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# **PERSISTENTLY TEMPORARY**

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## ***Ambiguity and Political Mobilisations in Italy's Roma camps: a comparative perspective***

Gaja Maestri

A Thesis presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Geography, Durham University

July 2016



## Abstract

This thesis interrogates the temporal persistence of Roma camps to understand the mechanisms that lead to the protraction of their temporary condition. While persistent temporariness has been widely acknowledged as a common aspect of camp-like institutions, it has rarely been problematised. Examining the cases of Italy and France, this thesis unpacks this notion of persistent temporariness and investigates the factors contributing to its different forms. In so doing, the thesis re-thinks the concept of persistence as gradual change and offers a new theorisation of the camp as a site of contentious governance.

The three empirical questions examined in the thesis are: 1) What are the factors that contribute to the persistence of the Italian Roma camps? 2) Can these factors also help with understanding of other cases of persistent temporariness? 3) What are the strategies developed to oppose the persistence of the Roma camps? These are addressed by way of a comparison of three institutional camps characterised by different types of enduring temporariness: today's Italian Roma camps, the historical French transit estates for Algerian migrants, and contemporary French integration villages for Roma migrants. Following an analysis of the Italian Roma camps, the thesis presents what I call an 'asymmetrical comparison' with the French cases, which aims to investigate how the factors implicated in the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps can help to explain the persistence of the transit estates and integration villages.

In examining these cases, I have drawn attention to the concept of policy ambiguity and to the way it influences the strategies of the actors involved in the camp governance and, therefore, their different trajectories of persistent temporariness. Although, in Italy, ambiguity facilitated the persistence of the Roma camps, in recent years a new form of resistance has turned policy ambiguity into an opportunity for political mobilisation.



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## **List of Abbreviations**

- AHR: Aide au retour humanitaire (Assisted Humanitarian Return)
- BPM: Blocchi Precari Metropolitan (Metropolitan Precarious Blocks)
- Cetrafa: Centres de transit familiaux (Transition Family Centres)
- CION: Coordinamento Intervento Operativo Nomadi (Coordination of Interventions and Operations on Nomads)
- CIR: Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (Italian Council for Refugees)
- DIHAL: Délégation Interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement (Inter-ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing)
- FAS: Fonds d'Action sociale pour les travailleurs musulmans d'Algérie en métropole et pour leur famille (Social Action Fund for Algerian Muslim workers and their families living in metropolitan areas)
- GEANARP: Groupe d'Etude et d'Action pour les Nord Africains de la Région Paris (Group of Research and Action for the Northern Africans of the Paris Region)
- IST: Immeubles Sociaux de Transit (Transition Social Buildings)
- LPS: Logement et Promotion Sociale (Housing and Social Promotion)
- OPHLM: Offices publics d'habitations à loyer modéré (Public Office for Rent-controlled Housing)
- RAM: Resistenza Abitativa Metropolitana (Metropolitan Housing Resistance)
- Sonacotra: Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs (National Construction Agency of Housing for Workers)
- Sonacotral: Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs algériens (National Construction Agency of Housing for Algerian Workers)
- SPE: Unità Operativa Sicurezza Pubblica ed Emergenziale (Police Unit of Public Security and Emergency)
- UNAR: Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali (National Office against Racial Discrimination)

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## **Statement of Copyright**

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**INTRODUCTION****Why and how to study the camp?**

Camps have proliferated across the world and many of them persist for generations despite being officially created as temporary. Today, there are approximately 12 million people living in over one thousand camps globally, including refugee camps and those for internally displaced persons, transit camps for evicted slum dwellers and immigration detention centres. The UNHCR announced an increase in the world's refugee population, with approximately five million more refugees in 2015 as compared to 2011, and a doubling of the number of asylum seekers and of assisted displaced persons, for a total of over 50 million people under the protection of the UNHCR (2012, 2016). Europe is today also experiencing this growing tendency, with one million refugees more in 2015 as compared to 2011. As a response to the so-called 'migration crisis', new hotspots, refugee centres and immigration removal and identification facilities are mushrooming in Europe, mainly at the southern border of the Schengen Area. However, although created as emergency solutions to temporarily host refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons, these camp-like institutions often persist beyond their initially planned duration, in some cases offering shelter and protection to people living in precarious conditions, while in others perpetuating their marginalisation and vulnerability. Since institutional camps are increasingly marking the world's geographies of exclusion and inclusion, it is today of crucial importance to interrogate their temporal persistence and to understand the mechanisms that prolong their condition of temporariness.

This thesis focuses on enduring camps, i.e. institutional camps characterised by a condition of persistent temporariness. Among scholars of camps studies, permanent temporariness is widely acknowledged as a common aspect of institutional camps, but has been rarely problematised, being treated as a definitional feature of these spaces. Although the concept of permanent temporariness usefully sheds light on a tension

characterising the lives of people inhabiting camps, enduring camps do evolve, last or end in different ways. For this reason, rather than a constant, permanent temporariness could be understood as ‘persistent temporariness’, i.e. treated as a variable that can assume different states of persistence rather than an indefinite condition of permanence. The aim of this investigation is therefore to unpack this notion, and to understand the factors contributing to the emergence of different regimes of persistent temporariness. In order to do this, the thesis considers three cases of enduring camps that have had different trajectories of duration: the Italian Roma camps, the French transit estates and the French integration villages. They all constitute different forms of camps created by governing institutions, with the aim of offering emergency accommodation to people left homeless following slum removal projects. Although created as temporary devices, they all lasted beyond their initially planned duration. However, they persisted in different ways, as the stories of their residents show.

Goran lives in a crowded Roma camp on the eastern periphery of the Italian capital city. A thousand Roma live there, in small Portakabins. Camps like this started appearing in Rome at the beginning of the 1990s, following the arrival of Roma asylum seekers during the Yugoslav Wars. Because they were viewed as nomads, most of them were not granted protection as refugees when they arrived in Italy and therefore ended up living in informal settlements. The lack of hygienic conditions in these settlements and the threat that, according to the municipality, they posed to public order and security, led to a series of slum removal programmes and to the relocation of evicted Roma to emergency camps. Although presented as an emergency measure, the Roma camp constitutes a policy tool that has increasingly been employed to manage the Roma population living in informal settlements. These camps have persisted until today and several thousand people have been stuck in these spaces for years, including Goran who says:

Portakabins here are too small, there is not enough space [...]. The municipality promised us a flat in a council house and told us that we had to stay here only for four months. But actually, we've been here for a long time now. I even went to meet the mayor [...] but they don't listen to us.<sup>1</sup>

The Roma camp where Goran lived is still in place, and others have been opened after

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<sup>1</sup> Interview reported in Anzaldi and Stasolla (2010).

it. Many others have been relocated there with the same expectations Goran had, and still wait to be moved elsewhere.

Approximately 40 years before, in France, Samir was relocated to a transit estate not far from Paris. After the Second World War, France needed a cheap workforce in the factories and decided to welcome economic migrants. However, migrants from the colonies were not as welcome as European ones and, although they could quickly find a job, they did not easily find places to live. The lack of housing stock after the war, the increasing number of migrants arriving into the cities, and the widespread racism towards people from the North African colonies, resulted in an increasing number of Algerian migrants living in informal settlements. Clearance of these informal settlements started during the 1960s and the people living there were relocated to emergency accommodation. A decade later, transit estates still constituted the main device for relocating slum dwellers, who lived there for more than the few months initially planned. Samir and his family, after almost a year living in a transit estate, decided to write a letter to the person responsible for the slum removal programmes. The letter read:

[Y]ou had reassured us that it was just temporary, a matter of two months, and that we would have been relocated elsewhere [...]. [T]oday it's almost nine months since we are here and we didn't hear from you ever since.<sup>2</sup>

Samir's family was finally relocated to a council house, 12 years after this letter was written. They had to spend years there instead of months but finally, unlike the Italian Roma camps, the transit estates were definitely closed in the 1980s.

While Goran and Samir spent years in emergency accommodation after being told they would spend only a few months there, in 2015 Cristian was evicted earlier than he expected from the village where he lived. In 2008 he had been relocated to a so-called integration village on the northern periphery of Paris following the clearance of the informal settlement where he lived with other Roma families. Unlike other Roma who were simply dispersed, Cristian's family was selected to join the integration village where they could receive language training as well as help for finding a job and a house. However, as the integration village came to an end in 2013, Cristian still did not find an

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from a resident of a transit estate cited in Cohen (2013, p.418).

alternative housing solution. Although some of the families relocated to the village found replacement houses, others like Cristian's family did not manage to find alternative accommodation and feared the closure of the integration village. He said to a journalist: “We would like to leave, but we need a house, otherwise where can we go?”<sup>3</sup>. In contrast to the residents of the Roma camps and transit estates, the Roma living in integration villages protested against their too short duration and campaign for prolonging them. In 2013 Cristian's family and other residents started squatting in the village and managed to remain until 2015, when the village was finally cleared and the families left on the streets.

Goran, Samir and Cristian experienced different types of persistent temporariness. While Goran still awaits relocation to a council estate, Samir finally moved out from the transit estate where he spent over ten years of his life. In contrast, Cristian would have preferred to spend more time in the integration village, and for this reason campaigned to extend the temporariness of this space. How could these similar spaces persist in such different, even opposite, ways? Why and how do institutional temporary camps last? This is the research puzzle underlying the work presented here. Starting from this point, this thesis aims to answer the following empirical questions:

- What are the factors that contribute to the persistence of the Italian Roma camps?
- Can these factors also help with understanding of other cases of persistent temporariness, such as the French transit estates and integration villages?
- What are the strategies developed to oppose the persistence of the Italian Roma camps?

In order to answer these questions, I will elaborate two theoretical premises about, firstly, how to conceive of enduring temporariness and, secondly, how to theorise the space of the camp.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview reported in Le Parisien, 15 June 2015. <http://www.leparisien.fr/saint-ouen-93400/saint-ouen-apres-le-village-d-insertion-14-familles-roms-dans-l-impasse-15-06-2015-4863981.php#xtref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.uk>. Accessed on 8 June 2016.

**Re-thinking persistence: investigating gradual change through an asymmetrical comparison**

The three cases illustrated above constitute three different articulations of persistent temporariness. In order to describe these differences more accurately, I suggest using the typology of gradual change advanced by scholars of institutional change. Bringing into the analysis the notion of gradual change can indeed emphasise the dynamism behind the notion of persistence, which is often associated with continuity. In fact, as shown by the experiences of Goran, Samir and Cristian, to reduce the temporal evolution of the Roma camps, transit estates and integration villages to mere continuity would imply an oversimplification of the dynamics at play. In contrast, I conceive of them as different types of gradual change, which is different from more radical and abrupt kinds of transformations and which, therefore, has often been misread as stability. There are three different typologies of gradual change that can shed light on the cases considered in this research. Firstly, the Italian Roma camps can be read as a case of ‘conversion’ since they have been redirected towards new goals, different from those that they initially served at the moment of their institution. As I illustrate in detail in Chapter 1, the Roma camps were created as emergency accommodation for slum dwellers but finally contributed to exacerbate the housing exclusion of the Roma. Secondly, the French transit estates constitute a case of ‘replacement’ since they were progressively replaced by a different form of housing, i.e. council estates. The closure of the transit estates occurred indeed over a time span of a decade, during which – following several protests – the residents were slowly relocated to council housing estates. Thirdly, the integration villages can be viewed as a type of ‘layering’ because there are a few exceptions that are added to existing rules. Although most of the integration villages are closed as their duration comes to the end, some of them are prolonged following the protests and demands of pro-Roma associations, as in the case of the village where Cristian lived. By asking what the factors are that contributed to persistent temporariness, the factors that led to the conversion of the Roma camps, to the replacement of the transit estates, and to the layering of the integration villages are therefore identified.

In order to understand the mechanism that contributed to these forms of gradual change, I develop what I call an ‘asymmetrical comparison’, i.e. a combination of a

primary case study and of a comparison. I primarily conduct an in-depth analysis of the Italian Roma camps that helps me to unpick the elements playing a role in the persistence of this policy. Once the argument explaining this case is developed, I then conduct a comparison with the French cases that I analyse by using the concepts emerging from the examination of the Italian one. The asymmetry in the comparison is due to the fact that the research is mainly about the Italian Roma camps, whereas the French transit estates and integration villages are used to support the ideas developed from the examination of the former. This asymmetrical comparison has two objectives: first, to grasp the reasons for the persistent temporariness of the Italian Roma camps and, second, to offer reflections about the dynamics contributing to the persistence of temporary camps in general. While the analysis of the Italian case aims to generate a hypothesis about the factors implicated in the production of persistent temporariness, the French cases are used to understand if the mechanisms at play in the Italian case can also shed light on other types of persistence. While the specific findings of this thesis cannot be generalised to other cases beyond those analysed here, it is hoped that the comparison will contribute to wider discussions about persistent temporariness of institutional camps.

The Roma camp has been chosen as the main focus of investigation because it constitutes one of the most persistent forms of segregation of an ethnic minority in Europe. At the beginning of the new millennium, Italy was infamously defined “Campland” (European Roma Rights Center, 2000) as it was considered the only country in Europe boasting of a systematic seclusion of the Roma into camps. While new forms of camps are appearing for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, the Roma camp is a deeply rooted form of segregation in western European countries, and even more so in Italy and Rome, where up to one-third of the Roma population live in institutional camps. The comparison with France's Roma integration villages contributes to the recent emerging of cross-national analysis of Roma segregation in western Europe, which has been widely explored through single country case studies but more rarely through a comparative perspective (Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015). In addition to this, the comparison with the Algerian transit estates aims to desegregate the discipline of Romani studies. Indeed, although there is academic work challenging the exceptionalism of the Roma, Romani studies rarely discuss the similarities between the

Roma and other categories, hence essentialising the Roma minority as a separate group (see Maestri, 2016b; Picker and Roccheggiani, 2013). Even though research into Roma segregation constitutes an attempt to promote equality, it also indirectly contributes to the representation of the Roma as an exceptional subject, separate from the socio-political dynamics affecting other ethnic groups and minorities. In contrast, I propose that Roma camps can be read as a case that contributes to our understanding of camps across the globe, thus placing the issue of the Roma people in a broader context of questions about marginalisation, citizenship and political mobilisations. The segregation of the Roma people in Europe is not an exception but shares many similarities with other forms of stigmatisation (for instance, of the Jews, see Picker and Roccheggiani, 2013) and spatial management of colonial subjects (Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015). For this reason, I compare it not only with other camps for Roma in France but with a form of institutional confinement of Algerian economic migrants. To compare the segregation of the Roma with that of other ethnic groups allows us to show how the former does not constitute a unique case but has several aspects in common with other kinds of seclusion.

### **Beyond spaces of exception: the camp as a site of contentious governance**

Since the beginning of the 2000s, Agamben's work has been increasingly used to construe camp-like institutions as spaces of exception. The Italian scholar argues that camps are exceptional spaces where the legal order is indefinitely suspended following a sovereign decision, which draws a line between those that are included in the realm of politics and citizenship and those that are excluded from it, or, as Agamben put it, excluded through inclusion. Although Agamben's work importantly denounces the legal limbo in which people living in camps find themselves and the negative effects that this has on their political agency and possibilities of resistance, it does not provide a nuanced understanding of the complex political process constituting what he defines, "sovereign decision" (Agamben, 1998, p.19). For this reason, a number of scholars have criticised the Agambenian understanding of the camp, considered an oversimplification of the interactions, conflicts and negotiations between a series of different semi-sovereign actors contributing to the production of the exception. For example, as I show

in Chapter 3, the Italian Roma camps – and the same applies to the transit estates and integration villages – are the product of the intricate relations between a multiplicity of actors, both institutional and non-institutional ones, including national and local governments, a wide variety of civil society organisations and also social movements. Therefore, to conceive of these spaces as the mere result of the decisions of governmental actors would provide an incomplete account of the complexity of their formation and change. In contrast, in order to understand the different trajectories of the persistent temporariness of institutional camps, it is fundamental to thoroughly consider the relations between the actors involved in the governance of these spaces. Indeed, the persistence of camps cannot be reduced to the decision of a single sovereign entity, but is shaped by the different power relations of “multiple partially sovereign actors” (Ramadan, 2013, p.69).

As the Agambenian conceptualisation of the camp is too limited to grasp the complexity of gradual change of institutional enduring camps, I suggest conceiving of the camp as a site of ‘contentious governance’. The concepts of ‘governance’ and of ‘political contention’ emerge from debates in political geography and sociology, and challenge the simplistic opposition between a rational and uniform domain of institutional policy-making, on the one hand, and the messy and plural field of non-institutional resistance, on the other. While the former criticises the hierarchical division between institutional and non-institutional actors and enables the policy-making process to be conceived as co-constituted by a plurality of actors, the latter places conflict at the core of policy formation and emphasises how the framings, opportunities, and resources mobilised by the actors involved in the governance of camps are relationally produced. In order to identify the factors contributing to the persistence of the Italian Roma camps, it is therefore necessary to understand, first, who the actors in favour and against this persistence are, and, second, how their power relations are influenced by the resources these actors mobilise, the way they frame their actions and the opportunities they articulate to shape the Roma camps.

### **Ambiguity, policy change and political mobilisations**

To understand how the Roma camps are constituted, I conducted a series of in-



depth interviews with a wide array of actors involved in the management and contestation of the camps, as well as a review of policy documents. When I started conducting interviews, I was surprised that there was no agreement on what a Roma camp is supposed to be. The policy guidelines and legal documents released since the early 1990s indeed describe the Roma camp often in contradictory ways, presenting it as a halting site for nomadic Roma but also as emergency accommodation for slum dwellers, or a housing project for the integration of a deviant minority. These different definitions of the Roma camps often recurred in the words of the interviewees, some of whom denounced this confusion, while others proposed their own interpretation of the correct definition of these spaces. During the interviews, when I asked questions about the reasons for the persistence of the Roma camps, interviewees often raised the problem of the ambiguity characterising this policy. The reiterated importance given to the lack of clear details about the Roma camps made me realise how this ambiguity crucially characterises this policy and led me to investigate how it relates to persistence.

Ambiguity can be defined as the presence of many ways to think about the same situation or phenomenon. Rather than a flaw, it is a constitutive aspect of policies and can be present at different stages of the policy-making process. I argue that in the Italian case ambiguity characterised the policy design of the Roma camps, as I illustrate in Chapter 4. Indeed, their ambiguity was not due to the wrong implementation of clear guidelines, but to the presence of a legal framework that offered simultaneously different and unclear definitions. For example, policy documents do not specify if the Roma camps are for nomadic Roma or for Roma slum dwellers, if these camps are temporary or permanent, and what their objectives are. This ambiguity was the result of the conflicting opinions present at the moment of the creation of the Roma camps in the early 1990s, but it later became an important factor shaping their persistent temporariness. As I discuss more in detail in Chapter 5, pro-Roma associations that – more or less intentionally – contributed to the protraction of this policy discursively mobilised its ambiguous definitions and objectives as a way to frame and to legitimise their actions and, as a result, opposers of the camps had fewer resources available and few opportunities to voice their dissent. Policy ambiguity is a characteristic of the Roma camps that was relationally produced by the actors involved in their creation, and that later became an aspect influencing the strategies of the actors involved in its persistent

temporariness.

From the analysis of the Italian Roma camps, it emerged that an ambiguous policy design weakened the resources available to the opposers of this policy, therefore resulting in its persistent temporariness. In Chapter 6, the comparison with the French cases shows that a clearer policy design, combined with an ambiguous policy implementation, facilitated the mobilisation of associations that were against the way in which the transit estates and the integration villages were implemented. While in the case of the transit estates, actors opposing their persistence used the clarity of its policy design to strengthen their claims and to finally reduce and end this policy, in the case of the integration villages, associations that were against closure managed to frame their claims within its policy objectives, leading to the temporal extension of some of the villages. Although this is a qualitative investigation of only three cases and it is, therefore, impossible to generalise the detailed findings beyond these examples, policy ambiguity emerged as a factor that, by influencing the resources, framing and opportunities available to the actors involved in the camp governance, contributed to different types of persistent temporariness. While the ambiguous policy design of the Italian Roma camps facilitated their conversion, the ambiguous implementation of the French transit estates and integration villages enabled the replacement of the former and the layering of the latter. However, since constraints and opportunities to actions emerge relationally and are never fixed or objective, the ambiguity of the policy design of the Roma camps cannot be reduced to a mere obstacle to the resistance against the Roma camps. Indeed, camp-dwellers and activists do engage creatively with the surrounding context and shape opportunities to fight back inequality. Even though ambiguity historically developed into a factor hindering the mobilisation of the opponents of the camps, as I illustrate in Chapter 7, these actors are also finding a way to turn it into an opportunity through new forms of resistance and urban solidarity.

### **The structure of the thesis**

The thesis presented here discusses the main points outlined in this introduction through seven chapters divided into two parts. The first three chapters compose the first part ('Approaching the camp'), which focuses on the theoretical and methodological

approaches of the research, while the remaining four constitute the second part ('Policy ambiguity and gradual change') that analyses the empirical cases through the lens of ambiguity, which emerged as a useful concept for understanding the persistence of the camps.

Chapter 1 ('Introducing the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps') illustrates the history and the main characteristics of the Roma camps in Rome and introduces the research question of the persistent temporariness of institutional camps, framing it within the larger academic debate on camps. Chapter 2 ('Re-thinking persistent temporariness as gradual change: a comparison of enduring camps') discusses the method of asymmetrical comparison and describes the French transit estates and integration villages, showing how they constitute different types of persistent temporariness which can be read as different forms of gradual change. Chapter 3 ('The camp as a site of contentious governance: understanding gradual change through a plural and relational approach'), drawing on the critiques of the Agambenian notion of the camp as a space of sovereign exception, suggests an alternative theorisation of this space as a site of contentious governance and will describe the main actors involved in the governance of the Italian Roma camps.

Part II draws on fieldwork material and presents several excerpts from in-depths interviews conducted with both policy-makers and members of NGOs and movements. Chapter 4 ('The ambiguity of the Roma camps: history and policy design') focuses on the ambiguous policy design of the Roma camps and, by discussing interviews and policy documents, it illustrates its main characteristics. Chapter 5 ('Ambiguity, framing flexibility and co-optation: lowering dissent towards the Roma camps') illustrates how the ambiguity of the Roma camps offered an opportunity to pro-Roma associations contributing to the camps' persistence to justify their position, with the result that their level of criticism towards this policy decreased, as well as the resources and opportunities available to the opponents of the camps and to the camp's residents. Chapter 6 ('The relationship between ambiguity and policy change: a comparative perspective') investigates the persistent temporariness of the French transit estates and integration villages through the notion of policy ambiguity, revealing how different types of ambiguity are associated with different types of gradual change. Finally, Chapter 7 ('From Roma to squatters: turning ambiguity into an urban opportunity

during the economic crisis’) looks at how Italian pro-Roma advocacy actors are turning policy ambiguity into an opportunity for action by mobilising urban solidarities in times of economic crisis.

## **PART I**

### **APPROACHING THE CAMP**



**CHAPTER 1****Introducing the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps<sup>4</sup>****Words from the Roma camp: “I was born in a camp and have always lived in a camp”**

I met Danica when I visited the Salone camp in September 2013. This camp is located on the eastern periphery of Rome (Figure 1.1.) and, with almost one thousand residents, it is one of the largest camps of the Italian capital city (Anzaldi and Stasolla, 2010). This plot of land was illegally occupied in 1999 by a group of Roma who set up an informal settlement, and in 2006 it became an official Roma camp managed by the municipality of Rome (Anzaldi and Stasolla, 2010). Since then, several hundred Roma have been temporarily relocated to this camp following evictions from other informal settlements.

I visited the camp with Alberto, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy group. To access an official Roma camp one needs either to acquire official authorisation from the municipality of Rome – which is usually difficult to obtain – or to go with someone from the network of associations working on the Roma issues. Like many other camps, the one in Salone is located on the periphery of the city, in a non-residential area, far from public transport and other facilities (there is a train station at about 500 metres away, but the road has no pavements). Furthermore, the health conditions in the camp are often extremely poor, not only because of a lack of hygiene, but also because the site is situated right next to a toxic waste factory (Anzaldi and Stasolla, 2010). When approaching the camp by car, a dumping area is visible right in front of the main gate. The presence of rubbish in the Roma camps is quite common, and images of it often circulate in the media as evidence of Roma dirtiness and messiness. However, the garbage is the result of municipal neglect and of an informal economy whereby non-

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All translations from Italian and French are the author's except where otherwise noted.

residents discard bulky waste in front of the Roma camps. The Roma then recover scrap metal from the waste and sell it to official metal re-sellers. This scrap metal recovery and illegal dumping provoke complaints from Italian neighbours, who denounce the pollution produced by burning waste material.

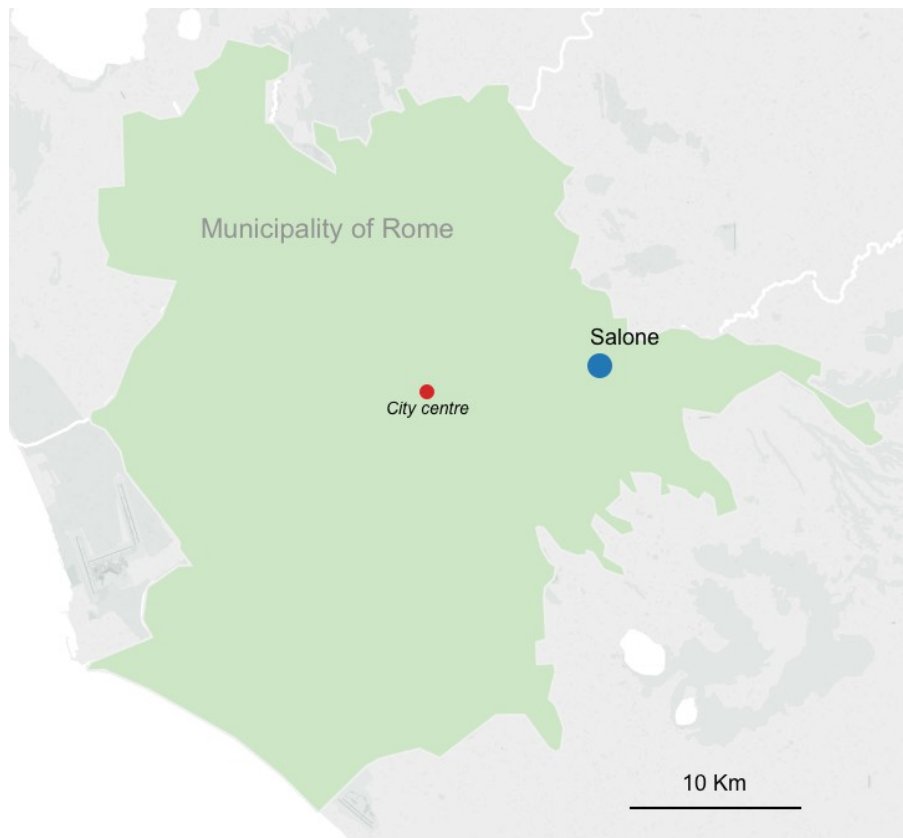


Figure 1.1 – A map showing the location of the Salone camp in the municipality of Rome

We entered the camp through the main gate. On the right hand side of the entrance there was a large empty waste container and on the left side there was a municipal Police station and a reception office, with guards in charge of the security services of the camp (Figure 1.2). Nobody seemed to mind our presence. Alberto explained the reason of our visit and we quickly found ourselves in the heart of the camp. The camp is surrounded by a metal fence which has been, however, damaged in some parts so that the residents can more easily exit and enter without passing through the main gate.





Figure 1.2 – The main entrance gate of the Salone camp<sup>5</sup>(©2016 Google)

The inhabited area stretches down the left side of the main entrance and across a long straight asphalt road that cuts the camp into two sections, with a multitude of Portakabins where the Roma live (Figure 1.3). Like several other camps, Salone is overcrowded: even though it was originally planned to host a maximum of 600 people, in 2010 the population peaked at 1,076, while in 2013 there were still more than 900 people of Bosnian, Serbian and Romanian origins (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a; Anzaldi and Stasolla, 2010). Although in other camps there are caravans, in more recent ones the municipality of Rome provided Portakabins of three different dimensions: 22.50m<sup>2</sup>, 24.30m<sup>2</sup> and 27.60m<sup>2</sup> (Anzaldi and Stasolla, 2010). They have a main door that leads to a small living room and two bedrooms. There is also a kitchen corner but they do not have en-suite bathrooms (Figure 1.4). Considering that there are often several children in each family, it is hard for six or eight people to fit into such a small space. While we were strolling around the camp, Alberto introduced me to Danica, a lady who had just given birth to a pair of twins and who received a double pushchair as a gift, which, however, she had to leave outside the Portakabin because it was larger than the Portakabin's main door.

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<sup>5</sup> During the visit I did not take any picture because I was advised not to, both because I needed official permission and also in order not to disturb the privacy of the residents. This and some of the pictures in the following pages are taken from Google Street View.



Figure 1.3 – A satellite image of the Salone camp (Imagery ©2016 Google, Map data ©2016 Google)



Figure 1.4 – The Portakabin in Salone camp (with permission of Associazione 21 Luglio)

Danica lived in the informal settlement Casilino 900, until she was evicted and relocated to the Salone camp together with her family. She said: “They told us that we would stay here only for a few months, but now it's been years!”<sup>6</sup>. This sense of enduring temporariness pervades the lives of many of the residents of official camps, where they were relocated with the initial promise – until today unfulfilled – of a new housing solution after a short period. Danica said that she does not like living in the camp because, although there are some nice neighbours, there are often violent fights

<sup>6</sup> Informal conversation held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

and disturbances.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the hygienic conditions are poor and there are rats. When I asked her if she preferred living in the informal settlement Casilino 900, she said “yes” as there they were not forced to live in small Portakabins in an overcrowded camp, but built their own shacks and had more space. Danica pointed out that, when they were living in Casilino 900, their life was easier because they were closer to a residential neighbourhood and to public services and schools, while in the Salone camp they feel more isolated and have to rely on school buses to take the children to schools in distant neighbourhoods.

For these reasons Danica would like to leave the camp and to find a house, but she does not have enough money to rent a flat in the private housing market. Some pro-Roma advocacy groups help the Roma living in camps to apply for council housing, but Danica's applications have never been successful. This is a common situation among the residents of both official camps and informal Roma settlements, who are practically denied access to public housing. As revealed by an Amnesty International report (2013), the Roma living in camps and settlements often fail to gain eligibility for public housing because they are not tenants or homeowners, and therefore lack the correct status needed for a place on the council housing register. This further extends their temporary stay in the camp, which appears more and more difficult to leave. Danica emphasised that she does not know how it feels to live in a “real home” or have a “quiet life”, and that she would like to find a job, and have a “normal house”. But, she added, “I was born in a camp and have always lived in a camp”, highlighting how the camp is perceived as an overwhelming temporary yet enduring exclusionary apparatus, which transforms the people living there into something ‘other’ from the rest of the population.

Although today several thousand Roma experience the same persisting segregation as Danica's, the Roma camps were initially planned to foster the integration of the Roma people and to provide them with temporary accommodation following their eviction from informal settlements. In this chapter I introduce the Roma camps and trace their history in Rome, showing how, despite their introduction as an emergency solution, they have persisted until today.

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<sup>7</sup> This and the following paragraphs are based on insights from an unrecorded informal conversation with Danica held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

**The Roma camps in Rome: facts, figures and persistence**

The conversation with Danica emphasised that what had been initially presented as a temporary relocation for Roma people evicted from informal settlements, has eventually become a persisting form of exclusion from housing, not only in Rome, but in several Italian cities. There is no national census available on the Roma living in official camps in Italy, but it is estimated that approximately 40,000 Roma<sup>8</sup> live in either informal settlements or official Roma camps (Sigona, 2007).<sup>9</sup> The 2008 census carried out by the Ministry of Interior in the cities of Rome, Naples, and Milan reported 12,346 Roma living in either informal settlements or camps, while official figures from the municipality of Rome revealed that, in 2011, they were 7,877 only in the Italian capital city (Comune di Roma, 2011), of which more than six thousand are today living in Roma camps run by the municipality of Rome.

These official Roma camps are publicly funded mono-ethnic housing projects for Roma people where the municipality supplies housing units (either Portakabins or caravans) and basic facilities (such as drinking water, toilets and electricity). There are two types of camps: official and tolerated. In official Roma camps, in addition to housing units and basic facilities, the municipality supplies a series of services provided by subcontracting NGOs, including internal surveillance and security as well as so-called socio-educational activities for the residents, i.e. job training and placement for adults and school support for the children. In so-called tolerated camps, the municipality provides basic facilities but does not offer socio-educational services, and although there is no official definition for these types of camps, in the last twenty years most of them were gradually closed as new official camps were opened. The idea is that they should all be cleared in the future and all people relocated to official sites.

As of 2013, official figures from the municipality of Rome showed approximately 4,500 Roma living in 8 official camps, and another 1,300 living in 11 tolerated ones (Table 1.1, Figure 1.5). In addition to these camps, in the last years the

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8 The Council of Europe estimates that there are approximately 150,000 Roma in Italy. The European Roma Rights Center (2000) reported a series of different estimates ranging from 45,000 – 70,000 to 90,000 – 110,000. However, the lack of an official census, combined with a blurred definition of Roma ethnicity, makes it extremely difficult to estimate the number of the Roma living in Italy and also in other European countries.

9 It is important to underscore that, although the Roma people in the media are often associated with camps and slums, the majority of the 150,000 Roma living in Italy actually live in houses.

municipality of Rome also created Roma reception centres to temporarily rehouse Roma people evicted from informal settlements. Like the official Roma camps, these are temporary but usually located in buildings. Official camps, tolerated ones and Roma centres constitute different types of Roma-only housing projects, and are often referred to by different terms, both in the policy documents and in the media, such as ‘gypsy camps’, ‘nomad camps’, or simply ‘camps’ or ‘villages’. In order to avoid confusion between these terms, I employ the term ‘official camps’ to refer to those where the municipality provides basic facilities and socio-educational services, ‘tolerated camps’ where the municipality only provides basic facilities, and ‘Roma centres’ for the reception centres opened recently. I will group these three different types of Roma housing projects under the general term ‘Roma camps’ since the conditions and management of the Roma centres are not that different from those of the official and tolerated camps.

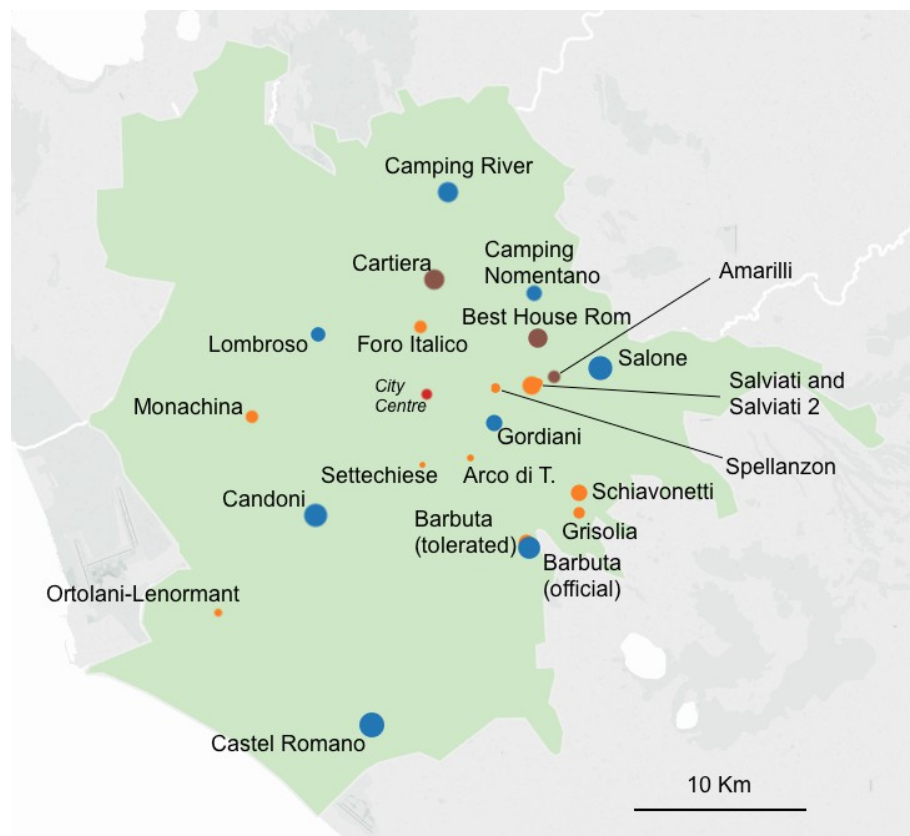


Figure 1.5 – The map of the Roma camps and centres in the municipality of Rome (blue = official Roma camps; orange = tolerated; brown = centres)

Table 1.1 – The list of the Roma camps in the municipality of Rome<sup>10</sup>

Type	Description	Camp name	Nationality	Year	No. of residents
<i>Tolerated</i>	The municipality provides basic facilities but does not offer socio-educational services. They should all be cleared in the future and people relocated to official ones.	<b>Foro Italico</b>	Serbian	1996	120
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Salviati</b>	Serbian	1995	69
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Salviati 2</b>	Bosnian	1996	336
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Spellanzon</b>	Italian (Sinti)	1996	67
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Arco di Travertino</b>	Bosnian	1996	38
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Settechiese</b>	Italian (Sinti)	1996	26
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Ortolani-L.</b>	Serbian	1996	61
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Monachina</b>	Bosnian	1996	120
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Schiavonetti</b>	Italian (Sinti)	1996	200
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Barbuta</b>	Italian (Sinti)	1996	200
<i>Tolerated</i>		<b>Grisolia</b>	Italian (Sinti)	1996	100
<b>Total population tolerated camps:</b>					1,337
<i>Official</i>	In addition to housing units and basic facilities, subcontracting NGOs supply a series of additional services including: internal surveillance, security as well as so-called socio-educational activities for the residents.	<b>Candoni</b>	Bosnian, Romanian	1996	820
<i>Official</i>		<b>Lombroso</b>	Bosnian	1996	150
<i>Official</i>		<b>Gordiani</b>	Bosnian, Serbian	2002	243
<i>Official</i>		<b>Camping Nomentano</b>	Bosnian, Romanian	2003 (closed in 2015)	172
<i>Official</i>		<b>Castel Romano</b>	Bosnian, Serbian	2005	1100
<i>Official</i>		<b>Camping River</b>	Bosnian, Kosovan, Romanian	2005	527
<i>Official</i>		<b>Salone</b>	Bosnian, Montenegrin, Romanian, Serbian	2006	900
<i>Official</i>		<b>Barbuta</b>	Bosnian, Italian (Sinti), Macedonian	2012	550
<b>Total population official camps:</b>					4,462
<i>Centre</i>	Buildings to temporarily rehouse Roma people evicted from informal settlements	<b>Best House Rom</b>	Mainly Romanian	2012 (closed in 2015)	359
<i>Centre</i>		<b>Amarilli</b>	Mainly Montenegrin	2009	125
<i>Centre</i>		<b>Cartiera</b>	Romanian	2009	385
<b>Total population Roma centres:</b>					869
<b>TOTAL POPULATION CAMPS AND CENTRES:</b>					<b>6,668</b>

10 The data in this table have been taken from the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (2013 census), and from two reports released by the Associazione 21 Luglio (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014b, 2015).

Although the Roma camps were initially introduced to offer temporary accommodation to Roma people evicted from informal settlements, they strongly shape the nature of the housing exclusion today experienced by several thousand Roma in Italy and in the city of Rome. For this reason, Italy infamously gained the title of “Campland”, through which the European Roma Rights Center (2000, p.17) aimed to denounce the racial segregation of the Roma people in Italy:

[...] as the third millennium dawns, Italy is the only country in Europe to boast a systematic, publicly organised and sponsored network of ghettos aimed at depriving Roma of full participation in, or even contact or interaction with, Italian life.

The ethnically discriminatory nature of the Roma camps traps the Roma in a Roma-only policy cycle from which it is difficult to escape, as shown by Danica's repeated efforts to obtain a place in council housing estates for non-Roma. For instance, homeless Roma are not treated as non-Roma homeless people, but are automatically included in Roma housing policies (for example, official Roma camps or Roma centres). A Roma who experiences homelessness or severe housing deprivation also interacts with specific public officers, such as those working for the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office in Rome (until 2014 called Nomads Office), and police units, for instance the Unit of Public Security and Emergency (SPE), which until 2011 was called Coordination of Interventions and Operations on Nomads (CION). Being a Roma *de facto* hinders access to facilities and services for non-Roma people and inclusion in Roma-only services exacerbates their segregation. Furthermore, Roma living in camps experience residential segregation and severe housing deprivation, as the camps suffer from poor hygienic conditions, and are mainly concentrated in the urban fringe, in non-residential and isolated areas, far from services and public transport, which further exacerbates their separation from the rest of the population. For example, when I visited the camp Camping Nomentano, I met Alexandra, a Roma teenager who told me that her schoolmates did not know that she lived in a Roma camp:

You know, I don't tell everyone that I live in a camp! I'm a bit ashamed. I hate living here, I really look forward to leaving this place... <sup>11</sup>

The geographical isolation of the Roma in mono-ethnic camps increases the barriers

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11 Interview held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

(not only material, but also symbolic) between Roma and non-Roma, thus reinforcing the negative stereotypes which Alexandra feared she would be troubled by if she were to tell her friends where she lived. This ethnic discrimination and spatial confinement are protracted in a situation of enduring temporariness, which is the result of the emergency context in which the Roma camps are rooted. The management of the Roma camps, as I will discuss more in depth in Chapter 4, has been mainly shaped by decisions taken by the executive branches of the government, in order to tackle alleged emergency situations through, for example, ministerial circulars, mayoral ordinances, programmatic political documents, policy guidelines, and decrees. Consequently, people living in the camps have no clear status and no stated rights since, as of today, there are no legal documents instituting and defining the Roma camps.

The figures of the last twenty years clearly show the persisting and reinforcing tendency of Roma-only housing policies (Table 1.2). Some of the camps have been closed. For instance: the Salviati camp, opened in 1995, was closed in 2005 and the residents have been relocated to Castel Romano; the Tor de' Cenci camp, which was created in 1996 as an official camp, was finally cleared in 2012 and the residents also relocated to Castel Romano; the Camping Nomentano was definitively closed at the end of 2015. Nonetheless, while these camps were closed, new (and larger) camps were opened, such as the Castel Romano camp, which as of today hosts more than one thousand Roma. Since the creation of the Roma camps in Rome, their number constantly increased together with the number of Roma people relocated there. In November 1995 the municipality of Rome undertook the first census of Roma living in informal settlements, which gained the status of tolerated camps following the official recognition of the municipality (Comune di Roma, 1996). According to the 1995 census there were 5,467 Roma living in 49 tolerated camps and one official camp (the Salviati camp, that was the first created by the municipality of Rome in 1995). In November 1996 a new census reported 33 tolerated and six official camps, for a total of 4,612 people. During the last two decades, very few of the camps planned have been realised, and most of the official camps present today have been set up in a makeshift manner, rather than as a result of a specific programme. In 1994, the local administration established the creation of ten official camps before the end of the year, a commitment which was renewed in 1999 with the planning of 35 tolerated camps and of 10 official



ones (for a total of 1,480 people) (Stasolla, 2012). However, in 2002, there were only 5 official camps out of the 10 planned three years before, and 23 tolerated. At that time the municipality of Rome committed to create six temporary tolerated camps (i.e. upgraded and acknowledged informal settlements for a total of 3,000 Roma) and 12 official villages (for 3,000 Roma). In 2009, a new plan was established to evict people from 80 informal settlements and 14 tolerated ones, and to create 13 equipped villages, but in the end no new official camp was opened.

Table 1.2 – The persisting tendency of the Roma camps (effective, planned, years)

Year	Official camps		Tolerated camps		Roma centres	Number of Roma
	Effective	Planned	Effective	Planned		
1994		10				
1995	1		29			5,467
1996	6		33			4,612
1999		10		35		
2002	5		23			
		12		6		
2009		13		14	2	
2013	8		11		3	6,668

Although not all the plans have come to light, the overall number of people living in official camps has increased in the last twenty years. As shown earlier in the chapter, recent figures report a total of 6,097 Roma living in 11 tolerated camps and 8 official camps. Furthermore, the amount of public monies spent on Roma camps also steadily increased during the last two decades. In 1999 the local administration committed to create new official camps for a cost of 12 billion Italian Lire (the equivalent of almost six million Euros) (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2013a). From 2005 to 2011 the municipality of Rome spent a total of 70 million Euros for Roma housing policies (Berenice et al., 2013). The expenses almost doubled in 2009, when Rome received 32 million Euros to for the management of the Roma camps (Stasolla, 2012).

Despite all the money spent on the Roma camps, the health and security conditions of the camps are very low (Figure 1.6). As in the case of the Salone camp, camps are often close to illegal dumps and there are poor hygienic conditions. For

example, the living conditions in the Camping Nomentano were really harsh before its closure at the end of 2015. Nevertheless, the electricity fee for each caravan (which had only one lamp, Figure 1.7) was 50 Euros a month, paid under the counter to the camp manager. For this reason, some residents refused to pay unless they could obtain a receipt, but later complained that the manager was harassing those who did not pay and stopped providing electricity to their caravans.



Figure 1.6 – Garbage at the main entrance of former Camping Nomentano

Living conditions in the camps can also be difficult because of tensions between different national groups. These are often the result of the sense of abandonment in the camps, where there are few social support activities and the residents are left to integrate on their own. This was the case of a Serbian Roma community that in 2010 was forcibly relocated to the official camp Castel Romano. As I will illustrate in Chapter 7, this group of Roma was harassed by people from the Bosnian community in Castel Romano and, because the municipality did not react when their Portakabins were repeatedly damaged, they decided to leave Castel Romano and to set up a new informal settlement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Insight from interview held in Rome on 21 December 2013.



Figure 1.7 – The internal room of a caravan in the Camping Nomentano

Twenty years after the first Roma camp was created, this Roma housing policy evolved in a way that its first proponents would have probably never imagined.

### **The origins and history of the Roma camps in Rome: tracing the constant emergency**

The municipality of Rome started adopting regulations on the management of halting sites for Roma at the beginning of the 1990s, later developing the official Roma camps. However, the journey towards the development of this policy can be traced back to the 1960s–1970s (Table 1.3), when the Italian Ministry of Interior started intervening in the debate about the freedom to roam for nomadic groups (Sigona, 2011). Political interest in the issue of free mobility for the Roma and Travellers was the result of advocacy by *Opera Nomadi*. This is an Italian Catholic association founded in 1963 that promotes the schooling of the Italian Sinti<sup>13</sup> children, whose school attendance had been

<sup>13</sup> The Sinti is a group of Italian Roma that traditionally conducted a nomadic lifestyle. Although I am aware of the differences between Romani groups and of their different denominations (see Maestri, 2016a), I will employ the general term ‘Roma’ to refer to them. I decided on this term because it is widely accepted as non-derogatory and non-discriminatory by several, both Roma and non-Roma,

undermined not only by their itinerant lifestyle but also by increasing hostility of local governments (Sigona, 2002). The first ministerial circular on this matter was issued in 1973 and invited local governments to remove the interdictions to the parking of trailers of nomadic groups. It also encouraged them to create halting sites where the Roma could stop. These aspects were re-stated in another circular issued in 1985, which also emphasised the importance of measures to promote Roma integration (Sigona, 2011).

Following this growing attention towards the living conditions of the Roma people, in the 1980s–1990s some Italian regions adopted laws which aimed to protect Roma culture, especially their supposed nomadism.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, since the 1970s, the discourse on the Roma people mainly centred on their alleged nomadism, not only in Italy but in several other European countries (Simhandl, 2009). Nomadism was considered by policy-makers an essential cultural feature of the Roma people, while their itinerant lifestyle was often an outcome of different aspects, such as economic ones (e.g. being seasonal workers or economic migrants, see Okely, 1983; Lucassen, 1998) and political and social reasons (e.g. wars or racial discriminations forcing them to flee, see Legros and Vitale, 2011; Sigona, 2003). Most of today's so-called 'nomads', i.e. the Roma people, are actually sedentary (see UNAR, 2012). However, although the Italian National Office against Racial Discrimination (*Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali*, UNAR) suggested not describing the Roma as 'nomads', the discourse about the Roma's nomadism has strongly shaped current Roma housing policies.

