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# Margizens. Exclusion and state violence towards the Romanian Roma community in Poland

## Margizeni. Wykluczenie i przemoc ze strony państwa wobec społeczności rumuńskich Romów w Polsce

**Abstract:** A Romanian Roma community has been present in the largest Polish cities since the beginning of the 1990s. Although their presence was initially perceived as temporary, some members of this group have now been living in Poland for more than 20 years. However, for much of that time they have been invisible to the authorities, with only occasional exposure, and the main reasons for intervention were an attempt to remove them from the country, or from territory they were living on.

In this paper, I would like to describe the situation of Romanian Roma in one Polish city, Wrocław. On their example I present different levels of exclusion from the community and space, describe the process of marginalisation (as a part of anti-Roma practices), as well as the tendency to use criminal law to discipline behaviours which society considers to be inappropriate and which it does not want to see. I'm thus presenting problems of evictions from public and private spaces, cases of prejudice followed by xenophobic attacks performed by representatives of Polish society and general lack of support neither from the general public, social institutions or police. Those practices lead to depravation of sense of security of the Roma population in Wrocław as police officers are perceived by them (and behaves) rather as oppressors who chase beggars away, fine them and confiscate money they earned on the street. And they fail in protection Roma community against xenophobic violence form the host society – or to be more precise they decided to abdicate from this role.

The control of and state's violence against the Roma community is made possible by labelling them as non-members of society, as strangers – persons to whom we can apply different rules than to ourselves.

**Keywords:** criminalisation, marginalisation, beggary, expulsion from public spaces, punishment

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**Abstrakt:** Społeczność rumuńskich Romów jest obecna w większych polskich miastach od początku lat 90. XX wieku. Chociaż ich pobyt uważany był za czasowy, okazało się, że niektórzy przedstawiciele tej grupy mieszkają w Polsce od ponad 20 lat. Przez większość tego czasu byli oni jednak niewidoczni dla polskich władz. Pojawiali się w orbicie ich spojrzenia jedynie sporadycznie i przede wszystkim w związku z próbami usunięcia ich – czy to wydalenia z Polski, czy też eksmisji z zajmowanej przez nich przestrzeni.

W niniejszym tekście chciałbym opisać sytuację rumuńskich Romów mieszkających w jednym z polskich miast – we Wrocławiu. Na ich przykładzie chcę pokazać sposoby wykluczania przedstawicieli tej społeczności zarówno ze społeczeństwa jako całości, jak i z przestrzeni publicznej. Opiszę proces marginalizacji rumuńskich Romów (jako przykład działań antyromskich), jak również używanie przepisów prawnokarnych do dyscyplinowania członków tej społeczności i korygowania ich zachowań – tych które polskie społeczeństwo uznało za niewłaściwe lub których po prostu nie chce oglądać. Pokażę zatem, jak wygląda proces wykluczania Romów z zarówno z przestrzeni publicznej, jak i z prywatnej (czy półpublicznej), podam przykłady uprzedzeń oraz przemocy motywowanej ksenofobią, której sprawcami są przedstawiciele polskiego społeczeństwa, opiszę także generalny brak wsparcia dla Romów – ze strony społeczeństwa, instytucji publicznych czy policji. Wszystkie te praktyki i działania prowadzą do pozbawienia przedstawicieli pochodzącej z Rumunii społeczności romskiej mieszkających we Wrocławiu poczucia bezpieczeństwa, bowiem policjanci są przez nich postrzegani (oraz zachowują się) raczej jako oprawcy, którzy przeganiają ich z publicznych miejsc, w których żebrzą, nakładają na nich grzywny oraz konfiskują pieniądze zarobione na ulicy. Jednocześnie nie zapewniają żadnej ochrony przed ksenofobiczną przemocą ze strony społeczeństwa – czy też, by być bardziej precyzyjnym, uznali, że nie będą występowali w roli osób strzegących tę społeczność.

Wzmożona kontrola oraz przemoc ze strony przedstawicieli instytucji publicznych wobec społeczności rumuńskich Romów wynika z postrzegania ich (i naznaczenia ich) jako nie-członków społeczności, jako obcych, wobec których mogą być stosowane inne zasady niż w stosunku do przedstawicieli polskiego społeczeństwa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kryminalizacja, marginalizacja, żebranie, kara, wykluczanie z przestrzeni publicznej

## Introduction

Modern neoliberal societies are becoming increasingly closed to all kinds of otherness, especially when this distinctive characteristic is connected with low class, colour of the skin or nationality (Webster 2008; Franko 2020; Pratt 2020). Any person defined and labelled as "different" is treated with suspicion, as if their mere presence in a particular place poses a potential danger (cultural, physical, religious, economic), especially if they are visible and if it is a public space. Their presence causes a certain cognitive dissonance – a stranger has found themselves in a space that does not belong to them, but belongs to us (Ahmed 2000). The only possible course of action, therefore, is to try to remove them from this place or at least reduce their visibility, to force them to hide. This "other" does not respect (in our understanding) our borders and the principles we profess (at least at the declaratory level), and they will never be able to accept and respect our rules and become one of us. The others, although we consider them meaningless and insig-

nificant, make us feel threatened by their mere presence, afraid that they will taint, dirty or infect us (Douglas 1966: 36–41; Kristeva 1982: 1; Wardhaugh 2000: 113).

In particular, there is one group that ticks all the checkboxes in the definition of otherness – the Roma. They differ from the majority of European societies, especially from the "look" of the middle classes: they are often distinguished by their way of dressing, they are usually poor (sometimes even extremely poor), the shade of their skin colour differs from what is understood by as "a proper" White – in other words, they are not white enough (Fox, Moroşanu, Szilassy 2012). All these qualities, together with their methods of earning a living, make them visible in the public space. Roma migrants are a group that, after Hanna Arendt, can be defined as people who

> were welcomed nowhere and could be assimilated nowhere. Once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth. (Arendt 1973: 267)

In this paper, I would like to describe the situation of the Romanian Roma who have been living in one Polish city, Wrocław. Using their example I would like to present the different levels of their exclusion from the community and space, describe the process of racializing and marginalizing them, as well as the tendency to use criminal law instruments to discipline their behaviour or even their manner of being, which Polish society considers to be inappropriate, and which it does not want to see. The control and punishment of Roma is made possible by their perception as non-members of society – persons to whom we can apply different rules than to ourselves and thus, we can defend ourselves against them rather than try to help them in any way we can (Garland 2001: 184–187). Constantly emphasizing the Roma's unbelonging, that is, making them into a "stranger", is one of the ways of fighting for power over a particular territory (i.e. streets in city centre). Owing to this treatment, they can be removed from a space as persons who do not have the right to stay there.

