

Bridging the Gap between Academia and Policy Makers

Safeguarding Roma children: is it a cultural problem?

Hulme Hall, Seminar Room

Oxford Place, Victoria Park, Manchester M14 5RR

February 25, 2015 - 1-5pm

The European Commission *Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states*, one of the most comprehensive and far reaching documents promoting Roma inclusion to date, calls for particular attention towards the most vulnerable among the Roma, namely children and women. At the same time, a report on early marriage by the European Roma and Travellers' Forum warns against the risk of stigmatizing the Roma community at large by attributing such issues to Romani culture. Indeed, in the media (see for example the recent documentary 'The Gypsy Matchmaker') Roma parents are often represented as prone to neglect their children and even exploit and abuse them, and Roma culture in general as exploitative of young people. Official numbers in Spain and Italy show how Roma migrant children are being taken into care, often for weak reasons, and how the resulting stigmatization of these groups is impinging on their integration. On the other side, both academic research and advocacy groups highlighted how Roma families in various countries are concerned with what they see as frequent and often unmotivated actions by local authorities to remove Roma children from their families. In the UK, following recent grooming scandals, 'safeguarding' has become a key element of local policies and is often discussed in relation to Roma communities. Questions therefore arise on how to effectively guarantee the rights of individuals that actually require it while avoiding the continuing stigmatization of Roma communities.

The meeting will offer an opportunity for policy makers and other actors in the field to familiarise themselves with academic research currently investigating the topic of Roma-targeted interventions in a range of European countries. Actors directly involved in representing and supporting Roma at various institutional levels will also discuss examples of local and international practices.

Programme

1-2pm Registration and welcome (with lunch)

2-3.30pm academic presentations

Margaret Greenfields and Jenni Berlin: *Professional Cultures and Romani Community Experiences of safeguarding: misrecognition, myths and mutual misunderstanding*

Ulderico Daniele: *"Culture" or "poverty". The blind alley in safeguarding Roma from the camps for nomads.*

Iulia Hasdeu: *Romanian Roma in Geneva 2007-2014: The Swiss politics of poverty and the absence of Roma children in town*

3.30-3.45pm coffee break

3.45-5pm policy panel & open discussion

Clémentine Trolong-Bailly *Making early marriage in Roma communities a global concern*

Dragica Felija *Working with East European Roma families*

Prof Margaret Greenfield (Bucks New University, UK) Since 1986 Margaret has engaged with Traveller and Gypsy issues, undertaking both welfare work, and latterly, research into health, accommodation and social concerns pertaining to Gypsy/Traveller lifestyles and well-being. Margaret also worked in a consultative and advice-giving capacity to Government departments and bodies working with Gypsies and Travellers, statutory and voluntary sector organisations and with individual solicitors undertaking family cases on behalf of Travellers.

Jenni Berlin (University of Eastern Finland/Bucks New University) Jenni's research focuses on issues of well-being and integration/assimilation among Finnish Romas and housed English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Currently she works as a research assistant in a project on Roma migrants' experiences of social care and youth offending teams in England, administered by Bucks New University, University of Derby and University of Manchester.

Dr Ulderico Daniele (Università Roma Tre, Italy) Ulderico's research focuses on "nomads camps" in Rome, treating the "camp" as a policy template to concentrate and control the Roma, and on the relations between local institutions and NGOs and the Roma community settled in the camp. Parallel to these interests, Ulderico is also analysing "Emergency policies" towards Roma, at both local and national level and the situation of Roma youngsters and their relation with urban spaces and the majority society, focusing on their hopes and resources.

Dr Iulia Hasdeu (Université de Genève, Switzerland) Iulia's research focuses on Roma women, in particular around issues of conjugality, sexual division of labour, pollution, clothing, representation of the Other and ethnical categorisation within Roma communities. As gender in Roma communities is a political issue in the governance agenda of local and national policies, Iulia aims to describe and analyse how political power deals with the ethnical definition of gender and how different contradictions occur in these spaces of negotiation.

Clémentine Trolong-Bailly (European Roma and Travelers' Forum, ERTF) Clémentine is the communication officer for ERTF, the umbrella organization representing Roma and Travellers at the Council of Europe. With a background in politics and social development studies, Clémentine is responsible for the organization of training about Roma and Travellers, the preparation of research papers and the monitoring of media on the situation of Roma in Europe. She is co-author of ERTF position papers and comments on gender and early marriage (<http://www.ertf.org/index.php/documents/reports-position-papers>).

