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Housing access for roma migrants: a comparative approach between Turin and Barcelona

Cecilia Vergnano, GRECS (Research Group on Exclusion and Social Control), OACU (Anthropology Observatory of Urban Conflicts)

This report presents a comparative approach about the housing exclusion processes of particular stigmatized groups, the Roma migrants, in Italy and Spain, setting as examples the cases of Turin and Barcelona. From a diachronic point of view, the housing strategies of these groups are integrated in (and shaped by) the different historical housing policies trajectories in an Italian and Spanish context. From a synchronic point of view however, similarities are seen in the daily routines and economic survival strategies of these groups regardless of the different social, historical and policy framework contexts: in both scenarios, housing insecurity is a daily matter of fact and the economic survival strategies are often criminalized and repressed.

1. Introduction

This report draws up some aspects of residential exclusion in Barcelona and Turin. In particular, a comparative analysis is realised of discriminatory practices targeted to a specific group of 'undesired' and stigmatized migrants: Romanian migrants ethnically referred to with the umbrella term 'Roma'. Based on a PhD thesis on Roma settlements in Turin and the political agenda aimed at eradicating them, this article provides some elements that can help understand the so-called 'Roma issue' in the metropolitan area of Barcelona and, in general terms, those informal housing and economic situations, linked to the denial of citizenship rights.

Turin and Barcelona have seen a transition –in different political and economical contexts– from the 'classical' industrial city model to a post-Fordist or neo-liberal city. These processes of social and economic readjustment would lead, at local level, to discriminatory practices towards an unrecognised sector of the population whose individuals would elaborate, in response, different housing strategies. From the occupation of abandoned urban land to building precarious housing (shacks or huts), to renting or occupying overcrowded flats, the stigmatized groups have found and continue to find, in different contexts, different responses in the face of the impossibility of accessing regular housing.

In fact, the so-called "Roma issue" can be considered a phenomenon through which to detect global forces imposing considerable social transformations at local level. Sassen (2014) argues in this way the characteristics and functioning of the 'systemic edge' ("the logic of expulsion and

inclusion”): “The extreme character of conditions at the edge makes visible larger trends that are less extreme and hence more difficult to capture” (cit.: 211).

It's important to highlight that I refer here to the most stigmatized and disadvantaged sectors of Roma populations (the so-called “undesired migrants”): it's a necessary explanation to avoid an essentialist representation of a category which is, in contrast, much more complex and heterogeneous. It's also important to note that, while Turin data is provided by a PhD research already concluded, data referring to Barcelona comes, on one hand, from bibliographic and documental sources and, on the other hand, from some immersions in the field corresponding to an initial investigation stage. This article has therefore to be considered as a working paper.

2. Theoretical framework. Contextualizing the “Roma issue”

Only recently has scientific research started getting involved in a task whose need was already pointed out by Willems: getting Romani studies out from their “splendid isolation” (1997: 305-6), and address a fundamental debate to a broader academic public.

Both Olivera (2015) and Vitale and Aguilera (2015) shed light on the connection between the emergence of informal settlements of Roma families on the outskirts of Spanish, French and Italian cities and the long history of migrations to industrial cities since the half of the XIX century. These authors have provided evidence on the persistence of informal settlements on the outskirts of industrial cities resulting from the very narrative and stigmatizing practices that would intend to reabsorb and eradicate them. Deconstructing the so-called ‘Roma issue’ helps researchers to contribute to the academic discussion about urban development, urban regeneration and slum eradication (Abrams, 1964; Bannerjee-Guha, 2010; Benjamin, 2008; Davis, 2006; Harvey, 2008; Mahmud, 2010; Roy, 2011), on housing access for families and individuals with low incomes (Allen et al. 2004; Forrest & Lee, 2003; Power, 1993; Tosi, 2008) and, in general, about “dangerous classes” (Chevalier, 1958) and territorial stigmatization processes (Wacquant, 2008).

