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Abstract

Since Romania joined the EU in 2007, the Roma migrants of the suburban slum 'Bron-Vinatier' have had the right to move freely within the Schengen area, facing legal ambiguities about the accountability of the French State to guarantee their rights on its national territory. Analyzed through the theoretical lens of anthropological Transnational Studies, it has become clear that local associations in the host country play a crucial role for the negotiations of these rights with the public institutions. Possibilities to help them are, however, restricted as territorial sovereignty remains at last reserved to the public authorities. Moreover, associations are divided about the right way to help the migrants largely concerning whether the families are in fact considered too deprived to make use of their rights and to contribute to their own integration. These uncertainties have led to a certain degree of objectification of the migrants which is most prominently visible in the legal confrontation of different associations and the school about a 'Roma class' consisting only of children from the slum. Additionally, the two associations intervening at Bron-Vinatier to facilitate the children's school access have a different strategy than the migrants to overcome extreme poverty: While the former focus on the integration of this population into majority society to improve their socioeconomic situation, the lives of the slum's inhabitants are shaped by back and forth movements between Romania and France to ensure the wellbeing of the whole family across borders. The constant mobility resulting from these movements and the forced expulsions effect the efforts by the associations and the school institution for their integration as they have difficulties defending the migrant's rights when they are physically unreachable. Yet, within this routine of forced mobility, moments of resistance to break this seemingly endless cycle do exist which are supported by associations bridging the contact to the majority population. This resistance by the Roma migrants demonstrates that the parents' demands for school and their subsequent refusal to allow their children to go to class are not contradictory but on the contrary interdependent and interwoven with their strategies of daily survival.

Zusammenfassung

Seit dem Beitritt Rumäniens zur EU genießen die RomamigrantInnen des Slums ‚Bron-Vinatier‘ in der Vorstadt Lyons Freizügigkeit innerhalb des Schengenraums. Dabei sind sie mit rechtlichen Unklarheiten bezüglich der Verantwortung des französischen Staates konfrontiert, ihre Rechte auf nationalem Boden zu garantieren. Die Ergebnisse meiner Feldforschung als Freiwilligenhelferin für die Schulintegration der Kinder zeigen – aus der theoretischen Perspektive der anthropologischen Transnational Studies betrachtet – dass lokale Vereine eine entscheidende Rolle in den Aushandlungen dieser Rechte mit den öffentlichen Institutionen einnehmen. Die Möglichkeiten der Vereine zur Hilfe sind dabei dennoch begrenzt, nachdem die territoriale Macht letztlich den öffentlichen Behörden vorbehalten bleibt. Die Vereine sind überdies uneins darüber, wie den RomamigrantInnen am besten geholfen werden kann. Dies betrifft hauptsächlich die Frage ob die Familien nicht letztlich zu unterprivilegiert sind, um von ihren Rechten Gebrauch zu machen und zu ihrer eigenen Integration beizutragen. Diese Unklarheiten führen zu einem gewissen Grad an Objektifizierung der MigrantInnen, welche sich besonders deutlich in der rechtlichen Auseinandersetzung zwischen verschiedenen Vereinen und der Schule über die ‚Romaklasse‘ in der lokalen Grundschule zeigt. Darüber hinaus haben die zwei Vereine, die in Bron-Vinatier für Schule intervenieren, andere Strategien als die BewohnerInnen selbst, um ihre extreme Armut zu bekämpfen: Während sich erstere auf die Integration der BewohnerInnen in die Mehrheitsgesellschaft konzentrieren, erstreckt sich das Leben der Menschen über Rumänien und Frankreich, um das Wohlergehen der gesamten Familie über Grenzen hinweg zu sichern. Die ständige Mobilität durch das Hin- und Herpendeln und ihre imminente Vertreibung von ihren Behausungen in Bron-Vinatier beeinflussen die Bemühungen der Vereine und der Schule für deren Integration. Sie haben Schwierigkeiten, die Rechte der MigrantInnen zu verteidigen, wenn sie physisch nicht erreichbar sind. Es existieren aber innerhalb dieser erzwungenen Routine der Mobilität Momente des Widerstands. Diese unterstützen die Vereine durch die Kontaktherstellung zur Mehrheitsbevölkerung. Der Widerstand der Menschen zeigt, dass die Forderung der Eltern nach dem Schulbesuch ihrer Kinder und die darauffolgende Verweigerung sie in den Unterricht gehen zu lassen keine widersprüchlichen Handlungen, sondern im Gegenteil voneinander abhängig und eng mit ihren täglichen Lebensstrategien verwoben sind.

“They did not know it was impossible so they did it.”

Mark Twain

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Introduction

“Les familles posent un ultimatum : « Pas d’argent, pas d’école » et s’engagent malgré tout à scolariser les enfants pendant un mois. Une nouvelle réunion est prévue dans un mois.”¹ (Email C.l.a.s.s.e.s. December 15, 2014)

The parents refused to send their children to school which was regarded as an attempt to ‘blackmail’ the commune to accept their application for public food aid. I learned about this ultimatum only shortly after my start as a volunteer at the Lyon association C.l.a.s.s.e.s.² which intervened in an informal Roma³ settlement in the suburban area of Lyon for the children’s school education. This settlement existed between August 2014 and April 2015 in the form of huts constructed out of collected wooden planks on an untitled terrain between a periphery highway and a psychiatric hospital in the commune of Bron. It was the parents who had demanded to send their children to school and it was also them who now used it as a means for materialistic ends. Their economic activities were generally informal; begging and collecting reusable goods from garbage were their principal sources of income. Given this refusal of schooling for their children it would have been easy to fall back into explanations borrowing from negative stereotypes of Roma which take this refusal as their natural denial to integrate into the French society. Instead, I decided to explore this apparent paradox of demand and refusal further. I realized that it was more easily understood through the analytic tools of Transnational Studies that have been developed by social and cultural anthropologists in recent decades (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004) who take the migrant’s integrity of life into account. This reality of the migrant – as an often neglected fact – is not confined to its incorporation into the host society. Instead, migrants often keep transnational ties to their home country and use them in a strategic way. This perspective made me return to see their lives as strongly structured by their legal status as migrants holding EU citizenship. This is a status that they have in fact only recently obtained through the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007. Between 15,000 and 18,000 Roma from Romania and Bulgaria are currently making use of this

¹ ‘The families give an ultimatum: ‘No money, no school’ and commit despite all to send their children to school for a month. A new meeting is planned for in a month.’

² Collectif Lyonnais pour l’Accès à la Scolarisation et le Soutien aux Enfants des Squats (C.l.a.s.s.e.s. 2012)

³ Several names like Roma, Gypsies, Tsiganes, Manush, Kale co-exist as self-designations as well as terms imposed by others which are used in an inconsistent way. The question if the Roma are to be considered as an ethnic group is subject to an ongoing debate in cultural and social anthropology. ‘Roma’, however, has become an “accepted international term”, Ram (2013:16) says. She warns, nevertheless, that “the common use of the term reinforces (in some cases inadvertently and in others intentionally) the notion of ‘the Roma’ as a concrete group”. ‘The Roma’ thus, according to her, have to be regarded a social construction, a view that this work also upholds.

relatively new right to free movement in order to come to France, a number that remains relatively stable despite mass evictions and removals from the French territory (Ram 2013:6). As they have been newly created through the enlargement of the EU, multiple citizenships shape the social spaces Roma migrants engage in and allow them to step up before other member states as demanders of rights as “social citizens” whose accountabilities have not yet been completely clarified (ibid.1024). These ambiguities have created frictions and open conflicts that are most strikingly visible through the systematic mass expulsions of Roma EU migrants from their settlements by the French government since 2010 (République Française 2010). A large number of NGOs have formed on the national and local level as an answer to these politics of exclusion and advocating for Roma migrants in the defense of social citizen rights (Ram 2013:5ff). This thesis focuses on how Roma migrants claim rights as social citizens with the support of local associations by the example of the Roma settlement Bron-Vinatier. The central question of my thesis therefore looks into the way(s) the EU Roma migrants in the informal settlement challenge the limits of their full social citizenship in France: How do the Roma EU migrants from Bron-Vinatier claim rights as social citizen and how does the State respond? What is the role of the intervening private stakeholders for the children’s schooling in this confrontation? In order to answer these questions, I conducted a participant observation at a Lyon association supporting the children’s school education and semi-structured interviews with the intervening stakeholders in Bron-Vinatier for which I also took the email communication between the members of the association into account.

The thesis is structured as follows: The first part presents the topic as well as the theoretical and methodological foundations of the field study. It describes the specific legal situation of EU Roma migrants in France and the recent growth of civic societal Roma advocacy. I will then sketch out the anthropological discourse on integration and how the concept of transnational migration is proposed as a new paradigm. The methodology and the used methods of data collection are highly informed by the insights gained from Transnational Studies and the Extended Case Method. The second part finally presents my empirical findings of the case of Bron-Vinatier. It is divided into the major ‘incidents’ at which the Roma migrants appeared as claimants of rights as social citizens. These incidents were the intervention for school by the association, the conflict around the ‘Roma class’, the use of school as means for materialistic ends, the strategy of back and forth movements between Romania and

France and finally the ways how their expulsion was anticipated and acted against. I will end with a summary of the findings of the case study and a final conclusion.

Part I – Literature Review and Methodology

EU Roma Migrants in France

The first part of this literature review comprises the presentation of the subject. Starting from a more general introduction into the construct of the ‘Roma’ and their migratory movements of Roma in Europe, I will show how they enact EU citizenship in France and how these actions have led to major shifts in French governmental and civic societal practices in form of large scale expulsion policies on the one hand and Roma advocacy on the other hand.

Making Use of the Freedom to Movement

Roma are present in nearly all countries of the European Union with a total size of their population that can only be roughly estimated. Some statistics name a number of six million Roma (e.g. Ram 2013:1), in contrast to other estimations amounting to twelve million, often called the largest minority group in Europe (e.g. Emiryan 2009:1, Liégeois 2009:5). These variable numbers are resulting firstly from the fact that in some member states Roma are not recognized as a distinct ethnic group, as it is the case for example for Roma migrants in France. Another potential reason for the unprecise numbers is the fear of racial discrimination which comes with such a recognition, preventing them from openly declaring their ethnic belonging (Ram 2013:4). A vast share of the Roma residing in France – approximately 400.000 – are Sinti. The majority of Sinti in Western Europe is naturalized, since they have been residing in the country for centuries (Fassin 2014:16ff). In France, they are subsumed under the legal term *Gens du Voyage* and benefit from certain minority rights aiming to meet their itinerant ‘lifestyle’. Roma not holding a French passport – commonly referred to as ‘Roma migrants’ – originate mostly from Romania and Bulgaria and are the smallest group in France with about 15,000 to 20,000 people. Since the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union in 2007 and the complete suspension of restrictions on the labor market access for their citizens in several Western European member states in 2014, nationals of these countries have the right to move and reside in France freely up to three months and, after fulfilling certain requirements (for example sufficient income), also beyond this period (Ram 2013:5). The increasing migration of Roma migrants started in 1989 at the end of the communist regime, at

that time arriving as irregular migrants or asylum seekers and living in auto-constructed informal settlements (Olivera 2014:342). Veermersch (2013:347) underlines the fact that the migratory movements of Roma today are not to be regarded as signs of nomadic ways of life as commonly assumed. Instead, they are the consequence of a life reality of “exclusion and poverty, as well as the processes of discrimination and stereotyping that exacerbate it”, as he claims (ibid. 342). Despite the relative small number of Roma migrants in France, they have become to be regarded as a ‘problem’ that has been followed by radical actions by the State and involving opinion making and mobilization by the civic society. This high attention and interest in the Roma migrants despite their relatively low number in France may be explained by their “high visibility” of the informal settlements and squats, “the relatively high level of internal cohesion, and the severe poverty of the Romani communities in question” (ibid.347).

French Expulsion Policies Against Roma

Regarding the Roma in the country, the French State has developed a very particular way to prevent the long-term settlement of Roma migrants on its territory. Although the French government had already been sending Romanian citizens home for years, in summer of 2010 the exclusionary measures reached a new level. Following criminal acts that were allegedly committed by Roma migrants, the government reacted with rigor, announcing “une démarche systématique de démantèlement des camps illicites, en priorité ceux de Rom [sic!]”⁴ (République Française 2010). As the interior minister Manuel Valls declared in 2013, it was the Roma people’s vocation to return to Romania or Bulgaria, since only a small portion of them made real efforts to integrate (Libération 2013). Since deportations of EU citizens are prohibited by EU law without solid reasons such as a genuine threat to public order and health, they were offered a special ‘deal’ to voluntarily leave the country by paying them money. This is why the dismantlement of a camp usually goes hand in hand with the imposition of the so-called ‘obligation to leave the French territory’⁵ within four weeks. According to EU law, however, Roma migrants are free to move within the Schengen area, a right of which they make use, as they often settle in the same area from anew until they get evicted again, which proves a more or less stable number of Roma residing in France, despite the large-scale ‘voluntary deportations’ in recent years (Ram 2013:5f). Local

⁴ “a systematic strategy of dismantlement of illegal camps, in priority those of Roma”

⁵ Obligations de Quitter le Territoire Français – OQTF (Ram 2013:5)

municipalities therefore currently mostly push the settlements to other communes by expelling the people from the informally occupied pieces of land (Fassin 2014:65). The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) and the Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH) reported for the year of 2014 the eviction of 13,483 persons from 138 sites in France. They thus concern – taking the estimated number of 15,000 to 20,000 Roma migrants as a reference – over 80% of the population. Only 43% were provided an alternative accommodation following their forced eviction (ERRC 2015:3).

These events triggered a major discussion about the responsibility of the EU and the more general question of the inclusion of Roma in Europe. Liégeois (2009:5) says that the Roma are in a very vulnerable position, as they are already excluded from the societies of their home countries, leaving them with neither territory, nor State or embassy of reference anywhere they go. He calls for a common effort that pushes forward the transition from “the Roma as a problem of European integration to the Roma as a model of European integration” (ibid. 2007:14). Veermersch (2013:349) notes that despite major EU Roma inclusion agendas “expulsion has clearly become the preferred policy response to Romani migration” in France. The intervention of the EU and the call for a shared responsibility, could, as he warns however, lead to a reinforcement of discriminative policies in the respective member states. The French response has already indicated what consequences the “Europeanisation” of the responsibilities can have, running the risk that it “might give domestic governments an opportunity to evade their own responsibility” (ibid. 357). The increase of Roma advocacy on the local level can therefore be attributed to the European discourse on Roma inclusion of the past decades as it has given national NGOs new instruments to apply pressure to domestic governments (ibid. 2012:1197). The authors Çağlar and Mehling (2013:172) confirm that the expulsions of Roma EU migrants as witnessed in France and Germany in recent years exemplify how European citizenship was traversed by legal ambiguities that are yet to be solved as their execution was decided by “negotiations rather than by making use of legal texts”. Their mere physical presence therein “played a constitutive role in the process by which Roma emerged as claimants of rights” that involved both public and private stakeholders in a large scale (ibid.171).

The following chapter examines how this involvement can be observed in France in form of an unprecedented advocacy for Roma at the national and local level.

The Municipalization of Politics and Roma Advocacy in France

Eric Fassin (2014:47f) is a French sociologist who has examined the current governmental treatment of Roma EU migrants in France. He says that this ‘Europeanisation’ of the Roma question on the National level has in fact led to its ‘municipalization’. He argues that a homogenization of the political parties has taken place in France in recent years, meaning a progressive assimilation of the classical left-wing parties to the political right. Since the Socialist President Francois Hollande has taken over the conservative line of his predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy, a ‘real’ solution to the problem has even more so been delegated to the higher level of the European institutions. The consequence of these (non-) management of the integration of the Roma population by the French State on a national level, however, was the increasing ‘localisation’ of the issue, which was what Fassin calls the “municipalisation de la politique de la race” (the municipalisation of racial politics) (ibid. 14). Since the State refrains in fact from any responsibility regarding this population, he even opts for the use of the term “dépolitisation” (ibid. 49). Policies on Roma, as he notes, were now made outside of official parties and the Welfare State was replaced by the action of private stakeholders. At the local level, as a consequence, the ‘question of the Roma’ has become a battle between public institutions, associations and residents. The work that carries the name *Roms et riverains – une politique municipale de la race* (Roma and residents – the municipal politics of racism) therefore describes precisely these residents or ‘neighbors’ of Roma informal settlements, complaining about the nuisances that these ‘uncivilized’ people made. Their indignation was often voiced before the municipality to act. Simultaneously, numerous local organizations in favor of human policies and integration measures have recently emerged to demand exactly the same thing: to make the municipality act, albeit the proposed solutions for this demanded action therein diverge significantly (ibid. 56).

One of the most important French NGOs and Collectives for Roma rights that have formed in recent years is the Romeurope Collective. It has grown to a number of 37 organizations in the past ten years, operating on the local, regional, national and international level. Another formation represented on the national level is the Collectif Roms. Other long established NGOs have now more specifically focused on Roma issues, like the Ligue des Droits de l’Homme or Human Rights Watch. All these NGOs are usually active for either the Gens du Voyage or Roma migrants. This concentration on one of the two groups aims at counterbalancing the French government’s tendency

to 'ethnicize' the Roma as a homogeneous group with equal discrimination and problems (Ram 2013:7ff). The Gens du Voyage, as they say, face other difficulties than Roma migrants, as they are national citizens and mostly in conflict with authorities because of their movements within the French borders. Advocacy for Roma EU migrants, however, largely concerns complaints about the violation of EU law, as for example against the expulsion policies of France. Other organizations established from Romeurope to tackle problems of specific aspects of the lives of Roma migrants, like the 'Collectif pour le droit des enfants roms à l'éducation' (Romeurope) which focusses on the access of Roma children to school education.

These NGOs are, however, rarely represented by Roma migrants themselves. As some of these organizations say according to Ram, "Roma migrants are too poor, too divided, too focused on their daily survival and/or too temporarily in France to organize or get involved in their work" (ibid.12). Instead, most of these NGOs are run by volunteer activists calling themselves "fighters" or "grassroots activists", while others are "professionals" with the vocation to help Roma migrants. Opinions in these organisms diverge about the ways Roma are to be treated as a group, about the question if poverty or discrimination are at the core of the problem and the consequent required degree of their protection. This advocacy, unfortunately, has currently not brought about the improvement of the Romas' situation in France: "Overall, Roma migration has resulted in increased representation but not much empowerment of Roma" (ibid. 15).

Gheorghe et al (2014:85ff) speak of the eternal status of victim of the Roma which called upon our shared responsibility to act against racist discrimination, also based on our historical responsibility to amend the wrong of the mass killings of the Holocaust. There was a deep fear of Roma advocates to enter into a debate with the 'racists' held responsible for the Romas' misfortune. To exclusively oppose to national governments and public authorities, according to the authors, ignored potential common interests that might exist. Such a debate, however, would bring the issue back on a discursive level, starting first of all with the 'de-victimization' of the population. The problem of the victimization of Roma has also been addressed by other researchers. Timmer (2010:265) points at the anthropologist's general recognition of "problem populations" as products of discursive construction rather than taking them as naturally given. Civil society and policy makers should be aware of the power of stigmatization, since their "stated goals are to promote societal integration, not

differentiation”. Ram (2013:13) also regards the lack of participation of Roma in these struggles as a main reason why they have so far been ineffective, as it results in a disrupted communication between the ‘helpers’ and its objects. The result can be seen in the constant increase of eviction politics and societal resistance against Roma, as the ERRC (2014:21) confirms in its study for 2014. She thus summarizes the current situation of Roma politics in France in the following way:

“By standing its ground on its domestic practices and even tossing the ball into the EU’s court to resolve the problems faced by Roma, France has been able to end the game—for now—in a stalemate, one in which Roma remain the losers.” (Ram 2013:15f)

Anthropological Theoretical Grounding

In order to understand these processes anthropologically, I will firstly present the theoretical discourse on integration and secondly the concepts of transnational migration and social citizenship.

