

Daniel Livermore writes, “the ideas of good citizenship and loyalty to the state have gradually become identified with the cultures and traditions of the majorities [within the nation-state]”¹; the above, taken from a paper titled, *Ethnic Conflict in the New Europe* raises particularly pertinent questions about the present political and social construction of Europe. The post-socialist transition within Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) revealed that “cultural Nationalism was (and still is) a driving force in formation and legitimization of nation-states which have a tendency to become ethnic states, that is states which ‘belong’ to an ethnic majority”.² The collapse of communist rule released powerful sentiments of historical injustices and drives to reconstitute national identities as sovereign states.³ Nowhere were these trends as striking as within CEE where East and West Germany reunified, while Czechoslovakia voted itself out of existence, creating separate Czech and Slovak nations and Yugoslavia fractured violently along ethnic lines. For many, it was both a narrative of national emancipation and a symbolic return to Europe.

In the present era of European integration this raises not only questions about the processes of political transformation in CEE, but also about the construction of “European” as an identity. Ian Hancock writes, “European isn’t a nationality or an ethnicity; Europeans are composed of a multitude of these”⁴, and yet, within Europe there is both a multitude of nationalities and ethnicities whose “European-ness” is questioned and even whose presence in Europe, broadly defined, is contested. The reorganization of space in Europe, as it moves closer to political harmonization, and perhaps even foreshadows the decline of the nation-state, has shifted emphasis to the question, what is *European-ness* and *unEuropean-ness*? Vilho Harle writes, “the point is the very idea of

what Europe *is* has been defined by the European mind in negative terms, suggesting what Europe *is not*.⁵ Despite official pronouncements, and discourses of European liberalism and tolerance, “given the way space and identity are constructed [,] Europe still excludes outside groups, who indeed face a new form of racism and exclusion”.⁶ I want to begin this paper with this question, for it suggests that pan-European as a citizenship is far from in place. Both Hancock and Livermore approach citizenship and ethnic conflicts from a common framework for understanding belonging, inclusion and exclusion: nationality and the nation-state. Hancock’s observation is important, for his comments are directed at a particular debate that continues to recur: the Romani people of Europe and whether they are, indeed, European, or as “European” as other “Europeans”.

Pál Tamás writes:

Policies of exclusion and forced assimilation, though different in many ways, share one important goal: both seek to reduce the visibility of Roma lifestyles, or even communities –the former by forcing them to the margins of society, and the latter by forcing them to assimilate.⁷

Assertions of Roma identity and rights often find a violent response in post-socialist Europe where the re-assertion of national identities increasingly demand minorities assimilate into the host society or submit to the cultural and linguistic supremacy of the ethnic majority. The expression of Roma identity raises fears among some sectors that the “national” identity, recently renewed or reemerging in the post-socialist period is imperiled by the expansion of minority rights and cultures.⁸ Dov Ronen adds a particularly bleaker interpretation of the re-emergence of national cultures in CEE, arguing, “Nationalism has not only come to rival democracy [in CEE]; nationalist manifestations have come threaten democracy”.⁹

Europe is confronted by a painful paradox; while the European institutions like to see the European Union as a champion of liberal democracy, human rights and equality,

the continued marginalization of the Roma –Gypsies– clashes with this vision. The nation- state, as the unit of primary identification is far more important than many would like to acknowledge, and rather than going into decline, in CEE, the nation-state is enjoying, if such a thing is possible, a renaissance. There is an additional debate which needs consideration when framing the relationship between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities in Central and Eastern Europe, that of national survival and national influence and integrity. The fields of Geopolitics and political geographers are increasingly framing ‘Europe’ as a much more pervasive and perhaps even invasive process than many integrationists would like to conceptualize European integration as. Geographers such as Merje Kuus and Anthropologists such as Elizabeth Dunn have increasingly drawn attention to the, in effect, perceived re-colonization of Central Europe through the extension of ‘western European’ standards, values, and assumptions about Eastern Europe and defining Eastern Europe as something not quite European enough.¹⁰ Returning to Harle’s previous remark, I want to suggest that the defining of groups such as the Roma as non-European, in some ways strengthens Central European claims to be more European or reduces the perceived influence of discourses that construct of South-west and Central Europe as an “other”.

The space of other in Europe: The Roma

On the eve of the dramatic changes which swept throughout Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism in 1989, a young Roma woman paused to allow her photograph to be taken in front of the dilapidated shack, cobbled together from pieces of corrugated tin, wood and fabric in which she and her family lived on the margins of a Bosnian town. Her remark, “let the whole world see from your book how we Gypsies

live. Like we weren't people at all. There's no work and no home for us, like there is for others,” speaks as forcibly about the isolation of Europe's approximately 10 million Roma on the margins of city and societies in 1989 as it does in 2005.¹¹ The Roma have been confined physically, politically and socially to the margins of many European societies by the status of undesirable or “despised outsider”.¹²

Ghettos, lack of adequate education, healthcare, housing, high unemployment, racism, ethnic violence, state indifference or active discrimination are all features of Roma life in many countries.¹³ The Europe spoken of in the Helsinki Final Act, the Convention on Human Rights and in Framework on Minority rights and the rhetoric of European integration to a large extent is not the Europe experienced by most Roma. Former Czech President Václav Havel remarked the treatment of the Roma is a “litmus test of civil society”; it is a test Europe is thus far struggling with.¹⁴ The Roma face a deep cycle of systemic racism, poverty, and even statelessness. Their case is not merely that of an ethnic minority struggling to define its place in a rapidly changing Europe; the case of the Roma speaks about the forces of integration, identity and citizenship, social exclusion and equality. The Roma as a subject confront the territorial, cultural and legal boundaries of the nation-state as an institution and the intellectual and social ideals of an enlarged common European home. The problem posed by the Europe's ‘gypsies’, is not, how will the European Union find a home for the gypsies, but rather, can and how will, the European Union protect the rights of other cultures and ethnic minorities.

While Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) confers equal European citizenship on member-states' nationals, Alvaro Gil-Robles, the European Commissioner for Human Rights in his Report for 2003 asks a timely, but uncomfortable question:

whether it is possible to be a non-citizen of the Union?¹⁵ The Roma are effectively non-citizens, for their rights in practice are not equal to those of other nationals.¹⁶ Racism and prejudice relegates them to the status of second or third class citizen, often below that of distinctly ethnic and culturally distinct immigrants and even guest workers such as the Turks. They are rejected by mainstream societies that seek to either remove their culture through assimilation, or push it far enough to the margins that it is excluded.¹⁷

Looking at Roma discrimination and rights in Europe is a broad category encompassing the legal and social structures of the European Union as well as the cultural and legal concepts of the nation state. Anti-Roma violence and exclusion is not a new advent, it has a history dating back seven centuries; it is a history which continues to shape present exclusion.¹⁸ The history of the Roma, and of European minority-majority relations is far too broad to do justice to in this paper; the European historiography of Roma relations itself fills many volumes. Indeed, the very question of who is a gypsy is still the subject of intense debate between linguists, anthropologists, ethnographers and historians.¹⁹ David Mayall writes, “[t]he struggle for the recognition of ethnic status [by the Gypsies] has largely been achieved within the specialist academic community engaged in Gypsy studies, but only small headway has been made outside this limited field”.²⁰ This paper, will use the terms “Gypsy” and “Roma” interchangeably throughout, and will not engage in the debate surrounding Gypsy identity or origins. Readers wishing to access that debate should consult the work of Prof. Ian Hancock, Prof. David Mayall, Judith Okley, Angus Bancroft and others. What is clear in much of the literature is that the transnational similarities between public perceptions and representations of the Roma are striking.

This paper therefore has two deeply interconnected themes, the first is the link between social and physical marginalization and isolation of the Roma (the boundaries between cultures), and the second, is discourses of power which employ narratives of biological, social, or ethnic *otherness* as legitimating mechanisms to enforce the limits of the first (the narratives defining the impermeability of those boundaries). There are plenty of grey areas between these two themes, but nonetheless, they define the mechanisms and the methodology of exclusion. Hancock has argued that it is the “stigmatization” of Gypsy as an identity through hostile imagery that drives much of the difficulty between Gypsy and non-Gypsy communities; Hancock’s point is equally valid for looking at the language and politics of *othering* towards other ethnic groups as it is that of the Roma.

The perceptual basis for discrimination:

Historian Joseph Agassi and sociologist Norbert Elias have observed that *Modernity*, or the process of promoting and maintaining the new social order—broadly defined as civilizing society and changing social and power relations with space—has placed unprecedented power in the hands of the nation-state to regulate and remove the “chaotic” from society.²¹ If civil society and inclusion is thought of as a series of processes through which one becomes accepted as belonging within a society then this status of *other*, or *outsider* is likewise a series of processes meant to exclude.²² The manufacture of this discourse has its roots in the Enlightenment quest for unity, coherence and community that constructed and regularized the divisions of labour and race as well as the 18th and 19th century emergence of the nation-state as an ethnically and culturally homogenous homeland of a particular group.²³ The race for empire among the European powers and the emerging science of Race provided the intellectual and moral

mandate for the European *mission civilizatrice*. More importantly, it provided the tools to categorize the newly acquired colonial possessions as lesser subjects or beings along the basis of skin colour and race; *Modernity* provided the state with a methodology to construct the racial and social ‘other’.

Anthropologist Ann Stoler observes social and political power narratives of those from a group with subordinate social status not only manifest in discourses of order but also in ideas of racial and national purity and co-committal ideas of racial and class inferiority.²⁴ Culture, or group specific traits and identity defining features found pseudo-scientific evidence in social Darwinism and also in the contest for dominance among European powers. Culture, nineteenth century elitist thinkers asserted, was the highest level of social achievement, and a western accomplishment needing to be protected, and passed along to civilized societies.²⁵ It became the responsibility of Europeans to spread, protect, educate and uplift lesser societies.

Evidence illustrating this type of argument and thought can be found in the history of France’s colonial empire in Southeast Asia. French administrators, traders and church officials alike viewed and treated the Vietnamese as “an inferior, child like race, ideally suited for a life of hard work for low wages”; work that was deemed beneath educated, literate, Christian Europeans.²⁶ This separation of labour (class), also equated a separation of power based on assumptions about the Vietnamese’s nature, (order) but also their inferiority and inequality to exercise the same rights as white Europeans (race). Similar attitudes towards ethnic *others* can be tracked in other civilizing missions; take for example American ‘*Manifest Destiny*’ and the political debate on Philippine self-governance and Filipino acquisition of American citizenship following the annexation of

the Philippine Islands from Spain. The American senator Henry Cabot Lodge best summed up the difference between ‘dark skinned savages’ and cultured whites on the floor of the United States Senate, commenting, “Whither they are fit to govern themselves, they are not fit to govern us”.²⁷ Similar sentiments can still be found, for example, the French Law of 3 January 1969 set quotas restricting the number of those with circulation cards (generally Gypsies) allowed to vote in any one municipality to 3% of the total electorate thus ensuring, while making democratic overtures, that in effect, the dark skinned Gypsy population is unable to form a significant enough voting bloc to rule over ‘white’ French citizens.²⁸

