

# **From Roma Autochthonous Homophily to Socialization and Community Building in the Parisian Metropolitan Region Shantytowns.**

## **Keywords**

Roma; Slums; Modularity; Integration; Community; Two-Mode Networks

## **Abstract**

Contemporary West European shantytowns have essentially been studied with qualitative methods. Questions related to their ethnic structure, homophily and interaction with local institutions have not been analyzed through large samples and survey data. Based on the example of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma living in shantytowns in the Parisian metropolitan area, we describe the ‘historical’ region of origin (autochthony), the links between individuals and between households having lived together in a shantytown, as well as some of their attitudes, skills, and behavior (i.e. expectations as to local welfare, French proficiency, children’s schooling). We used a database of slum-dwellers in Paris collected by social workers (N= 12,019). The paper looks at how autochthonies combine with socialization in shantytowns and with the territorial institutional effects of local policies. Evidence shows that while there are limited differences in the socio-professional backgrounds of slum-dwellers, there are several differences in attitudes, behavior and skills. These differences are not strictly correlated to the households’ region of origin (autochthony) but are much more related to the kind of socialization that individuals experience in acting together to build and manage a shantytown. Moreover, local policies at the city level play a role in shaping shantytown dwellers expectations and skills for integration.

Since 2002, the presence of informal shantytowns on the outskirts of French metropolises, inhabited by Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, has gradually become a public question, ethnicized as a Roma question (Legros & Rossetto 2011) related to a larger European Roma question (Sigona & Vermeersh 2012 and Van Baar 2011). The French government's answer to shantytown settlement oscillated between specific relocation programs (Legros 2010) and shantytown systematic destruction (Cousin & Legros 2015). This agenda had the effect of reviving academic research on French shantytowns, squats and camps (Aguilera 2017, Bouillon & Agier 2009) nearly fifty years after Colette Pétonnet's seminal work (1968). In the past few years, empirical research has followed two traditional lines of investigation: the first, inherited from social anthropology, describes ways of being, doing and living in the shantytowns (Benarosh-Orsoni 2019); the second studies the policies applied in the shantytowns (Cousin & Legros 2015). Yet there are no scientific articles in quantitative sociology on contemporary shantytown dwellers in French metropolitan regions. Academics have abandoned the production of statistics, a major political issue (Bruno *et al.* 2014), to NGOs like the ERRC and the LDH (2017), experts (Bourgois *et al.* 2015) or government agencies like the French Direction Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et au Logement. This absence can be explained by the difficulty of producing data that satisfy academic standards. Social actors' tendency to confuse ethnic concepts such as "Roma" and residential criteria, like "shantytown dwellers", also contributes to this reticence. Many recent studies have concentrated on deconstructing the social categories mobilized by the actors concerned (Clave-Mercier & Olivera 2018).

With this article, we decided to break down this reticence and conduct a quantitative study based on a relational database of 12,019 shantytown dwellers in the Paris region. Our ethnographic experience in those communities has led us to explore the link between autochthony, relationships within shantytowns, local embeddedness and pressure from public authorities. Pressures are related to the French way of integration and its injunctions. Of course, the French

way of integrating as well as the very concept of “integration” has been widely discussed in sociology (Favell, 1998; 2015, Saharso 2019) and especially regarding the so-called integration of Roma (Yildiz & De Genova 2017, Magazzini 2020). It emerges from this critical literature that integration is an injunction to individuals, even though it should be an obligation of inclusion for the majority society. In the French assimilationist case, this criticism is particularly acute. Moreover, in this article, we also believe that integration involves a series of injunctions: “you must speak French”, “your children must go to school”, “you must accept administrative relocation”. Faced with these injunctions, the actors can either submit to them or reject them according to their own agency. Understanding, bargaining, and developing strategy to cope with these injunctions (Clavé-Mercier & Olivera 2018) require skills that we call *integration skills*. From a pragmatic standpoint, we try to understand if migrants attained those skills in their home country or if they learned them in the host country.

### **Autochthony as a resource for integration? Roma migratory networks**

When we directly asked the Roma living in shantytowns why integration seems easier to certain person, they usually answered that, in their opinion, skills for integration depend on where people come from:

When I meet a Roma in Paris, if he tells me “my name is Rostas”, I know he comes from Cluj, from Oradea or from Deva, and thus that he is a responsible person, not like someone from Bucharest.<sup>1</sup>

The symbolic boundary expressed in this interview is something we frequently observed in our earlier fieldwork with Roma migrants (Cousin 2017). It divides northwestern Romania from

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1 Interview in Alesd (Romania), September 2016

the south and the east. Discourses distinguishing Roma in migration are based on regional archetypes marking the importance of (local and regional) territories of origin.

In taking symbolic boundaries seriously (Lamont, et al. 2015), this article uses a quantitative approach to explore the influence of territories of origin on migrants' social integration pathways. Like any distinction, symbolic boundaries are the result of a social and political history (Asséo, et al. 2017). The distinction does not apply exclusively to Romani people but runs through the whole Romanian population (Botea 2012) because it results from the ancient border between old kingdoms (Moldavia and Wallachia) and the territories formerly under Austro-Hungarian domination (Transylvania, Banat and Crisana). For all these reasons we developed a precise definition of autochthony based on previous ethnographic research (Vitale 2009a; Olivera 2012a; Cousin 2018). Autochthony is a concept used to express a type of relationship with the territory and history in the construction of a symbolic border that demarcates group belonging. We defined autochthony as the process of affirming group membership from an external, historical legacy of previous administrative and symbolic boundaries. We prefer to speak of autochthony and not of territorial embeddedness to enhance the symbolic dimension of the legacy of the past. This is coherent with the framework of this research that articulates socialization effects throughout the migratory process, not only at the beginning or at the end. We consider it coherent with a contemporary strong transnational behavior observed by empirical research on Roma in French cities. Compared to the concept of autonomy, talking of autochthony focuses on the symbolic home-grown nature of group boundaries, looking at long-term family territorial belonging.

For a century now, migration studies have dealt strongly with the concept of migratory chains (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918), linking a territory of origin (a town, village, region) to an

immigration site. These chains are made up of persons having already migrated and persons still living in the country of origin to whom they are related or tied by village sociability. The chains facilitate the new migrant's decision-making, departure, arrival and settling in (Macdonald & Macdonald 1964). Taken together, these chains constitute structures having their own socio-spatial dynamic (Vertovec 2003; Bankston III, 2014).

These migratory chains were identified as a major “push factor” in contemporary Romanian emigration to Western Europe (Weber 2004; Diminescu 2003) and more specifically as an important factor for Roma migration. Looking at Romanian Romani migratory chains in the Paris region, Olivera (2011) showed that the Roma's shantytowns become “translations” of their towns and villages of departure. This “translation” allows newcomers to insert themselves into the informal shantytown economy (especially scrap metal collecting) and into the daily labor market organized by small, frequently family-based, groups (Bernardot, et al. 2016; Florin, Garret 2019). Here, we point out the static nature of this model, as it underestimates the impact of migrants' socialization in the host country by overemphasizing the effect of migrating groups' region-based ties. Recent studies show that Roma from different parts of Romania have major exchange relations with persons they have chanced to meet in the various shantytowns they have lived in (Cousin 2017b, Lièvre 2016). Starting from the example of the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma living in the shantytowns we studied, we propose questioning the effects of selecting exchange relations in reference to territories, combined with the broader effects of socialization through cohabitation in the course of migration.

In order to achieve this global objective, we took into account regionalized differences in the socio-professional backgrounds of the studied sample and the embeddedness in relationships within the shantytowns in France and in the French cities' inclusion policies. These elements

are related to the articulation between socialization processes active in Roma migrants' hometowns and socialization processes throughout the migratory process, and notably due to life together in shantytowns. In the paper, we will first show that there are social differences between different Roma groups coming from different regions. Then we will show how relations between persons from different regions alter by living in the same shantytown(s). Finally, we will show that Roma integration in France correlates more with shantytown implantation than with regional origin and, above all, with the socialization process and reconfigurations of community ties occurring within shantytowns in the Parisian metropolitan region.

