



The immigration of Romanian Roma to western Europe:
Causes, effects, and future engagement strategies
(MigRom)

Report on the extended Survey

France

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SUMMARY

1	METHODOLOGY	3
2	THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN	5
2.1	RETURNEES	5
2.2	TRANSFER OF RESOURCES: EFFECTS ON SENDING COMMUNITIES	5
2.3	TRANSFER OF RESOURCES: PATTERNS AMONG MIGRANTS	6
3	- NETWORKS AND THE HISTORY OF THE MIGRATION	7
3.1	NETWORKS AS PULL FACTORS	7
3.2	IMMIGRATION AND COMMUNITY HISTORY	19
4	CHANGES TO FAMILY STRUCTURE.	30
5	LOCAL POLICIES	33
5.1	THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF EVICTION	33
5.2	FROM NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO LOCAL WAYS OF THINKING	35
5.3	WHAT IS THE COST OF THE EVICTION POLICY?	36
5.4	EVICTION AS A LOCAL POLICY IN FRENCH ACADEMIC DISCUSSION	38
5.5	THE EVICTION PROCEDURES IN OUR RESEARCH AREA	39
5.6	RIGHT TO THE CITY FOR ALL? DOMICILIATION (LEGAL ADDRESS), SCHOOLING AND RUBBISH COLLECTION.	44
5.7	THE ROLE OF THE NGOs ON THE PLATZ DU SAMARITAIN	46
5.8	THE NEED TO BE VISIBLE	47
6	SOCIAL INCLUSION	49
6.1	EMPLOYMENT	49
6.2	EDUCATION	51
6.3	PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO ROMA	57
7	TABLE OF CONTENTS	72
8	TABLE OF FIGURES	74
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	75

1 Methodology

For this report, we have focused our research on a Roma community living in a “bidonville”¹, known as the *Samaritain*. This encampment is located in La Courneuve, a very poor local authority in a suburb north of Paris. It formed around a Pentecostal church which brings the residents together. It was established in 2008 which makes it today the oldest encampment in Ile de France although the local authority, who owns the land, has initiated procedures for eviction. It consists of 78 shacks in which a survey carried out by *Médecins du Monde* identified 240 people of which 91 are children.

From February to June 2014, we carried out 12 in-depth interviews on this site, the minimum duration being 2 hours. In June 2014, the French research team went to the village of Balnaca in the *judet* of Bihor, which borders the *judet* of Cluj to visit the family of one of the interviewees. We did three interviews with the relatives of the migrants. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed in *romanes* then translated into French.



Figure 1 : Platz of Samaritain : Credits Grégoire Cousin 2011

On the site in La Courneuve, we also carried out an ethnographical study visiting the fieldwork site once or twice a week as from April 2013. Furthermore, between October 2014 and January 2015 we did participant observation in the local authority in La Courneuve, during which we discussed the future of the encampment with the local authority employees. This fieldwork was carried out by Florin Nita, Grégoire Cousin and Henriette Asséo.

As a complement to our observations, we have incorporated the quantitative data produced by the *GIP Habitat*, 10 September 2013, along with the *Medecins du Monde* data, 2014. For this report, we also analysed: all the eviction procedures available for the site; the architectural work of analysis and project carried out by the students in architecture at La Villette. The elements contained in this report are therefore voluntarily restricted to an unauthorised encampment in France and to the area of origin of the residents in Romania.

¹ unauthorised makeshift encampment

Extended Survey report Feb. 2015 Paris Team, Second Draft

The report was written between December 2014 and February 2015 by Henriette Asséo and Grégoire Cousin.

Profile of our interviewees

In France

- Danutz – from Apataeu, 34 years old, 5 children
- Sebastian, about 40 years old, from Arad (Son of Daniel)
- Daniel, from Lipova, 63 years old, (father of Sebastian)
- Titel, from Balnaca, 44 years old, 3 children, of whom 2 are married (brother of Corina)
- Lamanía from Fanao, 38 years old, 4 children (wife of Calin)
- Banea, from Sirbesti, 37 years old, 4 children
- Corina, from Balnaca, one daughter (sister of Titel)
- Calin, 44 years old, from Oradea, 5 children (husband of Lamanía)
- Sorin, 35 years old, from Zarand, 1 child
- Florin, from Inel, 38 years old, 6 children
- Roman, from Apateu, 40 years old, 6 children, of whom two are married
- Gheorghe, from Revetis, 45 years old, 3 children

In Romania

- Titi, [63](#) years old, from Balnaca
- Ana, [62](#) years old, from [Balnaca](#)
- [Argentina](#), about 30 years old, from [Balnaca](#), [2](#) children

2 The impact of migration on the communities of origin

2.1 Returnees

In Balnaca we met Argentina whom we had known in La Courneuve. Argentina and her husband are an example of a seasonal model of long-distance commuting over a period of several years. From November to March, they live in France where they earn a living by collecting scrap metal; then from the spring to the autumn, they are in Balnaca where they pick mushrooms. This model of commuting migration is not specific to the Roma, but is a characteristic of Romanian migration as a whole (Diminescu, 2003) The fluidity and nature of the migration prevents the conception of a strict dichotomy between migrants and ‘returnees’.

Argentina does not have a specific return ‘project’; however, now that she has finished renovating her house, she spends less time in France and her liquidity requirements are not as heavy. New projects could re-launch the dynamics of departure; she refers to the idea of financing the construction of an evangelical church in Balnaca. The fluidity of these commuting migrations can be observed in the feeling of belonging. Florin does not think of himself as a ‘migrant’; he has come for a few months to work in scrap metal recovery and live with the Pentecostals in La Courneuve but to him, it is obvious that he lives in his village in Romania where he ‘must look after the church’.

For people who are more established in migration, the hope of returning remains constant; all the interviewees speak of returning to Romania. Although he is well established, Titel is the only person who wonders why he spent his money on renovating his house in Romania since he is convinced that from now on “his life is here in France”.

2.2 Transfer of resources: effects on sending communities

Argentina and her husband were able to take over her father’s house in Balnaca; her father had bought the house from his son-in-law. The interior is attractive, with flowers and lavishly decorated. “We have decorated everything with things we found in France”. The kitchen is located in a veranda which is an addition, built the full length of the façade. Unlike the other houses we saw in the village, there are two rooms separated from the living room; there are also household appliances including a refrigerator, and a television and audio system.



Figure 2 : House interior in Balnaca : Credits Florin Nita 2014

As has been shown in previous studies (Benarrosh-Orsoni, 2010), housing projects are an important motive for migration. Corina arrived in 2010 and expects to stay for 4 to 5 years. Her dream is to have a house with a swimming pool in Oradea! While this dream may not come true, more modest projects do succeed. Titel observes that young Roma from his village who left for the West have been able to finish their houses. Banea makes the same remark concerning the improvements in the houses of the migrants in the village. Danutz goes further and says that in his village, the Roma like her who have renovated their houses are now respected by everyone.

However this observation is not unanimous. Roman considers that half the residents of his village have gone, and now there are only old people and children. The village is dilapidated and he himself does not earn enough money to renovate his house in Romania. Florin also considers that migration has not enabled the improvement of the village.

2.3 Transfer of resources: patterns among migrants

As we have observed, the migrants send money and material of all sorts to improve their housing in Romania. Financial aid to relatives who have remained back home is the other main motive for migration. Sorin came to France specially to be able to send back money for the medical treatment of his father who is ill. Danutz sends money via Western Union for the logs and kindling for his mother's heating. Titel says he helps the poorest members of his family who are his neighbours in Oradea. Finally, it is not always the whole family who migrates; children remain back home, cared for by a grandmother. Calin and Banea have left their two children at home and send money for their schooling. Calin and Laminia consider that to be a good investment because they hope that one day their daughter will become a

saleswoman in a shop. However the couple would like to have a more stable situation in France so that they could bring their children.

Money is not the only thing that circulates. Georghe who owns a commercial vehicle (a Sprinter) makes the journey to and fro between Paris and Arad. He transports passengers, and all sorts of goods. Titel also owns a Sprinter and takes advantage of each of his trips to Romania to take back household appliances, material and objects of decoration which he has found which he will be able to give or re-sell, doors and windows, and washbasins are also sent back to Romania. In the opposite direction, food comes to France including cabbages and smoked sausage, Palinka (a local alcohol) and cigarettes which are re-sold in the Platz.

3 - Networks and the history of the migration

3.1 Networks as pull factors

In the Platz du Samaritain, the idea of a network as a pull factor is a concept which does not appear to be operational. A difference has to be made between the ego-focused networks which pre-exist migration and which play a role therein and on the destination chosen and the network, possibly even the community, constituted in the migratory process, which has the unauthorised encampment as its home ground. This network is formed by persons who do not know each other in Romania.

In fact, the concept of the network has to be understood as being made up of several layers of networks of relations which are superimposed and can be studied separately. Here the research team in Paris is advancing a strong hypothesis: one of the characteristics of the Roma world is the primacy of the transmission of a capital of social relations, in other words, an endeavour to construct 'houses' in the meaning given by Pierre Lamaison (Lamaison & Lévi-Strauss, 1987) or autonomous domestic units. This concern for relationships emerges on examination of the individual and family relationships mobilised for migration, relations developed in France and which link the Roma from a place in France to each other through mutual acquaintances, the experience of day-to-day relations in these places and finally Pentecostalism as a system of relations.

3.1.1 Individual Relations and migration routes

The first people to arrive behaved as pioneers would. Danutz came to France in 2002. He was one of the first to leave in his family. He had already made a previous attempt to move to South America. In 2002, a Roma people trafficker from Timisoara dropped him at Stade de France, (St Denis) where he knew nobody. Now he has his cousins from Sepreus and Apateu in numerous towns scattered throughout the region. Sebastian also arrived alone in 1995; a friend who had returned from France had told him that it was easy to earn money. He paid a trafficker 4,500 lei and then arrived in Saint-Denis, though he did not know where he was. He then 'learned his way around'.

Titel was also one of the first to leave when the Schengen visas were abolished in 2002. He arrived in rue des Fillettes, in Saint Denis. At first in France he knew nobody whereas now, as he says, 'I go to all the Platz to see my friends'.

These pioneers opened the way for their families. Sebastian had his father come three years later. Corina, Titel's sister, arrived in 2010 as well as her cousins, Calin and his wife, Lamanian. The majority of those interviewed correspond to this family schema. Sorin arrived in France 3 years ago. He came to France because his brother, who has been here for 12 years, is involved in an integration project in Montreuil. Roman arrived in Montreuil by bus because he had family from Apateu there. Calin came to Saint Denis in 1998 to live with his cousin who lived in a Platz.

For the pioneers, the first migration was a period of exploration of the possibilities. Thus Danutz went to South America in 1999 with friends from Timisoara and he borrowed the price of the ticket. He arrived in Buenos Aires then crossed the continent as far as Mexico. His project was to cross the border to get into the United States. He was with a small group of migrants. A man from Timisoara tried to cross the border but he was shot. Luckily he did not die and now lives in Belgium. Danutz became frightened and went back to Argentina where he did odd jobs to repay his debt and buy the ticket home. In the social diagnostic survey submitted to all the families, 8 said they had come through Spain, 5 from Italy, 2 from Argentina, 1 from Sweden, 1 from Belgium and 1 from Denmark.

A solid family network is a factor for migration; it opens up possibilities in countries which have already been explored, thus enabling skills to be shared and learned by several persons in several places. But we can also view the information which the interviewees gave us from a

different angle; migration may be a way of remaining the focus of one's network, of conserving one's capital of relations but there comes a time when the network itself structures the migration, and not the reverse.

3.1.2 The reconfiguration of the Platz and contacts

The survey of the birthplaces of the residents in the *Platz du Samaritain* shows that the residents come from all over West Romania, mainly from the *judets* or counties of Bihor, Arad and Banat, but also from many towns and villages. We are not therefore in the presence of a pre-existing village community which simply moved to France.

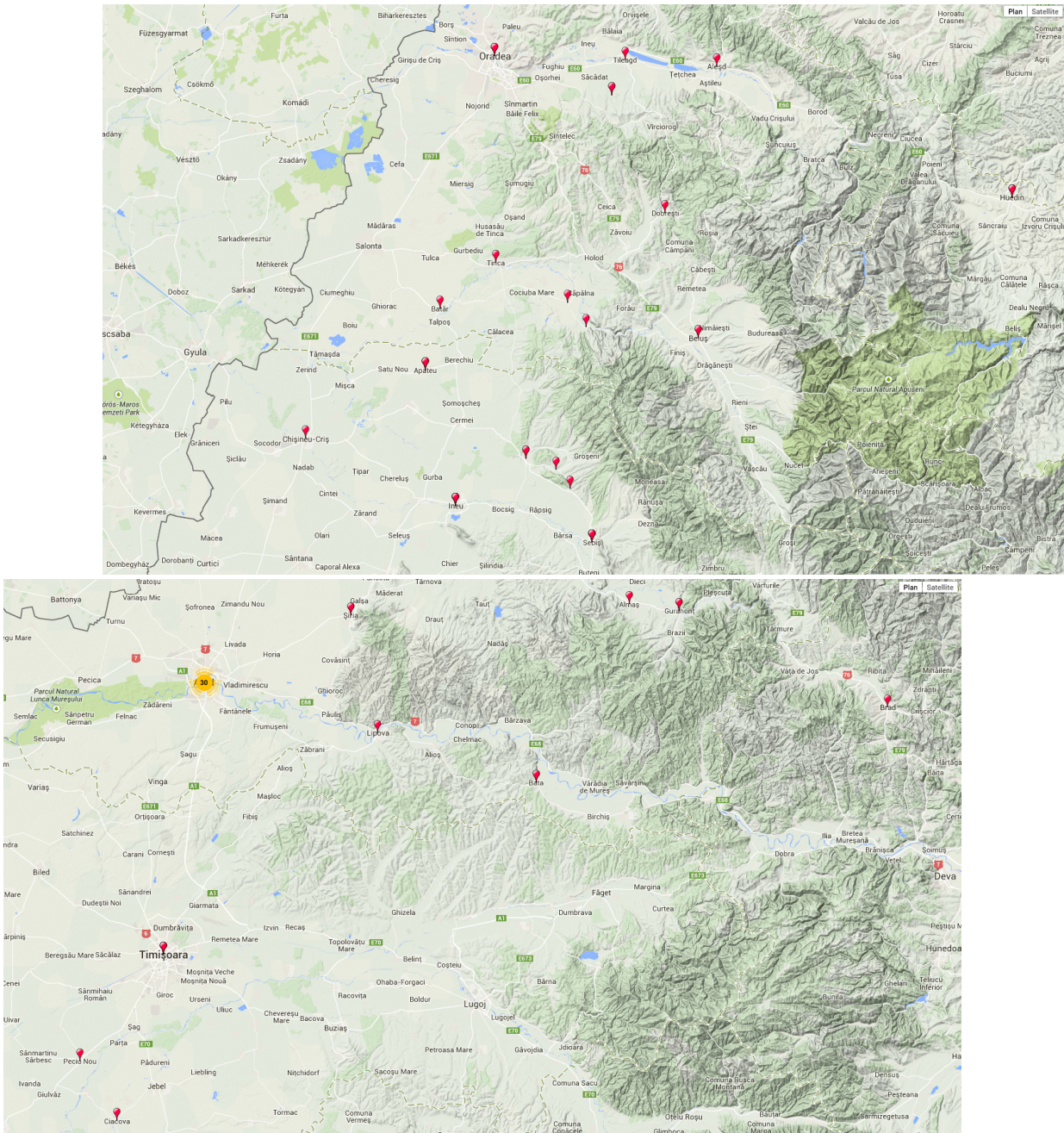


Figure 3 : Towns of origin of the residents of the platz in Bihor, Arad and Timis Judets

The true origin of the present community is France. By far the majority of those interviewed had been evicted several times before they settled in La Courneuve. The various people interviewed on any one site had thus been evicted from different unauthorised encampments. The residents in fact come from many different villages in Crisana and claim to belong to different Roma groups (Lingurar, Romungur, Kalderash, Cuirari, Patrinari). They met in the unauthorised encampments in France as these were reconfigured. Two key events are evoked. The eviction from the large encampment in Saint Ouen in 2005, where up to 1,000 people

lived, is often quoted as the time when people met each other and met Titel, the future head of the Platz and the pastor of the Samaritain. Other locations where people met were the evictions from the encampments in Aubervilliers in 2007 or from Saint Denis in the early 2000s. Finally the structure of the encampment in the Samaritain attracted other families whom people knew through the Pentecostal Church or through contacts made in the country of origin.

Thus, on the basis of 11 interviews carried out with heads of families we can suggest the following schema for the origins of the community living in the Platz du Samaritain.

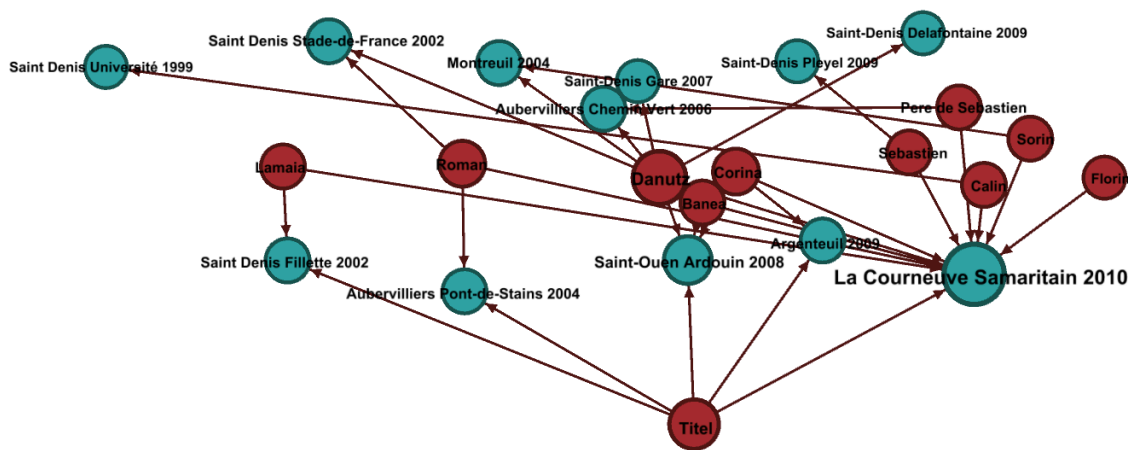


Figure 4 : links between platz and people : Red nodes - people, Blue nodes -platz

The Platz (blue dots) are located on two left right temporal axes.

At the bottom of the schema we find Titel (red dot); then above him, the sites (blue dots) where he has lived. Above these we have located the other persons interviewed (red dots) on an axis perpendicular to that of the sites where Titel also lived. Above these we have located the platz where these other interviewees lived without Titel (blue dots).

This schema demonstrates that repeated evictions have led to reconfigurations of the encampments, the families relocating where they could and not as a function of a strict community nomenclature (village, ethnic group). If we take the case of the *Platz du Samaritain*, Pastor Titel recruited people he had met amongst migrants as well as people he had known from his country of origin. Is this observation specific to the *Platz du Samaritain*? The Roma community from Dolj established in Essonne which we studied in the first report was much more homogeneous: the resident community only extended to two villages and two

ethnic groups. A morphological study of the unauthorized encampments in France would be required to attempt a global typology of residential communities.

