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Everyday Roma stigmatization: racialized urban encounters, collective histories and fragmented habitus

Remus Crețan

Department of Geography
West University of Timișoara
Vasile Parvan no 4 300233
Timișoara, Romania.
remus.cretan@e-uvt.ro

Petr Kupka

Department of Anthropology
University of West Bohemia,
Sedláčkova 15, 301 00
Pilsen, Czech Republic.
petr.kupka.jr@gmail.com

Ryan Powell (corresponding author)

Department of Urban Studies and Planning
University of Sheffield
Western Bank
Sheffield, UK.
S10 2TN
r.s.powell@sheffield.ac.uk

Václav Walach

Department of Political Science
Charles University
Voršilská 144/1, 110 00
Prague, Czech Republic.
vaclav.walach@gmail.com

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Abstract (166 words)

Roma discrimination and stigmatization in Europe are well-documented with urban scholars emphasizing pervasive prejudices and stereotypes alongside negative policy outcomes. However, the focus on Roma marginality has tended to centre on punitive state and urban governance to the neglect of everyday urban relations. This article focuses on the micro manifestations of stigmatization – racialized urban encounters – and their neglected longer-term affects for Roma in Czechia and Romania. Ethnographic research and in-depth qualitative interviews with Roma expose a complex, dynamic and multi-layered response to stigmatization that challenges the simplistic binary of resistance versus the internalization of stigma. The concept of fragmented habitus is deployed in capturing this dynamic process and nuancing the urban inhabitation of a long-term stigmatized and racialized position, beyond generic “Otherness”. We argue for more attention to the specificities and complexities of everyday relations and their affects in capturing the interdependence between urban encounters, the longer-term construction of Roma inferiority, and the heterogeneous, dynamic and ambivalent ways in which Roma inhabit their racialized urban position.

1. Introduction

Widespread experiences of Roma discrimination and stigmatization are well-documented with urban scholars providing important insights in furthering our understanding of ‘anti-Gypsyism’, or ‘Romaphobia’, in a range of European contexts (McGarry, 2017; Stewart, 2012; van Baar, 2011). This body of research emphasizes pervasive prejudices and stereotypes in the construction of Roma inferiority and has largely focused on the differential treatment and outcomes for Roma groups in terms of socio-economic positioning and deprivation. These negative outcomes manifest most clearly through labour market exclusion, educational and residential segregation (Berescu, 2011, 2019; Clough Marinaro, 2015, 2017; Filčák and Steger, 2014; O’Nions, 2010; Picker, 2017; Vincze and Raț, 2013; Vincze *et al.*, 2019). However, the policy-centric focus on Roma disadvantage, while hugely important, has tended to centre on relations with state apparatus, institutions and the segregating impact of punitive policies to the neglect of more mundane relations, experiences and interactions, especially within the Anglophone literature (see Grill, 2018; Pulay, 2015; Tosi Cambini and Beluschi Fabeni, 2017 for notable exceptions).

While there is a sizeable evidence base on state discrimination and deprivation, as well as the shifting mechanisms and techniques of governing Roma migration, which also involve the private and third sector (see van Baar *et al.*, 2019; Humphris, 2019; Maestri, 2019; Picker, 2017), much less is known about the *everyday manifestations of stigmatization* in contemporary urban settings (Pulay, 2018). Relatedly, little attention has been paid to the long-term, inter-generational effects of Roma stigmatization in terms of the emotional impacts this might produce, resultant injuries to the self, and the consequences for habitus formation under conditions of persistent and intense racialization and group stigmatization.

This article addresses this empirical gap by focusing on the micro-sociological dimensions of anti-Roma racism in Czechia and Romania. We spotlight the everyday manifestations of Roma stigmatization captured through the notion of *racialized urban encounters*, and their consequences for Roma habitus formation. Moving beyond the policy-centric concerns of housing, education and employment, we consider the neglected relationship between anti-Roma racism, everyday stigmatization and its longer-run affects. In doing so, we seek to open up a new set of discussions around the processual and affective dimensions of racialized urban encounters. The case of Roma contributes to these recent debates in two ways. First, it emphasizes the need for an historicized understanding of everyday stigmatization that acknowledges the collective and interdependent histories that shape Roma and non-Roma encounters and manifest in the micro-settings of the urban. Second, our analysis evidences, empirically, the neglected ‘darker side’ of urban encounters with difference (Amin, 2013), their relative omnipresence, and their impacts beyond the ephemeral.

Based on ethnographic research and in-depth qualitative interviews within the two nations we expose a diverse, dynamic and multi-layered response to stigmatization on the part of Roma. Emotional responses are shown to be dependent on material and spatial context and to manifest differently for different actors depending on their relative position in social space. Both racist responses *towards* Roma (e.g. fear, disgust, contempt) and emotional responses *of* Roma (e.g. shame, embarrassment, anger) are conditioned by the nature of long-term, interdependent relations between the two groups: collective Roma and non-Roma histories are made interdependently in Czechia and Romania.

These relations are characterized by anti-Roma racism and the perception of group inferiority, which has informed efforts to preserve homogenized, white spaces of privilege and to seclude

and separate Roma as a key logic of capital (McElroy, 2019) – non-Roma accrue value from their socio-spatial distance from Roma (see Skeggs, 2004; Gibbons, 2018). This racialization of the maligned Roma body frames contemporary urban encounters in terms of the reproduction of symbolic representations at the level of face-to-face interaction such that Roma are ‘haunted by the spectre of judgement’ (Skeggs, 2009) from below as well as above. Through a focus on the intimate micro-politics of the urban encounter and its affects, we articulate a complex multitude of Roma responses that challenge binary understandings of the internalization of stigma versus its resistance (Wacquant *et al.* 2014; see also Brooks, 2012). This speaks to the need to decouple the urban margins from such binaries in accounting for the dynamic making and (attempts at) unmaking of marginality (Lancione, 2019a, 2019b).