The Critique of the Integration Paradigm

The demand of the French government directed at the Roma to show their ‘will’ to integrate and the work of numerous organizations supporting them with their integration can be seen as representative for the central strategy of Western democracies to encounter immigration today. As Marvakis (2012:67) claims, ‘integration’ was “obviously a hot issue all around Europe with top priority on different agendas for the past several decades”. It has been the guiding principle in science and politics for over forty years and has only been interrupted by a short episode of *multiculturalism*⁶, as Hess and Moser (2009:12) confirm. Since the 1990s, the discourse has largely returned to integration in its previous, culturalistic meaning of ‘demanding and supporting’ the integration into the majority society. This observation is shared by Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) who dedicated an entire volume to “*The Multiculturalism Backlash*”. Integration is discussed in social and cultural anthropology as the paradigm of the time, an imperative that defines norms, governs and regulates (Hess/Moser 2009:14).

⁶ Multiculturalism in this context means specific policies that valorize and promote the idea of cultural diversity through immigration (Hess and Moser 2009:17).

Central to the critique of integration is the adherence to the image of a homogeneous national society as the basis of harmonious communal life (ibid.19). Integration is also criticized for being a hierarchical tool over migrants that takes them as mere passive beings. The powerful integration paradigm is “systematically ignoring the agency of migrants”, Marvakis (2012:74) says. While becoming part of the majority society remains the ultimate goal of all integration efforts, a change has been taking place in recent decades of *how* migrants can accomplish it. The community’s criteria for access have traditionally been based on the acquisition of formal national citizenship, regarding everyone as a member who was a citizen. Authors have increasingly claimed, however, that the belonging to this national community no longer depended solely on the category of national citizenship. In fact, it was no longer a matter of ethnic or nationalistic divisions, either. Borders, instead, “reach into the heart of political space”, Anderson (2013:2) says. It has now become to be less a question of what the person *is* than more of what it *does*. This means that integration is possible through own efforts, as the national community is redefined as a “community of value” (ibd.). Also national citizens have to prove their eligibility for being part of this community by their actions. Those who do not manage to do so are what she calls “Failed Citizens” sharing with the foreigner the same destiny of being excluded from the amenities that the “Good Citizen” enjoys (ibd. 5). There are certain core skills that are central to the subsistence of the society and all its members have to work together in order to integrate the ‘new’. Anderson (ibd. 3) explains what makes a “Good Citizen”:

“The community of value is populated by ‘good citizens’, law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families. The policy maker and politician are often self-consciously ‘good citizens’, and so too, if less self-consciously, are the academic researcher and the anti-deportation campaigner.”

The goal is thus not only to belong to the group of “tolerated citizens” but to be accepted by “the guardians of good citizenship” (ibd. 6). Piñeiro and Haller (2012:94) similarly speak of a “harmonious unity” which was “generated through shared core sociocultural and socioeconomic skills (language, values, norms, behavioral standards, education, and qualification standards)”. These skills are – contrarily to the concept of nativism as a precondition of citizenship – acquirable through integration. One of these central shared values that has to pass this ‘test of adequate values’ is the value of education. Education is not only considered important since it secures the subsistence of society. It also serves the purpose of integration to become a “social citizen”, as Piñeiro and

Haller (2012:96) state. This explains the high rating of education as one of the most important measures of the “integration society”:

“In the context of integration, education emerges as a technology of governing, as a political strategy to lead people according to the ideal of integration. Thereby it regulates the population to incorporate only integrated national and “social” citizens: Education serves the creation of an ‘integration society’.” (ibid.98)

Integration therefore is the confrontation of two different systems of value, often called ‘culture’, with the dominant culture being the host society to which the migrant is demanded to adjust. The migrant and even more so the migrant’s child, held an “in-between” position, pictured as a conflict between two cultures that could only be solved by eliminating the deficit that separates them from the host culture (ibid. 71). To picture migrants as ‘deficient’ fellow citizens has been criticized at large within the anthropological ‘deficit discourse’, Hess and Moser (2009:12) note. Finally, the community of ‘good citizens’ needs to protect itself from outsiders in order to sustain itself. To be a foreigner, then, is a person that is not integrated, or even unqualified to be integrated, due to a lack of essential values, such as education or cultural incompatibility, Piñeiro and Haller (2012:96) argue. For the protection of this ‘civilized’ community, its safety has to be ensured by minimizing risks that now threatened the community from inside and outside. The distinction between citizen and non-citizen, however, continues to play a major role in the exertion of power as national citizens of a state are usually not affected by the exclusion through the state sovereignty (ibid. 98).

Transnational Migration and Social Citizenship

In order to understand the complex life reality of the Roma EU migrant, it becomes necessary to move away from the concentration on their integration into the host society. In the past two decades, new theoretical concepts have been promoted by cultural and social anthropologists and sociologists to replace the narrow, nation-based paradigm of integration by a new one that takes the complex realities of a migrant’s life better into account. Some of these concepts to be mentioned are Hybridity, Transnational Studies and Cosmopolitanism (Hess/Moser 2009:13). The formulation of Transnational Studies as one of these approaches aims at putting an end to the tenacious view that society and nation-state are identical (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1007). A redefinition of our understanding of ‘society’ was required in order to live up to the empirically proven fact that migrants’ lives are – but do not have

to be – formed by transnational relationships that outlast the moment of their departure from their country of origin. Even after the physical act of migration to another country, responsibilities and emotional, financial, or social ties to the home land often remain important in a person's life. They therefore propose the notion of the “social field” which is characterized by “multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (ibid. 1009). Incorporation to the host as well as ties to the home country, non-linear back and forth “movement and attachment”, can consequently be simultaneous processes that do not contradict, but which constitute an important part in the migrant's life. These processes need to be further explored and explained by scholars. Some studies have already shown that transnational migration is often a strategy to improve the socioeconomic situation not just of an individual, but to serve the interests of an entire family that is dispersed in several countries (ibid. 1011). The social field is also characterized by concrete actions and representations. A distinction is thus made between “ways of being” and “ways of belonging”: While “ways of being” refer to the concrete actions of the person in its social field, “ways of belonging” are direct representations of identity and belonging to a group as for example expressed in statements, clothing or the consumption of certain products. As a consequence, persons “can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field” (ibid.1010).

Through their relationships and practices across borders, migrants are effected by and challenge laws and institutions that are present in their social field. They live with multiple legal identities that are still highly structured by the principles of citizenship and nationality. These identities still leave room for negotiation and are formed by them through their own “ways of being”, reflected in their concrete social relationships and practices (ibid. 1010ff). Levitt and Glick Schiller point at the legal ambiguities that multiple membership creates and which challenge governance at its base since it is not completely obvious which state is responsible for what part of the migrant's life (ibid. 1025). Still, transnational migrants frequently claim rights that are a priori reserved to persons with formal citizenship. The authors suggest to call these migrants “social citizens” which extends the definition by Piñeiro and Haller (2012:98) and Anderson (2013:3). Glick Schiller (2005:55) defines a social citizen as follows:

“When people make claims to belong to a state through collectively organizing to protect themselves against discrimination, or receive rights and benefits

from a state or make contributions to the development of a state and the life of people within it, they are said to be social citizens. Social citizens claim rights to citizenship substantively through social practice rather than law.”

This newly acknowledged form of citizenship in multiple legal frames has also been termed “Transborder Citizenship” (ebd.48), delineating persons who “claim and act on a relationship to more than one government” and testing legal pluralism that they experience within their transnational social field in form of real social action rather than through law. According to the authors, it is still a widely unexplored question how these transnational patterns of migration influence the legislation on the definition of its members and how states and their institutions in turn redefine their boundaries and borders:

“Future research needs to explore why some states change in response to their increasingly transnational constituencies and others do not. We also need to ask which functions states abandon, under what conditions, and what new roles they assume. Finally, we need to identify the new kinds of organizations and collectivities that step in to fill the gap left by the changing state.” (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1019).

Hess and Moser (2009:21) point at the number of studies that have been recently published showing that migrants often develop and strategically make use of transnational networks as a resource, as they are today facing neoliberal restructuration and unstable legal residence statuses. They also raise the question of how these practiced social citizenships can be anchored in tangible social citizenship rights, as the discussion about global social rights demonstrates. Based on current European migration politics that rely on a hierarchic principle of inclusion, a permanent residence permit – and as a consequence a legal status with social securities – has become a rare case. Immigration countries now often purposely prevent new immigrants from integrating and consequently force them to a life ‘in transit’ between several countries. Terms like “second grade citizenship” (Mezzadra 2008:39) or “second-class EU citizenship” (Martin 2013:4) strikingly denote the negative consequences this dual membership has created. There have already been deliberations on the EU level how these migratory movements can be regulated and used in a productive way, referred to as ‘circular migration’ (Hess/Moser 2009: 21). Circular migration of Roma families has so far been poorly empirically studied by social scientists, Hornberg and Brüggemann (2013:101) claim.

In France, new forms of social action by the civil society have been emerging in recent years to step in where the municipalities refuse to take responsibility for their

poverty. Especially the migrant's children are regarded as most vulnerable, having pushed civil society stakeholders to organize themselves and step up for their rights, particularly the right to education, as my case study will show. Starting from the premise of transnational studies that migrants strategically choose their ways to optimize the life situation of their families (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004: 1017), I stress the agency of the inhabitants of one informal settlement in Lyon, France. By doing this, I am interested in the role of the intervening private stakeholders to make their voice heard. The guiding questions that I wish to answer by this thesis are therefore formulated as follows: How do the Roma EU migrants from the settlement Bron-Vinatier claim rights as social citizens and how does the State respond? What is the role of the intervening stakeholders for the children's schooling in this confrontation? My hypothesis is that the migrants and the public and private stakeholders work together in order to establish their status as social citizens, they however diverge in their strategies to achieve this goal: while the main strategy of associations and school institutions is to integrate them into the host society in order to access social citizen rights, Roma follow a transnational strategy *and still* demand social citizen rights in France. The following chapter describes the methodology that guided the case study that I conducted between November 2014 and April 2015 in order to answer these questions.

Methodology – Transnational Studies and the Extended Case Method

Since transnational studies offer an entire new theoretical lens through which we can look at migration processes, posing a counterweight to the dominating paradigm of integration, they also have an impact on the methodology that guides such a project of social and cultural anthropological empirical research. Although the interest to examine transnational migration privileges multi-sited fieldwork, the analysis of the social field in only one geographical setting still allows to analyze one particular aspect of their transnational lives in detail, as for example their confrontation with the institutions of the host country (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1012).

The Extended Case Method (ECM) therein serves as a set of tools to the realization of a case study in a transnational social field. It was founded by the members of the Manchester School which Michael Burawoy (1998:15f) has further developed as

a union of positive and reflexive science. By studying the processual and contextual character of a particular social phenomenon in its detail, theory is reconstructed. In the beginnings of the ECM, scholars aimed at laying bare the stabilizing effects of social process on a social system, keeping the idea of structural functionalism of perceiving societies as static social systems. The method has nevertheless become very influential for providing a frame to identify and seize societal change through its focus on conflicts and inconsistencies. Conflicts are regarded as a series of “connected incidents that were occurring in the field”, which are analyzed “in order to isolate and identify the actual mechanisms underlying the development of the conflict” (Evens/Handelsman 2005:2). Burawoy (2000:29) proposes three ways that help to avoid the trap of an “objectification” of power– what he calls “forces” – since it is often falsely taken for something naturally given and unchangeable. Firstly, it is important to examine the processes of resistance in a field; secondly, to understand that forces are themselves social processes and thirdly and finally, to regard them in the end also only as a product of human imagination. For this purpose, participation becomes indispensable for observation. Participant observation locates “everyday life in its extralocal and historical context” (ibid. 1998:4). As I enter the field and act, reactions follow and also reveal the workings of the social situation. Social process becomes only visible through observation stretched over time and space, by comparing every day the theory with the observed situations of the previous day. This case is analysed in relation with others, finally leading to the extension of the theory, by challenging it in the course of its careful reconstruction (ibid.14ff). Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1013) also underline the importance of longitudinal fieldwork, since it is the only way to reveal “moments of crisis or opportunity, even those who have never identified or participated transnationally, but who are embedded in transnational social fields, may become mobilized into action”.

Within the scale of this work, I studied only one single case in detail over the course of five months until the expulsion of the families from their settlement. I consider the ECM therefore a set of tools which guided me the way through my field study that consisted of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, the two main methods of the ECM. An important decision of positioning within my participant observation was taken by joining an association in support of the Roma families. I realized that I could not just *be* there but rather required to have a *role* that was considered helpful by the families. Out of great hesitation to ‘abuse’ Roma migrants

once again for endless scientific enquiries about them – as I sensed reservations against outside ‘researchers’ – I did not force a participant observation and interviews with the families themselves outside my voluntary work with the associations. This choice admittedly prevented me from gaining a comprehensive insight into the migrants’ subjectivity, restricting the depth of understanding of their perspective to the point of view of a volunteer worker. I still had moments of deeper conversations with some of the parents when it was linguistically and situationally possible. This was also facilitated through my involvement in the work of another association who intervened at the terrain with a bus teaching the children. In these cases I made my research objectives clear. These limitations on my comprehension of their subjectivity nevertheless allowed me to study the “effects of strong and weak indirect ties within a transnational social field ... and those connections, whether they take the form of institutional or individual actors” (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1013). My roles of a volunteer and of a student conducting field research thus required a step back to a critical distance and to take this multiple role as a significant part of my analysis which was largely limited to the interpretations and actions of the associations. Additionally to my identity as student and volunteer worker, I was also a ‘foreigner’ in this context, moving between the French speaking environment of the associations on the one hand and a Romanes and Romanian speaking group of people on the other hand. The reflections on my identity did not stop with the language differences and its challenge for a successful fieldwork, either. The fact that I was of German origin, finding myself together with them in a foreign country did not only create a certain sort of ‘solidary’ feelings between us. It also pointed at the striking differences of our lives, explainable by the hierarchization of EU citizens by their wealth and exploitability: The laws of settlement concerned me in the same way as them; still, no one ever asked me for proof that I was able to support myself financially or other requirements to stay for longer than three months. It was out of question that I was not going to be concerned by measures of ‘voluntary return’ and expulsions as they did.

For a closer picture of people’s conceptions and interests in the field, semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant actors. I chose the method of semi-structured interviews rather than the so-called ‘expert-interview’ since these ‘experts’ were at the same time the actors that constituted my actual ‘sample’. The semi-structured interview allowed me to work with a flexible catalogue of questions, readapted to each interview partner depending on their individual role in the field

(Schlehe 2003:79f). I decided to draw a sample that approximately respected an equilibrium among the interacting groups, since my field was constituted by several groups with internal differences, a problem also observed by Burawoy (1998:12). In order to capture the different points of view and agencies, each involved party (the inhabitants of the settlement, associations and institutions) was to be represented by at least one person. This way, interviews could be seen as a technique situated within the context of my case study and as a processual element in time and space (ibid.13). Regrettable, yet meaningful, was the fact that I was not able to conduct interviews with the municipality and another association which was behind the condemnation of the school class at the elementary school as an 'ethnic class'. Several phone calls and emails from my side remained unanswered or rejected which I considered in itself already an important finding for my research question. Interviews finally included two members of the association C.l.a.s.s.e.s., the two teachers of the bus school, the teacher of the school class in the elementary school, a representative of the ministry of education as well as a married couple as part of the group of residents helping with the walks to school.

A way of complementing participant observation and interviews was the use of digital material. Although not mentioned in the literature on the ECM, online sources still seemed an indispensable factor to be exploited for the ends of my research. Online ethnography has become increasingly recognized and accepted in recent years, as the internet is today an essential component of many societies in the world, with mutual influence existing between the 'offline' and the 'online' sphere. Perhaps owing to its relatively short existence, the methodology of online ethnography is still in need of further development, with only a small number of ethnologists being dedicated to this field so far (Garcia et al. 2009:52f). In this thesis, the material I used varied by its form, as I took emails circulating between members of the associations equally into consideration as I analyzed internet blogs and television broadcasts. The association C.l.a.s.s.e.s. communicated intensively via emails sent to everyone considered concerned by an issue. The group of volunteers in Bron-Vinatier used emails as a means to pass on information, to launch discussions on experiences made during their work, ask questions, express doubts, or to promote new ideas that an individual or several persons had. These emails were a dense documentation of their motivations, their strategies and their conceptions which seemed highly valuable for my research interest. Although the recipients of the emails were chosen by each person individually,

causing a rather incomplete picture of the totality of emails in circulation, I decided to incorporate those I had received into my analysis. Experiences and opinions of involved persons were also shared on internet websites and blogs which I incorporated into my work as well. The question of liability of data purely drawn from the internet, with no physical connection between its members, is part of the debate on the methodology of online ethnography (ibid. 53). I used the occasion of this thesis to explore the possibilities of these methods without claiming their absolute validity.

In order to reduce the data won from participant observation, interviews and online communication to its relevant information for the research question and to contrast it with the presented theory, I orient myself by the Qualitative Data Analysis of Mayring (2000). In a first phase categories are inductively developed of a portion of the text data, revised, specified and potentially extended. These categories are then applied to the rest of the material and interpreted as well as put in relation with one another.

Part II – The Case Bron-Vinatier

The second part of this thesis presents the findings of my empirical case study of Bron-Vinatier. It was guided by the question how the Roma EU migrants negotiate their claim of rights as social citizens with State and private stakeholders. The migrants did not act all in the same manner and neither did all the intervening associations and their members – one case will show how the associations even legally fought one with another about the ‘best way to help’. There were nevertheless major strands of action at which the inhabitants of Bron-Vinatier were perceived by the associations and the school institution as a group claiming rights in a collective manner that I will regard as a series of “connected incidents” following Evens and Handelsman (2005:2). Every chapter ends with a discussion of the ‘incident’ in reference with the theory.

The Intervention of Associations

I will now describe my first contact to a Lyon association intervening at the settlement Bron-Vinatier for the access of Roma children to school education. The first section presents how their intervention is connected to the general commitment of several associations to help the migrants. I will then look at how these stakeholders worked together to support the children’s attendance at school that lived in the settlement.

Their Commitment to Help

We arrive in the dark, trying to find the way on the silty ground that is made a little bit more accessible through wooden planches that were laid on it, to reach the houses of the children. We are looking for four young boys to recharge their monthly bus cards for their way to school since the new month starts tomorrow. While we can catch the first boy directly at the first hut it is more difficult to find the others. We are referred from one hut to the next until we eventually find everyone but one. [...] Olivier tells that he usually comes to the village around 5pm, at this time of the day he has the highest chances to meet them at their homes. In the morning most of the parents are usually already gone for begging, collecting things or searching garbage bins. Not all the children go to school; many, Olivier says, stop after elementary school, particularly the girls. Ten days ago, a baby was born in the first hut behind the entrance. When we pass by that hut to say Hello, the hut is filled with people and hot from the fire that burns in an oven. Several generators on the side of the village provide electricity and a fire hydrant is used as the only source of drinking water [...] (Field notes November 30, 2014)

It was one afternoon at the end of November that I first met the inhabitants of Bron-Vinatier when I accompanied the volunteer Olivier of the association C.l.a.s.s.e.s. to assist him with his daily tasks. He and his colleagues had just managed to organize a group of residents who helped with the daily walks to school with the children from this settlement. I already knew about the existence of this village as I had seen it in passing with the tramway that led to the university campus in Bron. With the volunteers, I was then finally meeting its dwellers personally that I so far had only seen through the windows of the tram, sitting among other passengers and listening to their comments about ‘the Roma’ and their ‘ways of life’.

