

Veronika Nagy. *Crime Prevention, Migration Control and Surveillance Practices: Welfare Bureaucracy as Mobility Deterrent*. New York, New York: Routledge, 2019. 192 pp. US\$140. (Hardback). ISBN: 978-0-8153-9666-6.

Veronika Nagy's new book examines the relationship between the migration of Roma from Central Eastern Europe and the increase in the digitization of state surveillance in the United Kingdom. This surveillance enables authorities to profile, monitor, sort and control migrants using digital technology, and descriptions thereof contributes to work relating to digital humanities, internet governance, digital criminology and social studies on big data. The title of the book frames the discussion by considering the link between immigration and efforts aimed at securing the border as a means of social control. Nagy argues racial and ethnic stereotypes are used to track those most likely to be involved in criminal activity, including welfare fraud, and that this is a form of social sorting and control of visible minorities and the economically disadvantaged. Neoliberal discourse supports this approach by linking welfare and social assistance to criminal activity, and links like these are employed to justify limiting the migration of those who may seek social assistance and welfare benefits. Data submitted in online applications for welfare benefits are matched to immigration applications in order to screen applicants.

Nagy's book is organized into 8 chapters, each building on the previous. Chapter 1 is the introduction where she sets out her thesis. In chapter 2 Nagy outlines her theoretical perspectives. Next, in chapter 3 she discusses the background of the Roma, and she elaborates upon her methodological framework. She provides an analysis of the social policy objectives of the UK welfare system and the digitized platform for social sorting in chapter 4. In chapter 5 she considers the role of Romani scholars, NGOs and interpreters in the discourse. She outlines the bureaucratic procedures in chapter 6. In chapter 7, she describes the interactions between the Romani and the case managers in the digitized welfare system. Lastly, in chapter 8, she critically evaluates the digitized welfare bureaucracy and the dangers in the reliability of the system.

Nagy relies on Michel Foucault's panopticon and panoptic gaze, a coercive surveillance system which creates conditions where the individual has the perception they are being watched and monitored. Individuals do not know when they are being monitored, just that there is a possibility of being monitored. Under the panoptic gaze individuals act in accordance to social norms since the gaze of the surveillance mechanism can occur at any time. Nagy claims that the panopticon is used as a means of social and population control of the migrant population in places such as the European Union. She envisions a "digital welfare labyrinth" (10), an online collection of data which the state bureaucracy employs to analyze the information collected through online application forms. This virtual panopticon acts as a "funnel of exclusion" (16) for those migrants who are deemed undesirable by a system that is described with reference to the work of Didier Bigo a "welfare ban-optican", (6) a digitalized surveillance system which focuses on marginalized and racialized groups within society.

The state mechanisms that arbitrate online welfare and immigration applications are constantly monitoring the information inputted by applicants for inconsistencies and abnormalities. Migrant data is collected through online application forms through questions about the applicants' financial background and ethnicity, and then data that does not conform to the rules and regulations are identified and commodified. The results of this filtering system allow authorities to determine whether a migrant is eligible to enter the UK, whether they are likely to require welfare assistance. The computer system consolidates and analyzes the data and through set parameters to create a data profile of each migrant. This approach creates a "commodification of identity" (142) and a "commodification of debt" (147), resulting in narrative management

techniques, self-censorship and self-profiling”. In this system, the Roma are stereotyped as a population that is transient, and (therefore) likely to commit immigration and welfare fraud. She undertakes an ethnographic study of the Roma that involves interviews and meetings, and she engages with NGO officials who work with Roma migrants, as well as members of the governmental bureaucracy who processes the migrants in the UK. Her findings show how the welfare management system in the UK employs digitalized social sorting tools that are supported by a neoliberal narrative claiming that those who are labeled as different from the social norms and do not fit within the desired economic framework.

Nagy links her discussion to literary texts such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, arguing that the securitization of the digitalized bureaucracy is leading down the path to a totalitarian state where surveillance and social control measures guide our life. A similar dystopian society can be found in George Orwell’s *1984*, where Big Brother sits at the epicenter of social control and surveillance, creating a society where the citizenry is under the inescapable eye of the panoptic gaze. By these examples, the reader recognizes that law and literature mirror each other, reinforcing an important message about where social surveillance and the extensive online data collection conducted by social media corporations may be headed, namely, towards a social order where online surveillance, data collection and big brother monitor and control our lives.

Nagy’s goal is to critically reflect on the use of digitalized bureaucracies and the extent to which everyday life could be impacted. Although she focuses her discussion on the digitalized surveillance of Roma migrants in the UK, her conceptualization of social surveillance and securitization is applicable to an analysis of power and surveillance in the online environment. Her use of the panopticon provides an important frame for the coercive nature of social surveillance and power in the western world. This book is important reading for anyone who is interested in online surveillance, privacy, the digitalized bureaucracy and social control since her conceptualization of digitization and surveillance can be applied to general application of social surveillance and securitization.

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