

# **FROM SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTALITY TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE: EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRACTICE AMONG ROMA IN ROMANIA**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis attempts to explain the socio-economic differences amongst groups of Roma in Romania by looking at the way in which they appropriated (complied with and resisted against) the categories and symbols of the socialist modernization projects. Socialist governmentality aimed at creating spaces for identification by using diverse technologies of power such as sedentarization and proletarianization. However, the implementation of these programs in the case of nomadic Gypsies were negotiated and domesticated in the process of local governance. Moreover, the nomads' informal knowledge was not substituted by the new one, imposed by the socialist governmentality, but it was rather a source of adaptability for both Roma and local authorities in the process of socialist modernization.

On the other hand, the settled Roma, as governable subjects were easily approached by the socialist state and they were easier to incorporate in the socialist structures. In addition, as they were out of other alternatives for living, they were in a position to accept easier the new spaces for identification. The different forms of knowledge developed and used in the socialist regime either empowered or disempowered the Roma after 1990. While nomadic Roma, who preserved their informal knowledge succeeded in adapting successfully to post-socialism, the settled Roma, who made use of the imposed proletarian knowledge, were unable to manage in the new socio-economic environment. Therefore, this paper can be seen as a critique of the modernization projects of Roma populations, which generally approached the population outside their own resources and capacities.

***To my grandmother Alexandra lordache, a model of kindness and wisdom  
in my life***

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## Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Socialist governmentality and local governance in the process of modernization/assimilation of Roma: literature review .....	8
2. Methodology .....	20
3. Results and analysis.....	25
3.1. Historical background of the settled and nomadic Roma in Costeşti village .....	25
3.2. Local politics and governance: fields of negotiating Roma assimilation .....	28
3.2.1. Sedentarization of Căldărars.....	29
3.2.2. The role of bulibaşa in negotiating the relations between Căldărars and the state .....	32
3.2.3. Local authorities and Căldărars circumventing the central official rules.....	34
3.2.4. Economic niche of Căldărars, as approached by the local authorities.....	38
3.2.5. Romanianized Gypsies and the local state .....	41
3.3. Socio-economic organization of Romanianized Roma and Căldărars in post- socialism .....	45
3.3.1. Romanized Roma in post-socialism : strategies of subsistence.....	51
Conclusions.....	54
Bibliography .....	58

## Introduction

Many of the research and policy reports tend to construct the socio-economic situation of Roma by referring to a homogenous population described stereotypically as the poor, uneducated, marginalized and the underclass (Zamfir, Preda 2002; Bădescu et al 2007). Despite these, in present Romania and other Central-Eastern European countries (Mraz 2001; Guy 2001) great diversity and sharp socioeconomic divisions between the poor and the rich characterize Roma. In this sense, some authors have already suggested that the wealthy Gypsies seem to be usually the previously nomadic ones, those who deploy “traditional” ways of life, while the poor are usually those previously settled and much more violently exposed to mainstream society (Mraz 2001; Marushia kova, Popov 2001; Guy 2001; Voiculescu 2004). My research attempts to answer this empirical paradox: why certain nomadic Roma groups adapted successfully to post-socialism, while settled Roma groups are usually trapped in poverty. Based on social anthropological field research data, as well as on recent historical accounts, my research will question how different Romanian Roma pathways of social mobility were affected by assimilation/sedentarization projects of the socialist state.

Roma history, as any other history, has been full of interventions by the state, which worked as a crucial identifier imposing categories and classification schemes (Brubacker, Cooper 2000). From the decision to enslave the Roma to a proprietor’s court or monastery, to their release, peasantization, proletarization, underclass-ification, the state has been an active agent in classifying and defining the Roma. Every such attempt

generated further impoverishment and marginality for some Roma groups, or ascendant mobility for other Roma.

Sedentarization and assimilation, as state projects, were designed as early as the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in all three provinces that nowadays make up Romania. Their distinctiveness is that they were conceived of in different contexts and they addressed various Roma groups differently. Therefore, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gypsies were slaves in Moldova and Wallachia and serfs in Transylvania and were divided into three categories according to the relationship with their masters (to whom they also had to pay annual taxes): crown, lords', and monasteries' Gypsies (Achim 2004). Those who fitted in the first category were free to travel all over the country upon the condition to pay taxes to their masters. As for the other two, many of them were domestic slaves. This meant that they had to spend most of their time working the lord's or the monastery's land. In addition, they were much more settled than the first category. Later, these categories of Roma defined by the state led to various transformations in each Roma group.

Nowadays Roma are no longer nomadic as such; they used to be so until they were partially sedentarized by the socialist state. Nevertheless, they still maintain life styles and economic activities associated with nomadism. Most of their economic activities are associated with mobility inside and outside the country. Moreover, such Gypsies are still named in some communities as *nomads*, and this is the case in the village, Costești, Moldova, Eastern Romania, in which I have done my field research supporting the present paper. The other category of Gypsies, sedentarized in earlier times,

has lived and worked for a long time in the same location, becoming proletarians during socialism.

Among the groups which make up these categories, naturally, one can encounter contradictory socioeconomic patterns. For instance, among nomadic groups one can find poor Gypsies as well, while among the settled there might be rich Gypsies. In addition, the categories of nomadism and sedentarism, as I use them here are not sharply divided in the empirical world. Thus, among the settled one can find some groups who seasonally work or trade in nearby villages or towns. Nevertheless, I maintain these categorical distinctions in order to enable comparisons between the economic organization of different Roma groups in different political and economic regimes: socialism and post-socialism.

Assimilation, as a modernization project, continued also in socialism when the state aimed at modernizing Roma by incorporating them in the structures of the socialist economy. The main processes involved were sedentarization, proletarianization and insertion into the education system. According to their definition as nomadic or settled, different groups of Roma were approached differently by the socialist state. While nomadic Roma became the principal focus of the assimilation policies, being forced to sedentarize, the already settled Roma were forced to become proletarians.

Sedentarization<sup>1</sup> was conceived of since the 1960s when large nomadic populations were forced by the socialist authorities to settle in villages or towns (Achim

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<sup>1</sup> Sedentarization and actions of dispersal were parts of the larger national systematization project meant to change the physical and social landscape according to the industrialization and urbanization largely proceeded all over the country. Thus, not only Gypsies were moved from one place to another and pushed into different ways of life, but also many Romanians living in villages were encouraged to leave their places and to become more productive for the socialist regime.

2004). However, as the Hungarian case also shows, prior to that date, a large part of the Gypsy population was already settled and even assimilated by the host communities, during various old regimes (among which slavery was particularly relevant for the Romanian case), while others were nomads (Stewart 1993).

The state also tried to force the Roma to leave their traditional occupations and to employ them in collective agriculture or industry. In order to compel them to work collectively, the Romanian government began to restrict nomadic Roma access to work materials, many of them being confiscated as it was the case with carriages and horses, and with the gold many owned. Even if the police and other highly coercive institutions of the socialist state harassed them, many Gypsies continued their “traditional” occupations as coppersmiths, tinsmiths, or traders and some of them managed to obtain trade permits from the local authorities (Achim 2004).

Proletarianization of the Roma was a process that started since the beginning of socialism, which was especially applied to the settled Roma. This process was a typical example of the functionalist approach of the socialist state in its projects of assimilation. In this sense, the Roma fulfilled the state economy demand for unskilled jobs. Anyway, not all the Roma were employed in the state planned economy. As already mentioned the nomadic and the semi-nomadic ones in Romania as well as in Hungary refused to work for the state and resisted the projects of state assimilation (Stewart 1993; Achim 2004).

On the other hand, the already settled Gypsies (Curtens, Rudars) were easily assimilated in the socialist economy, many of them becoming workers in factories or in collective farms. Education was also an important factor in the equation of assimilation. Even if the Roma parents were forced to send their children to school, attendance was

still low among them. Many refused to send their children to school because they lacked appropriate material means to support their studies and because they were afraid of being discriminated against or challenged in their worldviews by the teachers (Helsinki Watch 1991), the last case being representative of the nomadic Roma.

As Brubaker (2001) noticed, assimilation as a policy can remain only an abstract project without direct, concrete assimilationist effects. Forced assimilation will produce and strengthen the differences rather than generate similarities among people. In the case of the socialist state, the attempts to homogenize society by imposing economic and political criteria over social life led indirectly to differentiation and hierarchies between different Roma groups and ethnicities. Proletarianization of Roma was not a homogenous process, but rather created differences and hierarchies among workers, and between them and the majority. Usually, Gypsies who worked in factories fulfilled low-skilled jobs, as compared with the majority who were trained and specialized to perform medium and high-skilled jobs. Moreover, the conditions for housing and education were at lower levels than those provided for the majority population and this led to further marginalization and discrimination (Achim 2004).

This paper argues that the projects of modernization were the expression of a particular socialist governmentality that sought to circumscribe Roma social life to the socialist economy and to transform them into a proletarian class. However, local governance that permitted the negotiation of the official rules at the advantage of the locals altered this general vision. Moreover, while the central government had the authority to generate laws, the local authorities were those empowered to sedentarize and assimilate Gypsies among non-Roma. Thus, the efficiency of the former depended on the

power and willingness of the latter to implement them. Therefore, I will show in my paper that policies of Roma assimilation were not successful because they were subject of negotiation and transformation between nomadic Roma and local authorities. Moreover, nomadic and settled Roma reacted differently to the assimilation policies. While nomadic Gypsies remained outside the socialist structures, being involved in the second economy, settled Gypsies were transformed into proletarians working in the state economy.

