

Research Committee 21
Sociology of Urban and Regional Development
International Sociological Association

Resourceful cities
Humboldt-University Berlin, Institute for Social Science, Department for Urban and Regional
Sociology
Berlin, 29-31 August 2013

Session 24-2: Permanent Temporariness? Urban camps from a global perspective

Government by Expulsion: The Roma Camp, Citizenship, and the State

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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that the Romani “problem” in the Europe is best addressed using the framework of the biopolitical camp developed by Giorgio Agamben. The camp signifies a departure from the hyper-ghettoisation of Romani communities throughout Europe insofar as it inevitably entails a “return” of the state to the governance of spaces where “undesirable” citizens are confined. Taking as an example the expulsion of the Romani from the French territory, the paper suggests that the techniques of government which make the camp possible, (namely, racialisation, surveillance, and expulsion), show a use of politics which is designed to protect the biological purity of the national body.

Keywords: Roma/Romanies, Europe; France; camps; governance; citizenship

Following Wacquant's reflections on the distinctions and resemblances between banlieus [sic] and ghettos and the current use of terms such as ethnic cluster, hyperghetto, enclave or barrierization and redlining, we can only hope to witness a larger debate among planners and policymakers willing to make the necessary distinctions within a cluster of problems and situations that are irreducible to their ethnic component.

[...]

We are in a stage when we predominantly use the ideas, the terms and the data about slums, ghettos, favellas, illegal camps and so on in an emotional, interchangeable, imprecise way. We are overwhelmed by indexicality. The creation of an epistemic community able to formalise the theoretical tools that can be used to operate with disadvantaged housing areas can only be achieved by acknowledging and theoretically formalising not only the knowledge about poor communities and their territories but also the agency, positions, behaviours, values, deontologies, practices, interests and so on of all the actors involved.

Cătălin Berescu¹

INTRODUCTION: "FROM THE GHETTO TO THE PARLIAMENT:" ROMANIES IN EUROPE TODAY

On 15 May 2013, Roman Krok, a Roma trainee with Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament addressed representatives in a plenary session. He recorded his experiences and thoughts in his blog, named "From the ghetto to the Parliament: A true life story of a young Roma." In one entry, he notes:

"Who would have ever thought that this was possible? Just a few weeks ago I was folding tea towels in a reintegration company with people that hadn't had any education, foreigners, and even formal detainees, and now I am going to give a speech in the European Parliament."²

A few months prior, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on 14 March 2013 calling for "measures to ensure the implementation of national Roma integration strategies through periodic reviews, monitoring and support to enable local, regional and national authorities to develop and implement effective human-rights-compliant policies, programmes and actions for the inclusion of Roma."³ Indeed, Romani issues seem to be the object of unprecedented attention and

¹ Cătălin Berescu, "The rise of the new European Roma ghettos: a brief accounts of some empirical studies," *Urban Research & Practice* 4/3 (2011), 346-347.

² Roman Krok, "Moving to Holland," *From the ghetto to the Parliament: A true life story of a young Roma* (blog), 15 May 2013, http://romankrok.blogspot.com/2013_05_15_archive.html, accessed May 2013.

³ European Parliament Resolution of 14 March 2013 on strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime, Strasbourg: European Parliament (2013).

academic energy: in addition to numerous papers and books, non-profit organisations, such as the Open Society Institute, international institutions (*e.g.* the World Bank), or intergovernmental agreements (most notably, the European Union) have recently produced several studies, data sets and reports on issues of education, health, and labour.⁴ For historian Henriette Asséo, the European attention on minority politics has created a “particular conjuncture [which] explains this exit from invisibility and creates a renewed interest in social sciences for the study of Gypsies (*Tsiganes*).”⁵ Since a highly-mediated 2003 conference entitled “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future,” and the subsequent organisation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, Romani issues appear to have emerged from obscure academic studies and “ascended” to mainstream European politics, or, in Krok's words, “from the ghetto to the Parliament.”

Simultaneously, newspapers and internet news painfully remind European publics that most Romanies do not make it from the ghetto to the European Parliament. In the words of Jean-Pierre Liégeois, the Romani in Europe are both “a paradigm and a paradox,”⁶ that is, a paradigm of cultural diversity, hybridity, and mobility, but also a paradox of contemporary Europe, as despite these qualities exalted in the late capitalist era, Romanies remain a targeted, rejected, and, in the eyes of most Europeans populations and governments, undesirable and abject. Traveller and Gypsy communities face the same marginalisation, due to their status as eternal outsiders, assimilated into an confusing ensemble of people living in “non-sedentary arrangements” – in spite of the fact that the vast majority of these communities are itinerant, if not completely

⁴ For instance, see Ina Zoon, *On the Margins: Roma and Public Service in Romania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia* ed. Mark Templeton (New York, NY: Open Society Institute, 2001), or, Joost de Laat, *Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion* (Washington, DC: The World Bank Publications, 2010), or, William Bartlett, Roberta Benini, & Claire Gordon, *Measures to Promote the Situation of Roma EU Citizens in the European Union* (Strasbourg: European Parliament, 2011).

⁵ Henriette Asséo, “Les Gypsy Studies et le droit européen des minorités,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 51e/4bis (2004), 72. All translations are mine, unless noted otherwise.

⁶ Jean-Pierre Liégeois, “Les Roms, un peuple méconnu,” *Diasporiques/Cultures en mouvement* 6 (2009), 24.

sedentarised.⁷ In short, on the one hand, the genuine concern and a celebration of Romani life at the level of European and international institutions, and the constant rejection of the mere presence of Romanies and Travellers at the national and societal level brush the depiction of a “schizophrenic” Europe.

This paper situates this dichotomy within broader discussions of the geography of governance and governmentality in European modernity. I contend that the Romani “problem” in the European Union is best explicated using the framework of the biopolitical camp developed by Giorgio Agamben. The generalised phenomenon of the camp not only crystallises anxieties over the meanings of social democracy, citizenship, identity, and multiculturalism, but also accounts for the changing place of the nation-state in the global era, maybe even more so than the model of the ghetto or the hyper-ghetto developed by Loïc Wacquant. Biopolitics, suggests Agamben, occurs when “the State decides to assume directly the care of the nation’s biological life as one of its proper tasks.”⁸ This paper proposes that the mode of governance that emerges around the contemporary European Romani camp promotes a politics of governing by exclusion, that is, by confining undesirable citizens to a “non-place” (the camp) meant to guarantee the health of the only possible place (*i.e.*, the nation).

