

The Janus face of precarity – Securitisation of Roma mobility in the UK



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journals.sagepub.com/home/lec**Veronika Nagy**

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Abstract

Technological developments and the free movement of people within the EU have enabled Member States to implement new geopolitical control measures to increase migration control and social sorting of undesired migrant groups. As part of a securitisation process, these measures are often expanded upon and justified in terms of economic threat that aims to restrain ‘opportunistic Central East European migrants’, who are associated with welfare dependence and cheap labour. Although unemployed Roma migrants are exposed to social exclusion due to the stigma of ‘benefit shoppers’, this paper explores how current neoliberal labour market structures facilitate new securitisation processes and fuel the precarity of Roma, even if they are employed in the host country. Based on a multi-sited ethnography completed in The United Kingdom, it will be illustrated how communitarianism of Member States stratifies the moral values of migrants’ labour in a manner that defines the preconditions of social inclusion of newcomers in host societies. In short, this paper argues that even for migrants who are not welfare dependent and who are self-sustaining, their social inclusion is defined by engagement in the sort of labour that is culturally acknowledged by the host society.

Keywords

communitarianism, precarity, securitisation, social sorting

Introduction

The recent referendum vote in the United Kingdom and the ensuing decision to leave the European Union have created new insecurities for EU citizens living in the UK. Although the UK has not yet left the EU, Europeans are already leaving Britain.

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The Migration Statistics Quarterly Report issued by the Office for National Statistics (2017) shows that net migration of EU citizens to the UK fell by 52,000 in the year ending March 2017, driven by higher emigration (up 33,000) and reduced immigration (down 19,000). The exodus was most marked among eastern Europeans, with an increase in emigration of 19,000 among this group. Although the anti-migration discourses have been genuinely linked to the political debate on Brexit, social tensions were increasing already after the Free Mobility Act that enabled migrants from new EU Member States to live and work in welfare states like the UK.

The collision of fears around intra-EU mobility and the refugee crisis were employed as a central feature of the Brexit campaign (Heisbourg, 2016), which emphasised the monetary risks of immigration for UK citizens. Central to such mobilisations, right wing political lobbies promoted legacies of inequality, precarity and colonial constructions of belonging. Though exclusionist debates on migration are widespread in many EU countries; based on an ethnographic study, this paper aims to address the unintended outcome of intra-European migration politics in the preBrexit UK context: namely how insecurity of Central and East European Roma newcomers is sustained by exclusionist values of the neoliberal migration governance.

The precarity of Roma migrant workers is regularly explained by the securitisation of transnational mobility (Van Baar, 2017; Yildiz, 2017), benefit tourism and limited access to labour markets in the European Union (Iov, 2014; Shutes, 2017). In this process political actors transform Roma migrants into matters of 'security', using the media discourse to justify extraordinary means in order to ensure the protection of their own citizens. Issues that become securitised do not necessarily represent

problems that are essential to the objective survival of a state, or its citizens, but rather represent situations where someone (usually a political agent) was successful in constructing an issue into an existential threat to the host society. As pro-Brexit narratives illustrate (Heath and Godwin, 2016; Uttley and Wilkinson, 2017), the free movement of people within the EU has led nations to implement geopolitical control measures as part of this securitisation process. These measures are often expanded upon and justified in terms of economic threat: they aim to control and restrain 'opportunistic Central East European migrants', who are associated with welfare dependence and cheap labour (Spencer et al., 2007). This paper explores how current neoliberal labour market structures facilitate this securitisation process and fuel the precarity of Roma migrants. As will be illustrated, communitarianism of Member States stratifies the moral values of migrants' labour in a manner that defines the preconditions of social inclusion of newcomers in host societies. In short, this paper argues that even for migrants who are not welfare dependent and who are self-sustaining, their social inclusion is defined by engagement in the sort of labour that is culturally acknowledged by the host society. Based on the concept defined by Armano and Murgia (2017: 4), 'precarity' will be used in this paper to describe a condition that is:

Inherent to contemporary global capitalism that allows for the production and reproduction of capital as a whole. From this perspective, insecurity, informality and precariousness represent a dominant mode of governance (Breman and Van der Linden, 2014) that is implemented by different means. For instance, an increasing number of people find employment outside of conventional work arrangements, in global cities or as crowd workers in the digital economy. These arrangements

are made invisible by the global dynamics of contemporary capitalism. (Atzeni and Ness, 2016)

I will use a multi-sited case study of Roma migration conducted in four countries to explain that the securitisation of migration creates new forms of exclusion in which immigrants, who are unable to participate in the traditional labour market, are forced to take risks outside of conventional economic venues. Based on the work of David Lyon (2010), I will explain how Roma newcomers learn the disadvantages associated with digital bureaucratic processes and in order to avoid administrative control measures, create alternative financial strategies that allow them to stay in host countries. Although these strategies create sustainable sources of income, these venues of financial sustainability are strongly securitised by anti-immigration policies, such as scrap metal collection, and lead to stigmatisation and suspicion of crime. As it will be argued, unconventional employment mechanisms that are not transparent for the local authorities lead to social exclusion of those who are not engaged with formal employment schemes. Accordingly, the more Roma migrants try to hide their financial strategy to prevent control and surveillance the easier they get stacked in a loop of suspicion and exclusion.