Moreover, the so-called “Roma issue” at the start of the 21st century can't be isolated from the current European ‘migration crisis’. Authors like Rigo (2005), Rygiel (2011), Andrijasevic (2010), Walters (2006) have observed that the European space has been transforming, while the organization of the labour market has been dividing and becoming more hierarchical. Balibar (2004) talks about an ‘European apartheid’, constituted by a massive increase of ‘internal borders’ that produce a segmentation and fragmentation of the concept of ‘European citizenship’.

After the EU Eastern expansion in 2004 and 2007, approximately two million Roma, have become European citizens and members of the largest European ethnic minority (Romani people), officially “free” to move through the Union territories. Roma migration flows from Eastern to Western countries can help us to understand the social change the introduction of the new neoliberal order at European level has brought about. In fact, these migratory flows can't be analysed without taking into account historical and geopolitical factors: the dismantling of the Soviet Union, wars in the former Yugoslavia, processes of market liberalisation in former socialist countries and the resulting exclusion and pauperisation processes, cutbacks in welfare systems in western European countries, the recent expansion to the East of the European Union and the “Schengen area” (Sigona and Trehan, 2009).

The entry of Romanian citizens ethnically connoted as ‘Roma’ in Europe, as fully legal European citizens, has undoubtedly produced a wave of anti-Gypsyism among European political leaders – see the state of emergency declaration from Italy with regards to the Roma settlements in 2008, or the massive deportations in France in 2011 (Clough Marinaro and Sigona, 2011; Van Baar, 2014). The moral panic provoked by the mobility of these groups reveals how, indeed, this issue doesn't

only reflect a problem of “cultural difference”, but also and mainly an issue of socio-economic inequalities.

The new geopolitical order that has re-drawn the map of Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall have been accompanied by the assertion and consolidation throughout the continent, but more clearly in the European Union and its new satellites, of the neoliberal economic doctrine. In countries that have followed this inspiration, an increasing number of people that, for various reasons, have not found any adequate and socially acceptable position in the new order have been pushed to the margins and impoverished: among these, there are millions of Roma people, for whom chronic unemployment and social exclusion have become the norm. (Sigona in Palidda, 2009: 54)

The “Roma issue” is hence deeply connected with the phenomenon of internal economic migrations in the EU, as well as issues related to economic and social rights access linked to European citizen status. The movement of these groups, victims of pauperisation and marginalization, reveals the limits and contradictions of the current neoliberal European order. Since 2007, the year when Romania entered the EU, the “Roma issue” has become more and more important in national political agendas, with notable effects in terms of securization (Sigona, 2008 and 2011; Sigona and Trehan, 2011; Van Baar, 2013), dehumanisation, nomadisation, differential inclusion (Van Baar, 2011, 2012 and 2015), and poverty ethnicizing (Olivera, 2011; Templer, 2006). These processes co-occur with a general process of ‘particularization’ of rights and entitlements, progressively abandoning the previous universalistic paradigm (Sassen, 2006; Nyers, 2011). Indeed it can be observed how the rights related to the European citizenship, including the right to residence, can be, in practice, formulated in a conditional way by central or local powers, connecting them with economic requirements.

3. “Housing for Roma” policies in Turin: ethnopolitical limits

In several European countries, policies and practices targeted to the Roma population have been almost exclusively focused on housing access, in a discriminatory way with regards to other unadvantaged sectors of the majority society. In fact, different ways of space segregation have emerged with the creation of special areas, ‘fields’ or ‘encampments’ for families ethnically connoted as Romani, often allocated on the margins of urban areas. The areas for travellers in the United Kingdom or for *gent de voyage* in France, are an example of these types of policies. Italy is a paradigmatic model of segregationist policies addressed to Romani groups. By using the controversial concept of ‘nomadism’ – feature assumed to be inherent in ‘Romani culture’ – local regulators have fostered, since the end of the 70s, the official construction of *campi nomadi* (nomad camps) on the outskirts of urban areas, as a concentration and control device for these populations. At the same time, the informal shack settlements (commonly named the same as the official ones, *campi*), have been mostly regulated by repressive practices of cyclic evictions or, on the opposite, their existence has been tacitly allowed (as long as it didn’t compromise other interests).