The Lazio Region, where Rome is located, was one of the first to adopt a law on the protection of Roma culture in 1985 (Regione Lazio, 1985). This regional law introduced the creation of so-called 'halting and transit camps' for nomadic Roma, which were supposed to provide the Roma with basic services (electricity, water, toilets) on sites of a specific size (between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,000m<sup>2</sup>), located near public services and residential areas. Unlike other regional laws, the one adopted by the Lazio region did not clarify if these camps were temporary or permanent and drew a distinction between nomadic and sedentary Roma, whereby the former could legally stop in halting and transit camps, while the latter were entitled to some form of support

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institutional, non-governmental and advocacy organisations.

14 Since 1985, a total of 11 Italian regions (Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, Sardinia, Tuscany, Umbria, Veneto) and one autonomous province (Trento) adopted laws for the protection of the Roma and nomadic communities.

towards their access to housing. The municipality of Rome started a debate on halting camps for nomads in 1986, when it adopted a so-called ‘Camps Plan’ in 1986, which granted temporary authorisation to Roma living in informal settlements and waiting for a relocation to official halting camps (Di Maggio and Parisi, 2008). However, it took almost another decade before the first camps for Roma people were actually established in the Italian capital city.

Table 1.3 – Documents adopted before the creation of the Roma camps in Rome

Year	Document	Description
1973	Ministerial Circular ‘Nomads Problem’ ( <i>Problema Nomadi</i> ), no.17 (11/10/1973)	The Ministry of Interior adopted this circular inviting local governments to remove restrictions to parking, and also encouraging them to create halting sites.
1985	Ministerial Circular ‘Nomads Problem’ ( <i>Problema Nomadi</i> ), no.4 (5/7/1985)	The Ministry of Interior adopted this circular inviting the local governments to facilitate the inclusion of Roma in residence registers, to promote schooling for Roma children and to remove obstacles to parking. It also invoked a change towards long-term measures of inclusion of the Roma.
1985	Lazio Regional Law ‘Norms in Favour of Roma Peoples’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The camps should be fenced, between 2,000-4,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and should not be isolated</li> <li>- There should be ‘appropriate’ initiatives for those who prefer sedentary life</li> <li>- Job placement programmes (mainly as artisans, to respect Roma culture)</li> </ul>
1986	Camps Plan	The plan granted temporary authorisation to those living in informal settlements and waiting for a relocation to official halting sites.

The official camps for Roma people were introduced in the city of Rome in the early 1990s (Table 1.4). An important factor that accelerated the implementation of this Roma housing policy was the arrival of Roma asylum seekers during the Yugoslav Wars. During the 1970s–1980s, Italy had already become the destination of Roma economic migrants arriving from former Yugoslavia (European Roma Rights Center, 2000), many of whom – despite not being ‘nomads’ – lived in informal settlements as they intended to remain only for a short period (see Daniele, 2012; Monasta, 2005). However, as I will more thoroughly illustrate in Chapter 4, the sudden arrival of groups of Roma during the war and the increasing number of informal Roma settlements resulted in the transformation of their presence into an ‘emergency’ which required

rapid solutions. The Roma camps appeared for the first time in Rome as emergency accommodation for this growing number of Roma living in informal settlements.

In January 1994 the former centre-left mayor of Rome, Francesco Rutelli<sup>15</sup> (1993-1997, 1997-2001), presented the first so-called ‘Nomad Plan’<sup>16</sup>, organising the clearance of informal Roma settlements and the creation of special housing projects for Roma former slum dwellers, consisting of 10 official Roma camps designed to provide better sanitary standards, with a total capacity of 1,480 people (see Stasolla, 2012). This Nomad Plan marked a change with the previous approach to informal Roma settlements: while in the 1980s the municipality of Rome mainly granted ex-post temporary authorisations to informal settlements, under the 1994 Nomad Plan the administration committed to the construction of brand new camps. In 1995 the municipality of Rome created the first camp in Salviati street, while in 1996 six other former informal settlements were transformed into official camps (Comune di Roma, 1996). In 1999 Rutelli renewed his commitment to the development of Roma camps and agreed to raise the number of official camps to ten by the following year (Stasolla, 2012).

Over the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the local (and national) political debate on the informal Roma settlements came to be increasingly framed in security terms rather than by the humanitarian approach prominent in the early 1990s. Towards the end of his mandate, Mayor Rutelli started endorsing a more explicit criminalising discourse towards the Roma, defining the situation in terms of ‘Gypsy emergency’ (Clough Marinaro, 2009). “Humanity and security” (Stasolla, 2012) became the two pillars of the approach to the management of the informal Roma settlements during the following centre-left administrations, led by the mayor Walter Veltroni (2001-2006, 2006-2008). In 2002, the Veltroni administration adopted a document called ‘Social Local Plan’ (Comune di Roma, 2002) which clarified and extended the scope of Rutelli's 1999 resolution. This plan explicitly established the temporary duration of the official Roma camps, and their function as transition towards more permanent forms of housing. Yet, despite the initial intentions, this regulation was never fully implemented. Overall, the

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15 Francesco Rutelli was the first directly elected mayor, following the Legislative Decree no. 267 (18 August 2000) which established the direct election of mayors.

16 The term Nomads Plan indicates a set of policies aimed at the management of so-called nomads, de facto targeting Roma people living in informal settlements. The municipality of Rome has adopted various different Nomads Plans since the Rutelli administration in 1995.

Veltroni administrations increased the forced evictions of Roma living in informal settlements and created new official Roma camps on the periphery of the city (see Bonadonna, 2011; Stasolla, 2012).<sup>17</sup> For example, in 2005 the Veltroni administration was strongly criticised for clearing an informal Roma settlement close to Rome's city centre and for relocating all 150 families to a new official Roma camp, called Castel Romano, located at approximately 30 kilometres from the previous settlement. The relocation caused distress to the Roma community, and the location and management of the Castel Romano camp proved unsuited to the needs of the families. The state of abandonment and lack of support to the families, despite the considerable amount of money spent on forced eviction and relocation, epitomised the approach of the Veltroni administration vis-à-vis the Roma camps.

Despite the initial pro-Roma advocacy groups' support for the creation of Roma camps, criticism mounted, especially during the second Veltroni administration (2006-2008). In 2007 the municipality of Rome presented two policy documents called 'Pacts for Secure Rome' establishing, among other measures aimed at increasing the security of the Italian capital city, the creation of four new official Roma camps (with a capacity of one thousand residents each). The official Roma camps came to be called 'solidarity villages' (*villaggi della solidarietà*), almost ironically concealing a more hostile approach towards the Roma living there. Indeed, the inclusion of measures targeting the Roma communities in a document on security indicates a clear shift towards a growing securitisation of the policies towards them. Pro-Roma NGOs openly criticised the Veltroni administration for confining the Roma to the periphery of the city and also denounced the increasing use of hate speech, mainly against Romanian Roma. This was exacerbated after two people were murdered in Rome, presumably by Roma people.<sup>18</sup> These violent episodes sparked off a series of measures against informal Roma settlements, including an agreement with the Romanian police who were authorised to search the informal Roma settlements of the Italian capital city and directly repatriate Romanian undocumented migrants (see Bonadonna, 2011). The expulsions of Romanian Roma were also facilitated by the adoption of the so-called 'expulsion

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17 It is estimated that, between 2003 and 2007, almost four thousand Roma were evicted and displaced within the city of Rome (Bonadonna, 2011).

18 Although these two murders were presented as perpetrated by Roma people, in one case the perpetrator was a non-Roma Romanian citizen who was nonetheless portrayed in the media as Roma.

decree' (Parlamento Italiano, 2007) issued at the end of October 2007, which authorised the repatriation of European citizens for security reasons. This security approach continued during the administration of the centre-right mayor Gianni Alemanno.

Gianni Alemanno became the mayor of Rome on 29 April 2008, about one week before Silvio Berlusconi started his third mandate as Italian Prime Minister. For the first time, the same party (i.e. Berlusconi's party The People of Freedom, *Popolo della Libertà*) won both the national and Rome's local elections, leading to the exacerbation of sour national and local discourses against informal Roma settlements. Following a series of violent episodes in Rome and other Italian cities<sup>19</sup>, the national government adopted the so-called Nomad Emergency Decree (*Decreto Emergenza Nomadi*) (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2008) in 2008. This emergency decree constituted a response to the alleged threat to public health, order and security posed by the presence of informal Roma settlements in several Italian cities. The prefects of the cities of Naples, Milan, and Rome were given extra powers to tackle this situation, including increased control of official Roma camps and additional support for evictions and repatriations. In 2009 Rome's local administration presented a new Nomad Plan for the creation of five official Roma camps on the outer periphery of the city, to which Roma evicted from informal settlements in the city centre were relocated. Local, national and international pro-Roma advocacy groups condemned this emergency decree and the Nomad Plan, arguing that they constituted ethnic discrimination and actually worsened the housing conditions of the Roma, rather than addressing their integration.

In 2013 the Nomad Emergency Decree and all the regulations adopted during the emergency period were annulled by the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation (Corte Suprema di Cassazione, 2013). As a consequence, the Roma camps still today do not have an official regulatory framework. The centre-left administration elected in 2013, and led by Ignazio Marino, planned to bring in new regulations for the Roma camps and made official commitments to the objectives established by the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities, part of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Yet, despite these apparent

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<sup>19</sup> In May 2008 a Roma camp was attacked in Milan and Novara (Piedmont) and in June another attack took place in Catania (Sicily). It is estimated that in 2008 there were a total of 24 violent clashes between Italians and Roma (Cahn and Guild, 2010).



advancements, the policies adopted during the Marino administration appeared to be in line with the former administrations (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014b).

Mayor Marino resigned in October 2015 only two years after his election, because his administration was swamped by allegations of corruption during the police enquiry ‘Capital Mafia’ (*Mafia Capitale*), which at the end of 2014 saw the arrest of 37 people of both past and present Roman political administrations. The trial started in November 2015, with a total of 46 defendants and four people sentenced following plea bargaining. The enquiry ‘Capital Mafia’ unveiled an intricate, corrupt system through which politicians, officials, members of subcontracting NGOs and criminal organisations rigged the bid process to select subcontractors for the management and provision of services in the Roma camps (and also refugee centres), appointing specific associations which would in turn support politicians both politically and economically. This political scandal led to widespread public disaffection with the Roman administrations, with the result that the municipality was put under temporary receivership in November 2015.

The last administration,<sup>20</sup> guided by the special commissioner Francesco Paolo Tronca, has adopted a document (called Unique Organising Document 2016-2018, *Documento Unico di Programmazione 2016-2018*) describing the policies for the period 2016-2018 (Comune di Roma, 2016). In the document, the local administration commits to the objectives of the National Strategy for the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities on Roma housing inclusion. However, several pro-Roma advocacy groups have criticised this document because, they claim, it does not change the way the Roma camps are managed. For example, at the beginning of 2016, the municipality of Rome opened a new call for tenders for contracting out the management activities and services in the Roma camps. Following complaints from pro-Roma advocacy groups, which denounced the lack of change, the municipality agreed to withdraw the call for bids.

Despite all the attempts to formalise the Roma camps through regulations and Nomad Plans, these spaces still lack a clear legal framework and many people continue to live there, in uncertainty.

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20 On 22 June 2016 Virginia Raggi (Five Star Movement) has been elected new mayor of Rome.

Table 1.4 – Documents and events about the Roma camps in Rome

Year	Document / Event	Description	Municipal administration
1994	Nomad Plan	The municipality of Rome organised the clearance of informal Roma settlements and the creation of 10 official camps, for a total of 1,480 Roma.	<b>Francesco Rutelli</b> <b>Centre-left coalition</b> <b>December 1993 – November 1997</b> <b>November 1997 – January 2001</b>
1995	The first official Roma camp	The municipality of Rome creates the first Roma equipped camp Salviani.	
1996	Six more Roma camps open	The municipality of Rome creates other six official Roma camps.	
	<i>Programming guidelines for the intervention of the Municipal Administration aimed at the inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti population</i>		
1999		The municipality of Rome commits to increase the number of Roma camps to 10 by 2000.	
Increased securitisation of Roma housing 'problem'.			
2002	<i>Interventions for the Roma people</i> (in the Social Local Plan)	This plan established the temporary duration of the Roma camp and organised the creation of camps as the first stage of a transition towards more stable forms of housing.	<b>Walter Veltroni</b> <b>Centre-Left coalition</b> <b>May 2001 – May 2006</b> <b>May 2006 – February 2008</b>
2005	Savini camp is closed and Roma relocated to Castel Romano	The municipality of Rome decides to close the first Roma camps created in 1995 (Savini) and to relocate all the residents to a new Roma camp, called Castel Romano, located at 30 Km from the city centre.	
2007	<i>Pact for a Safe Rome (Patto Roma Sicura)</i>	The Prefect of Rome, the municipality of Rome, the province of Rome and the Lazio region sign a pact for increasing security in Rome. This pact established: the creation of four new official camps (1,000 residents each) and an increased surveillance of informal Roma settlements.	
2007	Mediatization of two murders allegedly perpetrated by people of Roma ethnicity	A man and a woman are killed, allegedly by Roma people. As a result the municipality of Rome increased control of informal Roma settlements, and were helped by the Romanian police which were authorised to directly deport undocumented Romanian migrants to Romania.	
2007	Expulsion Decree	The Italian government adopted a Decree Law that facilitates the expulsion of European citizens for security reasons.	

2008	Nomad Emergency Decree	The Italian government adopted this Decree Law on the basis of the threat to public health, order, and security allegedly posed by informal Roma settlements. The decree gave the prefects of the cities of Naples, Milan and Rome extra powers to tackle this emergency situation.	<p><b>Gianni Alemanno</b>  <b>Centre-right coalition</b>  <b>April 2008 – June 2013</b></p>
2009	Nomad Plan	The municipality of Rome adopted a plan that established the creation of five official Roma camps on the outer periphery of the city where Roma evicted from informal settlements in the city centre could be re-located.	
2012	<i>National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities</i>	The UNAR ( <i>Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali</i> , i.e. National Office Against Racial Discrimination) draft this document, part of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.	
2013	Annulment Nomad Emergency Decree	The Italian Supreme Court of Cassation annulled the Nomad Emergency Decree because of the lack of an emergency situation.	
2014	Police Enquiry 'Capital Mafia'	This police enquiry uncovered corrupt management of Roma camps and centres, which entailed past and present Roman political administrators, members of subcontracting associations, and individuals from criminal organisations.	
2016	Unique Organising Document 2016-2018	The municipality of Rome adopted a new two-year policy document. The document commits to the objectives of the National Strategy for the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities released in 2012, but pro-Roma advocacy group disagree with this approach since they claim it does not change the way the Roma camps are managed.	
			<p><b>Ignazio Marino</b>  <b>Centre-left coalition</b>  <b>June 2013 – October 2015</b></p> <p><b>Temporary Receivership</b>  <b>Francesco Paolo Tronca</b>  <b>November 2015 – pres.</b></p>

**Investigating the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps**

Several scholars in so-called “camp studies” (Minca, 2015b, p.75) acknowledge permanent temporariness as an essential characteristic of camps<sup>21</sup>. Camps can indeed be defined as “durable socio-spatial formations that displace and confine undesirable populations, suspending them in a distinct spatial, legal and temporal condition” (Picker and Pasquetti, 2015, p.681). This definition emphasises three recurrent aspects of the camps discussed in the literature. Firstly, the camp constitutes the suspension of life in a distinct legal condition. As pointed out by Agamben (1998, pp.168-169)

*The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule. In the camp, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such nevertheless remains outside the normal order.*

The camp is not an illegal space, but an exceptional one unfolding beyond the dichotomous opposition between the legal and the illegal, and which emerges when the juridico-political order is suspended for reasons of either care or control (Minca, 2015b). This space is included in the realm of power via its very exclusion from the ordinary legal order, i.e. “inclusive exclusion” (Agamben, 1998, p.7), whereby the relation to the sovereign is maintained “in the form of the sovereign's suspension” (Ek, 2006, p.365). The state of exception entails an erasure of the clear-cut distinction between inclusion and exclusion, sovereign power and law, and political life and biological existence, which makes the camp a “*hybrid of law and fact in which the two terms have become indistinguishable*” (Agamben, 1998, p.170). As a result, the individual subject is relegated to a state of “bare life” whereby the “*homo sacer*”, or “werewolf”, can be defined as “neither a beast nor a man, an outlaw that can be exposed to violence without facing legal sanctions” (Diken, 2004, p.88; Agamben, 1998). For this reason, to understand the camp as an exceptional space implies not only focusing on its withdrawal from the realm of citizenship and exposure to pure force and violence, but, even more importantly, it means considering it as a space where these two domains

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21 As already mentioned in the introduction, the thesis is mainly concerned with institutional types of camps and not spontaneous and makeshift encampments, which Claudio Minca refers to as “counter-camps” (Minca 2015a, p.91), i.e. spatial formations that, despite being often related to state enforced camps, are created as spaces for resistance and are constantly under the threat of repression and eviction.

blur into each other producing a ‘zone of indistinction’ or a ‘threshold’ space (Agamben, 1998). The logic of indistinction is therefore regarded as one of the most important aspects of exception and of camps (see Diken, 2004; Giaccaria and Minca, 2011).

Secondly, the camp is a space of forced confinement of specific populations, often undesirable because perceived as threatening or as a burden to society (Bernardot, 2015), or that “the state does not know how to qualify [...] in spatial terms” (Minca, 2015a, p.91), such as the refugees or the Roma, who both have “ambiguous relationships compared with dominant views of territoriality” (Kofman, 1995, p.122). The camp is a response to the presence of people troubling the nation state's established order, which is protected by granting “the unlocalizable a permanent and visible localization” (Agamben, 1998, p.37). The political technology of the camp is deeply connected to colonialism, not only because the first camps were indeed used in the colonies to manage colonial subjects (see Agamben, 1998; Ek, 2006; Gregory, 2006; Picker and Pasquetti, 2015; Rahola, 2007), but also because they both operate within the same “logic of race as a socio-spatial ordering principle” (Picker and Pasquetti, 2015, p.684). During colonialism, the fact that inferior populations could be subject to the same legal authority as the European civilised man potentially undermined the nation states' binary division between inside and outside (Rahola, 2007) and race, as observed also by Hannah Arendt (1951), became a way to classify unknown indigenous populations from which the colonisers had to be defended. Extraterritoriality was deployed as a form of imperial rule to defend the coloniser population from inferior colonial subjects and to differentiate spaces for European racially-superior citizens from those for non-European backward tribal communities (Rygiel, 2012). Since then, colonial racist classifications adopted in the colonies started being applied in the West through internal colonialism (Ek, 2006), whereby internal racial others (today sometimes framed in cultural terms, see Minca, 2015b) are identified and managed through camps, which have appeared in Europe mainly since the 1930s (Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015). The presence of internal enemies undermines the “gap between the ‘territorial container’ of the state and the ‘nation’ inhabiting it” (Katz, 2015b, p.729). The gap is restored with the creation of camps through which the modern nation state's trilogy territory-state-nation is re-established through an extra-legal space,

where the other(ed) population is secluded from the rest of the population (Minca, 2015b). While in the colonies extraterritoriality was used to demarcate the spatial contours of citizenship from which colonial subjects were excluded, in the camp the extraterritorial principle is reversed, delimiting the exceptional space of those considered unworthy of citizenship (Rygiel, 2012).

A third aspect widely discussed by scholars in camp studies concerns the status of the subject of the camps and its capacity to act politically. According to an Agambenian reading, the camp “is the actual space where citizenship may be arbitrarily put into question, where people are translated into mere biopolitical bodies” (Minca, 2015b, p.79), and where the distinction between bare biological existence and political life unravels through a process of de-subjectivation and translation “into population, into figures, a mere biological matrix” (Minca, 2015b, p.76). Several scholars have, however, strongly criticized the notion of bare life for overlooking the possibility of resistance of the so-called *homo sacer* (see Butler, 2004; Butler and Spivak, 2007; Gregory, 2006) and advocate an alternative conception of the camp as a political space (see Katz, 2015a; Redclift, 2013; Rygiel, 2012). Indeed, as argued by Ramadan (2013, p.72), camps are not spaces of bare life “but spaces of sovereign abandonment filled with an alternative order (sometimes dis-order) that can have the capacity to produce its own political life”. Moreover, Agamben was accused of reducing the political to the legal-institutional realm and of neglecting the presence of practices that are not framed in legal terms, but that can nonetheless constitute forms of political action (Ramadan, 2013). While scholars drawing on Agamben focus on the violence of the political technology of the camp and the ways in which it represses “forms of resistance and subject formation” (Minca, 2015b, p.91), others adopt a “pedestrian perspective of those who inhabit the camp” (Turner, 2015, p.5; see also Agier, 2014) and propose alternative ways to account for the everyday life practices of resistance and for the plurality of social relations and cultural practices in and around the camps (Ramadan, 2010). For example, Isin and Rygiel (2007) suggest that we approach the space of the camp through the lens of citizenship and contend that, despite the camp being a mechanism hindering a formal process of citizenship-making, political claims can be nonetheless enacted by the subjects inhabiting the camps. Martin (2015, p.15) introduces the notion of “campscape” that “indicates [the camp's] fluidity and connection with its outside”

and enables to better grasp the way the subjects of the camp interact with the surrounding context. Ramadan (2013) suggests approaching the space of the camp through the lens of assemblage, which can better account for the relations among multiple actors constituting it, including sovereign actors and people interacting in it. Despite the disagreements, these different approaches highlight the third dimension of the camp, which is the agency of the human beings who are confined there, a constitutive and ineffaceable aspect that makes the camp open to resistance and unexpected transformations.

Exceptional and indistinct legal conditions, racial classification and the spatial confinement of populations disturbing the nation state's order, and the possibility of resistance are three aspects of the camps that materialise and unfold along two dimensions, a spatial and a temporal one. As pointed out by Agamben (1998), the camp constitutes the spatialisation of the exception which can be described as a “limbo” and “as an extraterritorial spatial container” (Minca, 2015b, p.76). Although many camps are clearly delimited and often assume semi-carceral features of control and surveillance, the camp as a logic of exception and indistinction is today spatially expanding behind the demarcated fences of institutional camps (Diken and Laustsen, 2005), virtually appearing every time the distinction between law and power is erased. Similarly, the temporal boundaries of the camp stretch beyond the temporariness of the legal suspension, becoming almost permanent. As pointed out by Ramadan (2013, p.72), the “camp is never intended to be a permanent home” but is planned as “a temporary site, a spatially defined location that exists only for a limited period” (Diken and Laustsen, 2005, p.17). The camp is indeed a spatio-temporal entity created in emergency situations, when there is “a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger” (Agamben, 1998, p.169). However, despite its creation “under the assumption that as the conditions will change its existence will no longer be necessary” (Katz, 2015b, p.17), the camp's state of temporariness often endures, becoming a “permanent spatial arrangement” (Agamben, 1998, p.169). In contrast with the view proposed by Agamben, Bernardot (2015) suggests that, rather than constituting a temporary response that unexpectedly becomes permanent, the camp is from its very origin planned as permanently temporary and therefore persistence is an aspect already inscribed in its creation. Yet, the presence of a permanent condition does

not imply the end of its exceptionality but a persisting existence “outside the normal order” (Agamben, 1998, p.169), even though this persistence does not always and necessarily imply further marginalisation. Indeed, although in many cases it leads to the perpetuation of regimes of exclusion and disenfranchisement, the blurring of legality and exception, fixity and temporariness can also produce “gray spaces” as “bases for self-organization, negotiation and empowerment.” (Yiftachel, 2009, p.243). In spite of these disagreements, it remains widely accepted among scholars in camp studies that permanent temporariness constitutes a crucial aspect of camps (see Hailey, 2009). This protracted temporal state has indeed been referred to in different ways, for instance: “enduring temporariness” (Ramadan, 2013, p.72), “transient permanency” (Diken, 2004, p.94), “permanent temporariness” (Picker and Pasquetti, 2015, p. 681) or “indeterminate temporariness” (Turner, 2015, p.4). I will employ the term ‘persistent temporariness’ (or ‘enduring temporariness’) rather than ‘permanent temporariness’, because this concept conveys the idea of a temporary state that can be protracted in different ways, rather than constituting an indeterminate and general condition of permanence.

While there is a convergent recognition of the persistent temporariness of the camp, there have been few attempts to investigate the reasons for this condition, which is often treated as pre-given and fixed characteristics of camp spaces and rarely problematised. Although there has been attention towards how prolonged temporariness is produced in the case of informal camps (see Bermann and Clough Marinaro, 2014; Katz, 2015b; Rygiel, 2011; Yiftachel, 2009) as well as long-standing research into the persistence of ghettos and urban racial segregation (see Massey and Denton, 1993; Wacquant, 2008; Wilson, 1987), the persistent temporariness of institutional camps has remained less investigated. There have been investigations into the experience of enduring temporariness, immobility and waiting, mainly of asylum seekers and refugees, (Brun and Fábos, 2015; Conlon, 2011; Fontanari, 2015; Schuster, 2011). However, the factors contributing to the protraction of a temporary state in institutional camps – beyond the case of the refugee camp – have been relatively under-explored. In a special issue on what they term “durable camps”, Picker and Pasquetti (2015, p.681) offer one attempt to look into “varied regimes of permanent temporariness”. They argue that this protracted temporary state is



the result of a plurality of factors and social forces – first and foremost ruling agencies' actions, but deep-rooted understandings of sovereignty and statehood also play an important role, as does spatial confinement. In particular, state and non-state ruling agencies typically perpetuate camps' temporariness, benefiting from it for the sake of controlling undesirable and dispossessed subjects. (*ibid.*, p.683)

In the special issue there are articles that investigate empirical cases of permanently temporary camps and that seek to shed light on the dynamics contributing to such phenomenon. For example, Herring and Lutz (2015) look into reasons for the growth and persistence of homeless encampments in the USA, and focus on spreading penal approaches to homelessness, and on the retrenchment of the welfare state. Picker, Greenfields and Smith (2015) discuss the political conditions and ideologies that led to the persistence of Roma and Gypsy camps in Italy and the UK, and argue that the silenced colonial roots of the technology of the Roma camp naturalise the seclusion of this population into camps. This growing research into the temporality of the camp shows that it is today increasingly important to understand how persistent temporariness is articulated in different ways. This thesis aims is to contribute to fill this gap in camp studies by looking at the case of the Italian Roma camps and by seeking to understand the factors that influence their protracted existence.

As illustrated above, the Roma camps were created as temporary emergency accommodation for Roma evicted from informal settlements. However, despite repeated promises by various mayors to formalise their temporariness, they are still in place. An increasing number of people who were relocated to the Roma camps have been stuck there for many years and, despite trenchant criticism of deplorable living conditions and ethnic discrimination, these spaces still lack a clear legal status, remaining in a limbo with temporary yet permanent suspension of rights. This enduring temporariness, however, has not constituted an explicit object of analysis thus far. Scholars of the Roma camps have focused on other aspects, such as the presence of exceptional and emergency measures, of discourses bolstering racial segregation, the activities of NGOs in camps and, more recently, individual strategies of resistance.

Leonardo Piasere (2006) was one of the first to define the Italian Roma camp in Agambenian terms, as an apparatus of inclusion through exclusion (often justified for humanitarian purposes), whereby the Roma are stripped of their citizenship and reduced

to what he terms ‘*campodini*’, i.e. citizens of the camp. The notion of exception and the Agambenian reading of the camp have been used by some scholars to study discourses that justify this long-lasting segregation, as well as the practices reinforcing it. For example, Sigona (2003, 2005, 2011) illustrates how the discourse on nomadism and the construction of the Roma as a problem could justify the persistence of the camps. Clough Marinaro (2003; 2009) investigates the processes of surveillance and exile drawn on to deal with the Roma in Rome, which instead of solving the so-called ‘Roma problem’ actually perpetuate the emergency approach towards this population. Finally, Alunni (2012) analyses how health policies exacerbate the exclusion of the Roma. As mentioned earlier, Picker, Greenfields and Smith (2015) argue that the persistence of the Roma camp as a segregated space is due to the legacy and naturalisation of racist ideologies that portray the Roma as a different racial group. In addition to this, Clough Marinaro and Daniele (2011) also illustrate the role played by humanitarianism discourses in the reproduction of the Roma segregation, discussing how the social services offered by NGOs in camps and the tools developed to increase the political participation of Roma camp-dwellers actually continue disempowering the Roma communities (Daniele, 2011). More recently Sigona (2015) has developed a critique of the Agambenian approach to the camp by showing that the Roma camps do not purely constitute a form of exclusion but also initiate a peculiar form of citizenship (what he calls ‘campzenship’), by giving visibility to the Roma and providing shelter to those left out of the asylum system.

The persistence of discourses on nomadism and of silent racial classifications, the presence of specific health policies for the Roma, the reproduction of marginalisation through surveillance and evictions, the effects of NGOs and of participatory tools which disempower the Roma communities, as well as the role of the camps as a space of shelter for excluded Roma, are all aspects that influence the persistence of these camps. However, the question of persistent temporariness has been only tangentially touched in these works and its causes not explicitly analysed. In order to advance the investigation of the reasons that lead different camps to have different protracted temporary durations, this research aims to understand the factors that contribute to the persistence of the Roma camps, and in so doing, it also aims to shed light on the mechanisms of persistence of institutional camps more generally.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced and discussed the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps in Rome. It has shown how in the past twenty years the number of Roma camps and people living in them has increased, as well as the public money spent to maintain these spaces. This growing tendency is, however, in stark contrast with the history of the Roma camps that clearly illustrates how policies repeatedly present them as an emergency relocation and a space of transition towards permanent housing. Although the camps in Rome were first created as emergency accommodation for Roma living in informal settlements in the Italian capital city, during the last two decades they have endured creating legal and temporal limbos in which the Roma people are caught, excluded from access to housing, work, health and education.

The research puzzle of this thesis arose from the ambivalence and contrast between the planned temporariness and actual persistence of the Roma camps, which is common among other institutional camps. In fact, rather than constituting an exception, the apparent paradox between the temporary and the permanent is an important and crucial tension of camp-like institutions, as acknowledged by several scholars in camp studies. Despite the general agreement on the widespread persistence of temporary institutional camps, there have been few attempts to understand the processes of production of different regimes of durability. The notion of permanent temporariness has seldom been problematised, and often simply regarded as the direct effect of exclusionary policies, discourses and practices. However, among emergency camps, some endure more than others and with different effects, and, I suggest, a comparison between differently enduring camps can help shed light on the dynamics that produce different types of enduring temporariness. In order to scrutinise the factors that contribute to the emergence of different enduring temporalities, in the next chapter I introduce two cases of institutional camps that have different types of persistent temporariness from that of the Italian Roma camps.

**CHAPTER 2****Re-thinking persistent temporariness as gradual change:  
a comparison of enduring camps****Introduction**

Some camps endure longer and in different ways to others, therefore making ‘persistent temporariness’ a variable rather than a constant of institutional camps. For example, this chapter introduces two other cases of institutional camps with different trajectories of enduring temporariness: the historical transit estates for Algerian migrants and the ongoing integration villages for Roma migrants, both in France. While the former endured for almost twenty years, finally disappearing in the 1980s, the latter are temporary, but in some cases pro-Roma associations have managed to prolong their duration for a few more years. However, although the concept of permanent temporariness accurately grasps the tension characterising many camps around the world, it is not as helpful when it comes to understanding its different practical articulations. How can “varied regimes of permanent temporariness” (Picker and Pasquetti, 2015, p.681) be described? This chapter re-thinks the notion of permanent temporariness, suggesting the possibility of complimenting it with that of ‘gradual change’. Rather than a criticism, the use of this alternative concept can be seen as contributing to a description of the different states that persistent temporariness assumes in real-world camps.

The concept of gradual change is borrowed from studies in institutional change and, since this research is about institutional camps, this literature has proven particularly helpful in supporting geographical investigations of the different ways in which temporary yet persisting camps evolve and in providing a vocabulary to thoroughly illustrate the practical articulations of persistent temporariness. Through this notion, the evolution of the Italian Roma camps will be described as an example of

‘conversion’, the transit estates as ‘replacement’ and the integration villages as ‘layering’. The identification of different typologies of persistent temporariness makes it possible to compare them and understand the factors that contribute to this phenomenon. I defined the comparison between the Italian Roma camps and the French transit estates and integration villages as ‘asymmetrical’ since the main research question concerns the first case, while the French cases are used to verify that the factors contributing to the persistence of the Roma camps could help further understand other cases. Furthermore, the comparison developed in this research has a political goal which is that of criticising the exceptionalism of the Roma people often reproduced in Romani studies. By comparing two cases involving two different groups, i.e. the Roma and Algerian migrants, I intend to reveal how dynamics that are often considered to be peculiar to the Roma people, are also common to other stigmatised groups.

The chapter starts with an illustration of the method of ‘asymmetrical comparison’ and with an introductory description of the French cases, and continues in the second part with the discussion of the notion of ‘gradual change’.

### **Investigating persistent temporariness through an asymmetrical comparison**

In order to understand the factors contributing to the persistence of the Roma camps I conduct a comparison through which I compare the Italian Roma camps with two French examples of enduring institutional emergency camps. The first is the case of the past ‘transit estates’ (*cités de transit*) in the 1970s for Algerian and Moroccan migrants, which were originally planned as temporary and yet persisted for more than twenty years after their creation. The second is the case of the ‘integration villages’ (*villages d'insertion*), mainly used today to temporarily relocate Roma living in informal settlements and some of which are being extended beyond their original duration. I decided to employ the method of comparison for two reasons: one analytical, i.e. as a support to the line of argumentation, the other political, i.e. as a criticism of the Roma exceptionalism diffused in Romani studies.

Analytically, the qualitative small-n comparison developed in this research will be used as a way to formulate new hypotheses on the dynamics leading temporary institutional camps to persistence. Despite the long-lasting predominance of quantitative

large-N comparison, current scholarship stressed the advantages of qualitative small-n comparative research not only for evaluating and generating new hypotheses, but also for thoroughly tracing and understanding causal processes (Collier, 2011; Falletti and Lynch, 2009; Hall, 2003; Landman, 2003). In fact, it can be argued that qualitative comparison provides a better and more exhaustive understanding of causality than statistical research, because it pays more attention to the complexity of the cases analysed and hence enables the researchers to understand how causal mechanisms – which are relational concepts – work in their interaction with the context, while the large N comparison often risks overlooking the importance of the context in which the phenomena under analysis are situated (Falletti and Lynch, 2009). Goldstone (1997) argues that research aiming at understanding causal mechanisms should not increase the number of cases, but should deepen the analysis of only few cases through a method called ‘process tracing’, which aims to create a “decomposition of a complex narrative into stages, episodes or events which can be connected by causal sequences” (Goldstone, 1997, p.112). This method is supported by several scholars who advocate the use of small-n comparison as a variable-based and not as a case-based type of research (see Collier, 2011; Hall, 2003). The focus on few cases is therefore optimal for investigating the complexity of a phenomenon, and for developing an in-depth understanding of its causal processes. However, the three cases considered in this research are not equally investigated but are part of an ‘asymmetrical comparison’ (Figure 2.1), which gives prominence to the Italian case and uses the French ones to corroborate the arguments emerging from the analysis of the Italian Roma camps. First, as I will illustrate in Chapters 4 and 5, I conduct a case study based on the Italian Roma camps, in which I look for the factors influencing their persistence and which enables me to offer a full account of the specificity of the Italian case. Once the mechanisms contributing to the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps are identified, I then develop the comparison with the French cases, which I examine through the factors that have emerged from the Italian case in order to see if they help us understand other cases of persistent temporariness and thereby achieve a more general level of validity. It must be stressed that as the research is only based on three cases, the argument cannot be generalised beyond these cases.

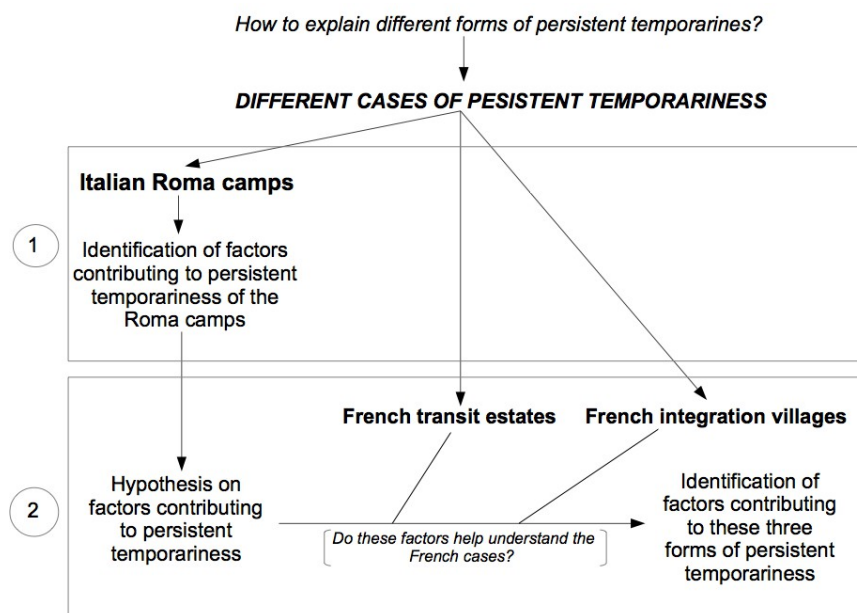


Figure 2.1 – A graph summarising the method of asymmetrical comparison

Secondly, I decided to include non-Roma camps in the research in order to challenge the exceptionality of the Roma. In the last decade there has been a revival of comparison in urban studies, not only as a method, but also as a way of thinking. As argued by McFarlane (2010) comparison is never neutral, but it often actively contributes to reproduce certain hierarchies. At the same time, comparison can problematise certain assumptions and trouble hierarchical distinctions between, for instance, the global North and the global South, between economically successful and ‘under-developed’ cities (see McFarlane, 2010; Robinson, 2006). Research on the Roma often presents comparisons between different countries (see Bancroft, 2001; Fekete, 2014; Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015; Sigona and Trehan, 2009) but more rarely between the Roma and other groups (see, for instance, Fassin, 2010, Grill, 2012, Sordé Marti et al., 2012), hence reproducing the idea that the Roma are an exceptional group. Romani studies have been criticised for essentialising the Roma (Tremlett, 2009), leading to an overestimation of the differences between them and other groups (Willems, 1998), while the Roma actually face many similar situations common to other categories. For instance, the marginalising discourse towards the Roma, which depicts them as ‘nomads’ and hence not wanting a permanent residency in a house, was also mobilised against migrants in France in 1967, when the former French prime minister

Georges Pompidou “opposed the creation of a tax for the housing of migrants on the basis of their ‘nomadic’ character” (Weil, 2005, p.93). As a consequence, by comparing the case of the Italian Roma camps with the French transit estates for Algerian migrants, I also aim to criticise a political distinction between the Roma and other migrants, and to show that the situation of residential segregation experienced by the Roma in Rome is also common to other categories and that, therefore, understanding the persistence of the Roma camps can tell us something about other types of institutional camps. Moreover, to portray the Roma as a separate category discursively sustains the exceptional policies adopted towards them, and should thus be questioned when criticising these exclusionary measures (see Maestri, 2016b).

This qualitative small-n comparative research aims, on the one hand, to strengthen and make potentially generalisable the argument emerging from the analysis of the Italian case and, on the other hand, to criticise the tendency in Romani studies to see the Roma as an exceptional object of studies. In contrast with quantitative large-N comparative research, which requires a random selection of cases, the cases have been selected on the basis of their relevance for the phenomenon considered, that is, the persistence of temporary institutional camps for former slum dwellers. Although Geddes (1990) and King et al. (1994) advise against the selection of cases on the basis of the dependent variable, this is a common strategy in small-n comparative research because of case-oriented research questions, and also because it is not useful to analyse a case where the phenomenon under study is not present (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006). King et al. (1994) argues that if the selection of cases is intentional and needs be done on the base of the dependent variable, the researcher should then try to maximise the variance on it in order to avoid a no-variance research design. I selected the research cases on the basis of the presence of the dependent variable, which is persistent temporariness. The three cases constitute, however, three different durations of temporary institutional camps for former slum dwellers (Table 2.1). While the ongoing Roma camps have endured for more than 15 years, the transit estates had an average duration of 17 years and the integration villages of approximately five years.



Table 2.1 – A summary of the Italian and French cases

	<b>Italian Roma camps</b>	<b>French transit estates</b>	<b>French integration villages</b>
<b>Where</b>	Municipality of Rome	Department of Hauts-de-Seine	Departments of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, Essonne
<b>How many</b>	22	13	8
<b>Target population</b>	Roma people (both nationals and migrants)	Algerian migrants	Roma migrants
<b>Numbers of people involved</b>	Over 6,000 people	Over 1,000 family units	Approximately 750 people
<b>When</b>	Early 1990s – pres.	Late 1950s – 1990s	2005 – pres.
<b>Duration (average)</b>	15,5 years (ongoing)	More than 17 years	Slightly more than 5 years

### **The transit estates: persistence and final closure**

At the end of the Second World War, the French government started facilitating immigration in order to increase the size of the workforce that had diminished during the war. Although the government initially considered the idea of ethnic quotas to incentivise the immigration of ‘desirable’ migrants (for example, from Germany and Italy), a republican approach to migration finally prevailed, and no discrimination was accepted (Weil, 2005). Nevertheless, preferences towards German and mainly Italian immigrants led France to establish offices for immigration in these two countries. In 1947 Algerians were formally granted French citizenship, and this resulted in a stark increase in Algerian immigration to France (Weil, 2005). Algerian immigration (especially family immigration) grew further during the Algerian War (1954-1962), from about 220,000 Algerian migrants registered in France in 1954 to 600,000 in 1965 (Cohen, 2013). However, racism towards Algerian migrants (which also increased during the Algerian War) and lack of immigrant policies, forced Algerian families to live in informal settlements. Together with Algerians, migrants from Morocco and Portugal also endured difficult living conditions. From the 1960s, the government started increasing slum-removal policies and therefore needed a quick solution for the evicted families (Weil, 2005). Although some transit estates had already appeared in the 1950s, they mushroomed during this period in order to provide temporary

accommodation for the increasing number of families left homeless following their eviction from informal settlements (Figure 2.2). The transit estates were comprised of family accommodation, which was different from accommodation for individuals only (mainly the so-called *harkis*, i.e. Algerian men who served in the French armies), called ‘transit camps’, ‘reception estates’, or ‘forest villages’ (Moumen, 2012).



Figure 2.2 – Aerial picture of the transit estate André Doucet in 1979 (with permission of Soci t  d'Histoire de Nanterre)

In the Hauts-de-Seine department (Figure 2.3; Figure 2.4), which is the focus of this research and where most of the Algerian informal settlements were concentrated, from 1959 to 1963 there were 9 transit estates providing a total of 644 units of accommodation (Cohen, 2013). In the first period of the transit estates, i.e. from 1960 to 1963, they were built as temporary structures which would be quickly demolished (Blanc-Chal ard, 2008) but in the 1960s and early 1970s, the numbers rose and five more transit estates were built in the department of Hauts-de-Seine, bringing the number of accommodation units available to more than 950 (Cohen, 2013) (Table 2.2).

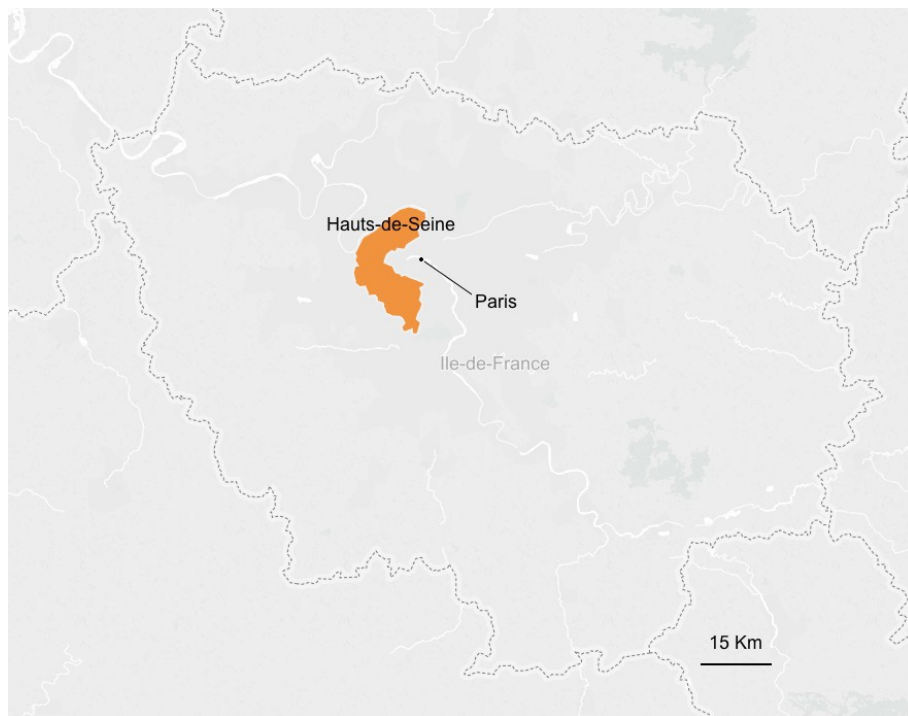


Figure 2.3 – A map showing the department of Hauts-de-Seine



Figure 2.4 – A map of the transit estates in the department of Hauts-de-Seine

Table 2.2 – A list of the transit estates in the department of Hauts-de-Seine

	<b>Transit estates</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Duration Period</b>	<b>Number of families</b>
1	Marguerites	Cetrafa (from 1962)	1956–1997	250
2	Pâquerettes	Sonacotra and then Cetrafa (from 1962)	1959–1971	30
3	Les Potagers	Sonacotra	1960–1996	66
4	Grands Prés	Sonacotra and then Cetrafa (from 1962)	1961–After 1981	101
5	Les Burons	Cetrafa	1961–1974	80
6	Côtes d'Auty	Sonacotra	1962–1983	119
7	André Doucet	Sonacotra and then Cetrafa (from 1962)	1962–After 1982	90
8	Les Groues	Cetrafa	1963–1969/1971	70
9	Grésillons	Cetrafa	1965–After 1980	51
10	5 Route Principale du Port	Cetrafa	1966–1986	93
11	51 Route Principale du Port	Cetrafa	1966–1986	173
12	Gutenberg	Cetrafa	1971–1985	192
13	Pont de Bezons	Sonacotra	1971–1985	140
	<b>Total</b>			1,458

The transit estates were based from the beginning on the idea of integration through housing, whereby people deemed unsuitable for houses were put into transit housing projects in order to familiarise them to the way of life of the majority population (Blanc-Chaléard, 2008). They were rooted in different types of housing projects, such as, emergency accommodation for slum dwellers called *Immeubles Sociaux de Transit* (IST, Transition Social Buildings), housing for marginalised people and the housing projects for the relocation of slum dwellers in the French colonies (so-called *cités de recasement*, i.e. relocation estates) (Cohen, 2013). This “dispersed genealogy” (Cohen and David, 2012, par.6), emphasises how the transit estates can be considered a form of institutional camp. They do indeed constitute a temporary form of accommodation used as a transitory solution during an emergency situation of housing informality targeted at people on the so-called margins of society (i.e. former colonial subjects) yet included (as workforce).

The two property developers and managers of transit estates in Hauts-de-Seine where Sonacotral (*Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs algériens*, National Construction Agency of Housing for Algerian Workers) and Cetrafa (*Centres de transit familiaux*, Transition Family Centres). The former was a public company funded in 1956 for the management of Algerian migrants, not only in the field of housing but also for social services (Bernardot, 2008) which in 1963 changed its name to Sonacotra (*Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs*, National Construction Agency of Housing for Workers) (Cohen and David, 2012). The Cetrafa was founded in 1961 in order to manage the transit estates built by the Seine Prefecture<sup>22</sup> (Hmed, 2008; Blanc-Chaléard, 2008). The Sonacotral was the first company to be charged with the implementation of a slum removal programme (for which it received both public money and funding from the employers of migrant workers) (Blanc-Chaléard, 2008).

