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JUDIT DURST *

**Out of the Frying Pan Into the Fire? From Municipal
Lords to the Global Assembly Lines – Roma
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Abstract

This article argues that an essential role that economically backward regions from Hungary play in the global economy is to provide a cheap, flexible and expendable labour force. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, it explores the multi-directional cross-border movement of this labour force, and in particular, that of low-skilled Roma people.

It demonstrates how these seemingly resourceless transnational migrants use their almost only capital: their kinship network as a resource, and ‘rumour publics’ as a strategy to manoeuvre in the ‘one-world capitalism’ in order to pursue a better life, or what they consider socio-economic mobility. This paper claims that while the dominant political and public discourse in Britain and Canada sees precarious migration as a problem, these undesired, low-skilled migrants, through their flexible and cheap labour, contribute to the increase of global capital. They cannot be considered, however, passive victims of capitalist forces, but rather active social actors who find some space for manoeuvring and ‘getting by’, even achieving socio-economic betterment for their households while navigating unequal global power structures.

Keywords: spatial and social mobility, transnational migration, recurring mobilities, roma, precarious migrants, Canada, England.

1. Introduction

Since 2011, and the beginning of mass out-migration from Hungary, labelled a new ‘exodus’ in the national media, at least half of the local inhabitants of Peteri, a North Hungarian, economically disadvantaged small town of almost 10,000 dwellers, has experienced work-related, trans-national mobility.¹ According to our household survey conducted during the last three years, 80 per cent of local households have at least one member who has practised various modes of spatial mobility during the last ten years, with the aim of generating income when opportunities were scarce in the local labour market. Even those poor with low (primary) schooling and no command of any foreign languages of whom textbooks and courses on migration studies speak as resourceless to migrate (Castles and Miller, 2009; Melegh, 2013), began to exercise mobility: mostly transnationally, across national borders. These migrants seem to be invisible not only in the context of national survey results in Hungary - according to which the young, educated and professionally or vocationally qualified part of the Hungarian population make the most out of the country’s emigrants (Blaskó and Gödri, 2014; 2016) - but their movement remained broadly unrecognised by their local governments. In 2013, when I began my ethnographic research in Peteri, by then half of the “Gypsy colony” (a segregated settlement on the outskirts of the town with almost 4000 inhabitants) had left for Canada, Toronto. In an interview, the local mayor tried to convince me that his town was not the best site for my research on migration as there was no significant movement there:

‘Have you not yet been to the Gypsy colony?’² How do you think these poor people can find the means to finance their trans-Atlantic travel and then find a way of livelihood when they can hardly make ends meet at home? When most of them have no more school than eight grades (finished primary school), they do not speak any languages, and they do not even know how to get to Miskolc, Búza Square?’³

The very few persons in the local establishment in the town who showed any sign of awareness of the transnational mobility of the local populations were the headmasters of the local primary schools, but only in respect to the ‘problem’ caused by pupils from the precarious, Roma returnees:

‘Yes, I can confirm that there are a few families here from the Gypsy colony who tried to migrate to Canada. But it proved to be an unsuccessful story. After a year, or two or sometimes three, they all came back to Peteri. And what did they bring home with them? Nothing. The only thing they managed to achieve with this

¹ All names, both settlements’ and people’s, used in this paper are pseudonyms. When referring to the local communities, both in Peteri and its neighbouring villages or small towns, I use the terminology employed by the locals themselves. In this region where there is a strong binary social order between Roma and non-Roma population, those who are labelled as Roma according to the politically correct language used across the European Union, refer to themselves as Gypsy (*Cigány*), and everybody else - that is non-Gypsies (*Gádzsó*) - as Hungarian (*Magyar*). The distinction between the categories ‘Gypsy’ and (non-Gypsy) ‘Hungarian’ has until now been one of the main rules governing interaction and determining social position in rural societies such as Peteri, in Hungary (Horváth, 2012; Kovai, 2018).

² Segregated Roma settlements are called ‘Gypsy colonies’ (*cigánytelep*) by Roma and non-Roma locals in this town.

³ Búza square (*Búza tér*) is a well-known assembly place, only 15 kilometres away from Peteri, where, among others, informal workers meet their work recruiters for casual labour in the region.

migration is that their children missed one or two, or sometimes three years of schooling. Because even if they went to school in Canada, they came home by knowing nothing. So, we must put them back in the class that they left from. For example, if a child left our school finishing Year Five⁴ and went with her family to Canada, on her return let's say after three years, we have to put her back in Year Six, among 12-year-old pupils, even if she is 15 (years old). It gives a lot of headache for our teachers how to teach these overaged children. The Hungarians are more forward thinking. In Hungarian families, it is only the father who goes abroad, mainly to Germany to work. The mother stays behind with the children. In this way, the education career of these kids does not get interrupted.⁵

In this paper I explore the almost 'invisible', mainly work-related or income-generating, multi-directional geographical mobility of the local populations. I argue that instead of the well-established category of 'circular migration' that is used in the case of many Roma groupings of different countries (Grill, 2015; Sardelic, 2017), we should call the multi-directional, transnational movement of our Hungarian Roma (and sometimes non-Roma) networks from this region as recurring mobilities (Limmer et al., 2010).⁵ Many of these people are of precarious social standing – income poor, 'unskilled' (according to the category of the formal labour market) with low formal education and no vocational training. I show how these seemingly resourceless transnational 'migrants' (or rather mobile labourers) use their almost only capital, their kinship network as a resource and 'rumour publics' as a strategy to manoeuvre under conditions of uncertainty, both in the sending and receiving localities, and under unequal circumstances of domination in the globalised economy, or as Hann and Hart call it, in the "one-world capitalism" (Hann and Hart, 2011: 142). I demonstrate how they organise their economic lives in societies in which the future has become synonymous with transnational mobility (Narotzky and Besnier, 2014; Pine, 2014). I argue that work-related spatial mobility is an act of hope (Pine, 2014), a last resort for those who perceive that the field of opportunities in their home societies does not make possible to live a viable 'economic' life. Here economic (*oikonomia*) is understood in its original meaning of the 'government of the household' and field of opportunities 'refer to a set of possibilities and constraints that define at a given moment the conditions for life' (L'Estoila, 2014).

After analysing the multi-directional, transnational mobility trajectories of the people from the North Hungarian region to England as EU citizens and to Canada as asylum-seekers, and having explored the role of various factors, among others ethnic capital (Portes, 1998) in the form of kinship networks, facilitating this geographical movement, I turn my attention to the outcomes of their spatial mobility in terms of social mobility. Although social mobility is best understood as a longer temporal process, highly structured by class, race and gender (Cohen et al. 2012), and is measured by standard sociological indicators, such as advancement in level of occupation and income (in the case of intragenerational mobility), I take social mobility in this paper as it is understood by my interlocutors. In their perception, it is about the search for opportunities, money-making possibilities, but more general, as

⁴ As children start primary school in Hungary mostly at age six in Year One, by Year Five they are 11 years old.

⁵ See also Pontrandolfo (2018) on 'multifocal migration'.

they put it, ‘advancing in one’s life’ or ‘making a step further’ (materially and socially) and to achieve a ‘good life’ for their families and a ‘better future for their children’.

For analytical purposes, I differentiate the outcome of their social mobility by using the concept of ‘getting by’ (in respect of the social and material well-being of the household) and ‘getting ahead’. In development studies, ‘getting by’ refers to (at least) restoring the social base of displaced household, meanwhile ‘getting ahead’ relates to improvement of its social position (World Bank, 2001; Quetulio-Navarra et al., 2017). Anthropologists argue that in post-socialist Europe, for the abandoned socialist working class, which many of my interlocutors belong to, getting by, or ‘the ability of making a livelihood by surviving and thriving in spite of reduced resources and under circumstances of uncertainty’ (Kideckel, 2008, in: Pulay, 2017) is the only opportunity at disposal. Many people in precarious social status in North Hungary see cross-border mobility as the only way not only to get by but even to get ahead, that is, advancing in one’s life under these circumstances.

However, as the ethnographic cases in this paper demonstrate, the chances of getting ahead through transnational movement are conditioned by many intersecting factors. In the case of my interlocutors, the most important ones are the: 1) different regimes of mobility politics (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013), along with the non/presence of anti-Gypsyism in the destination societies (Pontrandolfo, 2018); 2) the demand and structure of the localised global labour market 3) and the original social positions, attitude and social capital, migrants bring with them to their new localities. The analysis of the empirical material, divided in three sections, serves to illustrate the working of these factors.

2. Theoretical framework: Mobility regimes and social transformations affecting the Roma

The term ‘regimes of mobility’ (Salazar and Glick-Schiller, 2013) was coined as a refinement of the mobility turn paradigm (Urry, 2012) which, according to its critics, with the emphasis on fluidity and the free flow of people and goods across national borders in a globalised economy, does not reflect geopolitical relations between sending and host countries. Proponents of the regimes of mobility approach, in contrast, draw attention to the several intersecting regimes of mobility that normalises the movement of some sojourners while criminalising and hindering the ventures of others (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013). In his paper on the implications of the mobility-ridden life of a Chinese transnational migrant worker in Israel, and by investigating the link between his subject’s spatial and social mobility, Barak (2013) calls for research projects which ‘study human mobility holistically, privilege the perspective of moving subjects, and explore the impact of movement on the lived realities of involved actors’ (Ibid., 2013: 56). By following this thread of enquiry and by interrogating the multi-directional transnational mobility trajectories of different social networks from Peteri, and from the surrounding villages, this paper attempts to illustrate the consequences of these movements for the mobile people’s and their families. There is burgeoning academic literature on Roma transnational mobilities, which rejects the hegemonic and homogenising distorted notions of Romani migration, widespread in European public discourse (Kóczé, 2017), and more and

more research findings indicate that different Roma networks' westward transnational migration from CEE countries can best be described as labour migration (Vidra, 2013; Grill, 2015; Váradi et al., 2017; Virág, 2018; Yildiz and de Genova, 2017; Leggio and Matras, 2017; Greenfields and Dagilyte, 2018). However, there is still little knowledge on 'invisible', transnationally mobile Roma workers, even if the number of such workers have been growing in the last decade. Slovakian Roma from Tarkovce, such as my studied networks from Peteri, go to England's urban cities to 'fixing up money' (Grill, 2015) through combining wage labour and informal income generating works. Even those Roma from Hungary, who tried to start a new life as asylum seekers in Canada, whilst also fleeing from structural and institutional racism (Feischmidt and Szombati 2017; Vidra, 2013), labour market discrimination (Kertesi, 2005) and hatred incidents in Hungary from around 2010, the period of the Roma serial killings in some Hungarian rural settlements, take up casual work on top of welfare benefits, which they are entitled to as refugees (Kovats, 2002; Hajnal, 2012; Vidra, 2013; Vidra and Virág, 2013; Durst, 2013). However, up till now, there is very little literature focusing on the transnationally mobile Roma workers who join other CEEs precarious labour migrant's flow as a response to globalisation, under circumstances of opening up the global economy (Melegh et al., 2018).

3. Research methods and the field

Pursuing the anthropological thread of following mobility trajectories and by studying our moving subjects, I have over the past three years pinpointed the two most typical and widespread mobility routes of people from Peteri and its surrounding settlements to their destinations in Canada and in the UK: Toronto and Manchester.

The empirical findings and the argumentation of the paper benefits from a mixed method, but mainly ethnographic research: apart from a household survey, I carried out several short-term participant observations fieldwork, both in the sending locality (Peteri) and in the receiving ones (Toronto and Manchester). I also conducted 120 narrative life trajectory interviews with transnational migrants, returned to Peteri, or relocated either in Toronto or Manchester.

The value of this ethnographic case study approach lies in its heuristic character. Although the empirical findings of this paper are only valid for the studied social and spatial context, its relevance stems from its explorative nature. As Eysenck (1976) revealingly argued, 'sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases - not in the hope of proving anything but rather in the hope of learning something' (Ibid., 1976: 9, in: Flyvbjerg, 2006: 224).

In the economically disadvantaged region of North Hungary, Borsod county, amongst whom are those from the rural town of Peteri where official unemployment rate is around 20 per cent, during the past ten years, people have started to practice a work-related mobile life. In what follows, I depict and interpret three typical spatial mobility trajectories of mobile workers from Peteri and from the neighbouring settlements to illustrate the most common ways in which these seemingly resourceless people's agency variously respond to the shrinking opportunities in their home country and to the shifting mobility regimes in their destination societies to make a living for their family. This article provides what is lacking so far: an ethnographic

account of different geographical mobility trajectories of those ‘invisible migrants’ who are considered welfare dependent or, ‘superfluous mass’ on the imagined body of both sending and receiving societies (Nagy and Oude-Breuil, 2015).

4. The role of kinship and rumour publics in asylum seeking in Canada

Harney (2006, in: Humphris, 2017) calls unsubstantiated information, true or untrue, that passes by word of mouth (see also: Stewart and Strathern, 2004): ‘rumour publics’. By circulating news obtained from those already migrated, through social media, personal encounters and gossip, individualised understanding, discourses and experiences of formal and informal income generating opportunities abroad, and most importantly, how to navigate the labyrinth of the refugee claimant process in Canada (or how to find jobs and housing support in the UK), it creates hope, migratory imaginaries and aspirations for potential migrants, in a context of uncertainty and lack of formal news. The news is subjectively evaluated against standards of experience, knowledge and the trust in or prestige of those from whom one receives them (de Certeau, 1984, in: Humphris, 2017). These rumours also offer models for income earning strategies and entrepreneurial activities to be longed for, mimicked, or condemned.

Public rumour and how truth claims are incorporated into a system of beliefs takes on particular significance in the context of new Roma refugees/migrants (many are illiterate in English and therefore cannot have access via formal information) in an uncertain situation created by a fluid and changing refugee policy in Canada (or immigration policy in England, see: Humphris, 2017) as we will see in the case of Jani and his family in Toronto. Here, rumour publics is about how to play the game of institutions (Clave-Mercier and Olivera, 2018) that aim at getting rid of ‘undesirable’ migrants/refugees and how people adapt to structural constraints, for example, different regimes of mobility/refugee policy, and any forms of power inequality.

Since 2008, due to institutionalised discrimination and organised hate crimes, thousands of Hungarian Roma have fled to Canada to claim refugee status in the hope of a better life (Kovats, 2002; Vidra, 2013). In 2012-2013, to discourage the Roma’s flee to Canada, there was a substantial reform to the refugee determination system, in addition to some actions aimed specifically at the Eastern European Roma (Levine-Rasky, 2016), who, in the political discourse, were accused of being ‘bogus refugees’, or ‘economic refugees’, who ‘came to Canada to abuse the generous welfare provisions of the country’ (Levine-Rasky, 2012) and all that those with refugee status are entitled to.⁶ This discourse was widespread in the media, despite well-respected emigration lawyers trying to convince the public that there is no such a category. “The concept of economic refugee does not make sense to me”, argued one of them to me in an interview. “When someone is discriminated against on the labour market in his home country because of his darker skin, I take it as structural racism. This person has to flee as he cannot make a living for his family from legal work.”

⁶ The essence of the change was the introduction of the Designated Countries of Origin (DCO) list, on which Hungary was among the ‘safe’ countries where no one should flee from for political reasons. In the new Refugee Convention, since 2012, the Safe Countries list was particularly moulded against the putative ‘bogus refugees’ from CEE countries – the majority of them being Roma (Levine-Rasky, 2016).

In order to discourage ‘undeserving’ refugees/migrants to move to the country, the Canadian government tried to encourage unwanted groups to leave ‘by choice’.⁷ With the introduction of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program in 2012, Canada paid thousands of Roma 2,000 Canadian Dollars per family to abandon their refugee appeals and leave the country.⁸ Citizens of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia made up 61 per cent of the total of people in the programme: 1,800 by March 2013, according to the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB 2014), which was cancelled after a year.

Despite the new legislation, Hungarian Roma have been continuing their transnational mobility towards Canada, facilitated by their well embedded social ties, kinship networks, and also through their strategy of spreading news through their networks about new possibilities and how to navigate a shifting refugee system.⁹ An important part of the rumours distributing in the last few years, since the introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which serves as another device in the new mobility regime that impedes the mobility of unwanted refugees/migrants (Ciaschi, 2018), is to advise new migrants which route they should take on their way to Canada. From Peteri, there were a few Roma families who were taken off their flights (despite their valid tickets and ETA) in a transit country (among others in Amsterdam and in Frankfurt) by Canadian emigration officers, without any acceptable explanation. The new Canadian government, which is very proud of being a tolerant, welcoming and liberal governor of this multicultural country, is turning a blind eye to this overtly racial sorting of undesired refugees on their way to Canada.

Hungarian Roma refugees from Peteri, who have long been socialised in their home country as to how to navigate through unfavourable circumstances and constantly changing legal systems, have also been sharing news and information within their social networks (and through their ‘disposable ties’ (Desmond, 2012) with relevant social workers and interpreters) about what elements a successful refugee story should contain. To avoid refusal of their asylum claims, they learn to innovatively manipulate the descriptions of their social circumstances, the reasons they fled from their home society, and they (re)construct their ‘stories’ according to the favoured profiles by the judges who decide their fate: whether they can stay in Canada by providing them permanent residence status or whether they need to return home by rejecting their refugee claims. Most of my interlocutors in Canada have been in the precarious, vulnerable refugee claimant’s position for many years, anxiously waiting for the hearing process that will determine their fate. This precarity was caused by the liminality of their legal status: they were (or have been) constantly on the verge of being rendered illegal and hence subject to deportability (Sardelic, 2017; de Genova, 2005; Tóth, 2013).

⁷ In the context of the UK, Greenfields and Dagilyte (2018) and Nagy and Oude-Breuil (2016: 540) report about the same logic of the social workers used for getting rid of unwanted Eastern European Roma migrants through the mechanism of ‘governing by choice’ (Aas and Bosworth, 2013).

⁸ Although critics warned that the program takes advantage of people’s poverty, Roma ‘beneficiaries’ from Peteri, regarded it as another ‘generosity’ form the Canadian government.

⁹ Along with other research findings from Hungary (Kállai, 2002; Hajnal 2012), my interlocutors do not trust media or any formal, official news but only personal communication through their network.

Jani moved to Canada with his wife and his two little children as an asylum seeker in 2011, along with a big wave of many other low-skilled, low-educated Roma families from Northern Hungary and in particular, from Peteri and Miskolc. His story about why he decided to follow his network to Toronto, is a case in point that illustrates the validity of the network theory for Hungarian Roma which shows that migration decisions are taken trans-locally through social networks (informed and less informed choices on migration) (Massey et al., 1998; Hajnal, 2012; Virág, 2018) or through one's 'migration bubble' (*migrációs burok*, see: Sík, 2004). That is how Jani recalled this when I first met him:

“At that time, the whole Gypsy colony was full of news from their Roma kin, who had made a better life and good money in Canada. The news spread on Facebook that there are plenty of occasional jobs, that you can earn even a 100,000 forints in a week if you work. That was the time when both my wife and I lost our father. We told ourselves, what could we lose? Even if only we earn that money, we can repair the roof of our house at home. By that time, we ourselves experienced many racist incidents, so like many of us in the settlement, we had enough of being Gypsy in Hungary. So, we took our chance.”

Jani had to wait for seven years until he, his wife and their two children were granted residential status, after their refugee claims were twice rejected on the first and second level of the legal procedure. This was a final victory, in which a well-established emigration lawyer's firm and especially their emigration advisor of Hungarian origin, the by then much-respected Nicole who specialised in the case of the Hungarian refugees, have had a huge part.

When I first went to Toronto, in 2012, Jani's wife, who hosted me for my then one-month fieldwork, anxiously spoke to me about them living in two suitcases during the whole previous year, waiting for the result of their refugee appeal as a last-ditch attempt at not being deported out of the country:

“Judit, I swear this is about our life. If the judges believe our story – which as you know is all true – okay, with a bit of an exaggeration [...] then we can stay in Canada and I can give better opportunities to my kids to have a better life than we had at home. But if they do not believe it [...] On our second hearing, the judge asked me the weirdest question, how can I prove that I am Gypsy when he looks darker than me [...] He asked me whether I can do Gypsy dance¹⁰ [...] I cannot even think of what is awaiting us if we'll be sent back home [...] We discussed it several times with my wife that we need to go on to a different country then [...] most probably to England as many of our Roma friends did – because there is no life, no future in Hungary for a Roma. If they see your dark skin, then all job vacancies immediately are told to be filled up [...] Security guards in the shops follow you as if all Roma were thieves. Policemen stop you with your car, or even when just walking on the wrong side of the

¹⁰ Some non-Roma Hungarian use the strategy of making use of the situation of Roma in Hungary by deceitfully reporting themselves as of Roma origin. Although they are few in numbers, their deceitful strategy even more confuses the judges' decision-making process which is revolving around the question – for a Canadian a very difficult one – who is Roma and on what conditions can someone be considered Roma? Their limited knowledge about these people is centred around the common narrative in which 'Roma's bodies are historically marked by their racialised darkness' (Grill, 2017). In this real-life, Canadian context, it is not an academic constructivist question, but it has life-defining real stake, who is considered a real Gypsy by the judges.

street – here it is different. You are not a Gypsy here but a human being, you are considered a Hungarian.”

41-year-old Jani, who used to work in a manufacturing factory as a semi-skilled labourer before he moved to Canada with his family, cannot imagine his life anymore in Hungary. His social position, however, is still precarious, especially now when he has used up all his savings for paying lawyers, interpreters and settling the costs of all official documents necessary to fully acquiring his residency right. Although he does not see a chance to advance his occupational position in the Canadian labour market, due to his low educational credentials and his limited English-speaking skills (with these, he can easily get by in Toronto though, as he works and socialises among his Roma friends and other Hungarian refugees), he feels content. In Toronto, with the help of his Roma networks, he retrained to be a painter and has recently been working as a casual worker on different construction projects for a fellow Hungarian entrepreneur. On days when he is not called for work, he goes to collect scrap metal – a relatively good but incalculable income-earning economic strategy among Hungarian Roma refugees:

“If I’m able to work six days a week, I can earn around 750 dollars, clear money. It means I leave the house 9 am and come home by 11 pm. But it’s still worth it. When would you be able to earn this money (210,000 HUF weekly) in Hungary, with no vocational training?”

He often proudly said to me while I was living with his family, that here, unlike at home, he “can buy everything what the kids need. You see, our fridge is always full, my wife can cook the Sunday lunch even out of three kilograms of meat. We can live much better here.”

He also emphasises, however, that this (in material sense) better life came with a huge price. For seven years, he and his children could only see and talk to their families through Skype and on Facebook. Jani painfully realised how much he and his children missed his mother when she was allowed to visit them after they were granted ‘land’ [landed resident status]. He recalled his feeling of loss last time, when I visited them in June this year. ‘We have gone along a long way, we got the land and can stay in Canada. That’s what we were dreaming of during those last seven years. But when my mother came to visit us last December, it struck me how much we have lost. My children have missed the love of their grandmother, and their other close kin. We do not have a Christmas, a birthday when we can celebrate happily. Money is good, but it doesn’t make you happy.’¹¹

When I asked Jani about his perception of how his spatial move entangled with his social mobility, it was obvious that this is a complex and ambivalent relationship. On the positive side of the scale is his satisfaction that with this move, he managed to escape from his and his family’s ‘racial stuckedness’ which significantly curbed his

¹¹ This feeling of loss and the guilt coming with it, is very common among the Hungarian Roma refugees in Toronto. One of Jani’s friend recalled me how deeply conflicted he was when his beloved mother got fatally ill and he realised that he cannot even go back home to Hungary to the funeral, without losing the chance that his family’s refuge claim will be finally granted. He only found a little relief in that that his mother’s wish was him staying in Canada for the future of his family. Although he settled all costs of the funeral and watched it through Skype video, even after four years he keeps talking about this loss as one of the biggest prices of moving to Canada.

advancement in his home society. In a material sense, he is also able to provide a better life for his family – they sometimes go for a picnic or fishing at the weekends with his Roma friends, to beaches around Toronto, even to the Niagara Falls – all of which he would have never dreamt of before, from his segregated Roma settlement. It makes him happy to be able to show his children that there is a better, ‘big world’ outside the ghetto, where most of his relatives’ lives are confined in Hungary. However, the most important outcome of his spatial move to him is that both of his kids learnt fluent English in their schools, and that hopefully, in a multi-ethnic society like Canada: ‘their Gypsiness will not hinder them to find and take a job they want to do, unlike in Hungary.’

On the negative side of the scale, however, are his feelings of the loss of their close relatives. Sometimes he ponders about his Roma acquaintances, who left Canada after a period of working here for one and a half or two years (the average time the Roma from Peteri spent in Toronto, according to our survey), and who saved up enough money to buy or refurbish their houses in their hometown, and then moved onto England, again, temporarily, to make money. Perhaps, this would have been a better choice with a more positive outcome for his and his extended family?

Jani’s case supports the commonly accepted thesis that for the low-skilled poor, social capital (here in the form of kinship ties, strengthened by rumour publics, spreading in their network) is a substitute for other capitals (material and human) they lack (Putnam et al., 1993). However, there is a downside to it. Under circumstances of constantly changing and not welcoming mobility regimes for unwanted, poor Roma refugees, and in the absence of bridging social ties with people of higher social status, many Roma, like Jani’s family, are stuck in the ‘getting by’ state of social mobility, even after seven years of being in Canada.

Whether the strategy of recurring mobility leads to a different state of social mobility, that is, to getting ahead, will be illustrated by the case of my next interlocutor, Rozika and her family.

5. Recurring mobilities: The mobility-ridden life of Rozika and her family

Scholars analysing the transnational movement of different Roma networks commonly label this process as ‘circular migration’ (Grill, 2017; Pine, 2014). According to sociologists of migration this term refers to temporary migration, in which migrants come to a receiving country for a few months or years, and then return to their homelands (Castles and Miller, 2009).

During the last decade, however, social scientists studying work relations have argued that job-related spatial mobility has increasingly become an essential feature of late modern societies and this term is better suited to describe the widespread movement of people in a globalised world. According to a recent study on job mobilities and family lives in Europe, almost every second individual in Europe aged between 25 and 54 has experienced job-related spatial mobility during his or her professional career (Schneider and Collet, 2010). Researchers of this comparative European study found that people’s job-related mobility can take many different

forms, out of which one can distinguish two overarching mobility types. The first one is *residential mobility* - exemplified by residential relocation through internal or international migration. The other is *recurring mobility*, that is, a recurrent or intermittent but potentially multi-directional spatial movement, with stages of stasis and change of location (Limmer, Collet and Ruppenthal, 2010: 15-20).

Based on my ethnographic findings, many local Roma from Peteri have been choosing the strategy of recurring mobility during the last few years, after they were either been deported from Canada or left the country voluntarily. Rozika's migration story is a case in point.

Rozika moved to Canada as a refugee with her husband and at that time three children in 2011: "We went there to have a better livelihood, so that we can give everything to our children. We went there to work: both my husband and I had been working in a carrot factory¹² since the second week after our arrival." Rozika loved Canada, as there was no distinction between people of different colour. "It does not matter there whether you are a Gypsy (*cigány*) or not. Over there you can work in a shop or wherever you want. You are a Hungarian in Canada not a Gypsy."¹³

She bought the tickets for the flights of her family of five from the money she got after having sold her house in the Gypsy colony of Peteri. 'We thought we would never come home again', she explained to me. She even managed to transplant her whole extended family to Toronto where they lived all together with her fellow neighbours from the Gypsy colony from Peteri in a huge building, a block of flats in the periphery of the metropolis.

"I was the first who came here with my children. Then I sent money to my brother for the flight ticket. He also sold his furniture from his house at home and he took a loan from the bank Provident to cover the cost of the fare for his family of three children. When he arrived in Toronto, after three months he managed to pay me back the flight ticket from his family's welfare. Then he and I pooled our resources together and brought out our other extended family members. It was good; in the end, we had the whole family [which meant six nuclear households of 34 individuals], and also almost half of the Gypsy colony from Peteri, with us here in Toronto. We liked to be there."

However, after a year and a half, they decided to go home to Hungary as her husband developed anxiety and stress-related illness. 'The doctors in Canada didn't know how to treat him. We didn't trust the medicine they gave him. So, we decided it would be safer to come back home, for the sake of my husband. Although the children and I really liked Canada - there was a lot to do and to see there, from the Niagara Falls to the free beach, everything. And there was plenty of opportunity to work. But my husband could never get used to Canada.' Upon their arrival back at Peteri, from their savings of five million Hungarian forints (an equivalent of 18,500 USD - an amount which they could never dream of to possess should they stay

¹² An agricultural enterprise where many Hungarian Roma and (non-Roma), low-skilled and low educated refugee managed to find work without speaking any English. The boss used them and their cheap labour as unreported labourers.

¹³ This should be read as she felt equal in Canada and not an inferior member of the society as in Hungary.

home), Rozika managed to buy a house in the Roma settlement, this time a nicer one with a closer location to the town centre than their previous property.

Half a year later, however, after having used up all their savings (by not being able to find a proper job with a decent salary out of which they could keep their children), they decided to move again, this time to England where they had relatives to work and reside: “I would have never come home from Canada if it were about me. Canada was just a dream. England is different. In Canada you saw many nice places, unlike in England where there are only bricks and nothing else. There is no green space where you can let your children go to play. Over there, everybody is on his mobile phone and tablets. There is nothing to do for the children. It is like a prison. But where could we have gone? Only to places where we had kin and where they helped us. And where there is work. But, I cannot complain because regarding the work opportunities, England is a first-class country. That’s why we stayed there, intermittently, for many years.”

Since 2013, Rozika’s family had been in England five times with some breaks.¹⁴ First, they went to Wales for four months as her husband’s brother who had been living there already, helped her husband to find a job in a Pakistani family owned Pizzeria, Papa John’s. There he learnt how to make pizza. When they had to leave as the owner gave the job to his co-ethnic fellows, they moved to Manchester for another five months. Then onto Nelson for a further half a year. Everywhere they went they had to rent a new flat from a private landlord but Rozika says it was worth the two months deposit as her husband and 17-year-old son earned four times more money than they could have received in Hungary. In all these cities the husband and son managed to find jobs in pizza making factories as they had acquired the skill at Papa John’s earlier in Wales. Then Rozika’s little daughter got ill, and again, they did not trust the health system in a foreign country, so they moved back home. This time, they stayed another year but when their savings were used up, they left for Luton at the invitation of one of Rozika’s brother-in-law. Her son and husband got a job, in the food industry, in a factory at an assembly line, as agency workers subcontracted by a recruiter (staffing) agency – one that gives many Hungarian migrants with no command of English the opportunity to work for three-four times the salary they can earn in their home country.

A few months ago, I bumped into Rozika on the streets of Peteri. When I asked why they came home and whether they would stay this time, she said that her husband had had enough of working 12 hours a day during the last six years. Also, they managed to save up enough money, she said proudly, to buy a nice house, this time in the town, out of the Roma settlement. She also mentioned that her husband plans to set up a small entrepreneurship by getting a track and going to Slovakia to buy cheap wood and sell it on at a higher price in Peteri’s Roma settlement¹⁵ – the only business which gives locals a livelihood with a promise of socio-economic mobility.