Dragica Felja (Roma Support Group) Dragica has been working with Roma communities for the past twelve years. Through he work with the Roma Support Group, she provides support to statutory and non-statutory organisations working with Roma communities through training, consultancy and capacity building. Dragica, with a background in postcolonial studies, also contributed to various researches on Roma issues in the UK, ranging from substance abuses to access to services ([http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/documents/Druglink Magazine article.pdf](http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/documents/Druglink_Magazine_article.pdf), <http://www.ccinform.co.uk/guides/guide-to-working-with-east-european-roma-families/>).

The venue

Detailed information about Hulme Hall can be found on the venue web site at <http://www.conference.manchester.ac.uk/venues/search/details/?property=19>.

Traveling instructions

Hulme Hall is well connected with the city centre and easily accessible from the A34.

By public transport

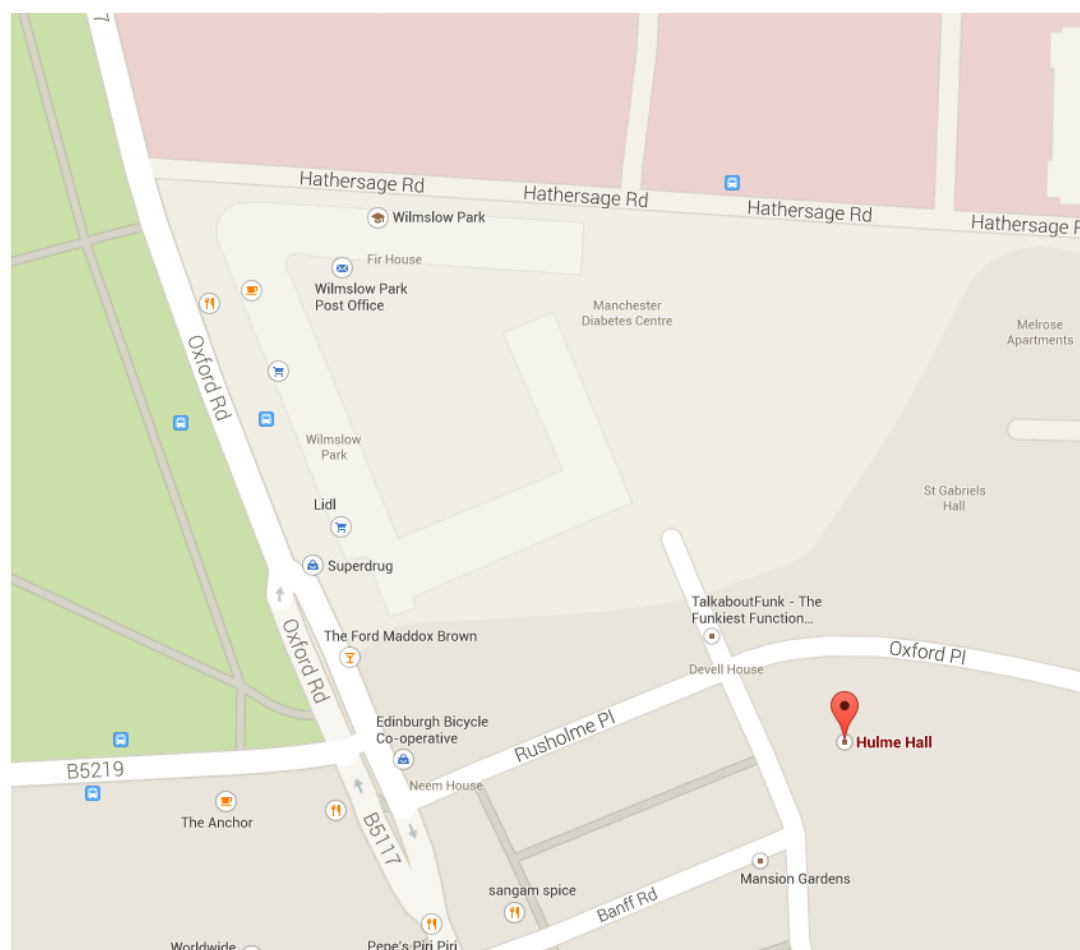
Bus 147 can be boarded outside Piccadilly and Oxford Road stations and the stop closest to Hulme Hall is on Heathersage Road.