## **Method**

We analyzed data from 164 surveys (called "social diagnostic" by French social workers) produced by the GIP-Habitat on shantytowns in the Parisian metropolitan region (Ile-de-France) between 1 February 2013 and 1 September 2015.

These surveys were commissioned by the prefecture of Paris and Ile-de-France as an implementation of the 26/08/2012 Directive concerning "the anticipation and accompanying of the evacuations of irregular encampment". These surveys originated from pro-Roma association lobbying in 2012, which successfully pushed public authorities to perform "a social diagnostic" prior to evicting the shantytowns (Cousin 2013). The surveys were designed to identify vulnerable families for rehousing when the shantytowns were evacuated. The Government, which commissioned the studies, prided itself on a "non-ethnic" approach, yet in practice, the mission of GIP-Habitat was uniquely to survey Romanian and Bulgarian Roma shantytowns, thus targeting the implicit public in the 26/08/2012 directive. We conducted ethnographic surveys in the various Romanian and Bulgarian Roma communities in the Parisian metropolitan region involved in the GIP-habitat survey and we recognized the places and groups we knew as Roma

(who speak the Romani language and declare themselves as Roma). This ethnic assertion, however, should be relativized. On the one hand, some people targeted by the survey are usually assimilated to the Romanian or Bulgarian “Gypsy” but do not consider themselves as Roma: This is the case of the Romanian Rudar community living in Ivry-sur-Seine. On the other hand, there are very often non-Roma inhabitants in shantytowns inhabited mainly by Roma (Cousin 2017). We can say that the GIP-Habitat surveys target the people seen implicitly as Roma by the administrations.

In the space of two years and six months, GIP-Habitat interviewed 12,019 persons. These data have never been analyzed before. The largest survey available in the literature on contemporary shantytowns in France concerned just several hundred people (Bourgois, et al. 2015). We do not claim the surveys were able to cover the full population but when comparing the size of our sample with the census of “irregular settlements” made every three months by the Interministerial Direction for Housing and Accommodation, we see that our data almost cover the whole target population. For example, in November 2014, there were 7,486 persons living in 152 “irregular settlements” in Ile-de-France. The people we met during our previous ethnographic surveys did not live full time in the shantytowns of Ile-de-France (Cousin 2017). They had developed a circulatory migration between Romania or Bulgaria and several Western European countries (Reyniers 2016). Logically, the number of residents surveyed in a month, in this case in November 2014, was lower than the number of residents who lived in slums during the two-year period involved by the GIP-Habitat survey. Only very few shantytowns were not surveyed before evacuation so the GIP-Habitat surveys provide a good overview of the people who lived in shantytowns between 2013 and 2015.

In other words, this database is the only robust and large database on Romanian Roma living in shantytowns, where collecting ethnic data for census purposes is theoretically forbidden in France (Simon, Stavo-Debaouge 2004). Data produced by organizations (administrations, firms,

associations) in the context of their work have long been a useful source (Ollion, Boelaert 2015). Looking back into social science history, researchers have therefore had access to the high granularity and the quasi-exhaustive information produced by government administrations or by Social Security agencies, which has enabled them to produce large-scale studies (Knapen, et al. 2014). In our case, the exhaustive nature of the information has saved us the task of having to build a sample that would be impossible to construct on such a difficult, shifting terrain as that of shantytowns that are perpetually in the process of deconstruction-reconstruction.

In order to access GIP-habitat's non-public data, we negotiated a tri-partite agreement with GIP-habitat and the Ile-de-France prefecture, the party which commissioned the "social diagnostic". This agreement foresaw the anonymization of the GIP-Habitat's 164 surveys and their transfer to us. We built a single database<sup>2</sup>, drafting the surveys after eliminating repetitions. This base counts a population of 12,019 people who lived in shantytowns in Ile-de-France between 2013 and 2015. It also contains an index identifying 3,915 households and an index identifying 164 shantytowns where these people lived. We retained 10 variables used for this analysis, which are available for almost the whole sample.

1. *Country of birth and Region of birth:* On the basis of identity papers, the interviewers recorded country and department of birth in Romania or Bulgaria and some other countries.

1. *Year of birth:* the interviewers recorded the date of birth based on identity papers.

2. *Adults' schooling:* The interviewers asked the adults "how many years did you go to school"? We retained this data set for those over 29 years of age and simplified it into three classes.

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2 The surveys contained 13,568 entries among which we identified 1,549 multi-diagnosed people (duplicates). The duplicates were detected by creating a single chain for each household, with date and place of birth of the two oldest members. We then checked for consistency with other items of information.



3. *Job experience*: The interviewers asked the adults “did you work back in the old country? And if yes, in what sector?” We retained this information for the over-29s and simplified it into four classes.
4. *Size of household*: For each person, we used the household index to calculate the number of persons living in the same household.
5. *Size of shantytowns*: We determined the population of each shantytown.
6. *Location of shantytowns in France, by city*.
7. *Proficiency in French*: The interviewers evaluated interviewees’ level of French.
8. *Children’s schooling*: For each child, the interviewers asked the parents if the child was in school.
9. *Attitudes on relocation*: The interviewers asked: “Would you like to be rehoused after your expulsion?” We distributed the answers into three categories (yes, on certain conditions, no).

By analyzing data about subjects' shantytown settlements, we built a *social network* representing their co-habitation relations (Wasserman and Faust 1994; see also Borgatti and Everett 1997). In the co-habitation network each node corresponds to one interviewed person. A link was created between any pair of two nodes  $i$  and  $j$  if the persons represented by  $i$  and  $j$  had settled in the same shantytown for a certain period. As a result, the co-habitation network is composed by 12,019 nodes and 1,015,828 links. This allowed us to analyze certain structural properties of the network, such as the formation of “clusters”, i.e. sets of nodes with high internal connectivity and low external connectivity (e.g., Newman and Girvan 2004; see also Mucha et al. 2010).

However, unfortunately, our information suffers from typical shortcomings of data produced without clear research protocols. Like any source, our data needed to be criticized and contextualized in order to assess the biases (Bourdieu *et al.* 1991). When gathering information, GIP-Habitat favored the operational aspect, since the data were not initially meant to be studied globally. Thus, certain variables evolved over the course of the project and some information is available only for part of the sample. Data quality also has to be assessed by taking into account the functional relations between interviewers and interviewees. First of all, shantytown residents associated the GIP-Habitat interviewers with evictions, which often occurred shortly after their visit. And secondly, shantytown dwellers answered the interviewers' questions carefully, the survey being the basis on which families were selected for rehousing at the time of "evacuation operations". Furthermore, a vital piece of information was lacking: the gender of those interviewed. This absence is all the more surprising because it is a piece of information that is generally useful in social work. The granularity of our data forces us to reflect on the protection of those interviewed (Laurens & Neyrat 2010). Although GIP-Habitat carried out data anonymization, combining information such as dates and departments of birth within the same families would probably have made it possible to identify the persons by cross-referencing our anonymized data with information from the civil status registers (Sweeney 2002). In order to avoid such cross-checking, we decided not to circulate the database.

### **Some regionalized social differences**

Following the chronology of migration, the first dimension to explore is the migrants' social background: countries and regions of birth, demographic structure, professional training and experience in the country of origin.

### *Regions of birth*

The “country of birth” variable shows that 90.33% of the inhabitants in the shantytowns studied were born in Romania. Next comes a small group of people born in Bulgaria (3.53%). 701 were born in Western Europe, 685 of them after 1989 to Romanian and Bulgarian parents. Lastly 37 people were born in other countries. Ethnographic research in the Paris region shows that Bulgarians and Romanians live side-by-side in the same settlement and that there is interpenetration between the two groups. We therefore chose to deal with Bulgarians and Romanians together. We have represented the shantytown dwellers’ birthplaces by historical region, grouping together several departments and considering Bulgaria as a single region of the “Romania-Bulgaria” ensemble. This territorial subdivision agrees with Roma self-identifications, often based on regional autochthonies, in turn based on old territorial divisions. We have defined 8 regions, as shown in Figure 1: The Romania-Bulgaria ensemble divided into regions. These territories are the starting point of migrations numerically more or less important, as shown in Figure 2: Origin of shantytown dwellers by region. **[figure 1 & 2 near here]** We found that 76.83% of those living in shantytowns in Ile-de-France came from three regions in Romania: Muntenia, Oltenia and Crişana, whereas these three regions account for only 40% of the Romanian population.<sup>3</sup>

### *A shared demographic morphology*

The choice to focus on integration led us to take a close look at age distribution, all the more called for because the literature underscores a strong rupture in school and economic insertion between Romanian Roma socialized before and after the collapse of the communist regime

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3 The distribution of the origin of shantytown dwellers born in Romania is very different from that of the general population of the country. See online Appendix.