The paper opens with a brief discussion of Romani migrations in Europe, and in particular, in the Schengen area, which illustrates the paradoxical position of Romanian and Bulgarian Romanies vis-à-vis Schengen regulations. Next, I expose the theoretical bases of the establishment of the camp and the construction of Romanies as “contemporary *homines sacri*.”

⁷ Dena Ringold, Mitchell Orenstein & Erika Wilkens, *Roma in an expanding Europe: Breaking the poverty circle* (Washington, DC: The World Bank Publications, 2005), 3.

Will Guy, “No Soft Touch: Romani Migration to the U.K.,” *Nationalities Papers* 31/1 (2003), 63.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 175.

In the third part, I explore how expulsions enable the camp to become a malleable technique of government, and I conclude with some considerations on citizenship in the era of the camp.

ROMANI MIGRATIONS AND THE SCHENGEN AREA:

“I came back to Romania with my family, says Iuliana Calin [a Romani woman from Calvini, Romania]. We will stay just long enough to spend the money we earned in France, and then we will go back there. What else could we do?”⁹

“In total, covering the three thousands kilometres between France and Romania takes nearly three days. The driver knows his way really well. Every other week, he makes the trip in order to take expelled Romani back [to France].”¹⁰

Narratives like the ones quoted above from French newspapers are quite common. Entire Romani families travel between Eastern and Western Europe, sometimes several times a year.

“Moving to the West is the only chance for them. No matter how unwelcoming, the East is even more problematic: the total lack of social policies, the (maybe) softer but generalised discrimination, and the sheer number of people lacking basic livelihoods will continue to drive the Roma to places with more opportunities.”¹¹

With this sombre diagnosis, Cătălin Berescu elucidates why Romanies have engaged in migrations to Western European countries after the implosion of the Eastern “block.” The “transition from communism” represented the end of assimilationist policies of full employment and (relative) job security for Romani who had been employed in Central and Eastern Europe: “Employers took advantage of labour migration from other former Communist countries to replace their Roma workers,”¹² explains Angus Bancroft, which meant that Romanies were the

⁹ Mirel Bran, “L’expulsion des Roms, une politique inefficace ?” *France 24*, 19 August 2010, <http://www.france24.com/fr/20100819-politique-expulsion-roms-france-retour-systematique-lellouche-roumanie>, accessed 13 September 2012.

¹⁰ Mirel Bran, “Roms : le retour en France,” *France 24*, 22 October 2010, <http://www.france24.com/fr/20101022-reporters-roumanie-roms-expulsion-europe-ue-espace-schengen-mirel-bran>, accessed 13 September 2012.

¹¹ Catalin Berescu, “The Shadows of the Future: East Europe and its Roma Ghettoes,” in *Mapping the Invisible: EU-Roma Gypsies*, ed. Lucy Orta (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), 92-93

¹² Angus Bancroft, “Closed Spaces, Restricted Places: Marginalisation of Roma in Europe,” *Space & Polity* 5/2 (2001), 149.

first to lose their jobs. Consequently, living conditions in Eastern Europe degraded even further, as Berescu describes:

“...a prison-like settlement that reminds us of Second World War, of an incredible squalid form of ‘social housing’ that reveals all the traits of an environmental racist attitude, of a form of resettlement that produces residential segregation which is difficult to overcome and of a national policy to improve living conditions that, more or less consciously, conserve ethnic divides.”¹³

Pockets of “new urban poverty” thus appeared in Eastern European countries, indicating first and foremost a withdrawal of the state, both material and discursive, from these ethnicised spatial formations. Because of this state retrenchment, these “settlements” although they display physical attributes of temporariness and precariousness (*i.e.* makeshift, improvised shelters with no electricity or running water made of recycled materials), take on a permanent meaning.¹⁴

In the West, harsh migratory policies and protectionist discourses on foreignness have rendered access to stable employment extremely complicated for poor migrants, leaving little choice but undocumented low-wage daily labour and begging. The Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, signed in 1990, establishes the Schengen Area, a zone where its “Internal borders may be crossed at any point without any checks on persons being carried out.”¹⁵ Since 1985, the Schengen Area has been extended to 26 countries, including former countries members of the Eastern Bloc, which have all *de facto* abolished border controls. As a result, migrations from Eastern Europe towards Western destination countries have steadily increased since the beginning of the 1990s and estimates given in the 2000s suggested that this trend was likely to

¹³ Berescu, “New European Roma ghettos,” 351.

¹⁴ Denise Lawrence and Setha Low suggested that “the meaning of the built environment [is best] revealed through its metaphorical connections and ritual practices.” Here, the absence of the state and social services is what constitutes the ghetto.

Denise Lawrence & Setha Low, “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990): 492.

¹⁵ Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders, *Official Journal L 239, 22/09/2000 P. 0019 – 0062*, (Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 1985)

continue and that temporary migration would progressively gain in amplitude.¹⁶ In 2008, Eurostat (the European Union statistics agency) observed that Romanians, Poles, and Bulgarians were the most mobile nationals of the Schengen Area.¹⁷

In 2007, the eastwards enlargement of the Schengen Space revived Cold War-inherited imaginaries of the East/West polarity (*e.g.* the image of the “Polish plumber”¹⁸ in France), which incited Western European electorates to demand from their governments more stringent migratory policies,¹⁹ although actual numbers suggest that migrations from Eastern Europe turned out to be less important than expected. The increase of economic discontentment in several Western countries and the subsequent revival of extreme right-wing parties (most notably in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, and Norway²⁰) polarised discourses on immigration and fuelled administrative stigmatising dynamics towards migrants and foreigners – and in particular, the Romani. Even though the latter have engaged in migrations for exactly the same reasons why mainstream populations migrate (unemployment, violence, discriminations...), given the historical construction of hated/envied outsiders-nomads,²¹ Will Guy explains,

“...even those who see discrimination as the main motivation of many recent Romani refugees sometimes cannot resist the familiar lure of attributing their flight to underlying elements in a unique and essentialised Romani culture.”²²

¹⁶ See for example, Tito Boeri and Herbert Brüker, *The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Employment and Labour Markets in the EU Member States*, Final Report of the European Integration Consortium, Berlin, 2000

¹⁷ European Commission, *Demography Report 2010: Older, more numerous and diverse Europeans* (Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2011), 44

¹⁸ Antonela Capelle-Pogacean, “The Polish plumber and the imaginaries of the east-west divide in Hungary and Bulgaria: old divisions and new boundaries,” *Studia UBB Europaea* 56/2 (2011): 5-28.