I learned that day that approximately 120 persons lived in the informal settlement since the beginning of August 2014. The settlement at Bron-Vinatier – or ‘Bron-Boutasse’, as it was also called by the volunteers – was one of the biggest informal settlements that existed in Lyon at the time. The families dwelled wooden, makeshift huts which were built – side by side in several rows – all along the exit lane of the suburban beltway and delimited by the stone walls of the psychiatric hospital Vinatier. All the families that I got to know in the course of the months of my presence originated from Romania, a majority even from the same commune, Tinca, in the West of the country. As the volunteers knew from earlier interventions, many of the people of Bron-Vinatier had previously lived only several hundred meters away from the location, at the other side of the hospital, in huts that had been destroyed after the people’s expulsion in August. Another part of the families had resettled here following the closure of one settlement that existed in the neighboring commune Villeurbanne.

Their independent appropriation of the land was quickly contested by its legal owner, the greater urban region of Lyon called *Métropole*. November 20, the owner of the terrain then won the trial against its occupants, giving them a delay of three months before their expulsion was going to be executed. I also learned about a petition that was initiated by some of the residents of Bron that demanded the immediate expulsion of the migrants. It collected over a thousand signatures within a few months⁷. Except for the presence of police authorities regularly checking identity cards and executing the expulsion of the settlement in April 2015, neither I nor the associations witnessed a member of the municipality establishing contact to the settlement's inhabitants. One of the members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. reported that the municipal as well as national police were occasionally passing by the village in order to undermine 'mafia-like' trading. Beside of that, the doctors of the NGO Médecins du Monde visited the village on a weekly basis to treat those persons who were in need of medical care.

How the expulsion could be prevented was a question that the association discussed many times throughout the whole time of the village's existence. This seemed particularly important as a shelter was the most basic human need of the families that they wanted to help. It was reasonable that their activities could not be limited to only school matters if the children were soon to be homeless. This is why they were also active in the city-wide protests that condemned the expulsion policies in November. It was at one of these events that I had learned about the association C.l.a.s.s.e.s. Bron-Vinatier was not the only informal settlement that was threatened by the forced closure by the public authorities. Several others of different size could be found in different parts of the city and its surrounding communes at the same time. Also squatted houses were concerned by forced evictions and equally condemned by the protesters. They demanded the people's relocation into public housing structures instead of their eviction without offering alternatives. Parallel to demonstrations like the one I had attended, an occupation of several schools in Lyon by homeless children and their families was organized which lasted for several months. The volunteers also debated the occupation of the schools as a potential way to force public authorities to provide social housing for the dwellers of Bron-Vinatier.

⁷ A politician of the conservative party initiated at the end of August 2014 an opposition group with the name *Un Avenir pour Bron* (A future for Bron) and put forward a petition to be signed by everyone wishing the slum to be moved to a different place. By December, this petition, being the only one put forward against the village, had already reached 1300 signatures, hoping to force the political leadership to succumb to the democratic pressure that it created (Bron Magazine November 2014:24).

These discussions revealed major uncertainties about the people's definitions of what they actually considered as 'homeless'. This already began with the reflections on how the places of their intervention were actually to be called. It was clear that the city did not recognize the place as an official settlement as it was in their eyes an 'illegal occupation' of their land. The volunteers tried to use the name the people utilized themselves which also varied from person to person. One of the present volunteers opted for the terms *village*, *village hameau* (small village) instead of *bidonville* (slum) or *campement* (camp). Similarly, she preferred *maison* (house) over *cabane* (hut) or *baraque* (shack). Her argument was that their dwellers considered these places as their home. Other notions like *Bron-Boutasse* (referring to the city quarter's name) *lieu de vie* (place of living) or simply *terrain* or *sur place* (on site) reflected a wish to neutralize the place which was already loaded with negative meanings solely through its naming, as 'slum' was found degrading, for instance. The designation was an important aspect for their whole work, as it had a direct impact on the way homelessness was defined and what measures had to be taken to help those concerned by it. This discussion became very relevant during the weeks of the school occupations since it was not clear if the Roma families from Bron-Vinatier should also be incited to participate in the protests. At the general meeting of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. in December, a number of questions was addressed concerning this matter, as was written in the report afterwards:

- “Le Collectif ‘Jamais sans toit’ comptabilise aujourd’hui 194 enfants mais les enfants dormant ‘en cabane’ sont-ils comptés ?
- Différence entre « être à la rue » et « être sans toit » : les enfants dormant dans les cabanes sont administrativement sans toit mais pour les familles Roms, être dans une cabane n’est pas être à la rue (différences culturelles).”⁸ (Email C.l.a.s.s.e.s. December 15, 2014)

It was therefore argued that the observed low participation of Roma in the occupation of schools and protests against homelessness was actually due to the fact that they simply did not define themselves as homeless since they actually *did* have a 'roof' over their heads to distinguish themselves from people that had no shelter at all. One day, a volunteer was quoted in an email saying that the children even painted houses all the time because they were dreaming of a real home which in their thinking they did not have (yet). The volunteer's interest in their 'Romanian' origins was also visible in the sometimes curious ways to obtain information about it: One day, a member of the

⁸ “The collective ‘Jamais Sans Toit’ today counts 194 children, but are the children who sleep in a hut counted, too? Difference between ‘to be on the street’ and ‘to be roofless’: the children who sleep on the street are administratively without roof, but for the Roma families, to be in a hut is not to be on the street (cultural differences)”

association told us that she had found the Facebook profiles of some of the inhabitants of the village and commented that the houses on the photos did not at all look like palaces than it was always claimed by opponents of the Roma settlement. These statements demonstrate that the volunteers, too, had internal debates within the group about the 'Romas' world views' and the consequences for their own involvement for them.

Supporting the School Enrolment

It was at last only through the decision of these two associations to go to the terrain of Bron-Vinatier on their own terms that they could express their demand for school and to receive support for the official administrative procedures. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. constituted itself in 2006 from the local branch of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH), with all its members working as volunteers. The usual way of getting engaged as a member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. is to become a contact person of one or several families. The presence of the members of the association at the demonstration and their solidarity with the school occupations showed me that their activities were not restricted to only formally achieving school access. Instead, their activities included also measures that favored the families' social integration as a whole, such as support for alternative housing, the allocation of charity and social welfare benefits, domiciliation procedures and others. The contact persons operated across the whole urban area of Lyon, some by themselves, others as a group of several volunteers at one place, depending on the size of the habitats and the time capacities of the workers. Through my interest for the work with C.l.a.s.s.e.s. I learned of their close cooperation partner ASET69⁹ which also intervened in Bron-Vinatier. In contrast to C.l.a.s.s.e.s. which was purely run by private commitment, ASET69 was a hybrid form of church and public intervention, as the two teachers Christine and Michel are employed at the same time by a private jesuit school and subcontracted with the State, represented by the DSDEN¹⁰ which administers the departmental services of the National Ministry of Education. The therefore also have to follow the instructions of the Ministry of Education that has to ensure the schooling of all children in compulsory school age. The *camion-école* (also called *Antennes Scolaires Mobiles* – mobile school antennas)

⁹ Association d'Aide à la Scolarisation et l'Education des Enfants Tsiganes in the département Rhône

¹⁰ Directions des services départementaux de l'Education nationale ; The DSDEN generally manages the school staff of public and to a certain degree also of private schools of primary education and ensures the quality of teaching (Académie Lyon 2012). It follows the National law under the direct instructions of the Ministry of Education in the name of the government.

is a school in vans established as a sort of ‘adaption’ to the people’s ‘mobility’ and as a temporary supplement when ‘real’ school was not possible. ASET69 roots back to 1969 to the region of Paris where it was originally founded to enable the Gens du Voyage to access school education. Today, there are two busses that invereene also in the urban region of Lyon often directly at the places where Gens du Voyage, asylum seekers and EU Roma migrants live. The DSDEN and ASET69 still highly depend on the work of C.l.a.s.s.e.s., as it is the volunteers who largely make the contact and mediate between the public institutions and the families. Main objective of the intervention of the camion-école is the evaluation of scholarly needs and its exchange with the DSDEN and the concerning commune, as well as the preparation of the children to be able to attend school in their age group. The main goal is thus the eventual integration into a school institution rather than the teaching in the bus as a long-term replacement of the ‘real’ school. During my work in the village I also assisted several of Christine’s teachings at Bron-Vinatier through which I was able to get an idea of the association’s work and their relationships with the families.

Emilie from C.l.a.s.s.e.s. remembered in our interview her first visits at the terrain in August when the families had just settled down. Being motivated to help, she walked through the newly established village, surrounded by curious children that learned that she was there for school. She already knew many of the families that asked for school with the children’s names being written on the lists from preceding settlements. Some of them had thus already visited school before but had dropped out again. Quite often, it was the children themselves who ‘were standing in line’ for school, Emilie said. Others were however not allowed to go to school since they were already still enrolled at schools in other communes. Yet others did generally show interest into their children’s schooling, but did not know how or had false information. Olivier gave the example of one family that he once talked to. It had only recently arrived from Belgium where the parents had to pay tuition fees for their children’s school. This became unaffordable to them after a while, so they took them out of school. Olivier informed them that public schools are generally tuition free in France, they were very surprised. With those parents who were interested in sending their children to school, we discussed practical aspects of the schooling or other issues where the help of others was welcomed. The language barrier was high and these conversations were therefore led in rather simplistic French that often caused misunderstandings.

Compared to the high number of children that lived in the huts, a large part had not approached the associations or showed no interest for their child's schooling. The associations said that some of the families were too poor to formulate a demand or had been taught to bear their own discrimination in which they find themselves today. Michel also took the situation in their home countries Romania and Bulgaria into account to explain the disinterest of some parents in their children's school education:

“Après, quand tu viens d'un pays - pour nous la Roumanie, ça peut être de Bulgarie ou bien d'un autre pays – et que dans ton propre pays, tu as eu du mal, toi-même, pour aller à l'école ou pour trouver ta place à l'école, alors on te place dans une école qu'on appelle les écoles pour enfants spéciaux, pour enfants handicapés, voire on ne t'envoie pas à l'école du tout. Il faut que tu fasses ton chemin.”¹¹ (Interview Michel March 2, 2015: 12,27-32)

He draws a comparison to the French society one hundred years ago when school education was – especially on the countryside – not at all normal for every child. According to him, this change in awareness about the value of school education was yet to happen for some of the parents. Some of them understood that school could draw their children out of misery, while others rested on a different level of realization, he said. The teachers of the bus school thus try to support this process of change by approaching those parents not yet aware of the advantages of their child's school education to explain them why it could be interesting for them. Olivier from C.l.a.s.s.e.s. called this work of convincing the parents of the sense of school 'sensitization' of the parents.

When the two teachers of the camion-école had learned of a newly installed settlement at the other side of the hospital Vinatier, they helped C.l.a.s.s.e.s. to carry out a census of the children in September to evaluate how many children needed a place at school in Bron. Since the school year began only shortly after, the members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. went to the town hall of Bron to preregister the children for elementary school and the kindergarten (*maternelle*) which is necessary before the actual enrolment at the school. The same was done for the 'collégiens', whose access to the middle school was managed by the prefecture of the *département*¹². Five children could

¹¹ 'Furthermore, if you come from a country – for us Romania, or if it's in Bulgaria or another country – where you, yourself, have already in your own country trouble to go to school or to find a place at school, where you are put in a school that we call schools for children with special needs or handicapped children, or if you are not even sent to school at all, you have to go your way.'

¹² The competence of the municipality in the field of education lies in the management of primary school education, thus kindergarten and elementary school. It owns, equips and ensures the maintenance of its school establishments and regulates the access of its students (République Française 2015, articles L212-1 to L212-9). Secondary school education is administered by the

be enrolled that way by the volunteers without encountering major problems. For their request concerning elementary school and the kindergarten, however, they learned that this was not possible, as there were apparently no more places for the children. The list of children that C.l.a.s.s.e.s. had presented to them contained 27 names, alarming the municipality and the local schools of a mass of children demanding immediate admission. The school year had to consequently begin without the children from Bron-Vinatier. The associations and the DSDEN accused the municipality of deliberately blocking the admission. In their eyes, the city just counted on the fact that the slum inhabitants would be expelled in only a short time anyway, making efforts of long-term schooling obsolete. They thus only wanted to wait out that the problem ‘solved itself’. Another reason for the rejection of the children was named by one of the representatives of the DSDEN, Lefebvre. He assumed that the municipality wanted to avoid that the families created social bonds to the local community through their children’s attendance at school as they could finally threaten an easy and smooth expulsion through resistance from the population:

“Au niveau des municipalités, ils ne sont pas trop volontaires pour qu’il y ait des campements comme ça, c’est clair. Donc elles essaient de les rendre le plus précaire possible, de limiter les ancrages, comme la scolarisation. Ou bien limiter l’aide sociale, des choses comme ça. Après, ça se délite.”¹³ (Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:17,20-24)

The volunteers claimed that the school attendance was not only considered as important for the future of the children, but also as a social frame and gate to enter society for the whole family. Still, the associations and the DSDEN insisted on the right to education as inscribed into National law. According to the Code de l’Education, compulsory schooling concerned every child between 6 and 16 years regardless their nationality (République Française 2015). The associations asked the DSDEN to support their negotiations with the municipality to achieve their enrolment. For Bron-Vinatier, several representatives of the DSDEN were active and cooperated with C.l.a.s.s.e.s. Besides its director, a responsible person for the so-called *EANA*¹⁴ (recently arrived foreign-speaking pupils) and *EFIV*¹⁵ (pupils from non-sedentary

prefecture of the département, which is the Collège (middle school) and the Lycée (high school) (ibid. articles L213-1 to L213-10).

¹³ ‘The municipalities are not so eager to accept that there are camps like this, of course. They therefore try to render them the most precarious as possible, to facilitate as little as possible the anchorages like the schooling or social benefits. That way, it resolves itself.’

¹⁴ *Élèves allophones nouvellement arrivés*

¹⁵ *Enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs*

families and travellers) and an educator supporting the teaching were deployed by the DSDEN.

Meanwhile, the association ASET69 followed the order of the DSDEN to teach the children who were waiting for their school admission in their bus and the other children that had not shown interest in the visit of a public school. They usually arrived in the morning, parked the bus next to the vehicles of the villagers in the roadside ditch and taught the children for two hours inside the bus. Christine occasionally went to their houses and talked to the parents about the importance of their children's schooling or listened to other worries that the families had. This concerned mainly the young children in the age of kindergarten, but also some of the older ones reaching up to the teen age. Michel explains how the families perceived their work:

“Ils voient bien que ce n'est pas tout à fait l'école, c'est une forme d'école. Et les parents nous perçoivent comme des adultes bienveillants. Ça veut dire qu'on est là pour [...] aider les enfants. On n'est pas la police, [...] on n'est pas des médecins - les médecins eux-aussi sont appréciés - mais nous on fait de notre mieux pour s'occuper des enfants. Et les enfants, c'est ce qu'ils ont de plus précieux.”¹⁶ (Interview Michel March 2, 2015:8, 20-25)

According to Michel, the municipality disliked the fact of the presence of the bus school. This means that it was not the municipality who asked for them to come to the village, but on the contrary the lack of action on the part of the commune for the children's schooling which made the DSDEN become proactive, as Michel declared, informing the municipality merely about the presence of the bus school. This autonomous decision by the DSDEN to intervene was viewed critically by the municipality, as Michel remembered:

“Elle s'était inquiétée du nombre d'enfants qui éventuellement devrait avoir à scolariser. Non seulement elle était inquiète, elle s'est même émue et sa réaction a été un peu désagréable. Puisqu'elle a interpellé l'Inspection Académique en disant, "Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? C'est quoi ces enseignants qui viennent en camion?" Alors qu'elle savait qu'on existe depuis longtemps parce qu'on a déjà travaillé sur Bron dans le passé.”¹⁷ (ibid. 3,20-26)

¹⁶ ‘They knew, of course, that this is not real school but a certain form of it. And the parents perceive us as benevolent adults. That means [...] to help the children. We are not the police, [...] we are no doctors – doctors are also appreciated – but we give our best to take care of the children who are the most precious thing they have.’

¹⁷ ‘They were worried because of the number of the children that were potentially supposed to be schooled. They were not only worried but even agitated, they almost reacted uncomfortably. Since they snapped at the Inspection Académique: ‘What does that mean? Who are these teachers who go there with a truck?’, even though they knew that we had been existing for a long time because we had worked in Bron in the past.’

The teacher describes how the refusal of the school admission had nevertheless an impact on the trust relationship between them and the families:

“Sur certains terrains, comme à Bron-Vinatier, on dit ‘L’école, c’est important! Il faut mettre les enfants à l’école! C’est très important!’ On dit ça en septembre. ‘Allez vous inscrire à la mairie!’ Alors qu’il faut compter un mois et demi avant d’avoir une place à l’école. Comment tu peux dire ‘L’école, c’est important!’ si le pays qui t’accueille ne te met pas à l’école tout de suite?” (ibid.13,10-14)¹⁸

October 20 finally, after the court’s decision to expel the occupants of Bron-Vinatier and the announcement about its execution not before January, thus made the schooling of the children legally compulsory for the time of their presence on the territory of Bron. On the day of the court’s decision for the settlement’s expulsion, then, places for the children became suddenly available although previously claiming a lack of capacity at the school. The kindergarten, however, remained inaccessible, as the municipality did not have the legal responsibility for children outside of the compulsory school age. November 12, thirteen of the children from Bron-Vinatier were finally welcomed at the school Anatole France, the closest elementary school from their place of living. Hopes were also high that the children’s attendance at school would stall the expulsion to the end of the school year in June. School would this way help the whole family through a longer stay at one place.

This ‘chance’ of going to school had to be followed by the fulfillment of certain parental duties to ensure the regularity of the child’s attendance at school, as it was for example usually expected of a parent to take their child to school. The associations knew from previous interventions that the parents often had problems to ensure the accompaniment of their children to class. A group of over thirty people was organized by C.l.a.s.s.e.s., by making a call to all ‘Brondillants’ – the residents of Bron – to support them with the accompaniment of the children to school every morning. The goal was to establish a routine to bring the children to school which would be assisted by the volunteers at the beginning. This task was planned to finally be completely handed over to the parents themselves, ideally by one mother or father of each child. The picking up of the children, on the contrary, was right from the start expected from the parents. This was usually done by one or two adults of the children’s families that were charged with the safe return of the whole group to the village.

¹⁸ At certain sites they say: ‘School is important! You have to send your children to school! It’s very important!’ We say that in September. ‘Go and get registered at the town hall!’ Although it takes one and a half months before getting a place at school. How can you say ‘School is important!’ if the country that receives you doesn’t allow you to school immediately?’

