

# Foreword

One of the key moral failures and policy challenges of our increasingly globalised world is how the notion of free movement of goods and services has not translated to free mobility for people. Human mobility is certainly increasing as a result of new regional blocs, temporary labour needs, international students markets and other forms of forced migration. Yet this supposed human mobility becomes constrained when it involves individuals from the global South or those minorities living in the global North but who unfortunately are not considered to be ethn-nationals of the states where they happen to live.

The problem these new forms of mobility and diversity raise concern how we treat people and how we regulate social relations within our multicultural societies. Unfortunately, the framework of national citizenship which has traditionally served to indicate membership of a socio-political community with associated rights and obligations has not necessarily caught up or reflected the new lived reality of mobility and diversity. This contributory understanding of such citizenship approaches has been enshrined by the now outdated Westphalian conception of the nation-state and its tendency to govern social relations within fixed and defined territorial borders.

The contemporary challenge in our increasingly globalised world, however, is that many individuals including migrants, asylum seekers, people from indigenous backgrounds and other categories of marginalised groups

and individuals are experiencing new forms of systematic oppression and exclusion. These new manifestations of oppression hegemonic state policies are impacting negatively on struggles and aspirations for cultural rights, socio-economic equality and active political participation.

It is a fact that some Western Governments have adopted various social policies to deal with rising levels of diversity ranging from multiculturalism to national citizenship frameworks. Yet, a common feature across these state-centric policies has been that ethnic and other minority groups have largely been constructed as collectives representing reified and essentialised cultures that needed to adapt and in some cases gradually assimilate within dominant mainstream cultural norms. And nowhere are these struggles and contestations more apparent than the situation of the Romani people across Europe and in particular in Italy. Armillei's book is a timely and important intervention that brings fresh empirical evidence on how state policies have deliberately contributed to the social political exclusion of the Romanies, who find themselves today at once spatially segregated and socially marginalised.

What is perhaps most disturbing about the findings of Armillei's research is how racist state policies deliberately work towards rendering the already deplorable conditions within the Romani urban camps even more inhumane and inhospitable. Ultimately, these practices highlight not only institutional and systematic racism, but more worryingly the failure of democratic ethos at various levels of governance. The book should not be viewed as simply about the plight of the Romani people in Italy and across Europe. Rather, it offers hope for resistance politics, hope for civil society activism and hope for the emerging global discourse on ethical solidarity and intercultural understanding.

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