## Who are the margizens and why were they created?

At the heart of the debate on marginalisation and exclusion is the question of belonging and membership. The entire concept of social stratification depends on who is considered to be a member of a given community, when and upon what basis, but also whether this membership can be graded or taken away and in what situations. Membership may be formal, i.e. legal in nature, and may be associated with the possession of a document, e.g. passport. Membership of a political community is usually formally confirmed by citizenship. Membership can also be

informal, symbolic, discretionary and independent of formal affiliations, which means that while certain individuals or groups theoretically hold citizenship, they are denied the right to be part of the community, and deprived of certain rights (Kochenov 2019). Or vice versa (although this is less frequent) – despite their lack of formal membership, additional rights are granted to certain groups. The most important element of membership is the possession of rights.

A distinction between members and non-members, between citizens and denizens was proposed by Tomas Hammar (Hammar 2003). He gave the latter term a new meaning - connecting it to long-term migrants with a formal status that allows them to reside in a host country and thus granting them a certain set of rights, albeit strictly limited and regulated. However, these people do not have political rights and may therefore become the targets of political attacks, because they have nothing to protect them – they have no political representatives to look after their interests (and collect their votes). Their rights may also be revoked at any time. They are not allowed to join the club of members, i.e. citizens (Walzer 1983).

The group in between denizenship and a full citizenship in the EU consists of migrants from other EU countries who exercise their treaty rights of free movement. They hold EU citizenship, which makes their position stronger compared to immigrants from third countries – it allows them to stay, protects against deportation (to some extent), grants the right to work etc. But those rights are rarely extended to Roma. Despite holding citizenship of an EU country, they are denied recognition as citizens of Europe. They tend to be treated as stateless, people always on the move, as welfare tourists, and because of this they are denied the right to stay and settle in other EU countries (Sardelić 2019).

But the term denizen is sometimes also used to cover other social groups, not only migrants. They may even be second-class citizens. These are part of the precariat (Standing 2011) who, although formally entitled to a full set of rights, are in practice deprived of many of them. Marc Schuilenburg (2008; 2015), however, considered that certain groups of people in societies, ones that are seen primarily through the prism of their deep exclusion, deprivation of rights and making enemies of them, should be addressed by a separate term – "margizens", which covers all persons, regardless of their formal citizenship. While denizens have been granted certain rights and are in part considered to be members (one might call them half-way citizens), the margizens have been deprived of the rights to which they were entitled (usually being citizens of a particular country), or have been denied the title and rights of denizens. In general, they are characterized by the fact that

these people do not have entrance to collective goods, or public services, such as the provision of security. […] These margizens are left outside of the protected zones, without any rights, at the mercy of authorities they get in touch with: police, private security services, and so on. (Schuilenburg 2008: 363–364)

From the perspective proposed by Schuilenburg, a combination of two elements is crucial. First, depriving or refusing to grant certain rights to a certain group of people, including access to various types of services, such as the free use of public spaces. Secondly, associating this group with danger and perceiving it as a social threat. This not only results in the representatives of this group being subject to control programmes and the use of penal measures against them, but it also deprives them of the protection of the services and public authorities that should protect them and ensure their safety. This leads to what the author calls "desolidarization of the security", i.e. to only granting the right to security to selected members of society while depriving others of it. This phenomenon has a strong class background, because margizens, as the name suggests, are people who have been pushed to the margin because of their often extreme state of poverty. This is an underclass which also includes certain groups of migrants, such as the undocumented or those with uncertain residence status (Schuilenburg 2015: 279–284). And although Schuilenburg in his deliberations does not refer to the Roma community, it seems that functioning of this particular group in contemporary European societies and its perception by them fits perfectly into the model created by him.

It is worth noting that protection from danger, aimed at ensuring the safety of an individual (or a specific group) and granting their personal or economic security, sometimes is made at the expense of another group. In such a situation, some groups are omitted, and security strategies may even be created and applied against certain social groups identified as dangerous. A certain kind of exclusivity is created, of these belonging to the "club", deserving of protection, and the rest, excluded, who are not only denied this protection, but through the label of dangerousness, are given even less security (Pratt 2020). This danger comes from the majority of society and the state which represents and protects it, forgetting that it should represent, or at least protect everyone – perhaps above all, the weakest members of society. Both the rights and security of individuals perceived as a threat are sacrificed on the altar of the "rich"; those 'threatening' individuals are usually poor or represent different minorities. To make this point even clearer, politicians could present members of excluded groups like the homeless as dangerous criminals, those a regular and law-abiding member of society should be scared of (Udvarhelyi 2014: 822–823). Thus public funds and law enforcement agencies are used to increase control over those already morally excluded margizens. In this way, instead of a protective service, the police turns into a persecution formation (Lemke 2001; Pratt 2020).

David Garland (2001) described this process as "criminalisation of the other". It has been progressing since the end of the 1990s in the countries of the Global North and consists of bringing the poor under ever greater control by formal public institutions – those connected with the implementation of criminal policy (the police, prosecutor's office, prisons), as well as those traditionally connected with social assistance and support, which are assigned the additional role and task

of controlling their clients. In addition, the behaviour and customs of the poor and underclass are criminalised, including their way of life, such as homelessness (Pratt 2020: 186–195). At the same time, these people are publicly represented as a threat, and their state of poverty is painted as a situation for which they bear sole responsibility, and hence, which they should solve for themselves. This also applies to risks to their safety arising from, for example, living on the street or earning money there. In the public debate they are presented as the margins of society, as outcasts who do not deserve support, because providing them with assistance would be a waste of public funds. Thus, they are left to fend for themselves, without protection, without help, and are additionally exposed to repressive actions aimed at them (Garland 2001: 183–201).