I will start by presenting the contextual and methodological framework used to embed the securitisation of migration into new surveillance practices in the UK (Nagy, forthcoming 2018) and then explain how the control measures applied to newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are extended through the bureaucratic surveillance measures of welfare services (Nagy and Oude Breuil, 2015). Finally, based on selected cases from an ethnographic study conducted between 2013 and 2014 for my PhD research, I will analyse how the fear of

surveillance and discrimination contributes to the moral deprivation of migrants' financial strategies in the UK, and why these have become even more important than financial dependence in late modern precarity. In conclusion I will argue that current values of neoliberal labour markets and employment surveillance are contributing to the precarity of newcomers in the UK.

Securitisation and the surveillance of 'benefit tourists'

After the fifth enlargement of the EU in 2007, intra-European mobility became a new challenge for many Western governments. As full EU citizens, many Roma migrants have taken advantage of the freedom of movement in Europe (Düvell and Wollmer, 2009; Goddard, 2012; O'Reilly, 2007; Ringold et al., 2004). Existing ideas about the threat associated with non-EU migrants have been applied to them, accompanied by a fear of a 'new menace' that includes criminal 'insiders' and 'benefit tourists' who might profit from the welfare provisions of wealthier member states (Borjas, 1999; Schulzek, 2012). Accordingly, social security and immigration policies have become increasingly entangled with member states' surveillance practices, blurring the line between welfare and crime control measures (Morrissens, 2008). This has led to several restrictive social policies, intended to select and limit newcomers' access to social services (Cohen and Razin, 2008).

The first serious wave of restrictions started with the UK's Welfare Reform Act of 2012. This act, revised the British social security system to restrict access to welfare benefits for new EU migrants including a six-month statutory habitual residency for benefits paid to jobseekers (Rutledge, 2014). This six months minimum residency has to be proved to become eligible for social

benefits in the UK which is proved by a test. The purpose of the test was to ensure that benefits were paid to people with reasonably close ties to the UK and to prevent welfare abuses of migrants. Among the provisions of the act (which came into force on 1 April 2013) were key changes related to accessing Housing Benefit, the Social Fund, child support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and other benefits for CEE foreign nationals. The act abolished the discretionary social fund, community care grants and crisis loans. Instead, local authorities were given funding to provide such assistance in their regions. Most of the measures implemented placed more responsibility on local authorities and pushed them towards intense monitoring of their clients. Although these measures aim to push welfare-dependent unemployed newcomers to actively search for job opportunities, these measures were often experienced as discriminatory control measures (online application forms in English), as clients were screened but they were then unable to claim any local assistance.

In short, welfare provisions have turned into the new geopolitical incentives of social sorting, applied by governments who use digitalised control techniques to guard against mobile immigrant groups. In this migration management process a classification system needs to be developed for profiling opportunist migrants and differentiate them from 'the best and the brightest' (Cerna, 2011), to enable authorities to 'sort things out' (Bowker and Star, 1999). As Lyon (2010) explains, measures like discriminatory monitoring practices 'sort out' migrants based on different attributes that allow a government to segregate 'undesirable elements' (e.g. people susceptible to certain diseases). This process may create injustice and institutional abuse in the age of the information society (Lyon, 2010). Thus, surveillance of migrants can

serve as a mechanism for social sorting, especially when monitoring practices rely on computer systems to identify and isolate groups of interest to the organisation concerned. Although newcomers increase their awareness of such profiling and seek employment, they often remain suspected of opportunism.

As part of the political narrative of the UK's Conservative Party, especially under the prime ministership of David Cameron (2010–2016), social benefits were defined by the Prime Minister as a dangerous attraction for CEE migrants, who were portrayed as lazy, opportunistic free riders who lived 'off the backs' of hardworking UK taxpayers (Thielemann and Schade, 2016). These narratives in turn resulted in tougher National Habitual Residence tests, less welfare eligibility for newcomers, stronger penalties for fraud (or error) and extensive assessments or investigations of data provided by claimants (Machin, 2015).

With this securitisation of intra-European migration, control measures are likely to be prolonged and engaged in the field of social service provision. However, with the growing privatisation of public sector activities, tougher processes for accessing unemployment benefits coupled with new management values. These were introduced via governmental service provision which inserted target mechanisms into the delivery of welfare services. In such a neoliberal context, the precarity of migrants has been defined in terms of financial/welfare dependency, and hybrid governmental services. In particular, Job Centre Plus have become the key player of the poverty management industry that forces the unemployed into the labour market by the process of welfare sanctions. These quasi-privatised service providers adapt efficiency-oriented strategies and competitive values from the business sector using incentives that are not supporting, but instead policing welfare applicants

(Rutledge, 2014). As it has been increasingly discussed (Huot et al., 2016; McKeever, 2012; Nagy, 2016), these values define foreign unemployed welfare claimants as a social-economic threat who should be forced to provide flexible and cheap labour, while financial costs associated with their residence should be minimised. Consequently, welfare-dependent newcomers are subjected to extra control measures and sanctions (like welfare restrictions), which are used as new neoliberal tools for social sorting (Rice, 2017). The intent of these mechanisms was to prevent those foreign citizens unable to support themselves from coming to the UK and to compel financially dependent migrants to move on (Cohen et al., 2014). By including privatised service providers in poverty management systems and applying new monitoring technologies to profile applicants, welfare payments have become the new arena of migration control. These monitoring strategies turned into the governance of labour force, reassuring newcomers to be self-sustaining in order to prevent control and sanctions.