The accompaniment in the mornings, however, were, except for the first school days after their admission, exclusively done by the volunteers. The absence of parents soon also concerned the pick-ups at midday, as the teacher reports:

“Et en fait, après dix jours, les parents ne sont plus venus, à onze heure quarante-cinq, à la fin de la matinée. Et c'était un problème parce que nous, on n'a pas d'autorisation pour laisser partir les enfants. Donc c'était un peu dangereux. On devait les garder, mais on n'a pas le droit de les garder. Donc ça créait une situation un peu... [...] Donc moi, je suis restée, j'ai des collègues qui sont restés avec moi, qui ont chanté des chansons, et on a téléphoné aux parents et finalement, au bout d'une demi-heure, quarante-cinq minutes les parents venaient.”¹⁹ (Interview Julie February 2, 2015:4,31-41)

Some of the parents claimed that they had to leave in the morning to spend the whole day out working, so they did not have the time to do it. The association argued that they could very well bring their children to class and go to work after. The question was raised what the minimum was that the parents could be demanded to contribute. They wanted to make them understand that the daily accompaniments by the volunteers were not a favor that they wanted to do for them for the whole school year. Instead, their support was connected with the condition that the parents would eventually fulfill their responsibility to take care of their children's route to school themselves. The lack of participation of the parents in taking their children to school sometimes resulted in a hesitation of the volunteers to help them with the enrolment of their other children. This was for example the case when Olivier told me about the young man Laurentiu who was constantly asking him to enroll his son Gabriel to the kindergarten. I deliberated with him what to do, since we had already done the enrolment for his first son Samuel and he had only attended kindergarten once ever since. Olivier decided to wait until the father had taken Samuel at least a couple of times to school before he wanted to become active for the second child. Christine of ASET69 regarded this as a well-known problem, and spoke of the ‘challenge’ to ensure regular school attendance:

“La difficulté, c'est l'assiduité - l'inscription, ça va. Maintenant, cela commence à venir, mais l'assiduité c'est vraiment la difficulté. Et puis le trajet à Bron, c'était vraiment particulier, puisque presque personne n'accompagnait les enfants. C'était vraiment les associations, les bénévoles, Olivier, Emilie et Manon, qui étaient là, tout le temps, tout le temps, tous les jours. Il y avait une rotation avec

¹⁹ “And actually, after ten days the parents stopped coming at eleven forty-five, before midday. That was a problem because we had no authorization to let the children go. That was therefore a bit dangerous. This caused a situation that was a bit... [...] Well, I stayed, I had colleagues who stayed with me who did some songs, we phoned the parents and finally, after half an hour, forty-five minutes, the parents came.”

au moins deux personnes à chaque fois.”²⁰ (Interview Christine March 2, 2015:7,5-11)

Michel said that although most of the parents had the will to send their children to school, they were just too centered on daily survival to fulfill this minimum demand:

“Quand tu as des enfants en âge d’aller à l’école, mais que tu ne sais pas ce que tu vas leur donner à manger dans une heure, dans trois heures, que tu ne sais pas si tu vas pouvoir continuer à les faire dormir dans une baraque en planches où il y a ni l’eau ni l’électricité, où il pleut, il fait froid, on peut dire que la première des choses, ce n’est pas de dire: ‘Tiens, je les ai préparés pour les amener à l’école, puis les aider à faire leurs devoirs, puis je vais les surveiller.’”

²¹ (Interview Michel March 2, 2015:11,28-33)

His colleague Christine backed up this argument by pointing out that the children often also didn’t attend class even when the volunteers came to pick them up. She refers to some moments where the parents did not want to let their children go to school with the reason of being too ashamed of their poverty and fearing the discrimination that they would encounter through their ‘otherness’ and ‘shabbiness’, mostly visible through their clothes. This shame was accordingly higher if the families were already considered ‘outsiders’ in the village.

A blog entry by ASET69 (2014) posted online after one day’s intervention by the school’s civil servant at the beginning of December underlined this view and explained why some children rather attended the classes in their busses than the ‘real’ school. The blog post was about a little boy who had successfully passed the assessment test to enter the collège. When he still continued to come to class in the bus, she interrogated his mother about it to find out the reasons for this. The mother replied – pointing at the flip-flops the boy wore on his feet – that her son didn’t even have shoes to go to school with. The post ends with the words that he had never imagined a problem like this once school was accessible. The question about the parental minimum duties was central to the work of the associations, as it defined their assumed tasks as well. It was

²⁰ ‘The difficulty, that’s the regular attendance – the enrolment, that’s fine. Now, it already starts to change, but the regular presence that’s really the difficulty. Moreover, the distance at Bron was really special, since almost nobody did the accompaniment for their child. It was really the associations, the volunteers, Olivier, Emilie and Manon who were there all the time, every day. There was a rotation of at least two people every time.’

²¹ ‘When you have children, even of school age, but you don’t know what you will give them to eat in one hour, in two hours, that you don’t know but make them continue to sleep in a shack made from wooden planks where you neither have water nor power because it rains, it is cold, we can state that the first thing you say is not: “Here you are, I got them ready to take them to school, then to do their homework, then I will watch them.”’

answered differently by the individual stakeholders, with some expecting more participation from them than others.

Conclusion

The first chapter described how I established my first contact to Bron-Vinatier through two associations that intervened there for the children's schooling. On the one hand, they had the right to come to Lyon as EU laws guarantee them the freedom of movement that migrants of Romanian nationality benefitted from. As I could observe in Bron-Vinatier, entire families made use of this right to move freely. As an accommodation was difficult to obtain for them, they built their own houses where they could find the space for it. The occupation of the land in Bron-Vinatier by the migrants can therefore in itself already be regarded as a claim of the right to reside in the city. They did not ask for the owner's permission to construct their houses on the empty, unused terrain – they simply did it. On the other hand, however, the occupation was judged 'illegal' by court decision and implied the enforcement of the owner's right to clear its land from its occupants. The time it took until this judgment was passed and implemented therefore determined the length of stay of the residents of the land and structured their plans for the months lying ahead. As I entered the village with an association that was active for the school integration of the children, I was able to observe the dynamics that the presence of the people created. Although the settlement attracted the interest of various societal groups and also the municipality was obviously aware of its existence, it was only three NGOs who made real contact to the people by physically going to their place of living. Their interaction with people from outside the village was in fact the precondition for showing "social presence" in the French host State and to eventually claim rights as social citizens (Glick Schiller 2005:55). This way, the people had the chance to receive support from a part of the majority population that cared for their wellbeing while the State not only ignored their existence by avoiding any contact to them, it also ordered their 'removal' from its territory by the use of physical force. The occupants of this terrain were therefore never given any opportunity to prove their eligibility to be "Good Citizens" (Anderson 2013:3), as they were excluded from the community of social citizens right from the beginning. This stands in alignment with the observations of Fassin (2014:47) that the formulation by French politicians of the 'Roma question' has led to the depolitization of national and municipal politics on the Roma, making their expulsion an unquestioned automatism and the only answer to the people's present outside of any democratic decision-making.

It was only this offer for help by the volunteers and teachers that helped the inhabitants to express their needs and who advocated for the people's rights. They wished to help the families who were too poor and too discriminated against to be able to fight against municipal resistance by themselves, something that Ram (2013:12) holds true for the majority of recent NGOs advocating for Roma migrants in France. Still, these intervening stakeholders came with their specific missions to help, as C.l.a.s.s.e.s. and ASET69 for example intervened for the children's school education. By becoming volunteer of one of them and also by supporting the other from time to time, I could be part of this work and see how the families' claims of rights as social citizens were made and responded to by the municipality.

According to law, it was the municipality who was responsible for the schooling of all children of elementary school age on their territory. What could be observed at Bron-Vinatier, however, was that the commune neither enforced the schooling of the children nor offered other support that could have facilitated their inclusion. In the case of their school access, categories like ethnicity or nationality played lesser a role than the fact that they were 'many': To admit such a high number of children at the same time also meant a greater financial burden to the commune's budget. It can be concluded that the commune acted regarding the village of the EU Roma migrants as an extension of current government politics that purposely prevent the EU Roma migrants from integrating (Hess/Moser 2009:21). Interestingly, the school enrolment was not solely a battle between private associations and public institutions, what Fassin (2014:49) views as the consequence of the 'municipalization' of French government politics on Roma. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. acted on a purely voluntary basis, whereas ASET69 was half funded by the State. Still, there was little coordination between the teachers of the bus school and the city's administration when they intervened according to the instructions by the DSDEN. The right to education did not depend on the nationality of the child; to exclude the children officially was thus illegal and contestable by the families. It is therefore interesting how the municipality – representing the State – attempted to 'get away' from their duty to compulsory schooling by claiming a lack of places, while the DSDEN – also representative of the State – was approached by the associations to step in and to remind the municipality of the children's rights. This situation showed that rights are not automatically conferred to the people but always first need someone to claim them. The three institutions thus worked together to contest the refusal of the municipality to enroll the children at the elementary school

as it was wished by the parents. The bus school, however, has not been demanded for by the parents but was not rejected, either. On the contrary, it was an institution that had been working with Roma for several years and which was already well-known among the population. That Michel saw himself perceived as a ‘benevolent adult’ helping their children underlined his view that the parents apparently differentiated mainly between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people from outside, as their perceptions of the French society were largely shaped by their experiences with the police.

The will by the associations to help goes even that far to convince those who were not even *aware* that they *wanted* to claim their right to school education. It must be noted that they helped the parents with their children’s schooling but this did not automatically mean that they had all the same objectives behind their enrolment. It can be viewed as a conscious decision by the families within their transnational strategy of life. Looking at the numerous incidents at which the parents justified their lack of contribution to their child’s attendance at school suggests that the claim to the right of education in itself had little value if the families were not able to make use of it due to great poverty. Still, the associations regarded school as their only ‘way out’, as it helped the integration of the family as whole. The regularity of the school attendance was also a chance to prove to the municipality that their suspicions about the unwillingness of the families to integrate were in fact wrong. It was a way to demonstrate to the municipality – the “guardians of good citizenship” – that these parents were indeed willing to become part of the “community of value” (Anderson 2013:6). If that ‘test’ was passed – they hoped – their chances to improve their life situation and to become “social citizens” would increase significantly (Piñeiro/Haller 2012:96). Disappointment and non-understanding were therefore big when the parents did not participate at the walks to school at all. This outcome, as they feared, would only confirm the municipality’s predictions and justified in turn future exclusions of Roma children from primary school institutions. Due to the continuing demand by the families to the volunteers to help them for school and due to a lack of alternatives, they carried on their support through daily accompaniments and the constant encouragements for school, in the hope that the situation would eventually change.

Against Racial Segregation: The Roma Class

The opening of the school class for the children from Bron-Vinatier did not only find appreciation. In the following chapter I aim to present how it provoked a conflict about discrimination within the school establishment which will show that

the different intervening associations did not necessarily agree on one way to help the families of the settlement.

The Attack by Another Association

While the volunteers around C.I.a.s.s.e.s. struggled with the regular attendance of the children at school the municipality was at the same time accused by another association of having opened an ‘ethnic class’. The local branch of the national association MRAP²² criticized that the municipality ethnically segregated the children from Bron-Vinatier by gathering them all in the same group, calling it a “classe ethnique”, as *Le Progrès* (2014) reports. MRAP published an official statement and gave interviews to several television channels and newspapers where they expressed their intention of putting forward a complaint to the European Commission and the Défenseur des Droits²³. The online newspaper Metro News (2014) quoted in December the spokesman of MRAP that the class congregated children that had been to school before, speaking already decent French, with those who had only recently arrived in France. This was thus a racial segregation which had no justifiable grounds.

The accused institutions responded immediately to the criticism by defending their actions. Lefebvre said that it was usually the norm that the children were going to the class with pupils of their age and similar skills. In this case, however, the DSDEN decided to open a completely new class that consisted only by the children from the village. The special arrangement called *UPE2A*²⁴ (pedagogical unit for non-French speaking, newly arrived children; Ministère Education Nationale 2012) targeted children that only recently migrated to France who were not yet fluent enough in French to follow ordinary teaching and who had few experience in going to school in general. This class was of transitory nature, considered a half closed ‘integration class’, with the goal of integrating the pupils as soon as they reach a level that allows them to follow and participate in an ordinary class. Such a class UPE2A already existed at Anatole France in the same school year with migrant children from various different countries. As it was already full and there was a reasonable number of children from Bron-Vinatier expected, the DSDEN sent out a new teacher to the school that was going to take care of all these children by herself. It was true that some of the children had lived in France for several years, Lefebvre stated. Their schooling had been, however,

²² Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l’amitié entre les peuples

²³ independent governmental institution defending the rights of people and institutions against discrimination (Défenseur des Droits)

²⁴ Unité Pédagogique pour Enfants Allophones Arrivants

poor since it had only concerned very short periods of time. The teacher of the class underlined her point of view that the integration of the children was only possible with the implementation of policies that supported them with additional staff and teaching material. Otherwise, she argued, the gap between them and other pupils would have been too wide. Still, being together in one class also had drawbacks, as she found:

“Il y a ce service-là mais en même temps, ils étaient tous ensemble. Et ça ne leur permettait pas de progresser autant que s'ils avaient été avec les autres. Donc là, en fait, c'est une sorte de problème sans solution. Je ne connais pas la meilleure manière de faire. Mais je pense que le fait d'être aussi nombreux sur le même bidonville, sur la même école, je pense que ce n'était pas un avantage.”²⁵ (Interview Julie February 2, 2015:10, 19-26)

She however rejected the accusation of racism heavily and passed it on to the municipality: “Entre le premier septembre et vendredi dernier pour les enfants de la maternelle, il y a eu une discrimination, c'est sûr. De la part de la mairie!”²⁶ (ibid. 12, 15-17). In the following months, the DSDEN had to deliver proof to the European Commission about the absence of a racist motivation behind the creation of the class. Also C.l.a.s.s.e.s. made a statement for a newspaper to defend the taken measures for the ‘integration class’ (Lyon Capitale 2014). Despite of several attempts, I was not able to speak to members of MRAP personally to learn more about their position. This was not the first time MRAP appealed to superior instances to denounce racial segregation in the Lyon area. In 2013, the Défenseur des Droits judged that the schooling of Roma children at the local school of the commune Saint-Fons had ‘stigmatizing characteristics’ (Le Progrès 2014). Concerning the class in Bron, however, the charges were eventually dropped.

Propaganda Against the School

MRAP had nonetheless a noticeable impact on the relationship between school and the parents, as Lefebvre found. Rumors spread among the volunteers and teachers about one activist from MRAP visiting the people at their homes to dissuade them from sending their children to school:

“Là, les enfants, ils venaient, mais en même temps ils entendaient qu'il y avait quelqu'un qui portait plainte contre l'école, on avait vraiment les pires conditions pour une scolarisation normale, parce qu'il y a de la méfiance,

²⁵ ‘On the one hand there was this service but on the other hand they were all together. That didn’t allow them to make progress in the same way than if they had been with the others. This, in fact, was a problem without solution. I don’t know the best way to do it. But the fact that they were so many in the same slum, in the same school, I think that this wasn’t an advantage.’

²⁶ ‘Between September 1 until last Friday, there was discrimination for the children of the kindergarten, that’s for sure: From the side of the municipality!’

quand même. Parce que les parents, ils croyaient ou ils ne croyaient pas cette personne du MRAP. Mais il y avait quand-même un discours du MRAP qui était hyper-violent contre l'école.”²⁷ (Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:19, 23-26)

A poster had been attached to one of the trees at the entrance of the village, apparently by MRAP, which listed different parts of national law that assured them of their right to stay at the terrain, claiming the illegality of the expulsion that was decided. They had also intervened in the past to prevent the schooling of the children from slums before the families had a decent accommodation and a minimum income. Stéphanie, member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s., described in an email the contents of her conversation with one father who refused to let his two children being brought to school. He did not want to hand his children over to people he did not know, he reportedly said. He claimed that he had been taken away one child this way a few years before. Stéphanie argued that this daily accompaniment by volunteers only took place because no one of the parents was willing to take their children to school themselves. She hence suggested him to come with them to school which he also declined. After a longer discussion she learned that the father particularly disliked the fact that the children from the village were not mixed with the other pupils of the school. Apart from single occasions like this, the association did not notice the impacts of the actions of MRAP on the villagers directly. Still, speculations were made during the meetings of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. about it, and certain formulations on the education ministry's homepage came into question to have played a role in the mobilization against the class. There, the principle of the integration classes in primary schools (called CLIS²⁸) is described as the teaching of small groups of maximum twelve children all sharing the same handicap (Ministère Education Nationale 2015). From the point of view of the members of the association, the families might dislike the term ‘handicap’ which also recalled experiences made in their home country, where they were frequently treated like children with special needs. Michel from the camion-école supported the view that such information played a huge role for the level of trust that the families develop towards the school institutions which was variable, as he said that “ça dépend des groupes, ça dépend des terrains, ça dépend de

²⁷ ‘The children came to school, but at the same time they learned that there was someone who sued the school. We really had the worst conditions for a normal schooling, because there is this distrust. Because the parents either did or they did not believe this person of MRAP. In any case, there was a discourse by MRAP that was extremely violent against school [.]’

²⁸ classes pour l’inclusion scolaire

qui tourne autour, des choses qu'on leur dit ou pas"²⁹ (Interview Michel March 2, 2015:12, 11-12). Except for the incident that Stéphanie had described, I was not able to find proof for the influence of the other association during my contact with the families. On the contrary, the continuing school attendance of the majority of the children showed that the parents were generally agreeing with the way their children were received at school.

Conclusion

The issue around the 'ethnic class' showed that the presence of the families at Bron-Vinatier incited several private and public stakeholders to help the migrants to claim their rights who didn't necessarily agree on one way how these rights were actually to be defined. While the school institution had chosen their strategy of supporting the children by a special insertion class and received backing from C.l.a.s.s.e.s., ASET69 and ostensibly the parents themselves, another actor came into play also claiming to 'help' the people against institutional discrimination. The accusation of racial discrimination was no more directed against the exclusion from the school institution as a whole but instead against the continuation of exclusionary policies *within* the school through a separate class. In other words, they were accused to have included them *in the wrong way* by discriminating them through their – albeit temporary – segregation from the other pupils of the school. In order to force through the closure of the 'ethnic class', MRAP lodged complaint before the European Commission and the Défenseur des Droits. This double strategy may have been connected to the hope that this EU institution would take responsibility to help the 'European' Roma against discriminatory acts when the concerned member state failed to react. This underlines once again the various political levels at which the integration of Roma EU migrants is negotiated, as the "Europeanisation" of Roma issues was also visible in the case Bron-Vinatier (Veermersch 2013:357). The DSDEN however responded by assuring that the form of the school class was rather to be taken as 'positive discrimination' that aimed precisely at the quicker integration of the children into the school community by supporting them to learn French and basic rules of behavior. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it was the high number of the children that was considered a major obstacle by the municipality. Concerning the school class, however, the fear of the teacher was rather that by being taught all

²⁹ 'That depends on the groups, on the terrain, on what circulates around it, who tells them things and not.'

together in one big group, the Roma children hindered their own integration process. Other actions by MRAP revealed moreover that they generally disagreed with the other intervening associations about the question if school made sense in the people's situation at all. For MRAP, the children's schooling could only be realized after other basic needs have been satisfied, since accommodation and employment were a priority in the 'integration project' and had to be tackled first.