In this way, while between the 50’s and the 80’s working class housing was managed (even if failing to cover all the demand) through universalist social policies (by building a social housing stock, called *case popolari*), that specific sector of the population ethnically connoted as Roma, also victim of housing exclusion, was the object of differential policies: the camps policy. In Turin, different neighbourhoods of shacks, in different periods, have been reabsorbed in different ways according to the ethnicity of their inhabitants: while internal migrants, settled in shacks on the margins of the industrial city during the post-war years, could often benefit from policies for social housing, the Roma slums’ dwellers of the 80’s and 90’s have been re-housed in *campi nomadi*, based on the stereotyped idea about their presumed ‘nomadism’ (and, therefore, their inability to live in a flat).

Furthermore, in the absence of an authentic asylum system for refugees in Italy, an indirect consequence of the Balkan Wars in the 90's has been the subsequent “gangrening” of the encampments system, conceived as the only possible solution to the housing emergency of Roma families running away from the war, fugitives and yet labelled as ‘Roma’ (see “nomads”) instead of refugees (Sigona, 2002 and 2014).

The most recent migratory flows, coming from Romania and also ‘ethnicized’ in hegemonic representations, have also been managed within this framework. As a result, these days in Turin there is a coexistence, often side by side, of neighbourhoods of case popolari (buildings of social housing, as part of a public housing stock which is currently almost entirely privatized), official camps for ‘nomads’ and informal camps (neighbourhoods of makeshift shacks).

My research in Turin is focused on three principal aspects of the ‘Roma issue’:

- a) Management capacity of camps’ dwellers (both formal and informal): housing and economic strategies, everyday resistance mechanisms and ‘infrapolitics’ (Scott 2003), adaptation and subjectivation processes.
- b) Public policies targeted to Roma population.
- c) Intersection between informal residential and economic strategies of camps’ dwellers and the formal markets –in particular, housing and labour markets.

Accordingly, the investigation is focused, on one hand, on the strategies carried out by camps’ dwellers “from below” and, on the other hand, on the public policies addressed to this population “from above”, providing evidence on the eventual incompatibilities and gaps between both. This approach shows the reasons of the failure in Turinese camps eradication policies and the persistence of stigmatized territories at urban edges. Moreover, the ‘Roma issue’ is stressed, describing its economic aspects, revealing its connection to wider processes, such as the growing exclusion of an increasing range of population sectors from the real state market and the labour market, the capitalist processes of ‘creative destruction’ (Schumpeter, 1951) and the ‘neoliberal turn’ in social policies.

Thus the research examines the intersection of different areas and disciplines profoundly bounded and yet rarely addressed together: the so-called ‘Romani studies’, urban anthropology, urban studies, migration studies, encampment sociology and political economy, broadening in this way the analytical potential of each one of these fields.

Choosing Turin as a geographic framework provides certain advantages due to different reasons. Turin represents a paradigmatic example of a post-Fordist city, severely affected by the transition from an extensive regulation of capitalist accumulation to a flexible one (Aglietta, 1976; Boyer, 2004), from industrial production to an economy of finance and services. Destination of remarkable migrant flows in the decades following the Second World War, Turin has dealt with the issue of housing access for working-class families in the 50's, 60's and 70's by building case popolari. Turin was, in addition, the first city in Italy where an official campo nomadi was built, in 1978, and which has implemented between 2013 and 2015 a re-housing project aimed at eradicating the largest informal settlement in the city, populated by around a thousand inhabitants, most of them Rumanian Roma.

The fieldwork research, carried out from 2009 to 2015 (a total of 20 months of participant observation) has allowed for qualitative and quantitative data to be collected and for extensive interviews to be done. These data show the emergence of some meaningful phenomena.