The depiction of the Filipinos, like the Gypsy as something to kept out of Czech and French communities, from holding equal rights as white Americans, kept away from boarding ramps of flights bound for Britain, seen as dark-skinned or racially predisposed to criminality and rejecting social values, is a common feature of racism. These are distinct features of cultural domination at work, which presuppose, as did the civilizing Europeans that their culture is inherently ‘better’ than others, thus allowing them to label and categorize the weakness or failings of other cultures. The defining of opposing or coexistent cultures and their reduction of status to *other* legitimates the exercise of exclusion policies. Benedict Anderson writes,

[the expressions of] racism have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation...No surprise ...that on the whole, racism and anti-Semitism manifest themselves, not across national boundaries, but within them. In other words they justify not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination.²⁹

For the Roma, seen as incapable of belonging, and therefore displaying loyalty to the state, they are reduced to the status of *other*, or alien culture. This not only positions them beneath the lowest rung on the social-economic ladder; it utilizes a discursive strategy

that presents the Roma as unwilling or incapable of participating in society or as threatening to national and cultural survival. This social construction of the Roma as dangerous to national unity of cultural coherence provides ontological justification for repression and exclusion of the Roma in the name of cultural and national survival.³⁰

Stoler suggests that the linkages between notions of power, class and race provides a deeply entrenched system of biases, imbedded in the western bourgeois liberalism which inform belonging and inclusion, and legitimates the exclusion of the ‘other’.³¹

Two key observations about the processes of modernity become clear; that it is spatially oriented, and that is hierarchically organized along lines of productivity or perceived social value. Territory, or spatial relationships therefore are key aspects in relation to the state in respect to political and legal rights. Geography, social space, and the use of space as power are therefore essential aspects of *modernity*. Space, however, is more than geography in terms of belonging and power; modernity also fixes the boundaries of social space, establishing and reinforcing the divisions between class and political power and between ideas of national space and ethnic space. As Benedict Anderson observed, the power dynamic establishes and reinforces social and political hierarchies of power by reducing the status of *other* groups and therefore their right to geographic and social inclusion.³²

The Roma as a subject: some attitudes

To provide the context necessary to understand the importance of the quote and the imagery offered at the beginning of this paper must look at what constitutes, for many, narratives of the Roma. Why is discrimination and marginalization accepted, and even justified by a large majority of national population? How is it that governments, thought of by modern human rights regimes as having the responsibility to protect its citizens,

have allowed or even designed the structures of systematic exclusion and been so hesitant or unwilling to dismantle them? The roots of discrimination targeting the Roma are closely connected with the *idea* of what the Roma, are or what they have been made to represent; it also shares a great deal in common with the treatment of minorities in general; the social status of *other* and the contest for dominance and space.³³

The Roma have been described as Europe’s other unwanted population, and the discourse of *otherness* surrounding the Roma portrays them as anti-modern, rootless, criminal, unhealthy, and often as dangerous to the progress and cohesiveness of society. One Hungarian poll, conducted in the 1970’s revealed that approximately a quarter of the Hungarian population viewed the gypsies as “lazy, immoral and prone to criminal behavior”, while another showed that most viewed the Roma as “work-shy” and “welfare parasites who receive too many social benefits”.³⁴ A series of recent investigations into Czech attitudes reveals that many Czech’s feel the Roma’s isolation is of their own making, having squandered government and societal support.³⁵ Sentiments in post-socialist Hungary reveal that not much changed from the 1970’s, with attitudes towards the Roma ranging from indifference to outright hostility; in a letter to the editor of a local paper, one Hungarian opined on the plight of the Roma:

I cannot comprehend, even if you’re a liberal how could you always and in every case take the gypsies’ side? ... That everyone harms the poor gypsy, from the government to the local council, that I’ve heard often from you, but not the reason everyone hates them! They cannot live like normal European people, though they had twenty-five years to thirty years to become humanized under the communists. Nobody forbade them from working and learning. But they steal and beg instead from childhood on. They teach their children to cheat.... And don’t tell me its poverty that made them do it because they are not poor. They have money for everything from food to taxis....³⁶

A 1999 public opinion poll in Bulgaria reveal that 78% of the population indicated they did not want Roma as neighbours.³⁷ A 1991 survey in three CEE countries revealed 78% percent of respondents held definitively negative attitudes of the Roma.³⁸ In Britain, a

member of the township of Sheffield’s Council remarked after a debate about regulating camping sites in 1979, “ I wish you would stop calling them gypsies...they’re cannibals, they’re parasites on society”.³⁹ Forbidden by national laws meant to exclude all non-Slavs from property rights, especially around the Czech industrial heart after the Second World War, Czechoslovakia’s Roma from the outset of the post war period were forced to the margins of the newly reconstituted Czechoslovak state. Denied property ownership, inclusion in the social and educational life of Czechoslovak society, popular perceptions of the Roma as uncontrollable or unreliable ensured that the Roma were excluded. The 1958 Czechoslovak law outlawing nomads presented similar perceptions of the Gypsies as social parasites or undesirable nomads, “who wander from place to place, even if they are permanently registered in some village, and avoid honest work or support themselves through dishonest activities”.⁴⁰ Around the same time period, Dr. H. Arnold, writing in the *Gypsy Lore Society*’s magazine in Britain in 1961 opined, “the essential Gypsy nature is due to a hereditary characteristic which determines whether a person is in behavior a Gypsy.”⁴¹ Similar sentiments can be easily found in post-transition sentiments, such as those of Jozef Pacai, the mayor of Medzev in Eastern Slovakia remarked, “I am no racist...But some Gypsies you would have to shoot” because of their nature.⁴²