The socio-educational activities in the estates managed by Sonacotral were the responsibility of the association *Groupe d'Etude et d'Action pour les Nord Africains de la Région Paris* (GEANARP, Group of Research and Action for the Northern Africans of the Paris Region), while Cetrafa was in charge of all the services in its estates. While GEANARP mainly focused on education, integration, and participation, Cetrafa pursued a more repressive approach similar to those adopted in the colonial relocation estates. Indeed, Cetrafa was renowned for recruiting estate managers from the pool of former Algerian civil service administrators and police officers who had served in the colonies (Hmed, 2008). By 1962 Cetrafa started running the majority of the transit estates in Nanterre, a municipality of the department of Hauts-de-Seine (see Table 2.3), replacing Sonacotral in several of them and therefore deeply changing the way social services were delivered. Over time social activities in the Cetrafa estates almost disappeared and security services and control of the population grew in importance (Cohen, 2013). In 1967 Sonacotra launched the association *Logement et Promotion Sociale* (LPS, Housing and Social Promotion) to provide social services in its transit estates (Cohen and David, 2012). LPS was critical of the segregation in the transit estates and promoted the involvement of the residents, some of whom were also hired by the LPS.

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<sup>22</sup> Following the Law 64-707 adopted on 10 July 1964, in 1968 the department Seine was divided into three departments: Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Val-de-Marne.

Table 2.3 – The agencies and associations involved in the management of the transit estates

<b>Cetrafa</b>	The association Transition Family Centres ( <i>Centres de transit familiaux</i> ) was founded in 1961 to manage the transit estates built by the Seine Prefecture. It also provided social services to the residents of the transit estates, and was characterised by a tougher approach than Sonacotral.
<b>GEANARP</b>	The Group of Research and Action for the Northern Africans of the Paris Region ( <i>Groupe d'Etude et d'Action pour les Nord Africains de la Région Paris</i> ) provided social services to the residents of Sonacotral estates.
<b>LPS</b>	In 1967 Sonacotra launched the association Housing and Social Promotion ( <i>Logement et Promotion Sociale</i> ) to provide social services in its transit estates. The LPS was critical of the segregation in the transit estates and promoted the involvement of the residents, some of whom were also hired by the LPS.
<b>Sonacotral</b>	The National Construction Agency of Housing for Algerian Workers ( <i>Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs algériens</i> ) was a public company funded in 1956 for the management of Algerian migrants. It changed its name to Sonacotra ( <i>Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs</i> , National Construction Agency of Housing for Workers) in 1963. Since 2006 it has been called Adoma.

Most of the people remained in the transit estates of the Hauts-de-Seine department for more than the two years initially scheduled, mainly because of the lack of rehousing options, as well as the poor economic conditions that the inhabitants were experiencing in a time of rising unemployment (Cohen and David, 2012). During the 1970s over 800 families lived in the transit estates, and in 1982 there were still more than 300 families in Nanterre and Gennevilliers (two municipalities of the Hauts-de-Seine department with a high concentration of transit estates) (Cohen, 2013). Although in the 1970s local government started relocating migrant families to council housing estates, the end of the transit estates arrived only a decade later. In order to highlight the decay of these transit estates, Abdallah (2006) denounced their “slummification”, which manifested itself in the deteriorating buildings, an increase in conflicts with neighbours, and growing social problems such as drug addiction and trafficking. Finally, decades after their creation, the former French President François Mitterrand made official commitment to the relocation of the residents of the transit estates. Despite this formal political engagement, which led to a slow dismantling of the transit estates, these spaces persisted until the 1980s (Abdallah, 2006), and some of them even lasted until the 1990s

(Cohen and David, 2012).

### ***The history of the transit estates***

Before being formalised within a national legal framework, the transit estates were local emergency projects for the relocation of slum dwellers. Their origins can be traced back to the end of the Second World War, when a big part of the population experienced severe housing deprivation, making the housing crisis a prominent issue on the political agenda (Cohen, 2013). At the beginning, the government planned to relocate the slum dwellers to council housing estates, but the lack of council housing and the increasing number of people experiencing housing deprivation (also because of post-war urban renewal projects and forced evictions) led to the emergence of the transit estates as a stage between the informal settlements and the public housing (Tricart, 1977). During the 1960s the national government issued laws to standardise the slum removal programmes and relocations (Table 2.4). The Debré Law, adopted in 1964, enabled the prefectures to clear informal settlements whilst also acknowledging the right of the evicted residents to be offered a relocation (either permanent or temporary). Two years later, the law was amended, becoming the so-called Debré-Nungesser Law, which constituted an attempt to accelerate these interventions by allowing the construction of relocation housing projects near to the cleared settlement areas. However, both laws were not enacted, mainly because of difficulties in reaching agreements on the localities of the housing projects due to the reticence of the local mayors to relocate migrants in their municipalities (Blanc-Chaléard, 2008). On 1 October 1968 a decree was adopted to speed up the relocation to council housing estates, by forcing social housing landlords to accept tenants from informal settlements and transit estates (Cohen, 2013). However, the obligation to offer migrants public housing only applied to the new council estates, which took years to be built. In the meantime, the transit estates did not seem to constitute a real transitory phase: between 1961 and 1964 only 70 families of the Cetrafa estates were relocated elsewhere out of more than 200 (Cohen, 2013). During the 1960s the main concern of the government was the removal of slums, symbolised by the spectacularised removal of the informal settlements in Nanterre in 1971 (Cohen, 2013). Although the transit estates were

initially supposed to host only families officially deemed ‘unsuitable’ for life in houses, from the 1970s onwards the transit estates started to be used for the relocation of all the evicted residents, and for the first time the problem of the enduring transit estates was more explicitly tackled (Cohen, 2013) through a “progressive institutionalisation of scattered experiences” (Tricart, 1977, p.623).

Table 2.4 – The legal framework of the transit estates

Year	Document	Main points
1964	Debré Law	This law enabled the prefectures to clear informal settlements and acknowledged the right of the evicted residents to be offered a relocation.
1968	Decree 1 October 1968	This decree was adopted to speed up the relocation to public housing, forcing social housing landlords to accept tenants coming from informal settlements and transit estates.
1970	Vivien Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This law extended the use of transit estates not only to evicted slum residents, but also to those who were experiencing situations of housing deprivation.</li> <li>- It reiterated the transitory character of the cités de transit.</li> </ul>
1971	Circular of 27 August 1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This circular reiterated the importance of relocation projects.</li> <li>- It was a reminder that the transit estates had to be temporary and built only when no other alternatives were available.</li> <li>- It also re-stated that permanent relocations had to be prioritised.</li> <li>- The decree emphasised the importance of socio-educational services.</li> <li>- It provided the first nationally acknowledged definition of transit estates.</li> <li>- It stated that the transit estates had to be built as concrete buildings with 50-80 accommodation places.</li> </ul>
1972	Circular of 19 April 1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It confirmed the points stated in the 1971 circular.</li> <li>- It re-stated that the transit estates were for marginalised families.</li> <li>- It confirmed the importance of socio-educational services and the temporary character of the transit estates.</li> </ul>

The transit estates were formalised in the 1970s with the Vivien Law (19 July 1970) for the eradication of unsanitary housing, which extended the use of transit estates to those who were experiencing situations of housing deprivation beyond informal settlements, and which restated the transitory character of the transit estates. In contrast



to the Debré law, the Vivien Law contributed to national and local government action against unsanitary housing, including the transit estates (Blanc-Chaléard, 2008; Cohen, 2013). While during the 1960s the main concern of the national government regarded the eradication of informal settlements and unsanitary housing, from the 1970s the issue of transit estates received more attention. The circular of 27 August 1971 (Groupe interministériel permanent, 1971, p.9504) for the implementation of the Vivien Law specified that “the relocation of residents is the most important aspect [of the fight against unsanitary housing]”. The circular was a reminder that the transit estates had to be “a place of temporary accommodation” (*ibid.* p.9504) resorted to only when other alternatives were not available, since permanent relocations should have been preferred to temporary ones. Moreover, the circular restated the importance of the implementation of “a structure for socio-educational services” (*ibid.* p.9505) and provided for the first time a nationally acknowledged definition of transit estates, defined as:

housing projects for the temporary accommodation of families whose access to forms of permanent housing cannot be accomplished without a socio-educational intervention (*ibid.* p.9512)

Even though the government increasingly resorted to the transit estates because of a lack of public housing, in the circular the families living in these estates were portrayed as needing socio-educational support before accessing permanent housing. The circular was a reminder that “the transit estates must fulfil their transitory purposes” (*ibid.* p.9512) and, unlike previous decrees and circulars requiring the transit estates to be provisional structures, ordered the transit estates to be built as concrete buildings with approximately 50 to 80 accommodation places, finally stating that “the notion of transition must be pursued in the existing transit estates” (*ibid.* p.9513).

A circular adopted on 19 April 1972 (Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire et al., 1972, p.7659) confirmed the definition expressed in the 1971 circular and underscored three main points: first, that transit estates were for particularly marginalised families that “risk[ed] rejection by the populations living in public housing”; second, they were characterised by a socio-educational intervention aiming at relocation to a permanent housing solution; third, the duration of the stay in the transit estate had to be “as short as possible”. As pointed out by Blanc-Chaléard (2008, p.267), this circular “gives official status to the transit estates, making them become, from a

practical tool, a rational instrument of housing policies.” The document advocated an increase in the building of transit estates and introduced the distinction between two types: the ‘classic type’ for families considered ready for relocation within two years and the ‘estates of family support’ for families for whom it was difficult to assess readiness for permanent accommodation. The circular of 19 April 1972 also stated that the transit estates had to be built close to city centres, in order to reduce the isolation and segregation of the residents, in concrete buildings built to last between 8 to 20 years. Socio-educational support for residents was considered crucial preparation for families due to move into permanent housing. As for the managers of the transit estates, they were a key figure in the lives of the residents and in the maintenance of the buildings, and wielded the power to increase or decrease the rent according to family income. The 1971 circular (Groupe interministériel permanent, 1971, p.9513) stated that the managers should “avoid that the duration of the stay in transit estates is too long”, and the 1972 circular (Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire et al., 1972, p.7661) reported that the main concern of the manager should be “to facilitate the relocation of families to permanent housing”, making sure that “possibilities for permanent relocation are offered” and sanctioning those families who refused to leave with rent increases. The slow pace of relocation was blamed on the reticence of mayors to accept relocation in their municipalities and also on the stigmatisation to which people formerly living in informal settlements were subject to (Cohen, 2013). Furthermore, families sometimes refused relocation because they would end up far away from their workplace and neighbourhood, and many of the women who did not speak French feared isolation (Cohen, 2013).

The history of the transit estates shows how they were born as local emergency relocation tools that the national government formalised over time through a series of laws and circulars. However, despite this progressive institutionalisation, several transit estates persisted beyond their planned duration and several hundred people remained in them until the 1980s.

### **The integration villages: prolonging temporariness**

With the change in visa requirements for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens and

the 2007 enlargement of the EU, the migration of Romanians and Roma from Eastern Europe became an important topic of political debate in France, and also in other western European countries (Olivera, 2015). Although the number of Romanian Roma living in informal settlements slightly increased throughout the 2000s, contrary to what was depicted by the media, Roma immigration from Romania remained relatively stable since 2002-2003 (Olivera, 2009). Poor Roma migrants had been living in informal settlements in France since the 1990s but the issue emerged as a problem mainly in the second half of the 2000s. As observed by Olivera (2009) the stigmatisation of the Roma mushroomed at the end of the 1990s, together with political discourses increasingly targeting Romanian migration. The confusion between the terms 'Romanian' and 'Roma' exacerbated negative feelings towards both categories and, finally, the expulsion policies enacted in summer 2010 by the Sarkozy government accelerated the negative representation and discriminatory treatment of these groups (see Barbulescu, 2012; Fassin, 2010; Parker, 2012). This was the context in which the problem of the informal Roma settlements emerged and to which, first the municipalities, and then the French State, started looking for a solution.

It is estimated that there are about 20,000 people living in informal settlements in France, mostly in Lyon and Paris (Olivera, 2015). *Romeurope* (2012), a pro-Roma association, estimates that in the Paris region there are approximately 5,000-6,000 Roma migrants living in informal settlements, experiencing social exclusion and difficult access to housing. In order to tackle this situation, French municipalities started creating new temporary family accommodation for Roma migrants evicted from informal settlements. The name 'integration village' is not the official one but it is the one the policy-makers and the media use to refer to these projects.<sup>23</sup> Between 2000 and 2005 integration villages were mainly run by the local municipalities that wanted to develop a local response to the increasingly harsh policies adopted by the national government. From 2005 regional governments started supporting them, via a partial state funding. The region of Île de France in 2005 adopted a series of measures for the eradication of slums and the funding of projects for the rehousing of people formerly living in slums. These villages can be read through the notion of 'camp' since they are

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23 In order to avoid confusion between different terms, the thesis will employ 'integration village' to refer to all the rehousing projects for Roma evicted from informal settlements funded by the state, the regions and the local governments.

created to tackle an alleged emergency situation through a mix of exceptional and ordinary measures which increase the marginalisation of the Roma, while at the same time increasing their visibility and stigmatisation in the media (Legros and Vitale, 2011). Moreover, the integration villages are way of localising a group which troubles the distinction between insider and outsider, and which is difficult to categorise in the modern nation-state, since they constitute a form of internal other (Fassin, 2010).

Since the French state started supporting the construction of integration villages, many have been built in the Seine-Saint-Denis department (i.e. in Aubervilliers, Bagnolet, Montreuil, Saint-Denis, Saint-Ouen), where approximately 650 Roma are living (Romeurope, 2012) (Table 2.5). The Seine-Saint-Denis, together with the Val-de-Marne and Essonne departments, constitute the geographical focus of the analysis of the integration villages (Figure 2.5; Figure 2.6).

Table 2.5 – The list of the integration villages in the departments of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne and Essonne

<b>Integration village</b>	<b>Duration Period</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Aubervilliers	2007–pres.	57
Bagnolet	2007–2011	78
Fort de l'Est	2007–pres.	76
Montreuil 1	2009–2015	180
Saint-Ouen	2009–2015	80
Montreuil 2	2010–pres.	192
Orly	2011–2013	74
Ris Orangis	2013–2014	38
<b>Total</b>		<b>775</b>

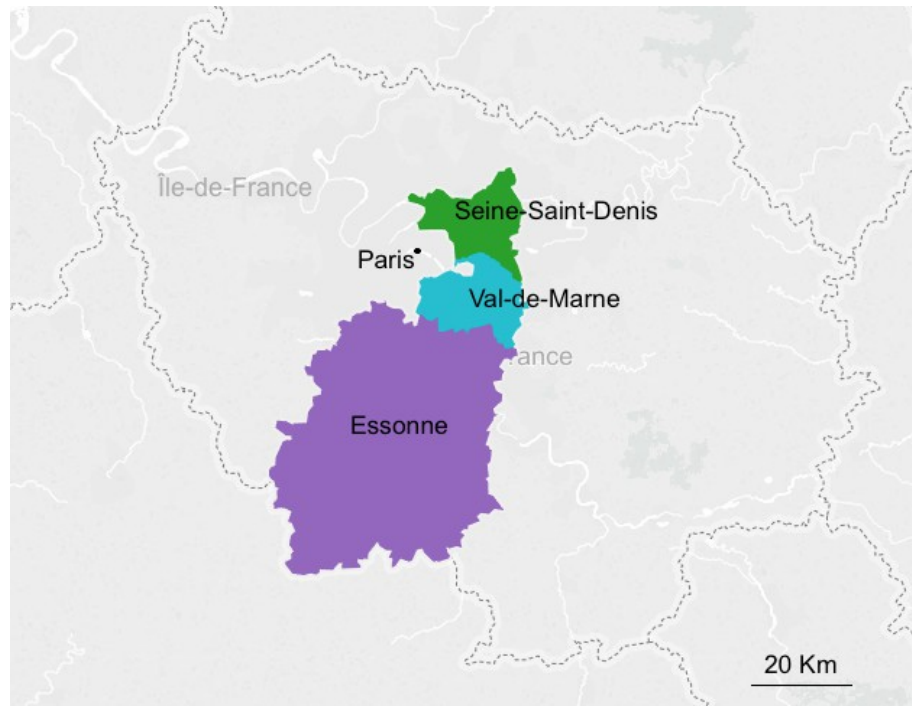


Figure 2.5 – A map of the departments of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne and Essonne

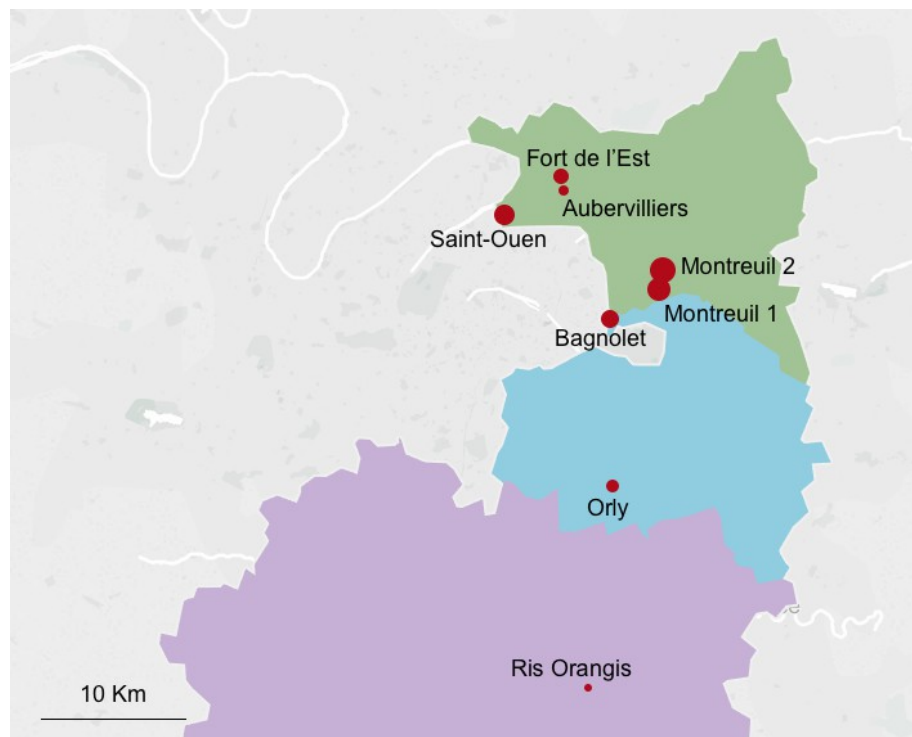


Figure 2.6 – A map of the integration villages in the departments of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne and Essonne

In the integration villages the families are usually selected from those evicted from cleared sites, and only those that pass a selection process (whose criteria are currently unknown) can move temporarily to an integration village, while the others are simply dispersed. Families living in these villages are supported by specific associations to undertake a process of integration into schooling and work, and to learn French. Differently from the French transit estates and also to the Italian Roma camps, it would appear that the integration villages only persist for a short time beyond the time limit within which they were planned. Moreover, in the case of the integration villages, the prolongation of their temporal duration is advocated by pro-Roma associations, while the local government intends to terminate these projects when their temporary lifespan expires. Although it is too early to assess the persistence of integration villages (most of them were created after 2007 for a duration of five years), some of these villages have already come to an end, as planned, such as villages in Orly, Saint-Denis, Bagnolet and Montreuil. In other cases, such as Saint-Ouen, the families who did not find another place at the end of the inclusion project illegally occupied the village until they were finally evicted in 2015.

### ***The history of the integration villages***

Olivier Legros (2010) observes that the integration villages developed in the same way as the transit estates discussed by Tricart (1977), with scattered local experiments later formalised at a national level. For example, in the Seine-Saint-Denis department, the municipality of Saint-Denis provided in 2003 a space for Roma families living in informal settlements, with water and electricity (families were, however, evicted in 2010). As mentioned above, different local experiments started to be standardised in 2005, with the involvement of the Île-de-France region in the planning and funding of these relocation projects (Table 2.6). Because of the over-saturation of non-Roma emergency accommodation and the presence of many informal settlements, the Île-de-France region decided to strengthen its intervention on homelessness and marginalisation by providing one million Euros for new slum removal programmes and integration villages. A report of the *Conseil Regional* (Conseil Regional D'Île-de-France, 2005) states that the Île-de-France Region not only aims to remove informal

settlements but also to promote the inclusion of the historically discriminated against Roma population. The projects funded by the regions are not built in the same locations as the informal settlements but close to means of transport. They are supported to last four or five years, for 60-80 people maximum, who are selected from family units and similar regions. Moreover, the housing units are not permanent structures but consist of, for instance, Portakabins or bungalows (Figure 2.7). The regional contribution to the integration villages adds up to 50 percent of the total cost. The municipalities that also implement measures for future access to housing are entitled to an addition of 20 percent of funding, up to 500,000 Euros for each project, and when they include services for social inclusion, access to health care, education and job placements the endorsement can last three years (renewable for a maximum of two more years).



Figure 2.7 – Portakabins and residents during a party in the integration village in Ris-Orangis

The slum removal programmes and integration villages implemented by the departments and funded by the French state and regions constitute an Urban and Social Management Project (MOUS, *Maîtrise d’Oeuvre Urbaine et Sociale*). The MOUS is a departmental planning instrument, used to promote access to housing for marginalised

people, for example, people experiencing severe housing deprivation (without explicit reference to the Roma groups), or in the case of special needs (like halting sites for French Travellers) (Ministère de l'égalité des territoires et du logement 1995, 2008). The MOUS includes both housing and social support, whereby the latter aims to identify together with the recipient of the service a new housing solution according to their needs. The MOUS is preceded by a so-called "social survey" (*diagnostic social*) conducted by social workers who collect information about the circumstances of the people to be relocated and then decide who to include in the integration village.

Table 2.6 – The legal framework of the integration villages

Year	Document	Main points
2005	Report by the Regional Council Île de France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOUS funded by the region</li> <li>- Not only slum removal but also social inclusion of evicted slum dwellers</li> <li>- 60-80 people</li> <li>- Social survey before the evicting slum dwellers</li> <li>- Temporary structures (Portakabins, bungalows)</li> <li>- Details on funding (50% of total cost from the Region, up to 70%)</li> <li>- Funding for three years, renewable for one year for a maximum of two years</li> </ul>
2012	Inter-ministerial circular (26 August 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State is responsible of slum-removal policies</li> <li>- Social support to evicted residents</li> <li>- Social survey to select those entitled to MOUS</li> <li>- DIHAL in charge of assisting the prefects for informal settlements removal and integration policies</li> </ul>
2014	Letter from the Ministry of Equality of Territories and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoma in charge of relocation housing projects of evicted slum dwellers (in cooperation with prefects)</li> </ul>

Another key moment in the formalisation of these projects was the adoption of the circular of 26 August 2012 which, explicitly in contrast with the approach of the former Sarkozy government characterised by evictions and repatriations, combined security concerns with humanitarian interventions (Cousin, 2013). With this circular, the French state took on responsibility for slum removal programmes, providing the guidelines to the prefectures for the removal of informal settlements. Together with



plans for the clearance of informal settlements, the circular confirmed the use of the MOUS as a planning instrument for the integration villages and stipulated that social workers should conduct a survey of the population of the informal settlements before eviction, with the aim of identifying the weakest individuals and those who want to participate in voluntary repatriation schemes. Following the survey, services for access to housing, work, schooling and health care should be planned according to need. The circular also holds the DIHAL (*Délégation Interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement*, Inter-ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing) responsible for the coordination of the prefectures with regard to removal and social inclusion.

At the beginning of 2014 the government also entrusted Adoma, formerly Sonacotra, with the mission of the eradication of informal settlements (Table 2.7). The agreement between Adoma and the Ministry of Housing was signed on 10 March 2013 and formalised joint working between the prefectures and Adoma on accommodation and inclusion initiatives. Adoma's mission is directed by the DIHAL at a national level and by the prefectures at the local one and it is due to last until December 2016, with the task of developing instruments of intervention in collaboration with local actors and of guaranteeing the rights and social support of those selected during the social surveys (Adoma, 2014).

Table 2.7 – The agencies involved in the management of the integration villages

<b>Adoma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoma is, since 2006, the new name for the Sonacotral. It is a national public agency directed by DIHAL.</li> <li>- In 2014 it was charged with the mission of eradicating informal settlements (until December 2016).</li> <li>- Their strategy is to collaborate with the prefectures, to support them in finding and building new accommodations and to contribute to social support and inclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>DIHAL</b>	<p>The Inter-ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (<i>Délégation Interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement</i>) was created in 2010 and tasked with promoting the inclusion of homeless people, those experiencing severe housing deprivation and French Travellers. Since 2012 it has been responsible for the coordination of the prefectures with regard to the removal of informal settlements and the social inclusion of the evicted population.</p>

Despite these clear interventions, scholars and associations have critically

pointed out that the DIHAL does not have any legal enforcement power. All it can do is assist the prefectures and local governments with the implementation of the integration villages programme (Cousin, 2013). As pointed out by Legros and Olivera (2014, par.22), the DIHAL:

[O]rganises thematic meetings with state's authorities and associations in order to define the appropriate instruments of intervention and, on this basis, to provide the actors with guidelines [and] finally it is responsibility of DIHAL to establish the principles and instruments of intervention, even though in practice they are always interpreted and adapted to the situation.

The weak role of the DIHAL is considered to be the main reason why the number of Roma living in informal settlements has not really changed since the Sarkozy government lost power. Indeed, the number of evictions even increased in France in the first year of the Hollande government (Ligue des droits de l'Homme and ERRC, 2014; Ligue des droits de l'Homme and ERRC, 2015) as affirmed by Maxime, one interviewee working for the DIHAL:

Some implement the circular to the bare minimum: they do really quick social surveys without caring about people after the evictions. Yes, they do respond to urgent situations, they help the most deprived, they find some sort of solution, they avoid the worst but that's it. In fact, we have a feeling that the reason why things haven't changed that much is that the regions still follow a logic of evictions, mainly in Île-de-France.<sup>24</sup>

However, despite these limitations and criticisms, as mentioned above, the circulars adopted during the past few years and the guidelines provided by the DIHAL have formalised state intervention in eviction and integration.

The short history of the integration villages has shown how they constitute a formalised policy, with precise guidelines and actors officially charged with their monitoring. However, their implementation ultimately depends on the prefectures and this makes their persistent temporariness dependent on the negotiations between local government, prefectures, and the state agencies responsible for them.

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24 Interview held in Paris on 27 November 2014.

**From persistence to gradual change: accounting for different types of persistent temporariness**

The cases illustrated thus far constitute different typologies of persistent temporariness. They not only last for different periods, but differ in nature due to the actions of different actors. In the Italian case, local government does not act to end the persistence of the Roma camps despite appeals to change from civil society. In the French case of transit estates, the national government started a slow process of relocation to council housing estates, but in the 1980s associations and movements managed to accelerate change. Finally, with regard to the integration villages, in contrast to the previous cases, the national and regional governments try to make these spaces temporary but NGOs and movements demand their prolongation, in certain cases successfully obtaining it. In order to delineate these different typologies more clearly, I suggest re-thinking the concept of persistent temporariness through that of gradual change. As I already argued in Chapter 1, the persistence of temporary camps has rarely been problematised and explicitly discussed and, as of today, there are no clear classifications of camps according to their different persistent temporariness. I contend that the notion of gradual change and its different typologies enables us to grasp the dynamism of the temporal evolution of camps, and can therefore enrich the description of different types of persistent temporariness. This is not to say that the notion of enduring temporariness is not useful for understanding the temporality of institutional camps. In fact, as already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this notion vividly grasps the paradoxical situation in which many people find themselves when living in temporary camps. However, it does not provide a detailed language with which to appreciate its different actual articulations. By re-thinking it through the concept of gradual change, I aim to offer an account of its different types.

Among scholars of institutional change, the notion of gradual change has received increasing attention since the early 2000s, until then the focus was predominantly on the stability and persistence of institutions and public policies. This wave of attention towards social change as incremental, rather than as abrupt, came from a dissatisfaction with the literature on policy persistence and path-dependence. Path-dependence referred to an analytical tool particularly used in debates around welfare regimes and varieties of capitalism (see Streeck and Thelen, 2005) which

explained the persistence of certain institutions through a set of so-called “increasing returns”, i.e. “self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes” (Pierson, 2000, p.251) which make it less likely – and more costly – for an institution to change over time, therefore leading to institutional stability. Although this approach proved an extremely useful way of grappling with the persistence of an institution, even its advocates acknowledged the risks of providing an “overly static view of the social world” (Pierson, 2000, p.265). In order to reconcile path-dependence with the study of institutional change, scholars developed an understanding of history consisting of long periods of continuity punctuated by critical conjunctures “when substantial institutional change takes place thereby creating a ‘branching point’ from which historical development moves onto a new path” (Hall and Taylor, 2001, p.942; see also Pierson, 2000). This resulted in a more dynamic view of history, but led to the analytical separation between periods of continuous low and marginal change, on the one hand, and sudden radical transformations, on the other (the so-called ‘punctuated equilibrium model’, see Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Streeck and Thelen, 2005). As a result, abrupt forms of change – instigated by exogenous aspects, such as the international context or crises – came to be considered as ‘real change’ while marginal change was often simplistically dismissed as continuity, therefore failing to account for the different states between ‘real change’ and stability (Peters et al., 2005). However, as pointed out by Streeck and Thelen (2005, p.vii):

[...] the kind of abrupt, discontinuous change captured in the traditional model does not come close to exhausting the ways in which institutions change, and misses entirely some of the most important ways in which institutions can evolve gradually over time.

Because of the equation between real change and radical and externally generated transformations, different kinds of gradual change have been overlooked and dismissed as stability. In contrast, scholars of gradual change rejected a dichotomous interpretation which juxtaposes persistence with change and advocated a more nuanced description of the states in-between the two.

Streeck and Thelen (2005, p.19) identify five modes of “gradual but nevertheless transformative change”. The first type is ‘replacement’, which consists of the removal of existing rules and introduction of new ones not through abrupt change, but through the rising salience of new models of organisational practices. ‘Layering’ entails

progressive “amendments, additions, or revisions to an existing set of institutions”, while ‘drift’ is the product of a “disjuncture between social programs and changing profiles of social risk” (*ibid.*, pp.24-25). ‘Conversion’ occurs when institutions “are redirected to new goals, functions, or purposes” and “adapted to serve new goals or fit the interests of new actors” (*ibid.*, p.26). Finally, ‘exhaustion’ points to an institutional breakdown, and it is therefore not strictly speaking a form of incremental change, although the collapsing is gradual rather than sudden. Although gradual change might appear extremely similar to persistence, Streeck and Thelen (2005, p.24) remind us that:

There is nothing automatic about institutional stability [...] Quite to the contrary institutions require active maintenance; to remain what they are they need to be reset and refocused, or sometimes more fundamentally recalibrated and renegotiated [...].

The concept of gradual change pays attention to the mechanisms that lead to what is dismissed as persistence, but that in fact entails some minor transformations. It can therefore be a fruitful way of thoroughly classifying the processes that lead to different types of persistent temporariness.

### ***Reading the research cases as conversion, replacement and layering***

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the Roma camps arose out of an emergency policy with a temporary character, yet they have persisted for more than twenty years. Created in the early 1990s following an increase in the number of Roma people arriving during the Yugoslav Wars, and living in informal settlements in the Italian capital city, the local administrations of Rome have since then perpetuated the temporary character of this housing policy. At the same time, in the last two decades, the municipality of Rome has developed new regulations, increased the services provided in the camps and involved a larger number of associations as subcontractors working in the camps, as well as tightening the harsh surveillance of these spaces. Although the discourses, architecture, and management of the Roma camps has remained the same for the last twenty years, several aspects have also changed. For instance, the number of official camps has grown, and also the people relocated there. Moreover, the increasing amounts of public money spent on the management of the Roma camps has gone almost entirely to subcontracting managers, making little

difference to the living conditions of the Roma in camps. Through the literature on gradual change, the apparent stability and persistence of the Roma camps can be read as the surface product of deeper processes of negotiation and recalibration which have produced a form of ‘conversion’ (Table 2.8), whereby the Roma camps have been silently redirected towards new functions, different from those originally stated. As revealed by *Associazione 21 Luglio* (2014b, 2015), the case of the Roma reception centre Best House Rom encapsulated the conversion of this policy as it shows how the outlays for this centre were not used to provide the Roma with an appropriate relocation shelter but produced poor living conditions and fed into corrupted relations. The conditions of the building were deplorable, with overcrowded rooms, insufficient sanitary standards and no catering facilities. There were neither schooling activities nor social inclusion projects for the residents, but the public money spent on this centre was consumed by the managing association. This example shows how the policy of the Roma camps went from being a means for the relocation of Roma slum dwellers to high-cost but low-quality accommodation that exacerbated the housing exclusion of the Roma, and was also instrumentally used for political and economic profit. Although, nominally, the Roma camps focused on housing, the main goal is no longer that of offering viable alternative accommodation to people experiencing severe housing deprivation. Today the Roma camps actually contribute to worsen living conditions for the Roma.

The transit estates and integration villages can also be read through the lens of gradual change. As illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, like the Roma camps, the transit estates were created to offer temporary accommodation to families evicted from informal settlements, but eventually persisted for two decades, actually exacerbating the very marginalisation that the government originally wanted to tackle. However, through the progressive formalisation of this housing policy, the slow introduction of new laws (for instance, the 1968 decree that required the inclusion of migrant families in council housing estates) and following the political mobilisation of the residents, the transit estates were eventually closed. This case can be described as an example of ‘replacement’, whereby the official termination of the transit estates did not occur through abrupt change, but through gradual transformations. The residents were indeed slowly relocated to council estates, while for other transit estates this shift was delayed

for many years. As for the integration villages, they are relatively recent and therefore it is more difficult to interpret the pattern of their evolution as it could still transmute into new forms. However, the way these villages are changing appears similar to ‘layering’, whereby there are exceptional amendments, revisions and new rules added on the top of existing ones. Indeed, while several integration villages – unlike the Roma camps and transit estates – are closing when their planned duration period expires, the temporariness of others has been prolonged following activists' demands on local government not to abandon the Roma still living in these villages. These conflicting demands resulted in a layering whereby a few cases have been granted the right to remain open.

Table 2.8 – The research cases and the different types of gradual change

Country	Italy	France	France
Period	1990s-present	1960s-1980s	2005-present
Case	Roma camps	Transit estates	Integration villages
Description of change	From being used to rehouse evicted slum dwellers, they became a costly mechanism of segregation and housing deprivation.	Through their progressive formalisation and the introduction of new laws, the transit estates slowly disappeared.	Some of the villages have been prolonged beyond their temporary duration period.
Type of policy change	Conversion <i>changed enactment of existing rules</i>	Replacement <i>removal of existing rules and introduction of new ones</i>	Layering <i>introduction of new rules on the top of existing ones</i>

Through the concept of gradual change, three different types of persistent temporariness could be viewed as conversion, replacement and layering. By conceptualising different types of persistent temporariness as different types of institutional gradual change, the research question can, then, be understood as follows: what are the factors that contribute to the conversion of the Roma camps? And, can these factors also help to understand other types of gradual change, such as the replacement of the transit estates and the layering of the integration villages? As I will show in the next chapter, in order to investigate the factors contributing to these forms of gradual change, the camp needs to be rethought, from a space of sovereign exception

to a space of plural governance and contention.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented some methodological caveats with regard to the investigation of persistent temporariness. As discussed in Chapter 1, permanent temporariness is acknowledged as a constitutive paradoxical aspect characterising many institutional camps. Indeed, camps are created as temporary solutions to alleged emergency situations, yet they often persist in creating limbos of protracted suspension of the legal order. Because this phenomenon of enduring temporariness was seldom explored, this thesis aims to address this gap by understanding the factors that contribute to it. More precisely, it aims to do so by comparing three cases of institutional camps that had different durations, namely, the Italian Roma camps, and the French transit estates and integration villages. However, to consider these different enduring camps under the general concept of persistent temporariness implies losing a deeper understanding of the slight variations between these three different types of protracted temporariness.

For this reason, I suggested integrating the notion of persistent temporariness with that of gradual change, with its different typologies, and therefore regarding the three cases compared in this thesis as forms of conversion, replacement and layering respectively. The Roma camps constitute a form of conversion because their persistence consisted of a shift from the original goal of offering relocation to Roma slum dwellers to becoming a costly tool that exacerbates the segregation and housing exclusion of the Roma. The persisting trajectory of the French transit estates can be read as a type of replacement because, after enduring for almost two decades, the transit estates were slowly abandoned in favour of council estates. Finally, the way the integration villages are persisting can be viewed as a type of layering whereby, some associations are negotiating a few temporal extensions. The asymmetrical comparison of these three cases aims to bring the argument emerging from the analysis of the Roma camps to a more general level, in order to formulate a hypothesis on the factors leading to persistent temporariness that could be used also to investigate other cases. However, as I will discuss in the next chapter, re-thinking enduring temporariness through gradual



change also implies reformulating a theoretical understanding of the camp that enables an explanation of change and not only of persistence.

**CHAPTER 3****The camp as a site of contentious governance:  
understanding gradual change through a plural and  
relational approach****Introduction**

In the previous chapter I proposed conceptualising different regimes of persistent temporariness as different instances of gradual change. However, the Agambenian reading of the camp as a space of sovereign exception does not allow for an understanding of incremental forms of change. In order to overcome this limitation, in this chapter I advance a theorisation of the camp that can encompass this new perspective. Drawing on the critique of the Agambenian notion of sovereignty, which fails to account for the plurality of interrelations among “multiple partially sovereign actors” (Ramadan, 2013, p.69), I will suggest an alternative theoretical understanding of the camp based on the concepts of ‘governance’ and ‘political contention’, borrowed from political geography and sociology. These two notions can indeed allow a non-hierarchical understanding of the relations between a plurality of governing actors. By conceiving of the camp as a site of ‘contentious governance’, change can be considered as generated within the very governing process instead of being regarded as something external to a presumedly unitary and monolithic sovereign actor.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the Agambenian notion of sovereignty and its limitations, after which I introduce the new theorisation of the camp as a space of ‘contentious governance’. By acknowledging the plurality of actors behind what is simplistically termed ‘sovereignty’, this perspective allows for an understanding of forms of gradual change. The second part of the chapter surveys the multiplicity of actors, both governmental and non-governmental, who participate in different ways in the design, implementation and contestation of the Italian Roma camps. Finally, I

conclude by discussing the main sources and research methods employed, i.e. in-depth interviews, participant observation and analysis of policy and legal documents.

### **Beyond a monolithic view of sovereignty and statehood**

As introduced in Chapter 1, debates on the camp mainly developed out of Agamben's work (1998, 2005), which since the early 2000s has been increasingly used by scholars in international relations and geography to read the growing phenomenon of humanitarian and other institutional camps (see, for instance, Edkins, 2000; Ek, 2006; Gregory, 2006; Minca, 2005). Agamben's investigation concerns the relationship between the sovereign and bio-power, which are not distinct but deeply connected. Agamben disagrees with a Foucauldian reading of power that sees the growth of techniques for the governing of life and population (i.e. bio-politics) as diverging from the operation of juridico-institutional models of power (i.e. sovereignty). In contrast to the separation between sovereign and bio-power, Agamben argues that these two modes of power actually intersect and have always been linked, since, as he claims, "*the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power*" (Agamben, 1998, p.6). Drawing on a Schmittian reading of sovereignty, Agamben conceives of the sovereign as marking the limits of the juridical order by being legitimised to decide and to enforce the division between what is the law and what is the exception. The exception is not a special type of law, but consists of the suspension of the legal order and hence defines law's limit (Agamben, 2005). Thus, it is not the decision of what is the law, but the decision of what is not under the law – i.e. the exception – that characterises the logic of sovereignty and that places sovereignty both inside and outside the juridical order (Agamben, 1998), revealing its ambiguous and janus-faced character (Brown, 2010). The camp is the spatialisation of the logic of sovereign power, and hence reflects its ambivalence at being both included and excluded in the legal order.

The Agambenian reading of the sovereign has been discussed, and criticised, by other political theorists. For instance, Wendy Brown (2010) argues that Agamben conceives of sovereignty theologically and in an atemporal way, i.e. as supreme and unaccountable. In this way it offers a unitary and monolithic understanding of the sovereign subject, while, as pointed out by Judith Butler (2004), the process of

suspension of the law is more complex than that. The suspension of the law can indeed be read as elaborated by a plurality of actors – that Butler (2004, p.56) calls “petty sovereigns” – which in different ways contribute to the suspension of the ordinary legal order. Thus, the sovereign could be better understood as an effect emerging from a series of different acts suspending the law, rather than as a monolithic entity that takes unappealable decisions. This would also avoid reducing the agency and resistance of the individuals living in camps, which are no longer subject to an unavoidable and absolute sovereign decision, but are part of a network of a multiplicity of actors contributing to the production of different states of dispossession (Butler, 2004). Agamben's account of the state of exception dismisses the plurality constituting it, for this reason Butler argues that “we need more complex ways of understanding the multivalence and tactics of power” (Butler and Spivak 2007, p.42). She continues:

[I]f the language by which we describe that destitution presumes, time and again, that the key terms are sovereignty and bare life, we deprive ourselves of the lexicon we need to understand the other networks of power to which it belongs, or how power is recast in that place or even saturated in that place. It seems to me that we've actually subscribed to a heuristic that only lets us make the same description time and again, which ends up taking on the perspective of sovereignty and reiterating its terms (*ibid.*, pp.42–43).

Approaches drawing on Agamben have been strongly criticised not only for being too pessimistic about resistance in the camp, as already discussed in Chapter 1, but also for overlooking the complexity of sovereign agencies (see Gregory, 2006; Martin, 2015; Ramadan, 2013). While many agree that the camp is a space where legal order is suspended, there is less agreement on the origins and complexity of the creation of such suspension. As mentioned above, Agamben interprets the exception as produced through a logic of sovereignty, which is however treated as an entity that decides when to suspend the law, and the camp is the spatialisation of this decision. However, studies of real-world camps “cannot be reduced to a formulaic reading of spaces of exception”, which “risk losing sight of the complex sovereignties of [...] camps” (Ramadan, 2013, p.68). In contrast to this view, scholars of the camp should acknowledge how “power and governance are exercised in the camps by a plethora of institutions and organizations” and “multiple partially sovereign actors [...] who all contribute to the suspension of the laws” (Ramadan, 2013, p.69), including international humanitarian

organisations, political movements and militant groups. In different camps, the law is suspended in different ways, and for different times, because every camp is characterised by a different assemblage of various actors that influence their constitution (Ramadan, 2013). Thus, the ways in which camps transform cannot be reduced as exclusively dictated by the state, because they also entail social and economic mechanisms that go beyond previously constituted juridical boundaries, including “the context, circumstances and the people acting on, inhabiting or surrounding it” (Martin, 2015, p.14).

In order to understand the gradual change of the Roma camps, it is necessary to consider the complexity of all the different actors and agencies participating in their formation. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, incremental forms of change have often been overlooked in favour of what was regarded as ‘real change’, i.e. abrupt discontinuities generated from radical shifts and crises generating outside the changing institution. The reduction of change to radical transformations reflects an understanding of policies and institutions as internally homogenous and therefore naturally enduring, that only exogenous shocks can cause to change. Institutions have been indeed often defined by institutional scholars<sup>25</sup> as “*relatively enduring* features of political and social life (rule, norms, procedures) that structure behavior and that cannot be changed easily or instantaneously” (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010, p.4), showing how persistence is already built in this very definition. Similarly, the notion of permanent temporariness is often taken as a pre-given feature of camps, as illustrated in Chapter 1. This conceptualisation almost inevitably led to the separation of the internal homogeneity of an institution from external factors leading to change. The tendency to overlook the dynamism beneath an apparently stable surface is therefore due to a lack of conceptualisation of political conflict within institutions and a disproportionate attention

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<sup>25</sup> As pointed out by Hall and Taylor (2001), institutionalism is not a unified body of thought, as it divides into streams that give attention to different aspects, such as historical continuity, rational choice, culture and, more recently, discourses (see Hall and Soskice, 2001; Schmidt, 2008). However, they all share the aim to “elucidate the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes” (Hall and Taylor, 2001, p.936) by, for example, influencing the distribution of power among interest groups, or by affecting the preferences and also identity and self-perception of individuals. The definition of institutions slightly differs according to the different approaches, for instance what is today called old institutionalism (see Bell, 2002) mainly focused on legal and formal institutions, while new institutionalism expands the definition to a “process or set of processes which shape behaviour” (Bell, 2002, p.1). Among the different streams of institutionalism, historical institutionalism became the leading approach in the analysis of public policies, mainly of their stability and national variations (Peters et al., 2005).

towards change originated outside them (Peters et al., 2005). In contrast, students of incremental change maintain that:

[T]here is nothing automatic, self-perpetuating, or self-reinforcing about institutional arrangements. Rather, a dynamic component is built in; [...] institutions represent compromises or relatively durable though still contested settlements based on specific coalitional dynamics, they are always vulnerable to shifts. On this view, change and stability are in fact inextricably linked (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010, p.8).

Through this perspective, persistence is no longer a definitional aspect of institutions, but becomes a variable depending on the power relations between a multiplicity of actors internal to the institutions, without reducing change to exogenously generated. Therefore, to grasp the ways in which the camp becomes enduring, one needs to account for the relations between the different actors contributing to its governance.

### **The camp as a site of contentious governance**

Since an Agambenian reading of the camp as a space of exception does not prove useful enough to fully grasp the complex dynamics between governing actors, there is a need for alternative theorisations of the camp. In the literature on the Italian Roma camps there have only been a few attempts to consider the multiplicity of actors perpetuating Roma segregation. For example, both Sigona (2005) and Daniele (2011) have focused on the way NGOs reinforce the disempowerment of the Roma living in camps. Clough Marinaro and Daniele (2014) analysed the co-optation of Roma representatives through the institutionalisation of Roma political participation, and how this secured compliance with controversial Roma housing policy and weakened opposition. Finally, Armillei (2015, forthcoming) has explored the governance of the Roma camps, considering institutions, civil society organisations and camp-dwellers as crucial actors in the persistence of the camps. However, although these works constitute an advancement towards a relational understanding of institutional politics and forms of resistance, they remain relatively heterogeneous and do not draw on similar literatures, therefore resulting in a fragmented overview of the issue. In order to develop an alternative theoretical framework that can connect these works and allow a reading of the camp as a space of interaction between a plurality of governing actors, I suggest

looking at the ways in which monolithic views of sovereignty and statehood have been challenged in political geography and sociology.

I contend that the view of sovereignty proposed by Agamben is rooted in the division between ‘state’ and ‘society’ characterising Western political theory. The concepts of state and society have assumed different meanings over time, but the organisational definition of the state (seen as a set of institutions) finally prevailed, with the result that the state was treated increasingly as an object totally separated from the population, at times even regarded as a person (Painter, 2011). To conceive of the state through an organisational definition implies strengthening the difference between a politicised realm and a non-political one (the latter referring to the civil society and the private life), and the objectification of the state as a pre-defined entity with specific boundaries (both territorial and functional) and characteristics. This latter point corresponds to the criticism of the Agambenian approach to the exception, namely, that there is no such sovereign subject who decides over the exception, and the sovereign and the state could be better conceived of as an effect (see Butler, 2004; Painter, 2006) and as having a “heterogeneous, constructed, porous, uneven, processual and relational character” (Painter, 2006, p.754). However, paraphrasing Foucault, Colebatch (2014, p.310) argues that still today in social analysis:

[W]e have still not cut off the king's head: we have been accustomed to the use of a way of talking about governing which presents it as the work of a superior sentient being called ‘the government’.

Conceiving of social phenomena, like the state, as static objects hampers the development of relational accounts (Emirbayer, 1997) and, albeit there is no explicit rejection of a relational understanding of state and sovereignty, the social sciences have been marked by research practices that reinforce a dichotomous separation between institutional and non-institutional dynamics.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the opposition between the state, on the one hand, and society, on the other, even reified as different disciplines studying these concepts separately. This division originated between the 1960s and 1980s, when political scientists started drawing on a Weberian understanding of the state (see Skocpol, 1985), while scholars interested in social movements were informed by a neo-Marxist approach (see Tilly, 1978). Scholars of public policy mainly looked at formal

institutions and considered social movements as purely disruptive, rather than participants in the policy-making process. On the other hand, social movements scholarship buttressed this division by focusing on protests and so-called unconventional political participation, looking at policies as a mere by-product of movements' protests (Meyer et al., 2005). However, in both these disciplinary fields there have been efforts to overcome this separation and to develop a more relational approach to the state and the policy-making process.