Distribution of what we call 'welfare surveillance' is not new: heightened surveillance of the poor has been well documented for years (e.g. Henman and Marston, 2008; Piven and Cloward, 1971). However, it has also incorporated a moral component now. Priorities in the risk society not only define the threat, but also the worth of individuals, placing them into a new type of social division based on surveillance practices that measure economic values (Henman, 2010). Accordingly, these administrative surveillance assemblages signify the dynamic interrelationship between migration policies implemented through financial screening of social services and the precariat (i.e. applicants). Nevertheless, this process is more complex than it seems. Recently, neoliberal state recognition has become based on legal

economic activity and social citizenship, which analytically distinguishes from formal citizenship (juridical codified rights and duties of citizen-members of states) differentiated by a range of monitoring incentives (Schinkel, 2010). Interestingly, this process triggers counter-reactions. As soon as the targeted migrants raise awareness of these incentives, they revise their economic strategies accordingly and try to gain social inclusion by hiding from these control measures.

Though most of the Roma migrants claimed to be integrated in the countries to which they have migrated, as it will be explained, social citizenship remains a real challenge for many of them in particular when their labour strategies differ from the local employment schemes.

Methods

This paper is based on a three-year PhD study (Nagy, 2016) during which I conducted multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in the UK to understand the effects of neoliberal values on the local governance of migrants. Empirical data helped me to identify the tools of social sorting and how vulnerable migrants adapt coping strategies in line with constantly changing screening and exclusionary practices.

Framed by an interactionist epistemology, I applied three methodological subfields of ethnographic research for data collection: a multi-sited approach, institutional ethnography and virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000). The combination of these ethnographic approaches enables an assessment of interrelations of space, ethnicity and marginalisation in different settings and the role of different interactions in these fields. During the first research phase, I collected information from professionals, academics and activists working with Roma. I also created sampling frames for the four Visegrad countries to

reflect the diversity of the Roma groups in terms of mobility patterns. Eligible persons for inclusion in the Roma sample were aged 16 and older who self-identified as Roma and who were residing in one of the selected countries and were willing to participate in the study. The sample was further stratified by gender and nationality. After choosing the primary sampling units where observations would take place, I selected household members to interview. In addition to making observations and shadowing organisations, I approached approximately 300 Roma migrants (online or in person) during a 15-month fieldwork period.

Online and in-person interviews were conducted in four countries between January 2013 and March 2014. Over 15 months of fieldwork, 98 interviews were undertaken consisting of 50 Roma migrants and returnees in different countries, 12 social workers and advocacy workers, four police officers, six interpreters, two lawyers and 24 civil servants (e.g. integration officers, education officers and counsellors).

Thirt-eight of the Roma interviewees were women and 12 were men and the Roma sample had an average age of 41.2 years (range = 21–62 years). A number of respondents were related to each other or living in the same household: these included seven people born in Poland, 20 in Hungary and six in the Czech Republic or Slovakia who were at the time of interview still living in the UK (Nagy, 2018).

Basing the study on virtual ethnography, I began by interviewing 20 returnees or relatives of migrants in Hungary who were approached on social media. Most of them provided enough information to refine the topic list used for interviews and narrow down the interview subjects. I then conducted 15 interviews with returnees in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but many of these interviews were impacted by the presence of social workers. The interviews with returnees or the relatives of

migrants took place in their home settings as it was hoped to ensure an open setting to best understand respondents' aspirations, expectations and dependency relations as well as elicit reflections about living abroad. I also completed several interviews with migrants living in the UK via Skype or Facebook. Some of those were repeated a year later, face to face in the UK. Most of these participants were recommended by social workers in Roma settlements or found via Roma activists, NGO workers, politicians or friends.

The snowballing recruitment strategy was used to find participants residing in London, Manchester, Leeds and other host cities in the UK where I conducted semi-structured interviews both face to face and online via Skype, in one- to three-hour sessions. Most of the interviews were customised to the participants, and I attempted to include information about participants' interpersonal relationships as part of the questioning. I also conducted structured interviews with advocacy workers who reflected on the preliminary findings.

Differences between interview data in different locations and timeslots provided 'thick' accounts of participants' different perceptions and understandings of self-representation. They also enabled me to understand some contradictions between what participants said in private and how they behaved in the presence of others.

The next section describes the coping strategies used by newcomers who stay outside the gaze of welfare services and their experiences with social exclusion, even when they fulfil economic demands. In particular, I discuss those people who stay hidden from the disciplinary control and surveillance measures of administrative services and try to prevent undue securitisation by their labour participation in the UK.

The price of invisibility – Living outside the surveillance gaze

Although precarity is often defined in financial terms as lacking job security, material or psychological welfare (Wright, 2016), I argue that the moral acknowledgement of migrants' financial strategies is even more important. Social sorting also has unintended effects on newcomers who seek to keep themselves away from bureaucratic surveillance mechanisms through particular financial strategies. These newcomers create employment niches that sustain their invisibility, but which also contribute to their social exclusion and to ongoing precarity.

