

# Roma Migrants in the City : Practices and Policies

Call for papers for *Geocarrefour* (Issue 86, 2011)

New deadline : 15<sup>th</sup> of december 2010

## Roma Migrants in the public space

In the last few years, Western European cities have been marked by the arrival of new populations coming from Central Europe or Balkans and belonging to the Roma minorities. Even though they are not actually numerous (between 10 and 20 000 in France according to the official estimates), these persons and these groups, labeled as “Roma migrants”, have a strong visibility in the urban public sphere. Most of the time without any means of support and irregular, these Roma/Gypsies settled in the urban margins (squats, slums). They implement informal strategies (begging, old iron collect, sale of homeless magazines etc). Counter to the social norms in course, these practices arouse reactions of empathy or, on the contrary, of rejection from the local society, as showed by the current progress of anti-gypsism in Italy.

The presence of Roma migrants in a precarious situation constitutes also a new public problem, that is to say a « state of fact [which became] a stake of reflection and protestation, and a target for the policy” (Gusfield, 2003). At this moment, public answers oscillate between rejection and hospitality. On the one hand, public authorities apply repressive measures (slums and squats evictions, expulsion of illegal immigrants) and seek to control the mobility within UE by making a census of populations and by ethnic profiling. On the other hand, local authorities can implement an integration policy. This policy aims to protect the migrants in distress, but it aims also at keeping them at a distance of the urban society too. In this perspective, Roma migrants can be grouping together in *campi nomadi* (Italy) or in *villages d’insertion* (France). Recently, the European institutions designed an inclusion strategy for Roma too.

## Assumptions and issues

The present special issue aims at exploring the different forms of interaction between the practices of the migrants and the policies linked to the control of mobility and/or to the reception of the Roma migrants in the European cities. Papers based on case study or on comparative research are welcome. Papers may examine the following themes:

### The practices of the Roma migrants in question

Throughout the exam of the mobility, of the housing and economic strategies, the main goal of this theme is both to analyze the effects of the current policies on the Roma migrants’ strategies and practices, and to study the relationship between these migrants, the city and the urban society.

## To welcome and/or to evict ? Cross insights on the local policies

The frequent resort to the spatial engineering (control of mobility, eviction, temporary housing in specific structures) leads to question if the local policies for Roma migrants constitute some “spatial policies” (Lussault, 2009), which aim at the control of local authorities on their own territories. How are the measures of rejection articulated with the reception policy? Which are the systems of action linked to the design and the implementation of local policies? Can we consider the current policies as an actualization of the measures applied in the past in order to control the migrants or the populations defined as “nomads” (Gotman, 2004)?

## The « Roma issue » at the local level: a spatial problem ?

The “Roma issue” doesn’t exist *a priori*; it builds itself in some situations of interactions, throughout the discourses and the practices of common citizens, of “civil society” organizations and of the institutions. Which are the genesis conditions of the “Roma issue” at local level? Which are the mechanisms of the public arenas linked to this emerging public matter? We will analyze especially the spatial dimension of the “Roma issue”. In a lot of French and Italian cities, some spatial elements – slums, street activities, vision of the foreign poverty – are often the origin of the public problems linked to the presence of Roma migrants in a precarious situation. Can we make the same observation in other European cities?

## Paper submission

The deadline for the submission is the **15<sup>th</sup> December 2010**. Articles could be written in French or in English. The typical length of the abstract is about **40.000 characters, ie 6000 words, spaces and figures included**. They will strictly follow the editorial norms of the review, that can be found on the following webpage (<http://geocarrefour.revues.org/index1017.html>). Papers must be submitted online through the following webpage (<http://manuscripts.revues.org/index.php/geocarrefour>). They will be evaluated under a double blind review process. The authors will be notified by the **1<sup>st</sup> March 2011**. The goal is to publish the present special issue in the spring 2011.

For any problems or questions, send an email to the coordinators ([olivier.legros@univ-tours.fr](mailto:olivier.legros@univ-tours.fr), [tommaso.vitale@unimib.it](mailto:tommaso.vitale@unimib.it)) or to the journal editor([geocarrefour@revues.org](mailto:geocarrefour@revues.org)).