my Nan was from Shropshire…we've always travelled round the Midlands too'. Melody (F: 30: Romany Gypsy) added 'My Granny is actually Scottish, we were well known up in Aberdeen but my dad's folk were always Yorkshire, York way and down the coast'. These narratives can be described as memories of where home *has been*. Collective histories and memories of "homes past" reaffirm nomadic identities and maintain connections to fixed physical locales that the participants continue to visit and feel attachment to. Participants often spoke of having strong attachments to towns, such as Appleby, Kenilworth and Scarborough, in which horse fairs have been held for generations.

The participants discursively construct their nomadism as a journey from where home has been, where it is now, and where it will be in the future. Narratives of the past are often rooted in nostalgia for the nomadic lifestyle that has since been lost. Homes of the present, such as, "bricks and mortar" accommodation, are often viewed as undesirable and impermanent, as will be discussed later in the chapter. As such, participants are always often considering their "future homes" whether it be a return to a more nomadic lifestyle or a Gypsy and Traveller site, etc. For James,

> James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): ….home is everywhere and nowhere. When I travel I'm happy. Wherever you are in the country there are memories, family, friends. Freedom - that is home to me and I can find it anywhere but the problem is I'm not allowed it. We can set up home anywhere but we know we'll be moved on in a day, a week, a month, or chased out of neighbourhoods, so is it really home or is it someone else's home?

For Romany Gypsies, notions of "home" are complex. The participants shared narratives of liminality, displacement and instability in which home is not fixed nor guaranteed. Nicole (F: 31: Romany Gypsy) explained, '…in the last two years I've been moved on probably fifty, sixty times. We don't know where we'll be calling home from one week to the next'. Ben (M: 26: Romany Gypsy) added, 'we have homes, just nowhere to put them'. The participants refer here to the multitude of legislation aimed at curbing the nomadic way of life (see

Chapter 1). They have all, to varying degrees, been the object of legislative control and regulation and spoke at length of their experiences of eviction and displacement. Such legislation has instigated, over the past three decades, a decline in the traditional nomadic lifestyle. As Frank (M: 49: Romany Gypsy) explains:

> I'd say since the 80s really, with the troubles with the New Travellers, it's been hard to travel like we used to. The Romany way has been ruined with law after law. You can travel, sure, but stopping you know council will be down by the end of the next working day serving you notice, legal action and all that. It just ain't like it was before, we don't travel like we used to. We're not the same people we were, we've lost something, communities, families, torn apart.

Sedentarism is deeply embedded in Western modernist thinking in which nomadism has traditionally contradicted the physical fixity of home. The increasing regulation of Romany lifestyles demonstrate that Romany mobilities are considered undesirable and as something that must be brought under control. As Frank's narrative implies, legislation has not only enforced physical restrictions on mobility, but has curbed their opportunities to maintain community and family networks. This arguably is an attempt to weaken collective Romany identities. Indeed, as McVeigh (1997, 2) argues the Romany Gypsies 'very existence threatens, undermines, "invades" sedentary identity'. Policies of spatial exclusion, as discussed in chapter one, have always been employed to keep poor, white, marginalised groups apart from

the wider, respectable, white population. Policies towards the Romanies, however, go far beyond spatial confinement and instead encourage assimilation and sedentarisation (Mayall, 1988).

Legislation has thus sought to constrain Gypsy and Traveller identity. Changes to planning policy, quietly introduced in 2015, prevent Gypsies and Travellers from settling on permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites unless they can prove that they maintain a nomadic lifestyle (see chapter 1). Consequently, in order to retain their ethnicity, Romany Gypsies must travel for part of the year despite facing increasing legislative restrictions on their mobility. Peggy (F: 47: Romany Gypsy) explains:

> It's a catch-22. We can't travel because of the laws they made but if we don't travel they'll take our ethnicity away from us and say we can't live on sites anymore. Being a Gypsy is something you're born as, not something you can become. If I don't travel I'm still a Gypsy but not in the eyes of the law.

Legislation, thus, assumes the continual movement of Romany Gypsy families between permanent sites, despite the willingness of some, including the majority of the participants, to establish and settle in permanent homes on Gypsy and Traveller sites. It is not only their mobility, therefore, that disrupts the settled populations' understandings of home, but their immobility as well. Even when settled in Gypsy and Traveller sites their presence is deemed problematic. Many of the participants referred to instances of hostility between Gypsies and Travellers living on sites and local residents. Mary (F: 43:

Romany Gypsy) explained she found it hard to 'feel at home' in such an environment:

> There was a lot of opposition to the site being here, there still is. We get a lot of trouble, they don't want us here and, to be honest, I don't want to be here either. I mean, it gives me security. I know I have somewhere to put my trailer but the trouble we get from the gorjers is not a nice way to live… I'm trapped, I ask God where can I go? I have to stay here because there aren't any other sites, I can't travel. It's not the home I want, I don't feel at home…

The opposition and hostility from Mary's neighbours can be explained in terms of the boundaries of whiteness discussed in chapter one. Mary's non-Gypsy neighbours seek to defend their homes and neighbourhoods in response to the "invasion" of abject white others who appear to threaten the boundaries of whiteness. Whiteness is equated with sedentarism – an ideology that is rooted in territory. Sedentarism implies civilisation and progress whereas nomadism is seen as backward and wild. In this way, it upholds and justifies orientalist thinking and nomadism is marked as a non-white lifestyle. The only way to be accepted in British society, therefore, is via full assimilation. As Bancroft (2005, 91) argues, 'Gypsies either have to stop being Gypsies (spatial control) or go be Gypsies somewhere else (spatial exclusion)'.

Assimilationist policy has led to the forced settlement of Romany Gypsies into housing. For many of the participants, "bricks and mortar" housing is considered a source of deep shame:

> Melody (F: 30: Romany Gypsy): We only stopped travelling because my mum got cancer….then we had to sell the trailer because there was nowhere to keep it here…I don't really want to unsettle the kids from school now…we're not staying in a house forever, when my mum's better we'll be travelling again.

> Chloe (F: 22: Romany Gypsy): I couldn't get the kids into school when we was travelling…when they've done with primary school we'll be travelling again.

Both Melody and Chloe went to great lengths to justify their settlement into housing – family sickness, their children's education, and so on. Likewise, other participants attempted to make the impression that settling in a house was a short-term solution to a specific situation. A decline in the nomadic way of life has signified for many the weakening of community cohesion and collective identity. Many participants expressed a feeling of isolation.

> Mary (F: 43: Romany Gypsy): It's very sad to see, we're just not like we used to be…when I grew up, we we're one big community, you'd be travelling together, living in your extended family, travelling with friends…I think people are isolated now, in most

towns there's only a handful of Gypsy families, if that…that kind of

life, that kind of community, just doesn't work when we're housed.

A decline in nomadism was associated with a loss of identity. Indeed, nomadism was considered central to the notion of "Romaniness". In the absence of nomadism, Gypsy culture becomes hard to "practice" or "observe". For James the transitioning into housing signified a loss of culture and loss of ethnic authenticity:

James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): My relationship with my family

broke down to a point where I couldn't live there anymore. I hate

living in a house, sometimes I just stop and think what the hell have

you become? I don't feel like a Gypsy, I'm like ashamed almost, I

don't travel. I don't stay in my trailer, I barely see other Gypsies

anymore, I just honestly don't know who I am anymore...like when

people refer to me as a Gypsy I feel like a fraud….

As the above narrative demonstrates, the impact of forced settlement can be profound and those who have made the transition to housing can suffer from a unique sense of imprisonment and physical oppression. Indeed, many of the participants stated that the most routine features of bricks and mortar accommodation - for instance, staircases, walls, doors, etc. – can provoke anxiety and depression. For many participants, housing was somewhat suffocating or claustrophobic compared to the relative freedom of nomadism. This is in spite of the fact that houses were often substantially larger than their

old trailers, caravans or homes. Not only is it difficult to adapt to this new environment, the transitioning to housing often involves feelings of grief and loss.

In spite of assimilationist policy, nomadism remains, both on an intragroup and intergroup level, one of the fundamental and observable markers of Gypsy ethnicity and an innate characteristic differentiating Gypsies from the wider population. As Liegeois (1998, 53) explains, 'to travel, to be "a Travelling person", is an essential identifying symbol for those concerned'. Or as Frank (M: 49: Romany Gypsy) puts it: 'just because we're in houses, it don't mean we've stopped travelling'. It appears, then, that the notion of nomadism can survive its physical demise. It holds various different meanings, with different participants emphasising economic, social, cultural and psychological understandings of nomadism. Nomadism is, therefore, as much a state of mind as it is way of life. What is palpable is that nomadism is far more than a lifestyle choice for these participants. Such a line of reasoning necessitates consideration of both nomadism in the physical sense, as a practical and preferred socioeconomic existence, and nomadism in the "emotional" or "spiritual" sense.

This is captured in the following quote from James:

James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): In the world of the gadze[8] it's all about land and property. This is my house, in my town, and it cost this much and I work a boring job that makes me miserable so I can have my piece of Britain. That's my idea of hell. It's the opposite of nomadism. Nomadism can be, you know, travelling but there's also the aspect of being free from all that bullshit. Not wanting land, just wanting to be free to go and explore the land, to work wherever, to live wherever, to sort of reject that very British aspiration of owing bricks and thinking it makes them successful. I never want that. That feels like prison to me, I just want to feel free.

The above narrative illustrates that nomadism comprises an emotional as well as a physical domain. As James states, it signifies freedom from the "official" or "bureaucratic" world. His account of nomadism, however, somewhat bolsters the romanticised notions of the Romanies that were propagated by the Gypsylorists which paint them as quaintly rebellious free-spirits 'living a natural, alfresco existence in the highways and byways…' (Holloway, 2005, 355). Indeed, at times, it was hard to move beyond such idealised understandings of the Romanies, as many of the participants themselves appeared to be "buy into" these romanticised stereotypes. By portraying Romany Gypsies as an unreservedly travelling people they are understood as rootless others, distinct from the wider population. They are considered, therefore, not as a people at home in Britain, with attachments to physical

[8] Non-Romanies

places, but as "guests", "strangers", or "invaders". With this in mind, the participants' feelings of "Britishness" will now be explored.

Feelings of Britishness amongst Romany Gypsies

Tara (F: 35: Romany Gypsy): I'm only British because I was born here. I don't identify with it...the whole proud to be British thing just isn't me…it just doesn't raise the same feelings I get when I think about being Romani, it's just a fact of life.

Max (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): I see myself as British and I'm proud to British. I'm an English Gypsy. I was born here, my parents were born here, their parents were born here. You know, my grandparents fought for this country in the war…. I love this county. I've travelled every part of it…. I was born here and I'll die here.

These two quotes illustrate the two predominant approaches to Britishness amongst the Romany Gypsy participants. Both invoke civic definitions of nationalism which infer that everyone living in the territory of a state belongs to the nation, irrespective of their ethnic or cultural identity (Jacobson, 1997). Britishness, for the participants, is secured through being born in Britain and holding British citizenship and nationality. Civic Britishness, however, provoked varying emotional responses from participants. For some participants, Britishness is an issue of minor importance. 'It says it on my birth certificate - born in Britain. It doesn't really mean much else to me' said Melanie. As Tara inferred, this is perhaps due to strong feelings of Romaniness which offset the need for strong emotional attachments to

national identity. Alternatively, it suggests that Britishness can remain an unacknowledged privilege and certainty for Romany Gypsies who, owing to their whiteness, do not occupy the same politically charged relationship with Britishness as migrants and people of colour. In this sense, Britishness can be "taken for granted".

Britishness evoked, for others, a deep sense of pride and patriotism. 'I'm very proud to be British' explained Sam (M: 28: Romany Gypsy), 'Gypsies have a long history in Britain, we're proudly British people'. Here the participants define Britishness in terms of "racial" boundaries. Britishness is related to a common descent and history with the rest of the British population. What is more, the participants referred to cultural markers of Britishness such as a common language and common religion. Chloe (F: 22: Romany Gypsy) stated:

> You get all these immigrants coming here now that don't speak English and we're not like them, we've been here generations… we are British, we speak English, we were born here, we're part of Britain….not like these Muslims, we go to church.

Chloe constructs boundaries here between a British "us" and a non-British "them". She discursively positions Romany Gypsies into the category of Britishness by highlighting, what she considers, the important markers of Britishness. These include a traceable British ancestry, fluency in English, and following Christianity. History also becomes important for substantiating Britishness. The participants often, for example, referred to the role of Romany

Gypsies in WW1 and WW2. Narratives attached to defending the nation often evoke a sense of patriotism. This was palpable in the participants' narratives:

> Johnny (M: 45: Romany Gypsy): Gypsies fought in both world wars just like every other British man, they fought for Queen and country and sacrificed their lives. That makes me proud that we fought for our country. It says a lot about us. We're British, we love our country, we'll die for our country.

This essentialised understanding of Britishness is important. Unlike the Roma, Romany Gypsies can draw on a long historical legacy when making claims to Britishness and many of the participants expressed a strong national identity. It is paradoxical, therefore, that the same participants construct cultural Britishness as a barrier to inclusion. Max is critical of the notion of "British values". Despite having a strong emotional attachment to his national identity, he considers British values and culture as impeding his access to Britishness:

> Max (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): I'm British as they come, my family are from Hampshire originally, nowhere else, but if I say I'm proud to be British then gorjers will be like well why don't you act British then? You don't have British values or British culture so you're not really British. Like basically I can't properly be British unless I live in a house and have these British values they always harking on about.

Like Max, many of the participants believed that they were excluded from Britishness not because they were assumed to have a "foreign" heritage, but because of their cultural otherness. As discussed in chapter one, notions of "otherness" are now increasingly grounded in assumptions about cultural, as opposed to racial difference. Gliroy (1991) and Hall (1998) refer to "new" or "cultural" racism in which differences in culture, ways of life, and morals and beliefs have overtaken biological characteristics as the main signifiers of difference. Cultural racism exploits these difference to construct a British norm or "British values", used to condemn and marginalise cultural "others", and justify cultural assimilation (Modood, 1997). Romany Gypsies, by virtue of their way of life, sit on the margins of cultural Britishness. A consciousness of cultural non-belonging, of an exclusion from Britishness, was shared by the majority of the participants and is illustrated in the following quote:

> Tommy (M: 35: Romany Gypsy): If you act British, you know live your life the way that it supposed to be British, then you're going to go further in life in a lot of ways, like you'll get a good job and all that and respect in society…they don't see me as like them, like living a British life, the British culture, and that is part of your daily life and there's no getting away from it.

Tommy indicates that being defined and recognised as British remains a solid foundation for exercising one's citizenship rights and accessing opportunities. Not being recognised as British negatively impacts one's position in a society that is structured by unequal power relations between the dominant British position and the inferiorised minority position. Being defined or marked as a

minority suggests an inferior social status in which one is not recognised or accepted as equal to the dominant members of society. Lack of recognition has direct consequences, therefore, for the participants social and material lives. Many participants refer to an "exclusive" British identity and consider it impenetrable, even if changes are made to their cultural attributes:

Shauna (F: 27: Romany): I'm born and bred in England but I don't feel like I'm completely British, not because I think I'm like foreign or anything but because I'm surrounded by people who think I'm some kind of alien. Even if I didn't live in a caravan, they'd not accept me as a real English person. Even if I changed my clothes and didn't dress like a typical Gypsy girl, they'd think I'm not properly English.