Our data captures the *nuanced, dynamic and ambivalent urban modes of inhabiting a racialized position*, foregrounding the way in which Roma reflect on the longer-term emotional impacts of their urban encounters with others. These reflective accounts lead us to the concept of fragmented habitus (Bourdieu, 2004) as a theoretical perspective in capturing Roma differentiation and conceptualising Roma responses. By bringing race and a long-term stigmatized status into dialogue with the notion of fragmented habitus, we address the common critique of habitus as rigid and overly deterministic (Lizardo, 2004; Silva, 2016). Habitus does not merely reflect individual and pre-determined dispositions but is continuously (re-)produced relationally and processually; and with a register of adaptations and orientations as variable as the heterogeneity of relations and materialities in which Roma are embedded. This allows for the registering of alternative ways of orienting and inhabiting the city beyond the generic individual positioning of Roma as ‘racialized Others’, and the collective Roma condition of ‘extreme Otherness’ and urban marginality (Humphris, 2019; Ivasiuc, 2020).

These findings contribute to understanding the ways in which unequal power relations are maintained and transformed over time and shape action (e.g. contribute to separation), but also how they might be contested and negotiated emotionally. In this regard we point, albeit tentatively, toward the generative potentialities of an invisible and collective emotional endurance (neither internalization nor resistance) that potentially enables Roma to manage and negotiate racialized urban encounters, but that appears a long way from the transformative politics emphasized by others (see Darling and Wilson, 2016). Our findings also contribute to debates on the fragmented habitus through spotlighting the role that membership of a long-term, stigmatized group plays in contributing to habitus formation. Roma provide a racial and

group perspective lacking from these debates, which have tended to centre on individualized class trajectories, particular stages of the life-course, and experiences of social im/mobility (Schilling, Blokland and Simone, 2019; Friedman, 2016; Silva, 2016). We conclude by arguing for: more attention to the specificities and complexities of everyday stigmatization; connecting these to institutional and historical analyses through a ‘micro inclusion of habitus’ (Blokland, 2019); and the potential of the concept of fragmented habitus in understanding the heterogeneous, dynamic and ambivalent ways in which Roma inhabit their racialized position.

The remainder of the paper is divided into four sections. The next section situates our analysis within debates on anti-Roma racism, stigmatization, urban encounters and habitus formation. Second, we detail the methodological approach and its limitations. Third, we present evidence from the two national contexts in articulating the longer-term, emotional complexities inherent in Roma responses to racialized urban encounters. The final section concludes with a discussion of the wider significance of our empirical findings and their contribution to the conceptual debates engaged.

2. Roma racialization, urban encounters and habitus

Long-term Roma stigmatization and contemporary racialization

Despite scholarly attention to the historical context of Roma stigmatization in Europe (e.g. Achim, 2013; Lucassen *et al.*, 1998; Picker, 2017), it remains the case that the ‘origins of such marginalization, power relations in particular, historical processes in general [...] have not been part of the scholarly discourse concerning Gypsies’ (Beck, 1989: 54; see Shmidt and Jaworsky, 2020). There is often a lack of acknowledgement of the very long-term and peculiar ‘outsider’ status of European Roma in research oriented toward the present condition (Powell, 2016). This downplays the role of collective history and the importance of *group* identifications in the intergenerational transmission of anti-Roma racism. Acknowledging longer-term relations is therefore an important preparatory step in understanding the gradual changes in contemporary Roma racialization (Petrovici, 2019), the maintenance of relative separation, and the inculcation of a strong group identification.

While Czechia and Romania share a communist legacy, there are of course many important historical differences. A key aspect here is the Roma experience of almost 500 years of slavery within Romania, from the 14th to the mid-19th century (Achim, 2013; Hancock, 1987). Such

asymmetrical interdependence over an extended period of time is a crucial consideration in understanding the empirical material below. Beck (1989) argues that Roma slavery and perceptions of inferiority were central to the formation of the state in Romania and the development of a collective national solidarity. Romanian national habitus has been formed in *opposition* to the maligned Roma group involving the internalization of a superior ‘we-image’ and a collective *disidentification* from Roma (de Swaan, 1997).

In contrast, in Czechia the Roma were never enslaved. However, they did face other forms of persecution, including expulsions under the threat of physical punishments, forced sterilization (as recent as the 1990s) and various assimilation policies (Donert, 2017; Sokolova, 2008). During the Second World War, almost all Czech Roma were exterminated in concentration camps. The Roma who live in Czechia today hail mainly from Slovakia where they were better integrated within the collectivized, agrarian society before the war – this saved them from the ‘final solution’ scenario adopted in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Despite the absence of Roma slavery, some scholars have argued that Czech national identity is also built upon a relation of superiority with regard to Roma in which whiteness functioned, *inter alia*, to identify with the normative notion of (Western) civilization (Shmidt and Jaworsky 2020; Stejskalová, 2012). These histories are too often neglected in contemporary accounts, but inform our interpretation of the empirical material presented below: collective histories of asymmetrical interdependence aid an understanding of contemporary urban encounters, their racialized hauntings, and their affective dimensions beyond the ephemeral.

With sensitivity to historical processes, we elucidate the emotional complexities inherent in experiences of long-term group stigmatization and racialization. By racialization we mean ‘racist ideological and material practices [as] infrastructure that needs to be updated, upgraded, and modernized periodically’ (Gilmore and Gilmore, 2008: 144). Contemporary Roma racialization needs to be understood in terms of the ‘long dispossession’ characterized by displacement and eviction, which produces ghettoization and a downward trajectory for many Roma in CEE (Baršová 2003; Petrovici, 2019; Vincze, 2019). Some urban scholars have argued that neoliberalism can be seen in its purest form in CEE (Zamfirescu, 2015), with whole areas of social policy jettisoned under a specific ‘zombie socialism’ (Chelcea and Druta, 2016). For example, recent dynamics of restitution in Romania (see Lancione, 2017) have meant that, in terms of Roma settlements, ‘forced evictions and administrative abandonment would be the main characteristics of the last 25 years’ (Berescu, 2019: 192). This has been bolstered by the

mobilization of anti-Roma racisms for political ends alongside the invisibilization of these racisms in ‘colour-blind’ discourse and policy (Crețan and O’Brien, 2019; Powell and van Baar, 2019).