Fear of the Roma is linked to the fact that this group has for centuries been presented in many European countries as a group that is foreign, threatening, and known for committing crimes (Sigona 2005; Póczik 2012; Donnelly-Drummond 2016). There is the general sense of a threat from vagabonds, and a medieval tradition of punishing such persons by the authorities in order to counteract uncontrolled social movements. The Roma themselves were (and are) considered nomads, regardless of whether they were actually in movement or, as in many European countries, not. They were forcibly settled and their freedom of movement was consistently restricted (through prohibitions on entering certain countries, orders to stop their travels) and whether they lived or camped (temporarily or permanently) in certain territories. The use of the term "nomads" to describe the Roma was (and is) a way of symbolically depriving them of their citizenship, highlighting their unproductive nature (Sardelić 2019). Over time, the labelling of Roma as nomads was used to justify their different treatment, increase control by the authorities, or to force them to behave in certain ways, e.g. by imprisoning them in camps built for them outside the cities (as was the case in Italy or Spain). This term also deliberately emphasized the distinction between citizens, i.e. persons enjoying rights, and strangers, others, temporary people, nomads, or wanderers – and sometimes even enemies (because of their perception as criminals) – i.e. persons not attached to the local community, not being a part of it. Thanks to this measure, societies were able to justify freeing themself from any obligations towards the Roma, including supporting them. In this way, the Roma could be described as undeserving of support (van Baar, Vermeersch 2017: 128).

The whole process, called the neo-nomadization of the Roma community (De Genova 2019: 30), aimed to control this group of people, to criminalize their behaviour while attempting to present this strategy as "objective", which allegedly means not targeting a particular social group, and allegedly not xenophobic, even though racism or antigypsyism is in its foundation (Alliance against Antigypsyism 2017: 5). Those practices Huub van Baar describes as "a reasonable anti-Gypsyism" because they are meant to rationalise public (law enforcement in particular) agents' actions against Roma and prove their legality to the public, to present them not as a form of unacceptable discrimination or antigypsyism practices, but

as the fully legal and inevitable consequences of someone's behaviour (van Baar 2014: 30–32). However, such actions result in increased public prejudice against the Roma and increasingly identify them as a threat. So they become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

The process described above has taken place because, as a result of neoliberal politics, at some point the notion of the victim was redefined. The term "new victims" was born, reversing the paradigm. Those who deserve help and support are no longer the poorest people. Now the "new victims" are middle-class, and it is the poor who have become a threat to them, threatening them with their own presence and way of life. They "hurt" the middle class, because they rob them of their money – taxes paid by hard-working people are "wasted" on the support of an underclass who do not deserve it (Garland 2001: 153–158). If we talk about supporting the Roma, this reasoning may lead to the further conclusion that we are dealing with the phenomenon of "reverse racism" – when the majority society is discriminated against, because disproportionate attention is paid to the Roma, and so much public money is spent on supporting them. Meanwhile, many people in the majority society are also in need and they truly "deserve" support and they are "the true victims" of this "racism"(Powell, van Baar 2019: 95–96).

If the middle class has been identified (or has identified itself) as victims, then these victims must also be granted appropriate protection. Ensuring security is the role of the state, which should protect its citizens. Here we come to the point where the state apparatus is used to protect the privileged groups that feel threatened. And it is directed at the poorest and most excluded (non-)members of society, who have been identified as a threat. As these concerns are related to security, the means and instruments that have been set up to ensure security (criminal law, police and such) are brought to bear. The problem is that, in most cases, these means are used in situations where no crime has been committed. So, in order to justify the use of punitive instruments against the poor, the catalogue of criminalised behaviours is expanded to include behaviours that have hitherto been considered neutral by law, such as rough sleeping, begging, littering etc. (Pratt 2020: 186–195). The second argument is that prevention is better than cure. In other words, it is important not to wait until a crime has been committed, but instead to intervene beforehand to prevent it. Such a strategy is called preventive justice (Ashworth, Zedner 2015). It means that the mere fact that certain groups are regarded as behaving improperly, as posing a potential threat, and having a preference for committing crimes, justifies intervening against them, which may consist of the use of punitive and control instruments. This reasoning is an attempt to justify these strategies.

The overarching theory for all the different approaches presented above could be the concept of state (government) crime. Victims of those type of crimes are characterised as:

> Individuals or groups of individuals who have experienced economic,
> cultural, or physical harm, pain, exclusion, or exploitation because of tacit

or explicit state actions or policies which violate law or generally define human rights. (Kauzlarich, Matthews, Miller 2001: 176)

This definition assumes both action and inaction by state agents – in other words, active deployment of physical, psychological or structural violence against some group or individuals, and also a lack of proper protection by law enforcement organisations (and sometimes the law itself) against violence used by a third party.

## Methodology

The aim of my research was to examine the issue of safety and the threat of victimization or various forms of violence against homeless people in Poland. I understood violence broadly to include the physical, psychological, sexual, institutional and symbolic denominations of this form of harm. I was interested in what types of violence most often affect people touched by homelessness, how they are perceived by them, who is responsible for this type of behaviour, what protection strategies are used to increase the level and sense of security of victims, and who supports homeless people in terms of protection against violence and victimisation.

Part of the wider research (comprised of 21 in-depth interviews with experts working with homeless people and 37 interviews with the homeless) was focused on a particular group – Romanian migrants of Roma origin. This community is quite small and consists of approx. 120 people, but has been very visible in the media for some time – especially on a local level – due to their conflict with the city of Wrocław (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 95). And even though they fulfil the ETHOS definition of homelessness (ETHOS 2005) living in shanty homes, they are not perceived as homeless by local authorities. The data presented in this paper are based on 13 interviews with 15 Romanian Roma from Wrocław[1] among which were 8 women and 7 men. They have experience in living in Poland for a long time, and some of them (especially the younger ones) were born in this country or have spent most of their lives here (living in different cities, as they were forced to move several times). They represent two generations – the older between 45-48 years of age (3 respondents), and the younger – at the time of interview between 17 and 30 years old (12 interviewees). The latter constituted the majority partly because the interviews were conducted in Polish.

All interviews were conducted in 2018 by a streetworker from a non-governmental organisation – the Nomada Association.[2] He has been working with this community for a several years now, thus he has established a relationship with representatives of this group and earned their trust. This made it possible to

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[1]    All the names of the respondents were changed.
[2]    I would like to express my gratitude to Maciej Mandelt, the researcher who worked with me and collected all of the interviews within this group.

discuss highly sensitive topics like the experience of exclusion and victimisation, which would not have been the case if a stranger had conducted the interview. The interviews took place either in the homes of interviewees or in the Nomada Association office. In both cases it was a safe space, familiar to respondents. Additional to the information gathered from the Roma community was two interviews with representatives of civil society organisations – to triangulate data and to discuss in-depth the mechanisms behind some practices observed.