¹⁹ Peter Andreas, “Introduction: The Wall after the Wall,” in *The Wall Around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe*, eds. Peter Andreas & Timothy Snyder (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 9

²⁰ Marcel Lubbers, Mérove Gisjberts, & Peer Scheepers, “Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe,” *European Journal of Political Research* 41 (2002): 357

²¹ Ken Lee, “Orientalism and Gypsyism,” *Social Analysis* 44/2 (2000): 129-156.

²² Will Guy, “No Soft Touch,” 64.

Nomadism, misery, dirtiness, and violence have been attributed to Gypsies and non-sedentary populations for centuries, as I highlight later. Travellers and Gypsies who have citizenship from Western countries have never been particularly well treated by governments and populations alike, notably by being either forced into sedentarism or by not receiving adequate social services or being politically represented. However, Romanies from Eastern Europe, in addition to being constructed as nomads, were also marginalised due to their foreignness and their unclear worrisome “oriental” origins (is it India? The Balkans? Eastern Europe?). Put differently, whilst many Romanies from Eastern Europe are members of the Schengen space, in actuality, many of them have never held a passport from their country of origin,²³ which has prevented Western government – and in particular the French government – to categorise them other than as “stateless,” “refugees,” or “asylum seekers.” Western governments tend to be reluctant to award these migratory statuses due to electoral pressures. As a result, clandestine migrations and human smuggling have dramatically increased as a consequence of these stringent asylum conditions.²⁴

The Orientalist and Cold-War inherited discomfort of Western countries towards Eastern Europe has placed Romania and Bulgaria (which have the largest Romani minorities²⁵) under a “transitory regime” which signifies that Romanian and Bulgarian nationals may work in the EU only if they are able to produce a work authorisation. In other words, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens can circulate freely in the EU but enjoy a very restricted access to employment. This legal structure theoretically includes Romanies, but the brutal dynamics of Romani marginalisation in Eastern Europe have complicated this framework. Indeed, given Romanies’ frequent lack of documentation, as well as the conditions of their migration, European authorities

²³ Claude Cahn & Elspeth Guild, *Recent Migration of Roma in Europe* (The Hague: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, High Commissioner on National Minorities, 2010).

²⁴ Michael Jandl, “Irregular Migration, Human Smuggling, and the Eastern Enlargement of European Union,” *International Migration Review* 2 (2007): 291-315.

²⁵ Jean-Pierre Liégeois, “Les Roms au cœur de l’Europe,” *Le Courrier des Pays de l’Est* 1052/6 (2005): 21.

have *de facto* treated Romani migrants as “third country nationals” rather than as citizens of the Schengen area – although they are *de jure* subjected to the Schengen regime. Elspeth Guild explains that migration conditions for third country nationals are “extreme:”²⁶

“Unless they are well off they will have no chance of getting short stay visas, work or residence permits. If they lose their employment and have no means to fall back on, their right of residence will be at risk. Their possibility of enjoying family reunification is dependent on their means: the poor are not entitled to family life, they must earn enough to support their family members before they can make a claim to it. Finally, those seeking international protection are ever more excluded because they are poor. Their ability to flee persecution depends on the financial means to bribe officials and traffickers and to purchase good quality documents in order to thwart the policy of the European Union to keep them trapped in a region or country of persecution and to manage to get a country where they can seek asylum. Assuming that they have succeeded in this, once they arrive, their asylum applications are delayed and the majority are rejected. Whatever amounts of public assistance have been made available to them while their applications are under consideration ceases on the refusal except in exceptional circumstances. But they are not necessarily expelled. Expulsion is expensive for the state. So they are trapped in a limbo of poverty and vulnerability outside the edge of society.”²⁷

Most Romanies coming from Eastern European countries, unfortunately, fit this description. Spatially, as I mention later, in pre-2010 France, Romani migrants were mostly ignored by the state and social services, and remained, as Guild says, “in a limbo of poverty and vulnerability outside the edge of society” (edge ferociously defended against these unwanted refugees).

Migrations politics within the Schengen Area have three main consequences on migration flows: first, Eastern Europe and its populations are now much closer to Western Europe and can circulate within the European Union much more freely. Secondly, because of the sharp economic categorisation of migrants, the most economically disadvantaged populations of the Schengen Area exist in a liminal situation where they can circulate freely, but are denied the right to settle (because of restricted access to stable employment and harsh asylum conditions). Finally, the disjointed structure of the Schengen area has diffused the responsibility of regulating the

²⁶ Elspeth Guild, “The Legal Framework: Who Is Entitled to Move?” in *Controlling Frontiers: Free Movement Into and Within Europe*, eds. Didier Bigo & Elspeth Guild (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 41-42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

migration of the poor onto individual states – which explains the burlesque governmental blaming game concerning the Romani, whereby Western countries hypocritically consider that Romanies are the responsibility of Eastern governments, a sort of NIMBYism on the European scale. In the remainder of the paper, I wish to focus on the historical turning point of the summer of 2010 in France. I argue that Romanies in France, went from a situation of ghettoisation to a situation of high visibility where they were abruptly “included” in French politics. But first, I expose the theoretical backbone of post-2010 Romani politics in France, namely, Giorgio Agamben’s conceptualisation of the camp.

ROMANIES, THE CAMP, AND EUROPEAN MODERNITY

Giorgio Agamben’s camp:

Giorgio Agamben, in his influential analysis of sovereignty in modern Europe, *Homo Sacer: Sovereignty Power and Bare Life*, establishes that the camp is paradigm of modern power; in his term, it is the “*nomos*” of the modern, to wit, the organising political principle of the modern. For Agamben, the camp becomes possible when the notion of the sacrality of biological life must be defended at all costs, or, in other words, when state sovereignty necessarily entails the recognition of life, and in particular, of the body, as sacred, what he calls the “politicization of life.”²⁸ Juridically, this means that the state must establish legal control over the entirety of the population, which requires the suspension of individual liberties indefinitely, that is, a “normal” state of exception. The camp, for Agamben, is precisely the “structure in which the state of exception [...] is realized *normally*.”²⁹ Put differently, the space of the camp is a zone where exception and norm exist indistinguishably of one another, which, consequently,

²⁸ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 119.

