

Decline and Restructuring of Gypsies' Nomadism in France : Beyond the Nomadic/Sedentary Binary

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Decline and Restructuring of Gypsies' Nomadism in France: Beyond the Nomadic/Sedentary Binary

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ABSTRACT

European Gypsies/Roma, traditionally known as a nomadic ethnic group, are today largely sedentarized. However, the sedentarization process varies according to the specific physical environment and forms of control and pressure in each country. In some Western countries—especially France, Great Britain and Ireland—Gypsies (or “Travellers”) pursue a travelling lifestyle. Given the situation of French Gypsies, this article addresses the French government’s policies toward this population, which reflect a stereotypical understanding of their nomadism. By examining the cases of French Gypsy families living in: 1) official halting areas designated by municipalities; 2) private family sites owned by Gypsies for the purpose of parking caravans; 3) adapted housing, or subsidised rental housing designed to suit certain residents’ special needs, this article illustrates how French Gypsies’ lives have changed with sedentarization and how, within the limits of political and economic acceptability, they are reorganising a new nomadism, wherein nomadic and sedentary lifestyles are complementary.

INTRODUCTION

European Gypsies/Roma¹⁾ have been known as “peripatetic nomads” (Berland and Salo 1986; Rao 1984; Salo 1986), who in industrialized nations offer the skills of a craft or trade to those with whom they come in contact during their movements. However, nowadays, most European Gypsies are no longer nomads. This population has become largely sedentarized, although the sedentarization process varies according to the specific physical environment and forms of control and pressure in each country. In the post-war communist countries, a large number of Gypsies experienced forced sedentarization and assimilation policies and became settled in towns and villages. In contrast, in some Western countries—especially in France, Great Britain and Ireland—the travelling and stopping of caravan dwellers still remains a “Gypsy problem”. In this context, this article addresses French policies toward the Gypsy population that reflect a stereotypical

understanding of their nomadism and demonstrates how, within the limits of political and economic acceptability, Gypsies are organising a new nomadism, in which nomadic and sedentary lifestyles are complementary.

GYPSEY/TRAVELLER POPULATION IN FRANCE

1) The study population

Since France refuses to institute ethnic monitoring, there are no reliable estimates of how many Gypsies live there. Academic estimates vary from 300,000 to 500,000. This population is known in French as “*gens du voyage*” (“Travelling people” or “Travellers”). This term is defined as those with mobile homes, and having no ethnic connotation. “*Gens du voyage*” can be divided into two groups, (1) those that are ethnic Gypsy groups, such as *Manouches*, *Gitans*, *Roms* and *Yéniches*², and (2) those that live on the road for economic reasons, for instance, travelling merchants and show persons (Figure 1). Unlike Anglo-Saxon countries, in which the term “Roma” has been adopted as a politically correct mode of referring to Gypsies, in the French context, this term (“*Roms*” in French) is not used predominately as a generic term by Gypsies, scholars and activists. Instead, “*Roms*” is perceived as the name of a specific Gypsy community, clearly distinguished from other subgroups. Many people self-identifying as *Gitans*, *Manouches* and others prefer not to identify themselves collectively as “*Roms*”. Hence, the generic term more widely used in France is “*gens du voyage*” or “*Tsiganes*”, i.e. “Gypsies”.

The following case studies are drawn from the author’s fieldwork among French Gypsies, particularly *Manouche* people, known as the most representative group of French Gypsies, and who traditionally led a nomadic existence and who now continue to travel, living in caravans (camping trailers)³. Since 2006, the author has continually conducted fieldwork among *Manouches* in the Pau Region (Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department) in southwestern France, and also in various other French regions (Essonne, Puy-de-Dôme, Gironde and Pyrénées-Atlantiques) in June and July 2014 (Figure 2). Most people met during fieldwork are

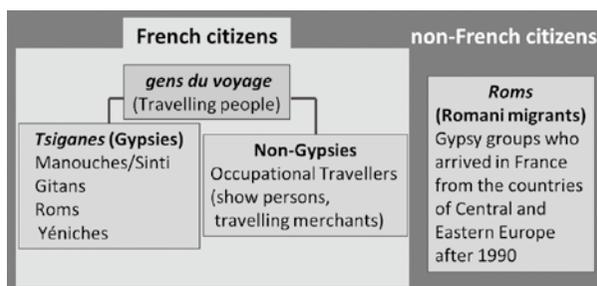


Figure 1 Classification of Gypsies and Travellers in France
Source: Prepared by the author



Figure 2 Map of the study areas in France
Source: Prepared by the author

Manouches, including those who call themselves *Gitan*, *Yéniche* or “*gens du voyage*”⁴), but living with their *Manouche* families.

2) Travelling lifestyle and effects of changing economic-cultural factors

Joseph Doerr (1902–1986), born a member of a *Manouche* group that left Alsace-Lorraine in the late-19th century and spread throughout France, wrote an autobiography, *Où vas-tu, Manouche?* (*Where are you going, Manouche?*, 1982), describing the nomadic life of his people during the 20th century. In it, Doerr explains how his family constantly and habitually travelled, stopping where they knew they could find jobs and hospitality, and where they could reunite with their families. He also describes how their life, which endured two World Wars and related massive social upheaval, was increasingly subjected to political and economic pressures toward sedentarization. The sedentarization process of these itinerant people accelerated dramatically as a result of sharp economic, political, demographic and environmental changes during France’s “Thirty Glorious Years”, from 1945 to 1975.

Although the Gypsies’ nomadism is often misunderstood as irrational, many Gypsy/Romani studies have emphasised repeatedly that the Gypsies do not travel aimlessly, but have a number of purposes that are economic, religious and socio-cultural.

2-1) Economic factors

Gypsy economy has been the most important factor influencing travelling patterns. Their subsistence activities depend greatly on the surrounding society, which necessitates travel. To diversify and maximize their economic opportunities, Gypsies often undertake jobs that others are less able or unwilling to do, moving from place-to-place in search of a peripatetic niche, occasional needs, where there are gaps in demand and supply, and where any large-scale, specialized business would be insecure (Okely 1983; see also Berland and Salo 1986; Salo 1986). The literature on Gypsies' economic activities indicates their strong preference for male self-employment and for geographical mobility, often associated with working in family groups. Women were portrayed as being in charge of most domestic chores and child-rearing, except for their responsibility for door-to-door sales or fortune-telling (Okely 1983; Sutherland 1986). Although the details differ, some aspects are common to traditional "Gypsy occupations", such as occasional supply of goods, services and labor, and a multiplicity and mobility of occupations (Formoso 1987; Okely 1983).

However, changes in political and economic environments over the last decades have made it increasingly difficult for Gypsies to earn a living in the manner they choose. For example, until the 1960s, when Gypsies began to sedentarize in the Pau Region, they had developed in their nomadic life manual and service occupations such as music, cinema, basket-weaving, furniture-making or repair, door-to-door sales (sewing materials, lacework) and seasonal agricultural work (harvesting fruit and vegetables). In the modern economy, many such traditional occupations have become obsolete, deeply impacted by the development of modern distribution networks, modern agriculture and the general process of globalization.

In today's difficult economic climate, a large proportion of Gypsy families in Pau—whether living at halting sites, at private sites, or elsewhere—depend on social welfare, in particular, on the minimum income (called "*RSA: Revenu de solidarité active*" since June, 2009, or "*RMI: Revenu minimum d'insertion*" before that date)⁵). Very often, they earn additional income from collecting scrap metal, now the most common occupation among the French Gypsy population. Despite facing a sharp decline of most peripatetic activities because of large-scale industrialization and greater numbers of organized migrant field laborers, many Gypsies also practice their traditional occupations. They work in seasonal agricultural jobs (harvesting fruit and vegetables, grape harvesting in Champagne or Bordeaux)⁶, and adapt their previous occupations to new contexts, for example the sale of clothing, accessories and daily necessities at local markets and service work, such as house cleaning, painting, garden maintenance and furniture repair.