¹⁴ This recurring mobility pattern is historically embedded in this region. Mobile workers from the lowest social strata such as day labourers and unskilled construction workers ‘regularly moved temporarily’ to grab the opportunity to work across the borders (Sik and Szeitl, 2015).

¹⁵ In this segregated settlement, most of the families heat their houses equipped with no electricity with wood not only during the long and cold winter months but also in the summer when they use wood for cooking.

When I asked her about the outcome of their long and multi-directional transnational mobility project, it turned out to be an ambiguous one, in respect to the pursuing of a better future for their children – the initial aim of their whole geographical movement. While the family, without question, secured a better life in a material sense, her two older children did not manage to finish even the primary school due to being away from Peteri for altogether four years. “When we came back from Canada, they put them back in the Year group where they left from. Here in the primary school the, teachers do not recognise the school certificate that they received in Canada. Nor the ones they got from England. At that time when we left, seven years ago, I didn’t grasp what would happen to them at school. Looking back now, this was a mistake. That’s why I regret all these movements now. Because my son cannot even get his driving licence as he did not have his primary school credentials.¹⁶ He is already 19 years old, they do not want to take him in any primary school [...] He should have two more years to finish Grade Eight [...] But luckily, we got cleverer and learnt from this mistake when it came to my youngest daughter. With her, there will be no missing grades as I always brought her back to sit the summer exam at the primary school in Peteri which she successfully managed to pass.”

Rozika’s mobility trajectory is a case in point that the transnational movement of Roma from North Hungary can more adequately be described by the term ‘recurring mobility’ than that of circular migration. This type of spatial movement, however, with its stages of stasis and move, can have a downside to it. While it led Rozika’s family to getting ahead, at the same time, it may have jeopardised the future of (some of) her children, by interrupting their school career. It remains a question and should be a topic of future research: that of what happens to the children of these transnationally mobile families’ in the long run, over successive years.

6. Transforming global labour markets, informalisation, and work-related mobility to England

There is a widely accepted thesis among scholars that migration should be seen as part of social transformation (Castles, 2010). In current times, a significant part of this transformation that migration processes are embedded in, is the restructuring of global labour markets in highly developed countries through economic deregulations and new employment practices such as subcontracting, temporary employment, casual work (Castles, 2010; Szelényi 2016). Closely linked to these changes are the expansion of informal segments of the economy and the informalisation of the formal low-wage labour market (Scott, 2017).¹⁷ On the one hand, the search for competitiveness in a globalised economy, combined with demographic change (aging population in the

¹⁶ In Hungary, the only condition to apply for a driving course is to have eight years of schooling.

¹⁷ Here the term, informalisation is used to refer to the loosening of regulatory regimes and associated downgrading of pay and working conditions within the low-wage formal economy (Slavnik, 2010, in: Scott, 2017). This is the case in the UK food industry where many mobile workers from Peteri find either contracted or agency work. According to Scott, in this segment of the mainstream labour market there is a huge concentration of Eastern European low-skilled migrants, who must deal with the exploitative facets of this informalisation process, namely job insecurity, work intensification and worker expendability.

developed West), leads to high demand for flexible and cheap migrant labour. On the other hand, in less developed countries, such as many post-socialist Eastern European countries like Hungary, the social transformation of the labour market (that is, the massive loss of jobs due to structural changes, among others the closing down of industrial factories) further encourages outmigration of the uprooted, 'superfluous' or 'abandoned' former socialist working class (Melegh et al., 2018), among them the currently unemployed, low-skilled Roma, in search of a better life and livelihood (Toma et al., 2017).

These changes on the globalised labour market have fostered new mobility streams to the developed Western European countries since the 2004 EU accession, which provided legal rights for residence and work for the newly accepted EU member states' citizens, among them Roma people from Hungary. Since then, over a million mobile Central Eastern Europeans (CEEs) have found work in Britain (Ciupijus, 2011). From Hungary approximately 300,000-400,000 people have a job in the UK (Kováts and Papp Z., 2016; Hárs, 2016). My ethnographic findings on the Roma migrants from North Hungary support research results that although CEEs migrants can earn much higher wages in the UK than in their countries of origin, in exchange they must perform long working hours, in exploitative working conditions (EHRC, 2010). Their long working hours and time spent almost exclusively among co-nationals, their Hungarian migrant Roma networks, or other CEEs mobile labourers at workplaces, which do not give them space for language learning and social interactions with British citizens (see also: EHRC, 2010). According to existing studies on labour migration, due to this working condition and to the 'language cost' (namely, that many low-skilled CEE migrants do not have a command of English), it is a kind of entrapment which hinders upward social mobility (Ciupijus, 2011). However, if we consider social mobility as it is understood by my interlocutors, working at the assembly lines in factories in the UK, as the search for opportunities in a broad sense: income generating possibilities, the search for a good life, and for better future for their children – the outcome is more positive.

Robika's story is a case in point to illustrate this and how people of precarious status can still rework their position even when their agency is constrained by exploitative labour market conditions. Robika of low formal schooling (completed primary school), but a huge amount of natural intelligence and other profitable skills learnt in the school of life (Pulay, 2015), had long been a successful small entrepreneur in Hungary, coming from a scrap metal trading family. Due to economic restructuring in the country and new economic regulations in this trade, his business was not sustainable from the beginning of the 2000s. Although he kept trying many different petite trades, there was no solvent demand for his goods. Some of his business mates, being in the same situation, and struggling with a shrinking opportunity field in North Hungary, started to commute as mobile workers to Austria, taking up work in the construction industry as semi-skilled labourers. However, most of his Roma networks who did not want to leave their families behind, went to Canada, and when having been deported as their refugee claims were rejected, they went on to the UK. To work in the UK, one needed some initial money, savings, to be able to pay for the usual two-three-month deposit for privately rented flats – where most of the Hungarian Roma migrant workers live in with their families. While

Robika's Canadian returnee migrant friends had this money from their savings from living and working in Toronto, Robika used up all his family's savings collected during those years when his business was still successful.

I have known Robi for five years now, from my previous fieldwork, from the time when the culture of migration had spread all over this region (Durst, 2013; Vidra 2013, see also: Hárs, 2016; Váradi et al., 2017). At that time, he was considering going to Canada, following his Roma networks, to escape from his and his family's racial stuckedness, and to grab the opportunities available there. However, after long and thorough consideration, he changed his mind: "I just realised that I do not want to show the example for my son that I am a refugee. I do not want to be nobody in a foreign country, not even speaking a word of English, when I am still somebody at home [in his social circles in Hungary]." Therefore, he kept trying to search for all opportunities to make money (in a legal way).¹⁸

When the opportunity field in Hungary, according to his perception, had completely vanished for him, as a Roma with low formal schooling, he decided to take his chances in England. He had migrant friends in a big urban city in the UK who accommodated him for the first two months. In exchange for the shelter, he contributed to the hosting family's monthly rent, and the meals. It was a win-win situation until both parties started to feel that the other made use of his generosity. Luckily by then, Robika, as a Hungarian agency worker in a food factory, was ready to rent his own flat and brought his wife and two children to the UK. On occasions when I asked him whether it is not a step back to his earlier social status, having been a respected, independent entrepreneur back home, he always replied to me in a revealing way: "It's obviously not my dream job. I cannot call it *kerele* - here we do not make the money as we did at home. Here you do the work for somebody else. But we are still Roma - we live the same way, under the same laws such as at home. Although you are not your own boss here in the factory, at the assembly lines, but I also did not become subservient (*szolgalelkű*)."

On some bad days, Robika complained (to me), that enough is enough, and he would not obey the nonsensical commands of his Lithuanian assembly line manager who always favoured his co-nationals and tried to get the other Eastern European migrants to perform the hardest, most enduring physical work. After a while, with the help of his employment (staffing) agency, he managed to find a physically less straining menial job for the same (minimum) wage. Being a hard worker, after a three-month trial period, he even got promoted to a contract worker, meaning a more secure labour position and a higher wage than agency workers possess.¹⁹ Part of the

¹⁸ Some of his friends started the business of informal money lending, with an 50-100 per cent interest rate. For Robika, however, this was not a 'good life', even if he could easily have started and conducted the business relying on his good business skills and widespread network: 'I want a life where I can put my head on the pillow relaxed, and do not have to wake up during the night fearing when the police come to check on me.' (Since 2012, due to the change of the criminal law in Hungary, informal money lending, called usury [*uzsora*] in legal and public discourse, is considered a crime).

¹⁹ The reason for him changing factory was that after Brexit (May, 2016) when the country voted to leave EU, Eastern European migrant workers started to be treated even more unequally, compared to their very few English worker mates - the latter almost exclusively in managerial positions. On that day when he first decided to leave, Robika was told that even on Bank Holiday (a national holiday in England) he has to come to work, at a usual wage. When he complained that it is a work-free national holiday, his

transformation of the globalised labour market in Britain in the era of the neo-liberal, late modern global capitalism, is the set up of employment or staffing agencies who offer cut rate agency workers to the big factories to keep them competitive globally by employing cheap, flexible and expendable (easy to replace) labourers. According to EU laws, these agency workers should be given staff employment after a given period. An agency worker position in the labour market is much more precarious than as a staff employer's. Not only that, but they get a lower pay than the rate of the job locally. They also have to be on standby at the recruitment agency's disposal as they have to be on call at all times, should their work be required by the factory. The problem with this is that most of the agency workers can work irregularly and mostly seasonally, only a few days a week; or in a worse season, a couple of days in a month, whenever there is surplus demand for the factory's product therefore the factory needs extra hands beyond its usual staff.

While many of Robika's Roma friends prefer to keep their status as agency workers because, as they explained to me, it gives them more flexibility, Robika is very proud of his rare status as a contract or 'factory worker' (*gyári munkás*), as he calls himself.

As an illustration of his pride, he messaged me a few months ago to share with me his joy at being praised, symbolically and materially for his hard work at his company. By sending me via Messenger a picture of his certificate, displayed on his kitchen table in the company of a bottle of champagne, and a box of Lindor chocolate, a symbol of luxurious celebration compared to his Roma friends' social standing, he wrote to me with undisguised complacency: 'this is my new collection.' The document, called the 'Certificate of Appreciation' said the following: 'You are our company's perfect catch and an ideal employee whose performance no one can match! Thanks for all your dedication and hard work. We are better because of you!'²⁰

Robika's work in England is hard and lacking prestige; his living conditions are much worse than they were at home; his employers are mostly exploitative – yet he still considers living in England a better life than he had at home, in Hungary:

"I think being a factory worker is not a step back. We are new in this country, we must start somewhere. For the time being, this is what we got [a position at the assembly line in a low-wage factory, full of low-skilled migrant workers]. We do not speak English, it's a disadvantage compared to other migrants, for example to the Pakistanis who are the most successful businessmen in this neighbourhood. But I'm not worried, I have plans. I want to save up some money to start a petite business here [to open a Hungarian restaurant], but first I need to learn English. It is still a better life than we had at home. Here there is job, and you do not need school to work. Here

manager told him, from now on, in this factory, this law only applies to the native-born British workers. And if he does not like it, he can leave. When Robi tried to awake the solidarity of his Romanian assembly line worker colleagues, they said to him: "Sorry, my brother, but we cannot afford to lose our job for supporting you. Here we earn money in a week that our family can live off for a month. Back home on many days we couldn't even afford a cup of coffee. It's still much better here for us than back home in Romania."

²⁰It had a symbolic meaning, however, that he only shared this appreciation of his company with me, privately, and not with his Roma friends, publicly, on Facebook. In a different regime of value, for his Roma friends, back at home in Hungary, wage labour had been undervalued (Stewart, 1997), although during the socialist period this was the main and regular source of income for most of the households.

you can be a Hungarian, not a Gypsy. Here you can make a living. My child can have a good education. In Hungary, if you are a Roma who did not study [has only primary school certificate], what can you do? You can earn 80,000-100,000 forints, maximum. That would just cover my utility bills and some basic food.”

Robika's case shows that that the 'superfluous' groupings or 'reserved army' of the labour force or the 'suffering slot' as some economists and social scientists label the long-term officially unemployed, the protagonists of my study, are not 'submissive players of global capitalism' but active social agents managing precarity by striving for some autonomy (Pulay, 2017). Resonating with Sigona's call (2015), who coined the term 'campzanship', to argue for appreciating the strategies and tactics of those who need to manoeuvre under restricting structures (such as the Nomad Camps for Roma migrants in Italy, or the exploitative labour market conditions in England), Robika's story contradicts the 'discourse of victimhood' (Bíró et al., 2013, see also: Ivasiuc, 2018). For Robika, his family's relocation to the UK eradicated racial stuntedness and provided a better education, and future for his children. However, his upward social mobility was facilitated by his middle class social status at home, with ensuing skills and high aspirations (along with his choice of using the strategy of 'ethnic invisibility' to get ahead in life).

7. Conclusion: Getting by or getting ahead? Or how spatial mobility entangles with socio-economic mobility

The current neoliberal moment of global capitalism encourages people from North Hungary to search for social mobility as an individual or family endeavour, in the hopes of achieving economic betterment and a better future for their children via a spatial move. For most Roma migrants from this economically underdeveloped region, the quest for social mobility is a home-oriented endeavour as Rozika's family's mobility-ridden life well illustrated. There are many other Roma, however, who see spatial mobility as the only way to escape from their 'racial stuntedness' which curbs their aspired social mobility chances in Hungary where, according to their lived experiences, 'there is no life, no future for a Roma' without higher schooling. While the first group of migrants practice recurring spatial mobilities, the latter chose the strategy of residential, relocating mobility.

Although Roma migrants/asylum seekers' agency is constrained by the labour market structure at their destination countries, and the characteristics of labour demand there, they still have room to rework their position. Even if their migration, in line with research findings on other CEE migrant workers, leads them to high level of clustering in the low and unskilled segments of the 'informalised' formal labour market (Scott, 2017), which is characterised by workers' flexibility, poor wages, intensive working hours, job insecurity associated with dependence on staffing agencies (Enright, 2013), and which in many cases is followed by limited progression thereafter (Pereira, 2014), Roma migrant workers from North Hungary still consider their new position better than it was in their home society. Viewing matters through the eyes of transnationally mobile workers, social mobility has a more complex meaning for them than purely achieving income or occupational advancement. In most of my interlocutors' case, their spatial mobility was a 'constrained choice', a way

or exit out of shrinking fields or loss of opportunities in their home countries to live a worthwhile life in a destination settlement, where there are plenty of job opportunities even for unskilled labourers, and where the focus of their imagined future and hope was on their next generation (see also: Ivasiuc, 2018).

As my ethnographic material showed, transnationally mobile, low-skilled Roma workers' cases from North Hungary presents mainly a 'getting by' picture of the migration-induced household's well-being. The rare cases of 'getting ahead' with their family's lives, as Robika's story has shown, is conditioned by many intersecting factors. Namely, the particular mobility regimes of the host society, and the non/presence of an anti-Gypsy social milieu; the demand and structure of the global and local labour market; and the original social position and ambition of the migrants, coupled with the supportive kinship networks.

I claim in this paper that while the dominant political and public discourse in Britain and Canada sees precarious migration as a problem, as 'welfare tourism' or 'bogus' asylum-seeking, these undesired, low-skilled migrants, while searching for a better life for their children, contribute with their flexible and cheap labour to the increase of global capital. As my ethnographic accounts show, by the very act of their 'moving', these migrants cannot be considered passive victims of capitalist forces, but rather active social actors who can still find some space for manoeuvring and achieving socio-economic betterment for their households while navigating unequal global power structures (see also: Harvey, 2003; Rogaly, 2009; Acuna, 2016; Levine-Rasky, 2016). In the economically disadvantaged region of North-Hungary, this 'invisible' transnational mobility of the poor also serves as a buffer (Portes, 1998) against chronic poverty, such as their other informal income generating activities or fiddling jobs (MacDonald, 1994) do.

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**STEFANO PIEMONTESE, BÁLINT-ÁBEL
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**Diverging Mobilities, Converging Immobility? Romanian
Roma Youths at the Crossroad between Spatial, Social
and Educational Im/mobility**

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Abstract

The article investigates the youth transitions of a group of Romanian Roma adolescents with different im/mobility experiences but originating from the same transnational rural village. Their post-compulsory education orientations and development of autonomous im/mobility projects are anything but homogeneous; nevertheless, they all develop halfway between the reproduction of socio-economic inequalities and the challenge of social mobility. While in Spain young migrants are confronted with severe residential and school mobility but have access to wider vocational training opportunities, their peers in Romania rely on more consistent educational trajectories, but face the prospect of poorly valued work in the local rural economy. As for young returnees, they struggle to mobilize their richer transnational social and cultural capital as a way of overcoming the negative experience and result of (re)migration. Based on broader, longitudinal, multi-sited and collaborative ethnography, this paper aims to unveil the interplay between structural constraints and individual agency that shapes meaningful interaction between spatial, social and educational im/mobility in both transnational localities. While emphasizing the usefulness of the concept of transition to explain the processes of intergenerational transfer of poverty in contemporary Europe, we discuss how temporality, social capital and mobility engage with the specific socio-economic context, transformations, and imagined futures of its young protagonists.

Keywords: Youth transitions; Roma mobility; student mobility; educational choices; social mobility; social capital.

1. Introduction

This paper aims at answering the question whether spatial mobility sets in motion social mobility careers by exploring how Romanian Roma rural youths make their transitions from school education into the labor market in a context of migration. Much of the literature about young people's educational and post-educational choices tends to give credit to the idea that formal qualifications lead to upward social mobility careers. In the same way, current European policy frameworks seek to foster societal development and individual advancement by getting more people educated, and for longer. Yet, the adversities that socio-economically disadvantaged youths are faced with as they strive to comply with these prescriptions clearly reveal the practical limitations of such powerful narrative construction. Thus, moving from an ethnographic and actor-centered perspective, this article unveils the complex interplay of structural constraints and individual agency that shapes the interaction between spatial, educational and social im/mobility for young people growing up in poverty. We first introduce the concept of 'youth transition' and outline the relation between formal education and social mobility according to both official discourses and critical scholarships. We use Gambetta's (1987) comprehensive framework on individual decision-making in education as it contributes to understanding how discrepancies are created between institutionally defined paths and young people's actual educational choices. This will serve to illustrate how the lived set of temporal, physical, and relational conditions frames and guides the way vital conjunctures are navigated, and educational choices are made. Next, the biographies of four Roma adolescents with different experiences of im/mobility will be presented. Ultimately, our discussion will highlight the complex way that experiences of place, mobility, and social capital influence educational and post-educational choices, concluding that the transformative potential of mobility and migration is largely dependent on relational settings and external structures of opportunities in which these processes are embedded.

2. Youth im/mobilities in social structure

Enquires into the youth phase are critical for understanding how structural and systemic inequalities are repopulated and chances for social transformation are shaped. Youth scholars agree in asserting that the original position of an individual in the social structure influences both their opportunities in youth and their final destinations in adulthood (MacDonald et al., 2005). But at the same time, no one disputes that many young people 'manage to escape the forces of social reproduction and the destinations that their ascribed status would predict' (Gambetta, 1987: 2). Building on such ambivalence, numerous authors have dedicated their work to untangling the intricate mechanisms that reproduce imbalances in the distributions of valuable social, cultural, and economic resources by highlighting the constrained nature of the youth phase, whilst at the same time asserting the meaningful role of individual agency in shaping young people's movement to adulthood.

Evolving scholarship (MacDonald et al., 2005) denotes how the concept of 'transition' was vigorously contested in youth sociology as it originally implied the

idea that movements towards adulthood are progressive in nature and coherent with linear school-to-work trajectories. While the main purpose of these critiques was to rescue contemporary and allegedly more ‘individualized’ movements into adulthood from structurally oriented and class-based analyses, youth scholars have broadened the notion of transition in two directions. On the one hand, they have recognized the diversity, fluidity and unpredictability of such transformations at the level of communities and individuals. On the other, they have started looking beyond the movements from full-time education to the labor market to wider and equally significant aspects of the youth experience, such as housing and family transitions, as well as leisure, drug-use, and criminality.

Similar to other research in this field, this paper recognizes the holistic nature of the concept of transition as a ‘useful metaphor that does not presume a particular sort of content, direction or length’ (Macdonald and Marsh, 2005: 36). Thus, if movements into adulthood are processual and non-straightforward, attention should be shifted from discrete demographic life stages marked by specific events to ‘critical moments’ (Abajo and Carrasco, 2004; Thomson et al., 2002) of particular biographical relevance that have implications for young people’s social relations, positions, and life trajectories. Building on this argument, Langevang (2008) suggests that the concepts of ‘vital conjunctures’ (Johnson-Hanks, 2002) and ‘social navigations’ (Christiansen et al., 2006) represent a valuable theoretical lens for appraising the intrinsic complexity of youth transitions, the former describing a temporary, ‘socially structured zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation’ (Langevang, 2008: 2040), the latter relating to the way individuals proceed through these conjunctures of events and networks, seeking to move towards their desirable futures by constantly reinventing their life trajectories in a changing and unstable social environment.

3. Progressing through education: an enduring mirage

Despite school-to-work careers being only a fragment of wider processes of transition, formal education still represents a time of key changes that contributes to the shaping of young people’s social destinations in adulthood, and may help them to escape the forces of social reproduction. Schools are ideally entrusted with the task of overcoming social inequalities by smoothing down from young people’s lives those structural constraints that hinder their ‘capacity to aspire’ (Appadurai, 2004). The opinion that formal education is crucial to definitions of successful youth transitions is widespread both locally and globally, as for many people growing up in economically deprived communities progressing through education still represents a powerful and trusted pathway to ‘become somebody’ in life (Crivello, 2011). Statistical data corroborate the meaningfulness of these expectations by displaying the existence of a pervasive association between educational attainment and participation in the labor market (OECD, 2016). Similarly, throughout the last two decades several European policy frameworks¹ have endeavored to claim and then to operationalize the crucial,

¹These policy frameworks are reflected in the ‘White paper on education and training’ (EC Commission, 1995), the ‘Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training’ (Council of the

positive relation between education, employment, and social inclusion. Thus, European school systems have gradually become the flagship of a common geopolitical agenda (EU2020) revolving around the notion of a ‘knowledge economy’ and pursuing the twofold ambition of boosting market competitiveness and at the same time social equity through increasing access to educational and training opportunities for all. In spite of this, research conducted in underprivileged contexts suggests that formal education does not suffice for overcoming structural inequalities and ensuring an alternative future livelihood for poor rural youths (Azaola, 2012; Crivello, 2011; Punch, 2015). Rather, access to quality education and the consequent opportunity to move into suitable employment is unequally distributed by ethnic, racial, gender, class, income, and geographic divisions. Partly, this relates to the axiomatic consideration that schools are not artefacts separated from the rest of the world but a faithful mirror of opportunity structures, macro-economic transformations, and structural violence.

Numerous authors have endeavored to untangle the ineluctable tension between individual experiences and hegemonic assumptions about social mobility by looking at the very concept of educational and post-educational aspirations. Stahl (2012) suggests that neoliberal educational policies that prioritize competitive, economic and status-based logics tend to regard aspirations as mere individual traits that arise from otherwise ‘passive citizens’ of the welfare state. He also stresses the tension between the aspirations and the underlying conceptualisation of the socially mobile middle-class and the working-class families. On the other hand, Zipin and colleagues (2015) single out two main rationales that ought to shape the formation of educational and post-educational aspirations among socially and geographically marginalized youths: doxic versus habituated logics. *Doxic logic* refers to a set of ideological principles transmitted by official policies that support dominant norms about ‘worthy futures’. Following these standards, less privileged individuals are more likely to be pushed towards aspirations that will later prove to be unattainable, and for whose failure they will blame themselves rather than unequal opportunity structures. Only in rare cases does the ‘ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers’ (Yosso, 2005: 77) seem to leave space for what Zipin and colleagues (2015) refer to as ‘subcultural doxic aspirations.’ In contrast, *habituated logic* (from Bourdieu’s habitus) applies to those self-limiting dispositions that are informed by the subjects’ position in the social structure and set the limits of their ‘situated possibility’ (ibid., 2005: 234) associated with their subordinated condition. In such a disjunctive landscape, a third process seems to be represented by emergent aspirations grounded in lived resources, or funds of aspirations: a mixture of imaginings, voicings and agentic impulses that point towards alternative futures which are neither doxic, nor habituated, but grounded on a *reimaginative logic*.

All of this raises important questions about the role of school education in shaping life chances and transitions to adulthood, and requires focusing our attention on the very mechanisms governing educational and post-educational choices.

European Union, 2009), the EU2020 ‘Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (European Commission, 2010), and the ‘Framework for national Roma integration strategies’ (European Commission, 2011).

4. Decision-making in education

Deciding about education is a complex issue that involves a range of institutionally defined options and an indefinite number of structural causes and subjective decision-making criteria. In this respect, Diego Gambetta's (1987) comprehensive analytical framework on individual decision making in education has the great merit of dealing with all these variables by combining three different scholarly traditions: the structuralist approach, the inertial forces approach, and the rational-intentional approach.

The structuralist approach sees human behavior as limited by inescapable external constraints like macro-economic forces and institutional dispositions. Although subjects are acknowledged to make decisions in compliance with their own preferences and intentions, their options seem to be largely channeled by externalities. From this perspective, educational choices are subject to material and financial limitations met by individuals, but also bound by the feasible set of alternatives and the specific regulations attached to any given school system. Educational schemes apply indiscriminately to everyone, but they also operate in a discriminating fashion by increasing the burden of pre-existing economic constraints. Keeping low-achieving students back, not providing adequate economic aid for poorer families, or delaying access to vocational routes have the considerable effect of increasing both the direct and indirect costs of education (books, fees, transport, and foregone earnings), thus discouraging indigent children from continuing their studies. Structuralist scholarship makes it manifest that low-income families are induced to consider school as a consumer commodity (which is acquired in greater quantities the lower its price) and work the competing alternative. Thus, either poorer students need to have stronger educational ambitions and to make greater sacrifices, or they are likely to be pushed towards shorter educational routes and early school withdrawal.

The inertial forces approach takes account of those psychological and environmental mechanisms that inform individuals' decision-making independently of their awareness. From this perspective, disparities in educational attainment are to be found in the underlying forces of economic, cultural and class causation that operate at the level of preference formation. Inertial forces embodied in beliefs, sub-cultural values, and social norms may either act on the preference structure, altering the value attached to any given option, or restrict the possibilities of evaluating and processing relevant information about each option, narrowing down the feasible set of alternatives from its logical to its perceived extension. Building on former research, Gambetta identifies three potential sources of inertia: family income careers, cognitive constraints and limited reference groups. *Family income careers* account for the economic experience and the patterns of income of the parents, and are held responsible for triggering a sense of caution towards the modification of schematic interpretations and embodied responses by producing certain 'models of the world', such as general assumptions regarding the way socio-economic forces operate. *Cognitive constraints* relate to the impediments of students at the lowest level of parental education as regards seeing the instrumental advantages of formal education and from processing the minimum information needed to form educational

aspirations themselves. Finally, *limited reference groups* explain the inclination to consider as social norms only the standards of other members of a certain group (relatives, peers, community) which are held accountable for exposing educational choices to strong normative pressure rooted in pre-existing, shared automatic responses.

Ultimately, the ‘rational-intentional approach’ assumes that individuals, when they are faced with multiple options, are capable of acting purposively in accordance with their preferences and choosing rationally in compliance with expected future rewards. From this view, educational decisions are taken after comparing alternative courses of action and evaluating them according to personal aspirations and expected probability of success. While it must be recognized that preference formation is significantly shaped by structural and inertial forces, the expected benefits of education are assessed through two specific criteria: *past academic achievements* give a measure of the ability one believes themselves to possess and may either enhance or reduce both self-confidence and the shadow costs attached to a certain choice, while *labor market prospects* suggest that educational choices are sensitive to working opportunities and that individuals with similar social backgrounds would choose differently under different macro-economic circumstances. According to this view, longer educational routes would then be regarded either as an investment (human capital approach) or as an immediate alternative to inaction and unemployment.

Building on these different approaches, Gambetta concludes that subjects always ‘evaluate rationally the various elements for making educational decisions, which include economic constraints, personal academic ability and expected labor market benefits.’ However, ‘this process of evaluation takes place on the basis of their personal preferences and life-plans’ which are partly the result of random influences and partly the reverberation of specific class-biases shaped by inertial forces ‘which act as weights that subjects’ sub-intentionality apply to the elements of their rational evaluation’ (1987: 186).²

5. Educational navigations through time, place, and social relations

The mechanisms introduced so far shed light on the influence of temporality, locality, and sociability on the formation of educational preferences, as well as on the role played by processes of social comparison attached to each dimension.

First and foremost, the presumption of intentionality in human behavior is based on the ability to use the future as a determinant of action (Gambetta, 1987) whereby temporality is both the frame where preferences are formed and the principle that turns them into actual intentions. The *moment in time* when educational choices are made is especially critical, as it shapes the actual set of available options and conditions as well as the incidental influence of the structural and institutional forces at stake. For instance, while students advance in their careers, economic constraints and the shadow costs of learning are likely to decrease whereas

² Differences in the possession of cultural capital (capacity for abstraction, language manipulation, formal thought), which are often regarded as one of the main explanations of inequality in educational attainment, do not find space in this model but exclusively in regard to the formation of educational preferences at the two extremes of parental education.

school options and requirements become tighter. However, youth transitions are not mere reactions to present and past circumstances but are above all individual and social processes of becoming – the first in a long series – whose nature is complex and non-linear precisely because they are ‘continually open to the future’ (Worth, 2009: 1051). According to this view, the time ahead is an open-ended dimension where ‘emotionally thick representations of what one’s future *might* and *should* look like’ can be cultivated in form of subjective and always changing aspirations (Boccagni, 2017: 2). Here, *notions about the past and the future* are crucial for assessing present educational choices and aspirations. While former school experiences lay the background for self-defining memories that guide the formation of imagined future selves, these function as motivational resources ‘the content of which serves to harness ambition and direct action’ (Prince, 2014: 704). Also, the *temporal horizon* within which individuals project themselves into the future is associated with the ability to catch sight of the rewards attached to current efforts and, consequently, with the chance of deferring gratification and making long-term investments (Horstmanshof and Zimitat, 2007).