The interviews followed a similar structure, were recorded and then transcribed. MAXQDA software was used for coding and analysis of the material.

The study has its limitations, as it was focused on the experiences of the representatives of a single vulnerable group – the Roma community living in Wrocław. I am perfectly aware that it has a subjective perspective, but that does not make it less valuable. The respondents shared their own perception of the events and behaviours of police officers and other members of Polish society they had encountered throughout their presence in Poland. It was not my role nor the aim of the study to assess the truth or the other party's evaluation of the same events. As the "truth" is generally highly subjective (Sandberg 2010). The aim was to give some voice to a group that has so far been neglected by academics (especially criminologists) in Poland. But I must stress that all voices and assessments of the main problems the Roma community is facing were very coherent and mirrored in expert opinions.

## Migration of Roma from Romania to Poland

Roma migration is governed by the same factors that apply to all migration. In the case of Romanian Roma, some very strong push factors are particularly important. These include, in particular, the poor treatment of this group which is centuries-old and rooted in Romanian society, their extreme impoverishment after the 1989 political transformation of the whole country, which particularly affected the Roma, who lost their jobs, and faced widespread discrimination. In addition, the development of capitalism has led to many Roma families being uprooted from their homes in city centres and moved to temporary camps on the outskirts. All these factors led to a large proportion of Roma living in extreme poverty in Romania, often in substandard housing or houses, which resulted in exceptionally high migratory pressures on this group (Sobotka 2003; Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 99–101; Djuve et al. 2015: 39–40; Mireanu 2019; Ravnbol 2019: 216–218).

The first migration of Roma from Romania to Polish territory took place in the middle of the 19th century. It was a consequence of the abolition of Roma slavery in the territory of Romania, which resulted in impoverishment of many families and led to massive migration to other European countries. Some of the migrant Roma permanently settled in Poland, for the rest it was a temporary

stop on their journey to other countries (Achim 2004: 120–127). This migration ceased for several decades during the communist period, and restarted after that system collapsed. The increase in Romanian Roma using migratory pathways to and through Poland in the 1990s was an effect of the fact that Romanian citizens did not need visas to travel to former socialist countries, including Poland. For some, Poland was only a stop (longer or shorter) on their way to Western Europe, especially Germany. It was easier to get to this country from Poland by submitting an asylum application at the border or trying to cross the Polish-German border illegally (Sobotka 2003). But because Poland's economy was much better off than Romania's at that time, some people found the opportunity to earn a living for themselves and their families in Poland by trading at bazaars, and then begging and playing music on the streets or on public transport in big cities. It soon became apparent that begging guaranteed the highest earnings compared to the other economic activities available to Roma at that time – mostly in the grey economy. In the 1990s it was estimated that up to half a million Romanian Roma could have been present in Poland for longer or shorter periods of time, which is almost 25% of the whole Roma population of Romania (Kapralski, Lechowski 2018: 71–72). These migrations reduced significantly since the beginning of the 21st century, especially once Poland joined the European Union in 2004. This process was associated with a significant tightening of controls on migration, including the introduction of a visa regime for Romanian citizens. After 2007, which saw Romania's accession to the EU, migrations to Poland increased again (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 100–101) but this movement is not very intense – probably due to the opportunity to migrate to wealthier EU countries such as the Scandinavian states (Djuve et al. 2015; Barker 2017).

The suspension of migration flows in the first decade of the 21st century was associated with a lack of new arrivals, but did not mean the Romanian Roma disappeared from Poland – many of them remained in Poland at that time as undocumented immigrants,[3] and these families were constantly growing, because new children were born (Kapralski, Lechowski 2018: 71). Many Roma families do not intend to move out of Poland – about 2/3 of the surveyed Romanian Roma living in Poland declared that they want to settle there permanently. Some people already speak some Polish, many children were born here and have little knowledge of Romania because they have never lived there (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 102–103). This migration route differs from the one to other EU countries, as it cannot truly be described as either touristic or as welfare driven (Sardelić 2019: 329) – taking into consideration the relatively lower level of economic development in Poland (compared to the "old" EU countries), and especially given the poor level of social assistance offered to people in need.

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[3]    Their legal status changed after Romania's accession to the EU in 2007, as they became EU citizens. But it only slightly improved their situation, as they still encounter a number of obstacles to registration of their stay (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 101–104).

## Temporality of residence in Poland

The homelessness of Romanian Roma differs in various EU countries. In Austria for example, (Raithelhuber 2019) the Roma, like other homeless people, often sleep rough on the streets, under bridges or in squats. In Poland many Roma live in camps, similar to the shantytowns in Spain (Vrăbiescu 2019) and Italy (Sigona 2005; Hepworth 2012; Manca and Vergnano 2019). Despite the presence of public authorities in these places, they have a scandalously low standard of living conditions, and are akin to homesteads made by hand, which can also be found at encampments in Poland. In Poland, the Roma themselves found undeveloped and rather small vacant plots of land, especially in the cities, where they built their shanty houses. These encampments are therefore relatively small (they can accommodate up to a dozen or so families), but the external appearance of these self-contained shelters, their poor facilities, including lack of access to running water or toilets, the lack of privacy caused by significant overcrowding (many people living in one room) is similar to camps operating in other countries.[4]

The Polish encampments have a lot in common with the Italian and Spanish camps/shantytowns. They gather in a specific, relatively closed space a specific group of people with similar characteristics, who are excluded and are being excluded from society as a whole, and are forced (physically or economically) to live in these conditions (Powell, van Baar 2019: 97–98). These encampments fulfil many elements of the definition of a camp formulated by Giorgio Agamben:

> The camp is a piece of land placed outside the normal juridical order […] and in which whether or not atrocities are committed depends not on law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign. (Agamben 1998: 169–170, 174)

These are not closed institutions, but it is difficult to assume a genuine enthusiasm to create a life there on the part of their inhabitants. Within their territory, many rights which remain in force outside of them are suspended, like privacy and security. Decisions by the state's representatives (police or social workers) are practically unassailable and have a serious impact on the future life of the inhabitants of these places, because they concern the granting of financial benefits, taking away children, eviction and destruction of property, and finally deportation (Agamben 1998).