Firstly, it is important to stress that the camp, as a “total institution” (Goffman, 1972), has become a decisive turning point for the housing pathways of its inhabitants, who today include up to the third generation of ‘son of the camps’ (that is, people who since they were born, have known only this housing type). For the families who live on a camp, this means a sort of ‘black hole’, capable of executing a centripetal and centrifugal force at the same time. Depending on the legal status, the economic and social resources of families, as well as their strategies, objectives and goals, the

camp can be a source of precariousness or insecurity, from which some of the inhabitants try to run away at all costs, using their own resources and according to their own strategies (a process comparable, in some aspects, to others of 'flight' by the middle class from stigmatized areas, like the well-known Black flight in the United States –see Wiese, 2004 among others). But the encampment can also represent, for deprived families, an attractive strategy to access housing in a context of lack of alternatives, due to cuts in social housing policies and the impossibility of accessing the housing market. In this context, the fights for the "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1968) would be reduced to the "right to the camp" (Grbac, 2014): conflicts between legitimate beneficiaries of housing in the camp, on one hand, and aspiring candidates, on the other, who in some cases even 'invade' and occupy illegally plots in the camp. The research has allowed therefore parallel processes of camp entry and exit from different families to be observed. In addition, it is worth remarking that leaving the camp often doesn't mean accessing formal housing, but rather remaining in a 'grey area' of semi-formal housing through the purchase of land devoted to agricultural use, used as a space for shacks, caravans or makeshift shelters. That way, families adopt their own strategies to access an 'affordable housing'; they settle in plots legally acquired which are, nevertheless, not allowed to be built on.

It's important to highlight as well that the few Roma families that were able to benefit social housing in the 90's, and who joined the labour market, were those that displayed the most remarkable social climbing paths, leaving behind definitively the social marginality of life in a camp.

After the recent reappearance of informal settlements on the edges of the urban areas, local authorities in Turin have recently implemented a re-housing project addressed to the inhabitants of the largest shacks settlement in the city. Between 2013 and 2015, a settlement populated by around 1.000 people –most of them Romanian Roma– has been progressively dismantled. The project's characteristics are meaningful, as they represent in many aspects the 'neoliberal turn' in contemporary social policies. The project's underlying logic is that it is necessary to separate the people living in settlements into 'deserving' and 'not deserving' families, according to moral order criteria. For the second group, eviction has been the only planned measure. For the first, however, re-housing has been provided by promoting the access to free market housing, at a historical time when both the idea of 'public housing' and the 'camp' seem anachronical. This insertion has been made with the accompaniment of small local NGOs. My investigation looks at the impact of these types of re-housing projects. Are these types of policies adequate for housing access in relation to the means, resources, capital, objectives and strategies of the shack inhabitants?

As other researchers have shown, (see Tosi, 2008) the innovations of the local planners in the field of housing policies –as a response to new social demands, but also as a consequence of the neoliberal turn in social policies– don't seem capable of tackling the structural forms of housing exclusion, the most radical and naturalised forms of stigmatization, where the problems of housing access are combined with other forms of social exclusion.

The PhD research has therefore revealed that, in a context of labour exclusion, the access to the free housing market can be an unrealistic objective and an unbearable weight for a deprived family. It can also trigger new forms of precariousness and loss of social capital due to the separation from the extended family and the breakdown of social bonds with former neighbours. Other pre-existing informal settlements have grown as a result of the displacement of people who were excluded from the project, on one hand, and because of a lack of sustainable housing solutions offered to the project's beneficiaries, on the other.

4. The housing market in Barcelona: housing crisis and rise of informal markets

Spain is usually referred to as a 'best practice' model in relation to the Romani population, considering the Romaphobic frame at European level.

Effectively, Spain didn't implemented camps policy nor massive expulsions of Romanian people of Roma ethnicity (like the ones in France in 2011), nor declared a 'state of emergency' with regards to Roma settlements (as Italy did in 2008).

On the other hand, as one of the most relevant researchers on the 'Roma issue' in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, Óscar López Catalán, points out, comparing the political management of the foreign Roma in France or in Italy with the –relatively generous– policies addressed to the native Gypsies in Spain would be a mistake. Effectively, Spain has adopted, at least initially, a relatively more permissive approach than in France or Italy in relation to the access of European citizens to work permits, education, social housing and a series of social allowances. Despite that, Parker and López Catalán (2014) observe that the daily experience of Roma families from Romania present also clear similarities in the different contexts of Spain and France – and, it could be added according to the fieldwork in Turin–, also in Italy.