The formation of future self-concepts and aspirations is not disconnected from the physical world but is inextricably bound to people’s *everyday place experience*. Place is not a neutral stage where events unfold, but a character in itself, being shaped by and giving shape to young people’s lives, relations, and actions (Robinson, 2009; Thompson, Russell and Simmons, 2014). ‘Place represents a particular nexus of class, ethnicity, history and institutions that is set alongside lived experiences in education and the labor market’ (Kintrea, St Clair and Houston, 2015). Building on Heidegger’s understanding of place as an ontological structure, Prince (2014) develops an emplaced approach to the theory of possible selves. Her core hypothesis is that, since the physical environment is one of the ways through which structural inequalities manifest themselves, it also plays a critical role in framing and guiding young people’s lives. Such a place-based characterization of possibilities is informed by two dimensions of place: place identity, which is the experience-based collection of *personal cognitions* about a location ‘that reflects how the physical environments of an individual’s everyday life are actively incorporated into the self’ (Prince, 2014: 698), and the *social representation* of place, which refers to the external meanings, symbols, and attributes attached to a given place. Accordingly, residential and school places can be seen as a vivid reminder of young people’s condition that send them daily messages about who they are and who they might become (Prince, 2014). From this perspective, place transformations, personal transitions and moves may change the relation with the physical environment (Hall, Coffey and Lashua, 2009; Manzo, 2003; Valentine, 2003) and disclose access to new, unexpected futures.

Ultimately, the experience of place is mediated by and subordinated to the social interactions attached to each physical environment. ‘Emplaced interactions’ not only reveal one’s position in the class structure but – similarly and contemporarily to place – also constitute a vivid frame of reference from which inferences about future possible selves can be drawn. Youth, in particular, internalize beliefs about their own potential futures through social interactions with significant adults, including parents and other ‘exemplary individuals that can be trusted’ (Colombo, 2011: 23). Peer social capital also exerts a substantial influence on both educational aspiration and socio-

emotional well-being, whereby the latter is seen to compensate for the less appealing aspects of schooling (Jørgensen, 2016: 572). Nevertheless, for young people at the two opposite ends of the social spectrum, educational attitudes are particularly dependent on restricted reference group dynamics and uniform economic experiences (Gambetta, 1987). Even though disadvantaged neighborhoods are neither secluded from the rest of the world nor necessarily associated with lower aspirations (Kintrea et al., 2015), growing up and learning in a spatially and socially segregated environment inevitably binds the processes of preference formation to general assumptions extrapolated from limited, unrepresentative interactions. For instance, when family or community income careers revolve around irregular, short-term, and low-value income streams, young people may interpret economic precariousness as an attribute of the economic system itself and be pushed to develop a general sense of caution towards alternative economic selves (Gambetta, 1987). Similarly, students with non-school-oriented peer networks are negatively affected in their educational efforts, whereas young people who have friends that value education tend to achieve more (Ream and Rumberger, 2008). In this respect, social capital theorists are used to distinguishing between ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ networks (Putnam, 2004; Reynolds, 2007) whereby the former refers to the norms of reciprocity that cut across various lines of social cleavage, and the latter to the links among people who share similar backgrounds. Putnam (2000; in: Jørgensen, 2016) argues that whereas bonding networks are enough for ‘getting by’, bridging ones create the broader identities and reciprocities that are needed to ‘get ahead.’ In the words of de Souza Briggs (1998), the first can be called ‘coping capital’ as it provides social support, while the latter can be referred to as ‘social leverage’, which points to the use of network ties in social mobility.

To sum up, young people’s inferences about who they might become are based on multidimensional processes of comparison that unfold both *inwards* – between past, present, and future selves – and *outwards* – with given physical environments and significant others. Thus, temporality, locality, and social interactions are not motionless matrices that shape young people’s educational choices, but are rather potentially transformative resources that can be literally mobilized or immobilized to seek or escape the imagined futures that they have contributed to creating. Both real and potential *spatial mobilities* (Kellerman, 2012) emerge then as a playground where all these dimensions play a role in shaping individual processes of *social mobility*. In this regard, Kaufmann and colleagues (2004) have coined the notion of ‘motility’ to indicate the convergence of both spatial and social mobilities, and defined it ‘as the manner in which an individual or a group appropriates the field of possibilities relative to movement and uses them’ (Kaufmann and Montulet, 2008: 45). What is especially relevant to our analysis is that motility is a form of capital that can be exchanged with other forms of capital, which is informed by processes of access and restriction, the acquisition of competences, and the appropriation of choices (Kaufmann et al., 2004). The way in which time, place and social network dimensions interact with the memories, aspirations, and experiences of mobility to shape the educational choices of underprivileged Romanian Roma youths is the content of the next pages.

6. *Methods and research context*

The fieldwork of this research was carried out as an ethnographic doctoral research (Piemontese, 2017) that started in the spring of 2014 with a mixed group (girls and boys) of 20 Roma³ pre-adolescents, adolescents, and young adults from a rural village in Southern Romania, residing in Madrid. The research developed in space and time ‘literally following connections, associations and putative relationships’ (Marcus, 1995) along the networks and phases of their urban and transnational mobility. While conducting multi-sited ethnography has allowed us to observe patterns of mobility, immobility, and return in both countries, the use of social media turned into a valuable tool for observing the self-representations and the self-reflections related to these experiences (Parker Webster and Marques da Silva, 2013). Also, audio-visual methodologies (Russell, 2007; White, 2009) and collaborative explorations (Milstein, 2010; Sime, 2008; Tucker, 2013) were used with the aim of further incorporating the participants’ own perspectives. Building on this methodological set, the following biographic accounts are based on data collected through collaborative interviews, ethnographic notes, videos recordings, and social media.⁴ These sets of data also include the information shared by significant adults, such as parents, older siblings, schoolteachers and educators interviewed during the fieldwork. To a certain extent, we can interpret these accounts as ‘choral narratives’ that reflect both the collaborative, multi-format way in which data have been collected, as well as – and most importantly – the relational landscape that shapes the social navigations of their protagonists.

For the purpose of this article we will consider the school-to-work transitions of four boys (17-20 years old at the time of writing) originating from the same village, Trandafireni, but presenting different experiences of im/mobility: urban and international, wanted and unwanted, real and imagined. Whereas policymakers and educators are used to contrasting the educational attitudes of immigrant youths with those of local students, we follow the approach of van Geel and Mazzucato (2017) of comparing young people who move with those who do not move with the aim of understanding how mobility affects young people’s lives. Accordingly, we conceptualize mobility as a process that also includes remembered, hoped-for, and observed mobility, and not merely the act of moving (Crivello, 2011: 396). This is the

³ In this article, we use the term Roma to refer to individuals who self-identify as *țigani romanizați* (Romanianized or assimilated Gypsies), an expression that designate those Romanian Roma communities that have abandoned traditional Roma languages and customs (Leggio and Matras, 2017; Vergnano, 2016). The usage of the term Roma has been the subject of intense debates both among scholars and policy makers (Matras, 2013; Surdu, 2015). Then, although we do not use it in brackets, it should be always understood as a politically constructed expression, which however has the merit of avoiding racialized constructions associated with other denominations. In reality, our research participants identify themselves as *țigani* when speaking in Romanian and *gitanos* when speaking in Spanish. Nevertheless, it is not ours the task of claiming the use of these terms as categories of hetero-identification.

⁴ With ‘collaborative interviews’ we understand the act of the researcher conducting formal interviews together with a research participant who is in charge of leading the interviews and adding contents when it comes to shared experiences. In our case, Adrian co-conducted the interview to Nicolae, who in turn (and together with his brother) co-conducted the interviews to Valeriu and Fabian, also acting as linguistic mediator.

most insightful approach into the lives of young people originating from a village like Trandafireni, whose inhabitants are well integrated into the network of transnational migration – more so than many other European citizens –, and where those who do not experience migration in the first person are at least privileged spectators thereof. As we will see, considering the aspirational and actual trajectories of mobile and immobile youth illuminates ‘the multisided relational settings in which their life projects are embedded, and the changing external structures of opportunities’ (Boccagni, 2017: 2).

In compliance with this approach, the biographies described in this paper are presented in an order that entails increasing physical and metaphorical separation from the home village: first migrant, then returnee, then left-behind, and finally non-migrant profiles are taken into account. Similarly, the work orientations of the four protagonists embrace different degrees of labor market positioning, including a criminal career, rural work, athletic vocation, and regular employment. Despite each participant experiencing his transition in a different way, their biographies reveal several commonalities that make them appropriate for comparison. First, they all originate from the same Roma district of Trandafireni, meaning that despite having non-identical experiences of inter-ethnic boundaries and different understandings of their ethnicity, being (identified as) Roma has been critical in shaping all of their early socialization processes. Second, they are young males who share ties of kinship and friendship, and who were taking their first steps into adulthood from a common background of social norms, beliefs, sub-cultural values and, most importantly, gendered-biased labor market prospects and expectations. The focus on male voices, however, should not lead to the hasty conclusion that the educational and post-educational routes of their female peers are dissimilar either in terms of constraints or aspirations, as has been shown elsewhere (Piemontese, 2018). Third, they each have a disengaged and low-achieving academic past: all of them went through phases of absenteeism and disaffection with school and were pushed into remedial educational schemes or segregated schools, and (with only one exception) dropped out towards the end of compulsory education. Fourth, their household economies are partly dependent on the intervention of either Spanish or Romanian social services, thus relying on the subscription of ‘inclusion agreements’ linking the provision of economic benefits to a commitment to attend compulsory education or undertake community work. Finally, they were all born within the five year period before the lifting of EU visa requirements for Romanian citizens in 2002, when the prospect of migrating to Spain arose in the minds of their parents more strongly than before, as it did with many other Romanian citizens (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2017).

The biographies exposed in this paper are not representative of the impact of mobility and migration on the educational careers of Roma youths in general, since the data on which they are based have been collected within a very specific migration network. However, since these stories reveal the very mechanisms that reproduce inequality in and through education under a condition of im/mobility, we believe that the conclusion of this paper can be generalized to other young people who share similar experiences of spatial mobility, segregation, and material deprivation. To a given extent, this paper may be also interpreted as an endeavor to explore the processes that leave underprivileged Roma behind – or *vice versa*, support individuals

to get ahead in education and work – leaving ‘Roma ethnicity’ out of the picture (Piemontese, 2015), thus ‘transcending the ethnic frame of reference’ (Stewart, 2010: 10) by addressing the topic in the larger frame of youth scholarships. Moreover, while the diverse transitions exposed in this paper may contribute to de-essentializing the understanding of Roma youths growing up in disadvantaged contexts, the article should be considered in the frame of broader scholarly research on ‘youths affected by mobility’ (Bereményi and Carrasco, 2017; Carrasco and Narciso, 2018) where the purpose of researching non-Roma alongside Roma youths (Tremlett, 2009; 2014) was actually achieved.

7. Adrian

Adrian (18 years old) moved from rural Romania to Madrid with his mother at the end of 2005, when he was only five years old. His father had then been squatting in an abandoned building in the Northern part of the city for almost three years, making an irregular living as a scrap metal collector. Only a couple of years after the family was reunited, dreams of the life they had hoped to have in Spain were suddenly interrupted by the first of many police evictions. After that, and for more than a decade, they were forced to move from place to place, consequently having to adopt a series of residential strategies in an attempt to ensure access to decent housing. This, however, never happened. Accordingly, Adrian, during the time of his compulsory education (2006 to 2016), had no choice but to move constantly with his parents to self-constructed shacks, motorhomes, ruined buildings, rented apartments and empty mortgaged properties.

The continuous restructuration of household priorities and the non-negotiable need to ‘make a new home’ following each move negatively intertwined with a wide range of material, social and psychological constraints, discouraging Adrian from going to school. In the long run, such precarious housing conditions, together with an especially permissive and uninvolved parenting style, further intensified a pre-existent ‘sense of caution’ towards formal education. This triggered a belated and intermittent educational trajectory, translated into poor grades. Adrian did not go to school until 2010, when he enrolled in fourth grade.⁵ This first contact with the Spanish education system came after the intervention of the local social services, which was intended to provide a public response to the irregular occupation of an abandoned building that was highly problematized by neighbors and in the local media. However, like other young squatters, Adrian went to school for a couple of months only until the building was evicted. During the following two years he did not receive an education. He returned to school only when his family found a more stable place to live in the district becoming more open to make an ‘inclusion agreement’ with social service agents.

When we first met in the summer of 2014, Adrian had just finished his first year of secondary school after repeating sixth grade. At the beginning, falling behind

⁵ In Spain, primary school lasts six years (grades 1 to 6) and secondary education is divided into two stages: a unified compulsory track (grades 7 to 10) and a non-compulsory specialization track (grades 11 and 12).

did not represent a source of discouragement to him. 'With time, I will learn', he used to repeat both to teachers and to himself: he was confident that it was a matter of making up for lost time. But later, in spite of being truly convinced of the advantages of attending secondary school, he became increasingly reluctant to spend his mornings confined with other students in a full-time compensatory class taught by a series of willing but undertrained temporary teachers:

I get bored at school. [The teacher is used to] asking us what we want to do, whether Math or other things, and sometimes it's Math, sometimes other things, like drawing or playing [...] There are five of us, but normally [we should be] 21, but they do not come: sometimes Antonio is there and Alex is not there, for example, or the opposite. They stay at home.

Therefore, during the second year he also began to skip school more and more frequently: his academic engagement, which was already very poor, dropped so inexorably that the following term he was pushed into an early vocational route for compensatory students (PCPI). The school counsellor and parents persuaded him to choose to study electro-mechanics, neglecting his desire to become a hairdresser: the counsellor told them that it was too much of a feminine choice for a boy. Two months later, he dropped out of the PCPI. In the following year, he took a carpentry course, but just *pro forma*, to comply with the requirements of social services. In 2017, his life underwent an important transformation: he became a father. At that time he was still financially dependent on his parents, thus he began to contribute to the household economy by collecting scrap metal and – like one of his older brothers – committing petty thefts.

Besides the influence that both economic and institutional constraints had on Adrian's school trajectory, broader socio-emotional and relational aspects shaped his last years of education. Since his late childhood, the reassuring and caring presence of his older brother, Aurel, had progressively balanced both the unreliable figure of the father and a busy mother overwhelmed with productive and reproductive roles. After Aurel died of cancer in 2015, Adrian was left without the only person who had made him feel protected: another older brother was serving a sentence in prison, and another one would have joined him very soon. Adrian's mourning was soon replaced by the self-imposed belief that he had to fill the now empty spot that his older brother had left. He had taken on new responsibilities the previous year, as his parents had spent most of their time either next to their older son's hospital bed or leaning over garbage bins on the street. Adrian was often asked to take care of his younger siblings or to help his illiterate mother communicate with doctors and social workers. With Aurel passing away, he had even more on his plate. During an interview, he explained that such 'care work' eventually became one of the main reasons why he had failed sixth grade. However, it also became a plausible excuse that he used with teachers to justify school absenteeism. Interestingly, this strategy had the side effect of limiting teachers' efforts to make school an attractive place to Adrian, as it induced them to blame his parents for his erratic school attendance. Moreover, the school also lost its initial attractiveness as a space for socialization:

Well, now that I'm not going to school too much, I'll start to quit because I almost do not know anything anymore. I forgot what I have to do [...] I don't care, because I know where my friends live, so I do not care. If I had no friends, I would say, 'Fuck! I should stay on at school!' But, as I told you, since I already have friends, I do not care if I continue or not.

Faced with a disruptive educational career and surrounded by other Roma and non-Roma young people with similar experiences of residential and educational segregation, and even criminal records, the future that Adrian could imagine began to narrow. Although his parents consistently reminded him that without an education he would become indigent like them, scrap metal collection and a criminal career started to seem his most plausible options.

8. Nicolae

Stefano: What does your mother think about education?

Nicolae: What do you think she believes?

Nicolae (19 years old) and Adrian have similar migratory trajectories and an equally complicated housing situation. However, in Nicolae's biography the distress and the ambitions of a returned migrant who had to adjust to the circular mobility of his family are also present. Everything began at the end of 2002, when his father moved to Madrid and settled in a recently developed shantytown located in the Southern part of the city. His wife joined him one year later and after several months, the couple went back to Romania to get their children and the grandfather and take them to Spain. For almost five years, that abandoned piece of ground flattened between ruined walls, crowded with scrap metal and infested with rats, became the playground for a prolific ecology of peer relationships that would become the most powerful and durable that its young inhabitants would establish. Following an eviction, Adrian ended up on the doorstep of Nicolae's shack, who offered himself as a 'cicerone' to the new neighbor: from then onwards - and despite their own personalities and situations - their bond grew stronger and stronger alongside an intensifying sequence of shared eviction experiences and irregular occupations that inextricably weaved together the destinies of their respective families. However, before embarking on this residential odyssey, Nicolae's life was shaken by a series of tragic events that shaped the livelihood of his household. In less than two years, both his grandfather and then his father passed away, meaning that the family had to sell the former's house in their hometown to ship his remains back to Romania. Moreover, until then the father had been the most important source of income they had in Spain. The eviction of the shantytown in 2009 thickened the plot, leaving the family homeless in both transnational localities and placing the mother in a subordinate yet relatively advantaged condition of dependency on both social services and the extended family. This situation allowed the household to pursue a moderate upward housing career that culminated three years later in the loan-based purchase of a small house in the hometown, and moving into an empty mortgaged apartment in Madrid that was in good shape. Before this, the family

changed house five times within five years, returning to Romania once in the context of a municipal 'voluntary repatriation' program.

Under these conditions, Nicolae's educational trajectory progressed in a fragmented but somehow steady way. Although he had attended kindergarten in Romania, in Madrid he did not enroll in school until the year before the shantytown eviction, which is when he started fourth grade. Hence, he successfully attended the last three years of primary education. Such continuity was sporadically interrupted by forced evictions and changes of school, which were promptly redressed by the uncompromising school-oriented attitude of the mother, which had undoubtedly been encouraged by the social services. However, in 2011, the 'voluntary repatriation' program of the municipality that came after another eviction interrupted Nicolae's educational career. Back in Romania, he was unable to enroll due to bureaucratic impediments related to the validation of the previous courses he had taken, so he lost one year of school. When he returned to Madrid with his family, he enrolled two consecutive times in the first year of secondary school (seventh grade). This period, however, was marked by him entering into conflict with some schoolmates who stigmatized him as 'poor and Gypsy'. In addition, some teachers addressed Nicolae's disruptive behavior through misuse of school expulsions, failing to understand the root of his misconduct, and irresponsibly neglecting the effects of further interruptions. Despite this, when we first met in the summer of 2014, Nicolae was an enthusiastic teenager aware of his privileged position as a student within the family, who looked forward to seeing him enrolled in an early vocational route (PCPI) in car mechanics that, he hoped, would allow him to find a decent job soon:

My mother, she really wants me to study, but since she knows that I'm not doing well at school [...] well, she and the teachers decided to sign me up for a PCPI. I love the idea! I already have friends who are mechanics, older people. I love it! I want to study four years as mechanic and become a professional, with a driving license and everything.

All these ambitions were interrupted by his mother's rapidly deteriorating health after she was diagnosed with cancer in an advanced state. This implied that the family had to return to Romania. There, after feeling excited at the beginning, Nicolae began to realize that his rural village offered him very little compared to Madrid. A series of improvised house parties and some sporadic visits to the capital city revealed his pointless attempts to maintain a cheerful, urban lifestyle. He struggled to recognize that the conditions around him had radically changed and that he, too, had to change. He began to feel increasingly bored and quietly resented his mother during that time: although he felt at home, he also felt out of place. Paradoxically, he could not go to school because, afraid of losing the Spanish social benefits that were the family's only source of income, the mother had not requested the documents needed to enroll her older child in Romania. Subsequently, as the benefits ended after several months, the prospects of school disappeared. The family had to rely on the minimal economic support of local social services, his younger siblings were virtually destitute, and the older sister was taking care of the housework, so Nicolae needed to speed up his transition to the labor market. Just as his strong, one year younger brother had found

his way in the construction sector, Nicolae, skinny and not very tall, had no option but to become part of the seasonal, underpaid, rural labor force. His almost insignificant and unstable earnings hardly covered the debts that the family accumulated with grocery shops during the winter. For a while, Nicolae looked for a job in the catering sector, but failed to find one as he did not have the right experience and the right acquaintances. Under these circumstances, migration seemed to be the only way out of poverty and so, at the beginning of 2017 when he turned 18, he planned to move back to Madrid to look for a better job, just like his father had done 15 years before, but with a fundamental difference: for Nicolae, working as an irregular scrap metal collector was out of the question.

9. Valeriu

Valeriu (17 years old) was only two years old when his mother moved to Spain in 2003. After that, he grew up with his grandparents in a small house at the edge of the Roma district of Trandafireni, close to Nicolae's future home. His dad continued to live in the ethnic-Romanian sector of the village where he was from, while the mother spent most of her time abroad, returning to the hometown for short periods. After kindergarten, Valeriu went to primary school and proved to be a fairly good student. From then on, he enrolled in middle school and, impressed by the facilities of the new center and fascinated by the presence of pupils from the other neighborhood, he was very enthusiastic about starting his first year.⁶ Along with other classmates, Valeriu was soon invited to take part in trial boxing lessons taught by the sports teacher, a charismatic man who just a couple of years before had managed to convince the principal and the city council to allow him to set up a boxing gym within the school. He was also a talent scout for the Romanian Boxing Federation who saw left-handed Valeriu's potential as a future boxer in his first punch.

Encouraged by his extended family and welcomed by the trainer, Valeriu entered the universe of boxing without giving it much thought. However, during the following school year he considered quitting as he was demoralized by this time-consuming activity that did not bring immediate results. This crisis was closely linked to his increasingly poor academic performance, as Valeriu had begun to hang out and skip school with older students. While his teachers were keen on tolerating the vanishing of a few 'troublemakers' from their classes, Valeriu's mother tried – from a distance and without much success – to warn her son about the risk of ending up like her: uneducated and forced to migrate to find a job. In this context, the mediation of the trainer represented a real turning point for Valeriu. Making the most of their trusting relationship, the coach encouraged his protégé to stay in the team. Soon after, when Valeriu started winning his first matches and gaining self-confidence, the coach tried to convince him that doing well at school would be an asset for his future boxing career: allowing to enroll in a sports secondary school and eventually becoming a trainer as well.

⁶ In Romania, primary school lasts four years (grades 1 to 4). Secondary school is divided into three stages: a unified compulsory track, or middle school (grades 5 to 8), a compulsory specialization track (grades 9 and 10) and a non-compulsory specialization track (grades 11 and 12). In Trandafireni, young people need to commute daily to the county capital to attend school after eighth grade.

I improved a bit because of boxing because my trainer told me to go to school; otherwise, he would have stopped training with me. Sometimes I [still] learn because I think about boxing, because my coach always tells me to study, because it is good for boxing, too. So, whenever I think about boxing I learn well, but when I do not think about boxing, I do not learn.

However, just as Valeriu had overcome the aforementioned crisis and immediately before starting seventh grade, he realized that he wanted to be reunited with his mother. After many years of intermittent visits, they both intended to reinvigorate their lost relationship so they applied for a passport, got permission to travel from the father, bought plane tickets and prepared for departure. However, Valeriu's grandparents opposed the plan, worried about the disruptive consequences that a long absence would trigger on a pathway that had only recently become stable. Valeriu ended up staying. In 2015, his promising athletic career was in an ascending phase: he had recently won the under-16 national boxing cup, and although he was still at middle school, he was offered a place at a sports secondary school in the county capital. In the long run, his plan was to become a professional boxer and study physical education at university and become a trainer himself. Interestingly enough, this trajectory was supported both by the coach and Valeriu's mother. The former regularly paid for Valeriu's equipment and sports-related trips, while the mother's remittances had allowed her child to afford to live a similar life to that of his more affluent teammates. This might mitigate Valeriu's perception of marginalization.

It was good to have my mother's money. The other guys had money in their pockets and I would have felt bad without that money. Without that money, I would not have gone to boxing any more.

Valeriu's boxing ambitions had progressively shaped his educational and professional orientation and even his plans for im/mobility. The way to this was paved by the reward from his daily effort, which took him one step closer to the future he hoped for and which had been revealed by the sport he was practicing. The more he progressed as an athlete, the more it became clear that boxing could open up alternative pathways – which he had not believed in before – towards social and spatial mobility. After seeing older team members earn good money from their victories, he began to believe that he, too, could climb the social ladder and – as he repeated to himself – ‘achieve something in life.’ Likewise, their stories about international competitions held in foreign countries contributed to repopulating his ideas about mobility. Although his view about the ‘world abroad’ was previously framed under the category of labor migration, now he perceived this collective imaginary with suspicion. Moreover, after witnessing the disruptive transitions of his returned peers, his ideas about Spain changed from that of a hoped-for mythical destination to a neutral passing station in his way to future international competitions. When we last met in 2016, Valeriu had been selected for the under-16 European boxing championship. However, neither his mother nor his trainer could pay for his travel and subsistence costs abroad for such a long period. To ‘live life like a champion and never fall

behind' – as he read on an advertisement for sporting goods – would not be easy, and would take him a lot of effort to achieve.

Every minute I am training I think very strongly about one sentence: fight now that you are young, because later you will be a champion.

10. *Fabian*

Fabian (20 years old) grew up with his parents and a younger sister in a small two-room house located in the ethnic-Roma district of Trandafireni. Since his childhood, the livelihood of his household had always depended on his dad's short-term, irregular and underpaid jobs, which were mainly connected to the construction sector. Despite the humble and precarious life that such a family economy could provide, migration never really came up as an alternative: the mother went to Spain only once as a seasonal agricultural worker. Although the father had been planning to look for a temporary job abroad for a long time, he ultimately decided to stay in Romania, where he could still rely on a strong network of contacts that allowed him to work 'every day, every month, and for everyone.'

As for Fabian, after kindergarten he enrolled in primary school and then middle school: he was an average pupil who went through school without much trouble, at least until his first and only failure in eighth grade. Fabian never had any specific ambitions, so when it came to choosing an upper secondary school track he preferred to choose a less demanding vocational route and chose hairstyling. However, given the lack of available places in this field, he was forced to pursue a career in telecommunications. During the first year (ninth grade) Fabian was intimidated by the unfamiliar environment of the new center and excited by the chance of breathing in a bit of the urban atmosphere of the county capital at the same time. Nevertheless, he began to lose interest in school very soon. In addition to other reasons, comparison with other peers from the ethnic Roma district who already had work experience as they had dropped out earlier, or finished compulsory education in due time, Fabian started to think about leaving school to look for a job. He wanted to earn his own money and become financially independent. What discouraged him from following this path was the rumor that the Romanian government had decided that compulsory education was a prerequisite for obtaining a driving license, which was something Fabian wished to pursue. In spite of his attempt to examine the opportunity cost of his intimate aspirations, during the last year of compulsory education (tenth grade), Fabian became increasingly disengaged with school: he started skipping classes, finally dropping out five weeks before the end of the term. At this point, both the principal and the parents intervened by talking to him about the risk of entering the labor market without a diploma. In addition, a social worker warned him that he would have to do community work if he wanted to keep the monthly allowance for dependent minors – a small yet important amount of money that had allowed Fabian to adopt socially significant consumption practices (transportation, leisure, clothes). Caught between family pressure, the burden of community work, losing his pocket money, and the concrete risk of not obtaining a diploma, Fabian decided to complete tenth grade. During the summer, he still was not

sure about staying in school and the pressure his parents placed on him to finish completion secondary education did not help. All he knew was that ‘something easy’ would fit him. Therefore, filled with uncertainty, he decided to postpone his choice as he was set to work all summer with Nicolae in the countryside and with his father in the construction sector. He thought he would be able to make a better choice based on these experiences. Fabian finally decided to go back to school without giving it much thought but before the end of the year finally gave up: deeply discouraged by the pressure of catching up in four subjects, now of legal age, and relieved of the ‘dependency trap’ of social services and the need to obtain a compulsory education diploma, and also based on his summer work experience, Fabian made a choice neither his parents or teachers could change.

Since 2016, Fabian has been working at a construction company with a regular salary of below the national income average, but still sufficiently high for the underprivileged 18-year old rural youth. Sometimes, during his early adolescence, Fabian had wanted to move to Spain to find his fortune, following the example of other peers who had migrated with their parents. However, as time went by and they started to return, he learnt that migration is indeed a risky venture. Much like his parents, besides having a natural fascination about the ‘world abroad’, Fabian has no migratory ambitions and actually trusts in the opportunities that Romania may offer him in the near future.

Nicolae: How is it possible that you still live here, that you don’t go to another country, that you are always in the same state of poverty? Do you not want to earn money? Going to another country – it changes your life!

Fabian: Yes, I desire another life, but I have got used to this one. I will stay with what I have.

11. *Discussion*

The four biographies presented in this paper show how the experiences of place and mobility, as well as the social relations available in both dimensions, interact in a reciprocal way to shape the educational and post-educational choices of young people. For underprivileged rural youths, migration may represent an attempt to renegotiate their social position (Thorsen, 2005: 1) and to achieve integration into mainstream society (Azaola, 2012: 884). Nevertheless, their uncertain social navigation is also symptomatic of the ‘regimes of mobility’ (Glick, Schiller, and Salazar, 2013) they undergo in both transnational locations. To understand whether their lives will lead to the reproduction of socio-economic inequalities or the challenge of upwards social mobility, it is necessary to understand the multiple intersections between their experiences of place, mobility, and social capital.

During their lives, our research participants underwent different degrees of residential and educational segregation. For those who migrated to Spain, the inadequate material conditions of shantytowns and squatted buildings, as well as fragmented access to quality education, intensified pre-existing feelings of caution towards formal education acting on both academic achievements and social behaviors. In fact, while parents postponed school enrolment until the housing situation

improved, the stigmas attached to place of residence, as well as to the family livelihood and ethnicity – squatters, garbage collectors, and ‘Gypsies’ – were the main sources of conflict at school, as has more exhaustively been shown elsewhere (Piemontese, 2018). These conditions triggered belated, interrupted, and conflictive school careers that ultimately pushed our participants towards remedial schemes and punitive measures: over time, these circumstances profoundly modified their ideas about how school education can create the desired social mobility. In Trandafireni, the boundaries that uncouple the lives of young Roma are much more volatile but are as powerful and ubiquitous as the ethnic and rural divide they shadow. Their early educational careers start within the limits of the Roma district and its run-down school branch, continue in the better-off school headquarters located in the ethnic-Romanian district, and culminate eight terms later with the need to commute to the county capital to finish compulsory education. In both transnational localities, the feeling of entrapment and stigma attached to the place of residence seem to permeate the school environment too. Moreover, from time to time institutional selection mechanisms remind our participants that they are not the main recipients of school education, but ‘visitors’ to a place created for more composed, effective, urban, or non-Roma pupils. As well as not ineluctable, these mechanisms significantly contribute to intensifying a sense of disconnection with the school environment.