Hiding Roma ethnicity is understood as a technique for gaining social and cultural inclusion (Albert et al., 2005; Kotic, 2012; Tschofen, 2009). I will argue, however, that maintaining a self-sustaining lifestyle with labour participation in a host country still does not allow Roma to avoid structural exclusion. Exclusion is based on an individual's degree of conformity with socially and morally established behaviours defined by the host society, such as the type of informal labour performed by Roma represented in the media as 'filthy' or 'untrustworthy'. Welfare bureaucracy does not determine the limits of acceptable behaviour, but the social-historical economic market values form a majority society's regulatory community that guides membership based on moral conditions of desirability (Anderson, 2013), differentiating the good worker from the undesirable one. In short, there is a contextualised intersection between immigration concerns, labour market demands, cultural fears and citizenship that defines inclusion (Orgad, 2010). Accordingly, social inclusion of migrants in a neoliberal market economy has communitarian preconditions in a nation state that are defined by cultural recognition of financial strategies by the national majority (Swanson, 2005). As it will be elaborated,

employment of many Roma migrants in the grey economy is considered by the majority population as suspicious, or illegal, culturally 'unfitting', or even dangerous, and thus there is a denial of Roma self-sustaining behaviours, innovative and social economic value. Essentially under a neoliberal communitarian regime, it becomes an individual's responsibility, expressed in the form of 'earning' one's citizenship and thus enabling conversion of status into membership of a nation that is sacralised as a bounded community of values. Thus, as Van Houdt et al. (2011: 408) asserts, neoliberal communitarianism:

combines two strategies that, at first glance, are contradictory: an individualising focus on earned citizenship and a de-individualising focus on the nation. This combination might seem surprising, but on a closer look both neoliberalism and communitarianism are based on the same diagnosis of society and its internal and external threats.

This 'bulimia society' previously described by Young (1999), can also be traced in media representations and in governmental propaganda as used against migrants, associating them with welfare opportunism (Nagy and Oude Breuil, 2015). The impact of these images which refer to the suspected outsider is also amplified by previous experiences of discrimination that makes Roma migrants even more eager to remain unnoticed and unwilling to be associated with state support. Therefore, those families who try to avoid the welfare system are creating their own labour market. Yet, as I will argue, their choice of self-sustainability and entrepreneurship is seen as outside the dominant moral values of the majority host society (Eremenko et al., 2017). As confirmed by a Roma self-employed man, this type of work is often experienced as a barrier to social

integration, as it is widely considered by the majority population as a mechanism for avoidance of tax payment and a tool to circumvent the traditional British labour market. As it will be illustrated by several quotes below, in the UK migration context social inclusion depends on the moral value of the type of financial or entrepreneurial activity that migrants choose. While construction work is widely accepted as a labour that contributes to social recognition, recycling waste or making music is largely stigmatised by the host society as unproductive labour activity. So the question remains, even if these Roma migrants stay out of the gaze of the welfare surveillance, how can they earn their social inclusion in a host country in such a way as to avoid precarity?

Based on the narratives of research participants, I will present two common economic strategies that enable migrants to make their livings while avoiding the spotlight of the UK social security system. The first strategy is to stay invisible by becoming 'regular employees'. These migrants choose not to participate in welfare bureaucracies but instead try to stay self-sustaining by taking temporary unskilled jobs even if they become exploited by their employers. The second strategy involves self employment and the role of ethnic recruitment in (often) abusive labour conditions. The later one also includes a collective system of unauthorised sales channels among migrants who trade in different legal products (e.g. antiquities) as it will be explained in the second part of the paper. Finally, I will discuss how these strategies contribute to Roma migrants' social 'othering' in the UK.

Integration or assimilation – Working class Roma in London

'We came to change our history', said one man, who regularly attended network meetings at a local NGO. As he described, many

Roma move to London to live and work without the ethnic stigma they experience in their countries of origin. According to Miller and Kaiser (2001: 74), stigma is 'an attribute that conveys a devalued social identity within a particular context' and this devaluation exposes stigmatised individuals to various stressors such as prejudice and discrimination. This was also extensively discussed in the recent study by Dagilyte and Greenfields (2015). In order to avoid these experiences, many participants argued that as an ethnic minority they try to stay invisible in a host society and consciously choose a lifestyle considered to be socially integrated within their new neighbourhood. This section of the paper highlights the tactics of Roma migrants who choose *not* to participate in welfare bureaucracies but instead try to stay self-sustaining, through involvement in temporary or long-term employment.

Integration is the buzzword in several EU strategies that aim to improve educational outcomes and the inclusion of Roma in every member state. However, those who become integrated then seem to disappear from the debate. In scientific discussions (Medda-Windischer, 2013; Van Baar, 2017), just as in policy papers (McGarry, 2012), Roma are often generalised and represented as in a dichotomy with non-Roma or limited to one specific locality or network. In these approaches, Roma who work or live in similar conditions as non-Roma and who follow similar transnational mobility paths remain out of sight. This practice might be explained by the political agenda of Roma Integration initiatives that aim to improve the living conditions of marginalised Roma communities, but it also reflects the unwillingness of many migrants to be identified as ethnic Roma as well as their aspiration for social inclusion. Interviewees generally stated that they preferred to be identified as a national minority, such as 'Slovak or Polish people'. According to Will