Experiences of discrimination entail the identification and awareness of the different physical or cultural markers that one has or lacks and the possibility or impossibility of obtaining them. Living in Britain, whether from birth or through migration, certainly provides a baseline of rights, yet the respondents encounter informal exclusion from these rights in their everyday lives. Shauna and Tommy refer to the ways in which their claims to Britishness are rejected. Their experiences imply a conflict and contradiction between the formal criteria for accessing citizenship rights and the informal criteria of who does and who does not belong to the "British identity". Their dialogue above suggests that a sense of belonging is entangled with processes of inclusion and exclusion. Although there is a will to be accepted as British, Tommy and

Shauna appear to have lost hope in obtaining access to equal citizenship in the UK.

The participants expressed frustration with the exclusivity of British society, making reference to the exclusionary experiences they encounter in their day to day lives. They live in a society which confronts them with a sense of non-belonging. This is an acute and uncomfortable feeling that can be experienced in many ways. Naomi draws attention to the ways in which her claim to Britishness is contested and rejected:

> Naomi (F: 18: Romany Gypsy): Once I was coming home from the footie, down where we was stopping in our trailers, and some gorjer girls come up to me, they was from the village we was stopping in, and they're shouting "fucking Pikey" and "fuck off back to where you come from" because I'm a Gypsy and I don't belong in their village. You know I just told them to do one, just because they're gorjers they shouldn't think they own towns or whatever. To be honest, it happens all the time.

In Naomi's experience, being a "gorjer" – that is, being non-Gypsy – appears to be a central criterion for defining Britishness and who or who doesn't belong. Nomadism is viewed as an occupation of land and the Romanies are labelled as intruders who confront the boundaries of Britishness. Naomi rejects the accusation of non-belonging and makes claims to Britishness. Nomadism, thus, challenges the boundaries of national identities and

citizenship and urges a redefinition of the boundaries of the British nation state that is composed of so many various groups.

Interestingly, Naomi and a number of other participants implied that to some degree they exclude themselves from Britishness. When asked what it means to be British, Naomi responded 'I don't know, ask them [non-Gypsies]…' Indeed, cultural understandings of Britishness left some participants feeling somewhat conflicted about their own Britishness. In response to the same question, Shane (M: 38: Romani) commented, 'I was born In Britain so I'm British, but culturally I am a Gypsy, like I don't really like British culture at all'. When asked what he does not like about "British culture", he responded, 'they treat their old really bad, putting them in homes, that is disgusting to me…young girls having sex and drinking…keeping themselves to themselves, like they're scared of their neighbours, they just don't have a community…'. To "opt out" of cultural Britishness is, evidently, one approach to challenging the imposition of otherness by the non-Romani majority. It gives rise to, what Castells (1997) termed, resistance identity which was discussed in Chapter 4.

Romany Gypsy Notions of Homeland

> Shauna (F: 27: Romany Gypsy): I've been discriminated against a lot but one of the times that stands out is I heard a gorjer telling me "go back to where you came from, get out our country". Like, I started to think, well where are we from? Where do we belong?

As Shauna indicates, homeland is considered an important marker of belonging and operates as a means through which to include and exclude people. The incident described above stood out to Shauna because Romany Gypsies were not viewed as belonging to the same homeland as the British people. This confronted her sense of belonging to Britain. Indeed, the issue of belonging was often evoked when the participants described their ideas of homeland. India was identified as self-evident Romani homeland by the majority of participants:

> Jessica (F: 20: Romany Gypsy): We're originally from India, about six hundred years ago I think. We were chased out and we travelled to Europe and then came to Scotland… and that's why people have always been suspicious with us, because we came over from India. They've done DNA tests, blood tests, it's scientifically proven. Our language is Indian too.

The participants recognise themselves as a dispersed people, largely of Indian origins. They appear, therefore, to have preserved a myth of their homeland. As discussed in Chapter two, this is considered of great importance to the formation of diaspora consciousness and identity (Safran, 1991 and Cohen, 1996). Their awareness of their origins seemingly contradicts previous research (see Hancock (1997) and Fonseca (2011) which suggests that the Romanies do not possess a collective memory or myth of a Romany homeland. The participants accounts of an Indian homeland were not, however, a "memory" of a homeland passed down through generations. Rather, the notion of a Romani homeland in India was a relatively new

discovery. Many of the participants had (re)discovered their Indian origins through events and workshops hosted by Gypsy and Traveller organisations, or through conducting their own research online. The development of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month was also recognised as raising consciousness of their Indian connections. This is illustrated in the following discussion:

Naomi (F: 18: Romany Gypsy): [Local Gypsy and Traveller organisation] are quite big on Gypsy history month now and that, it's not bad actually cause I found out a lot about us. I think maybe I knew a little bit about India but I learnt most through them, like how we got from India to here.

Mary (F: 43: Romany Gypsy): Well the kids are even learning this at school now. I know a couple school's round here have done a bit about Gypsy history, you know with all the Roma moving in.

Billy (M: 27: Romany Gypsy): Most folk got the internet now anyway, it's all on Wikipedia, you don't have to be reading books or owt. It's pretty much common knowledge these days.

Mary (F: 43: Romany Gypsy): See I don't remember it being such a big thing when I was a girl. We definitely know more about it these days… I was told Egypt growing up,

The above exchange suggests that knowledge and recognition of a Romani homeland has coincided with the growth of Gypsy and Traveller organisations and the subsequent success of initiatives, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History month, which seek to educate the Romani community about their

history. It resembles, therefore, Hobsbawm and Rangers (1983) "invented tradition" given that a memory of an Indian homeland has not been preserved in popular memory. Rather, it has been popularised by Gypsy and Traveller organisations and activists. Collective Romani identity is thus unlikely to be rooted in notions of an Indian homeland. Nevertheless, as Mary implies, the notion of a homeland, albeit an Egyptian one, has been common to Romany oral tradition long before the theory of Indian origins was popularised.

> Annie (F: 74: Romany Gypsy): I don't know if you've ever gone back in history, but when we was originally discovered in Scotland in the fourteenth century our title was little Egyptians. I can't believe India would give us a title like that. I believe we came from Egypt, and that is what they called the nomadic groups that was travelling around their country. You know, I think it was quite an endearing name, which got corrected over the generations to Gypsy.

Annie shows resistance to the academically acknowledged accounts of Romani origins. An Egyptian homeland has been important to her understanding of her ethnic identity. Indeed, many of the participants had been given a similar account of their origins by their parents or grandparents. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous research has indicated that the theory of Indian origins has failed to resonate beyond Romani activists and scholars. As Hancock (1997) explained, the Romani homeland has traditionally been situated in Egypt. Annie's resistance to scholarly accounts of her origins was shared by other participants. Tara suggests it undermines the tradition of oral

storytelling amongst Romani communities, in which stories of Romani origins seldom include references to India:

> Tara (F: 35: Romany Gypsy): I think it's a wee shame really, it sort of shits all over the stories that people like my mam told us growing up. There's all sorts of stories out there about where we come from, I just don't think this Indian thing, it sort of tells a lot of people that they're wrong but who's to say that these academics have any more proof than your old Gypsy lady telling her grandkids that the Gypsies come from Egypt.

Similarly, Shannon questioned whether research into the origins of the Romani people was beneficial to Romani communities themselves. Throughout her interview she made a distinction between India, as an imaginary homeland, and Britain as a tangible homeland in which she lives and has memories of. She explains:

> Shannon (F: 58: Romany Gypsy): …I don't identify with it [India]…you know I think we're going into the realms of testing our DNA, which we can do these days, and find journeys our ancestors took, or we can pick some obscure place in the distance and say that's me…we need to preserve our culture….and identity, our traditional ways as far as possible but this, this preoccupation with India, no I don't agree with that.

Shannon's criticism is important because it suggests there is not an innate bond between the Romanies and India just because scholarly research has "proven" a link. The bonds the participants have with certain places are contextually situated. Their identifications with home, homeland and place are historical, changeable, and adaptable given the socio-political factors that impinge on their personal and collective histories and experiences. As Hall (1990) argues, diasporic identities, too, are constantly transforming (see Chapter 2). The following quote illuminates the transitory nature of "home" and "origin" and highlights the political potential of the theory of Indian origins:

> Tony (M: 26: Romany Gypsy): When I found out [the Romanies were originally from India] it didn't change how I feel about myself really. I still feel British, like England, Britain, will always be my home… but I didn't just forget it either, you know? I'm interested, I do feel like it's an important part of our history. I always said I'll save up so I can travel to India and see where we're from. I want to do like a pilgrimage, travel the route we took to get here.

Tony's desire to visit India indicates that new meanings can be assigned to places once they have been described as a homeland. His understanding of "home" has undergone transformation and, though he still sees himself as British, India and a history of dispersal have become important to his understanding of his Romani identity. The idea of "pilgrimage" to a mythical homeland was shared by other participants who also expresses a desire to return to India. Shauna (F: 27: Romany Gypsy) states 'I'd love to go to India, I think it would be very spiritual to retrace our steps' while Johnny (M: 45:

Romany Gypsy) said 'I think I'll go to India before I die, see where it all began'.

They display, then, not a desire to return permanently to India, but a cultural

identification or spiritual connection to India. They exhibit what Brah (1996,

192) terms 'homing desire' (see Chapter 2). They do not long for permanent

return. Rather, they seek to reconcile their Romani identity with its mythical

and historical origins.

Summary

This chapter has focussed on the participants' understandings of home and

their sense of belonging to British society. The Roma maintain connections to

their countries of origin and assert a strong sense of national identity. They

consider British citizenship as a legal necessity, as opposed to a source of

identification. In many ways they can be considered British "on paper only",

and have little confidence in ever being "accepted" into British society. Often

this lack of belonging is rooted in cultural differences. Many Roma have faced

hostility and conflict due to assumed cultural clashes between Roma and non-

Roma. Nevertheless, many Roma felt they had adopted aspects of British

culture to such an extent that it had altered their identity and become part of

who they are.

Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, were largely patriotic and expressed

strong attachments to their British identity. They draw on a long historical

legacy when making claims to Britishness, in which a traceable British

ancestry and history of military service are deemed greatly important.

Nonetheless, they are critical of the cultural element of Britishness from which

they feel excluded. In many ways nomadism sets Romany Gypsies apart from

the rest of British society. For Romany Gypsies, land is to be roamed over and not owned and, thus, it becomes difficult to find a "home" in Britain's culture of sedentarism which has led to their forced settlement and isolation.

Given that the Romanies strongly identify with their countries of origin, it is not surprising that they have little interest in, or even knowledge of, an Indian homeland. Needless to say, the minority of Roma who identified as nationalists spoke passionately of India. The majority of Roma, however, had very little knowledge of their supposed ancestry, whereas Romany Gypsies had learnt only recently of their Indian roots. Though the notion of an Indian homeland is gaining popularity, many participants instead located a Romani homeland in Egypt. What was clear is that distant homelands held little importance to the participants and national identities were largely rooted in lived memories or in the recent past. In the next chapter, the notion of homeland will be revisited, exploring diasporic claims to a Romani homeland in the context of the Roma Nation.

Chapter 6

The Roma Nation

This chapter will explore the extent to which participants support, or actively adopt, the ideology of Romani nationalism. It will focus on the concept of collective identity and attempt to measure the participants' identifications with the "Roma Nation". It will pay particular heed to the specific circumstances and contexts in which the greatest levels of groupness and solidarity arise. It will end by considering critiques of Romani nationalism and will explore alternative approaches to mobilisation.

Narratives of Diaspora

Of the fifty-two participants, just five identified as Romani nationalists. The adoption of such an ideological stance was often in response to the assumed exclusivity of other European national identities and in resistance to forced assimilation and attempted eradication of Romani culture and identity. To be "Roma" and to fight for the maintenance of Romani identity is one of the central concerns of Romani diasporic politics. For many years, Romanies in Britain have organised politically with aim to protect and preserve their culture. Irrespective of how they define *themselves,* however, they are defined by society as "Gypsies". It is the Gypsy identity, a site of non-Britishness and otherness, which determines their position in society. "Gypsyness" is undesirable and is positioned as the negative counterpart of the British identity. Claiming "Romani" identity has, thus, become an active strategy for many Romanies to resist both the imposed Gypsy identity and assimilation. As Anastasija explains:

> Anastasija (F: 19: Roma): Gypsy is like the n-word. People use it to slur us, it's demeaning. Roma, Romani, this is who we really are, this is how we define ourselves, Gypsy is how we are defined by others.

Anastasija is engaged in what Taylor and Whittier (1992) refer to as "negotiation" – that is, the process of resisting and/or redefining stigmatising stereotypes of Romani identity. For Anastasija, "Gypsy" represents stigmatised representations of the Romanies which portray them as inherently criminal, workshy and culturally backward. She instead adopts the term "Romani" or "Roma" – a counter-narrative which frames the Romanies as an ethnic group with a rich cultural heritage. It is this focus on ethnocultural heritage which was predominantly cited when defining the boundaries of Romani identity. 'We are an ethnic group of Indian origins' said Igor (M: 21: Slovakian Roma). Zusana (F: 48: Czech Roma) added 'we share a language, culture and history'. Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma) elaborated 'we are a people of Indian origins living as nomads as we travelled towards Europe… we share a philosophy on life, cultural traditions and a violent history of oppression'. Understandings of "*who we are*", therefore, are territorially rooted in India with boundaries between Romanies and non-Romanies being drawn along cultural lines and historical narratives.

Accordingly, this group of participants employ a diasporic identity frame which closely follows Safran's (1991) territorially based definition of diaspora. As is seen in the above quotes, often their explanations of Romani identity begin

with reference to the Romanies assumed dispersal from India and subsequent journeys across the Middle East and Europe. Indian origins are thus a central marker of Romani identity, distinguishing them from other traditionally nomadic peoples. An Indian homeland is arguably a myth, with none of the participants retaining memories or lived experiences of India. Nonetheless, these participants feel a deep connection to India, as Frida (F: 43: Hungarian Roma) explains:

> I don't know India, you know, I've never been, but I have very strong spiritual connection to India. It's where it began… I do think it's the homeland of my people so I feel very connected… It is my hope to go to India, to Northern India, to visit, you know, the ancestral home.

Like Frida, many of the participants in this group had a desire to visit India. This is not to be confused as a longing to return, at least not in Safran's understanding on the term. The participants *do* wish to return to India but as visitors or "spiritual tourists", as opposed to settlers intending to (re)establish a Romani homeland. They exhibit Brah's (1996) "homing desire" – not a longing to return, but a longing to maintain a cultural identification with the homeland. These participants consider it important to Romani identity to uphold a connection to India. Zusana (F: 48: Czech Roma) explained, '…because over many years we have lost the connection to India, it is very important for us to teach our children and, of course, teach ourselves too about our ancestors'. They make considerable efforts, therefore, to maintain and restore the myth of the homeland.

Narratives of Groupness:

Fundamental to Safran's (1991) definition of diaspora is the manifestation of a collective consciousness and group solidarity. The participants who have adopted a diasporic identity frame are by no means ignorant of the divisions within the Romani community. As uncovered in Chapter 5, the majority of Roma participants had little, if any, knowledge of an Indian homeland, whereas Romany Gypsy participants displayed little emotional attachment to India despite having some awareness of its historical significance. A collective Romani identity and/or sense of solidarity is not, therefore, fashioned in relation to the homeland. What is more, the Romani people are deeply fragmented who, by consequence of their varying migratory paths, have differing lifestyles, customs and relationships with, and socioeconomic positions in, their countries of residence (Hancock, 1998; Marushiakova and Popov, 2004).