In this scenario, residential and school mobility emerges as an element of differentiation that is unequally distributed among migrant and non-migrant students, and affects their educational choices in a rather ambivalent and counterintuitive way. The striking overlapping of urban and transnational mobility that characterizes socio-economically disadvantaged young migrants endows them with ‘mobility capital’ that can be mobilized when needed, but also recreates the conditions that generate such needs. In essence, the cycles of evictions they undergo in Madrid set in motion a series of material and psychological constraints that discourage school enrolment, promote frequent changes of school and temporary withdrawals, and bring about ‘falling behind careers’ that require greater academic effort to catch up with the curriculum, as well as greater ability to re-establish social bonds with fellow students. With such educational trajectories behind them, young returnees to Romania face bureaucratic impediments related to the validation of their previous academic paths, which in most cases contribute to interrupting an already fragmented educational career. Nevertheless, it is in the blind alley of the return where the chances of social mobility seem to vanish forever, and that the ‘mobile self’ enters the picture. The process of continuously evaluating the countries of origin and destination that guides the formation of autonomous life plans among young returnees turns mobility from a *negative* source of unsuccessful school careers into a *positive* asset that can be mobilized to broaden labor market opportunities into an imagined elsewhere which is detailed and familiar. Strong in their double frame of reference, returned migrants often blame those who stay for ‘not knowing anything about the world abroad.’ This perspective, however, could be misleading. Young people with no direct experience of migration are witnesses to the departures and returns of parents, neighbors, and friends, and have even themselves considered the idea of migrating. At the same time they take advantage of those educational and relational resources that their returned peers lack. The uninterrupted educational careers allow them to complete

compulsory education with more ease, deeper, locally rooted social networks provide less complicated entries into secure labor market positions. In addition, they also start practicing mobility at a regional level for work and educational reasons. Under these conditions, *mobilizing mobility* and *mobilizing immobility* emerge as two alternative strategies that underprivileged Roma youths endowed with different ‘mobility capitals’ adopt to overcome situations of deprivation and develop their autonomous life transitions.

Ultimately, transnational mobility has indisputably allowed young migrants to project their social horizons onto the super-diverse landscape of the Spanish periphery, fostering wider and vibrant social relations. However, the residential strategies adopted by their families play out against such a potentially expanding relational trend, pushing them progressively to strengthen ‘bonding’ socio-emotional ties with adults and peers who share the same origins and housing solutions, and weakening at the same time ‘bridging networks’ (Putnam, 2004) with other people outside the ethnic, immigrant, and homeless community. In such an unstable environment, the closer reference group formed by other underprivileged Roma immigrants turns into the primary source of trust, reciprocity, emotional support, and identity for young people (Reynolds, 2007) which however also contributes to reinforcing a sense of ‘narrower self’ (Putnam, 2000; in: Jørgensen, 2016). Back in the hometown, smoother school and housing careers instead endow youths who are ‘non-affected by mobility’ with a less vibrant and dense, yet deeper social capital. This may potentially foster ‘social leverage’ processes (de Souza Briggs, 1998): ‘few but good’ relations that suffice to enable meaningful connections outside the district community within the labor market, and which may also influence the way home is experienced, and images of mobility are repopulated.

12. *Concluding notes*

The transitions to adulthood of underprivileged youths are particularly diverse and unpredictable as they are shaped by – and contribute to shaping – processes of mobility and immobility across and within borders, schools, and homes. Having a baby, becoming a breadwinner, picturing oneself in the shoes of a significant other, or seeking economic independence, are equally significant pathways to adulthood. Nevertheless, focusing on educational choices offers a privileged window into how youths construct their future and seek to escape the forces of social reproduction, either mobilizing or repopulating ideas about mobility and immobility.

Before anything else, the biographies exposed in this paper disclose the *negotiated and constrained nature of educational choices* in contexts of deprivation. Deciding about education is the result of collective processes of deliberation which take place within the family, may include other trusted individuals, and are informed by specific intergenerational dependencies (Carrasco, Ballestín and Borison, 2007; Colombo, 2011; Crivello, 2011; Punch, 2015). Throughout this process, the universalistic ‘doxic logic’ predicated by institutional agents that informs parental admonitions and timidly shapes individual educational aspirations enters into conflict with the ‘habituated logic’ of the individual biographical experience. We have observed how impoverished Roma parents warn their children of the risk that

leaving formal education will reproduce a condition of destitution within the family. At the same time, efforts of these Roma parents collapse in the perceived zero-sum game frame between the *uncertainty* of future rewards attached to current academic efforts, and the *familiarity* of a precarious life they have nevertheless always managed to deal with. Such underlying feelings of resignation jeopardize the unaffected enthusiasm encountered during early periods of schooling and turn economic precariousness from a potential source of bolder aspirations into the origins of prudent educational choices. These are the consequences of long-lasting processes of social, academic, and emotional disaffection with school (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004) that are deeply rooted in pre-existing institutional and structural constraints. The ability of underprivileged youths to engage in and progress through school education seems to be squeezed between the experience of stigma and segregation associated with the residential space and reproduced within the school by spatially conceived provisions for ethnic or disengaged students (Thompson et al., 2014: 66), and non-intersectional community-based 'social security arrangements' (de Jong, 2005) aimed at overcoming severe situations of 'deprotection' but which have a centripetal effect on 'bonding' networks and a centrifugal effect on 'bridging' social capital.

Thus, in scenarios tending towards social immobility, the *influence of bridging social capital on educational choices* seems to be crucial. Cultivating social relations outside the closer reference group – namely, having broader social capital in terms of extension, articulation, and variability in available social interactions – not only provides wider access to material resources like jobs and loans, but also supplies alternative images of the future. Virtually, the role of networks in shaping hoped-for or aspired-to possible selves is rooted in the very mechanisms of social comparison which describe the act of relating information about others to oneself in such a way that estimated differences and similarities influence judgment, cognitions, motivations, and behaviors (Corcoran, Crusius and Mussweiler, 2011). The capacity of young people to picture themselves in other persons may either disclose new narratives about adulthood or reaffirm pre-existing ones; make future rewards visible or keep them invisible; encourage bolder aspirations or reproduce prudent educational and post-educational choices. What really matters is the social positioning from which comparison with school-oriented adults and peers is formulated. While comparisons *on an equal basis* are more likely to bring about the idea that 'progressing through education' is the most appropriate route for seeking upward social mobility, *subordinated* processes of comparison are more likely to restrict attempts to achieve integration into mainstream society to socially significant consumption models.

In this context, the processes of spatial in/mobility emerge as a valuable yet ambivalent resource of social upward mobility, whose transformative potential is largely dependent on the relational settings and the external structures of opportunities into which they are embedded. The ability to navigate conjunctures and networks, to cultivate deeper relations with significant others, and to mobilize processes of mobility and immobility – in other words, to act like a purposeful and agentic social being – 'can only exist in interconnectedness and be brought about in relations' (Raithelhuber, 2016: 96). Therefore, in order for parents and educators to support underprivileged young people to act intentionally, to understand education as

an investment in the future, and to have bolder ambitions, we should first transform public policies in a way that does not require of subjects the courage to aspire, but only to achieve. Addressing undesired sources of residential mobility and school segregation is a first step in this direction.

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**Roma within Obstructing and Transformative Spaces:
Migration Processes and Social Distance in Ethnically
Mixed Localities in Romania**

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Abstract¹

The aim of our article is to inquire into the interconnectedness of local social context, mobility processes and social transformations. We argue that migratory patterns of the local Roma population in ethnically mixed communities are shaped by the degree and modes of maintenance of social distance between the Roma and local majority. While social distance can shape the ways migrant networks develop, it also influences the way remittances are invested at home. The analysis focuses on the comparison of two rural communities from Transylvania where we carried out community studies and a household survey which also included attitude questions related to ethnic groups. Our study reveal that the most visible aspect of the local separation is the housing segregation. While this is present in both cases, in one of the villages Roma use their upward mobility to challenge social segregation and to reduce physical distance (i.e. moving inside the village). Here in spite of physical closeness social distance between the majority and Roma remains high. In the other locality the importance of social ties increase during migration and social distance is reduced, while the ethnic groups maintain their relative residential separation.

Keywords: mobility, home communities, social distance, social transformation; Romania.

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1. Introduction

The recent migration of Romanian Roma within the EU has attracted heightened public and scholarly attention. However, the social context of the migration process is remarkably understudied in the communities of origin. As an experiment, one can look up the two thematic journal issues from the past year (they include 16 studies altogether) and observe that none of these has a focus on home community of the migrants, or the effect of migration on the sending country.² Without exploring the reasons for this lacuna, one can easily realize that the interpretation of the mobility processes of the Roma will remain biased or partial without a deeper look into the social processes and transformations of the home societies. In this study, we attempt to offer a glimpse into this area, with a focus on the sending localities. More than that, the dominant interpretation of the mobility of the Roma is the subject of interest following the Europe-wide effects of neoliberal governmentality, the racialization of poverty, and the dehumanization of the migrant Roma (see: Yıldız and De Genova, 2017; van Baar, 2017). Somewhat complementarily, we argue that focusing on the empirical realities ‘on the ground’ provides valuable insight into the diverse factors behind these processes, and explains how these processes play out.

The aim of our article is therefore to inquire into the interconnectedness of the local social context, mobility processes, and the social transformation of localities with a significant Roma population involved in international mobility. To address this issue, we focus on the concept of social distance, which has recently been neglected in the migration literature. Even though there is a large body of research dedicated to examine how racial/ethnic differences are maintained due to social distance among immigrants in destination countries and neighborhoods (Wilson and Portes, 1980; Portes, 1984), few studies discuss the effects of migration with a focus on segmented home communities, and even less on ethnically mixed communities in the light of social distance. Integrating these considerations into the discussion about the migration of Roma is crucial because the effects of migration are significantly dependent on the local social, economic, institutional and political context in the home localities. Making good use of the outcomes of migration might be difficult for returnees, even in the case of favorable general, structural conditions, while Roma migrants may face additional hindrances, or even prohibiting circumstances that are closely related to the existing social distance between local groups.

We argue that the mobility patterns of local Roma and the ways migrant networks develop are shaped by the degree and maintenance of social distance between the Roma and the local majority in ethnically mixed communities. Moreover, this also influences the way remittances are invested at home. The dynamic relationship between these processes influences the direction and extent of local social transformations.

²These are: *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, vol. 32 - n°1 (2016): The Migrations of Romanian Roma in Europe: Politics of Inclusion, Strategies of Distinction and (De)construction of Identity Boundaries, edited by Mihaela Nedelcu and Ruxandra-Oana Ciobanu; and *Social Identities. Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* (2017): Un/Free mobility: Roma migrants in the European Union, issue introduced by Can Yıldız and Nicholas De Genova.

Our empirical material comes from the results of the **MIGROM** project, during which we employed mixed methods for data collection, carried out quantitative surveys, an analysis of secondary sources, and ethnographic community studies.³ The structure of this study is the following: first, we discuss the recent return to the local focus on migration studies. We then briefly present the two field sites and the process of data gathering. A methodological overview of how social distance in sociology and anthropology is interpreted follows, while we unpack the data obtained during fieldwork. We conclude the study by considering the potentially diverging paths for local development and the implications of these for local policies.

2. Return to 'the local'

Migration studies have increasingly focused on the local level during recent years. Moreover, there is also a return to the local within policy discourses and development initiatives. Thomas Faist observed in his concluding commentary to a migration-themed issue of the journal *Population, Space and Place* that:

In short, it is above all on the local level that the diversification of migrants' nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, age, human capital, and legal status has become visible and needs to be studied. The debates on development cooperation have also been characterized by a return to the local. As international organizations such as the World Bank have made prominent note of since the early 2000s, cross-border migrants are crucial agents of development whose practices extend across the borders of states above all on a local level. These processes have been accompanied by the growing importance of civil society actors – migrant and diaspora associations included among them – and the local state (Faist, 2008). In a nutshell, the public and academic debates about mobility and development have experienced a scale shift over the past decades – the local is increasingly coming to the fore with respect to policy, social processes, and as a site of study (Faist 2016, p. 396).

Our approach is in line with this tendency, since we focus our analysis on two ethnically mixed local communities. The local focus, however, as Faist also suggested, does not mean that interpretations should remain locally confined. On the contrary, the field site is a laboratory of broader social processes that play out at the local level and therefore can be empirically grasped by researchers. Our cases also exemplify, as we show below, that – in the absence of targeted interventions by the state – the importance of socially grounded attitudes continues to influence group interaction, together with local non-formal institutions, local state authorities, and non-state structures (such as churches). Understanding the role of these is crucial in interpreting

³ During the process of fieldwork, local research assistants (most of them of Roma origin) joined our research team, helping both with data collection and the interpretation of findings. We are grateful to these research assistants and research participants in all localities. All remaining shortcomings remain the responsibility of the authors. We would also like to express our gratitude toward Judit Durst and Veronika Nagy for being such sharp-eyed and patient editors. The comments of the two anonymous reviewers also helped us to improve our article.

the social transformations not only in the local context but also for the whole process of Roma mobility within the EU.

While a focus on the local has been present in anthropological and sociological studies on Roma migration from Romania (Pantea, 2013b; Troc, 2012; Vlase and Voicu, 2014) as well as in policy suggestions (Pantea, 2013a), more attention has been paid to the pre-conditions and effects of migration *within the Roma* segments of the local population than to the broader local community and to the relationships between different local population segments (for notable exceptions, see: Anghel, 2016; Cingolani, 2012). In an earlier publication, we presented findings on Roma migration in relation to the general migratory patterns of the Romanians to address this limitation. We paid special attention to the effects of local social divisions and highlighted the particularities of each of the five localities we studied (Toma, Tesăr and Fosztó, 2017). In this paper, we continue to elaborate one particular aspect of our comparative analysis, focusing on the social distance between different segments of the local population in two localities (i.e. between the Roma and the local majority) and the effect of social distance on the local social transformations accompanying migration. In this way, we hope to provide a basis for a future theoretical synthesis in which findings about locally anchored studies will be a central feature.⁴

Local empirical studies about the migration of the Roma from Central and Eastern Europe are also needed to make sense of the broader context.

A few years ago, facing issues related to migration, the European Commission published its Communication on Maximizing the Development Impact of Migration.⁵ This document recognized that migration is both an opportunity and a challenge for development, and also warned that poorly managed migration may undermine progress towards sustainable development. In the context of European mobility, migrants from Romania have often received critical attention in different contexts both in destination countries and in Romania. Even though in recent years the EU and member states have appeared to struggle more with the pressure to manage the external ‘refugee- and humanitarian crisis’ and the internal migration of the Roma from Romania and Eastern-Europe seems to have declined in importance as a political priority, the issue still fuels public debate. Roma are often used as scapegoats: in 2017 in France the eviction of Roma camps was continuous;⁶ in 2016, Romanian Roma in the UK gained visibility in the context of pro-Brexit arguments;⁷ while Scandinavian authorities are looking for strategies to ameliorate the presence of

⁴ Attempts to deal theoretically with Roma migration within the EU have taken different paths so far. They tend to insist on macro-level processes and discourses (eg. securitization, racialization) and the effect of these within the Europeanization of the Roma issue (Yıldız and De Genova, 2017; van Baar, 2017). Even though these are valuable contributions, more systematic connections with empirical local studies are needed to substantiate the related arguments.

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Maximizing the Development Impact of Migration. The EU contribution for the UN High-level Dialogue and next steps towards broadening the development-migration nexus, European Commission, COM(2013)292, Brussels, 21.5.2013. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-maximising-the-development-impact-of-migration_en_11.pdf

⁶ <http://www.errc.org/press-releases/equality-law-fails-roma-evictions-increase-in-france>

⁷ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/656553/Roma-gypsy-palaces-quit-EU-benefits-Brexit>

Romanian and Bulgarian Roma beggars.⁸ These phenomena continue to maintain anti-migrant and anti-Roma sentiments throughout the EU (Stewart, 2012), not only in the receiving countries, but in home countries as well. A recent report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2018) shows that persistent anti-Roma feelings and attitudes hinder the social inclusion of the Roma in home countries. Our study will hopefully shed light on these broader trends by highlighting the processes which are underway in the ethnically mixed local communities that have the potential for reintegrating Roma returnees.

3. The localities and the methodology

Our analysis focuses on a comparison of two rural communities from Transylvania, Romania.⁹ These villages resemble each other in many regards, especially if we limit our inquiry to dry statistical data. The immediate vicinity of both these localities is lacking in major investment and industry, although they are located not very far from bigger (formal) industrial centers, and there have been fluctuations in employment rates during the last couple of decades. The sites are characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, and by a relatively high migration rate, both internal and international.

However, on entering these villages, the contrasts in the landscape become clear: arriving in Baratca¹⁰ (Braşov County) from the direction of the county seat, the first sight is of the Roma community, located on the hill on the fringe of the village. The location is a segregated residential area, with mostly one-room wooden or cob brick buildings, spotted with newly constructed, relatively bigger houses surrounded by fences, while further, towards the center of the village, we find the colorful houses of better-off Roma who managed to move out from the deprived neighborhood. Local Roma speak almost exclusively Romanian as their native tongue, and were traditionally Orthodox Christians. They have increasingly converted to Pentecostalism in recent decades. The local majority is Hungarian, while there is also a less numerous Romanian population. Most of the Hungarians belong to the Lutheran Church. The village has been repeatedly studied by Hungarian folklorists and ethnographers and acquired symbolic significance as being representative of regional Hungarian customs. These earlier descriptions mainly focus on particular elements of Hungarian ethnic culture and ignore the presence of the Roma who mostly live on the deprived margins of the community.

Due to the village's proximity to Braşov, which is an important industrial center, inhabitants of Baratca (including the Roma) were typically commuters during the socialist era. Some Roma worked in collective farms and as day laborers on small plots owned by majority owners. After 1990, most locals lost their industrial jobs and a

⁸<https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/sweden-sees-explosion-in-beggars-from-eu-countries/>

⁹ In the MIGROM project, we selected five localities (three small- and medium-size towns and two villages). While in towns we were able to survey only a sample of the local Roma inhabitants, in the villages we were able to implement a community census in the local Roma communities and also to obtain a majority population sample.

¹⁰ The name of localities has been altered to preserve the anonymity of the research participants.

large part of the younger and more mobile generation of ethnic Hungarians moved to Hungary. Those who stayed behind started small enterprises, moved to nearby towns, and a few families continue to work the land. Local employment opportunities for Roma remain limited.

Ethnic tensions are present in this village. There have been several instances of violent confrontation between the Hungarian and Roma during the last decade. Most notably, in the mid-2000s more than 350 persons were involved in an open conflict on the village streets. As a consequence, authorities try to maintain peace through the visible presence of police forces in the vicinity of the growing and territorially segregated Roma community. Moreover, earlier in the same period several tens of local Roma, described as illegal migrants and beggars, were expelled from one Western country, putting their home locality on the front page of mass-media reports alongside other Romanian localities, an event that further contributed to the stigmatization of the local Roma population.

The other village, Bighal (Sălaj County), is welcoming, with an image of a developing locality. It displays neat and tidy houses and gardens, a marketplace, and the new Pentecostal Church. Looking more carefully, one might realize that on the left there is a bigger and poorer neighborhood – compared to the houses on the main street –, while a little further on the right, at the end of a side street, several poorer families live, while later we can learn that both locations are inhabited mostly by Roma families.

Bighal is situated in the Northwest of Transylvania which was, during the socialist era, a traditionally agricultural region less affected by socialist industrialization. Most Roma are native Romani speakers, also proficient in Hungarian and Romanian. Traditionally, Roma and Hungarians are members of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church, but more recently membership of neo-protestant groups (i.e., Pentecostal and Baptist) has increased among the Roma community. In the past many villagers worked in small factories in the neighboring town, but local agriculture and its supporting branches (an agricultural machine park, livestock farms) remained the most important part of the local economy. Many Roma families also used to work as servants for local peasants, and then were hired by the collective farms. Sometimes they even travelled to other regions in Romania on seasonal work assignments. From the 1990s until recently, Roma worked as day laborers on land owned by the majority families. These economic relations contributed to the maintenance of peaceful ethnic relationships within the village. In the past few years, the importance of agriculture has declined and the number of small- and medium-sized enterprises has increased in various domains of light industry and tourism. Opportunities for Roma, even for temporary work, have diminished. In contrast to the situation in Baratca, in Bighal conflicts between the Roma and the majority population have not been reported.

The main commonality of these sites and the reason we chose to study them is that the process of migration has increased among the Roma in both villages in response to declining local employment opportunities. Migration of the Roma started relatively recently, and in 2014-2015, during the time of our fieldwork, it was still intense. The mobility of the majority population started earlier but declined by the time of the fieldwork. Roma families involved in migration invested part of their remittances in improving their houses in both villages, and started acquiring houses or

plots from peasants in areas outside the segregated Roma neighborhood in Baratca, in this way visibly increasing their presence in the local public sphere. Traditional local patterns of social interaction are challenged by these transformations; for some locals, having Roma in close proximity is a new experience. Even more visibly in Baratca, a whole new neighborhood has been developing since a portion of the main street at the entrance to the village has been renovated by returnees who bought and refurbished a number of neighboring houses.

The size of the two localities is comparable, totaling 3000-3500 inhabitants. Local Roma and non-Roma agree that there are large local Roma communities in both villages. In Bighal, locals estimate that there are approximately 500-700 Roma living in the neighborhood, which approximates well the data obtained from our household census. According to our survey, all respondents here consider the majority population to be Hungarian, while only four majority households are situated in a Roma majority neighborhood. On the other hand, in Baratca the changes in perceptions about the size of the local Roma population is even more dynamic; our local interlocutors agreed that around half of the inhabitants of the village are Roma; almost everybody (92.8 per cent from 181 persons) said that Roma represent the majority in the locality, while only 7.2 per cent claimed that they lived in a neighborhood with a Roma majority. Interviews underline this result, as some Hungarians claim that the ethnic proportions in the village have reached a tipping point and Roma now make up the new majority in the village. These figures reflect local perceptions about changing ethnic proportions and reveal something of the anxiety among members of the local majority in Baratca, while such fears are absent in Bighal.

In contrast to the local perceptions, the under-representation of the Roma in official statistics is striking. The difference between the figures can be explained on the one hand by the territorial stigmatization of the neighborhoods where Roma live (while these are not exclusively inhabited by Roma, according to local perceptions they are homogeneous 'Gypsy quarters'), and on the other hand by the 'reluctance error' (Rughiniş, 2010). Many individuals who locally are perceived as belonging to the Roma community preferred to declare themselves as having Romanian or Hungarian ethnicity to the census taker. According to the 2011 National Census in Baratca, self-identified Roma represent only 3.37 per cent of the total population of the village, while in Bighal the proportion is 6.69 per cent. Our community survey reveal that in Baratca the Roma represent at least 35 per cent of the local population, and in Bighal we estimate the proportion of Roma at around 20 per cent.¹¹ While the proportion of self-identified Roma is significantly higher than the census figures suggest, the most important factor in the changing ethnic proportions is the *perceived threat in Baratca*. Here, perceived danger is fueled both by the fear of being outnumbered, and the visible process of the village being 'taken over by the Gypsies' who are moving in from the margins.

¹¹ In Baratca, there were 1041 self-identified Roma persons, and in Bighal 672 Roma persons in our sample. We cannot estimate the exact sizes of the Roma populations as we did not reach those who were abroad for a longer period of time during the time of surveying, nor those few households who did not want to participate.

Local administration, however, remains under the firm control of Hungarians: during the most recent elections (2014), the majority of councilors came from Hungarian ethnic parties.¹²

We carried out field visits in 2014 and 2015, during which time our methodology was aimed at capturing the local social divisions as much as possible. We paid close attention to local categorizations during qualitative fieldwork (ethnographic observation and interviewing) and recruited local research assistants, both Roma and non-Roma, to help prepare our household survey. With the help of these assistants, we identified Roma households where the former carried out face-to-face interviews and completed questionnaires that recorded the ethnic self-identification of the respondents. Additionally, we prepared a questionnaire regarding attitudes related to Roma and surveyed samples of local non-Roma inhabitants in both localities (see: the details in Table 1). We followed the principle that Roma assistants surveyed Roma households, and members of the local majority administered the attitude questionnaires among the majority.

Table 1. Structure of sample for the survey

County	Locality	Total population (rounded figures)	% of Roma population (Census 2011)	MIGROM Roma Household Census	MIGROM Roma sample persons	MIGROM majority sample (households)
Braşov	Baratca	3,000	3.37	240	1,041	181
Sălaj	Bighal	3,500	6.69	180	672	141
			Total households	420		322
			Total persons		1,713	990

We summarize that the improvement in the housing conditions of Roma families which is observable in both villages is not due to the development of the local economy, or an improvement in the local or regional job market, even if periodic improvements can be identified. Instead, these sudden changes in the landscape are mainly due to the recent phenomenon of the migration of the Roma, which in both localities started soon after 2007 (for more detail, see: Toma, Tesăr and Fosztó, 2017). This phenomenon was practically non-existent before that year. From the 420 Roma households we surveyed, none had experience with migration before 2007, while approximately 60 per cent of the households in both villages had one or more household members abroad after 2007 for shorter or longer sojourns in Western European countries. Motivations to migrate are manifold, but we underline the local scarcity of jobs and lack of income. Only a minor percentage of Roma households

¹² There are three registered Hungarian ethnic parties in Romania; the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), the Hungarian Civic Party, and the Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania.

have members with a work contract and salary as main income. In Baratca, only five persons were found to have a form of work contract, while two women were on maternity leave, while in Bighal 25 persons had a work contract and two women were on maternity leave. Most of the Roma here rely mostly on informal work, different forms of social benefits, and more recently, remittances.

However, there are some basic differences between the two localities, mainly in attitudes regarding the Roma among the local majority population. In the next section, we turn to these differences based on findings from the local attitude survey.

4. Social distance as a way of understanding prejudice

In surveying the attitudes to Roma among the local majority population, our aim is to give a general review of the attitudes shared by a broader circle of respondents and provide statistical support for our observations and interviews. Our questionnaire included a standard set of questions measuring social distance, interaction patterns, and more general questions about trust relations among members of majority and the Roma.

The concept of social distance was introduced to social theory by the German sociologist Georg Simmel. In his essay on 'The Stranger' Simmel observed that 'spatial relations not only are determining conditions of relationships among men, but are also symbolic of those relations' (Simmel, 1971: 143). Simmel also discussed the tensions generated by the permanent presence of an outsider whose non-belonging is conspicuous by his physical nearness. Robert Park, who later became a prominent figure of the Chicago School of Sociology, attended Simmel's lectures while studying in Berlin, and took the idea across the ocean and applied it to ethnic relations in America. His co-worker, Emory Bogardus, operationalized the concept for quantitative surveys by creating a scale (Bogardus, 1925).

The scale consist of a series of questions regarding the acceptance of members of particular groups as potential marriage partners, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or visitors to the country, or whether the respondent thinks that the named individuals/groups should be excluded from the country altogether. This is a one-dimensional cumulative scale that assumes that the respondent would admit members of the selected group to all positions below the highest level of expressed acceptance (Williams, 2007). This scale, which came to be known as the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, was translated into many languages and has been implemented worldwide (Wark and Galliher, 2007). One shortcoming of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale compared to Simmel's perspective is that it captures only the symbolic component of social distance without considering existing contact between group members or their physical proximity. In spite of such criticism, the scale is used worldwide as a standard measurement of prejudice.¹³

¹³ Critics have observed that the concept of social distance and, more generally, Simmel's conception of social geometry is much more generous theoretically than Bogardus was able to capture with his scale (Ethington, 1997). Others claim that there are 'some question as to whether it [the scale] measures group status or social intimacy' (Williams, 2007: 4406). For historical reasons the development of the scale should not be divorced from its social context and the particular moment it was created; namely, during

In Romania, social distance towards minority groups is regularly measured with the Bogardus Scale at a national level. Institutions such as the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) and the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania regularly commission surveys on nationally representative samples, and these surveys usually rank Roma as among the groups which are at highest risk of being discriminated against; members of the majority express a preference for a rather high degree of social distance towards them (see: Table 2 for a comparative summary). However, there are no measurements available at the local level.¹⁴ In our questionnaire regarding local attitudes we included such a measurement, keeping most items unchanged, but adapted slightly the Bogardus Scale to include a question regarding locality ('Would you accept Roma in your locality?'). Additionally, we asked respondents to respond with yes/no to a set of statements regarding attitudes to local Roma, and registered the social circles of the respondents in order to elicit their local relationships with Roma and non-Roma.

Table 2. Use of the Bogardus Scale as applied to the Roma in Romania

	IPP Survey 2003 (%)	Come Closer 2008 (%)	CNCD survey 2008 (%)	CNCD survey 2010 (%)	Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of Holocaust (Oct 2015)	Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of Holocaust (Oct 2017)
Would accept in the family	7.9	17.9	20	10.6	6.0	6.0
Would accept as friend	11.9	42.0	43	17.2	7.0	10.0
Would accept as neighbor	16.9*	63.2	58	16.1	10.0	100
Would accept as co-worker	10.6	69.6	62	15.5	10.0	9.0
Would accept in the country	31.1	80.6	n.d.	7.3	27.0	26.0
Would not even accept in this country	13.3	15.6	n.d.	7.9	30.0	26.0
I do not know	8.4	n.d.	n.d.	7.8	n.d	n.d
Total	1500	954	1200	1400	1016	1014

*asked as: 'Would accept in my locality'

Sources: IPP Survey (Moraru, Voicu and Tobă, 2003: 79), Come Closer (Fleck and Rughiniș, 2008: 72), CNCD survey 2008 (GALLUP, 2008: 156), CNCD survey 2009 (INSOMAR, 2009: 12-15), and CNCD survey 2010 (Păunescu and Bobîrsc, 2010: 81), Elie Wiesel 2017 Oct. Report pg. 16.

the early 20th century, and involving ethnic tensions among immigrant groups in Chicago and Southern California where Bogardus worked and used his scale for the first time (see: Wark and Galliher, 2007).

¹⁴ There are examples of such studies being used in other contexts; for example, see: Valentina Savini for Pescara in Italy (Savini, 2017).

Our results indicate striking differences between the two field sites (see: Table 3). While in Bighal almost half of the non-Roma sample declared that they would accept a Rom/Romni as family member, in Baratca only 1.1 per cent chose this response. In Baratca, more than 60 per cent opted for the highest possible social distance; that is, banning Roma from entering the country. No respondent from Bighal chose this option.

Table 3. Local social distance to Roma (adapted Bogardus Scale)

	Baratca (%)	Bighal (%)
Would accept in the family	1.1	48.9
Would accept in the household	5.0	8.5
Would accept as neighbor	6.1	17.0
Would accept as co-worker	5.0	9.2
Would accept in the locality	15.5	10.6
Would not even accept in this country	60.8	0
I do not know	6.6	5.7
Total	181	141

We consider this contrast salient and rather atypical in both localities as compared to the national-level results presented above. In order to interpret this contrast, we need to go into more detail regarding the interaction patterns between members of the groups and general attitudes to the other.

It would be mistaken to attempt to understand local attitudes in isolation from broader social-economic and communication processes. In particular, media images can influence (most often for the worse) the generalized perception of the Roma in such villages. Television and the press carry images of migrant Roma and show the negative perceptions or refusal of the destination countries. If these generalized images are reinforced by local events, their effect on increasing social distance can hardly be overestimated. Not long before we started our fieldwork, groups of Roma from Baratca were sent back from the United Kingdom following charges of begging on the streets of London. Additionally, the British police visited the local Roma settlement and organized a seminar to discuss issues contributing to 'Roma migration.' For the members of the local majority, these events were additional proof of the misdeeds of Roma abroad, and reinforced the conviction that keeping a distance is the right attitude.