The two parties could not find common ground on these matters and were therefore forced to continue to work against each other to win over the favor of the families from Bron-Vinatier. As I was on the side of those promoting their schooling, I saw their point of view on the topic which called the actions of MRAP rather 'propaganda' against school or 'manipulation' than support for their integration. In fact, their actions were judged a threat to the success that had so far been achieved. During my work with the children, I however never heard any parents complaining about the school class except for the one incident. If they didn't express their disapproval with the school class during our visits at the village, I figured, they also didn't seek to claim a right that could be called 'their right to non-discrimination'. Through the non-involvement of the children and their families in the discussion, the conflict was carried out on a rather 'philosophical' level of what was considered best for them by others. It demonstrated that the advocacy by associations for 'the Roma' did not at all just follow a group claim for school education in general. As their ways of expressing their demands were relatively limited, they depended on associations for that and had to a certain degree also accept their ways of realizing these claims. In this case, however, they had the 'possibility' to choose between different opinions they were offered by the associations and the school. In those cases where the parents did not approve to the ways things were handled about their child's schooling, they simply did not allow it to go to school anymore. The parents, it seemed, did not have all the same opinion on the matter, either. It can therefore be found that the so-called "harmonious unity" of the national community was indeed traversed by conflicts, a fact that can be equally claimed for the apparent 'community of Roma' (Piñeiro/Haller 2012:94).

School as a Means of Exerting Pressure

While the last two chapters described the events that were directly linked to the families' claim of their right to education, the following one will show that the immediacy of the pressure of daily survival ultimately prevailed over their children's

attendance at school. It will become clear that school was in fact even used as a means of exerting pressure on the public institutions which had major consequences for the supporters of the school class of the children from Bron-Vinatier.

No Food, No Money - No School

Since the official schedule for of the children attending elementary school ended in the late afternoon they were supposed to be served lunch at the school's cafeteria like it was already the case for their peers. Similarly to the procedure concerning the school enrolment, it was necessary to register them at the municipality in order to access the cafeteria. The commune, however, only fulfilled its legal obligation to school the 6 to 16 year olds and refused the access to the cafeteria of the elementary school that had to be paid for by the parents of each child. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. argued that the families from the village could unfortunately not afford the fee and pointed at the same time at the importance of eating at the cafeteria to enable the children to stay for the afternoon class. The volunteers reported me in December of their several meetings with the municipality that did not lead to positive results. The association hence started to send letters of appeal to the region's politicians and the Défenseur des Droits. Their negotiations with the municipality stretched over several weeks. The volunteers found it difficult to explain to the families in the meantime why everyone could go to have lunch except their children. Olivier called this behavior that the commune had shown – first with their refusal of the school and then with the exclusion from the cafeteria – “scandaleux”. He was particularly furious about the fact that the city of Bron proudly carried the UNICEF title *Bron – Ville amie des enfants* ('Bron – the friend of children'; Ville Bron). In his view, it was “un peu scandaleux dire qu'une ville aime des enfants quand on les exclut”³⁰ (Interview Olivier March 13, 2015:4,27-29).

Indeed, the parents reacted dissatisfied about their children's refusal of lunch. The teacher of the class said that the parents soon found a way to express their disapproval about it. This is why, every school day at noon, some of the parents came to pick up the group of children from class without bringing them back in the afternoon. Julie also took the fact into consideration that additional accompaniments to and from school would have been necessary to get the children home for lunch which would have meant a supplementary burden for the parents who already 'struggled' with the accompaniments in the mornings. This refusal to bring their children to the second

³⁰ 'a bit scandalous to say that a city is the friend of children when it at the same time excludes them'

half of the school day had in turn repercussions on their treatment by the municipality, as Emilie recalled the negotiations. For them, the children's absence only reinforced their opinion that the families did not deserve the access to the cafeteria. Emilie suspected that the resistance against the children's admission to the cafeteria was a deliberate action by the commune calculated right from the beginning. She remembered the conversation they had with the assistant mayor of Bron:

"C'était l'adjoint au maire qui a dit ça. Ce n'est pas le mot 'utile', mais l'idée c'était "Est-ce que ça vaut le coup? Est-ce que, si on met la cafeteria, ça va marcher?" Bah, oui! Oui! Mais je crois qu'eux avaient parié sur le fait que ça ne marcherait pas. Mais DES le début que ça ne marcherait pas. Ils n'avaient pas la même lecture que nous parce que quand on a rencontré le 5 décembre ces élus à la mairie ils avaient déjà fait un relevé des présences des enfants, semaine après semaine pour dire "Voyez, les enfants vont à l'école que le matin ! Mais ouais, c'est normal!"³¹ (Interview Emilie February 26, 2015:8,14-21)

From her point of view, the children would have stayed for the afternoon class if they had had been given the opportunity to eat at school. For the municipality, on the contrary, their absence in the afternoon served as a justification for the denial of the access to the cafeteria. For Emilie, the lunch at midday was not only a physical necessity, it was also the only chance for them to meet their peers from other classes. Encounters like this symbolized for her "une fenêtre sur la vie"³² (ibid. 12,10) that were important for their successful integration. Olivier found the actions of the commune completely contradictory:

"Donc les familles se sentaient complètement exclues. Après on leur a dit qu'il faut qu'ils aillent à l'école tous les jours. D'un côté, on les empêche d'aller à l'école, après, du jour à lendemain, on les oblige à aller tous les jours à l'école. Il faut savoir ce qu'on veut."³³ (Interview Olivier March 13, 2015:5,3-6)

The DSDEN was thereafter mobilized by C.l.a.s.s.e.s. and ASET69 to discuss the subject with the elected deputies of the commune. Lefebvre, one of the representatives

³¹ 'That was the vice-mayor who said that. It wasn't the word 'useful', but the idea was 'Is this really worth it? Will it work when we let them go to the cafeteria?' Well, yes, yes! But I believe that they had counted on the fact that it wouldn't work. Right from the beginning that it wouldn't work. They had not the same understanding like us because when we met these delegates at the town hall December 5 they had already made an assessment of the children's attendance, week after week just to say 'You see, the children only go to school in the morning.' Of course, that's makes sense!'

³² 'a window to life'

³³ 'The families felt therefore completely excluded after all the times that they had been told to go to school every day. On the one hand, they are prevented from going to school; on the other hand, from one day to the next, they are obliged to go to school every single day. They should know what they want.'

of the regional services of education also condemned the actions of the municipality that were serving in his eyes a clear purpose:

“On a vu la difficulté pour s'inscrire à l'école, pour qu'ils soient inscrits à la cantine. On imaginait qu'ils n'étaient pas prêts à faire des concessions. Eux, le seul truc qui leur donnait envie, c'était que ce campement disparaisse. Et je pense qu'ils auront bientôt satisfaction.”³⁴ (Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:17,6-9)

After another meeting with the municipality in December, an agreement could be met involving the financial contribution by C.l.a.s.s.e.s.. Ten children from Bron-Vinater started to go to the cafeteria two weeks later, one month after their first day at school. The association showed great relief on the final break-through after weeks of negotiations. That they only succeeded by assuming the costs was a fact that was not supposed to be reaching the ears of the ‘Brondillants’. Officially – as was communicated to the members of the association – the message to the public was that it was the municipality who paid the children’s cafeteria. This way, they wished to demonstrate to the Brondillants that it was the authorities’ undeniable duty to pay the lunch of the children from the slum like it was already the case for every other child as well. This reaction not only sought to signal that education is a public, common good that was provided for society by the government. The association also wanted to avoid the image that represented the children from Bron-Vinater as people whose lunch had to be paid for by a private association. Besides the lunch which was possible from this moment on, those children who were enrolled at school were now also given the opportunity to take a shower every Wednesday in the school’s bath rooms, something that found much appreciation among the families.

With this new possibility of lunch at midday, the volunteers were split in their opinions if it should be expected from the parents to pick their children up in the afternoon themselves or if certain ‘incentives’ should be given by the helpers again. The finally decided not to help twice a day. Soon it became also clear that, despite the possibility to go to the cafeteria, few children really made use of it, as news about only three children communicated via Email to the members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. in mid-December showed.

³⁴ ‘We have seen the difficulty to enroll yourself at school, when they were supposed to be enrolled for the cafeteria. We could imagine that they were not willing to make any concessions. The only thing that they felt like was that this camp disappeared. And I think they will be soon be satisfied.’

A similar – if not even stronger – reaction than the denial of the children’s lunch followed on the rejection of the application for public food aid (*aide alimentaire*) that many families had made with the help of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. at the city’s social service. As they knew about other Roma in neighboring communes who received this help, the value of the vouchers for food products amounted up to two hundred euros per month. In the case of the Romanian families from Bron-Vinatier, however, all these requests got rejected. Olivier later obtained an explanation for this declination from the social service: In order to obtain food aid, a family had to prove either a loss of income or the verifiable intention to get out of their situation by the presentation of a ‘traceable life change project’. If, as he said, the families had never had income in a formal way in France before, they also cannot lose it and are thus not eligible for this aid. It could therefore be concluded that the people living in the slum were actually *too poor* to be entitled for public help. Questionable seemed to Olivier also the second option, precisely because of this poverty, to demand a traceable project out of poverty from those demanding a minimum for their survival. Moreover, an application for social benefits also required certain documents which the people from Bron-Vinatier obviously did not possess, as a certificate of their domestication, a bank account or tax bills. The news about the rejection of their applications were distributed to the volunteers via email:

“Donc B.M. a choisi d’appliquer à la lettre cette consigne sur Bron, n’ayant pas de budget pour faire autrement. Il ne donne donc aucune aide aux familles du terrain. Il reconnaît que s’il s’agissait d’une ou deux familles seulement, une aide pourrait être envisagée, mais devant le nombre c’est impossible.”³⁵ (Email from Olivier January 14, 2015)

C.l.a.s.s.e.s. criticized the decisions on the allocation of food aid by the social service as completely arbitrary, unfair and variable depending on the commune and the families. The *Métropole* (designating the urban area of Lyon), responsible for the allocation of public aid, had also sent a letter with the words that they assumed that it was the ‘charity organizations’ who were taking care of the people’s needs, a view that C.l.a.s.s.e.s. rejected decisively as it didn’t consider itself as a charity organization at all. At one of our visits in the village I followed a conversation between several members of the association about the issue. Two of the women were debating about possible reasons for the rejection, as they knew that the person deciding about the allocation of

³⁵ ‘B.M. has therefore chosen to apply these instructions in Bron in a literal sense, since he had no budget to do otherwise. He thus does not give any aid to the families of the terrain. He could be persuaded if it was a question of only one or two families, but with the given number it is impossible.’

food aid in Bron was by chance the same as in Vaulx-en-Velin where Roma families from the slum had been allocated public food aid. They found that it was difficult to explain this unequal treatment to the people from Bron-Vinatier since they did not even understand it themselves. Olivier pointed out that food assistance for families was originally created for the very same reason to facilitate the access to school for children from slums. It was a known fact that the children often constituted an important element in the economy of their family, as they participated in going begging or searching the garbage bins every day. With their school attendance, this 'child labor' would be stopped. If, on the other hand, they do not have any support from the government, bringing the children to school and to pick them up again means a major time investment for them while at the same time the income usually brought in by the child is missing as well, the volunteers claim. Olivier had often seen children that were supposed to be at collège or even elementary school on the street begging. This was also one motivation behind the organization of the group of volunteers for the children's daily accompaniment to school, although this work was not meant to be exclusively left to them but to be eventually handed over to the parents. The refusal of public food aid to the families could thus be interpreted as an indirect way of rendering the children's school attendance impossible, the volunteers said³⁶.

When the families learned that they would not receive any food aid, they reacted with disbelief, asking the volunteers about the reasons for this refusal. In mid-December then, first announcements were made that their children would no longer go to school as long as they did not receive any food aid from the commune. They gave an ultimatum of one month after which they would take their children out of school. The day after the Christmas holidays, the number of children that we picked up in the morning decreased drastically. While one part had meanwhile left the village with their

³⁶ According to the association, another factor could possibly have played a role to the parents' decision to use school as a tool of pressure to force through public aid, if also only indirectly. As they assumed, many families knew of the project Andatu³⁶, a pilot project by the prefecture of the Rhône region that ended in 2014. The measures were targeting the integration of a total number of four hundred Romanian citizens from Lyon's squats, most evidently targeting Roma migrants, as the name 'Andatu' meant 'For you' in Romani. The selected families were granted three-year residence and work permits, as well as minimum social welfare benefits, an accommodation and support to finding an employment. The project ended in the same year with no concrete plans to extend this help to other families in a similar situation. My colleagues from C.l.a.s.s.e.s. welcomed the project as a good start to finally give the people a real chance to integrate. They criticized, however, the arbitrariness and exclusiveness of the selection criteria and the total absence of any kind of support by the public institutions regarding the rest of the population.³⁶ The project had only been a way to present the city of Lyon as proactive for the integration of the Roma in order to sweep their ongoing practice of mass expulsions under the carpet. The families, the volunteers figured, might have seen that others got 'lucky' to be helped by the city and had expectations to receive the same.

families to go to Romania, the remaining parents expressed their dissatisfaction about their treatment by the municipality. Their warning about a refusal of school was put into action, even if this was sometimes happening against their children's will. As the teacher of the integration class found, the children were very happy to come to school. She even witnessed them begging their parents to let them come to her class. Emilie confirmed that some of them could barely accept their parent's decision. She described in an email what she had witnessed one morning in January:

“J'ai aussi été tiré avec énergie par Melina Atonescu jusqu'à l'intérieur de sa cabane pour me dire qu'elle voulait aller à l'école. Sa maman m'a dit ‘non’ : pas d'argent, pas d'école... Pauvre Melina qui s'est jetée sur le lit en pleurs !”³⁷ (Email Emilie, January 15, 2015)

One of the daily helpers told us at a later meeting of the volunteer group in Bron that he had also observed some of the children looking forward to school to such an extent that they simply got up and dressed for school without their parents' help, impatiently waiting to get picked up by the volunteers. Other children, by contrast, often announced with conviction that they did not plan to come back to school class when we came to take them to school in the morning.

Lefebvre meanwhile organized a meeting with the parents and the teacher at school and collective visits of the families in their village in December with the presence of an interpreter. He asked them to show more will to send their children to school in the following month. This also included that the parents themselves became more involved in taking their children to and to pick them up again, since this had so far only been done by members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. and the voluntary residents of Bron. In his opinion, the parents viewed their children's school attendance as something that they had themselves generously given to the school with the expectation to receive something in return:

“C'était un peu donnant-donnant pour eux, ils acceptaient que leurs enfants aillent à l'école, mais il fallait qu'il y ait une contrepartie financière dans leur esprit. Ils avaient du mal à concevoir que l'école, c'était une aide en soi. Donc eux, ils nous disaient, ‘Nous, on vous donne nos enfants...’”³⁸ (Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:2,25-29)

³⁷ ‘With force I was pulled by Melina Antoescu into her hut to tell me that she wanted to go to school. Her mom told me ‘No’: no money, no school...Poor Melina who threw herself on the bed in tears!’

³⁸ ‘It was a bit like ‘One hand washes the other’ for them, they accepted that their children went to school but in their thinking, there had to be a financial reward for it. They had difficulties to understand that school was an end in itself. They told us: ‘We give you our children!’

Also Michel understood their refusal to send their children to school as the demand for a financial compensation for their efforts. To be organized, to get up in the morning and to find clean clothes were efforts that had to find their appropriate recognition, as he explained. The teachers of the *camion-école*, too, gave the parents regularly a ‘push’ to take their children to school when they met them during their intervention in the village. Even though there were still many children coming to class in the bus, they still considered it their duty to motivate them for ‘real’ school. At the same time, Christine constantly had to reject to admit children to her classes because they were either too young, too old or because they were already enrolled at the elementary school or the *collège* – the latter being the ones that she had to reject in the most strict way. This rule concerned for example Laurentiu – the father I had accompanied for the enrolment of his son Samuel to the kindergarten – who now passed by the *camion-école* all the time to ask for the enrolment of his second son Gabriel to the bus classes. He had only recently brought him with him from Romania. The teacher told me that she did not want to accept his children anymore, since he was always aggressive when he approached her, not to mention the fact that Samuel was already supposed to go to the kindergarten where he had only recently been admitted. Through these actions, the teachers of the bus school also wanted to emphasize the importance to make use of the possibility that the children had regarding their proper integration into a public school of the commune.

Pointing at the Economic Advantages of School

Despite the parents’ firm stance on ‘no money, no school’, the associations and the school kept encouraging the families to cooperate with them, arguing with the benefits the child’s attendance at school would yield. It was a work of persuasion against the pressure of time, since the school would close the class again if the children continued to stay absent. At the beginning, the volunteers of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. had hoped to stall the moment of the expulsion of people from the village by proving a good school integration of the children. That way, at least, the official date of the eviction scheduled for the end of January was more likely to be extended until the end of the winter. With the decrease of the number of children who regularly attended school – in the elementary school – which was more and more also the case for the children enrolled at the *collège* – however, the fear increased that the absence of any school efforts from the side of the families could bring about a faster expulsion of their village than so far expected.

The association, too, used the argument of real materialistic advantages to convince the parents of the sense of their children's schooling. Only *through* going to school they could achieve the welfare benefits they were hoping for. Lefebvre, too, claimed to have reminded the parents several times of the fact that the commune often asked the school for the status quo concerning their children's presence and behavior in class. A regular, eager attendance could have favorable impacts on their application for public aid or even a resettlement into social housing structures. If there was, on the contrary, no regularity, one could not argue that there was a real will to take their children to school and to integrate themselves into the educational system:

“Si on pouvait dire "Il y a 15 enfants qui viennent à l'école depuis quatre mois, ils font des progrès, ils ont appris à lire, ils sont allés en classe, on pourrait militer, presque je dirais, argumenter pour [...] qu'ils sont relogé à Bron, ou dans un autre lieu un peu moins précaire. On pourrait – là, on ne peut pas!"³⁹
(Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:17,24-30)

The members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. also argued by the long-term economic benefits of school education when they spoke to the parents of the children that were expected by the teacher. Education as an engine leading out of poverty should be, as they found, a convincing argument that was used many times during our visits in the village. Reading and writing were skills that were – no matter how basic – pictured as a competence that will sooner or later bring benefits to the whole family. At one occasion, I passed by the village with Emilie, member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. to collect the monthly bus cards to recharge them for the following month. For that, we searched for the houses of the concerned children. At one hut we found two of the boys with their mother. Also Marcel, the boy I had enrolled to the kindergarten, was with them. My colleague asked the mother of the two boys for the reason of their absence from school and stressed the importance of their regular attendance. The woman recalled the fact that she was a mother of eight children for whom she did not even have enough clothes that were suitable for school. I witnessed this type of conversation numerous times in the course of my participant observation. Being surprised about Marcel's presence, we also learned that his father had returned to Romania and that solely his mother was now taking care of him. Emilie found his non-attendance deplorable and told her that her son had made fast progress in only a short time, especially in terms of the language.

³⁹ 'If we could say "There are 15 children who have been coming to school for four months, they are making progress, they learned to read, they have been attending class, we could be favorable, almost argue for their resettlement in Bron, or to another place a bit less precarious. We could – in this case, we cannot!'

School had an accelerating effect on learning French, she argued. At school, they could also learn to read and write which would have been helpful for later for the whole family to fill out forms and do other paperwork that is important for daily life.