Kymlicka (2001), cultural minorities can be divided into two kinds within a given state, national minority and ethnic minority. The former is a historical community, institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language or culture while the latter is a group with common cultural origins, but whose members do not constitute an institutionally complete society concentrated in one territory. Many Roma migrants in London share the same aspirations as non-Roma migrants, and access the same education and work opportunities, while securing their invisibility among other national migrants by (for example) sharing accommodation with Central Eastern European non-Roma migrants (Cherkezova, 2014). These practices can also be found among many different ethnic minorities, such as Punjabis, Pashtuns, Vlach or Kalderash living in similar circumstances in London and who often seek to minimise their 'ethnic' identity through public identification with their national identity in post-migration contexts. The perceived risks of being visible might, however, vary among different networks and should be situated in the ethnoscape in which they live (Blackaby and Frank, 2000; Gingrich and Lightman, 2015). According to narratives of Roma who use ethnic mimicry (pretending to be a non-Roma Pole or Slovak), following in the footsteps of their direct network of fellow countryman enables them to create a more sustainable life abroad. These Roma are thus often excluded from their own ethnic networks or become labelled as 'White bloods'. Situationally, in particular in neighbourhoods with high density of Pakistani migrants, Roma also accepted other ethnic labels, for instance when they became confused with Pakistani minorities at work. As one of the participants explained:

Veronika, the words have power. They mostly think I am Romanian or Pakistani at my work, but it is better

here to be seen as such or to be seen as an Eastern European migrant than Roma. Noone likes Roma. I prefer to avoid Roma people to be honest. I choose to live here in London far from my relatives because too much Roma in the same place is trouble. I work with Slovaks and when they ask me I say that I am Slovak. If the other Slovaks not tell them that they think I am Roma, I would never tell it to anyone. (Slovak Roma man, 32)

Roma who hide their ethnic background have a different migration pattern to those who identify openly as Roma. They frequently depart their country of origin alone, they are below 40 years, have no children and take no responsibility for others in their family (Brown et al., 2014; Cools and Oosterlynck, 2015). They also tend to come from relatively less deprived home situations than those who move with their whole families and they have the knowledge of how to apply for jobs abroad. Some interviewees have excellent language skills, are well educated and have easily made contact with employment agencies before arrival in the UK. A few stressed their previous experiences abroad as au pairs, construction workers or cleaners. These participants had all been employed in their home countries and had reliable networks who were able to support them in finding jobs.

Most of this study's participants in this category were living in shared accommodations with other Hungarian, Slovak or Polish nationals as they were unwilling to live close to Roma households or with their extended family networks in the host country. These self-differentiating practices were not only seen as identity management, but also as an internal bordering between different classes in the Roma diaspora. As one participant clarified, many of them prefer to isolate themselves and live in 'in-betweenness'. They do not belong to the local Roma ethnic networks, and they are

socially and culturally excluded from the host society. Interestingly, several participants who were using the strategy of ethnic invisibility were raised in state care in their home countries and had mainly negative experiences which they associated with ethnicised connotations. As they explained, hiding ethnicity might enable one to participate in the local economy, but simultaneously it does not prevent social exclusion in the host country.

Roma migration trends are similar to the chain migration of other minorities (when migrants follow their network members abroad) and to those of non-Roma coming from CEE countries (Tóth, 2013). However, even in cases where they live under similar conditions in their home countries, Roma reported seeming to have more difficulty in finding jobs than do non-Roma, when they identified their ethnicity. Losing jobs and falling into debt or usury in their home country were also regularly mentioned as motivations for moving. Three interviewees found jobs in the same profession as in their home country, for example bakers at TESCO who obtained the same jobs in London. Almost all the participants who were working in London stated that there had been few chances for them to participate in the labour markets in their home countries in recent years, due to prejudice and discrimination in application procedures. In cases when they reduced their ethnic networks post-migration and obtain a job, several Roma migrants stressed that they still did not feel socially accepted. They have few acquaintances with the British majority population (or amongst other minorities) and complain about stress, isolation, boredom, social exclusion and, in some cases, homesickness. Some even referred to a fear of depression. Social isolation in cases of economically integrated Roma migrants is therefore two-fold, on the one hand the host society is experienced as distant, on the other hand

Roma migrants are also alienated from their existing ethnic networks. Roma newcomers following this strategy not only keep their ethnicity hidden, but sometimes also keep a distance from other Roma migrants, even if they were from the same sending country. One Slovak man described this distance as follows:

I have no problem with them, of course. I'm a Gypsy and often I feel sorry for them, because I do not agree with his Gypsy way of thinking and therefore I do not feel comfortable among them. Because they think differently. They are negligent, annoying, and sometimes I feel like if I'd stay around them they would look down on me and cannot understand that I am different and why. We do not feel happy among many Roma. I cannot tell you why, but no. (Slovak Roma man, 49)

These narratives challenge the common notion of bonding and Roma ethnic enclaves, as these relationships became situationally overwritten by many participants. Another interviewee from Poland stressed that she felt annoyed by her Roma network because people asked her for favours, but never returned her support. 'I know it's going to sound stupid now, but for me, I hate Roma people. I don't know why, but I always say this' (Hungarian Roma women, 26)