The following table (Table 4) illustrates the interactions of the local majority with the local Roma population as reported in our survey. Interactions between the groups are rather intense in both cases but the type of relationships and exchanges differ significantly. In Baratca, the relationships and exchanges of the local majority with the Roma are more likely to be involuntary and aimed at the maintenance of distance, while in Bighal local Roma and non-Roma engage in more interaction which is of a voluntary nature.

Table 4. Interaction patterns with local Roma

	True	Baratca (%)	Bighal (%)
	Sometimes Roma help me with agricultural work	29.3	49.6
	Sometimes Roma help me with household tasks	8.3	34.0
	I have Roma colleagues at work	18.2	26.2
	Sometimes I visit a Roma acquaintance, friend	7.7	38.3
	I have Roma neighbors	51.9	22.7
	I have Roma relatives	1.7	7.1
	I am a godparent to a Roma child	0	10.6
	Total	181	141

The most conspicuous difference between the two samples is that more than half of respondents in Baratca reported that they have Roma neighbors, while in Bighal the proportion is only about 22 per cent. This is a result of the process of spontaneous residential desegregation, as described in the previous section. Increasing physical closeness, however, does not necessarily bring about stronger ties or more positive attitudes. In terms of the general patterns of economic exchange, the figures demonstrate that there is more cooperation in Bighal than in Baratca. About half of respondents in Bighal employ Roma occasionally as farm-hands, and about one-third of the sample use Roma helpers in household chores. The proportions of economic cooperation reported in Baratca are significantly lower; 29.3 per cent for agricultural labor and 8.3 per cent for domestic help.

It is interesting to note that, even if our measurement of social distance suggests that almost half of the Bighal sample were ready to accept a Roma as a family member, the proportion of those who actually have Roma relatives is only about 7 per cent. This can be interpreted as an example of divergence between declared attitudes of social distance and existing social practices.

One particular form of ritual kinship is rather frequent in Bighal; about every 10th Hungarian has a Roma godchild (Toma, forthcoming). There are hardly any kinship ties between Roma and non-Roma in Baratca.

These attitudes are also apparent in the reported friendship choices in the two localities: in Baratca 51.9 per cent of our total sample declared that their close family friends are exclusively from their own ethnic group, and an additional 47.5 per cent that their friends come mostly from their own ethnic group. In Bighal, 14.2 per cent of respondents said that they only have friends from their own group, while the majority of respondents (54.6 per cent) declared that ethnicity does not count in their choice of friends.

Looking at the responses to questions regarding trust relations with particular groups of Roma, the results are significantly different in the two villages (see Table 5). More than 50 per cent of respondents from Bighal believe that the Roma in their region and their locality 'are more trustworthy' than Roma in Romania generally, or those living in the neighboring localities. Only a few respondents from Baratca hold similar views about the Roma in their region or locality. There seems to be more similarity between attitudes regarding the trustfulness of Roma living in the segregated settlement and those who live in more central areas of the village. In Bighal, 80 per cent and Baratca 46 per cent of respondents agree that those who live within the village are more trustworthy. This result indicates that the desegregation process might

be having a positive impact on perceptions of socially mobile Roma families, while territorial stigma persists about those living in the disadvantaged areas. Virtually everybody from the sample in Bighal acknowledged that they know a trustworthy Roma person, while eight in ten respondents in Baratca claimed the same.

Table 5. Statements about the Roma by the local majority¹⁵

True	Baratca (%)	Bighal (%)
Roma are more trustworthy in our region than in Romania in general	2.2	51.8
Roma are more trustworthy in our locality than in neighboring localities	1.1	52.5
Roma living within the village are more trustworthy than those who live in segregated communities	46.4	80.1
I know a trustworthy Roma person	80.1	95.0
Total	181	141

Some of these results appear to contrast with the measurement of social distance. While replies to questions using the Bogardus scale show a rather high degree of social rejection of the generalized category of ‘the Roma’, local interactions and attitudes to individuals and subgroups are more diverse. The survey data can be also corroborated with the results of earlier qualitative research in Bighal that identified several layers of attitude-related baggage of the local majority population towards the Roma, depending on how they frame their interpretations (Toma, 2014).

Imagining these attitudes on a linear continuum, the broadest set of attitudes is characterized by strong stereotypes and prejudices, a type of discourse that we can easily find in the mass-media and public discourse (*i.e.* ‘*their [the Roma] attitude toward work and generally toward life is very negative. They spend the money that they earn today, yesterday. They don’t think of anything... They learn that dirty lifestyle from each other, they are born in it and that’s what they continue to do.*’ – *middle-aged Hungarian man, institute representative*). At this generalized level, Roma are characterized as a menace to local communities: they are ‘dangerous outsiders.’

The second dimension we can interpret in a narrowed context is the following: Roma are a present reality in the lives of the villages, but there is a clear division between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ These distinctions are also built into the visible differences between different local Roma communities: one (in the ethnically mixed area of the village) is better situated, while the other (territorially more homogeneous) is poorer. This might be the reason why the same informal economic activities are considered differently (by some of the locals): ‘*ahh, it’s a big deal to gather raspberries. You go to the woods, take a nice walk, and get some money out of nothing...*’ (*Hungarian woman, about the compact community*). On the other hand, those Hungarians who

¹⁵In the survey we asked only one adult person from a household.

live in the vicinity of or have other types of contact with some Roma families use a more differentiated and complex discourse when speaking about the Roma, sometimes even neglecting totally ethnic dimensions. When these are mentioned, it is underlined that *'our Gypsies are not like the (Romanian, Southern, Traditional, etc.) Gypsies.'*

Finally, the third identified position on the above-mentioned continuum is when the lines of demarcation weaken and even blur. The line between 'us' and 'them' is extended: 'us' broadens to incorporate local others, while 'them' is used to refer to those at a greater distance. This brings to the surface situational identity categories as it largely depends on the actual context, and stereotypes do not apply on an individual level.

However, physical proximity or frequent contact does not obviously blur ethnic boundaries, because the intentionality of behavior in interpersonal relations – which appears in everyday forms of contact – corresponds to that generalizing and more stigmatizing attitude that is applied to the whole group. Removing someone from the 'them' category thus may not mean simply recognizing and acknowledging the difference of the other, but trying to maintain a certain hierarchy, while the Roma – on the other hand – try to capitalize on relationships in order to overcome stereotyping and essentializing generalizations.

These observations are in line with the findings of earlier anthropological studies about ethnically mixed localities in Transylvania that found that local socioeconomic transformation can challenge established ethnic interaction patterns, reinforce stigmatization, and increase collective anxieties (Fosztó, 2003), as well as bring about changes in attitudes and discourses related to the 'other' by emphasizing collective identities at the expense of more personalized interactions (Biró and Bodó, 2003), or can lead to insistence on the positive individual qualities of the Roma person present in the interaction but maintenance of a generalized negative stigma about the ethnic community (Toma, 2006).

5. Discussion: migration and local transformations in the light of social distance

In this section, we turn to discussing the interplay between local social distance and spatial transformation and its relation to the recent opening up of a wider space for the mobility of local Roma. Migration and mobility bring the promise of upward social mobility, even for the most disadvantaged local segments of communities, but they also potentially create new obstacles to the full realization of these promises by hardening social boundaries and increasing social distance. The localities we study are increasingly experiencing these transformations, although these are not always easy to link directly to the effects of migration.

In spite of the growth in scholarly literature on the impact of migration on communities of origin, it is still difficult to obtain a comprehensive overview and understanding of these effects. In the localities we studied, migration is a relatively new phenomenon which has grown in intensity in a very short period of time. The impact of migration on home communities worldwide has been identified on many levels and in numerous dimensions of social life. It affects the local and national economy, and it can transform the political landscape. Migration can change family structure (Mincer, 1978), but on a broader level and over a longer time it also changes the demographic structure of localities, regions, and even countries. It influences gender and intergenerational relations in households (Schuerkens, 2005; Lutz, 2010; Portes, 2010), it has an impact on the education of the population, and can change the health practices or the access to health of those who remain at home. Moreover, migration can change the everyday habits of home-making and house-building practices. Remittances are fuel for social change and transformation (Faist, 2008) and their effects can be very diverse (Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995; Levitt, 1998).

To better understand the effects of migration on a *local level*, financial and social remittances should not be considered as clearly separate categories. Social remittances influence the way financial remittances are spent or invested, while financial remittances can have a major impact on how social remittances are made use of. Both financial and social-remittances are embedded in the local social context and are used through local social networks. Thus, migration and remittances can influence not only the households participating in migration, but also affect the broader community, including non-migrants as well (Taylor and Dyer, 2009). In most cases, the results of 'successful' migration become visible to non-migrants as well, thus it is not only direct beneficiaries who attach value and meaning to it, but non-migrants as well. Non-migrants can value positively or condemn and disapprove (Elrick, 2008) the way that returning migrants present themselves in their locality of origin. These attitudes implicitly affect local social relations with non-migrants, and have the potential to change interactions. There is ample empirical evidence from relatively homogeneous communities worldwide which shows that the impact of migration can be positive or negative, or both synchronously; nevertheless, conclusions are not unequivocal about the factors and processes that lead to these outcomes.

There is less research about ethnically mixed communities where local society is more likely to be hierarchically organized according to the ethnic belonging that is pervasive in every dimension of social life (job markets, education, access to services,

housing, social networks, and so on). Most of the research that does focus on ethnic minorities analyses ethnic minority formation in *receiving* countries, modes of incorporation through policies and informal practices, migrants' job market positions and residential segregation, and, last but not least, intensifying racism and violence (Portes and Böröcz, 1989; Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014).

In the previous section we described how there are striking differences between the attitudes of the majority population (Hungarians and Romanians) regarding the Roma in the two localities. In both cases there is a history of residential separation between the Roma and the majority, with Roma houses clustering in the less well-off neighborhoods. However, recently we have observed the rapid improvement of the houses and living conditions of the Roma, and also that Roma families are moving out from the poorer areas. While these improvements would not have been possible without the migration of the Roma during the last decade, the process is more complex. Indeed, one cannot say how these villages would have looked without the effects of migration, but it is safe to say that migration and remittances have substantially contributed to such improvements. Thus, on the local and community level, one of the strongest – if not the strongest – and most visible markers of the impact of migration and the investment of remittances is 'remittance houses' (Lopez, 2010). Building new homes and improving existing ones can be considered a widespread way of spending remittances, independent of the type of migration.

However, the way construction takes place is not independent of the patterns of migration in the two localities of our study: in Baratca, the Roma migrate using their own family and ethnic networks to a limited number of destination countries, while Roma in Bighal had dense relationships and networks with the local non-Roma population, which led to a greater diversity of destinations involving inter-ethnic networks. Everyday contacts and cooperation fostered the opportunity for the Roma to use non-Roma networks to find jobs abroad. In contrast, a high level of social distance and reduced interaction between different ethnic groups in Baratca appears to be leading to the consolidation of ethnic and family networks. The spatial reconfiguration of the villages mirrors these processes: in spite of the heightened social distance in Baratca, the process of residential desegregation is increasing; successful Roma migrants are moving out from the segregated area of the village and are establishing household networks in the inner space of the locality. This can be contrasted in some ways with the process that is taking place in Bighal, where there is much less residential intermingling between the Roma and the local majority, but they maintain a relatively balanced state of interaction during everyday life.

Our findings regarding the situation in Baratca are consistent with recent social psychological studies which demonstrate that contact between the Roma and other ethnic groups does not necessarily reduce social distance in Eastern Europe. This claim seems particularly relevant for understanding the dynamics of social distance in the present context. A study of the correlation between social distance and existing contact between ethnic groups in Romania concludes that 'direct correlations between our results for levels of contact and social distance show that contact is a strong predictor of social distance with respect to both the Romanian and Hungarian ethnic groups. However, levels of contact with Roma do not predict social distance from Roma' (Ives et al., 2016: 10-11). In this survey of a sample of ethnic Hungarian and

Romanian high school students from Romania, social distance appears to remain relatively high, despite contact with Roma. Another study of social distance and contact argues that social contact increases rather than decreases prejudice in the presence of social contexts approving of negative beliefs about the Roma, as demonstrated using samples from Hungary and Slovakia (Kende, Hadarics and Láštiová, 2017).

However, our case study about Bighal also demonstrates that there is an alternative to such negative scenarios in the form of more balanced local development. More detailed study of these cases is still needed, but we can already identify some elements of the contexts. Comparing the Roma households of the two villages, we can observe several basic differences. Traditionally, there was a more intermingled residential pattern in Bighal as more households in Bighal live in ethnically mixed neighborhoods (20 per cent of the households are in mixed neighborhoods, while in Baratca only 2.9 per cent). There are also important differences regarding the use of local languages. In Baratca, the mother tongue of the Roma is Romanian (99.8 per cent) and they rarely speak Hungarian, the language of the local majority. In Bighal the Roma are native speakers of Romani (94.6 per cent), but they speak Hungarian and Romanian as well. They also have a higher level of education on average. Moreover, in Bighal Roma families often chose Hungarian godparents for their newborn children (16.8 per cent of Roma respondents have a Hungarian godparent, meaning that 80 households from the 180 have at least one Hungarian godparent), while in Baratca trans-ethnic godparents are entirely lacking.

In comparison to these findings, the non-Roma households of the two villages are not so evidently different. The most salient difference is that in Bighal the religious diversity among the Roma is higher (3 per cent are Orthodox Christians, 32.1 per cent Protestants, and 64.7 per cent are Neoprotestants). Religious belonging also cross-cuts ethnic divisions, while in Baratca religious boundaries roughly coincide with ethnic ones; Hungarians belong to the Lutheran Church, while Roma are exclusively Orthodox Christians or Pentecostals (14.5 per cent of the Roma are Orthodox Christians and 85.2 per cent Neoprotestants). Additionally, members of the local majority population in Bighal are relatively younger and live in better-equipped households. Members of the majority in Bighal have slightly more experience of migration than those in Baratca, and their intention to migrate is greater. In Bighal, 47.8 per cent of all households were planning to look for a job abroad in the next 12 months (the year following data collection), while in Baratca the proportion was only 22.1 per cent.

Obtaining a broader understanding of how local ethnic relations develop processes of local migration among the local majority populations should be not neglected either. In their seminal study of Csenyéte, a village in Northeastern Hungary, János Ladányi and Iván Szelényi (Ladányi and Szelényi, 2003) demonstrated that ethnic categories and territorial divisions significantly change over longer periods of time. However, changes can sometimes happen rapidly, as the work of Judit Durst revealed (2010). Durst, working in another village in Northeastern Hungary, described how a local government-financed housing program that was set up to offer housing to local Roma and thereby dismantle the segregated neighborhood (*telepfelszámolás*) had unexpected side effects and led almost instantaneously to the

creation of a 'ghetto village'. The project not only contributed to the mobility of the Roma, who managed to move into more central spaces in the village, but also intensified the mobility of non-Roma; the latter took advantage of the financial resources brought into the village by the desegregation project, sold their houses, and moved to the city nearby. In spite of development-related intentions, this process only worsened the exclusion of local Roma by leaving them behind in an isolated, Roma-only village.

Local desegregation can also increase local social tensions and reinforce stigmatization. Working in another village in the same region, Cecília Kovai observed the side effects of a similarly benevolently intended housing intervention:

The programme that aimed to dissolve the Gypsy settlement 'named the Gypsy': the call for participation explicitly addressed the Gypsies. The successful application to carry out the program was prepared by the Gypsy association funded a couple of years earlier. As a result, families who were living on the margins of the village could move into the village but were able to do this only as Gypsies - there was no chance to pretend that their ethnic status did not matter. And future neighbours, with a few exceptions made no efforts to pretend at all: they responded with intense protests. [...] The act of naming therefore brings both new room for manoeuvre within the 'Gypsy issue' and has reinforced offensive and exclusionary stigmatization (Kovai, 2012: 290).

These examples show that top-down, state-driven intervention can have sometimes unexpected side effects. Our own cases document situations where the motor of change was located 'below', as momentum was generated by market forces. Unlike the earlier-described settlement dissolution programs implemented by the local administration and Roma associations in Hungary, the desegregation process in the villages we studied was triggered spontaneously by the local, transformative effects of migration. While there are similarities in the process, the differences are also significant.

6. Concluding remarks: diverging paths of development and their implications for local policies

Sam Beck, an American anthropologist who did long-term fieldwork in the Braşov region in the 1970s and 1980s, was writing about the situation of Roma in socialist Romania. He argued that under the conditions of intensifying, state-driven modernization, policies for settlement and employment-related interaction between the Roma and the majority population increased, but along with this, mistreatment or rejection of the Țigani/Roma also intensified (Beck, 1984: 31). Our findings from roughly the same region but more than three decades later, and under conditions of post-socialist, market-induced modernization, show striking parallels to the changes observed by Beck. Today, migration following European integration is arguably the reason for the most important social changes in the Romanian countryside. The effects of international mobility, return, and the remittances spent or invested trigger

visible modernization processes ‘from below.’ This induces an increase in the amount of interaction between the Roma and non-Roma that affects and challenges existing patterns of ethnic relations. Changing attitudes feed into and shape possible scenarios for further local development.

However, as our comparative analysis has shown, the effects of migration are not necessarily negative. Compared to what we found in Baratca, the relationship between local Roma and their Hungarian neighbors in Bighal involves much less tension and conflict.

International migration has enabled migrant Roma families to increase their capacity for local social mobility in their home localities. In this sense, the opening up of the European space can be seen as a transformative process for the Roma involved in migration. In the absence of targeted and effective state policies, market forces can bring about local change which challenges old perceptions and generates fear. Still, as we have argued, this is not unavoidable: understanding local ethnic interaction patterns and the dynamics of social distance should be the first step towards creating more empirically informed local policies.

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MARGARET GREENFIELDS AND EGLÉ DAGILYTĖ *
**'I Would Never Have Come If We'd Know It Might Be Like
This': On the (Un)Intended Consequences of Welfare
Governance of EU Roma Migrants in Britain**

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings from a small-scale pilot study which explores the experiences of accessing welfare benefits by the migrant Roma European Union (EU) citizens in the UK. It compares administrative barriers and individuals' knowledge of welfare entitlement both prior and after the implementation of changes to the welfare regime in 2014, when a tranche of 'policy hardening' legal enactments came into force. For the migrants who participated in this study, precarious, low paid post-migration work has brought several hazards, including a non-eligibility for certain social protections and an inability to demonstrate documentation which enable access to 'passported' welfare benefits. The combination of problems in accessing welfare benefits and the resulting state interventions, including expulsion from the UK in some cases, suggest that EU Roma citizens experience disproportionate negative impacts of welfare hardening, adding to the much vaunted 'hostile environment' to EU migrants in the wake of the Brexit vote. As such, we find the practice of 'bordering' migrant EU Roma citizens to the UK is taking place through covert state enforcement action against families and households, discouraging effective and genuine use of their free movement rights guaranteed under European Union law.

Keywords: migration; Roma; EU citizenship; expulsion; welfare benefits; Brexit.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the experiences of Roma European Union (EU) citizens resident in the UK and asks whether explicit anti-migrant discourse (Cap, 2017), widespread public scepticism towards the benefits of migration¹, and policy ‘hardening’ (British Social Attitudes 31, 2014; Hopkins, 2017) towards EU migrants, particularly in the wake of the 2016 Brexit vote (Khaleeli, 2016) have coalesced so as to disproportionately impact ‘bordered’² and socially excluded Roma EU citizens, who mainly arrived to the UK from the so-called Eastern European countries.

Our research focus on migrant EU Roma citizens is deliberate. Since the EU enlargements post-2004, many of the ‘old’ EU Member States became increasingly concerned with the ‘welfare tourism’ (Giulietti and Wahba, 2012), trying to find ways to restrict free movement for economically non-sufficient EU citizens (Blauberger and Schmidt, 2015). Such policies often counteracted the EU law guarantees on free movement not only for those who have a job offer or provide commercial services as the self-employed, but also for those who seek work, including their family members.³ Arguably, next to the intersectional interplay between ethnicity, nationality and gender (Vrăbiescu and Kalir, 2018), Roma EU citizens who arrived in the UK after 2004 bring to the host countries new and additional policy challenges based on class and socio-economic status, which may be different to those faced by the ‘older migrant’ Roma communities,⁴ as the research on Gitanos/Roma in Spain illustrates (Magazzini and Piemontese, 2016). In this context, while focusing on this particular population sample, we acknowledge the problematic use of the homogenising term ‘Eastern European Roma migrants’ in public discourse: it is a social/political construction that fails to acknowledge not only individual migration stories and experiences but also assumes a possible simplified policy ‘quick fix’, without seeking to understand meaningfully the various communities and the socio-economic challenges they face (Magazzini and Piemontese, 2016; Vrăbiescu and Kalir, 2018).

Therefore, this discussion piece asks whether in Britain targeted ‘covert enforcement’ action is undertaken against EU citizen Roma families and households as a way of discouraging ‘undesirable’ migration (Bulat, 2017) through the mechanisms of welfare benefits regulation and other state interventions, seeking to persuade current and would-be migrants eager to settle in Britain prior to Brexit

¹ Press Association (2017) Majority of Britons Think Minorities Threaten UK Culture. *The Guardian*, May 25. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/25/majority-of-britons-think-minorities-threaten-uk-culture-report-says>. Accessed: 27-11-2017.

² We are very thankful to Judit Durst and the anonymous peer reviewers who helped us improve this piece. The usual disclaimer applies.

³ Following Yuval-Davis et al. (2017), ‘bordering’ is understood as ‘the everyday construction of borders through ideology, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions and attitudes ... to refer to the interplay between (social) ordering and border-making’ (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017: 3). Such practices create ‘borders’ which act as barriers to inclusion through the socio-cultural, moral and sometimes spatial segmentation of the population so ‘bordered’, and thus held to be apart from apparently hegemonic norms of the given society.

⁴ For the core legislative framework on EU citizens’ migration, see Articles 45, 49 and 56 of the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union; Directive 2004/38; Regulation 492/2011; Regulation 883/2004.

⁵ By ‘older’, we refer to those who have lived in the host country for 10 years or longer. In research project, some respondents (predominantly Polish Roma) had lived in the UK for 15 years.

implementation (Travis, 2016) that the UK is not as welcoming and desirable a destination as may have been portrayed in online discourse or family migration narratives (Boehmova, 2016; Travis, 2016; Parutis, 2014; Grill, 2011; Dekker et al., 2016). In this way, our research enhances the understanding of the consequences of welfare governance of EU Roma migrants in Britain, contributing to the wider literature on migrants' agency in dealing with administrative removals and deportations from the UK (Sardelić, 2017; Schweitzer, 2017) and on the growing body of work that explores EU minority rights and the social justice dimension of the European Union citizenship (Kochenov and Agarin, 2017; O'Brien, 2017).

While our research sample is relatively small and cannot be considered fully representative of all EU Roma citizens in the UK, our findings are similar to those of more recent large-scale studies (Martin et al., 2017). Thus, despite the positive benefits of European migration (Portes, 2018), when compared to the often deeply exclusionary circumstances experienced by Roma in countries of origin (FRA, 2016), our findings suggest that migrant Roma, especially since the toughening of the UK welfare regime in 2013-2014, are subjected to particular scrutiny: they are viewed through the 'welfare gaze' and perceived of as the 'undeserving poor' (Romano, 2017) who must be treated in a disciplinary manner to ensure compliance with the preferred (or imagined) norms of British society (Nagy, 2016). Whilst non-Roma 'poor' or 'undesirable' EU migrants (typically those who are street homeless) are also subject to the state treatment and have been increasingly targeted by interventions aimed at requiring or enforcing their removal from the UK (Cooper, 2017),⁵ we propose that there is a growing body of evidence to suggest disproportionate levels of 'bordering' (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002) of Roma families, impacting on their migration intentions or influencing decisions to return to countries of origin. Building upon the findings from our pilot report (Dagilyte and Greenfields, forthcoming 2018) and on the data on de facto deportations (Home Office, 2017a), or expulsions⁶ of EU citizens (Mantu et al., 2017), we suggest that EU Roma citizens and their families may experience particularly high barriers to demonstrate their entitlement to welfare benefits, in result impacting on their residence rights and migration intentions, as well as diminishing their trust in state agencies.

⁵ For a wider European context, note the organised large-scale expulsions in 2010 in France that are widely documented (Ciulinaru, 2018; Rieder, 2012; Bennett, 2011) and the recent call for a new Roma expulsion policy in Italy (Salam, 2018).

⁶ In the context of this paper, this term refers to the gamut of means by which EU citizens can legally be required to leave the UK with a particular focus on administrative removals and voluntary returns. Deportations/expulsions occur where an individual is removed from the UK on the decision of the Secretary of State for the Home Office if their presence is not 'conducive to the public good' (as provided under sections 3(5)(a) and 5(1) of the Immigration Act 1971) or following a court decision resulting in a prison sentence. Administrative removals are the enforced removals of EU citizens and their family members who no longer have legal rights of residence (the right to reside) or on the grounds of 'mis-use' of rights (see: Evans in: Mantu et al., 2017; Home Office, 2017b). Voluntary departures are the departures of individuals against whom enforced removal proceedings have been initiated but who have opted to leave the country prior to such enforced removal taking place (Migration Observatory, 2017). Following deportation or removal by the means outlined above (including voluntary return), there is re-entry ban imposed which may be for up to five years, depending on the expense to the state or circumstances in which they left the UK (see further: Home Office, 2017c; Mantu et al., 2017).

In the remainder of this paper we present the findings from our pilot study and consider whether multi-factorial social exclusion, both pre and post migration, places Roma migrants in a situation of unique disadvantage, leaving them particularly vulnerable to negative welfare governance and at risk of expulsion. To do so, we will firstly outline the national political and economic context in which the EU Roma citizens' migration has occurred. This is followed by the overview on how our empirical research study was designed and conducted, proceeding to highlight the key findings and offering conclusions on the institutional 'bordering' EU Roma citizens via the hostile welfare state policies and such migrants' eventual voluntary or enforced returns from the UK.

2. The UK Political and Economic Context of Welfare 'Bordering'

In the British context, there continues to exist a considerable debate about 'pull factors' influencing migration from the EU (Migration Observatory, 2016). Hence the complex and continuously restructured social welfare system seems to have been deliberately (re)designed to diminish the 'attractiveness' of low paid employment in the UK (Fontanella-Khan and Warrell, 2013; Alberti, 2017). One of the reasons is to curb employment related migration from the EU, where, subject to regulation, some EU citizens can legally access in-work welfare benefits and 'top-up' their income where children or disabled persons are part of a household.

Analysis of Hansard debates in the UK House of Commons⁷, both prior to and following the UK Brexit vote (especially during the period 2013-2017), reveals considerable political preoccupation with the fiscal 'cost' to the state of EU migration, whilst reporting of discourse around the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 evidences a preoccupation with EU citizens exercising their legal rights to move to Britain and to claim welfare benefits.

Typical examples of such utilitarian political discourse include statements rooted in a presumption that migration – especially from poorer EU states – is directly associated with the ease with which migrants can claim financial support, and who in turn (by implication) diminish the public wealth available to British citizens:

Mark Wrekin (MP) 23/01/2013 '[...] may I ask the Secretary of State what plans he is putting in place to stop Bulgarian and Romanian migrants claiming welfare benefits from 1 January 2014, thus driving up the welfare bill for UK taxpayers.'

David Cameron (Prime Minister) 19/10/2015 'There is an issue [...] of people coming from different European countries and claiming benefits to which they are not entitled. The bigger problem [...] is that someone who comes from another European country to Britain is able, in the first year, to access in-work benefits of perhaps as much as €10,000 or €12,000. This is about being able to control our own welfare system to reduce the pressures of migration.'

⁷ Hansard is the official transcript of all British parliamentary debate, updated with verbatim reports no later than 24 hours after a debate has taken place. The searchable website for proceedings in both the House of Commons and Lords is accessible at: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/publications/hansard/>

Mark Harper (MP) 29/11/2017 'the migrant workers in Britain who do not earn significant salaries but have access to benefits such as our welfare system are not making a net contribution to public finances. I am not suggesting that they are not working; they are, but they are earning a lower salary and are therefore entitled to things like in-work tax credits and [...] universal credit. [...] In effect, British citizens and those already working here are subsidising some of those migrant workers.'

The examples reveal a toxic focus on the 'burden' to the State of EU migrant workers, ignoring research indicating that EU migrants generally pay more in tax than they claim in benefits (although variables exist depending on the country of origin, see further: FullFact, 2017). There are also concerns that the EU has been associated with loss of control of borders and diminished sovereignty at the expense of the wellbeing and economic security of British citizens. These economic implications of migration were at the heart of the success of the 'Leave-EU' campaign in 2016, in a process dubbed 'project fear' by Moore and Ramsey (2017). Similarly, the Migration Observatory (2016) found that prior and after the Brexit vote on 23 June 2016, print media from across the political spectrum (tabloid to broadsheet) had an increasingly explicit focus on immigration. Commonly, 'tabloid', right-leaning newspapers framed the argument for voting to leave the EU around concerns over 'sovereignty' and resentment of the European 'project' which led to 'uncontrolled' migration.

Although debate over the level and speed of EU migration to the UK first came under public and media scrutiny in relation to unexpectedly high levels of East European migrants exercising their right to enter the UK for work⁸ after the 2004 enlargement of the EU (Watt and Wintour, 2015), it was not until the wake of A2 enlargement (Romania and Bulgaria) that Roma EU citizens became more noticeably framed as low-skilled undesirable workers, likely to seek to settle in the UK in large numbers, given the perceived ease of access to welfare benefits (Richardson, 2014; Yuval-Davis et al., 2017).

A particular strand of discourse both within Westminster and outside among the media and general public concerned the fact that EU migrants who fulfilled certain criteria were able to access both UK 'universal benefits', such as payment of an allowance for children (FullFact, 2016), even if the child was not resident in Britain, and also other 'passport' benefits which were relatively uncommon elsewhere in the EU and included the right to apply for financial support to meet the costs of housing (Alberti, 2017; Dagilyte and Greenfields, 2015).

Accordingly, it became a truism widely reported in the media, and in political discourse, that the 'easy' availability of welfare benefits had had a disproportionate impact on migration rates from A2 and A8 countries (Portes, 2015; Riley-Smith, 2015; Dawar, 2015; Guentner et al., 2016). Alongside these enhanced levels of explicit anti-EU migrant discourse, with even moderately mainstream newspapers and online media outlets increasingly using terminology and tropes which would have been

⁸ A8 migrants entering the UK steadily increased from 50,000 in 2004 to just over 700,000 in 2008 although that figure was acknowledged to be an undercount of the true scale of migration (Migration Advisory Committee, 2008: 8).

virtually unthinkable a few years previously other than in the most extreme of the right wing press, the political response was an obvious policy-hardening which was in apparent response to public concerns over ‘welfare tourism’ and alleged downward pressures on British citizens’ wages (British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014; Hopkins, 2017).