(Asséo, et al. 2017; Leggio & Matras 2017). The demographic distribution of the shantytowns<sup>4</sup> reflects a particular social structure. Although Romanians make up slightly more than 90% of the sample, there are important differences between the demographic data for Romania as a whole. Therefore, the distribution of birth years is remarkable from several standpoints as we can see in Figure 3: Distribution of year of birth. **[figure 3 near here]** There are very few elderly subjects: only 1.95% of those interviewed were over 60 in 2013. Shantytown dwellers are young: 46.53% were under 23 in 2013<sup>5</sup>. The distribution pattern is not the same as the Romanian age pyramid, which begins to diminish with the 1970–1975 generation (Ghețău 2007). Last but not least, the average household size is 3.07 persons, which is more than the general Romanian average of 2.66 persons recorded in the 2011 census (Institutul Național de Statistică 2012). There is a break in the ascending curve between the years 1999 and 2005. This can be explained in several ways: firstly, the age distribution is an indication of a migratory burden borne by young people between 20 and 30 years of age, who were too young in 2013–2014 to have children born between 1998 and 2005; and secondly, parents living in shantytowns often had schooling strategies for their children, sending them back to Romania. Many of the children born between 1999 and 2005, of an age to be enrolled in primary and secondary school in 2013–2015, probably remained in Romania. Having immigrated recently, the majority of shantytown dwellers are young people between the ages of 20 and 30 with young children.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Date of birth is systematically indicated in the database. Nevertheless, in order to present a histogram that makes statistical sense, we have eliminated children born during the survey, between January 2013 and August 2015.

5 The median age of immigrants in the European Union in 2015 was 27.5 years, Eurostat. Migration statistics and the migrant population. Data retrieved in March 2017.

6 This standard profile does not change from one region to another. See online Appendix.

### *Low-skilled migrants*

The social history of the Roma people in Romania (Asséo *et al.* 2017) shows that, under the communist regime, Romani families underwent a two-fold process: on the one hand, the proletarianization in the industrial sector and, on the other, the organization into labor brigades in the agricultural system on state cooperatives. Subsequently, they found themselves in the front line of the economic crisis that accompanied the transition to the market economy. Therefore, shantytown dwellers over 30 years of age often had work experience (65%): 27% had worked in agriculture, 23% in construction and industry and 23% as tertiary-sector employees or shopkeepers. The oldest migrants, who had worked before 1990, can cite job experience back home more often than the youngest migrants. Nevertheless, 34% of migrants over 29 have had no professional experience.

In 1989 the country was essentially rural (Roger 2012) with some strongly industrialized regions. This territorial differentiation was also found in the sectors in which shantytown dwellers gained experience in the old country. As we can see in Table 1: Professional experience and region of origin, migrants from the three main regions of origin (Oltenia, Muntenia and Crisana), were primarily agricultural laborers (between 22 and 30%), whereas migrants from Dobruja were primarily construction workers (40%) and the Bulgarians (39%) were employees and small business owners (mainly artisans). **[Table 1 near here]** Absence of professional experience can vary as much as 100% depending on the region (20% for Moldavia but 40% for Oltenia and Dobruja). Although they come largely from agricultural and industrial working backgrounds, Romanian and Bulgarian Roma do not have the same professional backgrounds in the different regions of origin.

The vast majority of professions carried out did not require a specific degree. Viktor Daniele Leggio and Yaron Matras (2017) showed that Romanian Roma immigrants in Manchester of between 25 and 35 years of age had fewer years of schooling than older migrants, who were sent to primary school during the communist era. Nevertheless, even among the over 29s there is a critical lack of primary education: 43% of those interviewed had never been to school and 65% had not gone beyond the first cycle (5 years of school). This very low educational level is a strong sign of a population at the bottom of the social ladder in Romania and Bulgaria. The explanation of a “lost generation” during the transition is not enough on its own. The critical lack of education largely challenges the idea that the Roma received equal education under the communist regime in Romania and Bulgaria (Guest, Nacu 2008). For comparison’s sake, according to the UNDP report for 2005–2015, the literacy rate was 98.77% and 98.39% in Romania and Bulgaria respectively. Migrants from all regions have a very low educational level but we can see some variation in Table 2: Educational experience of adults (over 29) and region of birth. [Table 2 near here] Just a little more than half of the Bulgarians had over 5 years of schooling (54%). The three main regions of emigration (Oltenia, Muntenia and Crisana) show striking differences. For example, 9% more Oltenians than Muntenians had never been to school. Conversely, 9% more Muntenians than Crisanians had completed primary school (5 years).

The social characteristics of the shantytown dwellers are massive from one region to the next in terms of socio-professional background and education levels. These differences nevertheless fall within a general framework of, on the one hand, belonging to the agricultural and industrial proletariat and, on the other, an extremely low level of education, far short of Romanian and Bulgarian national standards.

## **Production of new communities in France**

People in the shantytowns often knew each other before migrating since they followed the same migratory chains between a Romanian village or region and a shantytown in France. Mutual acquaintances among the inhabitants of a shantytown can also result from contacts established in French shantytowns. The multiplication of settlement sites owing to regular evictions (Cousin & Legros 2015) entails a proliferation of encounters. Settlement site destruction-reconstruction cycles constitute many additional occasions for residential communities to re-organize, where some neighbors return to Romania or decide to separate from the group, while new arrivals join. Interconnection modalities can therefore be very different, ranging from simple mechanisms of reputation and exchange to fusion and a high degree of reciprocity. However, in all events shantytowns are places of relationships.

In this paper, we consider the structural properties of living and acting together (community, in the Weberian sense, 2001) in terms of forms of power and exchange (Blau 1964) that each person can draw on to survive in the shantytowns and to adapt to the surrounding territory. To establish this, we searched for structurally emergent clusters within the network, then looked to see if they correlated with autochthony. In order to identify emergent clusters in the co-habitation network, we applied the Louvain algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008). The algorithm returns a partition of a given network while optimizing modularity, i.e. the difference between the actual proportion of within-cluster links in the network and the statistically expected proportion of within-cluster links if a similar network were randomly generated (Newman 2004; see also Traag 2014)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> We also performed a robustness analysis of our results by running other algorithms for community detection. See online Appendix for results.

### ***Shantytowns in the Paris region***

The GIP-Habitat interviewers visited 164 shantytowns; Figure 4 shows their distribution in the Paris region<sup>8</sup>. [figure 4 near here] These shantytowns have several features in common: they are a collection of shacks, cobbled together from salvaged materials (sometimes from old caravans) on an unlawfully occupied lot. Within this definition, the shantytowns can vary substantially in terms of internal social organization. The size of the shantytowns in our tables gives an idea of this diversity: 82 shantytowns had a population of fewer than 50 people, in other words, 2,013 people lived in those particular shantytowns that the ethnographic study identifies as mainly family-based settlements. These small shantytowns could sometimes be quite isolated with few contacts with institutions and NGOs. Over half of the people (7,729) lived in 74 shantytowns with populations of between 50 and 200 individuals. This intermediary size was the most frequent experience of those living in shantytowns. The third type of shantytown hosted over 200 people each. Inhabitants often disparage these big shantytowns as being dirty, overpopulated, however, it is often more likely that NGOs and charities intervene there. GIP-Habitat intervened in 8 shantytowns with over 200 persons, involving a total of 2,160 people.