²⁹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 170.

creates a “zone of indistinction between inside and outside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective rights and juridical protection no longer made any sense.”³⁰ The camp, the extralegal location therefore finds itself everywhere and nowhere, it is a “dislocating localization”³¹ which both centralises and disperses the *possibility* of the camp, that is, the possibility of a “zone of indistinction.”

Now, the inhabitants of the camp, as Agamben notes, are sent to camps because they are “life that does not deserve to live,”³² *i.e.*, as will be shown later, life which is unworthy of belonging to the People. When the state recognises the sacrality of life, it implicitly introduces a theory of valuation of life, that is, it creates a system that sacralises life (in general) and evaluates life (in particular), a system where it is possible for the state to determine that *one* life is not worth living. The camp is the spatial arrangement that centralises these lives devoid of value. The project of the modern state is, paraphrasing Agamben, the determination of the criteria with which life is evaluated (race in Nazi Germany), or, put differently, the state creates the map of its own acceptable and desirable population, and, consequently, decides on the boundaries of the existence of its people. Those outside the boundary (which does not mean outside the state), that is, the “undesirable” population are confined in the camp, that is are fully “incorporated” into the realisation of state power. The prevalence of such zones in Europe and elsewhere confirms Agamben's insight: the camp has a reality which transcends war, and cannot be dismissed as “mere” accident of the Second World War, or even as a particular manifestation of Nazi eugenics. If modern sovereignty blurs the juridical distinction between norm and exception, that is, if the state of exception is a “paradigm of government” to the point of necessity, *i.e.*, when governing necessarily entails a “*suspension* of the order that is in force in order to guarantee its

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 175.

³² Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 136.

existence,”³³ then the structure where this suspension is actualised becomes “normal.” Suspending the law in a permanent manner signifies a confusion of legality itself: inside the camp, the rule becomes ~~rule~~, the law becomes ~~law~~, and place becomes ~~place~~: the camp is where “everything is possible.”³⁴ Agamben writes:

“...we must admit that we find ourselves in presence of the camp every time such a structure is created, *independent of the kind of crimes that are committed there and whatever its denomination and specific topography.*”³⁵

Romanies as Homo Sacer

Despite punctual assimilation campaigns,³⁶ European Romanies have been the target of violent exclusionary policies since times immemorial. Racialised discourses have treated nomads

“as the ‘opposite to settled fold and placed them at the hostile end of the tradition-modernity continuum. Viewed thus Gypsies and Travellers were vagabonds who constituted a threat to settled communities precisely because they were outside sedentary society.”³⁷

The mobile, itinerant poor were very early on categorised as vagrant, lazy, and aimless wanderers; what Georg Simmel has called the Stranger, *i.e.*, “the man who comes today and stays tomorrow,”³⁸ always an outsider whose specific social positioning upset binary divisions. “The stranger undermines the spatial ordering of the world – the fought-after co-ordination between moral and topographical closeness, the staying together of friends and the remoteness of enemies,”³⁹ writes Zygmunt Bauman. Margaret Greenfield adds, quoting Angus Bancroft,⁴⁰ that

³³ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2005). Emphasis in the original.

³⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 170.

³⁵ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 174. My emphases.

³⁶ See for instance Zlotan Barany’s article, “Politics and the Roma in state-socialist Eastern Europe,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33/4 (2000): 421-437.

³⁷ Jim MacLaughlin, “The political geography of anti-Traveller racism in Ireland: The politics of exclusion and the geography of closure,” *Political Geography* 17/4 (1998), 418.

³⁸ Georg Simmel, “The Stranger (1908),” in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald Levine (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143.

³⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 67.

⁴⁰ Angus Bancroft, *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: Modernity, Race, Space, and Exclusion* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 48.

“‘the Stranger’ may be subject (in pre-modernity) to particularised taxes or tithes, and, in modern nation-states, processes of control aimed at regulation, assimilation, or removal.”⁴¹ Likewise, Jim MacLaughlin highlights the dynamics of urbanisation, industrialisation, and nation-state-construction during the modern era by which itinerancy, at first welcome, was progressively vilified, then penalised, and finally frankly persecuted.⁴² The Romani in European modernity (called by a variety of names throughout Europe, for example Tsigane, Gypsy – or Egyptian – or Manouche...) is *always* an outsider. The Gypsy outsider is the subject of two opposite fantasies: on the one hand, she is viewed as abject, but on the other hand, she is fetishised, sexualised, and glamorised: investigating twentieth-century modern expressions of unconventional sexuality in literature, Kirstie Blair emphasises the profound relation between fantasies of homelessness and exotic sexual desire and writes that “gypsies represent liberation, excitement, danger, and the free expression of sexuality.”⁴³ Gypsies were constructed as exotic others: “Romanies are the Orientals within [Europe].”⁴⁴ However, it should be noted that these desires must remain concealed, hidden, and, if practised, then it must be clandestinely. Therefore, in purely Saidian Orientalist fashion, non-Gypsies attribute character traits to Gypsy outsiders, constructing an essential binary of manifest hate and latent desire. At the same time, Gypsy communities may not find at ease within the physical implications of this constructed binary, and may seek to distance themselves from non-Gypsy groups. As Will Guy explains,

“Being a Rom meant for centuries seeing the world as hostile, as a place where gaining a livelihood was a precarious business, where you were always liable to be beaten up and driven away, where

⁴¹ Margaret Greenfields, “Accommodation of Gypsies/Travellers: New Approaches to Policy in England,” *Social Policy & Society* 7/1 (2007), 77.

⁴² Jim Mac Laughlin, “Nation-building, social closure and anti-Traveller racism in Ireland,” *Sociology* 33/1 (1999): 129-151.

See also Colin Clark & Margaret Greenfields, *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006).

⁴³ Kirstie Blair, “Gypsies and Lesbian Desire: Vita Sackville-West, Violet Trefusis, and Virginia Woolf,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 50/2 (2004), 141.