Whilst rarely explicitly framed as anti-Roma reportage, xenophobic representations of EU migrants are coupled with persistent ‘tabloid’ media hostility towards EU Roma citizens who are portrayed as the undesirable migrant par excellence (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017; Kóczé, 2017; Clark, 2015): tabloid newsprint often associate anti-migrant stories with images of ‘Roma villages’ or visibly identifiable Roma individuals (on which see further: Tremlett et al., 2017; Richardson, 2014). At the same time, EU Roma welfare benefit claimants in the UK were found to be only occasionally consulting civil society organisations for help, even though compared to non-Roma peers they experienced disproportionate monitoring of their welfare claims and ever-increasing documentary hurdles when they sought to access benefit entitlements (Dagilyte and Greenfields, 2015; Martin et al., 2017). Moreover, they appeared to face an additional layer of ‘Romaphobic’ othering (McGarry, 2017), in addition to the significant linguistic or bureaucratic barriers placed in the way of all EU migrants who were seeking to access in-work welfare benefits (Alberti, 2017; Shutes, 2016).

3. Research Design and Methods

This small-scale pilot project, co-funded by the Socio-Legal Studies Association and Bucks New University, emerged following the consultation of the Czech Republic NGO, Odlisnost, where we developed a welfare benefits advice briefing for their Roma clients. It became clear that there was scope for developing a pilot project to explore themes which were emerging as important to civil society agencies dealing with enquiries from Roma clients who had migrated to the UK.

The project fieldwork was undertaken in 2014-2015 and was thus in essence a scoping study to evaluate the extent of the impacts of welfare regulation change on recent migrant EU Roma populations to the UK with the view to exploring whether in work benefit changes were impacting migration intention for primary migrants and their family members. A subsidiary theme looked at whether the poverty associated with low-paid employment and difficulties accessing welfare benefits were increasing the likelihood of Roma households considering return migration, or indeed being expelled to their country of origin.

The research involved close collaboration with two leading civil society Roma rights organisations running comparative field-work sites. Thanks to ongoing collaborations and existing contacts, it was possible to undertake interviews with NGO support staff and EU Roma migrants in a small Northern city with a large Roma population (Derby) and also in London. The project used multiple methodologies and incorporated the following activities:

1. Three focus groups facilitated with known NGOs in the two geographical areas (exploring Roma migrants’ experiences of seeking work; intentions on moving and the process of claiming welfare benefits);

2. A group interview with NGO support workers, focused on their knowledge of employment patterns and welfare claim experiences of Roma client groups (London); and short discussions with support staff in Derby.
3. In addition, we prepared a short online survey covering the same key questions asked of support staff, which was distributed via relevant e-networks. This final phase produced an additional five responses from law centres, advice drop-in agencies and local authority staff.

We collected data from Roma participants via three focus groups on their knowledge of welfare benefit entitlement pre and post migration, employment access strategies and intent on entering the UK (e.g. to work or claim benefits), actual experience of claiming welfare benefits, complexities pertaining to relevant documentation, success rate in claims, appeals processes, and linguistic barriers pre and post the 2014 welfare benefit changes. Our research focused on two benefits in particular: the income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and the Housing Benefit (for reasoning on the selection, see Dagilyte and Greenfields, 2015).

In total, 28 Roma respondents were interviewed. These consisted of 12 Polish and 14 Czech or Slovak and two Romanian respondents. The majority had been resident in the UK from between one month and three years. In several cases, respondents had been resident in the UK for less than three months: a key time frame post-April 2014, when the minimum period of residence was extended to evidence migrants' 'Right to Reside' and 'Habitual Residence' that are required to access welfare benefits.

Three Polish Roma interviewees had been resident in the UK in excess of five years and accordingly had established permanent residence status: a fact which was to prove critically important in terms of attempted administrative removals recounted by one respondent; and indeed, in evidencing inconsistent decision making by officials pertaining to refusal of welfare benefits.

The gender and age sample of Roma respondents was split approximately 60:40 male to female and equal numbers of 20-34-year-olds (within which group there were more than 80 per cent who were new arrivals resident for less than three months in the UK) and 35-65 years of age. More than three quarters of respondents had dependent children.

Thematic analysis was undertaken for transcripts of focus groups and of the online survey responses received. Empirical findings were supplemented by secondary analysis of more recently published materials (for example, the large-scale Salford study on Roma and Welfare Benefit access, see: Martin et al, 2017). The section below summarises key findings from the final report, to be published in 2018.

4. Key Findings: The Institutionalised Process of 'Bordering'

The overall findings indicate a worrying picture of EU Roma migrants' rights after the 2014 welfare reforms in the run up to the Brexit vote. Despite moving to the UK to find work, when falling in need of welfare support this group of people faced strict rules for compliance with the UK legal tests that are applied by authorities for EU citizens to be eligible for welfare benefits, often without considering the migrants' and

their family members' personal circumstances. We found such decisions were often taken despite the welfare agencies staff's lack of knowledge about the ever-changing conditions for welfare benefits entitlements, without a possibility to interview the applicants in their own native language, accompanied by a lack of transparency as to exactly what documents are required to file a benefits claim. As our interviews with the advice workers show, such institutionalised barriers of 'bordering' often cannot be challenged judicially, even though they cause delays and result in many EU Roma citizens abandoning welfare benefits applications.

In particular, findings from our soon to be published pilot study (Dagilyte and Greenfields, forthcoming 2018) and a discrete yet associated inter-university project due to be reported on later in 2018, have identified a set of circumstances which appear to disproportionately 'border' low-skilled, low-paid Roma migrants who have practised 'whole-family migration' (Ryan and Sales, 2013; Moskal and Tyrrell, 2016). Such patterns of family group migration, which are particularly common among Roma households moving from the Czech/Slovak Republics and Romania (Grill, 2012; Matras and Leggio, 2017), have tended to be favoured by 'pioneer' migrants among Roma communities. This is precisely because the 'pioneers' are viewed as opening up opportunities which enable a family group to access various financial and practical support mechanisms when settling into work and a new life as long-term migrants into the UK (even though, over time, post-migration social and economic mobility may stall, negatively impacting second generation migrants, as persuasively argued by Beluschi-Fabeni et al., 2018).

4.1. Purposes of Migration to the UK

The primary finding from this project was contrary to the populist narrative of welfare 'tourists' as outlined in the Introduction to this paper above. Our findings, however, are fully in line with those identified by Martin and his colleagues (2017) in which participants in a series of focus groups held with Roma migrants in five locations highlighted that, far from being attracted by the UK welfare system, the opportunity to work and create a better future for their families are the primary motivating factors and that accessing benefits proved extremely difficult as a result of poor literacy and increasingly restrictive criteria excluding them from the UK welfare system. Thus, we found that, like other EU migrants, Roma people relocated to the UK predominantly to work and achieve a better standard of living for themselves and their families (IPPR, 2013; Okólski and Salt, 2014), albeit often with the additional driver of escaping intolerable levels of racism and discrimination in countries of origin which limits employment opportunities (FRA, 2016; ERRC, 2007).

In our study, we found that 'first wave' migrants, i.e. individuals who were pioneers amongst their family or community group and who had not migrated to join established relatives or participate in existing networks with jobs awaiting them, typically had no clear idea of the type of work which they would find on migrating to the UK. As such they migrated with a core priority of seeking an opportunity to work and earn money to assist relatives at home, in a manner which was largely unavailable to them in the post-communist system. Such work was typically low paid, dirty and involved harsh working conditions:

'they all [are] working 12 hour shifts in one of the four or five major factories that are around, [e.g.] in plastics [industry] [...] flour factory, rice factory, chicken factory' (translator for a focus group/NGO advice worker referring to Czech and Slovak Roma recent migrants).

Regardless of their country of origin, Roma respondents indicated that a combination of hardship in their member state and the perceived opportunities in the UK (often relayed via family or friend networks or online communication) had been the main migration driver leading them to move to Britain. Those respondents who were the longest established (for example, Polish Roma migrants who had been resident in two cases for over 15 years) reported how they had initially obtained work doing 'anything' on arrival in the UK: accepting temporary unskilled jobs such as street cleaning, undertaking field labour, working in chicken slaughtering factories, road sweeping, collecting scrap metal, or distributing leaflets. This was until they were able to obtain more stable employment through developing networks with local employers. For example, one respondent's wife was working as a teacher. Such employment patterns were also found among more recent migrants from the Czech and Slovak Republics and is further borne out by other research in the UK with diverse Roma populations (e.g. Beluschi-Fabeni et al., 2018; Grill, 2012; Martin et al., 2017).

In time, the more established migrants (for example, early migrants from Poland or the Czech Republic) had been able to advise and support their own relatives and members of other Roma networks migrating to the UK, advising them on how best to access agency work (generally through compatriots) until English language skills developed adequately to permit of more mainstream, albeit generally fairly low skilled, work.

Very few respondents reported engaging in self-employment, such as was carried out by highly visible Roma 'Big Issue' sellers, who were identified as most likely to be Romanian or Slovak migrants, present in the UK for long enough to access these 'sale' networks but who had not yet managed to establish themselves in 'mainstream' employment. Pendulum migration was also as common among such 'sellers', while our participants were either well established in Britain⁹ or indicated that such was their intention:

'there [are] chances here for children to have education and for work. At home this is not possible for Roma. My wife will come, [and] my oldest daughter - in a little while six month - eight - I will send for them.' (focus group participant - Slovak Roma, resident in the UK for less than one year).

For migrants who were recent newcomers to the UK, e.g. newly arrived Polish, Czech and Slovak migrants present in the country for less than three months, employment was typically achieved through the goodwill of their family and friends who formed part of a pattern of chain migration. More than two-thirds of newly arrived migrants in one focus group were working within a month of arrival, typically through

⁹ E.g. some had obtained British citizenship; others had children born in the UK and had acquired a stable source of income through regular employment; their children attended school or college, etc.

introductions made by relatives or their house-mates who connected the new arrival with someone (who could be Roma themselves), or who employed groups of workers on something akin to the 'gang master' system. i.e. working as cleaners (women); factory work (male), etc. Overall, 70 per cent of migrants indicated that their key intention on reaching the UK was to seek work. The exceptions were all married women with dependent children, or in one case an adult daughter with caring responsibilities who assisted her wider family with looking after a disabled household member.

Respondents repeatedly noted that housing costs were kept low by the process of co-residence in over-crowded accommodation, thus reducing costs for each individual. This mitigates the impact of low wages and the three-month new migrant 'penalty period' (post-2014), during which time new migrants are unable access Housing Benefit or other forms of welfare support in the UK. Accordingly, the location and format of these 'new migrant enclaves' are typically high-density, low-quality, private rented housing in excluded neighbourhoods populated by diverse migrant communities (Brown et al., 2013). In some cases, housing and employment were both arranged by a middle-man who may themselves be a Roma who had become more established within a local neighbourhood, a finding which Nagy (2018) has also highlighted.

It was particularly noticeable, for both recent and longer-established migrants, that patterns of low-paid, often 'grey-market'/cash in hand work were the norm on first relocating; with such jobs typically obtained within a few days or weeks of moving to Britain. This form of 'word of mouth' employment access was overwhelmingly obtained through being hired by a person from the same country of origin. Therefore, we found absolutely no evidence that Roma migrants were drawn to the UK as a result of perceived ease of access to welfare benefits: instead, they emphasised the value of work that provided a tangible sense of empowerment, especially for men.

4.2. Barriers to Accessing Benefits

Accessing precarious, low paid work of the type outlined above, while an effective short-term financial strategy, and one which potentially enables funds to be remitted home to support relatives prior to their migration, is unsustainable if welfare benefits need to be claimed as additional support. Such sporadic and not always 'official' employment history makes it difficult to demonstrate administrative requirements which enable access to 'passport' welfare benefits, i.e. assistance in meeting housing costs or low-pay 'top-up' benefits available to EU migrants after a period of working in the UK, subject to fulfilling certain criteria.

From our focus group interviews and the online survey it became clear that for respondents who had attempted to access welfare benefits (most noticeably after the regulatory changes which occurred in April 2014) a significant number of barriers existed, which appeared to disproportionately impact EU workers, and we posit, EU Roma migrants in particular.

Major themes which emerged from analysis of data gathered from Roma respondents who had applied for benefits, supported by more nuanced commentary on findings from advice/support workers, presented an almost unanimous picture of a

confused and inadequately administered welfare benefits system in which administrative staff employed by the Department of Work and Pensions themselves appeared to lack knowledge over the precise legal status enjoyed by migrant claimants:

'Very bad experience, because he applied for housing benefits because of his illness; he is not fit. When he went to [...] City Council he was told to bring old pay slips, e.g. [last] two months, and when he brought it to the Council, they told him he had to bring something else. When he got all the documents, they wanted something else, so he has a bad experience. He has to pay for rent, otherwise he will be homeless, it is very complicated and he is not fit to go to work and he does not have enough money to pay the rent. He expected a more compatible communication with the council regarding benefit' (Translator explaining the experience of Roma migrant from Slovakia – resident in the UK for five years, formerly employed).

A key area of confusion (and one which is strongly implicated in cases of administrative removals) concerns the dual legal test which migrants need to meet in order to be eligible for welfare benefits: the Habitual Residence Test (HRT) and Right to Reside Test (RTRT). Both must be fulfilled before an individual can claim non-contributory, means-tested benefits which exist to retain a minimal income for unemployed people without other finances (see: Dagilyte and Greenfields, 2015 for a full explanation).

The obvious problem, however, lies in the fact that an individual who is undertaking very low paid work (below the legal minimum wage), or for 'cash in hand', will be unable to establish their right to fulfil the requirements for the HRT and RTRT. Even for individuals legally employed on minimum wages, the hurdles to be overcome are substantial. Roma migrants who were often not literate in the language of their country of origin, or who had extremely limited knowledge of how to obtain advice, were found to be particularly vulnerable to refusal of benefits. Evidence was supplied on several occasions of translation services (where they were offered) being provided in only a partially comprehended language or via a translator from a 'country of origin' who was hostile to Roma and either did not fully translate responses, or implied to the investigating officer that the claimant was not seeking to work but wished to claim benefits.

The issue of lack of translation services when seeking to apply for services arose repeatedly, with Roma respondents often using informal networks of support to obtain information or assist them with claim-making. One respondent in a focus group who applied for housing benefit, having been resident in the UK for over three years, told us that he used his current language skills (Russian and Polish) to communicate with migrants from other EU Member States (Lithuania, Poland), whose English language comprehension and expression were more advanced, and asked them for help when dealing with welfare benefits authorities:

'When he went to the Jobcentre, [they] gave him the declaration in English. So when he first came to the country [as a single man], he couldn't read or speak [English], so it was hard for him, as he didn't understand anything. He made a

claim, but he had to provide some documents, he didn't speak English at that time, so it was difficult for him, so he just left it. And now, this is the first time claiming since he became ill [...] because he is with a partner, and he has an illness, and she [the partner] speaks English' (Translator in focus group explaining the situation of a Roma migrant participant).

Indeed, we found evidence in several cases of Roma migrants giving up welfare claims which they were entitled to make as they believed that they would not be able to satisfy eligibility requirements given complex regulations and documents requested by bureaucrats. It was particularly problematic that there appears to be no single set of guidance on what form of documentation will satisfy officials, leading to at times arbitrary decision-making on whether the HRT or RTRT have been fulfilled.

4.3. From 'Bordering' to Expulsion

In turn, lack of demonstrable documented official employment history increases the risk of administrative removal if an individual or family were deemed by the state benefits agency not to be exercising their EU rights of freedom of movement for the purposes of seeking employment; instead they can be perceived as an unwarranted burden on the State, as popularly portrayed in the 'welfare tourist' media discourse. In such circumstances, several respondents in both London and Derby either recounted that they themselves (or relatives and friends) had been subject to interviews by the migration authorities enquiring as to their intent and circumstances and pressure was applied to encourage 'voluntarily return' to countries of origin following the refusal of welfare benefits. In one case of a Roma family who had the right to reside, a home-maker mother with an employed spouse were unlawfully threatened with removal, as she was not personally seeking work or enacting behaviours associated with 'genuinely seeking work/genuinely likelihood of work'. In another case, a Roma man who had acquired British citizenship was repeatedly called in and was subject to disciplinary welfare interviews until it transpired that he had British citizenship and the approach of benefits agency staff abruptly changed towards him.

To illustrate the processes aimed at facilitating a 'willingness' to return to countries of origin, an investigative newspaper article of October 2017 (published shortly before the issue of increasingly stringent Government guidance on the process for undertaking administrative removals of EU citizens)¹⁰ reported that as part of the Government's pledge to create a 'hostile environment' for individuals regarded as undesirable, a homeless.

'[A] Romanian national [held] in an immigration detention centre [was advised] that his request for emergency accommodation has been rejected and he should consider another country. [The letter he received] states: "You could avoid becoming destitute by returning to Romania or another EU member state

¹⁰ The details of the various mechanisms by which an EU national can lawfully be required to leave the UK are provided under footnote 3. We argue that besides the three 'official' routes there is a fourth element of 'quasi-voluntary' departures, used by Roma and other vulnerable migrants as a way to avoid increasingly negative engagement with administrative agencies.

where you could enjoy access to all your ECHR [European Convention on Human Rights] without interference” (Townsend, 2017b).

While it is not stated whether that the individual in that case was Roma, the Roma Support Group working in collaboration with a leading UK homelessness charity, St. Mungo's, found that Romanian nationals were the fastest growing group of rough sleepers in London, accounting for 1,388 Romanian rough sleepers (18.7 per cent of all rough sleepers in Greater London) with a 'sharp rise in the number and of percentage of Romanian rough sleepers thought to be of Roma ethnicity' (RSG, 2016: 3). Moreover, their report explicitly referred to the difficulties in accessing welfare benefits experienced by Romanian migrants and increasing distrust of officials as a result of an emphasis on 'reconnection' or voluntary return to Romania. By the summer of 2017, evidence was increasingly emerging of a distinct policy (perhaps unwittingly assisted by civil society agencies supporting vulnerable migrants) pertaining to deportations of homeless or otherwise socially excluded EU citizens, in particularly those from A2 countries (Townsend, 2017a).

This dramatic increase in administrative removals or 'quasi-voluntary departures' (Mantu et al., 2017), reported initially by Roma respondents to our study, who were often living in poor quality over-crowded housing prior to being refused welfare benefits, may perhaps be posited as indicating that Roma were the 'trial group' for enactment of this policy. This policy shift quietly determined rough sleeping or homelessness as an 'abuse' of EU citizens' right of freedom of movement (Cooper, 2017), enabling enforcement action, including detention prior to removal, to be taken. Subsequently, and in the light of further evidence of increasing numbers of formal deportations of homeless EU citizens which illustrated that the group most likely to experience 'enforced returns' from the UK between June 2016-2017 were Romanian nationals (Home Office, 2017a), a judicial review was brought by a coalition of charities, which led to the policy of a blanket detention and return of homeless EU migrants being declared unlawful by the British courts in a 2017 case.¹¹ It is clear, however, based on evidence from our study and anecdotal report to civil society agencies that the declared figures do not include all those who are pressurised to leave the UK, as official statistics do not include 'quasi-voluntary' returns that are driven by fears of child protection interventions or the risk of destitution following unsuccessful applications for welfare benefits.

Moreover, despite the court ruling, in December 2017 new Home Office guidance on administrative removals (2017b) has, while more cautious in tone, still reiterated a sense of suspicion towards EU migrants, indicating that evasion of taxes, entering into a marriage of convenience with an individual entitled to reside in the UK, or persistent low-level offending may all be taken into account when administrative removal decisions are made.

As can be seen, for Roma migrants the risk of becoming entangled in a Kafkaesque bureaucratic system leading to denial of entitlement of financial support, spiralling risk of state interventions and ultimately removal or in the absence of any alternative a strategic decision to return to their country of origin, is relatively high.

¹¹ The case of R. (Gureckis) [2017].

This risk of respondents coming into unexpected contact with migration authorities staff following referrals made to the immigration authorities by welfare benefits agencies (particularly when considered in relation to the issue of ‘evasion of taxes’ being grounds for administrative removals) was exacerbated by use of ‘word of mouth’ and grey-market (cash in hand) employment strategies used by new migrants (see also: Nagy, 2018) which impacted their ability to demonstrate that they had been employed prior to seeking welfare benefit support. Even lawfully employed Roma migrants frequently appeared to have failed to collate suitable evidence to support welfare benefit claims as, contrary to popular discourse, prior or upon arrival they were overwhelmingly unfamiliar with the British welfare regime and legal expectations upon them. Even after the initial three months ‘migrant penalty period’, following which migrants could access welfare benefits and ‘passported’ housing benefits, somewhat surprisingly to the research team, recent (and not so recent) arrivals still often lacked understanding of welfare eligibility criteria. NGO agencies and staff, too, reported frequent encounters of Roma who were near destitute, oblivious about their entitlements:

‘quite often we first come across a client when someone, another Roma, perhaps someone they are working with - will bring them along to us or phone and say ‘can you help this person, they’ve got three kids under seven, and they aren’t getting xx and I get it so I know [...] for example, people we’ve had in weren’t claiming child benefit although they were working and entitled, or didn’t realise that they could get help if there was someone disabled in the family... that sort of thing’ (NGO staff member).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

As can be seen, there is a complexity to, and multi-layered levels of, exclusion experienced by EU Roma citizens in the UK. These include their prior experiences of engagement with the home state, marginality on arrival in the UK, precarity in both the employment and housing markets, exacerbated by the dramatic shrinkage in migrant workers’ rights impacting both Roma and non-Roma who need to seek to access welfare benefits (Martin et al., 2017; Alberti, 2017).

These experiences of poverty and precarious employment are coupled with the impacts of low levels of literacy and limited access to agencies working with and supporting Roma clients (Morris, 2016), language barriers, low levels of knowledge of welfare entitlements in the UK, an increased risk of exploitation by employers, perhaps associated, too, with anti-Roma racism (McGarry, 2017), and a willingness to accept housing and working conditions which may be worse than those available to non-Roma migrants (Brown et al., 2013). Hence, the potential mix for a toxic and declining situation exists which greatly diminishes the security of EU Roma migrants in the UK.

As is illustrated above, the discussion on administrative removals emerged in several interviews. This is worrying, as the policy consists of practices of tacit bordering and policing by state agencies, which operate to ‘encourage’ return migration of EU Roma citizens to their home countries, in contradiction to EU law

which will continue to apply throughout the transitional period before Brexit. The UK does not seem to be alone in this approach: Tervonena and Enache (2017) found similar 'everyday bordering' of Roma migrants in Finland, operationalised through the processes of 'mobilizing municipal workers and local police as everyday gatekeepers' (2017: 1114). It would appear that in several European countries regarded as beacons of equality and possessing relatively good reputations for civility towards migrant populations and no record of targeted anti-Roma racism, there is a slow drip-feed of pressure which is disproportionately impacting Roma as a result of their precarity and position in the labour market. Indeed, this focus of the welfare gaze on EU Roma citizens can be seen as directly linked to van Baar's proposition (2011) that there is 'new norm' of 'problematising' Roma as migrant criminals. Nagy (2016) theorised that disciplinary practices are enacted by state agencies to ensure compliance with preferred (or imagined) norms of society and thus that Roma migrants to the UK engage with these pressures by a series of strategies - subversion, compliance or 'ethnic denial' (blending in and perceived a Czech or Romanian national rather than Roma); a finding which has marked similarities to Acton's (1974) thesis of Romani adaptive strategies.

Despite the adaptive attempts adopted by some EU Roma migrants in the UK, and a clear determination by the vast majority of our respondents to seek work and settle in the UK on a long-term basis, our findings suggest that the 'taint' of being a migrant, working in a low-paid sector and in some cases being openly identified as Roma - for example, by translators who share a country of origin - created a particular level of risk for members of this community over and above that experienced by other EU migrants with similar skillsets or working in low-paid jobs.

Professionals who had contact with migrant Roma households often appear to hold deeply embedded opinions based on 'common sense knowledge' which has created an image of the communities fuelled by stereotypical media representations of anti-social Roma behaviours which, to utilise the concept coined by the late Professor Stuart Hall, embodies 'inferential racism' (Hall, 2000). Highlighting this point, our online survey of NGO advice workers showed that not only the UK authorities dealing with welfare benefit claims were not familiar with issues of Roma culture but they also lacked empathy with EU Roma applicants, resulting in the breakdown of trust and cooperation with the UK migrant Roma community. Given that Roma welfare claims are being scrutinised more than other EU citizens' claims, especially if submitted by Romanian nationals, one our online survey respondent went as far as to describe the UK welfare benefits administration system as 'institutionally racist', while the other highlighted the continuing 'stigma of being a Roma'.

When via state bodies such ethnicised association of particular (usually negative) behaviours and attributes are attached to a particular community (in this case the Roma) and acted upon as if those tropes and concepts bore some relationship to lived reality, such vicious circle inclines state actors to treat individuals as though they are automatically a suspect population, furthering the process of 'bordering'. For example, we identified cases of deep concern where, as a result of poverty arising from rejection of Roma migrants' welfare benefits claims, or due to delays in receiving in-work benefits, families 'voluntarily' elected to return to their countries of origin (to

once again experience racism, exclusion and joblessness), so as to avoid becoming totally destitute:

'He made a claim but he had to provide some documents, he didn't speak English at that time so it was difficult for him so he just left it [...]. They are saying that some people will go back to Slovakia, some will stay here, he says there is going to be more homeless people, more people living in poverty and children being poor, it is impossible [...] It is so scary to think about' (Translator - Slovak participants, average period in the UK 6 months).

Some EU Roma citizens resident in the UK are comfortably self-sufficient and blend with diverse well-established populations (particularly perhaps in super-diverse London). However, for others, who may be particularly visible by dint of high density of residency (for example, in Govanhill in Glasgow, or Page Hall in Sheffield),¹² there is a danger that the way in which they are positioned in public discourse - as low-skilled, anti-social 'welfare benefit tourists' with a predilection for criminal behaviour - may destabilise their situation. In the light of the post-Brexit anti-migrant toxicity and dramatically increased rates of anti-migrant hate crimes (Dearden, 2017a), it would appear clear that the situation of Roma in Britain, while not perhaps as marginalised as in many countries of origin, is still highly precarious and potentially worsening.

Overall, our research presents compelling evidence to suggest that - contrary to basic EU principles of freedom of movement of people and the EU's commitment to diversity and human rights - policing and bordering is occurring through enforcement action and active discouragement of settlement of Roma and other marginalised migrant households. Such treatment continues to be directed at those who seek legitimately to use their (current) ability to exercise their EU rights and simultaneously make use of welfare regimes within the UK. While we do not suggest this is explicitly formulated into a policy of 'active discouragement' of Roma in a way found in some other member states, such activities are in part an artefact of Romaphobia, that plays out in a wider post-Brexit xenophobia, as resistance to East European migrants who are seen as problematic or failing to comply with British norms of household structures and behaviour. Such highly politicised discourses do not allow for taking into account of individual stories and enable further 'bordering' of EU Roma citizens.

Accordingly, and in the light of fiscal retrenchment and increasingly stringent welfare benefits requirements even for UK-born citizens, the tools exist which enable bureaucrats to operationalise pressures (or enact direct administrative removals) upon migrant Roma who come to the attention of the State, so that they 'voluntarily leave' the country.

In relation to welfare benefits claims, we consistently found that there was a lack of an accessible, precise list of documents required to support evidence required to meet the Habitual Residence Test; imposition of an impersonal, one-size-fits-all application of the Right to Reside Test; long, artificially-created delays in assessing welfare benefits applications; and rejection of welfare benefits applications without

¹² Both areas which have, in recent years, been intermittently subject to highly charged politicised, ethnicised discourse in relation to rates of Roma migration and claims of intense levels of anti-social behaviour and child exploitation (see for example: Jackson, 2016; Graham, 2013; Clark, 2014).

administrators providing clear reasons for such decisions, which ultimately may lead to commencement of removal of claimants from the UK. Moreover, there was a high burden of proof on the jobseekers to show 'compelling evidence' of meeting the genuine prospect of work test.

The complex relationship between poverty and the welfare governance of EU Roma migrants is thus deeply entwined. The risk of slippage into destitution for migrant Roma households (including those in 'grey market' or low-income employment such as is frequently obtained following first migration) is profound in the light of employment exclusion and low pay, racism, marginalised accommodation opportunities and migrants' lack of awareness of employment/welfare benefits rights.

Accordingly, migrant Roma household potentially find themselves in 'receiving' member states in a precarious situation requiring them to traverse and balance risk factors which, while qualitatively different from those in their countries of origin, often expose them to worse environmental health and appalling working and living conditions than native-born citizens or even other migrant populations.

In conclusion, we posit that an unarticulated and perhaps barely recognised governance of Roma can occur through using welfare benefits agencies to discourage residence in Britain for all but the 'ideal', self-sufficient, self-supporting, well-integrated, English speaking migrant (preferably well-qualified and perhaps married to a British citizen). This approach reignites the debate on the undeserving poor (Romano, 2017), deeply embedded into British welfare policy for decades, but which in the current climate exudes a particularly xenophobic tone. The impact of a toxic media environment (Balch and Balabanova, 2016) stigmatising A2 migrants as 'welfare tourists', coupled with experiences of anti-Roma discrimination (McGarry, 2017; Tremlett et al., 2017) has accordingly created a sense of insecurity for members of these migrant communities (, 2016). Thus, we see evidence of a situation coming from the strictest interpretation of EU free movement rights that is very much outside the spirit of European Union law and integration objectives. In the face of imminent Brexit, we fear that circumstances may become even harsher for EU Roma citizens on the margins of British society.

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ULDERICO DANIELE, STEFANO PASTA AND
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From Public Enemy to Urban Ghost: Roma Migrants and
the Dismantling of the Nomad Camp Systems in Milan
and Rome

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Abstract

Roma migration from Eastern countries has been one of the main topics of public debate in Italy in the last decade. Roma people have been depicted as the biggest threat to citizens' safety, especially in the biggest cities, and have become the target of special *securitarian* measures that revive old stereotypes. At the same time, thanks to various European bodies, Roma people have also become the targets of ad hoc inclusionary policies, such as the National Strategy for Inclusion. The deconstruction of the camp system for nomads was one of the basic targets of all the interventions. This article describes what happened to Roma migrants during the last ten years – from the ‘Nomad Emergency’ of 2007 until the present-day dismantling of the nomad camp system. It focuses on Roma migrants who live in the two Italian cities where most of the Romanian Roma have settled since the beginning of the 21st century: Milan and Rome. The paper analyzes the public policies that were implemented by national and local authorities, and highlights some of the strategies that Roma migrants use to cope with the dismantling of the nomad camp system.

Keywords: Nomad Camp, Romanian Roma migrants, Italy, Rome, Milan, public policy.

Introduction

In Italy, Roma migrants are no longer perceived as the main security issue: new threats, such as terrorism and the refugee crisis now make up the focus of public debate. At the same time, sadly, Italy continues to be infamous for the living conditions of Roma groups, and especially for the housing policies that target them.

This situation continues despite the countless reports – both national and European – that denounce the inadequacy of the policies implemented by the central government and local administrations (Commissioner Jo Cox, 2017; ECRI, 2015). Since 2000, Italy has been famous as the ‘nomad camp country’ (ERRC, 2000); the displacement of the Roma within this specific type of settlement was only the first element in a wider system of governance.