Sharing *some* commonalities with Andrea Gibbons’s (2018) historical analysis of race and housing struggle in Los Angeles, contemporary Roma racialization in CEE rests on the adaptation of long-standing stigmatizing tropes of deviance, incivility, backwardness and group inferiority to fit with contemporary logics that seek to legitimize Roma separation and seclusion (Sokolova, 2008). In a similar vein to the hostile (or indifferent) white residents preserving privileged white space in Gibbons’ detailed account of LA, non-Roma in CEE exhibit an inability to recognise the segregated urban condition that they have created through their strong desire for emotional, social and physical distance from the racialized Roma body. This widespread disidentification from Roma is further legitimized by their framing as a homogenous group who wish to live separately (Berescu, 2019). In this regard, racialized Roma frameworks are reinforced by the material conditions and social reality of the segregated Roma urban condition. Universal assumptions of Roma segregation, ghettoization and seclusion support homogenized logics of Roma ‘backwardness’ and their positioning as ‘socially unadaptable’ (to use the prominent discourse in Czechia). This is further accentuated where Roma are more readily equated with landscapes of industrial ruination and inhospitable, polluted environments (Filčák and Steger 2014).

Where Roma deviate from this racialized framework, new frames and discourses are required – this is the constant work of racialization in action (Gilmore and Gilmore, 2008). For example, wealthy Roma who do not fit this expectation of inferiority but inhabit relatively wealthy neighbourhoods are equated with the ‘Gypsy mafia’ or ‘sex trafficking’ – old logics of criminality and the sexualized female Roma body are re-worked anew (Crețan and Powell, 2018; Crețan and O’Brien, 2019). Furthermore, as Ivasiuc (2020) shows, in some urban contexts the desire for domestic fortification and security from the imagined (and always racialized) Roma threat is so strong it can produce vigilante responses from non-Roma. The racialized logics of segregation and desire for separation apply also to the institutional spaces of schools, workplaces and urban public space, as well as housing and the purification of neighbourhood spaces. This ensures that opportunities for encounters between Roma and non-Roma are *relatively* limited in many CEE contexts. However, the denser environments and networks of the urban and the integration of many Roma within urban labour markets and

economic relations makes encounters inevitable, even where mutual avoidance may be an explicit strategy.

Urban encounters and ambivalence

The concept of urban encounters has resonated among urban scholars in theorizing urban engagements and negotiations with difference (Valentine, 2008). Following Darling and Wilson (2016: 1), we take urban encounters seriously in ‘critically attend[ing] to the many complexities, contestations and contradictions of contemporary urbanism, with a specific attention to difference’. Urban encounters are particularly useful here as they not only capture the ‘idea of a meeting that goes beyond contact’ and the ephemeral, but are also ‘deeply charged with emotions’ (Simonsen and Koefoed, 2020: 49–50). Our analysis shows that the racialized urban encounters of Roma can produce long-lasting effects and affects, disrupt notions of the Roma self, and impact future urban orientations and practices. This speaks to notions of encounters that ‘resonate beyond their own immediate event, shaping opinions, assumptions’ and ‘situated within personal and collective histories’ (Darling and Wilson, 2016: 10–11). Encounters are far more than ‘an empty referent for any form of meeting’, they are ‘laden with value and worthy of more conceptual scrutiny’ (Wilson, 2016: 464). In this respect, historicized urban encounters can tell us something about the consequences of everyday stigmatization for Roma, but also nuance the longer-term impacts and ways of inhabiting an inferiorized position within racialized urban hierarchies.

However, our evidence diverges from recent geography literature, which has tended to foreground the potentiality of ‘entanglements’ and ‘the folding together of varied temporalities, the constitution of difference and the opening up of transformative possibilities’ (Darling and Wilson, 2016: 9; Wilson, 2016). We would concur with the idea that much ‘writing on multiculturalism tends to ignore [the] darker aspect of everyday encounters of difference, which are always mediated by conflicting vernaculars – one at ease with difference and the other fretful, ready to pounce on the stranger’ (Amin, 2013: 5). Yet, for many Roma in CEE the racialized, stigmatizing urban encounter and overt expressions of human inferiority have a long, long history stretching much farther back than Amin’s analysis acknowledges; and ‘conflicting vernaculars’ are often incredibly one-sided, if discernible at all amongst the noisy space of race talk and the discursive invisibilization and dehistoricization of anti-Roma racism.

Roma experiences and reflections in Czechia and Romania point toward the urban encounter as an often asymmetrical and injurious experience, where a sense of rupture more often relates to the disruption of the Roma self and a sense of rejection, rather than a radical urban politics of difference (Lancione, 2019). That is not to deny the potentialities and possibilities of urban encounters, but to acknowledge that for many Roma, the realization of a collective politics of urban transformation - or even a normative orientation toward residential inclusion and assimilation - is often faced with hostility, stigmatization and/or indifference. This can inform avoidance behaviour and separation and be a powerful weapon in maintaining the status quo of relative separation. The possibility of assembling the city differently is not universal but shaped by interdependent relations of power. For Roma, urban encounters can reaffirm inferior discourses and act against collective solidarities (discussed below). In this sense, we caution against an overly optimistic reading of urban encounters and their potentialities, instead foregrounding Roma diversity (where differences can *sometimes* work against collective action (Berescu, 2019)) and the inherent and historical ambivalence of Roma experiences tied to the wider urban condition (Elias, 2000).

The strong group disidentification and the desire for separation from the racialized Roma body must be located within a long history of group stigmatization, which is both embodied and reflected in the spatiality of the city. Methodologically, foregrounding the collective histories informing racialized urban encounters and attending to their longer-term affects allow us to get to emotions; and emotions lead us to the fragmented habitus in nuancing the contemporary Roma condition. This provides a means of operationalizing emotions and a route to exploring the way in which bodily encounters are ‘relived and reformed in their apartness’ (Simonsen and Koefoed, 2020: 50). But here we depart further from geographical understandings in articulating the potential of habitus as a means to elucidate the heterogeneity of contemporary Roma responses and adaptations, while also acknowledging historical contingencies and foregrounding ambivalence.

Habitus and the diversity of Roma positions

Our understanding of habitus is drawn from the ‘post-philosophical sociology’ of Bourdieu, Elias and Wacquant. They supplant the false philosophical concept of the *homo clausus* (closed subject) and the dichotomy between the internal and the external world by using ‘habitus-in-figurations/fields’ (Pauille *et al.*, 2012) showing how habitus formation takes place

interdependently with (and inseparably from) wider social development and urban transformation. Put simply, human figurations are the modes of living together of human beings (Elias, 2000). Habitus-in-figurations thereby ‘directs attention towards shifting patterns, regularities, directions of change, tendencies, and counter-tendencies, in webs of human relationships that are always changing over time [...] the term invokes “the individual”, “agency”, “society”, “social change”, “power”, and “structure” simultaneously, but purposively without being reducible to any of these components’ (Dunning and Hughes, 2013: 2). In this sense, longer-term social transformations and psychic changes within individuals are interdependent (Elias, 2000). Habitus integrates these levels while also foregrounding emotions in terms of the way in which socialization and emotional management are moulded by experiences of shame, embarrassment etc. (e.g. the bodily functions) over the lifecourse of the individual, but also intergenerationally (e.g. social thresholds of shame and embarrassment or repugnance to violence change over time) (Elias, 2000). Emotions are drivers of individual habitus formation, but collective habitus produced through shared histories, group socialization and identifications also shape emotions.