Lascoumes and Le Galès (2012) endeavoured to reconcile a political approach to the study of public policy, mainly focused on the role of the state and elites, with a sociological one, which looked at the implementation of policies. By employing the 'governance paradigm' (see also Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007) they understand the relations between the different actors partaking in the policy-making process as less hierarchised. Through this perspective, they conceive of the policy-making process as constituted by a multiplicity of actors, not in strict hierarchical relationships, but all involved to different extents in the implementation of a policy, breaking away from the tendency to see the state as a unique, homogenous and rational actor which acts rationally (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2012). The debate around the concept of governance has re-gained currency during the past two decades, becoming a buzzword that broadly – and often unclearly (see Colebatch, 2014) – refers to the process of governing in general or to a series of different situations in which there is an increased salience of private actors in public policies (Painter, 2000). However, governance also constitutes an analytical tool which does not point at a new occurrence, but mainly underscores the important relationship between state and non-state organisations, including market actors and civil society organisations, interactively involved in the policy-making process (Painter, 2000; Peters, 2014; Stoker, 1998). The camp can therefore be approached as a site of governance, including both governmental actors as well as non-governmental ones. In this way actors who have been historically constructed as external to the policy process, such as social movements (see Meyer et al., 2005), are considered as fully participating in the formation of policies. While these actors obviously contribute in different ways to the policy-making process, they nonetheless affect the final implementation of planned policy, not only by opposition but also through contestation, compliance and negotiation.



In addition to this, the camp can be understood as a site of contention. Contentious politics can be broadly defined as a type of “collective political struggle” (McAdam et al., 2001, p.5) to which a series of actors (at least one of which is the government) make claims that would affect the interest of the other parties. The analysis of the dynamics of contention combines previous theories developed in social movements studies, namely, resources mobilisation (Mayer and McCarthy, 1977; Tilly, 1978), political opportunity structures (Tarrow, 1998) and framing processes (Snow et al., 1986). The first approach considers the variety of resources (not only material, but also socio-organisational ones which include networks among people and groups) and the ways in which they are mobilised. The second considers the ways in which the political context can either facilitate or repress certain political mobilisations. Finally, the third looks at how political issues are framed in order to achieve the mobilisation's goals or to foster solidarities with other movements. The theory on dynamics of contention advanced by McAdam et al. (2001) injects some dynamism into the analysis of resources, opportunities and framings, by understanding them relationally. There are no pre-existing resources as such, but they are constructed by actors and embedded in political contexts. Likewise, opportunities and threats are the outcomes of specific framing strategies, which never depend only on the intentions of the movement, but are deeply influenced by the framing presented by other actors – like the media – as well as by cultural settings. In addition to this, the notion of contentious politics has shifted the focus from social movements as objects of research to contention as a type of political relation. This has enabled the use of analytical tools previously only used for the studies of social movements to be applied to a wider variety of actors, including political parties, interest groups and revolutionary movements, thereby allowing analysts to overcome the different vocabularies that separate these literatures.

To approach the camp as a site of contentious governance enables us to map all the actors who participate in the formation of this space in a non-hierarchical fashion and also to acknowledge how all the frames these actors develop, the opportunities they take, and the resources they mobilise, emerge relationally. Explaining the evolution of the Roma camps leads therefore to consideration of the actors involved in its governance, and also to understanding of how their actions and discourses do not happen in a void, but are crucially influenced by the characteristics of the institutional

arrangement and political context in which they take place (see Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007; Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). The persistence of the Roma camp is not the unavoidable effect of their nature as camps, but is determined by the ways in which its supporters and opponents frame their claims, mobilise resources to stabilise or challenging the situation, and create or close opportunity windows to voice demands.

In the next sections I illustrate the main actors participating in the governance of the Roma camps in Rome. After outlining the methods I used to investigate their power relations, in the second part of the thesis I analyse the empirical data and findings of the research and discuss the factors that contributed to the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps.

### **Roma camps' governing actors I: national and local government**

The municipality of Rome<sup>26</sup> is one of the main actors in the management of the Roma camps, through the actions of the local assessors and councillors (Table 3.1; Figure 3.1). As illustrated in Chapter 1, the Roma camps were never formalised but instead arrived at through a series of local resolutions, ordinances and ad hoc policy documents, that often provided different guidelines. The only period when the national government openly participated in the management of the Roma camps and informal settlements was from 2008 to 2013 with the Nomad Emergency Decree (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2008). In this case the alleged emergency situation was managed by the Ministry of Interior that charged the police prefects and nominated special commissioners, with solving the critical situation in the regions where the Nomad Emergency was declared (initially the Campania, Lazio and Lombardy regions, followed by Piedmont, Veneto and Tuscany).

During the Nomad Emergency the local actors involved in the management of the Roma were granted extra powers, and new governing bodies were created (see Stasolla, 2012) (Figure 3.1). For example, the director of the Department of Social

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<sup>26</sup> As a result of the 2001 Italian federalist reform, since 2010 the district of Rome obtained the status of 'Rome Capital', a special local government that is granted greater administrative and financial autonomy mainly in the field of cultural property, tourism and civil protection. In 2014, the province of Rome became the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital. These changes did not, however, affect the way the Roma camps are governed.

Policies, Subsidiarity and Health became the implementing project manager of the Nomad Plan adopted during the Nomad Emergency. Moreover, from 2010 responsibility for the socio-educational activities carried out in the official camps and informal settlements was given to the Italian Red Cross (which, as of 2013, was still the manager of the Roma camp La Barbuta).

The public institutions involved in the management of the Roma camps in ordinary times mainly report to the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health (see Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a). This Department is the key actor in the management of the Roma population, mainly through the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office, until 2014 called Nomads Office,<sup>27</sup> which is charged with the management of official camps and informal settlements. This shows how the presence of poor Roma is managed by ad hoc institutions that approach them as an ethnic group (seen as nomadic) and not by governmental agencies that deal with their various needs, for instance, their housing exclusion. For example, the Department of Housing Policies is not involved in the management of the official camps, nor of the needs of Roma living in informal settlements<sup>28</sup>. As two members of the Department of Housing Policies explained to me during two brief conversations, their department is not responsible for the Roma living in official camps or informal settlements because the official camps are, as already mentioned, regulated by ad hoc documents.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, as the Roma live in self-built shacks in the informal settlements, these do not qualify as permanent structures and therefore do not fall into the remit of this department.<sup>30</sup>

The Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office collaborates with the Street Unit of the so-called Social Operational Room (Sala Operativa Sociale, SOS) which deals with situations of extreme marginality by providing rapid interventions, and also with the unit coordinating the shelters for single mothers with minors (that often host Roma women and children following the clearance of informal settlements).

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27 Despite changing name, the web-page of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office still employs the terms 'nomadic population' and 'nomad camps'.

28 Although the Department of Housing Policies is not among the actors involved in the management of the Roma population, Daniele Ozzimo, former council member and president of the Commission for Housing Policies, was convicted of corruption within the enquiry *Mafia Capitale* in 2015.

29 Unrecorded telephone conversation held on 3 November 2013.

30 Insights from unrecorded interview held in Rome on 31 October 2013.

Table 3.1 – List of institutional governing bodies (in alphabetical order)

Name	Description
<b>Department of Educational and Schooling Services</b>	The Department of Educational and Schooling Services of the municipality of Rome is in charge of the school integration of Roma children (through transport services and schooling projects implemented by sub-contracted organisations). It collaborates with the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health.
<b>Department of Housing Policies</b>	The Department of Housing Policies of the municipality of Rome manages social housing policies, and deals with people who experience evictions or severe housing deprivation, and also with the urban squatting movements. It is, however, not involved in the management of the official camps, nor of the needs of Roma living in informal settlements.
<b>Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health</b>	This Department is the key actor in the management of the Roma population, mainly through the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office. It deals with social services in the municipality of Rome, including the management of refugees and asylum seekers, and of situations of extreme marginality through the Social Operational Room.
<b>European Commission</b>	The EC adopted in 2011 a EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, requiring all the member states to adopt a programme for the inclusion of the Roma communities.
<b>Italian Red Cross</b>	The Italian Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross. It is also a private association from 2012 which, however, collaborates with the Italian state for humanitarian interventions (it is under the high patronage of the President of the Italian Republic).
<b>Municipality of Rome</b>	As a result of the 2001 Italian federalist reform, since 2010 the district of Rome obtained the status of 'Rome Capital', with greater administrative and financial autonomy mainly in the field of cultural property, tourism and civil protection. It is divided into 15 boroughs.
<b>Police Unit of Public Security and Emergency</b>	The Unit of Public Security and Emergency ( <i>Unità Operativa Sicurezza Pubblica ed Emergenziale</i> , SPE) is charged with the monitoring and control of both the official Roma camps and informal settlements, and with conducting evictions.
<b>Resources for Rome</b>	Resources for Rome ( <i>Risorse per Roma</i> ) is a joint-stock company in the field of property and management almost totally controlled by the municipality of Rome and which is entrusted with the security and maintenance services in the official camps.

<b>Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office</b>	Created in 1996 and until 2014 called Nomads Office, the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office is charged with the management of the official camps and informal settlements.
<b>Sanitary camper van</b>	The so-called ‘sanitary camper [van]’ ( <i>camper sanitario</i> ) is managed by the local Public Health Local Services ( <i>Azienda Sanitaria Locale</i> , ASL) and subcontracting associations. It allows doctors and nurses to offer health assistance to the camp-residents.
<b>Street Unit of the Social Operational Room</b>	The Social Operational Room ( <i>Sala Operativa Sociale</i> , SOS) is a team of the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health of the municipality of Rome founded in 2002. Its activities include the organisation and delivery of social interventions aimed at the support and monitoring of people experiencing situations of extreme marginality (like homeless people, single mothers with children and unaccompanied minors). The Street Unit deals with situations of extreme marginality providing rapid interventions.
<b>UNAR</b>	The UNAR ( <i>Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali</i> , National Office Against Racial Discrimination) adopted in 2012 the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities, in accordance with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies launched by the European Commission in 2011.

The Department of Social Policies also works in collaboration with the Educational and Schooling Services on the school integration of Roma children (through transport services and schooling projects implemented by sub-contracted organisations) (see Armillei, forthcoming). Although only two of the official camps (i.e. Camping River and Salone) are equipped with a health unit on site (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a), as observed by Alunni (2015), the Public Health Local Service of the boroughs of Rome is also involved in sanitation through a so-called ‘sanitary camper [van]’ (*camper sanitario*)<sup>31</sup>. Additionally, doctors and nurses employed by subcontractors offer health assistance to the camp-residents.

<sup>31</sup> The so-called ‘sanitary camper [van]’ is a recreational vehicle equipped for medical examinations and visits both informal and official camps during the week to offer health assistance to Roma camp-dwellers.

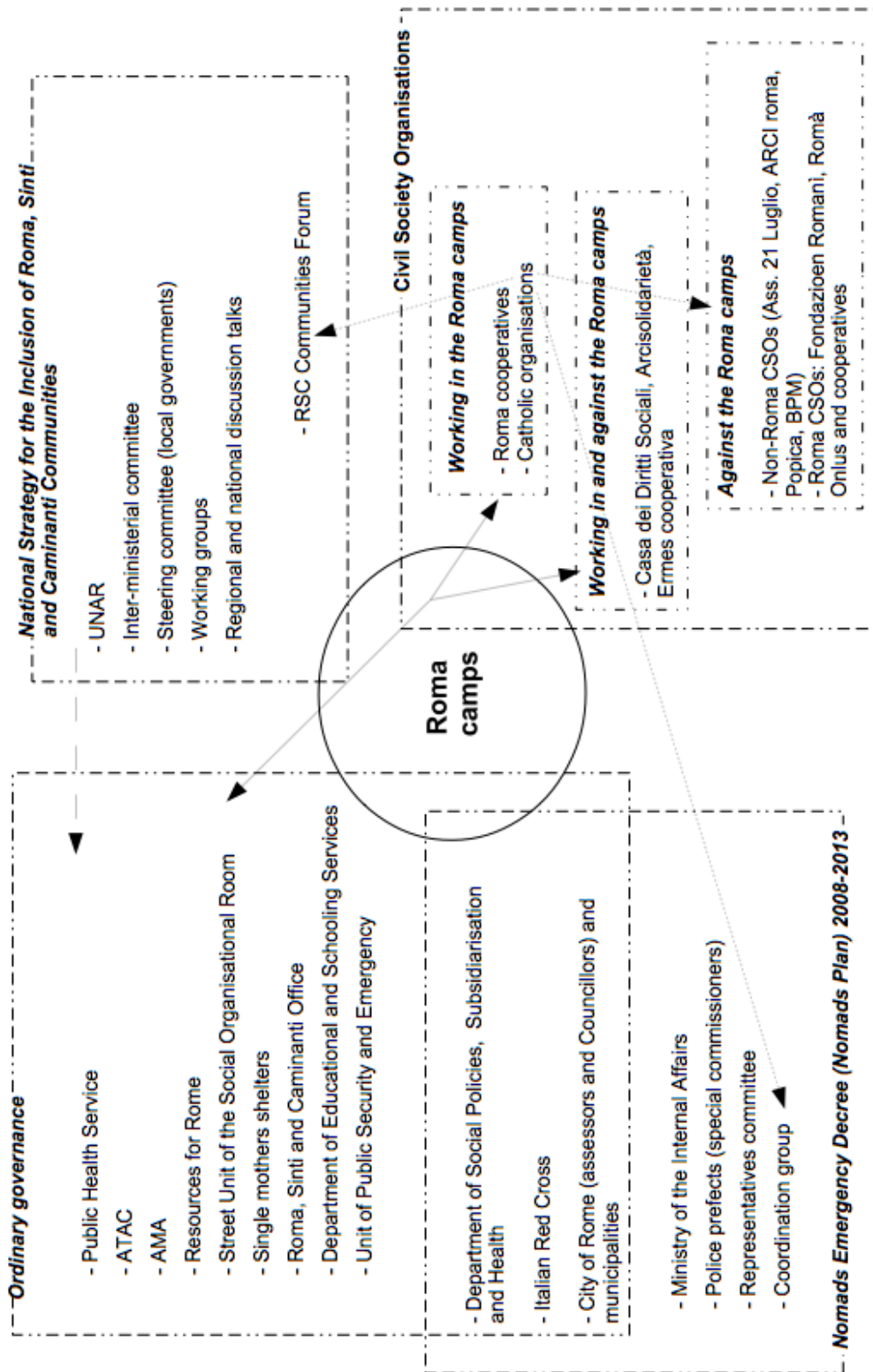


Figure 3.1 – A graph illustrating the actors involved in the governance of the Roma

The local police also play a crucial role in the management of the Roma population in Rome, mainly through the police Unit of Public Security and Emergency (*Unità Operativa Sicurezza Pubblica ed Emergenziale*, SPE), which until 2011 was called Coordination of Interventions and Operations on Nomads (*Coordinamento Intervento Operativo Nomadi*, CION). This unit is charged with the monitoring and control of both the official Roma camps and informal settlements, and with conducting evictions. There are other actors that participate in the practical management of the Roma official and informal settlements, for example Resources for Rome (*Risorse per Roma*) is a joint-stock company in the field of property and management. It is almost totally controlled by the municipality of Rome and entrusted with the security and maintenance services in the official camps.

Since the adoption of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by the European Commission in 2011, the UNAR (*Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali*, National Office Against Racial Discrimination) became another important actor in the question of the Roma housing. The UNAR is linked to the Prime Minister's office and in 2012 promoted a National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities (UNAR, 2012). This sets out goals for dismantling the Roma camps because they are considered as constituting a form of racial discrimination and segregation. The UNAR established a series of governing bodies to work towards this goal (see Figure 3.1), including a steering committee made up of local governments (i.e. regions, provinces and municipalities), a Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (RSC) Communities Forum with Roma associations, working groups, and both national and regional discussion talks to foster dialogue between different stakeholders, including national and local institutions and prefectures. However, this system is being implemented slowly, with regional talks only starting in the Lazio region in February 2015. For this reason, the UNAR still plays a relatively marginal role compared to the other local institutional actors involved in the management of the Roma camps.

### **Roma camps' governing actors II: pro-Roma associations**

Pro-Roma and third sector organisations have played a crucial role in the governance of Roma camps since the early 1990s (see Sigona, 2011) (Table 3.2; Figure

3.1). They are still deeply involved in the management of the Roma camps (see Daniele, 2011), from security and maintenance, to social services. However, not all pro-Roma organisations work as subcontractors for the municipality of Rome, and many have different attitudes towards the Roma camps. The UNAR (2012, p.48) divides civil society organisations involved in Roma policy-making into three main types: the Roma associations, i.e. “primarily or exclusively composed” of Roma people<sup>32</sup>; third sector organisations operating in the Roma social inclusion process (including the Roma camps); and human rights NGOs. To this list, I suggest adding the social movements that are increasingly involved in the mobilisations against the Roma camps – as I will discuss more in depth in Chapter 7. These pro-Roma organisations have different opinions about the Roma camps and Roma inclusion and divide into two broad factions: those that do not work as subcontractors and are openly against the Roma camps, and subcontracting associations that are either only mildly or not at all critical of the Roma camps. In order to distinguish between them more easily I will refer to the former group as ‘pro-Roma advocacy groups/associations’ and to the latter as ‘subcontracting NGOs/associations’.

### ***Pro-Roma advocacy groups against the camps***

The group of associations who are strongly against the Roma camps refuse to work as subcontractors in the camps and actively lobby local government to change their housing policies. This group comprises both Roma and non-Roma organisations such as, among others, the Associazione 21 Luglio, ARCI Roma, Popica, Federazione Romani, and the social movements BPM (Blocchi Precari Metropolitani, i.e. Metropolitan Precarious Blocks) and RAM (Resistenza Abitativa Metropolitana, Metropolitan Housing Resistance). These groups are supported by advocacy research groups like Lunaria, Berenice and OsservAZione (that edited a report about the Roma camps in Italy, see Berenice et al., 2013). In their opinion, the Roma camps symbolise utter racial discrimination and segregation and the most important cause of the persisting marginalisation of the Roma.

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32 Similarly, the Open Society Foundation defines a Roma NGO as “an organization in which at least 50% of the membership (in the case of associations), governance body and senior management openly declare their Roma ethnic origin” (definition given in the Application Guidelines 2014 for the initiative “Empowering Roma Voters” promoted by the Roma Initiative Office of the Open Society Foundations).



Table 3.2 – List of non-institutional governing bodies (in alphabetical order)

Name	Role	Activities
<b>ARCI Roma</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	<i>ARCI Roma</i> is part of a national association (ARCI) that conducts social activities for migrants (mainly Italian language courses). Together with <i>Associazione 21 Luglio</i> , it presented a petition advocating more long-term housing alternatives for the Roma currently living in camps.
<b>Arciconfraternita del SS. Sacramento e San Trifone</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Arciconfraternita del SS. Sacramento e San Trifone</i> is a Catholic association that, through a series of social cooperatives (such as <i>Casa della Solidarietà</i> ), is involved in the management of Roma centres and camps.
<b>Arcisolidarietà</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Arcisolidarietà</i> is a social cooperative that works as a subcontractor manager in some Roma camps, and provides school support in others.
<b>Associazione 21 Luglio</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	The <i>Associazione 21 Luglio</i> is a pro-Roma NGO. It was founded in 2010 and focuses mainly on Roma children's rights. It also conducts advocacy research and publishes reports on the conditions of the Roma camps. Today it is the leading association in the campaign for the closure of the Roma camps.
<b>Berenice</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	<i>Berenice</i> is a social cooperative that mainly conducts advocacy research on migration and marginalisation. Together with Lunaria and OsservAzione they published a report (called <i>Segregare Costa</i> , i.e. The Costs of Segregation) on the public money spent on the Roma camps.
<b>BPM</b>	Social movement	The <i>BPM</i> is a squatting urban movement in the city of Rome. It set up a squat, called Metropolitiz, where Roma live (see Chapter 7).
<b>Caritas</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association (Catholic)	<i>Caritas</i> is a Catholic association (a branch of the Italian Bishops Conference), charged with the social support of marginalised people, including the Roma.
<b>Casa dei Diritti Sociali</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Casa dei Diritti Sociali</i> is a social cooperative that works as subcontractor in some Roma camps, mainly providing school support.
<b>Casa della Solidarietà</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Casa della Solidarietà</i> is a social cooperative that work as subcontractor manager in some Roma camps. In 2013 it was the best-paid subcontractor in Roma camps, receiving more than four million Euros (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a). It is linked to the Arciconfraternita del SS. Sacramento e San Trifone.
<b>Eriches29</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Eriches29</i> is a social cooperative that works as a subcontractor manager in some Roma camps. This cooperative is part of the larger cooperative association <i>29 Giugno</i> , whose president is Salvatore Buzzi, considered the main leader of the corrupt network revealed by the police enquiry

		Mafia Capitale in 2014.
<b>Ermes Cooperativa</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Ermes</i> is a social cooperative that works as a subcontractor in some Roma camps, mainly providing school support.
<b>Eureka 1</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Eureka 1</i> is a social cooperative that works as a subcontractor in some Roma camps, mainly providing school support.
<b>Federazione Romani</b>	Roma organisation	<i>Federazione Romani</i> is a national federation of Roma organisations. It promotes projects of empowerment for Roma youth and campaigns against anti-Roma racism.
<b>Lunaria</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	<i>Lunaria</i> is a social cooperative that mainly conducts advocacy research on migration. Together with Berenice and OsservAzione they published a report (called <i>Segregare Costa</i> , i.e. The Costs of Segregation) on the public money spent on the Roma camps.
<b>Opera Nomadi</b>	Subcontracting NGO	<i>Opera Nomadi</i> is the oldest national pro-Roma association. It was founded in 1963 by a priest in order to support the schooling of the Roma children, and played a crucial role in the adoption of regional laws establishing the creation of halting sites for nomadic Roma. Today it works as a subcontractor in some Roma camps, providing schooling services.
<b>OsservAzione</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	<i>OsservAzione</i> is an NGO that conducts advocacy research on the Roma. Together with Berenice and Lunaria they published a report (called <i>Segregare Costa</i> , i.e. The Costs of Segregation) on the public money spent on the Roma camps.
<b>Popica</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association	<i>Popica</i> is an association that mainly works with Roma children, in both Italy and Romania. In Italy it specialises in activities with Roma living in informal settlements.
<b>RAM</b>	Social movement	The <i>RAM</i> is a squatting urban movement in the city of Rome. It set up a squat, called Lancio, where Roma live (see Chapter 7).
<b>Romà Onlus</b>	Roma organisation	<i>Romà Onlus</i> is a Roma association, which develops projects aiming at the empowerment of Roma children and youth, and at the eradication of anti-Roma racism.
<b>Sant'Egidio</b>	Pro-Roma advocacy association (Catholic)	<i>Sant'Egidio</i> is a Catholic association that promotes social activities for the most marginalised.

During the interviews, members of these groups repeatedly likened the camps to institutions, like mental asylums or prisons, where the in-mates become accustomed to their confinement. Others equated the camps with Second World War Jewish ghettos, or slums. Although all these associations agree that the Roma camps should be closed, their solutions differ and also operate in different ways. Some of them explicitly call for rehousing in council housing estates, while others also promote activities such as slums upgrading, self-construction or squatting.

Among the non-Roma organisations, the *Associazione 21 Luglio*, which has become the most influential association in the front against the Roma camps, often works with Amnesty International and mainly acts through legal actions, lobbying (for instance, through petitions), and advocacy research. Other associations, such as Popica, and are closer to social movements. As I will illustrate in Chapter 7, for example, Popica and the BPM movement occupied an area called Metropoliz, where evicted Roma live together with other migrants and Italians. These associations also offer training courses to Roma on their rights and on how to increase political participation.

The Roma associations who criticise Roma camps remain, however, separate from the non-Roma organisations mentioned above. The *Fondazione Romani* is a national organisation that includes local associations, like *Romà Onlus* in Rome. Their activities include social awareness advertising and support for research and public debates around the issue of Roma discrimination, cultural events, and youth empowerment through training courses. Although they are against the Roma camps as form of ethnic discrimination, these associations are sceptical about the role played by non-Roma associations in the campaign against the Roma camps as they maintain that the Roma should speak for themselves.

### ***Pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs***

The second set of associations consists of two main sub-groups: the associations that manage services for the Roma camps as subcontractors of the municipality of Rome and are mildly critical of Roma housing policy, and other subcontractors who do not take sides, yet often sustain this policy. However, because these associations present themselves as pro-Roma at the same time as actively contributing to the persistence of

the Roma camps, they are often criticised by pro-Roma advocacy associations because of their position as both pro-Roma and pro-camps.

The group of subcontracting NGOs includes, for example, *Casa dei Diritti Sociali*, *Arcisolidarietà*, *Ermes Cooperativa* which are mainly entrusted with the management of the camps and the schooling services. A report on the economic evaluation of the official camps of the city of Rome released in 2014 by *Associazione 21 Luglio* revealed that *Arcisolidarietà* and *Ermes Cooperativa* were two of the best-paid subcontractors (*Associazione 21 Luglio*, 2014a). These associations are harshly criticised by pro-Roma advocacy groups for economically benefiting from the Roma camps while at the same time criticising them. Indeed, during the interviews, members of these associations agreed that the camps are problematic and need a solution, yet closing them would be hard and unrealistic in the short term. This argument was made by the president of *Ermes Cooperativa* in response to the petition to end Roma camps circulated by *Associazione 21 Luglio* together with *ARCI Roma*, among others. Moreover, as I will discuss Chapter 5, among these associations there is no clear agreement on why the camps are negative. While associations like *Associazione 21 Luglio*, *Popica* and *ARCI Roma* clearly state that the idea of a Roma camp is a sheer form of racial discrimination, both in its conception and implementation, these associations are not as critical of the actual camps on the ground. In fact, as pointed out by Armillei (forthcoming), these associations develop a series of different arguments to reconcile their contradictory position.

Finally, there is a whole group of non-profit associations working for the municipality of Rome as subcontractors in the Roma camps and not explicitly siding with or against the camps. These include, among others, the *Opera Nomadi*, *Casa della Solidarietà*, *Eureka 1*, *Eriches 29*. The report by *Associazione 21 Luglio* (2014a) revealed that *Casa della Solidarietà* and *Eriches29* were the most highly-paid associations in 2013. Like the associations listed above, they work as subcontractors in the Roma camps, providing management, maintenance, and schooling services, and for this reason they are strongly condemned by pro-Roma advocacy associations. The credibility of these associations was deeply undermined in 2014 when the police enquiry *Mafia Capitale* revealed the corrupt network behind the management of the Roma camps, in which one of the central figures was Salvatori Buzzi, the president of

*Eriches*<sup>29</sup>. During the Alemanno administration (2008-2013) there were also Roma cooperatives, founded by camps residents, involved in the management of the camps, mainly with regard to waste disposal services, but an *Associazione 21 Luglio* report provided evidence that they were instrumentally used by the municipality of Rome to smooth the management and control of the Roma camps (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2012).

In a similar position are the Catholic organisations, like *Arciconfraternita del SS. Sacramento e San Trifone*, that were also involved in the Nomad Plan during the Nomad emergency in 2008 and are not openly critical of the Roma camps. There are, however, two Catholic associations that are different, i.e. *Caritas* and *Sant'Egidio*. They were initially involved in the Nomad Plan but left because they did not agree with the overall approach adopted by the local administration. Although sceptical of the Roma camps, these two organisations do not explicitly support the claims of pro-Roma advocacy.

### **Reflections on fieldwork: methods, data collection, positionality and access**

This research was initially designed as a comparison of only two cases, the Italian Roma camps and the French Roma integration villages. The comparative method that I have described at the beginning of Chapter 2, which includes also a third case (that of the French Algerian transit estates) was not planned at the beginning of the PhD but emerged during fieldwork in France in early 2014. After conducting research in Rome from September to December 2013, in January 2014 I moved to Paris to carry out fieldwork on the French integration villages. While I was reviewing the literature on the integration villages, I started reading the work of the French geographer Olivier Legros. In one of his articles (Legros, 2011), titled *Les « villages roms » ou la réinvention des cités de transit* (The Roma villages or the re-invention of transit estates), he argues that, similar to the transit estates, the integration villages constitute a type of slum-removal programme which concentrate a specific ethnic group in mono-ethnic and highly surveilled housing projects. Moreover, like the transit estates, they also involve social workers who aim for the economic integration of village residents and to teach them dominant social norms. Both integration villages and transit estates are, in Legros' opinion, disciplinary tools for specific undesirable populations and aim at their

assimilation and surveillance. His work prompted other comparative investigations of the integration villages and transit estates, such as Roche's work (2013), which illustrates the common points of these two housing projects: their temporariness, their location in industrial urban fringes, the geographical concentration of a population, and the mixing of housing, social work and economic integration.

Reading these articles made me understand two aspects that then proved crucial in the re-definition of the research design. Firstly, that what I wanted to understand in my thesis, i.e. the reasons for the persistence of the Roma camps, went actually beyond the Roma camps and was shared also by other types of camps for other ethnic minorities. Secondly, while I criticised the exceptionalism of the Roma often reproduced in Romani studies, by only looking at cases of Roma camps I was implicitly supporting this very limiting view. Including the third case of the Algerian transit estates has therefore enabled me to:

- Understand the dynamics at play in the emergence of different regimes of persistent temporariness beyond the Roma camps and, hence, to expand the extent of generalisations from my thesis findings;
- Challenge in a more effective way the exceptionalism characterising Romani studies – which I have criticised elsewhere (see Maestri, 2016b) – that was still shaping my original research design, only comparing two different forms of enduring Roma camps.

These were the reasons that led me to develop a form of “asymmetrical comparison”, which not only led me to have an additional case that could back up my argument about the Italian Roma camps through the analysis of the French case, but which also enabled me to include in the research a case that could appear different from the other two. “Asymmetry”, indeed, points to the lack of equivalence between two things. However, it was the very comparison between asymmetrical cases that has contributed to new insights into the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps.

The change in the comparative research design during the fieldwork period made me clearly understand that the process of research is not linear, but needs constant re-thinking, without the fear of altering it after it started. Inserting a new comparative case during the second year of my PhD necessitated supplementary work for the literature review, more time dedicated to the fieldwork (due to the new interviews and archival

research required) and also to the analysis of collected data. Despite these problems, I decided to add a third case study because I was convinced that the two aforementioned aspects – i.e. potential generalisation, and challenging Roma exceptionalism – were of highest importance and could have crucially contributed to the thesis. Furthermore, this unexpected issue has taught me the political potential of the comparative method, which I underestimated at the beginning of the project.

For the Italian case, the data for analysis were collected mainly through in-depth interviews with a series of different actors involved in the governance of the Roma, as well as participant observation of events related to the Italian Roma camps, and policy documents analysis. I conducted in-depth interviews and informal conversations with members of the pro-Roma organisations illustrated in the previous section, including Roma activists, some of the residents of the Italian Roma camps and also a series of experts on the topic (such as academics, journalists, and former policy-makers). I also interviewed governmental actors, including politicians (i.e. members of the municipal council and assembly, both current and former ones), policy-makers, public officials and police members.<sup>33</sup> The in-depth interviews lasted from a minimum of 20 minutes to a maximum of two hours and a half and were recorded, only when agreed by the interviewee. I conducted a total of 45 in-depth interviews and additionally had 15 informal conversations during visits and participant observations.<sup>34</sup>

The in-depth interview method is particularly suited to developing an in-depth understanding of the interviewee's point of view in an open-ended manner (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Although I had a framework with questions guiding me through the interview, I wanted the meeting to be as spontaneous as possible, and also to leave the interviewee free to pursue topics which were not originally included in my questions list. Open-ended and unstructured interviews result in a slower coding, with more time required before common themes emerge from the interviews (see Patton, 2002), but they proved to be extremely helpful in discussing aspects that I had not anticipated, for instance the importance of policy ambiguity that I will discuss in the next chapter.

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33 See Appendix I for a complete list of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted in Italian and French, and I translated them into English.

34 Among the interviewees there were: 18 members of pro-Roma organisations, 14 official camp and informal settlement residents, 5 experts and 8 governmental actors. The informal conversations comprised: 3 members of pro-Roma organisations, 10 official camp and informal settlement residents and 2 governmental actors.

During the interviews with association members, the questions mainly focused on the association's opinions of the Italian Roma camps, on what the interviewee believed were the reasons for this persistence, on obstacles to change and, finally, if the association was against the Roma camps. With these questions I also aimed to understand the constraints perceived by those that are against the Roma camps and how those that work in the Roma camps justify their position. This enabled me to trace the aspects that, on the one hand, discourage and weaken the mobilisation of actors against the Italian Roma camps and, on the other, that incentivise compliance. Similar interviews were conducted with camp-residents as well as experts on the topic. Since one of the strengths of in-depth interviews is flexibility and the freedom left to the interviewee, each interview differed and each interviewee was able to discuss different topics according to their interest.

Even though the method of in-depth interviews proved a really useful one as it allowed enough space to discuss unanticipated aspects, it worked better with members of advocacy groups rather than with subcontracting associations. Out of the 21 interviews and informal conversation held with members of pro-Roma groups, only 6 were with subcontracting pro-Roma associations. This was because the members of subcontracting associations were more difficult to approach as most of them did not reply to emails. As I will discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 5, researching the views of subcontracting associations proved more challenging than anticipated as most of them refused to be interviewed, and those who accepted to be interviewed avoided discussions on how they reconcile their work in the camps with their official pro-Roma stance. As I knew this was a sensitive topic, I was careful with phrasing my questions in a neutral way, without hinting any pre-assumptions on this matter. Questions such as “How do you think the camps help to improve the lives of the Roma?” or “What are the main problems in the Roma camps and how could they be addressed?” were posed to investigate how these associations position themselves in relation to both their pro-Roma goals and their work in the camp. However, a few times the interviewees openly refused to answer, changing the topic of conversation. While this has obviously posed significant problems to the advancement of the research, it also constituted important information in itself. As I will show in Chapter 4, the ways in which the interviewed members of subcontracting associations avoided detailed discussions about their



involvement in the highly controversial Roma camps, actually implicitly revealed how they cope with the apparent contradiction of being pro-Roma while at the same time working in Roma camps. It has brought to light the discursive strategies that they develop to reconcile these two apparent opposite views, showing how the policy ambiguity of the Roma camps plays an important role in the ways in which subcontracting associations frame their role in the camps.

While the silence and the elusive answers of some interviewees also offered an important insight into the complexity of their position, the considerations on their interviews needed to be supported by additional evidence. For example, Chapter 5 reflects on the ways in which subcontracting associations justify their role in the Roma camps and argues that their work in camps is in contrast with their stated goals of Roma inclusion. This is a result of their incorporation into institutionalised governance through contracting-out, which effected a change in their operational logics. This kind of topic was difficult to broach and thoroughly discuss during the interviews and, therefore, needed to be backed up by other types of data. Firstly, I investigated their relationship with pro-Roma advocacy groups and with campaigns demanding the closure of the Roma camps, through looking at the documents of these campaigns and by attending events and demonstrations organised by both groups of pro-Roma associations. This has shown how subcontractors seldom participate in campaigns sponsored by pro-Roma advocacy groups aiming to dismantle the Roma camps and hence provided evidence that being in favour of the Roma housing inclusion is in contrast with working in the Roma camps, as those demanding the end of this form of segregation do not work in camps and those who work in camps do not endorse this demand. Secondly, through participant observation, I investigated how subcontracting associations limit the access to Roma camps and mediate the interactions between the camp-dwellers and the visitors.

The in-depth interviews with governmental actors mainly focused on the sources of the Italian Roma camps' persistence and on the actions undertaken by the government to tackle the issue of enduring temporariness. However, during the fieldwork I only managed to conduct eight interviews with governmental actors. As pointed out by Mikecz (2012) the question of access is crucial when interviewing elites, and I struggled to contact governmental actors, only succeeding in a small number of cases. The

subjects I finally interviewed were all contacted through informal gatekeepers as the formal ones – like institutional contacts, secretary offices or local council receptions – did not prove useful in gaining access to this part of the field. The most fruitful contact was a friend of a friend who was working for the municipality of Rome. This person provided me with the personal phone numbers of some of the people I was trying to interview, yet many still either refused to be interviewed or simply ignored my request. Following these difficulties, I decided to carry out a more in-depth analysis of the policy and legal documents on the Italian Roma camps in order to identify the main constraints to policy change. These documents included local ordinances, council deliberations, policy guidelines, documents of the local police, regional and national legal texts, and policy reports. The analysis of these documents enabled me to trace the development of the Italian Roma camps, with a specific focus on the objectives of this housing policy and on aspects regarding the participation of pro-Roma associations in the design and implementation of the Roma camps. These aspects provided an understanding of the context that framed the action of associations.

The method of in-depth interviews and documents analysis was mainly employed to understand the constraints to political mobilisation. However, in order to investigate the strategies enacted by pro-Roma advocacy associations to overcome these constraints, I also supported the collection of data with “ethnographic practices”, as defined by Martin (2011, p.43). This method consists in short periods of participant observation concisely focused on specific sites. After having discussed with members of associations and movements the strategies enacted to overcome the Roma camps, I then employed ethnographic practices to investigate that specific strategy as a complimentary method to interviews (see Atkinson and Coffey, 2003). For instance, as I will illustrate in Chapter 7, I visited several squats where Roma families were living thanks to the support of urban social movements. Although ethnography is often supported by visual material enriching the observation, during my fieldwork I decided not to take many pictures of the places I visited (being it Roma camps, centres or squats). Current visual sociology goes beyond the idea of the objectivity of the images produced through the use of photography in research, and conceives of photography as a way of developing collaborative research in order to empower the research subjects or to problematise certain assumptions (Harper, 1998). Although appreciating the critical and heuristic

potential of visual material, I had to acknowledge the fact that during the fieldwork I was not able to change my uneasiness in dealing with my position as a White middle-class researcher, and the uneven power relationships that emerged when researching aspects involving subjects with lower economic capital and belonging to a highly stigmatised ethnic group. Therefore, in order not to risk reproducing a form of “politically reactionary voyeurism” (Harper, 1998, p.36), I decided not to take many photographs of the places I visited and to do so only in public spaces, when they were empty or during public events.

Participant observation was also carried out in some Roma camps and centres, as I will describe more thoroughly in Chapter 5. This method was used in order to have a fuller understanding of the activities carried out and the discourses developed by subcontracting organisations, as well as of the dynamics between their members and the Roma camp-dwellers. However, access to the Roma camps proved to be more challenging than I imagined when I was preparing for the fieldwork in summer 2013. I knew that accessing the Roma camps was likely to require significant time and effort, as they are highly policed and surveilled institutional spaces. However, I thought I could access the Italian Roma camps by contacting one of the most active advocacy groups in Rome. Other researchers working in the same field warned me that being issued an official authorisation for individual visits by the municipality of Rome was virtually impossible. Moreover, advocacy groups were easier to contact than subcontracting associations who, because of their work for the municipality of Rome, tend to keep their work confidential and are less willing to share their views with researchers and journalists. In contrast, advocacy groups are often very welcoming to people that want to research the Roma camps as this increases the visibility of their work. And, as expected, the first pro-Roma associations that I contacted replied to me positively saying that they were more than happy with me going with them in the camps and attending the activities they did with camp-dwellers. After contacting them via email, in summer 2013 I met with the president of this association, who confirmed their availability to help me with my research.

However, when my fieldwork started in September and I wrote to this association to arrange the first meeting and visits, they appeared to have changed their mind. They sent me an email in which they stated that they realised it was not

appropriate for me to attend the activities with camp-dwellers and they offered to take me only once to Roma camps with them. I tried and asked why they changed their views, but at the same time I did not want to undermine the most important contact I had secured to access the Roma camps. As I illustrated in Chapter 1, thanks to their help I managed to visit four Roma camps at the beginning of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, I soon realised that being so reliant on their help would have restricted the amount and type of information I could access. For example, meeting Danica (Chapter 1) offered me a sound and concrete entry point into the research question. At the same time, however, Danica often collaborated with this association, appearing in some of their videos and campaigns to raise awareness about the Roma camps, and therefore was quite chatty and confident when speaking to other people. Furthermore, her point of view was in line with the association's, which is obviously not something negative per se, but limited the range of views I could access in the camp.

In order to address this issue, I tried also to access the Roma camps by directly asking the subcontracting managers of the camps. As I will discuss more in details in Chapter 5, this was problematic and also very arbitrary. Whilst sometimes I was told I needed official authorisation by the municipality, other times I could simply show up and enter the camp. In both instances I experienced a different relation to the camp-dwellers. In moments where access was presented as something that needed official authorisation, the visit to the camp was done in presence of the managers. On the other hand, when I was let in independently, I was offered the support of an employee of the managing association, who kindly escorted me during my whole visit, while also heavily filtering the answers of the residents. Access to the French integration village presented similar difficulties, with decisions being highly arbitrary and context-specific. For example, it was easy to get into the village in Ris-Orangis, where the entrance was not patrolled and the interaction with the residents was spontaneous. Similarly, I was welcome to enter one of the villages in Montreuil. At the same time, I repeatedly tried to contact the managing association of the other village in Montreuil, without receiving any answer, even when other people who were closer to the association offered to write on my behalf. To independently access the village managed by this association was more difficult as it was heavily surveilled and surrounded by a fence.

These issues with access certainly limited the data that I could have collected on

fieldwork. However, as this thesis is on the governance of the Roma camps, having a limited access to Roma camp-dwellers fortunately did not deeply impacted on the research outcomes. Further to this, encountering these difficulties allowed me to understand how these spaces are heavily surveilled and how life there is hugely mediated by the work of a series of associations that monopolise the access and the boundaries of the camp. These are the difficulties that the residents face when they want to invite members of the family, or the friends of their children. Therefore the issues with my access to the camps did not only affect me and my research, they also affect those people who do not live in the camps yet who want to enter these highly surveilled spaces. As a result, this isolates and negatively influences the lives of camp-dwellers. What this difficulty taught me is not to underestimate the power of gatekeepers in accessing the field, and to think in advance about possible alternatives. Finally, although this probably clashes with the way the PhD programme is structured in UK Higher Education Institutions where there is a strict division between the first-year period of literature review and the second-year fieldwork, probably having the chance to conduct shorter periods of fieldwork over a longer span of time would allow to more effectively address the difficulties encountered.

The fieldwork in France mirrored the methods adopted in the Italian case but on a smaller scale, with fewer interviews and documents analysed. I conducted a total of 15 in-depth interviews about the French integration villages and seven on the French transit estates.<sup>35</sup> Since the analysis of the French case rested on the analysis of the Italian case, the interviews about the French integration villages mainly focused on the concepts emerging from the interviews conducted about the Italian Roma camps. The interviews with public officials aimed to understand current government action vis-à-vis the French integration villages. This stage was also supported by the analysis of policy and legal documents including regional policy guidelines, municipal evaluation documents and policy reports. The analysis of the French transit estates mainly relied on the analysis of policy and legal documents and on the review of the existing literature. I also had the opportunity to conduct two interviews with two former Sonacotra employees, and also with academics and experts who wrote on this topic.

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<sup>35</sup> With regard to the inclusion villages, the interviewees were: 11 members of associations, 3 experts and 1 member of an inter-ministerial committee. As for the interviews and informal conversations on the transit estates, they included: 4 experts and 3 former members of institutional bodies.

## **Conclusions**

The theorisation of the camp in Agambenian terms, i.e. as a space of sovereign exception, does not allow an understanding of the different types of gradual change undergone by institutional camps. This is because this view is based on a monolithic idea of sovereignty and statehood, which does not prove useful for grasping the actual plurality of the partially sovereign actors participating in the governance of real-world camps. Indeed, the minor transformations originating from the interrelations between the multiple actors acting within the governing process are dismissed in favour of the internal consistency of a presupposed unitary sovereign actor, therefore reducing change as exogenously generated and hampering the appreciation of gradual forms of change. In contrast, to acknowledge the plural and relational character of what is called the ‘sovereign decision’ allows an understanding of the different trajectories of persistent temporariness analysed in this research. In order to incorporate into the analysis the multiple actors and relations characterising the formation of camps, I suggested an alternative theorisation of the camp as site of ‘contentious governance’. By drawing on theories developed in political sociology and geography, I have shown how the concept of ‘governance’ can help map the plurality of actors involved in the governing of the camps in a non-hierarchical way, while the notion of ‘political contention’ can contribute to the analysis of the relational production of the framings, resources and opportunities mobilised by the governing actors.

In the next part of the thesis, drawing on the data collected during the fieldwork, I will discuss the concept of policy ambiguity, which emerged as an important aspect of the Roma camps and that, as I will show in Chapter 5, contributed to strengthen the position of the actors supporting the Roma camps and to weaken the power of their opponents.

## **PART II**

# **POLICY AMBIGUITY AND GRADUAL CHANGE**





**CHAPTER 4****The ambiguity of the Roma camps:  
history and policy design****Introduction**

It is tricky to understand what a Roma camp is. As observed by a number of scholars, the camp is an institution that is intrinsically ambivalent since it mixes logics of help with control, and sits somewhere between humanitarianism, discipline and strategies of security (see Edkins, 2000; Hyndman, 2000; Minca, 2015b). Moreover, as argued by Agamben (1998), the claim that the camp is a space of exception places the subject of the camp in a legal and temporal ‘zone of indistinction’, a ‘threshold space’ (see Giaccaria and Minca, 2011) between the political realm and bare life. Roma camps, transit estates and integration villages all share this ambivalent nature, which divides those who support them from those who criticise them. Yet, for the Roma camps, the fact of being situated at the edge between inclusion and exclusion from the ordinary legal order, with a double character of humanitarian intervention and device of control, is exacerbated by the ambiguity of the policy documents and regulatory framework. Indeed, when I arrived in Rome, this widespread ambiguity struck me as pervasive and constitutive of the debate on the Roma camps. As soon as I started the fieldwork, I realised how not only interviewees disagreed on the reasons for the persistence of the Roma camps or on their effects and alternative solutions, but also and most importantly, on the very definition of this policy, its objectives, its temporality and also target population. Reading the policy documents about the Roma camps was not enough to understand what they are, since these documents often contradict each other and they lack detail while at the same time they bulge with jargon. Likewise, asking policy-makers, public officials, activists and advocates did not necessarily help me to navigate these intricate documents. This made me realise that all these different definitions and

interpretations actually revealed one of the crucial aspects of the formalisation of the Roma camp: its policy ambiguity.

In this chapter I discuss the ambiguity characterising the Roma camps, which I define as the presence of multiple definitions and interpretations of this Roma housing policy. In the first part, I show that policy ambiguity is a result of the emergencies that led to the creation of the Roma camps in the last two decades and that were adopted because of lack of policies of protection for Roma asylum seekers experiencing severe housing deprivation, of the stereotypical representation of the Roma as nomads, and of the conflicting views about how to tackle the increasing number of Roma living in informal settlements in the early 1990s. The adoption of an ambiguous emergency policy enabled policy-makers to address the issue of informal Roma settlements and accommodate different opinions on the matter. As I show in the second part of the chapter, this initial emergency approach has, however, persisted and resulted in an unclear policy design, both in terms of the definition of the target groups and types of camps and also in terms of their temporal boundaries and objectives. I will illustrate that it is not clear whether these camps are planned for nomadic groups or poor homeless Roma, what they are called, if they were conceived as temporary or long-term, and what their purpose is, whether they seek to offer inclusion or simply support homeless – or nomadic – families. This ambiguity can be observed both in policy documents and in interviews with public officials, and it is also reflected in the different interpretations of associations.

It is necessary to discuss the origins and type of policy ambiguity characterising the Roma camps in order to understand how it contributed to their persistence, from being a device for relocating Roma slum dwellers to becoming a tool of housing exclusion and political and economic interests. Indeed, as I will show in Chapter 6, different types of ambiguity correspond to different types of policy change and persistence, and it is therefore extremely important to first delineate and unpick the notion of ambiguity.

### **The policy ambiguity of the Roma camps**

When in September 2013 I started the fieldwork in Rome, I was determined to

understand why the Roma camps have persisted and what prevented the associations opposing them from being heard. However, as soon as I started conducting the interviews, I noticed that the interviewees spent a considerable amount of time discussing about what a Roma camp is, rather than explicitly considering the reasons of its persistence. I initially thought this could hinder the advancement of the research, but then realised that what the Roma camps are constitute the key to understanding their persistence.

Interviewees spoke about the camps as a ‘mix’<sup>36</sup> of different logics, including the management (either protecting or assimilating) of a nomadic ethnic minority, the urgent relocation of slum dwellers through temporary and emergency accommodation, and the transition (in the sense of a re-education) towards sedentary forms of housing. As I illustrate in more details later in the chapter, the Roma camp could not be reduced to any of these ideas and was often defined by the interviewees as a ‘mistake’, a ‘blunder’, a ‘hash’, or a ‘quick fix’, both ‘grave’ but also ‘made in good faith’. The interviewees pointed to the mismatch between the way the Roma camps were planned and the way they were implemented, emphasising how the camps’ presumed ‘original character’ was not eventually actualised because the situation went ‘out of control’, as one interviewee argued. However, what was sometimes presented in the interviews as a gap between planning and implementation, actually revealed the multiplicity of ideas that emerged in the planning phase of the Roma camps, as an analysis of the policy and legal documents later revealed. The presence of many different aspects in the documents about one single policy produced various interpretations about what the Roma camps were supposed to be.