Identifying as Romani reveals very little, therefore, about the extent to which the participants' lived experiences fashion a sense of solidarity and/or collective identity. The task of participants engaged in diasporic politics, therefore, is to fashion a sense of "groupness" which transcends internal divisions. It is perhaps unsurprising, given their territorially rooted understandings of Romani identity, that these participants turn to the ideology of nationalism in an attempt to inspire groupness. Indeed, nationalist ideology necessitates setting aside differences within the group in favour of the nation.

In the process of constructing a "Roma Nation", these participants are selectively preserving the narrative of Indian origins. Anastasija (F: 19: Slovakian Roma), for example, argues 'the people believing we are from Egypt need correcting, this is a false story told by gadze… we need to teach all Roma our Indian origins'. Disregarding the process of creolisation, they also favour a version of Romani culture that is "untouched" by the cultures of European nation states. They downplay internal divisions, attributing any differences to forceful non-Romani influences:

Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma): It is very important to remember that Roma were one people when they leave India and they are one people now. We are one language, one culture…let us look at the difference between, I give example, Roma in Czech Republic and Roma in Poland. They share Roma culture, very similar, they do not share the Czech culture, the Polish culture, the gadze culture that is forced on us with assimilation. This is what differs us, the gadze culture, not the Roma culture and Romani nationalism is to fight this, to fight assimilation, to practice Roma culture as it should be…

The risk with such understandings of Romani identity is that they redraw the boundaries of "Romaniness" to exclude anyone lacking Romani culture, as defined by political entrepreneurs. What is more, they inevitably exclude other nomadic peoples subject to similar discrimination, stigmatisation and policies of assimilation. This becomes problematic in the British context given that Romany Gypsies have historically aligned themselves, at least in the political

sense, with the culturally similar Irish Travellers. For Anastasija, however, this is to the detriment of Romani unity:

> Anastasija (F: 19: Roma): I don't join in activism organised by Gypsy Traveller organisations for purpose of Irish Traveller problems like Dale Farm. I join in activism when, I give example, the media and politician lie about Roma, example the story of Maria in Greece, Roma invasions of UK, and France expel Roma from the country to return to Romania and Bulgaria. Irish Traveller have problems yes, but it is not connected to the Roma and the Roma Nation…my father is more involved with problems of Irish Travellers but I don't like that because it divides the Roma. The most important thing is…the Romani spirit and not Irish Travellers and the TV show they embarrass themselves on now.

Anastasija describes what she believe should constitute the boundary of Romani identity and why collective mobilisations should be enacted through Romani nationalism. Her stance on Romani identity assigns Romani nationalism a rank above other forms of groupness that are based on Gypsy and Traveller cooperation. Here shared origins (identity based claims) are considered a greater source of identification than shared experience (interest based claims). Often this was related to a fear of being discriminated against, on an international stage:

Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma): It is important for the Roma to have something that unites us. We have our own culture, history that goes back further than many other groups, our own language. We'll never be accepted as a distinct people by the international community if we're not recognised as a nation – a figurative Romastan – where we can maintain our own culture, beliefs and values. It is only then the world will accept us. I don't want to be associated with people like Irish Travellers – that is belittling. A people who live a backwards, idle life, who steal and rob, who turn their back on progress and have no distinct homeland from the Irish people. I don't want to be associated with people like them because the Roma have good values. Just look at how people look at Irish Travellers – they are not ethnically distinct and they do not wish to make any effort at integration or adaption. I don't want people to think of the Roma in a similar way.

In the process of constructing the boundaries of the nation, Gamson (1997, 80) argues that an "us" is defined 'not just against an external *them* but also against *thems* inside' (see Chapter 2). At present, Britain's Roma and Romany Gypsies are incorporated under the umbrella term of "Gypsies and Travellers" and are represented at a political level accordingly. For Romani nationalists this is problematic given that such a constituency does not share an ancestral homeland and cannot, therefore, make claims to nationhood. Roman and Anastasija mark Irish Travellers as undesirable "thems inside" who threaten the construction of a political constituency based on shared origins. Roman regards Irish Travellers and their negative representations (whether real or as

he imagines them) as a fitting example of the cost of not having a claim to nationhood. He uses their lack of a homeland distinct 'from the Irish people' to legitimise the Romanies as a nation. The Romanies, with their homeland in India, are thus enrolled into the alleged normative order of Europe while Irish Travellers remain, at least in Roman's eyes, a social problem.

He falls, then, into the trap of identity politics, as outlined by Butler (2004), which preserves a history of division. Using a homeland narrative, he distinguishes between those with the power to make claims (the Romanies with their territorial homeland) and those without power to make claims (the Irish Travellers). What is more, he privileges a specific form of Romani experience, namely one that necessitates that an individual must be well integrated and hold ambiguously defined "good values". Roman, thus, impedes other experience of Romaniness that may include estrangement from society and a sense of unity or solidarity with Irish Travellers.

Can We Speak of a Roma Community?

Marushiakova and Popov (2004: 88) ask 'how realistic is it to use the concept of community (let alone nation)' to describe the Romani peoples. This research has already indicated relatively weak attachments to an Indian homeland and a diversity in lived experiences. This section describes the degree of unity among Britain's Romanies through an exploration of the participants' relationships with, and connection to, the wider Romani community. Two important questions to consider, therefore, are: to what extent is it possible to talk about a single "Romani community" and to what

extent do Romanies from different countries form their own separate Romani communities?

If we turn, firstly, to the post-migratory networks of Roma migrants; many of the Roma participants moved to areas where they already had friends and relatives. These pre-existing networks continue to be important to them. Miroslav (M: 28: Slovakian Roma) explained:

> I have more in common with Roma from Slovakia because these persons have lived similar life to me, many arrive from same neighbourhood or nearby. And if I do not know them very well I probably know their family or have shared friendships… It was very useful to me when I arrive in Britain, they help to get me a house and job.

Like Miroslav, upon arrival in Britain many of the Roma participants were already part of a wider Romani community which could provide them with support and advice. The Roma networks, in which the participants found themselves part of, replicated their pre-migratory social networks in their home countries. Arguably, then, Romanies in Britain are divided into several smaller communities, as opposed to one united Romani community. Indeed, participants from different parts of Europe did not feel that they had much in common. They often stressed their national identities and explained that Roma migrants from different parts of Europe organise on the basis of national belonging. For example, they rent houses in the same neighbourhoods,

pursue the same occupations and build social networks with Roma from their own countries.

Muslim Roma often placed more priority on their religious affiliations as opposed to their Romani identity. The identities of Muslim Roma participants are influenced by their active involvement in British Muslim community life, which arguably strengthens their religious identities. Religion has an important function for these participants, who imagine themselves to be "Turks" regardless of their country of birth. Their religion is determined by their expression of a strong Turkish national identity, for example, Velislava (F: 19: Bulgarian Roma) said 'I am Muslim because I am Turkish'. At the same time, their religious affiliation strengthened their Turkish identity. Indeed, through a common religion Muslim Roma felt an attachment to the Turkish people. In the following exchange, Simeon, who is Muslim, explained that Muslim Roma often feel they have more in common with Turkish people than they do other Roma.

> Simeon (M: 19: Bulgarian Roma): I think because we share a religion, we speak Turkish, we think of ourselves as Turkish first, Roma second. Turkish culture, pop culture, is a big thing, like more so than Roma culture. I mean, I know, you [non-Muslim Roma] look at us badly.

> Efraim (M: 45: Bulgarian Roma): I don't look at you bad. I wonder when you say we are Turkish, we are Turks, we are Muslims, is this

because of shame to be Roma? I think this look disloyal to some people.

Simeon: I don't know, it's a status thing… the end goal, it's to be accepted as a Turkish Muslim not a Roma Muslim. Turks have better lives than Roma.

Efraim indicts Muslim Roma of assuming a preferred Turkish identity in order to hide their Roma identity. As Simeon implies, by identifying as Turkish, the Muslim Roma strive to distinguish themselves from other Roma by embracing Turkish cultural and religious elements, thereby advancing their social status. Simeon later acknowledged, however, that Turks seldom accept Muslim Roma and continue to recognise them as Roma. Like Efraim, other participants viewed negatively the attempts of Muslim Roma to differentiate themselves from the wider Roma population. What is more, many saw the religious lifestyles and practices of Muslim Roma as weakening their ties to Romani culture and traditions.

The participants often referred to a common Romani culture or shared Romani traditions but were often unable to define what these were outside the context of their own subgroup. Nevertheless, examples of universally shared customs and values included: the centrality of family and kinship, respect and care for the elderly, strong community spirit, observance of strict codes of cleanliness and purity, economic self-sufficiency, importance of marriage; music and storytelling, and remaining detached from non-Romanies. The participants

considered these shared characteristics as ethno-cultural makers that unite the community and that distinguish them from the non-Romani population.

Roma participants felt they had more in common with other Roma, in terms of way of life, and lived experience of migration, than they did with Romany Gypsies. Indeed, cultural differences became most pronounced when considering the relationship between Roma migrants and Romany Gypsies. In the following exchange, these differences are discussed:

Nathan (M: 26: Romany Gypsy): Do you see us as like the same?

Yuliyan (M: 45: Bulgarian Roma): I not know for a long time that you are Romani, I think you are Irish because I watch Big Fat Gypsy Weddings and they say British Gypsies are Irish. I think we have some sameness in culture but I have more sameness with Roma from Balkans, East Europe.

Rozalina (F: 38: Bulgarian Roma): I didn't know Britain have Gypsies… your caravans are very different life to us… this is first time I meet British Gypsy so how do I know if we are same?

Nathan: We have different lifestyles because you don't travel. I think we have more in common with Irish Travellers, because they live a life on the road too… we have more of a history together.

The nomadic lifestyle of the Romany Gypsies is considered one of the greatest differences between the lifestyles of Roma and Romany Gypsies.

The sedentary lifestyle of Roma migrants contradicts Romany Gypsy culture, to which travelling is central. Shannon explained that some Roma activists have been critical of the Romany Gypsy nomadic lifestyle and have argued that it should be eradicated. She revealed that some Roma activists have argued that 'the cultural traditional way of life of Romany Gypsy people in UK, is not a desirable way of life and should cease'.

It is unsurprising then that, like Nathan, many Romany Gypsies identify more strongly with Irish Travellers whose culture seems more familiar to them than that of Roma migrants. Under government policy, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers have often been deemed a homogenous group. They have, therefore, similar experiences of regulation and discrimination. The two groups maintain close relations and often socialise at shared culture events, such as Gypsy fairs. What is more, participants noted that intermarriage was not uncommon. Given that large-scale Roma migration to Britain is essentially a contemporary phenomenon, the absence of a similar relationship between Romany Gypsies and Roma is not surprising.

Rozalina points out that there had been limited opportunities for Roma from different countries to interact before they moved to Britain. For the majority of the participants, migration of Roma to Britain had been their first opportunity to meet Romanies from other countries:

Rozalina (F: 38: Bulgaria): I only knew Roma who live in my village in Bulgaria and I came to England and I met Roma from England,

Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, all over Europe. Roma are a very big people, in Europe we are in every country and now we can come together. We are one Roma people in Britain and we can do a lot together.

Mary (F: 43: Romany Gypsy): I never appreciated the size of the Romani population until, you know, we had a lot of Roma come here and they're from so many different countries. This is the first time I've had contact with Gypsies from another country…it's a big place out there, together we could probably be quite powerful.

Romani migration across Europe can be understood in two ways. On the one hand it signifies diaspora and dispersal. On the other it signifies the integration of previously detached Romani populations, given that it builds a bridge between the different national boundaries that once divided the Romanies. As Rozalina and Mary state, many of the participants had never met Romanies from other countries before the increase in Roma migration. In Britain they have the opportunity to meet Romanies from across Europe. In Britain it has become possible for the Romanies to meet across national boundaries, thus providing an opportunity for the Romanies to extend their social networks and develop a sense of community that transcends national borders.

It must be emphasised that the participants did, at times, express a feeling of unity. To a large extent, this was discursively expressed rather than experienced or practiced directly. Nonetheless, groupness is an *event* (Brubaker, 2004). It is felt intermittently and the participants expressed a

greater sense of unity in regards to some issues as opposed to others. The remainder of this chapter will explore the extent to which groupness materialises when invoked via a nationalist framework.

Language Standardisation

As discussed in Chapter Two, the objectives of Romani nationalism have been constructed around the reunification of the Romani diaspora. Their efforts have taken inspiration from traditional projects of nation building in which uniformity is often enforced via programs which aim to "regulate" the population and manipulate and mould subjects and their identities (Foucault, 1980). The promotion of a common language is often cited as vital to this process (Kymlicka, 1997:28) and is central to Safran's definition of diaspora. As discussed in chapter 2, there has never been a homogenous Romani language and there are many various dialects of the Romani language. Great efforts have been made by the IRU to determine and universalise a standardised Romani language (Acton and Klímová, 2001). For Zusana and Frida, linguistic pluralism contributes to the fragmentation of the Romani people:

Zusana (F: 48: Czech Roma): It is very bad, Roma come to UK from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania but we speak to other Roma in English. My neighbour can be Roma but we do not have share language because Romani is very different in Romania and Czech Republic. In Czech Republic there is very many Romani languages, and in UK with very many migrants there is many Romani languages....this is similar but not always can we

understand, it makes us very separate…this would be better for us as people to speak the same language, one Romani language for one Romani people.

Frida (F: 43: Hungarian Roma): Yes, there is true Romani language, it's been spoiled by European languages mixing with it to make a crossbreed of language that is not true, pure Romani…the Roma nation has one true language, not crossbreed language, this is not Romani, this is what parts us.

Frida's reference to a "true" and "pure" Romani language raises questions about what counts as authentic Romani language, which Romani dialect should be used in projects of standardisation and who should decide such matters. There is a risk, therefore, that in the pursuit of the standardisation of a "true" and "pure" Romani language, scores of Romani people may be excluded from the notion of the "Roma Nation" depending on their proficiency in this supposedly authentic Romani dialect. Frida later referred to the Romani language as a defining marker of Romani identity and considered her own dialect of Romani as "purer" or more advanced than other "spoiled" dialects. The risk with such attitudes, as argued in Chapter 2, is they permit political entrepreneurs to certify who *can* and who *can't* claim Romani identity.

For Roman, the standardisation of Romani language is not about selecting a "true" or "authentic" dialect of Romani. Rather, he sees it as a necessity given the transnational space the Romanies now occupy:

Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma): I meet with Roma activists from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Sweden, Romania, all over the world. We meet for one purpose, we are Roma, we are one people but we will talk in English because dialects of Romani are not mutually understandable. Now tell me this? Is it wrong to wish for an official Romani language? One that we can all understand and communicate in? It is very necessary in the international world we now live in.

Roman's concerns are not unfounded given that in the past two decades, there has been greater cooperation between Europe's various Romani organisations in an attempt to coordinate and unify Romani rights activism. The lack of a standardised Romani language, however, often restricts the distribution of activist literature and publications to the national level. At the same time, it throws doubt to the Romanies diasporic claims. Safran (1991) argues a minority group that has been dispersed from its homeland cannot be considered a diaspora if they no longer speak the language of the homeland. Standardisation of language, thus, becomes a priority for political entrepreneurs framing Romani identity according to definitions of diaspora.