Emotions are anchored in habitus because they are a form of practice undertaken by the historical body (Scheer, 2012). Emotions are something people do not simply have but rather do. They are not purely physical – in the sense of bodily arousals – but deeply socialized. They tend to be manifested, sometimes on purpose, depending on a socio-cultural context. Following the practical logic of different situations, the body functions as ‘a knowing, mindful entity that stores past experiences in habituated, practical processes’ (Davison *et al.*, 2018: 226). Always embodied, the habitus ‘specifies what is “feelable” in a specific setting, orients the mind/body in a certain direction without making the outcome fully predictable’ (Scheer, 2012: 205). Habitus generates certain emotional practices, the practices produce the feeling subject.

Far from a rigid and static set of pre-determined dispositions then, habitus is the continuous ‘internalization of the externality and the externalization of the internality [...] a *multi-scalar construct* [that] enables us to mate the study of the generic [...] with a focus on the specific’ (Wacquant, 2016: 67, emphasis in original). From this standpoint Roma and non-Roma relations are indelibly shaped by the past – individual and group history are sedimented in the body and mental structure – but social habitus also adapts to changing social, cultural and historical conditions (Baur and Ernst, 2011). Our evidence develops the concept of habitus which ‘invites us to trace empirically, rather than simply postulate, how social structures are

translated into lived realities' (Wacquant, 2019: 39) read through racialized urban encounters and their longer-run impacts.

The emotional repertoire in responses and discussions of racialized urban encounters among our Roma informants varied dependent upon the specific context. For example, upwardly mobile Roma were sometimes talked about in derogatory terms by other Roma. Relatives and acquaintances who had achieved economic success and left neighbourhoods of relegation in seeking to escape the 'blemish of place' (Wacquant, 2008) were sometimes seen to have abandoned their Roma identity and were 'not Roma anymore' – effectively equating the Roma category with poverty and marginality. Such individuals faced the potential trauma of being ostracized by their fellow Roma group members, but never feeling truly accepted by non-Roma, and unable to shake off the label of 'socially unadaptable'. We focus on this betwixt and between space that manifests from a strong group identification and racialized, stigmatized urban positioning on the one hand, and the gradual opening up of ways of being and orientating beyond the Roma family or group on the other.

This leads us to the concept of the *fragmented habitus*, which elucidates the internal emotional tensions that abound from the tug-of-war between the pull of the Roma group and familial identification on one hand, and the widening of social interdependencies, encounters, opportunities, bonds and orientations on the other. If this was not difficult enough, then all this must be reconciled within the social and political context of overt group stigmatization and the haunting ubiquity of inferior judgements in urban encounters with many non-Roma. Habitus has been criticized both for its rigidity and its plasticity (see Silva, 2016). On the one hand, it provides an over-deterministic framework for understanding individual becoming which lacks explanatory power. On the other, it has led to the creation of a multitude of different forms of collective habitus which can homogenize individuals and detach habitus from its integration with the concept of field (or figuration) and/or social space (Atkinson, 2011; Silva, 2016; see also Wacquant, 2016, 2018a, 2019). However, we would suggest that such criticisms are decidedly present-centred and fail to fully grasp the importance of intergenerational transfer and *group* identifications (and disidentifications) in habitus formation. For habitus is never static and is always a 'multi-layered and dynamic set of schemata' that displays 'varying degrees of integration and tension, depending on the character and compatibility of the social situations that fashioned it over time' (Wacquant, 2016: 68).

Roma represent a particularly novel and insightful empirical case in contributing to these conceptual debates given such a long-term stigmatized, outsider status which has in turn cultivated a very strong ‘we-image’ and group identification i.e. ‘fashioned’ habitus in a particular way. At the same time, there is a gradual and discernible orientation away from the extended Roma group which manifests in tensions between I- and we-identities and widening circles of identification (de Swaan, 1995) beyond the patriarchal family (see Oprea, 2012 for an excellent Romani feminist account of this tension). The empirical material below seeks to capture the diverse responses of Roma and their ‘divergent ways of being in the world’ (Simone, 2019: 14) by going beyond the binary of internalization versus resistance.

In articulating this, we also contribute to the development of the concept of the fragmented habitus in applying it to the *group figuration* of stigmatized Roma; always approaching it dynamically as ‘habitus-in-figurations’ (Paulle *et al.*, 2012). Previous empirical accounts have tended to centre on individualized trajectories of class im/mobility in either: emphasizing the lack of congruence between individual habitus and the conditions of the individual’s life (what Bourdieu conceptualized as ‘hysteresis’); or focusing ‘on the tensions and contradictions of a strong discrepancy of inhabiting different fields’ (Silva, 2016: 178). Where theorizing has been extended beyond individualized habitus formation, this has tended to focus on an institutional collective habitus (Reay *et al.*, 2001). Little attention, however, has been paid to the emotional burden of habitus formation for members of a group long deemed inferior by those of the dominant society. Nor how habitus formation and fragmentation may differ in such circumstances. The notion of fragmented habitus provides a lens onto the ‘temporal and spatial dynamics of assembling resources in ways that do not *necessarily* follow from individual motives, pre-structured dispositions’ (Schilling *et al.*, 2019: 1344 – our emphasis) and supposed rigid group norms. In this sense, it retains a focus on the inherent tensions in habitus formation, can capture the pull of different collective affinities and orientations (past and present), and nuances the urban reality of an oftentimes ambivalent racialized position. These dynamic concepts – long-term group stigmatization, Roma racialization, and fragmented habitus – are integrated in tandem with the empirical material presented below. First, we set out our methodological approach.