⁴⁴ Ken Lee, “Orientalism and Gypsylorism,” 132.

perhaps you and your family might even be drowned, hanged at the crossroads or even burned in your hut...”⁴⁵

The Gypsy therefore necessarily acquires a liminal, confused status, whereby she, as an abject outsider, is not “valuable” enough to enjoy the protection of the state, but, as an envied figure, she is jealously persecuted. Importantly, these psycho-social dynamics develop, suggests Agamben, as the modern nation-state, seeks to protect the purity of the life of the nation. This last point is capital, because, “*homo sacer*,” the citizen of the camp, originates precisely in a similarly confused notion of the sacred: “*Sacer* designates the person or the thing that one cannot touch without dirtying oneself or without dirtying.”⁴⁶

Ken Lee suggests that in an analogous discursive development to Orientalism, “Gypsyism” reflects colonialist uneven power relations “that in turn help to re-constitute and perpetuate the unequal exchanges that underlay the initial discursive formation.”⁴⁷ If Lee’s insight is correct, it then implies that the domination of accepted modes of life, and in particular, the construction and perpetuation of the nation-state necessitates the continual segregation and subordination of Gypsies. In short, it means that Romanies are *homo sacer par excellence* – the perfect and necessary camp citizen:

*“The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life—that is the life that may be killed but not sacrificed—is the life that has been captured in this sphere.”*⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Willy Guy, “Ways of Looking at Roms: The Case of Czechoslovakia,” in *Gypsies, Tinkers, and other Travellers*, ed. Farnham Rehfisch (London: Academic Press, 1975), 202.

⁴⁶ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 79.

⁴⁷ Lee, “Orientalism and Gypsyism,” 132.

⁴⁸ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 83.

GOVERNING BY EXPULSION: THE FRENCH CAMP AND ROMANIES

The turning point of 2010, from the ghetto to the camp:

As mentioned above, the migratory conditions created by the Schengen regime and by the dynamics of marginalisation of Eastern European Romanies have degraded the living conditions in these communities in a dramatic manner. In Eastern Europe, as Berescu describes, Romanies live in:

“...a prison-like settlement that reminds us of Second World War, of an incredible squalid form of ‘social housing’ that reveals all the traits of an environmental racist attitude, of a form of resettlement that produces residential segregation which is difficult to overcome and of a national policy to improve living conditions that, more or less consciously, conserve ethnic divides.”⁴⁹

In Western Europe, the situation is not much different. In France for instance, Jean-Pierre Dacheux and Bernard Delmotte talk about a “return of the shanty town” (*le retour des bidonvilles*):

“Though some have managed to find flats or, to occupy an abandoned residence, most often, Romanies set up improvised settlements and take cover in very temporary shelters, bound to frequent displacements and even successive destructions.”⁵⁰

Pockets of “new urban poverty” thus appear all over European countries, indicating first and foremost a withdrawal of the state, both material and discursive, from these spatial formations. In effect, this created what João Biehl has called “zones of social abandonment,” *i.e.* zones which “make visible the realities that exist *through and beyond formal governance* and that determine the life course of an increasing number of poor people who are not part of mapped populations.”⁵¹ However, as implied above, poverty is not the only characteristic of these “zones of social abandonment,” whose borders are “guarded like a prison;”⁵² indeed, these spaces, as

⁴⁹ Berescu, “New European Roma ghettos,” 351.

⁵⁰ Jean-Pierre Dacheux & Bernard Delmotte, *Roms de France, Roms en France : Le peuple du voyage* (Montreuil: Cédis, 2010), 83.

⁵¹ João Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 4.

⁵² Berescu, “Shadows of the Future,” 92.

Berescu suggests, are the object of stringent police surveillance and non-inclusion policies in order to ensure their ethnic impermeability.

The characterisation of the European-Romani spatial order has been theorised in various terms: marginalisation, segregation, exclusion, and, more recently, ghettoisation. But this “topology of exclusion”⁵³ has lacked the meticulous characterisation of, say, Loïc Wacquant’s ghetto,⁵⁴ reflecting a “stage when we predominantly use the ideas, the terms and the data about slums, ghettos, favellas, illegal camps and so on in an emotional, interchangeable, imprecise way.”⁵⁵ As the prefatory quote by Berescu suggests, “We are overwhelmed by indexicality.”⁵⁶ Thus, in much of the scholarship, the notions of camp and ghetto are synonymous. However, the political abandonment of the Romani space by welfare and social services (but not by the repressive apparatus of the state) suggests that these zones pertain more to the ghetto or rather, to the hyper-ghetto than to the camp.⁵⁷ The space of the camp depicted by Agamben is a space

⁵³ Angus Bancroft, “Closed Spaces,” 148.

⁵⁴ Loïc Wacquant, “Decivilizing and demonizing: the remaking of the black American ghetto,” in *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, eds. Steven Loyal & Stephen Quilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008); and especially, “A Janus-faced institution of ethnoracial closure: a sociological specification of the ghetto,” in *The Ghetto: Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies*, eds. Ray Hutchison & Bruce Haynes (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012).

⁵⁵ Berescu, “New European Roma ghettos,” 347.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ The concepts of the ghetto and the hyper-ghetto have recently been deployed to characterise Romanies’ and Travellers’ situation of social abandonment. Using Loïc Wacquant’s description of the ghetto and its “five mutually reinforcing properties [...]”: (1) growing ethnic homogeneity, (2) increased encompassment of the target population, (3) rising organizational density, (4) the production and adoption of a collective identity, and (5) impermeable boundaries,” Ryan Powell, Angus Bancroft, and others have investigated these boundaries meant “to separate the decent people’ from the Roma.” Hyper-ghettoisation may be an even more accurate term to describe the extreme deprivation of social services faced by Romanies in Europe. Michel Agier has noted that “It is the *distance from the state* that constitutes the ghetto, not cultural difference [...]; and it is the institutional abandonment of the ghetto by the political elites of town and state that has created hyperghettoization.” All these scholarly work very aptly situate Romani communities in the hyper-ghetto in a state of complete isolation from the state (which imply that its borders are heavily policed and transgression severely repressed). However, in 2010, the wave of expulsions started by the French government signified a transition from the hyper-ghetto to the camp.

See the excellent articles by Michel Agier, “The Ghetto, The Hyperghetto, and the Fragmentation of the World,” trans Iain Fraser, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33/3 (Sept. 2009): 854-857; Angus Bancroft, “Closed Spaces, Restricted Places: Marginalisation of Roma in Europe,” *Space & Polity* 5/2 (2001): 145-157; Ryan Powell, “Loïc Wacquant’s ‘Ghetto’ and Ethnic Minority Segregation in the UK: The Neglected Case of Gypsy-Travellers,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37/1 (2012): 115-134; Loïc Wacquant, “A Janus-Faced Institution of Ethnoracial Closure: A Sociological Specification of the Ghetto,” in *The Ghetto:*

where *life* is politicised, that is, where the very bodies of those inside the camp are politicised. On the other hand, the space of the hyper-ghetto, though not apolitical, seems characterised by a highly politicised *boundary*. Consequently, if one were to accept Wacquant's notion of the ghetto and Agamben's conceptualisation of the camp, then it would suggest that whilst the hyper-ghetto exacerbates processes of marginalisation, the camp, where "everything is possible," creates situations of perpetual expulsion, but not situations of marginality. Marginality may be a discursive *precondition* for entering the camp, but entering the camp entails a *sortie* of marginality.