Thus, the tendency to favor self-employment and occasional wage-labor remains. However, the recent trend that differs from previous decades is the Gypsies' way of working. Increasingly today Gypsies start businesses as "micro-enterprises", obtaining proof of competence or qualifications for skills they already

possess. These self-employed entrepreneurs work, for example, as house painters or scrap metal recycling workers, as they did before. Now, however, they often work in a locally based manner that requires, rather than geographical mobility, a certain stability and close engagement with the local population in order to build relationships with and confidence in customers and partners. Moreover, although permanent wage earners are still few, increasing numbers of Gypsies seek temporary, wage-labor employment, such as housekeeping in hotels and buildings by women and street cleaning or construction work by men. These changes in their way of working mean that travelling is not necessarily an essential condition for the economic survival of today's Gypsies.

2-2) Family and socio-cultural factors

Although economic factors have become less influential for many Gypsy families, movement for socio-cultural and religious reasons remains, or has become even more important. The basic social unit (of residence and consumption) of Gypsy society is not the nuclear family, but an extended family composed of a man and his wife, their married sons and daughters, and the latter's partners and children⁷⁾. Further, they maintain strong ties with other extended families who are related by kinship, marriage or comradeship, who often live in the same neighborhood, but may also live in different French regions or even abroad. The solidarity of extended families that support and look after one another is a source of great pride for Gypsies. Visiting relatives and friends on special occasions such as christenings, weddings, illnesses, funerals or during vacations is extremely important as a way of retaining and strengthening group identity.

2-3) Religious factors

Connected with an annual large-group gathering, travelling for religious reasons is also common among Gypsies, and today is activated by the growing Gypsy Pentecostal movement. The Gypsies have traditionally adopted the dominant religion of the country where they live. In France, most are Catholic, and they go on pilgrimages to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (in late May), Lourdes (in August) in southern France and other holy sites in neighboring countries. Today, however, many French Gypsies belong to Evangelical or Pentecostal churches and follow different religious practices, such as attending a series of mission meetings and conferences (*Conventions*) held from late-May to September in various French locations and in other countries. Pentecostalism, originating in the USA, has spread rapidly among French Gypsies since the early-1950s⁸⁾. The Gypsy Evangelical Mission, founded in 1968, started ordaining Gypsy pastors, who began to evangelize among their communities and now organize numerous conferences, some of which are gatherings of hundreds of caravans.

The nomadic way of life still plays an important role in the Gypsy community, but there are also many obstacles to its implementation. Two major

factors are political action and the rapid change of economic environment that affects the Gypsies' way of working. Taking into account these different factors, this article addresses France's policy toward Gypsies' travelling and stopping to explain why the provision of halting areas, despite its intention to protect Gypsies' traditional lifestyle, forced them to settle under difficult conditions. To compare different patterns of Gypsies' movements according to different types of caravan dwelling, the following sections examine the situations of Gypsy families living in: 1) official halting areas (*aire d'accueil*) designated by municipalities; 2) private family sites (*terrain familial*) owned by Gypsies for the purpose of parking caravans; 3) adapted housing (*habitat adapté*), subsidized rental housing designed to suit certain residents' special needs. These case studies illustrate how French Gypsies' lives have changed with sedentarization and why owning a "fixed home" has today become crucial in organizing a new nomadic way of life.

FRENCH POLICIES REGULATING THE TRAVELLING OF GYPSIES/ TRAVELLERS

1) French laws and regulations toward Gypsies, Nomads and *gens du voyage*

Despite the French state claiming to make no distinction among its citizens on any grounds, for almost a century, laws and regulations distinguished Gypsies from the rest of civil society as "Nomads". Throughout history, harsh measures toward them have taken a variety of forms, for instance, punishment by making them galley slaves under Louis XIV and deportation to the concentration camps under the Vichy regime during World War Two. The main objective, however, has been to control and restrict their movements. Gypsy mobility became the subject of a hostile administrative process, particularly from the end of the 19th century onward.

In 1912, the French government enacted a law on the Nomads' movement;⁹⁾ this required Gypsies and other itinerant populations to carry a special travel document "*carnet anthropométrique* (Anthropometric Identity Booklet)", which, adopting a method Bertillon created during the 1880s to track criminals. It included personal information about the holder, such as his or her full name, nicknames, place of birth and other information relevant to establishing identity. It also included spaces for fingerprints, photographs and physical details, such as eye color, chest and waist measurements, length and width of the head as well as the length of the right ear, left elbow and left foot.

Carnet anthropométrique was cancelled by law in 1969¹⁰⁾, but Travelling people (*gens du voyage*) instead had to carry new types of documents, "*livret de circulation*" or "*carnet de circulation*", which had to be stamped by the police at regular intervals. Persons caught without such documents or who failed to present them for validation could be subject to penal sanctions, including fines and imprisonment. Further, they had to have a "municipality of attachment", a requirement (and an assumption) that causes negative consequences in access to

social rights¹¹).

On the other hand, as a result of increased urbanization that has eliminated marginal spaces previously occupied by Gypsies, many families had moved from rural to urban settings by the early-1980s. Although most families continued to travel with caravans during most of the year, many have settled near towns to pursue new economic strategies, including scrap metal collecting. Indeed, it became illegal for them to live in caravans anywhere except at specific halting sites. However, local authorities responsible for arranging suitable accommodation for the itinerant population were not eager to develop these sites. Gypsies were thus increasingly faced with a lack of stopping places.

To deal with this problematical situation, the French government adopted two legislative texts on 31 May, 1990, for the implementation of the right to housing (*Loi n°90-449 du 31 mai 1990*) and on 5 July, 2000, on the reception and housing of Travelling people (*Loi n°2000-614 du 5 juillet 2000*), known as the “Besson Laws 1 and 2”. These laws require that every municipality of over 5000 residents create a halting area, called “*aire d'accueil*”, for Travelling people.

The Besson Laws, as the cornerstone of government involvement concerning Gypsies' caravan dwelling, represent a significant change in attitudes and policies toward this minority. But the present situation of the Gypsies is paradoxical. Although the laws are intended to protect Gypsies' traditional lifestyle, many have been forced to stop travelling and to settle under difficult conditions.

One reason for the paradox is that a majority of French municipalities have not implemented the laws. In practice, the Besson Laws have failed in their intention to establish halting sites owing to many mayors' lack of political will to do so. According to a French audit office report, only 52 percent of mandated camping spaces had been established by the late-2010 (Cour des Comptes 2012:



Photo 1 Illegal encampment (Photograph by the author at Pyrénées-Atlantiques, in 2008)

50). This shortfall forces many Gypsies to camp illegally (Photo 1). Further, most existing halting areas are located in places totally unsuitable for human residence—polluted, inconvenient and marginal areas, for example, industrial zones or areas near refuse dumps or motorways, far from urban services. In some areas, the basic infrastructure (e.g. electricity, clean water for washing or drinking and sewage) is inadequate in quantity and quality or, worse, is entirely unavailable.

In the past several years, many observers have pointed out these problems (e.g. Cour des Comptes 2012; ERRC 2005). However, yet another problem has not been fully understood: an intrinsic discrepancy between policies on halting areas and the Gypsies' changing travel practices.