Camps are also temporary by their nature, a fact that is felt and understood by both the inhabitants and the local community. Their temporality is visible at first glance, because it results from the very concept of these places; from the way in which they were built, to how they look and function. It's also linked to the

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[4]    It is also worth noting that for many families, their housing situation in Romania is similar. They lived there in houses without running water in toilets or kitchens, in overcrowded rooms. These were homes of a significantly worse standard than the average Romanian family homes (Djuve et al. 2015: 37–40; Mireanu 2019).

chronic insecurity of the people living there. Generally, a home is perceived as a space of security that protects us from the outside world, in which no one will hurt us, where we can hide (Wardhaugh 2000: 76–79). This is a space on which we have a claim, in which we feel good. It is a place that is stable, certain – in contrast to a public space that is unpredictable and in which we are not sure what can happen to us. Home is a space where we decide who can enter, so no one unwanted will bother us (Crawford, Hutchinson 2016). In the case of residents of shantytowns or encampments, the feeling of security that a home should provide is often non-existent.

The encampments are built illegally, hence they are under threat of destruction by the owners of the areas concerned, including local authorities, as happened in Wrocław in 2015. The biggest problem for the Roma with the liquidation of this shanty encampments is that frequently the personal wealth of people living there, gathered with great difficulty, is destroyed as well. Roma rarely have the opportunity to pack and transport all their belongings before destruction takes place. After the elimination of an encampment, its inhabitants usually look for another similar place to live somewhere else, sometimes in another city in Poland. Hence, many people have already lived in several locations – and each time they were expelled (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015; Kapralski, Lechowski 2018; Kostka 2019: 167–168).

Huub van Baar (2017) defines the risk of being without a place to live as "evictability" – when, with the ongoing privatisation of space as a result of neo-liberalism, the poor are thrown out of more and more places by the owners. This whole process also takes place in accordance with the law, and sometimes public institutions, such as the police, even help to carry out these evictions. This process also affects public areas managed by local authorities, which behave in this respect as private owners, regardless of their responsibilities towards all categories of residents, including the poorest and most excluded ones (van Baar 2017; Kupka, Walach, Brendzová 2021).

One of the respondents – Alexandru – described a typical story of moving and searching for one's own place, building it and losing one shelter after another:

*When we arrived* [to Poland]*, the first place was the train station, then we were looking for an uninhabited flat or a building.* [...] *We went, there were a lot of us, to the forest and built tents made of wood and material. We lived there for a month, nobody bothered us, so we built a camp.* [...] *After 3 years* [...] *the police came and chased us away. Later* [we] *lived in a brick house in the forest. And it was fun there. It was only our family. And we spent three years there. And then people from the city knocked down the house with a bulldozer and we moved to an encampment in Wrocław.* (Alexandru)

Isolated sites are chosen for the construction of campsites, which increases the sense of security of their inhabitants and reduces the risk of attacks (such as arson, destruction, assault) by the local community. Attacks on the encampments by members of local community (throwing stones, setting homes on fire) are a

common experience of Roma throughout Europe, including Poland. Mundra told the story of the constant fear of attacks accompanying people living in temporary places:

> When *we did not live in a house, there were a few men who didn't sleep or* [slept] *in turns. They made sure no one set us on fire or robbed us at night.* (Mundra)

In the case of an attack on an encampment, the police arrive late, sometimes many hours later, when the perpetrators are long gone. The police do not make any special efforts to identify and prosecute the perpetrators. This process corresponds precisely to the concept of "desolidarization of security", where excluded persons are deprived of protection, and the police act to protect society from them, rather than protecting them the society or any other threats or violence (Schuilenburg 2015: 282–283). It is not surprising, therefore, that camps are places where the police are seen not as a protective service but as an oppressive formation – one which controls, threatens to take children away or deport them, evicts them from the encampments and then destroys them.

In the case of the Roma, removal from a shanty encampment may be also a prelude to immediate further deportation from the country (Hepworth 2012: 440–441). Such situations occurred in Poland in the late 1990s (Kapralski, Lechowski 2018; Kostka 2019: 159–160), but have not been observed recently. This practice goes against the strategies deployed by other EU countries against this group. Not only is it highly controlled by law enforcement, but the aim of those actions is usually expulsion from the territory (Barker 2017; Franko 2020).

## Polish society, the Roma and prejudice

Polish society is not particularly open to diversity, and the Roma are the least accepted ethnic group. Data from the European Social Survey show that over 2/3 of Poles believe that the Roma should not be allowed to come to Poland at all, or that they could come in very small numbers (Wysieńska-Di Carlo 2018: 28). According to data from the Polish Prejudice Survey, 43% of Poles would not want to have a Roma as a neighbour, and almost 60% would not accept the marriage of a member of their family to a Roma. Since 2013, we can observe an increase in social distance in Polish society towards this group, and thus an aversion towards it (Stefaniak, Malinowska, Witkowska 2018). This change may be caused by a gradual increase in nationalist moods in Poland, and the accompanying process of de-Europeanisation (Vermeersch 2019) meaning a departure of Poles, both in declarations and in actions, from values understood as European, including tolerance towards various minority groups.

Romanian Roma in Wrocław face a double stigma – as Roma and as foreigners. Polish society is not particularly friendly towards migrants – these moods have worsened significantly after 2015 in the aftermath of the refugee crisis. Although Poland did not experience an influx of large numbers of refugees at that time, the attitudes of right-wing politicians, who effectively built their parliamentary campaigns on the threat of refugees, have led to a significant increase in Poles' reluctance towards migrants (Klaus et al. 2018: 484–487; Jaskułowski 2019).

During the research, respondents asked about their relations with Poles often referred to hate speech and adverse comments they were subject to. These comments can be divided into two basic groups which exhibit the two objectives that guided them. Some people simply insulted the Roma because they wanted to offend them, to humiliate them. The behaviour of the second group aimed to show them that they don't belong, thus the purpose was to deprive the Roma of the feeling that they are at home. It was to demonstrate them that they are strangers in Poland, in Wrocław in particular, and that they are unwelcome there. Hence the numerous calls to leave Poland – often formed with discriminatory words, as our interviewees explained:

> [Hooligans] *use swearwords, shout and tell us: "F\*ck off, you guys are dirty".* (Iłon)

> [Poles shout] *f\*cking Gypsies, go to Romania, Poland is for Poles.* (Nicu)

The perpetrators of the aforementioned acts – insults, spitting – are mostly decent, so called "normal" citizens, ordinary passers-by who meet the Roma on the street or on public transport. Both women and men. A difference between the sexes in terms of the intensity of aggression was noticed by Lamita: *Women shout, but only for a short time. Men shout worse, they* [are] *often drunk then.*

Some people from insults turn to more serious acts. Many Roma in my research expressed the fear of being assaulted by young men (under 30 years old), often under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They called them hooligans. But during the course of the interview it usually became evident that those young adults did not differ much from the general public, they represent the "normal", the "average". It is worth mentioning that the term "hooligans", and expressions of fear towards them, was also used by the Polish homeless to describe the young people who persecute them.