Certainly, the legal situation in Spain for marginalized EU citizens such as Roma has been more favourable than the one encountered in France, where a systematic policy of exclusion has been driven from the center. Thus, in many ways, a comparison of these two contexts serves to illustrate the ways in which EU citizenship is interpreted and can consequently be experienced, in quite different ways in different EU spaces. [...] We might suppose that the different legal conditions would make for very different lived experiences for Romanian Roma residing in France and Spain, this is not necessarily the case due to a range of local laws and practices which interact with national and EU law. [...] [Considering] the “everyday” lived experiences of Romanian Roma in a local Spanish context, we argue that there may be more subtle mechanisms at play through which migrant Roma are excluded. (cit.: 388)

The context in Barcelona is very different from that in Turin, and this is due, firstly, to the diverse housing policies historically implemented in Spain and Italy. Social policies encompassing the vertiginous and badly-managed Italian 'economic miracle' of the 60's and the 70's, if questionable from the point of view of public housing provision (very limited with respect to demand) have undoubtedly represented a policy approach much less liberal in respect to the housing access policies promoted by Francoism. Francoist liberal policies, whose consequences are still visible today through the importance of the building sector and the real estate promotion in the Spanish economy, have strongly influenced on the process of housing financing that has produced the recent collapse of the “housing bubble”. This collapse is at the basis of the current economical crisis and has brought about –and still does– severe processes of housing exclusion affecting a broad range of the Spanish population, not only those groups traditionally stigmatized. If the Italian model has favoured a double policy of social housing for the most vulnerable sectors of society, on one side, and an 'ethnopolitics' of camps for Roma population, on the other, the Spanish model, with the primacy of free housing market, has fostered the development of an informal housing market that is nourished by the needs of the groups or individuals excluded from the formal one. Overcrowded flats are an example of this type of informal market.

Furthermore, although in Spain the 'camp' model hasn't been implemented, the quality of social housing on peripheral suburbs where many families living in shacks have been rehoused (many of them Gypsies) is far removed from the minimum conditions of dignified housing - it's not by chance that, as regard this kind of suburbs, the expression “barranquismo vertical” (vertical slums) is used. From the point of view of the experience of the ethnicized and stigmatized population, results are similar regardless of the different planning models.

Barcelona's expansion has led to a situation of full occupation of urban land, with the exception of empty sites which have become, in some cases, informal settlements or makeshift shacks whose size and extension can't be in any way compared to the slums like Lungu Stura Lazio or Germagnano in Turin, neither with the slums of Barcelona in the last century. The phenomenon appears, from that point of view, more invisible, more reduced and, if possible, even more precarious, disseminated and fragmented. In these conditions, the consolidation of social bonds is

more difficult, as is the creation of extended networks between the individuals who suffer the same type of exclusion.

With the neoliberal turn affecting social and urban policies, the housing problem has often been reduced to its urban dimension and absorbed by urban policies. This reduction is especially problematic, and yet supported by speculative interests attached to the reclassification of land and the 'regeneration' of city areas. Steering the housing issue towards this dimension is particularly inadequate, since in many cases it's the regeneration processes themselves that generate new forms of social exclusion (see gentrification processes), leaving unanswered questions regarding to what extent urban policies can contribute to the problem of housing access and under which conditions.

In this context, which strategies are developed at ground level, between those "undesired" migrant groups, for whom housing access is particularly difficult?

These days, a few thousand Romanian citizens, ethnically connoted as Roma, live on the outskirts of Barcelona: most of them, in the districts of Badalona and Santa Coloma de Gramanet. While a small part of them have a regular job and live in 'standard' dwellings, life conditions of others are much more insecure: access to housing is made by renting in overcrowded conditions (more than one family per flat), occupying empty flats or empty plots or industrial units (in shacks or shops), ensuring income by the use of informal strategies (begging, cleaning windows at traffic lights, , collecting scrap).