Because of this multiplicity of definitions and interpretations, I adopted the concept of ‘ambiguity’ (also referred to as ‘ambivalence’) to read the Roma camps and to interpret their persistence. Ambiguity refers to “a state of having many ways of thinking about the same circumstances of phenomena” (Feldman, 1989, as cited in Zahariadis, 2014, p. 26) and should not be seen as a flaw but as a fundamental aspect of politics and policy-making process (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). Ambiguity proved extremely useful for grasping one of the crucial characteristics of the Roma camps. This

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<sup>36</sup> This and the following terms used to refer to the ambiguity of the Roma camps are taken from interviews that I will discuss more thoroughly in the remainder of the chapter.

situation could have also been read as a type of policy failure (see Howlett and Ramesh, 2014), since the government is accused of a poor diagnosis of the problem, as well as poor design and implementation. However, the notion of policy failure presupposes the existence of a policy success, which strongly depends on the actors considered, for what is a failure for some people can be positive for others. For example, the lack of housing policies effectively tackling the housing exclusion experienced by the Roma has been functional to the sustainment of patron-client relations from which several politicians and members of associations and criminal organisations benefited. In contrast, ambiguity is a more neutral concept and, as Matland (1995, p.171) points out, it “should be viewed neither as an evil nor as a good” but “should be seen as a characteristic of a policy, without imbuing it with any normative value”. Moreover, it does not necessarily lead to policy failure (Howlett et al., 2015), but can also contribute to the emergence of more creative practices leading to policy change (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). In fact, ambiguity itself does not produce straightforward results, but its nature and effects varies depending on the context and on other interacting factors, like levels of conflicts (Matland, 1995) and presence of veto powers (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). Furthermore, unlike the notions of ‘contradiction’ or ‘confusion’ that presuppose that something specific is either in conflict with something opposite or misunderstood, I considered the concept of ambiguity as particularly suited to grasp the general vagueness of the policy design of the Roma camps.

In the literature on the Roma camps, ambiguity has been often considered an important aspect. Sigona (2011) argues that ambiguity characterises the policy discourses and laws on the Roma camps since the 1970s. When Roma asylum seekers arrived in Italy in the 1990s from the Southern Balkans, they were excluded from the protection measures for the refugees, since their ambivalent representations as refugees but also as Roma (and hence thought to be nomads) legitimised their relegation to camps, spaces of exclusion often presented as protection (Sigona, 2003). This tension between protection and exclusion reflects the ambivalence of the discourse of the ‘Gypsy problem’, meaning both the problems faced by the Roma communities and the problems caused by their presence to Italian neighbours (see Sigona, 2005). Also Daniele (2012) underscores the ambiguity characterising several aspects of the Roma camps, for instance the clash between the role of third sector associations that aim to

empower the camp-residents, on the one hand, and the presence of security agencies in the camps, on the other. Moreover, Daniele notes how the ambiguity of the legal and policy documents about the role of subcontracting associations actually weakens their potential empowering role. Nevertheless, ambiguity is not only seen as a tool for the Roma exclusion but also as a possibility for resistance and negotiation of citizenship. For example, the camp, as an ambiguous space both including and excluding, has been also used as refuge by Roma who were excluded from asylum policies (Sigona, 2015). These works emphasise ambiguity as a critical aspect of the Roma camps. However, in a similar way to the concept of permanent temporariness, the concept of ambiguity has not been considered in the different states it can assume. In contrast, in this chapter I aim to give a more nuanced understanding of concept of ‘policy ambiguity’ by illustrating its origins and describing its main characteristics.

As I show in the next section, the Roma camps' ambiguity was the result of conflicting views at the moment of their creation and of the lack of asylum policies and local welfare that could support the Roma asylum seekers living in informal settlements. The municipality of Rome created ambiguous Roma camps in order to remedy the lack of ordinary policies with which to address the Roma housing exclusion, and also as a way to accommodate and reconcile different opinions about how to manage the Roma population. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, all institutional camps have an ambiguous character due to their often simultaneous humanitarian and security functions, as well as their unclear legal condition. However, different camps have different types and levels of ambiguity, which I aim to describe by analysing the data I collected during my fieldwork. Ambiguity, as argued by Matland (1995), can be present at different levels of the policy process, and in the rest of the chapter I illustrate that the Roma camps have an ambiguous policy design. Firstly, the Roma camps are characterised by an ambiguity about the target population and types of camps. Secondly, the Roma camps present an unclear temporal status and unclear policy objectives.

### **The roots of ambiguity: governing through emergencies**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the idea of official camps for the Roma minority

started emerging in the early 1980s, mainly under pressure from *Opera Nomadi*, a Catholic association from northern Italy that supported the Roma living in informal settlements. In the period following the Second World War, the Italian Roma communities were traditionally working in rural areas, in sectors such as horse farming, circuses, fairs and knives grinding (UNAR, 2012), which were economic activities that implied a mobile lifestyle. As illustrated in Chapter 1, mobility became, however, essentialised as a peculiar cultural feature of these groups and therefore used to shape policies towards them – not only in Italy but also in several other European countries (Simhandl, 2009) – and this resulted in several sedentary Roma being targeted by policies and discourses aimed at nomadic Roma. The municipality of Rome started a debate on halting sites for nomads in 1986, after the adoption of a regional law (Regione Lazio, 1985) on the protection of Roma culture. Yet, when these regional laws were adopted in the 1980s the situation of the informal Roma settlements was really different from the situation that developed in the 1990s. While in the 1980s Italy witnessed economic migration from former Yugoslavia, with Roma migrants arriving in Italian cities mainly to work in the construction and cleaning sector (Monasta, 2005; UNAR, 2012), in the 1990s the situation drastically changed mainly because of the arrival of many Roma asylum seekers during the Yugoslav Wars. The Rome Councillor for Social Policies in the first Rutelli administration (1993-1997), maintained that ‘nomads’ constituted the most prominent emergency of the city of Rome. For this reason they created Roma camps as temporary emergency accommodation in 1994. However, since then, every administration has claimed it faces an emergency regarding the Roma communities in Rome (as in other Italian cities, see Sarcinelli, 2015): first a humanitarian and health emergency, then a national and public security one. Therefore, as already discussed in Chapter 1, a series of Nomad Plans have been adopted by the administrations of Rome over the last two decades.

The story of Imer's family epitomises the changes in Roma migration to Italy and the new problems that the Roma arriving in Italy in the 1990s faced. Imer is a Kosovan Roma man living in an official camp in the northern Italian city of Brescia. Although he does not live in Rome, his story clearly encapsulates the main issues at stake in the implementation of emergency policies vis-à-vis the Roma in several cities in Italy. Imer's father arrived in Italy in the 1980s as an economic migrant. Like many

others, he migrated to improve his family's living conditions in Kosovo and intended to remain in Italy only for a short period before returning to his home country (Monasta, 2005). Imer recalls his house back in Kosovo that was built thanks to the money earned by his father in Italy:

We had a nice house back in Kosovo. It was a four-storey house. My father built it in the 1980s... he was here in Italy, working informally... but back in Kosovo you could build a house with only twenty millions [of former Italian Lire], you could do it easily. It was a nice house, on the lake. You opened the door and the lake was just 50 metres away. It was a really nice house, all brand new...<sup>37</sup>

But they did not enjoy their nice house for long, as they soon faced a new form of forced migration brought about by the deteriorating political situation in the southern Balkans. War broke out and, in 1993, when Imer was only thirteen years old, he fled his country to seek asylum in Italy together with other Roma from Kosovo. As put it by a Imer's neighbour, a Roma refugee from the same city in Kosovo:

You know, we didn't come here to live better. We escaped the war. Because there were the Albanians on one side, and the Serbians on the other...<sup>38</sup>

However, the Roma who arrived in Italy were not welcome or treated as asylum seekers. For instance, whilst for other refugees the Italian state provided accommodation and a weekly allowance, in most cases the Roma were at best offered relocation to Roma-only camps with caravans (Però, 1999). Similarly, they were not offered services despite experiencing severe housing deprivation, nor were they included in immigrant and integration policies, because the local administrations dismissed the importance of push and pull factors on Roma migration and reduced Roma mobility to a cultural feature (van Baar, 2011) This interpretation influenced, and also justified, the types of policies put in place to assist Roma war asylum seekers: emergency policies underpinned by the cultural stereotype of nomadism.

### ***The unpreparedness of Italian asylum system and of local welfare***

Before the fall of the USSR, Italy mainly operated as a transit route for refugees

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37 Interview held in Brescia on 27 July 2013.

38 Ibid.

who later resettled in other countries (Hein, 2000) and was not prepared for the huge flows of asylum seekers during the early 1990s (Hein, 2000; Sigona, 2015).<sup>39</sup> Although the Italian Constitution guarantees the right to asylum for foreign nationals who are not able to enjoy democratic freedom (Italian constitution, article 10.3), no law specifies the conditions regulating the right to asylum.<sup>40</sup> Even when asylum seekers arrived during the Yugoslav Wars, Italy did not develop a formal asylum system, but adopted temporary and makeshift solutions (Sigona, 2015). A law in 1992 acknowledged the right to asylum for war displaced persons (law 390 of 24 September 1992), without, however, regulating the access to Italian territory for people of this category and therefore leading to many asylum seekers being pushed back at the Italian frontiers (Hein, 2010). The delay in adopting new regulations vis-à-vis this emergency was also due to the 1992 government crisis which led to the so-called Italian Second Republic. The situation stabilised after the Dayton Agreements, but the emergency erupted again during the Kosovo War, when new provisional solutions were adopted. Following an initial delay, Italy joined other countries in accepting refugees fleeing to Macedonia from Kosovo, who were threatened with repatriation by the Macedonian government, which did not want to risk new ethnic tensions. Even though several thousands of refugees practically succeeded in staying in Italy, Hein (2000, p.145) underscores the ad hoc character of these protection measures, observing that:

[T]he vast majority of refugees who arrived and remained in Italy in the 1990s obtained protection without being recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention.

This patchy situation was, however, even more problematic for Roma war asylum seekers who in many cases did not gain access to residence permits and asylum protection (ECRI, 2002; Sigona, 2015). It is estimated that in the period 1992-2000 approximately 16,000 Roma arrived in Italy from former Yugoslavia (UNAR, 2012). The Italian Council for Refugees (*Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati*, CIR) was charged by the Italian government with conducting a survey of the Roma living in informal

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39 Data of the Italian Ministry of Interior show that in the early 1990s asylum requests rose sharply from less than 5,000 in 1990 to 28,400 in 1991. Ministro dell'Interno. [http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/quaderno\\_statistico\\_1990\\_-\\_2014\\_asilo.pdf#27](http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/quaderno_statistico_1990_-_2014_asilo.pdf#27). Accessed on 23 June 2016.

40 Although Italy ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention in 1954 (though with a restriction on the right to work) and the 1967 Protocol amending the Geneva Convention in 1970, Italy did not formalise an asylum system until the 1990s (Sigona, 2015), before which most asylum seekers were regularised thanks to the amnesties adopted periodically by the Italian government (Hein, 2000).



settlements in order to identify those who were eligible for refugee status (Hein, 2010). The CIR research uncovered a situation in which most of the Roma were undocumented because they were no longer citizens of the new countries created in the aftermath of the Yugoslav Wars, therefore caught in a limbo of statelessness that made it difficult both to apply for a visa in Italy and to go back to their country of origin. Furthermore, many others did not receive any protection on the basis that the conflict was almost over (Hein, 2000). Many of the Roma who were left out from asylum reception structures, either experiencing delays in the recognition of their refugee status or not getting any protection at all, started living in informal settlements (Sigona, 2015), which then became the target of local policies. Indeed, instead of approaching the informal settlements as a consequence of insufficient measures protecting asylum seekers, as already mentioned earlier, the local municipalities treated them as nomadic groups.

When the Italian and local governments had to deal with Roma migrants, not only was the asylum system inadequate, but also the welfare system could not cope with such a situation. The Italian welfare system is characterised by weak social assistance and social security provision (Costamagna, 2013), by weak poverty and housing policies (De Luca, Governa and Lancione, 2009; Ranci and Pavolini, 2015; Tosi and Cremaschi, 2001) as well as weak immigrant policies (Alexander, 2003; Barberis, 2009). Italian welfare<sup>41</sup> presents universal health care provisions, with a transfer-centred model of income support based on occupation status (instead of in-kind services), which creates a highly fragmented protection system between protected and unprotected categories (such as those working in the informal market, or first job seekers) and high poverty rates. Furthermore, the Italian model of welfare is characterised by a mix between public and private actors (mainly voluntary associations and the family), and by a diffused political clientelism (Ferrera, 1996).

Social services have always played a secondary role in the Italian welfare system, in which as of today only 3.7 per cent of public spending goes to social services, while 60 per cent goes to old age and survivors' pensions (Costamagna, 2013).

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41 Esping-Andersen (1990) classifies Italy in the conservative-corporatist model of welfare (alongside France, Austria and Germany), whereby social rights are not universally recognised but strongly depends on one's economic class. This typology has been criticised by Ferrera (1996) who argues that Italy – together with Spain, Portugal and Greece – constitutes a fourth type of welfare model, the Southern one – also called “familistic model” (Kazepov, 2008) –, mixing both universal and corporatist aspects.

Limited provision of social services, rather than other welfare transfers, such as pensions or health care, is actually what distinguishes Italy (and other southern European countries) most distinctively from other western European welfare systems, as observed by Jensen (2008). Before the adoption of the law 328/2000, the first to develop an integrated framework for social services (Parlamento Italiano, 2000), social services in Italy were highly fragmented and with strong regional and geographical variations. In the 1990s there were few services for minors, the disabled and the elderly – whose welfare was mainly provided by either the family or cooperative associations – as well as a lack of measures to tackle social exclusion, and a poor coordination overall. In Rome, before the adoption of the Social Local Plan in 2002, the regulation of social services was the responsibility of the Department of Social Policies and of organisational units made up of social workers, and emergencies shaped service delivery. During an interview, Marco, a former member of the executive committee for the social services in Rome, made a joke about the tendency of the municipality to see – and frame – many issues as emergencies. As an example of this tendency, he mentioned the Emergency of Cold (*Emergenza Freddo*), renewed every year, whereby homeless people are offered emergency shelter during winter months: “As if the winter were an emergency that can't be foreseen!”<sup>42</sup>, he exclaimed laughing. However, even after the adoption of the new law in 2000, the provision of social services has remained highly territorially differentiated (Burgalassi, 2012), with worrying effects on the fragmentation of social citizenship that weakens its link to national and supranational level (Bifulco, 2014) and strengthens its urban dimension (Holston and Appadurai, 1996; Sassen, 2002; Isin, 2002a, 2002b).

Like the social services, immigration and immigrant policies<sup>43</sup> were relatively undeveloped until the 1990s. Italy, in contrast with other western European countries with older immigrant populations, was historically a country of emigration and only started experiencing an upsurge of immigration during the early 1990s, right at the same time as the arrival of the Roma from former Yugoslavia (Bonifazi, Heins, Strozza and Vitiello, 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2009). The Italian government started regulating

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42 Interview held on in Rome 28 October 2013.

43 Fix and Passel (1994) draw a distinction between immigration and immigrant policies: the former regulate modalities of entry and residence of immigrants, the latter is about welfare and integration policies.

migration from the early 1980s, but most of the laws were developed from the 1990s onwards, and Italian immigration policies are usually considered ineffective compared to other western and northern European countries (Barberis, 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino, 2009). The Italian model of immigrant policies is considered ineffective mainly because it is characterised by emergency measures to remedy the lack of clear policies (Barberis, 2009). Italian immigration and immigrant policies are characterised by “unrealistic policy goals” (Finotelli and Sciortino, 2009, p.119), a tension between restrictive policy discourses and practical laxity, belated intervention with a subsequent increase of exclusion from protection, privatised provision of services, and variable local government that perpetuates a fragmentation of access to rights (Barberis, 2009). At a local level, Alexander (2003, p.416) focuses on immigrant policies and observes that Rome has actually adopted what he terms a “Non-Policy model” for dealing with immigrants. This model is characterised by a lack of systematic public intervention which shifts responsibility for migrants' welfare to other actors (historically, in Rome, Church-based associations have played a major role, see Masiello, 2009). As the case of the Roma shows, strategies consist of ad hoc measures for specific issues, as a way of “putting out fires” (Alexander, 2003, p. 420).

This was the situation when intense media coverage of Roma asylum seekers (see Sigona, 2003) cast a harsh spotlight on informal settlements, placing the ‘Roma problem’ at the centre of the urban political agenda. As I illustrated earlier in this section, there was no real protection for Roma asylum seekers, the local municipality did not have specific social services for the poorest, most marginalised and those excluded from housing and the labour market, leaving this mainly to voluntary-based associations. Immigration policies were characterised by an ad hoc and emergency approach due to unclear national policy guidelines. Moreover, the ambiguity of the Roma asylum seekers, who were stereotypically regarded as nomads (Sigona, 2003), led the municipality of Rome to treat the Roma camps as emergency accommodation for Roma asylum seekers, even though they constituted a regional housing policy for nomads. In addition to this, the presence of conflicting views voiced by actors in favour of a humanitarian intervention (mainly the Catholic wing of the left) and those prioritising security concerns, like the growing populist right and the EU (Finotelli and Sciortino, 2009; Huysmans, 2000), resulted in the adoption of a policy that could

accommodate these different demands. Conflicting rationales, stereotypical representations of the target population and a lack of ordinary policies are important factors that subjected the Roma to an ambiguous emergency housing policy. Indeed, as pointed out by Rochefort and Cobb (1994), the framing of an issue as an emergency or crisis usually occurs when there are several competing claims over an issue that is perceived as urgently needing a solution and when policy ambiguity can be strategically used to reduce conflicts among parties and build coalitions (see Matland, 1995; Radaelli and Schmidt, 2004).

Imer's story, once again, epitomises the way in which many other Roma families arrived in Italy as war asylum seekers. When he and his family arrived in Brescia, they struggled to access protection for war refugees and were denied access to social services and social protection. They were temporarily relocated to an old abandoned farmhouse on the periphery of Brescia, where the municipality provided some caravans after granting them the status of war refugees (Monasta, 2005). He told me that they had to do the rest: cleaning up the space and securing access to electricity and water. This resulted in a highly precarious and unsafe living space, highly stigmatised by the local media. Eventually, after a fire, the local municipality cleared the settlement in 2002 and evicted the residents on the basis of the very unsafe living conditions that the municipality contributed to creating some years before (Monasta, 2005). The residents were relocated to an official camp with other Roma families, where the municipality provided housing units, basic facilities and services for the children. They still live there today, and the camp is officially called Centre for Housing Emergency (*Centro di Emergenza Abitativa*).

This story shows how the adoption of emergency policies to manage the arrival of Roma asylum seekers not only denied them the international protection to which they were entitled, but also initiated a process of increasing segregation in Roma camps, where the residents are hindered access to a series of rights, such as to adequate housing, schooling and health, and subject to stigmatisation. However, instead of strengthening the support for Roma asylum seekers and migrants, or tackling their social and housing exclusion, during the last two decades national and local governments have constantly adopted emergency measures to manage the Roma people, exacerbating their housing exclusion and the ambiguity of the Roma camps. Although

the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) advocates the overcoming of this emergency approach and the dismantling of the Roma camps, and despite a ruling which rendered the latest Nomad Emergency Decree anti-constitutional, the Roma camps in Rome are not yet regularised by any legal framework and remain highly ambiguous in their very design and nature.

### **Policy design ambiguity I: target population and types of camps**

When looking at the policy documents it is difficult to find a clear definition of the target group of the Roma camps. This (more or less intentional) ambiguity is visible in the fact that the terms ‘nomads’ and ‘Roma’ are used almost interchangeably in legal and policy documents. A text analysis of the main policy documents of the last twenty years shows the ambivalence of the target group (Table 4.1). For instance, in the regional law 82/1985 (Regione Lazio, 1985) the term ‘nomads’ (*nomadi*) is used 13 times, while the term ‘Roma’ (*rom*) recurs 8 times. The municipal resolution in 1993 (Comune di Roma, 1993) engages more often with the term ‘Roma’ (recurring 6 times) than ‘nomads’ (4 times). With the local ordinance in 1996 (Comune di Roma, 1996) the term ‘nomads’ is employed 10 times, while the term ‘Roma’ only 1. It is also interesting to notice that the title of the regional law in 1985 is ‘Norms in Favour of Roma Peoples’, while the title of the resolution in 1993 is ‘Regulation of Equipped Halting Camps Destined to Roma Peoples *or* [emphasis added] Populations of Nomadic Origins’. While in 1985 there was only a reference to Roma in the title, in 1993 there was a distinction (although not clarified in the text) between Roma and those of nomadic origins, which might hint at the increasing dominance of the idea of nomadism as a guiding concept for policies on the Roma. By 1996 the term Roma totally disappeared from the title of the ordinance (‘Directives for the Verification of the Presence of Nomads in Halting Camps and in Spontaneous Settlements Located on the Urban Territory’). Apart from the brief experience of the Social Local Plan in 2002 (that never saw the light of day) acknowledging that the Roma are not nomads, since the 1990s most policy documents on the Roma mainly employ the term ‘nomads’.

Table 4.1 – The text analysis of the main documents on the Roma camps

Year	Document	Subject adopting the document	Name of document	Target population		Terms for camps	Definition	Duration
				Nomads	Roma			
1985	Regional law	Lazio Region	<i>Norms in Favour of Roma Peoples</i>	<u>13</u>	8	Halting site	- Fencing, between 2,000-4,000 m <sup>2</sup> , not isolated - Appropriate initiatives for those who prefer sedentary life - Job placement (mainly as artisans, to respect Roma culture)	n/a
1993	Deliberation of the High Commissioner	Municipal Council	<i>Regulation of Equipped Halting Camps Destined to Roma Peoples or Populations of Nomadic Origins</i>	4	<u>6</u>	Equipped halting site	n/a	Maximum four months (only for “itinerant groups”)
1994	Nomad Plan	Municipality of Rome	n/a	n/a	n/a	Halting site	- Max 150 people	n/a
1996	Mayor's ordinance	Municipality of Rome	Directives for the Verification of the Presence of Nomads in Halting Camps and in Spontaneous Settlements Located on the Urban Territory	<u>10</u>	1	Temporary camp	- Appropriate services	n/a
						Equipped halting site	- Following the Regional Law 82/1985	n/a
1999	City Council Deliberation	Municipality of Rome	<i>Guidelines for interventions of the Municipal Administration for the inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti population</i>	5	<u>31</u>	Halting site	- For nomads or semi-nomads	TBC by municipality
						Equipped residential area	- For sedentary Roma - Respecting the way of life of Roma	Long-term

2002	Social Local Plan 2002	Capital Rome	<i>Interventions for the Roma people</i>	8	62	Temporary halting area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humanitarian intervention</li> <li>- Similar to a camping</li> </ul>	12 months
2007	Pact with the prefecture	Prefect of Rome, Municipality of Rome, Province of Rome, Lazio Region	<i>Pact for a Safe Rome</i>	Population without territory		Equipped village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gradual exit of families from villages towards a stable housing solution</li> <li>- Incubator of social and cultural integration</li> </ul>	36 months (potentially renewable)
2008	Pact with the prefecture	"	<i>Second Pact for a Safe Rome</i>	3	0	Solidarity village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Containment of population</li> <li>- Social inclusion</li> <li>- Max 1000 people</li> </ul>	n/a
2008	Nomad Emergency Decree	Council of Ministers	<i>Declaration of the state of emergency in relation to the settlements of the nomadic communities in the territories of the regions Campania, Lazio and Lombardy</i>	6	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
2009	Rome Camps Regulation	Delegate to the nomads emergency in the Lazio region	<i>Regulation for the management of the equipped villages for the nomadic communities in the Lazio region</i>	6	0	Equipped village / Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter for nomadic people</li> <li>- Promotion of initiatives for social inclusion, social support and job placement</li> </ul>	2 years (renewable once)

This tendency was confirmed in 2008 with the adoption of the Nomad Emergency Decree (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2008). Furthermore, some documents employ the term ‘gypsy’ (*zingaro*). The recent Marino administration was debating the adoption of a new regulation of which I was shown a draft during an interview with Giacomo, a member of the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health. The new regulation aimed to define the camp as a temporary accommodation for people experiencing housing deprivation rather than as a space for nomadic groups, therefore focusing on the needs of the people instead of on their presumed necessities as an ethnic group. When I asked whether this implied that also non-Roma people could be hosted in camps, Giacomo told me that this was their intention, which, however, was never implemented. These continuing changes in the definition of the target population, even more than twenty years after the creation of the first Roma camp, are symptomatic of how far this is from being a clear aspect.

The policy documents also show a multiplicity of different names adopted to refer to the Roma camps which are, however, rarely defined. The 1985 regional law referred to ‘halting sites’ (*campo di sosta*), while in 1993 the term used was ‘equipped halting sites’ (*campi di sosta attrezzati*), including the camps in the same category of hospitals and public parks (i.e. zones of public interest). Later in 1996 the municipality of Rome distinguished between ‘equipped halting camps’ (*campi di sosta attrezzati*) and ‘temporary camps’ (*campi provvisori*), both equipped with facilities and services (Comune di Roma, 1996). In 1999 a city council resolution (Comune di Roma, 1999) made a new distinction between two types of accommodation policies aimed at the Roma: ‘areas for temporary halting’ and ‘equipped residential areas’. This distinction was also adopted by the 2002 Social Local Plan (Comune di Roma, 2002): the names employed were ‘halting site’ (*campo sosta*) and ‘equipped village’ (*villaggio attrezzato*), and both of them were considered temporary. To these two categories of camps a new one was introduced in 2007 (Comune di Roma, 2007) which was called ‘solidarity village’ (*villaggio della solidarietà*) without, however, clarifying how this differed from the previous equipped villages. This term was not employed by the following administration, which in 2009 (Regione Lazio, 2009) only employed the term ‘equipped village’. In addition to this, during these last twenty years the term ‘tolerated camp’ (*campo tollerato*) has been employed without ever being defined.



These documents show the presence of different ideas guiding these interventions: on the one hand, the creation of temporary halting sites for nomadic groups and, on the other, the creation of emergency housing for Roma who are sedentary. Commenting on the origins of the Roma camps and on these blurred aspects, Giulio, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy association, observed that they have been the product of a misunderstanding whereby nomadism, although no longer a characteristic of Roma groups, was deemed a guiding principle of policy-making. In Giulio's opinion, mobilising the Roma camps instituted by the regional laws in the 1980s as a way to manage non-nomadic Roma living in informal settlements was also a way for the local administration not to tackle more structural aspects that were at the base of the Roma housing exclusion, such as a lack of housing policies and ineffective social services:

It's been a mistake that was made also in the regional laws for the Roma – and, to be precise, most regional laws actually talk about nomads. If you think about it, still today there is a Nomad Office, a Nomad Plan... [...] At the beginning they genuinely thought that the camp was a sort of natural solution to a condition of nomadism that actually wasn't there since a long time. It's from this idea that these regional laws have created the camps.

But in the early 1990s we were already denouncing the fact the Roma who arrived from former Yugoslavia, mainly escaping the war, they had been living in houses for ages. [...] This sort of cultural hash made also things easier for the institutions because instead of giving them a house, instead of considering them homeless people, it was easier to consider them Roma, hence nomads.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, the discourse on nomadism conveys the idea that the Roma will at one point leave, an idea that is used to justify the lack of permanent housing policies for the Roma. For instance, in 2008 the former right-wing mayor of Rome, Gianni Alemanno, during his electoral campaign publicly expressed his discontent with Roma housing policies by arguing that, since the Roma are nomads, “they should pack and leave” without staying for years in “our neighbourhoods”<sup>45</sup>. As Giulio argued, this institutionalisation of a misunderstanding was favoured by widespread stereotypes and prejudices about the Roma as nomads, and it was used as a quick fix. However, instead of solving the problem it eventually exacerbated it by postponing a more long-term solution:

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44 Interview held in Rome on 30 October 2013.

45 Gianni Alemanno al Brancaccio - i campi nomadi a Roma, April 2008  
<[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_dcdZUd3O4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_dcdZUd3O4)> Retrieved on 8/12/2013.

It was a mix of cultural stereotypes, prejudices etc. that determined this misunderstanding, which was combined with emergency and repressive policies that just made a quick fix. Then, everyone used this sort of cultural hash, this regional laws, to show to the general public that the Roma issue was solved, while this problem has actually exacerbated. [...] In order to put a pad on it, to quickly fix the various emergencies, to contain the problem, all the administrations kept promoting these camps.

This misunderstanding was also actively supported by activists that employed it to frame the protection of Roma people living in informal settlements. As Alberto, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy group, said:

In the 1980s, in good faith, [activists] started this in Turin and then Lucca, then everywhere in Italy. When, because of the economic crisis of the time, Roma arrived from ex-Yugoslavia to find seasonal jobs, they were often evicted from their settlements. So activists started protesting and started saying that they were nomads and they advocated the creation of halting sites. They made a blunder. [...] It is a grave mistake to confuse Roma and nomads, to think that they enjoy living in the open-air, with the bonfire, big pots, violins and guitars and wearing colourful long skirts. But then we had the laws to protect the nomadic culture...<sup>46</sup>

The controversy continues. On the one hand, halting sites for nomads were instituted by the regional law adopted in 1985 for the protection of Roma's supposedly nomadic culture, and the stay in these camps was supposed to be temporary (although the Lazio regional law, unlike other regional laws, did not specify the maximum stay). On the other hand, the Roma camps for Roma living in informal settlements were planned to be a solution (either temporary or long-term) to the problems faced by slum dwellers. But the Lazio regional law was mobilised to justify both measures, hence generating an intrinsically ambiguous policy and enabling different interpretations. Alice, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy association, told me how she interpreted these different policies:

These camps were planned to be temporary for those who were nomads, and fixed or partly temporary for those who were not nomads and that should have been helped to access social housing. This has been completely neglected and then they began with an emergency discourse, whereby all the informal settlements needed to be removed and people squeezed into huge camps.<sup>47</sup>

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46 Interview held in Rome on 21 November 2013.

47 Interview held in Rome on 26 November 2013.

These interviews differently interpret the ambiguous character of the Roma camps, whereby it is not clear who is the target population for what type of camp. In addition to this, also their duration, as well as objectives and tools, have remained fuzzy.

### **Policy design ambiguity II: temporal status and policy objectives**

The ambivalent origin of the Roma camps seems also to indicate two different temporalities: short-term temporary stay in halting sites for the nomads, while a more long-term, yet still temporary, stay in transition structures for non-nomadic Roma. During an interview, Antonio, a public official working for the municipality of Rome, argued that the camps for the Roma were planned as a transitory step towards more permanent forms of housing. In Antonio's opinion, the regional laws for the protection of the Roma culture that instituted the halting sites for nomads in the 1980s have nothing to do with the Roma camps created in the 1990s for the Roma asylum seekers:

Since 1996 the camps are thought of as transit spaces. The fact that this hasn't been practically applied is a different matter. Anyway, allocations to a camp are always temporary. Even if there is someone that has been there for decades... and this might also be the responsibility of all the administrations and mayors we had over the years: when someone new arrives, they always have a different idea of how things should be done.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, Andrea, a member of subcontracting NGO in Rome, underscores the temporariness of the Roma camps:

We're now working at a project about how to overcome this emergency approach [...] we need to start enacting the transitory character that the official camps were supposed to have when they were created.<sup>49</sup>

However, when looking at the series of policy documents, there does not seem to be a real clear-cut definition of the duration of the Roma camps. The 1993 resolution adopted by the municipality of Rome (Comune di Roma, 1993) did not make any reference to the term 'transit' and only established that itinerant groups could stop for a maximum of four months. Moreover, it did not specify whether the camps for non-itinerant people were supposed to be permanent or temporary.

<sup>48</sup> Interview held in Rome on 4 November 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Interview held in Rome on 21 November 2013.

In 1994 the first Rutelli administration (1993-1997) adopted a Nomad Plan establishing the creation of 10 official camps for so-called nomads who would have then be relocated to council housing estates after two years (Stasolla, 2012). However, in line with the 1985 Lazio regional law, the Nomad Plan did not explicitly specify whether the camps were planned for temporary or permanent residence. As mentioned above, in 1996 the municipality of Rome further differentiated between equipped halting camps and temporary camps without, however, specifying what ‘temporary’ meant (Comune di Roma, 1996). In 1999 a city council resolution (Comune di Roma, 1999) drew a new distinction between two types of accommodation policies aimed at the Roma, i.e. ‘halting camps’ (*campi di sosta*) and ‘equipped villages’ (*villaggi attrezzati*).

This lack of clarity continued under the following administrations. The 2002 Social Local Plan (Comune di Roma, 2002) clarified that camps were considered as a temporary step during a transition towards housing. This type of accommodation was thought of as an “incubator” of “social and cultural integration” for a transition to housing (Comune di Roma, 2002, p.208). The plan (Comune di Roma, 2002, p.208) explicitly stated that the main objective of the camps was a “gradual exit of families from villages towards a stable housing solution”. In contrast, so-called ‘temporary halting areas’ (*aree di sosta temporanea*) were aimed at Roma who experienced poor and precarious living conditions; they were planned as emergency solutions in which the maximum length of stay was set to 12 months. These areas were seen as the first step of an integration path towards housing. The second step of this integrating path consisted of so-called equipped villages, where Roma could stay for a maximum of 36 months (potentially renewable) during which they were advised about how to find a stable housing. Yet, despite the detailed clarifications of the Social Local Plan, this regulation had never been applied.

During an interview, Marco, a former member of the executive committee for the social services in Rome, who witnessed the creation of official camps during the Veltroni administrations (2001-2006; 2006-2008), reported that there was an explicit aim to make these camps temporary and transitory, but then, for reasons that he claimed he did not understand, this idea of transition was never implemented:

*Marco:* ...at the beginning of 2001 we started planning these camps

because we wanted camps that weren't camps... I mean, equipped, transitory, not halting sites as they had been until then, but with a transition to social housing.

*Gaja*: So, you mean, temporary?

*Marco*: Exactly! Temporary sites towards social housing. That was my commitment, I started with that. In the last period of the Rutelli administration [1999-2001] we were already discussing this idea, but we developed it mainly with Veltroni when we inaugurated a camp in Salone street. Then... did the situation went out of control, maybe? Didn't they want to realise it? I personally really don't know as I wasn't involved in the political aspects of the decision. That being said, the camps became closed, confined [...] within a security approach. [...]

...then, when I noticed that in two years nothing had changed, I understood that we would have hit a wall. [...] The idea itself wasn't bad. But, they had to be temporary! Now I clearly see that the word 'temporary' in Italy, and in Rome mainly, is deceptive because this temporary has a permanent character, there is nothing temporary about it, it's just all permanent! Everything became sticky. And from that moment, third sector associations started working in these camps, 'temporarily' of course! [laughing]<sup>50</sup>

During the Nomad Emergency Decree in 2008 (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2008) the Lazio Region adopted a new special regulation for the official camps, in which the maximum stay was set to two years (renewable only once) (Regione Lazio, 2009). However, as already mentioned, the regulation adopted under the Nomad Emergency was finally annulled (Consiglio di Stato, 2011; Corte Suprema di Cassazione, 2013). The puzzle of the Roma camps' duration continued during the Marino administration (2013-2015) too: Giacomo, the employee of the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health, explained to me that the administration conceived of the Roma camps as temporary solutions but, Giacomo said, "less temporary" than refugee centres, or battered-women shelters. Although Giacomo tried to define how temporary should the camps be, he could not precisely indicate what 'temporary' really meant.<sup>51</sup>

The policy documents also show unclear policy objectives: in certain periods – for instance, during the Veltroni administrations (2001-2006, 2006-2008) – the idea of a transition towards housing was made more explicit, without, however, specifying whether after the period of 'social and cultural integration' the camp-residents would be

<sup>50</sup> Interview held in Rome on 28 October 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Interview held in Rome on 13 November 2013.

included in council housing estates, or whether they were supposed to find their own accommodation in the private housing market. Likewise, in the case of Alemanno administration (2008-2013), even though the security function of these camps was particularly enhanced, for example through the use of ID cards for residents, the broader purpose of this policy was not made explicitly clear in the documents. For instance, in the regulation of the camps adopted during the Alemanno administration, there was reference to schemes of inclusion and job placement, without, however, any clarification of the final goals of these schemes, whether they aimed at work integration or at the residents' empowerment in order to find housing alternatives.

To this day, the camps are not regularised and, from a legal point of view, they do not exist. This ambiguous character of the Roma camp, in-between a legal provision and an emergency response, produced a confusion whereby it is difficult to say whether they were aimed at nomads or at sedentary populations, if they were supposed to be temporary or not, and for what purposes they were created – whether they were simply emergency accommodations or part of a larger project of social inclusion.

## **Conclusion**

The interviews and the policy documents analysed in this chapter did not provide a clear account of what the Roma camps were supposed to be, and rather highlighted the extreme messiness and ambiguity characterising them. Indeed, different and often contradictory aspects co-exist: sometimes they have been presented as a tool for the protection, or assimilation, of a nomadic ethnic minority; at other times, they were planned as a temporary and emergency measure for Roma slum dwellers; certain discourses and practices point to the security function of the Roma camps, which confine a threatening and deviant ethnic minority; finally, the Roma camps have been also presented as a way to empower a historically marginalised ethnic minority, which needs help in transiting towards sedentariness.

However, this lack of explicit definitions is a constitutive aspect of this housing policy rather than a simple flaw or misunderstanding. This ambiguity originates from the long-lasting emergency approach to the Roma housing exclusion. Emergency measures for relocating Roma living in informal settlements were initially adopted to

quickly remedy the lack of policies for the protection of asylum seekers, as well as of those experiencing extreme poverty and housing deprivation, but also to avoid producing a clearer policy in a moment when there were many conflicting views on the matter. However, this emergency approach has persisted until today, making the design of the Roma camp highly ambiguous, mainly with regard to the definition of the types of camp, of its temporality and objectives as well as of its target population.

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce and discuss the main concept that guided the analysis of the Roma camps and from which I develop the answer to the research questions. Policy ambiguity unexpectedly emerged as playing a key role in the persistence of the Roma camps. As I illustrate in the next chapter, the different interpretations of the Roma camps enabled pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs to legitimise their work in camps, therefore leading to increased compliance.

**CHAPTER 5****Ambiguity, framing flexibility and co-optation:  
the depoliticisation of the Roma camps****Introduction**

The ambiguity of the Roma camps was the product of a series of conflicting opinions about the presence of informal Roma settlements, of the lack of asylum and local welfare policies, and of the diffused stereotypes that depicted Roma asylum seekers as nomads. However, this ambiguity has not only deeply shaped this housing policy until today, but also critically affected power relations between actors involved in the governance of these spaces, contributing to their persistence. In this chapter I illustrate how policy ambiguity contributed to the depoliticisation of the Roma camps. I do not argue that this was the only aspect, but I maintain that it has been an important factor that, in conjunction with others, has facilitated the persistence of the Roma camps.

The first section of the chapter exposes how the policy ambiguity of the Roma camps facilitated the development of framing strategies that justified the position of pro-Roma associations working in the Roma camps as subcontractors. These subcontracting NGOs are indeed criticised by pro-Roma advocacy groups for presenting themselves as pro-Roma while, at the same time, actively contributing to the maintenance of segregation. Notwithstanding whether being pro-Roma necessarily implies being against the camps, in the second section of the chapter I show how subcontracting NGOs are less critical towards this form of segregation and therefore contribute – more or less intentionally – to its reproduction. This is because incorporation into governance structures implies a shift in the operational logic of an association, from a focus towards struggles against inequality to more geographically narrow and temporally restricted objectives, and to increase the opportunity to access



public funding. This often mutes criticism and therefore contributes to the persistence of certain dynamics. In the case of the Roma camps, subcontracting associations have been increasingly co-opted into institutionalised governance and, as a result, have toned down their concerns and increased their incomes. Furthermore, as illustrated in the third section of the chapter, the presence of co-opted subcontracting NGOs in the camps also leads one set of actors monopolising access to camps and controlling the residents' voices. As a consequence, pro-Roma advocacy groups have limited access to the camps and the camp-residents are monitored and therefore not fully free when they interact with external members. Minimisation of criticism, the distancing of pro-Roma advocacy groups from the camps, and general control of the camp-residents have enhanced the power of the supporters of the camps and weakened the material and socio-organisational resources available to its opposers. However, I do not claim that subcontracting NGOs wittingly support the segregation of the Roma. What this chapter does is examine the effects of the incorporation of pro-Roma NGOs into governance structures but does not investigate the intentions that lead associations to become subcontractors, which are varied and cannot be simplistically reduced to profit-making.

### **Ambiguity and framing flexibility: legitimising co-optation**

The way policies are designed creates specific messages which can influence “the political orientation and participations patterns of target populations” (Ingram, Schneider and deLeon, 2007, p.97). Indeed, as pointed out by Lascoumes and Le Galès, (2007), the characteristics of policy instruments cannot be reduced to mere political decision and negotiations, but also exercise important effects on the distribution of power among the actors involved in it. However, Pierson (1993), argues that policies do not have only material effects on the distribution of resources, but also interpretive ones, which depend on the specific type of knowledge, information and meanings that are produced by a specific policy. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the policy design of the Roma camp is highly ambiguous: it is not clear whether the Roma camps are temporary or permanent solutions, who the target population is and, finally, if the camps provide emergency temporary accommodation or ordinary housing solutions, or if they constitute an effort – however ineffective – to recognise and protect cultural differences.

As a result, this ambiguity has strengthened the co-optation through partnership of subcontracting NGOs, since it enables them to justify their contradictory position as both pro-Roma and pro-camps, and subsequently minimise criticism and dissent. Indeed, as illustrated in Chapter 3, subcontracting NGOs present themselves as pro-Roma but, at the same time, are often only mildly critical or uncritical of the Roma camps. Other pro-Roma advocacy groups which are against the Roma camps denounce subcontracting NGOs for being co-opted and for complying with segregation. As Roberto, a member of a Roma advocacy group, puts it:

They [the associations that work in the camps] say that they do not want people to live in camps but do want to promote access to housing. But to say that camps shouldn't exist while at the same time being paid to work there, it's contradictory! [...] You can't say you are against the camps while managing them. This is simply what we argue.<sup>52</sup>

However, subcontracting NGOs manage to reconcile this apparent contradiction by discursively mobilising the Roma camps' ambiguity. Working in these camps is indeed justified in different ways through the manipulation of highly ambiguous and flexible definitions of the Roma camps which maintain the subcontracting NGOs' "frame consistency", i.e. "congruency between an SMO's [social movement organisation] articulated beliefs, claims, and actions" (Benford and Snow, 2000, p.619). As the following excerpts from interviews with subcontracting NGOs show, the different aspects co-existing in the policy design of the Roma camps are utilised to explain the fact of being both pro-Roma while not being (strongly) critical of the Roma camps.

Some associations working in the camps see them as part of an integration policy that addresses the cultural differences of an ethnic minority, supports them and, eventually, enables them to assimilate into the wider society. Lucia, the director of the managing association of the Cartiera centre, said:

They love spending time in the backyard... I don't know if you know it, but living in the open air is part of the Roma culture so they don't want to live in houses.<sup>53</sup>

And her colleague Massimiliano later added:

They always grouse because they're not educated. They don't like

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52 Interview held in Rome on 18 November 2013.

53 Informal conversation held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

pasta, they always want to eat red meat and you can just imagine their level of cholesterol... it's no surprise they die young here! So we have to teach them to say thank you, please, to eat pasta. At first they don't like it but then they get used to it. They're really ignoramus when they arrive here, so that's why we work towards civic education, that's the first thing... I mean, we help them!<sup>54</sup>

These discourses essentialising presumed ethnic characteristics and differences are, however, becoming increasingly uncommon and disapproved of among pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs. Following the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the work of local and international pro-Roma NGOs, it is today widely accepted that the Roma are not all nomads and the camps do not meet the housing needs of these groups. However, the discourse on the self-segregation of the Roma is taking on a new shape, no longer based on their supposed nomadism, but on their deviant culture instead. When I asked Alvisè, a member of a subcontracting NGO working in a Roma camps, what he thought about the Italian Roma housing policy, this is what he replied:

Listen to me, the camps are a false problem. Most of the Roma don't live in camps and those who live there it's because they want to stay there, understood? Because they save money there and then they can use it in their dirty business. I'm used to it now, no matter what they say...<sup>55</sup>

Then I asked Alvisè why his association worked in Roma camps but he rapidly changed topic and repeated that most of the Roma do not live in camps. Although they acknowledge the problems with the Roma camps, these pro-Roma associations are the most reluctant to openly denounce the segregating effects of this policy. The position of these interviewees shows that these subcontracting associations working in the camps build their frame consistency on the basis of the cultural difference of the Roma. The Roma camps are in these cases conceived of as a policy for managing the diversity of the Roma, understood as either nomadism or deviance.

Alvisè's opinion remains, however, quite unique among the pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs working in camps. Although several agree that the camp is a space of disempowerment and de-responsibilisation, they do not directly blame the Roma and justify their work in the camps as aiming at breaking this tendency and initiating more empowering processes. In these cases, these associations frame their

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54 Informal conversation held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

55 Interview held in Rome on 29 October 2013.

actions as humanitarian. In an interview, Gregorio, now a former member of an NGO working in Roma camps, argued that the way the Roma camps have been implemented since their outset was to the detriment of the Roma living there because the associations isolated and infantilised them. For this reason, Gregorio's association aimed to empower the Roma by calling a halt to unnecessary services, such as meetings with the teachers of the schools:

Even though we work in the camps, our association is different from the others because we have a different approach to the schooling services and we aim at the empowerment and autonomy of the Roma families, something that other associations don't do. [...] It would be enough to do what we're already doing, that is, working on the autonomy of the families [...] favouring the direct relationships between schools and families. If the associations keep mediating between the two, segregation will persist because this feeds into the vicious circle of the isolation of the camps. But as long as the municipality insists on paying associations to provide unnecessary services that replace a direct relationships, the conditions to overcome the camps will never develop.<sup>56</sup>

Gregorio's association maintains its congruence by criticising the actual implementation of the Roma camps (disempowering and infantilising), by trying to restore the original idea of empowerment of this minority and by changing the problematic aspects of the camps from within.

Other subcontractors justify their work by using the discourse on the Roma camps as emergency policy, which is therefore not perfect but which, at least, provides the Roma with basic services. For instance, Alice, working for a pro-Roma advocacy group which also works with people living in the Roma camps, argued:

However bad they are, Roma camps at least provide residents with services, toilets, electricity, warm water... what is needed to properly survive. Then, they're located far away, they put so many people together, and this is not good, of course.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, Andrea, a member of a subcontracting NGO, although being aware of the temporary character of the Roma camps, acknowledged the improvements that this policy brought to the life of many Roma slum dwellers. The association for which Andrea works was often criticised during the interviews with pro-Roma advocacy groups for not committing strongly enough to the goal of closing the camps and for just

<sup>56</sup> Interview held in Rome on 6 December 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Interview held in Rome on 26 November 2013.

paying lip service to this cause. However, like Alice, Andrea used the idea of the camps as provisional relocation solution to justify the role of his association:

Before 1994 the Roma camps didn't exist but there were slums where people camped out, with just one water fountain and a few chemical toilets. At the beginning of the 1990s these situations were repaired and the camps were created. Originally these camps were supposed to be transition spaces, a first relocation solution [...]<sup>58</sup>

He also adopted a realistic and pragmatic stance, agreeing that the Roma camps negatively impact on the lives of residents and should be replaced by permanent and inclusive housing, but at the same time he recognised how difficult it would be to dismantle them and argued that the camps cannot be closed quickly:

The camps exist and these are the conditions. Me too, I could say 'let's close the camps down', but first we need to understand how to do it, how to get out of this. And we should acknowledge the fact that maybe it will take five, six, even seven years if we start today, and we need to start.

Moreover, in Andrea's opinion unemployment is the main source of the Roma marginalisation. Therefore, developing job placement programmes is more important than closing the camps:

It is often believed that housing is the priority [...] but the main problem is jobs! We need to understand what are the priorities. In the best of all possible worlds, camps shouldn't exist. But they exist... but the main problem is job! Let's say, today we close the camps and we give them a house... the morning after how do you maintain your house?