## Consequences of begging on the street

The Roma are visible not only because of their ethnicity, but also because of the way in which they earn their living, by begging. It is one of their survival strategies, and often the only one possible, and it's widespread throughout Europe – for

example, this is how around 90% of Roma women and around 70% of Roma living in Stockholm or Oslo earn their living. Despite its popularity, for most people it is a humiliating experience (Djuve et al. 2015: 59–62), but this sense of shame must be overcome, because often there is simply no other way of earning money for the Roma (Raithelhuber 2019: 143). The Roma in Poland had similar experiences – more than 80% made their living begging, sometimes also in addition doing other jobs, most often undertaken illegally, without any official signed contracts. Another way of earning, usually performed by men, was collecting waste and selling it to recycling companies. Begging does not generate much income –an average of 4.5-6.5 euros per day in Wrocław. This amount allows for a very poor life and does not give a chance to change it by for example renting a flat (Czarnota, Siemaszko 2015: 105). This experience of working mostly in deprived parts of the grey economy and not in other sectors, and not being legally employed, is a consequence of their migration status. Most of the Romanian Roma living in Poland do not have the proper documents that allow them to be employed, and in addition their language skills (a low level of Polish language competence) contribute to their exclusion from the official workforce. This differentiates them from the Roma community in Chechia for example, which is mostly of local origin, possessing Czech citizenship. But even there, most of their representatives also work in precarious conditions and perform rather informal forms of work (Černušáková 2017).

Begging in Poland is an activity that is mainly carried out by women. Many of them are accompanied by children. The reasons for this are influenced by cultural and practical matters. In Roma culture, women are not used to parting with their children, especially small ones. This is also why they do not leave them at day-care, which often would be inaccessible for them anyway, as such places do not want to admit Roma children (Ruggiu 2016: 46–50). In general it is difficult in Poland to find a place in a public kindergarten for the child of unemployed parents. In addition, however, due to the uncertainty and impermanence surrounding living in encampments and the constant fear of deportation or eviction, women want to have their children with them in case this situation occurs. They don't want to be separated from them (Hepworth 2012: 442–443).

In Poland, as in many other European countries, since the end of the Middle Ages, legislation has been introduced to regulate and reduce begging (Klaus 2015). The provisions of the current Code of Administrative Offences of 1971 provides for the punishment of a person who begs even though they have the means of subsistence or are capable of work. Begging means not only collecting money, but also non-monetary donations, e.g. clothes or food. A person who begs intrusively or fraudulently exposes himself or herself to even greater repercussions (Klaus 2019). This type of legislation, which prohibits so called offensive or aggressive begging, can be found in many European jurisdictions (Raithelhuber 2019; Ward-haugh 2000: 119). It follows that the only "acceptable" behaviour for people when begging is the notion that Eberhard Raithelhuber (2019: 141, 146–147) called the "still and silent beggar". This refers to an adult, unaccompanied by children, who

sits still on the pavement, in a designated place, does not speak to passers-by, does not touch them and does not even look at them. He or she should also sit in a place that does not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle traffic. Any other form of begging is considered aggressive and, as a result, punishable. Even greeting of passers-by is forbidden for begging people.

These regulations were introduced because begging was presented to the society as a dangerous activity (even as part of organised crime), threatening the members of a given community to some extent, as an activity that should be counteracted (Pratt 2020). In many cases, this crusade is specifically targeted at the Roma, because in many cities, it is the Roma who primarily earn their living in such a way (Barker 2017; Franko 2020: 102–103). This is also the case in Poland, where my research shows that other homeless people tend not to be engaged in begging on the street in the classical sense of the term. Begging people were presented as wanting to exploit Polish citizens, to deceive them. This increases the adverse feelings towards this nonbelonging group, which is pushed to the margins of society, or even outside it. And it also can lead to increased attacks. In Poland, because it is mainly Roma women who beg on the streets, this violence usually does not take severe forms (Kostka 2019: 166). Different interviewees described their experiences of begging as follows:

*There are people who spit, hit us, call the police.* (Lamita)

*When people see us in Wrocław on the street, they say: dirty people, Romanians.* (Eva)

Findings from the study showed that with cases of assault, the police are not a service that would protect them as victims, thus the Roma no longer try to seek help from police officers. When they tried it, they heard from the cops:

*they say it's our fault, too, that we're bothering people. And they say, "Please leave"* [from the police station]. (Iłon)

[The cops think] *it's our fault too,* [...] *that we should go back to our country, and this is Poland, only for real Poles.* (Mundra)

If the behaviour presented by Iłon is contrasted with the figure of the "still and silent beggar" described above, it takes on an additional meaning. It may mean that a beggar who does not act in accordance with these "guidelines" or the expectations of the community may be subject not only to legal consequences. In addition, violence against them, inflicted by members of the community, by citizens, is allowed. One could therefore consider such an "unruly" beggar as *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998) who one can become through the mere fact of failing to behave like a "proper" beggar. Such a violation of the rules (which are not always written down) is considered to be tantamount to excluding them from legal protection, and exposing them to violence by citizens. The fact that such a person is not a Polish citizen in every sense of the word further deprives them of protection, as Mundra said.

## Formal and informal punishment of the Roma by the police

In the previous chapter, I described the criminalisation of begging. The banning of this activity with the simultaneously flexible scope of regulations, e.g. to determine what exactly is deceitful or loud behaviour, gives the police a large and discretionary power. This is a power that the police officers willingly use, and often abuse. This power consists of the possibility to punish a begging person (usually with a fine) and is usually not challenged by other authorities, including courts, because police officers are well aware that the Roma are unlikely to appeal to courts for relief, as they do not have the appropriate skills to do so. Sometimes appeals to the courts are effective and judges revoke such fines as illegal. However, going through the appeal process requires time and support from local activists (Raithelhuber 2019: 141). The discretionary power of police officers is also reflected in the fact that punishment does not take place every day – people do not know when they will be punished, how, and exactly for what behaviour. It creates a feeling of uncertainty and unpredictability of both the law and the agencies enforce it.