The housing conditions of the Roma migrants in the metropolitan area of Barcelona are not the result of directly discriminatory policies such as the segregationist policy of the camps, which was implemented in Italian districts. Nevertheless, the housing strategies of these migrants must be integrated in a context of historic scarcity of social housing, due to a political agenda that, at national and local level, has promoted for decades the real estate business and fostered home ownership. Long before the 'neoliberal agenda' was affirmed, in Spain an expansive liberalised market of home ownership was created, supported by mortgages and by highly expansive urban policies. This context has inevitably encouraged the emergence of an informal housing market, which leads to forms of social and housing segregation (Arbaci 2007).

The majority of migrant Roma families in the area of Badalona and Santa Coloma live in flats, gaining access through a segmented and often irregular rental market, managed mainly by Pakistani citizens (Parker and López Catalán 2014). These could access mortgages during the Spanish estate market bubble in the 90's and the start of 2000, according to an institutional framework that made housing investment very attractive, as it ensured an important capital gains tax relief and favourable tax return.

It must be highlighted that the overcrowding conditions in these flats have worsened after the subprime crisis (highly risky bank loans) in Spain from 2007 (Lopez and Rodriguez, 2011: 20). People who rented flats to Roma families faced great difficulties to pay the increasing mortgage payments and have therefore loaded these difficulties on these "disoriented, newly arrived Roma" tenants (Parker and Lopez Catalan, cit.:390).

The notable aspect about low standard housing (either a shack or an overcrowded flat) is that the civil registration of the inhabitants can become more difficult, as a consequence of discriminations from the local authorities. Although the Spanish law permits the registration also in cases of low standard housing (including informal housing and even public spaces), at a local level significant differences in the registration practices between the different districts are seen and there's "an evident lack of criteria in the registration of citizens who have just entered the European Union" (Defensor del Pueblo Catalán 2008: 143). The civil registration is a prior requirement for accessing a series of social and economic rights linked to citizenship (education, health, social housing, social allowances). That way, denying the registration in the council register becomes an obstacle to access these rights.

In Santa Coloma and Badalona, the situation of overcrowded flats has been tackled with restrictive laws in the access to the civil registration (Parker and López Catalán, cit.). In these districts there's a limit in the number of people registered in the same flat. Roma migrants, despite having legal permanence in Spain as European citizens, have faced severe restrictions to get registered. In some cases, registered inhabitants were unregistered when overcrowding conditions were detected; in others, the citizen registration couldn't be done because the previous occupants of the flat hadn't changed their postal address (Parker and López Catalán, cit.). Moreover, the civil registration in the city councils of Santa Coloma and Badalona has been denied in some cases to Romanian citizens, who presented their national ID card, but who were asked to show their passport as well.

In practice, Santa Coloma and Badalona city councils don't register people who live in insecure conditions, despite the current legislation establishing they should be registered and should benefit from social assistance.

The precariousness situation can trigger forced mobility and displacements, as a consequence of occupied or overcrowded flats evictions, and the marginalisation of its dwellers. López Catalán (2012) provides the example of a family who has moved 12 times in six months between Badalona and Santa Coloma. On ten occasions, these forced displacements were caused by police interventions, with no intervention by the social services.

5. Semi-formal and formal economic strategies in the post-Fordist city

The position of 'unwanted' and stigmatized Roma people is often a 'grey area', a middle point between a formal and informal situation, not only concerning housing access, but also regarding economic survival strategies. These strategies, that, despite not being criminal, are often criminalised, are developed in specific socio-economic contexts.

Turin is a city whose economic growth, during the 'miracle' decades which followed Second World War, has been based on the automotive industry and related industry, mainly structured around a unique economic 'driving force', constituted by Fiat. In fact, Turin has quickly transformed, since the start of the past century, into a city defined by economists and analysts as a one-company town (Locke, 1995: 134). The contraction of the industrial production from the 80's has therefore deeply affected the local economy. Unemployment has increased remarkably and large abandoned industrial areas have been appearing on the suburban landscape.