Policymakers have now committed to slowly eliminating this system. In some Italian cities, new policies have been implemented, to little effect. This process is obviously affecting Roma people because it is changing the range of opportunities they have and the types of risks they face. The aim of this article is to analyze the reasons, forms and consequences of this policy shift, and to explore how Roma migrants deal with it.

While scholars with diverse perspectives have provided a deep understanding of what we can define as the ‘nomadic camp system’ (Sigona, 2005; Colacicchi, 2008; Vitale, 2008; Clough Marinaro, 2009; Picker, 2010; Daniele, 2011a), we have little scientific knowledge of how this policy shift has been implemented or what were its consequences. Policies governing the nomad camp system have changed throughout the last 30 years, and their implementation has been affected by the nature of the local contexts they encountered. Because of this, we focus on the most recent stage in the evolution of nomad camp policy – that which spans the so-called ‘Emergency Period’ to the present days.

Within this policy shift, we aim at describing some of the strategies implemented by Roma migrants. In their trajectories, we can recognize a new kind of challenge to the physical and symbolic border of the nomadic camp, and we will see if and how the Roma can create new links and connections in the local context or in a transnational environment. We critically refer to the notion of ‘campzanship’ (Sigona, 2015), and try to understand if and how this concept is useful during the process of dismantling the nomad camp system.

Moreover, our analysis will only include the cities of Rome and Milan. These are the two cities with the greatest number of Roma groups in Italy. In both cases, a great amount of resources have been allocated to deal with the issue, to little or no effect. Furthermore, both cities have been host to large Roma settlements for a long period of time in the form of unplanned shantytowns and authorized nomad camps, inhabited by groups with different migratory itineraries and different stories of co-existence within the city. We focus in particular on the Romanian Roma.¹

¹ The main author of Part no. 1 is Daniele, in collaboration with Greta Persico; the main author of Part no. 2.1 is Pasta in collaboration with Persico; Paragraphs 2.2 and 3.2 were written by Daniele; Part no. 3 was written by Daniele and Pasta; the main author of Part no. 3.1 is Persico in collaboration with Pasta.

1. The theoretical frame for understanding nomad camps and their dismantling

In the last ten years, the policy surrounding nomad camps has been studied using different theoretical frameworks.

Following Agambenian theory about state and citizenship, nomad camps have been depicted as an exemplary locus of exceptionality, where state authorities displace and confine non-citizens while preserving their 'bare life'. From this point of view, nomad camps, together with other kinds of camps, are tools that state authorities use to deal with populations that are considered different and dangerous because they disturb, if not threaten, 'national order' (Piasere, 2006; Clough Marinaro, 2009).

Critical perspectives related to post-colonial studies have highlighted the colonial origins of confinement measures and depicted the nomad camp system as a 'spatio-racial political technology' based on the simultaneous criminalization and protection of the so-called nomadic people (Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015). Nomad camps have also been defined as 'neo-ghettos'; that is, following Wacquant, a peculiar tool for managing urban marginality through control and punishment (Clough Marinaro, 2015).

Foucauldian approaches, inscribed within a general critique of the notion of power, have highlighted the circularity of power relations within the settlements and focused on the interactions among diverse subjects. In line with this perspective, Maestri (2017b: 6) summarizes the diverse recent contributions, underlining that '[...] the camp is co-produced "by a plethora of institutions and organizations" and "multiple partially sovereign actors" (Ramadan, 2013: 69), as well as by "the people acting on, inhabiting or surrounding it" (Martin, 2015: 14), including organizations acting in solidarity with the camp residents.' In line with this perspective, refugees studies are no longer focused exclusively on understanding the confinement and disempowerment of settlers. Besides deprivation of rights and limitation of freedom and agency, settlers are not reduced to 'bare life': they still have resources and opportunities for crossing the physical and symbolic border of the settlements (Turner, 2015).

Following the latter approach, we do not identify the nomad camp system as a static and homogenous mechanism that always produces the same kind of segregated and marginalized subjects.

First of all, following Shore, Wright and Però's perspective about the anthropological analysis of the related policy (2011), we consider the historical modifications of this policy and the diverse contexts of its implementation with a view to describing its life and changes, as well as what we can define as its unexpected outputs.

Moreover, we aim at describing the nomad camp construction as a dynamic setting in which, together with the circulation of specific resources and discourses, new subjectivities can emerge or disappear, and actors can modify their own strategies and aims. Focusing on the actors related to this scenario, we include other subjects in our analysis, such as those who share the same urban situation as the Roma, and we deal with the issue of the agency of Roma settlers. Our aim is to describe and theoretically

understand the action undertaken by Roma during the time that the previous frame of action, the ‘nomad camp system’, was being overcome, or dismantled.

The Italian literature about the agency of Roma within nomad camps seems to be framed using two main theoretical approaches. There are scholars, mainly anthropologists, who underline the cultural autonomy of Roma people as a feature that makes them somehow independent from the power that g g  authorities would exert over them. Roma people are depicted as a ‘*peuples-r sistance*’ (Ass eo, 1989): they are deemed able to re-translate all experiences into internal scenarios that are totally different from those of the g g  and are closed off to them (Solimene, 2013). Furthermore, we have scholars, mainly sociologists and political scientists, who focus on the various forms of political re-action engaged in by the Roma within the nomad camps. These researchers apply notions such as resistance, protest or subversion (Armillei, 2016; Maestri, 2017a, 2017b) to reject the depiction of the camp as a ‘total institution’ (Nicola, 2011) in which Roma are reduced to a ‘bare life’ (Clough Marinaro, 2009) and upon whom the state can exert its sovereign power without restriction.

In this article, we employ a diverse perspective in which cultural identity and autonomy are not adopted as the ultimate explanation for all the strategies that the Roma engage in, and nor is agency limited to political activism. We aim at following and broadening the path opened up by Sigona (2015) who, following the wider theoretical debate about camps and encampment policies, and adopting Ong’s notion of ‘mutations of citizenship’ (2006), depicted components of dwellers’ agency in terms of a sort of ‘campzanship’. Moreover, we refer to the latest work by Clough Marinaro who highlights how Roma settlers in legal and illegal settlements manage formal and informal relations with g g  in their search for new opportunities (2017).

We focus on the new migratory and settlement strategies engaged in by some Roma families and individuals because, following Manzoni (2016), those are considered pivotal grounds for understanding the interplay between g g  interventions and Roma families’ strategies.

In the first part of the article, we present two life trajectories² of Roma migrants settled in Rome and Milan. We then inscribe these trajectories within the history of policies toward Roma people carried out at the national and local level: a decade marked by the increasing harshness of the security approach, the start of what is known as the Nomad Emergency, and the overcoming of this emergency as marked by the National Strategy.

Our aim is to describe the difference between the so-called ‘overcoming’ of the nomad camp policy and the more prosaic ‘dismantling’ of it. Within this frame, we also aim at providing some first insights into the strategies that Roma engage in to cope with this policy shift.

² Life trajectories were collated as part of the international research project MARG-IN (project number ANR-15-CE28-0006): MARGinalisation/INclusion: les effets   moyen et   long terme des politiques de r gulation de la pauvret   trang re sur les populations-cibles : le cas des migrants dits « roms » dans les villes d’Europe occidentale (France, Italie, Espagne). (Mid and long term effects of the policies aiming at managing poverty on target populations : the case of the people called Roma in Western European cities.)

The three authors of the paper have been involved in Italian Romani Studies since 2004. Their work has focused on Roma in Italy and abroad – more specifically, in Romania. All of them have been in touch with Roma families since the very beginning of their fieldwork, approximately ten years ago.

Besides carrying out research activities with Roma families, we have also been actively involved in community development and social care projects alongside them.

During these activities, we collected and constantly updated a large amount of ethnographic data. In the present text, we focus on two of the 18 life trajectories that we have drafted in the last few months. Each life trajectory refers to a single Roma person and their household. It focuses particularly on their dwelling history, the economic strategies they adopted, and their spatial mobility, with the aim of highlighting the interplay between policies, social interventions and personal strategies. These life trajectories are based on data collected through interviews and individual meetings that occurred in Italy and Romania with the people involved in the research, as well as the researchers' participation in family life and special events such as marriage, *Judecata*, christenings, or family celebrations for Christmas, birthdays or Easter.

We do not consider the life trajectories we present here to be representative of the complex system of Romanian Roma migration from Romania (see: Pontradolfo and Piasere, 2016). On the contrary, we consider them a useful tool for triggering an analysis of the interplay between Roma agency, social intervention, and local policy because they allow us to identify the turning points that led to the adoption of new strategies.

2. From policies to daily lives: two experiences from fieldwork³

2.1 Costel's story: Milan

We met Costel in the warm spring of 2008 while hundreds of evictions were taking place. Costel was moving his possessions from the shelter he was living in to a cousin's car. In this situation, we just helped him and his wife to save their property. During the weeks that followed the eviction, we met them in their new settlement nearby. Ten years have since passed, and many things have happened to him and his family.

Costel is now 46, his wife Aluna 42; he has two daughters: Anca, 18 – who he had with his first wife and who lives with him – and Elena, 8 whose mother is Aluna. In the last few years (especially from 2012 to 2015) Costel also lived with his first son Catalin, 25, his wife Flori, 24, and their three children. Costel's mother, Geta – who is 61 – joined them in 2015, and is still living with them. Costel was born in Draganești and emigrated to Milan in 2005 following the migration trajectory of several other families from the Olt region of Romania (Potradolfo and Piasere, 2016).

From 2005 to 2007, he spent only a part of the year in Italy, going back to Romania quite often to stay with his parents.

³ The authors have modified names and sensitive details to guarantee the privacy of the people involved in the research.

When in Italy, he stayed at his cousin's shelter in the Triboniano area, a big slum that was transformed into a regular nomad camp in 2008 by the right-wing local administration, only to be closed few years later, in 2011. From 2008 onwards, Costel and his wife Aluna decided to remain in Italy for longer periods. Because they were not allowed to live as residents in what was now an authorized nomad camp, they moved several times and stayed in different shantytowns, from which they were regularly evicted.

At the beginning Costel refused all offers from social services such as a foster house for his wife and child (at that time, Costel's daughter was seven years old) so as not to become separated from them.

In 2013, he agreed to be hosted in the Social Emergency Center⁴ because at this center families were allowed to live together and because Elena's health condition was precarious due to the living conditions of the slums.

At the beginning of 2015, after several extensions of their permanent status at the CES shelter, Costel's family was displaced to the CAA⁵ in the Western suburbs of the city. In this case, the center had been built a few meters away from a former nomad camp which had been closed by the municipality. Once settled into the CAA, Costel and his wife began what was defined as a path towards autonomy - at least by the social workers of the center.

Costel found and lost a job within a short time, but was then able to find another one. For a few months, Aluna undertook a paid internship which was not designed to result in a permanent position. At the end of 2016, Costel was told that he had to look for a rented house or an alternative housing solution because his stay at the CAA could not be prolonged. Costel and his wife had to leave the place in October 2017, and they rejected the offer, made by the municipality, to return to the CES.

By then, Costel had been in Milan for almost ten years and was at risk of going back to living on the street.

Thanks to some information received from another family from Draganești - previously lodged at the CAA - Costel came into contact with people of Maghreb origin who were in charge of the market that supported the illegal occupation of public housing in the Eastern suburbs. After paying approximately 1200 euros, he entered an apartment recently left by a family who had returned to their native country.

In the period, the eldest daughter, separated from her 'husband' from Salcuța, and who had returned to live with her son at her father's 'maisonnée', left her family of origin again. In January 2018, she started a relationship with a young man of

4 The CES - in Italian: *Centro di Emergenza Sociale* - Social Emergency Center, is a public service for short- and mid-term housing emergencies. They are located on the periphery of towns, and are equipped with containers (one for several families, around 40 people each), common toilets and kitchens, and a big room for social activities. In these centers, surveillance is ongoing 24-7, and social workers are present every day.

5 The CAA - in Italian: *Centro per l'Autonomia Abitativa* - Autonomous Housing Center, is a public service for mid-term housing designed for families living in precarious housing. At these centers, each family has its own container. CAA is considered to be a second step in the autonomous housing process following CES.

Maghreb origin; they illegally occupied a second flat. Shortly after, however, Anca's new partner was arrested for drug dealing.

2.2 Estela's history in Rome

Estela was born in 1996 in a very small town in the southwest of Romania. Her hometown is located only a few minutes from the Danube river, while Turnu Severin and Craiova are 30 minutes by car. She is the oldest of the four sons of Marian and Dorina.

The family left their hometown and moved to Rome in 1998 after a few failed attempts to settle in Germany by Marian, acting alone.

They chose Rome because many relatives and people from the same area had previously settled there and it was considered an easy place to settle in.

They settled in an unauthorized settlement in the Southern periphery of the town. The settlement was made of shacks built by the settlers themselves; no basic services were provided, and hygiene was very poor.

In 2000, Estela's family - together with many other Roma - moved into a new, authorized settlement recently inaugurated by the municipality. This is the Via Candoni nomad camp, located in the Southern suburb of the city. Estela's family was appointed a Portakabin with a size of 36 square meters. All the basic services, such as water and electricity, were provided. Besides the radical change in housing conditions, in the new settlement Estela and all the members of her family could benefit from the social interventions carried out by social workers specifically for the settlers. Since opening, the Municipality has funded NGOs that implement social projects related to schooling, health and job placement.

Estela's family receives significant aid from the social workers involved in these activities. and it was especially Madalina, born with physical problems in the winter of 1998, who benefited from these. During their stay in the unauthorized settlement, Marian and Dorina did not ask anyone for help, and could not get in touch with the Italian care system or social workers. They were used to keeping Madalina in the house, and none of their relatives were aware of the situation. Once they moved into Candoni, it was easier to get in touch with Italian social workers, and thanks to them she could start receiving professional treatment. Moreover, Italian social workers pushed the relatives to apply for financial support because of Madalina's disabilities.

It was not only Madalina who benefited from the social projects that were implemented within the settlement. While Marian continued to occasionally work with relatives and settlers of the Candoni camp, his wife engaged in some of the educational and vocational activities that were provided in the settlement. By doing this, Dorina could avoid begging, as she did when they lived in the unauthorized settlement. Since 2006, thanks to Italian social workers' help, she has been employed as a cleaner or a kitchen hand through daily contracts. This process has been long and slow but massively changed the family income.

In the spring of 2014, Marian and Dorina received an official marriage request for Estela from a family from the same Romanian town as theirs that had settled in Brussels. After many phone calls and chats, Estela was allowed to spend some time

with Viorel, a youngster of the same age as her who she had got in touch with the previous summer. The wedding was celebrated in the summer of 2014.

Estela moved to Viorel's house, a little apartment in the suburb of Brussels. The house was inhabited by Viorel's parents, an older brother with his wife and two little sons, and two younger children, one male and one female. Estela had very little opportunity to leave the apartment or meet other people: she did not know the town she was living in, and could not speak the local language; she was allowed to meet only Viorel's relatives, and could not leave the flat without her husband escorting her.

In February 2016, Estela's parents received a phone call from Viorel's father. He said that Estela had moved out of their house and had not come back for two days. The day after, Marian's cousin in Brussels found Estela on the streets and brought her to his house.

Marian immediately went to Brussels and brought her daughter back to Rome with him; she stayed in the nomad camp for few weeks and then, during Easter time, she went back to her grandmother's house in Romania. In the meantime, divorce proceedings were quickly concluded between the two families.

Estela moved back to Rome together with her family at the end of summer 2016, but at this time her parents had decided that their time in Rome was over. During the summer time in Romania they had talked with some Romanian Roma who were organizing travel to the United States. They made arrangements with these people and were supposed to move in December 2016. Their last autumn in Rome was devoted to earning money rapidly and to preparing for the trip. They found another family that was interested in renting their Portakabin and appointed a trusty person from the settlement to watch the Portakabins for them. None of the children attended school during those months, and for the very first time Estela's sister was asked to go begging on the streets.

3. A look at the national scenario: the public policies for managing Roma

In Italy, the level of housing segregation of the Roma is still high; as scholars have pointed out, this ethnically based segregation is based on the erroneous assumption that these groups are nomads and therefore deserve different kinds of housing solutions, namely, nomad camps (Sigona, 2002; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009; Dalla Zuanna, 2013).

The genesis of these policies is to be found in the 1980s when various Italian regional councils adopted regional laws aimed at protecting so-called Roma culture, starting with their supposed nomadism. Local authorities tackled the issue exclusively on an ethno-cultural basis. In the absence of a national law that recognized the Roma and Sinti as minorities, this choice – also supported by Catholic pro-Roma NGOs – led to the creation of the nomad camp policy system. Besides Italians, Roma and Sinti with their specific history and Roma migrants from former Yugoslavia – not nomads – were the very first targets of the nomad camp policy. These individuals started arriving in Italy in the 1970s–80s and settled in the biggest cities, such as Milan, Rome, Turin and Naples. During the 1990s, the increase in their number due to the Balkan Wars accelerated the spread of the nomad camp policy.

Another turning point can clearly be highlighted: in 2007–2008, when the so-called ‘Nomad Problem’ became a national issue. The progressive increase in the migratory flux from Romania triggered this change, together with four local events which took place in the biggest Italian cities: the fire in the Opera shantytown, a camp entirely made up of tents located just outside Milan; the hyper-visibility of Roma minor ‘pickpockets’ in the main train station of Milan; the pogrom of Ponticelli in Naples (May 2007); and the murder of Giovanna Reggiani in Rome (October 2007). Taken together, these four events strongly oriented the public discourse about Roma migration and triggered the clear process of criminalization of the Roma population by politicians and media. We claim that these phenomena led to the proclamation of a state of emergency, and the signing of an inter-government agreement to send back to Romania those Romanian (European) citizens that Italy deemed ‘socially dangerous’ (Vitale, 2009).

On 21 May 2008, the Italian Government issued a Decree on the Nomad Emergency to be applied in the regions of Lazio, Campania and Lombardy (later extended to Piedmont and Veneto in May 2009). This emergency legislation included extraordinary measures, such as collecting fingerprints (even of minors) and a census of all the people living in nomad camps. The decree was renewed in 2010 and 2011. Although nomadism was used to formally avoid ethnic profiling (Daniele, 2010), this categorization excluded the two-thirds of Roma and Sinti who live in houses in Italy. This juridical measure permits emergency intervention by public authorities and is similar to those decrees issued in the same period to deal with the earthquake in the Abruzzo region and the waste emergency in Campania. At a local level, the implementation of the state of emergency was marked by hyper-visibility in the media, growth in social tension concerning the settlements, political manipulation by right-wing parties, the great availability of funds for local administrations to cope with the problem, and interventions targeting mainly large cities. The main feature, however, was the ongoing social criminalization of the populations who were targeted by the interventions, often through the demagogic use of more *securitarian* instruments of governance. During this period, the municipality of Milan carried out hundreds of evictions and issued fines of 500 euros for ‘vexatious begging’ or ‘illegal camping’. In Rome, the emergency regulations, which operate outside the ordinary juridical framework, led to multiple violations of the management of contracts regulating social services and activities targeting the Roma. Since 2014, the management of these services and activities had been under an investigation known as ‘Mafia Capitale’.

With decision n. 6050 of 16 November, 2011, the Italian Council of State declared the state of emergency illegitimate. This decision was made possible due to a petition signed by a Roma family settled in Rome and the ERRC, and coincided with the general election in Italy. The legal procedure that led to the withdrawal of the state of emergency ran in parallel with a slow and in many respects hidden shift in policy planning.

In 2012, in line with a wider change which involved European bodies and national governments, the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office (UNAR) launched the National Strategy of Inclusion of the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (Bortone, 2016).

The National Strategy seemed to open up a new season for policies towards the Roma in Italy: for the first time, the government adopted a policy document that tackled the issue at the national level. Unfortunately, an ex-post evaluation concluded that the new policy had limited effects.

According to Daniele (2014) and Bortone (2016), the strategy is worth remembering for three main reasons:

First, the strategy considers the Roma minority a structural component of the Italian population, thus overcoming the emergency narrative largely based on the idea of a 'sudden and exceptional invasion'. As a consequence, there is no need for exceptional measures: if Roma are simply a part of the Italian population, it makes no sense to invoke the notions of identity and cultural traits to justify ad hoc measures; following the 'explicit but not exclusive' policy approach, addressing the needs of Roma does not require special and dedicated channels. Last, nomad camps are identified as part of the problem: far from being a solution, the spatial segregation of Roma is acknowledged to cause poverty, particularly in the biggest cities.

To re-embed Roma policies within the mainstream system, the strategy calls for the creation of a complex system of governance (Bortone, 2016) based on four main areas of intervention: work, education, health, and housing. Ministries were invited to create national committees to study and tackle problems concerning these sectors. A special committee was formed to discuss the legal status of foreign Roma.

The new governance system was led by an inter-ministerial steering committee, directly connected to the government. The system also involved local authorities, such as regional and municipal councils. Regional councils were required to create local committees, one for each of the four areas mentioned above; they were also required to support municipalities in drafting and implementing new local plans for Roma. Local administrators and NGOs were also an active part of the system. Roma associations were considered key stakeholders: they were involved in the writing process and took part in some of the institutional action that was undertaken.

In the preliminary phases, UNAR encouraged the participation of Roma and pro-Roma associations, further boosting the process of speaking up against the censuses and the declaration of emergency which had started years before. During the preliminary phases, not only did the number of Roma associations increase significantly, but coordinating groups and federations of organizations were also formed, raising the level of dialogue with the institutions.

It is of note that, despite the introduction of new and positive elements and the commitment of the UNAR, the strategy did not produce any visible results (Pasta, 2017; ERRC, 2017).

After an initial period, during which some of the ministries and a few local authorities implemented the guidelines, the complex system of governance collapsed.

In the absence of political and institutional stimuli, no stable system of coordination among the ministries, or between regional councils and city councils was structured; the municipalities continued to act with full autonomy, oscillating between commitment to the new strategy and the adoption of the old emergency logic.

The substantial failure of implementation of the national strategy can be attributed to the genesis and the characteristics of this initiative.

The text contained an important series of general guidelines of strong symbolic and political value and set forth a governance system involving both local and national institutions. However, as already stated by the European Commission in all the periodic reviews of 2015, the text did not include objectives that could be effectively quantified, and nor did it provide a clear schedule for the implementation of the measures. Furthermore, it did not attribute clear responsibilities to the individual institutions and did not clearly quantify the resources to be used. In this sense, the text of the national strategy paradoxically seemed to lack those essential elements that define a policy; i.e., those elements that fix the concrete means of its implementation.

In this context, the absolute lack of a system of obligations (prohibitions, obligations) and of stimuli (rewarding elements, additional resources, etc.) for the implementation of the measures described in the strategy appears significant. The absence of these elements, together with the structural weakness of the UNAR - which was incapable of interacting effectively with ministries and local authorities - resulted in no administrations being obliged or even stimulated to abide by the guidelines expressed in the strategy.

In the face of the objectives and expectations that accompanied its launch, it can therefore be stated that the strategy did not succeed in redefining the national framework of policies for the Roma and did not influence significantly the political debate around these issues.

The Roma issue has been rescheduled onto the national agenda, and some of the structural funds for social policies have been redirected toward Roma peoples. Some symbolic changes have occurred: the term 'nomads' has progressively disappeared from the name of many municipal offices, and many of the training and coordination initiatives of the UNAR and ANCI have been implemented. Despite these efforts, and given the weakness of UNAR, none of these changes affected any policies deeply.

3.1 The city of Milan: towards a policy shift

On 18 May 2007, the right-wing mayor Letizia Moratti, the prefect Gian Valerio Lombardi, and the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Marco Minniti approved the 'Security Pact for Milan'. This document anticipated the declaration of the state of emergency - which was issued one year later. The first act was a census which in Milan, unlike in Naples and Rome, did not include fingerprint procedures. During the state of emergency, the city's policy targeted two main areas: the 12 municipal camps and the shantytowns.

With respect to the illegal settlements, the 'extraordinary' measures envisaged by the state of emergency and adopted by the local authorities aimed at creating demagogic public policies, dictated by the quest for political consensus, which included law-abiding types of interventions and simultaneous exclusion of those concerned from municipal welfare programs. The public discourses and the political agenda concerning the shantytowns were aimed at their complete elimination from municipal territory; once translated into action the approach multiplied the number of shanty towns, worsening the quality of life of their inhabitants. Between 2007 and April 2011, over 500 evictions were carried out in Milan - half of which in 2010,

accompanied by press releases by the local authorities which criminalized the evacuees. Evictions of large settlements, such as the Bacula flyover and Via Bovisasca, were perceived as psychological violence by the inhabitants as they were carried out under the threat of placing minors into the custody of social services, the confiscation of documents, and compulsory deportation to the country of origin.

It is not surprising that the Milanese evictions, carried out ‘in the name of legality’, systematically violated national and international rules (Neri, 2011). The biennium 2008/2009 was also marked by ‘impressive’ evictions, targeting record numbers of people and involving the highest number ever number of policemen; between 2010 and May 2011 evictions proceeded at an alarming rate, and even the smaller settlements were affected. The great visibility of the Roma in the media and political discourse corresponds to the lack of social policies. Shantytowns have always been ignored by municipal social services. The third sector organizations operating in the illegal settlements are not recognized as stakeholders by the prefect or the city council, save on rare occasions. Schools are the only institutions that consider Roma to be entitled to social rights: although the mediation of associations is almost always necessary, Roma children could be enrolled in schools. Starting from 2008, some schools in the Lambrate area, close to the settlement of Via Rubattino, encouraged collaboration between Roma and gagè families, thus openly challenging public administrations (Giunipero and Robbiati, 2011).

Scholars and NGOs published several reports and pieces of research denouncing the impact of repeated evictions. Vitale (2008) and Persico (2010) highlight that the policy imprisoned individuals in what can be defined as a ‘perpetual present’, making any form of existential planning impossible and destroying any form of stability: each clearing obliged evacuees to reconstruct their present all over again.

When we asked Costel and his family to recall their life in Milan during the emergency period, their faces became very serious.

They started to list all the places they were forced to leave: ‘First, the Triboniano area, then Bovisa parking and the Bacula overpass, again Bovisa parking, but in a tent, because we had no time to look for materials to build a shelter.... We were moving around, but Triboniano area continued to be a crucial point.... I went there because of my cousin but also because it was the informal transport station to Draganesti, the place where judecata took place, and weddings were celebrated.’ In 2010 alone, Costel was evicted 17 times.

The discussion brought to our mind the various ways families deal with evictions: cars full of stuff, mattresses hidden nearby, and in some cases Italian teachers or friends storing bags, books and toys in their garages.⁶

It is interesting to note how this was the period when the largest financial resources for Roma and Sinti were allocated to local administration. In the municipal nomad camps, four million euros from a total of 13,115,700 were allocated to social projects, housing and employment projects. The rest of the resources were used to fund security measures to control inhabitants. The municipality of Milan also introduced the *Regulation for the transient parking areas for nomads in the area of the*

⁶ Data collected during informal meetings from October 2016 to March 2017 aimed at updating Costel’s life trajectory.

*City of Milan.*⁷ The implementation of the regulation was entrusted to a management committee, whose primary task was coordinating and monitoring Roma's adherence to the 'Pact for Sociality and Legality'; the pact committed Roma settlers to school attendance in exchange for 'school support, social inclusion, training and employment programmes.' This was to foster the 'process of integration into the urban fabric'.⁸ The objective of the Council Department of Social Policy was to close down some of the municipal nomad camps and 'downsize' the others.

In spring 2011, right before the administrative elections, the camp of Via Triboniano – inhabited mostly by Romanian Roma – was closed for good, while the Via Novara camp was downsized. It is worth noting that these were the only two areas legally inhabited by Roma migrants. Two years later, all 52 families who had decided to stay in Milan after the closure of Via Triboniano camp were still living in social houses, and most of them regularly paid rent or an agreed contribution. The situation of the families who had returned to Romania was different: many had come back to Milan, sometimes even only a few months after their repatriation, and were living in illegal settlements. In the same period, the other legal nomad camps remained in a state of uncertainty due to incoherence between official communications announcing their immediate closure.

It was the political change of 2011 that caused the discontinuity; it should be noted how this transition coincided with what was new locally and the end of the emergency at a national level.

Policies towards Roma started to change with the election of Giuliano Pisapia as mayor in 2011. The center-left candidate was elected after a campaign in which the Roma emergency took center stage; he was critical about the eviction policy and won the elections although an alliance supporting Letizia Moratti – who was running for a second mandate – accused the left-wing coalition of planning to transform the city into a Zingaropoli (Gypsy-polis). With respect to both migrants and resident Roma, the first element of change was the tone of the public discourse, much removed from the one previously adopted by Moratti's Council. Roma continued to be considered a problem, but they were no longer labeled a criminal ethnic group, nor viewed as one of the main problems of the city. Evictions were carried out to a lesser degree, and without systematic exposure or negative reports in the media. Following Persico and Sarcinelli (2017), it is also worthy of underlining that very little change occurred among the staff of the Roma and Sinti Department (formerly, Nomad Department). Therefore, we now have public officers that, together with NGO workers, have acquired considerable competences and expertise, but have been called, and are still called, to implement very diverse – if not inconsistent – policies, often dealing with the very same migrant Roma who have been living in the city for years.

Since June 2016, after new elections in which the Roma issue was not among the pivotal issues in electoral debates, the city has been administered by a different mayor from the center-left alliance, Giuseppe Sala. One year after taking office, we can say that Giuseppe Sala has operated in continuity with the previous council.

⁷ Defined according to regional law 77/1989; the Regulation was published in the Official Journal of the Lombardy Region on 23 February 2009.

⁸ See: the report *Segregare Costa* (2013) edited by Berenice, Compare, Lunaria and OsservAzione.

For the Roma living in the shantytowns, the main novelty was the drafting of the *Guidelines for Roma, Sinti and Caminanti People 2012–2015*, which were issued in 2012, after consultation with third sector organizations and Roma representatives.

Unlike previous policies, the document overcomes the distinction between legal and illegal settlements, granting access to social programs in both situations.⁹ Therefore, most of the families evicted from illegal settlement and from authorized nomad camps were offered the opportunity to access the Centers for Social Emergency (in Italian: *Centro Emergenza Sociale*), preserving the unity of each family. In the centers, there are large rooms with 24–40 beds; NGOs and cooperatives provide social services and verify that guests follow the code of behavior.

Centers for Housing Autonomy (in Italian: *Centro Autonomia Abitativa*) were also created. These centers support autonomy in the short term and are made up of little apartments managed by the third sector. So far, this solution has been adopted for a small number of Roma.

Although these social interventions have been subject to criticism (Naga 2015), because of their limited effectiveness and results, we should underline that access to the CES-CAA system after eviction represented a clear change: it provided an opportunity to escape from dwelling in a precarious situation.

It is in this context that we will provide some ethnographic insights that foster understanding of what happened to Roma families, beside policy plans and NGO reports.