What is presented here is a depiction of the Roma as an outsider within their own societies by genetic, social, or cultural practices; the implications however, are further reaching. Among many Czechs, surveys have revealed there is a sense that the Roma reject the values of Czech society, or that they are as a group incompatible with Czech, or as the Hungarian writer above commented, European society. Indeed, many continue to

view the isolation of the Roma as necessary. The mayor of the French town of Gisors recently remarked during a town hall meeting that the stopping areas required by the French Besson law should be constructed in a guarded and controlled area one and half kilometers outside the town in order to keep the “security threat” posed by the Gypsies as away from the town as possible.⁴³ Another representation of the Gypsies comes in another Czech passage worth quoting,

A Gypsy will not work, he wants to wander, steal and live his own life. Gypsies are a terrible advertisement for us. Foreign tourists take pictures of the gypsy gangs, their camps and wagons – soon we will be known abroad as the nation (národ) of Gypsies.⁴⁴

This 1956 Czechoslovak depiction of the Roma as dark-skinned, unproductive nomads with multiple children and dogs living in caravans devoid of order finds remarkable traction throughout Europe.



Fig A: Czech Depiction of Traditional Roma life. Note the prominence of the caravans, dark skin and the inevitable dogs. Zdečka Jamnická-Smerglová, *Dějiny našich Cikánů* (Prague: Orbis, 1955, pp. 59)

This *discourse* of the Gypsy as physical representations of social disorder perpetuates the conditions that magnified their exclusion as a source of disorder. Discriminated against for as being unwilling to participate in meaningful employment and joining sedentary life, prevented by racism from obtaining meaningful employment, or prevented by lack of educational opportunities, they are confined to a vicious circle of poverty and exclusion. Racism and discrimination has created in effect a second tier of citizenship in society.

Indeed, a December 1950 Czechoslovak document reveals that Communist authorities realized that integration of the Roma into communist society was entirely dependent on the willingness of the Czechoslovak population to accept them as belonging.⁴⁵ In spite of Czechoslovakia’s Communist governments efforts to force the settlement of the Roma and assimilate it into communist society, popular perceptions – ironically those produced by the regime itself- effectively created Roma ghettos in cities and towns that served to reinforce *Gypsy* as an identity and cut off the Roma population from the services and opportunities necessary to shed the traits viewed by the regime and society as anti-modern and socially disruptive. In other countries, such as France, laws have been passed which require ‘travelers’ (almost exclusively Gypsies) to possess circulation documents, and the permission of the police to move about or set up camp. The absence of either can result in criminal sanction.⁴⁶ One of the core features of discrimination is therefore the depiction of the Roma as not belonging, nor capable of belonging, making them whoever the writer or speaker wants them to be, whether that be an ethnic minority, a criminal group, social vagrants, or a race.⁴⁷

Modernity, the city, and exclusion:

If it is accepted that one of the key aspects of modernity is the intertwining of power with physical geography through the social and physical transformation of space from rural, unproductive and *uncivilized* to urban, orderly and *modern*; then the rise of the city as a feature of modernity seems somewhat natural. More importantly, in a social capacity, the city provides a framework to examine the relationship between space, power, inclusion and exclusion. In order to exercise equal participation, the Roma must assimilate and become Czech, Hungarian, French etc, and no aspect of Roma culture is

seen as compatible with modern living. For the Roma, the struggle for space, and thus inclusion, plays out on the edges of the city; the degree of spatial separation between the Roma and non-Roma community has a direct connection with levels of Roma prosperity or poverty, access to equal services and therefore inclusion and exclusion.⁴⁸

As a social institution based on cohesiveness and continuity, historian Christopher Friedrichs argues, the city, as a territorial and social project, allowed urban communities to survive war, religious and political upheavals.⁴⁹ Modernity’s removing or isolating of the ‘chaotic’ from society makes the urban city a dividing line between ‘modern’ society and uncivilized elements of elements of social non-cohesion; or keeping out the *other*. Thinking about exclusion through the framework of the city works as effectively for 18th century Europe as it does for the twentieth, to evaluate the prominence of Roma settlements on the outsides – or margins- of towns, and ghettos within the urban environment in CEE and Western Europe.

If we return briefly to Ann Stoler, who argued that engineered and socially constructed values play an important role in providing the benchmarks against which claims of citizenship, property rights and public value are measured, then within the urban city the ability of the Roma to access, remain within, and exercise property ownership and access to public services reveals the depths of Roma marginalization.⁵⁰ Residential segregation is not a new experience for the Roma, even those who have settled into sedentary life styles. In Central and Eastern Europe, the roots of segregation predate the socialist era; despite one of the main social projects of the CEE communist regimes being the denial of ethnicity and the effort to forge new socialist societies, segregation was deepened.