### ***Shantytown network interconnections***

Those living in shantytowns are cyclically evicted in the Parisian metropolitan region and the Roma who are not relocated in social housing are obliged to change shantytowns, joining an already existing one, or more often building a new one. When moving from one shantytown to

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8 This map illustrates the total number of shantytown inhabitants for each commune in Ile-de-France. The data on the geography of the communes were taken from the open data section of the website of the *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*. The map projection used the standard WGS 84. One detail that does not appear in the map is that two of the communes with more than 200 bidonville inhabitants have significantly more than their counterparts in that category; Bonneuil-sur-Marne with 462 and La Courneuve with no less than 1027



another, they do not always remain with the same group of people. This circulation of people increases cohabitation links. We considered that those living in the same shantytown would know each other, and we used these links to draw up the interconnections between shantytown dwellers and to map one single network.

In order to be able to reflect on such a large scale, we produced Figure 5 Cohabitation Network using Gephi software. **[Figure 5 near here]**. We colored the nodes to highlight autochthony within the network: people from the South and East are shown in red, those from the Northwest in blue and Bulgarians in green. The nodes are distributed among 40 *connected components*. Each component is defined as to include any pair of nodes where each node is connected to other one by a path, i.e. a sequence of links (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). The largest component included 9,872 nodes (82.14% of the network), which means that such a large proportion of the interviewed persons were directly or indirectly connected by cohabitation relations. The rest of the interviewed persons are distributed among 39 smaller components including a number of people ranging from 6 to 257.

While most interviewed people had settled in just one shantytown at the time they were interviewed, 1,549 people had lived in a more than one shantytown (12.89%). Therefore, the fact that 82.14% of people were indirectly connected in the largest component is due to a minority of people bridging the members of different shantytowns into a large connected network component. This is a massive and impressive empirical result: in the Parisian metropolitan region, with its 12,011 km<sup>2</sup>, 4 out of 5 shantytown inhabitants belong to the same network of people who know each other, having lived together, side-by-side in the same shantytowns for at least some period of their lives. Clearly it does not mean they have all lived

together. They do not all know each other but they are in contact with people who, in turn, are in contact with others.

### ***Homophily and heterophily in shantytowns***

Visual exploration of the graph allows us to grasp the articulation between mapping (in this case geographical) and clustering (Diminescu 2012; McCarty, et al. 2019). We observe that people having lived together in the same shantytowns do not always come from the same territory of autochthony. Studies of migratory networks have tended to underscore the residential homophily of the rural communities in migration (Laffont Lemozy 2017). At the beginning of the year 2000, the first Romanian Romani shantytowns in the Parisian outskirts were probably the result of Romanian village community migration (Olivera 2011). But the eviction cycle has inter-mixed Roma coming from different villages and different regions. We measured heterogeneity in autochthony of the people's cohabitation relations by dividing, for each person, the number of their relations with individuals from regions other than their own by the total number of their relations; this ratio is on average 29.72%. This means that each person has an average of two-thirds of his cohabitation relationships with people from their own region and one third with those from other regions. Such a level of heterogeneity is much greater than literature tends to suggest (Reynier 2016).

### ***From network to exchange communities***

Mapping by territorial variable is therefore inadequate and it would therefore appear necessary to adopt a structural clustering approach. We have used algorithms of community structure detection (Newman, Girvan, 2004; see also Mucha et al. 2010) to depict communities based on emergent local concentrations of links between nodes. Hence, being part of the same

community in a network does not necessarily imply perceived unity. It is a community in the Weberian sense of a group of people intentionally associating and acting together to make commonalities (Weber 2001; Blokland 2017; Vitale, Tosi 2019). Isolated shantytowns are by definition exchange communities. Therefore, in order to analyze exchanges between shantytowns, we concentrated on the largest component.

For our structural clustering measurements, we used the Louvain algorithm (Blondel et al. 2008), which is one of the most widely used algorithms to identify clusters within networks. The Louvain algorithm returns a partition of a given network while optimizing modularity, i.e. the difference between the actual proportion of within-cluster links in the network and the statistically expected proportion of within-cluster links if a similar network were randomly generated (Newman 2004; see also Traag 2014)<sup>9</sup>. By running a Louvain algorithm for modularity optimization, we detected 27 exchange communities<sup>10</sup>. Figure 6 shows the distribution of individuals in these 27 clusters, while Figure 7 shows the contingent distribution of region of origin by Louvain clusters. **[Figures 6 & 7 near here].**

For a shantytown dweller, being part of a cluster means being in a dense community where many people have lived together, at least for a certain amount of time. This community is separated from other communities as cohabitation links between the two communities are fewer. These clusters vary greatly in size: they can match to one little shantytown, (e.g., cluster 12), or include up to 22 shantytowns, like cluster 9. This shows a real diversity in inclusion mode

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<sup>9</sup> We also performed a robustness analysis of our results by running other algorithms for community detection. See online Appendix for results.

<sup>10</sup> We also performed a robustness analysis of our results by running Louvain algorithm at household level. The distribution of clusters of households is almost equal to the distribution of clusters of individuals. See online Appendix for results.

within exchange communities of shantytown-dwellers in France. The two clusters of more than 750 people (9 and 19) are composed of persons from all over Romania. We find the same tendency of heterogeneous origins in all clusters of more than 500 members. Alternatively, one small cluster, such as number 12, is inhabited only by people from Transylvania. Roma from Muntenia are present in 25 clusters out of 27, and Roma from Oltenia and Crisana in 21 out of 27 clusters. Despite the heterogeneous distribution of geographical origins in the set of clusters, the two variables are strongly correlated ( $V = .55$ ;  $\chi^2 = 6441.5$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, there is still a large part of the community formation (almost half) that cannot be explained simply by shared autochthony.

### **Shantytown dwellers' skills, behavior and attitudes**

While debriefing their fieldwork, the GIP-Habitat interviewers evaluated the interviewees' proficiency in spoken French. Over half spoke no French at all. Shantytown dwellers, despite sometimes having lived in France for several years, have much lower linguistic skills than European migrants in general (Bechichi, et al. 2016). This low proficiency in French should be placed alongside the low level of schooling and literacy in Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>11</sup> Immigration amplified lack of schooling. In 2015, the shantytowns in the Parisian metropolitan region counted 2,671 children between the ages of 6 and 16 (mandatory age for school attendance), but only 350 were actually enrolled in school. The level of schooling in the shantytowns is extremely low, around 13%.<sup>12</sup> The GIP interviewers asked their interlocutors what their preferences were in terms of housing after expulsion from their shantytown. The interviewees expected (1) nothing from the government (15.39%) or (2) excluded a possibility like emergency

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11 There are large disparities in language fluency as a function of age. See online Appendix.

12 The true level of schooling is even more reliable. In the study, the level is increased because we also rated children attending some kind of preparation for school via the bi-weekly visits of mobile classrooms run by the Association de Scolarisation des Enfants Tsiganes as "in school".

accommodation (40.66%) because it was too precarious (Le Méner 2013) or (3) were willing to accept any form of accommodation (43.95%).

### *Exchange spaces and capacity for interacting with institutions*

Taken together, the variables schooling, proficiency in French and expectations regarding relocation policy instruments can be considered as indicators of integration skills, i.e. skills for interacting with institutions. In our conception of integration as injunction on the part of public authorities, the expectation of relocation is a good integration skill indicator, even if it is unusual, because, in our case, it shows how people act when faced with a violent relocation system. We wanted to further explore the relative effects of autochthony, communities of exchange and towns of settlement on integration skills using the 3,196 households concerned in the principal component. To obtain a schooling variable at household level, we produced an indicator covering all members of the family: the household ratio of children in school. This variable was constructed by dividing the number of children in a household who were attending school by the total number of children in the household. Figure 8 shows the results of the following variables by household (1) *Knowledge of French*, (2) *Children in School* and (3) *Attitude to relocation*. **Figures 8, 9 and 10 near here.** All cross-variable correlations between schooling, language proficiency and attitudes on relocation are negligible<sup>13</sup>. These are therefore independent skills and attitudes that should be tested separately. Even if proficiency in French is not correlated with massive schooling, those who speak French enroll their children in school three times more often than those who do not.

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<sup>13</sup> For cross-variable correlations between schooling, language proficiency and attitudes on relocation, see online Appendix.