3.1.3 The Platz, a reality shared on a daily basis

The approach in terms of relations links belonging with the daily experience of interaction with individual contacts. This daily aspect forces us to consider where the Roms live, their homes and their material and domestic situations in order to understand how sharing things shape the different forms of relations.

3.1.3.1 From house to house

The Platz is a set of shacks forming a local area. The residents succeeded in establishing themselves because they arrived when the occupation was just being set up and Titel gave them permission to build shacks. This right was not paid for but enabled the leader of the platz to get together a community of 'decent people'. On an average, the shacks are 9.2 square metres and consist of a room with an open kitchen. There is a stove made of salvaged materials (petrol drums), which they call a Soba. Several mattresses are piled up on the double bed in daytime. In the evening, the mattresses take up all the space on the floor and enable the whole family to have somewhere to sleep.

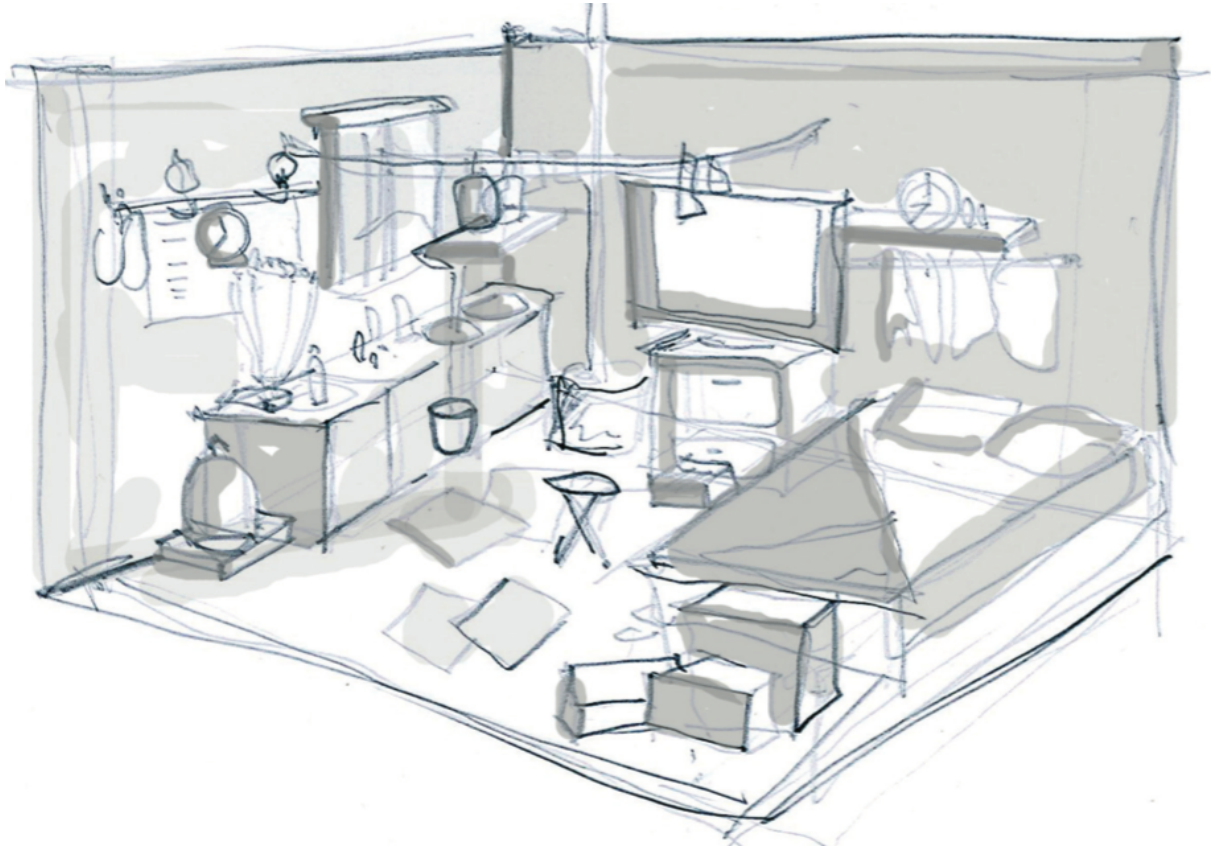


Figure 5 : Interior of shack in the Platz du Samaritain, credits Amen Allah Cheikh Amor, 2014

The shacks are built entirely from salvaged materials. Two eaves heights are supported by four poles driven into the ground, slightly staggered to give the slanted roof (sealed with linoleum) a little slope towards the street. The walls are made of wood and the windows have been salvaged. The walls are covered with material and carpeting to improve the insulation and to give the interior a warmer feel. These methods of construction are found in numerous Platz (Bonami-Redler, 2014). However in the *Platz du Samaritain*, time has enabled families to make their shack truly their own as witness the care spent on the interior layout. The shacks are a private space for each family. They are locked with a key if the owner is away and one knocks at the door before entering. However they are not well isolated and promiscuity means that one shares the neighbours' lives; people speak through the walls and wait for quarrels to stop. The experience of the Platz here is the same as in the French *bidonvilles* in the 1950s and 1960s (Pétonnet & Choron-Baix, 2002).

Between the street (a few metres wide) and the shack, there is a threshold which is both public and private space: people do leave things there but it is visible to all and is not really separated from the street.

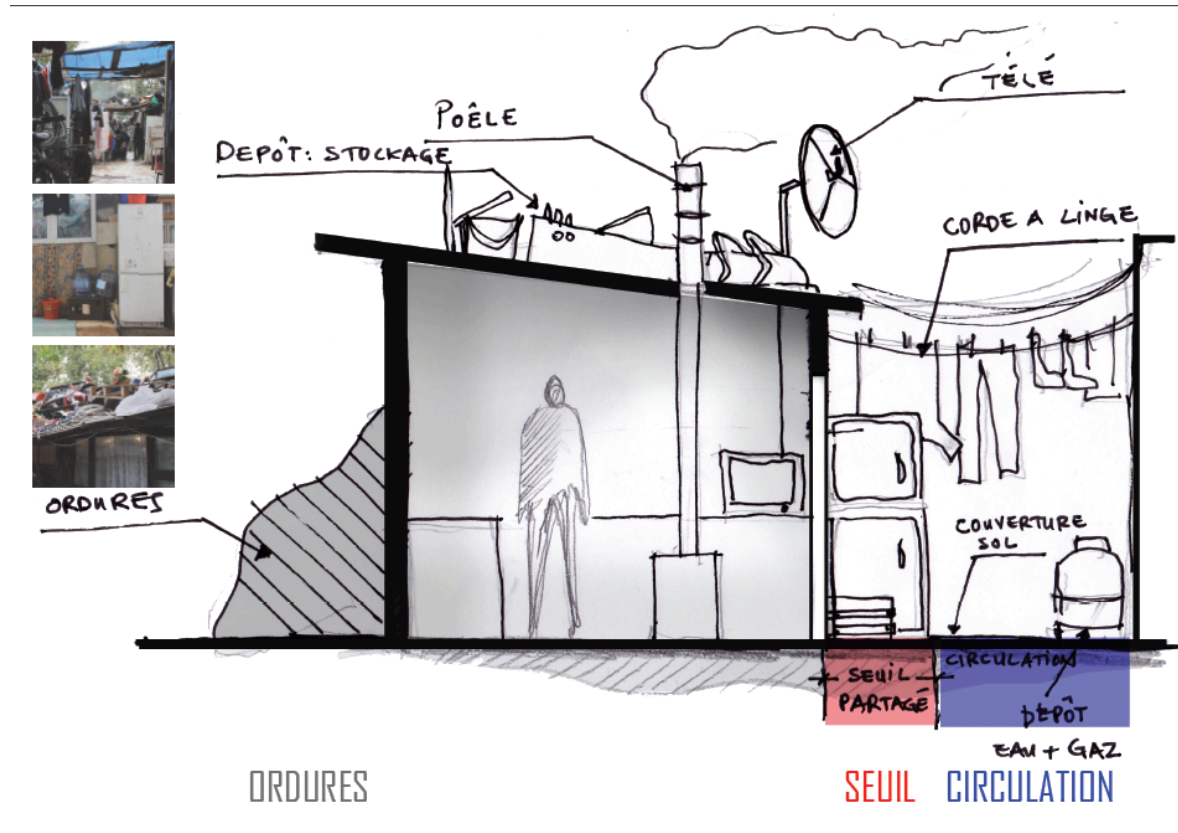


Figure 6 : shack of the platz du Samaritain (implantation), credits : Amen Allah Cheikh Amor, 2014

In this space which is both public and private, contacts are made with the neighbours. People sitting outside their doors invite others for a coffee or chat with passers-by. This co-habitation is not only a question of relations but also one of organisation: the shacks are grouped together in sets of 10 households who share a power generator and who share the cost of the diesel fuel.

In the case of the Platz du Samaritain, these dense neighbourhood relations have been operational for the past six years. The residents have gone beyond the usual contacts in unauthorised encampments and have established deeper relationships. Thus Calin explained: “Here you don’t see Roma who speak ill of one another. When I get up, I go to greet my neighbours and when they see each other all the Roma say – “*Te aves baxtalo mirro phral*” – ‘Things are getting better’ or ‘May luck be with you’.

Several interviewees quoted the same proverb: “*Jekh gadjo trajl maskar le rrom ta jakh rrom maskar gage ci*”. The use of this proverb in the context of conversations about community life in the Platz demonstrates that this mode of organisation of housing provides a feeling of physical security but also of symbolical security and reinforces the feeling of belonging to a Roma community.

3.1.3.2 *The site plan*

The overall plan of the site seems to stretch uniformly on an East-West axis along a central street. However circulation within the area of the encampment reveals a centre and a periphery which corresponds to the social hierarchy internal to the Platz. There is only one entry, at the west end. At this entry a dog in a kennel barks when new people arrive. Its presence dissuades intruders.

A few metres further on there is a small covered square where the house of the head of the Platz faces the church. This space, which is wider than the adjoining streets, is a space for exchange and buying things: people chat when they come out of church; food is for sale on tables. The house of the head of the Platz opposite the church is ideally located to control the comings and goings – everyone has to go past it.

The site is divided by four narrower streets leading out of the square. These streets get ever narrower and at the end are the families who are less well regarded just before the rubbish dump and the latrines.

The head of the Platz demands a contribution from each household to pay two people who ensure the material supervision of the community; they patrol at night to prevent intrusions



Figure 7 : Platz du Samaritain, credits Quentin Bichet, 2014

and fires and one person must clean the toilets. This contribution is the source of numerous complaints: the toilets are not properly cleaned; it is not necessary to pay night watchmen (one is the son of the head), the head of the platz takes too much commission out of the common fund. But for better or for worse, this organisation has been in place for the past six years.

The platz is therefore both a network of relations and an autonomous organisation. Given its urban location, it affords easy access to the city, the convenience of the urban and suburban transport network and the social and financial resources of the town. The Platz du Samaritain is a vacant area in an industrial zone in La Courneuve, running alongside the railway, a location which ensures its relative invisibility and avoids problems with neighbours. However, it is less than five minutes away from the tram which serves all the suburbs to the north of Paris and 15 minutes distant from the suburban RER B line, with access to Paris in a few minutes. The city offers numerous resources: the possibility of easily contacting other Roms, the points for the sale of scrap metal, of places to beg, of seeing French people they met by chance. In this sense, the platz and its residents are included in a network of networks in the meaning defined by Hannerz (Hannerz & Joseph, 1983). Each individual can then get the most out of their own networks and the platz does afford a genuine *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1968) and its inhabitants.

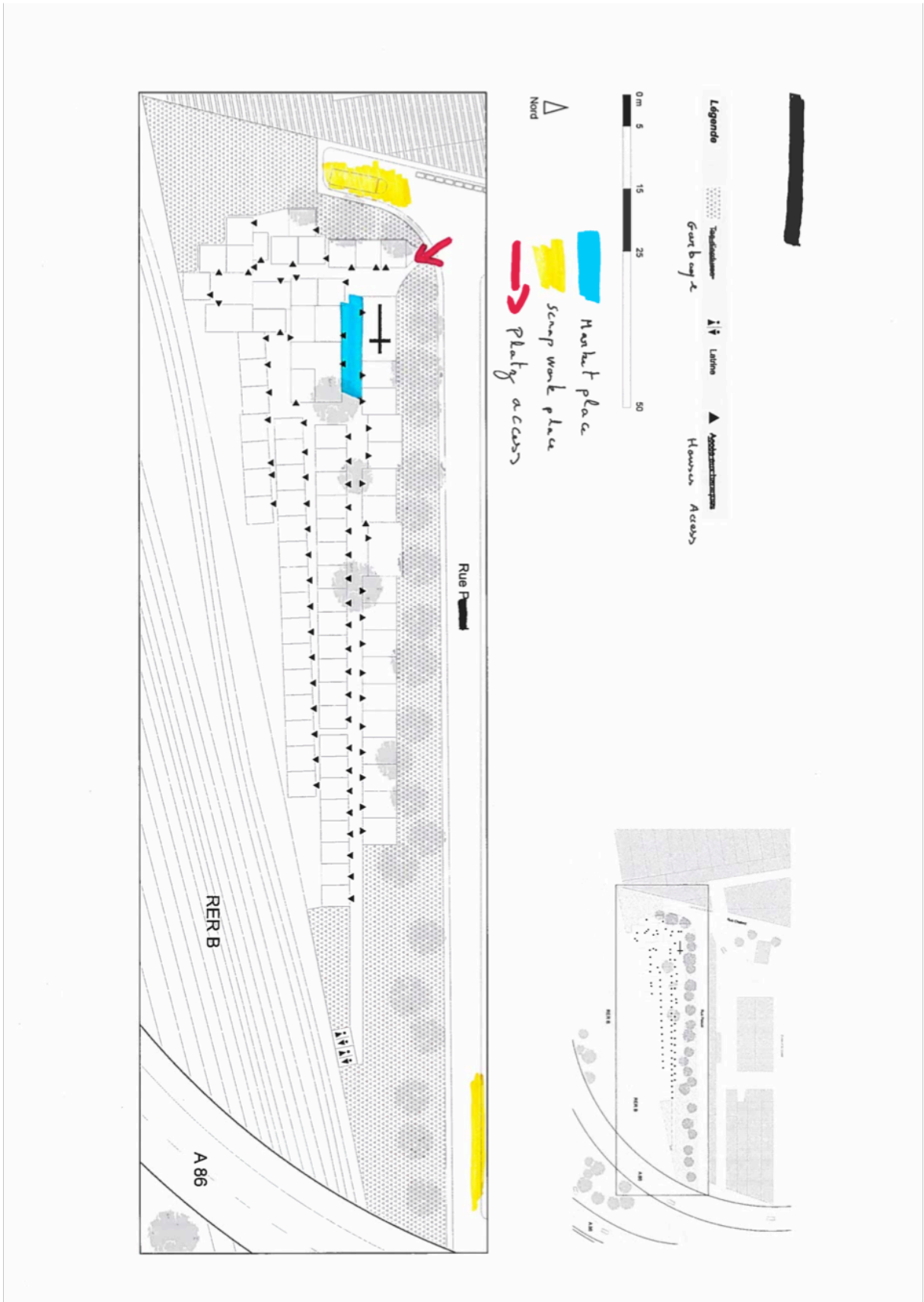


Figure 8 : Ground plan of the platz du Samaritain, credits MDM, 2014

3.1.4 The Pentecostal network

A characteristic of the Platz du Samaritain is the presence of a Pentecostal church and the majority of the Roma in the platz say they belong to it. If, for the time being, we leave to one side the religious practice aspect and the history of its implantation in Romania (Fosztó, 2005, 2009) and focus on the effect on social relations, we can make several observations:

For several of those interviewed the choice of coming to live in the Platz du Samaritain rather than on other sites was linked to their Pentecostal religion. The presence of a church, the fact that the head of the platz was the Pastor functioned as a recommendation for a family who wished to settle in the Platz: Danutz stated that by coming to live there he was “sure to be with decent people”.

The presence of the church enables the materialisation of a Pentecostal network, or a chosen community. The church radiates beyond the residents on site, it is attended by Roma from all



Figure 9 : Interior of the church : credits Gregoire Cousin, 2013

over the *département* (county), mainly from the West of Romania. It is thus in direct competition with the Pentecostal church in Montreuil or the one in Pierrefitte. The pastors know each other and visit each other. Pentecostalism is also a factor in the contact with Roma communities who are not Romanian; thus the pastor of the Kalderash Roma in Pavillon-sous-Bois (CMERI) sometimes attends the church in the

Samaritain in La Courneuve. These links with French Pentecostal churches studied by Patrick Williams (Williams, 1991, 1993) and Gaella Loiseau (Loiseau, 2004) have still to be explored further.

The church in the Samaritain enables the residents to be part of an international network. Georghe is spending a month in Paris; he came to see his son who lives in an apartment in Montreuil. He is visiting the Platz du Samaritain because he is a Pentecostal and knows the church. He would like to go to Belfast to see other Pentecostals. This religious network was also the reason for Florin’s visit to the Platz. He is a Pentecostal priest who was invited by Titel to come to preach to the Roma in La Courneuve for a few months. Titel lent him a

caravan at the entry to the encampment. Florin cannot leave Romania for too long because he has to take care of his own church there. However, this does not prevent him from going to preach in Montreuil or in Belgium or in Spain.

Many conversations return to the wish to visit the ‘brothers’ in Ireland or in Belgium. This desire seems to evoke the idea of an ‘imagined community’ which is maintained by the positive accounts of the pastors after their visits to the brothers. Moving around in this context enhances one’s prestige, as the videos studied by Norah Benarrosh-Orsoni (Benarrosh-Orsoni, 2013) on YouTube demonstrate.

3.2 Immigration and Community History

All the Roma in the Platz come from two *judets* which were formerly Hungarian *comitats*. After the Austria Hungary Compromise in 1867, the *comitat* of Bihar was created; it was bigger than the present size of the *judet* of Bihor. In 1918, the region became Romanian which was confirmed by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The *judet* of Bihor at that point was 7,467 km². It included a local authority, Oradea, two towns Salonta and Geius and twelve *arrondissements* or districts (*plasa*): Alesd, Beius, Beliu (today in the *judet* of Arad), Ceica, Centrala, Marghita, Săcueni, Sălard, Salonta, Tileagd, Tinca and Vascău.

The *judet* of Arad (in Hungarian Arad = *megye*) is a Romanian *département* (county) located in the west of the country, partly in Transylvania and partly in Banat, with Arad as the county town, and was formerly in the Hungarian part of Banat.

In the *comitat* of Bihar, the majority population in the municipal authorities were Magyars; for example, Oradea (Grosswardein, Nagy-Varad), Ineu (Borosjenő) or Zărand, a historical administrative centre of the principality of Transylvania.

Our study of the historical background considers with several aspects which still condition the present structure.

Is the Magyar/Romanian divide still relevant? What can we learn from onomastics and patronyms in the structuring of family identity?

How are the ethnonyms distributed and what is their meaning for the interviewees?