2) Restrictive aspects of “Hosting area”

In the Pau Region, approximately 40 percent of the itinerant population—the majority of which comprises about 1,300 *Manouche* people—live in four halting areas for Travelling people and the rest, on unauthorized encampments or private family sites, called *terrain familial*.

In Pau, as well as in other regions of France, halting areas are not adapted for Gypsy families' needs. A literal translation of *aire d'accueil* into English would be “hosting area”, but Gypsies often call these places a “designated site” or “ghetto”. They are located near motorways and systematically hidden and removed from local communities. One official halting area, no longer managed by local authorities, became a blighted slum because of the unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate and overcrowded conditions of its structures¹²⁾.

Although halting sites were provided in large part to improve access to economic activities in which Gypsies can participate and to educate children, residents consistently link their frustrations to the urban fringes' lack of public transport, a situation that limits social activities, employment and education. As for the education of Gypsy children, it has been said that, for cultural reasons (cf. Formoso 1987), Gypsies do not value formalized education as highly as does the settled population. However, today most Gypsy parents, many of whom received little or no schooling and consequently face many difficulties in their daily and working lives, recognize that their children must become literate. Actually, the main barrier for many Gypsy parents is lack of public transportation, so that they must drive their children to and from school every day.

Significantly, although the Besson Laws intended to provide hosting areas to protect the Gypsies' nomadic lifestyle, they have several restrictive aspects that make it impossible to put their intentions into practice. This is an important consideration, especially for the decline of Gypsies' economic activities associated with the inability to move and, paradoxically, the inability to settle down.

As mentioned above, although the Gypsies' commercial nomadism and casual labor has lost much of its previous importance, they still tend to continue their traditional occupations. In fact, income differences among Gypsy families arise

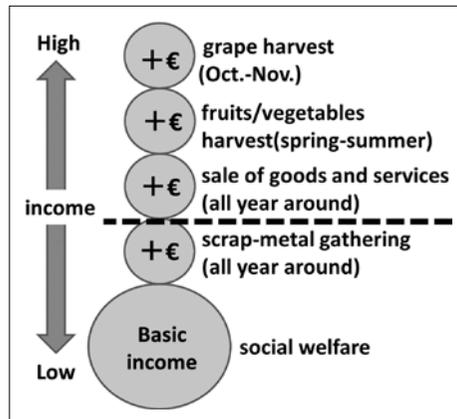


Figure 3 The changing economic situation
Source: Authors' field study

from different forms of labor or the ability to exploit multiple job opportunities (Figure 3).

In the case of Gypsies living in halting areas, an increasing number of families have become dependent on social welfare and scrap metal work, rather than exploiting multiple job opportunities as previously. These families tend to avoid some occupations, such as seasonal agricultural work and sale of goods and services that require not only certain forms of mobility, but also stability.

In certain of these families, the decline of traditional economic activities is not only forced by changes in the economic environment, but also by the transformation of travelling and caravan-dwelling conditions. The laws, policies and actions of local officials, which make increasingly difficult for Gypsies to stop their caravans, even temporarily, have a detrimental impact on their ability to work. The lack of sufficient halting areas also creates this situation. For example, in the Pau Region, all halting areas are overpopulated, so that at one site, the population is double the approved capacity. In this region as a whole, the total number of official halting areas amounts to only half of those needed. This means that half the Gypsy population is unable to find a place. Further, unauthorized camping has been criminalized. Those persons who have no other choice but to live outside official halting areas are subject to the Security Law's penal sanctions, such as imprisonment, fines and suspension of a driving license.

In these circumstances, the basic condition of halting areas identified by law as "public equipment", not as "private habitation", has accelerated Gypsies' sedentarization. In overpopulated sites, Gypsy families, although having lived for decades in the same location, are denied ownership of or rights to their caravan plots. Therefore, they hesitate to travel for fear that if they leave, they will not be able to return and they will have nowhere to go. Actually, at most sites, while travelling Gypsy families might, retain the caravan plot they usually occupy by

entrusting its management to kin or friends or, occasionally, receiving the site manager's unofficial approval to do so. However, these unofficial possibilities do not alter the fact that the Gypsies do not have the freedom or autonomy to make decisions concerning their movements. For example, one family that wanted to travel allowed their relatives to occupy their plot to avoid occupation by others. But when the family returned earlier than expected, owing to a family member's illness, they were obliged to move around several encampments near their habitual caravan site for three months before their relatives departed.

In short, for Gypsy families, travelling and movements are attended by considerable risk. Through stereotypical conceptions of nomadism, Gypsies are viewed as having no attachment to any sedentary (permanent home) life, and thus, they are denied the right to occupy their caravan sites in an enduring way. It must be emphasised that a lack of ownership in the halting site entails not only prohibition of travel, but also prohibition of return and settlement. As detailed below, Gypsy families today need permanent homes more than ever, in order to send their children to school, to find occasional paid work in the neighborhood or, for small and local-based businesses, to build social networks, to stock merchandise and to develop other social and occupational activities.

In other words, the halting site policy that limits their rights to a permanent home does not fulfil the Gypsies' need for a "territorial anchor". Gypsy/Romani studies have long shown that Gypsies are not wanderers isolated from the rest of society, but their mobile territoriality is always characterized by associations with certain localities (e.g. Humeau 1995)¹³. They visit repeatedly certain places as part of a set route, including places where their families have lived for generations and where they form strong attachments to their locality resulting from seasonal employment opportunities and traditional stopping places.

Today, the importance of a territorial anchor is greater than ever. Gypsy families living in the Pau Region call themselves "*Manouches palois* (Manouches of Pau)", expressing their sense of belonging not only to a particular ethnic group, but also to their neighborhood. A prominent part of this population is also called the family of "local wandering (*errance locale*)" because they continually move (in most cases, being forced) from one unauthorized encampment to another, but always within the region¹⁴. All these families have ties to the local community because most have been rooted there for more than half a century. If several conditions and restrictions associated with travelling could be solved, they might travel more frequently and over greater distances. However, all of them would return and continue to live in the region where they grew up, where their families live and where they know people who offer them jobs and support their daily needs. Indeed, their survival depends on their locally based family networks and on close engagement with the local population.

This kind of territorial anchor or local belonging has been neglected in the policy on halting sites. A discrepancy between policy and Gypsy families' needs becomes particularly obvious in the following cases, wherein some families have

adopted a new nomadism by owning a fixed home.

FAMILY SITES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FIXED HOME

1) The role of caravan as dwelling

A family site is, in general, private land purchased or leased by Gypsies for the purpose of parking caravans. Figure 4 shows a general type of family site, which usually contains a bungalow or house (Photo 2), becoming a mixture of bungalow/house properties and caravan pitches.

The extended family is the residential unit at most family sites, while the land's area restricts the number of extended family members who are able to live there. Living space is also organized in the same manner as in a traditional caravan dwelling, composed of two sections: the caravan's interior and its exterior. Each couple or extended family member has a caravan, considered the most intimate of their living spaces, which serves as a bedroom and living area. Outdoor living space is used for various communal activities with family members and for interactions with friends. Such activities include cooking, eating, chatting, working and caring for children. A bungalow or house supplements rather than replaces, a caravan dwelling. Such constructions are an extension or a complement to the outdoor living space shared by extended family members, that is, as a comfortable living and kitchen area, regardless of the weather. Families that build large houses with bedrooms and other rooms also continue to use their caravans as bedrooms and spend significant time in the outdoor living spaces.