After 1989, the differences between settled and nomadic Gypsies were perpetuated and even developed. As it was the case of Hungary (Stewart 1997), the settled who were employed in low-skilled jobs during socialism were the first to be laid off from state enterprises. Many began to live on the social benefits received from the state and on working in Romanian and Hungarian peasant households as day-laborers. Others went abroad for work, even for low returns (Voiculescu 2004). Therefore, today in Romania many communities of settled Roma live in poverty and lack the basic conditions of living. The nomadic Gypsies who resisted assimilation policies continued after 1990 to be mobile and to adapt their occupations. Some of them began to practice successfully cross-border trading into Hungary; illustrative is the case of Gabors from Transylvania. Other nomadic Roma – the Căldărars from Moldova and South Romania - started different sorts of businesses like (whole)selling first and second hand metals to different private agents and companies. Many of them became not only the wealthiest Gypsies among the Roma, but also the wealthiest people in the places where they live.

This empirical account seems to be a paradox that contradicts the modernization theories of upward social mobility. According to these, Roma groups that assimilated the projects of modernization carried out by the nation-state, including compulsory

education, formal employment, sedentarization, and certain values related to social hierarchies would have been easily considered as likely to proceed to upward social mobility. On the other hand, those individuals and groups who rejected the system's predicaments would have been likely to fall within the marginalized, pauperized strata of society. My research will challenge this theoretical and empirical expectation by bringing in the reverse situation, in which the labels of modernization are converted into expressions of marginality and poverty. On the other hand, many Roma who did not fit in the modern state's projects are more likely to go up onto the economic hierarchies among Roma, even if not socially recognized by many of their neighbors, both Romanians and Hungarians. In this sense, their specific knowledge given by mobility, informal occupations and all the "traditional" values proved to be veritable sources of affluence for them. Therefore, my paper will focus on the ways in which projects of modernization of Roma conceived of by the socialist governmentality were negotiated and domesticated by both nomadic Gypsies and local authorities in the process of local governance. In addition, I will inquire into the ways in which both groups of Roma appropriated differently the categories and the form of knowledge generated by the socialist governmentality. Thus, I will show how the Roma compliance or resistance against the socialist modernization affected their existence and life strategies after 1990.

The next chapter offers a broader theoretical view on modernization considered from the lens of the notions of governmentality and local governance. Next, I will describe and explain the methodological strategy used. The following section will be dedicated to the analysis of empirical data that will inquire first into the projects of Roma socialist modernization at the local level and then into their socio-economic organization

after 1990. In the end, I will conclude by explaining the process through which the new social stratification of Roma groups was created.

## ***1. Socialist governmentality and local governance in the process of modernization/assimilation of Roma: literature review***

Sedentarization and assimilation, as state projects, were designed from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but socialism was one of the important periods when these processes took place under the label of modernization. In Romania under socialism, the state aimed at maintaining a national homogeneity by assimilating Gypsies within the majority and the dominant working class. The effects of such an effort of ethnic and social homogenization, systematically carried out by the socialist state, and even by the earlier state formations, were able to produce a great deal of overlapping between categories of class and ethnicity (Verdery 1981). Thus, the state provided large populations of Gypsies with houses and regular unskilled jobs in order to integrate them in the mainstream. On the other hand, the state launched general policies to give marginal groups, with nomad Gypsies among them, the opportunity to work in the second economy.

One of the most important steps in assimilating the Roma was the sedentarization of nomadic Roma. From a neo-Marxist point of view, nomadism was associated with marginality and poverty. Thus, all the Gypsies who were not employed in the formal economy were out-classified as lumpenproletariat (Lucassen 1998). Sedentarization as a

particular ideology was imposed by the modern nation state in order to strengthen and centralize its power by controlling the population (McVeigh 1997). Usually, this process imposed from above was conceived of by the social evolutionist stream of thinking as a transition to “civilization, security and modernity”. Considering the widespread criticism, which subjected modernity and modernization in general from the point of view of the anti-evolutionist reactions, McVeigh offers an alternative and critical vision to the sedentarization ideology. In this sense, he argues that many nomadic societies have the same levels of complexity in their social and political organization. From this point of view, he considers that sedentarization can be seen as a form of oppression and coercive control aimed at destroying the ethnic identities of the nomads:

*Nomadism is a constituent part of the ethnicity of “ethnic nomads” - forcibly to sedentarize them is not simply to stop them traveling, it is actively to destroy their ethnicity or “race”. (McVeigh 1997: 16)*

Referring to Gypsy travellers, McVeigh considers that the nomads were perceived as a threat for the nation state because nomadism was long associated with deviance. In order to solve their imagined “problems”, the modern state sought to control these populations through sedentarization, which afterwards can enable the mainstream society to assimilate them. Beyond this simplifying view, however, nomadism is not only an itinerant mode of existence, but also an expression of specific values about work, property, and social life (McVeigh 1997). On the other hand, sedentarism, as an ideological construction, employs a hegemonic vision about wage labor and private property (McVeigh 1997). Against this hegemony of sedentarism, which wrongly reduces nomadism to vagrancy and deviance, there are many examples of resistance and non-

compliance, among them those of travelers of England and Ireland who continued to be self-employed and to travel during the industrialization period (Okely 1982).

However, for most of the Roma in Romania, these processes were premises for further dispossession, negative accumulation, and dependence on the state in post-socialism. That is why the mostly assimilated Roma seem also the poorest, living on the state's social transfers and benefits, day-labour etc.

Assimilation should be perceived as integrative to modernization that was equally the aim of both socialist states and Western ones. The process of modernization aimed at creating new institutions and structures and opposed them to the communal and customary prescriptions getting expression in the so-called "traditional" societies (Krishan 2001). Therefore, the so-called "traditional" societies, which are represented, in my case, by nomadic Roma, were compelled in a way to subsume their particular institutions to the new socialist (in my case) socio-economic order. However, Krishan (2001) suggests that the new forms of identification imposed by modernization do not exclude the traditional ones - tribal membership, race, religion, age - which struggle to survive in the new social system. For instance, nomadic Gypsies in socialism maintained a great deal of their lifestyles by - seasonal migration, trading - even if they were forced to settle and practice formal jobs. On the other hand, modernization entailed dislocation and, I would add, fragmentation of these traditional communities that were compelled to insert themselves in a new institutional system that fulfilled different socio-economic tasks that were formerly achieved by the community. In this sense, Krishan (2001) notes that the manipulation of the social and economic life by modern institutions can lead to the individuals' dependency on the state. The clearest example is the extreme poverty

experienced by settled Roma in post-socialism, after being assimilated by state structures in socialism. Many of them became dependent on social state benefits after 1989 (Voiculescu 2004).

The differentiation of institutions and norms developed outside the community is not the only key element in the process of modernization (Smelser 2001). Integration is also another process that creates a new logic of association for the new structures developed by modernization. Therefore, if at the first, the institutions as parts of the communities were substituted by modern ones and abstracted from their whole, at the second stage, the whole is reconstructed on a new basis following the principles of modernization. Thus, in socialism, the state attempted to substitute the Roma community, as a source of fulfillment of the social and economic tasks (education, work, sociality) by modern institutions (school, factory, cultural houses etc.) and to recreate a new unity around these institutions (trade unions, parent associations etc). However, this social reconfiguration, as Smelser writes, can lead to social conflicts and, I would say, resistance, as it was the case of nomadic Gypsies forced by the state to integrate in the mainstream society. Nomadic Gypsies accepted sedentarization only partially and continued to travel and practice informal activities. Moreover, their particular knowledge continued to develop in the families along generations.

However, as Gati (1974) shows, the socialist perspective of modernization is quite different from the Western one. Although they have some features in common as it is the idea of progress and linearity of the process, the Soviet concept of modernization was focused on vertical rather than horizontal development, and had as a final stage the attainment of communist society. Stages of development are seen historically rather than

empirically, as it are the cases of Western societies. In the case of the socialist systems, the basic imperatives and indicators of modernization were the collectivization of property and institutions and the controlling and transformation of certain social groups and classes. In any of the socialist countries, state policies towards Roma were based on the Soviet ideology of minorities and model of modernization (Stewart 2001).

In Romania, The Romanian Communist Party conceived of modern society as “multilaterally developed” in which all the levels of society should be transformed and improved economically, politically, socially, and culturally (Gati 1974). From an economic point of view, modernization meant a high level of industrialization and consequent urbanization initiated and controlled by the state through central planning. From a social and cultural perspective, modern citizens were required to acquire knowledge and training in order to participate in the socialist working system. Similarly, the various ethnic groups were compelled to fulfill the functions of the economic system. Thus, the marker of identity was not ethnicity but rather the economic position through and from which individuals contributed to the construction of the socialist society. In this way, proletarianization of the Roma is a typical example of the functional approach of the socialist state in its projects of modernization (Guy 1998).

At the political level, the citizens were responsible for the alleviation of traditional views, while the state had to diminish the differences between ethnic groups by subsuming their identities to the new economic system. Along with this etatist ideology, socialist modernization brought about an over-bureaucratization of social and economic life, a “dictatorship of public life” through which individuals were governed and controlled (Outhwaite, Larry 2005).

Although there are many differences between the Soviet and the Western forms of modernization, in both the links between economic position, level of education, rewards and social prestige are enabled by modern institutions. At the same time, both capitalist and socialist systems are socially stratified as shaped by different economic and political factors (Goldthorpe 2001). Goldthorpe criticizes the deterministic relation between material life and social order and argues that social stratification can be an outcome of the political action as well as of the economic and social processes. Thus, the proletarianization of the Roma can also be viewed not as a homogenous process, but rather as stimulating the differences among the Roma, and between Roma and Romanians. Usually, Gypsies who worked in factories fulfilled low-skilled jobs, as compared with Romanians who were trained and specialized to perform particular, medium and high-skilled jobs. By the same token, Gypsies who worked in factories differentiated from those who were semi-nomadic and involved in the second economy by the form and level of training, by their lifestyles and, more generally, by their attachment to either “traditional” or “modern” life. Although the socialist state attempted to homogenize society by imposing economic and political criteria over social life, it indirectly created differentiation and hierarchies between different groups and ethnicities.

