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# European Social Integration and the Roma

Questioning neoliberal governmentality

Cerasela Voiculescu



# European Social Integration and the Roma

Theoretically nuanced and empirically rich, this new study by sociologist Dr. Cerasela Voiculescu offers a unique and fresh insight on how power, in neoliberal times, is impacting on different Roma communities in Romania. Based on field observations, community work and academic reflection over nearly fifteen years, the project deftly deconstructs “the Roma” as both political projection and as non-static actors with strength, agency and their own power in challenging and disrupting gadzhe (non-Roma) institutions and the state. This is a remarkable book that strikes new ground in both Romani studies and critical accounts of neoliberalism and power.

**Colin Clark**, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy,  
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In the field of political sociology and European studies, there has long been a discussion on transnational neoliberal development and ethnic groups’ self-governance. Notwithstanding, there has been limited exploration in relation to modes of knowledge production associated with neoliberal governance of the Other (e.g. ethnic and indigenous groups), which capture its idiosyncratic modes of political expression and empowerment.

Drawing on Michel Foucault’s political philosophy, this book discusses European social integration as transnational neoliberal governmentality and challenges its epistemologically constituted subaltern subject. Neoliberalism is questioned in relation to its programs of securitisation of poverty and authoritarian models of self-governance associated with instrumentality of the market. In this context, the book’s rich political historical ethnography develops a new framework for the study of social power. Furthermore, inspired by Jacques Ranciere’s radical philosophy, *European Social Integration and the Roma* proposes a new mode of knowledge production about populations excessively subjected to neoliberal governmentality, heralding the epistemological decolonisation of the neoliberal subject.

Presenting an insightful new prospect in critical sociology as well as the conceptualisation of power and the application of theories of governmentality, this book will appeal to scholars interested in the areas of political sociology and anthropology, international relations, social and political theory/philosophy and post-development studies.

**Cerasela Voiculescu** is an experienced researcher interested in critical social and political philosophy/theory with specific reference to social and political power, neoliberalism, knowledge, governmentality and European studies.

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# **European Social Integration and the Roma**

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*Politics is not the exercise of power. It is the political relationship that makes it possible to conceive the subject of politics (. . .).*

*Jacques Ranciere*

*What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power.*

*Michel Foucault*

*The relation between answer and question is essentially a power relation, hence political: relation of despotic master and slave up in arms.  
It is never the answer, but the question that sets the building on fire.  
Let this door be a flame.*

*Edmond Jabes*

*To Roma  
and all those populations struggling for political recognition and liberty.*

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**Part I**

**Book discussion and  
introduction**



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# 1 European transnational government for the Other

In the way Said (2003) expressed concerns about the Orient as an alter-ego of Western societies projecting their own cultural norms and rules of identification onto the epistemologically construed external Other, the Roma are politically imagined as the ‘internal Other’ (Balibar 2009) of the European model or Europeanness. Yet, Balibar (2009) considers that Roma need to be socially integrated, but social integration is a neoliberal problematisation in itself, and his statement confirms, once more, that Marxist realist analysis can, unfortunately, overlap discourses of power such as neoliberalism. They are seamlessly portrayed as an unrevealed subject<sup>1</sup> (e.g. ‘who are the Roma?’)<sup>2</sup>, under continuous scrutiny, inquiry and assessment of its peripherality, as part of a dialectical politics of appropriation and re-subjectification<sup>3</sup> of a boundary subject, strengthening the political imaginary of a European core identity. This brings similitudes to Black People in America and Jews in Europe (Kalmar & Penslar 2005), “subjected to a kind of internal Orientalism” (Wilson III 1981: 63), a Western colonising knowledge of the Other entangled with governmental practices, which aimed at exorcising the idiosyncrasies of an imagined non-Westerner or non-European which grounded their existence and expansion.

“Vocabulary, imaginary, rhetoric” (Said 2003: 41) of the West’s Orientalism placed subjects of knowledge in a continuum of “scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline, or [and] governing” (p. 41). Notwithstanding, Orientalism is much more than a political doctrine of the West. It is an apparatus of knowing, colonising cultural identities and territorialising alternatively construed political subjectivities, employed by architectures of power – transnational politics – which reify and project their geopolitical needs of government (e.g. neoliberalisation of Eastern Europe) onto subjects of governance (e.g. the Roma in Europe). The Roma were construed, in Balibar’s terms, as the internal Orientals or Orientalised subjects of a purified idealised Europe and “neoliberal conception of European governance” (Balibar 2009: xi), which still conforms to modern architectural models of apprehension and incorporation of the socially disobedient Other. Furthermore, he argues that the expansion of Europe and the EU triggered divisive mechanisms of categorisation and governance in relation to the Roma and Eastern Europe, which by default were projected as the reversed Other. The latter were mainly construed in relation to an antithetical ideology – socialism and its reminiscences – threatening the security of the Western model of economic and social development. EU