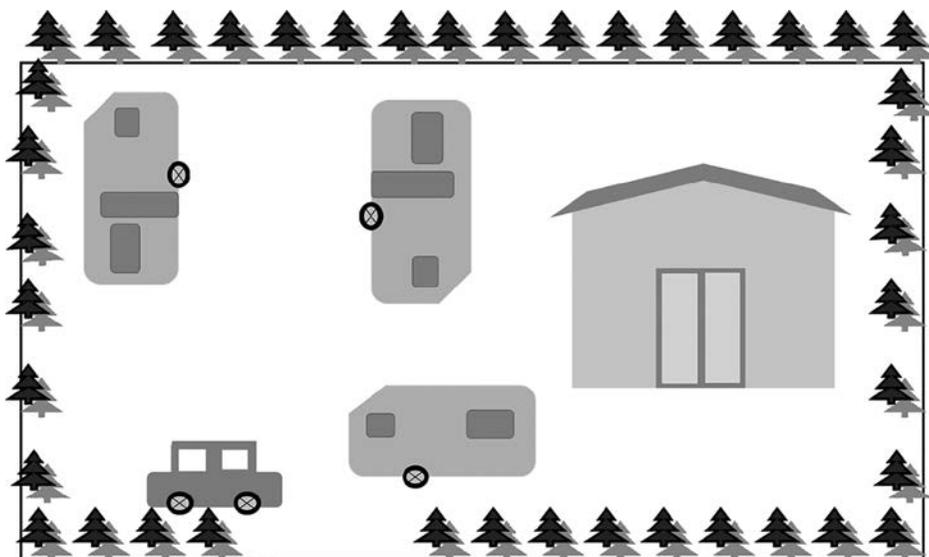


Figure 4 Mixture of bungalow/house properties and caravan pitches
Source: Author's field study



Photo 2 A bungalow of a Gypsy family
(Photograph by the author at Pyrénées-Atlantiques, in 2007)

2) Sedentary home as a crucial condition for travelling

As a result, the style of caravan dwelling does not change regardless of whether Gypsy families live in encampments or at a family site. Through the nomadic/sedentary dichotomy, Gypsies living in sedentary homes are classified as “sedentarized Gypsies”, but their real lives differ materially from what can be seen on the surface. The caravan remains an important part of their living space, and as the following cases show, owning a settled home does not mean an end to travelling.

[Case 1] Family A

Sixty-year-old parents, with their sons’ and daughters’ families (a total of 11 couples and their children), live together at a family site. Family A’s father, Mr D.S., said that in the early-1990s, he had the good luck to purchase land (1,500–2,000 m², located in an industrial zone) before prices began escalating. He gave the following answer to my question “Why did you decide to purchase this site and to live on it?”:

I didn’t decide to do that. I was forced...because we had to send our children to school. There was no designated site where we could live with 10 children. ...Here we can be together, whenever we want. On occasions such as holidays, weddings,

anniversaries, we can gather together here. In designated sites, there are often conflicts that occur among the various families whose caravans are closely packed, so it is a good thing to have one's own site. Here we have possibilities, we can work and we do not need to trouble ourselves about police exclusion. Life here is calm.

Mr D.S. remains at the family site almost year-round with his wife who needs regular hospital treatment for a kidney disease. He earns some money by selling, in the front yard of his site, antique objects that he collects in the neighborhood. However, his family site, which affords accommodation for all extended family members and visiting friends, is filled only in the winter. His children's families travel actively. They start in March and follow the fruit and vegetable harvest in southern France. From July to September, they join the Evangelical Mission trip through the towns and villages of Northern France, where they might obtain a few handyman jobs, such as house cleaning and furniture repair. From September to October, they pick grapes in the Champagne Region.

The concern here is that the extended family members are not always together during travel seasons; each couple moves independently, making decisions according to family and financial conditions. However, from December to February, almost all extended family members settle at their family site. The male members collect scrap metal. Thus, the life of Family A is distinguished by two phases: dispersion during travel (spring–autumn) and concentration at the family site (winter)¹⁵.

[Case 2] Family B

Parents in their early-thirties and their children live at the family site with their relatives (husband and wife's kin), who also spend several months there, mainly in the winter. The husband of Family B is engaged in micro-businesses like house cleaning, garden maintenance or scrap metal collecting, changing services or products several times during a year. In addition, from March to June, the husband and adult members of his family group seek casual farm work, like picking fruit in the neighborhood. They travel much more during summer vacation when their children are not attending school, taking the children to either the beach or mountains in southern France. At the same time, the father earns some money in the places they visit by offering such handyman services as light carpentry or moss removal. Family B stays at their private site from September to February, except for October, when they travel to Champagne for the grape harvest.

These two cases enable an understanding of the relationship between mobility and multiplicity of economic activities, as well as the important role that the family site plays as a fixed home. While scrap metal collecting is the most important income source during the settled period, Gypsies have multiple occupations, especially during travel seasons, to satisfy the welfare needs of their household members. In both cases, seasonal regularities in travelling are

influenced by the demands of jobs, especially those in agriculture. Moreover, they are also affected by current factors, in Family A's case, by new religious practices that require a long travel period or, in Family B's case, by children's school schedules that limit the period and area of travel. In comparison with their traditional practice, the choices and form (multiplicity and mobility) of economic activities where these two families engage do not change. However, as Mr D.S remarked, for that to be possible today, they need a fixed home as a base to start from and to return to whenever they want.

In the next case, it can be said more simply that owning a fixed home is essential to Gypsies' mobile practices.

[Case 3] Family C

Family C also lives with relatives at a family site. They work together selling clothing and household goods at local markets all over southern France. This is a traditional Gypsy occupation, but today has become more complicated than in the past, owing to global competition. Nevertheless, Family C, whose members do not need extra work like scrap metal collecting or casual farm work, seems to manage the situation successfully, adapting elements of the traditional economy to new contexts. They buy merchandise from Spain and sell it at French local markets. In their frequent movements between Spain and France, the family site is important for storing goods and for resting with family group members.

The above three cases of families differ in economic activities and regular patterns of movement, but also highlight the importance of mobility in economic strategies and the role of a sedentary homes as a necessary condition for travelling. The families have private sites, not for settling down permanently, but for travelling and working. Moreover, the roles of travelling and the family site are not limited to economic spheres, but are linked to religious and familial considerations. In particular, their fixed homes are a gathering place for members of the extended families and of the community.

This last aspect points to an important role of travelling and fixed homes in the social life of Gypsy families who are forced to shift their traditional practices to accommodate new social, economic or environmental realities. The following case of Family D that, unlike the previous families, does not travel for economic purposes, shows clearly how the family site and travelling play important roles in Gypsies' social lives.

[Case 4] Family D

Family D lives on land owned by a friend who allows them to use free-of-charge. They transformed the wild land into a inhabitable place with three caravans, building a small bungalow that serves as a kitchen and sitting room. The parents, in their late-sixties, have five daughters and one son (aged in their thirties to forties), one of whom lives with them at the family site; the other five children

live on official or unofficial halting areas in the neighborhood. Thus, the residential unit of Family D's site is composed of parents, their daughter, the daughter's two children and the son of another daughter, living in one official halting area close to the family site. The parents had also lived in the same halting site for around 10 years.

Lotta, the mother of Family D, reported that they were very happy with this site because her husband has a heart disease, for which requires regular medication, and because "here, I feel calmer and more likely to live than in a halting site. This is ours, after all". At the time of this conversation, more than 20 caravans of Gypsies or Travelling people coming from another region had been staying temporarily in public parking, near Family D's site. But Lotta said, "we have never visited them because they are neither families nor friends. Not all *Manouches* always live close together".