Among the remainder of the participants, there was scepticism about the practicality of language standardisation. Michal (20: M: Czech Roma) noted:

We don't understand each other. Everyone not speak Romani and different types of Romani can be very different they are not easy to

understand. I not see how this can become one language when it is very different… official Romani language like this will not understand to everyone.

As Michal explains, very few Romani people in Britain are able to communicate successfully between different dialects, thus questioning the feasibility of establishing a standardised form of Romani that is intelligible to the vast majority of Romani people. It is important to emphasise that some of the participants could not speak any dialect of Romani. Often these participants were from former communist countries where the Romani language had been supressed. Deshka (F: 35: Bulgarian Roma) spoke of her experience of growing up in Bulgaria:

I was always talking Romani with my mother and baba but when I went to school in Bulgaria my teacher would hit me because I shouldn't speak Romani… and I almost forgot Romani. And when I came to England I had to learn English… that's why I can't speak Romani now.

James, a young Romany Gypsy noted:

James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): You know the problem for Romani people is that my English is better than my Romani. The Romani dialect here as we know it is very anglicised, almost a mash up of English and Romani… our culture changed, it became for

anglicised as well, through assimilation, through oppression... we
don't live as much in communities anymore where we get the
chance to speak Romani... the younger generations are
assimilated more. I am assimilated more than my grandparents.
They think in Romani, not like me. I don't like it though, I feel like
part of me is missing in a way. I listen to Romani music, I read
Romani books, I try to learn more of the language.

Many other participants were in the same position of having to actively learn
the langauge they felt they had been deprived of due to aggressive policies of
assimilation. James attempts to recover an element of Romani identity he
considers lost by listening to Romani music and reading Romani literature.
Often the participants independent study of the Romani language had
instigated a sense of groupness which often led to a degree of involvemnet in,
or engagement with, Romani nationalism. In many nationalist movements, the
revival of the national langauge has acted as a precurrsor to political
mobilisation. In the case of the Romanies, the revival of the national langauge
is closely linked to the emergence of a politically united Romani diapora. High
levels of illiteracy among the Romanies, however, makes the task of reviving
the Romani langauge particularly arduous.

For participants, particularly young Roma migrants, who felt they were forcibly
assimilated into the culture of their country of origin, there has been a coming
of awareness of their Romani idenity. Supressed in their home countries, their
Romani identity has been (re)discovered after a period of sustained linguistic

and cultural education which, in the case of the Roma, has only become available to them as they have struggled to make sense of their lives in Britain. The effort to learn the language, and some case the culture, of the Romani people involves the (re)discovery of the past. A diapsoric Romani identity is, thus, actively being invented by linking elements of the past, present and future.

A Community of Suffering

In nationalist discourse, "suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort" (Renan, 1990, p.19). Accordingly political entrepreneurs have attempted to rouse groupness by emphasising the Romanies shared history of suffering. Zusana argues that the aspiration towards a Roma Nation is related to sufferings and atrocities that the Romani people have undergone:

> Zusana (F: 48: Czech Roma): My Roma identity is very, very, important to me. I don't want the Roma to be forgot and this is why I call myself Roma. I leave Czech Republic because I am Roma and this is the only reason I leave. The independence of Czech Republic was very bad for Roma. A lot of very bad racism and Nazi groups, you understand these people very right wing, they very like Nazis. I don't want this to be forgot….

For Zusana, it is becomes important to recognise the Romanies as political subjects. Her experience of fleeing the Czech Republic – as someone subjected to oppression, suffering and forced migration – is an important argument to legitimatise Romani claims to a national identity. Anastasija, like Zusana, politicises the suffering of the Romanies and uses this as a source of political justification for a Roma nation.

> Anastasija (F: 19: Roma): Hundreds of thousands of Roma were murdered with the Jews by the Nazis. This we can say is the summit of our suffering, but we suffered a long time before this and a long after this…our Jewish friends live prosperously in Israel, they've been, this sounds tactless, but compensated. What did Roma receive? Late apologies and more suffering…the Porajmos[9] should be remembered by Roma and the world…for this reason alone we should be recognised as a people, a nation.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the "victim narrative", which positions the Romanies as the objects of perpetual suffering, is an effective strategy of ethnopolitical mobilisation. Zuzana and Anastasija employ a "victim narrative" to make the case for Romani nationalism and, as Anastasija alludes to, present their demands for official recognition as an ethnic minority and nation. Their narratives are redolent of Brown's (1995) "politics of ressentiment". Anastasija, in particular, implies that the Romanies should be recognised as

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[99] Romani Holocaust

a nation precisely because they are a historically subjugated people deserving of compensation. This confines the Romanies to a position of victimhood which, as argued in Chapter two, leads to the internalisation of victimhood as an 'unchanging reality of life' (PER Report, 1992, no pagination). This is reflected in Anastasija's narrative:

> When you think of the big moments of Roma history… it is the moments that we were treated the very worst, fleeing India, slavery in Romania, Nazi regime, in the past, and in the more recent times the sterilisation of Roma woman, destruction of our homes and neighbourhoods, young Roma children placed in state institutions and schools for the retarded…suffering is very real to us, it's the only thing we can expect for certain for our future…

Brown (1995) warns that identity-based politics rooted in victimhood 'fix the identities of the injured and the injuring as social positions', thus reducing the possibilities for resignification. This is detrimental to Anastasija's own counter-narrative of Romani identity, which aims to reposition stigmatised "Gypsies" as the Romanies - a stateless nation with a rich cultural heritage. Nonetheless, groupness materialised most strongly, among the participants, during discussions of collective suffering. Frequently, the participants referred to incidents of individual and collective suffering both in Britain and, in the case of migrants, their home countries. For the participants the acts of *remembering together* and memorialising the historic collective sufferings of the Romani people is vital to Romani identity and culture:

Yuliyan (M: 45: Bulgarian Roma): To be a Gypsy, a Roma, is very important to me. This is why I come to England. In Bulgaria it's very difficult to be Gypsy, very racist, oppression, and I do not come to England to be English, to be British, I come to be Gypsy, to be Roma. It is not good…to forget who are you and your culture. We have much racism from the das[10]…we have been killed, assaulted, children take from parents to institution, very bad things, much violence. You hold this, you hold it in your heart, from child to adult.

Shane (M: 38: Romany Gypsy): My granny always end her stories, kekkana bishano…the stories granny told me were about the Romani fowki, cast out of Egypt, cast out of every country we travelled…they made slaves of us, they beat us, they killed us, they cast us away…and she'd say kekkana bishano, never forget…later on, when it hit me, you know what the Nazis had done to our fowki, well that's when I knew them words are important. Kekkana bishano, na bister…if we don't tell our stories were forgotten…not just by the world but we'll forget ourselves…

Remembrance of suffering characterises Yuliyan's experience of being Romani in Europe. He deems his personal experiences of racism and oppression in Bulgaria a reflection of the collective suffering of the Romanies across Europe. As Yuliyan suggests, racism and oppression are among the

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[10] Non-Gypsies.

main reasons why the Roma have migrated to the UK and also why they should maintain their identity and culture. Being Romani, is considered by Yuliyan and Shane, to be synonymous with the suffering and oppression that the Romanies, as a group, are subjected to by non-Romani authorities across Europe. It is this victim centred narrative of Romani identity that acts as the motivating force behind the maintenance of Romani identity and culture, or as Yuliyan puts it, remembering 'who you are'. The suffering experienced by the Romanies has become a symbol of shared and on-going oppression that materialises in a deeply felt sense of groupness.

Ethnic minorities, like the Romanies, who have been exposed to sustained oppression may have a strong need to maintain their ethnic identity. In such cases, assimilation is considered a threat to their political aspirations as an ethnic group, particularly if such aspirations involve the establishment of a nation state or national identity. Within this victim centred narrative, assimilation is considered a victory for the oppressor. Collective suffering thus inspires collective action, as Madalina implies:

Madalina (F: 22: Romanian Roma): It is important to know where you come from. If you know where you come from you will know where you belong and you will know your history. The Gypsies are very oppressed and this is very bad. We do not have country to say is ours. It is very important to know who you are, a Gypsy, and the history of the Gypsy people because we fight for equal rights and we need know Gypsy history and the bad situation in Europe.

As Madalina argues above, an awareness of Romani history and origins is related to the struggle for equal rights and freedom from oppression. Oppression, lack of a nation state, and a notion of statelessness reinforces the importance of knowing one's roots, history and origins. The recording of history and the marking of origins are central elements to the nationalist project (Vali, 2003), as their discursive construction shapes how the present political situation is experienced. To gain legitimacy, it is vital to construct history as linear. A coherent Romani identity can connect the political challenges, sufferings and losses of the past to the struggle for a cohesive collective identity in the present.

As argued in Chapter Two, the historical documentation of suffering is greatly valuable to the Romani nationalist project. As the above narratives have indicated, the suffering undergone by the Romanies has become a symbol of a shared and enduring oppression that offers the Romani people a foundation for solidarity. As Kapralski (1997) argues, the historical and contemporary suffering of the Romani people has the power to unite typically disparate Romani populations into a single group. For Melanie, a Romany Gypsy, collective suffering has influenced her identification with Roma across Europe:

> Melanie (F: 34: Romany Gypsy): I didn't always feel that connection
> with Roma, they seemed very distant, it's a different life, but when
> I hear what happens to them I feel closer, I want to fight for them,
> they go through the same shit that we live through too…we're
> surviving together, it makes me proud…

Here Melanie relates the idea of collective suffering and survival to a sense of pride. Throughout the focus group session, Melanie had been very opposed to the notion of a Roma Nation. When framing Romani identity in terms of suffering, as opposed to origins, however, she, perhaps unknowingly, began to consider the prospect of a national Romani identity:

> Melanie: As a Rom, I have never had a really strong Romani pride in the same way that people can be proud of being English or Scottish or whatever, because we don't have national identity like that. Like, we don't have a country or anything, but I know that even though I was born in England, I am Romani. We have a lot of history behind us, like way more than some countries even, but we don't have that same national mentality. Like, you'd never see a Romani team allowed in Eurovision or the Olympics.

> Ivana (F: 52: Roma): Eurovision makes me very upset actually. Only four times in the history, I think four, correct me if I'm wrong, has a Rom represent a country and I think only once a song in Romani. We are part of Europe, many, many years in Europe and we're invisible, like we don't exist. I know, I know, only Eurovision, but this is important to me. I would be very proud if Romani songs could have a place.

> Melanie: I actually would love that, to have Romani teams.

National identities are often understood in terms of shame and pride, with emphasis placed on achievements, visibility, defeats and losses. It is within this context we can understand Melanie's account. Her reference to history is an argumentative tool that legitimises nationhood. Competitions, like Eurovision, are peaceful arenas for nations to conduct their struggle for recognition and also strengthen and reinforce national identity through defeating other nations. The absence of the Romani people within these events, as Ivana explains, intensifies the international invisibility of the Romanies and makes real their alienation and oppression. Given that Melanie and Ivana had both previously given little credence to the idea of a Roma Nation, it suggests that narratives of collective suffering are effective in generating groupness.

International Romani Day

International Romani Day was identified as another method through which to unite Britain's Romani population. Observed annually on the 8th of April, International Romani Day, sometimes referred to as Roma Nation Day, celebrates Romani culture and raises awareness of the racism, discrimination and exclusion faced by the Romani people worldwide. Roman described the day as:

> Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma): …a day to stand together as a united people and show the world that they can't oppress us longer. We are a Roma Nation but we are citizens of Europe and so on this day we ask for equal rights as Europeans. We protest racism,

discrimination, evictions, murder of our culture. It's an important day. Roma brothers and sisters all around Europe, the world, stand together. We are united in solidarity.

International Romani Day is often now a political manifestation which celebrates Romani identity and culture and promotes the notion of a Roma nation. The activities organised on this day, often marches and demonstrations, have a strong symbolic meaning for many of the participants – specifically Romani nationalists. The banners displayed at the International Romani Day event I attended carried phrases such as "Defend Roma Rights", "Celebrate Diversity" and "Roma Welcome Here" and the Roma flag was heavily featured. One participants said:

Natalia (F: 29: Slovakian Roma): Actually, International Romani Day is much more political these days. It's not something that's like cultural, it's not a cultural tradition, it's more of a political thing, or the celebration of Romani culture has been politicised because on International Romani Day, maybe you noticed, all these people organise marches and have signs that have political messages about unity, identity, racism.

In attendance at the International Romani Day event I attended were Romanies from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and Britain suggesting that such events bring divided communities together. Nevertheless, among the majority of the participants, International Romani Day was not viewed as an important celebration. The events organised by various Romani organisations

were not well known or attended. Those participants who did regularly attend International Romani Day events felt the day was an important occasion during which Romanies from different countries could interact, build networks and organise politically.

My own impression is that the emotional and political element of International Romani day was most intense for new Roma migrants. This is perhaps unsurprising given the hostility they have received since moving to Britain and the absence, and often prohibiting, of similar celebrations in their home countries. As discussed in Chapter 4, after years of denial of their ethnicity in their countries of origin, all Romani cultural and political expressions achieved a greater importance in the post-migratory context. Romani identity becomes, by necessity, a political as opposed to a private issue because of the racism and discrimination experienced by the Roma.

For Romany Gypsies, International Romani Day was of less importance and was often referred to as a "Roma" event. Tommy (M: 35: Romany Gypsy) stated, 'there's an event here every year but it's mainly for them Slovakians' while Rhiannon (F: 27: Romany Gypsy) explained, 'it's not something I've ever celebrated, I think it's a Roma thing'. Other Romany Gypsy participants expressed concerns over the "authenticity" of International Romani Day, suggesting it was established and organised by non-Romani activists. Melanie was particularly critical of the organisation *'8 April Movement'* which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a direct action network which organises International Romani Day demonstrations :

Melanie (F: 34: Romani): This is the problem with the Roma nation thing; it's mostly gorjers who are involved. The April 8th ones are the Dale Farm lot, its run by Grattan Puxon and well…

Jessica (F: 20: Romany Gypsy): He's imposing…

Melanie: It certainly puts me off…

Melanie and Jessica hint at the wider problem of community involvement in Romani and/or Gypsy and Traveller politics and activism. This is by no means a contemporary issue. The Gypsy Council, established in 1966, which has been described as pioneering in regards to the organised representation of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Britain, was ruptured by the perception that it had come to be dominated by non-Gypsy and Traveller activists. Indeed, its leading figures, such as Grattan Puxon, who was also involved in organising the first World Romani Congress in 1971 through which the IRU was established, were largely non-Gypsies and Travellers.

Similar concerns were also raised by Roman who is critical of non-Romani involvement in Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller organisations, claiming they further oppress the Romani people:

Roman (M: 31: Czech Roma): Gypsy and Traveller organisations in the UK are managed by gadze, non-Roma. They decide they do not like the Roma nation, they deny the Roma nation. They have time for Roma only when Roma live in caravan with Irish Travellers. This is all very focussed on Irish Travellers and they say we are the same and this not true, this is offensive. They deny the Roma

nation but will be very dishonest and say they are allies. Allies do not deny your struggles, they do not deny who you are and they do not speak for you and belittle you. This is oppression again from non-Roma.