Andrea's association openly criticised the camps as spaces of segregation and exclusion, but managed to legitimise his association's work in these camps by mobilising the discourse of provisional relocation solution implemented to quickly meet the basic needs of slum dwellers. Despite their problematic aspects, the camps are not presented as the priority – since employment is the main problem – and are instead considered a pragmatic solution that cannot be easily changed.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the ideas of assimilation, humanitarian intervention, empowerment and temporary accommodation, all constitute different aspects of the Roma camps. These interviews have illustrated how these competing

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58 Interview held in Rome on 21 November 2013.

ideas underpinning the camps are mobilised by the pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs in order to show how their work as sub-contractors does not necessarily clash with their role as a pro-Roma association. While some argued that their work in the camp aims to educate and help them integrate into the rest of society, others acknowledge the limitations of the Roma camps and argue that their work aims to empower the Roma. As I show in the next section, a facilitated justification of the co-optation of pro-Roma associations has contributed to the persistence of the Roma camps by both toning down criticism and weakening opposition. While, in the 1990s, ambiguity smoothed the conflict between competing ideas on how to manage numbers of Roma slum dwellers and enabled the policy-makers to avoid a stalemate, throughout the years it has worked in favour of the co-optation of subcontracting NGOs, producing another stalemate of persistent temporariness.

### **Co-optation and depoliticisation: subcontracting NGOs and Roma representatives**

The participation of associations is usually celebrated as a positive aspect because it is thought to deepen democratic deliberation yet, as reminded by Silver et al. (2010, p.473), it “can also be exclusionary and perpetuate inequality”. This section discusses the effects of the involvement of pro-Roma associations as subcontractors of services, which resulted in co-optation and therefore reduced dissent (see Clough Marinaro and Daniele, 2014; Daniele 2011). Since the institution of the Roma camps in Rome in the early 1990s, pro-Roma associations have been included in board meetings and also worked as subcontractors of the municipality of Rome which outsourced the provision of services in the Roma camps, from surveillance and management activities to social services for the integration of the camp-residents.

This involvement has grown considerably over the last two decades, with increasing public outlays spent on the outsourcing of services in the camps. More recently, the municipality of Rome also decided to recognise the representatives of the camp-residents. Although Roma spokespersons have often been privileged interlocutors of the municipality, the Alemanno administration (2008-2013) decided to make the participation of Roma leaders official by appointing a mayor's counsellor and by holding elections of Roma representatives in the camps. However, the incorporation of

pro-Roma NGOs in the design and implementation of the Roma camps, rather than power-sharing with the Roma, has contributed to the depoliticisation and persistence of the Roma camps. Indeed, although associations might find incorporation appealing because new opportunities become available, “this incorporation is expected to be expressed in the forms envisaged by such context” (Però and Solomos, 2010, p.5), therefore it sometimes leads to co-optation.

Co-optation is a strategy often used by actors in a position of power (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011) to identify and tame dissenting actors by changing their goals and reducing their opportunities to dissent. Co-opting an association into institutionalised governance structures can indeed divert its activities to a new operational rationality “requiring them to fundraise, professionalize and seek legal, financial and other expertise” (Silver et al., 2010, p.461). As observed by Uitermark and Nicholls (2014, p.7), “[c]oopting through partnerships has been a common method to incorporate civil associations into policing plans” through two main mechanisms: “temporal delimitation” and “territorial encapsulation”. The first indicates the emergence of short-term objectives, while the second underscores the creation of projects focused on specific geographical areas, like neighbourhoods. Both changes constitute a pragmatic choice that facilitates access to government funding. However, while associations can in this way increase their funding, this also risks reducing their level of dissent and imposes an “administrative logic on their operations” (Uitermark and Nicholls, 2014, p.7). For this reason incorporation through partnership can lead to co-optation, which contributes to a depoliticisation of the associations and to a managerial governance (see Darling, 2016; Silver et al., 2010; Tyler et al., 2014; Uitermark and Nicholls, 2014). In the following pages I illustrate how the facilitated participation of some subcontracting NGOs and Roma representatives to the institutionalised governance of the Roma camps transformed into co-optation and contributed to their persistence.

### ***The economic interest of subcontracting NGOs***

Some members of pro-Roma advocacy groups argue that working for the municipality of Rome undermines the impartiality and autonomy of subcontracting NGOs and makes them less critical of Roma camps. Alessandro, a member of a pro-

Roma advocacy association, argues that his association does not work as subcontractor in the Roma camps because they “want to be absolutely free to do what [they] like, even to strongly contest and disagree with the policies adopted by the local administration”<sup>59</sup>. Alberto, of another pro-Roma advocacy group, made a similar point during an interview:

*Alberto:* Two years ago the municipality of Rome offered us ten employees to work for our association, for a total of 200,000 Euros a year. But we rejected the offer. [...] We didn't do it to show off, but because we want to be free.

*Gaja:* Are you saying that the associations that work in the camps are not free?

*Alberto:* Totally, of course they are not!<sup>60</sup>

As these interviewees maintain, and also as shown by the interviews reported in the previous section, pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs are not particularly critical of the Roma camps. Some of them acknowledge the limitations of the current state of the camps, mainly their segregating and isolating effect, but also argue that they provide better living conditions than informal settlements. Moreover, the Roma camps offer an opportunity for empowerment thanks to the work of the social workers. Despite acknowledging some of the problems with the Roma camps, most of the subcontracting NGOs do not participate in events organised by pro-Roma advocacy groups and rarely (openly) support campaigns against the Roma camps. In early 2016, the decision taken by some subcontractors to stop tendering for services in Roma camps was one of the few times they openly joined a campaign launched by pro-Roma advocacy groups. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *Associazione 21 Luglio* publicly called on subcontracting NGOs to boycott the new tenders advertised by the municipality of Rome because the tenders marked a continuation rather than a change in the way the Roma camps are managed. Although in this case the subcontracting NGOs responded to the call of *Associazione 21 Luglio*, when a similar campaign was launched against the opening of the Roma camp Barbuta in 2012 they still went ahead with tendering for contracts.

The difficulty in developing coalitions between pro-Roma advocacy groups and subcontracting NGOs stems from their different operational logics. While the former are more committed to struggles for equality, the latter focus on delivering specific projects for which they need public funding. Indeed, as pointed out by Uitermark and Nicholls

<sup>59</sup> Interview held in Rome on 22 October 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Interview held in Rome on 21 November 2013.



(2014, p.8), “the propensity of civil actors to engage with one another to form radical counterpublics decreases as their dependence on the state increases”. Associations that are incorporated into institutionalised governance structures start relying on public funding and therefore adapt the logic of their actions, weaken their end goals and favour more short-term and geographically delimited claims and projects. These two different views were evident in a letter co-signed by *Associazione 21 Luglio*, an advocacy group, and *Arcisolidarietà*, a subcontracting NGO, released in 2013, which demanded the dismantling of the Roma camps, while at the same time asking for the protection for their employees (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2013a). On the one hand, *Associazione 21 Luglio* was mainly concerned with the rights of the Roma camp-residents, while on the other *Arcisolidarietà* aimed to secure the rights of the people working in the Roma camps. These two radically different views made this coalition too fragile and it soon crumbled. For instance, *Arcisolidarietà* did not join the petition launched in 2015 by *Associazione 21 Luglio* for the closure of the Roma camps.

This difference is even more marked in times of economic crisis (see Maestri, 2014), when subcontracting NGOs mobilise to secure their access to shrinking public funding. For example, on the morning of 14 October 2013 I was going to the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office of the municipality of Rome in the hope of arranging some interviews. When I arrived, a group of about one hundred people were gathered in front of the main entrance. There were several banners, someone taking pictures and some journalists. I approached a lady and enquired about the reason for the demonstration. She said that the municipality did not want to pay the subcontractors working in the Roma centres, including the Cartiera, so *Alleanza delle Cooperative* (Alliance of Cooperatives) organised a protest to lobby the Assessor for Social Policies to continue paying for their service. A resident of the Cartiera centre joined the conversation, and started explaining that the municipality had not paid the subcontracting association for four months. She claimed that if this did not change they would not be able to provide services in the centre anymore.

When I talked about the aforementioned demonstration with Alessandro, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy group, he told me that he knew about it and claimed that the manager of the Cartiera used the Roma to further their own economic interest:

We are in contact with them [the residents of the Cartiera centre] and they called us the day before saying “the mediators of the cooperative are forcing us to attend the demonstration!”<sup>61</sup>

It is difficult to prove that the Cartiera's managing association actually forced the residents to attend the demonstration, but the opinion that some associations exploit the presence of the Roma to strengthen their position while, in practice, aiming to protect their vested interests is shared by other associations. This is what a member of a Roma advocacy association, Roberto, told me about a similar demonstration organised by a subcontracting NGO at risk of budget cuts:

The guys who lost their jobs set up a protest in front of the municipal office. They were 25 and brought 100 Roma with them, some of whom were employed by the subcontracting association as translators and cultural mediators. After the demonstration they managed to speak to a council member, three of them participated in the negotiations – and, obviously, none of these three were Roma workers – with also union members. They were all hired again, but all the Roma were sacked. It's evident that these bunch of non-Roma workers were fighting for their own rights, and they did not give a damn about the Roma community that just becomes a sack of potatoes that everyone can use for their own political and economic interests!<sup>62</sup>

There is no evidence to back up Roberto's claims and, as reminded at the beginning of this chapter, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate the reasons for the actions of subcontracting NGOs. However, the protests of subcontracting NGOs against the cuts, rather than their support for campaigns denouncing the disempowering and segregating effects of the Roma camps, reveal that their priorities are different from those of pro-Roma advocacy groups because of their reliance on public funding for their work.

The funding made available to subcontracting NGOs in the city of Rome is higher than in other Italian cities and, as a consequence, this increases their dependence on public money. Furthermore, the difficulty in navigating the intricate bureaucracy about budget decisions and funding allocation (Berenice et al., 2013), facilitates the obfuscation around the financial benefits of ‘helping’ the Roma. This situation was exacerbated with the declaration of a state of emergency in 2008. Even though the

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61 Interview held in Rome on 22 October 2013.

62 Interview held in Rome on 18 November 2013.

measures vis-à-vis the Roma community have been, since the early 1990s, characterised by an emergency and ad hoc approach, in 2008 for the first time a state of emergency was nationally declared. In 2001 (Law 401/2001), ‘major events’ (like the organisation of the G8 in L’Aquila and the swimming World Cup, both held in Rome in 2009) were included in a list of scenarios requiring support from Civil Protection, i.e. the agency in charge of the protection of the population in case of national disasters. This reform enabled the government to extend emergency power legislations beyond natural disasters. These extra powers involve additional public funding and accelerated subcontractors’ selection procedures, often not subject to the same controls as under ordinary rule. For instance, as illustrated in Chapter 1, from 2005 to 2011 the municipality of Rome spent almost 70 million Euros on the Roma camps (Berenice et al., 2013). The expenses doubled in 2009 after the declaration of the Nomad Emergency in 2008, during which the municipality of Rome received a total of 32 million Euros (Stasolla, 2012). This funding was used for the exceptional measures adopted during the Nomad Emergency (such as the increased police surveillance of the Roma camps), while ordinary managing and schooling services accounted for another 30 million Euros. Moreover, the breakdown of expenditure showed that most of this money went to maintenance and security services providers, while the funding on activities to promote integration only came to 0.4 per cent of the total amount (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2014a).

The disproportionate allocation of financial resources to subcontractors involved in the management and maintenance of the Roma camps, rather than to social activities, cast doubt both on the actual commitment of the municipality of Rome to the betterment of the living conditions of the Roma living in camps, as well as on the effects of the involvement of subcontracting NGOs, which are accused of prioritising their economic interest over the empowerment of the Roma. For this reason, Alberto, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy group, compared the system of the Roma camps to “a company that makes millions of Euros and with hundreds of employees”<sup>63</sup>. Subcontractors are criticised for being dependent on public funding, and consequently not advocating the dismantlement of the Roma camps, because this would imply losing a considerable source of income. On the one hand, by increasing the public funding available, the

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63 Interview held in Rome on 21 November 2013.

municipality of Rome incorporates pro-Roma associations into the institutionalised governance of the Roma camps, curbing their criticism. On the other, subcontractors specialise in the provision of services for the Roma camps in order to maximise their economic gains, thereby sacrificing their goal of improving the living conditions of the Roma.

This interdependence culminated in the Capital Mafia scandal that involved politicians, public officials, members of subcontracting NGOs and criminal organisations in a corrupt network. The associations controlled by the criminal organisation rigged the call for tenders for subcontractors working in the Roma camps, both through bribery involving money and also other favours (like securing jobs for family members) and through the use of threats and violence. Not all associations are directly involved in corruption and legally participate in the management of the services in the Roma camps. However they are still more or less intentionally part of a system in which acquiring public funding becomes one of the main objectives, and lobbying on behalf of the Roma seems of secondary importance. It is not the aim of this work to judge whether subcontracting associations intentionally change their goals, or if this is an unintended effect of the strategies they need to develop if they want to obtain funding for their activities. Notwithstanding the intentions of the members of the associations, the effect of the incorporation of subcontracting NGOs goes hand in hand with a reduction of their criticism of the Roma camps. In the next section I discuss how the incorporation of Roma representatives became a way to control dissent amongst camp-residents.

### ***Minimising dissent through Roma representatives***

The institutionalisation of Roma representatives was firstly introduced during the Alemanno administration (2008–2013) which decided to hold official elections in the Roma camps in order to elect five representatives for the so-called Representation Committee (Stasolla, 2012). The elections were held in 2011 in only two camps (Salone and Camping River) and eventually no committee was created, also because the initiative was abandoned when the Nomad Emergency Decree was annulled in 2013. Giacomo, a public official in the municipal Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity

and Health told me that the Marino administration (2013-2015) wanted to adopt a new regulation for the Roma camps, possibly including elections of democratically elected camp representatives:

The election of camp representatives is like the election of a block representative. There are block representatives and so in the camps there should be one or more representatives. Then our goal is surely the overcoming of mono-ethnic camps, with the cohabitation of different groups, and depending on the number of camp residents there should be as many representatives, elected with transparency and with equal possibility for everyone to be elected, with a proper election regulation [...] like the one for government elections. Surely there will be limitations with regard to possible legal troubles, in order to have the good persons, with goodwill, and interested in their community and not those who work in their own private interest. Unfortunately, in the past – and not only in the last five years – some of the representatives were elected more for their economic power or they were directly appointed by the administrations, which elected those that agreed with them.<sup>64</sup>

However, as of today, no regulation for the Roma camps has been adopted and the idea of elections has not been further discussed.

There are a number reasons for which the interviewees believe the elections failed to engage the Roma. Firstly, the idea of camp elections is quite controversial: while some think that it can be a good idea, others believe that it is just another method of segregation, and that the lack of political participation by the Roma should be tackled more generally by fostering their participation in local and national elections, like the rest of the Italian population. Secondly, those who are positive about the idea of elections think that they were, however, not appropriately implemented and that the Roma population was not really involved in a process that was, in the end, just a way to pay lip service to the principle of participation in order to legitimise the choices of the municipality.

For some of the interviewees, the idea of camp elections implies legitimising the existence of the camp, as argued by Roberto, a Roma member of a pro-Roma association:

It's not a right way of involving people. I don't accept camps elections simply because I don't accept camps!

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<sup>64</sup> Interview held in Rome on 13 November 2013.

He continued, pointing to the exclusionary effect of these elections, which he said constitute a way to secure compliance among the Roma through the co-optation of some leaders and keep them separate from broader political processes:

I mean, if you wanna be elected, then run for the municipal elections! Because otherwise they keep you in the camp, they make you do the elections in the camp, and then if they need electoral support for a candidate running for the local elections they ask *your* vote for *them*!

Similarly, Alberto, a member of another pro-Roma advocacy group, said: *Alberto*: We are against everything that legitimises the camps, for this reason we do activities like education of children and teenagers, but all our work is outside the camp because for us every single action inside the camp legitimises the camp, which is a system that needs be changed. [...]

*Gaja*: But the municipality argues that the camp representative could be seen as a sort of block representative... *Alberto*: But what's the purpose of an election like this?! I mean, they can't impose it, can they? ...they might as well simply take the decisions for them, then, it wouldn't change anything! [...] They did similar things in the past, to bring democracy in the camps, to civilise them. That's what's really going on for us. That's why it is totally pointless, they can do it but they can't do anything good with it.

Another interviewee, Clorinda, an official working for the municipality of Rome during the Marino administration (2013-2015), argued that the electoral participation of the Roma should be understood in broader terms and not confined to the camp:

We should be clearer about that. The Alemanno administration started a democratisation discourse with elections in the camps, but the process should be made more transparent and we should also clarify what is the purpose of all this. Because if they are Italian citizens, they should be invited to participate in Italian elections. I would widen the perspective and acknowledge their belonging to a broader community than the Roma one, because otherwise we just leave them among themselves and it's hard to fight against it.<sup>65</sup>

There were also interviewees that think of elections as potentially positive but that these elections were not done appropriately. For instance, the rules of the elections held in 2011 were not clear. During an interview with Iancu, an elected representative of an official camp, it emerged that the voting procedures were supervised by the personnel of the municipality of Rome, but it was not clear how the candidates were chosen. Apparently, he claimed, only those who were already acknowledged as spokespersons

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65 Interview held in Rome on 4 November 2013.

of the communities could run as candidates.<sup>66</sup> Iancu was already known by the municipality because he was working in several Roma associations. Iancu argued that the idea of Roma representatives is not bad in itself, but the elections were not really done with the intention of fostering a real Roma representation so much as to reduce the number of people officially entitled to directly interact with the municipality. The following is an excerpt of the field notes I took during the interview with Iancu:

The decision to hold elections in the camps does not really contribute to the development of a Roma representation, but it is in the interest of the institutions. Iancu argues that the main goal is actually to ignore the voice of Roma communities, by dealing with as few people as possible, i.e. only the representatives, and preventing too many people from complaining to the municipality. So the municipality can say something like “no, you haven't got the right to complain, you should ask your representative to do it for you!” This is why, in Iancu's opinion, the creation of formal Roma representation has damaging and negative effects on the expression of a Roma voice.<sup>67</sup>

The formalisation of the Roma representatives is thought to strengthen the segregation of the Roma in the camps rather than giving the Roma a voice. In addition to this, some have argued that Roma representatives are used to control and repress potential Roma dissent. For instance, in 2010, during the Nomad Emergency, the Alemanno administration (2008-2013) decided to appoint a mayor's counsellor who could work on innovative ways to promote the Roma's inclusion, education, job placement and cultural mediation. However, nothing was done to improve the inclusion of the Roma while Alemanno's counsellor, Najo Adzovic, was in office but, as shown in Chapter 1, during the Nomad Emergency security was the top priority. A large number of associations in Rome, including public officials working for the municipality of Rome, maintain that the reason for the appointment of Najo Adzovic as the mayor's counsellor was to facilitate the eviction of the informal settlement Casilino 900, of which Adzovic was the spokesperson. Enrico, who worked on a research project with the residents of the Casilino 900, argued that Najo Adzovic initially started collaborating with the local administration in the hope of a better alternative for the residents of Casilino 900 but was later co-opted and received bribes to silence dissent:

It was Najo that made the Casilino 900 eviction possible, there is no

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<sup>66</sup> Insights from an unrecorded interview held with Iancu, representative of an official camp. The interview was held in Rome on 6 December 2013.

<sup>67</sup> Field notes taken during the interview with Iancu, held in Rome on 6 December 2013.

doubt about that. He accepted a series of promises... he even finally became the mayor's counsellor! When he realised that they [i.e. the municipality] were not doing anything [good for the Roma of Casilino 900], he became really disappointed and started saying that [while in office at the municipality of Rome] he photocopied every receipt of the payments he received. We know that this material is somewhere out there. But few days after he said that, he was arrested! After he started speaking out against the municipality, he was put under house arrest. [...] He's screwed now, no credibility whatsoever. But, politically, he's the best figure among all the Roma in Rome. If only he were more honest... because he is really an intelligent man! He should have been more aware of what they had in store for him. [...] He started this process thinking that they [i.e. the municipality] would have offered them a new housing solution, but then it ended up this way. Now he has lost the support of all his community...<sup>68</sup>

This and other informal conversations with members of associations point to the fact that the institutionalised participation of Roma camp spokespersons often does not work in the real interest of the Roma, but is a way to make evictions and relocations smoother and to secure the compliance of the communities by offering power positions to a small Roma elite. Davide, a member of a pro-Roma association, was convinced that the involvement of Roma representatives and associations concealed a strategy of control of the Roma population by 'buying' the compliance of their representatives:

It is even worse than representation, I'd say it's exactly the contrary, it's a tool of discipline and government. The perfect example of this thing is what happened in the camp of Savini street. One of the reasons the Roma accepted to be relocated was – and there are plenty of evidences in official documents of this – that the association managed by a couple of the camp's representatives received a huge amount of public money, of course officially through public tender for the maintenance works of the camps. [...] And it's always been like this, it's been like this for the eviction of the Tor de' Cenci settlement and the relocation to the Barbuta camps, it's been like this for the Casilino 900, for those who've been relocated to the Salone camp. In certain cases real money have been paid, like for the case of Savini settlement and the relocation to Castel Romano, in other cases the money were just promised.

As in the case of the economic interest of subcontracting associations, it is impossible to know if the Roma spokespersons intentionally start collaborating with the local administration to further their own private interest, or because they actually think

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68 Interview held in Rome on 20 November 2013.



this could increase their power when negotiating on behalf of their communities. Regardless of the reason behind the collaboration with the municipality of Rome, the example of Najo Adzovic shows the limits of the system of participation of Roma representatives that, as observed by Daniele (2011), is often imposed from the top and shaped by the same logic with which the municipality regards the Roma, i.e. as a separate and passive homogenous group that is incapable of organising politically and that therefore needs an authority deciding how they should represent themselves.

### **The ‘buffering effect’ of co-optation: isolating and controlling the Roma**

The co-optation of pro-Roma associations and Roma representatives resulted in reduced criticism towards the Roma camps. Subcontracting NGOs depoliticised their activities as they prioritised access to public funding over the goal of improving the living conditions of the Roma and, similarly, Roma representatives helped implement controversial measures for their own economic and political advancement. In addition to this, the intrusive presence of associations in the camps represses dissent towards the Roma camps through what I term a ‘buffering effect’. This involves monopolising access to the Roma camps and inhibiting contact between the camp-residents and the outside, on the one hand, and in controlling expressions of dissent, on the other. The Cartiera centre epitomises the ‘buffering’ power of subcontracting associations.

The Roma reception centre Cartiera opened in 2009 and it is currently in the process of being closed, although there are protests against its closure because no alternative relocation has yet been offered to its residents. As of today it houses approximately 380 people, mainly Bosnian, Montenegrin and Romanian Roma (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2015). The Cartiera is an old paper factory located in the northern part of Rome, in a building with a tall and heavy gate patrolled 24/7 (Figure 5.2) and therefore, entering without a permission, or without being seen by some of the guards, is virtually impossible. The social life of the centre mainly occurs in the backyard of the building (Figure 5.1), adjacent to a smelly municipal waste disposal area. In the backyard there are some kitchen corners where groups of women can cook because inside there are no kitchen facilities. The residents sleep in changing rooms in the internal part of the factory. When the centre was opened, they were sleeping

together in the main hall of the factory, using some bedsheets to divide the space and to seek privacy. After the *Associazione 21 Luglio* complained to the municipality about the lack of privacy, changing rooms were provided. However, they are not big enough for a family with three or four children as they are only 12m<sup>2</sup> each (*Associazione 21 Luglio*, 2015). With only one toilet for 20 users on average, toilet facilities are inadequate, and there is only one room with one television and video game console for social activities.



Figure 5.1 – The entrance gate of the Cartiera centre

I visited the Cartiera centre twice, the first time in September 2013 with members of the *Associazione 21 Luglio* and the second time a month later alone with a friend who came with me out of interest. Both times, the workers of the managing associations kindly welcomed us and showed us around, but did not allow us to take pictures, for which, they argued, we needed special authorisation from the municipality. The two visits were equally important as they gave me different perspectives on the centre, both in terms of managing access and with regard to the control of the residents.



Figure 5.2 – The backyard of the Cartiera centre

### ***Monopolising the access to the camp***

During the first visit to the Cartiera centre in September 2013 I was with some of the members of *Associazione 21 Luglio* and a couple of municipal councillors. At the main entrance the guard asked us for an authorisation card which we did not have, but the presence of municipal councillors enabled us to enter easily, even without authorisation. Inside, we were welcomed by the manager and social operators of the centres, who stayed with us for the entire duration of the visit. The members of *Associazione 21 Luglio* asked them why we were asked for authorisation to enter the camp given that there is no current official regulation requiring official permission. Lucia, the director of the centre, first said that the authorisation is actually an official requirement, but soon corrected herself saying that it was mainly a matter of security, that everyone was actually free to come and go whenever they wanted and, she said, she felt sorry we had been given the impression that the centre was a confined space. We then continued our visit, at the end of which I asked Massimiliano, one of the employees of the subcontracting association managing the Cartiera if I could go back to do some interviews and he told me I was more than welcome to visit them again. I asked him if I needed special authorisation and he said: “Don't worry about it... no need

to ask anyone, you just come here and you ask for me!”<sup>69</sup>. So, without the need for authorisation – different from what was initially stated by the director of the centre – I went to the Cartiera for the second time.

As shown in this example, the managing subcontractor of the Cartiera wields a huge discretionary power in deciding who can enter the centre. Although there is no official regulation of the camps, in practice to access them one needs either to know someone working for a pro-Roma association or to have an official authorisation from the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office of the municipality of Rome, which is often difficult to obtain. Most of the time access to camps is denied on the basis that this could harm the residents' privacy. Contacting the *Associazione 21 Luglio* enabled me to access and visit some of the official Roma camps in Rome. The *Associazione 21 Luglio* has a privileged position in this regard as they have a wide knowledge of the Roma settlements in the Italian capital city, and know many camp-residents. This allows them to have access to the camps through direct links with people living there. At times, however, they can also experience more difficulties in accessing the camp because they are known for being at the forefront of political mobilisation against the Roma camps. For instance, when visiting the official camp Cesarina, we were let in promptly because there were municipal councillors in the group – as in the case of Cartiera – but the members of the *Associazione 21 Luglio* used fake names in order not to be recognised. This shows how the space of the Roma camp, far from being an abandoned space of exclusion, is a complex socio-spatial and political machine in which access is governed by actors, gates and fences that work without formal rules. This hinders contact with other associations that are not officially working with the municipality of Rome. Alessandro, who works for a pro-Roma advocacy group, said:

Almost paradoxically, to carry out activities in informal settlements is far easier than trying to work in the official camps, because in the camps there is a pyramidal system of associations and cooperatives that hinders direct contact with the outside.<sup>70</sup>

“Almost paradoxically”, he said, because one would expect an informal settlement to be more marginal and difficult to access than institutionalised official camps. Yet, it is this precise institutionalisation of control through associations (that are supposed to help the

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69 Informal conversation held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

70 Interview held in Rome on 22 October 2013.

Roma) that makes the access to these spaces so difficult. This control does not only affect the access of other associations to the official Roma camps, but also extends to other venues of participation of associations working on Roma issues. Alessandro continued:

There was a meeting of subcontracting associations a few months ago but it was behind a locked-door. The speakers were already decided without the possibility for others to participate.<sup>71</sup>

The co-optation of subcontracting associations not only limits their opportunities to speak out about the problematic aspects of the Roma camps, but also hinders the participation of associations that do not agree with segregation. Furthermore, as I illustrate in the next section, the intrusive presence of subcontracting NGOs in the camps reduces the freedom of expression of the residents and their contact with visitors.

### ***Steering the complaints of the residents***

During visits to the Cartiera centre I also noticed subordinate power relationships between the Roma residents and the members of the subcontracting associations. The presence of social operators throughout the visit, and the enclosed and restrained physical space of the building, hindered spontaneous interaction with the Roma who were always under the vigilant gaze of the managers. The first time, while we were having a conversation with the director of the centre, a Roma lady living in the centre, who was also employed by the managing association as organiser of the children's sport activities, was invited to join the discussion. She started confirming that the centre was a free space, just as the director of the centre told us, and that they enjoyed living there. But, suddenly, a few seconds later she raised her voice and started saying that she was “fed up with centres and camps”, that she wanted to find a house, and then left. While leaving she turned again towards us, adding that it was not true that the centre was a free space, that her children went to school but could never invite friends home so they could do their homework together.<sup>72</sup> This sudden shift gave the impression that what the Roma say in front of the managers is not always what they

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71 Ibid.

72 Unrecorded conversation with Roma women resident of Cartiera centre held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

think.

The managers then led us through to the main backyard where there were kitchens and washing spaces and where people spent most of their time given the lack of space inside the building. A man carrying his daughter in his arm told me that he was relocated to the Cartiera centre in 2009 and he still lived there even though he did not like it. At one point he waved to me and tried to get my attention by whispering something I could not hear. I went closer to him and, always whispering, he repeated that he was not free to tell me everything he wanted because “they” [i.e. the managing association] controlled him. “If you pay them, you're fine”, he said, but then added that he could not tell me more than that. He stopped as soon as a worker of the subcontracting NGOs came closer, and kept walking with us.<sup>73</sup> I tried to ask him more about what he told me but he warned me not to ask him too much because otherwise “they” would have been upset with him for telling me things that “they” did not like, and then he walked away. Towards the end of the visit the municipal councillors asked a group of the residents what they did not like and what they wanted to change in the centre. Women started shouting “washing machines, hot water!” The managers of the centres looked at us smiling and Lucia, the director of the Cartiera, said:

But that's not true... They always complain, and I say, let them complain, because this is absolutely not true... look at the others, look at how many don't say anything.<sup>74</sup>

Someone started complaining about the fact that, as residents, they could not have guests. This appeared an extremely controversial topic: while the Roma lady working for the managing association said that the centre was a free place, later adding that her children could actually not invite friends, someone else added that families were allowed to visit but only for half an hour. At the same time the managers claimed that it was possible to have guests, later specifying that they were not allowed at night because of security reasons: “they party, they eat, drink and get drunk and then they start fighting”<sup>75</sup>. While the managers and residents were arguing, a woman was staring at us, shaking her head silently. When we started to leave and were almost at the gate, she ran towards us and told us not to believe what they said, that no guests were allowed in the

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<sup>73</sup> Insights from unrecorded interview with a Roma man resident of the Cartiera centre held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Informal conversation held in Rome on 21 September 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

centre.

During my second visit, I was taken by Stella, a linguistic mediator working for the managing association of the camp, who offered to support me in case some residents did not understand my questions (the residents are from Romania and, since I do not speak Romanian, I was asking questions in Italian). Although I do not deny that the mediator had good intentions, her translations filtered the interviews. She often replied on behalf of the residents or helped them formulate the answers, as if the residents were not able to express themselves while, in my opinion, their level of Italian was more than adequate and they could understand everything I asked. Although Stella seemed to have a friendly relationship with the residents, my impression was that her presence inhibited open discussion, apart from when the residents had an explicitly positive opinion about the centre.

The mediating effect of the association was evident also during the protest organised in October 2013 and illustrated above. By speaking with the people at the demonstration it emerged that the residents were there in support of the subcontracting association managing the centre because they were strongly convinced that the only alternative to the centre was the street, which does not correspond to the view of many pro-Roma associations that propose other solutions. This is an excerpt from my field notes describing the conversation I had with a resident of a Roma centre:

I asked her some questions, like why they were there. She confirmed that they went in support of the association, because if the association closed, they did not know where else to go. They heard that the newspapers said that the Cartiera centre was going to close soon and they didn't want this to happen because they feared it would have meant to go back in the street. I asked her if someone had told them about other housing alternatives, but she said "no", nobody ever gave them alternatives of any kind, they were absolutely sure that if the association was not paid this would have forced them to live in the street and they didn't want this to happen.<sup>76</sup>

These examples show how subcontracting associations not only wield high discretionary power with regard to who is entitled to access the space of the camp, keeping out potential critics, but they also control the voices of the camp-residents, who are hindered from freely express their opinions about their living conditions and from

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<sup>76</sup> Field notes from an unrecorded conversation I had with two Roma women residents of the Cartiera centre in Rome on 14 October 2013.

learning about the alternatives.

## **Conclusion**

Justification of the involvement of pro-Roma associations in the management of the Roma camps facilitates their co-optation and silences criticism of contentious Roma housing policies. Co-operation with institutions leads associations to reduce the geographical and temporal focus of their projects and to increase their specialisation in order to win public funding, prioritising a different logic from that of associations that do not work for the municipality. For example, subcontracting associations specialise in specific projects for Roma camps and a decrease in funding would inevitably affect their activities. For this reason there have been protests against the cuts to the service providers in camps. Without intentionally and explicitly supporting the segregation of the Roma, subcontracting associations fighting against the reduction of public funding prioritise their own financial interests and the working rights of their employees, therefore feeding into the persistence of the Roma camps. This different operational logic distances them from pro-Roma advocacy groups that, as a consequence, struggle to build coalitions with them and to access the Roma camps. Furthermore, through the recognition of Roma representatives and through the intrusive presence of subcontracting NGOs in the camps, the potential dissent of the camp-residents is also minimised.

This chapter has shown how the ambiguity of a policy can deeply affect the types of change it undergoes: the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps is a product of their ambiguous design that has contributed to a process of depoliticisation. As illustrated in Chapter 2 there are, however, varied types of persistent temporariness, such as in the case of the French transit estates and integration villages. The next chapter aims to tease out if ambiguity can offer a helpful conceptual tool for understanding these cases too.



**CHAPTER 6****The relationship between ambiguity and policy change:  
a comparative perspective****Introduction**

Economic migrants who arrived in France after the end of the Second World War found themselves in a situation similar to that experienced by the Roma in the camps of Rome a generation later. During the postwar housing crisis, they started building makeshift shelters in informal settlements but were soon evicted and relocated to supposedly temporary housing projects, called ‘transit estates’, which persisted for decades. The persistence of the transit estates, mainly those where Algerian migrants lived, indelibly marked the history of French immigration, revealing the deep-rooted racism towards former colonial subjects and persistent segregation. The story of these relocation estates was soon, however, erased in the memory of policy-makers who, less than twenty years later, re-proposed a similar temporary relocation policy for Roma slum dwellers. While in the Italian case, as illustrated in the previous chapter, the presence of an ambiguous policy design enhanced the power of actors supporting the Roma camps, in the French transit estates and integration villages, the less ambiguous policy design favoured the claims of the critics.

This chapter analyses the French transit estates and integration villages in order to show how different types of policy ambiguity can lead to different sorts of policy change. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is an asymmetrical comparison, whereby the French cases are used with the purpose of corroborating the argument on the relationship between policy ambiguity and change that emerged out of the analysis of the Italian Roma camps. Therefore, the investigation illustrated here focuses on the concept of ambiguity and does not claim to provide an exhaustive analysis of the change undergone by the transit estates and integration villages.

The first part of the chapter summarises the important role played by ambiguity

in the persistence of the Roma camps. The second part focuses on the transit estates and discusses their ambiguity, which is characterised by a progressive clarification and formalisation of the policy design, but also by ambiguous implementation. More precisely, the persistence and deteriorating conditions of certain transit estates contrasted with their supposed temporariness and characteristics. By targeting this mismatch and drawing on policy guidelines, the associations fighting against the transit estates managed to strengthen their claims and speed up the final relocation of residents to council housing estates. For this reason, as discussed in Chapter 2, the evolution of the transit estates can be read as a form of ‘replacement’. The third part of the chapter deals with the integration villages and offers a description of their ambiguities, mainly due to clear yet contrasting policy objectives that have produced an ambiguous implementation. Indeed, while the villages aim to promote Roma housing inclusion, they are often closed before this is achieved. As the villages are defined in a less ambiguous way, pro-Roma associations demanding the housing inclusion of the Roma frame their claims within the objectives of this housing policy, protracting the duration of some of the villages and leading to a form of ‘layering’, as illustrated in Chapter 2.

### **The role of ambiguity in policy conversion and other forms of gradual change**

From the analysis of the Italian case, it emerged that the policy ambiguity of the Roma camp, i.e. of its goals and definition, defused criticism and hence contributed to the persistence of this controversial housing policy. As discussed in Chapter 2, although there is a nominal persistence of the Roma camps, this apparent continuity conceals a gradual form of change whereby the existing policy is redirected (i.e. ‘conversion’). While the Roma camps were initially created to tackle the housing exclusion faced by Roma asylum seekers arriving from former Yugoslavia and living in informal settlements, they eventually became a source of Roma housing exclusion. In the previous chapter I have shown how ambiguity played a crucial role in enabling this shift. Created in the 1990s as part of a strategy to ease the agreement between conflicting actors, the ambiguous character of the Roma camps did not directly cause their persistence but facilitated certain actors and mechanisms that led to persistent temporariness. This reveals how policy instruments cannot be reduced to precise and

straightforward implementations of rational policy designs, but should be regarded as the product of negotiations and power relations. Moreover, in contrast with a more traditional understanding of the policy process, policy devices are not the neutral and passive end result of a policy decision, but can influence the power relations of actors participating in governance networks, which has important consequences for the possibility for change (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007). For example, ‘conversion’ is “produced by actors who actively exploit the inherent ambiguities of the institutions” (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010, p.17). In the case of the Roma camps, policy ambiguity affected the types of framings, opportunities and resources available to the actors participating in the camp governance.

By providing different interpretations of the Roma camp, ambiguity offered subcontracting NGOs that present themselves as both pro-Roma and pro-camps a framing opportunity to reconcile their paradoxical position. By discursively mobilising and adapting the different ideas and aspects simultaneously characterising the Roma camps, subcontracting NGOs developed flexible framings that help them to maintain the coherence between their stated goals and actions and therefore to justify their co-optation into governance structures. As Matland (1995) points out, ambiguity is often negatively correlated with conflict: when ambiguity is high, conflict between opposite parties tend to be lower. In the case of the Roma camps, ambiguity indeed functioned as a way to lower the potential conflicts between pro-Roma associations and the municipality. As illustrated in the previous chapter, it favoured the co-optation into institutionalised governance structures of subcontracting NGOs which toned down their disapproval of the segregating effects of the Roma camps and the lack of alternative housing inclusion programmes. Furthermore, the incorporation of pro-Roma subcontracting NGOs into the system reduced the socio-organisational resources available to the opponents of the Roma camps, i.e. the possibility of finding allies and developing networks to sustain their claims (see Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). Indeed, as illustrated earlier, pro-Roma advocacy associations struggle to build coalitions with subcontracting NGOs because of their different operational logics. However, ambiguity is not the only factor leading to policy change as institutional characteristics enable different types of change depending on the surrounding political context (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010). For instance, in the case of the Roma camps, subcontracting NGOs could

also rely on considerable financial support from institutional actors. Ambiguity, by facilitating the increase in financial resources of subcontracting NGOs and by weakening the possibilities of coalitions of pro-Roma advocacy associations, contributed to the gradual ‘conversion’ of the Roma camps.

In order to conduct a more general investigation into how ambiguity influences types of policy change, this chapter compares the Roma camps, transit estates and integration villages. As illustrated in Chapter 2, these cases constitute three different types of gradual change, namely, ‘conversion’, ‘replacement’ and ‘layering’ respectively. The aim of this comparison is to verify if the concept of ambiguity, which emerged from the analysis of the Italian case, can also contribute to an understanding of the types of gradual change in the French case studies.

### **Transit estates: an increasingly clear policy design and replacement**

The transit estates were characterised by a progressive institutionalisation, as introduced in Chapter 2. Created in the 1960s as relocation solutions for evicted slum dwellers and implemented in different ways by local government, they became the object of national legislation in the 1970s, mainly through the 1970 Vivien Law and a circular adopted in 1972. These legal documents formalised the transit estates' transitory character (whereby residents were only supposed to stay for a maximum of two years) and also the importance of the socio-educational activities as a key aspect in the integration process of the residents (Cohen and David, 2012). However, people have remained in the transit estates for several years, many until the 1980s. In this section I discuss the ambiguity characterising the transit estates and how it affected the actors opposing this form of segregation. In contrast to the Roma camps, I show that the transit estates were shaped by relatively clear policy design (which became clearer as the role of national government became more important) but policy implementation was ambiguous. I argue that this “institutional incoherence” (Streeck and Thelen, 2005, p.31), i.e. the mismatch between clear policy design and an ambivalent implementation, played to the strengths of the groups advocating alternative housing solutions.

### ***Ambiguities in the transit estates***

Despite being presented as short-term housing solutions, the transit estates were

seldom temporary places, especially for large and poor families. As observed by Blanc-Chaléard (2006, p.8):

[T]he transition does not transit, but [...] it has been increasingly resorted to, mainly during the phase of great slum removals after 1970.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, for most of the people who entered the transit estates “the duration of the stay is far from the planned two-year transition period” (Cohen, 2013, p.572) and many transit estates in the Hauts-de-Seine department lasted more than the ten years stated in the law adopted in 1970 (Cohen, 2013). For examples, Blanc-Chaléard (2008) reports that in 1975 around 30 percent of the families living in transit estates had been there for more than five years. She also shows that in 1976, in France, more than 120,000 people lived in transit estates and that in 1977 the average turn-over was only 10 percent. The phenomenon on the ground starkly contradicted the legal framework developed at the beginning of the 1970s, mainly in Hauts-de-Seine. As declared by Bruno, a former member of LPS (*Logement et Promotion Sociale*), an association organising the social activities in the transit estates, “they were called transit estates, people should have been there temporarily, but actually they stayed”<sup>77</sup>.

Gutenberg and Pont de Bezons, built in 1971, were the last transit estates built in Nanterre, a municipality in Hauts-de-Seine department. The local authority held back from building others because, in 1969 this department already hosted 65 percent of the transit estates across the entire Paris region. For this reason after 1970 most of the people arriving from the informal settlements of Nanterre were relocated to Seine-Saint-Denis and other departments in the Paris region (Cohen, 2013). The fact that the last transit estates in Hauts-de-Seine were built just before the 1971 and 1972 circulars meant that the situation on the ground in this department was particularly different from the legal framework that emerged during the 1970s. For example, the transit estates in Hauts-de-Seine persisted, with people living there for several more years than the two they were officially supposed to. For instance in the Pont de Bezons estate, the turn-over was between 7 and 11 percent in 1973 and 1974 (Cohen, 2013). In the 1980s still more than 4,500 people lived in the transit estates in Nanterre (Abdallah, 2006). As Bruno, the former LPS employee, put it:

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<sup>77</sup> Interview held in Meudon on 24 June 2014.

These estates had to be in theory transitory, but unfortunately they never really and truly constituted a transition.<sup>78</sup>

In 1980, even the director of the *Offices publics d'habitations à loyer modéré* (OPHLM, Public Office for Rent-controlled Housing), Xavier Ousset, acknowledged in an article that the turn-over in the transit estates was the same as in the council housing estates (Ousset, 1980). Moreover, most of the transit estates in Hauts-de-Seine were constructed in the first half of the 1960s with poor quality materials that were not designed to last. Nonetheless, almost all the estates in this department lasted for more than 10 years, and more than half of them even lasted fifteen years (see Table 6.1). The estate Les Potagers was converted to a permanent council estate during the 1990s, therefore enduring for more than thirty years as a transit estate. Similarly, the estate Marguerites was demolished in 1997. These two estates were the only ones built with durable concrete and therefore lasted for more years than the others (Cohen and David, 2012), but were still only temporary housing characterised by really low hygiene standards.

Table 6.1 – The persistence of the transit estates in Hauts-de-Seine

<b>Transit estates</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Marguerites	1956–1997	41
Pâquerettes	1959–1971	12
Les Potagers	1960–1996	35
Grands Prés	1961–After 1981	More than 21
Les Burons	1961–1974	13
Côtes d'Auty	1962–1983	11
André Doucet	1962–After 1982	19
Les Groues	1963–1969/1971	6 or 8
Grésillons	1965–After 1980	More than 15
5 Route Principale du Port	1966–1986	20
51 Route Principale du Port	1966–1986	20
Gutenberg	1971–1985	14
Pont de Bezons	1971–1985	14

In addition to this, although the transit estates were officially aimed at all the

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

people living in informal settlements, those that endured the longest in Hauts-de-Seine were for Algerian (and also, although to a lower extent for, Moroccan) migrants.<sup>79</sup> For instance, in 1975, more than 64 percent of the families living in the Pont de Bezons estate and almost one-third of the families living in the estate in the Colombes neighbourhood were Algerians (Cohen, 2013). In 1975, 76 percent of Algerians living in Nanterre were concentrated in two main neighbourhoods, the Petit-Nanterre and the Chemin-de-L'Île, where there was a high concentration of transit estates and council housing (Cohen, 2013). This concentration of Algerians and Moroccans in transit estates was mainly due to their presence in informal settlements (while for instance in Seine-Saint-Denis there were mainly Portuguese migrants), but also due to the strong stigmatisation of Algerian migration which increased throughout the 1960s and the 1970s and led to the progressive rejection and neglect of these families.

Another aspect of the implementation of the transit estates that was in stark contrast with the formal legal framework concerned the conditions of the buildings and also the socio-educational services. For instance, according to the 1971 and 1972 circulars, the transit estates had to be built of concrete, close to the city centres, with social services available to the residents. However, both the Gutenberg and the Pont de Bezons estates were not constructed from concrete but consisted of housing containers, and, the Pont de Bezons estate was particularly isolated (Cohen, 2013). For this reason living conditions were particularly difficult, both from the point of view of the isolation of the residents, as well as in terms of the quality of the buildings that rapidly worsened (Cohen, 2013). Despite the worsening conditions of the transit estates, the rents steadily increased. The 1972 circular stated that the rents should be adjusted to the salary levels of the families, and also raised in instances when someone refused to leave the transit estates and relocate to council estates. For instance, on the Gutenberg transit estate the rent was 421 French Francs in 1977, and 1,012 Francs in 1980. This increase was mainly due to poor building maintenance, which led to overuse of the heating system during winter (Cohen, 2013).

In addition to this, socio-educational services were progressively run down. As

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<sup>79</sup> However, despite the higher concentration of Algerians among the residents of the transit estates, it is important to notice how the majority of the Algerian population never lived in transit estates. In the 1970s, out of 5,000 Algerian families living in Hauts-de-Seine, about 2,000 lived in transit estates (Cohen, 2013).

Bruno recounted, LPS, the association he worked for, experienced difficulties with the funding, which eventually led to its dissolution:

As a board of directors, we often had difficulties with the teams working in the field because they said we didn't give them enough resources to do a good job. Finally, the LPS was dissolved because we had financial problems with the FAS<sup>80</sup> not funding our activities anymore. [...] Some of the employees complained, saying 'you don't give us the means to do the job as it should!' It was not about their salary, but it was about the fact that they didn't have the resources to make things work. And this was absolutely true! As board of directors we did what we could, but to get proper funding from the FAS wasn't that easy. And, then, the association died, the FAS didn't want to fund it anymore. It's never been easy, we had to do everything to fetch subsidies, but without success.

Although the circulars in the 1970s restated the importance of the socio-educational services and despite the efforts of several associations to guarantee some basic services for the residents, the socio-educational programmes “were never the real aim of a serious policy-making” (Blanc-Chaléard, 2006, p.8). For example Charles, a former member of GEANARP and later an employee of the Sonacotra in the 1970s, was one of the directors of the relocation programmes of the residents evicted from informal settlements and of the services for the families living in the transit estates. He told me that while he was living in the Grand Prés estate (managed by the Cetrafa) he barely saw a social worker:

We lived in a transit estates, with my wife and my daughters. We conceived these estates with flats that were big enough to live in, we built an office for the social workers, and also a kitchen for doing training classes for women. Not a single social worker showed up in the office!<sup>81</sup>

In the last period, the transit estates' residents were left alone, without social support and mainly controlled by the security team (Abdallah, 2006). The socio-educational activities, even though “presented as essential aspects for the transition” were withdrawn, thereby “doubling the feeling of abandonment” (Collet, 2013, p.378) of the residents.

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80 The FAS was the fund for the endorsement of activities aimed at Algerian workers' families living in France, including housing renewal and renovation of old housing stock (and before the independence of Algeria a part of the money also went to activities in the former colony). The FAS was funded by the taxes of the employers and employees and also by the rents paid by the residents of the transition estates.