In the Czechoslovak state, the regime built upon traditions of exclusion and efforts to force integration dating back the Austro-Hungarian Empire where the Empress Maria Theresa enacted laws against nomadic life. In Slovakia, the exclusion of the Roma to the physical margins of Slovak cities and towns date back the Holy Roman Empire and the 16th century Hungarian kingdoms conflict with the Turkish Ottoman Empire.⁵¹ Popular perceptions of the Roma as Turkish spies led to restrictions forcing Roma groups to settle outside of towns, and allowed Gypsy access to towns only on selected days and between selected hours. These and similar policies setting restrictions on minimum distance from public roadways for Gypsy encampments were enforced well into the twentieth century.⁵² The efforts of the Communist regimes to control the Gypsy population therefore had distinct spatial aspects. The Czechoslovak Communist party identified the nomadic nature of the Gypsy population – to many extents a direct result of social ostracism – as the major barrier to successfully forging a new society. It is well worth noting, that at this point, the majority of the Roma population in the Czech lands were, and had been settled since the late 19th century.⁵³

The Czech government therefore set out to resolve the ‘Gypsy question’, by removing, legally, the status of gypsy in the passage of the “law about permanent settlement of nomadic persons”. Modernity is deeply connected with this effort, in that it was the first law not to use the term gypsy, or any other ethnic distinguishers, but adopted the language of *modernity*, and the goal of settling unproductive citizens into productive values. This law was part of a discursive strategy aimed at removing the ‘Gypsy’ as an identity and as a legitimate subject.⁵⁴ Enforcing the states authority required extending its spatial control to citizens outside of its normal power base, Spatial control was a key

aspect, and state agencies were ordered to “liquidate gypsy camps and ghettos in order to get rid of all sources of gypsy isolation” and bring the anti-modern life style of the Gypsy into the modern environment of the city.⁵⁵ A series of raids by local police and security services were efforts to end the “backwardness and the incorrect way of life of citizens of Gypsy origin in [Czechoslovakia], to increase their standard of living and to reeducate them into being dignified citizens of our socialist society”.⁵⁶ Bringing a dignified existence to the Gypsies meant the taking of a census, but discrimination was readily perceivable with local police units cutting off the wheels of caravans, and confiscating Gypsy’s groups horses in order to force their conversion to sedentary life.

They came in the middle of the night. It was cold. They woke everybody up. Adults and children. And started to count everybody. They took horses, our biggest friends and helpers. And cut wheels off the wagon – calling us black gobs...⁵⁷

By virtue of being where they were the night of the raid, Roma groups were made members of which ever town they were close to; those towns, in turn, inherited the responsibility to clothe, feed, and educate them in order to effect to the states goal of making them productive citizens.⁵⁸ The biases against gypsy culture are accessible in directives from the national party authority to local levels to teach the Roma how to live in apartments and modern society.⁵⁹ Local resistance, and difficulty assimilating the Gypsies into local communities was two fold; local communities refused or resisted their integration, and Gypsies themselves, refused to accept their reduction to the non-status ascribed to them by the state.

Vera Solkova makes an interesting argument, which explains in some ways the post-1989 experiences of the Roma in Central Europe; their reduction as a subject or group with an ethnic right to inclusion and participation in civil society and reduction to ‘social deviant’ under communism built upon existing prejudices. This depiction, and the all to

frequent criminalization of their lifestyle and culture removed their entitlement to recognition and protection as participants in civil society by conferred upon them the status of criminal.⁶⁰ The sudden changes in Europe only served to reinforce those perceptions. More so, the often clear physical difference between the Gypsies and their Czech and Slovak neighbours ensured that the Gypsy community was in effect pushed by popular opinion and local particularity into a Ghetto either within the city, or that the boundaries of the city proper shifted in ways which pushed the Gypsy population to the city's margins. The lack of opportunities with the cities were reinforced by educational differences; where Gypsy children were placed into special remedial schools classes, which in effect closed off higher education, dooming successive generations of Roma to menial labour jobs and increased social isolation.⁶¹

The regimes efforts to assimilate the Roma into Czechoslovak was the victim of a double edged sword, the first being the artificial nature of the communities the communist regimes attempted to create through forcibly integration of the Roma into towns. The second, was the all too successful campaign to describe the Roma as ‘asocial’, or social parasites and the failure of the regime to enforce a true lack of distinction, which created ghettos, second class educational and employment options, and essential reinforced the difference Czechoslovak society intimately felt between themselves and the gypsies. István Pogány observes, “[i]t is widely recognized that Gypsies, or Roma, have been routinely denied basic rights and that they have been treated less favourably than non-Roma by bureaucracies, courts and police in much of Central and Eastern Europe”.⁶² Communist Europe, however, was not alone in its treatment of the Roma as social deviants or a disruptive force to social cohesion. In both Britain, and France,

western European countries with long democratic traditions, the gypsy community has not fared well. Take for example, the use of city bylaws to force Roma who own the property they live on to move. In the town of Merignac in France, the local mayor used sections of the security law, article 9 specifically which relate to public order, to evict only Gypsy families. It is notable that only Gypsy families were forced out and had their homes destroyed.⁶³ The courts when asked to review or intervene have frequently ruled in favour of the municipalities, or declined to hear the cases on ‘procedural grounds’. The tone of anti-Gypsy sentiments is readily accessible through the comments of elites. Take for instance, the following from the Prefect of Vaucluse:

You can ask my former colleagues... I have no particular tenderness for those people. They live at our expense, from pillage too, everyone knows it. When they invade a piece of land, believe me, I am always ready to use all means to expel them. But there is a law that imposes a halting area in each commune of more than 500 residents, and it is necessary to respect it.... Don't worry, I know how to behave with respect to this subject.⁶⁴