3. Methods

Accounts of Roma stigmatization and marginalization have tended to suffer from a methodological nationalism with scholars emphasizing the heterogeneity of the Roma group and the unique national context within different European nations (Matras, 2014), which can serve as a barrier to comparative analyses. Yet, processes of Roma segregation and stigmatization are more-or-less universal to the nations of Europe (and beyond), though varying in intensity and logics dependent on specific historical relations (Achim, 2013; Beck, 1989; Lucassen *et al.*, 1998; Shmidt and Jaworsky, 2020). A methodological focus on urban encounters as ubiquitous can therefore aid cross-national and urban comparison. The analysis presented below is drawn from empirical material collected from separate studies in Czechia and Romania. The studies were not co-designed, set out to explore different topics, and employed variable methods. Nevertheless, in combining these datasets we provide empirical insights into commonalities across the two nations in terms of pervasive anti-Roma racism and its everyday urban manifestations.

The Romanian research

The Romanian study explored perceptions of stigmatization among Roma and non-Roma who live in south-western Romania and involved 145 qualitative interviews – 85 Roma and 60 non-Roma (see Table 1 below). The fieldwork was completed in two stages: June-August 2015 and June-July 2016. Interviews ranged in length from 50 to about 90 minutes. All the Roma and non-Roma who had participated were invited to do so through direct field interaction (i.e. snowball sampling). At the start of each interview participants were given an information sheet which explained the scope of the study and all provided informed consent to participate. The interviews took place in different urban locations of the Banat region. Interviewees were drawn from two major cities (Timisoara, Resita) and two towns (Bocsa, Gataia) which contain areas of Roma concentrations where a mixture of poorer, middle class and wealthy Roma live. Most participants were reluctant to be recorded, which in some cases was explicitly related to a rising anti-Roma rhetoric within Romania, with extensive interview notes recorded instead. All other interviews were transcribed.

Table 1 here

The Czech research

For the Czech study area, the data are drawn from three case studies that were conducted from 2010 to 2018 in Havířov-Šumbark, Ostrava-Kunčičky and Obrnice, focusing on the issues of security, crime and victimization. All the studies were located in the so-called ‘socially excluded localities’ – the state’s term for disadvantaged and stigmatized areas where Roma are disproportionately represented. Havířov-Šumbark and Ostrava-Kunčičky are part of larger cities. Obrnice is a small municipality but it functions as a residential area for the city of Most. The main method of the studies was ethnography involving participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document analysis. In Havířov-Šumbark, we spent approximately 1,100 hours observing in the field and conducted interviews with 72 people living in the area during 2010 and 2014. Males and people identifying as Roma represent the majority of interviewees. In Ostrava-Kunčičky, between 2017 and 2018, we engaged in 1,150 hours of observation and conducted 34 interviews. The fieldwork in Obrnice also ran from 2017 to 2018, involving 275 hours of observation and 27 interviews. Combined field notes consist of 2,900 standard pages. The majority of interviews were recorded (a minority refused) and all were transcribed. All the participants were told about the research and its objectives with informed consent granted by all respondents.

Analysis

Given the distinct studies we draw upon, we did not formulate consistent lines of questioning on stigmatization or urban encounters and their affects across them. In both cases, the research design was informed by an inductive logic of inquiry, building upwards from empirical data. Data from both studies had highlighted a neglected aspect of Roma stigmatization – its everyday manifestations and the complex emotional response this induces. This was not central to initial research design but emerged during the research process (during observations and interviews). Reactions towards this experience varied across informants. Some were indignant, some annoyed, others resigned. And some reproduced stigma as lateral denigration (Wacquant *et al.* 2014), for example, complaining about ‘new Gypsies’ who ‘ruined it all’. The data for both studies were re-visited with these emergent themes specifically in mind. A thematic analysis was employed centred explicitly on experiences of stigmatization, reflections on racialized urban encounters, and their discernible emotional impacts. The data presented below capture diversity and typify the range of emotional repertoires, trauma and in/actions that were shown to result from everyday stigmatization through our analysis (all names given are pseudonyms). We spotlight instances of fragmented habitus and longer run affects in evidencing our argument empirically.

4. The emotional burden of Roma stigmatization

This section presents empirical material focusing on racialized urban encounters and everyday experiences of Roma stigmatization. Through this analysis we articulate the hitherto neglected emotional burden of stigmatization for Roma that arises from their relegated embodied position within social space. We spotlight its variable consequences which range from apathy, shame, anxiety, fear and avoidance behaviour; to the lateral denigration of other Roma; to the rejection of Roma inferiority; and even to amusement at the strict taboos on social contact adhered to by non-Roma.

Group stigmatization, racialization and collective histories

As noted above, acknowledging the widespread and persistent nature of anti-Roma sentiment over time is a crucial, but often neglected consideration in understanding contemporary relations. Far more attention has been paid to the outcomes and symptoms of stigmatization, rather than developing an understanding of it as a historically contingent and interdependent group process. This peculiar, long-term perception of human inferiority powerfully structures the nature of everyday relations and urban interdependencies for Roma, but also feelings and emotions. As one elderly Romanian man put it: ‘I am not a slave anymore, but I *feel* like a slave, enclosed in a town where all people hate us’ (Bubu, 66 years old Roma man, Resita, our emphasis). In the case below, the contemporary workplace setting is shown to be no exemption from the spectre of judgement and overt expressions of Roma inferiority.

So, she always took from me [part of my snack]. I say: ‘I never mind,’ yeah. I’m not the kind of person who is like: ‘I don’t give you or like that. Take it!’ We went to a town once, and I was with my mom. Mom, when you meet her and look at her, you can see that she’s like a Gypsy, yeah. It’s darker than me. The next day, I come to work and say hi to her. And she was like: ‘Hi, hi,’ and she was so distanced, since she had seen me with my mother [...] And I say: ‘What’s up?’ I was making fun of it, it struck me the very day we met in the town, as she was looking so strange at me. And I say: ‘What’s up?’ [She said:] ‘No, I won’t be sitting with the Gypsies.’ I say: ‘Pardon? But every day you had my snack, which a Gypsy made by hand.’ I say: ‘You liked it daily, didn’t you?’ And she: ‘Well, if I knew you were Gypsies, I would never take it from you.’ And it seems funny to me, right. I say: ‘You are a person like me. You think your shit doesn’t smell like mine?’ Then we didn’t communicate, she made herself move to another shift. (Alena, 35 years old Roma woman, Obrnice).