In this way, Family D seems to enjoy a peaceful life at their private family site. However, they are not isolated from other Gypsy families. Members often leave their private site to join other families living in different places or regions. During the summer, when the children are out of school, they travel around southern France to see their relatives and make pilgrimages to Lourdes (about an hour away from their site by car), where they stay alongside relatives' caravans during two weeks in August. And all year-round, especially during school holidays, they move in the neighborhood of their family site from one unauthorised encampment to another, to stay with their close kin and friends.

Family D's local movements can be understood as the social practice of minimizing isolation and maintaining contact with the wider Gypsy community. For them, the family site is a secure place to which they can return whenever they wish, for example, when they are forced to leave illegal sites, when a family member needs medical care, or when they want to live quietly in a small family unit. Thus, in Family D's life, two types of living places fit into two different modes of social life (Figure 5): a private site for closeness in the small family

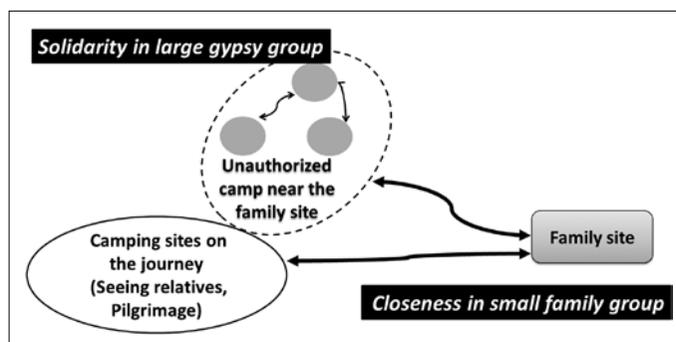


Figure 5 Family D's movements and two modes of social life
Source: Author's field study

unit, and camping sites on journeys or unauthorized encampments in the neighborhood for solidarity in the larger Gypsy group. By leaving and returning to their family site, Family D moves between two modes of social life.

3) Movement's influence on social life

Many other Gypsy families live on their own land, but often move among several encampments in the neighborhood. These cases of movement between private family site and encampments show how a family site is significant for Gypsies in solving new problems that the process of sedentarization introduces into their social lives.

The sedentarization of Gypsies, leading to concentration of populations and caravans on restricted areas such as halting sites, affects their social organization, which is linked closely to nomadism. Travelling and movements have been major factors that influenced Gypsies' social organization, which is characterized by constant change of companions and the periodic splitting and coalescence of extended families. As described in Doerr's autobiography (1982), while two or more extended families were mutually dependent and cooperated with each other to form a group, during travel, including border crossings, they often changed partners, and the relationships were not fixed. Even today, although Gypsies have developed strong group ties between and among extended families and frequently move to be with family members, they do not form a stable, clearly bounded community. Each unit of the extended family is free from the control of other units. They emphasize the autonomy of each extended family and much prefer to live dispersed in small units of close relatives.

This nomadic pattern of fission and fusion has changed during the sedentarization process. In the Pau Region, although Gypsies maintain family solidarity with those who live in distant locations, even at opposite ends of France, most tend to establish ties of marriage and alliance with other families who have settled down in the neighborhood in similar circumstances. Such attachments between units of the extended family have built a sense of belonging and common interest and consequently fortified local group unity. By reserving and monopolizing official/unofficial halting sites, Gypsy families have benefitted from localized solidarity against other itinerant groups.

However, although geographical proximity and concentration of Gypsy families within the settled region facilitate contact and cooperation, internal conflict and disputes seriously affect their daily lives. This has been a particular problem for Gypsies living in official halting sites, where conflicts among families often arise about the sites' usage—about borders of families' lots, rubbish, scrap work and individual acts of inappropriate behavior such as drunkenness, injuries and monetary disputes. Essentially, these conflicts have resulted from enforced co-residence and permanent concentration in a single halting site, conditions the residents have not previously experienced.

It seems that Gypsies find it difficult to manage this new societal

circumstance and its resulting problems because they lack political solutions for them. Unlike Roma (*Roms*) who have their own legal system of “*kris*”, a traditional court wherein elders adjudicate conflicts (cf. Sutherland 1986), the Gypsies-*Manouches* in this study have no formalized system of justice and hierarchy and no leadership beyond that of chief of the extended family group. Thus, when conflict arises, such social organization offers no solution except departure from the site, i.e. “escape from conflict” (Dollé 1980). But today, this kind of solution is no longer possible because Gypsy families have no alternative places to go, and therefore they are forced to continue living under much stress.

Here, it can be understood why the family site has become crucial for the social life of Gypsies facing problems that accompany sedentarization. Owning a fixed home enables free movement between two different modes of social life, as an attempt to combine the autonomy of the extended family and the solidarity of the wider Gypsy group.

Within the past several decades, the Gypsy community has experienced dramatic mutation owing to economic change and strengthened legislation. Some typical consequences are official halting areas that have undermined Gypsy families' traditionally nomadic way of life, without offering alternatives for their livelihood and cultural survival. However, in contrast to this decline, the above case studies on Gypsies' family sites demonstrate how they have organized a new nomadism, adapting to the changing environment. As Mr D.S. of Family A said, by obtaining their “own fixed home”, they have possibilities for addressing various constraints in maintaining their way of life and their autonomy. The fixed home, which provides Gypsies with the freedom to travel and to return, is essential for maintaining and improving their economic, socio-cultural and religious practices as well as for their reconstructed nomadism, in which a territorial anchor enables movement.

Thus, it seems undeniable that fixed homes have become crucial for Gypsy families who are reorganising their lives on the continuum from nomadic to settled. In fact, the vast majority of people whom the author met on official and unofficial halting sites expressed a desire to have their own place, either to settle on or for temporary but repeated seasonal use.

In practice, however, in attempting to obtain a place of their own, Gypsies encounter many obstacles. First, lack of financial resources has been a major constraint, especially during the past two decades when the price of land has continued to rise. Second, even Gypsy families who can afford to purchase or rent land face various obstacles: many banks will not loan to families who cannot prove a fixed domicile and permanent salaried work, or landowners refuse to sell or lease land to those who live in caravans. Third, even when Gypsy families do obtain land, problems arise from discord between Gypsies' specific housing needs and policies regulating land use in France. Nowadays, many Gypsy families buy plots located on non-constructible land, which can be cheaper than constructible plots which have municipal consent for planning or building. One outcome of

such a choice is that families who reside in caravans on their own, non-constructible land might not be provided with local water or electrical services. Further, although a caravan is not officially recognized as a house, but as a vehicle that does not qualify for housing benefit, those who live in caravans as permanent homes on non-constructible land could be threatened with penal sanctions and eviction¹⁶⁾.

ADAPTED HOUSING FOR NEW NOMADIC-SEDENTARY LIFE

1) Integration of Gypsies' caravan dwelling into mainstream housing policy

Besides rules and regulations on travelling and stopping and on housing, Gypsy families who inhabit caravans must struggle with many difficulties arising from the incompatibility of their lifestyle with norms and laws of mainstream, sedentary society, most of which remains ignorant of their needs. How can these needs of itinerant citizens' be included in mainstream policies? When considering such a question, the current changes in French policy toward Gypsies' caravan dwelling should be noted.

In recent years, particularly since the late-2000s, owing to the failure of the policy on halting areas for improving itinerant citizens' living conditions and to address the problem of illegal camps, some French municipalities have begun to shift their policy toward Travelling people from provision of halting areas to adapted housing (*habitat adapté*)¹⁷⁾.