The local economy reconversion from the second to the third sector is a process which has affected as well, but in a different manner, Barcelona. In fact, it is meaningful to observe that the economic strategies of the marginalised population are quite similar in both contexts (Turin and Barcelona): self-employment in the scrap sector, begging, street trading, cleaning windows at traffic lights, occupying empty sites and industrial units.

These strategies are perfectly integrated in the economic restructuration processes which are currently affecting many cities. It's worth pointing out, for example, that the price of some metals such as copper has trebled in the years following 2008 due to the financial crisis. The scrap market has become particularly attractive, especially for those marginalized sectors that the recession has expelled from the labour market.

It's significant that, both the dwellers of shantytowns in Turin and the inhabitants of overcrowded flats in Badalona and Santa Coloma, as well as many other stigmatized groups, survive everyday thanks to the leftovers of a consumer society. It has to be remembered that waste management is an increasingly important sector in Western societies. The inhabitants of stigmatized areas would represent the last link of the chain in this economic sector. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reconcile

the idea of 'waste management' with capitalist ideas of employment, labour and production. Therefore talking about waste or rubbish means referring to loss, degradation, impurity, contamination, even death. This is certainly a paradox, since it's known that, in semiotic and biological terms, every system needs to exchange constantly 'live' material with 'death' material to reproduce itself (Rennó, 2013).

In fact, as recycling some materials is starting to get a commercial value, it offers the possibility of an income for the dwellers of marginalised spaces in many worldwide cities. As Rennó suggests (cit.), the pressure on the ecological importance of recycling waste and 'sustained growth' creates a concern about the material, but that concern forgets that it can be used as a subsistence form: the job of scrap-picker is seen as almost illegal, with no labour rights and high risk. In effect, inhabitants of the official encampment in Germagnano in Turin, despite being considered as criminals, develop their activity of scrap picking registering themselves as self-employed and paying the corresponding taxes.

According to Marxist theory, capitalism intends to produce the rapid obsolescence of objects; however, the same way in which discarded objects are considered waste, the person who makes a living from them would be considered as 'human waste'.

Both in Turin and Barcelona, street scrap dealers are often repressed and criminalized and the rules regulating their activity have been hardened in the last few years. In Turin, legislation about scrap has become more rigid, while in Barcelona local policy measures have been promoted to strictly limit the use of public space for the stigmatized groups (see 2004 citizen ordinance), pushing the informal scrap pickers towards subsequent marginalization.

6. Conclusions

In spite of the different historical backgrounds and legal frameworks, both in Turin and Barcelona exclusion practices occur at different levels, and are experienced in a similar way by Roma migrants in their daily life.

In Italy, the stigmatization of these groups of 'undesired' Roma people has triggered a distinguishing policy of housing access, the 'camps policy', creating specific pathways with regards to other low income families who are 'non-ethnicized' and who have been able to benefit from social housing acquisition.

In Spain, where social housing policies have been traditionally inadequate, policies aimed at fostering home ownership have contributed to a situation where the main housing access for Roma migrants has been renting in the free market, often in overcrowded situations, or squatting. The Spanish housing market collapse, from 2008, has been crucial in the worsening of the overcrowding conditions in these flats. The "issue of the Romanian Roma" and the overcrowded flats has been therefore used as a pretext for the stigmatization and denial of the civil registration – with the associated social rights– instead of intervening through social policies.

Be it a shack in an encampment or a squat or overcrowded flat, the housing, hygiene and public order rules might have been applied in a discriminatory way towards these groups. In both contexts, housing insecurity is experienced daily, and economic survival strategies adopted are often criminalized and made illegal.

Exclusion always occurs within a complex legal framework that develops over various levels (central and local; police authority and care assistance). In that context, local regulation about citizen registration, begging, scrap selling and buying and rules of public space use help to justify particular bureaucratic practices and particular forms through which these laws interact with, and are legitimised by, the local policies.

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