#### 4 *Book discussion and introduction*

enlargement brought these distinctions and dialectical antagonisms at the forefront of political and economic integration of the neighbouring antipode, which commanded processes of translation, epistemological and cultural appropriation. As he further suggests, within the political imaginaries of the already constituted EU, the Roma were projected as 'stateless people' and, therefore, disentangled from previous or current regimes of citizenship structured by Eastern European modern states in order to be appropriated as a signifier of processes of accommodation of Eastern Europe within larger frameworks of governance produced by a neoliberal Europe. In my terms, Roma were subjected to a *dislocated spatialisation of governance*, which diffused their subjection from the nation state policies towards transnational neoliberal governmental power discussed in this introduction.

In substance, EU enlargement implied a sort of pre-accession neoliberal 'normalisation' of Eastern European states, which had to undergo reformatory transitions promoted by big international actors such as the World Bank (WB), the European Union (EU), the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which raised concerns about a population not yet developed or socially integrated, implicitly not subjected to its legislative structures and ideological contents.

More recently, the processes of EU accession have been an important impetus focusing international attention on Roma issues from Central and Eastern Europe (. . .) Roma issues emerge under political criteria for accession as part of the subchapter on "human rights and the protection of minorities" that was adopted at 1993 European Copenhagen European Council.

(WB 2000: 38)

Prior to 1990, "European institutions paid little attention to Roma/Gypsies" (Kovats 2001: 1), but after the fall of the iron curtain, when the former socialist states joined transnational polities such as the Council of Europe and OSCE, Western European states and associated large polities became increasingly interested in securitising Eastern European Roma migration (WB 2000), which was portrayed as a threat to 'the stability' of the European economic area. As already suggested, the Roma themselves were the signifier of Eastern European poverty and de-regulation, whose status had to be supervised constantly, and the OSCE was the first to pay attention to issues of securitisation of Eastern European populations. The High Commissioner of National Minorities (HCNM) (1993) report underlined both the intrinsic and extrinsic scope of its policies and prioritisation of their instrumental character aimed at migration prevention through a process of state allegiance enhancement involving higher standards of living "for the sake of such improvements, but also for the reduction in pressures on international migration" (p. 10). These programs were designed to provide "an enduring sense of belonging" (p. 10), social and economic, to migrants from Southern-Eastern Europe to Western Europe, who "unable to reintegrate at home may be likely to consider the international migration again" (p. 11). The implication of this programmatic deliberate governance of the Other as the migrant populations to the West was the

localisation of the implementation of development and social integration programs in the home countries and ideological abode in the political and economic government of Western Europe:

Every effort should be made to support such returned migrants, particularly in the context of more comprehensive programs for improving literacy, job training, and economic opportunity for Roma in their own countries.

(HCNM 1993: 11)

Furthermore, under the requests for enlargement of the economic area, the EU started to “monitor candidates on minority protection” (Guglielmo & Waters 2005: 771) and frame its migration prevention policies as social integration of the Roma and populations generally considered ‘poor’ and ‘vulnerable’. Yet, once the European inclusion of the Eastern European states was achieved, the EU internalised the problematic of governance and strengthened the focus on social integration and minority rights. Thus, “underlying concerns about Romani migration have not disappeared” (Kovats 2001: 2), but they have rather been incorporated into new strategies of securitisation of Roma migration as human and social development. Hence, it can be implied that the social integration of the Roma and the Europeanisation of its contents expanded progressively as a European discursive practice and bureaucratic machinery, but, in practical terms, continued as a transnational apparatus of governance of Eastern European migration. In other words, securitisation of mobility was politically translated into the language of human development and social integration, which mainly represented the Eastern European Roma as a European ‘problem’ that needed further assessment and supervision. New mechanisms of knowledge production and technologies of institutional governance, mainly extraneous to Romani civil society and nation states, became engines for transnational securitisation policies. Although the problematic of governance had become European, the population subjected to it has not been yet Europeanised. It was rather placed in a liminal position from where it was expected to acquire and realise the commitments of the so-called European social integration. Generally, the Europeanisation of the problematic of government for the Roma brought a dialectical command and technical passage between the freedom of movement and technologies of securitisation of migration in the format of human development and guided or ‘good governance’, largely employed by all transnational organisations for development.

Security is directly linked to development: there is no development in chronically insecure environments (. . .). Security is key to regional stability, poverty reduction and conflict prevention (EC 2003: 7) (. . .) The concept of security is increasingly understood not just in terms of security of the state, but also embraces the broad notion of human security, which involves the ability to live in freedom, peace and safety. Security must be both as a national interest and as part of individual rights. Security systems reforms is an integral component of *good governance* [my emphasis].