In France, various types of adapted housing are built as part of the social housing program that provides for people facing special difficulties, e.g. the elderly, disabled and young persons. Adapted housing for sedentary or semi-sedentary Gypsy families is designed and sized to suit their special needs and differences. In general, it takes the form of land on which families can place their caravans, mostly with individual houses for permanent residence. Adapted housing can also be arranged as small-scale group housing that meets Gypsies' desire to reside in extended family groups. Local authorities responsible for urban planning and local housing policies establish these sites, but the national government largely finances them on the terms applicable for construction of caravan plots at halting sites¹⁸⁾. Unlike at halting sites, however, Gypsies can receive housing benefits granted to persons below a certain income level.

During fieldwork in 2014, the author visited five adapted housing sites for Travelling people, constructed in Puy-de-Dôme, Pyrénées-Atlantiques (Pau and Basque regions) and Gironde. Their key features can be summarized as follows:

1) *Housing contract*: all adapted housing visited is owned and let by local municipalities to Gypsy families whose rent can be supported by housing benefits, for instance, the "rental housing loan for social integration (*prêt locatif aidé d'intégration—PLAI*)", covering almost the full cost of the rent. Residents pay for their water, electricity, gas and, if necessary, their caravan loan.

2) *Structure*: all adapted housing is designed in the same style—one plot

provides a traditional exterior structure—a house with a living-dining room and kitchen area and a bathroom—with a parking area accommodating a car and a caravan serving as living room and bedroom. More precisely, the structure of adapted housing does differ somewhat depending on the presence or absence of a bedroom in the house: the former is treated as *PLAI* housing; the latter as a family site financed as part of adapted housing programmes (Photos 3 and 4). In both cases, the location of doors is important for easy movement between houses and outdoor and/or caravan living space. In some adapted housing, the bathroom can be entered directly from outside.

3) *Housing unit*: an adapted housing site is occupied by a nuclear family, that is, husband, wife and unmarried children, often with the parents of the husband or wife. Whatever its constitution, the extended family remains important in living arrangements. Among sites the author visited, the number of plots varies from 5 to 13, with extended family members residing together. An adapted housing site might be shared by two or more extended families, but among them, kinship or companionship has existed for many years.

Although still few in number (Table 1)¹⁹, adapted housing sites are highly innovative and well suited to the needs of families wishing to become sedentary or semi-sedentary. First, adapted housing provides a solution to economic difficulties. Given that Gypsy families are not entitled to housing assistance owing to non-recognition of a caravan as a type of housing, it is important that the house in adapted housing (mostly *PLAI* housing) provides access to benefits. Second, adapted housing restores the autonomy that Gypsy families were previously denied



Photo 3 A plot of adapted housing: *PLAI* housing type (Photograph by the author at Puy-de-Dôme, in 2014)

by having to live in slum neighborhoods or halting areas for many years. Within a form of social housing, adapted housing entails the legal rights of a permanent home, or the right to occupy the land exclusively (Table 2).



Photo 4 A plot of adapted housing: family site type (Photograph by the author at Gironde, in 2014)

Table 1 Number of plots and housing in adapted housing for *gens du voyage* (2004–2011)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Number of plots on financed-family site (private or rented)	17	92	89	76	83	163	80	133	733
in operation	N/A	N/A	102	98	108	85	N/A	N/A	498
Number of PLAI type housing	N/A	65	15	85	7	36	29	14	251

Source: *Cour des Comptes* (2012: 131–132)

Table 2 Comparison of three types of sites for Gypsies' caravan dwelling

	Official Halting Area	Private Family Site	Adapted housing
Definition	Public equipment	Private land	Private housing
Residential Unit	Various families	One extended family	One or more extended families selected
Occupation Right	No	Yes	Yes
Cost	0~400€/month		200~400€/month
Housing Allowances	No	No	Yes
Circulation Document/ Municipality of Attachment	Required	Not required (Required in the case of non-constructible land)	Not required

Source: Author's field study

The following case typifies how adapted housing meets the needs of Gypsy families.

[Case 5] Family E

In 2007, the basic plan for construction of adapted housing for Travelling people was formulated in the Pau Region. Neighboring municipalities had implemented this type of accommodation already, thus pushing local authorities toward this decision.

The Pau Region has experienced many problems with official halting areas, where Gypsies often live in undesirable conditions. Other problems involve illegal encampments, with Gypsy families moving year-round within the region. Therefore, the director of the local association working to aid local Gypsies and Travellers faced a difficult task in selecting families for adapted housing from the long list of applicants. In the author's interview with her, she recalled, "I was worried because it was very difficult to choose the most eligible families from over hundreds of people". Eventually, she selected one extended family unit "Family E". Two decisive reasons were the following: Family E had two elderly women suffering from disabilities and long-term illnesses. With them, the extended family had continued to move around the Pau Region for over 20 years.

The author first became acquainted with Family E in the summer of 2006. At that time, and for some years after, they were forced to lead a hard life called "local wandering". Usually, Family E had lived and moved in a unit made up of 10 households with five generations: Tatiana, a widow in her late-eighties, her widowed daughter in her late-sixties, grandchildren from thirty to fifty years old, great-grandchildren and great great-grandchildren. They continued moving around the Pau Region, setting up illegal encampments in various places, such as industrial and commercial premises, public car parks and open spaces along roads. They would stay at a location from one to more than four weeks, depending on police officers and neighborhood residents' attitudes. A family member said, "we have to leave the site right away when policemen knock on the door of the caravan, even in early morning or during meals".

Around fifty years ago, when Gypsy families' movement was still very active in France, Tatiana and her husband arrived in the Pau Region. After they started having children, they began to spend the winter there, travelling through various French regions during the rest of the year. For more than a decade, around the 1980s, they gradually reduced their frequency of travelling; they stayed at a public caravan site, where Tatiana's grandchildren grew up and married. After this period, they returned to the life they had lived previously, never stopping their caravans on any official sites in the Pau Region. One granddaughter of Tatiana, who married and had children at that site, explained as follows. In public caravan sites where various family groups live together, there were frequent conflicts among residents, as well as youth delinquency, like vandalism and alcohol abuse. So to protect their families and children against such problems, they decided to maintain

a certain distance from those sites.

Thus, the adapted housing plan was gratifying to Family E, after suffering such a hard life. “How nice to have our own site!” a member said. However, because the planned site provided limited living spaces, they had to winnow the number of members living together. Consequently, members of Family E chose six families in single-mother households or in households including young children. All these families have difficulties with travelling owing to a lack of adult male members (only three married men at that time). Other households, with enough manpower, continued living at unauthorised encampments in the neighborhood.

Family E’s adapted housing site has six plots, each with a parking area accommodating caravans and cars, a porch, a garden and a house (Figure 6). It was designed to meet two major needs. The first was to preserve the integrity of traditional ways of life, such as caravan dwelling in a multi-family dwelling unit. The second was to ensure a basic level of comfort for the elderly and disabled, who prefer to stay in the house rather than moving between caravan and house. Thus, the house on this plot has two bedrooms to accommodate the two elderly women with disabilities, whereas other houses have only one bedroom, because most members of Family E hoped to use their caravans as a second house or a bedroom for children.

Photos 5 were taken during the author’s visit to Family D’s site, in 2014. Because of delays in construction work, in 2010, they finally moved into their new home. Tatiana passed away before its completion. “We were waiting for a long time!”, Beta, one of her grandchildren repeated during the interview, but about their current living conditions, she also said, “we are satisfied with our lives. It’s good to be in our own home, better than caravans”.