In the same evolutionist manner, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) speak about modernization not only as a process of rationalization, secularization and bureaucratization, but also as a process of human development. They say that socio-economic modernization develops the individuals’ capabilities and consequently increases their autonomy and self-expression. Raising the levels of education, economic growth and sociability, modernization generates the premises for human autonomy.

Moreover, for Inglehart and Welzel (2005) modernization substitutes the secular-rational values to traditional ones. Consequently, he rejects the coexistence of traditional and modern values emphasized by other authors. In this perspective, modernization appears as a linear process with multiple stages (industrialization, post-industrialization), as a transition from “traditional” to “modern” societies in which the individual gradually acquires social and economic autonomy. This theory and in general theories of modernization, as Outhwaite and Larry (2005) noticed, were focused more on the idea of temporal progress and less on the discontinuities and disturbances generated by this process.

Nevertheless, critical studies on modernization indicate the inconsistencies of this process. Perhaps the most important cost of modernization is the dislocation and disembodying of different groups and communities considered as traditional or anti-modern. Upon many of them there was imposed a new system of socio-economic institutions which were taken as superior to their own organization. The latter should, from this point of view, be removed and reintegrated in the new order without being considered a point of departure for the modernization process. Referring to capitalist societies but confirming also the case of socialist ones, Escobar (2004) argues that the main instrument of the process of modernization was the massive displacement of people and their “ecological and cultural transformation along the lines of an allegedly rational order” (p.16). In this way, the “spatial-cultural” projects of development based on the knowledge of experts and guided by the ideology of progress take the form of structural violence that affects the deepest aspects of people’s life.

James Scott (1998) discusses many of the modern state projects as programs of social engineering that do not take account of the local knowledge, of the practical experience and values inherent to local communities. In this sense, the state is mentioned, which attempts to sedentarize the Gypsy, vagrants, homeless etc. These projects were integrated in a larger vision of the state to arrange and shape particular identities into different categories of people in order to hold a greater control over the population. To Scott (1998), social engineering projects are characterized by an “administrative ordering of nature and society” that involves different regimes of citizenship and social welfare. The scientific and technological knowledge is the main ideology of this type of systems - high modernist ideology - that attempts to create a rational plan for the existing social order and to impose changes on people’s moral and living patterns.

Although the social engineering projects of the state did not encounter too much resistance, they failed to reach their goals because of their lack of awareness and consideration for the existing, non-standardized social rules and institutions. Citizens appear in this projects as standardized subjects, as a large uniform mass of people “that have no gender, no values, no opinions or original ideas, no traditions and no distinctive personalities to contribute to the enterprise” (Scott 1998: 6). These modernizing projects of the state with its constraining institutions exclude the individual agency for self-organization and governance (p. 7). Illustrative of these cases are the attempts of the socialist state to assimilate nomadic Roma through sedentarization and proletarianization without taking into account the specificity of their socio-economic organization based on economic activities that necessitated mobility (for example tinker-trading).

However, the state projects become functional when they are adapted and transformed by people to their needs. The official rules and institutions undergo a process of social domestication and become integrated in the system as informal practices. Scott (1998) defines this feature of informality inherent to rational formal systems as “metis to the rescue”. In the case of nomadic Roma, the sedentarization was partially achieved because many of them continue to migrate seasonally to practice their commerce. This temporary migration and their involvement in the second economy were metis features of an utopist project of sedentarization.

Besides processes of industrialization and urbanization, socialist modernization involved a particular form of governmentality. The concept of governmentality, as developed by Foucault (1991) was defined as “art of government” and as “conduct of conduct”, a general vision about how the population should be governed. It is the indirect control over the population exercised “through a specific kind of reasoning” (Lemke 2002: 53) which frames the individual actions and “work[s] through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants, and lifestyle of individuals and groups” (Dean 1999: 12). Thus, the individuals are self-disciplined through specific techniques and tactics that are aimed at imposing new forms of knowledge. These main instruments of the governmentality are differentiated between technologies of power and programs (Gledhill 1994).

*Technologies of power are techniques and practices for the disciplining, surveillance, administration and shaping of human individuals. Programmes define forms of knowledge and discourses about objects of knowledge. (Gledhill 1994: 150)*

Thus, technologies of powers are meant to apply and enforce the knowledge defined by programmes. Moreover, these practices of government attribute new roles, duties or capacities to the people governed (Dean 1999). It creates new spaces of

identification through which the governmental power is aimed at working. Thus, a population can be governed only if it is visible or identifiable and if a specific bunch of knowledge was developed on it (Herbert-Cheshire 2000). In addition, governmentality is aimed at controlling the individuals through various institutions and structures (Dean 1999: 20) – police, army, education, welfare system, etc. - through which the newly developed knowledge is implemented.

Usually, the analyses of governmentality were historically and spatially placed within Western Europe. My research brings in a new discussion about how to understand forms of governmentality in connection with larger processes of socialist modernization in the authoritarian political context of Romania before 1989.

In Romania, the socialist modernization involved an authoritarian form of governmentality in which the state represented “the tactics of government, as a dynamic form and historic stabilization of societal power relations” (Lemke 2002: 58). Thus, authoritarian governmentality was an expression of the “governmentalization of the state” (Dean 1999), phenomenon firstly discussed by Foucault (1991). The main vision of governing populations was to subsume the other categories of identity to the economic principle. Thus, the socialist governmentality aimed at producing a particular knowledge and space for identification through which people behave as socialist citizens, as proletarians. From these points of view, proletarianization was a technology of power meant to shape people’s life and discipline them.

The Roma population was also subjected to the socialist governmentality. Proletarianization and sedentarization of nomadic Gypsies were practices of disciplining, associated with particular knowledge about work and social life in general. Moreover,

this new specialized knowledge was very different from the local knowledge of the nomadic Roma.

In order to understand how socialist governmentality worked, I will look at the ways in which its technologies of power were reflected in local governance. Local governance was defined as the authoritative form of power and control acting through coercive means. Nowadays the concept shifted to new meanings which “involves a partnership between state and non-state actors” (Herbert-Cheshire 2000: 204). The change refers not to the outcome of these practices but rather to the techniques of governance that are not anymore based on “coercive powers of the state” (Herbert-Cheshire 2000: 205). Thus, local governance is defined as a space for negotiation between the people in charge with the government and communities governed rather than the mere application of laws from above (Kearns 1995). Moreover, community is seen as a source of dynamism and change that can lead to modernization through mechanisms different than those proposed by the central state (Tooke 2003).

At the same time, representatives of the local governance “can see themselves as community members” that participate together in the process of governance (Tooke 2003: 233). In my paper, I will show that the new meanings of the concept of local governance can also be applicable in the socialist governance. Thus, in the case of Romanian Roma, projects of modernization were negotiated with the local authorities and, on these bases, the former nomads were not forced to lose their space of expression and to identify with the proletarians.

In the modernization process, the Roma were “unmarked citizens”, that is, in Scott’s (1998) terms, subjects of categorization and classification schemes by the modern

state (Brubaker, Cooper 2000). Categorization by the state is a way of administering symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1985; Brubaker, Cooper 2000) through “public rhetoric, legislative and administrative acts and the distribution of resources via networks of clientage” (Jenkins 2003: 68). The categorization can be assimilated by the classified if the classifier is a “legitimate authority to categorize them, by virtue of their superior ritual status, knowledge” (Jenkins 2003: 70). Once the categorization is assimilated by the categorized, the latter are exposed to a process that deeply transforms their social life. However, this influence cannot be seen as one-way, or unidirectional.

Categorizations, which “fulfill an important role in people’s subjection” (Tooke 2003: 237) can be appropriated differently by various groups. The ways in which these categorizations are appropriated represent “potential targets for strategic reversibility” (Tooke 2003: 237) generating either empowerment or disempowerment. Thus, nomadic and settled Roma appropriated differently the symbols, categories imposed by socialist modernization and this different approach structured their existence, their economic and social life for a long period.

However, the exercise of power and the responses in the form of resistance are not separate phenomena. They rather form a dynamic system in which they influence each other (Haynes, Prakash 1991). Moreover, resistance can be the expression of an alternative form of power that competes and struggles with other structures of power (Abu-Lughod 1990). In the case of these two groups of Roma, their responses to the assimilation/modernization are embedded in their particular and different experiences during slavery.

## **2. Methodology**

First, I have to emphasize that I made use of two analytical categories of Roma - nomadic and settled - that I consider could further enable a better understanding of the relationship between Roma and the state projects of modernization. These categories do not overlap entirely with empirical units, with the populations of Roma represented. They do not represent bounded cultures or homogenous groups but they are put here to differentiate within the Roma population whose socioeconomic life was differently shaped by the political and economic forces in history. In order to understand and explain the sharp socio-economic differences between them, I follow both a micro-historical and an anthropological approach. First, I inquire into the local meanings and actions that emerged at the local level during the process of assimilation. The aim is to explain how the modernization projects of the state were implemented at the local level and how both Roma groups appropriated the categories and identities conceived of by socialist governmentality.

In order to do that I use the micro-political approach proposed by Gledhill (2000), who proposes to look at the ways in which “power is grounded in everyday life” (p. 129) and at the ways micro-political processes challenge the grand projects of the state. By using life histories, I attempt to bring in details about the actions and interactions between local authorities and Roma, which brought about new meanings of the state project of Roma modernization. The temporality of my research starts from the period in which the state began sedentarizing Gypsies and when the nomads were forced to settle in villages, as the neighbours of the peasants.

In addition, to explain their former and present socio-economic organization, I made use of a qualitative approach suggested by Berteaux and Thompson (1997) in the study of social mobility, which differentiate from the classical survey method.