Following a long period of racialised and ethnicised tensions in France, France's then president, Nicolas Sarkozy, announced a series of measures to restore order by means of reasserting the value of French nationality (*nationalité*) and expelling non-French national from the French territory.⁵⁸ The speech (later known as *le discours de Grenoble* – Speech in Grenoble) explicitly targeted people and communities situated outside the borders of the national French imaginary: nomads, vagrants, migrants, veiled Muslim women, and obviously, non-French Romanies. (All these individuals and communities live in the margins of cities, in ghettoised *banlieues* and settlements, as discussed above.) Sarkozy's proposed measures included awarding new powers to the police and the gendarmerie, augmenting the numbers of video surveillance cameras, terminating unauthorised Romani settlements (*mettre un terme aux implantations de sauvages de campements de Roms*), and expelling their inhabitants, as well as stripping undocumented migrants and "delinquents" of foreign origin (*d'origine étrangère*) from the French nationality, as they are, in the eyes of the government and the majority of the population,

Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies, eds. Ray Hutchison & Bruce Haynes (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012).

⁵⁸ Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours sur la lutte contre la criminalité, la délinquance, et l'immigration illégale," Grenoble, 30 July 2010, <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/107001771.html>, accessed december 2011. The title reads: "Speech on the fight against crime, delinquency, and illegal immigration."

guilty of being unworthy of the French nationality, to wit, of belonging to the French People: “one must deserve French nationality and be able to demonstrate one’s worthiness [of being a French national]” (*La nationalité française se mérite et il faut pouvoir s’en montrer digne*).⁵⁹ In the aftermath of the *discours de Grenoble*, about 10,000 Romanies were expelled from the French territory without much opposition from either the left or French society.⁶⁰ They were targetted because they were deemed illegal, idle, living off French welfare, begging or working in underground economic sectors, and more importantly, undeserving of belonging to the French People. In a particularly clear Agambenian moment, the (racialised) purity of the French people was located in discourses of danger and survival: if Romanies endanger the purity of France’s Peoplehood, then, it becomes the duty and the prerogative of the state to defend it (what Agamben names the “politicisation of life”). The *discours de Grenoble* marks the point when the hyper-ghetto ceases to be abandoned and totally invisible; it is a point of rupture, where surveillance does not simply monitor the border of the hyper-ghetto, but where it is instrumental in mapping the movement of Romanies; surveillance also enables the state to enter the hyper-ghetto, which, at this point turns into a camp.

Expulsions and the malleable camp:

Before 2010, the Romani hyper-ghetto in France was a “zone of social abandonment,” that is, in the realm of the barely visible: largely ignored by public powers – though its borders

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ These data are mostly estimates: the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) reports that 10000 Romanies were expelled from France in 2010 (ERRC, *Spotlight on France: Targeted Evictions and Deportation of Roma*, 19 August 2010, <http://www.errc.org/article/spotlight-on-france-targeted-evictions-and-deportations-of-roma/3619>, accessed September 2012), The Association Européenne pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme (European Association for the Defence of Human Rights) states that 9396 Romanies were deported in 2011, but more than 12000 in 2013 (Philippe Goosens, *Recensement des evacuations forces des lieux de vie occupés par les Roms migrants en France et de leurs expulsions collectives du territoire – 2012, 2012*, <http://www.aedh.eu/Recensement-des-evacuations.html>, accessed February 2013).

were heavily policed. However, after 2010, the governance of the hyper-ghetto shifted its practices from abandonment to exclusion. This means that the hyper-ghetto, characterised, suggests Michel Agier by its “distance from the state,”⁶¹ could no longer afford the (relative) safety of invisibility, but was subjected to the ceaseless “gaze”⁶² of the state. The moment the state begins to exercise its sovereignty on the ghetto *with the aim of protecting the sacrality of the nation’s biological life*, the ghetto becomes a camp.

In the aftermath of the *Discours de Grenoble*, a concerted effort between the police, the gendarmerie, the *préfets* (local representatives of the executive branch of the state), and mayors proceeded to expelling of non-French Romani from the French territory. Police officers in riot gear entered the ghettos, dismantled the frail shelters of the Romanies, and rounded up the inhabitants of the camp in order to start procedures of deportation. A witness (a city councilman from Grenoble) reports:

“That camp was where the Romani were living following an earlier forced evacuation of their camp stuck between the ring road and the railway. This operation had been done with brutality by about a hundred policemen; the bulldozers erased the camp to the ground and the stuff that was left there got thrown away in dumpsters. More than a hundred Romani had found themselves wandering about the streets and sleeping in public parks. The municipality must reopen another field and small tents that could have been sufficient in the summer were given out to the Romani – a lot of families with kids. That situation lasted for three month and became unbearable: the Romani, who knew how to build shelters had been forbidden from building anything less precarious than these thin tents; no electricity; very few water taps, portable toilets, and interdiction to light a fire... It took the determination of charity organisations to have the city build a wooden common house to provide a shelter from the rain and seating somewhere else other than under the tents. With the rain, the mud, and the snow, the city could not leave these people in those dreadful conditions. But the state, which is suppose to finance or provide shelter for homeless people refused to do so. They had to wait until Tuesday at 6 at night after it started snowing to get moved to another location in the most improvised fashion. Families were moved to caravans and flats on the one hand, but the other hand, the most ‘isolated’ people (among whom a lot of women) did not get that lucky: for them an unclean, polluted warehouse which had been closed for years; no transportation to relocate them, no food on the premises, an insufficient heating system started up only after their arrival, and the police as well as security guards to prevent

⁶¹ Michel Agier, “The Ghetto, The Hyperghetto, and the Fragmentation of the World,” trans. Iain Fraser, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33/3 (Sept. 2009): 856.