What was a perfectly normal and relatively friendly relationship with a work colleague, characterised by exchange and sharing, is immediately undone and contact severed once Roma identity is revealed. This behaviour is met with amusement and a certain incredulity on the part of Alena given its perceived irrationality, but also an *emotional resistance* rather than passivity or internalization – the encounter is laughed off and she asserts her equal standing (‘your shit doesn’t smell like mine?’). Individual characteristics, personality, generosity, or a shared past matter little once membership of the Roma group is exposed, which elucidates the incredible power of group stigmatization in maintaining separation (Creţan and Powell, 2018). The response of the non-Roma colleague is instantaneous, complete and emphatic: all communication is ceased and contact avoided through transferring to a different shift. This hints at the strong internalization of superiority (and Roma inferiority) within the wider Czech population and related avoidance behaviour, reinforced by group sentiment and (mis)representations of Roma. While the media and political discourse reinforce prejudice and serve to mobilize disidentifications, the strong aversion to Roma often seems to be in-built and automatic: an intergenerational disposition related to Czech and Romanian national habitus. The quote below illustrates the role of intergenerational transfer in perpetuating and maintaining stigmatization through time, as well as the anger at its persistent pervasiveness.

That is what, like, your race did. That you play a role and we play another role [he said angrily]. Today, a small kid, six seven years old, will tell you: ‘Hey, there’s a Gypsy.’ You are walking through town, [and the kid says:] ‘Gypsy, Gypsy, you see him, don’t talk to him.’ He’s six years old and this kid knows what Gypsy is. He knows Gypsy is shit, because that’s how he has been taught since childhood. The father, the mother: ‘The Gypsies? No! Not at all!’ Or there are children at a school meeting: ‘Gypsy, Gypsy, yuck!’ My sister is eight, nine years old and she goes to third grade. ‘Gypsy, yuck, you’re a dirty Gypsy, you have lice, you have lice.’ When she’s a Gypsy, she has lice. And the boy or the girl is eight years old. Who is it who teaches you? Why? Tell me the reason? (Jan, 25 years old Roma man, Havířov-Šumbark).

The socialization of Roma inferiority and separation takes place at a very early age with young non-Roma well attuned to Roma categorization and taboos on social contact (‘don’t talk to him’). Such aversions can be shaped by parental sentiments: ‘I didn’t want their children to play with my child’ (Lina, 41 years old non-Roma woman, Resita). The young kid in the quote above knows nothing of Jan or his life, but once he is categorised as a member of the

homogenized Roma group then he is assumed inferior and reminded of this positioning through verbal insults drawing on long-standing stereotypes. This socialization process contributes to a strong disidentification from Roma as an automatic affect across a large section of non-Roma society – it is integral to national habitus formation (Beck, 1989). Many young non-Roma are exposed to the assumption of Roma inferiority across symbolic, social and physical space. The quote below provides an example of the dehistoricization of Roma persecution (‘exaggeration’) and the invisibilization of anti-Roma racism, mediated through the institutional space of the school and the domestic space of the home.

At school I learnt more about the economic and ideological aspects of Romanian history, more than the social aspects; I found out from my family that Roma feel stigmatised but it is only their exaggeration on how they perceive the past world of Romanian history against them (Dodu, 35 years old non-Roma man, Bocsă).

Where the denial of Roma history and hostility directed at Roma was accompanied by fascist ideology and symbolism (e.g. graffiti) this could stir up feelings of ‘disgust’ and revulsion among Roma tied to a collective history at times characterized by barbarism and extermination:

I feel a sense of disgust, especially when I saw drawings on different walls in the town with so many fascist crosses and different inscriptions against us. These are signs against innocent Roma people – who died innocently, who wished to live in a free country, to have a normal everyday life (Petri, 62 years old Roma man, Timisoara).

The symbolic power of group categorization and its affect was evident from a very early age with teachers and other authority figures sometimes instigators of stigma in the classroom. In the case below children then repeat the racist taunts of the teacher:

[Son] was in [a different town], and there was a teacher who was obsessed with him. In a classroom, there were just boys in the classroom. There [teacher] had an aquarium, [where he] put fish. You know what [son] looks like, hints that he’s fat, things like that. Then insults like that Gypsies make fire in the apartment. Do I seem to you that I am making fire here? He had an aquarium there, and one fish was dark, probably black, just dark. And he told the guys in that class: ‘Do you see this fish? That’s him...’ [Son] got some reprimand, the insults repeated. So I went there and it was a little tense, yeah [...] it just made me angry that my child was just being bullied. So I say, I will not leave it like that. So I just went

there with someone, [teacher] started running, here it. Finally, I agreed with the director that I would just put him [son] away. I'll put him elsewhere (Patrik, 35 years old Roma man, Obrnice).

Such experiences illustrate how the power differentials faced by Roma, as a result of such long-term and widespread stigmatization, are so great that everyday injustices often result in *detrimental consequences for Roma victims* (having to change school), rather than reprimand for the perpetrators of racism – a logic of reversal (see Goldberg, 2009). These symbolic logics are so powerful due to the way in which the entire heterogeneous Roma group can be conflated with the ‘minority of the worst’ of that group (Elias and Scotson, 1994). A view socialized and internalized and informing sentiments, feelings and actions that perpetuate themselves from one generation to the next – a sedimented habitus.

Everyday stigmatization and its affects

The longer-term context of two interdependent groups locked together in an asymmetrical relation of power shapes all contemporary Roma relations: material, social, spatial and symbolic. In many cases this is experienced as ‘normal’, as Tomáš reflects:

Well, we have been living with racism all our lives. To the extent that we find it normal. Every Gypsy lives racism all day, every day. It's our daily bread. To the extent that you don't even notice... To the extent that you say to yourself: ‘I would have to kill somebody every day.’ It's so normal for us that we rather let it go (Tomáš, 42 years old Roma man, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

Beyond this self-restraint in the face of such a steep power imbalance, Roma respondents also *sometimes* internalized stigma and often became complicit in the stigmatization of fellow Roma. This can be viewed as a form of symbolic power that elucidates Roma racialization and stigmatization as ‘cognitively based violence’ (Wacquant, 2019: 37). The quote below illuminates how awareness of one's position in social space can affect experiences in public space, informing feelings and thoughts about one's place and therefore actions, which can potentially disarm:

You know, humans are different, and everyone sees it differently. I do not feel inferior, but when I go somewhere among the people, I see that I should not have been here. It's stupid,

but I can't change the world. What should I do with it? It's like that and it won't be different.
(Lukáš, 25 years old Roma man, Havířov-Šumbark)

Experiences of stigmatization and awareness of the differential treatment of Roma could also manifest in the active management and reflexive performance of identity dependent on social space. In the case below, the respondent's ability to 'pass' as non-Roma in France leads to the mobilization of his Romanian identification and the denial (or hiding) of his Roma group identity as a tactic of getting by.