(p. 8)

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In this case, security is tied to human development and governance, but also to further EU enlargement and, therefore, to migration prevention strategies, which discursively construed by transnational actors in development (EC 2003; WB 2000, 2005) need to be implemented by sending states. Thus, the migration of the Roma to Western countries remains a primary concern for regional EU stability and a target of securitisation apparatuses.

However, the current situation of Roma living in poor conditions in enlargement countries has had consequences in terms of the increased number of Roma temporarily migrating to EU member states under visa-free regime and even applying for asylum. This can have a negative impact on visa liberalisation, which is one of the greatest achievements towards the integration of the Western Balkans into EU.

(EC 2012: 17)

In this regard, the transition has been made from a ‘human rights’ perspective to that of ‘governance’, which “became an integral part of the [EU] Poverty Reduction Strategy” (EC 2003: 5). ‘Governance’ or ‘good governance’ was conceived by both WB (1992) and EC (2003, 2006) as a more comprehensive and less authoritarian concept in its definition, but a more controlled, pervasive and effective mechanism in its actions and leverage. It generally aims to organise the conduct of particular people and states, including the migration of Eastern European Roma to Western Europe.

Sound management of migration is also a factor in ensuring overall a good governance (. . .). By promoting good governance the EU is addressing one of the important roots of migration.

(EC 2003: 12)

There was a broad understanding about the need for a new and strong partnership of all key actors in this field. Moreover, it became evident that only a targeted culturally sensitive approach, which aimed at inclusion of Roma into mainstream society, could lead to progress.

(EC 2010: 4)

Furthermore ‘marginalisation’ was conceptually connected to poverty, and the social integration of populations such as the Roma became “instrumental in reducing poverty” (EC 2003: 5). In other words, programs of human development and social integration of ‘the vulnerable’ as mechanisms of securitisation of migration became entangled with the concept of governance of the Eastern European Roma. Yet, the whole responsibility for the undertaking was left in the hands of the EU member states and the site for the exercise of ‘good governance’ was confined to their jurisdiction (EC 2012). Overall, these institutional efforts for ‘good governance’ and social integration of the Roma have been expanded and incorporated into a matrix of transnational neoliberal governmental power

practically enacted by main transnational polities and organisations which deal with worldwide ‘development’ and governance of the Other (Escobar 2012).

Furthermore, cooperation takes place in the framework of international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the United Nations and their Agencies, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the World Bank, as well as in multilateral initiatives, such as the Decade for Roma inclusion 2005–2015, or more informal networks focused on Roma issues.

(EC 2010: 28)

All these transnational actors devise programs of social integration which, considered to be beneficial to the targeted population, are part of a broader neoliberal economic instrumental rationality which is expected to be incorporated into the new EU state apparatuses of governance. Decreasing welfare through the integration of the Roma into the official labour markets is aimed to be beneficial primarily to the Eastern European states, which can reduce their costs and adjust their economies to the national and global markets.

According to a recent research by the World Bank, for instance, full Roma integration in the labour market could bring economic benefits estimated to be around € 0.5 billion annually for some countries. Great *participation of Roma in the labour market* would improve *economic productivity*, *reduce government payments* [my emphasis] for social assistance and increase revenue from income taxes. According to the same World Bank study, *the tax benefits* [my emphasis] of Roma integration in the labour market are estimated to be around € 175 million annually per country (EC 2011: 3). Studies demonstrate that the exclusion of Roma entails important economic consequences in terms of direct costs for public budgets as well in terms of indirect costs losses in productivity.

(EC 2010: 3)

In other terms, the social integration of populations considered to be living at the edge of the newly ‘liberalised’ economies becomes “both a moral and economic imperative” (EC 2012: 5) that needs to be endorsed by the nation states. The latter “have the primary responsibility and competences to change the situation of marginalised populations” (EC 2012: 5) by engaging with the transnational governmental power’s legal and technical or semiological apparatuses.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the social inclusion of the reversed Other to these political and economic commitments advocated by transnational organisations for development is part of a process of global economic ‘liberalisation’ and integration. Furthermore, this transnational governmental power and its enactments are mainly upheld by and in need for technical knowledge apparatuses and mechanisms of identification of the targeted populations.

[C]ountries need to look carefully at their statistical instruments (for example, censuses and household surveys) and administrative data to assess how

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they can better capture information on Roma and other minorities that will be useful from a policy perspective. (. . .) More information on international practices, particularly in addressing the privacy issue on ethnic identification, is needed.

(WB 2000: 39)

In order to get useful data in the long term, the Commission will also foster cooperation between national statistical offices and Eurostat so as to be able to identify methods to map the EU's least developed micro-regions, where the most marginalised groups live, and in particular Roma, as a first step.