Roman touches upon what has been referred to as the "Gypsy Industry". This is the idea that non Gypsies and Travellers, due to their expertise, are able to establish careers in supporting Gypsies and Travellers, while presenting the communities themselves with limited opportunities to get involved (Ryder, 2011). More recently Gypsy and Traveller NGOs have experienced a change in dynamics, with an increase in the employment and involvement of community members (Ryder, 2011; Richardson and Ryder, 2012b).

Narratives of Deterritorial Diaspora

Among the participants were several frank critics of Romani Nationalism who indict Romani nationalists of relying on essentialised notions of origin. Echoing the critiques of cultural theorists, such as Anthias, Soysal and Hall (see Chapter 2), they refute nationalist claims that Romani identity can only be secured in relation to a territorial homeland in India. These participants do not contest the scholarly research that indicates an Indian origin of the Romani people. In fact, they demonstrated a great deal of knowledge of their assumed origins and journeys across the Middle East and Europe. They recognise, however, the dangers inherent in a nationalist ideology that essentialises India, as the mythical site of origin, and fetishizes the past. Asserting "sameness" by consequence of shared origins was, therefore, deemed greatly problematic:

James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): They're obsessed with India and it's pointless, it literally has zero impact on our lives. You know, I'm convinced, yes, I think there's truth in it [Indian origins] but it's irrelevant to my life now because since then we've ended up in Europe, we've mixed with other groups, our culture has changed, it's changed in my lifetime.

James recognises the transformative nature of identity echoing Hall's conception of identity, as discussed in Chapter 2, which positions it as continually in production. For these participants, far from being fixed in an essentialised past, Romani identity is subject to the continuous and transformative play of history, culture and power (Hall, 1990). They referred to the process of cultural transformation which takes place in an ever-changing context. The relationships between the Romanies and their countries of residence, as well as their political and socio-economic status (in both home and host countries), refashion Romani culture and identities.

Participants pointed to: a rise in marriage outside of the community and intermarriage with other nomadic groups; the adoption of non-Romani sociocultural practices whether voluntary, through necessity of modernity, or involuntary via assimilationist policy; and the rise of Romani mobility, as sources of cultural transformation and cross-cultural exchange. The interactions, whether positive or negative, between the Romanies and host or dominant cultural groups are a site for transformation. These participants understand Romani identities as an amalgam of the many cultural identities

that the Romanies have encountered since their dispersal from India. For them, therefore, there is no homogenous Romani identity to be recovered.

Some participants were, thus, sceptical of reunification efforts:

Mary (F: 43: Romany Gypsy): I think it's an unhealthy obsession, we're not the same. I mean, they can argue until they're blue in the face that we're all from India, I'm not disputing it, I just don't think it's that important…it's important that our kids go to school without being bullied, for us to have secure places to live, to not be discriminated against…it doesn't really matter what language we speak, of course we're all different, that was thousands of years ago, why is it important that we should be the same and speak the same language?

Efraim (M: 68: Bulgarian Roma): It is simply impossible to have all these thousands of people from all around the EU, around Europe, to have the same feelings of identity. I do feel very connected to all Romani people, we share many things in common, but the many differences is not a problem. We come together, Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, because we're all treated the same, we don't have to be the same to ask to be equal.

For Mary and Efraim, unity should be built upon the Romanies shared experiences of racism and discrimination, as opposed to the homogenising and universalising rhetoric of shared origins. Cultural and linguistic

homogeneity is, thus, unimportant to their understandings of Romani identity. That said, while Romani nationalists regard the reunification of the Romanies, as a stateless nation of Indian origins, as a worthwhile end in itself, Mary and Efraim use Romani solidarity as a means necessary to free the Romanies from racism and discrimination. The emphasis is on the language of human rights, as opposed to nation building, and the narrative of shared origins is eclipsed by a narrative of shared oppression. Akin to Brown's (1995) call for "loosening identities" (see Chapter 1), this understanding of Romani identity is less of an assertion of who the Romanies *are* and more of a statement of what the Romanies *want.* Romani identity is used, therefore, not as an ontological claim but as an explicitly political one.

These participants largely maintain a sense of groupness with other nomadic peoples. Romani nationalism is considered an obstacle to upholding this solidarity, given that it divides nomadic groups along "homeland" boundaries. Peggy (F: 47: Romany Gypsy) argues:

> I find it really hard to understand that kind of mentality. We've always been sort of naturally allied with Irish Travellers and I'm not trying to say that, you know, we're the same people, but were facing the same problems, the same laws, you know. People don't discriminate between us, the government doesn't. I don't understand the point in isolating ourselves because we've got Indian roots and they've got Irish.

Peggy's critique of Romani nationalism echoes that of Anthias who argues that territorial rooted understandings of diaspora overlook interethnic cooperation (see Chapter 2). Anthias warned that the territorial model of diaspora was unresponsive to transethnic solidarities, such as antiracist movements, given its reliance on the notions of homeland and origin.

Like Peggy, many of the participants expressed solidarity with Irish Travellers and other nomadic peoples, as well as other black and minority ethnic groups. Experience of racism and discrimination thus acts as a unifying force in which shared oppression, as opposed to share origins, is used to invoke transethnic groupness. Tara aligned herself with antiracism, explaining '…because I have been active within the left, I would call myself an anti-racist'. She continued, 'I have [racism] in common with Black people, Asian people… Muslims, Arabs. It's all the same when it comes down to it, so I feel like solidarity with other ethnic groups'. Similarly, Miroslav stated:

Miroslav (M: 28: Slovakian Gypsy): I do not like racism. Against me, it hurts a lot but it hurts me when I see racism to other people. You must treat people how you like to be treat and I don't like to see people in silence when racism against Gypsy people is here. I do not stay silent for racism against black people or other people…we are the same to racists, they hate us all, we must stand together.

Miroslav views it as his duty to condemn racism against other BME groups, suggesting a reciprocal relationship in which BME groups support and defend

one another via transethnic solidarity. For Miroslav, Romani identity is to be fashioned on the basis of transethnic alliances and cooperation as opposed to insularity and cultural homogenisation. Other participants advocated the formation of national-level antiracist coalitions made up of individuals and organisations representing different ethnic and national groups. In practice, however, alliances have not transpired. Shannon spoke of her discouraging experience of seeking support from other BME organisations:

Shannon (F: 58: Romany Gypsy): I've approached several other community groups asking for support on various things from other ethnic groups and been ignored…I approached a black women's group to ask if they could lend us some support, and they didn't, they didn't reply and when I asked if they got my email they said yes we did and that was the end of that…it can be very uncomfortable.

In Shannon's interpretation of this incident, her request was ignored because Gypsies and Travellers are not considered by other BME groups as victims of racism and discrimination. As discussed in Chapter 1, the tendency to overlook anti-Roma racism or "Romaphobia" is greatly apparent in understandings of racism and ethnicity. Antiracist discourse has played a fundamental role in shaping contemporary understandings of racism, with understandings or race and ethnicity constructed around post-war, commonwealth migration. This involved the development of a hierarchy of racialised identities that juxtaposed black and white by employing colour as

the central indicator of difference. Conceptual and theoretical frameworks, as well as antiracist activisms, were thus developed around non-white groups, such as Afro-Caribbeans and Asians. Under this understanding of racism, the experiences of non-white minorities, such as the Irish, Jewish and Gypsy and Traveller populations, were marginalised.

As James points out, the Romanies are outwardly white:

> James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): …we're not really accepted as people of colour, so the antiracist movement is, yeah it's not got a place for us. I mean, we look white, we're Romani, but we're white and unfortunately a lot of black activists, well, they have a very narrow minded view about white people. If you're white, you're privileged…they can't seem to see that there are white ethnic minorities and we do experience racism, in fact worse racism than they do.

James highlights the ambiguities of whiteness. The colour dichotomy marks Afro-Caribbean and Asians as "racial" or "ethnic", whilst Gypsy, Traveller, Irish and Jewish populations are considered "white" and thus unmarked by race and ethnicity. This reinforces the notion of "black victims" and "white perpetrators", which excludes the Romanies from the antiracist movement. As argued in Chapter 1, when the inequalities experienced by the Romanies are recognised this is usually done so within a "hierarchy of oppression" which posits that white minorities cannot experience racism at the same intensity as

black minorities. For James, this places limitations on the alliances the Romanies can expect to form, stating: 'we're not black enough for them; we're not white enough for white people, so in reality the furthest our alliances can stretch is to other nomadic groups like Irish Travellers'.

With the Romanies occupying a marginalised position within antiracism, Tara fears Romani nationalism will become a credible alternative for disenchanted Romani youth, particularly given the increasing centrality of their Indian origins. In a similar vein, James notes the normalisation and widespread acceptance of nationalistic discourse among Romanies and non-Romanies alike:

> James (M: 20: Romany Gypsy): It's become PC these days to refer to us as the Roma, not the Gypsies, and every time we are written about or spoken about there seems to be this unwritten rule that you must say were originally from India…every year we have International Romani Day and then one year it was suddenly Roma Nation Day….nationalism is subtly slipping into our culture and our like knowledge or understanding of ourselves and so you don't actually have to pledge allegiance to some sort of Romani nationalist manifesto, it's more like people just are nationalist these days without even realising it, without even putting a label on it.

Whether or not this indicates that the invented traditions, propagated by Romani nationalists, have become meaningful sites of identity for the Romani population, is, of course, disputable given what this chapter has already

revealed. It indicates, however, that the reconceptualization of the Romanies, from the "Gypsies" to the "Roma", has, at the very least, been convincing at a scholarly and/or journalistic level. What is more, it implies that Romani nationalism need not be actively performed. Rather, it can be described as a subconscious nationalism, attributable to an increasing number of Romanies, who, despite not formulating or asserting in any coherent way their specific nationalistic loyalties and beliefs, are nevertheless influenced by nationalistic ideas.

Summary

This chapter has explored the extent to which participants experience a sense of groupness, focussing specifically on the notion of a united Roma nation. Romani nationalists employ a diasporic identity frame which defines the Romanies as a dispersed people of Indian origins and which draws boundaries along cultural and historical lines. Although they have little desire to return to, or re-establish, a Romani homeland, they make efforts to maintain a connection to India. In their attempt to construct a united Roma Nation, Romani nationalists fall into the trap of identity politics in which they homogenise the Romani population and downplay internal differences.

In reality, Britain's Romanies are greatly diverse. They remain largely divided by country of origin, national identity, religion and lifestyle. The Roma, for example, felt they had little in common with the traditionally nomadic Romany Gypsies, while Romany Gypsies considered their culture and experiences of discrimination more similar to that of Irish Travellers. There exists, however, shared ethno-cultural markers that unite the Romani community despite their

differences, and which construct and maintain a sense of "us" and "them", or "Romani" and "gadze".

In attempt to unite the Romani population, Romani nationalists have advocated the standardisation of Romani language. This has been met with scepticism given that different dialects of Romani are largely intelligible. The introduction of "International Romani Day" has also been ineffective in uniting Britain's Romani population, with celebrations remaining relatively unknown or poorly attended. Feelings of groupness materialised most strongly through the remembrance of collective suffering. Regardless of their differences, the participants shared in common a history of racism and discrimination. It acts as a motivating force to maintain and defend Romani culture and identity.

Critics of nationalism argue that Romani unity should be rooted in a shared experience of racism and discrimination and not in cultural and/or linguistic homogeneity. They employ the language of human rights as opposed to the language of nation building, focussing on shared oppression rather than shared origins. While Roma nationalists are critical of inter-ethnic cooperation, their critics express solidarity with other nomadic groups and the wider black and minority ethnic population. Solidarity often lacks a reciprocal element, however, with Romaphobia being positioned at the bottom of a hierarchy of oppression. As such, critics fear Romani nationalism will grow in strength.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Integral to Safran's definition of diaspora is the lived experience of alienation. Indeed, he argues a minority group that has been dispersed from its homeland cannot be considered a diaspora if they have few barriers to integration in their host country. Are the Romanies socially integrated? Based on the findings of this research, arguably no. They remain a marginalised "other", stigmatised and vilified in the media as "backwards", "animalistic", "criminals" who profit through deceitful opportunism. Romany Gypsies, whose nomadic tradition flies in the face of social integration, find themselves at the bottom of a hierarchy of abject whiteness. Even "chavs" with their working class vulgarities have the common decency to *at least* inhabit bricks and mortar. Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, emphatically fail to meet the white ideals expected from performances of white racial identity and, thus, remain stigmatised "white others" existing on the margins of society.

The Roma, too, can be considered marginalised. They face a multiple otherness in which they are subject to existing prejudices and fears relating to "native" Gypsy and Traveller populations, as well as carrying the stigma of being "migrant". Roma migration has, in recent years, attracted a disproportionate amount of negative attention. As Britain's immigration policy has been forced to adapt to enable the freedom of movement of all EU citizens, EU migration has fuelled public anxieties, aiding a resurgence of the populist right. Freedom of movement indisputably contributed to the emergence of the Roma as a hot political issue in which leading politicians

and the media have employed a "security" and "culture" discourse commonly heard in immigration debate. It is into this environment that the Roma arrive in Britain – *Gypsies on Benefits and Proud* - a "freeloading hoard" of Eastern European "Gypo scum" who, as so often presented, are unwilling to integrate but more than willing to reap the benefits of British "generosity" in the form of the welfare state. Unlike their British Romany Gypsy counterparts, their otherness cannot be hidden under the veil of whiteness. The Roma are far from inconspicuous – from their physical appearance, to their command of English – they are marked with otherness. Nonetheless, the findings of the research suggest that they are marked not by their "Romaniness", but by their generic otherness or general "foreignness". This can work to the Roma's benefit or detriment: at best they are misidentified as Western European, at worst they are mistaken as Asian. Their otherness is, thus, imbedded in a complex fusion of xenophobia and (mis)directed racism while the otherness of Romany Gypsies finds its roots in the ideology of sedentarism, classism and cultural Racism.

The Romanies, whether native or migrant, are excluded from society quite literally. Through the process of spatial exclusion they are kept away from the "respectable" white population – Romany Gypsies into Gypsy and Traveller sites and/or social housing in low socio-economic areas and Roma into ethnically diverse sink estates. These areas are subsequently transformed into classed and ethnically marked spaces. They function to separate the undesirables from the desirables and render otherness visible. Their presence is unwelcome in white spaces as is demonstrated by the nimbyist opposition

to Gypsy and Traveller sites or the regular removal of homeless Roma beggars from London's landmarks. They remain, therefore, alienated, marginalised and stigmatised.

In "multicultural" Britain, there have been superficial attempts at implementing policies of social integration - the key word here being *superficial*, given that social integration has too often been conflated with forced assimilation. Romany Gypsies have seen a striking decline in their traditional way of life, as was reflected in their narratives. Pervasive hegemonic sedentarism targets those who lack strong attachments to a fixed locale, pathologising and demonising them as abnormal, backwards and dangerous. Romany Gypsies have thus witnessed the increasing regulation of Romani culture in which nomadism has been curbed. Unsurprisingly this has not occasioned the integration and upward social mobility of the Romany Gypsies. Quite the opposite, their alienation has become amplified. Romany Gypsy narratives were beset with loss, shame and despondency. Enduring displacement from repeated evictions and forced settlement into bricks and mortar accommodation, has left the Romany Gypsies asking *where do we belong?* They have suffered a loss of tradition and culture which, in their opinion, has called into question their ethnic authenticity. Yet under the sedentarist gaze this is "progress"; the decline of nomadism allows Romany Gypsies to break free of their otherness, climb the hierarchy of abject whiteness, and join the ranks of the less despised white working class.