The purpose was to understand whether the difference in integration skills among Roma people depends primarily on the kind of autochthonous socialization related to their region of origin and their ethnic belonging, or on the socialization they had experienced in the communities of exchange created through living together in a shantytown. Our first finding is that autochthonies had a very limited impact on the capacity to interact with institutions. The associations between autochthony and children's schooling ( $V = .19$ ;  $\chi^2 = 83.84$ ,  $p < .01$ ), autochthony and proficiency in French ( $V = .12$ ;  $\chi^2 = 41.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and autochthony and attitudes on relocation ( $V = .11$ ;  $\chi^2 = 60.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ) are weak.

Secondly, we looked at the eventual impact of exchange communities on the integration variables. And in this case, we have a different result. The associations between exchange community integration skills are significantly higher in the case of exchange communities and schooling ( $V = .34$ ;  $\chi^2 = 307.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ), exchange communities and language proficiency ( $V = .21$ ;  $\chi^2 = 131.93$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and exchange communities and attitudes on relocation ( $V = .27$ ;  $\chi^2 = 367.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These relatively strong associations can be explained by reception and integration policies and attitudes to rejection that differ strongly from one city to another. Here the communities' spatial distribution has a direct impact on integration skill development. The associations between integration skills and city of settlement are also relatively strong in regard to children's schooling: ( $V = .38$ ;  $\chi^2 = 371.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ), proficiency in French: ( $V = .22$ ;  $\chi^2 = 138.69$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and for attitudes on relocation ( $V = 0.35$ ;  $\chi^2 = 654.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This proves that the intense life together in a shantytown, as well as local policy, have a greater impact on integration skills and concrete behavior than does the Romanian regional background.

## **Discussion**

Our findings challenge some of the current ideas found in the literature on Roma migration (Friberg 2018). Romanian shantytown dwellers in the Parisian metropolitan area show massive regional differences in socio-professional and educational backgrounds. Nevertheless, they do fit into a general framework. On the one hand, the people belong to the agricultural and industrial proletariat and, on the other, they have enjoyed very little schooling: 43% of the over-30s interviewed had never attended school.

Even if autochthonies are important for organizing part of the migratory chain and marriage strategies (Tesar 2018), they do not play a major role in defining the boundaries of urban practice. In the Parisian metropolitan region, Roma shantytowns are heterogeneous spaces in terms of regions of origin. Roma living in a shantytown are exposed to quite high levels of heterogeneity: these living spaces are not based on the regional/sub-ethnic belonging of the people. The eviction cycle plays a major role in inter-mixing people from different regions and in enriching their contacts. With respect to the rural communities of departure, the networks of contacts in France are broader. They allow migrants to go beyond the cultural and symbolic borders running through Romania while retaining something of their origins and territorial solidarities.

Shantytown dwellers in the Parisian metropolitan region form a system while retaining specificities inherited from migratory chains. It is because they form a system, and can therefore largely pool settlement opportunities, that shantytown dwellers manage to resist governance by expulsion and continue to live in the Parisian metropolitan region. The Romanian and Bulgarian shantytowns constitute a “single market”, in which their inhabitants can find a place to live after eviction, after returning from Romania or following the breakup of a household. To move means increasing contacts with other Roma while staying in the same place provides the chance

to deepen relations in the shantytown and to take advantage of the surrounding structural context of opportunities (Blau 1994). This context of opportunities is formed by associations and political organizations, markets and broader services and connections, as well as easier ties with medical and educational institutions.

Changes of residence, whether voluntary or forced following an eviction, sometimes result in a change of residential group (you no longer live with the same people) or a change of residential location (city) and sometimes both. In the second case, how does the person who changes residential communities and geographical location find another shantytown, integrate and stay? As shown by the literature on shantytown eviction (Vitale 2009; Cousin 2017), this circulation is regulated by family solidarities and commercial exchanges (buying out shacks). We can thus say that the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma living in the shantytowns of Ile-de-France are included in the exchange communities where they are going to interact to find information and effective social support to solve their housing problem. In other words, these communities are not communitarian identity groups based on ethnic/regional belonging, shared norms and beliefs or predefined stable symbolic boundaries. There is no need to consider that the fact that individuals live together tends to converge toward a common normative vision of the world, new symbolic boundaries of ethnic belonging or shared attitudes (Vitale 2019). Living in a shantytown does, however, create a community of people who act together and exchange intensively. Living in a shantytown is an urban practice requiring building shacks and finding common arrangements with neighbors, sharing the cost of a gasoline power supply and defining the rules of cohabitation. Urban practices are those that enact communities, or as Talja Blokland (2017) put it, communities are urban practices.



Moreover, created by acting together to self-govern a shantytown, these communities have socialization effects. They are correlated with relevant skills and behavior, like learning the French language, schooling or improving the capacity to interact with public administrations. The inhabitants of certain shantytowns seem more able to interact with public authorities than those of other shantytowns (Lièvre 2016): they speak better French and seem more aware of the norms and working modalities of institutions and markets. The stable presence is decisive in acquiring these skills. Regular interventions on the part of associations, such as the Association de Scolarisation des Enfants Tsiganes (ASET), the association Les Enfants du canal, Médecins du Monde or different local groups, favor contacts with administrations, learning the French language and enrolling the children in school. But the associations do not intervene everywhere. They are limited by their resources, by an unequal geographical distribution and also by mechanisms such as “cream skimming” (Vitale 2009b; Brodtkin 2012), whereby they choose what they regard as the easiest cases for intervention.<sup>14</sup> Finally, our empirical ethnographic work of over more than 10 years, gives us the feeling that certain communities had collectively given up on their relations with institutions, while others had made a go of it. Reasons for the differences in life-paths are not related to autochthonies but to the experience of socialization and to the structural context of opportunities, for instance, the city where the shantytown is located and its inclusionary (or exclusionary) policies. We cannot look to Romania for an explanation of divergent patterns of behavior, but to France, at the crossroads between social and political dynamics. Social dynamics are related to broadening the personal network beyond ethnic autochthonies and acting together in meaningful communities, i.e. self-governing shantytowns. Political dynamics relate to the whole set of policy instruments and relational styles of city-level administration and local governments (Le Galès, Vitale 2019).

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<sup>14</sup> It is not unusual to hear association activists justify their action prioritization by saying: “*We focused on this shantytown because it is easier to work with Bihoren than with Tandarei*”.

We thus discover two main structuring dynamics. Firstly, communities have their own social dynamics, which drive certain groups to develop, or not develop, collective skills for interacting with the French administration. Secondly, the territorialization of Romani communities through their localized settlement in shantytowns results in different experiences and possibilities from one city to the next as a function of local social policies. Unlike the public discourse on integrating Roma, which, on the whole, tends to see them in terms of their Romanian socio-economic background, the GIP-Habitat data tells us that the ongoing social dynamics play out in shantytowns, in community ties and in the reception experienced by the different Romani communities over the past 15 years. Moreover, correlations between integration variables and the cities where shantytowns are located, are higher than those with Romanian regions. This is because of the impact that policy instruments and administrative relational styles have on individuals' attitudes, skills and behavior. Local policy may be very exclusionary, governing by eviction. Or it may be inclusive, attracting children to schools and investing in housing relocation. However, this capacity is still limited. Over half of shantytown dwellers do not speak any French at all. The percentage of children in school in the shantytowns of Ile-de-France is extremely low, around 13%. Shantytown inhabitants expect little from the state. As we have seen, correlations are higher between cities and dwellers' attitudes toward relocation, as preferences adapt to the local context of the social housing offer. Yet, if we take a closer look, the social relations developed in the shantytowns, together with their location, are decisive factors in the educational and linguistic inclusion of those who live in them.