⁶² Michel Foucault, “Preface,” *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1994), ix.

the press and some people from the neighbourhood who had come in solidarity from entering the new camp... Today, after a second sleepless night in dire condition, the Romani were asked to leave, and were told: 'you will be notified tonight if we are reopening the place for you.' They took this opportunity to go back to their first camp in Rondeau [the camp from which they had been expelled two days prior] to collect their belongings, as they were authorised to do so by the Communal Social Action Centre [the welfare administration]. There, they bumped into policemen, and everything went to the dumpster. The Préfecture therefore deliberately opted for police brutality."⁶³

In the camp, Agamben reminds us, "everything is possible."⁶⁴ This testimony is one of the rare ones available which details one of the expulsions. It should be noted that the irruption of the police in the hyper-ghetto, also signifies the irruption the state in the life of its residents: the latter have to deal with the various branches of the state (and of the welfare system): the police, municipal authorities, the *Préfecture* (the local representative of the central government which coordinates, among other things, police action), and municipal welfare services (here the Communal Social Action Centre). The inhabitants of the camp have no way out, no legal administrative help, and, since July 2006, no help to expect from French citizens whose conscience might provoke manifestations of solidarity towards Romanies.⁶⁵ For the duration of the expulsion process, the camp's residents have no control over their lives and bodies. They are stripped of their national and legal rights, and undergo a thorough biometric control, "with face and profile head photo shots [...]. Digital prints of the ten fingers [are] taken, as well as saliva samples."⁶⁶ These expulsions therefore place Romani bodies completely under the control of the state: even the stuff of life (DNA) is collected and stored by the state, as well as their names,

⁶³ Gilles Kuntz, "Mise à l'abri ou opération de police ?" *Le blog de Gilles Kuntz*, 2 December 2010, <http://www.gilleskuntz.fr/?p=1609>, accessed September 2013.

⁶⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 170.

⁶⁵ The 2006 law regulating foreign nationals' entry into the French territory stipulates that "Any person who, directly or indirectly facilitates or attempts to facilitate the entry, the circulation, or the unauthorised stay of undocumented foreigners will be sentenced to a five-year term in prison and a fine of 30000 Euros." "Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile," Loi 2006-911 2006-07-24 art. 120, *Journal Officiel de la République Française* (25 juillet 2006).

⁶⁶ Sylvain Mouillard, "Tests ADN sur les Roms : l'excès de zèle des gendarmes du Val d'Oise," *Libération*, 8 October 2010, <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/01012295165-tests-adn-sur-des-roms-l-exces-de-zele-des-gendarmes-du-val-d-oise>, accessed on the 20th April 2011

their known family members and associates, their last known addresses in France and in their country of origin, with links to any encounter with the judicial system.⁶⁷ The moment the state enters the camp, the Romanies acquire an administrative existence, with biometric characteristics, which may later be used to prevent them to enter the territory by legal channels for a five-year period.⁶⁸

In order to prevent deportees' returns (Schengen space *oblige*), biometric data (such as finger prints) are taken,⁶⁹ though no European consensus has been reached on the issue of anthropometric and biometric data in the Schengen space. The collection of personal data from foreign nationals by French authorities is therefore not yet legal under European law; moreover, French law forbids ethnic and racial profiling, which includes the collection of such data. Nonetheless, this search for legal (or legal-like) possibilities illustrates this state of "indistinction" mentioned by Agamben: European and French courts appear unprepared to pronounce judgements on the issues which have arisen since expulsions started; despite numerous verbal condemnations from European institutions of police brutality, deportations, racial profiling, and human rights abuses, France still expels Romanies (2873 for the first trimester of 2013, which is more than for the first trimester of 2012).⁷⁰ The "indistinction" mentioned above is reinforced by the fact that not many have witnessed actual expulsions – except a few reporters or social workers; there has not been any academic ethnographic rendition of the legal, police, and cross-border repatriation processes at play in these expulsions. As a

⁶⁷ Franck Johannès, "Le fichier des Roms du ministère de l'intérieur," *Libertés surveillées, garantir vos droits dans un monde inquiet* (blog hosted by *Le Monde*), 7 October 2010, <http://libertes.blog.lemonde.fr/2010/10/07/le-fichier-des-roms-du-ministere-de-linterieur/>, accessed April 2011.

⁶⁸ Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés, "OSCAR: Outil Simplifié de Contrôle des Aides au Retour," 26 August 2010, <http://www.cnil.fr/documentation/fichiers-en-fiche/fichier/article/oscar-outil-de-statistique-et-de-controle-de-laide-au-retour/>, accessed September 2012.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Philippe Goosens, *Recensement des évacuations forcées des lieux de vie occupés par les Roms étrangers en France – 1^{er} trimestre 2013*, 5 April 2013, <http://www.aedh.eu/Recensement-des-evacuations,1903.html>, accessed May 2013.

regional newspaper reports, expulsions often happen at night, first to make sure that the Romani will be at the camp, but also to avoid legal observers and the glance of the (rare) sympathetic citizens, “so as to ‘dissuade onlookers and journalists from getting too close’ although this was never said officially.”⁷¹

The expulsion practices described above, far from depicting sanitised procedures of “extraction,” shows a confused procedure which extends for a significant period of time (in this case, several months). The imaginary of expulsions conjures images of brevity and precision aiming at dismantling the camp. The material presence of the camp is quickly eliminated under the action of the police and commandeered bulldozers. Yet, the camp lingers, as local institutions decide what to do with this floating population. When the state mandates the destruction of Romani caravan and goods, Romanies are stripped of the possibility to start another more concealed shelter in a different urban or peri-urban area. In the example above, the Romani camp residents are not held in a specific place for any length of time. On the contrary, they were displaced first to another outside location, then to a wooden house, then – due to severe weather conditions – to flats and caravans, to a warehouse, and finally, to the streets. The state perpetuates its spatial control by confining the Romanies to outdoors locations (*homines sacri* may be killed...) and provides some meagre vital support only when “forced” by local charities (but cannot be sacrificed...). The camp itself becomes deterritorialised: when it is dismantled, its materiality ceases to exist, to wit, it is no longer a stable, spatial arrangement, but a “condition” which spreads to the city streets, and acquires a temporary, improvised, drifting quality as it attaches itself to the body of the Romani. The deterritorialisation of the camp therefore does not signify that the camp disappears. Police surveillance and legal provisions ensure that the Romani

⁷¹ Eric Chauveau & Basile Lemaire, “Le camp de Roms de Dompierre-sur-Mer (17) livré aux engins de destruction,” *Sud Ouest*, Friday 20 August 2010, <http://www.sudouest.fr/2010/08/20/evacuation-cette-nuit-d-un-camp-de-roms-a-dompierre-sur-mer-en-charente-maritime-165341-1333.php>, accessed September 2012.

remain visible and legally isolated from the “real” French population – until the state has made the necessary preparations to deport them. For the Romanies, exiting the camp, means exiting the national territory of France. Should they come back via irregular migration patterns, mechanisms of police surveillance, including biometric files and ethnic profiling ensure that Romanies present on the French territory remain in the camp, that is, that their bodies remain under the custody and the gaze of the state.