I am a Gypsy in Romania but when I go to work in France I would better say I am Romanian. Why? Because I heard that French police could take us from there and if we would say we are Gypsies they will send us back by airplanes to Romania with a total interdiction to stay in France [...] I'm lucky my skin is not so dark, so they cannot catch me easily as Gypsy (Cosi, 43 years old Roma man, Gataia).

In a similar vein, Firica below avoids speaking Romani in an attempt to perform a 'more Romanian' identity, driven by her emotions of shame as a direct consequence of stigmatization. The power of stigmatization and its emotional impact informs practices and behaviours aimed at distinction from 'Gypsies you hear about on TV'. In this sense, attempts at managing a racialized positioning and escaping stigma can work against the realization of collective identifications and solidarity:

We are the only Roma family here, the others are Romanians... We feel to be more Romanian, speak mostly in Romanian among us, because we are ashamed the other neighbours to say that we are 'stinky Gypsies'. We are not those Gypsies who are doing foolish things. We are a respected family, very clean, we do not steal – so we not alike the Gypsies you hear about on TV (Firica, 33 years old Roma woman, Timisoara).

Some Roma respondents were more explicit and overt in their denigration of other Roma. This group invariably tended to be in less deprived material circumstances and to orientate themselves more toward the behavioural expectations of non-Roma. Such respondents expressed feelings of shame due to the expected or assumed behaviour of their Roma peers. The quote below appears contradictory, but is perhaps a clue to the emotional consequences of the management of a spoiled Roma identity and the potential shame and embarrassment that might ensue.

I don't want to live among such Romani people. For me, it is not a shame, but it is unpleasant, like. I just don't want to live among the Roma. No problem, they are not annoying or so. But I am ashamed when people from the bus arriving look at people sitting in front of their houses and drinking coffee. Or I would be ashamed when I take someone to this area (Gustav, 22 years old Roma man, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

Roma informants often reproduced the very same discourses and stigmatizing tropes that emanated from the wider population, as well as political and media sources.

Gypsies are hedonists. Gypsies are terrible hedonists. I want sneakers for example. These sneakers cost five thousand [CZK] and I want them. What now, dude? I will have to do something. I'll make some money and don't think what's gonna be next. But Gadjo [non-Roma] wouldn't do that. Do you know what gadjo would probably do? He would save 500 every month and will buy it in 10 months. Gadjo can save his money. But Gypsy wants something else in 10 months. And he wants it twice (Tomáš, 42 years old Roma man, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

Here Tomáš makes a clear distinction between the virtues of deferred gratification, restraint, work ethic and thrift that he attributes to the Gadjo community on the one hand, and the exaggerated, 'hedonistic' lack of self-restraint, foresight and rationality associated with Roma. These assumptions homogenize and essentialize the two groups to the extent that the respondent has internalized the non-Roma propensity to equate *all* Roma with the 'minority of the worst', and non-Roma with the 'minority of the best' (Elias and Scotson, 1994). This logic is also apparent in the following quote where lateral denigration is tied to common tropes of welfare dependency and a misplaced notion of 'Gypsy exceptionalism'.

We are maybe the worst nation in the world [...] But Gypsies are able to adapt themselves to everything everywhere in the world. That's what we have. We have one great trait – an adaptability. We are completely adaptable to the system. We are able to find a gap in the system. Gypsies – speculators. We can find a gap in every country [...] Only Gypsies found a way to draw money from English system... Only the Gypsy can do that! (Tomáš, 42, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

Fragmented habitus

Roma are a diverse group and our sample contained various examples of social mobility and differing degrees of separation from, and interaction with, non-Roma. For Roma that had progressed further educationally and/or had lived outwith the Roma 'ghetto', their networks of non-Roma were more abundant, interactions more frequent, and relations often more positive. A small minority appeared able to maintain a stable sense of national identification in tandem with their Roma identity. The informant below expresses his social distinction from other Roma through spatial reference to the Roma 'ghetto'. He notes how he 'switches' between Gypsy and non-Gypsy, and how a 'different' upbringing enabled that stable and unified habitus formation.

I have been raised differently and I grew up differently. That's what's going on here in Ostrava haven't been in Havířov. There were no such ghettos. There were three (Gypsy) families in the whole neighborhood. I actually had my family, my grandma and so, here. So, when I came here, I switched and I was a Gypsy. And when I got back home, I switched again and I wasn't Gypsy. That always distinguished me from the others. Because, how to say... the school made me smart a bit. The language, the expression, the vocabulary, it all builds upon itself. And when you go with Gypsies you got respect from them (Tomáš, 42, Roma man, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

For many in this group however, there was a discernible tension between their identification with the nation and their Roma origin, which emerged from our analysis as a type of fragmented habitus.

I am a Gypsy, but I do not feel like a Gypsy. I always feel like a Czech because I live in the Czech Republic. Then, as I was older and saw that they tar with the same brush, I read in the news this and that, I thought to myself: Dude, I thought I was Czech. I might have been of Roma origin, but I was Czech (Vincent, 31 years old Roma man, Havířov-Šumbark).

For Vincent there was no problem with his identification as Czech in his childhood, but when he became aware of the extent of vilification and the homogenizing effects of Roma stigmatization ('they tar with the same brush'), this caused a rupture in his sense of self. Identification with the nation is called into question by his growing realization of the way in which Roma are consistently framed in opposition to, and as distinct from, Czech national habitus. His awareness that he too is perceived in this way due to his Roma group membership

disrupts his national affiliation. This biographical process of habitus fragmentation and the trauma it can induce is articulated most clearly and emotively by Klára below:

A teacher came into the classroom and asked what had happened and who had started the fight. He was crying and said: 'That black Gypsy did it!' That's how it started. 'But I am not a Gypsy,' I told myself. My lifelong trauma being Roma started there. I had thoughts like: 'Why I was born to Gypsy family? Why I was not born to different one?' I came home crying...It got me. I started to shun even my bros. I couldn't stop crying. [Mum] tried to make me feel better because she knew I loved going to school. It seems that it has been disrupted here. My personality was disrupted. I feel it like that and I started to be against everyone, including my mother (Klára, 42 years old Roma woman, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

A 'personality disrupted' illustrates the psychological difficulties of the fragmented habitus, which Klára states is a 'lifelong trauma'. The onset of this trauma was a classroom encounter and the realization that she was a member of the maligned group, which has longer-term effects and causes her to shun her family. This conflict also played out in relation to a Roma versus non-Roma binary akin to a fragmented habitus whereby tensions arise from inhabiting different fields. Below she articulates the state of betwixt and between and potential trauma that can induce from feeling like a ubiquitous outsider – 'neither Roma nor Gadjo' – expressed through her perception that her Roma siblings and nieces are nervous around her and avoid certain topics of conversation.