The Limits of Advocacy Facing A Collective Refusal

C.l.a.s.s.e.s. finally decided to stop the daily walks to school after several mornings at which the volunteers couldn't make any of the children to come with them. A second visit at the village was organized in January to talk to the parents about the situation. For Lefebvre, this represented the last chance for the families to change their mind before the teacher was redeployed at a different school. The meeting – at which I was also present – didn't lead to the desired results. The few parents that we could find at their homes and who were talking to us insisted on their claim of financial aid before allowing their children to go back to school. When there were eventually no more children attending class, the DSDEN made the decision to close it and to send the teacher away. This marked the failure of the school integration of these children for the DSDEN, after a huge engagement from their side to provide staff and teaching material, Lefebvre said. He also pointed at the efforts by associations to accompany the children to school and criticized its low appreciation by the families. Also the other teachers of the school had problems to understand the parents' behavior that had ended with the children's drop out. The teacher of the integration class remembered the reactions of the school staff on the children's absence:

“Et quand les enfants arrêtaient de venir – déjà une partie et ensuite tout le monde – il y a eu bien sûr des collègues qui se demandaient ‘Pourquoi? Pourquoi les parents de ces enfants ne comprennent pas que c'est une chance, que, même s'ils n'ont pas d'aide, l'école peut quand même être quelque chose qu'on donne, qui est gratuit, que leurs enfants seront au chaud, qu'ils pourront accéder aux douches les mercredis?’ [...] Donc il y avait des avantages très matériels. [...] Et puis, ils sont heureux de venir.”⁴⁰ (Interview Julie February 2, 2015:6,24-32)

Later in the conversation she added that some of her colleagues tried to project themselves into their situation: “Certains comprennent que manger, s'habiller, dormir

⁴⁰ ‘And when the children stopped coming – first one part and then all of them – there were of course colleagues who asked themselves ‘Why? Why don't the parents of these children understand that it is a chance that, even though they don't have public aid, school can nevertheless be something that we give to them, which is free and their children would be in the warmth, where they can wash themselves in the shower on Wednesdays. [...] Short, there were very materialistic advantages for them. [...] And they are also happy to come.’

au chaud – c'est une priorité par rapport à l'école, quand même, quand même.”⁴¹ (ibid. 40-42). Despite of all this insistence on the part of the associations and the school, the parents remained tenaciously on their position ‘no money, no school’. Olivier accepted that he could not force them, but stayed nevertheless open to help them again the day they would change their mind. Still, he seemed unhappy about their attempt of blackmailing. He told me about some families he already knew for a while and who had asked him to develop some photos he had taken of them. He had done them this favor before but with the refusal of school he also become hesitant to hand them over to them straight away. When they approached him for the photos another day, he replied: "Pas d'école, pas de photos!" (No school, no photos!). Some members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. even demanded consequences for these children in order to underline the urge behind their attendance at school, as the following email shows:

“Il y a un truc qui m'ennuie. C'est l'ado Doina qui apparemment vient avec vous, de temps en temps, notamment les mercredis matin pour la douche... Elle ne va plus au collège et est en train de perdre sa place (et donc la bourse) : négociation avec le collège de plus en plus dur pour garder sa place compte tenu des absences. J'aimerais donc qu'on ait tous le même discours à ce sujet et qu'elle ne soit plus présente pour l'accompagnement et/ou la douche...”⁴² (Email Manon January 14, 2015)

These examples demonstrate that the associations, too, wished their work to be respected and appreciated, also considering the fact that they dedicated a lot of time to this work for which they were not remunerated. In the case of the parents' statement ‘no money, no school’, however, I had the impression that some families held the volunteers often co-responsible for something that was decided by the municipality. It could also have played a role that they did not *want* to see the powerlessness of the volunteers of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. to change the negative decision on the allocation of food aid. Faking sickness in order to avoid the volunteers to pick them up for school, for instance, was one of these situations that were perceived particularly ungrateful by the volunteers. Emilie reported in an email how she found the apparently ‘sick’ children of the morning playing outside in the afternoon the same day:

⁴¹ ‘Some of them understand that to eat, to get dressed, to sleep in the warmth – that is a priority over school, still, still.’

⁴² ‘There is something that annoys me. It's the teen Doina who apparently comes with us. She is not going to collège anymore and is about to lose her place (and consequently her scholarship): the negotiation with the college becomes more and more difficult in order to keep her place considering her absences. I would therefore like to be on the same page with everyone regarding this subject and that she is no more present for the accompaniment and/or the shower...’

“Bien surprenant tout ça tout de même. hier a-midi me trouvant sur la place, rencontrant sous le soleil des 15h tous les enfants, déjà pas à l'école - mais je ne savais pas les pourquoi - j'ai eu de grandes promesses quant à leur mobilisation en vue de ce matin.”⁴³ (Email Emilie January 9, 2015)

Another day, she wrote about her encounter with one father of the children who were enrolled to elementary school. He was in rage, complaining that he had no money for school to send his children to school. To emphasize his claim, he added that he could not even wash and dry their clothes to get them properly dressed for class. She offered to do that for him, but he remained firm on his position. I remember another morning where Emilie and I were searching for the little boy Benjamin who was one of the only ones who had recently attended school. He had also usually been the most motivated student, too, she said. As we approached his hut, we found it blocked-up and secured with a padlock. Still, Emilie noticed the smoke coming out of the chimney and expressed her suspicions that the boy actually hid inside of his house while his parents had gone somewhere else. It seemed that the parents had to leave for work in the morning and wanted their son to stay in the hut meanwhile. As they knew that the volunteers would come to pick up their child for school – that was our reasoning – they told him to be quiet and to show no reaction. We returned three times to the hut in the course of our ‘morning child search’ to check if her hypothesis might have proved right and the boy had now changed his mind to come to school. We never found out if the boy really ‘squatted’ the hut or not, this incident however suggested that the volunteers were not always welcome with their motivations for school that they might have also developed strategies to avoid the constant confrontation with them even if the family had stayed in the village. In our interview, Emilie addressed this problem of communication and how she ‘lived’ with it:

“On n'est jamais sûr que ce qu'on leur dit est bien compris, entendu. On ne sait même pas si c'est apprécié. Ça nous oblige à tenir une position très correcte et courtoise. Après c'est tant mieux si on s'entend au niveau de l'école”⁴⁴
(Interview Emilie February 26, 2015:10,13-16)

Despite of these discouraging experiences, Emilie found that the parents' choice had to be respected, since ‘you cannot give food to someone who is not hungry’. They had still all learned a lot one from another, especially about the association's possibilities to

⁴³ ‘Very surprising still was this. Yesterday afternoon finding myself at the site, meeting at 3pm in broad daylight all the children, again not at school – but I don't know why – I got big promises after this morning's mobilization.’

⁴⁴ ‘We are never sure if that what we say to them is understood, heard. We don't even know if it is appreciated. That obliges us to take a very correct and courteous position. Even better if we get along in terms of school then’

help them which were obviously exhausted at a certain point. Michel confirmed my observations by saying that the work of ‘sensitization’ for school was generally very important, but it also had its limits. In the end, it was still up to them to decide about their future, as he said:

“Et puis, c’est notre mission, notre rôle pour les convaincre, parce qu’au moins les familles – la plupart des collégiens – nous font confiance. Après, on n’est pas non plus des magiciens, on n’a pas non plus des baguettes magiques pour faire quelque chose se fasse née.”⁴⁵ (Interview Michel March 2, 2015:6,13-16)

Julie still underlined the benefits that the weeks of schooling had brought to her students. Within only a very short period of time, the children had made great strides with learning French that would have been even bigger if the children didn’t have such a difficult life and – even more so – if they had been able to go to school since the very beginning of the school year in September. In addition, the specialized teaching material for the children arrived only months after the children’s first school day when it was already too late: “Le jour où j’ai reçu le matériel, j’étais triste. Parce que je me suis dit: ‘J’ai tous les matériels, je n’ai pas d’enfants’”⁴⁶ (Interview Julie February 2, 2015:9,36-37).

The volunteers declared their efforts for the children’s schooling, as a consequence, suspended for the time being. Still, the persons that had been involved in the work in Bron-Vinater claimed that the way things went for the children in terms of their schooling was not usual. Comparisons were drawn to other villages like the one at ‘la Feyssine’ whose inhabitants had not been expelled for over a year. Similar to the situation in Bron, the families had been supported by a large community of residents with several parents who regularly participated. Olivier found that Bron-Vinatier was an exceptional case since there were almost no children left that attended school, in the neighboring commune of Vaulx-en-Velin, by contrast, the children were still going, at least for a couple of hours a day. Lefebvre also called Bron-Vinatier a ‘special terrain’. He was convinced of the existence of a certain social structure of the families living in the village. According to what he had observed up to this moment, he assumed that there was a hierarchy among the families that left major decisions within the slum to its ‘boss’: He surveilled the entrance of it, made new occupants pay rent for their huts

⁴⁵ ‘Farther, it is our mission, our role to convince them because at least the families – the majority of the collégiens – trusts us. Still, we aren’t magicians either. We haven’t got magic sticks either to make them realize about their own needs.’

⁴⁶ ‘The day I got the material I was really sad. Because I told myself: ‘I’ve got all the material but I’ve got no children.’

and also polemized against school. With such a group dynamic, he reasoned, it should therefore also be possible to inverse this attitude into the internal promotion of school:

“Si quelqu'un dit ‘Non, mais c'est vraiment urgent d'envoyer les enfants à l'école’... et que je les accompagne physiquement le matin avant d’aller travailler, faire la manche, ou autre, et que j'y donne de l'importance, peut-être que ça peut entraîner d'autres personnes à agir dans ce sens.”⁴⁷ (Interview Lefebvre February 27, 2015:19,6-17)

Other involved persons I spoke with also considered the place as a village in a sense that it was structured in the constellation of houses and also socially. It had a main entrance and – in the same way as Lefebvre claimed – a boss surveilling those entering and leaving the terrain. This supposed social structure was said to have an impact on their ‘will’ to send their children to school. Emilie, too, identified a system behind the families’ actions:

“Je trouve qu’il y a des parents qui ne font plus facilement confiance, ... on ne sait pas vraiment pourquoi ! [...] Est-ce qu'ils sont très attachés à leur culture [...] ‘Il n'y a plus de place pour nous!’ Je ne sais pas. C'est difficile. Je pense que quand les gens restent dans un campement, dans un même lieu de vie, ils ont peut-être un peu tous tendance à fonctionner de la même manière, de ce que j'ai compris là à Bron.”⁴⁸ (Interview Emilie February 26, 2015:5,24-25).

She remembered how she had seen the decision of openly refusing their children’s schooling spreading from one father, the ‘boss’, to the parents of the whole class: “Il le dit, très haut, très fort, et les autres n'ont pas d'opinion”⁴⁹ (ibid. 10,7). Another member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s., Eugène, speaks of ‘an internal problem’ that had caused the standstill of schooling. From his point of view, the people from Bron-Vinatier feared the loss of their culture if their children got too emerged into the community of the ‘outsiders’. He added that the whole issue was in the end very complex, as he knew a girl that spoke fluent French, whereas others spoke the language only poorly since they had never gone to school.

⁴⁷ ‘If someone says ‘Actually, it is really urgent to send the children to school’...and I bring them physically to school in the morning before I go to work, go begging and so on, and I consider it important, maybe this can make other people act in the same way.’

⁴⁸ ‘I find that there are families who don’t trust us very easily anymore [...] I don’t know why! [...] Are they too attached to their culture? ‘There is no place for us anymore!’ I don’t know. It’s difficult. I think if the people stay in a camp, at one place of living, they maybe have a tendency to function a bit all in the same way, from what I understood for the case of Bron.’

⁴⁹ ‘He says things very high, very loud, and the others have no opinion’

Cultural Activities Filling the School Gap

Deliberations how to continue were made when the volunteers were facing the decreasing numbers of children attending the elementary school in Bron. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. regularly invited all involved persons to come together and to plan further actions. Bron-Vinatier had, despite of all, succeeded to build a large network of solidarity that could still be used in a productive way. Many of them therefore rejected the view that their intervention in the village was to be called a complete failure. Both sides – the families' and their own – had learned a lot from their encounter, after all. Emilie pleaded for the continuation of the association's work that should include "un accompagnement, qu'il soit adapté, souple, tenant compte des possibilités des familles à venir vers cet outil proposé visant l'insertion, continuer vers l'humanisation des liens et échanges⁵⁰"(ibd.). The group present at the meeting discussed what new strategies could be envisaged to help the families, also elaborating on the possibilities of supporting the adults to find a job. This seemed – considering the limited means of the association – an overwhelmingly huge task. Some of the volunteers had also occasionally tried to distribute second hand clothes to the families which had evoked the question of fairness: How can the distribution be equal if there was not enough and the same there for everyone? Facing all these difficulties, the voluntary workers decided that their involvement should from this moment on be focused on not losing contact with the families completely which was already difficult enough, they found. The volunteers at least wanted to signalize their open, stretched out hand through shared moments with the people from the village. Their offer for contact was moreover one of the rare chances to meet the 'French', to feel closer to society also by learning their language and their social codes. Apart from the camion-école that had now come again to teach the children after several weeks of the bus's breakdown, a painting work shop was organized for the children by the association Art et Développement which was supported by C.l.a.s.s.e.s. On a weekly basis, members of the associations, residents of Bron and other volunteers carried painting equipment to the village and stayed for an hour with the children that were interested to participate. They had the choice between two activities, one was painting on cardboards and the other was the reading of children's books that the volunteers had brought with them. These activities were supposed to be a pleasure for the children but they were also serving the purpose

⁵⁰ 'An accompaniment that is adapted, flexible and that takes the possibilities of the families into account to make use of this tool serving their insertion, continuing the humanization of the relationships and exchanges'

of keeping in touch with the families, of continuing to learn French and of building a trust relationship to the rest of Bron's population that the volunteers considered deeply troubled. The painting workshops in Bron were called a success by the volunteers which was proven by lists of participants with more than thirty children. A French language course was inaugurated as well. Another occasion of exchange and a chance for the children to leave the village was a collective cinema visit. The film was purposely chosen by the volunteers because of its relevance for the families, particularly the teenagers, since it was 'about them': *Spartacus & Cassandra* was a semi-documentary told by two Roma teenagers divided between their 'chance' to either live in a host family with the opportunity to go to school or with their parents on the street, in short they were forced to choose between their family and a better life. The members of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. arranged a special screening to sensitize the residents of Bron and the dwellers of the terrain for the topics addressed in the film. It was attended by over forty people from different villages and squats across the city. I accompanied several inhabitants from Bron-Vinatier to the cinema who expressed their appreciation of this opportunity, as the conditions for a participation were very open and financially covered by associations. These were also occasions that allowed the creation of a more relaxed atmosphere than during our 'negotiations' with them about school.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented two moments in which the Roma migrants from Bron-Vinatier demanded access to the services of public institutions, how they these demands were rejected and what they did to contest it. Already the refusal of the afternoon classes was interpreted by those involved in the school activities as the parents' way to underline their claim for equal treatment. While the conflict about the cafeteria could finally be solved through the financial support by C.l.a.s.s.e.s., the insistence before the social service on the allocation of food aid for the families did not lead to the desired results. The ultimatum that followed its denial was considered an even more radical attempt to change the commune's decision through own actions. The families and the volunteers knew that the interpretation of the 'law' was obviously flexible, as the inhabitants of other villages in the neighboring communes had received food vouchers although they were objectively in the same situation. To claim that the law regarded them as *too poor* to be entitled to food aid was therefore seen as the commune's creative – if not to say absurd – way to justify their unwillingness to take responsibility for the poverty of this population. These suspicions finally proved right

with the reception of the email of the social service employee again speaking of a ‘problem of number’ of applicants for public social benefits: they were not too poor, but simply *too many*. The person in charge of these allocations obviously decided its personal limit after which the ‘Roma’ were finally judged as ‘too many’, leading to rather unequal distributions across the different communes in the urban area of Lyon. It can therefore be stated that the State’s response to the claims of transnational EU migrants for public social benefits in France has rather resulted in a restriction than in a loosening of the making and reading of national law. This stands in contrast to the expectation that the movements of EU members increasingly led to their recognition as members of the host state (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1019). The parents’ ultimatum showed nevertheless their great determination to contest these ‘arbitrary’ decisions by claiming certain rights through their “social presence rather than formal law” (Glick Schiller 2005:55).

When the parents’ demand for food aid still remained rejected, they finally completely refused their children to attend school. The volunteers and the school institution tried to change their mind by arguing that their children’s schooling would bring tangible materialistic advantages. These advantages however were not as quickly achieved as the parents demanded them. The result of their ‘blackmailing’ consequently was that the families neither received any public financial support, nor the children were able to go to school. The parents’ actions therefore seemed for the volunteers and the school like a refusal to be helped, but could also be interpreted as a strategy aiming at the best for their children in immediate need. The associations and the school had difficulties to understand this decision, as it in their view did in no way help the families out of their situation, on the contrary, it hindered the integration of the whole family into society. The eventual closure of the class was seen from the side of the school as a chance for valuable school education that the parents had missed. The additional fact that it was taken by several families at the same time also made the intervening stakeholders conjecture about a negative group dynamic that was influenced by the ‘boss’ of the village. This dynamic resembled in a certain way the apparent influence of MRAP on the whole village which was even considered by Lefebvre to be used in the same way to change it into the other direction. Seen from a transnational perspective, however, the parents’ reaction on the exclusion from lunch and food aid can also be seen as their very own strategy to claim “to belong to a state through collectively organizing to protect themselves against discrimination”, that is

to become social citizens (Glick Schiller 2005:55). It also reflects in a radical way the quest of transnational families for a better economic situation, albeit without any success. As the association's options to achieve the children's schooling appeared exhausted, the members searched for other ways to facilitate their integration. They offered cultural activities to the children and the parents that were largely appreciated and simultaneously kept the contact to the associations erect. Other actions, as for example the distribution of clothes, also confronted the volunteers with the question of equal treatment which was at last the same problematic of high numbers that was justifying the denial of help by the commune.

Constant Mobility - Back and Forth to Romania

Over the course of the years, the people had developed strategies to live with their successive expulsions from one place to the other and the impossibility for a permanent stay in the country. Despite the fact that they all lived together at the terrain in Bron-Vinatier, their strategies were not identical, as they depended on the individual life situations of the family units. Many of them maintained strong ties to their place of origin in Romania that were accompanied by constant back and forth movements between the two countries. The next chapter describes how I experienced their mobility as a volunteer worker and how the intervening stakeholders for school dealt with it.

“Partir en Roumanie” – The Constant Fluctuation of Inhabitants

After the Christmas holidays, about fifty families remained residing in the village but also new ones were arriving, as I often watched trailers and cars parking at the village's entrance and men discharging furniture and household devices. The new arrivals sometimes also approached us and asked for their children's school enrolment. Only three out of ten children who were part of the school class at France Anatole, however, still lived in Bron-Vinatier, the rest had left to Romania or neighboring cities, as some of the people told us. Phrases in French like “pas d'argent pour la nourriture, les vêtements, pas d'école, partir en Roumanie⁵¹” (Email Emilie January 12, 2015) became frequent, as Emilie quoted one father mid-January in an email. Some of them even said that they did not see the sense of allowing their children to go to school because they soon wanted to go to Romania anyway. The mothers welcomed the possibility for school in principle, but did not oppose their temporary return to Romania, either. High fluctuation within the village was also visible in the number of

⁵¹ ‘No money for food, for clothes, no school, leaving to Romania’

over thirty children that was on the list of current enrolments at the camion-école. The school bus was only small and the teacher generally welcomed a smaller group size; it was therefore not seen as negative that there were never more than between five and ten children in the bus for each session. It was also very noticeable that rarely the same children came to these classes. This could also be seen in the fact that new enrolments were taking place all the time. As the bus was usually placed directly next to the vehicles of the inhabitants, we were able to observe that there were always families filling their cars and leaving to Romania. This was increasingly the case the closer the expulsion was coming. At the camion-école, I witnessed several moments where mothers came over to the bus to say good-bye, as this short description of such an occasion proves:

The mother of Carmella comes to pick up her daughter. They want to leave to Romania if possible today. They plan to spend three to four months there to get the children's passports issued and to organize some things. They then want to come back to earn some money. Christine wants to hand her the girl's exercise book in which all her exercise sheets are pasted. She praises Isabella before her mother for having already written some of the letters of her name on a piece of paper. 'That should be posted on our internet blog', she says. The mother receives the exercise book with the appeal to train to write her name and some letters on the remaining empty pages. We wish them a good trip. Abraham, the little boy next to Carmella, was the brother of her mother. Him and his family stayed here for the moment, they say. I remember that all the other three children next to me – Iulian, Raluca and Sorin – were siblings. They, too, stayed here for the time being. (Field notes, March 27, 2015)

Another mother who came over to make her fare-wells was Bianca. They were talking about her child and how it had made progress. They then told me, with smiles on their faces, that Christine had already been the teacher of Bianca ten years ago. At the time, she was thirteen years old. Today, it was her child that she brought to the camion-école, but her situation was more or less the same for the following generation. This case showed once again intriguingly the time dimensions of the life trajectories of the people in which Bron-Vinatier was in fact only a short episode.