We insist on a preliminary which is essential for historical understanding: the historical frontier between Austria-Hungary and the Danube Provinces was also the frontier between

two contradictory forms of status for the Roma. Since the 18th century, all those who belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary, as subjects of the Emperor of Austria-Hungary had, obligatorily, the status of free men or women as subjects of the Crown. The principle of the *European (Family) Pattern* based on the nuclear family and filiation legitimated by a certificate of baptism as an act of civil status for all was applied to populations on the basis of their religions: Catholic, Eastern Catholic church (Uniate), Presbyterian, Calvinist, Orthodox, Jewish, etc. all co-existed. This contributed to a model of fertility determined by age at marriage (Szuhay & Cigányország, 2012), (Cotovanu, 2014). The situation of the Roma from the historical provinces of the Old Kingdom where slavery was abolished at a later date, as we know, was very different. Finally the demographic transition of the Romanian peasantry was characterised by a birth rate which remained high until a late date.

This frontier between the legal legacy of Austro-Hungary and that of the Old Kingdom was still operational in the 20th century and continues to this day because it has historically conditioned family regimes. Similarly in the analysis of the distribution of villages, the homogenous Hungarian villages (or *Kolonat*) contrast with the dispersion of Romanian Roma families domiciled in mixed villages (Asséo, 2002, 2003). The demographic scales are also different. There are Hungarian villages or towns in which the Roma population was 16% of the total, for example in Ószentanna (Comlăus), where Roma had a strong autochthonous discourse : « Historically, the Gypsy community of Comlaus is perhaps the oldest in the region. When asked ' what kind of Gypsies they are' all my respondents told me that they are «bastinas», - That is autochthonous Gypsies, or «vatarar » using the radical «vatra» (hearth) to underline that they belong to the place». (Fleck, 2008).

Thus the study of the ethnonyms cannot be separated from a consideration of the local anthroponymic systems and the global political issues in the region of origin of the people in the Platz. Thus the variety of Roma ethnonyms used by the residents on the site does not enable us to speak of the existence of an abstract ethnic community in which people would be closely linked before their migration. The assertions of identity are based on onomastic practices, whether it be a question of assimilating or of resisting assimilation. The category of 'people's names' or 'anthroponyms' is split into numerous sub-categories, particularly as the anthroponymic systems are extremely varied in time and space. This extreme variety and the various possible hierarchies of the different components of the whole name may constitute a political issue (Guillourel & Akin, 2008), (Todenhagen & Thiele, 2007), especially in the

Hungarian context: “*In 1881 in Budapest a Society for Hungarian Names was set up (Központi Névmagyarosító Társaság) with the intention of fixing the rules for this action. A guide was also published with a glossary of the correspondances between Romanian-Hungarian onomastics. In this period there was an increase in the number of names changed: on average, 1261 names per year, according to the statistics published by two or three historians. Between 1881 and 1905, 42,437 family names had received Hungarian versions. The reaction of the Romanian population in Transylvania was immediate: family names were sought which could not be translated into Hungarian*”(Seton-Watson, 1934) .

Thus, apart from the study of currents of migration, their directions and their strength, onomastic practices enable us to decipher the relations and modes through which the Roma get to know each other. This approach implies an in-depth knowledge of the regional, anthroponymic characteristics.

The people in the Platz describe themselves as being in turn: *Romungur, Ciatanari, Lingurari, Kastale, Pitulesti, Covaci, Kortunari, Kaldarara, Bazara, Patrinari, Ciurari*, or again as being one of ‘those who operate the stills’. The ethnonyms are not really fixed; members of a same family can say they belong to different groups and change in the course of the conversation. These variations do not prevent each member of the Platz from specifically identifying the set of Roma which he frequents, or of whom he has heard mention in exile or in Romania. Generally, the interviewees refer to the trade of their paternal grand-father but without assigning to a meaning of permanent ethnic identity. The discussion about the relevance of the attributions is a daily subject of conversation: le “*jeu romanes*” continues in the Platz. The interviews enable us to provide partial answers to three types of question. How are these markers of attribution which result in an individual being either this or that constituted? In what context should we locate the denominations proposed by people? Finally, what is the explanation for their very shifting nature?

A general initial precaution of method seems essential to us. All the interviews question the schema of an analysis opposing denominations considered to be external to the community and therefore arbitrary, and denominations considered to be emic or internal to the culture which are constants free of any taint of acculturation. Similarly, the extreme mobility of the attribution of Roma ethnonyms by the Roma themselves proves their modern and functional nature. For example, we cannot confine ourselves to the simplistic vision which considers a naming system based on a trade as something archaic from the pre-industrial era which

extends back in linear fashion to a time gone by, or a storehouse of traditions. The Roma on the Platz are not living in an ivory tower and their family and genealogical culture, like their management of the ethnonyms are shifting social categories, constantly being re-appropriated. The interviews demonstrate that two aspects dominate the way the Roma of the Platz deal with ethnonyms.

- The variation in the ethnic reference grid of close relatives depends on a subtle distinction. In the Platz, one is not a ‘Roma as such ...’ but a ‘Roma from ...’ and the variations which the Roma use are all conditioned by the complex history of the regions to which they belong.
- In fact, in the 20th century there is scarcely any region in Central or Eastern Europe, or in the Balkans, which has not been subjected to multiple movements of population. The unchanging village is an illusion and the fixity of the peasantry a figment of the imagination.

Like other ethnic communities in the region, the Roma in the Platz have been subjected to the political effects of changes in sovereignty. The application of various agrarian reforms in the territories attached to Romania by virtue of the Post War Treaties (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, September 1919 and Trianon, June 1920) coincided with the evictions and departures associated with the transfer of sovereignty. Thus the division between Romanian and those who opted for Hungarian nationality (under Clause 63 in the 1920 Treaty of Trianon) is fundamental. It was strengthened by the demands and frustrations of the local and external arguments in favour of revising the treaties² which contributed to the attribution of identities; for example the demands of the Hungarians sought to integrate the Roma systematically as Hungarian to raise the figures of their population (Nemes, 2013). The majority of the people in the Platz come from these local authorities where the system of economic circulation was drastically blocked and then re-oriented under Romanian administration. They all therefore belonged to Austro-Hungarian territories until 1918. It is a fact that the reference to Hungary is still very much alive as a legacy from the Austro-Hungarian civilisation and because crossing borders was customary in the inter-war period since the development of trade was maintained by the network of county towns and villages.

² The demand for a revision of the Treaties presented to the League of Nations,(LN) and the Permanent Court of International Justice internationale (PCIJ), set up by the great powers.

The Roma in the Platz prefer the term ‘Bihor’ to describe their region.³ But there is a very strong feeling of local patriotism which transcends the Magyar/Romanian divide: whole families in the Platz du Samaritain speak Hungarian. In Balnaca, the wife of Titi’s grandson is a Hungarian Romni.

The second shared socio-economic characteristic is based on their dual identity of belonging to both urban and rural life. Our report stresses that what is essential for an understanding of the present situations of the Roma families who told us the story of their trajectories is the historical setting and the structured contextualisation. We learned through the interviews that all those questioned had had the opportunity of access to land which had been confiscated from them. Therefore the key to understanding the constant reformulation of ethnic differentiation resides in the study of agrarian Romania. Instead of attenuating the agrarian conflicts, the inter-war reforms in the 1930s increased the ethnic tensions as did the schemes for re-privatisation after 1992 (Giordano, 2001). In the region which concerns us, the agrarian reforms led to competition for access to land which aggravated the ethno-political tensions between beneficiaries and marginalised minorities against a background of permanent agrarian crisis (Antoine Roger, 2002a, 2002b) (Antoine Roger, 2014).

“The agrarian reform in Greater Romania after World War One, which should have modernised the rural world by reducing the gap between this country and those in Western Europe, failed, in part at least, for economic reasons. It became a bone of contention between the various nationalities and damaged inter-ethnic relations which had been difficult for centuries as a result of the conflicting interests between the big landowners who were in majority Hungarian and the peasants who were mainly Romanian. Although it did not lead to a quasi-civil war situation, or to one of open ‘ethnic cleansing’, this agrarian reform aggravated the nationalism of each ethnic group, contributing significantly to creating a divide which is still visible today”
(Iordachi, 2009)

Special attention has to be paid to the study of the territorial distribution because the present situation is misleading. The period between 1940 and 1960 was one of considerable territorial

³ Crișana (in Hungarian/ Körösvidék, in German: Kreischgebiet, sometimes transcribed in French as Crisanie) is the continuity with Partium, an external territory belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary which remained under the trusteeship of the Princes of Transylvania (Transylvania which the Hungarians referred to as ‘Beyond the Kirilyhago Forests’ and which the Austrian monarchy had baptised in German ‘Siebenbürgen’ or the Administered Lands). In 1918, this region was taken from the Hungary of the Dual Monarchy, the Transleithania. It has remained Romanian ever since

reconfiguration. We have advanced the hypothesis that the different processes of local collectivisation were, along with the Fall of the Berlin Wall, key events for an understanding of the social dynamics. On this point, the stated affiliations pose more questions than answers. Thus the Lingurars (Titel and Corina) in the Platz du Samaritain have relatives in Dobresti and we know from the literature that the Lingurars in Dobresti came from Galati at the beginning of Communism; however Titel considers himself to be a native of the Region. Similarly, we know that the group of Roma families in Balnaca in a Gypsy section of the town did not exist before the second war. In the 1950s, the Roma in the region came to settle in this village to flee 'collectivisation' and they found themselves recruited into the silica mine.

Titi, who says he is Patrinari, told us that his father lived in Alesd and had an orchestra which played in the restaurants in the region and as far away as Budapest. When he was young, he himself played in this orchestra before becoming a miner in the Borod mine. The other families in the village come from other groups, like his son-in-law, and were also recruited to work in the mine. The break in relations was harsh since the Romanian authorities allowed nobody to cross the border; even Bela Bartok had to abandon extending his collecting of folk songs from Bihor/Bihar for this reason, and the Roma in particular had to give up their profession of itinerant musicians, as *Zigeuner Musikanten (Bartók, 1931)*, (*Nemes, 2013*). The memory of Hungary in fact comes from the memory of activities which were an integral part of the former system of circulation in Austro-Hungary. This example demonstrates that the process of becoming an industrial proletariat was a response to the dual constraint of transformation of the frontiers which put an end to any possibility of continuing an artistic activity before an urban Hungarian audience and the social constraints of collectivisation. The period 1950-1962 appears to be crucial. The companies in the Alesd conglomerate (*combinat*) had accelerated the opening of new mines in the Bratca-Borod region, open-pit mines for silicate clay (the cement industry) in the 1950s which were then abandoned in the transition.

After the 1948 International Conference in Moscow, the creation of satellite countries by the USSR involved the introduction of commercial restrictions. Dependence on Soviet credits paid in roubles meant being forced to accept the orientations fixed by Moscow. Romania, like Hungary, formerly a country of agricultural exports, abandoned agriculture in favour of metallurgy and machine-building. As a result, the 11 July 1948 Nationalisation Law was enacted with a view to a transfer of agricultural labour to industry and the first Five Year Plan

1951-1955 was based on the development of the mining and machine-building sector. But, unlike the USSR, the conglomerates (*combinat*) combined mines and small craft-industrial businesses forming a network of small towns with a population of both peasants and factory workers. This was the social fabric in which the Roma in the *zonei miniere Borod-Şuncuiuş-Dobreşti-Vadu Crişului, judeţul Bihor* lived. In passing, it is quite amusing to see that as from 1999, official documents describe this region as a deprived area, whereas it was presented as a showcase example in the Soviet economic press.

Titel: "My paternal grand-father was a carpenter. That's why our name is Kastale or Lingurar. He made large objects for making bread and everything that was made of wood. My father then worked in the silica mine in Borod. He earned a little extra by selling fish; he died young at the age of 57. After the Fall of the (Berlin) Wall, I worked for an Italian boss who had a big factory but he went bankrupt. After that I collected scrap metal, and then I went to Italy".

Collectivisation resulted in the establishment of two types of institutional structures: the APC or Agricultural Production Cooperatives, and the IAS, or state farming enterprises. It was in this context of conflicts and high tensions in an agricultural society, that the radical social and economic changes following the establishment of lignite mining took place in these villages. To check whether the Roma in the region were particularly targeted for transfer to an industrial proletariat as a result of the local development of the mining sector, it would be necessary to examine the archives to see how the population census in the inter-world war period and the post-World War Two period took place, since the communist evaluation campaigns described a peasant who owned a single cow or the least horse as a 'capitalist', on a par with the land-owner targeted by immediate expropriation.

However, collectivisation did not put an end to itinerant craft activities with their roaming contributing to opening up rural areas, given the forms of the market. Thus two families explained that their parents had carts and went from village to village selling copper objects or collecting bottles but they had to settle to become farm-workers in cooperatives.

Roman: "I come from Apateu – Apateu et Sepreus, it's the same thing. A long time ago, when we were children, we used to get together in our grand-father's house so that he could tell us « paramicia», stories, stories he made up, stories about the Emperor and his daughter. He also told us stories about the war. He said that his brother had been

in the Romanian army and he had too, but that his brother was killed in the war, and, as a result, he asked to leave the army and that he was freed. My grand-father made pails and sold them in the neighbouring villages for food in exchange. He had a house but he preferred to live on his cart. My grand-father was a Kaldarash, not one of these who have galbeni (gold coins) in their hair and worked in copper; my family worked in iron. I didn't learn anything about all that because in Romania I worked as a day labourer for Romanians and did small jobs for them."

Calin:" My father sold horses and collected glass bottles a long time ago. After that he worked in a leather processing factory and then in building canals and he gets a pension for that."

As a result, we must stress that the customary sociological divisions concerning the presumed difference between sedentary and itinerant populations are absurd because, to a greater or lesser extent, **all** the rural population and large sectors of the urban population in this region have experienced many collective displacements, whether voluntary or forced, in addition to which many attempts have been made by all the heads of families to adapt to the turn over in employment which was chronic until the 1970s. Furthermore, this explains the maintenance of a proto-industrialised rural industry like that of the production of bricks, allocated to the Roma:

Lamania. "My parents made bricks. They made wooden moulds for two bricks, then put them in the oven to fire them. They died when I was ten years old, so I don't know anything more about them."

This intense mobility was emphasised by the unique characteristics of agrarian collectivisation in Romania. After the coup d'état on 23 August 1944, the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) came out into the open and, in the context of the Soviet occupation, campaigned for an agrarian reform which at the time advocated the eviction of the large landowners and the sharing of the land. The 23 March 1945 Agrarian Law 187 provided for the transfer of one million hectares in full ownership to 8,000,000 peasants (Dobrincu, 2007). Between 1944 and 1948, the main theme was the struggle against the large landowners, but the State was conducting the forced requisition not only of cereals but of all agricultural commodities and 'quotas' were applied as from 1946 to a population already weakened by war, previous requisitions and the famine in 1947-48. They were maintained until 1957 and

1962. In theory, the quotas should have affected the peasantry who, at the time, represented more than 80% of the 12 million inhabitants. The history of collectivisation long remained a subject which was taboo in Romania. Moreover, the majority of Western geographers who specialise in agrarian questions are complacent toward communism and all adhere to the ideology of reconstruction based on industry.

The operation of bringing the peasantry to heel and frequent endeavours to systematize the villages led to economic forms of disobedience by the peasants. In fact, the ultra minority Communist Party had to win over the rural masses. In 1945, the RCP had only 800 members, most of whom were urban dwellers whereas the peasants formed 74% of the active population (Roberts, 1951). As a consequence, at the elections two contradictory aims had to be taken into consideration: the socialisation of the means of production which clashed with the need to spare the peasantry, at least initially, to rally them to the regime. Later the theme of the class struggle would have to be raised in rural areas to pit the poor peasants against the better-off or 'rich' peasants (the *chiaburi* Cf : the kulaks in Russia).

Florin: *"I'm not interested in the history of my family because I am a Pentecostal, but in my region there are a lot of agricultural co-operatives and everyone works there."*

The reform in October 1945 therefore began slowly, but in Transylvania and in Banat the expropriations freed lands which were given to the State-owned agricultural holdings. As from 1949, the totality of peasant holdings (5 to 10 ha) were gradually expropriated (Doc. Census archives in view of expropriation). Then it was the turn of the peasants who owned less than 5 ha. to be collectivized. The agricultural production cooperatives (*CAP Cooperativa Agricola de Productie*) were created with this aim in mind. The norms of production were not as stringent as in the state-owned firms, the work teams were based on the pre-war model of 25 to 30 worker peasant cooperative members (*tarani cooperatorii*) who formed a work team (*echipa de nunca*). Three teams together formed a brigade ; their members worked the collectivised land together and had individual plots (*loturi in folosinta*). The aim of standardisation was to force the peasantry out of their networks of diffuse reciprocal obligations which regulated the exchanges of labour in the form of reciprocal gift and counter-gift. In the years 1949-1951, numerous uprisings took place. These were bloodily crushed by the authorities who feared the 1907 precedent. Furthermore hundreds of families, numbering thousands of people, were displaced to regions far from their home villages, in particular in Dobroudja and in Baragan (Dobrincu, 2007).

But in 1951, contrary to expectations, the RCP decided to criticise the ‘errors’ of the policies of the regime. On 18 September 1951, at the height of Stalinism, a decision was taken to abandon wholesale collectivisation in favour of agricultural cooperatives which were voluntary associations of production in which each peasant kept his personal property. In 1953, there was a further decision to slow down collectivisation. But the main aim of destruction of private, peasant property did not disappear and was pursued relentlessly: ‘*It remained the top priority of the RCP to ensure complete control of society*’ (p.72). The years 1957-1958 were marked by an increase in agricultural socialisation and those in power, feeling strong enough, prepared for a final confrontation with the peasantry. Repression became a preventive measure aimed at avoiding revolt on a bigger scale.

Thus two agrarian policies were tested. Between 1949 and 1963 an attempt was made to generalise the model of agricultural production cooperative. But the hesitation made collectivisation a very gradual process and enabled the peasants’ civil disobedience to take shape. The peasants attempted to develop illegal practices within the family to avoid the new regulation of the markets. The State encouraged a policy of «*cooperativizare*». Romania was the last country to be collectivized. A further strengthening of regulations was introduced following the 1955 Congress; and at the end of 1958 a plan for ‘total socialisation’ was introduced but with another halt in 1962. In 1962, 91% of the peasants were members of cooperatives.⁴ Between 1964 and 1971, an attempt was made to subject the individual plots to standardised norms to direct their production towards the textile and raw materials processing industry, the surplus being bought by the State. The year 1958 witnessed a series of measures of a repressive nature. In November 1958 the resumption of the collectivisation processes meant that none of the *Samaritain* families escaped, all being more or less forced to join the collectivised structures. The Cooperative of Zarand en Santana has been studied (Chelcea, Lăţea, & Antohi, 2000), so we can compare the literature with our own interviews.

Sorin: “*My father worked as a farm labourer in an agricultural cooperative in Zarand then as a tanner in Arad in a State factory which was denationalised at the revolution.*”

⁴ The most recent work based on new material is resumed up in Constantin Iordachi, Dorin Dobrinicu, « The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949-1962 », in Constantin Iordachi et Arnd Bauerkämper, *The collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe, Comparaison and Entranglements*, Central European University Press, 2014, pp. 251- 292. Constantin Iordachi is Associate Professor of Comparative History, and Head of the Department of History, Central European University, Budapest Arnd Bauerkämper is Professor of History, Freie Universität, Berlin

My grandfather worked for the same cooperative until he retired - the agricultural cooperative in Zarand.”

The strategies implemented until the fall of Communism, in particular the attempts to maintain their pluri-activity (of peasant-craftsmen or worker-peasants) suggest that, in Romania, the move to collectivisation did not necessarily destroy the Romani village-based cultural behaviour which was maintained.