Institutional expressions of anti-Gypsy public sentiment become institutionalized harassment that chases Gypsy groups from one community to the next, often with the stated goal of driving the Gypsy out of the country. In the Czech republic, following the ‘velvet divorce’, anti-Gypsy sentiment took on a far more invasive form, the outright denial of citizenship. Following the break up of the country, a new citizenship law was drafted which conferred “Czech” citizenship on those who were considered Czech under the 1969 citizenship law, and deemed all others as aliens. Ethno-politics, and ethno-nationalism were key elements of the mix that drafted the law in order to deny Czech citizenship to “Slovaks” in advance of an anticipated wave of economic migration from the poorer Slovak republic.⁶⁵ A further aspect of the Czech law was its prohibition on eligibility for citizenship to those with criminal records within the previous five years. On the eve of its passage, numerous local police forces conducted raids of Gypsy ghettos to

ensure that as many Roma as possible possessed criminal records and thus would be ineligible for citizenship.⁶⁶ Czech officials have admitted, that nearly all those excluded under the Czech citizenship law, were in reality, Roma; wanted by neither the Slovak Republic, nor the Czech Republic they in effect find themselves stateless.⁶⁷ The Slovak Premier, Vladimir Meclar, argued in a speech in September of 1993, that he considered it “was necessary to curtail the ‘extended reproduction of the socially inadapted and mentally backward population”, he was referring to the Roma, An “official translation” of his speech was released shortly after in efforts to address anger from western Europe to his remarks; that translation asserts,

They [the gypsies] should be perceived as a problem as a problem group that is growing in size... This means if we do not deal with them now, they will deal with us later... Another thing we have to consider is extended reproduction of socially inadequate population. [sic].⁶⁸

Meclar’s comments were foreshadowing of deepening exclusion of the Roma from Slovak society. Within the immediate period of the collapse of communism and the ‘velvet divorce’, Roma settlements in Slovakia increased from 278 in 1988 to 591 in 1998.⁶⁹ As in France, local elites have used local authority and exploited the relatively poor education and legal background of Slovak Gypsies to force them from their homes and land, in order to recreate the ethnically and culturally homogenous community. In the Czech Republic, local elites and town governments sought central government assistance to “repatriate “undesirables” to Slovakia”.⁷⁰ With strikingly higher than the national averages, Europe’s Roma find themselves economical, socially, and financially inhibited from asserting the rights on par with ethnically majorities. The city, as a space for observing and evaluating Roma inclusion and exclusion, as the Slovak, Czech, and French examples reveal is an ideal site. Perhaps, the most telling example of the Roma’s place in European society comes from the Czech town of *Usti nad labem*, and the

construction by local residents of a sixty meter long, two meter high reinforced concrete wall between the housing of non-gypsies and Gypsies in October of 1999. The popular constructions of Gypsy identity outlined earlier in this paper found their physical expression in the efforts of local residents, unable to physically remove the residents, to isolate them, in effect building a real ghetto where a cultural economic and social ghetto already existed.⁷¹ Even within the core of the urban city, where state authority had previously forced Roma inclusion, physically, in reality, social exclusion in the form of a ghetto, created by residents, exists.

Similar circumstances can be found in the Slovak Republic, where a substantial portion of the Roma have been forced to live on the outskirts of towns or continue to face either directly sanctioned or tacitly ignored by government officials discrimination such as curfews.⁷² Forced inclusion by law and legislation by the EU or national governments will only have the effect of continuing to perpetuate Roma exclusion and xenophobia at best as *Usti Nad Labem* illustrates and at worse, and at best, will only maintain the status quo. What is needed, is a fundamental change in the approach of the national governments to the issue of the Roma. There are signs that positive change is being made, but it all too frequently comes as a result of incidents such as Usti Nad Labem (which was extremely embarrassing for the Czech national government) or the drowning death of a young Roma chased by skinheads into a river in 2003. Paul Polansky captured the attitudes that led to that death succinctly in his poem, “The River killed my brother”:

They weren't skinheads who threw my brother into the river.
They were boys he went to school with...
I ran for help. . I didn't have to go very far.
Two policemen were sitting in a car watching, laughing.⁷³

This status of ‘other’ perhaps speaks most for the plight of the Roma than any of the many terms commonly used to describe them, *Tsigani*, *Roma*, *Gypsy*, *Gypsy-Traveller* or any permutation thereof. The Roma have been traditionally viewed as a problem, as barriers to progress and modernization and thereby subjected to a wide reaching effort by state authorities of assimilation and extermination.⁷⁴ In the aftermath of the demolition of the Gypsy wall in *Ústi nad Labem* came two separate comments that reveal the depth of animosity towards the Gypsies, as well as the strength of prejudice. The first, is closely linked with the earlier illustrated processes of modernity, and connects the economic dislocation experienced by many Czechs during the transition to market economies with a physical target, “Everything, whether it is criminality, drugs, whatever comes to your mind was first started by the Roma”. The ‘Wall’ itself illustrates the second aspect, which is the impermeability of borders between social spaces. One Czech woman asked, “Why can’t the Roma behave as decently as we do?”⁷⁵ Race, class and social characteristics are intrinsically linked in the production of a divide, which positions the racialized ‘other’ in opposition to the mainstream.⁷⁶ The efforts of the Czech and Slovak nations to reconstitute themselves made the Roma convenient scapegoats for the social and economic ills experience by post-socialist Europe. The politics of exclusion in CEE can thought of as a two-tier process with respect to the Roma: the first finds its basis within an agenda located in the processes of modernity, understood through economic and social aesthetics, in that ‘white’ society ascribes to itself the social values and ideal it holds at the highest level, whereas ‘dark’, or ‘black’ society are represented as exhibiting criminality, backwardness and social practices rejected or held in contempt by the majority population. Geopolitically, the implosion of communist regimes shifted the