One conversation with the father of a child I had helped to enroll at the kindergarten gave me a deepened insight into one life of the people from Bron-Vinatier. It showed how the constant movement of the families had become a forced routine over the years that they did not manage to escape. The occasion for this informal talk was the collective visit of the cinema in February. I picked up several inhabitants of the village to go to the film theater in the Lyon city center. Nelu, his son Marcel and two teenage boys decided to join me. Marcel had not been able to attend school recently after a long stay at the hospital, his father told me. As he had a good level of French, we

were able to talk during our trip to the cinema. He soon started sharing details about the life with his family that had brought them to France for the first time seven years ago. Ever since, they had been moving around the area of Lyon, listing several names of different places where they always stayed in huts and squats for the time of one year until they were expelled again. The year before, they had lived in a village in Vaulx-en-Velin where Marcel also went to the kindergarten. When a fire broke out, they had to flee, leaving behind all their possessions, but fortunately carrying his papers on him. He told me about the secretary of the local doctor with whom they talked after the incident who felt really sorry for their situation. She decided to help them: She passed them her bank card, the security pin and told them to withdraw 150 euros and to give her the ticket of withdrawal. Since then, they had been doing this nearly every week, allowing them to buy food and new clothes. At the end of the month, he said, they were invited again for a coffee. Despite this help, however, they still had no formal work and decent accommodation – a fact, he said, that had forced them to settle in one of the villages again. He also talked about the reasons why it was impossible for his family to go back to Romania permanently:

They then moved to Bron behind the children's hospital and finally to the other side of the walls where I got to know them. He said that he came from Tinca. His other son was at his parents' place right now. His father had a house there, which wouldn't be the case for all Roma. They now had electricity and water, but no work. That's why they couldn't stay. His girlfriend usually goes begging while he stayed at home with his son. He had a job last summer that his friend had organized for him. Since this friend had returned to Portugal, though, he had no job. Every year, they usually go back to Romania for two or three months. (Field notes February 17, 2015)

During our conversation, he also expressed his anxiety about the imminent expulsion which he expected to take place at the end of March, he didn't know when exactly. After that, they will be forced to look for a new place. The only people that came from outside the village to help them were C.I.a.s.s.e.s. and Médecin du Monde. Later in the conversation, we also talked about his relation to the other people in the village. He had known many of them for a long time, some of them were even relatives of him. Then he started criticizing the other father Laurentiu I had accompanied for the enrolment of his son. He was always high on drugs and behaved inappropriately, he found. Also, his wife was that much older than him that he was even younger than some of the seven children that she had from her first marriage. One week after the cinema visit I coincidentally met Laurentiu in the street where I lived. He was begging on a traffic island between the cars waiting at the red traffic light. He told me that he

couldn't take his son to the kindergarten because he had to work. And Nelu, he added, had left with his family to Romania six days ago. A couple of weeks later, I saw Nelu's son Marcel again in the *camion-école*, he had stayed with his mother in Bron, while his father had left to Romania by himself. This short episode into the life story of a family surely represented an exceptional case concerning the financial support from a French woman, something that – I assume – was not the case for many of the families, underlining the differences between them that they also judged among themselves. It showed nevertheless how the forced movements in France had become to be an inevitable part of their lives, making transnational orientation towards the home country the more important to them as this was the only way to be owners of property and to remain in social structures that guaranteed stability.

School Work and the Disappearance of Families

The departures and arrivals of families to and from Romania were almost a normality for the teachers of the bus school and also the members of Cl.a.s.s.e.s. did not regard them as an unusual thing. The work with their children could only be continued at the point where they had stopped before their departure – what counted for them the most was therefore 'there' or 'not there'. Stories by the volunteers and the teachers about the schooling of the children had to 'skip' the time at which they were simply physically not present. Often, we spent our visits wondering which hut was inhabited by whom, where the family we were looking for might have moved or which person could give us useful information about it. Sometimes we noticed new people living in the same hut in which we had previously found another family. Or similarly, only certain family members were gone, while other relatives had meanwhile come to stay with them. From the point of view of the volunteers, though, many families often just 'disappeared' from their homes. When I arrived with the volunteers in the morning to pick up the children for school many of the huts where we had previously found them were increasingly abandoned by their former dwellers, as they were either secured with padlocks, open and empty or even destroyed in pieces. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. members were soon talking about the 'disappearance' of entire families who had apparently travelled to Romania. Rumors circulated about fares for a one-way trip by bus starting at sixty euros, return 100 euros, for those who were not in possession of a vehicle themselves. Others, yet, did not leave Bron-Vinatier, as I saw them until the closure of the village in April by public authorities where they were forcefully removed from the huts. The volunteers felt left in the dark about the children's presence and absence, since they

often departed without a notice and any information about their return, making it hard for the volunteers to communicate tangible facts about the children's whereabouts to the schools that expected them to attend class:

“Pour info, je n’ai pas réussi à avoir de date de retour pour Rodica et Liviu actuellement partis en Roumanie. Pas sûr qu’ils reviennent prochainement. A suivre... Idem les familles de Ioana et Illinca sont sur le point de partir en Roumanie (d’ici 2 ou 3 jours apparemment, en tous cas, valises en cours...). Probablement pour quelques semaines...”⁵² (Email Manon January 18, 2015)

That the families increasingly announced their departures to Romania was a fact that the volunteers had to accept. Still, this caused a certain unease among the volunteer workers of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. how to combine their mobility with their efforts for the children's schooling. One incident taking place on the first school day after the holidays exemplifies the discomfort of the volunteers about the departure of many families to Romania that were more than anything else scattering the association's efforts for their children's schooling in France. I arrived in the morning to help with the children's accompaniment to school when I learned about the refusal of some of the parents to send their children to school since they had not received food aid. That day, we were nevertheless able to get six of the children together for elementary school and started our foot walk. It was during this walk that I witnessed the following dialogue. It was a short conversation between one of the volunteers and a girl that was among the children:

Olivier lessons the sister of a girl that comes with us that she is again not attending collège today. She is only fourteen years old. She says that she had neither exercise book, nor bag – nothing. It had been burned as heating material. She claims that she was able to work in Romania, however. Olivier asks if she even knew how to speak and write in Romanian. She says that she knew how to read in Romanian. She reacts indifferently on our encouragements to go to school. When her mother says that she was going to go tomorrow for sure, Olivier replies that she always said that and tells the girl that she should better go to Romania then if she doesn't want to go to school here. (Field notes January 6, 2015)

Their decision to leave the village and particularly her preference of going to school in Romania were almost hitting him personally, as signifying the devaluation of the entire work that had been done by the association so far. Being present during conversations between the parents and children that they did not understand, they also gained the

⁵² ‘For information: I was not able to get a date of return for Rodica and Liviu who are currently gone to Romania. Not sure if they come back anytime soon. To be followed... Idem the families of Ioana and Illinca are about to leave to Romania (apparently in the next 2 or 3 days from today, in any case, suitcases are being packed...) Probably for a couple of weeks...’

impression that talks and interactions happened behind their backs that concerned them and their purpose of being there in a negative way.

An important difference was thus made between those families who left and those who stayed in the village. Those who had gone were ‘out of sight’, unreachable for any work of school persuasion until the perhaps came back. Everything that happened after that – their travelling, the stay in their home country – remained unknown – and was also not relevant to most. The one’s who did not leave, though, could be asked and confronted directly with the necessity to ensure their child’s schooling. The following statement by the school teacher indicates that there was a significant difference drawn between those departing and the ones who stayed but who no longer attended school:

“Je suis retournée au bidonville pour aller poser des questions. Puis, j’ai essayé de donner des réponses à mes collègues, mais en fait personne ne m’a vraiment donné une réponse. Il y avait des déménagements, il y avait des retours en Roumanie, mais pourquoi exactement, on ne sait pas. Après, nous aussi, on s’est mis à la place de ces familles. On peut se dire que rêver de meilleures conditions de vie et aussi essayer ailleurs, c’est de toute façon de naturel. Mais les enfants qui restent, qui ne viennent pas à l’école, ça, personne ne comprend.”⁵³ (Interview Julie February 2, 2015:6,34-40)

Despite all that, she did not give up on the ones that had left to Romania. At this time, she was still employed at the school Anatole France, hoping for the children to finally come back from their trip to their home country into her class which was in fact occasionally the case. The school institution, still, did not seem to work in the same ‘rhythm’ with the families’ strategies of shifting between two or several places of living, as the late arrival of the school material had demonstrated. Sometimes Christine went searching for some of the absent children in the village. One time, she had even received the order from the DSDEN to check why two boys did not show up in collège. They replied that their father did not let them go because they were going to go to Romania soon. She told them that they were expected by the teacher, that they still had their places at school, they only had to make use of it. The insistence of the volunteers and teachers on school was understandable, as it was the reason for their entire work.

⁵³ ‘I returned to the slum to ask questions and I asked. After that, I tried to give an answer to my colleagues, but actually no one has really given me an answer. There were some moving, there were some returning to Romania, but why exactly, we don’t know. We, too, tried to put ourselves in their shoes. You can say that to dream of better life conditions and to try somewhere else, that is completely natural. The children who stayed, however, that do not come to school – that is something no one understands.’

It created, nonetheless, a certain pressure to fulfill these expectations while they at the same time did not change their plans of leaving the village, either.

Conclusion

The interactions between the Roma migrants and the supporters for school as well as my observations and exchanges with the people within the frame of my volunteer work showed that their lives had been for years shaped by high levels of mobility. The conversations with Nelu, for example, revealed the development of a certain forced routine over the time that was shaped by permanent insecurity. The life 'in transit' thereby hits with double severity, since it means both – involuntary movement within the city and regular journeys to their home country as they cannot live in France indefinitely. As the families claimed themselves many times, they had no chance to stay in France, being subject to expulsions and having no possibilities to obtain a house or other property as some of them had in Romania. Going to France had become an "investment strategy, or even an exit strategy" for their unemployment in Romania, while the return to the village Tinca in Romania was the "exit strategy" for their impossibility to stay in France permanently (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1012). The movements of single family members showed that their life was led across borders and indicated the "renegotiating communication between spouses, the distribution of work tasks, and who will migrate and who will stay behind via long distance" (ibid.1016). The criticism that Nelu exercised on the other father showed that these negotiations depended on the individual and led to sometimes very different strategies of the families. Also the teachers and volunteers had sometimes already been active for such a long time that they even witnessed the children they had enrolled at school becoming parents again, therefore already taking care of the next generation, as for example the story of Bianca and her daughter testified. Still, many families left without a notice and those who did announce their departure beforehand did not forcibly get the volunteers' unlimited appreciation for their plans as their absence also meant the interruption of the children's attendance at school. An additional reason for this unease was the reasoning that their 'voluntary' mobility to Romania not only decreased the time of the children's schooling, but also the chances of an eventual better life for their children as well. In this way, it was not completely comprehensible to them how – as Levitt and Glick Schiller put it – the children could be considered "the central axis of family migration", posing "a critical reason why families move back and forth and sustain transnational ties" when the consequence of this apparent "socioeconomic

strategic unit” (ibid. 1017) did not improve their children’s lives significantly. Their offer to help the migrants was, as a locally operating association, certainly restricted to Lyon and its given frame of possibilities. School education in France was therein perceived as a major chance for the families to escape poverty and to become successful demanders of social citizen rights – which were difficult to claim if they were not there. The consequence of this vicious circle was therefore that these movements had to be accepted in a way and school was more or less arranged around them. Criticism was peculiarly more exercised on those who remained in the village than on those who were gone as the latter were simply ‘unreachable’ to their school encouragements.

Contesting the Expulsion

The last chapter of this thesis examines how the Roma migrants at Bron-Vinatier anticipated their expulsion and how some of them showed resistance against it. I will end with a conclusion about the impact of the expulsion on the association’s efforts for school.

Modes of Anticipation and Action

As I already assessed in the first chapter of this thesis, the very fact of having occupied the piece of land in Bron-Vinatier can be seen as a claim by the Roma EU migrants to the right to reside in the city. This ‘self-appropriated’ right, however, possessed a ‘shelf life’ that was determined the state sovereign. The people therefore dwelled the terrain with the consciousness that they would be obliged to leave it again in a moment that public authorities will have chosen. The expulsion of the settlement at Bron-Vinatier was ‘scheduled’ for January 20. The prefect of the Rhône region at the time – was the circulating information – wanted to wait out the end of the ‘winter break’ of evictions⁵⁴ and the increase of the night temperatures (Madaoui-Terneaud 2015). At the end of March, Emilie noted at one of our visits in the village that she felt ‘the tension in the air’, meaning a certain unrest among the villagers. The police was now passing more frequently in order to check identity cards and to warn them about the upcoming expulsion without giving an exact date. Conversations with the inhabitants of Bron-Vinatier revealed that the people anticipated the day of the expulsion in quite different ways. Manon of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. said that everyone who had the financial and technical means and who had enough ‘courage’ had already left to

⁵⁴ The so-called ‘trêve hivernale’ usually only concerns evictions from buildings, not of ‘camps’ like Bron-Vinatier (République Française 2014)

Romania or other places, as she said in an email April 11. She also wrote about the way she experienced the different attitudes of the people towards the effective date:

“Peu ont des plans B, beaucoup n’ont rien. Certains espèrent qu’on leurs propose une solution le jour de l’expulsion, d’autres angoissent, d’autres encore ont pris une sorte d’ «habitude au déménagement forcé » et se sont résignés. Les mêmes questions sur une hypothétique solution de mise à l’abri le jour J : ma femme est enceinte de 6 mois, tu crois que... ? Mon fils a un bébé de 2 mois, tu crois que... ? Avec mes 6 enfants, tu crois que... ?”⁵⁵ (Email Manon April 11, 2015)

The growing pressure in the preceding weeks by frequent identity checks by the police showed that the ‘avoidance strategy’ of leaving before the expulsion played in the hands of the public authorities, as the site emptied itself this way, without expecting strong resistance on the day itself. What counted for them was that the terrain could quickly be cleared and secured to prevent their resettlement. One of the volunteers of the painting workshops told us about the statement of a father from the village asking them to give him at least one day of notice in order to be able to prepare the blankets and the stuff for the children for that they won’t freeze when they will be outside after their eviction from their homes. The story of a young couple shows that sometimes the families planned to pre-empt the expulsion by their temporary return to Romania, but other forces were quicker: One day, Emilie and I went to the village where we met a two teenagers in front of the entrance. They were standing offside, watching a heated argument between a crowd of people from the village. When we got into conversation with them we learned that one of them was the niece of the main protagonist of this scene. She was fourteen years old and had given birth to twins only four months ago. She was living with her eighteen year old husband, her relatives and also other families in a squat in the nearby city of Feyzin. The girl said that they were not going to stay there for long anymore, as they were planning to go back to Romania. They just hadn’t any means to stay here, whereas in Romania they had means and a house, she claimed. Besides, their expulsion from the occupied house had already been announced for the end of March. A few weeks later, Emilie told me the news about a fire in the squat. She was so emotional about it that she could barely talk. She reported that the grandmother of the girl we had met the other day had fallen asleep in front of her room’s fire place, not noticing the fire spreading. She could not be saved by the arriving fire brigade,

⁵⁵ ‘Few have a plan B, many have nothing. Certain ones hope that they are going to be proposed a solution on the day of the expulsion, others are scared, others have put on a sort of ‘habit of forced moving’ and have given up. The same question on a hypothetical solution of an accommodation at the effective date: my wife is six months pregnant, do you think that...? My son has a 2 month old baby, do you think that...? With my 6 children, do you think that...?’

while the rest of the house's occupants was able to flee in time. Even though her family had managed to get a caravan but they did not find a place to park and sleep in it, they were now basically on the street.

Concerning the expulsion of Bron-Vinatier, the associations I worked with did not feel powerful enough to prevent the expulsion or to force public authorities to provide alternative accommodation. All that the volunteers could therefore do was to make sure that their expulsion took place at least in a non-violent way. It was their sole presence that was supposed to make sure that the police forces did not physically abuse them during their evacuation of the terrain. C.l.a.s.s.e.s. and its cooperating associations organized a daily team of volunteers to go to the village on the days it was likely that the eviction would be executed. In their eyes, there was little that could be done for the families in the moment where public authorities carry out their orders from the top.

At the beginning of April, the association MRAP, once again, announced plans to help the inhabitants through legal measures. This time, an official complaint by a number of persons from the Bron-Vinatier against the prefecture was supposed to force through their rehousing. As a member of MRAP is quoted in a newspaper article, he wanted to remind the prefecture of adhering to State law that obliged them to provide alternative housing for the expelled (Madaoui-Terneaud 2015). In 2012, a circular note by the government declared that all evacuation measures had to be accompanied by the provision of an alternative accommodation (République Française 2012). The people made an effort to integrate, as he reassured the journalist. Still, in the end these actions did not impede the evacuation by the authorities which took place April 16. Due to prior experiences were they had been just put out on the street without an alternative, however, many of them abandoned their huts before they got forced to leave it; others were present the day the court's order was executed, with different levels of defending their claim of residence in the city, as the following description of the day of the expulsion will show.