Daniel: *“My father walked around with carts until he died; he collected chicken feathers to sell them through an intermediary, a private person, to a State factory. He also sold basins which he made himself. He was taught by his father who also made frying pans and pipes. I was born kaj pori le grasteski⁵ (at the tail of a horse) in a stable on 1st December. That’s why I am a horse doctor. When my father died, I took over the horses and the carts and I continued on the roads until 2000. Then the police forbid carts from travelling on the roads; they imposed fines and they took the horses.”*

Gheorghe: *“My grandparents had tents. They moved around all the time and they lived by making stills. In summer, they worked on the collective farm in Pecica then in winter they left to sell the stills. Pecica was the biggest farm in Romania; even Ceauscecu came to eat the farm vegetables. He liked the bread which came from the oven every morning. My parents also worked for the collective farm until the revolution.”*

The period which began in 1969-1972 until the collapse of the regime was based on a new approach with effects which have to be identified. To remain in office, the front rank elites took advantage of the blockage. The ‘facilities’ granted to the peasants to ensure their loyalty became a widespread practice of corruption.

To what extent were the Roma been able to maintain their pluri-activity in a system in which the second market of goods from individual plots was not entirely directed towards the State? The answer lies in the nature of the social models which characterised peasant civil disobedience and the way in which the peasants circumvented the instructions:

-The extended families of the peasants in cooperatives developed a second market in the produce from their agricultural holdings. The worker-peasants worked in factories and left

⁵ At the tail of a horse

their children with their parents who still lived in the country. The factory workers got their provisions from those in the country, but they contributed their salaries in exchange and formed an autonomous socio-economic unit: this is also the Roma model.

-The second model is that of the commuters (*navestisti*) in a household domiciled in an agricultural cooperative. A mixed agro-industrial strategy was adopted. The head of the family went to town every day to work in a factory. His wife and his children stayed on the farm and work the small-holding and occasionally the collective land. In 1970, 57% of the industrial population lived in the country; even 72% of those employed in the mining industries were commuters. Once again Roma households were able to adopt this model.

As from 1972, another factor had to be taken into consideration: the recurrent concern for standardisation in the socialist system. In 1969, 41 *judet* or divisions conceived of as being the same size and compatible with statistical processing became the basis for a completely new framework for an artificial grid. This was implemented and maintained after 1989, with the aim of becoming a functional spatial structure promoting demographic transition (a birth-rate of 34/00 in 1930 had fallen to 16/00 in 1989), and the development of salaried employees. In 1989 73% of the active population were salaried workers with an increasing percentage in industry (47% in 1989) (Rey, 1994).

In this context, the re-privatisation of agriculture was an original phenomenon in the post-socialist transition with the disappearance of the major cooperative production units and the return to individual peasant labour (Vultur, 2002). 65% of the agricultural area is now worked by individual peasants not in any association. However there was no re-privatisation in the South-East. The inter-regional flows of migration are reconfiguring the more attractive areas.

4 Changes to family structure.

If we take the survey carried out by *Médecins du Monde* in Autumn, 2014, there are 78 shacks on site, or 78 households. These 78 households represent 240 people, including at this date:

15 infants (0 – 2 years)

18 children (3-5 years)

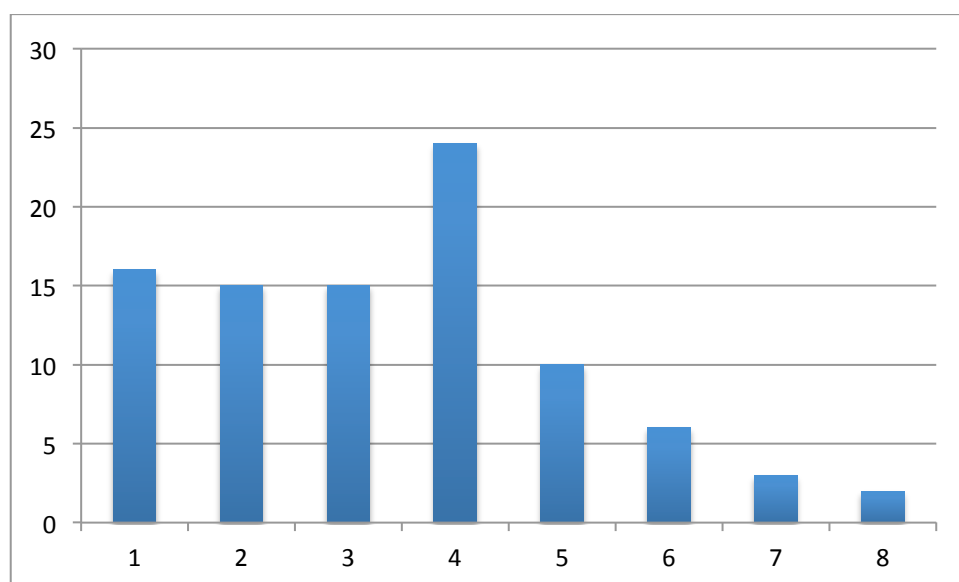
58 children (6 – 16 years)

145 adults (17 – 60 years) including 6 pregnant women

4 adults (60 years and over)

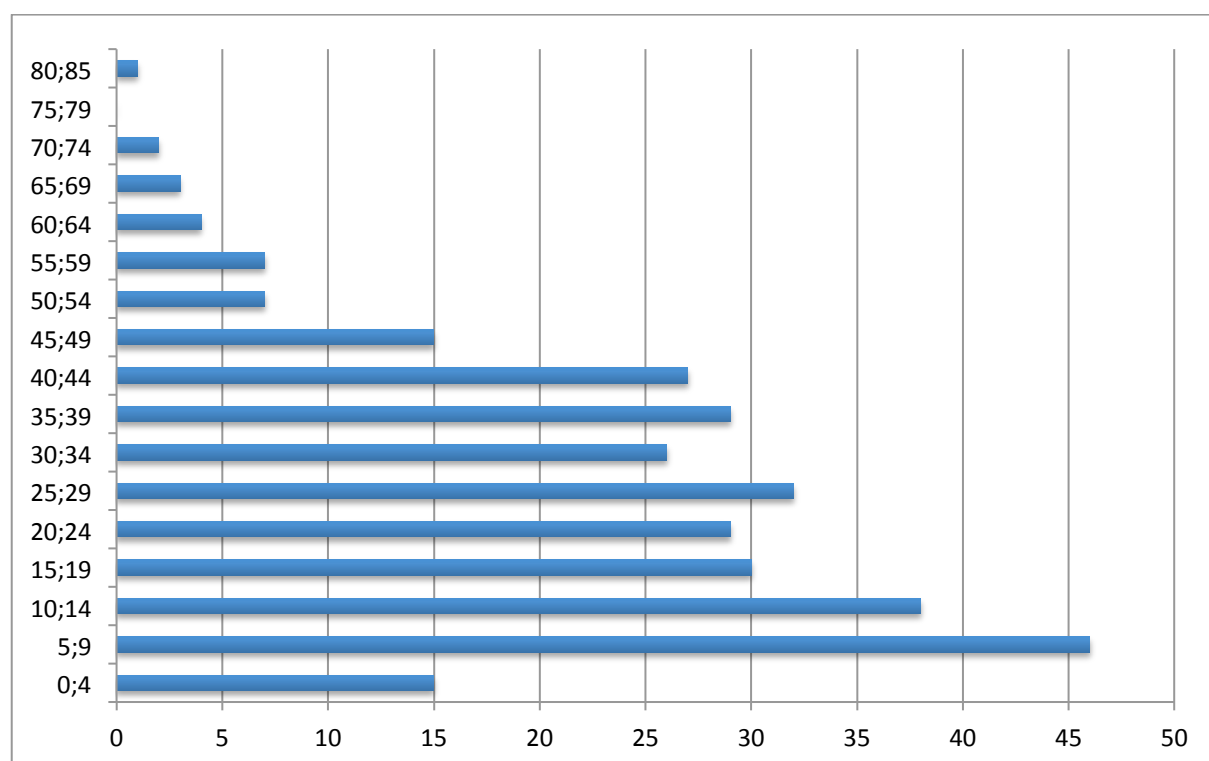
The data from the GIP-Habitat shows the demographic structure of the population of the Platz. There are 310 inhabitants in 92 households. Figure 10 shows the number of persons per household (a range of 1 to 8). The dominant family pattern of a couple with 2 children is similar to the usual Western Europe model. The extended family pattern, with three generations, is found in 4 of the 5 large families of 7 or more persons.

Figure 10 : Number of persons by household



There are no figures for distribution by sex so we cannot calculate the average age at which women give birth to their first child; in the interviews several women told us they also had children in Romania who were adults or stepchildren. However we can construct an age pyramid (not disaggregated by sex) for this population.

Figure 11 : Age pyramid : Age groups / Number of persons



We note the small number of children below the age of 5. In interviews several parents told us they return to Romania for the early years of their children to protect them from poverty. We also note a homogeneous distribution of adults between the ages of 20 and 44 years and only a very few adults over the age of 60 years. However, in the generational renewal, the new arrivals follow closely together with the result that several generations may live together in the same shack. Titel and Livia are 41 years old. They live with their daughter of 9, their son who is 24, his wife (20 years old) and his son's three children (0 – 4 years old). Titel's parents are dead and Livia's parents – Titi and Ana – live in Romania.

Sebastien (40 years) lives with his wife and their four children, along with his father, Daniel (63 years). Daniel looks after the children while Sebastien and his wife go out to beg – *manghel*. Roman is 40 years old, his father who was born in 1953 is dead; his mother, aged 58 years lives with him and helps his wife to bring up their 4 young children.

Calin and Lamania have left their four children (8 – 10 – 12 – 13 years old) in Romania in the care of Calin's mother. It is heartbreaking but it is 'easier to cope'. This situation, which is common in other Platz is unusual here. Lamania's parents died when she was ten years old.

Other families have kept their old folk back home: Sorin, who is 35 years old, lost his mother six years ago; she was 50, his father is 62 and is still alive, living in Romania. Danutz is 34 years old. His father died 10 years ago at the age of 57. His mother, who is 60, is still alive in Romania. Florin's parents are 55 years old; he lives with them, his wife and his children in Romania. When he travels, he comes on his own.

5 Local policies

In this part, we will present the practice of eviction as being the cornerstone of French policy towards Roma. As we have already emphasized in relation to the methods of national authorities in the previous report, French policy towards Roma is primarily one of the management of the makeshift settlements, known as *bidonvilles*, which have been declared illegal. In this respect it is the response at local level of the application of a legal system predefined as a global policy. We can then go back to the past and present the experience of the residents of the Platz du Samaritain to understand the chronology and the technical aspects of eviction. Finally, after having contextualised the role of the NGO's, we will describe the community engagement project which we are endeavouring to set up with the Roma and the local authority in La Courneuve in an attempt to bypass or to block the eviction policy.

5.1 The legal framework of eviction

Legally speaking, people living in makeshift settlements are occupants with neither right nor title. The occupancy of the site, whether public or private, may conflict with several principles:

- Property rights if it is occupancy with neither right nor title;
- The requirements of public order if the occupancy of the site implies a threat to the security of the occupants or third parties (nearby residents, motorists if close to a road). Thus, the public authority must ensure the safety of people and property;
- The proper utilization of the public domain, if the occupancy of the site compromises missions of public service or if the site can be assigned for direct public use.

Several types of procedures can therefore culminate in the dismantling of an illegally occupied site. In particular two main categories of measures can be distinguished:

administrative measures targeting the living space, which are based on public order considerations, and legal decisions ordering the eviction of occupants with neither right nor title to ensure respect for property rights, whether they be public or private.

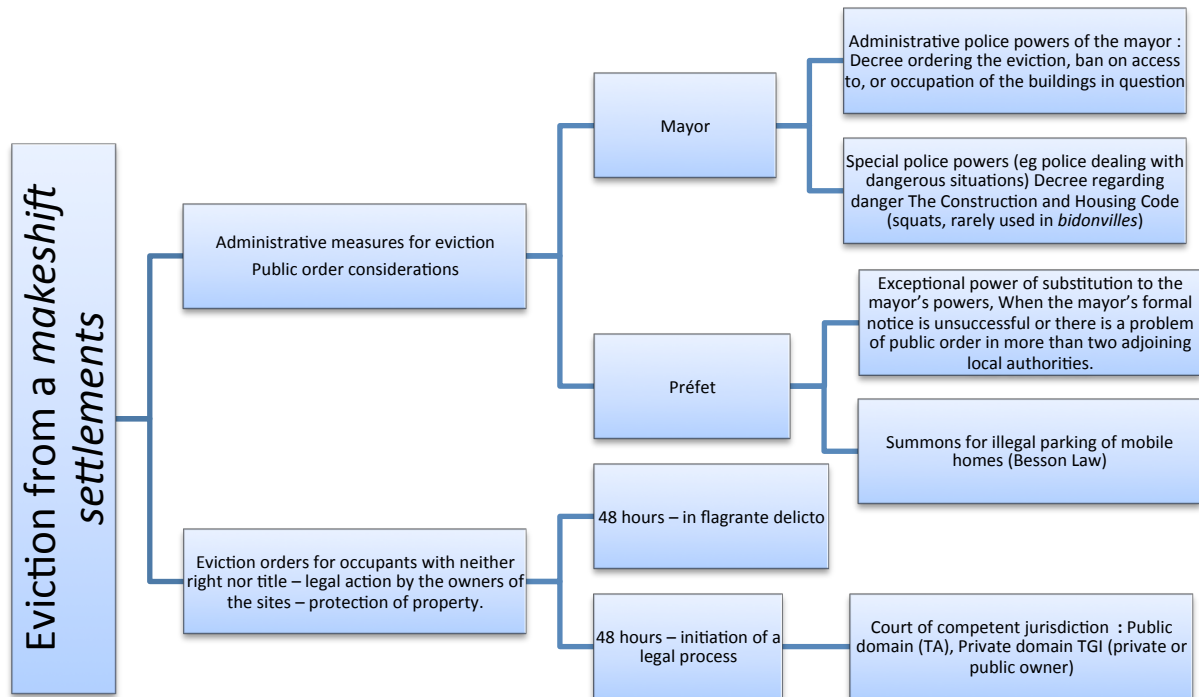


Figure 12 : Diagram of evictions procedure

For a long time, by far the majority of decisions to evict were the result of legal action but in recent years this situation has been subject to a two processes have brought about a change.

For several years now, judges had been making decisions in favour of the owner: occupants with neither right nor title were considered to be of an ‘obviously unlawful nature’, the *juge des référés* referred to pursuant to article 809 in the Civil Procedure Code automatically decreed the expulsion, occasionally granting a few months’ delay. However, the *juge des référés* in Bobigny (which had a considerable share of the litigation given the location of the *makeshift settlements*) took a series of decisions in which he decided that it was not for the judge in a situation of emergency to arbitrate between competing fundamental rights, namely, the right to property and the right to respect for private and family life and, in particular, the domicile. These decisions challenged this practice of automatic expulsion, as, for the first time, the *juge des référés* in Bobigny had endeavoured to evaluate the proportionality of the various conflicting rights. It was a direct application of the recent decision in the European

Court for Human Rights, Winterstein, C. (Fillonneau, 2014). This decree, which stipulates that courts evaluate proportionality, also recognises that

‘the loss of accommodation, no matter how precarious, is one of the most serious breaches of the right to respect for domicile and private and family life’.

Furthermore, the legal nature of expulsion orders changed. They gradually moved from the legal domain to that of administrative decisions taken by mayors on the basis of their administrative policing powers. Municipal decrees, which were non-existent ten years ago, have become very frequent in Ile-de-France. Mayors have systematically justified this move by their desire to obtain expulsions more rapidly than by legal means. This change in strategy has led to politics coming to the fore; a public policy originating in a political injunction is now central stage. Disturbance of public order is a vague concept, the outcome of social non-acceptability at a particular moment in time (Redor, 2001). It can therefore be mobilised against a highly stigmatised group (Cousin, 2013b) without the risk of being censored by the Administrative judge.

5.2 From national framework to local ways of thinking

Repression is a useful tool to which public authorities frequently resort when confronted with cases of occupation with neither right nor title. The remark applies to French towns where in recent years there has been an unprecedented rise in clearing ‘illegal camps’, or makeshift housing built by Romanian or Bulgarian Roma. It is estimated that almost 21,500 people were evicted from such sites in 2013 as compared with 9,500 in 2012 (Fillonneau & Goossens, 2014). In France, eviction from ‘illegal camps’ has even become a national policy since several ministerial circulars have been issued in this respect, the most recent being dated 26 August 2012, focusing on anticipating and accompanying these operations of eviction from ‘illegal camp sites’ (Cousin, 2013a). In 2014, the first three quarters show the continuation of this policy: according to the LDH (Ligue des Droits de l’Homme) and the ERRC (European Roma Rights Center), of the 450 sites listed since the 1st January, there were over 106 evictions between January and September.

However, at national level, the coercitive measures do not appear to be very dissuasive. Thus the DIHAL estimate of the number of inhabitants in makeshift settlements remained stable between September 2013 and November 2014 fluctuating between 15,000 and 20,000 persons

(Cousin, 2013a). In fact, the community journals on the subject⁶ or the observations of the MigRom team demonstrate that, once evicted, the residents of the camps usually build new makeshift shelters nearby. According to the same estimates, the number of residents in makeshift settlements in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis has fallen from 7,000 to a little over 2,700 persons. The people have gone to other neighbouring departments where the number of occupants with neither right nor title has risen. Site evictions therefore result primarily in ‘an expansion of the squat’ (Bouillon & Agier, 2009). To address the issue of the relevance of ‘cycles of eviction’ we wished to consider the cost of the repeated evictions of one and the same group.

5.3 What is the cost of the eviction policy?

Given the lack of any evaluation of evictions as a public policy, the MigRom research group decided to mento a research report analysing public policy carried out by five doctoral students (Master II) in the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées (Bossière, Desbieys, Mouche, Teichner, & Wolff, 2013).

5.3.1 Methodology

For this study, we chose a qualitative approach of the ‘bottom-up’ type. We chose a group which Grégoire Cousin had followed over the past few years during his community work activity as one which seemed to us to be relatively representative of cycles of eviction experienced by the Roma. After reconstituting their itinerary since 2011 in detail with their help and the use of community archives, we identified all the actors involved in the successive evictions (owners, local authorities, state services) and we conducted a survey of this population to identify the costs involved in evicting the site. The second task in the identification of the actors and the costs consisted in listing the social, educational and other actions – to some extent the investment costs which had been lost as a result of the evictions. We identified the actors of these actions and carried out a survey of the costs they had spent on this community.

We established a financial nomenclature before, during and after the eviction :

⁶ See in particular the annual reports of the Collectif Droits de l’Homme Romeurope, available on their web site : <http://www.romeurope.org/>

Extended Survey report Feb. 2015 Paris Team, Second Draft

Before: Management, Schooling, Health, Social Diagnosis

During: Legal costs, Eviction costs, Demolition/Cleaning, Security Plan

After: Equipment lost/destroyed, loss of income; re-housing

5.3.2 Outcome

We traced the itinerary of a group of Ursari from Filiasi. The group comprised about one hundred people. The size of the *makeshift settlements* does not necessarily correspond to the size of the group as they may live with other people on the same site. The wanderings of this group led them to live in town A, in the suburbs of a large city, B, and in the city B before returning to A.