How does this translate to the context of the Roma? Arguably, the Roma have fared well under British multiculturalism. Roma participants have largely migrated to Britain to improve their social-economic situations. An objective they have arguably achieved. In Britain they, or their children, have received a better education, improved employment prospects and higher paid jobs, habitable accommodation, free health care, greater recognition and a lesser risk of discrimination and violence than in comparison to their pre-migratory lives. In their narratives they are hopeful of a more prosperous future and they speak positively of multicultural Britain.

Roma have a desire to be culturally British. They make efforts to integrate, to adopt British cultural norms and values whilst simultaneously discarding undesirable elements of Romaniness. This is not to say that they are willing to give up their Roma identity completely. Nor does multiculturalism require them to do this. There appears, however, to be a strong will to belong that is noticeably absent in the narratives of Romany Gypsies who see "not belonging" as integral to who they are. Indeed, while Roma encourage integration, Romany Gypsies actively discourage it, fearing social integration would transform Romani identity into something unrecognisable.

Why do Roma and Romany Gypsies experience Britain so differently? Why do Romany Gypsies fear for their future while Roma welcome it enthusiastically? Their experiences are, of course, contextually dependent. Prior to their migration, the Roma lived in countries notorious for their countless human rights abuses where they largely inhabited ghettoised,

impoverished areas and were denied education, health care and even reproductive rights. The European Court of Human Rights has repeatedly been called upon to defend the rights of the Roma where their home countries have failed to do so. Britain, while by no means having a faultless human rights record, appears "just" and "equal" in comparison. This is not to say that Romany Gypsies have suffered any less than the Roma, or vice versa, but to acknowledge that suffering is relative. Far more likely is that: 1) the Roma *do* suffer in Britain, but the improvement to their socioeconomic status compensates for any discrimination that they might face; and (2) any discrimination the Roma do face is likely to be rooted in their status as migrants and, thus, the Roma have less experience of targeted ethnic or anti-Gypsy discrimination in Britain.

This disparity in experience does not go unnoticed by Romany Gypsies. They are frustrated. While they suffer the impact of assimilationist policy, they witness an improvement in the social and material circumstances of other minorities. The Romany Gypsies in this research are disillusioned with multiculturalism. They have experienced the attempted eradication of Gypsy culture while simultaneously witnessing the growth in the celebration, and tolerance of, other minoritised cultures. In the narratives of Romany Gypsies, these frustrations materialise in the language of inter-ethnic competition. As British born citizens they consider themselves as more "deserving" of tolerance, as opposed to the "undeserving" migrant other.

Indeed, despite their precarious relationship with society, and irrespective of their ethnic and cultural differences, the Romany Gypsies consider themselves a truly British people. Born and raised in Britain, and having travelled the length and breadth of the country, they perhaps know Britain better than their sedentary "foes". It is with this is mind, that they construct the boundaries between a deserving British "us" and an undeserving foreign "them".

The Roma too express similar sentiments. They emphasise their sameness with British people in the form of supposed shared European, often Christian, liberal democratic values, thus constructing divisive boundaries between European and Non-European and/or Muslim others. Both groups employ such language in an attempt to *whiten* themselves and gain greater economic, political and social capital. Yet, perhaps ironically, Romany Gypsies also hope to draw attention to their *difference* in order to make claim to the benefits, whether real or imagined, that are afforded to other minorities.

Their narratives could be easily misunderstood as similar to, or even identical to the views of the populist right. One might be inclined therefore to dismiss their frustrations as straightforward xenophobia. Indeed, wider critiques of multiculturalism are often written off as racist ramblings, given that the alternative to multiculturalism is supposedly fascist nationalism. Multiculturalism has arguably become immune from critique and this makes it difficult to call attention to the exclusion of white minorities, given that it runs the risk of condoning "fascists". Romany Gypsy narratives reveal, however, a

fundamental flaw in the multiculturalist project in which white minorities are rendered cultureless. Under multiculturalism, whiteness if conceived as an unmarked norm against which other racial and ethnic groups are compared (McLaren, 1994). The white British are, thus, homogenised and the cultures of white minorities erased by the myth of monolithic whiteness. The invisibility of the Romany Gypsies is intensified by: 1) their absence from the post-Windrush race and ethnicity discourse (see chapter one); and 2) their underrepresentation in, or rebuff from, the antiracist movement in which, owing to the colour of their skin, they occupy the bottom of hierarchical oppression (see chapter six).

"Roots" are central to multiculturalism. The notions of origins, ancestry, history and identity are vital to multicultural ideology which 'tends to eroticise others in a nativistic retreat that locates difference in a primeval past of cultural authenticity' (Perry, 2002, 196). Yet, multiculturalism is widely applauded for its apparent progressiveness. It is considered a prerequisite of a contemporary society that exemplifies the tolerance, respect for equality and anti-racism of the "left". Critics of multiculturalism are deemed conservative at best and unequivocally racist, xenophobic and nationalist at worst. The difficulty with framing or voicing criticism/s of multiculturalism, associated as it has become with identity politics and leftist elitism, has alienated the now invisible abject whites, which in turn has strengthened support for the populist right.

Fuelled by the fears surrounding the loss of "white working class culture", the populist right exploit anxieties and insecurities among those who were "left behind" by multiculturalism. The populist right appeals to the disillusioned and socially isolated. Indeed, socially disadvantaged groups are more likely to blame migrant populations for their own deteriorating socioeconomic conditions (Betz, 2009). We witness, therefore, an anger seething in many Romany Gypsy participants who feel they have been denied their piece of the multiculturalist pie, which has instead been consumed, in their view, by the "undeserving" migrant populations.

The multiculturalist fixation with "white privilege" goes a long way to explain why Romany Gypsies are vulnerable to the influences of the populist right. Over the past four decades a considerable proportion of the white working class has continued to slide further down the socio-economic ladder (Merry et al., 2016), with Romany Gypsies occupying the very bottom. Their plight is very much shaped by involuntary – namely economic – forces beyond their control which limit the opportunities available to them (Merry et al., 2016). Yet, because the hierarchy of oppression is so closely tied to the dichotomy of black victims/ white perpetrators, their marginalisation remains eclipsed by their "privilege". Indeed, discourse has not focussed on the marginalisation of the white working class, but on their *response* to marginalisation (i.e. their support for the populist right) which indicates their 'cultural impoverishment, a poverty of identity based on outdated ways of thinking and being' (Haylett, 2001, 352). In contemporary multicultural Britain, abject whites have come to

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represent the unmodern and the bigoted, while the middle class left are positioned as champions of equality, antiracism and tolerance.

Of what importance is this to Romani nationalism? It suggests that Romany Gypsies feel a sense of injustice in which they are neglected by social programs that favour non-white minorities. The nature of their injustice is one of frustration and resentment about being left behind in the struggle to acquire valuable resources. Arguably, Romany Gypsies are vulnerable to the populist right, thus, leaving Romani nationalism redundant. I argue this is unlikely given the centrality of "British values" to such ideologies. As this research has revealed, Romany Gypsies feel alienated from cultural Britishness and actively opt out, substituting "British values" for "Romany values".

Romany Gypsies remain, however, a valuable constituency to political entrepreneurs constructing a movement rooted in injustice. Romani nationalism is uniquely placed to cultivate these frustrations given that it seeks to appeal to its constituency via a frame of injustice. Romani nationalists locate the source of injustice as the invisibility of the Romani peoples. They express anger at the unequal socio-political arrangements that maintain their invisibility and render the Romanies a social problem and invoke claims to victimhood. Frames are successful when they arouse and channel the emotional frustrations that will raise the likelihood of successful mobilisation (Jasper, 2001). Successful frames must resonate emotionally so as to motivate and sustain collective action.

For Kemper (2001), the dominant emotion in many social movements is anger. An effective social movement must expose unequal socio-political arrangements that deny one group rights, resources and/or status to the benefit of another group. In the case of Romani nationalism, the Romanies suffer while the rest of society benefit from their non-Gypsy status. Anger is a reliable indicator of the unequal social relations that produce pools of potential constituents (Kemper, 2001). The consciousness raising efforts of political entrepreneurs seek to enable marginalised and disadvantaged groups to make connections between their low socioeconomic status and their discontent. They must get their constituents to focus the blame for current injustices on a target, from which they will lay the foundations for social change.

Romani nationalism does not, as many Romany Gypsies have, lay the blame for the inequality suffered by the Romanies, on non-white minorities. Rather, they blame it on the lack of international recognition of the Romanies as a distinct ethnic group and as a nation without a state. Indeed, the diasporic claims of Romani nationalism benefit from the fact that multiculturalism continues to: 1) manifest deep racial/ethnic divisions; 2) tie group rights to demonstrable ethnic/racial identity and 3) conflate whiteness with privilege. Romani Nationalists, in their focus on origins, homeland and suffering: 1) cement the Romanies as an ethnic minority; 2) create the foundations from which claims to group rights can be made; and 3) unsettle the multiculturalist notion that whiteness equals power and, thus, inadvertently appeal to the sense of injustice felt by Romany Gypsies.

Of course, it is overly simplistic to suggest that for this reason alone Romany Gypsies will find a "home" in Romani nationalism. Romani nationalism implies the adoption of an entirely new and imagined national identity and, as already discussed, Romany Gypsies consider themselves a truly British people. They feel excluded, however, from "cultural Britishness" but express little, if any, desire to be part of it. Nevertheless, their narratives provide little evidence of them requiring an alternative source of national identification to counteract the exclusivity of cultural Britishness. It seems unlikely the notion of a "Roma Nation" will have any appeal, in this respect.

Roma, too, have strong national identities and attachments to their home countries irrespective of how long they have lived in Britain. This is not surprising as they were born and spent a considerable amount of their lives in their countries of origin. In their home countries remain family and friends and Roma maintain strong ties to their countries of origin. They retain memories of their pre-migratory lives that were formative to their identities. Nationality remains, therefore, central to the Roma's understandings of *who they are*. This is hardly surprising given that many Roma arrive in Britain from the former communist states of the "Eastern Bloc". State sponsored policies of cultural homogenisation, employed to mask national heterogeneity, were effective in depriving the Roma of their culture and ethnic identities via forced assimilation. Marushiakova and Popov (2010, 43) argue that Roma in Eastern and Central Europe are, by consequence, much more socially integrated and have a far stronger attachments to the nation state in comparison to other Romanies in Western Europe and other parts of the world.

This poses a challenge to Romani nationalists who have constructed the idea of a diasporic Romani identity and "Roma Nation" on the premise of postnationalism. Romani nationalist claims to recognition on the international stage are based on the notion that the nation state's status as the principal unit of social organisation has been confronted by the forces of globalisation and the transferal of powers from the national to the supranational and transnational level. Scholars, such as, Soysal (1994) and Jacobson (1996), have argued that the post-war period has seen the growth of new forms of "postnational" citizenship that have left national citizenship defunct due to the transnationalisation/diasporisation of migrant communities and the increasing role of supranational organisations and governance which have bolstered the rights of migrants and ethnic minorities.

The Roma Nation is a greatly laboured attempt at creating a "postnational" citizenship, identity and solidarity, in which it is assumed that the Romanies, by consequence of their alienation, have weak attachments to the nation state. Postnationalist scholars argue, however, that there has been a separation of identity from rights: 'Rights increasingly assume universality… and are defined at the global level. Identities, in contrast, still express particularity and are conceived of as territorially bounded. As an identity, national citizenship… still prevails. But in terms of its translation into rights and privileges, it is no longer a significant construction" (Soysal, 1998, 208).

Postnationalism is not without its critics, but these critiques are beyond the scope of this thesis. There has undeniably been a growth in international

conventions relating to human rights, yet the extent to which this lessens the power and autonomy of the nation state is a matter of contention. It is, perhaps, more fruitful to remain within the realms of multiculturalism. Indeed, the increased cultural pluralism of the nation-states has coincided with increased mobility in which we have seen the rise of a "multicultural" citizenship which affords special rights, recognition and protection to minority groups and their cultures (Kymlicka, 1995). Multicultural citizenship has greatly enhanced opportunities for migrants and ethnic minorities to make claims for recognition, of their cultural and/or ethnic difference, from the nation state. Migrant and ethnic communities increasingly take the shape, therefore, of transnational diasporas who maintain strong ties to their countries of origin (Kymlicka, 1995).

For Roma, British citizenship is merely a legal necessity and is not integral to the formation of their identities. By gaining British citizenship they do not expect to suddenly inherit British identity. Rather, they expect to inherit rights, protections and recognition without having to surrender their national and ethnic affiliations. They maintain strong attachments to their home countries despite having little desire to return, given that they cannot offer the same standard of living. In this fashion, they do not want to be, for example, Bulgarian in Bulgaria, but Bulgarian in Britain.

For Romani nationalists, national attachments are testing. Nationalists consider the Romanies a diaspora and Romani identity is believed to be fashioned in relation to an Indian homeland, not in relation to the nation states

of Europe. The Romanies, however, have little, if any, knowledge of their Indian origins. For the Roma, an Indian homeland is a remote past and irrelevant to the present. Their identities are rooted in their *lived* memories or in the recent past. Their increased mobility and migration has meant their countries of birth are considered their homelands. Notions of homeland thus differ according to country of origin and migratory history. Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, are more aware, on the whole, of their supposed origins. India has become the narrative of choice for Gypsy and Traveller organisations and it is firmly embedded into any account of Gypsy history intending to raise awareness of "Gypsy, Roma and Traveller" issues. This does not necessarily indicate that such organisations are "nationalist", but that they are engaged in the politics of recognition in which groups must indulge the multiculturalist fixation with descent and ascribed status.

Romany Gypsies have largely accepted the (re)discovery of an Indian homeland. India is not integral to their identities but they increasingly recognise themselves as a historically dispersed people of Indian origins. India is a mythical homeland; it is a claim to a past long gone. Britain, on the other hand, remains a tangible homeland to which Romany Gypsies hold indisputable bonds - bonds which cannot be replicated in the Indian context just because scholarly research has "proven" a link. What the narrative of Indian origins provides for Romany Gypsies is a stronger claim to minority-hood within a multiculturalist system fixated on difference. Indeed, the ability to substantiate their difference from their fellow "white Britons" legitimates them as contenders for special group rights. This is of less urgency to the

Roma who, by virtue of their immigrant status, already have strong claims to minority-hood.

It seems imprudent, therefore, to suggest, as Romani nationalists so readily do, that collective Romani identity and solidarity can be fashioned in relation to a homeland. The term "Romani" refers to a diversity of people who have followed various migratory paths since their dispersal from India and who have found home in each of Europe's nation states and beyond. They maintain different lifestyles, hold varying socioeconomic positions, and exhibit different relationships with society. Identifying as "Romani", therefore, tells us very little about the extent of their solidarity or collective identity. In common is the belief that the world is firmly divided into Romanies and "gadze", though the participants found it difficult to articulate how such boundaries are drawn. Outside of the context of their own subgroup, they were unable to define a shared "Romaniness" but felt certain it exists. They referred to universally shared Romani principles which are governed by a string of traditions and values concerning family and kinship, cleanliness and important milestones such as, birth, marriage and death. Boundaries are drawn, therefore, between those who do, and those who do not, adhere to this "code of practice". What separates the Romanies from non-Romanies, therefore, is not origins, but values and traditions. This is not to say one can become Romani by adhering to Romani principles. Indeed, traditions and values interplay with kinship. Rather, it highlights that a shared homeland is virtually absent from articulations of "Romaniness".