I was present on the day of the expulsion which started at seven o'clock in the morning. It marked the dramatic end of several weeks of anticipation. When I arrived, the majority of the people had already been removed from their homes and gathered in front of the entrance with their suitcases, bags and trollies. I saw a member of MRAP who tried to convince the people to give him their names in order to communicate them to the number for emergency housing 115 and taking photos of their IDs. He also asked

Laurentiu who was standing next to me. He gave back that he was not interested. The man asked if he preferred to be on the street than to at least try 115. Laurentiu again rejected his help and referred to the many times he had already unsuccessfully attempted to reach the service of the emergency housing himself. Eugène from C.l.a.s.s.e.s. was interviewed by several TV channels during the expulsion, expressing his anger about the events. More and more families meanwhile decided to leave the place and grabbed their belongings. The internal disunity of the people from Bron-Vinatier about their actions facing their eviction now became clearly visible through the following fragmentation of the crowd into three groups that I then watched dispersing in different directions:

One part of the crowd of people leaves to go to the town hall where they reportedly want to demand an accommodation. Another part moves in the direction of the tramway. I am staying with the other people who are still there. [...] When it starts raining heavily, the people begin to flee under the bridge underneath the highway that is one hundred meters away from us. The police men follow them, the cars stop. Two volunteers and I observe the scene from the distance and we eventually to join the people under the bridge. [...] The doctor from Médecin du Monde calls the people together to tell them that they should stay here, that way the police will be forced to find something for them, as they could not secure the bridge forever. Nathalie and Zoé want to stay here to be present as witnesses. The elderly women among them sit on their luggage and the others stand together in small groups and wait. Little time after, a big truck parks next to the terrain and unloads huge concrete blocks that are put around the site. (Field notes April 16, 2015)

The families under the bridge – as a member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. reported later in the day via email – had decided to really stay there, built up some tents and laid down mattresses. This ‘mini-squat’, as it was called by some, only lasted until the following day and the contact to most families broke off almost instantly. Although we spotted some of the families of Bron-Vinatier in the subsequent days in different parts of the city we did not notice a new village coming up anywhere. The associations criticized the expulsion of the families from Bron-Vinatier heavily as public authorities once again failed to offer any alternative housing to the families, only throwing them on the street. Many emails were sent during the day of the expulsion, giving updates about the events, discussing further actions and also expressing their helplessness towards the actions that were viewed as completely inhuman and as a major obstacle to their efforts for the children's schooling. A couple of days after the eviction, a group of expelled occupants from another terrain in Lyon announced protests in front of the prefecture to demand an accommodation. Several hundred people from numerous other informal settlements and squats in the city had been evicted in the course of only two weeks

(Le Progrès 2015). Apart from the actions initiated by MRAP and those going to the town hall on the day of the expulsion, mobilization of this kind among the people themselves did not take place for the inhabitants Bron-Vinatier.

Impact on the Children's Schooling

Although the school class at the elementary school and also the other enrolled children at the collège and the kindergarten had ceased to attend school a while before the executive date, the expulsions were regarded as having the biggest impact on their efforts for the children's school integration. The devastating consequences on the association's efforts for the children's attendance at school were continually recalled by the volunteers, as this email from Eugène for instance shows:

“Nous avons ainsi vu partir les enfants que nous avons accompagnés à l'école pendant quelques semaines. Que vont-ils devenir et pourquoi provoquer de telles ruptures dans la scolarité ? Pourquoi casser ce travail qui avait mobilisé de nombreux bénévoles désireux d'apporter une aide à ces citoyens européens pauvres ?”⁵⁶ (Email Eugène April 16, 2015)

The forced evictions made the families at least temporarily homeless until they could find a new shelter. Through their settlement at a new place the distance to the school that the child had so far attended became sometimes too long, also resulting in their dropout. Most families were not only expelled once, but several times within a year, as the volunteers have followed some of the families for a long time and had witnessed their shifts from one commune to another. Sometimes the people also had to flee fires or floods in their villages or squats, as the story of Nelu and of the young couple showed. Combined with their returns to Romania, the associations were thus confronted with the question of how many enrolments within a year were in fact possible. This raises once again the question up until which point their work for school could realistically adapt to the life circumstances in which the children lived. Emilie from C.l.a.s.s.e.s. did not only criticize the inhumanity of these policies, she also wasn't able to understand why public authorities adhered to them although it was obvious that the children and their parents would go to another commune when they were chased away from one. She assumed that the municipalities knew very well that an eviction would not make them immediately return to Romania. An ironic comment exemplified her perceived powerlessness before the circumstances and her resignation about it: “S'ils changent

⁵⁶ ‘We have thus seen those children leaving we had accompanied to school for a couple of weeks. What do they want to become one day and why provoking such great ruptures in their schooling? Why ruining the work that had mobilized so many volunteers that wanted to give aid to these poor European citizens?’

six fois de lieu de vie dans l'année, on ne va pas faire six inscriptions. On devrait en faire cinq, hein”⁵⁷ (Interview Emilie February 26, 2015:19,30-31). Olivier said that the fact that the families don't know where they are going to live in the next couple of months definitely prevented them from having any clear live projects. He found the policies of the French government ‘scandalous’ and ‘inhuman’ which was particularly the case as it called itself ‘Socialist’ these days. He concluded that “l'investissement qu'on fait pour ses familles est un peu massacré par ces conditions-là”⁵⁸ (Interview Olivier March 13, 2015:6,31-32). Lefebvre from the DSDEN confirmed that the children's ‘unpredictable life situations’ posed the biggest obstacle for the development of a general strategy for the school inclusion of these children. Measures targeting these populations, as he explained, required at least one year of planning ahead, a time at which Bron-Vinatier had not even existed yet. Still, he could imagine a form of school that came directly to their village – similar to the concept of the *camion-école* – on a larger scale and permanently installed. These were measures that considered the current specific living conditions, adapted to their ‘mode de vie’ and at the same time creating the important link to the school institution. In short, the different stakeholders did have disparate opinions on how far their efforts for school made sense or what was possible to realize within the given setting. While the DSDEN had to declare their attempt for the schooling of the children for the case of Bron-Vinatier as failed, the associations continued their work that was structured by the currently given politics. They were still in hope, however, that their protests against public authorities and the major mobilization across the whole urban area of Lyon would eventually result in a change of the political direction. At one of the general meetings of C.l.a.s.s.e.s., I asked the members how the work for school could ever make progress if the schooling was eventually always destroyed by the families' expulsion. The president of the association gave me the following answer which was written in the meeting's following report:

“La scolarisation des enfants est pour ces familles une première reconnaissance de leurs droits mais les expulsions successives sont bien sûr un obstacle majeur pour une bonne scolarisation. La mobilisation actuelle dans les écoles montre que la scolarisation des enfants permet la création d'un réseau de solidarité (enfants, parents, enseignants, voisins...) pour mettre en évidence leurs

⁵⁷ ‘If they change their place of living six times within one year, we are not going to do six enrolments. We should rather do five, right’

⁵⁸ ‘The work that we are doing for the families are a bit massacred by these conditions.’

difficultés et essayer de trouver des solutions pérennes.”⁵⁹ (Report C.l.a.s.s.e.s. Meeting December 15, 2015)

These words highlighted the importance of the association’s work not *despite* the politics of exclusion, but in order to *change* them from the base. The school attendance of the children helped the whole family out of their geographically and socially isolated position. School was therefore a first step to establish contact to the rest of the population that reminded the latter of the equality of all human beings since the Roma families, too, had future plans and worries for the children like every other family that lives in France as well. This was – as it was the case for all the other obstacles that had been encountered so far – the reason why not even the endless repetition of expulsion and restart made the volunteers of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. ever think of giving up their commitment to help the children and their parents.

Conclusion

The expulsion of the inhabitants of Bron-Vinatier symbolized the most conspicuous refusal of social citizenship that I had witnessed during the time of the slum’s existence. It was the exertion of power in its physical sense. The clearance of an unused land like the roadside ditch of Bron’s periphery was an act that showed once again that in “public debate ‘migrant’ is not simply about either legal status or where a person is born but is about being one of the global poor” (Anderson 2014:3). It can furthermore be asserted that the “guardians of good citizenship” (ibid.6) did not even want to look through the loophole in their gate to see who was standing outside since they did not enter into dialogue with the people from the village whatsoever. Power was not only exercised through the execution of the expulsion itself, it was also operating through the months of its anticipation that incited the people to develop strategies to avoid its negative consequences. Many of them had left the village prior to their imminent eviction, while the rest awaited it with anxiety, anger and resignation. Again, law became an empty shell when their eviction was not accompanied by the provision of the people’s alternative housing. Diverging opinions about potential actions existed among the associations as well as among the migrants. While some of them followed the call of MRAP to claim their right to rehousing, others showed signs of having given up. The telephone calls on the emergency housing number of the city

⁵⁹ ‘The schooling of the children is already a first recognition of their rights of these families but the successive expulsions are of course a major obstacle for a successful school attendance. The current mobilization on the schools shows that the school attendance of the children allows the creation of a solidarity network (children, parents, teachers, residents...) to make their difficulties clear and to try to find durable solutions.’

and the numerous pleads to the police in the course of the eviction remained unanswered and finally resulted – as I at least observed for the one part of the group – in sleeping under the bridge. The associations I worked with also tried to help the inhabitants of the village as much as they could. In this case, however, they felt as powerless as the people themselves.

The expulsion also marked the end of a cycle that had – when I first made contact with the associations – begun with demonstrations against the expulsions of informal settlements and squats and also finished with the same demands. The case of the protests by the occupants of another terrain in the week after the eviction of the inhabitants of Bron-Vinatier showed that initiatives by the expelled generally existed and activism by civil society was regarded as crucial to support them in this struggle. The successive expulsions also resulted in a constant cycle of school dropouts and enrolments that equally took the families, the volunteers and the schools to the limits of their capacities. During the whole time of the intervention by the associations, the question about its sense kept emerging, as the volunteers and teachers of the bus school seemed trapped in an endless repetition of the same struggle and defeat for years. Still, they did not think of giving up, as the value of the children's schooling was seen as the starting point of societal change from 'the bottom-up'. In this sense, the volunteers' role was not only understood as "fighters" against the people's discrimination, but as real "grassroots activists" (Ram 2013:15).

Final Conclusion

The goal of this empirical study was to examine how the Roma EU migrants from the informal settlement Bron-Vinatier claimed rights as social citizens, how the State responded to these claims and what the role of the intervening stakeholders for the children's schooling for these negotiations was. In five chapters, I presented the major lines of conflict occurring during the time of my field work that ended with the people's expulsion. I will now summarize these incidents in order to end with a final conclusion.

Although the city commanded the expulsion of the 'camp' by court decision shortly after the settlement of the families on the terrain, the time of the trial and its postponed execution for the cold winter period together resulted in the village's existence for almost nine months. During this time, several associations intervened at

the site strongly committed to helping the people against extreme poverty and to fighting their discrimination by the State. Since the latter completely refused to take responsibility for the integration of these people into society, these stakeholders saw their role in laying the foundations for the migrants to become “social citizens” (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1024). These foundations should mainly be based on their “social presence” through the children’s school education which was regarded as the major tool for their integration (Glick Schiller 2005:55). Their support was also considered necessary in order to make some of the families even aware of their demands and to formulate them. School was not only important for making contact to the majority society and to create ‘social anchorages’, it was also a way to prove to the municipality that the migrants made efforts to integrate. This seemed particularly significant as it was assumed to have a direct impact on the willingness of the municipality and prefecture to help them through rehousing measures, access to the school cafeteria or public social benefits. The children’s attendance at school– as they argued– was in fact *the key* to convince public authorities of their eligibility to be claimants of social benefits. It could even, as the representative of the school ministry said, motivate those in power to instruct their relocation into permanent public housing structures. The conviction about the benefits of school education motivated the associations to implement informal ‘educational measures’ even when the efforts for the children’s formal school education were eventually declared fruitless, as this happened for example through painting workshops and a collective cinema visit with the village’s inhabitants to watch a film about Roma children ‘torn’ between their parents and their chance for schooling. In this sense, the associations felt forced to join the game of the municipality that uses education as a “technology of governing, as a political strategy to lead people according to the ideal of integration” in form of “a permanent education” that transcends all parts of their lives (Piñeiro/Haller 2012:98). In this struggle to be ‘Good Citizens’, the Roma can be considered both, non-citizens and, due to their EU passport, as “Failed Citizens” who do not prove to have the core skills to belong to the “community of value” (Anderson 2013:5).

The migrants were therefore not regarded worthy of accessing public services and the support for school integration was mainly concentrated on a battle by associations against the exclusionary stance of the commune. This was already visible by the enrolment procedure at the primary school which took several months. The municipality was accused of purposely ‘delaying’ enrolment procedures in order to ‘wait out’ the people’s expulsion. Also the refusal of lunch for the school children was

called a deliberate act of exclusion with the justification that they are not coming to class in the afternoon anyway. The explanation for the refusal of public food aid, finally, reached an almost absurd level in the eyes of the associations, as apparently only families with a 'decrease of income' were entitled to it. What became clear, however, was that the families' appearance as collective claimants of their children's school enrolment and public benefits did not result in a *power of the masses* as they had hoped – but on the contrary – in a *weakness of the masses* as their high number served as the main justification by the commune to reject their demands for help.

The expulsion, finally, was the act of exclusion against which the associations felt the most powerless to ensure the families' rights. Even though some of the migrants claimed their right to rehousing through complaints and protests addressed to the public authorities, their eviction was carried out and the 'guarantees' by State law remained unfulfilled. While this event marked the final point of Bron-Vinatier as a physical space, it did not forcibly mean the end of the migrants' struggle to gain a foothold in the city of Lyon, as their earlier life paths had proven. This seemingly endless-cycle of mobility and settlement of the Roma EU migrants at last also raised the question about the effectiveness of the work that the associations do in favor of their integration into French society. The volunteers of C.l.a.s.s.e.s. nevertheless perceived their efforts as highly valuable to bring about societal change from the 'bottom-up'. This view understands forces as "contingent social processes" where resistance counts significantly (Burawoy 2000:29).

The apparent opposition between private advocacy and public exclusion in the negotiation of the migrants' rights did not hold true for the case of Bron-Vinatier. This could be seen in the fact that one of the intervening associations was employed by the school ministry who joined the volunteers together in their efforts to ensure the families' right to education. The case of the denunciation of the 'Roma class', also confirmed that the lines between private involvement and public institutions have been completely blurred, leading to the peculiar situation that national and EU institutions for human rights were addressed to act *against* the school class that had previously been forced through after months of fighting for the children's access to primary school education. Both intervening volunteer organizations chose to appeal to higher political bodies to make their claims heard since they regarded the level of the municipality as a dead end street, calling the French State and the EU for help.

During these conflicts between the various institutions, the agency of the migrants was pushed into the background and returned to the awareness of the involved stakeholders in moments where their active participation was demanded to make the achievements about the children's schooling durable. This was for the first time the case when a group of volunteers was set up to help the parents to take their children to school, an expectation which became never reality. The parents' capacity to act for their particular interests was the most visible to the volunteers and teachers in their reaction to the municipality's refusal to admit the children to the school cafeteria and to entitle the families for public food aid. Pressure on public institutions was exerted primarily through their final word on their children's schooling. These measures were judged by the intervening stakeholders as necessary for the families' claim for equal treatment before the State, as they knew of other communes where Roma citizens had been entitled to financial support.

Despite these incidents where school was refused to underline other claims, many parents insisted on the school enrolment of their children, showing that their simultaneous demand for school and its refusal for the access to public social benefits were not mutually exclusive but by contrast interdependent and interwoven with their strategies of daily survival. The work as a volunteer was determined by the parents' choices who were, in the end, strongly influenced by the families' legal possibilities to move and to settle in France. As my observations of the interactions and conversations with the people revealed, constant mobility has been structuring their lives for years involving several generations. Their stay in France, as they explained, was their "exit-strategy" for the lack of income opportunities in Romania while their return to their country of national citizenship was their "exit-strategy" to escape the lack of possibilities for a permanent stay in France (Levitt/Glick Schiller 2004:1012). The use of the opportunity to move within the Schengen area however varied from family to family, as some of them did these back and forth journeys more often than others. These differences could be most prominently observed on the day of the expulsion when the police forces found half of the huts in the village already abandoned, while the other half had stayed until the very last moment. Although their mobility had almost become normality to the volunteer workers and the teachers, their departures were sometimes not announced beforehand and caused uncertainties about the children's whereabouts, making it difficult to argue before the school to give information about their return to class. This points to the challenge that associations faced to advocate in favor of the rights of people who were physically not there. Their

absence, as well as the children's *absenteeism* that followed only weeks after the school enrolment rendered their ability to argue in favor of further integration measures difficult. It can thus be concluded that despite the fact that the inhabitants of Bron-Vinater had developed "alternative ways of being", or even "a migrant *habitus*" to ensure the wellbeing of the family members, their actions were again feared to be interpreted as their unwillingness to integrate into the host country (Glick Schiller 2005:56, italics in the original). The parents, however, demanded rights unconditionally, as they claimed to not be able to prove their eligibility by ensuring their children's regular school attendance, let alone the fact that they did not have sufficient time to pass the 'test of integration', as their imminent expulsion from their homes was a permanent certainty. One could therefore switch perspective and contend that it was the migrants who 'tested' the state's boundaries through their situatedness in a social field of legal pluralism based on their identity as EU migrants. Their great determination to access services of the State can be viewed as "claims to belong to a state through collectively organizing" in order "to protect themselves against discrimination, or receive rights and benefits from a state" (Glick Schiller 2005:55). The very appropriation of the public land as their place of settlement, in this sense, can be regarded as the base of their demand to belong to a social citizenry in France.

Epilogue

In the moment of writing the last lines of this thesis, news reach me about the Roma settlement at 'la Feyssine' that I mentioned earlier as one of the oldest villages in the suburban area of Lyon. Apparently, the Rhône prefecture decided to include a part of the families in a project of relocation into housing structures supported by measures to find employment. At the same time, however, the remaining rest reportedly just received the feared 'OQTF' – the authorities' order to leave the French territory. In this sense it may be concluded that progress and regression, or extension and restriction, of the transnational EU migrants' rights as social citizens are to be considered as constant and simultaneous processes that need to be negotiated instead of being 'depoliticized' behind an apparent 'flood' of migrants demanding to share societal wealth. I will therefore end with the words of the French journalist Carine Fouteau (2014:72):

"Car aux yeux des pouvoirs publics, les Roms ne sont pas des pauvres comme les autres, ils ne sont pas des sans-abri comme les autres, ils ne sont pas des

familles comme les autres, ils ne sont pas des étrangers comme les autres. Ils sont en trop.”⁶⁰

Appendix: Table of participants

Interviews

Julie – February 2, 2015: Teacher of the elementary school class in Bron.

Emilie – February 26, 2015: Member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s.

Lefebvre – February 27, 2015: Representative DSDEN Rhône.

Christine – March 2, 2015: Teacher of the ASET69 bus school

Michel – March 2, 2015: Teacher of the ASET69 bus school

Olivier – March 13, 2015: Member of C.l.a.s.s.e.s.

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⁶⁰ ‘Because in the eyes of the public authorities, the Roma are not poor people like the others, they are not homeless people like the others, they are not families like the others, they are not foreigners like the others. They are redundant.’

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Ville Bron: Bron, ville amie des enfants. Available online at <http://www.ville-bron.fr/editorial.php?Rub=496>, checked on 10/19/2015.

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

University of Vienna, 2013-2015

Master CREOLE Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes, Cultural and Social Anthropology

Erasmus Mobility Programme at Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2014-2015

Master Thesis: *“No Money, No School – EU Roma Migrants in an Informal Settlement in Lyon as Claimants of Rights”*

Thematic Modules: New Identities and Visual Culture

University of Vienna, 2009-2013

Bachelor Cultural and Social Anthropology

Bachelor Thesis 1: *Ist Entwicklung Macht? – Die Rolle des Entwicklungsbegriffs für den tansanischen Sozialismus (Is Development Power? – The Role of the Notion of Development for the Tanzanian Socialism)*

Bachelor Thesis 2: *Einfach an der Tür geklopft. Illegalisierte Flüchtlinge unter Schutz eines schwedischen Klosters (Simply Knocked at the Door. Illegalized Refugees Under the Protection of a Swedish Monastery)*

WORK EXPERIENCE

European Migration Network (EMN) / International Organization of Migration (IOM), Vienna, September 2013 – November 2013
Research Intern

Deserteurs- und Flüchtlingsberatung (Counselling of Asylum Seekers), Vienna, October 2012
Intern

LANGUAGES

German, English, French