Municipality A : State property – 120 persons – Evicted on 07/12/2012

Municipality B : Local authority property – 70 persons – evicted on 12/06/2013

Municipality B : Property belonging to a public sector company – 240 persons – evicted 29/05/2013

Municipality A : Local authority property – 100 people – not evicted in April 2014

By applying the costs declared in the basic nomenclature, we obtain the following table:

Table 1 : cost of evictions

Time	Costs	Makeshift settlements 1 Municipality A	Makeshift settlements 2 Municipality B	Makeshift settlements 2 Municipality B	Makeshift settlements 3 Municipality A
Before eviction	Management	-	-	-	159000€
	Education	0€	0€	0€	6000€
	Health	-	-	-	-
	Diagnostic	-	-	3500€	3500€
Eviction	Legal costs	3798€	7063€	3589€	845€
	Eviction	1365€	1365€	3885€	Not relevant
	Cleaning	103000€	20215€	59745€	Not relevant
	Security plan	0€	0€	105000€	Not relevant
Subseq	Loss of	1200€	800€	4000€	Not relevant

uent	Equipment	400€	1000€	3000€	Not relevant
costs	Loss of income	-	-	1530	Not relevant
	Rehousing				

NB: the blank spaces are those where we were not able to identify the costs directly. The fourth site had not yet been evacuated at the time of the survey so some spaces are not relevant.

Thus, for 3 successive evictions over two years of the same group of approximately 100 persons, we calculate the total cost to be 324,000 Euros.

- *Makeshift settlements 1* : 109 000 €
- *Makeshift settlements 2* : 30 000 €
- *Makeshift settlements 3* : 174 000 €

In this report we also demonstrated that the costs are mainly borne by the owners (91%) who are, however, in many cases, public entities.

5.4 Eviction as a local policy in French academic discussion

While the relative inefficiency of a policy for makeshift settlements based on eviction appears obvious at national level, this policy is meaningful at local level: thus the *Préfet* of the Seine-Saint-Denis can take credit in the press⁷ for the efficiency of his action of repression. This is rational because this action is evaluated at the level of his sphere of competence. Today, this observation concerning the relative ‘rationality’ of an actor’s behaviour is shared by the various researchers who work on the question of removals or evictions. Reviewing the interventions of participants in recent years during the study days of the *Urba-rom* research network we could see a gradual move both in the point of view and in the analysis from a policy at national level to one at local level. This turning point is meaningful in scientific terms; it corresponds to a relative exhaustion of the national field of analysis after reaching a peak under Sarkozy in 2010 (Sallé, 2011), (Legros & Vitale, 2011) and a recent influence of Italian political sociological studies which are more advanced in local studies (Vitale, 2009). It is above all a genuine move of the power to evacuate from national to local level.

We can summarise the French debate by looking at two conceptions. Thus, Eric Fassin (Fassin, Fouteau, Guichard, & Windels, 2014) supports the idea that the French state can no longer develop a racist anti-Roma policy at central state level and has delegated this policy to

⁷ *Le Parisien*, 18 April 2014

local authorities who can classify populations without actually naming them in order to remove them. Eviction is thus the tool in practice of anti-Roma projects delegated to local authorities. The second position is more finely tuned (Cousin & Legros, 2015) and (Aguilera, 2014). While these authors agree with Eric Fassin on the primacy of the local, they reveal a complex interplay of actors in which the accent is not on a policy of race but on the problem of demonstrating the capacity of the public authorities to control areas undergoing transformation. The removal policy thus becomes meaningful in the analysis of land tenure and urban renovation policies rather than as an instrument of anti-Rom discrimination.

5.5 The eviction procedures in our research area

The residents in the Samaritain settlement where our fieldwork took place are no exception. They had experienced several evictions before establishing themselves in this settlement. The Samaritain settlement is itself in the process of being removed.

The past evictions are an important factor in the reconfiguration of the present community (as we showed in Part 3). The vast majority of those interviewed had lived through several evictions before settling in the Platz du Samaritain; they also speak of the failures of the public policies for integration, in particular the choice of Saint-Ouen as the village of integration.

5.5.1 Saint-Ouen “Village of Integration”

As we have shown the settlement in Saint Ouen was one of the key moments in the residential history of the migrants. This settlement was the focus of a public policy at local level of the ‘village for integration’ type. We considered it important to go back to this old project, which was studied by the geographer, Olivier Legros, and consider the relation with the present inhabitants of the makeshift settlements.

In 2007, there were roughly 600 people from the Arad region ou from Bucarest living in the settlement in the Rue Ardouin in Saint Ouen. The site had been occupied since 2006. The mayor suspended the decision to evacuate for 2 years (Legros, 2010). In January, 2007, the numbers increased as a result of the evictions which took place in Ile-Saint-Denis, La Courneuve and Gennevilliers, (Radenez & Remion, 2007). For a time, this site was to become important, both in terms of the sociability of families and in terms of the construction of public policies of the village for integration type (Legros, 2013). In 2008, after an on-site

selection, twenty-one families were chosen (80 person) and they went to live in the village. Almost 400 people accepted grants to return home (ARH)⁸; the remainder (about one hundred people) foresaw the removal and left for other squats. The integration village thus seems to be one tool among many to get rid of settlements. Thus *‘The authorities do not really need to resort to force: the removal measures, the establishment of the ‘village’ and the ARH grants to return home seemed to be enough to discourage any desire to resist’* (Legros 2013).

The integration village which was set up is, legally, a convention for urban and social control (MOUS – Maîtrise d’Oeuvre Urbaine et Sociale) or a tri-partite convention with the state, a collectivity and one or several associations, the aim being to link housing and social work. In Saint Ouen, the ALJ93 became responsible for managing rental aspects and the PactArim for social work. These two associations, which are both present in the *Département*, are long-standing organisations in social work in the *Département*. These associations are recognized as “working for” public authority and as such were to be highly criticized in particular by the *Voix des Rroms* association for their participation in the villages of integration. A study of this scheme (Legros, 2011) showed that the villages for integration were nothing more than a re-invention of the old French methods of intervention in makeshift settlements: temporary housing (*cités de transit*), imposing strict rules of behaviour and daily control of those going in and out. This link with the past showed the incapacity of the public authorities to go further than somewhat inefficient schemes in terms of cost and integration but this was perhaps not the real issue at stake subject of the scheme:

‘Thus the institutions appear to be more concerned with maintaining law and order than with the reception or integration of migrants in a vulnerable situation. Like the transit housing of yester year, today’s ‘villages’ are first and foremost regulatory measures aimed at re-asserting the authority of governments over their respective territories, controlling poorly identified populations and, sometimes, freeing land for urban planning operations. It is however important to stress that these policies are not viable. Specific forms of treatment and assimilation under supervision accelerate processes of marginalisation, as the experience of transit housing (cites de transit) demonstrated (Petonnet, 1985). The grants for repatriation do not give any consideration to the difficulties which the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma encounter in their countries of origin, which encourages many of them to go back to France.

⁸ Cf First Paris Migrom Report, April 2014

There is little doubt that the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma in vulnerable situations are now part of the urban scenery in France, as in other Western European countries. It is thus permissible to believe that by focusing, as is the case today, on questions of policing and public order, the new policies for makeshift settlements or settlements will encourage the emergence of permanent forms of marginality as the transit housing did 40 years ago. The public authorities are now probably contributing to the making of one of the social questions which we will have to confront in years to come'.

This paragraph, taken from the conclusion of Olivier Legros' 2011 study, rings particularly true today. The integration village in Saint-Ouen was 'closed' in 2012: of the twenty-one families accommodated, five were re-housed by the town or the State and five went to the integration village in Aubervilliers while waiting for a permanent solution. Four families left the scheme and seven remained on the site with no solution. The MOUS scheme cost roughly 200,000 Euros per year for 5 years, for a result which is far from satisfactory (from the housing viewpoint alone, only 25% were successful). In Saint-Ouen, those in charge never succeeded in by-passing the ban on employment, valid till January 2014, and the families found themselves caught between state-financed schemes ordering them to find employment while in practice the state refused to issue them with work permits.

The end result, from the point of view of residential stability, was that the families we interviewed and who weren't been selected in 2008, were just as successful as those in the scheme. Thus the Titel family, who left the rue Ardouin just before the evacuation in September 2008, settled in Quai de Saint Denis in Argenteuil, then as from 2009 in La Courneuve. But it has to be borne in mind here that the stability of the settlement in La Courneuve is exceptional.

5.5.2 Eviction procedures in the Platz du Samaritain

The fact is that the local authority who was the owner of the site had long tolerated this community (unlike other makeshift settlements in the town). But in March 2013, after four years of existence, the local authority initiated court proceedings to obtain evacuation of the site. The municipal officers invoked two reasons for this change in policy: deterioration in relations concerning the management of the rubbish bins and more generally of living together, or, conversely, pressure from the Préfet who was said to have demanded that the

local authority initiate eviction procedures against this area in return for his support on other issues. After having brought in a bailiff then the municipal health and hygiene department, the local authority assigned the residents of the site to the *Tribunal de Grande Instance* (TGI). After several postponements, the hearing took place on 29 July 2013. Several new actors emerged at this hearing. The residents were defended by a lawyer contacted through the intermediary of Rromeurope – a Rom political micro-organisation. The Defender of Rights, informed by the European Roma Rights Center, had stated his position concerning the effect of the evictions on the children. Finally in order to increase the local authority's chances of obtaining a rapid eviction, the *Préfet* undertook in a letter to carry out the social survey, provided for in the circular of August 2012 before any eviction.

By Order dated 30 August 2013, the TGI decided that the local authority could proceed with the eviction as from 1/12/2014, thus granting a delay of 3 months. The tribunal clarified two very important points: the local authority was only authorised to remove the shacks located on the cadastral plot quoted in the procedure. In effect, since the makeshift settlements was located on two cadastral plots this decision de facto prevented the eviction; furthermore, the TGI specified that the shacks constituted dwellings.

In view of this result, the local authority requested the TGI to extend the effect of the order dated 30/08/2013 to the adjacent plots. The TGI did so by an order on request dated 29/09/2013, before withdrawing by an Order dated 20/12/2013 following an appeal by the residents on the site. The local authority appealed against the decision to withdraw the Order and the Appeal Court by a decision dated 25/11/2014 overturned the 20/12/2013 decision thus making the decisions of 30/08/2013 and 29/09/2013 effective.

In the meantime, the residents on site requested a further delay from the enforcement judge who by a decision dated 15/02/2015 granted a delay until 15/08/2015. Therefore at the date of writing this report (01/04/2015) the residents of the makeshift settlements may be evicted in the coming months.

Following these procedures enabled us to reveal several points.

. What is at issue in the first instance is the question of time management: local policies have to take into consideration the temporal dynamics inherent to the law. Going through the judicial process forces local authorities to respect the time limits and they are not therefore totally in control of their schedule for eviction. The occupants with neither right nor title are

by definition living on borrowed time; all they can gain is an extension of stay. However the field survey on the Platz du Samaritain demonstrates that time gained whether it be political (2009-2013) or legal (2013-2015) is the essential condition for a two-fold integration both into the migrant community and into French society.

. The political decision to evacuate a site is the outcome of the political balance within the local authority at a given moment.

. It emerges from the rhetoric of the local elected officials that the Ville de la Courneuve has a negative image. It is stigmatized as being a poor town. Evicting the Roma settlements is part of an affirmative action policy aimed at the residents (demonstrating that the mayor is in control of the area) and, indirectly, contributes to the improvement of the town's image in the eyes of the outside world (eliminating signs of poverty in the town).

The legal status of the site has an impact on the Roma community, thus since 25 November 2014, the risk of eviction seems to be eroding the cohesion of the community: families hesitate to anticipate the eviction and leave, the leadership of the *platz* is challenged and tensions, which till then were dormant, are emerging between the orthodox families and the neo-Protestants.

The *Tribunal de Grande Instance* (TGI) has ordered the eviction of specific people and not of the community, nor eviction from the site. There is however something specific about the relationship of the institutions to the dialectic between individuals and groups when they interact with the Roma. Thus in December 2013, when 150 Roma from the Platz du Samaritain came to the hearing at the Tribunal de Grande Instance, suddenly the procedure for admission to the Tribunal broke down. The ushers called the police and approximately ten officers formed a cordon blocking the entrance. The Roma protested and produced documents to show that they had all been assigned. Their lawyer went to get the judge who confirmed they had all been summoned and asked the police to allow them to enter but, he specified, without the children. This scene is an illustration of a recurrent observation in the studies on the relations between the Roma and the institutions (Cousin, 2013b) – fear of numbers, or the group, while applying procedures which are fictitiously individual.

5.6 Right to the city for all? Domiciliation (legal address), schooling and rubbish collection.

Quite apart from the issue of whether or not the local authority tolerates the occupation, the presence of the *makeshift settlements* does constitute a challenge to the local authority's capacity for integration in exercising the powers devolved to it. We have focused on three issues: domiciliation (legal address), schooling and rubbish collection.

5.6.1 Choice of address

In France, access to social rights is in practice subject to having a legal address or domicile which is systematically requested by welfare agencies. This is one of the major problems encountered by the Roma in La Courneuve. The address of the makeshift settlements is not recognised by the post office and no agency is willing to issue them with an address for administrative purposes.

The '*domiciliation administrative*' or address for administrative purposes enables a person with no fixed address to use the postal address of an agreed agency or a third party to access their civil and social rights, and receive private or administrative mail. Domiciliation is a right set out in the *Code de l'Action Sociale et des Familles (article L.264-1 à 10)*. There are two types of domiciliation – one is general and one is specific to the *Aide Médicale d'Etat (AME)* (State Medical Aid). The costs of the state medical aid defined by *Article L. 252-2 du Code de l'Action Sociale et des Familles* is covered by the *Médecins du Monde* health service. Difficulties arise in relation to the 'general' administrative domiciliation.

Article 51 in the *Droit au Logement Opposable (DALO)* or Enforceable Right to Housing Law concerns the 'right to domiciliation' for the benefit of persons of no fixed abode. The DALO or enforceable right to housing enables a person to claim:

- . 'legal, regulatory and contractual' social benefits with the exception of the AME or state medical aid,
- . legal aid,
- . the issue of a national identity card,
- . registration on the electoral register,

- . access to essential services such as a bank account, guaranteed by law, or compulsory insurance.

Normally this domiciliation is carried out by an agency approved by the *Préfecture* or by the Community Centre for Social Action. However in La Courneuve no agency in the local authority ensures this domiciliation, not even the Community Centre for Social Action (CCAS). This situation is openly illegal; the CCAS must ensure domiciliation. Their only right is to make the domiciliation subject to the presentation of proof of an attachment to the local authority. In the case of refusal, they must justify their decision in writing. The local authority in La Courneuve quite simply has no domiciliation service in the CCAS. Applications can therefore not be submitted and the CCAS does not answer written requests for domiciliation. Although illegal, this practice is far from being isolated. In fact it is the practice in the vast majority of the local authorities in the Ile-de-France region (Mercey & Vella, 2011). It is a crucial issue for the access to social rights of Roma living in makeshift settlements in Ile-de-France.

5.6.2 Schooling

The question of schooling is directly linked to the preceding issue of domiciliation. In La Courneuve, the office dealing with school enrolment demands a postal address or an address for administrative purposes (*domiciliation administrative*) in the local authority. The local authority itself refuses to issue this domiciliation. In France, schooling is compulsory and the local authority is clearly not in line with the law. However, the refusal to enrol the Roma applies to all the departments. Several reasons are raised by the elected officials:

- . Past experience: a few years ago an extra class was opened to deal with the enrolment of 'Roma children' in school; this was a failure. After a few weeks the children stopped going to school.
- . Roma children will lower the level of the schools which are already in difficulty, because La Courneuve hosts orphan children from Paris in these classes.

Confronted with the indifference, if not the hostility of the local authority concerning the schooling of the children, only the most insistent parents have sent their children to school; the local authority does enrol children whose parents insist strongly. Of the 58 children of

school age, five go to the Paul Doumer Primary School and two go to secondary school (one in La Courneuve and the other in Aubervilliers).

5.6.3 Garbage collection

After the complications of the first few years, when a rubbish heap accumulated on the edge of the site, the local authority organized a rubbish collection on the site. To do so, they provided five containers which were emptied twice a week. The question of rubbish collection has always been an element forcing the local authority to talk to the Roma, whether it be in conflict mode or a question of negotiation.

5.7 The role of the NGOs on the Platz du Samaritain

Several NGO's are involved on the Platz:

- Médecins du Monde (MDM), a major organization in the *department* of Seine-Saint-Denis, has been involved in the medical sphere in the Platz du Samaritain for the past 5 years. Their local office (formerly the Mission Rroma) with 3 employees and forty volunteers is a pilot mission focussing on precarity and the only association to do so in this area. They enable access to treatment (and in particular to State Medical Aid) by paediatricians, and their nurses and doctors visit the Roma regularly. MDM also organise vaccination campaigns and screening for tuberculosis.
The significant presence of MDM puts this organization at the centre of political action. It acts informally as network head, coordinating smaller structures. The MDM consider the Platz du Samaritain to be a showcase and symbolic of good practices arising from stability.
- The Association for the Schooling of Gipsy Children (A.S.E.T.93) is an NGO linked to the school system which organises classes in a mobile school for the children who do not go to school. Three seconded teachers from the school of Saint Joseph La Salle in Pantin work for the NGO; there is also a school mediator who specialises in school enrolment. L'ASET 93 has been working in La Platz since 2010. In September 2014 their numbers increased and they now come twice a week (see 6.2.2 schooling p. 54)
- Rromeurope (not to be confused with Romeurope) is a small organisation run by a French Roma 'nationalist' activist. It intervenes mainly in the legal sphere, preparing

the documents required by the lawyers to benefit from legal aid. This association works in liaison with another activist Roma association: the Voice of the Roma (la voix des Rroms).

- Lastly various people from artistic circles far and wide (the cinema, architects, photographers ..) visit the site.

We have observed that these NGOs come from neighbouring towns but no local association is present on site. However the Roms do visit the local charity organizations such as the *secours populaire* or the *Restos du Coeur* (free meals).). The associations, which are usually either humanitarian or Roma political associations, have united around the Platz Samaritan to fight against eviction.

5.8 The need to be visible

Confronted with the announcement of an imminent eviction and in light of the observations listed above, as from October 2014 and in partnership with the NGOs, the MigRom team have undertaken an operation aimed at improving the image of the Platz. The strategy aims to move from the image of a pocket of poverty posing a public problem to a vibrant place which can on the contrary contribute to the cultural dynamics of the town. This ‘Community engagement’ project has several aspects:

- . the institutional recognition of La Platz as a residential area,
- . making the site a focus for cultural vitality
- . improvement of the material conditions on site

The first action was to ask the residents to choose an official name which would be used in their relations with the institutions. The makeshift settlements was named the ‘Platz du Samaritain’.