Usually, surveys analyze only two temporal references: the time when the individual is surveyed and the time when his/her parents got their last job or last form of education (Andorka 1997). Nevertheless, studying social mobility entails also the transition from one socio-economic position to another, from one period to another. The time of individual actions should be also framed in the time of the general structures (Andorka 1997). Therefore, the advantage of using work and life histories is that they represent a tool in understanding how the same social-economic transformations produced various and opposite effects towards socio-economic statuses of individuals, families and groups living in the same area (Berteaux, Thompson 1997). Another problem related to quantitative researches is that they usually approximate the average population features without taking into account the differences between segments of the population. This is the case of many of the quantitative studies focused on Roma where their socio-economic conditions are analyzed in comparison with those of the majority population (Zamfir 1993; Zamfir, Preda 2002; Bădescu et al 2007). Therefore, to understand structural frameworks and sharp differences between Roma populations I used life and work histories in non- and semi-structured form. The people whom I have talked to were settled and nomadic Roma<sup>2</sup> living in the Costești village, their Romanian neighbors, and the bureaucrats of the socialist regime who were witnesses to and participants in the process of assimilation initiated by the socialist state.

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<sup>2</sup>During my fieldwork I had informal conversations with approximately 25 Roma from each community of Costești.

In the case of nomadic Roma, I used non-structured interviews in an informal manner that gave me access to their previous and present economic organization characterized by informality. For example, Căldărars - the former nomads of Costeşti - are involved in informal activities and try to avoid as much as possible the state authorities. For this matter, some of them are in the records of the police and generally very suspicious to any outsider. On the other hand, their past is full of violations of their life and possessions - deportation to Transnistria in the Second World War and the systematic seizure of their gold - that was not completely compensated after 1990 and presently constitutes a source of discontent in different families. Therefore, I considered it inappropriate to interview them formally about their past and present economic activities. It seemed to me a better solution to carry out free and short conversations, avoiding in this way any intrusive methods.

In the case of settled Gypsies, the unstructured interviews were also a good choice. Because many of them live in extreme poverty, lacking the basic means of subsistence, they have become accustomed to the official representatives that inquire into their socio-economic conditions and they usually expect to receive material help from anyone who is interested in their life. Consequently, I tried to avoid this trap by approaching them informally in unstructured conversations. In the case of Romanian peasants, I also used the method of informal interviewing in order to have access to their deep thoughts and feelings related to their Roma neighbors. From the category of bureaucrats, I interviewed three persons who offered me data about the local history of the Roma settlements as well as reflections about their involvement in formal and

informal structures of the socialist regime. The respondents were representatives of the socialist state involved in the Roma assimilation process.

One of former bureaucrats interviewed, F., held the position of history teacher, mayor and head of the village cultural house and he had multiple interactions with both nomadic and settled Gypsies during socialism. In the same period, J., another respondent, was successively the head of the village trading cooperative, president of the collective farm, and head of the village cultural house. His wife worked as a teacher and now continues the same profession at the village school that most of the nomads attend. All of them gave me details about their experiences and relations with Gypsies that they had since socialism. Because they seemed used to interviews, I could approach these persons differently than I did with the Roma by interviewing them at home and using a recorder. In their case, the interviews took a semi-structured form.

The research was carried out in a village in Moldova - Costești<sup>3</sup> - where both categories of Roma live: settled Gypsies locally named Romanianized Gypsies, and Căldărars, the nomadic ones. The research location I chose is not necessarily representative of the Romanian villages where the Roma live but it is a strategic place for a comparative analysis between nomadic and settled Roma. Choosing one location for researching differences among the Roma offered me control over other variables (regional development, local history, exceptional events) that can intervene in the comparison, when different Roma groups live separately, in different localities. This helped me to explain the sharp economic differences between Căldărars and Romanianized Gypsies through the various experiences of the Roma in socialism.

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<sup>3</sup> My fieldwork location cannot be uncovered due to multiple data of informal nature that can affect the lives and security of the Roma. Costești is just a fictive name that will be permanently used in this paper.

Therefore, my field location helped me to test the hypothesis of my research that is based on a path dependency model and expresses the importance of historical structures for the actual socio-economic status of Roma.

### **3. Results and analysis**

The focus of my empirical analysis is on the socialist period but I also give accounts of Roma life changes after 1990. In the first sub-chapter, I give a brief description about the economic status of Roma and their relations with local population since slavery. The following chapters bring about a thick ethnographic description about the ways in which modernization of Roma took place at the local level. It gives details about the actors involved in the process and about the specific relations developed between local authorities and nomadic Roma. The last chapter of my findings inquires into their actual life strategies that reveal multiple relations between Roma groups as well as interactions with the Romanian peasant population.

#### ***3.1. Historical background of the settled and nomadic Roma in Costeşti village***

Costeşti is a village in Eastern Romania (Moldavia) that, according to the last 2002 census, has a population of 9.959 inhabitants out of which roughly 2000 are Roma. Costeşti hosts two communities of Gypsies: *tigani romanizați* (Romanianized Gypsies) and *căldărari* (nomadic Gypsies), each of them counting roughly 1000 persons. The existence of the Romanianized Gypsies in Costeşti is acknowledged from the second half

of the 15th century when all of them were slaves, working on the boyars' land and lived in the quarter of the village named *Tigănie*<sup>4</sup>.

From 1856, Costești became a regional fair where different ethnic populations (Jews, Greeks, Tatars, and Armenians) came to set up stores. Thus, many of the Romanianized Gypsies who were already freed from slavery began to work for Jews or other local ethnic groups. The women were employed as housekeepers in their houses while the men worked as day-labourers in the Jews or Greeks' workshops (of furriers or knitting) and restaurants or as brick makers for the Costești population in general. On the other hand, there were some of them who were fiddlers, their folk music bands being demanded to play at various parties and weddings from the surrounding localities.

After the world war two, they gave up working as brick makers and during socialism, they began to incorporate in the state economy. Many Romanianized Gypsies were members of the collective farm of Costești or seasonal labourers on diverse garden farms within the county or even outside. There were also some of them unskilled laborers at the ironwork plant (Combinat) of Galați.

During the sedentarization period, more exactly since 1973, many nomadic Gypsies belonging to the larger group of Căldărars<sup>5</sup> came in Costești. They did not form a compact group, their routes being different. Some of them came from Transylvania, others from Banat, while others from the region of Basarabia. They continued their "traditional" occupation as bucket makers until the 1989 transformations. Since then they have been involving in semi-informal business like trading in iron products.

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<sup>4</sup> Data provided by F., teacher of the local school and author of an unpublished monograph of Costești.

The name of Căldărars comes from their occupation and ability to manufacture buckets; the term *Căldărar* can be translated as bucket maker.

After 1990, Romanianized Gypsies were laid off from the collective farms and factories. They began to involve informally as day-labourers in the Romanian and Căldărars' households. These work relations proved to be a feature of their adaptability as one of the representatives of the village authorities said: "The Gypsies have worked with Costeşti people since ever" (F., 52 years). Moreover, a large part of them is the beneficiary of the guaranteed minimum income offered by the government to those big families who do not have sufficient means of subsistence.

Today, Romanianized Gypsies and Căldărars live in separate locations of the village. While Romanianized Gypsies have been living in the same historical quarter, the Căldărars has settled nearby the railway station of Costeşti in 1973. The most visible features that differentiate them are the ways they are dressed and the architecture/size of their houses. Entering the village, the most striking image offered to a stranger is given by Căldărars' big houses, which have three or four floors and resemble oriental constructions. Walking down the street where Căldărars live, one can see colorful dressed Gypsy women wearing large colorful skirts and headscarves, sitting in the front of their houses altogether with their husbands who wear suits. On the other hand, in the community of Romanianized Gypsies, the image is slightly different. Many of the houses are in very bad shape. These are made of mud and the roof is improvised by cardboard. However, at the entrance of their street one can notice newly built houses, still simple but with new roofs. Asking the people one can find out that these houses were constructed after a period of floods when the government released some funds to support the victims and to recover their belongings. Gypsies living in this area speak only Romanian and they are dressed casually, hardly differentiating from Romanians. These are the first

noticeable traits but their socio-economic positions in the village are still marked by their different historical experiences. Socialism was a period that reflected the ways in which Romanianized Gypsies became incorporated in the state projects as the marginals of the system and in which Căldărars resisted to assimilation by preserving their social and economic forms of organization. After 1990, the socialist experience became sources of adaptability or inadaptability for Romanianized Gypsies, respectively for Căldărars. The next chapter will show how the assimilation policies conceived of to dislocate the Roma and reintegrate them in the socialist economy were much more negotiable for the Căldărars as compared with the Romanianized Gypsies.

### ***3.2. Local politics and governance: fields of negotiating Roma assimilation***

The socialist model of assimilation was grounded in a Stalinist pattern of modernization aimed at homogenizing and therefore diminishing the variation in the multiple layers of society: economic, cultural, and political (Stewart 1993). Consequently, the Gypsies, especially the nomadic groups, who were displaying extremely discrepant ways of life, as compared with other populations, were among the most important targets of socialist modernization projects. The state aimed at integrating them within a proletarian working class, by following a deterministic equation of integration: giving, or forcing them to housing, education, permanent employment (Stewart 1993).

In order to understand how this politics shapes the people's existence I look at the micro-political level (Geldhill 2000) that can reveal the local meanings and power relations involved in the process of local governance. Therefore, following in a critical way the modernization equation employed by the socialist state, I will analyze the way in which central state projects were applied at the local level. The main transformative dimensions aimed to affect Gypsies' lives in socialism on which I will focus are the following: sedentarization, proletarianization and formal education.

