

Dr. Magdalena IONESCU (Assistant Professor at Reitaku University, Tokyo, Japan): "**Power, government and the discrimination of Roma in Romania – an alternative explanation**" – lecture at the Nicolae Iorga Institute of History, Bucharest, **September 3, 2015**.

Abstract

My research seeks to answer from the perspective of power and government the question of why, despite the transition to neoliberal democracy, Roma discrimination continues to be a problem. It identifies a) the discourses b) the main actors and interests c) the institutional tools and procedures involved, and it comparatively analyzes them with those that have fueled Gypsy/Roma discrimination in the past political regimes experienced by modern Romania.

The argument is that, rather than the Roma per se, it is the way in which the political and economic actors holding power seek to govern by using existing (or adapting) discourses, governmental tools and assumed identities in an attempt to pursue their own narrow interests, that have created and are sustaining Gypsy/Roma discrimination in Romania.

A deep understanding of this issue is important not only because, arguably, Romania is home to the largest Roma population in the world, but also because the current (Western normative) approach to anti-discrimination spearheaded by the European Union tends to underestimate the impact on this phenomenon of the local socio-political dynamics.