With a view to the recognition of La Platz du Samaritain as a residential area, we went with the residents to a meal featuring Roma culture in the local *Maison de la Citoyenneté* (House for Citizenship). This was an opportunity to meet the elected officials and to resume a working relationship which had been broken off since 2013. After this first contact, the *Maison de la Citoyenneté* organised a meeting of all the associations in order to evaluate which projects were viable in the light of those who attended. After this meeting, the residents

of La Platz decided to set up a community organization which would defend the interests of the site and be able to speak in the name of a structure recognized by the institutions and have a legal framework to organise events. Thus with the help of MigRom the *Samariteanul* Association was set up. The first action of the association was to organise a workshop for the children to do drawings at the *Maison de la Citoyenneté* while their mothers used the kitchen there to make cakes for sale at the inter-associations ice-rink on the square at the town-hall. The second arena where recognition was sought was academic research in urban planning. To this end, the on-site pastor took the floor during an international colloquium on '*paysage global de camps*' to invite the participants to come and visit him on the following day. About thirty academics accepted and on 7 November 2014 Le Platz was included in the tour organized by the *Société Française des Urbanistes*; 70 town planners from all over the world were welcomed in the church before visiting the site.

It is obviously interesting to discover a 'Roma settlement'. Thus, and still with a view to ensuring visibility of the site, its population and way of life, we contacted the project MyGranTour⁹ whose objective is to train 'guides' in migrant communities who can organise visits within their own communities. A young man from the site is on a training course at the moment in the context of his enrolment in a civic volunteer service. At the end of his course, he should be able to set up tours of the area in conjunction with a travel agency specialised in 'alternative experiences'.

The strategy of working on the image of the site aims to associate the makeshift Roma settlements with prestigious events. Thus a string quartet from the *Orchestre de Chambre* of the city of Paris was invited to play in the church on 21 November 2014 in the evening. Key local personalities were invited to a private concert with the Roms. The event was the subject of a radio report on *France Musique*. In the same spirit of associating the local area, high culture and the local authority, the MigRom team proposed an international conference at La Courneuve entitled *Les Métropoles européennes et habitats populaires* in association with the local authority, the *University of Paris V*, the *Ecole d'Architecture de la Villette* and *Sciences-Po*. The decision to not mention the Roma aspect of the event is deliberate. The political focus is on an 'area which is part of the town' and not on its 'unwanted population'. After a first period of discussion, the municipality rejected the project.

⁹ For a description of the programme, see <http://www.mygrantour.org/fr/>

Another project being studied concerns good quality architectural developments in the *makeshift settlements*. The students from the *Ecole d'Architecture de la Villette* made sketches in the shacks. A very well-known architect has also been contacted to design a building for the children. These architectural actions are coordinated with a project for sanitary and social improvements developed by the *Fondation Abbé Pierre* and *Médecins du Monde*. This project consists in removing the rubbish from the garbage dump next to the site, and using the space liberated to install water and sanitation facilities. This improvement in living conditions would aim to make the *makeshift settlements* acceptable. It would then be possible to launch a project for the social support of individual departures from the *makeshift settlements*, without re-housing everyone or dissolving the social ties constructed by the group

6 Social Inclusion

6.1 Employment

6.1.1 Recovery of scrap metal

The *Platz* forms an economic unit based on the recovery of scrap metal. The primary activity of identification and collection is carried out by a fleet of people who either have carts attached to bicycles or small trucks (less than 3.5 tonnes). The scrap metal is recovered in the first instance in the street, in garbage bins, or from public bulky waste collections. Those who are best equipped (with trucks) are in contact with building contractors who give them or to sell them the scrap metal from demolition sites. This system involves many informal entrepreneurs who circulate in the city, their trucks being shared by several persons. Geographical knowledge of the area is essential according to our interviewees. The *Département de Seine-Saint-Denis* is constantly undergoing urban renovation and one therefore has to have knowledge of the on-going building sites, the scheduled dates for entrance and exit to bulky waste depots for the various local authorities and the sites which are further away where there is less competition. Recognised skills acquired through an excellent knowledge of the urban fabric are brought fully into play.

The scrap metal collected is brought back to the *Platz* where it is dismantled, the copper wire is stripped off, motor windings removed and the aluminium put on one side. Loaded onto trucks, these materials are resold to major companies in the sector such as *Auber Métaux*, *Europe Fer et Métaux* or *Métaux européens* which are within a radius of a few kilometres around the Rom site. Several companies buy scrap from the Roms. The prices are aligned

with global rates. In March 2013, 'ordinary' scrap was selling for 141 Euros the tonne, today the price is 120 Euros per tonne.

Since the reform in 2010, companies no longer have the right to pay for the purchase of scrap metal in cash; transactions must be done by cheque. Most of the Roms in the Samaritain do not have bank accounts, therefore theoretically they do not have access to this activity. To get round this difficulty, two models have been developed. Some people, who do have bank accounts buy the scrap directly on the *Platz* at a price below market rates, then sell it to the scrap companies. These intermediaries thus concentrate the activity of dozens of individuals. What one might call a 'derivative' scrap metal market has also been established in the community. When there is a delivery of scrap metal to a company, the owner of the company issues a ticket stamped with the weight delivered and the sum to be paid by the cashier. These tickets are brought back to the *Platz* and resold to someone with a bank account who deals with getting a cheque for the ticket, then cash. On the scrap metal derivatives market the tickets are sold on average 15% above their face value. In both cases, it is essential to be in possession of a bank account to succeed; however it is extremely difficult to open a bank account when one has neither a regular income nor a legal domicile. Let me remind you once again that a residence in the *Platz* does not constitute a legal domicile.

6.1.2 The internal economy of the *Platz*

In the Samaritain, the *Platz* is primarily a market in the first sense, a place of exchange and in particular of economic exchange. In their shacks, Mme C. sells Roumanie cigarettes. Titel sells soft drinks and crisps; although he is the head of the *Platz* he only insists on the monopoly for these two products. A few tables in front of the church serve as stalls: there are shopping bags with shampoo, chocolates, cakes, *gadjé* from Romania are delivered about once a week; the Roms in the *Platz* sell food at the same place when the opportunity arises (food-aid packages, products past sell-by date). While not prohibitive, the prices are not rock-bottom but, 'it means we don't have to go as far as LIDL'. Two Romni from the *Platz* Voltaire go from shack to shack selling skirts and T-shirts with 'I Love Paris' embroidered in strass on them. From time to time, various Romanian 'specialities' such as, cabbages, sausages and cakes arrive with the return of someone from Romania. The market is not really specialised, but depends on the opportunities of each participant. The services are more specialised, like hairdressers who go from *Platz* to *Platz* with their scissors and are an important source of information recounting the gossip from other *Platz*. As a result of its

stability the Samaritain has become a meeting place for departures to Romania. Mini-buses come to collect the Roms who want to go back; two people in the *Platz* operate a road transport business. Roms from other *Platz* leave from La Courneuve.

6.1.3 Integration into the formal economy?

According to the survey carried out in the autumn by *Médecins du Monde*, 6 households were recorded with an official work permit (building site, housework, shop assistant). 4 persons were recorded as having a regular job but undocumented. This is not a satisfactory situation but it is much better than in the period before the lifting of the transitional measures in January 2014 because, according to the information in the GIP (Public Interest Group) survey, in September 2013 nobody had a work contract.

The attempts to enter the legal work market can give rise to unpleasant experiences. Thus a young man and his brother told us that they had been working, without documentation, for a cleaning company. They were paid at the end of each day. They asked the employer to declare them. He gave them a work contract stipulating the salary would be paid at the end of the month. After one month of work, the employer fired them without paying the salary due.

More generally speaking, it is most regrettable that to date in the local authority there is no employment counselling or training set up by *pôle-emploi* (French Employment Agency) or any other similar organization in the *Platz* (with the notable exception of one young man doing a civic service¹⁰ placement). Integration into the world of work is restricted to self-insertion and therefore relies directly on the social and relational capital of the individual (Legros, 2012).

6.2 Education

As we demonstrated in part 5.6.2 the children on site have low school attendance in French schools. However, we cannot limit our analysis to this observation. Some of the children of the residents live in Romania and go to school there (like those of Lamanian and Calin) or learn

¹⁰ The Civic service is a voluntary service managed by the State- or on behalf of the State e.g. in the social field or in civil protection, set up under the Law of 10 March 2010. In the present case, it is more specifically the civic service for 6 to 12 months aimed at young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years and mainly financed by the State.

the basics of French in mobile schools. We will see how education can be understood as going to school but also as the transmission of knowledge within the group.

6.2.1 Transmission within the group

The families and the dynamics of the *Platz* are also areas for Romani education. The first fundamental thing to be transmitted is the Romani language. On the site, everyone speaks Romani; the interviewees said they had learned it in early childhood; they then learned Romanian at school or with childhood friends. In early childhood, the priority is the transmission of the language and the relationship to the adult world. For the parents, this is a time for special protection which is why, as Danutz explained: ‘When my wife is pregnant, we go back to Romania until the baby is two years old’. Paradoxically, Romani is strengthened by migration; the children in the *Platz* at the moment live in a totally Romani environment. The *Platz* is in effect a closed space, which is highly socialised and in which everyone has the right to express an opinion on the supervision of the children as a whole. The children have the right to come and go and to play in the *Platz*. This can lead to friction; we witnessed a mother complaining to an adult who had scolded her child for tormenting a dog. She complained that this woman had raised her voice against her son even though the situation did not justify it. In the *Platz* the contacts between children are multiple as are those between children and adults. For the adults, this situation is reassuring; as Titel explained to us; ‘It is safe here – there are no drugs in the Platz’. On site, it is rapidly apparent that the fact that everyone supervises the children is a very important social resource when coping in difficult social situations (Pétonnet & Choron-Baix, 2002). Mothers can leave for a few hours, take advantage of an opportunity such as a distribution of food-aid or go to the health-centre without worrying when they know the children are safe.

It remains to be seen whether or not this shared and closed space is a determining factor for the reproduction of the group, a group which did not exist six years ago. In other words, will the adolescents who are becoming adults and who have grown up on the site, give priority to the friendships forged in the *Platz* (marriage, business, etc.)? We can observe that the adolescent boys do group together disregarding the social and religious hierarchies which the parents have established on the site. Here we find the adolescents’ version of the society of equals which constitutes the symbolic resource of Rom egalitarianism, as demonstrated by Michael Stewart (Stewart, 1991).

Adolescence is an age particularly favourable to the learning of technical knowledge about cars and metals. Thus an experienced mechanic dismantling a car is watched in silence by several adolescents who then discuss the mechanism at length using a language of technical knowledge which is amplified by the pleasure of the discussion. For girls, the acquisition of household knowledge is also done through observation with the various tasks being ranked. Thus, in Livia's house, her *bori* and her daughter do not prepare the meal, but busy themselves with sweeping the house. Nevertheless there is the idea that doing things together is a way of learning: several women told us that what they miss in the *Platz* is not having a real kitchen and sharing times when, together, they make cakes or festival meals.

6.2.2 Schooling

Young people over the age of 15 have usually had some schooling in Romania and can read Romanian. Most of the children in the *Samaritain* under the age of ten can neither read nor write, apart from the few who go to school (13 children out of 58). Their bi-national origins seem to be both a help and a hindrance to schooling. Some families have chosen to leave the children in Romania where they say they are being well educated. It appears from what they say that, for many families whose children are in France, what they hope and presume will be their imminent return to Romania prevents them from investing in schooling in France because 'school is in Romania'. Globally, the local authority and the schools make no approaches to the families. But the families themselves do not devote the energy required to educate the children despite the obstacles (for example, to get round the problem of domicile, the commute to school and the anti-Rom racism which is very strong in the multi-cultural classes in the deprived outer suburbs).

Here, the comparison with the education of the children in the neighbouring town of Bobigny is dramatic. The head-teacher of a school in this town has initiated a pro-active approach to the *Platzs* in the town and has succeeded in obtaining good results in terms of schooling. Her prestigious position as the head teacher in a public local authority school who took the first step and went round to visit the parents and who facilitates life at school in all sorts of ways (like organizing showers and changing rooms) has enabled these results. To return to the comparison with the *Platz du Samaritain*, it is highly regrettable that what was an individual initiative in Bobigny was not publicised and that, despite three Circulars from the Ministry in

2012¹¹, the national education authority has not tackled this issue of non-enrolment in national education schools, head on.

Finally, on site, the ASET (Association for the Schooling of Gipsy Children) is present with three mobile classrooms twice a week. About thirty children attend the classes given by the teachers. The ASET has only been ensuring this regularity and this frequency since September but considerable results are observed since several children of CP and CE1 level already know how to read in French. The situation is more complicated for the older children who have a substantial backlog to catch up before they can enter school. The ASET responds to the main demand made by the families in matters of schooling: learning how to read and to count. The liberating nature of the school or the importance of qualifications for the children's professional life in the future is not mentioned when the parents' talk about the future of their children.

6.2.3 Representation

The fact that Titel is the head of the *Platz* is not challenged in the first instance. He is the interlocutor who discusses decisions affecting the site as a whole with people from outside – for example, when legal counsel has to be hired in eviction procedures. He manages a number of everyday questions: the parking of cars, the management of the garbage bins, overnight supervision of the *Platz*. In the discourse of the people in the *Platz*, Titel is the head because he 'set up' the *Platz*, he found it and he succeeded in avoiding immediate eviction. However, that is not enough; “*the site does not belong to him*”, “*he should not be too domineering*” in the words of one man, exasperated by Titel's anger at the parking of cars in front of the garbage bins. We are not faced with some form of counter-ownership, but rather an initial element in his political legitimacy.

Whether he be appreciated or criticised, it is his mastery of the spoken word, his oratorical skills, his capacity to evaluate his interlocutor or the legitimacy of what this person is saying which is then advanced by our interviewees: “*He is intelligent. He speaks properly to*

¹¹ Circular n° 2012-142 dated 2-10-2012, *Scolarisation et scolarité des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs* ; Circular n° 2012-141 dated 2-10-2012, *l'Organisation de la scolarité des élèves allophones nouvellement arrivés* ; Circular n° 2012-143 dated 2-10-2012, *Organisation des Casnav*

everyone, including to French people”, “*If he is where he is, it’s because he’s the biggest liar in the world*”. To his supporters he presents himself as being the one who does the speaking: “*OK, OK, tonight I’ll get the Roms together and I’ll explain it to them*”, or as the person who knows what not to say, “*We can’t say that it is over and done with because, if we do that, nobody will pay attention any longer and the Platz will be in a mess*”. This role of ‘the person who speaks’, as a definition of power is in keeping with Pierre Clastres’ analyses of the Chiefdoms in South America (Clastres, 2011) and leads us to ask whether he really does exercise power? A photograph of Titel, shaving bare-chested, was published in one of these free newspapers distributed in the public transport. For the next few days, men from the *Platz* went round to his place, mocking him for having appeared half-naked like that in a newspaper. Titel, who prides himself on his sense of humour, joked with them about it. But he called the photographer and forbade him to come back to the site. His authority in the negative sense of coercion stops here – he can exclude someone from the site – “My sister’s husband drank – he was violent – I asked them to leave”. But his power in the positive meaning of the term is wider. He is, in Clastres’ definition, a ‘peace maker’; “When there are problems I speak to the men to convince them to do things properly”.

This legitimacy of the word is concomitant with his role as a Pastor, who institutionalises the legitimacy of the authority of the word. In his church, he leads the prayers. Elements of political management of the site are dispensed corresponding to the religious services; prayers are said against eviction, and against fires. A prophet is said to have foreseen that the site will not be evacuated before Easter 2015. Titel often comes back to this prophecy which enables him to maintain a religious distance from the political nature of his activities. We did submit to him what we understood to be a positive idea namely, that it was his discussions with the local authority which made of him a political person. This was rejected as being an insult: “but I am an evangelist, I do not have the right to commit sins like politics”.

However, his political legitimacy is accepted by the outside world; he is considered by the local authority officers and by the NGOs to be the representative on site and nobody questions this. There is a reciprocal reinforcement of internal and external legitimacy: speaking with external actors means he is essential internally, and his presumed capacity to be listened to by all the inhabitants within the *Platz* enables the institutions (public authorities and NGOs) to have a single interlocutor. Since November 2014, while the risk of eviction was taking shape in private, several residents have challenged his authority in the *Platz*. Everything appeared to

indicate that he was no longer capable of negotiating with the authorities; there was no reason to listen to him. He was challenged in particular by the orthodox families over whom he had no religious authority. With these families, he could not bring the religious sphere into play to assert his authority when his role as a political intermediary was threatened. In this situation, was he a political leader, or merely an intermediary? Here he is in a pre-political situation of convergence of non-political legitimacy (the pioneer, the spoken word, the religious) which could become a strictly political position if he were to enter the political sphere of the majority society which is also that of the Roms: “in Romania, there is no *Bulibasha*, (King of the Gypsies) it is the local authority who decides and I prefer it like that” in the words of Danutz’ answer to a question from a social anthropologist about traditional community chiefs. Once again, we find here the attachment to Gadjekané political and legal structures, in the non-existence or refusal to resort to the Romany *kriss* (customary court): “No, no – if I have a problem I ask the police”; “We don’t do that”.¹²

Endeavouring to position himself in French political structures, Titel would like to create a ‘legal’ association, of which he would be president, and which would represent the Roms in the *Platz* in dealings with the local authority thus corresponding perfectly to the practice of local authorities in deprived outer suburbs of using community associations in the management of the aspirations of their residents. It is precisely because this was the key to political integration in the town that the local authority administrative management opposed its veto to the domiciliation of this association at the *Maison des Associations* in the town, although the application had been accepted beforehand by its services. The other element in the political integration of a Romani representative is their impact on local elections (European Community citizens have the right to vote in local elections) and their capacity to sway the vote in favour of one candidate or another. This impact is feared as we have shown for Saint Denis in the following chapter and, generally speaking, one of the possible keys to understanding why the Mayor in La Courneuve wishes to deny them access to domiciliation is that this would lead to their registration on the electoral lists.

These initial considerations on power within the *platz* raise further questions:

How is power maintained and what are the channels for its institutionalisation?

¹² Here it should be noted that Titel is an exception in that he admits having resorted to Romany Kriss, but only in Romania. Furthermore, the residents of the Samaritain *Platz* have a completely different approach from that observed on our other sites where most conflicts are settled by arbitration of the Roms who would take a poor view of resorting to the police or the courts.

What relationship do the Roms who live in the *platz* have with the legitimacy of power and what are its limits?

In comparison, how do other *platz* leaders ensure their power

6.3 Public attitudes to Roma

The ongoing study of the emergence and diffusion of the “Roma issues” in the political field on the web during the campaign for the European and local elections by means of the social network analysis has been carried out by the Italian team in cooperation with the French team and the *Laboratoire TIC-migrations* of the *Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* of Paris (<http://www.e-diasporas.fr/>).

6.3.1 First results about the emergence and diffusion of «Roma issues» in the political web arena

As part of the European MigRom project, with social network analysis (SNA) instruments, we are studying the emergence and diffusion of «Roma issues» in the political web arena during local electoral campaigns. Our aim is to analyse the flow of political discourses within the political and media websites. Our hypothesis is that, beyond the well established representations of politicians, a new autonomous arena is emerging from the campaigns, a political arena made up of a combination of controversies that is well present on the web and where we find Roma.

As the first step of our study, using Hyphe software, we tried to create two complex databases, one for France and one for Italy, including:

- all the media articles which were answering to the keyword "Rom", through a systematic press review on Google News;
- all political and institutional websites (at both a national and local level, party by party, candidate by candidate, institution by institution, association by association);
- information media websites.