### **3.2.1. Sedentarization of Căldărars**

Although the national policy of assimilation began in 1960, sedentarization of nomadic Gypsies started to apply more firmly in Costești no earlier than 1973. The mayor of that time was ordered to sedentarize the Căldărars, who happened to pass the surrounding area, at the margins of the village by giving them places for house construction. Many of the Căldărars in question chose Costești because they were nearby railway station, which was an advantage for their mobile occupations. Connected to the proximity of the railway station, even after they were offered houses in Costești, the Căldărars maintained their seasonal travels:

*They were leaving in the summer, they were coming back in the autumn, and everyone of them had a wagon, or more. One was full of iron and copper while in the others there were collected grains and maize. All the wagons stationed until everybody unloaded their goods and materials (F. 52 years old)*

The directive of settlement stipulated that the local authorities of a given locality, where nomadic Roma chose to come were responsible with their sedentarization and obliged to provide them with space for houses and construction materials. As in the case of Czechoslovakia's case of assimilation, local authorities were not willing to settle them in their villages (Guy 1998) because in this way would have taken the responsibility to govern them in a more comprehensive manner, for example by giving them places to live and work, facilities which were simply not available.

On the other hand, Căldărars they began negotiate their settlement nearby railway station by giving the mayor golden coins as bribes (locally named *cocoșei*), because they knew that police would harass them if they would not have a fixed residence,. In addition, *bulibaşa*<sup>6</sup> complained at the central authorities that the local authorities rejected their sedentarization. Because of the complaints, Căldărars succeeded to settled down in Costești, but continued to travel and practice their occupations during the summer.

As they were sedentarized in Costești, most of the Căldărars were off identity papers and birth certificates and they could be hardly identified because all of them had the same surname: Stănescu. In order to handle this problem the local authorities were made responsible by the central government with their integration in the institutional structures of the state. Propaganda teams formed by local priests, teachers and members of the local council attempted to convince Căldarars to make identity cards and send their children to school. However, the Căldărars rejected all these attempts by voicing a general common concern:

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<sup>6</sup> Bulibaşa is a kind of political and customary juridical leader of a the Căldărars group, position that is still encountered in most of the Gypsy traditional communities

*After all, we did not want to settle in Costești. They [the local authorities] settled us. Therefore they have to accept us just as we are. (F. 52 years old)*

While not being registered in any of the population and military evidences, nobody could actually control their activities. Thus, none of the men did the military service and very few of them sent their children to school. At the same time, they tried to avoid paying any of the state revenues . For example:

*In order to collect their money for the unpaid electricity bills, it was needed that all the police officers mobilize. They did not need RENEL [electricity company] to come here to connect their houses to the electricity cable. They were able to do it alone [illegally] or with the help of their neighbors to connect to the electricity. (F., 52 years old)*

Although the state aimed to control the Roma population through sedentarization, it did not succeed. Sedentarization, as McVeigh (1997) argues, was always a tool for controlling the mobile populations and therefore for strengthening the power of the state. Moreover, from a governmentality point of view, the sedentarization was not only a technology of power but also a program (Gledhill 2000) which was meant to introduce a specific knowledge in order to discipline the individual to behave as a proletarian and as socialist citizen. In this sense, the state attempted to alienate the Căldărars from their values attached to nomadism and to introduce them into the socialist idea of proletariat. From this perspective, all the socialist citizens had to have a standardized life that was necessary to fulfill the functions of the socialist society.

However, there was a real gap between the sedentarization as a technology of power – the mode in which it was conceived of and expected to operate - and sedentarization as a program - the way in which this new knowledge was imported and actually implemented. This type of govermentality based on a functionalist approach was

reinterpreted and experienced differently in the process of local governance. In the case of Căldărars, sedentarization did not reach its ideological scope, namely, it did not bring a new vision about work and living.

Thus, as Tooke (2003) argues, the particular way in which a category is appropriated can lead to reversible effects. The category of “sedentarized” was accepted only at the concrete spatial level but it did not change Căldărars’ lifestyles and economic practices. Because many of them continued to work in different regions and localities without having a fixed workplace, their economic sedentarization in general terms has never occurred.

### **3.2.2. The role of bulibaşa in negotiating the relations between Căldărars and the state**

In the state actions towards the assimilation of the nomads, the informal leader of Căldărars had a very important role. *Bulibaşa* was always an effective link or bridge between state and the groups of Căldărars. His role of brokerage underpinned by his social networks helped community members to solve their problems emerged from their interaction with the state authorities, among many other internal or external concerns.

*Eleven nomads were once arrested in Alba Iulia. Well, bulibaşa went to Alba Iulia and in three days freed them and came back together by bus. [To fix the problem] he went to the Ministry of Interior and spoke to Colonel Moraru. When he came back showed me a receipt that he paid ten thousands lei. (J., 56 years old)*

He also intervened in stopping violent actions undertook by police when one of the community members killed a police officer. Moreover, bulibaşa, as a leader of

Căldărars, was sometimes more influential than the public authorities of the village. He was able to reject many of the official rules of incorporating the nomads by keeping good connections with local and central institutions.

*During communism, bulibaşa broke the windscreen of somebody's car. He was afraid not to be bitten by the owner. (...) In less than one hour I received a call from one of the first [Communist Party] Secretary offices and he told me to take care of him [of bulibaşa]. I had a position in commune but if I wanted to go in audience to the first Secretary I had to make an appointment and to come one week after. (J., 56 years old).*

*I was the mayor of the commune and I received a call from the Senate's Secretary. 'My dear, I ask you to give bulibaşa a color TV station'. In that time, all the TV stations were to be distributed on the basis of a list. I could not give him the TV in front of the Romanians. (...) Then I found a solution of compromise. I called bulibaşa and I told him: 'you will tell them [the Romanians] that you take this TV station for the whole community, not only for you', and he did this way. (F. 52 years old)*

He also manipulated the relations with the local authorities in order to protect his family and community from the intrusive directives of the state. For instance, when central authorities tried repeatedly (it happened two or three times a year) and violently to confiscate their golden coins, *bulibaşa* intervened in helping the Căldărars' families.

Because the Căldărars were difficult to control as population, and even hardly identifiable, the central state usually approached them not directly but through their informal leader who was seen as the only "qualified" person who could give them reliable information about Căldărars. In this way, *bulibaşa* was many times in a safe position to give misleading details about who is the possessor of gold and who is not and about the quantity of gold owned by Căldărars. Moreover, using his useful bureaucratic connections at local and regional levels, he sometimes was able to advertise in advance the members of his community about possible police raids.

### **3.2.3. Local authorities and Căldărars circumventing the central official rules**

As my data reveal, the local authorities were not interested to integrate or assimilate the Căldărars, but rather to take advantage economically as much as possible of their existence in the village and to meet or to circumvent the rigid criteria of the state (Ex:fixed levels of economic production). In addition, the local bureaucrats avoided registering Căldărars during the censuses. They even refused to go to their places to convince them to involve children in school because they were considered hardly approachable. At their turn, the Roma refused many times to register, to issue identity cards for themselves or to send their chidren to school. Căldărars were considered outside the law, by their own will but, at the same time, it is equally true that the local authorities were not interested to apply the law in their case; instead, they were much more interested to appropriate the Căldărars in order to circumvent the official rules of the state.

For instance, in the late socialist period, due to the serious shortages of the workforce in the big developing and industrializing cities, the majority of young working people from Costeşti village preferred to work at the Combinat of Galaţi for better salaries and living conditions. In this way, the local cooperative units faced dramatic shortages of labour and partly for this reasons they started to be no longer profitable. In turn, being unprofitable was disadvantageous for the local budgets of the council, as well as subject to sanctions by the central state authorities. In this context, Căldărars fit in perfectly and appeared as a solution for a long-term local economic crisis. For example, the representatives of the local economic units made use of Căldărars' workforce in

desperate situations in order to avoid hard sanctions during the controls of the regional party secretaries in the village:

*Once I resorted to the nomads to ingather maize. On Sunday, Mr. X, from the central committee and the Secretary [they came to control the agricultural production] came onto the field and I needed people to ingather melons. Who was going to work? Everybody was at the weddings, parties. So, who? I took the nomads as agricultural workforce, to help me. (...) When they saw the car [of the officials] leaving,, they [the Căldărars] immediately left by their cars and with half of the melons. (J., 56 years old)*

As opposed to the coercive strategy of the regional or central authorities - especially in the attempts to force Căldărars to pay the electricity bills, or to violently seize their gold - the local authorities approached them differently, without any implicit or explicit goal of integrating or assimilating them. In order to make the cooperation possible- to become trustworthy, and to be as familiar and friendly as possible- the mayor, the president of collective farm, and the director of the trading cooperative were many times invited by *bulibaşa* or other Căldărars to participate in their parties. At the same time, the authorities were ready to help them in their problems and to give them access to different services in exchange for different amounts of money or other facilities the Căldărars were able to provide.

*I was invited at nephew party. ‘Mr. president, please come to our party’ (...) At 12 o’clock in the night a driver came to take me there. (...) When I arrived, he who invited me has brought me an armchair, a turkey, and champagne, to sit, eat, and drink. I drank with bulibaşa a bottle of champagne and he asked me to keep the whole box of bottles of champagne for myself and to take it at home. (J., 56 years old)*

*It was hard to enter in their community if they did not know you. When I was president at the trading cooperative, I helped them a lot. For example, there were restrictions for oil and sugar [shortages]. It was the Easter time and I have made a list with their names. The young were very afraid to come because they thought that I will register them to army. I told them that I do not make the others’ jobs. I gave them oil, flower, and sugar and, since then, they started to trust me. Whenever I have been to their place, I have never had a conflict with them. (J., 56 years old)*

Usually, the regional and central authorities approached Căldărars by coercive and sometimes violent measures. Yet, the violent treatment was usually received and rejected with the same violence from the part of the Căldărars. Illustrative is the case of a regional police officer who tried to enter by force the Căldărars' community:

*A police captain from Focşani came to Căldărars to arrest one of them due to a reclamation received by the police. Everybody told him: 'Do not go because they are mean people'. He told us: 'No, I will talk to bulibaşa and I will beat ten of them'. He went and talked to bulibaşa. At one signal, he was beaten by Căldărars and chased away from that place because bulibaşa could not control them anymore. (J., 56 years old)*

The most frequent and violent action of the central authorities was the repeated attempt to dispossess them of gold. While in the case of peasants or big owners, the state aimed and succeeded to seize the agricultural land, in the case of Căldărars, the gold, either inherited or accumulated in the family, was the only valuable subjected to confiscation. Even if Căldărars number or other details of collective or individual identification could only be approximated or even non-accessible, the central authorities, in turn, always knew that they posses considerable amounts of gold.