When I visit my family, I perceive that my siblings and my nieces are nervous of me. That someone respectable, someone directive came into the house, so they pay attention of what they are saying. Whether to chat about kids or cooking. They are not speaking about other issues to prevent me reacting. I feel like I am between a rock and a hard place so that sometimes I feel neither Roma nor Gadjo (Klára, 42 years old Roma woman, Ostrava-Kunčičky).

5. Conclusions

Our analysis of everyday stigmatization and the fragmented Roma habitus offers three contributions. First, we have shed empirical light on the under-researched, darker side of everyday urban encounters with difference (Amin, 2013). Extending analysis beyond the state addresses the micro-sociological aspects of Roma stigmatization as a powerful and complementary force to dynamic racializing frameworks emanating from above. In this sense,

a conceptual focus on habitus offers potential for integrating the micro and macro and avoiding false dualisms, while retaining a focus on *group* dynamics and collective histories as a counter to overly individualized and present-centred accounts of stigmatization. Second, we have evidenced the hitherto neglected affective dimensions of group stigmatization for many Roma, which results from a long-term, marginalized positioning within social space and tensions in habitus formation. Third, we have articulated the potential of the fragmented habitus in nuancing the ways in which Roma inhabit a racialized urban position, which goes beyond generic notions of extreme Otherness. An historicized understanding of the urban encounters of Roma also questions overly optimistic readings of their transformative potential. Some respondents expressed a fairly integrated Czech/Romanian Roma habitus in their childhood, which was undermined and disrupted by injurious racialized encounters and a realization of their relative (and collective) position within the social space of positions. Though stigmatization from the state, media and political discourse is seemingly ubiquitous, everyday experiences of racism in face-to-face urban interactions with non-Roma are arguably more significant and emotionally burdensome, particularly where they are carried into future orientations and practices (i.e. where habitus produces avoidance behaviours and the maintenance and adherence to logics of separation).

The realization of one's categorization as a member of a maligned, inferior group largely at the urban margins and often at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the distribution of material resources, affects Roma in very different ways. A small minority seem to manage fairly well in flitting between Roma and non-Roma social contexts, which resonates with the notion of 'fluid identifications' (Truong, 2019) and a more malleable habitus. But attempting to widen one's circles of identification beyond the Roma group can sometimes be a painful experience. The emotional costs are perhaps most acute for those whose fragmented habitus had resulted from a rejection of their claims to national identification on the part of non-Roma during face-to-face urban encounters, backed by long-standing media and institutional discourses (e.g. Roma 'unadaptability' and 'ineducability' (Shmidt and Jaworsky, 2020)). Others seem to suffer from a fragmented habitus, manage their spoiled identity through the lateral denigration of Roma peers deemed subordinate, and/or retreat into the family sphere in seeking to avoid contact with non-Roma. All Roma in our sample express some form of emotional pain or trauma from their long-term, racialized outsider positioning. The emotional burden of stigmatization manifests in very real consequences for in/actions and orientations. It is itself a powerful force acting against interaction and 'integration', for enforcing separation, and for

stymieing collective responses. These variegated responses are far more complex than a simple binary conceptualisation of apathy and the internalization of stigma on the one hand, versus resistance to stigma on the other, prominent within accounts of territorial stigmatization for example.

Spotlighting instances of fragmented habitus foregrounds collective urban histories and allows for a fuller appreciation of the complex dynamics and affective dimensions underpinning the *process* of Roma segregation, as oppose to its outcomes. Maintaining separation and the desire for social distance rests not on Roma poverty, ‘insularity’ or ‘un-adaptability’, but rather on everyday stigmatization emanating from the non-Roma Czech and Romanian population alongside state policies of confinement and separation reflecting and exploiting that national sentiment. Anti-Roma sentiment is reproduced inter-generationally and urban practices and encounters form a neglected part of that socialization process. Our evidence shows quite markedly how, contrary to dominant perceptions of Roma as ‘unwilling to integrate’, Roma can often be the instigators of potentially meaningful interactions and integrative bonds. Where these relations became unstuck or soured this was invariably due to the hostility of non-Roma who universally fell back on long-standing tropes and stereotypes in seeking to reassert social and psychological distance from the maligned Roma body. That Roma belong to a group labelled as such is often sufficient in itself to precipitate what might ordinarily be deemed peculiar avoidance behaviours in other urban encounters with difference. This automatic response operates within some non-Roma individuals from a very early age, sedimented within the national Czech and Romanian habitus. Distance from Roma – psychological, social, spatial – conveys value, which can only be understood in long-term view.

We would suggest that the fragmented habitus offers theoretical potential in terms of a historicized understanding of everyday stigmatization (as an ongoing process) and its affects in the context of a long-term racialized and inferiorized group. Conversely, the reflective accounts of Roma oscillating between the different group norms and behavioural expectations of segregated Roma and non-Roma urban spaces, challenges the notion of habitus as rigid and deterministic. In the context of long-term group stigmatization and overt denigration, habitus adapts to the shifting dynamics and affordances of complex urban figurations underscoring the divergent ways of inhabiting a racialized position beyond a generalized, marginalized Otherness. Recognition and acknowledgement of the varied, dynamic and multi-layered ways of orienting and acting within social space opens up a wider register of Roma possibilities for

inhabiting a racialized position; and for *potentially* challenging and disrupting stigmatizing and homogenizing discourses and logics. This points to a highly complex, ambivalent emotional endurance that transcends a simplistic apathetic/resistant binary in aiding ‘appreciation of actions that are something else besides these things’ (Simone, 2019: 14).

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