In Poland the fines are often quite high. Most people in my study mentioned 500 zloty (110 EUR) fines that had been imposed on them or people they knew:

> *The police give a fine of 500 zlotys and forbid begging. We say we know we can't do this, but what do we do? We don't have a job, so how are we supposed to live? They don't care if they see that you have 10 or 20 zlotys, they immediately search all your pockets. If they see you have money, they take it.* [...] [And additionally they give you a fine] *for 500 zlotys. Not 50, 100, but 500 zlotys at once.* (Lamita)

The problem, however, is not only that police officers issue very high fines (imposed the maximum possible amount), but also that they often take money collected by the Roma without a receipt. My interlocutors called these confiscations fines, but it often turned out that it was out of the legal procedure and was simply a kind of forced tribute by police officers. This behaviour has been the same for years and is present in various Polish cities (Kapralski, Lechowski 2018: 80–81) and, although on a much smaller scale, in Copenhagen, where 15% of Roma surveyed admitted that police officers had taken money or their other belongings (e.g. mobile phones) usually without confirmation of their confiscation (Djuve et al. 2015: 107).

Police officers can also harass people begging on the street, e.g. by checking their IDs regularly. Such frequent checks have no rational justification and are intended to scare people off the streets. In Wrocław though, police officers use different methods – they detain people for no reason at the police station for a few hours. This behaviour should be considered illegal because it is difficult to determine what purpose other than harassment is served by keeping a Roma person who was arrested for begging on the street- when this is a person they know and pass by on the street every day:

*It often happened that we were led to the police station or searched on the street, and taken money from, as much as there was. ...* [And at the police station] *they could keep you from morning till evening.* (Mundra)

Other example of harassment, frequently given by my interlocutors, is to take them to a police car and drive to outskirts of the city, to a place that is poorly connected to public transport, and to leave them there. It is also a behaviour aimed solely at harassment and an informal way of punishing and deterring:

 [The policemen] *took me across town with my granddaughter. And they let us go. We had to go back alone for an hour, two hours, until we found the tram.* (Lamita)

The police officers' behaviour towards Roma described above, including, in particular, their perception as a threat and as potential criminals, seems to stem from prejudice and concealed xenophobia. It is not specifically Polish. The police try to justify racism, both institutional (Williams 1985) and possibly individual, by giving examples of crimes committed by members of this group and publicising them in the media. Those practices could be also seen as a example of "a reasonable anti-Gypsyism" policy in practice (van Baar 2014: 30–32).

## Exclusion from space

One of the key aspects of being considered a margizen is the exclusion of a person from a certain (usually public) space. Assigning a certain place to margizens, also not letting them enter specific city areas, does not only symbolically indicate segregation. It is a gesture that shows that such a person is fully treated as an "abject" and additionally as a "deject" (Kristeva 1982: 8). He or she is excluded from society and the space where it functions. The space itself is fragmented, and there are portions that only the chosen ones have access to.

The most frequent exclusion occurs in representative places, city centres. In spaces where the middle and upper class (or people aspiring to these classes) want to feel good, do not want to be disturbed, do not want to see anything unfriendly, no dirt in the space they manage, use and which they consider to be their own (Pratt 2020: 145–150). All uncleanliness, all "dirt" should be removed from sight (Douglas 1966: 36, 41). In other words, there is a symbolic designation of a certain space (even when speaking of a public space) as belonging to the middle class, where only selected persons can fully use it, while others are in it as (usually unwanted and unwelcomed) guests and can be removed from it at any time for behaviour (or even appearance) that is considered inappropriate by the "rulers" of that space. There are many ways in which this behaviour manifests itself. It will cover both the Dutch shop bans, i.e. a ban on entering a shop imposed by shop owners on persons

deemed inappropriate and problematic (both actually or potentially). This ban stretches to other shops located in city centres, acting together in this case under an agreement they are part of (Schuilenburg 2015: 226–244). The other example is imposing a ban on begging on designated streets in the city and the creation of "forbidden zones" in the city centre for beggars (Raithelhuber 2019: 140), a ban on sitting or lying on sidewalks or in parks, prohibition of sleeping in cars in parking areas, shaving or cleaning up in public bathrooms, introduction of "controlled drinking" or "alcohol disorder zones" (Pratt 2020: 186–197), or a significant fine for "living in a public spaces" – a broad and vague term coined in Hungary, allowing authorities use discretion when targeting different groups of homeless people (Udvarhelyi 2014: 821). Another form of space exclusion would be evicting people from communal dwellings in the city centre that are not intended for the poor, as in the Romanian town of Cluj (Mireanu 2019). Common to these activities is that their goal is to target the poor, the underclass, and frequently also the Roma.

In addition to the streets, shops and shopping malls are other areas from which the Roma are driven out in various ways. These spaces should be considered public even though they have private owners. Everyone has, and should have, access to them. Moreover, in Poland, a refusal to serve a specific person in a shop (as well as in a restaurant) and a refusal to sell goods is a misdemeanour (Article 135 of the Polish Administrative Offences Code). This law is a communist relic and it was passed in connection with the frequent shortages of various goods at the time and it was intended to discipline sellers who hid goods from customers (keeping them for themselves or for other customers). At present, however, it serves to support anti-discrimination activities. It has also been used repeatedly to protect the rights of the Roma, who have been kicked out of restaurants, hotels and nightclubs (Burek 2007: 10). Any restriction on access to a place where goods are sold should also be regarded as an infringement of that provision, just as a ban on entering or order to leave the store or mall for no reason should be regarded as such. Nevertheless, the Roma are often driven out of such places or prevented from entering them (as explained by Iłon). The actions of private security company employees are aimed at discouraging the Roma from shopping by treating them as thieves, watching them closely and accompanying them at every step. It makes people uncomfortable. Such actions also show their unbelonging – the fact that the Roma are out of place in shops, they should not be there, because this is not their space or a space for them:

> The worst is to go to a shop for example at the Market Square. They see us Gypsies,[5] they tell us we steal or beg. [Security] doesn't allow us to enter the store or they're driving us out. (Iłon)

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[5]　This term was used by the interviewee himself.