To continue the analogy, these actions were much more violent than those oriented towards peasants' property. The regional police, following the directives of the central socialist government, were raiding the Căldărars several times per year. During these raids, the Căldărars were beaten and forced to tell where they hid the gold. It is worth to note that these violent intrusions in their private or collective life were the only constant actions undertook by the central state towards or against the Căldărars of Costeşti (as well as from other villages in which they were settled in socialism).

On the other hand, at the level of symbolic violence there were several regional and central directives aimed at better controlling them as a population. One of them was to convince the Căldărars to change their names from the collective name Stănescu into a variety of Romanian names that could give the authorities the chance to identify them easier. In addition, one of the regional directives was to institutionalize their tinker-trade by giving compelling them to work in a separate shop floor in the local trading cooperative. However, these initiatives were left in the hands of the local authorities, which were more interested to maintain good relations with the Căldărars, rather than to force them change their lives radically, according to the directives issued by the centre:

*You don't have to impose your principles and to tell them: 'You are forced to do this' because you will never come to a good end. Nobody went to talk to them peacefully and really well intended. (J., 56 years old)*

Therefore, the resistance posed by the Căldărars against the socialist sedentarization and assimilation issued from the center was in fact facilitated by the flexible approach of the local authorities in the process. The local authorities of the socialist state were more interested to get local advantages from Căldărars' particular abilities and informal local knowledge, otherwise much discredited and disregarded by the central authorities. This form of local governance did not follow the central coercive rules of the central authorities but it developed rather as a field of negotiation between local authorities and Roma populations . Thus, the local authorities acted more as members of the village than the representatives of the state (Tooke 2003) and sought to operate together with the Roma population in reaching or rather avoiding the official rules of the central government.

### **3.2.4. Economic niche of Căldărars, as approached by the local authorities**

As I have mentioned in the first section of my empirical analysis, the Căldărars continued to practice tinker-trading even after they settled in Costeşti. Majority of them were leaving in the summer to work in Transylvania and other regions of the country such as Argeş or Vâlcea, hilly areas where people cultivate plum trees and need specific recipients to produce a particular beverage that is usually named *tuică*. To be legally permitted to travel all around the country and to retail these recipients, they needed licenses for independent/individual trading activities, which were issued by the local council of Costeşti. These authorizations were valid for 5 years and available for all the ‘liberal professions’ accepted in socialism, usually referred to as to second economy. Therefore, among carpenters, hairdressers, painters and photographers of the village who practiced their professions based on these licenses, there was also a large population of Căldărars who received the same facility for tinker trading. All of them had to pay annual taxes to the local council in order to renew their authorizations.

As my interviews and observations show, tinker trading was a very profitable profession in socialism. As far as it was a shortage of goods in the official planned economy, people generally looked for informal ways to satisfy their consumer needs. In the same way, the Căldărars manufactured buckets for producing *tuică* for private persons, as well as for collective farms in exchange for relatively big amounts of money. In Costeşti, their successful profession became attractive for the president of the local trading cooperative who was interested to fulfill the state demands by raising the profit of

the economic units. Although received with reticence by the administrative authorities at county level, he decided to employ a team of Căldărars under the supervision of their *bulibaşa* and set up a separate shop floor for them within the local trading cooperative. On the other hand, the Căldărars' leader needed this job to serve a sentence by working in a state institution. At the same time, *bulibaşa* was very interested to strengthen its role and good position of brokerage between Căldărars and the local authorities. He involved several members of his family in the trading cooperative. Both parties had advantages from this exchange. The Căldărars who worked in the trading cooperative maintained their territorial mobility but started to work on a contractual basis, provided by the numerous contacts of the director.

Their profession and their capacity, availability to mobility were used by the local trading cooperative to produce local welfare. Thus, with the participation of the Căldărars, the trading cooperative of Costeşti was one of the leading economic units at the village and even regional levels, in terms of high returns and revenues to the local budgets.

Căldărars' material success in practicing tinker trading was not based on a formal qualification but on informal training passing through generations<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, as Okely (1983) suggests for the case of Travelers, informal abilities of Roma were always overshadowed by putting in the front the formal education, as a general vision imposed by modernization ideology. In socialism the lack of formal education was usually conceived of as a backward characteristic which unable people to be productive in the socialist society. The case of Căldărars settled in Costeşti rather demonstrates the

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<sup>7</sup> Okely (1983) writes about the same feature in the case of traveler Gypsies from England who acquire the abilities through the institution of family.

opposite: that their local knowledge was as important as the formal one prescribed by the modernization projects of the state. The following statement of the director of the trading cooperative is relevant for the non-applicability of the standards of formal schooling and official professional training in the case of Căldărars:

*They did not know how to measure out, they did not know about numbers, they just used to measure by hand. I remember that some time ago I recommended them to someone as good professionals. They went to that person and they did not measure the material used. After they left, I received a phone from that person: ‘What have you done to me? You sent those people and they did not measure the material’. I told him: ‘Leave them alone, they know what they are doing’. After two weeks, they finished the work. That person made a new call and he told me: ‘They are cleverer than we are, they measured only by hand and it was totally fitted in’. So, they were really good professionals. (J., 56 years old)*

Therefore, the Căldărars resisted assimilation projects of the state by domesticating local institutions and negotiating their position in the village with the local authorities. Some of them, as I have shown, worked in socialist state structures of economy but their “way of imagining reality was ideologically sealed from material practice” (Stewart 1993: 199). As Stewart shows in the case of Roma from Hungary, they resisted the projects of assimilation by using their particular view about labor that did not coincided with that imposed by socialist governmentality. Working in formal socialist economy was a way of creating proletarians (Stewart 1993), category needed to underpin the socialist ideological system. However, the Căldărars who were workers in the trading cooperative did not appropriate the proletarian ideology but, on the contrary, they continued to use their informal knowledge associated to self-employment (traveling throughout the country and dealing with various products).

Moreover, the resistance of Căldărars should be circumscribed to a particular type of local governance that does not necessarily followed the official ideology of socialist

state's approach to modernization, but rather a process of reciprocal appropriation and negotiation between the actors involved. Because many of the responsibilities regarding the modernization and assimilation of the Roma passed from the central to the local level of administration, the state's control over Roma was highly dependent on the local governance supposed to implement the directives of the central state.

The particular type of local governance developed in my case was not a reflection of the central state's power but of a kind of social contract between Căldărars and representatives of the local authorities aimed to avoid the central state's surveillance and intrusion. Therefore, the process of socialist modernization, which was meant to dislocate the communities of Căldărars, was altered by local authorities and, in the process of local governance. On the other hand, their informal abilities were converted into economic development that fitted in the socialist state, even if the Căldărars logic of existence and exploiting their resources remained the same.

### **3.2.5. Romanianized Gypsies and the local state**

Compared to Căldărars, Romanian Roma generally lacked particular organization and, therefore, they were more easily incorporated in the socialist institutions. Because all of them spoke Romanian and considered themselves Romanians, they were approached as Romanians rather than Gypsies. As one of the representatives of the local authorities declared, during socialism the regional and local state approached them as any other Romanian citizens:

*Romanianized Gypsies and Romanian peasants were alike. They had papers, everybody knew about them. (J., 56 years old)*

Romanianized Gypsies were historically settled in the village. Being in the local and regional evidences of authorities, they were very easily controllable and more vulnerable to the state laws and sanctions. They were the direct subjects of the socialist governance. Many of them were constrained to enter in the army, to come to school regularly and to get formal jobs in the local and regional economy. Oftentimes, they were the subjects of police raids who controlled the employment status of the population<sup>8</sup>. Those who could not demonstrate their active employment status were arrested or fined by the police:

*They were sanctioned in a similar way as the Romanians. They were fined for the fact that they don't work, that they do not practice an activity for the locality in which they were living. (F, 52 years old)*

At the same time, the local teachers were many times involved in the propaganda actions of the socialist state meant to incorporate them in its structures. The teachers were coming into their settlements in order to convince them to send their children to school. These actions were taken constantly but in this case, unlike towards the Căldărars, the teachers were not afraid and therefore willing to approach Romanianized Roma. Therefore, the great majority of Romanianized Roma were successfully forced to complete at least the primary education in the village and many of them earned qualifications in vocational schools, which prepared people as proletarians. As compared with Căldărars' profession, developed on informal bases, theirs was formed within the state education institutions. In addition, the young men of their community who refused

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<sup>8</sup> During socialism, unemployment was outlawed and consequently sanctioned by local or regional authorities.

the recruitment in the army were ultimately forced by police to do it. Obviously, the Romanianized Roma were much more under the direct control of the state than the Căldărars were.

Moreover, lacking agricultural land and other means of production to sustain their lives, many of them readily accepted the incorporation in the formal socialist economy. They were working in the local collective farm, as well as on the nearby industrial factories. As compared with Romanian peasants, who were very reluctant to collectivization process of the 1960s, the Romanianized Gypsies were the first who entered as members the Costeşti collective farm. In exchange, they were promised to receive plots and various goods.