A Hungarian Roma man, who was living with a non-Roma woman, referred to Roma as '*tieganas*', which is a discriminatory name in his language. He even changed his surname to make it less obvious to strangers that he is Roma. He clarified that he hates Roma because he was beaten up daily by his step-parents, who were non-Roma. These experiences led to an internalised stigma and aversion to his own ethnic group. Controversially, while his Roma background was constantly denied, he

repeatedly stated that there is no discrimination in London. He assumes that in such a huge diversity there is a lack of knowledge about Roma ethnicity. In these narratives distance from Roma ethnicity was thus used to symbolise social mobility and social integration despite the fact that many of these migrants were living in isolation within their East European diaspora. Therefore, hiding ethnic identity was used not only to prevent situational discrimination within the host society but also to prevent bullying by their fellow countrymen. These narratives were constantly shifting between the narratives of ‘the British dream’, a place for hardworking migrants where you can succeed if you integrate, with narratives on the exclusionary British society, where migrants are exploited to do the jobs the local population refused to do. In the latter narratives, Roma are considered just as socially inferior as any other minority, therefore, discrimination was not experienced as a result of being Roma, but as a foreign migrant in general. This might be explained by the multi-ethnic experience in the big cities of the UK, which are in comparison to CEE sending countries, situated very differently from the Roma/Non-Roma ethnic dichotomy within sending countries. Therefore, the precariat situation of Roma was not explained by Romaphobia, but by recognition of the social inferiority of the foreign ethnic working class and national communitarian values. This model has been also confirmed by those profiling measures that were targeting foreign benefit claimants as applications do not sort out applicants based on ethnic attributes, but on the financial attributes of these foreigners (Nagy, 2016).

Therefore, as a result of the stereotypes of poor Roma ‘benefit tourists’, most of the Roma respondents who hid their ethnicity praised the opportunities available in London, but they were also not confident enough to publicly admit their social or

cultural differences *as* Roma. In order to preserve their dignity, Roma women typically emphasised that they try to avoid the negative impacts of Roma economic stereotypes and use their nationality as a ‘public identity’ to engage with the local cultural expectations. This was often justified by previous experiences in their home countries and by reference to stigmatising concepts used by British citizens in their presence. One participant I interviewed, who was regularly stigmatised in elementary school, interpreted self-identification as an unnecessary risk that could lead to exclusion:

Why would I tell them? If they don't ask, I won't tell them . . . It is a risk to be identified as a Roma. It is not negative, but it is always a risk to be seen as a Roma. . . .

Do you think there's a negative image about Slovak Roma in the UK?

It doesn't matter if you are Slovak Roma or Spanish Roma or Italian. They have a bad opinion. (Slovak woman, 23)

Others also remained silent about their ethnicity when they became involved in conversations discussing Roma cultural stereotypes. Some young parents did not even tell their children that they were Roma. By framing their identity as a CEE national migrant, they say they are not hiding their identity or trying to pass as non-Roma, but, as several participants emphasised, they would rather not share their personal business with others. This self-censorship, however, also contributes to their social isolation. Some Slovak and Czech Roma families stressed that they are not willing to move into districts where their relatives are living, and they even want to avoid their churches. Some young males stated that they consciously avoid traditional clothes and hairstyle as they do

not want to be even associated with other Roma migrants. Although most of the arguments were justified by the negative experiences of their families, I also witnessed occasions where it was unclear why the civil servant who was dealing with a Roma client described her as ‘a worthless citizen who is abusing the UK welfare system’. The decision to dissociate from social settings like a Roma diaspora epitomises how participants perceive that they would be treated in London if they were identified. In turn this creates a wall of silence between these newcomers and the host society, increasing their social isolation, distrust in the host society and sustaining their situation of precarity.

In short, by ‘disengagement-coping’ (Choi et al., 2011), Roma actively withdraw from situations where they might experience discrimination. Accordingly, Roma newcomers employ conscious strategies to mitigate the impact of stigmatisation with the hope of increasing their social inclusion. However, after arrival in a new country, many are confronted with the complexities of expectations they have to satisfy in a foreign society. It is not only ethnicity or self-sustainability that shapes their inclusion, but the social recognition of the job selected in the local context. If their role is considered as filthy, unskilled labour or self-employment in a field regarded as financially opaque (e.g. associated with secrecy among business partners involved in activities such as car dealing, subletting, selling antique or other goods) even if they pay taxes, they are seen as untrustworthy by the majority population in the host society (Wilson, 2000).

Communitarianism and conflicting neoliberal values

Based on the concept of communitarianism described above, newcomers are not

socially excluded based on formal citizenship, but on legal economic productivity and a historically developed social citizenship (Somers and Wright, 2008). These are based on the concept of solidarity that is currently framed by the neoliberal concept of tax contributions monitored by digitalised service provisions. Therefore, we have to analytically distinguish between formal citizenship (juridical codified rights and duties of citizen-members of states) and an economically productive moral citizenship (a counterfactual ideal of citizen participation) (Schinkel, 2008: 17). Social sorting mechanisms of welfare services are thus extended by exclusionary labour market values defined by the attributes of the ‘decent hard-working tax payer’, which is represented as in conflict with the socially constructed image of ethnic Roma migrants.

As the referendum votes for Brexit (in 2016) have shown, media interpretations of migrant workers also contribute to the disadvantaged labour market participation of new migrants as these are presented in terms of social economic threat. Though several forms of discriminatory practices have been discussed in the literature as targeting Roma due to their ethnicity, nationality or social economic position (Fox et al., 2012; Kovats, 2003; Petrova, 2003), research participants described some bureaucratic practices discriminative, even cases which were difficult to identify as ethnicised discrimination considering the many disadvantages applicants faced in the host countries. For instance, some were unable to open bank accounts while others stressed their repeated temporary employment contracts or rejected job applications based on their limited CV. Integration and labour market participation thus do not only become more complex because of (potential) ethnic discrimination against newcomers, but also because of their financial profile and traceability online.