[When] *security guards see us in stores, they look at us. People ask the security to keep an eye on us.* (Alexandru)

The experience of the Wrocław Roma shows that they are also very unwelcome in spaces that most people associate with support, help for the poor, asylum – that is Catholic churches. A lot of respondents said that not only did they not receive any support from priests (with a few exceptions), but that priests were among their persecutors – ordering them to leave their space – whether it was the church itself (also in winter, as Lamita told us) or the space in front of it:

*Sometimes the priest is bad and he kicks us out. A lot. If I ask for tea or sandwiches for children, he* [says]: *"Goodbye." There are those who have a heart and will help, and others will throw you out and won't let you sit in the church.* [...] [Whether it's] *cold or warm, whatever. And they don't care if you have kids with you.* (Lamita)

[Most of priests] *are chasing you, threatening, calling the police.* (Mundra)

For those who spend a lot of time on the street, that is for the homeless or beggars, railway stations are important spaces, as they are often open 24/7. They are crucial for several reasons. First of all, they guarantee protection against the weather – rain, wind, cold. Second, because they are always illuminated and there are a lot of people in them – thus it is safer there. This greatly reduces the chances that someone will attack or assault you, because someone will certainly notice and help. There are also often police units at railway stations, which further increases protection by discouraging potential perpetrators of violence. Of course, the presence of police officers also has a negative side – they are used to drive unwanted people (Roma, homeless people) out of the station, so that the travellers can feel more comfortable there:

*We also lived at the railway station, but when we slept there at night, the police came and did not wake us up normally: "Please stand up." No.* [A policeman] *hit us, the adults, the boys. With a baton. And they had a big dog. They threw us out of the station. One o'clock, two o'clock in the morning.* (Iłon)

In public places, police officers always perform these two, often contradictory roles towards the most excluded groups – on the one hand, to a certain degree they serve a protective role (their presence alone means that some people will not attack the homeless or begging people), and on the other hand, they introduce control and oppression (Wardhaugh 2000: 128–129). But in the absence of other possibilities, Roma still sometimes decide (or rather previously decided, because it is not the case now) to sleep at railway stations for safety reasons (Kapralski, Lechowski 2018: 75).

## Conclusions

Observation of the European countries' approach to migrant Roma over the last 30 years may lead to the conclusion that new migration policy solutions, which are later implemented on a larger scale, are first tested on this group, and then extended to further groups of migrants. The 1990s showed that the Roma were subject to what can now be called push back factors. European governments introduced various mechanisms aimed at preventing their arrival (including limiting the filing of asylum applications, which was a fairly common strategy used by the Roma in the 1990s) and facilitating their rapid expulsion from their territory (Sobotka 2003; Kreide 2019). Currently, exactly the same mechanisms are applied to refugees arriving in Europe from other continents (Klaus, Pachocka 2019). The question arises of what the practices of exclusion from space and ghettoization will be used for in the future.

Criminalization and excessive control of the Roma and their behaviour is possible because the representatives of this group can be considered to be Agambenian *homo sacer*. These are persons who are considered to not be part of society. They are seen as outlaws, and as such can be sacrificed because they are not subject to ordinary law, ordinary rules. On the contrary, they must be subject to exceptional rules, and if these do not exist, they must be created. In the eyes of society, by their behaviour (and often by their mere presence alone), *homo sacer* make it necessary to introduce a state of exception and to make them subject to extraordinarily regulations which also allow (or even require) the use of various forms of violence. The aim of the actions against these social outcasts or outlaws is to make them disappear from society and its territory. In this case, normal social relationships are also suspended in relation to them, hence "ordinary" people claim the right to behave towards *homo sacer* in ways that they would not allow themselves to use towards another member of society. This is where violent behaviour such as insulting, degrading or violating their physical integrity comes from. The rules of giving aid do not apply to *homo sacer* either – that is why it is possible to deprive them of the support of social welfare institutions (Agamben 1998).

The Roma are an interesting group that is visible and invisible at the same time. This is the term that Julia Wardhough (2000: 91–92) uses to describe how societies approach the homeless. They are invisible when it comes to helping them, noticing their victimisation, the violence they are subjected to, their needs. At the same time, their visibility is connected with the media and politicians identifying their actions as illegal, an "improper" use of public space, showing them to be a threat. Analogous terms for Roma are used by Huub van Baar, who emphasizes their "hyper-visibility" resulting from underlining, in public debate, the lowly position of Roma in the social structure, their deficits, as well as focusing in principle exclusively on the alleged threat posed by their presence. Hence, control and policing activities strongly focus on the Roma. At the same time, aid programmes

aimed at providing social support in the areas of education, housing, prevention of discrimination tend to make the Roma "avisual". It can therefore be said that both the visibility and invisibility of the Roma have only negative consequences for the community (van Baar, Vermeersch 2017: 131–133; Powell, van Baar 2019: 94). This process was noticed by one of my interlocutors, Iłon, who explained that the process of noticing Roma in Wrocław and trying to help them, at the same time contributed to an increase in the aversion of the local community towards this group:

> *Until our situation became a focus of the media, until* [Social Welfare Centre] *took care of us, it was different, it was good. People didn't know we had cars, they didn't know we were burning* [garbage] *in the stoves. Nobody abused us, we could do whatever we wanted. We were free men. There wasn't so much hate. It started 2–3 years ago when we moved out of the barracks. We appeared as new residents* [in the estate]. [...] *People* [Poles] *got upset that* [the Roma] *have cars, smoke, don't work, go begging.* (Iłon)

This example shows that the social support that is (and should be) offered to migrant Roma must be adequately communicated to the local community. In the absence of such communication, "welfare nationalism" (Barker 2017: 134) may appear, which consists of denying social support and the right to claim it to persons not considered to be members of a given community.

Let me return here to the concept of state crime and its victims as discussed above (Kauzlarich et al. 2001). The findings from the study are clearly in line with this theoretical perspective. They exposed actions by police officers using force against the Roma community to evict them from their homes, from the streets where they earn money, and to confiscate their earnings. In those behaviours we observed ignoring existing legislation when it was convenient for officers or allowed achieving other purposes, such as making public space a pleasant place for the society. But the presence of representatives of public institutions is not constant. They disappear and turn their backs when there is a need for help, for protection – be it against violent perpetrators or exclusion, poverty and hunger.

## Declaration of Conflict Interests

## Funding

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