*There were setting up some teams formed by teachers, priests and doctors. Everybody had to convince the villagers to be cooperative members. They said: ‘You enter collective farm and you receive sheep, milk, cheese and eggs. The population that has not opposed resistance was that of the Romanianized Roma. My father was bound by its cart and land because he had six children. It was very hard for him to go into the collective farm. They [the Romanian Roma] would not loose so much. They subscribed to the cooperative because they had nothing to lose. (J., 56 years old, former president of the collective farm and of the trading cooperative)*

However, in exchange of their labor in the collective farm, they received only small plots and periodically small quantities of goods. All these returns were conditioned by their level of participation in the collective farming and in this sense; their labouring days were counted carefully. Some of them who worked seasonally to various state farms in neighborhood villages were better paid, as compared with working in the local collective farm, but they did not receive plots of land for individual or family use. Others who worked at the Combinat of Galați were much more advantaged by the state. As compared to those who were employed in the collective farms, the latter were offered

flats in the city and better salaries. They were also among the few Romanianized Roma who had formal training and qualifications and benefited in a more effective way from them.

It was not only the central state, but also their previous economic condition of settled Gypsies, described in the first sub-chapter of the analysis section, that pushed them more deeply into the socialist economy. The majority of Romanianized Roma appropriated the state institutions because it was the only solution available to them. Therefore, the integration of Roma into the socialist, ‘modernizing’ structures was not only designed and acted from above but also from below; it was not merely and exclusively coming from socialist structures, but also from the political and economic regimes that acted towards the Roma prior to socialism. Their status of settled Gypsies made them identifiable and easily governable subjects. Consequently, they were to a greater extent subjects to the technologies of power generated by the socialist governmentality and less able to circumvent the official rules of the state.

However, among Romanianized Gypsies, there were some who were fiddlers, and used their performance as a complementary source of money to the formal employment or as a full liberal profession. They were the wealthiest Romanianized Gypsies.

Those who were exclusively involved in this profession were under the same legal conditions as the Căldărars tinkers. They used authorizations to demonstrate the provenience of their money. Some of them were involved in the socialist cultural events organized by the local cultural house. It is known that these cultural events, unless they were private parties such as weddings, were conceived of as supporting the socialist ideology. Thus, the informal abilities of few fiddlers Romanianized Roma acquired

through generations became indirect tools for underpinning the socialist ideology. This could be another argument for supporting the idea that informal local knowledge and abilities were important elements that were included indirectly by the local authorities in the state projects of modernization. On the other hand, the insertion of the Romanianized Gypsies, as promised by the socialist state, was actually operated at the margins of the socialist economic system. As is the case of Hungary acknowledged by Stewart (1993), Roma were largely placed on low-skilled jobs in the local cooperative farms or industrial plants that gave them access only to the possibility to meet basic subsistence needs. As a result, the integration of some Romanian Roma within the structures of the state did not empower them but rather created the grounds for an even higher dependency and higher expectations from the state in post-socialism (Krishan 2001). The transformations of social and economic organization of Roma in post-socialism under the influence of the previous socialist economic system will be developed further in the next chapter.

### ***3.3. Socio-economic organization of Romanianized Roma and Căldărars in post- socialism***

The socio-economic life of the Roma of Costeşti village changed dramatically after 1990. While the Romanianized Roma were laid off from the former state enterprises, the Căldărars began to develop informal businesses in the new social and economic environment. To keep the comparison between these local, but still different Roma populations, I describe how their economic organization started a dramatic process of polarization.

After 1990, the Căldărars' occupation of tinker-trading was relatively devalued because the economic conditions that favored its functionality in socialism (shortage of goods) transformed and gave way to new opportunities of material accumulation. The situation is quite similar with the case of Gypsy Travelers of England studied by Judith Okely (1982). While the Travelers exploited the opportunities offered by industrialization in setting informal business, the Căldărars' new economic practices were initiated in the frame of process of deindustrialization occurred after 1990.

Căldărars, and other nomadic groups who practiced "traditional" occupations were many times imagined in a similar way as the Travelers were in England, "as victims of cultural disintegration and as helpless" (Okely 1982: 29), as an isolated community that is not able to adapt to the new socio-economic environments. However, Căldărars knew how to fill the gaps of the new capitalist economy in the making, which, especially in the 1990s, lost many of the connections between production, distribution, and consumption in the case of many products. In this context of fragmentation, they began to intermediate wholesales of aluminum and various metal products between big plants downsizing their activities and different private firms commercializing or using such raw materials.

Due to the proximity of the steel-plant (the *Combinat* of Galați) they started dealing with various transactions with the directors of the state firms. They still use to buy metal products from state plants and resell it for a higher price to private firms. In order to be able to make these kinds of transactions and to use bank accounts for massive payments, the great majority of them set up commercial enterprises. Although this undertaking has made use of the banking system and regulations, the financial

management of these firms located their business in the informal economy. Thus, the Căldărars do not pay the official taxes and state revenues associated to their economic transactions. Consequently, the financial control institutions together with the police do often come to raid their community in order to force them pay the duties taxes. Nevertheless, upon such occasions many of them succeed to run way without paying their debts. In this way, just as in socialism, they continue to circumvent the official rules of the central state. Therefore, their informal practices previously inserted in the socialist so-called second economy were transformed into purely informal ones in the post-socialist capitalist economy. Nevertheless, this categorization making use of “formal” and “informal” notions of economy is just an artificial division defined from the perspective of state law. The economic activities of the Căldărars are neither legal nor illegal, neither formal nor informal, but just their way of managing with life, which is located at the interstices between various economic transactions.

These new businesses are also trading activities associated with intense mobility all over the country. Usually, the men travel several days per week in different regions of the country in order to deal diverse transactions with state or private companies. Therefore, they seem to be a continuation and development of their former abilities employed in tinker-trading and of the tactical knowledge developed and experienced from socialism.

At the same time, their new economic activities support their social and cultural routines, which are usually considered “traditional”. For example, the Căldărars use to arrange marriages of their children at young ages (from 4 to 14 years of age). This practice is usually a strategy for securing the prestige and welfare of the family.

Căldărars<sup>9</sup> strive to make their kin among the wealthy and respectable families (doing big business and owning big amounts of gold) by marrying their children as early as possible. The marriage takes the form of the economic transactions in which the boy's family is responsible with constructing a very big house for the just married, while the girl's family has to offer a dower consisting of clothes and valuable collars of golden coins. In order to manage these marriage situations and to face the competition among families that inevitably occurs the Căldărars strive to make as much money as possible from their businesses with the metals.

The early marital arrangements existed also in socialism but their returns resulted from tinker trading did not give them the opportunity to build houses to their children at young ages. Thus, marring children at 4 or even 6 years old seems to be a new practice enforced by the new businesses and the big money they prompt. In this way, these new and more profitable businesses, adapted and developed within a rapidly changing and uncertain economic milieu, do paradoxically strengthen their so-called "traditions".

In the early 1990s, many of the affluent Căldărars started to buy land and houses "among the Romanians" in the proximity of the central road of the village. Thus, those who succeeded to move from their former location, offered by the socialist authorities several decades ago, where the first who started to be involved in metal trading with state companies. Those less successful in their businesses moved into the same area and started to construct their big houses more recently. The less successful Căldărars, but even managing, support financially their residential change by other economic activities - painting the roofs of the peasants' houses in different regions of Romania. These

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<sup>9</sup> Căldărars are endogamous groups that marry among themselves in order not to mix their blood, as they say.

activities are not as lucrative as the big businesses with metal but still offering resources enough for building a house with two levels and participating in the marriage arrangements of the community.

Besides the differences among them, the Căldărars succeeded to fill in some of the gaps of the post-socialist transition and to manage in an uncertain and risky socio-economic environment. Moreover, the Căldărars, in comparison with their neighbors - Romanian peasants, Romanianized Roma - have a positive attitude about risk and do not consider self-employment and informal businesses as risky activities but, on the contrary, as their only possible source of affluence and independence.

*We do not care about pension<sup>10</sup>. I have worked all my life this way. When I will get old, I will have resources enough to live off and my children will be able to help me. During Ceaușescu we were doing what we wanted, we were not like Romanians. While I was waking up in the morning at whatever time I wanted - 11, 12 pm, or even later - the Romanian was going to the Combinat in Galați at 3 o'clock in the morning. (Căldărar, 52 years old)*

When I asked several Căldărars what they are going to do after these businesses will not be profitable anymore, they gave me a kind of collective answer: "We will work it out and we would carry out another sort of business". This positive attitude towards "business" shows that, rather than being challenged and deprived after 1989, their space of expression was preserved and developed in post-socialism. As Okely (1983) argues in the case of English Travelers, self-employment is a choice and not an expression of their "exclusion from the opportunities of the wage labor market" (p. 33). Thus, nomadic Gypsies are not a separate society but, on the contrary, build their economic niches in

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<sup>10</sup> It is interestingly to notice that Căldărars, in a similar way with the traveler Gypsies described by Okely (1983), do not have the concept of retirement.

relation with the larger economy and majority population without losing their distinctiveness within the majority (Okely 1983: 34).