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**Figures and tables**

Figure 1: The Romania-Bulgaria ensemble divided into regions

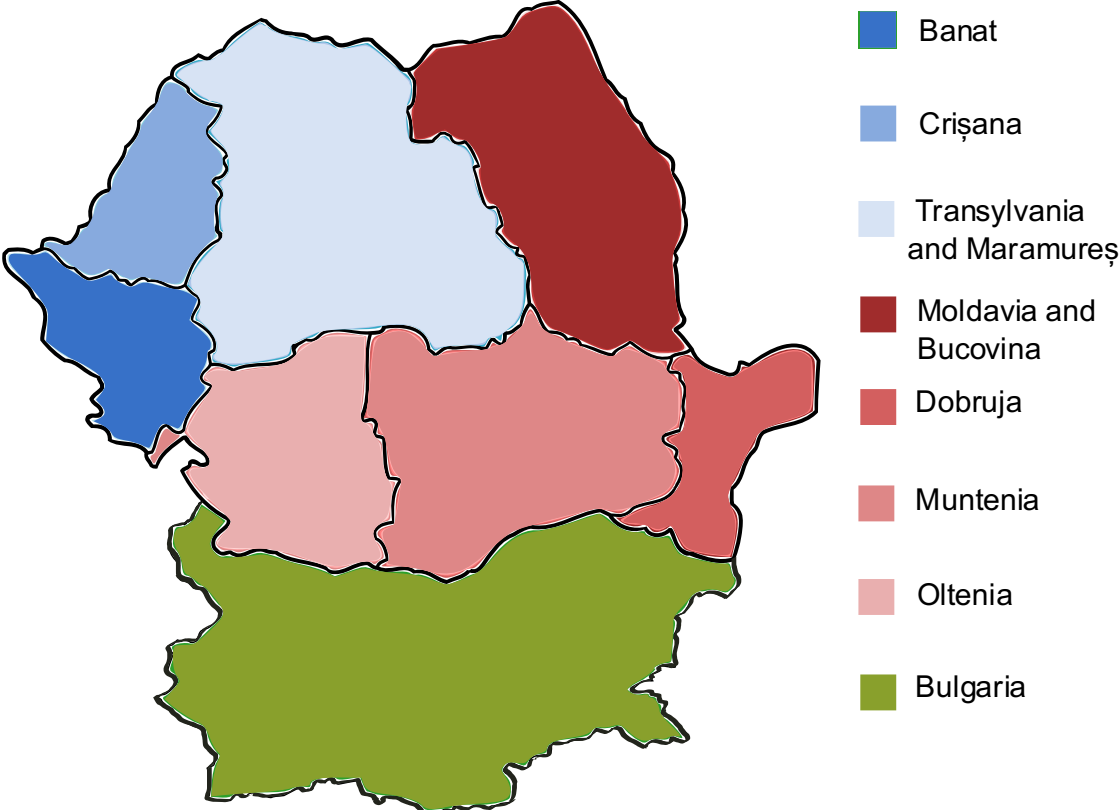


Figure 2: Origin of shantytown dwellers by region.

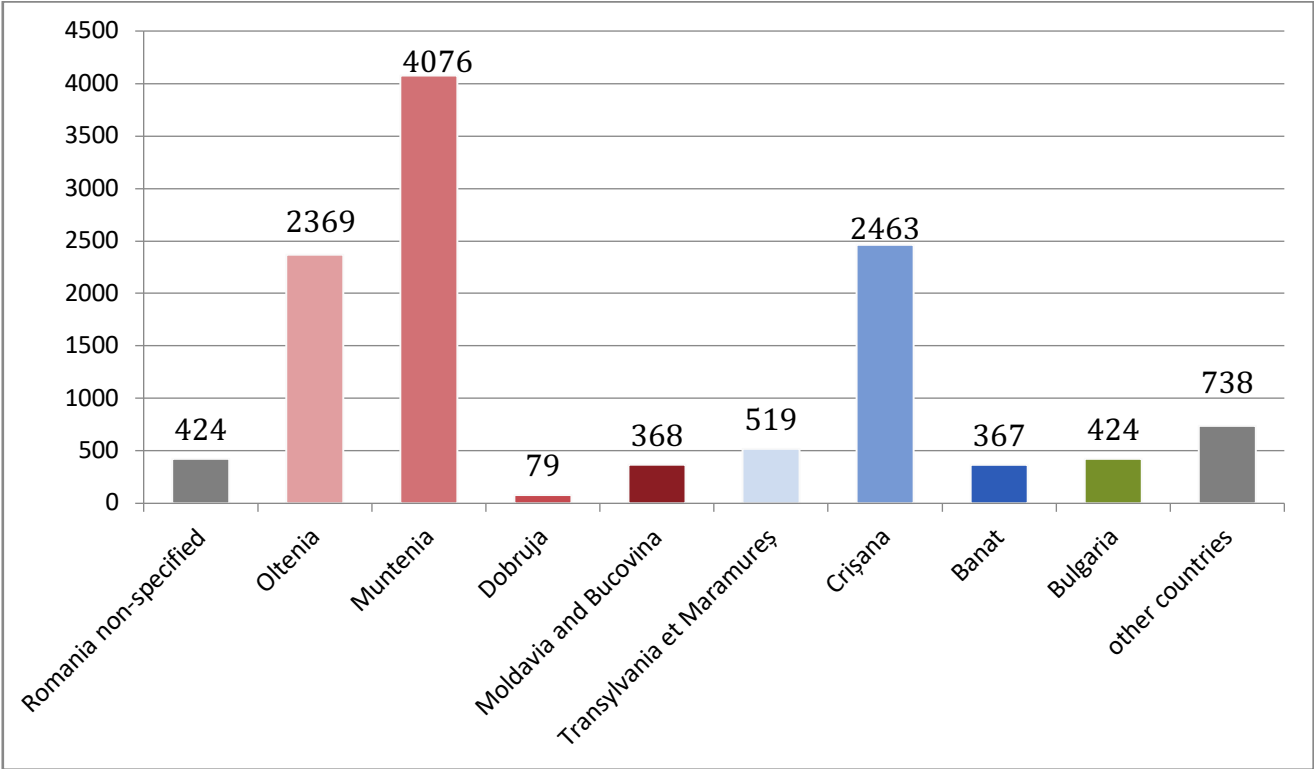


Figure 3: Distribution of year of birth.