With technological developments and the introduction of E-governance newcomers are subjected to a range of new control measures based on their labour history, tax payment and financial credibility. Thus, if the family income was not legitimised by proof of tax payments or payslips, extra screening took place, social security agents visited respondents regularly, and often they were ‘controlled’ by the local civil servants until they felt forced to leave the Borough they lived in. Since there was already mutual distrust and Roma families were uncertain about the formal expectations within their municipality, they considered safeguarding measures operationalised by civil servants as policing their private lives. According to these social sorting practices, this suspicion of immigrants does not engage with the formal inclusion of citizens that are legitimised by free mobility available to EU nationals, but focuses on their moral inclusion in the discursive domain.

Accordingly, those who try to stay self-employed (e.g. as a painter or a window cleaner) and are not willing to be stigmatised as a benefit tourist might still become excluded in the UK host society. Although they are not excluded based on Roma ethnicity or due to their welfare dependency, Roma migrants who try to engage with the labour market often remain outsiders. Some participants interpreted their situation as cultural conflict in their values and lifestyle, whilst others see it as relative deprivation and exclusion by British citizens. However, based on the employment history of these invisible migrants, their social isolation and ethnic invisibility not only reflect the differentiation of the ‘good’ active citizen from the ‘inactive’ citizen in a host society, but also differentiations based on social and cultural assimilation (Schinkel and Van Houdt, 2010). Accordingly, the role of the ‘social contract’ – which forms the foundations of nation states and in which host societies prescribe the duties,

responsibilities and moral capacities of potential citizens – has changed (Schinkel et al., 2015). Van Houdt et al. (2011: 16) suggest that the new preconditions for earning one’s inclusion as a newcomer should be understood through:

three intertwined processes, called neoliberal communitarianism:

1. (re)formulations of social contracts between (potential) citizens, civil society, the state and the markets;
2. a renewed sacralisation of the nation; and
3. a form of citizenship that involves an increased emphasis on the need to earn one’s citizenship.

For those EU citizens who live and work in another country, they are not necessarily guaranteed to become socially integrated into the host country. Newcomer Roma included in this study has hardly any contact with the majority population, were not engaged in their British sacralisation practices (celebrating the national memorials, etc.) and were also not eager to obtain British citizenship. Thus, political programmes of EU citizenship in relation to integration in the UK manifest conflictually as both a ‘neoliberalisation’ of citizenship that involves an increased emphasis on the need to earn one’s citizenship and an increased ‘communitarianisation’ (Etzioni, 2007). Brubaker (1992) identifies these practices as a ‘sacralisation’ of the nation in response to waves of immigration.

Although my research was completed before the Brexit debate, the collected experiences of Roma resonate with the cultural and economic arguments of the exclusionary communitarian narrative that led voters to support the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. As Roma participants explained, migrants who are subjected to suspicion respond by consciously constructing an identity perceived of as deserving in the

host society. In this identity-making process, they dissociate themselves from stigmatised parameters to avoid cultural expulsion. However, this adaptation does not comprehend the mechanisms of *assimilation* in which assimilative objectives of deservingness and inclusion are vague and ever shifting. In summary, unlike membership of the nation state, membership in society is a non-codified discursive construct. The following empirical data provide several examples of how such economic strategies are valorised and contribute to structural exclusion of newcomers.

Self-employment as social exclusion

Roma economic strategies are often mystified in public discourse, which associates their labour market position with ethnic distinctiveness. Many scholars argue that Roma are living in a marginal position due to their structural exclusion, which makes them unable to participate in the mainstream labour market. Others, like Michael Stewart (1997), claim that Roma economic strategies are strictly related to their self-identification practices. He asserts that Roma consciously stay out of the mainstream labour market to maintain their cultural identity. In Stewart's study in socialist Hungary, where Vlach Roma were employed in factories, Roma expressed an ideological preference for so-called *Romani butji* (Roma work), which connotes deals in the marketplace which show one's acumen and through which men constantly recreated themselves as Roma. This focus on personhood and the creation of proper social relationships (Gay y Blasco, 1999) highlights the need for researchers to pay attention not only to the description of Roma participation in different social-economic contexts and also how it is related to their ethnic distinctiveness, but also to the

various ways that Roma conceptualise articulations between gender, money, work and ethnic belonging (Brazzabeni et al., 2015).

In short, there are many theories about the resilience of Roma and how it is articulated in their transnational economic strategies. Scholars such as those above refer to particularised Roma financial strategies but according to some of the Roma participants it is not ethnically specific in their current migration networks. Accordingly, those immigrants who did not find employment opportunities and who had marketable skills often started their own businesses. One Polish family shared their innovative history, which represents the dynamic interrelation of market and control polices. The participant's father moved to Bradford, where he had family, but he had a hard time there because he could not find a permanent job. He stayed in Bradford for six months, working in a carwash and distributing leaflets, and then moved to London. He was saving money for a rented apartment, so began to take gardening, decorating and painting jobs. Later, he recruited other family members to help with leaflet distribution. As the participant explained, they turned the leaflet distribution role to their own benefit by distributing their own leaflets alongside those they were paid to distribute:

When I finished my 11th [year of school] in Poland, I came to London too. I started straight away doing leaflet distribution with them, so they slowly started to give us more jobs. We were doing it together, and in addition we started . . . because I spoke English, not really good, but communicated, we made our own leaflets too [advertisement for their other jobs] like painter and decorator. (Polish man 35)

As this family's case illustrates, those who were unable or unwilling to become dependent on employment agencies danced on the edge of grey market

businesses and self-employment. As the previously quoted participant stated: 'If people aren't going to give you a job, you can create one for yourself!' (Polish man, 35).