The Romani camp is thus a flexible, malleable, but confused technique of government that can be retracted and redeployed as Romanies come and go, and which combines the coordinated action of several branches of the state (the police, immigration services, sometimes social services, and so on). It should be noted that discursively, the action of the government aims at, in the Sarkozy’s words, “terminating unauthorised settlements.” In actuality, when the police (the state) enter a ghetto, they diffuse the camp into the bodies of the Romanies.

CONCLUSION: CITIZENSHIP VS. CITIZENSHIP

In a certain sense, the issue of “unwanted populations” is deceptively simple: a modern understanding of citizenship posits the latter as the nation-state’s symbol and instrument of deciding exclusion and inclusion. Now, as Schengen migration flows confront the migratory policies of European nation-states, discriminating between citizens and non-citizens becomes a delicate matter. Whilst the nation-state still retain the ultimate prerogative of determining what Linda Bosniak calls “citizenship’s ‘who’ question,”⁷² this choice is complicated by the increased visibility of many communities and individuals who are deemed “unorthodox,” to wit, liminal, simply constructed outside the limits of habitual citizenship, *i.e.* the Other. However, Agamben’s

⁷² That is, who is included in the category of the citizens.

Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1.

understanding of citizenship in *Homo Sacer* is vastly different: citizenship as defined by modern Western “Declaration of rights [represents] the originary figure of the inscription of natural life into the juridico-political order of the nation-state.”⁷³ In other words, for Agamben, being a citizen does not mean being able to make claims before the nation-state (*e.g.* recognition, social services, political representation, etc.), but it means being placed ineluctably under its total control. Furthermore, Agamben established that modern state sovereignty entailed the blurring of the boundary between the “normal” and the “exceptional” legal orders: legality itself acquires an uncertain value: as French and European institutions search for legal explanations and justifications for the repeated expulsions of the Romani from the French territory, who can define what the law is, which regulations should apply, and who can enforce them? Now, these paradoxes of citizenship aggravate the situation of the Romanies: Schengen “citizenship” brought Romanian and Bulgarian nationals free-movement, but it denied them the right to settle in Western Europe. Hyper-ghettoised in Eastern Europe and expelled from Western Europe, consequent numbers of Romanies have no choice but to engage in perpetual comings and goings between East and West, as juridico-political circumstances dictate. However, as mentioned earlier, this juridico-political order is “normally suspended.” In particular, laws regarding personal data and the collection of biometric data have not yet been clarified by French or European institutions. The expulsions and the camps are as symptomatic of the legal confusions of European modernity as they are of centuries of constructing Romanies and Gypsies as *homines sacri*.

When they are subjected to a police control, the inhabitants of the camp enter a temporary spatial malleable power arrangement, or, paraphrasing Agamben, a “dislocating localization.”⁷⁴

⁷³ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 127.

⁷⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 175.

that is, a space of confusion and suspension of the law, almost what Marc Augé has called a “non-place.”⁷⁵ The concept of *homo sacer* and the essentialist discourses attached to it implies that strong stigmata and manifestations of disgust are attached to the camp. Romanies live in squalid conditions because they are Romani (“...the [Romanian] mayor was adamant and clear,” quotes Berescu, “the gypsies live like that because of their nature; you cannot do much, even if you try”⁷⁶). Consequently, they are Romani because they live in squalid conditions. Indeed, the condition of *homo sacer* (and its etymological relation to dirt and impurity) signifies that, in the European landscape, the Romani corrupt whatever they touch and are corrupted by whatever touches them. Trapped in this essentialist “*homo sacer* citizenship,” Romanies can only aspire to be citizens of the camp. The People, the ones who cannot enter the camp, walk next to it but never stop, are defined by its “non-localisation” inside the camp. Because the camp is inhabited by non-People citizens, it follows that the camp is necessarily what France is not. Conversely, France is what is located outside the camp, that is, the only possible place. The camp is a non-place, that is non-France, populated by non-French citizens (who are paradoxically subjected to a tight control performed by the French state).

Expulsions have steadily increased for nearly three years, yet, camps and *homo sacer* citizens are still coming back. The regrettable absence of solution both at the European and the national level is likely to perpetuate a decaying situation whereby Romanies from Eastern Europe are confined to hyper-ghettos, and the Romanies present on the French territory are restricted to camps. The continuation of this migratory and governance conundrum has somewhat banalised and normalised expulsion as a legitimate technique of migration regulation. In September 2012, in Marseille, neighbourhood residents, angered at the presence of a Romani

⁷⁵ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2009).

⁷⁶ Berescu, “European Roma ghettos,” 345.

families in the vicinity, decided to proceed themselves to expelling the Romanies and dismantling (actually, burning) the latter's belonging.⁷⁷ Whilst these outbursts of communitarian violence are for the time being uncommon (at least in France), this event may signify a more worrisome trend: if the expulsion of entire racialised and ethnicised communities becomes a routinised phenomenon, and, in Bauman's words,

“if the state loses its monopoly of coercion [...] it does not necessarily follow that the sum total of violence, including violence with potentially genocidal consequences, will diminish; violence may be only ‘deregulated,’ descending from the state to the ‘community’ (neo-tribal) level.”⁷⁸

Bauman's frightening warning is today far from becoming a reality, but it is nonetheless conjures memories of Europe's sombre times, ushered by “the curious contiguity between democracy and totalitarianism,”⁷⁹ writes Agamben. *A bon entendeur...*

⁷⁷ “Marseille : des riverains expulsent les Roms et brûlent leur camp,” 28 September 2012, *La Provence*, <http://www.laprovence.com/article/actualites/1977261/marseille-des-riverains-expulsent-les-roms-et-brulent-leur-camp.html>, accessed December 2012.

⁷⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 193.

⁷⁹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 121

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