So the final corpus, comprehensive of all political websites and all the media articles on Roma, is a blend of three different categories of web-entities :

- newspapers, radio, TV and information websites, for example: www.lemonde.fr

www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/puglia/

www.ntr24.tv/it.html

www.ansa.it/sicilia/

- articles on Roma, for example:

www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2013/11/09/01016-20131109ARTFIG00321-un-camp-rom-menace-l-alimentation-en-chauffage-de-paris.php

or

www.lastampa.it/2014/03/22/cronaca/costume/la-scuola-che-fa-crescere-i-rom-tZ8GH5xnTZgtu4J9227t9H/pagina.html

- political, institutional and NGOs websites, such as

www.frontnational.com

www.partitodemocratico.it

www.elections2014.eu/it

www.educationsansfrontieres.org

www.21luglio.org/

The French corpus we created is made up 1109 nodes (web-entities) and 6390 hyperlinks between those nodes.

The Italian corpus is made up of 1451 nodes and 8903 hyperlinks between those nodes.

The databases were produced during the electoral municipal campaigns (November - April 2014 for the city agglomeration of La Plain commune - North of Paris, and April- May 2014 for the town of Bari - Southern Italy).

At the beginning we decided to investigate the following issues:

- who, among the political players, was especially interested in Roma? That is, how were discourses about Roma distributed in the political sphere during the local electoral campaigns?

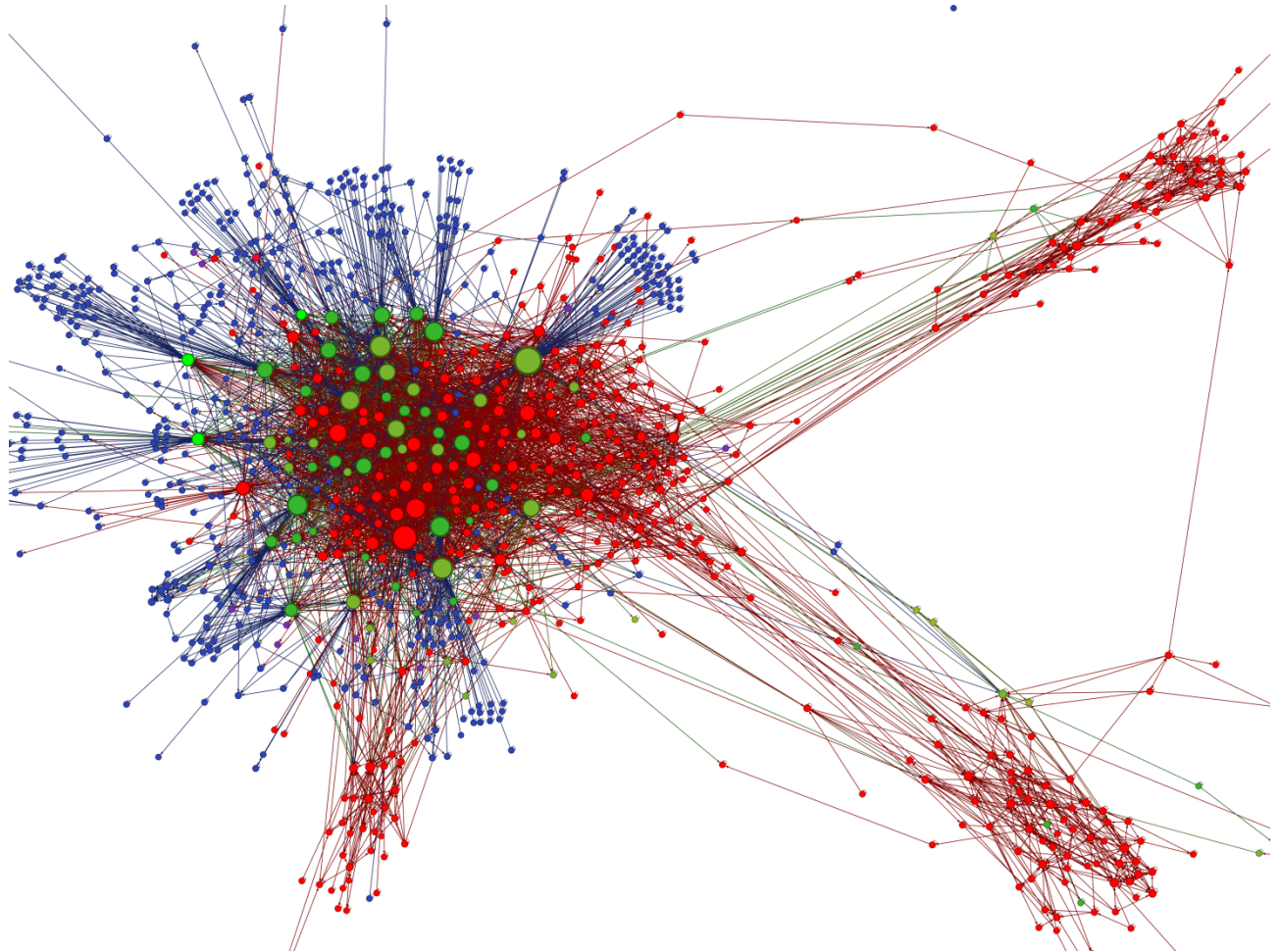
- who, among the press and information media, was especially interested in Roma? That is, how were discourses about Roma distributed in the information sphere during the local electoral campaigns?

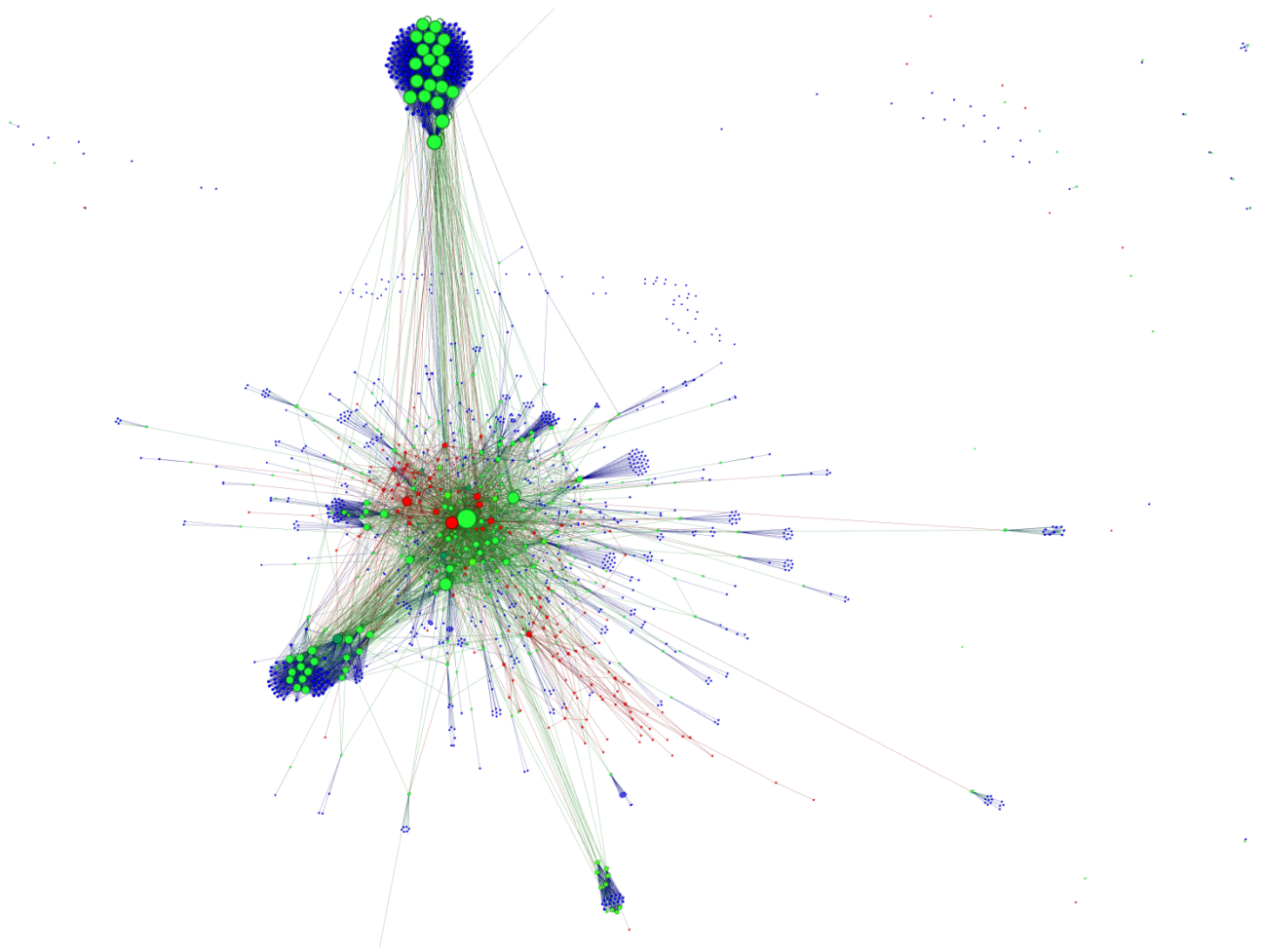
- which was the correlation, if there was any, between the media and the political discourses about Roma?

- which were the main topics of the media and political debates on the web? Which was the correlation, if there was any, between the media's and the politicians' topics?

Once the two databases had been compiled, we used Gephi software to create two maps representing the network of relations linking all the elements included in the databases
Once the two databases had been compiled, we used Gephi software to create two maps representing the network of relations linking all the elements included in the databases (maps 1 and 2).

Map 1 : french corpus



Map 2 : italian corpus**Caption of Maps 1 & 2 :**

- Green= information sites
- Red=political sites
- Blue= articles

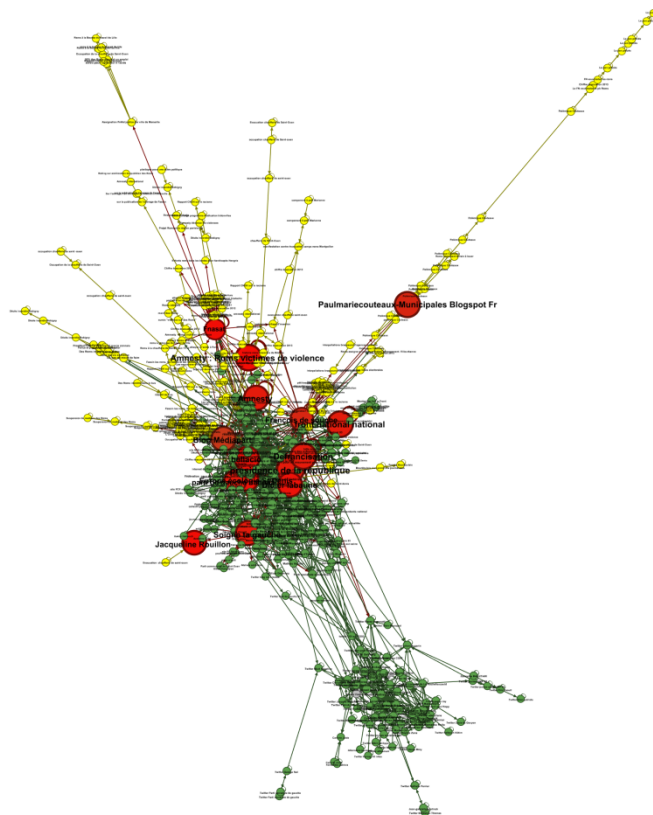
Starting from these complete and very complex maps, we filtered some elements so that only a few relation networks were plotted on new maps.

Firstly, we created maps that only showed networks between political websites and articles concerning Roma so that we could identify those political players who were especially interested in Roma during the local electoral campaigns (maps 3-4-5-6).

Before reading these maps, we should point out that the analysis of our data is first of all cartographic: these maps can show how the "Roma" topic is constructed on the web by the players selected to create our databases: politicians, associations, information media, institutional sites. They can show this mainly through the morphological features of the network represented. The usual tools for this kind of morphological analysis are as follows:

- modularity: how the players group together creating clusters of relations
- centrality: how some players are in the centre of other players' relations, and therefore crucial for our analysis
- degree: the number of relations between the players.

Map 3 : French corpus, politics vs articles



Caption :

- Green and red=political websites
- Yellow=articles linked with the political network
- Red=political websites directly linked with articles

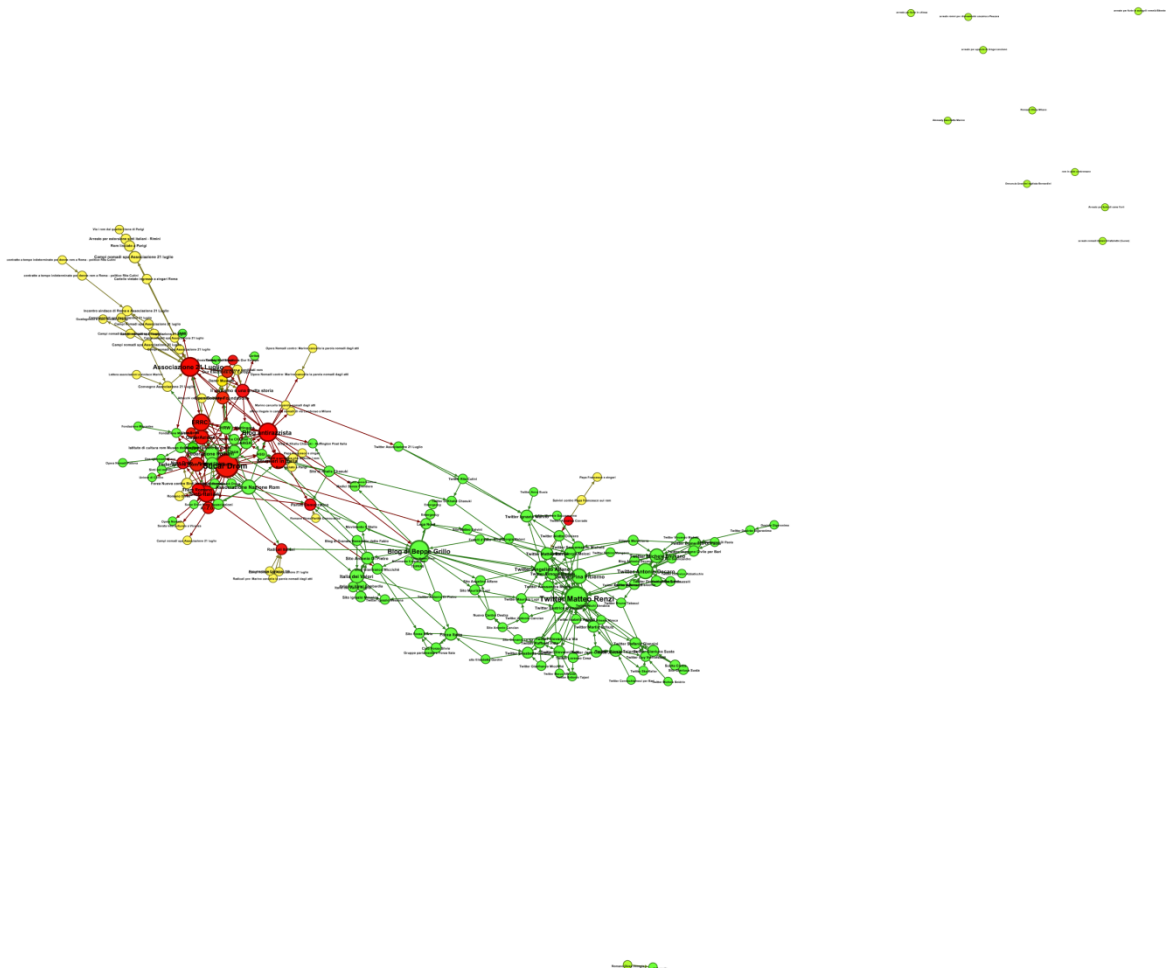
The French map (3) shows the political websites that created direct links with articles concerning Roma.

We highlighted in red all the sites which quote or are quoted by an article about Roma. If we get out the Republic Presidency (quoted many times in an article), we can read different kinds of relations on the map.

The **Fnasat** (a federation of pro-Roma associations) quotes many articles, acting as a **hub** (that is, in terms of social network analysis, a site quoting many other sites) for the political sphere of associations. This site is connected with the **Médiapart** blog (extreme left wing) and with **Alain Bertho's** blog, an academic greatly involved in the local pro-Roma struggle in Saint-Denis. **François Desouche's** site has the same centrality as those already mentioned and also functions as a hub making a point of reviewing all the articles about Roma and also showing the importance of Roma topics for the French extreme right wing. To confirm this hypothesis, we can also notice that the only French political party directly linked with an article concerning Roma is that of the **National Front** (quoting the trial of Jean-Marie Le Pen). Another extreme right hub, **Defrancisation**, quotes an article concerning Roma occupation of the Saint-Ouen gas power station. This relates to a local topic with considerable centrality on the map since it is quoted by **Soigne ta gauche**, another blog directly linked with the site of the town's Mayor. Another emerging local topic concerns the enrolment of Roma in the Saint-Denis electoral registry, quoted both by **Didier Labaume's** site, a candidate for mayor of Saint-Denis, and the aforementioned blog by Alain Bertho. We will be offering some reflections on these emerging topics later, but, by now, we can observe that, in France, the general topic of "Roma" clearly brings two big groups of national and local political players into opposition: on one hand the extreme right wing and on the other a coalition of associations with the extreme left wing.

The Italian map (4), unlike the French one, reveal a scarcity of political websites which created direct links with articles concerning Roma. In this map we can see three well-defined clusters of relations representing the general distribution of Italian political discourses on the web and their correlation with articles about Roma.

Map 4 : Italian corpus politics vs Articles



On the left, we find a cluster mostly grouping Roma and pro-Roma associations, strictly connected with articles concerning Roma (the yellow points on the map). The **Associazione 21 Luglio** stands out among these associations due to its centrality in the network, the large number of quotations it receives from other associative sites and the numerous articles related to it. It is actually the only association able to direct the flow of information about Roma on the web and to be quoted significantly by other sites. In social network analysis terms, the Associazione 21 Luglio represents an **authority**, in other words, a site quoted by many other sites.

In the middle, we find the network of political sites related to the **Movimento 5 Stelle**, a political party led by Beppe Grillo, in a dominant position. This party originated on the web and normally uses the web as its main instrument for political action (the party's political discourses often evoke a more or less plausible conception of "web democracy"), particularly **Beppe Grillo's blog**, which represents a large hub on the map.

On the right, we can see a cluster of political sites strictly connected to Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's websites (Partito Democratico). **Matteo Renzi's twitter** represents an important authority on the map and is quoted by many others.

All the other players in the Italian political sphere hold marginal positions on the map. In particular, we could point out the area in which we find the political sites linked to Forza Italia, Silvio Berlusconi's party, which, while still being the right wing party with the highest number of voters, is almost non-existent on the map.