However, caravans continue to be used. Because Beta lives on her plot with her husband, three sons, one daughter and her single sister, she needs four places to put beds—two in caravans and others in the house (Figure 7). Further, outdoor living space remains important; the family spend much time on the porch located

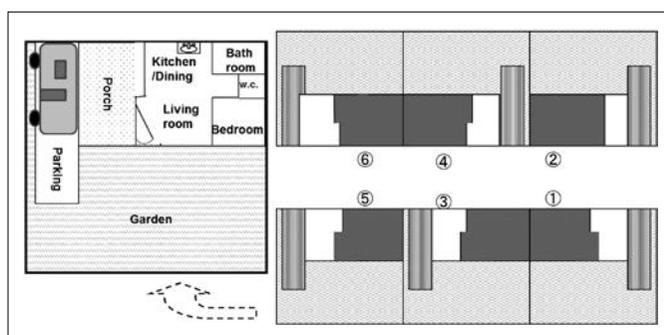


Figure 6 Design of Family E’s site
Source: Author’s field study



Photo 5 The interior and exterior of a plot of Family E's site
(Photograph by the author at Pyrénées-Atlantiques, in 2014)

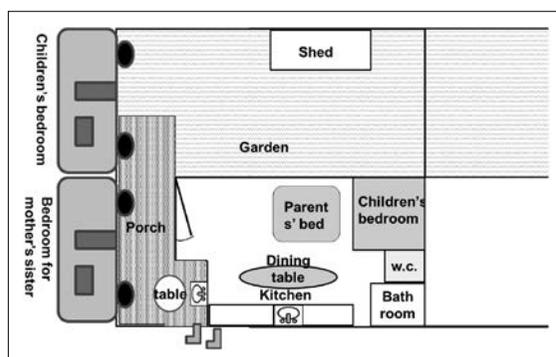


Figure 7 An example of present usage
Source: Author's field study

between the house and caravans. The porch serves as a place for eating and relaxation. As Beta explained, “we eat outdoors even when it’s raining. In this way, we get some fresh air”. As for the outdoor space as a location for hospitality and sociability, the enclosed garden, because of its location, seems to be a good place for hanging the washing, but otherwise is not of much use. When family members and friends come from another plot or another site, for a cup of coffee and a chat, residents place chairs not in the enclosed garden, but on the porch or in the passageway, where people can communicate with each other easily²⁰.

2) Travelling patterns of families living in adapted housing

The adapted housing project particularly addresses Gypsy families with a high degree of sedentarization, who lack the financial resources to purchase their own land or to maintain their nomadic lifestyle. In fact, at the time of fieldwork, the author encountered no families who earned their livelihood mainly through work connected with travel, although many did harvesting in vineyards as a side job.

The most frequent and important jobs among them were scrap metal collection and service work, which included carpentry, house repairs, painting and on the like. People employed by a company or working as permanent wage earners were still in the minority. However, many Gypsy men and women interviewed at adapted housing sites were employed or seeking employment in various forms, including temporary agency work, short-term contracts, part-time work or daily hire work, all requiring geographical stability rather than mobility.

The next case is illustrative. Lilas, a 41-year-old single mother, lives with one of her married children in adapted housing. Her married son, living next door, is a registered worker with a company providing temporary employees to a wide variety of local industries. Lilas has also registered with a temporary agency that offers cleaning services for offices, houses, shops, factories and so on. However, also she looks constantly for additional job opportunities: "I work not for saving money, but just for surviving this month", she said. Although social benefits cover almost her full rent, she must earn money to buy her daily food and to pay back the loan on her caravan (about 300 Euros a month). Thus, she sometimes sells perfume at the local market or works seasonal jobs in vineyards (leaf-plucking in summer, harvesting in autumn) located one hour by car from her home.

In addition to accessing employment opportunities, participation in formal schooling leads to reduced seasonal movement. According to the author's interviewees and information provided by local associations and authorities working with Gypsy families, almost all children attend primary school, and access to secondary education has increased significantly at adapted housing sites.

Promoting access to work and education is the primary concern of special housing measures that aim to achieve Gypsies' social integration. Today's economic difficulties have reminded Gypsy families themselves of the need to participate in the mainstream labor market and in the education of their children. In conditions like these, which greatly limit mobility, how can they maintain or reconstruct their nomadic way of life?

It seems that these families' travelling patterns are less consistent than those of families living on private family sites. Nevertheless, many families whom the author interviewed at adapted housing sites repeatedly stressed their attachment to the caravan and travelling. As Beta noted, "we keep caravans for travelling. Nowadays, we gradually reduce the opportunity to travel, but we move for seeing our families or for leisure. Because it is our custom, you know, everyone has their own custom". In fact, almost all of the families the author met in adapted housing travel at some point during the year, and possession of a caravan plays an important role in maintaining the ability to travel even if they do so only for a few weeks each summer²¹).

Two major purposes determine Gypsies' travelling: family gatherings and religious activities. As mentioned above, these two motivations are often bound together, and, generally, families who attend a series of mission meetings and conferences of Pentecostal churches travel longer and farther than Catholic

families, who usually travel to one or two holy sites for a few weeks in the summer.

Further, many families often travel simply for pleasure. It seems that in Gypsies' present situation, the importance of travel as an end in itself has increased. At adapted housing sites, residents self-select, and thus the co-residential unit is less complex than that of halting areas. However, even though living with their kin and allies, conflicts among residents cannot be avoided. Causes of the conflicts resemble those of official halting sites, namely, usage of communal space or individuals' inappropriate behavior. The fundamental source of these conflicts is, also similarly, the difficulty of adapting to a new, settled lifestyle, i.e. permanently living in a single location. "We never live crowded together like this...", one elderly woman complained at an adapted housing site. Thus, as with families living on private family sites who move between two different modes of social life, families living in adapted housing also need movement and temporal dissolution that involves flux, change of air and many other circumstances of life.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, various cases of French Gypsy families living in caravans at official halting areas, private family sites and adapted housing sites have been discussed. Common to all cases is the inexorable trend toward sedentarization. It seems that Gypsy families decide, either by choice or out of necessity, to become sedentary, rather than to move constantly between designated halting areas. The main factors influencing this trend have been French policies regulating their stopping and travelling, on the one hand, and changes in the socio-economic environment, on the other. People increasingly need a settled home to send their children to school, to obtain care for sick family members in hospitals and to engage in wage labor or run small, localized businesses. The greatest single issue facing Gypsy families is thus finding suitable accommodation where they can live peacefully in their caravans.

However, the Gypsy families in this study have experienced the sedentarization process in their own way. As shown by examples from private family sites and adapted housing sites, many Gypsies steadfastly resist total assimilation, preferring to keep a caravan at their settled homes and to continue nomadic practices by refashioning them to fit a new environment. Families who have successfully transitioned into fixed homes do not enter fully into housed society; rather, they have better chances of travelling. As discussed, fundamental or qualitative changes have occurred, particularly in the economic field. Although mobility remains relatively high for families who own a private, settled site, most families, like those living in adapted housing, tend to exploit the particular area around their settled homes. Although the link between economic activities and mobility has become diluted today, many families move through nomadic and sedentary periods connected with family, religious and socio-cultural factors. Even families living in

adapted housing, despite reduced economic mobility, maintain a strong sense of collective identity as Travellers in their seasonal movements and caravan dwelling, inseparable from various aspects of shared socio-cultural values.