In Căldărars' case, their economic partners were always the Romanians - directors or managers of different firms and companies. Moreover, in socialism and in the first years after 1990, the Căldărars, lacking formal education and therefore driver licenses resorted to Romanian peasants from Costeşti as car drivers<sup>11</sup>. Nowadays, the Căldărars, either children or adults, women and men, began to go to school in order to get driver licenses and to acquire the basic knowledge necessary for reading the subtitles of the TV series or the articles of a newspaper. However, they do not consider the formal education as a resource for social mobility neither for themselves, nor for their children. Interestingly, referring to Romanianized Roma and their formal education, one of the Căldărars told me:

*How the school did help them (Romanianized Roma)? If you do not have a real profession, as we have, it is worthless.*

However, after 1990, it was not directly their profession that helped them to improve their life but the experiences and abilities associated with it. Their experience of mobility, social networking, and the unlimited abilities of dealing in the private sphere were very important resources. Moreover, working within the socialist second economy they had the opportunity to experience the market even before the so-called free market economy emerged. Therefore, the transition to a challenging socio-economic

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<sup>11</sup> Haşdeu (2005) noticed the same employment relations between Roma and Romanians in her study on another community of Căldărars in Soth Romania. The Romanians work in this community as day-labourers, drivers, painters, musicians, gardeners etc. At the same time, majority of Căldărars developed a similar economic niche as those from Costeşti. They trade aluminum and metals to different firms in the region.

environment, in which the state withdrew from its former functions was an opportunity for Căldărars to go onto upward social mobility. As for the Romanianized Roma, post-socialist capitalism pushed them into a status of deprivation and dependency.

### **3.3.1. Romanized Roma in post-socialism : strategies of subsistence**

Romanianized Roma of Costeşti, as all the others settled Roma across the country, were dislocated from the state economy and pushed off at the margins of the new capitalist system. Those who worked as low-skilled workers in Galaţi or in the collective farms were the first laid off<sup>12</sup>.

On the other hand, those Romanianized Roma who worked in the collective farm of the village received pensions and were entitled to receive half a hectare of agricultural land (because of the 1991 law of agricultural land restitution). As many of them lack basic means of production, they sold the plots to their Romanian peasant neighbors. At the same time, the pensions offered by the collective farms were too low to cover their subsistence needs. In result, many of them started working as day-labourers in the Romanian households, doing house chores or basic agricultural tasks.

As I suggested in a previous publication with reference to the Transylvanian context (Voiculescu 2004) the relations developed between the settled Roma and peasants are based on mutual help and dependence and get expression in the form of generalized reciprocity. Moreover, the peasant and settled *settled Gypsies* economies (the case of *hazi cigany in Transylvania*) are two forms of subsistence brought together

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<sup>12</sup> Stewart (1997) discusses about a similar phenomenon in Hungary, where the low-skilled occupations were pretext for dismissal.

through day labour and particular forms of informal credit<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, Romanianized Gypsies of Costeşti offer their cheap workforce in exchange of goods, money and particular small services or loans. Moreover, they work in the Căldărars' households on a daily basis. While women do the house chores, men work as day-labourers in building Căldărars' villas or as car drivers during their business trips. Although the relations between them are quite asymmetrical and hierarchical<sup>14</sup>, the Căldărars offer them constantly informal jobs that constitute one of their relatively stable sources of subsistence.

*We live on them. I could not realize what I would have done if they did not exist.*  
*(Romanianized Rom woman, 30 years old)*

Besides these relations that underpin their subsistence, a few Romanianized Roma went abroad for work, especially to Spain or Italy, where from they returned unsuccessfully after short periods. However, the only constant source of money for them is given by the state social benefits granted to unemployed families. As a representative of the local authority has noticed, a newly stratified social structure emerged in Costeşti after 1990:

*Căldărars are the wealthiest, Romanianized Gypsies are the poorest and the Romanian peasants are in the middle.* (Representative of the local council, 62 years old)

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<sup>13</sup> Tohotom's ethnography (2005) in which he describes similar reciprocal relations between Hungarian Roma and Hungarian peasants also acknowledged these types of transactions, between previously settled Roma and peasants.

<sup>14</sup> Căldărars perceive Romanian Roma as a lower social class that does not fit in the criteria of Gypsy identity and often disregard them on this basis.

This new social structure can be better understood by looking at their different resources and positions in the socialist economy. Căldărars were those who possessed market abilities and had a substantial material capital in the first years of the 1990s. Thus, speaking in Bourdieu's terms(1986), they possessed both the cultural and material capitals that empowered them to manage. Generally, the Romanian peasants received the land back and, in this way, they had minimum means of subsistence ensured. At the bottom of the village hierarchy, there are the Romanianized Gypsies who lack both types of capital and who became much more exposed to the post-1989 transformations.

Thus, being dislocated from the state economy that represented their source of existence for nearly 50 years, they were practically unable to create new resources to face the new market economy. As Szalai (1997) shows, poverty is not only an outcome of the inequalities created by the market, but rather of the embeddedness of individual economic life in the politics of the state and state economy. Their integration within the state planned economy was perceived not only from an assimilationist point of view but also from a functionalist one. They represented for the socialist state a supply of low-skilled labor needed for the rapid systematization and industrialization. Moreover, the proletarianization, as a particular socialist technology of power, offered the Romanianized Roma not only new spaces for identification, but also a specific knowledge about managing life that was largely imagined in the spheres of the state. This particular type of knowledge could not represent a source of adaptability, as informal knowledge represented for Căldărars, but rather a barrier in their socio-economic organization after 1990.

Therefore, the way in which socialist modernization of Romanian Roma was conceived of and applied hindered the development of their agency and led to their disempowerment and poverty after 1990.

## Conclusions

All these efforts to assimilate and integrate the Roma, as Achim (2004) argues, should be seen in the framework of state projects of urban systematization, industrialization, and social homogenization, within the larger processes of socialist modernization. I have argued in this paper that these projects of modernization were grounded in an authoritarian governmentality “located in the govermentalization of the state” (Dean 2003: 131). This type of government worked more through coercive measures and “[sought] to operate through obedient rather than free subjects” (p. 131). Socialist governmentality aimed at creating spaces for identification in order to ground a particular social, economic, and political ideology. Thus, the social space was reorganized through the new socialist state institutions (school, workplace, etc.) in order to “produce” a homogeneous population of proletarians.

Roma population was also subject of the general socialist governmentality and of modernization projects. Through assimilation, the socialist state aimed at shaping Roma identity through restricting their space of expression and their spatial subjectivity (Bancroft 2001). The borders imposed by these policies were meant to create “a single meaning, an identity of place” (p. 154) in which Roma to identify themselves. As Bancroft (2001) shows, these imposed meanings were challenged or sometimes rejected

by different individuals and communities (p. 154). From this point of view, as I have demonstrated in this paper, policies of assimilation became subject of negotiation and transformation at the local level.

The technologies of power conceived of to generate new spaces of identification and new forms of knowledge for Roma population were mainly sedentarization and proletarianization. The real gap was between technologies of power and the modalities through which the programs attempted to introduce a new type of knowledge. The main variable in creating this difference was the local governance, where both nomadic Roma (the Căldărars) and local authorities have domesticated and negotiated state modernization projects. Thus, local authorities sought to reach modernization's goals of the state and to avoid, at the same time, strict surveillance from the center by using the local knowledge of some of the Căldărars. In exchange, local authorities gave them freedom of expression by not participating in the actions of population indexing conceived of by the central state. While not being identifiable, the Căldărars could not be subjects of the central power and not governable either, as it was the case of Romanized Gypsies. Thus, the main responsibility of control and assimilation remained only in the hands of the local authorities who sought to govern them on different and more informal rules than those conceived of by the central state. In this way, Căldărars succeeded not to be fully dislocated by remaining outside of the control technologies and of the identification spaces created by the socialist governmentality.

By resisting and rejecting the new meanings and symbols of state modernization, the Căldărars preserved and developed their local knowledge, power, and agency. These constituted important resources in their strategies of life and sources of adaptability and

welfare after 1990. Therefore, majority of them are currently involved in informal economy and still reluctant to the modern state institutions. Their affluence is still based on their trading abilities, social relations and mobility experience developed through generations, which blurred the boundary between “tradition” and “modernity”.

On the other hand, Romanianized Roma - the previously settled Roma - were approached differently by the central state authorities and at the same time they appropriated differently its institutions and programs. Being already settled, the Romanianized Roma were identifiable subjects that could be governed and controlled by the socialist institutions. They were more easily to incorporate in the new institutional order and spaces of identification conceived of by the socialist governmentality. On the other hand, majority of them were more willing to accept the socio-economic order and the life conduct imposed by the socialist governmentality. However, there were some Romanianized Roma - the fiddlers - who were able to use their abilities in order to become economically independent but were not able to circumvent the official rules. These are the only Romanian Roma who better adapted to the new socio-economic transformations.

After 1990, the proletarian knowledge offered by the socialist governmentality and enforced by its institutions was not anymore useful in managing the new economic environment. Moreover, the marginal and functional position of Roma in the socialist system as low-skilled workers refrained them for going up onto the social hierarchy in post-socialism.

Nevertheless, the resistance of Căldărars or the compliance of Romanianized Roma to assimilation can be better understood only by looking back into their history and

to the former structures of power in which their life was embedded. Their resistance was not only a reaction to the actual forces of power but also an expression of an alternative structure of power (Abu-Lughod 1990; Haynes, Prakash 1991). The former status - crown Gypsies or domestic Gypsies - of Căldărars and Romanianized Roma- during the period of slavery shaped their existence in both socialism and post-socialism and made them more or less able to resist to the socialist assimilation. Therefore, the status of crown Gypsies gave Căldărars the liberty to travel and to preserve their traditional features, as compared with the domestic Gypsies who were forced to work on the monastery and proprietor's land and to respect their strict rules. Therefore, the nomads were in a way better prepared to resist and, their actions - continuing trade and mobility – can be seen as expressions of their traditional lifestyles tolerated largely by the former regimes. However, the relevance of these historical categories and the degree of overlapping with the empirical/ethnographic ones could be proved and further developed through in-depth historical analysis.

To conclude, I would say that this paper has explained the socio-economic differences among Roma through the ways in which modernization, respectively assimilation policies conceived of by the socialist governmentality, were domesticated and negotiated by local governance. In addition, the paper also demonstrates that modernization of Roma made only through the modern institutions outside of the development of local knowledge and community empowerment led them to poverty and marginalization in post-socialism.

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