Entrepreneurial skills were also used to develop a role as a sponsor who assists other migrants. Local knowledge of market dynamics has a high value among Roma newcomers who can invent new segments in the local market. One of these entrepreneurs described the advantages of knowledge of different countries and how he implemented his knowledge about being 'self-employed'. He had lived in Germany and then in Canada, where he opened a pizzeria without government support. However, his asylum claim was refused, so he was sent back to the home country. There he was involved in numerous black market activities, such as the antique trade and car trade, as well as recruiting gardeners.

Social media plays an extremely important role in these situations. Information, advice and decisions are regularly given and made on Skype and Facebook. Networks monitor each other and constantly calculate the most profitable decisions related to the financial implications of investments in different countries. These activities also increasingly draw the attention of local authorities, who try to push these 'grey' activities outside of their territories instead of considering their possibilities and advantages. Therefore, to avoid any repercussions associated with these activities, many families currently choose to avoid these kinds of financial strategies.

The cases above illustrated a conflicting expectation of the neoliberal labour market and the sacralisation of migrants in the local culture. While these examples confirm that migrants invent new economic fields outside the traditional markets, they also illustrate the reason for social exclusion as these practices were facilitated by social secrecy and suspicion. While Roma migrants typically exhibit dispositions of neoliberal citizenship

consistent with shifts in the bureaucratic field, they also sustain cultural othering in the host society. Indeed, neoliberal politicians and bureaucrats pressure government agencies to embrace accountable, business-like and responsibility-inducing models of service (Woolford and Nelund, 2013), but these might also directly raise levels of exclusion and distrust towards these foreign entrepreneurs.

Neoliberal communitarianism is thus a paradoxical strategy of population management using both neoliberal techniques and rhetoric (e.g. an emphasis on activation and contractual notions) as well as communitarian notions and techniques (strong emphasis on national community, e.g. supporting its core of shared values as guiding principles). It is thus a form of governing that requires both community and individual responsibility (Van Houdt et al., 2011).

In summary, new citizens are encouraged to be inventive and self-supporting, but they also need to conform with the cultural economic strategies of the host society. As it was argued by Engbersen and Broeders (2011), the transnational nature of newcomers' market activities and the foggy nature of their money transfers as well as 'cash cultures' trigger control measures by national bureaucracies, particularly in the financial field. In turn, these targeted monitoring practices increase fear of authorities among entrepreneurs who are pushed towards new economic strategies. These processes are entwined, pushing newcomers into precarity and social isolation.

Conclusion

As Woolford and Nelund (2013: 293) write, 'neoliberalism is a transnational political project aiming to remake the nexus of market, state, and citizenship from above'. Although the legal acknowledgement of newcomers in a host society is a regularly debated issue in mobility studies, the

limitations of inclusion based on communitarianism in the Member States are often missing from this debate. As the cases of Roma migrants illustrate, economic values and socially accepted strategies of labour market participation are also historically and culturally constructed, and those who do not adapt to socially conventional methods of economic participation will be systematically 'sorted out'. With the digitalisation of governance several new incentives have been developed to control and monitor migration labour. Those self-sustaining immigrants who are able to avoid the gaze of surveillance are therefore still challenged by conformist cultural expectations that shape the precariat of newcomers. Roma who tried to prevent exclusion and discrimination are often hidden from monitoring and control practices; however, their economic participation in particular fields might still be used to justify their social exclusion.

Although ethnic discrimination has been used to critique UK governance, the current social exclusion of Roma is strictly defined by moralising parameters focused on stratified labour market positions and categories of entrepreneurship. Even in cases when Roma migrants experience discrimination, it might best reflect their economic position rather than their ethnic identity as an attribute to be 'sorted out'. Accordingly, the geopolitical principle of the UK frames inclusion and citizenship not only as legal concepts, but based on communitarian values of the host society presumes that these benefits should be earned by adopting the correct economic strategies for a neoliberal society.

In this context, precarity represents the dominant mode of governance. David Lyon's surveillance theory (2010) can be used to explain how communitarian values of labour participation create categories of migrant precarity and use it to exclude unproductive migrants or those who use

'suspicious' financial strategies. With the growing extension of the EU, nation states are reaching back towards social contractulist politics with adjustments to specific citizenship criteria (Sassen, 2006; Schinkel, 2009), such as participation in the labour market culture. Roma migrants therefore experience social exclusion and cultural differentiation because of their economic strategies which are often considered as unlawful by the host society. As the selected cases illustrate, EU citizenship and labour participation are only technical parameters to be overcome in accession to full citizenship. Moral inclusion should also be earned by culturally accepted economic strategies. These changes explain why self-sustaining Roma migrants who are hiding their ethnic identity still experience exclusion from the communitarian British society.

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