

## **Abstract**

The thesis focuses on the practice of resettlement policy in the 1960s in Czechoslovakia, which targeted the population referred to as 'gypsies'. This policy, also known as the policy of 'dispersal', has often been described in historical and Romani studies literature as one of the symbols of the communist regime's violence against the Roma, which was to lead to the disruption of their cultural identity and the disruption of established socio-economic structures. Paradoxically, the practice of this policy has been described very marginally. The aim of this paper is to fill this gap, to take the monitoring of this policy out of a strongly evaluative interpretive framework, and at the same time to shift the emphasis from the perspective of the state and its authorities to the agency of the Roma themselves.

In the introduction of my thesis, I provide a basic characterization and contextualization of resettlement policy while summarizing the existing literature related to it. In the first chapter, I present the theoretical and methodological background of the whole thesis. Here I acknowledge the microhistorical approach and the inspiration in the discipline of anthropology in general. In doing so, I specifically discuss these approaches in relation to the possibilities of studying 'Romani histories'. In the second chapter, I analyse contemporary discourses of 'gypsiness' and use a specific case study to show how these were negotiated within locally anchored socio-economic relations. At the same time, the case study presented here suggests that the practice of resettlement policy was linked to historically conditioned and locally specific processes. In Chapter 3, I focus on the part of the resettlement policy that aimed at the 'liquidation of gypsy settlements'. Here I elaborate on the different ways in which individual actors, and especially the Roma as their inhabitants, related to the spaces so designated. I show that central policy in this respect may have largely overlapped with Roma aspirations for spatial mobility. However, the Roma themselves did not necessarily fully share the official view of settlements as places of 'deviant way of life'. In Chapter 4, I discuss the actual resettlement of Roma from Slovakia to Czechia. Even this movement could not be separated from Roma migration as an actor-led economic strategy. The logic of 'dispersal' promoted by state policy ultimately met with the aspirations of individual families for spatial and socio-economic autonomy. From their perspective, however, the apparent adherence to the dominant logic did not necessarily lead to assimilation in the sense of shedding one's own cultural identity and breaking established ties.

In tracing the forms of Roma agency, I note a state of certain tension and ambivalence in which I view the relationship of Roma to assimilationist policies towards "gypsies" as an 'experimental consent' (High 2008). At the same time, however, I discern a considerable heterogeneity of locally and historically conditioned positionalities on the part of Roma, which ultimately leads me to disrupt the explicit opposition between the state and Roma as its marginalized population, as well as the notion of Roma as an a priori outside group.

### **Keywords**

Roma, belonging, mobility, gypsiness, resettlement policies, communist regime, Czechoslovakia