81 Interview held in Paris on 23 June 2014.



While the Roma camps are deeply ambiguous in their definition, the transit estates were mainly characterised by a strong legal framework but ambivalent implementation. First, while on the one hand, the 1970s policy documents clearly defined the transit estates as temporary tools, most of the residents had to wait many years before being relocated to council housing. Second, the transit estates that persisted were largely those hosting Algerian and Moroccan migrants, which illustrated the extent of the discrimination and stigmatisation of these migrants compared to others, such as Portuguese migrants. Third, despite the official documents clearly underscoring the importance of socio-educational services, the transit estates were effectively abandoned. This ambiguous implementation contrasting with clear legal definitions enabled the associations to denounce the gap between practice and theory and lobby for the speedy relocation of residents and the final closure of the transit estates.

### ***The replacement of the transit estates***

As illustrated in the previous section, the implementation of the transit estates was extremely ambiguous, as these spaces were temporary yet persistent, ethnic-blind yet mainly targeting specific ethnic groups, supported by social services yet abandoned by social workers. These aspects were already controversial before the 1970s, but the lack of official regulations governing the transit estates meant that implementation varied locally in many different ways. However, the subsequent formalisation of the transit estates emphasised the mismatch between design and practice, therefore allowing their critics to denounce “institutional incoherence” (Streeck and Thelen, 2005, p.31).

There were two main phases of resistance against the transit estates: one by the first generation of migrants, and one by the youth in the 1980s (Cohen, 2013). The former mainly organised strikes, whereby the residents refused to pay the increasing rents, and also petitions, while the latter mainly organised protests and demonstrations (Collet, 2013). The main mobilisations started in the 1970s when the living conditions on the transit estates started worsening, the rents started increasing, and the pace of relocations slowed up.

Condemnation of the persistence of the supposedly short-term transit estates grew in the 1970s. A resident relocated to a Gennevilliers estate in 1971 wrote to Marc

Roberrini, the official responsible for the eradication of informal settlements, about their concerns:

When we, my family and I, were relocated to the Gennevilliers transit estate, you had reassured us that it was just temporary, a matter of two months, and that we would have been relocated elsewhere. We arrived on 13 July 1971 and today it's almost nine months since we are here and we didn't hear from you ever since. I would like to remind you what you told us and also to ask you to consider our demand of relocation. (quoted in Cohen, 2013, p.418)

This family was only finally relocated to a council housing estates in the early 1980s, and their story epitomises the sad destiny of many others. In 1972 the complaints of the residents were echoed by a group of workers of Cetrafa (one of the agencies managing transit estates) who published an article denouncing their employer:

We, Cetrafa staff working with the immigrant families living in the transit estates, decided to resign and to put into question the concept of transit estate that is constantly disproved by the facts. What does transit estate mean? For the inter-ministerial circular of 19 April 1972, it is 'a housing project for the temporary accommodation of families whose access to forms of permanent housing cannot be accomplished without a socio-educational intervention aimed at fostering their social integration and support'. But what is it, actually? Certain families do not need to be educated at all. They are simply victims of the housing crisis that led them to live in informal settlements. [...] What is its aim, then? (quoted in Cohen, 2013, p.555)

Furthermore François Tricard, a former employee of the Sonacotra (another agency managing transit estates) who had been responsible for socio-educational services in the transit estates, criticised in an article published in 1980 "the myth of the transition", claiming that "the provisional has become precarious" (Tricard, 1980, p.43).

In 1978 the strikes started gaining attention as a further rent increase mobilised residents to form residents' committees. They complained about the rent rises and deteriorating conditions of the buildings (Cohen, 2013, Hmed, 2008). In the same year the residents of the Pont de Bezons estate organised a strike because of the rent rises, the lack of hot water and heating, leaking roofs, lack of security and poor quality buildings. The residents said they were not treated "like human beings, but like animals" (quoted in Cohen, 2013, p.578). The declaration of strike read: "We demand to be relocated, like it was agreed at the creation of these temporary estates, called transit estates" (Cohen, 2013, p.578). The rent strike lasted for four years until 1979, after

which the residents started paying up (Cohen, 2013). One year later, in 1980, they mobilised again. The residents of the André Doucet estate started a petition to demand their relocation. Other petitions had been proposed before, for instance by the residents of the Burons estates in March 1974. They sent a petition, signed by twenty-six residents, to the prefecture demanding their relocation to a council estates, but without success. In 1980 the group of residents of the André Doucet transit estate did an open door event, inviting the citizens of Nanterre to participate, and collected about two thousand signatures. Despite the growing numbers of people supporting the cause of the residents of the transit estates, those living in the André Doucet estate had to wait years before being relocated.

Young people became more politically engaged in the early 1980s, with the death of Abdenbi Guemiah, a young resident of the Gutenberg estate killed by a bullet shot by one of the neighbours living in a building close to the transit estate in October 1982. The death of Abdenbi, aged 19, was widely covered by the media and the relocation of the residents became the core of a new campaign, although other issues like police violence were crucial too (Cohen, 2013). However, the mayor of Nanterre spoke out strongly against the relocation of the residents in the Nanterre municipality. After less than one month the Gutenberg residents elected a representative and a residents' committee, becoming the main interlocutor with the institutions regarding the issue of relocations. This committee became responsible for the relocation programmes, talking with the families about their needs, and monitoring new accommodation possibilities, which were directly forwarded to the officials in charge (Cohen, 2013). This mobilisation had two main aims: the rapid sentencing of the murderer of Abdenbi Guemiah, and a precise and tight timetable of the relocations (Collet, 2013). Mogniss Abdallah, a young activist who participated in the actions of the residents' committee of the Gutenberg estate wrote an article, originally published in 1983, whose title summarised the main points of this mobilisation: "To end with a temporariness that lasts" (Abdallah, 2006). In the article Abdallah (2006, p.5) denounced the persistent temporariness of the transit estates, in contrast with the Vivien Law and with the 1972 circular, their deteriorating conditions and their "logic of imprisonment". The Gutenberg committee succeeded in registering the families, who had until then been "considered as 'nomads' depending on the prefecture's will" (Abdallah, 2006, p.55), on

the list of those experiencing severe housing deprivation and therefore entitled to relocation to council estates.

The death of Abdenbi sparked off this new mobilisation and “obliged [...] the government to start addressing this issue officially for the first time” (Cohen, 2013, p.585). A meeting was held at the prefecture in Hauts-de-Seine in December 1982, where the national government committed to the relocation of the Gutenberg's residents within 18 months, but the relocations almost stopped after February 1983. In March 1983 the Prime Minister sent a letter to the Hauts-de-Seine prefect to restate the need of new relocations, for which the Gutenberg and Grands Près estates were the “priority of the priorities” (quoted in Cohen, 2013, p.584). But even after the intervention of the French Prime Minister, the relocations were slower than initially promised. The last family on the Gutenberg estate was relocated in early 1985, and the estate was demolished on 3 February 1985.

These mobilisations showed that clarity of legal documents was mobilised as a tool to effectively advocate the end of persistent housing exclusion. While in the first period – i.e. for the first 15 years from their emergence – the transit estates were not defined in both their objectives and implementation, the Vivien Law and the 1971 and 1972 circulars constituted important moments in the definition of this policy (Blanc-Chaléard, 2008), with the result that the opponents of the transit estates could more strongly frame their demands. The rent strikes during the early period were justified on the basis of deteriorating buildings that were due to demolition. In the later period, the petitions and the demonstrations showed how official recognition of the temporary character of the transit estates was used to criticise their persistence and slow pace of rehousing.

### **Integration villages: an inconsistent policy design and layering**

As illustrated in Chapter 2, similar to the transit estates, the integration villages have a clear policy design which, however, is poorly implemented. State funding of the integration villages is clearly regulated with a specific duration and characteristics, and a series of ministerial circulars offered clear guidelines underscoring the main objectives of the relocation projects set up following the removal of informal

settlements. These two co-existing regulations of the integration villages are not in contradiction with each other but, when the villages are implemented, there is a tension between the documents regulating state funding and the objectives stated in the ministerial circulars. Moreover, the creation of integration villages is at the discretion of the prefectures and local government and therefore the implementation of these villages is very variable and context specific. However, I contend that the gap between the conflicting objectives and the implementation enables pro-Roma associations to advocate the prioritisation of the objectives over the correctness of the state funding procedures, as a way of “fixing” their tension and producing “differential growths” (see Streeck and Thelen, 2005 , p.31).

### ***Ambiguities in the integration villages***

The policy documents about the integration villages illustrated in Chapter 2 clearly specify the temporary duration of the state funding. However, this is often in contrast with the aims of the integration villages stated in the ministerial circulars, which might require a longer time span. When conducting interviews, I often discussed the persistent temporariness of the Italian Roma camps with French interviewees, and most of the time they told me that this is not the case in France (Table 6.2). This is, for instance, what Guillaume, the member of a sub-contracting association working in an integration village in the Seine-Saint-Denis department, told me:

We noticed that after three or four years, there might be people who still live in the village, but when it's over, it's really over... it's temporary even for those who still live there, it's not like in Italy! Three years means three years, and then it's over. [...] There is no persistence at all. And also when these integration villages work well, if at the beginning there were, say, 10 or 15 families and then some among them move somewhere else, the Portakabins remain empty. They don't accept new families.<sup>82</sup>

Guillaume emphasised that the government wants to keep these spaces temporary and that, even if Portakabins are available, they are left empty instead of being offered to new people who could benefit from housing. He continued:

They just want to get rid of people as soon as they can. How they do that, doesn't matter. For them five years is the maximum, and then everyone has to move out. For these integration villages, there is not

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82 Interview held in Montreuil on 16 June 2014.

the intention to make them persistent, rather the contrary!

This interview shows that it is not clear what the priority of these integration villages is, whether the inclusion of Roma living in informal settlements or the temporariness of the intervention. Indeed, the state tries to enforce their temporariness even though the goals stated in the guidelines of the integration villages are not achieved. Edi, a member of a Roma association, argued that:

The end of the project does not come at the end of the inclusion journey towards autonomy, but simply at the end of the funding: they use the funding no matter how, and then when the funding's over they get rid of those who still live there – that, by the way, are more than those who found a house during the project!<sup>83</sup>

He continued:

These housing projects are conceived as something temporary, and this is a good thing of course. But the temporary should make people ready for the permanent, and this is not being done right now.<sup>84</sup>

Henri, a member of an association for the support of minors living in the street, agreed with the fact that, unlike in the Italian case, the main concern of the French government is to keep these spaces temporary:

Now there are villages that are being closed, they were funded for three years. They are often extended for two years or so, but this year there are many that are closing.<sup>85</sup>

The intention to make them temporary is so strong that no support is put in place for those that did not succeed in securing work and finding a house during the years of the project. As Henri puts it:

They keep them in a bubble for three or four years and then, at the end, they tell them 'sorry you didn't find a job, bye now!'<sup>86</sup>

Since most of the integration villages in the Île-de-France region started after 2007, it is probably too early to know if the integration villages will remain temporary. As of today, the first integration villages have been dismantled (i.e. Aubervilliers, Bagnolet, Orly) but other have been extended because pro-Roma associations demanded their continuation (for example, in Montreuil, Ris-Orangis and Saint-Denis). Unlike the

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83 Interview held in Saint-Denis on 2 June 2015.

84 Ibid.

85 Interview held in Montreuil on 6 June 2014.

86 Ibid.

Italian Roma camps and the French transit estates where persistence was strongly contested by associations, in the case of the integration villages it is their temporariness that is condemned by pro-Roma associations, which demand more time to bring about genuine inclusion.

Table 6.2 – The persistence of the integration villages

<b>Integration village</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Aubervilliers	2007–pres.	9
Bagnolet	2007–2011	4
Fort de l'Est	2007–pres.	9
Montreuil 1	2009–2015	6
Saint-Ouen	2009–2015	6
Montreuil 2	2010–pres.	6
Orly	2011–2013	2
Ris Orangis	2013–2014	1

Another controversial topic is the so-called ‘social survey’, conducted by social workers in order to identify people suitable for inclusion projects. As illustrated in Chapter 2, before an informal settlement is cleared, a survey is conducted in order to select the people to include in integration villages (which only accept 60-80 people out of several hundred possible candidates). However, the criteria of this selection are not explicitly stated. Anne, a member of a subcontracting association providing children's entertainment services in a village in the Essonne department, told me that families with at least one adult who works and with young children are preferred, because children can be schooled and job placements can be easier for adults who already have work experience.<sup>87</sup> The selection seems to favour those families who are already more likely to find a regular job and move out from the informal settlement. For this reason, Henri, from an association supporting homeless minors, argued:

My impression is that, most often than not, they simply choose the most employable ones, that have a better knowledge of French. But why help those that maybe need less help than others? I actually think that the three or four families that find a job thanks to the integration village would find it anyway because they speak French well, they know how the French administration works [...].<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Insights from unrecorded interview held in Ris-Orangis on 9 May 2014.

<sup>88</sup> Interview held in Montreuil on 6 June 2014.

The process of selecting the most employable contradicts the stated objectives of the integration villages that officially aim to support the housing inclusion of the Roma living in informal settlements while, in practice, excluding those that are most in need of such support.

A final critical point regards the ethnic character of this policy. Indeed, although integration villages are targeted at people suffering from housing deprivation regardless of their ethnicity, in practice current integration villages only cater to Roma migrants (Doytcheva, 2012). However, the fact that this policy targets a specific ethnic group is not officially acknowledged. This is due, as repeatedly stated in several of the interviews, to the French ‘colour-blind’ approach, rejecting the official acknowledgement of ethnic minorities. This approach was confirmed by the French Governmental Strategy for the Roma Inclusion (*Stratégie du gouvernement français pour l'inclusion des Roms*) adopted in 2011. Following the European Commission's demand that France adopts a strategy for the integration of the Roma population, the French government replied with a strategy aimed at “all the marginalised populations, including groups called Roma” (DIHAL, 2011). In the Strategy (DIHAL, 2011, p.1), the government stated:

[T]he term ‘Roma’ refers to a concept of ethnicity, which cannot be used under French law to construct public policies. The French republican tradition, which involves a strict interpretation of the principle of equality, does not allow measures to be specifically targeted at a particular ethnic group.

However, several associations maintain that this colour-blind approach is not implemented in practice. When I was interviewing Edi, a member of a Roma association, I told him that in Italy pro-Roma associations denounce the official ethnic character of the Roma camps and that, therefore, the French model might be considered less discriminatory. He agreed but also said that this, however, clashes with the discriminatory practices that explicitly target the Roma groups in the media and political discourses. Even though ethnic discrimination is not formalised, the mismatch between discriminatory practices and non-discriminatory rules perpetuates an ethnically segregating system, without including the possibility for the factual recipients (i.e. the Roma) to have a say on the integration policies targeting them.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Insights from interview held in Saint-Denis on 2 June 2015.



An analysis of policy documents and interviews shows that the ambiguous nature of the integration villages is mainly due to the clear yet contrasting official goals and characteristics of this policy. Firstly, the villages are officially supposed to last for a maximum of five years, but this temporariness – which is the main concern of the local governments – is in contrast with the stated objectives of inclusion, stated in the ministerial guidelines, for which often the planned temporary duration is not enough. Secondly, the selection process of the families is probably the most controversial and comes in for much criticism because it clashes with its universal spirit and its stated purpose to support those in need. Thirdly, the ethnic-blind political discourse is in contrast with widespread discriminatory practices explicitly targeting the Roma people.

### ***The layering of the integration villages***

As illustrated in the previous section, the integration villages are clearly planned but poorly implemented. Indeed, there is a tension between, on the one hand, the planned temporariness and the selective character of these spaces and their goals of inclusion, on the other. However, in certain cases, the clarity in the planning guidelines has enabled pro-Roma associations to successfully demand the prolongation of the integration villages. The objectives clearly stated in the ministerial guidelines offered a solid basis on which to develop claims for an extended duration of these spaces. As pointed out in Chapter 2, although the implementation of the integration villages is the responsibility of and down to the discretion of the prefects and local governments, the presence of clear guidelines at least provides “a juridical and political resource, a basis for discussion among associations, prefecture, tribunals and local communities” (Cousin, 2013, par.19). In this section, I show how a lower ambiguity at the definitional level, combined with an ambiguity in the implementation phase, has enabled pro-Roma associations to criticise the integration villages' temporariness and to negotiate, in some cases, exceptional extensions of their temporal duration.

One of the integration villages in Montreuil was exceptionally extended beyond its official end in 2014. This village was created in 2009 following a fire in 2008 in an informal settlement in Montreuil, where about 300 Romanian Roma lived (in Dombasle street). The municipality of Montreuil responded to this urgent situation by creating an temporary site for about 180 people, and by giving permission for a new informal

settlement (in Saint-Just street) set up by the remaining families. In 2009, the municipality obtained state funding for the temporary site, which became an integration village with the involvement of a pro-Roma association (Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 – A map of the relocation of the Roma in Montreuil

Because the pro-Roma associations in Montreuil disagreed with the practice of selecting families for the reasons laid out in the previous section, the integration village was implemented without the ‘social survey’ and all the families that were living in the informal settlement were included. As stated in their assessment of the activities of 2014, the subcontracting association managing the village wrote:

Since the beginning of the project we wanted to propose an alternative to the ‘integration village’: no prior selection of families, a more open way of managing of the site, the valorisation of family resources, considering the needs of the community.

This association also provided social services to the families living in the informal settlement, but poor hygiene conditions led the municipality to set up a second integration village managed by another association. In 2010 a new site was chosen about 1.5 kilometres away from the first one.

The integration village that started in 2009 was due to end in 2014 but the managing association succeeded in prolonging it for one year. When the time for closure came, six households had not yet found a job and a housing solution. An extension was therefore demanded in order to achieve the initial aim of the project, i.e. to include the families living in the village. In this case, the clarity of the aims of the integration villages has enabled the association to claim the need for an exceptional extension.

Like the integration villages in Montreuil, in Saint-Denis the Fort de l'Est village was created following a fire in an informal settlement in 2007. The municipality of Saint-Denis provided a site locally managed from 2007 to 2009, and then from 2009 funded by the state, the department and the region. Out of the 700 people living in the informal settlement (in Campra street), 25 families were included in the integration village Fort de l'Est (Figure 6.2). In 2015 the Fort de l'Est village was still working because, in a similar way to Montreuil, the association managing the village demanded an exceptional extension for the seven families that had not found jobs and new housing. However, the municipality did not allow new families into the village, which was only lived in by a few remaining families. In May 2015 a series of associations supporting another informal settlement in Saint-Denis, called Voltaire, where about 150 families lived, decided to ask the municipality to relocate some of the families to the empty Portakabins in Fort de l'Est. The settlement Voltaire is partly run by the municipality of Saint-Denis, which provides basic facilities and funds an association to run part-time social support to the residents. The municipality initially decided to accept this settlement and make a commitment to starting an integration village, but the situation remained provisional and the municipality later abandoned this idea. Adèle, an activist in a group of citizens who support the Roma in the Voltaire settlement, told me about their request to include some of the families of the Voltaire settlement in the Fort de l'Est project:

We had a meeting and our proposal was put to vote in the city council. We asked to include 19 families in the Fort de l'Est village [...]. The state said ok, on one condition, that the village also becomes a transit accommodation for six families that experience severe housing deprivation.<sup>90</sup>

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90 Interview held in Paris on 4 July 2015.

On the basis of the objectives of the integration villages, namely the integration and betterment of the living conditions of Roma living in informal settlements, pro-Roma associations in Saint-Denis managed to demand and obtain an extension of the village.

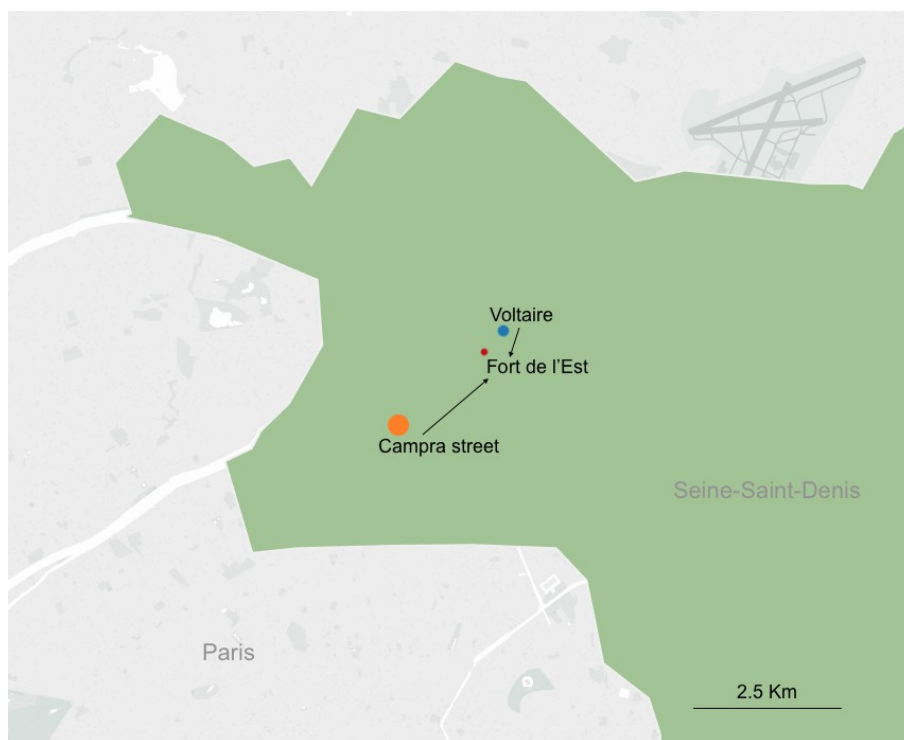


Figure 6.2 – A map of the relocation of the Roma in Saint-Denis

The integration village in Ris-Orangis, started at the end of 2013 as a two-year project and is still open today. In April 2013 an informal settlement in Ris-Orangis, in the Essonne department, was cleared and the Romanian Roma living there were evicted. After deciding to create an integration village, funded by the region and the state, the prefecture sent a team of social workers to select twelve families, out of almost 250 people, to be relocated to the integration village. In April 2013, the informal settlement in Ris-Orangis was cleared. Those not selected for the integration village were offered temporary accommodation for a few days, and some of them agreed to be repatriated to Romania through what is called Assisted Humanitarian Return (AHR, *Aide au retour humanitaire*<sup>91</sup>), a programme of voluntary returns for EU citizens that has been widely used for Roma migrants from Bulgaria and Romania (Cahn and Guild, 2010). The

<sup>91</sup> The Assisted Humanitarian Return is a repatriation scheme for EU citizens (who cannot be forcibly repatriated in the same way as non-EU citizens) which consists in a one-way paid ticket for a trip to the country of origin, plus a sum of money for each adult and child in the family

twelve families selected for the integration village waited in temporary accommodation until the opening of the integration village in December 2013. One week after the eviction, the families excluded from the inclusion project found a new plot of land on which they started building new shacks, about 500 metres away from the former settlement, in Grigny. The new informal settlement was eventually cleared in August 2014 and, following pressure from pro-Roma associations, six new families were selected to join the integration village in Ris-Orangis despite the initial reticence of the department, while the remaining 30 were left without an alternative and eventually moved elsewhere, creating a new informal settlement, in Fromont street, from which they were again evicted in July 2015 (Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3 – A map of the relocation of the Roma in Ris-Orangis

When I visited the village in May 2014, Anne, a member of a subcontracting association organising social activities for the children and the residents, told me that some Portakabins were left empty after the families living there found another house thanks to the help received in the integration village.<sup>92</sup> As in the case of the village Fort de l'Est, her association denounced the way in which the department refused to use the

<sup>92</sup> Insights from unrecorded interview held in Ris-Orangis on 9 May 2014.

empty Portakabins for other families who could have benefited from them. Anne said that presenting the integration village as a device for the integration of Roma living in informal settlement conflicted with the refusal to accept new families in need. In this case, the clarity of the objective of the integration villages was used to justify an extension for the new families that were not originally selected. Eventually Anne's association managed to convince the department to host new families in the village and following the clearance of the informal settlement in Grigny in August 2014, six new families were selected for the integration village. In addition to this, at the beginning of 2016 this village was prolonged for two more additional years. It is, however, too early to know if it will last longer than that.

These examples have shown how a lower ambiguity with regard to the objectives of the integration villages can offer a more solid basis for claims that entail a temporal prolongation. As claimed by the pro-Roma associations reported in this section, the temporal duration of the integration villages has often led to the ineffective implementation of some of the stated objectives and therefore they succeeded in demanding the temporal extension. Unlike the Italian Roma camps and the French transit estates, where the persistence of these spaces was supported by institutional actors, the integration villages have persisted only in some cases and as a consequence of non-institutional actors who see in the persistence of these spaces a way to empower the Roma migrants, while the intention of the local government is to keep these villages strictly temporary. As discussed in Chapter 1, the persistence of an institutional camp is indeed neither positive nor negative in itself, as it can be imposed, but also negotiated, as part of a strategy of enfranchisement.

## **Conclusion**

From the analysis of the Italian case, it emerged that ambiguity is an important factor that, by toning down criticism of the Roma camps, contributed to their persistence. The comparison with the French cases is aimed at understanding if ambiguity constitutes a useful concept for reading different types of persistent temporariness. As introduced in Chapter 1, institutional camps can persist in different

ways and, in order to understand the factors that help produce these varied regime of persistent temporariness, I suggested conducting an in-depth case study supported by an asymmetrical comparison through which the argument emerged from the analysis of one case could be generalised to others. Obviously, three cases are not a strong enough basis on which to generalise about the relationship between types of ambiguity and forms of gradual change. However, in this chapter I have shown that the concept of ambiguity can offer an insight also into other forms of persistent temporariness (Figure 6.4).

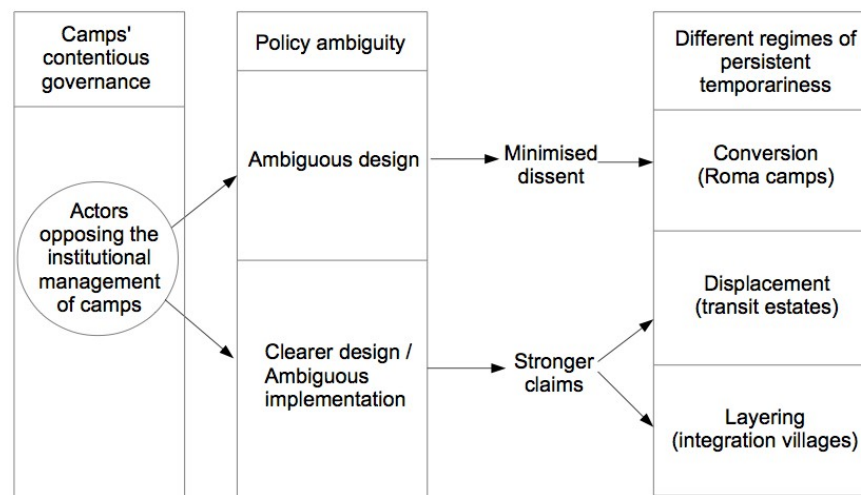


Figure 6.4 – A graph summarising the result of the comparison

In the transit estates, the progressive clarity of the objectives and definitions slowly highlighted the controversial points of the implementation of this housing policy. While the documents adopted in the 1970s confirmed the temporary status of the transit estates, their basic standards and the services to which the residents were entitled, the reality often saw the contrary. Many families were stuck for years in estates where they were relocated initially only for a few months. The buildings were poorly built and a lack of maintenance led to their quick deterioration which during winter meant higher heating bills. Finally, the frequent isolation of these spaces was not only geographical, but also social, since social services were often cut back to a minimum. Even though these aspects were problematic at the beginning of the transit estates, they became more

evident as the institutionalised legal framework developed. The ambiguity that emerged between design and implementation offered the critics of the transit estate a more solid basis on which to build their claims. Finally, by denouncing “slummification”, the “logic of imprisonment” of these spaces” and their “temporariness that lasts” (Abdallah, 2006, p.54-55), which was in stark contrast with what stated in the laws and circulars, the people opposing them managed to put an end to the transit estates.

The integration villages have a different trajectory of persistent temporariness. While the associations of residents in the transit estates were fighting for closure, in the case of the integration villages pro-Roma associations advocated extending them. There are different dynamics at work in these two cases, for instance, the villages – unlike the Roma camps and transit estates – are seen as a form of empowerment rather than marginalisation. However, the concept of ambiguity proved useful for reading this type of enduring temporariness too. Like the transit estates, the integration villages presented an ambiguous implementation. The clear yet at times contrasting objectives and definitions produced integration villages where the enforcement of temporariness clashed with the aim of housing inclusion. By denouncing this tension, the associations have suggested prioritising the inclusionary goal of this policy, with the result that in certain cases the villages have been prolonged.

By affecting the resources, framings and opportunities of the actors involved in the governance of these spaces, ambiguity contributed to their persistence and gradual change. In both the transit estates and the integration villages a relatively clear policy design facilitated the claims of non-institutional actors who mobilised existing rules to strengthen their demands against the ways institutions managed these spaces. In contrast, in the case of the Italian Roma camps, ambiguity made it more difficult for non-institutional actors opposing the institutional management of these spaces to demand the correct implementation of the rules, because these were highly ambiguous. However, collective actors are not passive subject to the effects of institutional ambiguity but react, reformulating them creatively. As I will show in the next chapter, even though in the Italian case ambiguity has favoured persistence, it has not completely deactivated the power of the opponents of the camps, who have recently re-framed it as a resource for political mobilisation.



**CHAPTER 7****From Roma to squatters:  
turning ambiguity into an urban opportunity  
during the economic crisis****Introduction**

As the analysis of the Italian case has shown, ambiguity emerged as an important factor facilitating the persistence of Roma camps. The actions, strategies and power relations of the actors involved in their governance shape, while at the same time being crucially influenced by, the characteristics of the policy design of these camps. The previous chapter has discussed how different levels and types of policy ambiguity have enabled different actors and therefore different types of gradual change and persistence. Moreover, it has shown how lower levels of ambiguity in the policy design can reinforce the framing strategies of non-governmental actors that oppose the way camps are managed by governmental actors. Indeed, while in the French cases, the clarity of policy objectives and definitions helped associations to either end or continue institutional camps, in the Italian case the ambiguity characterising the design of the Roma camps reduced the resources available to non-governmental actors. However, as stated at the end of the previous chapter, actors are not passive receivers of opportunities and resources shaped by the context, but can actively mobilise in order to reformulate them. This chapter illustrates how ambiguity not only hindered the political mobilisation of pro-Roma advocacy groups, but was also strategically turned into a resource thanks to new forms of solidarities and coalitions with other urban actors.

Besides the strategies of pro-Roma advocacy groups that contest the discriminatory nature of the camps and advocate respect for the human rights of the Roma by collaborating with European and international associations, in the last decade in Rome a new strategy of resistance has developed. Since 2009 an increasing number

of Roma have joined urban social movements and started living in political squats, exploiting the ambiguity of the Roma camps as a tool to escape their relocation to these segregating spaces. The action of squatting with the help of urban social movements implied, in some cases, a shift from being seen as Roma to being seen as squatters. The ambiguity of the definition of who a Roma is, and therefore who should be relocated to a Roma camp, created an opportunity for the Roma to change their status and hence to avoid segregation.

The following sections introduce the solidarity between Roma groups and squatters as a new form of resistance that enabled the Roma to become a new political subject, no longer included in Roma camps. After illustrating four cases of Roma groups who adopted a squatting strategy, two in which they managed to frame themselves as squatters and also to be identified as such by the local government, the chapter shows how this status enabled them to avoid the relocation to Roma camps. Finally, I unpick the main factors that account for the consolidation of the transformation from Roma into squatters.

### **From constraint to resource for action: the Roma join the squatting movement**

Collective action is “constrained by, and embedded in, a political context” (Meyer and Evans, 2014) p.266) and, therefore, to account for mobilisation, one should consider the political and institutional settings that create both constraints and opportunities. As argued by McAdam et al. (2001) in their analysis of political contention, constraints and opportunities are not static and objective, but are dynamics and relationally constituted, and can change depending on the interactions between different actors and contexts. Thus far, I have showed how ambiguity worked as a constraint to political mobilisation. However, the examples I illustrate in this chapter show that ambiguity can also be used as a strategy to challenge the Roma camps.

In the past few years, in Rome, there has been an increase in the number of political squats involving Roma groups who, by becoming squatters, managed to escape their relocation to Roma camps. In the past the squatting movement supported the Roma (see Mudu, 2004; Boschetti and Vitale, 2011), but in the cases illustrated in this chapter the claims were re-framed within the broader transnational and urban mobilisations that

emerged after the 2008 financial crisis. The bridging of the Roma fight for housing inclusion and of the squatting movement intensified in the context of this wave of contention, during which the economic crisis worked as an opportunity for joining a new repertoire of action (Maestri, 2014). This shows how the 2008 economic crisis not only intensified the economic rationality of subcontracting NGOs, as discussed in Chapter 5, but also provided an opportunity for the opposers of the camps. Moreover, the Roma who joined the political squats have used the city as a space of politicisation, allying themselves with the urban social movements that aim to enhance the power of citizens in creating the cities (Miller and Nicholls, 2013). By exploiting the city in order to build “reciprocal exchanges and structural interdependencies” (Uitermark and Nicholls, 2014, p.5), the Roma mobilised the strategy of squatting and the framing offered by the urban social movements, and therefore managed to turn ambiguity into an opportunity.

Squatting as a strategy of political contention emerged in Italy in the 1970s and merged with the anti-globalisation movement in the 1990s, when squatting became not only a pro-housing strategy, drawing attention to the re-use of unoccupied public buildings and land, but also a political one for the creation of political identities (Mudu, 2004). Mainly since 2010 there has been a resurgence of squatting as a repertoire of action through the Occupy Movement (Pruijt, 2013a). One specificity of the local movements that took part in this wave of contention was the occupation of public spaces to set up protest camps in which to develop practices of participatory democracy (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). Moreover, these movements are centred around a claim of the right to the city, that is, the right of citizens to participate in the creation of their cities against capitalist urbanisation (Harvey, 2013). Housing rights are an important component of the right to the city, as the growing commodification and financialisation of the housing market has, mostly after the crisis, undermined access to adequate housing for the poorer classes (Rolnik, 2013). In Italy students' protests against the crisis started in 2008 and culminated in 2010 with strong anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal arguments (Zamponi and Daphi, 2014).

The movements that the Roma have joined in the last few years emerged within this context of anti-neoliberal protests against a form of urbanisation increasingly serving economic and political interests, and for the right to adequate housing for the

poorest and most marginalised (including a growing number of migrants), whose housing deprivation was also exacerbated during the crisis. Thanks to the protests sparked after the 2008 economic crisis, the Roma managed to join urban movements and escape the apparently relentless housing exclusion and segregation which they are subject to in camps. However, the action of squatting an abandoned building with the support of a social movement does not automatically lead to an enduring mobilisation as squatters and avoidance of relocation to Roma camps, but requires a specific socio-spatial process (see Uitermark and Nicholls, 2014). As I illustrate in the next sections, there are examples of squatting strategy where the Roma did not frame themselves as squatters. In the first two cases, i.e. the the Pachamama and Avis squats, the Roma only initially presented themselves as squatters, while in the third (the Metropoliz squat) and the fourth (the Lancio squat) the Roma strengthened their articulation as squatters, finally transforming themselves into new political subjects and therefore no longer treated as Roma by the local government.

### **From squatters back to camps and informal settlements: Pachamama and Avis squats**

Pachamama is the name given to the occupation of an abandoned farmhouse on the south-western periphery of Rome in June 2013. The farmhouse was built before the 1920s, but since 2001 the area was subject to property development and the construction of purpose-built flats. Services were also supposed to be developed for the area, but even after the flats were built it still lacked commercial services and was only served by one bus line. From 2007 onwards, the residents also started complaining about the belated refurbishment of the farmhouse, which the builder was supposed to undertake. However, these complaints remained unheard.

The aim of the occupation was to return the farmhouse to the community, restoring the role it used to have in the past as a centre of community life and of agriculture. From this point of view, using Pruijt's classification, the Pachamama can be classified as a conservational type of squat, since it aimed to preserve the traditional city landscape (Pruijt, 2013b, p.23). The squat, that closed at the end of May 2014 following an eviction, hosted six households, two of which were migrants. The farmhouse

consisted of a main building with a common area used as a kitchen and living room, and another building on the back with an internal courtyard used as a community garden. At the beginning, Action (the urban movement that organised the creation of the squat) and the associations that supported the occupation decided to involve one Roma family.

This family lived in the informal settlement Tor de' Cenci, located not far from the Pachamama squat. The Tor de' Cenci settlement, which was created in 1995 as an official camp, but later downgraded to informal settlement, was cleared in September 2012 and the residents were relocated to the official camp Castel Romano (Figure 7.1). Some of the people involved in the squat knew the families of the Tor de' Cenci settlement because they worked for a subcontracting NGO providing services there. When they started looking for families that were interested in joining the occupation, the family of a former spokesperson of the Tor de' Cenci settlement decided to join the occupation, but finally left after only four months, in October 2013.



Figure 7.1 – A map of the relocation of the Roma who joined the Pachamama squat

Giulia, a member of an association supporting the occupation, told me that the

Roma family left because they were not participating in the activities of the squat. During the first months of the occupation, the conditions of the farmhouse were very precarious and the squatters worked intensively to refurbish the space and make it suitable for the families. However, the Roma family did not contribute to this first phase and was still living few days a week in the Castel Romano camp. Giulia said:

Finally we also pushed them to choose, because they kept going back and forth from the camp for a series of reasons, for four months. So we made them choose, and their choice was actually to stay here with us but they wanted us to fully support them because of their problems, they wanted us to build their house etc. But we could hardly built ours! And then they wouldn't have been as the rest of us anymore.<sup>93</sup>

In the case of Pachamama, the precariousness of the space did not help the squatters develop a peaceful relationship and the associations and movements involved were not prepared for this situation. Giulia added:

To be honest, the thing is that we were probably caught off guard because when we got here and we found this context, we didn't expect these dynamics to emerge, you know... we thought it could be easier.<sup>94</sup>

The experience of Pachamama shows how becoming a squatter requires a deep commitment to participation in the activities of the squatting community, and also how the associations and movements play a crucial role in recruiting families. The squatters were not prepared for the challenges while the Roma family did not fully join the squatting community as they had already accepted the opportunity to relocate to the official camp of Castel Romano, where they kept on living while setting up the occupation.

In 2013 a movement called *Resistenza Abitativa Metropolitana* (RAM, Metropolitan Housing Resistance) started supporting Roma groups evicted from informal settlements and involving them in squats. In 2013 I visited two squats where Roma families lived, located on Tiburtina street on the eastern periphery of Rome. These buildings were occupied during a series of demonstrations that took place in 2013, called 'tsunami tour', that led to the occupation of several buildings in the Italian capital city in order to offer housing solutions to an increasing number of homeless

<sup>93</sup> Interview held in Rome on 15 December 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

families neglected by the municipality. The Roma involved in these two squats came from the official camp Castel Romano, in the southern part of Rome and when I met them they told me about their journey from Castel Romano to Tiburtina street.

The Castel Romano camp – the same camp from which the Roma family that lived for a few months in the Pachamama squat came – is one of the largest in Italy and was created in 2005 to relocate the evicted Roma from an informal settlement in the city centre. From 2010 to 2012 it was further expanded to accommodate evicted families coming from two other settlements, including one in Martora street, on the eastern periphery of the city. The Castel Romano camp is considered to be one of the most problematic because of its isolation (it is built on a national park, temporarily – yet still today – leased by the municipality of Rome) and it is the scene of conflicts between the Bosnian and Serbian communities living there. Several Serbian families were harassed and violent attacks, presumably perpetrated by Bosnian Roma, damaged the windows and doors of their Portakabins. As a result of this situation, in June 2013 approximately 40 Serbian Roma decided to leave the Castel Romano camp, soon followed by the rest of the Serbian community because of an arson attack. Following this last episode of violence the municipality of Rome provided new Portakabins for the Serbian Roma, but one night these were damaged while still under construction, and the municipality of Rome eventually decided not to build any new housing units. After leaving the Castel Romano camp, in August 2013 the Serbian community settled in a new informal settlement on the eastern periphery of Rome (in Salviati street), just a few hundreds meters away from the former site in Martora street, where they settled in 1984 and were evicted from in 2010. However, they soon received an eviction order and in September 2013 the few shacks in the settlement were destroyed by the local police. The eviction started early in the morning and, as reported by the members of the evicted community, was really violent: the Roma started resisting the eviction but the police quickly destroyed the shacks, threatened to remove children from families and a pregnant lady fainted and subsequently suffered a miscarriage. Since the municipality of Rome did not offer any relocation solutions to the Roma, they moved to the other side of the street and started living on a field in the open air (Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2 – The field where the Roma moved after the eviction from the settlement in Salviati street

In the days after the eviction they met with RAM activists, who decided to help them occupy an empty building (called Avis, from the name of the rental car company that was previously located there) about five kilometres from the Salviati settlement on the Tiburtina street (Figure 7.3). The main aim of the Avis squat was to offer the Roma evicted from the informal settlement an “alternative housing strategy” (see Pruijt, 2013b, p.23). The community of Salviati street got in touch with the RAM through a help desk that they run and that is regularly open during the week to support people who experience severe housing deprivation. Simone, a member of RAM, told me:

Around twenty days after the eviction we were informed about what was happening to this Roma group. We went there and we found them in a field, in the wild, with children. They were so angry for how they'd been treated [...]. So we tried to include them in this journey, that they struggle to accept though because they're used to be taken and put into camps, maltreated and with no rights. One morning, with the comrades of the RAM we identified a free space, we occupied it and we confronted the mayor, telling him ‘from today, they're with us!’<sup>95</sup>

Although the RAM discourse clearly underlined the solidarity between the Roma and the squatting movement, the Roma were the only occupants of the Avis squat.

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<sup>95</sup> Interview held in Rome on 21 December 2013.



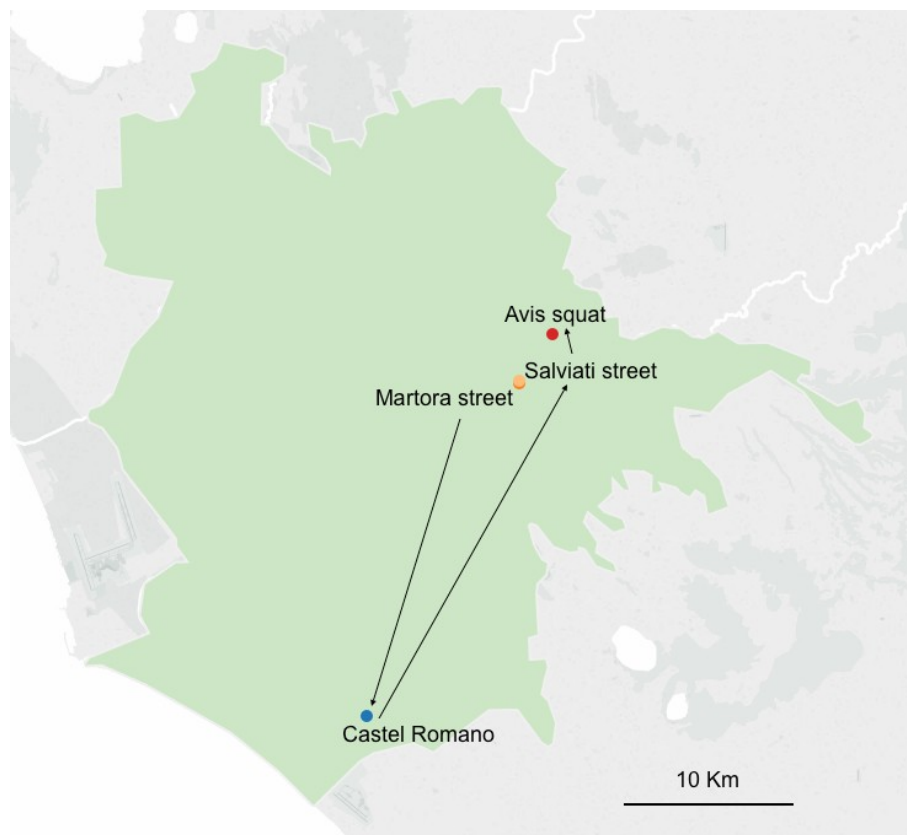


Figure 7.3 – A map of the relocation of the Roma who joined the Avis squat

During a visit to the Avis squat in December 2013, I met the families living there and had a one hour conversation with Jevren, a member of the Roma community, who told me:

Now we're here thanks to these wonderful people who helped us! [...] But they [i.e. the municipality of Rome] should have offered us an alternative. This eviction was wrong, they wanted us to go back to Castel Romano, but we can't live there, there are always problems, we had been abused. After leaving Castel Romano we went back to Salviati street, which is really close to where we stayed before. The chief of the local police told us we could stay there and that things were going to be ok. We stayed there for three months and then we received the order to go back to Castel Romano.<sup>96</sup>

Jevren's words show how their claims were principally centred around the housing situation of the Roma and not linked to the broader housing crisis faced by other

<sup>96</sup> Interview held in Rome on 21 December 2013.

marginal groups. Probably for this reason, this occupation rapidly ended. The Roma I met in December 2013 were evicted soon after, and the community scattered, looking for solutions on their own. However, some of the families from Avis joined the Lancio squat, which I illustrate in the next section.

The Roma who took part both in the Pachamama and Avis squats did not consolidate their transformation into squatters since, the shift to a squatter category was weakened by their lack of participation in the activities of the squat, in the first case, and by the the lack of an intersectional political claim, in the second. In the next section I examine two cases where the Roma managed to make their transformation into squatters more enduring and I analyse the conditions and actions that enabled this passage.

### **From Roma to squatters: Metropoliz and Lancio squats**

In November 2009 the informal Roma settlement Casilino 700 was evicted after the residents tirelessly but unsuccessfully resisted removal by the police. This informal settlement, located in the south-eastern periphery of Rome, in Casilina street, was considered one of the biggest Roma settlements in Europe, with more than 1,200 people estimated living there at the end of the 1990s (mainly Roma from Bosnia, Montenegro, Romania and Macedonia) (Rossi, 2006). When these Roma migrants started squatting on this plot of land, they mainly lived in shacks and old caravans. The settlement lacked access to water, and the municipality of Rome provided only few chemical toilets. Therefore there were bad hygienic and safety conditions that also led to a couple of tragic accidents in which children lost their lives because of fires and toxic exhalation (see Alunni, 2015). The Casilino 700 was subject to ongoing monitoring by the police and, because of its illegality and unhealthy conditions, was cleared for the first time in 2000. The evicted people were relocated to a new official camp not far from Casilina street, while others moved to another settlement on the south-western periphery of the city – called Tor de' Cenci, where also the family who joined the Pachamama squat lived until their eviction in 2012 (Rossi, 2006).

After the 2000 eviction, in 2008 a new informal settlement emerged on Casilina

street, led mainly by Roma families from southern Romania, who were also evicted in 2009. When the 360 residents of the so-called new Casilino 700 settlement received the eviction order in April 2009, the pro-Roma association Popica managed to postpone the eviction thanks to the support of other associations that claimed that the eviction would undermine the school attendance of the children. In June a second eviction order was issued and, on 12 November 2009, the police cleared the settlement. The evicted residents of the Casilino 700 were offered temporary accommodation in the reception centre Cartiera in the northern part of the city. Almost 100 out of the 360 residents of the Casilino 700 accepted to be relocated there, while 150 of them decided to protest against the proposed temporary relocation and squatted in an abandoned Heineken factory nearby with the help of Popica. But they were soon evicted from there too (Figure 7.4).