Yet the concept of the Roma Nation is entirely premised on the notion of an Indian homeland. The Roma Nation is expected to transcend the internal differences that divide the Romanies and inspire a sense of groupness which is rooted in shared origins. For Romani nationalists, differences must be set aside for the sake of, and in loyalty to, the nation. Their narratives were overwhelmed with disapproval, and at times denial, of Romani heterogeneity. Romani nationalists wish to reclaim and rediscover a "pure" Romani culture that is untouched by European influences. Such narratives are evocative of the populist right who seek to reclaim the domestic territory as a space of pure British culture and tradition, untouched by migration and cultural pluralism. Whether or not there ever was a "pure" Romani culture is debatable and is beyond the scope of this research. In the contemporary world, it has become ever more difficult to locate any "pure" cultures which are untouched by external influences, and the Romanies are no different. Rather, most people now reside within the 'borderlands' (Anzaldua, 1999), or 'the third space' (Bhabha, 1994), across and between cultures. This is not only true of ethnic minorities like the Romanies, but for national or majority cultures too.

To be "Romani" in contemporary society, therefore, is to be subject to many different cultural influences, including the pervasive forces of the nation states in which they have settled. There exists a broad church of "Romaniness", as has always been the way for hundreds of years. In the face of this, Romani nationalists intend to redraw the boundaries of "Romaniness" according to their own subjective interpretations of cultural "pureness" and ethnic authenticity.

Is the nationalist fantasy of the recovery of a pure Romani culture just that - a fantasy? Or, are Britain's Romanies just as eager to recover the Romani culture of Indian yesteryears? The fact that the Roma are enthusiastically welcoming social integration and cultural Britishness renders it unlikely they are wistful for 11th century Romani culture. In Chapter 4, Roma narratives revealed instances of "internalised racism" and "defensive othering"; this is hardly what one would expect from a community supposedly beset with desire for cultural purity. The Romany Gypsies, on the other hand, exhibit resistant and oppositional identities in which they "overplay" their Romaniness, actively preserve Romany culture and maintain the gap between themselves and wider society. By rejecting British culture, one cannot automatically draw conclusions that the Romany Gypsies are pursuing a pure Romani culture. It suggests, however, that Romany Gypsies are somewhat culturally insular in comparison to their Roma counterparts. The bounded and insular nature of Romani nationalism may, therefore, hold some appeal. The Romani culture engineered by Romani nationalists, however, is arguably irreconcilable with Romany Gypsy lifestyle. Indeed, the narratives revealed that Roma nationalists are often critical of nomadism, considering it an inhibitive influence on the social mobility of Romany Gypsies.

The outcome of this is to push Romany Gypsies away from the "Roma Nation" towards a Gypsy and Traveller alliance. In their narratives, Romany Gypsies repeatedly underlined their close ties to the Irish Traveller community. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers share a history in Britain in which they have been subject to the same government legislation aimed at restricting and

policing the nomadic way of life. They have shared, and continue to share, cultural spaces – from Gypsy and Traveller sites to annual horse fairs. The similarities between their cultures has resulted in a deeply felt sense of comradery that is absent between Romany Gypsies and Roma who have had little opportunity to interact in comparison. Indeed, Roma consider themselves as having more in common with other Roma, in terms of way of life and lived experiences of migration and discrimination.

Romani nationalists are not, to say the least, in favour of establishing alliances with other traditionally nomadic groups subject to similar discrimination and state responses. Ultimately shared origins (identity based claims) are considered a greater source of identification than shared experience (interest based claims). Irish Travellers do not share an ancestral homeland with the Romanies, thus an alliance would disrupt Romani claims to nationhood. Indeed, in their attempts to integrate into the normative order of Europe, their claims to nationhood must be robust with no room for uncertainty. The Irish Travellers must remain, therefore, an unrelated "social problem". Romany Gypsies thus face a choice: do they maintain their alliances with Irish Travellers or do they enlist in the Roma Nation? One can assume it will not be the latter.

The nationalist aversion to nomadic solidarities, and nomadism itself, highlights more than ever the extent to which Romani nationalism is "out of touch" with its assumed constituency. The Roma Nation was never about establishing a state. It was a response to the exclusivity of "Europeanness"

and a resistance to the forced assimilation and attempted eradication of Romani culture. In doing so, however, they have created something as equally exclusive. In their efforts to construct the Romanies as a nation, they have become preoccupied with matters that their constituents neither want nor need. For example, the standardisation of Romani language has been dismissed as an unachievable whim. Inspired by the notion of one language one nation (Smith, 1971), nationalists believe that Romani fragmentation can be remedied via the destruction of linguistic pluralism. Such claims are redolent of ambitions of cultural purity. If, as Safran (1991) argues, a group cannot be considered a diaspora if they cease to speak the language of their homeland, linguistic pluralism questions the Romanies legitimacy as an ethnically homogenous unit. Romani nationalists have, thus, attempted to enforce a standardised Romani language. This has been unsuccessful given that: 1) Romani dialects are largely mutually unintelligible; 2) many Romanies do not speak any dialect of Romani at all; and 3) the Romanies suffer from high levels of illiteracy (Romani is considered an "unwritten language"). Both Roma and Romany Gypsies alike consider language standardisation somewhat absurd – there simply does not exist a singular Romani language. This is not to discount the idea completely; indeed, the revival of the Hebrew language in Israel was successful despite Israel's multilingual population. The growth of multilingual language groups is emblematic of contemporary Europe, as seen in the Welsh, Irish and Scots Gaelic, Corsicans and Flemish, Catalan and Basques, etc.

International Romani Day signals another unsuccessful attempt at inspiring groupness. Despite being declared in 1990 by the IRU, it remains unfamiliar, unimportant and poorly observed by both Roma and Romany Gypsies alike. The over involvement of non-Romani activists in the planning and execution of International Romani Day events, has left it ineffective and open to ridicule. Where it has been observed, events have been mainly attended by Roma, with little involvement from the Romany Gypsy community. It has been utilised as a community outreach exercise within neighbourhoods experiencing interethnic tensions. It has failed to unite, in any significant way, the Romanies at both a national and transnational level.

Yet even critics of Romani nationalism fall into the trap of assuming unity where evidence suggests there is none. They too embrace a homogenising view of community by identifying particular "communities", be that Gypsy and Traveller, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller, or Romani, which often overlook differences within these communities. They do not refute nationalist claims of Indian origins. Rather, they question its centrality to the Romani experience. Nevertheless, the narrative of Indian origins is regularly reproduced in publications circulated by Gypsy and Traveller organisations, arguably in an attempt, as with Romani nationalism, to legitimise the Romanies as an ethnic minority comparable to more visible black and minority ethnic groups. Thus, while critics of the Roma Nation may decry Romani nationalists for the essentialism inherent in nationalist ideology, they too concede to the notion of shared descent. The counter-narratives of nationalist critics do move away from the "one culture, one language, one nation" rhetoric, however. They

recognise that Romani identity and culture is subject to the continuous influences of cross-cultural exchange and consider Romani culture as an amalgam of the various cultural practices the Romanies have encountered since their dispersal from India. For the critics of the Roma Nation, there is no homogenous Romani culture to be recovered.

They argue, therefore, that Romani unity should be based on shared experience of racism and discrimination as opposed to shared origins and cultural and linguistic homogeneity. While the reunification of the Romanies is an end in itself for Romani nationalists, its critics see Romani solidarity as a necessary means by which to free the Romanies from racism and discrimination. The language of human rights, as opposed to nation building, is invoked. The focus is on shared oppression, not shared origins. In this way, Romani politics becomes less about defining who the Romani *are*, and more about what the Romanies *want* (i.e. special group rights).

Does such an approach succeed where Romani nationalism has so markedly failed? Arguably, yes. Experiences of racism and discrimination were the one thing that consistently united the participants, and instigated little disagreement, in spite of their strikingly different narratives. The act of memorialising collective suffering – from the Porajmos (Romani holocaust) to "everyday racism" – is the glue that bonds the Romani people into a single socio-political imaginary. In other words, it is where groupness materialises most strongly. Yet, the employment of a "collective suffering" frame is not unique to nationalist critics. Ultimately, this is where Romani nationalists and

their critics come to an agreement. In an age in which victims of identity-based injustices are demanding and receiving both symbolic and material redress, claims to Romani "victimhood" propose the greatest chance of recognition. Thus, whether framed in the language of human rights or in the rhetoric of nation building, the Romanies have been defined as historically subjugated objects of perpetual suffering who are deserving of recognition and redress.

Although the trend for identity politics dates back to at least the 1960s, it has acquired new purchase for the Romanies at a time when Romani organisations have grown exponentially throughout Europe; when a Romani academic circle is emerging; when far-Right anti-Romani violence is on the rise; when freedom of movement and the increase in Roma migration aggravate the socioeconomic marginalisation of these communities; and when human rights abuses against the Romanies, go largely unnoticed in national, and often international, political agendas. In lieu of a politics of universal rights, many activists and scholars have turned to the politics of group-specific rights which specifically account for the ongoing effects of racism and discrimination on the Romanies ability to access supposed universal equality. Although varying widely in their assessment of both the justification for and desired end of group rights, these efforts comprise an identity based movement rooted in claims of victimhood.

A substantial group of scholars, as discussed in chapter two, have questioned the value of identity politics, arguing that organising around historically marginalised group identities results in a preoccupation with past suffering,

and divides minorities into rival factions and the world into victims and perpetrators. For Brown (1995), when we organize around identity, or what she terms our "wounded attachments", we are conceding to our subjugation, and maintaining a cycle of blame which continues to focus on oppression rather than transcending it. Brown's observations expose the risks inherent in the contemporary fixations with victimhood. Indeed, with narrated experiences of suffering and oppression increasingly granting minority groups special rights and legitimacy, victimhood becomes competitive, with only groups who have suffered deemed to have the legitimate right to make claims in the name of minority-hood. Because suffering becomes the basis of claim making, minority groups must particularise and prove their individual and collective suffering so as to authenticate their identities. In short, experiences of suffering become the impetus for creating a subject position, running the risk that "victims" are defined by, and never escape, their positions of perpetual suffering (Brown, 1995).

Accordingly, narratives of victimhood engender a specific form of politics that is competitive, focuses only on suffering and weaponises misery. Indeed, victimhood has become fetishised to such an extent that a "hierarchy of oppression" now regulates the legitimacy of minoritised identity claims. This becomes evident in Romani activists' experiences with the antiracist movement. Romany Gypsies, specifically, have been excluded from notions of antiracist solidarity given their whiteness leaves them unmarked by race and ethnicity. Indeed, the Romanies have found themselves positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy of oppression and therein lies the problem with

Romani claims to victimhood. For as long as ethno-racial victimhood is premised on the notion of black victims/ white perpetrators, it will be assumed that white minorities cannot experience racism at the same intensity as black minorities. Any claim to victimhood by a white minority will thus be subject to scrutiny. Arguably, this has greater impact on the Romany Gypsies, who by virtue of their skin colour and country of birth, appear to epitomise "privilege". The Roma, on the other hand, may fare better in the victimhood discourse given their greater visibility and status as migrants. Indeed, in the current political climate, in which attentions are focussed on the "post-Brexit" response to EU migrants, the Roma may find they climb the ladder of the oppression hierarchy.

We arrive then at a somewhat fatalist conclusion. The Roma and the Romany Gypsies have irreconcilable differences in terms of lifestyle, socio-economic status, positionings within, and towards, multiculturalism and antiracism and experiences of xenophobia and/or racism. In common they have only the suffering of oppression, albeit with some Romanies suffering more than others. One could conclude, therefore, there is no "Roma Nation" in the British context. Firstly, Britain's Romanies appear to have little desire to retrieve cultural or linguistic homogeneity. Nor do many consider themselves an Indian diaspora. Though many of the participants are aware of their supposed Indian origins, they were unable to reconcile their "Indianness" with their present day experiences of Europeanness and Romaniness, thus, demystifying this idealised and lost homeland. The absence of an emotional connection to India can be understood with regards to their strongly felt national identifications

with their countries of birth and the certainty of these countries as their homelands, despite suffering racism and discrimination and experiencing tremendous barriers to belonging in those homelands. It is necessary, therefore, that: 1) national identifications and belonging are detached from culturalist notions of "Britishness" because this is the main reason why participants from Romani backgrounds feel rejected; and 2) we recognise that the Romanies often do not identify with one single place, but a variety of places which can hold different meanings at different stages of their lives.

Despite this, I remain hesitant to conclude that there is no future for the Roma Nation in Britain. Britain's Romanies, whether native or migrant, recognise and acknowledge the "Romaniness" of their fellow Romanies without necessitating that they "be Romani together". It is a passive solidarity in this sense, in which they recognise the world is divided into Romanies and gadze, without it necessarily requiring strong identifications between different groups of Romanies. There are circumstances under which solidarities and groupness intensify. Specifically, it appears collective suffering and injustice fosters a greater sense of "we-ness". How might Romani nationalists respond to this reality? It will entail a shift in ideology, in which they must accept the internal diversity of their "nation". They may want to consider the "Roma Nation" as a tool of strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1998), for example. Here they can employ markers of Romani identity, (e.g. shared culture, language, origin and experiences of discrimination) for the purpose of confronting the systems and processes that perpetuate exclusion, while simultaneously bringing to attention their internal differences (e.g. socio-economic status, history of

migration, lifestyle etc.). This is arguably the approach taken by critics of the Roma Nation, who pursue solidarity between Roma, Gypsies and Travellers while simultaneously recognising the nuances between these groups.

This approach would require Romani nationalists to rethink the way they frame Romani identity, or at least necessitate a revaluation of their aims of "reunification". Indeed, one must question whether Romani nationalists can employ strategic essentialism when their aims include cultural and lingual homogenisation. Romani nationalists may, therefore, find it constructive to clarify the differences between identity based and interest based claims. Identity claims will focus on their pursuit of nationhood, shared culture, language and origins and their diasporic claims. On the other hand, when making interest based claims (around issues of economic deprivation, housing, education and unemployment, for instance) it can be demonstrated that group boundaries may alter depending on the issues at question. On occasion it will be crucial to employ a discourse that constructs a secure notion of Romani identity, while on other occasions it may be more valuable to deconstruct such an identity. The assault on nomadism, for example, is specific to Romany Gypsies, while issues surrounding migration are pertinent to Roma. Claims to recognition alone are unlikely to tackle these more interest based issues. Identity claims should be accompanied, therefore, by a claim to equal access to opportunities and social and material resources. As Iris Marion Young (2005) has argues, the principal aims of identity-based mobilisations should be to destabilise the structural processes that maintain inequality.

Iris Marion Young's (2005) conception of a 'politics of positional difference' presents a valuable insight into how Romani nationalists could mobilise around experience of difference and disadvantage without falling victim to the trap of essentialism. She contends that social groups are, in effect, constituted through collective experiences of inequality and oppression which establish 'categorical distinctions among people in hierarchies of status and privilege' (Young, 2005). She asks that we move our attentions away from ascribed attributes that mark difference and instead evaluate the ways in possession of these markers of difference fashion one's socio-economic positioning and social perspective. Instances of groupness do not materialise because the Romanies share Indian origins, but because their shared societal positioning has instigated socio-economic disadvantage. Social groups are defined less, therefore, by a set of shared attributes, and more by the socio-economic positionings which determine their relations to others (Young, 2002, 89).