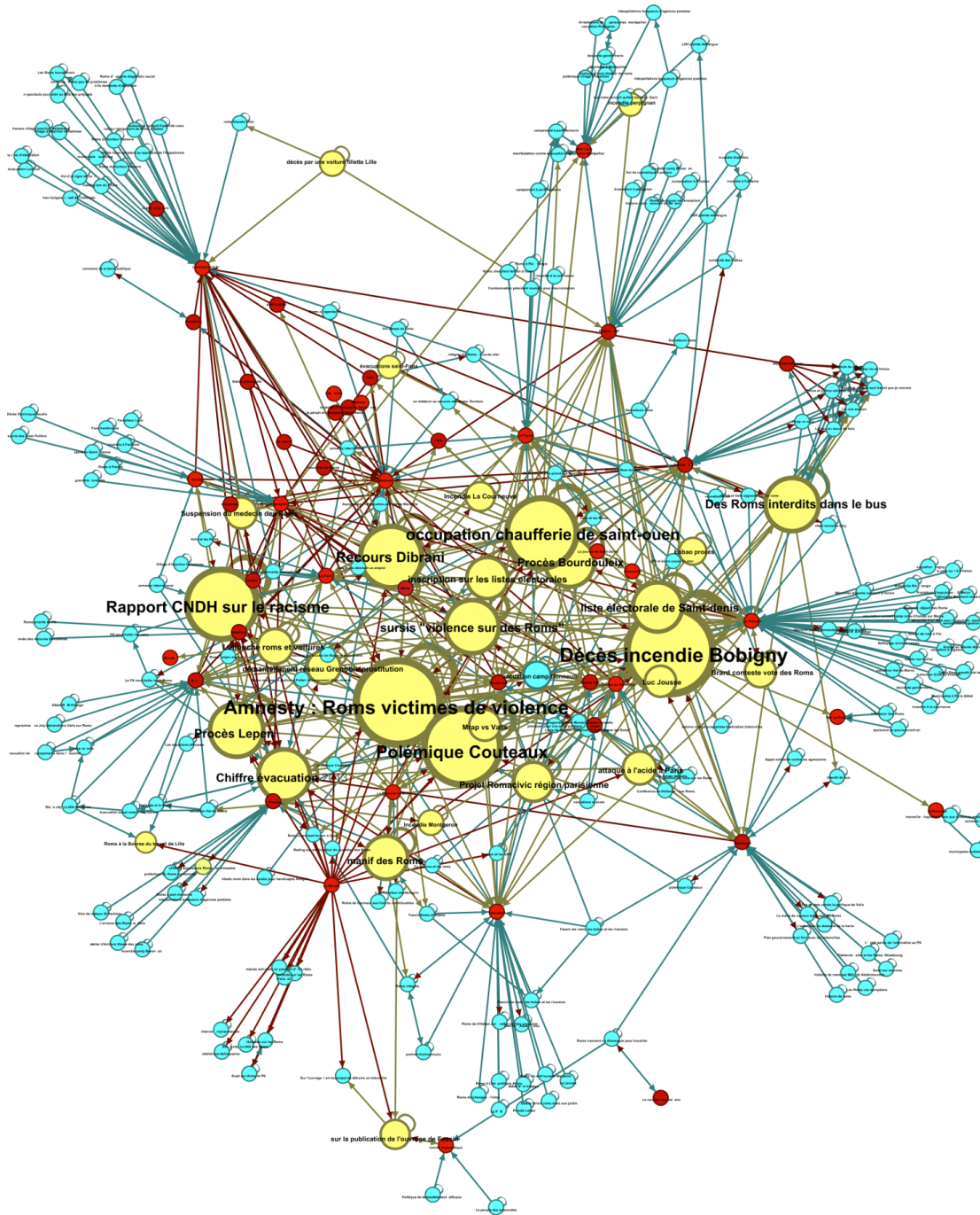
The first point to highlight: this map shows us that Italian politicians, also in comparison with the French, do not make great use of the web as an instrument for political communication and/or action. Only the Movimento 5 Stelle distinguishes itself through the use of the web and through the difficulty to locate it in the traditional political categories. Here we are dealing with a political party, originating from a movement on the web, that cannot be defined either as right wing or left wing, because it involves political issues from both traditional wings simultaneously. This is actually a specificity not only within the Italian context, but also on the international political landscape. The Partito Democratico led by Renzi is conducting a policy that aims to narrow the gap between the web and traditional parties, while the other parties clearly still prefer to use more traditional communication/action instruments (for example, Forza Italia's huge conventions organised in many Italian towns and directly led by Silvio Berlusconi during electoral campaigns).

A second point to highlight: in any case, we can see from this map that Italian politicians have no direct links with articles on Roma. The only political players really interested in Roma are associations, especially the Associazione 21 Luglio in Rome. This does not mean that Italian politicians make no use of Roma issues at all for electoral aims. In fact, we will see below that Roma topics were very frequently used in political discourses by the extreme right and by right wing Italian politicians during electoral campaigns. But these political players generally do not use their websites to communicate, preferring to rely on traditional media like radio, television and the press through declarations given to journalists, as we will see later.

Before proposing any further comparative reflections, we will present the second kind of map we created, which merely represents the networks between media websites and articles concerning Roma. The aim of these maps is to identify which information sites were especially interested in Roma during the local electoral campaigns (maps 5-6).

The French map (5) immediately reveals that French media treat the subject rather superficially. Only half of the topics is original, which means that the articles deal with news reported by one media only. Furthermore, most of them come from the local press, and from two news sites in particular: **Le Parisien** and **La voix du Nord**. These sites basically publish first hand news concerning various short news items (i.e. forced evictions, demonstrations, etc.)

Map 5 : French corpus, mediatic topics



Caption of map 5

- Red = media web site
- Blue = isolated articles
- Yellow = topic

If we consider the topics with the highest degree (that is the highest number of relations between the players) we find:

- the publication of a report on 2013 forced evictions by the "Ligue des droits de l'Homme" (*LDH*) and "European Roma Rights Centre" (*ERRC*) associations;
- the publication of a report on Roma by Amnesty International;
- the publication of an annual report by the "Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme" (*CNCDH*).

The top three topics therefore come from the associative sphere but with a national range. However, the importance of information from associations contrasts with the idea that Roma are a subject treated above all by politicians.

The following six important topics are:

- the death of a child in a fire;
- Le Pen's trial after declaring that "les Roms volent naturellement comme les oiseaux" (it is in the nature of Roma to steal or take flight like birds)
- the ban on bus travel (a discrimination event in Saint-Denis)
- the occupation of the Saint-Ouen gas power station
- Dibrahnis' appeal following the case of Leonarda
- the acid attack on a family living in the street in Paris.

Only Le Pen's trial and Dibrahnis' appeal related to issues of national importance, while the other topics related to various news items which were only brought to national visibility thanks to being published by *Le Parisien*. The ability of this medium to make a local news item national depends on the Paris centralism of French media, regularly highlighted by many observers.

Two topics especially help to explain the correlation between the "Roma issues" and the Plaine Commune local electoral campaign.

- the occupation of the Saint-Ouen gas power station
- the enrolment of Roma in the Saint-Denis electoral registry.

The first topic concerns the occupation of the railway that serves to move in the raw material of the Saint-Ouen gas power station by some Romanian Roma. The left wing politician, who was Mayor of Saint-Ouen at that time, decided to write an open letter to the Internal Affairs Minister Manuel Valls informing him of the risk that this occupation could represent for the little town's heating provisions (8 November 2013).

Roma had been in conflict with the Saint-Ouen City Council since the creation of an "integration village" in 2005 and, in order to confront the Mayor and the Minister, they called up the extreme left party (NPA - Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste) against their forced eviction.

To study this story, we should firstly ask ourselves why this Mayor from a political party that generally supports the Roma's political fights, chose to go against them in this case.

Did this choice impact on the loss of the City Council some months after? In a political context where different left parties are in competition, to chose an agenda setting on right wing topics as security issues can destabilise traditional coalitions. This let us suppose that the right wing wins (as it won in this case) when the left wing enhance security rhetoric.

The second topic concerns a debate inside the political arena of Saint-Denis. Matthieu Hanotin, a candidate from the PS (Parti Socialiste), denounced the supposed illicit enrolment of 80 Roma on the Saint-Denis electoral registry to support the PC (Parti Communiste) candidates who held the City Council.

We can interpret this controversy as a clear pro or anti-Roma communication strategy for electoral purposes. Here we should ask whether, and how, this strategy impacted on the electoral results since the PS candidate failed by only 165 votes! Did his criticisms not go far enough? In any case, he received the support of the FN (Front National) candidate, therefore, local electoral campaign controversies allow us to identify which political players enhance security rhetoric.

The Italian map, which only shows the networks between media websites and articles concerning Roma (map 6), reveals the presence of four clusters of relations between different kinds of information sites.

On the right we find two big clusters roughly representing two large local press editorial groups.

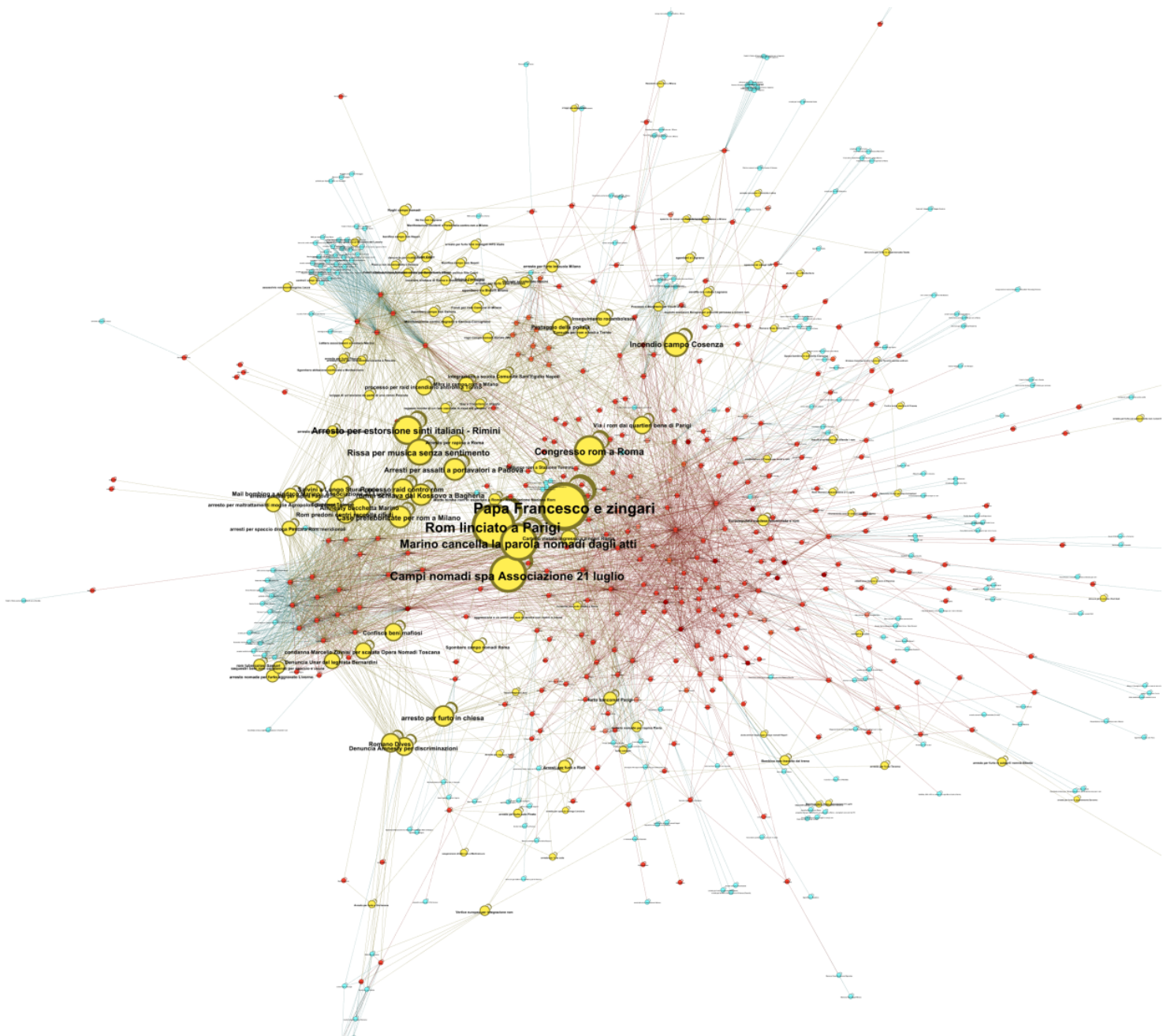
In the top left, we find the cluster of national and local press agencies.

In the bottom left, we find the cluster of national newspapers.

A first point to highlight is that the local press has the majority of links with articles concerning Roma. A systematic review of the articles linked with the different clusters shows that:

- the Italian national press generally does not produce original articles about Roma, and certainly much fewer than in France;
- the Italian local press produces a lot of first-hand news concerning various items, as in France;
- only in a few cases does the Italian national press repeat articles taken from the local press.

Map 6 : Italian corpus, mediatic topics



Caption of map 5

- Red = media web site
- Blue = isolated articles
- Yellow = topic

Therefore, we can only find convergent interest by both the national and local press for particular topics: those at the centre of the map, in the middle of the clusters (the large yellow ones).

If we omit the topic of a fire in the town of Cosenza (a topic with a high degree but low centrality because it related strictly to a local political controversy), we can see five other topics with the highest centrality and degree in this map:

- Pope Francis' declaration on "zingari" in Rome;
- the local political controversy created by Rome Council's refusal to provide a hall for a Roma association meeting for a bureaucratic problem;
- the local political controversy created by the Mayor of Rome's decision to erase the word "nomads" from administrative deeds;
- the publication of the "Campi Nomadi s.p.a." report by the Associazione 21 Luglio;
- the beating up of a Rom in Paris.

As regard to the first topic, on the occasion of the meeting sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the pastoral care of migrants and itinerant people, "The Church and Gypsies: to announce the gospel in the peripheries", Pope Francis remembered having personally observed many episodes of discrimination in the everyday life of Rome, and called for the commitment of local and national institutions and the support of the international community to identify proposals and interventions geared toward improving the Gypsies' quality of life. The numerous articles quoting this topic are probably due to the great visibility of someone like Pope Francis rather than its content, but it is exactly because of this great visibility that someone may have decided to comment on the Pope's words polemically. This is the case of the **Legha Nord** leader, **Matteo Salvini**, who probably gave declarations in opposition to the Pope in order to gain some media visibility in return.

The news about a Rom being beaten up in Paris, as well as other topics concerning Roma living abroad often quoted by many Italian information sites, could lead us to reflect on the inclination of the Italian press not to report on domestic problems and preferring to give more visibility to foreign ones. In the same period, news about a Rom being beaten up in Italy, supposedly not by unknown persons but by policemen, obtained only 7 mentions in the Italian press, against the 27 on the similar

news in Paris. Is this a way to deny political responsibilities about the current situation of Roma in Italy?

The other three most important topics in this map concern local political affairs in Rome, i.e. web controversies essentially involving the local political sphere of Rome only. We observe here something similar to the French case, because, here too, the centralism of the capital city, a sort of capital city effect, seems to make Rome's local items become of national importance. This effect certainly does not depend on a supposed special or very different situation in Rome compared to other big Italian cities (Milan has the same problems concerning Roma as Rome). It could, however, depend on the higher concentration of information and political players in the city which does, in fact, represent the core of national politics. But it could also depend on another factor: the presence in Rome of the Associazione 21 Luglio, the only association able to create public debates on the web about Roma.

Lastly, a systematic review of the contents of the articles on the most important topics in this map shows us who, among the Italian political players, and with which aims, spoke about Roma during the local electoral campaign.

In brief, the extreme right and right wing politicians often spoke about Roma for electoral purposes, while associations often spoke about Roma trying to influence the national and local politics through their perspective on integration. But the question is: where is the Italian left? The Italian left, just like the Italian extreme left, did not mention Roma during the electoral campaign, and they won the elections. Could it be that, among the multiple factors affecting an electoral campaign and so its final results, the "Roma issues" are not so effective and do not bring in a good return in terms of votes?

7 Table of Contents

1	METHODOLOGY	3
2	THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN	5
2.1	RETURNEES	5
2.2	TRANSFER OF RESOURCES: EFFECTS ON SENDING COMMUNITIES	5
2.3	TRANSFER OF RESOURCES: PATTERNS AMONG MIGRANTS	6
3	- NETWORKS AND THE HISTORY OF THE MIGRATION	7
3.1	NETWORKS AS PULL FACTORS	7
3.1.1	INDIVIDUAL RELATIONS AND MIGRATION ROUTES	8
3.1.2	THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE PLATZ AND CONTACTS	9
3.1.3	THE PLATZ, A REALITY SHARED ON A DAILY BASIS	12
3.1.3.1	From house to house	12
3.1.3.2	The site plan	15
3.1.4	THE PENTECOSTAL NETWORK	18
3.2	IMMIGRATION AND COMMUNITY HISTORY	19
4	CHANGES TO FAMILY STRUCTURE.	30
5	LOCAL POLICIES	33
5.1	THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF EVICTION	33
5.2	FROM NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO LOCAL WAYS OF THINKING	35
5.3	WHAT IS THE COST OF THE EVICTION POLICY?	36
5.3.1	METHODOLOGY	36
5.3.2	OUTCOME	37
5.4	EVICTION AS A LOCAL POLICY IN FRENCH ACADEMIC DISCUSSION	38
5.5	THE EVICTION PROCEDURES IN OUR RESEARCH AREA	39
5.5.1	SAINT-OUEN "VILLAGE OF INTEGRATION"	39
5.5.2	EVICTION PROCEDURES IN THE PLATZ DU SAMARITAIN	41
5.6	RIGHT TO THE CITY FOR ALL? DOMICILIATION (LEGAL ADDRESS), SCHOOLING AND RUBBISH COLLECTION.	44
5.6.1	CHOICE OF ADDRESS	44
5.6.2	SCHOOLING	45
5.6.3	GARBAGE COLLECTION	46
5.7	THE ROLE OF THE NGOs ON THE PLATZ DU SAMARITAIN	46
5.8	THE NEED TO BE VISIBLE	47
6	SOCIAL INCLUSION	49
6.1	EMPLOYMENT	49
6.1.1	RECOVERY OF SCRAP METAL	49
6.1.2	THE INTERNAL ECONOMY OF THE <i>PLATZ</i>	50
6.1.3	INTEGRATION INTO THE FORMAL ECONOMY?	51
6.2	EDUCATION	51

6.2.1	TRANSMISSION WITHIN THE GROUP	52
6.2.2	SCHOOLING	53
6.2.3	REPRESENTATION	54
6.3	PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO ROMA	57
6.3.1	FIRST RESULTS ABOUT THE EMERGENCE AND DIFFUSION OF «ROMA ISSUES» IN THE POLITICAL WEB ARENA	57
7	TABLE OF CONTENTS	72
8	TABLE OF FIGURES	74
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	75

8 Table of Figures

Figure 2 : House interior in Balnaca, credits Florin Nita 2014	6
Figure 3 : towns of origin of the residents of the platz in Bihor, Arad and Timis Judets	10
Figure 4 : links between platzs and people, caption : Red nodes - people, Blue nodes -platz	11
Figure 5 : Interior of shack in the Platz du Samaritain, credits Amen Allah Cheikh Amor, 2014	13
Figure 6 : shack of the platz du Samaritain (implantation), credits : Amen Allah Cheikh Amor, 2014 .	14
Figure 8 : Ground plan of the platz du Samaritain, credits MDM, 2014	17
Figure 10 : Number of person by household	31
Figure 11 : Age pyramid	31
Figure 12 : Diagram of evictions procedure.....	34
Table 1 : cost of evictions	37
Map 1 : french corpus.....	59
Map 2 : italian corpus	60
Map 3 : French corpus, politics vs articles	61
Map 4 : Italian corpus politics vs Articles.....	63
Map 5 : French corpus, mediatic topics.....	66
Map 6 : Italian corpus, mediatic topics.....	69

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