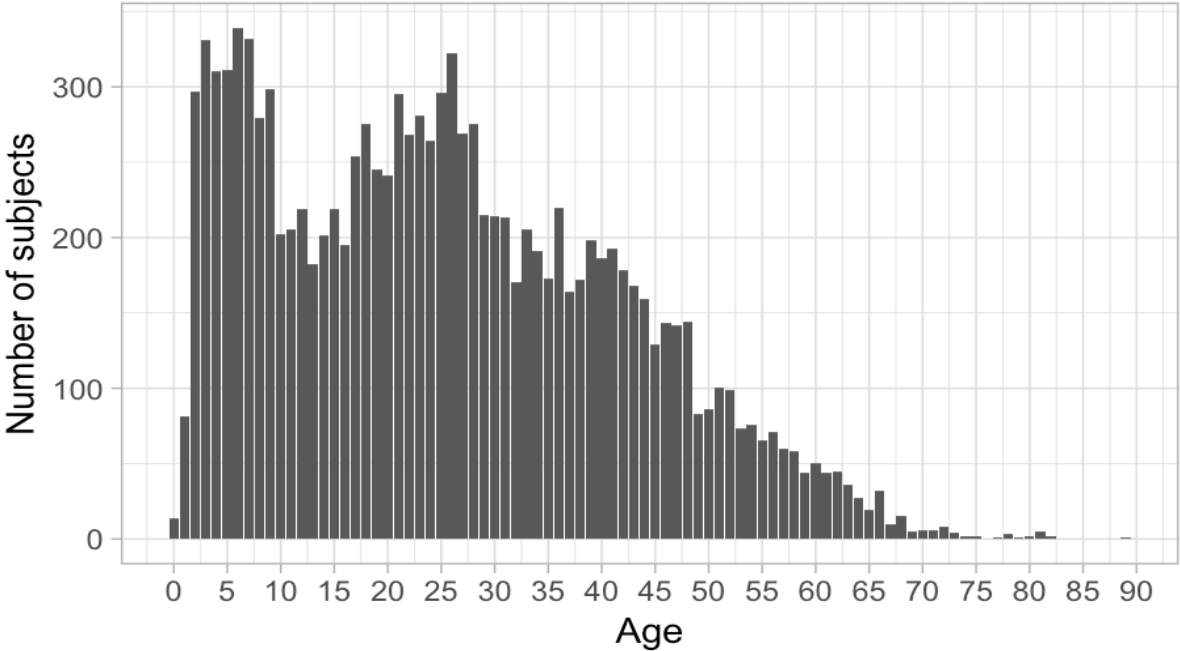


Figure 4: Map of shantytowns dweller population

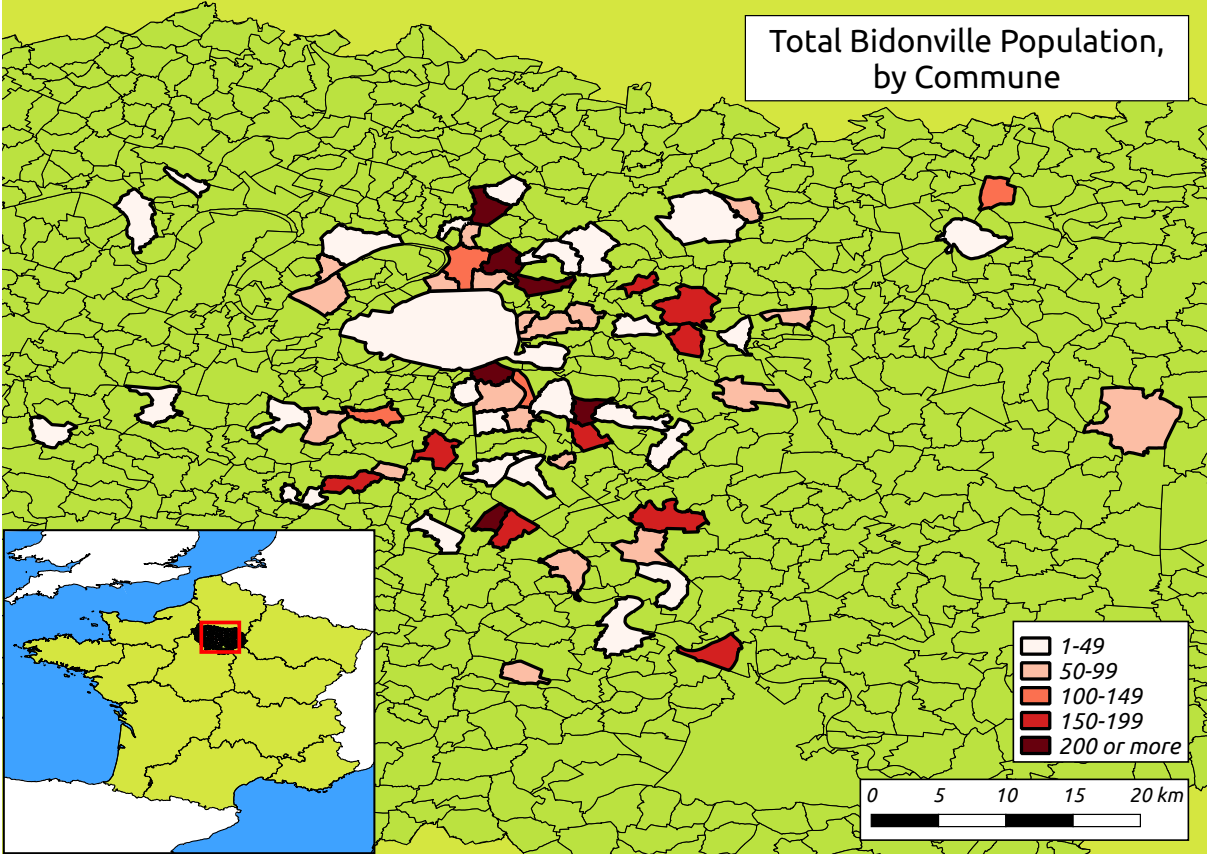


Figure 5: Cohabitation network (Red: South and East; Blue: Northwest; Green: Bulgaria).

- Transylvania, Maramureş Crişana Banat;
- Muntenia, Moldavia, Bucovina, Dobruja
- Bulgaria

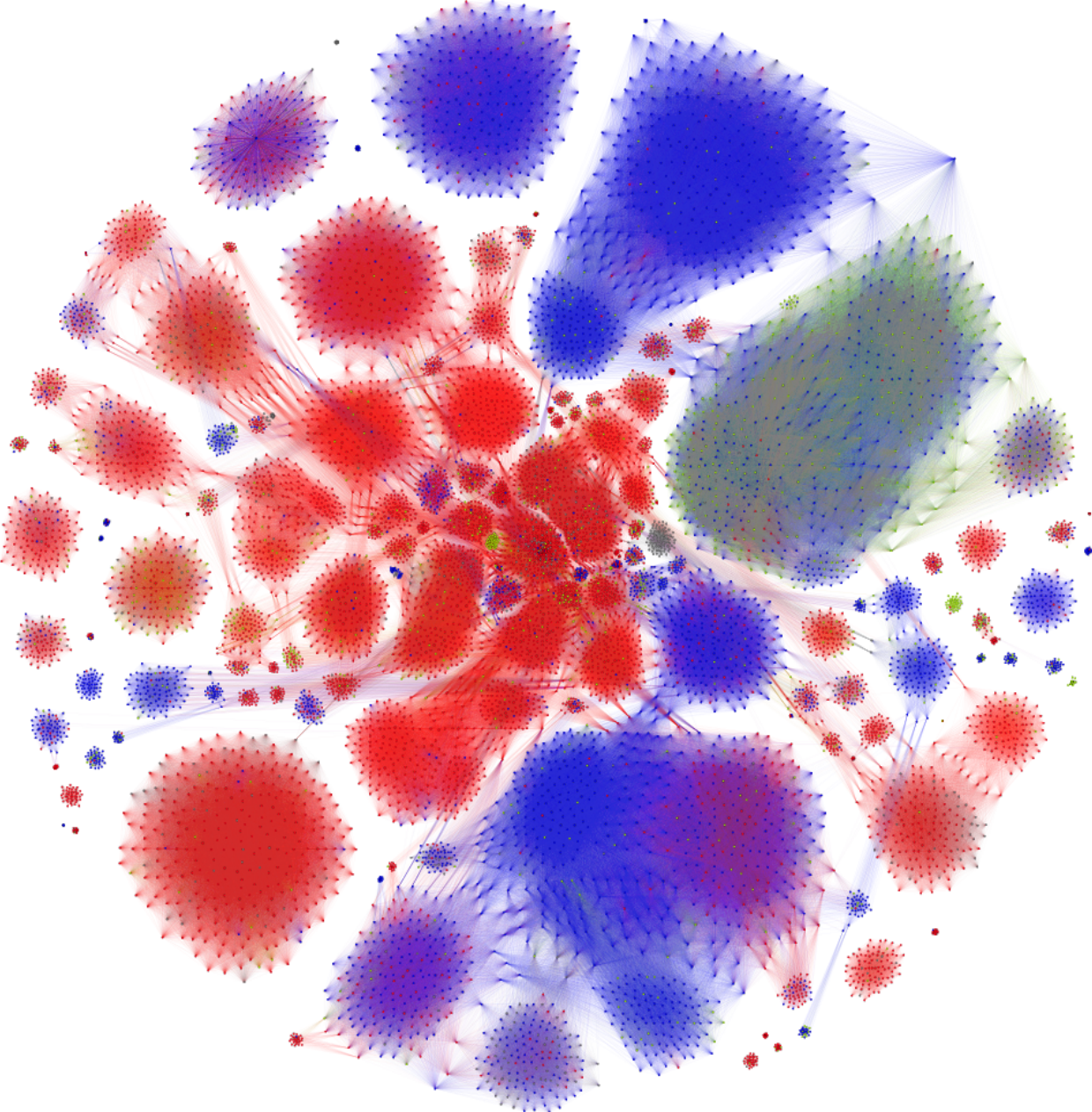




Figure 8: Distribution of *Proficiency in French* among households in the largest component