That said, rather that exclusively centring on questions of identity, which Young argues is likely to neglect structural societal disadvantage, identity movements should pay heed to the injustice and ingrained differences arising from structural inequalities and constructions of "normal" and "other". For Young, we must imagine social groups in 'relational rather than substantial terms' in order to 'retain a description of social group differentiation, but without fixing or reifying groups' (Young, 2002, 89). In other words, when groups make political claims, they should not be narrowly understood as mere claims to recognition of a stigmatised or marginalised identity. Rather, while

the recognition of minority identity may make up part of a movement's aims, the overarching claim is always for equality.

By exploring the politics of positional difference, we may obtain a greater understanding into the circumstances that produce the need to exercise the demand for the recognition of oppressed identities. Additionally, we may understand more clearly that not all circumstances produce such a need. Put differently, both Young and Spivak reject the claim that all the individuals acknowledged as a single identity group always suffer the same hardship in every context. This more or less resembles what Nancy Fraser argues in her theory of redistribution and recognition. Fraser (2003) argues that inequality should be considered both economic, thus requiting material redistribution, and cultural, thus requiring the recognition of identities and cultural diversity. She contends that some social groups suffer from both types of inequality, specifically those from ethnic and racial minorities. Indeed, they are not only discriminated against in the labour market, but subject to 'patterns of cultural value' which privilege certain cultures over others, thus constructing ethnic and racial minorities as 'deficient and inferior others who cannot be full members of society' (Fraser, 2003, 23).

Identity movements, according to Fraser, are often preoccupied with the act of disputing stigmatising cultural representations of minority groups, thus, isolating misrecognition from economic inequality and encouraging ethnic/racial essentialism. She proposes "a non-identitarian" politics that can resolve misrecognition without overlooking redistributive struggles and

essentialising group identity. She thus rejects the model of identity politics and proposes a "status" model. Misrecognition as status inequality requires a politics that will overcome subordination 'by establishing the misrecognised party as a full member of society, capable of participating on par with the rest' (Fraser, 2000, 113). This is arguably the aim of Romani nationalists who seek the equal participation of the "Roma Nation" in international and national government.

If Romani nationalists were to consider these approaches, Romani nationalism may be able to concentrate not only on defining Romani identity, but on circumstantially and contextually issue and interest based collective action. By exploring the latter, one may encourage the increased materialisation of groupness and opportunities to form alliances and solidarities when group boundaries shift. A Roma Nation that takes such a perspective is more likely to steer clear of portrayals of the group as possessing internal homogeneity. Such an approach may highlight that the Romanies are continually evolving throughout the course of movement action and are established in a milieu of social relations. Thus, it may also simultaneously avoid demobilising the attempts of Romani nationalist to make claims and demands in the name of the Roma Nation.

To conclude, therefore, this research has shown that there is little organised or explicit support for a Romani nationalist movement in Britain. Neither Roma, nor Romany Gypsies, identify with an Indian homeland and are equally unmoved by the idea of a Roma Nation. There is however, strong feelings of

exclusion, injustice and victimhood amongst these communities and, if carefully cultivated and framed, the Roma Nation may offer a home to this group who are so often searching for a place to belong.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Roma Participants by nationality and wave of migration

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Migratory Wave
Efraim	M	68	Bulgarian	1980s
Ivana	F	52	Bulgarian	1980s
Simeon	M	19	Bulgarian	1980s (second generation)
Monika	F	47	Czech	1990s (Refugee)
Pavel	M	25	Slovakian	1990s (Refugee)
Teodor	M	28	Kosovan	1990s (Refugee)
Anastasija	F	19	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Deshka	F	35	Bulgarian	Post-2004 EU
Frida	F	43	Hungarian	Post-2004 EU
Igor	M	21	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Ina	F	26	Romanian	Post-2004 EU
Ioana	F	24	Romanian	Post-2004 EU
Janka	F	26	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Katarina	F	21	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Lenka	F	36	Czech	Post-2004 EU
Madalina	F	22	Romanian	Post-2004 EU
Marja	F	24	Slovenian	Post-2004 EU
Michal	M	20	Czech	Post-2004 EU
Miroslav	M	28	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Natalia	F	29	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Petra	F	49	Slovakian	Post-2004 EU
Roman	M	31	Czech	Post-2004 EU
Rozalina	F	38	Bulgarian	Post-2004 EU
Velislava	F	19	Bulgarian	Post-2004 EU

Yuliyan	M	45	Bulgarian	Post-2004 EU
Zusana	F	48	Czech	Post-2004 EU

Appendix 2

Table 2.1: Sessions & Attendance of Intervention Group 1 (West Yorkshire)

Date	Stage	Length	Attendance
27/06/2016	Who we are	1 hrs 30 mins	12
11/07/2015	Who we are	1 hrs 15 mins	11
31/07/2015	Interlocutor	2 hrs	8
08/08/2015	Interlocutor	1 hrs	8
30/01/2016	Analysis	1 hrs 15 mins	6

Table 2.2: Sessions & Attendance of Intervention Group 2 (Sheffield)

Date	Stage	Length	Attendance
21/11/2015	Who we are	1 hrs 30 mins	10
12/12/2015	Interlocutor	2 hrs	6
16/01/2016	Analysis	1 hrs 15 mins	5

Table 2.3: Focus Groups

Date	Location	Length	Attendance
24/09/2015	Midlothian	2 hrs 20 mins	7
25/09/2015	Glasgow	1 hrs 45 mins	8
27/11/2015	Derbyshire	1 hrs 45 mins	8

Table 2.4: Interviews

Date	Participant	Location
15/07/2015	Natalia	Telephone
05/08/2015	Igor	Telephone
06/09/2015	Shannon	Telephone
08/09/2015	Annie	Telephone
25/09/2015	Ina	Glasgow
26/09/2015	James	Edinburgh
08/12/2015	Roman	Derby

Appendix 3

Focus Group Guide

- How do the participants define Romaniness?
    - Cultural elements? Set of beliefs and values? Way of life?
    - Do Romany Gypsies and Roma consider themselves as part of the same "group"? Do Roma consider other Roma as part of the same "group"?
- Are the participants aware of the theory of Indian origins?
    - Do they identify with an Indian homeland? Is it important to them?
    - Are there other places they consider a homeland? Where is home?
    - Do they have strong national identifications with their countries of origin/residence?
- What are the participants' experiences of "Otherness" and stigmatisation?
    - How does being Roma and migrant impact experiences of "otherness"?
- Do the participants feel a sense of belonging to Britain?
    - What is their relation to Britishness?
    - Have they experienced racism and discrimination?

Appendix 4

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form.

My name is Emily Webb and I am a PhD Sociology Student at the University of Leeds. The purpose of this consent form is to inform you of your rights as a participant in this study and of the procedures involved in the collection and keeping of data about yourself.

What you need to know:

- It is your right not to answer any question that you are asked.
- You may ask me any questions which you have.
- You are free to withdraw from the research at any point up to two months after your final interview/focus group without giving a reason and without consequences.
- Your name and identity will be changed so no one will be able to recognise you in the study and guarantee confidentiality in any discussions and publications in agreement with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- No information will be passed on to anyone connected to you.
- The only information that I may have to tell someone is if you inform me that you or someone you know, who is under the age of 18, is being physically or mentally harmed or abused in any way. This information will be passed on to the appropriate persons.
- The interview will be recorded digitally and all notes and recordings will be kept in a safe and secure place.
- You have the right to access data about yourself and to ask for it to be returned to you at any time.
- A copy of the completed research will be forwarded to you, should you wish to receive it.
- I have read this consent form in full, I have had the chance to ask questions concerning any areas that I did not understand, and I consent to being a participant in this study.

Signature of participant: _____ Print name: - _____

Date of Participation: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Emily Webb and I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds. I am currently working on a project that explores Britain's Romani communities. Specifically I am interested in finding out more about your culture and way of life, your experiences of discrimination, your feelings of belonging and your understandings of the history of the Romani people. I would like to invite you to take part in this project. To help you with your decision, this sheet provides you with all the important information about this research and what your involvement would entail. Should you have any questions about this information please do not hesitate to contact me on:

Email: ss08evw@leeds.ac.uk or
Telephone: 07830683596

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of this research is to explore something called Romani nationalism and gather your thoughts on the "Roma Nation". In other words, it aims to:

- Understand experiences of discrimination, home and belonging.
- Explore collective Romani identity.
- Gather your opinions on the ways in which Romani activists and community leaders have described Romani identity.

This research is part of my PhD studies at the University of Leeds. It is a small scale study that aims to make an educational contribution to knowledge about Romani communities that can be used by researchers and Romani communities alike.

Why have I been invited to participate?

The UK is home to Romani communities from across Europe. I want this research project to adequately reflect the diversity of Britain's Romani population. You have been invited to participate because you are a Romany Gypsy/ a Roma Migrant.

What do I have to do if I take part?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to attend (delete as necessary):

- A face to face interview at a location of your choice. This is expected to last approximately one hour.
- A focus group (group interview) in your community. This will last between 1.5 – 2 hours.
- 4/2 focus groups in your community. These will last between 1.5 – 2 hours.

If you require a translator, one will be provided in the language of your choice.

Will the information I provide be kept confidential?

All of the data collected from interviews and focus groups will remain confidential and anonymised. Audio recordings will be taken of your interviews and focus groups. These recordings will be deleted after they have been transcribed and will be anonymised. In other words, your name will be changed and any details that may identify you, such as your workplace or the names of family and friends, will not be used. Your contact details and transcripts of your interviews and focus groups will be stored securely at the University of Leeds.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

You are under no obligation to take part in the research – it is entirely your choice whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you are free to withdraw from the research at any point up to two months after your final interview or focus group. If you decide to take part you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form or give verbal consent.

How will taking part in the research benefit me?

Although there will be no immediate benefits for you if you participate in the project, it is hoped that this research will enhance knowledge of Romani people in the UK and assist future political action, activism and advocacy within Romani communities. The results of this research will be available to you, your community, and the organisations who act on your behalf.

Thank you, for taking the time to read this information. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Advisory Panel Consent Form

Advisory Panel Consent Form.

My name is Emily Webb and I am a PhD Student at the University of Leeds. The purpose of this consent form is to tell you of your rights as a member of the advisory panel and of the role that you will play within this research. This research aims to explore Romani nationalism, and the extent to which Britain's Romani population support, and identify with, the notion of a "Roma nation".

What you need to know:

- I will ask for your help and advice to develop a set of questions which will form the focus of this research. I want to know what issues are important to you and how I can produce research that will be beneficial to your community.
- I will keep you updated on the progress of my research and share key findings.
- Your job is to let me know where, how and when I am going wrong! You are the expert and it is your job to inform me when I have overlooked or overstated issues, or when I pay far too much attention to the issues that are not important to your community.
- When the research process has finished, I would like you to join me in writing a research report which will be sent to Gypsy and Traveller organisations. This will be co-authored, so your name will appear alongside my own.
- You are free to end your participation in the advisory panel at any time without giving a reason and without consequences.
- The participants of this study are entitled to privacy and confidentiality. Should you join the advisory panel, you may have access to information that you must keep completely confidential. I will provide you with guidelines and information about the Data Protection Act 1988 and the BSA Statement of Ethical Practice so that you will understand your responsibilities fully.
- You are also entitled to privacy and confidentiality and should you wish not to be identified as a member of the advisory panel then this is perfectly ok.
- A copy of the completed research will be forwarded to you, should you wish to receive it.
- I have read this consent form in full, I have had the chance to ask questions concerning any areas that I did not understand, and I consent to being a member of the advisory panel.

Signature of member: _____ Print name: -
_____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Appendix 5

Example of Advisory Panel Correspondence

Chapter 4 concerns

Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>   Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 1:26 PM
To: ██
██
██

Cc: Emily Webb <ss08evw@leeds.ac.uk.

Hi all,

I've been working on the first of my results chapters and have a few concerns. I've attached the chapter and a summary to this email. I know it's long so please don't feel obliged to read the whole thing but can I draw your attention to the section on page 7 called "The Other Others". I think it's important to include these quotes but wish to do so in a way that avoids making racism within/expressed by the Romani community the focus of the chapter. I'm trying to analyse these issues sensitively and with balance but I do think there is something really interesting and significant here. Any thoughts?

Many thanks.

Emily

                                                      Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 5:18 PM
To: Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>; ████████████
██
██

Cc: Emily Webb <ss08evw@leeds.ac.uk>

Hey Em,

Nah, I don't think anyone is coming across as racist really just super frustrated with the situation. I think the way you've summed it up is spot on. There's this one bit after Shaunas quote where you say she's distinguishing between deserving and undeserving groups. Tbh my take on it is that she's not blaming immigrants she's blaming the gov for favouring them groups and giving them special treatment. I don't think in her head she's like fuck immigrants, its more like fuck government. I dunno?

████

Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>   Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 6:58 PM
To: ██
██
██

Cc: Emily Webb <ss08evw@leeds.ac.uk>

Hi ████

Agreed. When I refer to "deserving" and "undeserving" others I meant Shauna thinks Gypsies

are more deserving of special treatment from the government than newly arrived immigrants. I don't mean for Shauna to come across as believing Gypsies are better or superior to other ethnic groups/ nationalities.

Regards,
Emily

Sat, Feb 6, 2016 at 9:22 AM

To: Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>;

Hi Emily

I think it's very good actually and I don't think you need worry about this racist thing. It reads very good to me and very interesting. A few things I thought as I read.

1. I notice that some of the stories of refugees are gone now and I think they were very nice information for the reader.
2. The Muslim Roma is very interesting I think for showing this is very different between Roma. I wonder if there is opportunity to have more detail about this?

This is very interesting all together.

With love,

Sat, Feb 6, 2016 at 13:28 PM

To: Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>;

Hi everyone!

I agree with ▮▮▮ but I'm bias maybe because my family are muslim Turkish roma. But didn't you have the life story of the muslim guy? Like that was good I think keep that in and you don't need to go into proper detail. Only other thing I think is maybe there just isn't enough on roma who were born here but with immigrant parents or mixed parents. I think that's another kind of experience and I dunno if its too late to add something like that? I know there is one or two people, the refugee guy and the muslim.

Sat, Feb 6, 2016 at 13:51 PM

To:
                          Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>;

Agree with ███████ but think it's too late now. Might be too late for Muslim thing too. What did happen to the bio things?

Emily Webb <emvwebb@gmail.com>   Sat, Feb 6, 2016 at 19:25 PM
To: ██
██
████████████████████████████████████

Hi all,

The participant biographies are separate to this chapter. In all honesty I am concerned about the word limit and whether I'll have room for them. I definitely want to include them with the summary report though because I think they are useful for anyone working with Roma.

███████ I really did consider this all the way through the research. I had to draw a line somewhere though. We do have Simeon in the study who was born in the UK to immigrant Roma parents. He does talk about this, I think in chapter 5. Let me follow up on this. Maybe this is something I can bring out in his narrative.

Regarding Muslim Roma. I touch on this in all three results chapters. It's something I would have liked to explore in a lot more detail but if I'm being realistic – it would need a whole study in itself, or at least a chapter which would require more fieldwork. Time wise this isn't possible. It's something I would consider for a future research project. Maybe it's something we can work on in the future?

Best wishes,

Emily