Thus, some Gypsies have adopted a new form of nomadism, in which nomadic and sedentary lives are complementary. Conversely, forced sedentarization at halting sites has had disincentive effects on Gypsies' lives. Those people who can neither continue travelling, nor settle down well, have difficulties maintaining or refashioning their economic strategies and their social lives. The experiences of these families highlight the importance of fixed homes. The policy failure of hosting areas clearly relates to French policymaker's attempts to protect and facilitate the "traditional" travelling way of life, reproducing the nomadic/sedentary dichotomy that frames Gypsies as perpetual wanderers. Consequently, the increasing role of fixed homes or territorial anchors in their new way of life on the continuum from nomadic to settled has been largely ignored.

Gypsy families' needs, of course, are not houses like that of the settled population, nor are they traditional caravan sites that now restrict their travel patterns and fix their lifestyles. What today's Gypsy families require in response to broader social forces, but also in refashioning their lifestyle are sedentary, fixed homes that enable them to settle down peacefully and to travel when they choose to do so. For them, a sedentary home is a base to start from and to return to, and owning such a home is an attempt to preserve their autonomy and their way of life. In fact, these French Gypsies live in a process of acculturation, but also in the process of restructuring their nomadism according to the surrounding economic and social situations. As many studies (e.g. Liégeois 1983; Okely 1997; Salo 1986; Sibley 1981) have shown repeatedly, the survival strategies of Gypsies as peripatetic nomads are characterized by their ability to adapt without losing their autonomy and the essence of their culture. Similarly, among the experiences of French Gypsy families in this study, it can be seen that such an adaptation or capacity challenges the mistaken assumption that transition from nomadism to permanency leads to assimilation of Gypsies into the dominant, settled society.

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NOTES

- 1) Although different authors have emphasized different origins of the Gypsies (cf. Okely 1983; Willems 1997), the general consensus is that Gypsies left India in the 10th century AD, migrating west to Persia and the Arabian Peninsula. Some moved westward to Byzantium and the Transcaucasia, reaching Europe around 1250. By the fifteenth century, Gypsies lived throughout Europe.
- 2) There are three or four categories of Gypsies in France: First there are *Gitans* who come from the Iberian Peninsula; second, *Manouches* or *Sinti* who come from the Alsace region and other German-speaking parts of Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Austria); third, *Roms* are from Hungary, Romania and other eastern European countries. *Yéniches* are the nomadic population of Germanic origin, the supposed descendants of people displaced by the Thirty Years War (cf. Bader 2007). A distinction is often made between Gypsies of Indian origin and indigenous European Travellers, even if there is no clear consensus on this distinction. In France, *Yéniches* have strong historical and cultural links with *Manouches*.
- 3) In 1990, the Delamon Report (1990) noted that, of the roughly 250,000 Travelling people in France, 70,000 were itinerants, 65,000 semi-sedentary, and 105,000 sedentary.
- 4) It should be noted that many *Manouches* call themselves *Gitans*, using it as a generic term to refer to Gypsies. There are also more Gypsies who present themselves as *gens du voyage* or *Voyageurs* (Travellers). And, it would be important to underline that exogamous marriages between Gypsies and non-Gypsies have occurred both historically and in recent times. Most Gypsy extended families in this study have one or more family member from outside the travelling community. Finally, please note that all names of individuals and families used in this paper are fictitious.
- 5) For example, according to data provided by three Departments, it can be estimated roughly that between 70% and 80% of Travelling people received *RMI* or *RSA* (*Cour des Comptes* 2012: 23).
- 6) Most seasonal agricultural work has been mechanized, but many vineyards prefer to hand-pick their grapes, following an ancient tradition, to preserve the grapes' quality. Gypsy families have established regular contacts with such vineyards.
- 7) There appears to be no consensus about whether Gypsies' family groups are patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral. Among people interviewed, the family group is marked by bilateral emphasis, that is, no distinction is made between patrilineal and matrilineal relatives.
- 8) For example, in the Pau Region, it is estimated that one-third of the Gypsies identify themselves as evangelical.
- 9) *Loi du 16 juillet 1912, 'Sur l'exercice des professions ambulantes et la réglementation de la circulation des nomades', J.O.19 juillet 1912.*
- 10) Law n° 69-3 of 3 January 1969, 'Relating to the exercise of ambulant activities and to the regime applicable to persons circulating in France without a fixed domicile or residence', *J.O.5 janvier 1969.*
- 11) The number of Travelling people attached to a municipality cannot exceed 3% of the town's population (the application for which has to be reasoned and accepted by the Prefect). Such persons "attached" may exercise their right to vote only after a three-year period of residence in a given municipality. In December 2016, the French government abolished the 1969 law, passing the "Equality and Citizenship (*Egalité et Citoyenneté*)" Bill (For details, see the website of the French National Assembly, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/ta/ta0878.asp> [Accessed 6 February 2017]).
- 12) This site, located directly under a motorway, serves as the long-term home of between 120–

150 people, who share three single showers and three toilets. Although this paper focuses on the importance of the right to have one's own permanent home, it should be noted that the material living conditions of Gypsy families that differ greatly in each halting site, even within the same region, also lead to better or poorer outcomes for their social and economic situations. For example, one official halting area in the Pau Region provides relative comfort such as a building including kitchen, living and sanitary space for each family's use. A plot including such a small building can be occupied exclusively, even during travels, by one family who pays rent. According to the information of a local association working to help these families and to the author's interview with them, in this halting area, despite its isolated location, the percentage of children attending school as well as the number of people working constantly—self-employment or wage-labour—are high by comparison with other official halting areas.

- 13) Humeau provides many examples to show the mobile territoriality of Gypsies is constituted through patterned interactions between localities and their economic and sociocultural activity.
- 14) Many of them refuse to stay at a halting site owing to the unsatisfactory situation described above (also see Case 5) and prefer to run the risk of facing severe penalties.
- 15) Mauss (1906), too, studying Eskimo nomadic hunting life, distinguished between two phases of social life, dispersed nomadism during the summer and concentration in winter stations.
- 16) Authorization is required to park a caravan continuously for more than three months. In fact, it seems that many illegal places have been tolerated, but during fieldwork, the author encountered a case of a family under threat of eviction: the family owns a parcel of land composed of two parts—one part zoned as constructible and another as non-constructible. They built a bungalow on the former and parked their caravans on the latter. A neighbor reported this to the police.
- 17) In 2009, the French Minister for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Sea, published an important guide on how to provide adapted housing for Travelling people (MEEDDM 2009).
- 18) In addition to the Departmental plan for Travelling people, several departments exploit housing programs for the disadvantaged, such as the “county housing action plan for the underprivileged (*plan départemental d'action pour le logement des personnes défavorisées-PDALPD*)”, or the “local housing programme (*programme local d'habitat -PLH*)”. During fieldwork, the author also encountered cases of municipalities that have tried to regularize the plots of land belonging to Travelling people and located on non-constructible land by extending the local town plan within the same policy context.
- 19) The number of plots and housing in adapted housing has increased recently, reaching about 1,500 in May, 2015, according to the estimation of FNASAT-Gens du voyage (*Fédération nationale des associations solidaires d'action avec les Tsiganes et les Gens du voyage*) (personal communication, May 28, 2015).
- 20) Detailed analysis of sociability sites that characterize the inside/outside divisions of Gypsies' living spaces has already been conducted (Sachi-Noro 2010; 2013).
- 21) During my fieldwork, I encountered only two families who live in adapted housing, selling their caravans. One of them placed a handcrafted miniature of an old gypsy wagon (*roulotte*) in the garden.

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