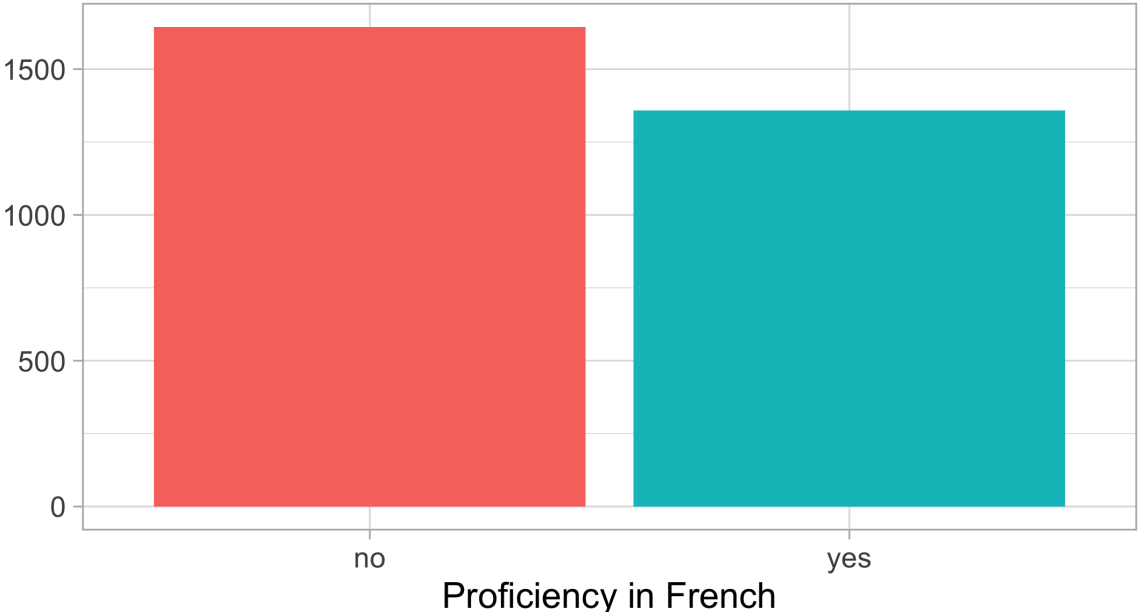


Figure 9: Distribution of *Children's schooling* among households in the largest component

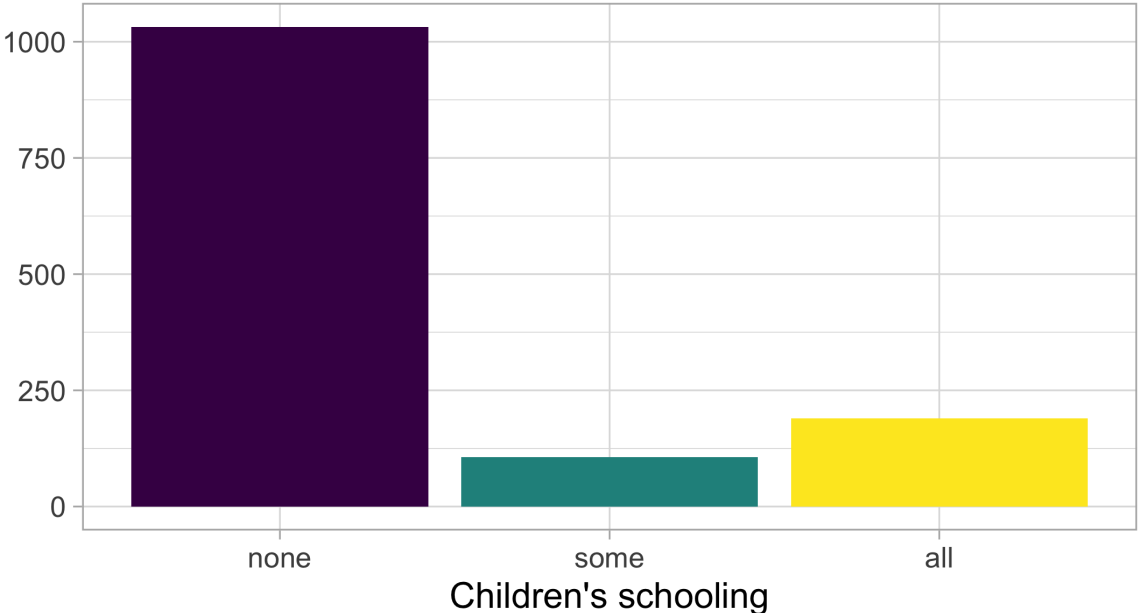




Figure 10: Distribution of *Attitudes on relocation* among households in the largest component

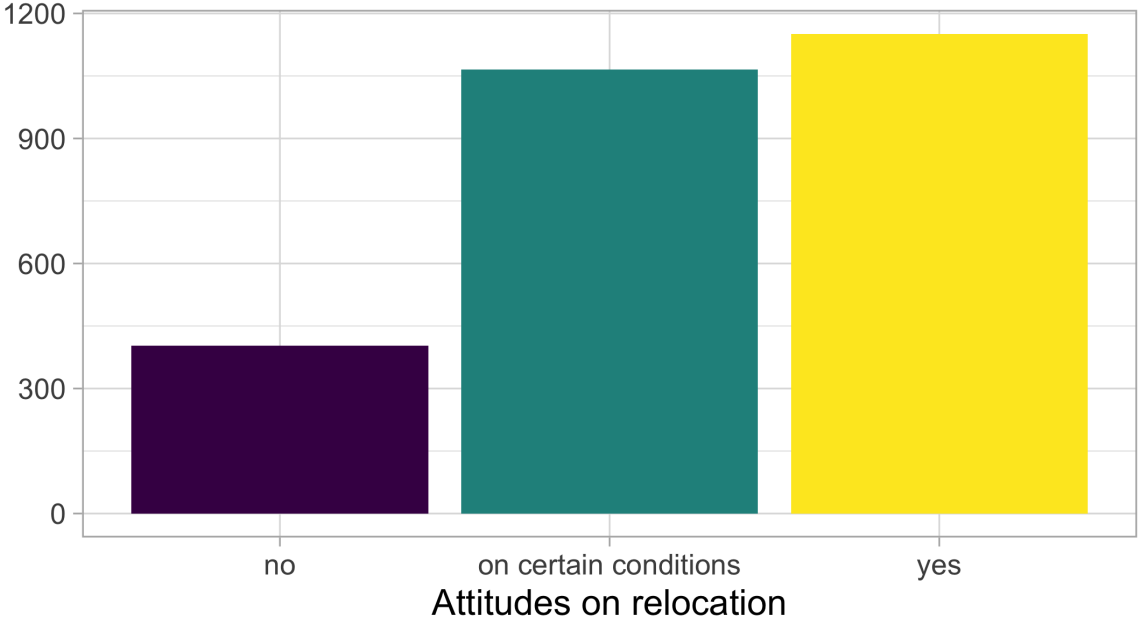


Table 1: Professional experience and region of origin (N=3064)

Professional experience in the old country	Moldavia Transylvania							
	Oltenia	Muntenia	Dobruja	Bucovina	Maramureş	Crişana	Banat	Bulgaria
Agricultural workers	22 %	30 %	7 %	17 %	29 %	25 %	25 %	9 %
Workers in construction and industry	18 %	21 %	40 %	23 %	21 %	26 %	25 %	26 %
Tertiary sector employees and small business owners	20 %	19 %	13 %	40 %	24 %	19 %	26 %	39 %
No professional experience	40 %	30 %	40 %	20 %	26 %	30 %	24 %	25 %

Table 2: Educational experience of adults over 29 years of age and region of birth (N= 3214)

Scolarisation	Moldavia, Transylvania,							
	Oltenia	Muntenia	Dobruja	Bucovina	Maramures	Crişana	Banat	Bulgaria
No educational experience	48 %	39 %	48 %	49 %	48 %	44 %	44 %	24 %
1 to 5 years of school	23 %	23 %	9 %	13 %	21 %	21 %	29 %	22 %
Over 5 years of school	29 %	38 %	41 %	38 %	31 %	31 %	27 %	54 %