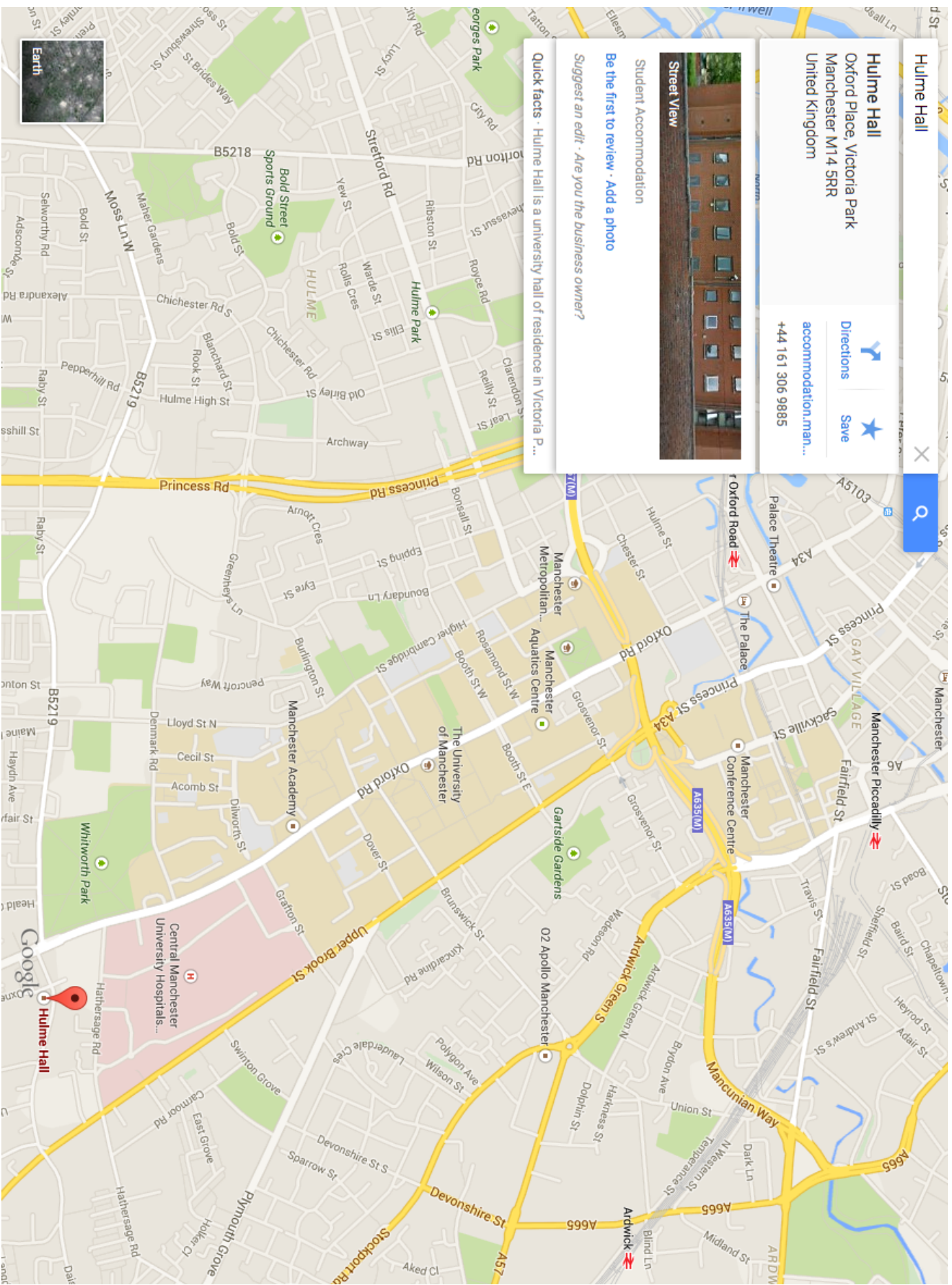
Buses 38, 41, 42, 42A 43, 44, 142, 143, 157, X41, X57 can be boarded at Piccadilly Gardens (5 minutes walk from Piccadilly Station) or outside Oxford Road Station and the stop closest to Hulme Hall is on Oxford Road. **Bus 43** can be also boarded at Manchester Airport.

You can get detailed information about buses at: http://www.tfgm.com/journey_planning/Pages/default.aspx.

By car

From Upper Brook Street (A34) or from Oxford Road turn onto Oxford Place. Hulme Hall offers free parking on site.





Hulme Hall

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