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CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS: JUSTICE IN THE MAKING - REVUE ÉTUDES TSIGANES

- *Justice in the making* edited by Gaëlla Loiseau and Islen About
- *Abstracts must be received by March 15th, 2026*
- *The response to proposals will be given on April 1th, 2026, receipt of articles on September 1th 2026*
- *Article proposals (300–500 words, i.e. approximately 2,000–3,000 characters including spaces).*

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In studies on Roma and Travellers, issues of justice have traditionally been documented through the lens of anthropology, which focuses on analyzing internal conflict resolution mechanisms (Weyrauch W. O. 2001). Beyond the interest and relevance of this work, which has helped to understand the drivers of legal pluralism (Gamela J.F., Muntean V.M. 2014, Okely J. 2005, Acton T.A. 2003), some have contributed to accentuating a criminogenic conception of these groups (Foley A. 2010), while downplaying their agency in rebalancing the power dynamics at work in their relations with non-Roma.

Recent years in France and Europe have been marked by a reconfiguration of the methods used to raise public and media awareness of the prejudice, injustice, and discrimination experienced by Roma and Traveller groups. In this issue, we focus on these processes of engagement, visibility, and the fight for dignity. The idea of “making justice” refers to multiple forms of emancipation that promote recognition (by peers, within communities of belonging, and by the majority society) of abuse, oppression, and arbitrary practices, requiring forms of rehabilitation, whether in the public, social, or private spheres. Roma and Traveller actors and collectives who organize to denounce these forms of injustice exert political pressure that can transform power relations and rebalance their position and representation within institutions themselves. This issue aims to document and analyze these processes at

work, whether they are ongoing, have been successful, or have failed, taking into account the socio-historical complexity in which these actors operate, as well as the social, emotional, political, and legal implications they have on an individual and collective scale.

The first area of focus proposes analyzing the micro-political forms of expression of injustices experienced by Roma and traveling communities. The very desire to seek justice manifests itself through physical and emotional postures inherent to situations of oppression or discrimination. Enrolling children in school can be a real challenge when living on the road or in a slum. How do physicality and emotions shape forms of resistance in acts of protest, mediation efforts, or requests made to institutions? How do these expressions sometimes transform into longer-term mobilizations?

Social media now offers a new space for expression that has renewed opportunities for new assertions through direct digital interactions. It allows for the redeployment of endogenous forms of expression, often using derision and humor (Loiseau G. 2015), where previously news reports and press articles offered little political leverage to those most affected. These new media, accessible to all, have made it possible to restart unprecedented processes of speaking out about discrimination, ensuring the development of new political spaces for Roma and Traveller groups. This has allowed more or less media-savvy figures to emerge as whistleblowers or citizen collectives capable of organizing to make their voices heard. This issue will focus on analyzing these processes, which are transforming perceptions of the contemporary realities of Roma and Traveller groups in Europe.

Facing Justice, facing the State

Discriminatory laws and regulations are inseparable from many of the charges brought against Roma and Traveller groups. In these circumstances, how do they deal with the justice system? Arbitrary procedures and the excessive use of force and violence, sometimes lethal, also lead to complaints, protests, and revolts. Roma and Travellers may also be involved in or charged with criminal cases or offenses of all kinds. In these legal confrontations, those facing justice attempt to defend their rights and escape conviction. Few studies have yet explored the multiple dimensions of encounters with the justice system: this can cover the position assigned to Roma and Travellers during investigations or trials, discrimination within the judicial system itself, in prisons, the means used to defend oneself, the use of legal remedies and

lawyers, the means of contesting sanctions or escaping prison, but also forms of acceptance of convictions and resignation. These dimensions cover the role of the justice system in the formation or perpetuation of discrimination, but also the agency of individuals, which is particularly overlooked, in the face of the judicial system (Fassin D., 2020).

This focus will explore claims for reparations or compensation, particularly—but not exclusively—related to persecution during World War II. Efforts to recognize the crimes perpetrated against Roma and Traveller populations during European and global conflicts remain largely unexplored in most European countries (outside Germany). This field of study raises many questions relating to the formation of pressure groups, legal action, and individual efforts to achieve transitional justice. These initiatives involve varying degrees of mobilization, protest, claims, public statements, and legal action before courts and tribunals at the national or supranational level. They reflect a diverse range of efforts to fight for the application of the law, to recognize harm, or to restore justice in the face of inequity or injustice.

Factors of transformation and supports for emancipation

While the desire to “seek justice” reflects an awareness and questioning of social issues such as racism, discrimination, and numerous situations of injustice, it cannot always lead to the transformation of these issues into “social problems” (Lascoumes P., 2018) without the support, advocacy, and connections of activists. What are the decisive encounters that enable Roma and Traveller activists to fully engage in a collective struggle for dignity? What associative, political, and activist support relays and establishes their demands in broader arenas? How do Roma and Traveller activists compose and negotiate their positions in these political and activist environments? What do they bring to these struggles? How do actions aimed at “doing justice” initiated by Roma and Travelers find their place in intersectional struggles, whether they concern gender emancipation, ecological struggles against environmental inequalities, or struggles against police violence? Is customary law, which sometimes conflicts with common law, an issue and the subject of discussion and negotiation in these new arenas?

Finally, this issue aims to question the role of research and the arts in these processes of emancipation and recognition of the prejudices suffered by Roma and Traveller groups. Participatory research methods that promote social transformation are

regularly used to work with these audiences. Creative approaches based on lived experience (particularly in the visual arts, theater, and cinema) can serve as vehicles for raising awareness of injustices and bringing them to the attention of the media with a view to recognizing anti-Gypsyism. Do these creative and research efforts contribute to justice, and in what arenas? Are they relevant tools for community leaders and activists?

Criticisms related to epistemologies based on objectivity and distance from observed facts are now being re-examined in light of perspectives on the co-construction of knowledge. The expression "Nothing about us without us," promoted by Roma and traveling citizen associations, is part of this approach. Other researchers (Gay y Blasco, 2019) advocate for reciprocal ethnography, which involves taking emotions into account by valuing the reflexivity inherent in relationships established in the field. The formats used to translate the life experiences of individuals and families caught up in deeply entrenched processes of racialization and segregation may be analyzed in this issue.

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