(EC 2011: 13)

The quotes show how technical knowledge about the Roma and their conditions of existence is an essential component of governance, in a continuous process of regional expansion and diversification of its mechanisms of production, which are mainly yielded by transnational organisations and polities in collaboration with states, experts and also scholars in the field. Following this brief analysis, European social integration, the program of governance questioned in the framework of this book, can be seen as a reflection of these particular articulations between global-national social, economic forms of governance and technical knowledge production they are associated with, or in other terms as a transnational neoliberal discourse or neoliberal governmentality. The latter is further inquired into conceptually and theoretically in the next section, in relation to liberalism vs. neoliberalism, Foucault's discussion on government, knowledge and neoliberal subject of governance, issues of sovereignty, world development and human securitisation.

## 2 Transnational neoliberal governmentality

### The moral economic order of neoliberalism and its subject

In the early 1990s, the reconfiguration of the social, economic and political space of Eastern Europe brought to the forefront the problematic of development, which has been progressively defined and tied to technologies of human securitisation, and ideologies of economic progress focused both on delocalised forms of governance and state-led ones. Human development, as an approach, was more attentive to the enhancement of the individual capabilities and realisation of human rights, an approach mainly promoted by the UNDP. On the other hand, an economic developmental perspective exploited the sovereign power as a form of conducting an Eastern European *ataxic democracy*<sup>5</sup> (see Ranciere 2010) which emerged outside of a legal framework ordered by global neoliberal governmental power.

In Eastern Europe, the lack of a legal system conducive to private sector development is a severe impediment to privatization and new investment (WB 1992: 4) (. . .). Even in societies that are highly market-oriented, only governments can provide two sorts of public goods: rules to make markets work efficiently and corrective interventions where there are market failures (McLean 1987: 19–21). With respect to rules, without the institutions and supportive framework of the state to create and enforce the rules, *to establish law and order* [my emphasis], and to ensure property rights, production and investment will be deterred and development hindered.

(Eggertson 1990, in WB 1992: 6)

The foundation of law was associated with order as the main first target in the process of the institutionalisation of the market. At a first stage the latter aimed at reforming the state and establishing the rule of law as mechanisms of ordering the social and apparatuses for the market appearance, command and corrective adaptations to a continuously reformed economic environment mainly portrayed as the Eastern European transition to a market economy.

Without assuming the responsibility of direct intervention and ownership of the reform, the main transnational exponents of neoliberalism endorsed the role of policing the emergent ‘void’<sup>6</sup>, in Ranciere’s (2010) terms, which, nonetheless, equalled governmental action at a distance as a dislocated spatialised intercession.

The World Bank is assisting countries to review, update, and simplify their legal systems. Such reforms of legal systems will improve the capacity of government to regulate the economy efficiently and to reach administrative decisions on the basis of a dear set of new and relevant laws therefore the cost, of committing capital or labour.

(WB 1992: 35)

[However] [f]irst, as an external agency, the Bank cannot substitute for the political commitment that governments must bring to reforms in this area. Outsiders can assist and advise, but unless governments are committed to reform, changes that are brought about will not be sustainable. Full ownership of reforms is as important in this area as it is with economic policy reforms.

(WB 1992: 50)

The WB's statement also implies that the ownership of the economic reform was shared, even if not assumed. It also reveals that neoliberal governmental power, in its incipient stages of expansions, when both its material and discursive devices were not yet sown in local governmental technologies, appropriates sovereign power as executive apparatus of its ruling, which has the role of establishing a new order, filling the new vacuum with its global Master signifier-neoliberalism (see Zizek 1993).

In the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe it was the state's long-term failure to deliver on its promises that led, finally to its overthrow. But the collapse of central planning has created problems of its own. In the resulting vacuum, *citizens are sometimes deprived of basic public goods such as law and order* [my emphasis].

(WB 1998: 16)

Hence, paradoxically, in seeking to implement an order that was dissolved with the falling of Eastern European states, transnational neoliberalism, with the force of deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation<sup>7</sup> into sovereignty, reinforced the state as an apparatus of command for its discursive enactments and local interventionism. On the other hand, it delocalised and projected its ideological command as a de-responsibilised extraneous authority, which was portrayed as the outsider in the process of Eastern European national neoliberalisation. After the incipient stage of the neoliberalisation of Eastern Europe in the late 1990s, transferred capitalism to the states of the East placed at its centre *capital as axiomatic apparatus of subjectification*<sup>8</sup> of labour power, for which the nation state became its main model of realisation (Deleuze & Guattari 2005). The interventionist character of neoliberalism changed its delivery when WB set a new agenda for the reformation of the state and its complementary functionalities in relation to the institutionalisation of the market. More exactly, in the 1997 report, WB advocated a transition from a quantitative to a qualitative state intercession, which should