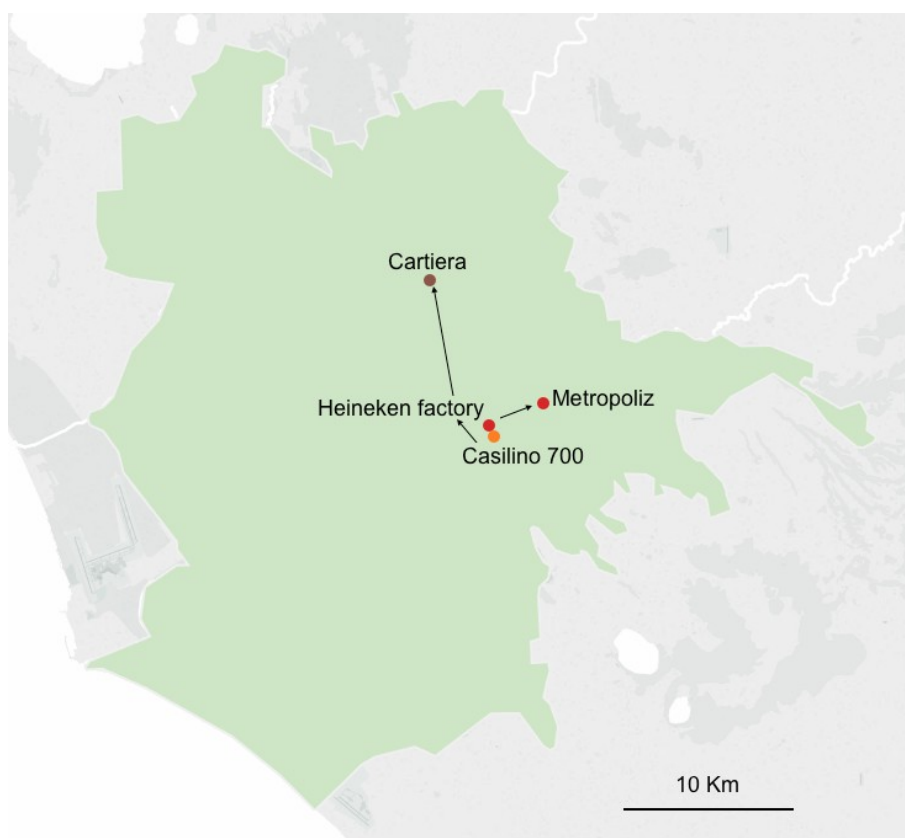


Figure 7.4 – A map of the relocation of the Roma of Casilino 700 settlement

After the eviction of the Heineken factory, the Casilino 700 residents joined the squat Metropoliz, an abandoned factory occupied since May 2009 by the movement for housing rights *Blocchi Precari Metropolitani* (BPM, Metropolitan Precarious Blocks),

founded in 2007. This was the first squat in which Roma people cohabited with other homeless migrants – mainly Moroccan and Peruvian – and Italians. The entrance gate, on the Prenestina street, leads to an internal yard from which one can access the buildings of the squat. On the right-hand side of the gate is the main building, where people create flats (see Figure 7.5).



Figure 7.5 – The main entrance of Metropoliz

There are other smaller wings in the building, for instance one closer to the gate (Figure 7.6), which hosts an artists' atelier and an area for the children (Figure 7.7; Figure 7.8). The Roma were originally living in self-built flats in a hangar on the left-hand side of the entrance and in front of the main building, but this space was dismantled by the police in August 2012. After this eviction most of the Roma moved into the main building (Figure 7.9), while a small number of families left the squat. When I did the fieldwork at the end of 2013, there were 23 Roma families living in the squat (out of the 50 families that originally joined the occupation). Metropoliz is an occupation crossing over a deprivation-based and a political type of squat: the former provides housing to homeless people, while the latter is aimed at developing a “counter-power to the state” (Pruijt, 2013b, p.23).



Figure 7.6 – The building hosting the artists' ateliers in Metropoliz



Figure 7.7 – The art works in the artists' atelier



Figure 7.8 – The children's area in Metropoliz



Figure 7.9 – A flat of a Roma family on the rooftop of the main building in Metropoliz

In Metropoliz the Roma united with other migrants and Italians, constituting a new political subject, based not on ethnicity but on their shared socioeconomic status of being excluded from the formal labour market and being left homeless in times of crisis.

As argued by Fabiana, a member of a pro-Roma association supporting the squatters living in Metropoliz, the occupation of the Heineken factory was the first example of Roma occupying a building with a political claim:

It was a shock for the city council, no one ever saw a group of Roma occupying a building with a political goal. I mean, there were of course Roma who squatted buildings before, but without making any political claim.<sup>97</sup>

She continued:

[The Roma who joined Metropoliz] took up this journey and started to participate in the assemblies, to do things that they had never done before, and also to approach the housing question not as an ethnic community supposedly nomadic, and that therefore should live in camps, but as an issue that they have in common with many other people, migrants, Italians etc.<sup>98</sup>

Although they did not claim this act as a way to challenge the ambiguity of the policies targeting them, the Roma living in Metropoliz have actually unsettled these policies on the basis of their very ambiguity. The shift from being seen as Roma to being seen as squatters enabled the Roma to escape the relocation policies for Roma living in informal settlements (i.e. official Roma camps) and to be included in the negotiations and solutions offered to the squatters (Maestri, 2016b).

While the relocation to council housing estates is never offered to the Roma evicted from an informal settlements, the Roma who participated in the Metropoliz squatting movement benefited from the negotiating power of squatters and were included in the relocation solutions offered to them. For instance, social movements negotiate their claims with the Department of Work, Housing and Housing Emergency and not with the Department of Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health and the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office. Following the negotiations with the municipality of Rome, Metropoliz was included in the list of squatted buildings mentioned in the municipal resolution 206 adopted in 2007, which establishes that, in case of eviction, the 15 percent of available council housing should go to the squatters of movements for housing rights, therefore to the Roma of Metropoliz too. This means that the Roma living in Metropoliz have been, at least formally, entitled to social housing, something that the Roma living in informal settlements are practically denied access to. As

<sup>97</sup> Interview held in Rome on 20 November 2013.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

mentioned in Chapter 1, the Roma living in informal settlements and official camps often fail to gain eligibility for public housing but, by joining Metropoliz, they managed to gain access to housing projects for non-Roma.

Although today the residents in Metropoliz live together peacefully, there were some initial cohabitation difficulties. One difficulty concerned a group of people who eventually left the squat because they did not participate in shared activities with the other squatters, while other obstacles emerged out of the perceived differences between the Roma and other migrants. Fabiana, an activist in an association supporting the squat, said that the cohabitation issues were mainly due to racial prejudices between different ethnic groups:

You should think of this place as an apartment building, that actually is an abandoned factory with all the material problems that come with it, and with people from all over the world. Every form of racism you can think about, you can find it here. ‘I don't like him because he's black, he's white, red... the other is Roma’, you name it. This problem exists, then politically we get by.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, during the interview, Fabiana pointed out that the Roma who joined Metropoliz had already developed a feeling of community among themselves since they had been living together in the Casilino 700 settlement. This was a good basis for a peaceful cohabitation, but also partly hindered the emergence of a strong new political subject from the occupation:

In this regard, Metropoliz is not even the best situation because they [i.e. the Roma] are too many. You see, the community should arise from the occupation and, possibly, there shouldn't be pre-constituted groups. But this squat was born out of the urgency of the situation, and you can't kick them out after months, can you? Ideally, here there should be three or four Moroccan families, three or four Peruvian families, but not more, otherwise they create ethnic enclaves.<sup>100</sup>

For this reason the other squats later set up by the BPM group intentionally only involve fewer Roma families rather than an entire settlement community (as of 2013 there were a total of four BPM squats involving Roma families).

The Roma of Metropoliz strenuously resisted the relocation alternatives that

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99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.



were offered to them after they were evicted from the Casilino 700 in 2009, and this made their involvement in the squat stronger. The case of Metropoliz highlights the importance of a space in which the Roma can dedicate time to becoming squatters and build a feeling of community with other groups. Furthermore, it also underscores how the shifting from a category of Roma to that of squatters is not the direct consequence of joining a squat or of occupying an abandoned building, but requires the creation of claims that intersect different groups.

Not far from the Avis squat illustrated in the previous section, the RAM movement occupied another building, called Lancio (Figure 7.10). Some of the families living in the Avis squat joined the Lancio because of disagreements with the rest of the Roma community. The Lancio building was occupied in June 2013 (Figure 7.11) and is composed of several small buildings, an internal courtyard, depots and large empty spaces with high ceilings where the squatters can build their own flats and gather.



Figure 7.10 – The entrance of the Lancio squat

The Lancio squat hosts several migrants communities and when I visited

it (in December 2013) there were 52 family units, some from Central Africa and Eastern Europe. The atmosphere was relaxed and the residents were setting up a birthday party in a common room, with music, sweets and colourful balloons.

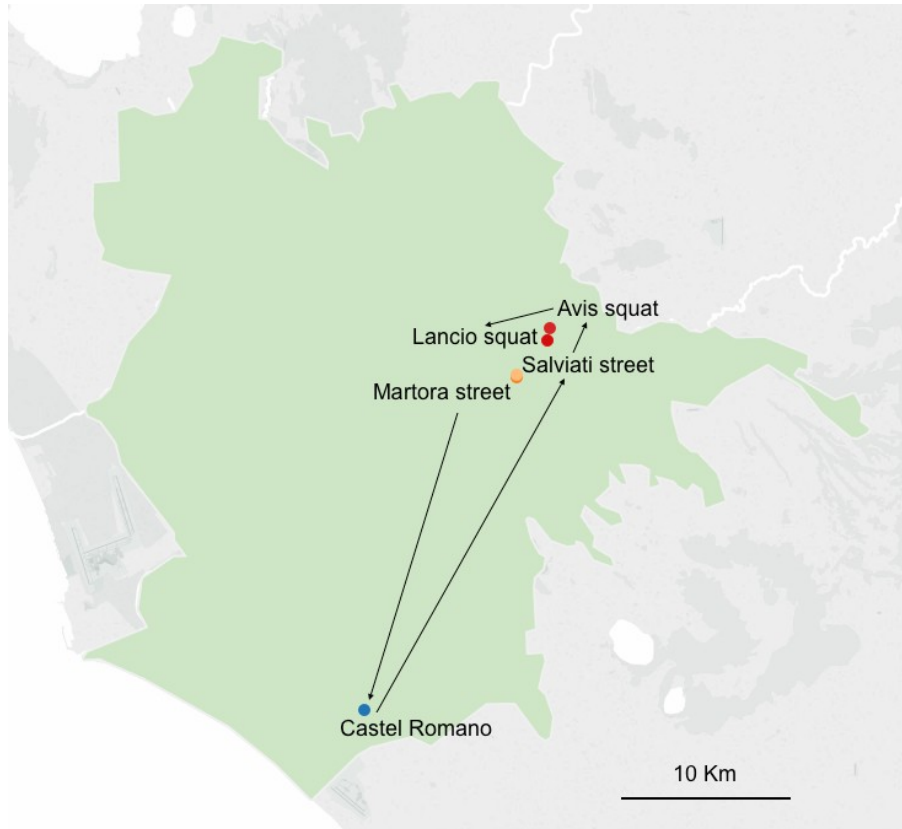


Figure 7.11 – A map of the relocation of the Roma from Martora settlement

There are rules in the squat that guarantee peaceful cohabitation. As Simone, a RAM activist, said:

In the occupation we have rules, you don't raise your hands, you don't push drugs, you don't steal... if we know of someone who doesn't follow these rules we take him and we kick him out straight, otherwise we risk being evicted, you know, you give the police a pretext for the eviction.<sup>101</sup>

Stevan, a Serbian migrant who was living in the Salviati informal settlement and who left the Avis occupation because of disagreements with the rest of the Roma squatters, showed me the flat where he lived with his wife and children. He was working in the construction sector as a carpenter (like many other squatters living there) and, thanks to his skills, he built his flat on his own. He told me:

<sup>101</sup> Interview held in Rome on 21 December 2013.

Here's too good, we get along with everyone, even with coloured people [sic]... my mouth aches by constantly saying 'good morning, good morning'!<sup>102</sup>

Dorina, Stevan's wife, added:

There [in Castel Romano] the boys kept running everywhere until late at night, at 2am, 3am, but here we can finally relax.<sup>103</sup>

Interestingly, Stevan and Dorina were introduced by the RAM activists as Roma, but they said they were not. When I asked them where they came from, Dorina replied:

I'm Romanian and he's from Serbia, we are not Roma, but we were put with them. We were first in Salviati street and then we moved to Castel Romano.

This shows how the pure fact of being seen as Roma, regardless of whether people define themselves in this way, is crucial in determining what type of policy one becomes the target of. The example of Stevan and Dorina clearly indicates how both the categories of Roma and squatters are constructed and framed, and that the shift to the category of squatters is not the change or the disguise of an objective category, but the re-framing of an already imagined group.

As Metropoliz illustrates, the provision of a stable space where one is able to take time to build a house and relationships with the neighbours helps develop a feeling of community and facilitates the creation of a single political subject. In both the Metropoliz and Lancio cases, unlike in the previous examples, the Roma groups taking part in the occupations did not accept the relocation alternatives that were offered to them and were therefore deeply committed to and involved in the process of becoming squatters, which, as illustrated above, requires time and effort. Furthermore, the framing of the Roma claims in terms of housing deprivation and not on the basis of their ethnicity enabled them to be included in the solutions offered to non-Roma squatters.

### **Ambiguity as an opportunity for escaping the Roma camps**

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Roma policy documents are characterised by a strong ambiguity which makes it difficult to understand who the targets of these camps

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102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

are. As a consequence, the fact of simply moving to an occupied building with the help of an urban social movement helped the Roma not to be seen by the municipality as the target of the Roma camps anymore. The confusion between the Roma as an ethnic group, and the Italian Roma as nomads enhance the discretionary power of the bureaucrats who find themselves in the position of interpreting the situation. A conversation I had with a police officer in the Unit of Public Security and Emergency clearly highlights the ambiguity around the Roma camps and also the interpretations that have emerged.

The Police Unit of Public Security and Emergency (SPE, *Unità Operativa di Sicurezza Pubblica ed Emergenziale*), which until 2011 was called the Coordination of Interventions and Operations on Nomads (CION, *Coordinamento Interventi Operativi Nomadi*), is an organisational unit of the local police of the municipality of Rome. After repeatedly contacting the vice-president of this police unit for an interview, I succeeded in fixing an appointment with Luciano, a SPE police officer. As of February 2014, the website of the municipality of Rome reports that this police unit's responsibilities include urban security, the clearance of occupied buildings and interventions in informal settlements and Roma camps (although the description on the website employs the term 'nomads' not 'Roma'). However, from the interview with Luciano it emerged that the main responsibility of the unit is the control of informal Roma settlements and camps. As Luciano explained:

We exclusively deal with the nomad camps [sic]. We monitor, check, control the irregular camps. Our squads go around the irregular camps and give feedback about potential problems to be solved. We know everything that happens in the camps, we also work with the keepers [of the official Roma camps] of *Risorse per Roma* that collaborate with us [...]. They write daily reports for us on what's going on there every day.<sup>104</sup>

This police unit, together with the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office, is on the frontline of the management of the informal Roma settlements and camps and, although every eviction needs be mandated by a judge, police officers nevertheless hold significant discretionary power when it comes to negotiating the practicalities on the day of the eviction. The interpretation of the situations by police officers is also crucial when it comes to identifying new informal Roma settlements, because the very fact of naming a

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<sup>104</sup> Interview held in Rome on 15 November 2013.

person ‘Roma’ and a settlement a ‘Roma settlement’ has important implications for the people living there. The example of Stevan and Dorina, the Lancio squatters mentioned above, clearly illustrates how people can get caught up in a vicious cycle of evictions, relocations and Roma camps by just being seen as ‘Roma’ and living in a ‘Roma settlement’. However, defining a Roma and a Roma settlement is not straightforward. The following is an excerpt of the conversation I had with Luciano, which highlights the problematic aspects of defining the target of the Roma camps:

*Gaja*: How are the informal Roma settlements different from informal settlements set up by other people?

*Luciano*: It depends what you mean by Roma!

*Gaja*: I mean, why are the informal Roma settlements treated differently from other informal camps in which maybe other migrants live?

*Luciano*: Why do you say so? It's the same.

*Gaja*: Ok, so you're telling me that this police unit also deals with migrants that squat a plot of land?

*Luciano*: Yes, but, you see, it never occurred to me to find a camp set up by Africans! They don't build nomad camps, do they? [he asked me ironically] Although, now that I think about it, just few days back a colleague of mine told me that in a settlement they found coloured [sic] people. But it's a phenomenon that hasn't really developed yet.<sup>105</sup>

*Gaja*: Then, what you're saying is that it's mainly nomads who create nomad camps?

*Luciano*: Exactly! Romanian Roma or Slavic ones... but they're all of Roma ethnicity. We also found some Bulgarian Roma.

*Gaja*: And are there also Italian Sinti living in the camps?

*Luciano*: Of course. [Showing me a report they published on informal Roma settlements] Here we wrote Italians-Italians, but under this category you also find those ones [i.e. Italian Sinti]. The ethnic category Sinti hasn't been included in the report though, but you're right, this surely is a limitation. [...] <sup>106</sup>

With these questions I was trying to understand what is meant by ‘nomad’, since this police unit mainly deals with ‘nomad camps’, and when they decide to proceed with an eviction, this is the starting point of the relocation process to Roma camps. But, as shown by Luciano's elusive answers, the definition of the policy category ‘nomad’ is unclear and ambiguous. The report he showed me during the interview proved to be equally ambiguous in its definition of the groups which this police unit targets:

<sup>105</sup> As a matter of fact, studies have shown that in Rome there are also informal settlements set up by African migrants (see Rossi, 2010; Stalker, 2007).

<sup>106</sup> Interview held in Rome on 15 November 2013.

Gypsies? Roma? Nomads? Gitanos? Who are those women and children that we often meet, begging in the streets of our cities? Sometimes they are the protagonists of terrible news items that reveal their precarious living conditions. They die from the cold or from fire in the camps where they live. (Polizia Roma Capitale, 2013, p.7)

Although in the first lines there would seem to be already an implicit definition that depicts the Roma as beggars, exploiting children, and living in camps, the report promises a clarification of all these terms:

Gypsies? Besides the harsh judgement towards them, this term is not politically correct. Nomads, then? But are they really nomads? Roma? But – as we shall see – they are not all Roma. Slavs? Least of all. (*ibid.*, p.7)

However, despite illustrating the history of the Roma communities in Italy and despite saying that they are not all nomads, the report keeps referring to the Roma as nomads and employs the term ‘nomad camp’. The ‘nomads’ (the ‘Roma’, the ‘Gypsy’ etc.) appear to be tautologically defined as those (because they are barely defined as individuals) who live in (and set up) ‘nomad camps’. Practically speaking, this unclear definition translates into practices of racial and ethnic discrimination whereby ‘nomads’ are groups of Roma-looking people (either because of their language, the way they dress or the activities they carry out, like scrap metal recycling) who squat on a plot of land mainly because of their poor socio-economic situation. In contrast, if those who illegally occupy a plot of land look different from a ‘nomad’, are from other continents, or if Roma-looking people squat a building, they are not ‘nomads’ anymore and, therefore, no longer the responsibility of the SPE unit. As Luciano stated:

[In the case of a group of Roma occupying a building] we usually report everything to the municipal department, so that they know what's going on. We regularly write memorandums and edit reports. We could also evict, but usually for this kind of thing it is rather the riot police, the state police or the *Carabinieri*<sup>107</sup>. We're more concerned with the council's property estate. [...] Anyway, if they're nomads, we keep an eye on them.<sup>108</sup>

Although this police unit controls the Roma communities that, for example, move from an informal settlement to an occupied building, when there are social movements involved it is no longer their responsibility – as if, by definition, ‘nomads’ cannot be

107 The *Carabinieri* are the Italian gendarmery.

108 Interview held in Rome on 15 November 2013.

part of social movements. Therefore, when the groups of Roma joined urban social movements including Italian activists and other migrants, they were no longer dealt with using the same measures deployed for ‘nomads’.

The effect of this passage from Roma to squatters has been confirmed by other interviewees too. Antonio, a public official working for the municipality of Rome, explained that the Roma who joined the squatting movements are not straightforwardly responsibility of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Office:

They're no longer the responsibility of this office [i.e. the Nomads Office, in 2013]. I bumped, by pure chance, into a spokesperson of the Roma community and we had a nice chat, these people are ok. He's aware of the choice they made, which is a question with no answer yet. Personally, I'm happy that they finally interact with the municipality not as Roma but as people who experience severe housing deprivation [...] because in this way they can access services according to their needs.<sup>109</sup>

Antonio's words clearly highlight that the Roma who become squatters are no longer the responsibility of the offices, departments and police units that deal with the Roma and the Roma camps, but can now make claims on the basis of necessity rather than ethnicity. Also Giulio, a member of a pro-Roma advocacy association, agreed on the fact that being seen as a Roma – regardless of what this means – implies being automatically linked to Roma camps:

If two Roma people sleep in the street, the social workers arrive and ask them ‘right, you two are Roma, in what camp do you live, then?’, so that's why they will end up in a Roma camp. It's like a decision based on their status: they're homeless Roma.<sup>110</sup>

Homeless Roma are not treated like non-Roma homeless people, who may be offered a place in a homeless shelter. Being regarded as Roma *de facto* hinders access to facilities and services for homeless people and leads to inclusion in Roma-only services, as if the ethnicity of a person automatically determines his or her housing needs. Presenting oneself as non-Roma can therefore be used as a way to resist this apparently inexorable trap of Roma policies. Giulio argued that becoming a squatter is a viable way out of the discriminatory policies to which the Roma are subject to:

There is an occupation, called Metropolit, where there is a group of

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109 Interview held in Rome on 4 November 2013.

110 Interview held in Rome on 30 October 2013.

Roma that live with others, so there isn't only a group of Roma. An entire Roma community occupied this building with others and, since they're there, they haven't been caught in the cycle of waiting lists for the Roma camps, ending up in a caravan, etc. but they're now considered as victims of the urban housing crisis. [...] So, they changed their status, that is what we think is better. They became squatters, in the same way as Francesco or Muhammad [made-up names that mean other Italians or other migrants in general] and live together there, and they ask the municipality of Rome for a solution not as foreigners or Roma but as citizens. It doesn't take much. And then no one from the Nomads Office bothered them anymore. They've been considered another thing.

By joining the urban social movements, and by moving to a squat instead of building umpteen huts in informal settlements that are highly likely to be destroyed during an eviction, the Roma managed to escape the cycle of labelling, eviction and relocation to Roma camps. The 'grammar' (see MacLeod and McFarlane, 2014) of squatting, in this case seemed to have effectively spelled out and tackled the inequality to which the Roma are subject to. However, as already mentioned above, to maintain this grammar requires more than simply occupying a building with the support of an urban social movement.

### **The process for becoming squatters: intersectional claims, commitment and space**

The cases illustrated in this chapter show how becoming a squatter is not a straightforward consequence of squatting a building. Becoming squatters constitutes an "act of citizenship", which can be defined as a deed that disrupts the status quo and creates new political subjects that claim rights to which they are not entitled to (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Despite the fact that many of the Roma are formally citizens, their citizenship is often hindered by practices of discrimination and exclusion (see, for instance, Çağlar and Mehling, 2013; Kofman, 1995; Hepworth, 2012; Sigona and Monasta, 2006). Yet citizenship cannot be reduced to a fixed membership to a community, but it is better understood as a system of political subjectivities that are negotiated through struggles and claim-making (Isin, 2002a). By joining the urban squatting movement some of the Roma became squatters and hence turned into a new political subject with new claims, i.e. demanding the access to public housing as victims of the urban housing crisis and not as (presumably nomadic) ethnic group. Acts of



citizenship, however, must endure in order to consolidate the newly emerged political subjectivity. As shown by the case of the Pachamama and Avis squats, it is not enough to occupy a building to become squatters. To turn ambiguity into an opportunity to escape the Roma camps, and to fortify the process of becoming squatters, require veritable effort both from the Roma and the social movement activists, and also depends on a series of conditions and actors beyond the Roma and social movements' control. The analysis of the cases illustrated in this chapter can shed light on the factors that led the Roma to become squatters (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 – Conditions for becoming squatters

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Intersectional claim</b>	<b>Relocation accepted</b>	<b>Space</b>
Pachamama	<i>Official camp</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Avis	<i>Eviction</i>	No	No	Yes
Metropoliz	<b>Squatters</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Lancio	<b>Squatters</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>

An important aspect that emerged as crucial in enabling the passage from Roma to squatters is the deep commitment to intersectional claims that cross those of other categories, going beyond the ethnicisation of the housing deprivation experienced by the Roma. The official Roma camps indeed constitute a housing policy for an ethnic minority which is arbitrarily assumed to be nomadic. Advocating a relocation solution by presenting themselves as Roma would almost automatically lead to Roma-only accommodation, which would not be offered to other non-Roma homeless people, marginalised migrants or Italians. Therefore, joining other categories and framing political claims together is a way to avoid being targeted as Roma. In both the Metropoliz and Lancio squats, the Roma framed their claims within the broader discourse of the struggle against neoliberal urbanisation, for the right to the city and access to adequate housing in times of economic crisis. In contrast, in the case of the Avis squat, the claims were still framed as specific to the situation faced by the Roma people. However, the presence of claims beyond the specificity of Roma inclusion alone is not enough to make this act of citizenship endure (as also shown by Boschetti and

Vitale, 2011).

From my analysis of these occupations, it also emerged that the Roma who endured as squatters in the eye of the local administration were those who, at the moment of joining the squat, rejected or had not been offered an opportunity to relocate by the municipality of Rome. For instance, the Roma who joined Metropoliz refused to be relocated to the Cartiera centre, and those of the Lancio squat firmly declined the offer of new Portakabins in the Castel Romano camp. On the other hand, in the case of Pachamama, the Roma had already accepted the relocation to the Castel Romano camp, and it was not clear if they wanted to fully join the occupation or stay in the camp. The rejection of the solutions offered indicates a stronger political commitment by the Roma and the lack of an alternative makes it easier for them to take on the journey to becoming squatters which, as illustrated above, requires time and effort.

Space is, finally, another factor that emerged as crucial in enabling the passage from Roma to squatters. The examples analysed in this chapter have shown that the appropriation of a new space in which to invest time to becoming squatters, and to nurture the relationships sustaining the creation of a new political subject, is fundamental. As argued by Uitermark and Nicholls (2014) the formation of relations in interstitial spaces is one of the conditions of effective politicisation. The Metropoliz and Lancio squats show how building spaces where the Roma can cohabit (preferably) with other categories and can make claims on the basis of severe housing deprivation strengthens their escape from the Roma camps. As pointed out by Engin Isin (2002a, p.49), space “is a fundamental strategic property by which groups [...] are constituted in the real world”. Space is not the neutral background of political struggles but crucial to the creation of political subjects. As the case of the Roma camps show, space can actively and strategically be used as tool to disempower abject subjects (Isin and Rygiel, 2007). However, it is also a resource for enacting new scripts of activist citizens, also through solidarity (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), as revealed by the cases of political squats where the Roma fraternised with a variety of other people. At the same time, space affects the ways in which new political subjects come to emerge, for instance the fact that Roma in Metropoliz had to move from the hangar to the main building fortified their feeling of belonging to the squat. Space is, therefore, crucial to the creation of political subjectivities, and by moving from the space of the informal Roma settlement

to that of a political squat, where they can develop new solidarities, the Roma can stop being (seen as) Roma.

Becoming squatters can constitute a useful strategy of avoidance of the vicious cycle that reinforces the segregation of the Roma in camps, but is not the solution to all the problems and stigmatisation faced by the Roma. Indeed, that of squatters is a highly stigmatised category too, even more after 2001 with the introduction of the article 270-bis of the Penal Code regulating the sanctions for terrorist associations and targeting squatters too. Being charged under this article entails the type of imprisonment which is used for Mafia related crimes. Another aspect that shows how becoming squatters can only be the beginning of the journey towards the end of the Roma camps is that being formally entitled to a place on council housing estates does not necessarily mean that this will happen in a near future, given current low construction rates. Becoming squatters is the first step but requires other forms of inclusion of the Roma: first, avoiding their potential further stigmatisation as squatters and, second, addressing the more generalised housing crisis, also due to a retrenchment of the welfare state.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has illustrated how ambiguity, which emerged as a factor contributing to the persistence of the Roma camps, also opens up opportunities for resisting segregating housing policies. In the last decade an increasing number of Roma have joined political squats with the support of urban social movements and therefore started to be seen, in certain cases, as squatters rather than as Roma. As confirmed by interviews with public officials and members of pro-Roma associations, this shift has enabled the Roma to escape the policy category of Roma and, therefore, the relocation solutions offered to these groups, that is, Roma-only centres or official camps. In contrast to those who are seen as Roma, Roma who became squatters have been included in the negotiations between the squatting movement and the Department of Work, Housing and Housing Emergency and were entitled to the relocation solutions offered to squatters, including non-Roma public housing estates.

These examples have shown how there are no objective constraints, but that whether something becomes a constraint or an opportunity depends on the framing

strategies of actors as well as on the surrounding political context and the resources it offers. In this case, the 2008 economic crisis and the following wave of contention against austerity measures offered the Roma an occasion to articulate a new form of resistance through the adoption of a new repertoire (i.e. squatting) and through the mobilisation of the urban as a site of contestation and emerging social movements. The alliance between the Roma and the urban squatting movement has transformed ambiguity into a tool to escape the very discriminatory policies that it enabled. Although some Roma-squatters have resisted now for some years, this strategy of resistance remains nonetheless limited to a few Roma communities and does not, for the moment, affect the institutional processes of segregation in Roma camps. However, thanks to this solidarity strategy that has creatively by-passed an obstacle to the political mobilisation against the Roma camps, new modes of political subjectivities are diffusing, calling into question the categorisation on which the Roma camps are based and potentially ushering in the possibility of transformation in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined the notion of persistent temporariness in relation to institutional camps and developed two main arguments: one towards the theoretical investigation of these spaces, and one about the empirical cases analysed. The first part has shown how varied regimes of persistent temporariness are the result of complex processes of interaction, negotiation and conflict between multiple governing actors whose power relations are influenced by the broader institutional and political context. In so doing, I aimed to offer two main contributions to the literature on institutional camps: first, suggesting that persistent temporariness should be understood as a variable rather than a constant and, second, proposing that the camp should be conceived as a site of contentious governance. As discussed in Chapter 1, permanent temporariness is regarded as a common feature of institutional camps which, although created as responses to emergency situations, often endure in time, as the case of the Italian Roma camps showed. However, this notion has been rarely problematised and treated as a direct effect of the uncertain legal status of these spaces. In contrast with this view, I have suggested approaching it as a variable that can assume disparate states, rather than an indeterminate and general condition. I therefore introduced the term ‘persistent temporariness’, instead of ‘permanent temporariness’, since it conveys the idea of a temporariness that can persist in various ways rather than becoming permanent. Indeed, as I have illustrated in Chapter 2, there are examples of institutional camps with different persisting trajectories. While in Italy, Roma camps are still in place, in France, the transit estates persisted for almost two decades but were slowly replaced by council housing estates, and some integration villages have persisted following protests against their closure. In order to describe these three typologies of persistent temporariness, I employed the notion of gradual institutional change as it draws attention to the dynamic dimension of persistence, which rather than a stable continuity can be conceived of as a state characterised by minor transformations.

By appreciating the small changes that shape different cases of persistent temporariness, I have shown how the persistence of the Italian Roma camps constitutes

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a case of ‘conversion’, the French transit estates can be read through the notion of ‘replacement’ and, finally, the French integration villages persist through a form of ‘layering’. To grasp the processes that produced these different types of gradual change would have been, however, impossible if I had adopted an Agambenian understanding of the camp. This is because of the limitations of seeing the camp as a space of sovereign exception, as I have discussed in Chapter 3. By drawing on a number of scholars who criticise the Agambenian notion of sovereignty, which overlooks the complexity and multiplicity of actors involved in the political process, I proposed to theorise the space of camp as a site of contentious governance. This conceptualisation has enabled me to develop a multiple and relational understanding of the camp. Through the concept of governance, I have focused on the plurality of actors involved in the formation and contestation of the Roma camps, without however making any hierarchical division between institutional and non-institutional ones. At the same time, the notion of contentious politics allowed me to inject a relational perspective into the analysis of governance and to consider that framings, resources and opportunities to actions are always relationally produced through the strategies of the actors and the surrounding context. Overall, with this first part of the thesis, I not only aimed to lay the methodological foundations for the investigation of the Roma camps, but also to present a conceptualisation that could act as a blueprint for studying other types of institutional camps, and for understanding the change they undergo.

More specifically, with respect to the empirical cases analysed, this thesis has focused on the concept of ambiguity and investigated how it relates to the camps' multiple regimes of persistent temporariness. Chapter 4 has introduced the concept of policy ambiguity, reporting excerpts of interviews and policy documents that showed the multiple definitions and objectives characterising the policy design of the Roma camps. As I have discussed in Chapter 5, this ambiguous policy design allowed multiple interpretations that were discursively mobilised by subcontracting NGOs in order to justify their role in camps, often criticised for contributing to the persistence of such a controversial segregation. As a result, the incorporation of these associations into institutional governance has led to a minimisation of their criticism and to a further isolation of the Roma, which also resulted in enhanced control of their expressions of dissent. Co-optation implies, indeed, a shift in the operational logics of associations

that, from struggling for equality, start focusing on more short-term and geographically delimited projects and also reduce their level of criticism as they increase their chances to access public funding. This slowly leads to what was originally thought as a means to an end (i.e. the participation in governance structures in order to improve the living conditions of the Roma) to become a means in itself, as shown by the protests organised by subcontracting associations against the cuts to their activities in the camps, while none of them supported the petition for the dismantling of the Roma camps. At the same time, the intrusive presence of sub-contracting NGOs in the camps makes contact with the outside more difficult, prevents pro-Roma advocacy groups from conducting activities in the camps, and often results in the silencing of the voice of the Roma camp-residents. Policy ambiguity has facilitated the framing strategies and the increase of material resources of subcontracting NGOs that lowered their criticisms, while weakening the socio-organisational resources available to the opponents of the Roma camps, therefore leading to a policy conversion.

In order not to limit my reflections to the specific case of the Italian Roma camps, I conducted a comparison with the French transit estates and integration villages to examine whether the ambiguity I discovered in the Italian case had resulted in other types of persistent temporariness. Chapter 6 has illustrated that, unlike the Roma camps, both French cases are characterised by a clear policy design but also by an ambiguous implementation. For the transit estates, a progressive clarity of their definitions and objectives strengthened the claims of actors fighting against this form of segregation, leading to the slow termination of this policy. Similarly, the clear objectives of the Roma integration villages were used to argue against their short duration and, in some cases, enabled pro-Roma actors to successfully demand their temporal extension. Through this comparison, it emerged that different types of ambiguity contribute to different types of persistence. In both French cases, clearer policy objectives facilitated the claims of non-institutional actors against the decisions of institutional ones, while in the Italian case an ambiguous policy design hindered the action of non-institutional actors opposing the way these spaces were managed by the local government. However, the ambiguity of the policy design does not totally impede political mobilisation against the Roma camps. As I discussed in Chapter 7, there are urban social movements that, with the help of some pro-Roma advocacy group, have exploited the moment of

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economic and housing crisis to turn the ambiguity of the Roma camps into an opportunity for action. An increasing number of Roma have joined the squats set up by urban social movements, enabling them to present themselves as squatters and not as Roma. Thus, their claims for housing exclusion have changed, being no longer based on an ethnic belonging, but characterised by a socio-economic condition of housing exclusion, which is shared by other squatters. It is maybe too soon to understand the outcomes of this new type of mobilisation, but for the moment, this re-articulation from Roma to squatters is challenging the current segregation in camps through their very ambiguity.

It is important to remember that there is not a single reason for the persistence of institutional camps, as this is a complex social phenomenon that emerges from an intricate combination of historical and geographical legacies as well as contextual and often contingent factors that produce the peculiarity of every single event. Therefore, I do not claim I have exhaustively told the whole story about the persistent temporariness of enduring camps. This would be unrealistic to do in one single work. Claiming that ambiguity, in its different forms, contributes to the camps' persistence does not mean that it is the only factor determining persistence, nor that it should work in the same way and for all types of camps. This shows how there is scope for further research into the factors contributing to the camps' persistent temporariness and also for new comparative works analysing the temporal evolution of other enduring camps, which could both enrich the account offered in this thesis.

Another potential limitation of the thesis concerns the broad definition and difficult operationalisation of the concept of ambiguity, which risks becoming a slippery one, referring to too many things at the same time. Mindful of this risk, I defined it according to the stages of the policy-making process where ambiguity was present. Moreover, in Chapter 4, I have carefully explained why I opted for this term rather than similar others. However, in order to more safely avoid confusion, future research on this concept could employ different phrasings. For instance, the ambiguity at the implementation stage could be described as a 'mismatch' between the rules and practices, and design ambiguity could be defined as 'conflicting', characterised by



different statements regarding one policy or aspect. This would also enable us to link this research to other cases that are currently studied through different terminologies and literatures, for instance that on policy failures (which I mentioned in Chapter 5), or on the construction of policy problems.

Lastly, this research does not pretend to have found a panacea for the persistent temporariness of the Roma camps but has just analysed one of the factors facilitating their persistence. However, I hope that the mechanisms discussed in this thesis can offer policy-makers, as well as activists, some food for thought on how to tackle this policy that currently perpetuates and exacerbates the marginalisation of an already disenfranchised minority. There are several associations that propose feasible and inclusive alternatives to camps, such as slum-upgrading or self-building projects. However, how could they redirect the current persisting trajectory towards the end of the Roma camps? In the thesis it emerged that trying to build intersectional coalitions between the Roma and other categories, and avoiding to frame claims in ethnic terms, could be fruitful since it enables the Roma to become something other, hence not included in Roma-only relocation solutions. During the research, the urban squatting movements emerged as especially powerful allies. In addition to this, demanding a more clear design of the Roma camp could work as a pragmatic short-term strategy aiming at reducing their ambiguity. Although most pro-Roma advocacy groups in Rome reject any attempt made by the local administration to issue new regulations of the camps because this potentially perpetuates this form of segregation, having a clear definition of these spaces could diminish the indistinct status in which thousands of Roma live today, help to fortify the claims of the pro-Roma advocacy groups, and stop facilitating the justification of subcontracting associations.

### **Reflections on the camps and beyond**

There are five main aspects that I hope will stay in the reader's mind after putting this thesis back on the bookshelf. These considerations emerge from the main findings of the thesis and aim to provoke some thought not only around the complex governance of the camp, but more generally around the notion of institutional persistence, the nature of policy instrumentation, and the relationship between political mobilisations and the

urban space.

The first is that the camp is not an immutable and homogeneous space of exception, but is a constantly mutating relational space constituted by a multiplicity of institutional and non-institutional actors who interact and co-operate but also negotiate with and contest each other. Agamben has brilliantly and invaluablely ushered in the study of the camp as a space increasingly marking the contemporary global landscapes of exclusion and inclusion. However, when applied to the study of real-world camps, his reflections on this spatio-political formation fall short of accounting for the complex sociological and political dimensions of what he termed 'sovereign decision'. For example, Chapter 3 offered a description of some of the actors involved in the production and maintenance of the Roma camps. In order to offer a theorisation of the camp that could encompass this complexity, I have suggested conceptualising it as a site of contentious governance. Through this conceptualisation, the analysis focuses on the power relations between a plurality of governmental and non-governmental actors that participate in the production of the camp and allows then to understand not only the reasons for persistence, but more generally the ways in which these spaces evolve and change.

A second observation concerns how we think about institutional stability and change. What is often regarded as persistence is actually more than continuity. In fact, the dichotomous division between persistence and radical change overlooks the disparate states in the middle, which consist of minor transformations that, however, produce change in the long-term. The cases analysed in this thesis have challenged this dichotomy and showed how there are more than just two states. The Roma camps, the transit estates and the integration villages present different trajectories of gradual change, which are situated somewhere in between persistence and change. Moreover, the difference between these two states cannot be reduced to a quantitative one, but should also be considered from a qualitative point of view. For example, what distinguishes the persistence of the Roma camps from that of integration villages is not (only) the number of months or years of their duration, but also the dynamics that led to this enduring temporariness. Finally, persistence should be viewed as the result of veritable efforts as much as change is. Although persistence is often associated with inertia, to maintain institutional arrangements proves more difficult than surrendering to

change. For instance, the political squats analysed in Chapter 7 do not automatically endure following their creation, but require specific conditions in order to strengthen their persistence.

Thirdly, the analysis of the ambiguity of the Roma camps has shown that policy instruments are not the direct outcomes of a rational policy-making process, but are often the result of compromises, negotiations, historical legacies, and, sometimes, also, of the lack of clear alternatives. Furthermore, far from constituting the neutral and technical implementation of policy principles, they produce specific effects. The Roma camps were the product of an entanglement of a variety of aspects, including a lack of ordinary tools with which to tackle the housing exclusion of Roma asylum seekers and the presence of conflicting actors whose different opinions produced a strong ambiguity in the objectives of this policy. But studying the origins of ambiguity does not say everything about it. Indeed, policy tools generate unexpected and unintentional effects, which contribute to change in unforeseeable ways. As discussed in Chapter 5, the ambiguity of the Roma camps had an important effect on the persistence of this form of segregation as it favoured the emergence of flexible framings utilised by subcontracting NGOs to justify their role in the camps. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, it has also enabled new forms of resistance through solidarities between the Roma and urban social movements in times of economic crisis.

The fourth point is about political mobilisation and how it should be understood relationally, reduced neither to a result of the intentions and strategies of activists nor to structures of constraints and opportunities. Frames, opportunities and resources for political mobilisations emerge from the relationships between the actors, the political context and institutional arrangements. Indeed, they are actively shaped and constantly re-articulated by movements but are also deeply influenced by cultural factors, by the media, and by the ever evolving surrounding context. Moreover, the target of political mobilisation is not passive but importantly affects these opportunities, resources and framings. As exposed by the cases analysed in this thesis, the ambiguity of the policies targeted by political mobilisations crucially influence the strength of their frames and their resources: while in the case of the transit estates, the progressive clarity about their objectives increasingly fortified the framings against the persistence of these spaces, the ambiguity of the Italian Roma camps weakened the socio-organisational resources

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available to the mobilisation of its opponents. However, the creativity of the activists combined with the resurgence of the strategy of squatting following the 2008 economic crisis, transformed this ambiguity into an opportunity for political mobilisation.

The fifth and last aspect which emerged from this research regards urban movements and the city as a space of not only exclusion and marginalisation, but also of politicisation. As discussed in the previous paragraph, opportunities are context and time specific. For example, the economic crisis was used as a favourable moment to build coalitions between the Roma and the urban squatting movement, allowing the Roma-squatters to escape the segregation in camps. Together with crises, which can productively put into question practices that were previously taken for granted, the urban space can also offer opportunities for political mobilisations. Indeed, while cities are characterised by exacerbating forms of seclusion, they also function as spaces of encounter and exchange where solidarities are shaped and new political subjectivities can emerge. Danica said, as I recalled in Chapter 1, that she “was born in a camp and have always lived in a camp”. The camp is indeed an enclosure that isolates the Roma. However, it always remains part of a broader urban machinery that can produce precious alliances re-articulating the cityscapes of exclusion.

## APPENDIX

### List of Interviewees

#### Italian Roma Camps:

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Type of Interview</b>	<b>Place and Date</b>
1	Alberto	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 21 November 2013
2	Alessandro	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 22 October 2013
3	Alexandra	Residents of Camping Nomentano camp	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
4	Alice	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 26 November 2013
5	Alvise	Member of subcontracting NGO	In-depth interview	Rome, 29 October 2013
6	Andrea	Member of subcontracting NGO	In-depth interview	Rome, 21 November 2013
7	Anna	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	Informal conversation	Rome, 18 November 2013
8	Antonio	Public official municipality of Rome	In-depth interview	Rome, 4 November 2013
9	Clorinda	Public official municipality of Rome	In-depth interview	Rome, 4 November 2013
10	Danica	Resident of Salone camp	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
11	Davide	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 27 November 2013
12	Dorina	Resident of Lancio squat	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 December 2013
13	Enrico	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 20 November 2013
14	Fabiana	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 20 November 2013

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15	Filippo	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	Informal conversation	Rome, 15 December 2013
16	Giacomo	Public official municipality of Rome	In-depth interview	Rome, 13 November 2013
17	Giulia	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	Informal conversation	Rome, 15 December 2013
18	Giulio	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 30 October 2013
19	Gregorio	Member of subcontracting NGO	In-depth interview	Rome, 6 December 2013
20	Iancu	Resident and spokesperson of a Roma camp	In-depth interview	Rome, 6 December 2013
21	Imer	Resident of an official camp	In-depth interview	Brescia, 27 July 2013
22	Imer's neighbour	Resident of an official camp	In-depth interview	Brescia, 27 July 2013
23	Jevren	Residents of Avis squat	In-depth interview	Rome, 21 December 2013
24	Lucia	Director of Cartiera's managing association	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
25	Luciano	Police officer	In-depth interview	Rome, 15 November 2013
26	Man with daughter at Cartiera centre	Resident of Cartiera centre	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
27	Marco	Former public official of the municipality of Rome	In-depth interview	Rome, 28 October 2013
28	Marzia	Member of RAM movement	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 December 2013
29	Massimiliano	Member of Cartiera's managing association	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
30	Roberto	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Rome, 18 November 2013
31	Simone	Member of RAM movement	In-depth interview	Rome, 21 December 2013
32	Sorina	Resident of Metropoliz squat	Informal conversation	Rome, 20 November 2013
33	Stella	Member of Cartiera's	Informal	Rome, 2 October

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		managing association	conversation	2013
34	Stevan	Resident of Lancio squat	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 December 2013
35	Roma woman at the Cartiera's gate	Resident of Cartiera centre	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
36	Roma woman organising sport activities	Resident of Cartiera centre	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
37	Roma woman at the rally	Resident of Cartiera centre	Informal conversation	Rome, 14 October 2013
38	Roma woman at the rally	Resident of Cartiera centre	Informal conversation	Rome, 14 October 2013
39	Int. 39	Public official from Department of Housing Policies	Informal conversation	Rome, 31 October 2013
40	Int. 40	Public official from Department of Housing Policies	Telephone conversation	Rome, 3 November 2013 Rome, 21 November 2013
41	Int. 41	Employee of UNAR	In-depth interview	
42	Int. 42	Public official municipality of Rome	Informal conversation	Rome, 14 October 2013
43	Int. 43	Public official municipality of Rome	Informal conversation	Rome, 15 November 2013
44	Int. 44	Member of subcontracting NGO	In-depth interview	Rome, 23 October 2013
45	Int. 45	Resident of Camping Nomentano	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
46	Int. 46	Resident of Salone camp	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
47	Int. 47	Resident of Salviati informal settlement	Informal conversation	Rome, 21 September 2013
48	Int. 48	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
49	Int. 49	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
50	Int. 50	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013

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51	Int. 51	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
52	Int. 52	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
53	Int. 53	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
54	Int. 54	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
55	Int. 55	Resident of Cartiera centre	Short interview	Rome, 2 October 2013
56	Int. 56	University lecturer	In-depth interview	Rome, 24 September 2013
57	Int. 57	University lecturer	In-depth interview	Rome, 10 October 2013
58	Int. 58	University lecturer	In-depth interview	Rome, 21 October 2013
59	Int. 59	Journalist	In-depth interview	Rome, 25 November 2013
60	Int. 60	PhD student involved in a project in a informal Roma settlement	Informal conversation	Rome, 20 September 2013

### French Integration Villages:

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Type of Interview</b>	<b>Place and Date</b>
1	Adèle	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Paris, 4 July 2015
2	Anne	Member of subcontracting NGO	Informal conversation	Ris Orangis, 9 May 2014
3	Edi	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Saint-Denis, 2 June 2015
4	Guillaume	Member of subcontracting NGO	In-depth interview	Montreuil, 16 June 2014
5	Henri	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Montreuil, 6 June 2014
6	Maxime	Public official (DIHAL)	In-depth interview	Paris, 27 November 2014



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7	Int. 7	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Paris, 6 May 2014
8	Int. 8	University lecturer	Informal conversation	Paris, 12 May 2014
9	Int. 9	University lecturer	Informal conversation	Paris, 12 May 2014
10	Int. 10	University lecturer	Informal conversation	Paris, 23 May 2014
11	Int. 11	Public official municipality of Nanterre	In-depth interview	Nanterre, 26 May 2014
12	Int. 12	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	Informal conversation	Nanterre, 4 June 2014
13	Int. 13	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Meudon, 24 June 2014
14	Int. 14	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Paris, 25 June 2014
15	Int. 15	Member of pro-Roma advocacy group	In-depth interview	Paris, 20 June 2015

### French Transit Estates:

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Type of Interview</b>	<b>Place and Date</b>
1	Bruno	Former employee LPS	In-depth interview	Meudon, 24 June 2014
2	Charles	Former employee of Sonacotral	In-depth interview	Paris, 23 June 2014
3	Int. 3	Member of an association in Nanterre	In-depth interview	Nanterre, 21 May 2014
4	Int. 4	University researcher	Informal conversation	Paris, 23 May 2014
5	Int. 5	University researcher	In-depth interview	Nanterre, 4 June 2014
6	Int. 6	University researcher	Informal conversation	Paris, 10 June 2014
7	Int. 7	Former employee of Sonacotral	In-depth interview	Meudon, 24 June 2014

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