borders, real and imagined for Europe, creating new spatial orientations and a new ‘East’. At the same time that this process unfolded, western European states began enacting a series of legislative acts, and acts by effect, which aimed to limit the real or perceived influx of eastern Europeans, particularly Roma to western Europe, to take advantage of the social security net. In effect, the continued existence of these laws, and laws that effect Roma exclusion (or other ethnic minorities) reveals the tension between ‘old Europe’ and a Europe of united, but sovereign nations. The full rights of EU citizenship cannot be denied to a substantial number of citizens, based on their ethnicity and yet be still thought of as citizenship, in its full sense.⁷⁷ In an article titled, “the coming Hordes” the January 15th, 2005 edition of *The Economist* magazine captured the position of outsider that the Roma hold.⁷⁸ The Roma, very much, exist on the margins described in the opening to this paper and as Vaclav Havel noted, they are indeed a litmus test for the Human rights regime. The Roma are the quintessential outsiders; they are often seen as a social problem to be solved not through inclusion, but rather regulated exclusion.⁷⁹ Massive economic and social dislocation, combined with historical prejudice has created an environment where, even in geographies where the Roma population possess formal citizenship- with all formal entitlements and protections-, in practice they are subjected to a ‘different’ type of citizenship which denies them the basic rights accorded to other citizens.⁸⁰ For CEE, the construction of internal narratives of ethnic state and national identity place ethnic minorities, despite legislation or official government positions at a disadvantage. For CEE, treated as a “subject” by Europe proper, in need of western European expertise, institutions, in order to become fully European, the effort to retain national identities finds a direct tension with integration. Ironically, perhaps, is that

integration itself, is in tension between national identities and supra-nationalism. The position of ethnic minorities in CEE, and in Europe at large continues to remain tenuous as integration increasingly reframes discourses of *Europeanness* and ethnic and territorial claims of what is European and not European back to the center of the debate on political integration especially in light of the debate on Turkish accession. What separates a Czech or Pole from a Romanian, a Russian, or a Latvian and what defines a “European” from a “non-European”? For Central Europe, and the Roma, discourses that define the geographic and geopolitical space, as well as the nations and the peoples who inhabit it as an “other” places the continued exclusion and marginalization of the Roma in a position of constant relevance for evaluating European citizenship and integration.

¹ Daniel Livermore, *Ethnic conflict in the New Europe*, Queens center for International Relations, Martello papers #10, Kingston: Queens University Press, 1994. 10

² Nicolae Gheorghe & Thomas Acton, “Citizens of the world and nowhere: Minority, ethnic and human rights for Roma during the last hurrah of the nation-state.” In *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ed, Will Guy. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001. 54.

³ Nancy Wingfield, Ed. *Creating the Other: Ethnic conflict in Habsburg Central Europe* Austrian History, culture, and Society studies, V5. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003.2; Max Riedlsperger, “Europe of the Regions: A new hope for ethnic minorities?” *History of European Ideas*, 19:4-6 (1994) ,655.

⁴ Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People (Ame sam e Rromane dzene)*. Université René Descartes. Centre de recherches tsiganes. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2002. 77.

⁵ Vilho Harle, “On the concepts of the “OTHER” and the “ENEMY”: The cultural moment in International Studies” *History of European Ideas*, 19:1-3 (1994), 28.

⁶ Andras L. Pap. *Transitions online* (formerly Central European review) Book review: *European Helots*. 15 February 2005. (Location, current writing folder, desktop)

⁷ Pal Tamas, “Roma politics in Central Europe” *EurActiv.com* 1 Dec, 2005. np.

⁸ Rogers Brubaker, ‘Myths and Misconceptions in the study of Nationalism’ in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, John Hall, Ed Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1998. 276-277.

⁹ Dov Ronen, “On the incompatibility of “nationalism” and “democracy”—Lessons from East Central Europe” *History of European Ideas* 19:1-3 (1994). 479.

¹⁰ Merje Kuus, “Europe’s eastern expansion and the reinscription of otherness in East-Central Europe” *Progress in Human Geography* 28:4 *2004) pp.472-489; Elizabeth C. Dunn, “Standards and person-making in east-central Europe” in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Pp.173-193.

¹¹ Bato Tomasevic, in *Gypsies of the world*. New York: Hent Holt and co, 1988, 133.

¹² Zoltan Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime change, marginality and ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.2.

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- ¹³ Claude Cahn, Roma rights: Rights, justice, and strategies for equality. New York: International debate education association, 2002.48.
- ¹⁴ Rick Fawn, "Czech attitudes towards the Roma: 'Expecting more from Havel's country'?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 53:8 (Dec, 2001). 1195.
- ¹⁵ Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights; "4th annual report; January to December 2003 to the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary assembly" 15 December 2004. Struasbourg: Council of Europe, 2004. 28
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 30.
- ¹⁷ European Roma Rights Center, "Always somewhere else: Anti-Gypsyism in France". Country reports series, No 15. (Nov, 2005) Budapest: European Roma Rights center, 2005. 31.
- ¹⁸ Zoltan Barany, *The East European Gypsies* 3.
- ¹⁹ See for instance the work of Ian Hancock, and David Mayall.
- ²⁰ Mayall, gypsy identities, 1500-2000.243.
- ²¹ Bancroft, Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe, 51 one of the central features of Modernity has been the cultural and scientific regulation, domination, and structure of space. The discourse is therefore shaped by the process of modernization but also the connected expressions of power dynamics with creating and regulating new norms; see for instance, Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process: the development of manners*. New York: Urizen Books, 1978; and Joseph Agassi "The contemporary role of historians of science and technology" *Protosoziologie* 8 (1996) 385-401.
- ²² Rinus Penninx, et al, Eds, *Citizenship in European Cities: immigrants, local politics and integration policies*. Burlington VY: Ashgate, 2004, 141.
- ²³ David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities: From Egipcians and Moon-men to the Ethic Romany*. London: Routledge, 2004. 101, 104-105.; Daniel Livermore, *Ethnic Conflict in the New Europe*. Martello Papers #8. Kingston; Queens University Press, Queens Center for International Relations, 1994.10-11.
- ²⁴ See Vera Sokolova, "A Matter of speaking: Racism, gender and social deviance in the politics of the "Gypsy Question" in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-1989" Phd. Diss. University of Washington, 2002 chapters 4.; 10-11.
- ²⁵ Solkova, 29.
- ²⁶ George D. Moss. *Vietnam: An American Ordeal*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1998, 14.
- ²⁷ Christopher Lasch. "The Anti-Imperialists, The Philippines, and the inequality of man." *The Journal of Southern History*. 24:3(1958). P.327; see also the extensive debate in the United States Senate, and Walter L. Williams, "United States Indian Policy ad the debate over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the origins of American Imperialism." *The Journal of America History*, 66 :4 (Mar, 1980) 810-831.
- ²⁸ ERRC. "Always somewhere else", 69.
- ²⁹ Quoted in Stoler, 30
- ³⁰ As a departure point, consider the work of Edward Said on orientalism, and Eric Hobsbawm on nationalism. Mayall, *Gypsy Identities, 1500-2000* 29.
- ³¹ Stoler, *Race and the education of desire*, 9. See also the Treaty of Nice, Preamble title II.
- ³² David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities: From Egipcians and Moon-men to the Ethic Romany*. London: Routledge, 2004. 12
- ³³ Dena Ringold, *Roma and the transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and challenges*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 200. Vii.
- ³⁴ Helsinki watch, "Struggling for ethnic identity: The gypsies of Hungary". New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993. 40
- ³⁵ Rick Fawn, "Czech attitudes towards the Roma " in *Europe-Asia Studies*. 1196.
- ³⁶ Helsinki Watch. "Struggling for ethnic identity: The gypsies of Hungary". New York: Human rights watch, 1993 47-48)
- ³⁷ Ringold, *Roma in the transition*, 2000. 8.
- ³⁸ Zoltan Barany, "Living on the edge: The East European Roma in Postcommunist politics and societies" *Slavic Review* 53:2 (Summer, 1994). 329
- ³⁹ Bancroft, 261.David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities*, 261.
- ⁴⁰ Solkova, 8.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Mayall, *Gypsy identities, 1500-2000*.pp.133.
- ⁴² Zoltan D. Barany, "Living on the edge: The Eastern European Roma in Postcommunist politics and societies" *Slavic Review* 53:2 (summer,1994), 321.

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- ⁴³ ERRC, "always somewhere else", 95.
- ⁴⁴ Quoted in Solkova, 91.
- ⁴⁵ Solkova, 101
- ⁴⁶ ERRC, "Always somewhere else", 61.
- ⁴⁷ David Mayall, *Gypsy Identities: From Egipcians and Moon-men to the Ethic Romany*. London: Routledge, 2004. 3
- ⁴⁸ Dena Ringold, *Roma in an expanding Europe*: 62.
- ⁴⁹ The Historian Christopher R. Friedrichs' book, *The early modern city, 1450-1750. A history of urban society in Europe, Vol. I.* (London: Longman, 1995) provides an excellent analysis of the emergence of the modern city as political social space in Early modern Europe.
- ⁵⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the colonial order of things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. 7-8.
- ⁵¹ Ringold, *Roma and the transition*.4
- ⁵² Dena Ringold, *Roma in an expanding Europe: breaking the poverty cycle*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2004. 56. ; Ringold, *Roma in an expanding Europe*, 15.
- ⁵³ Barany, *Living on the edge*, 324-325.
- ⁵⁴ Solkova, 113.
- ⁵⁵ Solkova 106.
- ⁵⁶ Solkova, 112.
- ⁵⁷ solkova, 118.
- ⁵⁸ Solkova, 120.
- ⁵⁹ Solkova, 104
- ⁶⁰ Solkova, 114..
- ⁶¹ Solkova 222.
- ⁶² István Pogány. *The Roma Café*. London: Pluto Press, 2004. 13.
- ⁶³ ERRC, "always somewhere else", 128.
- ⁶⁴ Always somewhere else, 32-33.
- ⁶⁵ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Implementation of the Helsinki accords: Human rights and democratization in the Czech republic*. (September, 1994) Washington DC: Commission on Cooperation and security in Europe, 1994. 22.
- ⁶⁶ See Vera Solkova, particularly chapter 4, and 6
- ⁶⁷ CSCE, 26-27.
- ⁶⁸ David M. Crowe, *A history of the gypsies*. 66.
- ⁶⁹ Ringold, *Breaking the poverty cycle*. 61
- ⁷⁰ Barany, "Living on the edge" 337.
- ⁷¹ Solkova., 3-5.
- ⁷² Barany, "Living on the edge", 338-339.
- ⁷³ Paul Polansky, *The River killed my brother. Poems of the Czech and Slovak Roma since 1989*. San Francisco: Norton Coker/ JEJUNE Publications, 2001.6.
- ⁷⁴ Vera Sokolova, "A Matter of speaking: Racism, gender and social deviance in the politics of the "Gypsy Question" in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-1989" Phd. Diss. University of Washington, 2002. 10.
- ⁷⁵ Sokolva, 5-6).
- ⁷⁶ Stoler, 22.)
- ⁷⁷ 4th annual report to the committee of ministers and the parliamentary assembly of the commissioner for Human rights: Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2004. 29
- ⁷⁸ *The Economist*, 15 January 2005.
- ⁷⁹ Istvan Pogany, *the Roma Café*: 51
- ⁸⁰ Angus Bancroft, *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: Modernity, Race, Space and exclusion*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005. 32.