CES is situated in close proximity to a regular nomad camp inhabited by Italian Roma. Settlers living in both of the places told us that at the very beginning the relations among them were hostile. After a few months, the same persons described something like an alliance among some of the families from the two settlements. Besides the sharing of daily activities, this alliance also generated common involvement in economic activities, especially in the black or illegal market, such as street selling or collecting scrap metal.

If we consider the CES-CAA system from the perspective of the life trajectory of Roma, these services are opportunities that should be considered mere steps within a complex migratory experience.

Costel's experience in the CES started almost by chance. *'It was 2013 and another eviction occurred. Aluna and me were really tired and worried because of our daughter's health. She was three years old and always sick. When the tall and curly woman from the Comune [municipality] told us about the CES we really did not know what to do. Vom vedea... (we will see). We spent time with the woman. Then we discovered that Trandafir and his wife, and other families from Draganești were also moving there, so we thought... let's try.'*

Costel's experience in the CES was not so positive. In the center, he experienced the informal leadership imposed by some powerful families. He explained: *'Bocea Pavel's family wanted to command, as in Draganești. His sister was lodged in CES for seven months. They continued to lend money with a very high rate of interest: if you didn't pay, they would take your home in Draganești. This is their law.'* Costel was afraid for his daughter Anca: *'When a member of Bocea's family*

9 In the discourse of policymakers and social workers, the idea of 'autonomy' concerns the ability of Roma families to earn enough money and obtain a place to stay lawfully.

wants [something], he kidnaps a beautiful girl for his son or grandson. You can't fight it, otherwise your home will be burnt down.'

Costel and other families told us how they 'got used' to the situation but also how it was quite difficult, especially at the beginning. Each container is shared by approximately 40 persons, 6 or 7 families in the same container. This means they lack privacy and there are numerous conflicts about managing common spaces such as toilets.

'In the beginning we used blankets to separate each family. But they [the social workers] did not allow us for safety reasons. Then, when the social workers changed, we did it again and nobody said anything.' Costel continued to complain about the rules in the center and described the ways he and other families found not to respect them.

While he was living in the CES he worked on construction sites and, thanks to a 15,000 euro loan he obtained from a bank in Draganești, bought a little house in Romania *'But don't tell them!'* (referring to the social workers). Anca and Elena went to school more regularly than before in that period. In the CES, Anca met her first husband again; they became closer until they decided to run away and get married.

In 2015, Costel and his family were placed in the CAA, a period Costel remembers as quite positive. *'I had a permanent job, and we had our own container... much better than the other Center!'* After one year, social workers told him they had to leave the center and to find another housing solution. Costel tried in different ways to extend their permanence in the Center; he collected documents from the job agency he used and in the end obtained an extension until October 2017.

Following Manzoni (2016), we can say that ethnographic data shows how Roma migrants can use the social measures that target them in unexpected ways. The tools and practices of local administrators and social workers are often subverted or attributed with new meaning. This reframing of gage policies and interventions within migration strategies are much more unstable and flexible than what housing policies are able to foresee.

Concerning authorized camps, the decision of the council of state to call an end to the Nomad Emergency led to the abolition of the contested regulation of 2009 and the return to 'regulations for the settlement of gypsy minorities in the territory of the City of Milan' of 1998. Actually, this resulted in reduced social support and reduced investments in the sector. The need to overcome the logic of the camps was increasingly recognized by the municipality: in July 2014, the closure of the camp in Via Novara (Macedonian and Kosovar Roma) was completed and in March 2016, the camp in Via Idro (Italian Roma) was also closed.

Ethnographic data allow us to identify another original strategy that a growing number of Roma families – including Costel's – are now adopting.

Starting from 2014, diverse Roma families joined with many other migrants families in a wave of housing occupations that became a trigger for major social tension throughout the city, partly due to inflated media coverage.

While housing occupation is not rare in suburban areas of the town, the presence of Romanian Roma should be considered a novelty.

Roma families occupied public housing apartments mostly in the districts of Lotto, Lorenteggio and Molise-Calvaire. As far as we know, some of these families

were previously involved in social programs or joined CES-CAA programs but were somehow banned from the centers. These families settled in Milan for the first time at the beginning of the new millennium; they faced an eviction policy implemented by the right-wing administrations and considered occupation a means of emancipating themselves from the historical work of post-eviction reconstruction and a form of retaliation against evictions. Another relevant novelty concerning the housing occupation strategy is that some of the Roma families have built up original networks and alliances with other occupants.

In October 2017, Costel, Aluna, and their daughter Elena were required to leave the CAA; social services from the municipality offered to move them back into the CES. For Costel, this was not an option, so he found a different solution. Thanks to another family from Draganești he had met in the CAA, he got in contact with North African people who managed the illegal occupation of social housing. He paid 1,200 euros and moved into an apartment.

I could not come back to the CES. I didn't want go back to Romania. I did not want to go back to living in a shack... What should I do? In the neighborhood in which Costel occupied the apartment there are many families from Draganești. His daughter Anca is engaged to an Egyptian man and, until he was arrested, they were living nearby in another occupied apartment.

We are aware of Roma families who create and manage economic activities with families from North Africa who have historically settled in the same areas. We also collected data about family ties that have been created between Roma and Moroccan migrants; for example, through mixed marriage.

3.2 Rome: a policy shift without a policy

According to scholars (Daniele, 2016; Maestri and Vitale, 2017), in the last 30 years policies toward Roma groups in Rome appear to be characterized by recurring cycles of emergencies or tragic events followed by announcements of new and radical plans of intervention. Both the right- and the left-wing administrations acted within the rhetorical frame of a supposed 'nomad emergency' and based their interventions on the nomad camp system.

The first organic plan of interventions in the city was issued in 1986 following a series of demonstrations by citizens and right-wing political groups against the presence of camper vans and shantytowns in various parts of the city (Daniele, 2016). The plan tackled the issue of the 'nomadic presence' in the town. It revolved around the identification of authorized areas where the 'nomads' could settle, combined with evictions from unauthorized settlements. From this moment on, the 'nomad problem in Rome' was mainly framed as a space problem (Legros, 2011), with local policy-makers aiming to control the nomadic presence, thereby guaranteeing the hygiene of the urban space (Daniele, 2011b).

The same pattern of interventions - based on evictions and displacement - was then repeated in 1993 and in 1999 - when the migration of Roma from former Yugoslavia intensified - and then again in 2000 and 2008, with the arrival of Romanian Roma. In these periods, evictions from unauthorized areas and relocation in authorized settlements consolidated the logic of the exclusive concentration of

Roma in nomad camps. Furthermore, local authorities moved the settlements to increasingly peripheral areas, concentrating them far away from built-up areas. The municipality guaranteed the provision of basic supplies such as water and electricity within these settlements, but they became bigger and bigger: they were generally capable of hosting several hundred people.

This is the historical period and the political frame in which Estela's family migration was planned and realized. Estela has some memories of the 40-hour trip in a minivan after which they were left at the entrance to one of the many settlements of the town. Estela's parents have very happy memories of this place because they were located right next to relatives and friends from the same area of Romania, but the housing and hygiene condition were very poor.

In 2000, Estela's family moved to the authorized nomad camp in Via Candoni; their situation there improved dramatically. They settled into an authorized camp where their presence was considered legal by local authorities; the settlement and the Portakabins they lived in were provided with basic services, such as water and electricity.

Around the same time, from 1991 to 2008, local authorities considerably extended the services that they provided in the authorized settlements. Besides the basic supplies, a wider system of social services was constructed with the aim of tackling the issues of schooling, job placement, and the everyday management of the settlements (Daniele, 2016; Clough Marinaro, 2017).

As mentioned above, Estela's family received huge help from this; her little sister and her mother benefited most from the regularization of relations with Italian social workers.

However, it is relevant to underline that while Dorina and her little daughter Madalina's situation improved, Estela paid a significant price: when her mother was at work, she was required to replace her by doing her domestic work. This increased in 2006 when Estela's mother gave birth to twins. Social workers in the nomad camp tried to support Estela's schooling career by intervening in diverse ways, but they faced Marian's opposition. While most of the other boys and girls of the same age in the settlement were enrolled and went to school, with some of them attending vocational courses and leisure activities in the neighborhood, Estela mainly spent her time in the settlement. Therefore she could not even get a primary school diploma. Besides the issue of the domestic work, Marian became more and more controlling: he was afraid that Estela could come into contact with other boys and be 'stolen' by them - as happened before to other couple of youngsters living in the settlements. Forced to stay in the settlement and the Portakabin and weighed down with domestic activities, Estela often defined the camp as a jail, stressing the control she was subject to from her father, but also from the other people living in the settlement: *'Everybody here watches you: whatever you do or say, wherever you go, everybody watches and goes back to my father and tells him about me...'*

She tried to take advantage of every opportunity she had to leave the settlement, but she needed her parents' approval to attend the Orthodox Church and to go to the supermarket. Moreover, her parents had strict control over her access to mobile phones and social networks, because they knew that these tools could help her make relationships. Given this situation, Estela was very happy to go back to Romania on

holidays with her family. During the weeks spent in the little village, her parents' control decreased and she was allowed to go around the city with her cousins and uncles and other relatives. She also spent a lot of time with her grandmother because, as she said, she was one of the only people who would support Estela's desires.

Despite the social programs within the nomads camp, Estela declared that all of her desires and relations were located only in Romania because her relatives and the other settlers were used to controlling her.

With this knowledge, we claim that the nomad camps became the fulcrum in a wide system of government of the Roma presence in Rome, because they defined the only places in town available to the Roma, while making them subject to formal and informal control measures.

This system had enormous economic costs¹⁰ and negative social outcomes.

The declaration of the emergency in 2007 – which in Rome was accompanied by the election of the first post-Fascist mayor after more than 20 years of center-left administration –, did not produce a significant shift. Alemanno followed the same twofold pattern of intervention, evicting Roma from unauthorized settlements and creating new large structures in which to concentrate increasingly large numbers of residents.¹¹

In the first months of the emergency, heated debate developed around the topic of the census of the Roma, in particular on the subject of collecting minors' fingerprints. After statements and interventions from European bodies, the municipality modified parts of the procedure. The census was then presented as a necessary tool for starting a new policy of reception and management of the nomad camps. In a few months, the controversy died down.

The main initiative of the center-right administration was the closure of two authorized settlements in the city, Casilino 900, and Tor De Cenci, both of which had been inhabited for decades by hundreds of Roma. The settlers were moved to the renewed nomad camp of La Barbuta, inaugurated in 2012, and three other nomad camps around the city that were spruced up for the occasion. One of these settlements is located in Castel Romano, 25 km outside the border of the city. This settlement is located between a mall, a natural park, and a railway. It was created in 2004, when Veltroni's administration relocated 800 Roma previously settled in a nomad camp located in the Ostiense neighborhood, right next to the city center (Daniele, 2011a). After Alemanno's interventions, this nomad camp hosted more than 1,200 Roma.

Alemanno's administration then established new structures, the so-called 'Collection Centers for Roma',¹² which were to be widely used in the following years when there were evictions or displacements from authorized and unauthorized settlements.

10 Given the lack of accountability of the municipality and NGOs directly involved in the system, it was only in 2011 that data about public expenditure were published by an independent organization who were able to trigger a debate about policy toward Roma in the town (Berenice, Compare, Lunaria and OsservAzione 2013; Associazione 21 Luglio, Fondazione Michelucci, Amalipé Romanò, 2014).

11 As stated in diverse official documents, such as executive decision no. 2769 of 15/06/2012: '[...] all the nomads in Rome must be accommodated in the equipped villages with the simultaneous elimination of all the illegal settlements existing at present.'

12 In Italian: '*Centri di Raccolta di Romi*'.

Besides the intensification of the concentration policy, Alemanno's administration tried to modify the landscape of the NGO actors that provided social services within the authorized nomad camps (Armillei, 2017). The Red Cross became one of the main actors, while NGOs historically connected to left-wing administration lost their pivotal role but were not totally replaced. This shift was strengthened by budget cuts.

Other planned measures, such as the new regulations and the system of control of access, were not implemented.

In 2013, the center-left coalition won the elections and Ignazio Marino became mayor. Despite this, the real change in policies for the Roma occurred mainly because of two legal events. With the decree of May 2015, the Court of Rome stated unequivocally that placing Roma inside the nomad camps was an act of discrimination because it produced 'a deteriorated, not transitory, differentiated treatment with respect to other subjects who are in poor housing conditions.'¹³ The statement represented a turning point because it legally required the municipality to modify the policy.

During the same period, an investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Rome, informally called 'Mafia Capitale', highlighted the existence of a widespread system of corruption concerning the contracts signed by Rome's administration to fund social services for migrants, in particular the management of nomad camps and their maintenance.¹⁴ The investigations of the 'Mafia Capitale' directly involved politicians and technical personnel from the municipal departments who, since the years of Veltroni's council, had played a key role in policies for the Roma.¹⁵ Together with politicians and public officers, the investigations involved key figures from the third sector who for years had controlled the main social expenditure items for the Roma, and, for the first time, some Roma leaders.

The overlapping of the two events blocked all political initiatives in relation to the Roma, because personnel at every level of the chain of Roman governance of the nomad camps ended up involved in the investigations. The only initiative that was implemented during Marino's administration, was the closure of another authorized settlement (the one located in Via Cesarina), but all of the Roma residents were displaced to a Collection Center for Roma people, and no other kind of housing policy was created (Maestri and Vitale, 2017).

The Marino council fell after only two years of government; the next elections did not bring in a representative of the traditional parties to the City Hall: victory went to Virginia Raggi, a candidate of the Five Star Movement. However, at least for a long period, the new administration did not undertake any initiatives, while evictions of unauthorized settlements continued. It was only in early 2017 that the administration presented its Roma Plan. There is clearly novelty in this plan, because the focus is now on making the nomad camps obsolete with the closure in the coming years of the

13 The decision can be accessed on the website of ASGI (*Associazione Studi Giuridici Immigrazione* www.asgi.it)

14 'We earn more money managing migrants than selling drugs,' stated one of the key figures in the investigation.

15 The former director of the Nomads Office has been declared guilty, while many others employed in the same office are still under investigation.

first two settlements. The first stage of the plan involves the closure of the nomad camp called Camping River. For the very first time, the municipality started a process that, in their opinion, will not lead to the creation of a new nomad camp or to Roma displacement in segregated accommodation. This process is facing much criticism from Roma and pro-Roma organizations.

It is fundamental to underline that, beside the political orientation, cuts of the funds allocated for social intervention that started during Alemanno's administration¹⁶ triggered the process of dismantling the nomad camp system. This gradual policy shift was not a topic of political debate, but strongly affected the daily lives of the thousands of Roma still living in the nomad camps. From that moment on, no social or management activities had been implemented within the settlement, nor did the municipality fund any sort of stable presence of social workers or local police officers.

A first consequence is the drastic reduction of Roma presence in schools. The municipality cut cultural mediation activities and reduced transportation services, leaving families who lived in nomad camps located several kilometers from the built-up areas in difficulty. Teachers and social workers employed in schools located near nomad camps estimated that the number of Roma pupils attending primary school has decreased by at least 20–30 per cent since 2012.¹⁷ Funds for controlling the inhabitants and for social activities within the settlements were also totally cut off. It is worth pointing out that Roma settlers who were employed in these services were also fired, ending an experiment that, despite being ambiguous and complex to assess, had guaranteed a form of regular income to many families. The gradual reduction of the funds brings to a conclusion one of the pillars of the 'nomad camp policy system', that is, the extensively criticized presence of social services within the nomad camps. The end comes without any assessment or reconsideration in terms of social policy.

Moreover, spaces and facilities once used by social workers and local police officers were simply abandoned. In all of the settlements, the bars at the entrance, the Portakabins where the meters are and where social and educational activities were carried out were simply left without any monitoring or maintenance. Therefore, the living conditions of the settlers worsened because the provision of essential utilities, such as lighting and electricity, are guaranteed no more.

Furthermore, the progressive disappearance of all the *gagè* workers and authorities has triggered a process of reorganization of relations among the Roma settlers.

The evolution of Roma policies in Rome deeply affected Estela's family choices.

During the few weeks she spent in the nomad camp in the winter of 2016, Estela faced radical changes in her family life and in the whole settlement.

Her mother had to go back to begging on the streets because it became more difficult to find job opportunities, while all the support she had from social workers had vanished. Her younger brothers and sister could not benefit from the school

16 Both in the case of Via Cesarina and Camping River, the municipality did not have resources for signing a new contract with the owners of the structures.

17 We interviewed four teachers and three social workers who worked in schools in the North periphery of the town, in proximity to the Camping River nomad camp, and in the South periphery, near the Candoni nomad camp.

transport service or any of the other school support activity. In addition to this, her older sister, who had physical disabilities, had to stop attending all the support activities she had been taking advantage of in previous years.

Estela found changes even inside her Portakabin: her family has started hosting another Romanian family that had recently migrated to Rome who were neither relatives nor friends. They were paying rent to stay in one of the rooms of the Portakabin and to use its facilities. Renting room inside of a Portakabin was one of the strategies that settlers used to generate money: it was also a quite easy strategy because on the one hand there were still many Romanian Roma families who were moving to Rome, looking for opportunities. On the other hand, all of the monitoring activities carried out within the settlement had been rapidly cut off by local authorities: there was no longer any surveillance at the entrance, nor was there the daily presence of Italian social workers within the settlement, so no one was checking the number and identity of settlers.

Moreover, in Estela's words, this lack of *gagè* presence within the settlement worsened hygienic conditions because no one was called in to clean, and even the garbage collection service became less and less efficient.

Information that we collected from Roma settled in Castel Romano, Via di Salone, and Via Candoni and from *gagè* who used to work within these settlements confirms that the spaces and the management activities once carried out by *gagè* authorities have been informally taken up by some of the residents, or groups of these. The strongest groups in the nomad camps have grabbed the chance to 'informally' carry out these activities. Therefore, there are now Roma families who have the power to control access to the settlement and 'assign' inhabitable spaces or reconnect meters. Roma and *gagè* interviewees affirm that families and groups acquired this power through acts of violence and intimidation against rival groups or *gagè* and they oblige other residents to pay fees for all of these activities.¹⁸

The further detachment of the nomad camps and of those who live in them from Italian society can be connected with another increasingly prevalent phenomenon: the resumption of the migratory experience for groups and families who had been settled for ten years or more in Rome. In recent years, Rome continued to be a pole of attraction for Roma from Eastern Europe. In particular, those coming from Bulgaria are establishing unauthorized settlements in abandoned areas of the city, often joining those of the Romanian Roma or living in close proximity. At the same time, Romanian Roma are opening new migratory paths.

Estela's family implemented the aforementioned strategies after losing all the benefits and opportunities previously granted by the nomad camp system, taking advantage of the absence of any form of control by the non-Roma authorities. Roma families 'sell' or rent their Portakabins to newly arrived Roma, entrusting one member with the monitoring of the asset.¹⁹ In so doing, the Portakabins - which previously granted security and stability to the family - generate capital for investing or financing new journeys, a new stage on the family migratory path.

¹⁸ See also: Clough Marinaro (2017).

¹⁹ Armillei (2016) describes other forms of trade with Portakabins by Roma settlers in a variety of authorized camps.

Photos published on social networks that circulate within the Roma community suggest that the numerous opportunities for making money in the USA make the investment required to move there worthwhile. The new migratory pattern, documented by pictures easily accessible with a mobile phone, occupies the thoughts of those who have not yet left. When thinking of this new form of migration Estela was excited and scared at the same time. She had heard many tales from Roma migrants who had settled in the United States and, along with her parents, thought she could easily earn money and find accommodation there. However, she did not know exactly what could happen, where and with whom they could settle, or how they could earn money. She understood that this could be a new beginning for her and for her family, yet, somehow, she was tired of it.

4. Conclusions

We will now try to provide some preliminary conclusions. We first focus on the evolution of the policies targeting Roma at both the national and local level. Following this, we focus on the Roma's reactions to this changing scenario.

After the 'emergency' and the unfulfilled expectations of the strategy, in certain regions Roma seem to have lost their role as public enemies. They seem to have become less interesting and useful for building political consensus. This is because other threatening subjects have modified the geography of fear and intolerance: citizens' protests now address reception centers for asylum seekers, which seem to have replaced the nomad camps and the shantytowns; the refugee is now the intolerable other who inopportunistically occupies parts of our cities.

Despite the efforts at building a national frame and regional committees to plan and implement policies for Roma, differences between the diverse municipalities appear relevant even during this phase - when the deconstruction of the nomad camp system is considered a common objective.

After implementing the *securitarian* approach that characterizes the years of the Nomad Emergency, Rome and Milan are now following very diverse paths that are leading to the simple dismantling of the 'nomad camp system' - not to its real deconstruction.

In Milan, new housing plans and tools of intervention have been designed, such as CES and CAA.

These centers should make it possible to improve the living conditions of those who live in shacks or illegally occupy flats. The centers represent both the first and the second ring of a chain of tools and services that should lead the inhabitants of shantytowns to housing autonomy.

However, Costel's story shows us all the notable limitations of this chain of intervention: CES are located in very marginalized areas of towns, ironically often in proximity to evicted settlements and authorized nomad camps inhabited by Italian Roma. Moreover, despite being designed not only for Roma but for all families who experience precarious housing conditions, the CES is mainly, if not exclusively, inhabited by Roma guests. Therefore, it reproduces the same spatial segregation as the nomad camps, and creates once again the exclusive relations of social workers who work within the centers. Furthermore, despite being aimed at supporting the

autonomy of guests, the special arrangement of the CES does not allow any familiar intimacy but recreate a compulsory communitarian dimension that was one of the features of the nomad camps. Beside the structural elements that remind one of the nomad camps scenarios, we should also underline that social work within the CES still faces some difficulties: the lack of a connection with public officers and local administrators, the authority being limited to crucial issues such as access and release from the center, and a lack of data about migratory paths and benefits that the hosts previously received.

Once more, Costel's story shows us that, despite the CES being a public service with a high level of control, it is governed by implicit rules that determine the geography of social interactions and power relations between families.

Moreover, we must underline that in Costel's experience the permanence in the center is designed to achieve an objective that is partly different from that defined by social workers: Costel is now buying a new home in Romania while still working and residing in Milan and is not investing (nor is he planning to invest) in better accommodation in Italy for his family. In these terms, we can say that the 'chain of services' provided to inhabitants of this center allows him and his family to overcome the housing instability he earlier faced, breaking the circle of eviction and re-settlement. However, such housing strategies are still planned and implemented alongside social workers and social projects.

The situation should be different in the CAA, where each family has its own Portakabin and the number of non-Roma families is much higher than in CES. However, the number of Roma families accessing this second step is at the moment very low. From this point of view, we may say that the overcoming of the 'nomad camp system' in Milan is much more an ambition than it a realization: the CES-CAA system does not seem to represent a path towards a stable and durable solution.

In Rome, a policy shift is yet to come. Despite announcements about a new plan for intervention, nomad camps remain the *locus* of the Roma issue in towns, while the whole scenario is being modified by juridical procedures and welfare budget cuts. Rather than overcoming the nomad camp policy, policy from Rome seems to be moving toward abandoning the Roma people still segregated in the nomad camps.

Besides the differences, there has not been any critical analysis of the nomad camps system in either city, thus policymakers have neither planned nor implemented consistent policy plans designed to deal with the situation. Moreover, in both cities the tools and principles underpinning the nomad camp system are still at work in the rhetoric of the policy makers, in the segregated and marginalized housing structures provided to the Roma, and in everyday relations with social workers and NGOs. As a consequence, the nomad camp system is not being overcome. It is being dismantled without a coherent plan.

Ethnographic observations in Rome and Milan led us to recognize the original strategies that some of the Roma families put into play while the nomad camp system is being dismantled.

In Rome we highlighted two complementary phenomena: on the one hand, many Roma, and especially many of those who were born and grew up in Rome, with all of the benefits and problems connected with the nomad camp system, are now moving away from the settlements and the city. On the other, Roma migrants who

remain in the authorized settlements are being abandoned by authorities and social workers and are even more confined within the system of relations located within the border of nomad camps. Therefore, nomad camps have become physically and socially much more detached from Italian society and invisible to non-Roma eyes. Between these two phenomena, we can see the divide between Roma and Italian society increasingly widening.

In Milan, the main novelty consists in Roma families creating unprecedented connections and alliances in the city: they are engaged in dealing with other migrant and marginalized groups, sharing housing solutions, economic activities and also creating family ties. While Roma families are still managing to keep connected to the homeland (the main place for investing or saving money), many of them are now vanishing within the cities in which they live: they are not the targets of exclusive interventions but rather hide from them and look for and create mixing strategies with other migrants and citizens.

Comparing these ethnographic data with the theoretical frame of 'campzanship', we argue that while the nomad camp system is being dismantled, it no longer works as a device for guaranteeing and allowing formal or informal citizenship to dwellers. Therefore, we find Roma families moving in original directions in their search for new tools with which to obtain opportunities and rights (that is, new migration strategies), open new ground for relations with other groups, and reproduce the old and well-established patterns of relations based on welfare exploitation and mistrust.

However, all of the paths pursued by the Roma families seem to be confined to marginalized areas of the town and separate spheres of society; therefore, the Roma still belong only informally to the territory where they settle and, while the nomad camp system is being dismantled, their citizenship remains fragmented and unassembled.

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GIUSEPPE BELUSCHI-FABENI *

**Ritual Spaces and Burial Places: International Migration
and Transnational Change Among the Korturare Roma**

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Abstract

The migration of Romanian Korturare is analyzed with a focus on the transformation of three aspects of their funerary practices: place of burial, multi-sited funeral celebrations, and the use of communication technologies. This ‘mortuary focus’, which has not previously been applied to studies of international Romani migration, provides a better understanding of the interaction between territorial attachment and international mobility patterns. Observations based on ethnographic fieldwork are complemented by an analysis of social media use, audiovisual materials and a sample of 69 cases. Localities of origin continue to be the preferred place for burial and collective memorialization, while funerals become multi-sited, involving both host towns and hometowns. The mediatization of death practices reinforces both of these tendencies. The transformation reflects the role of Korturare social organization in the migration process. The broad and densely nested family networks of the Korturare keep the possibility of multidirectional migration open and act as an adaptive resource by reproducing community life abroad. At the same time, they preserve the localities of origin as the common and privileged territory of the symbolic reproduction of family ties.

Keywords: transnational funerals, burial places, communication technology, migration patterns, Romania, Romani Studies.

1. *Introduction*¹

In this article, the ‘mortuary focus’, the observation of what people do when a death occurs in the community (Zirh, 2012: 1768), is applied to the migrations of the Korturare² Roma, a Romanian minority currently dispersed throughout Europe and North America.³

Research on death in migratory contexts has focused mainly on populations living in Northern Europe who came from the Maghreb (Chaïb, 2000; Jonker, 1996), Turkey and the Near East (Balkan, 2015; Hunter, 2016b; Zirh, 2012), the Indian subcontinent (Gardner, 1998; Jassal, 2015) and Ghana (Mazzucato et al., 2006), and on Mexican migrants in the U.S. (Lestage, 2012). Migrant Europeans have been studied very little (Oliver, 2004). To the best of the authors’ knowledge, to date no study has been conducted on how Romani migrants deal with death. This omission is quite striking because the labels traditionally attributed to the Roma, such as ‘itinerant’, ‘not settled’, or ‘unwilling to integrate’, persist in political and social policies, which often problematize Roma mobility in the EU (Matras and Leggio, 2017a; van Baar, 2011). Yet, the analysis of migrants’ death-related practices – burial and funeral celebrations in this case – can reveal the emergence, maintenance and transformation of territorial attachments and social integration in the home and host countries.

The importance of framing ‘Gypsies’ as autochthonous communities with sociocultural configurations that are the product of integration in local geographies and history (Olivera, 2012), rather than as exogenous groups ‘with no history’, has been put forward as a paradigm since the 1980s (Okely, 1983; Williams, 1984; Piasere, 1985; Stewart, 1987; Pasqualino, 1998) and adopted more recently by anthropological historians and ethnographers on Roma in Romania (Piasere, 2005; Berta, 2007; Olivera 2012; Asséo *et al.*, 2017), as well as by scholars in the field of migration studies. The latter explore how Roma’s local systems become transnational and cross-border and their sociocultural configurations change as a result of simultaneous insertion in the human environments and geographies of both places of migration and origin. Some of these works adopt a ‘whole network perspective’ (Molina, 2012: 8) that studies the dynamics between regions. Through the analysis of cross-border networking practices, such as the circulation of objects or the use of communication technologies, this approach explores the emergence of ‘transnational social spaces’ (*ibid.*), in which relations formerly based on face-to-face interactions or territorial continuities become transnational. Bennarosh Orsoni’s ‘transnational households’ (2016), for example, result from the use of landline phones that recreate, at a distance, the (formerly indoor) intimacy of domestic verbal interaction; and from the exchange of goods between the Romanian villages and the towns of migration

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² Korturare is a Romani word, from Romanian ‘*corturari*’.

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(Benarrosh-Orsoni, 2017). Similarly, in Silverman (2012), the circulation of taped recordings of weddings sent between the United States and the Balkans connects 'transnational families' in 'transnational celebrations', thus spreading common aesthetic systems and information about social relations. Other studies focus on migrant Roma actions embedded in transnational 'fields', i.e. they position the analysis of transnational phenomena 'inside' specific places (Molina, 2012: 8). Within this approach, the production-consumption axis has attracted considerable attention, thanks to its capacity to reveal the roles played by the localities of origin and of migration in the migrants' lives and the migrants' search for upward social mobility. Investing remittances in housing projects appears to be common among several migrant Roma groups and it indicates that the localities of origin play a dominant role as the referential context against which they assess their social status, both inside their own Roma context and in relations with 'others' (Toma *et al.*, 2017; Grill, 2012; Pantea, 2012). Home-oriented migration patterns and remittance flows vary depending on the ways in which migrants engage with, or are given access to, the social environment of host countries. Tesăr's analysis (2015b) of the *Cortorari* representation of migratory space is emblematic of a polarization between 'abroad' - where purely economic interests dominate their behavior, aimed at maximizing earnings - and 'at home' - the realm of private and domestic morality. The *Cortorari* base their income strategies on begging expeditions abroad, where they stay for limited periods of time and live in precarious conditions. Then, while 'at home', they invest their income in ongoing construction projects that follow the developmental, and future-oriented, cycle of the domestic group and make visible their present family prosperity (Tesăr, 2015a). Benarrosh Orsoni (2015) examines how Roma 'transnational households' compete with one another for the best house in the best position of their Romanian locality, but in this case many actually have little need for housing in the home village, as they are well inserted in the host context. The author suggests that families maintain their engagement in such consumption practices 'at home' as a way to reproduce their reciprocal links and the unity of the group, in opposition to the individualization of professional and residential trajectories underway abroad. Intergenerational changes in the role of the migration poles have also been observed. Pontrandolfo (2017) and Beluschi Fabeni *et al.* (2018) highlight that young Roma migrants, who have spent a large part of their lives abroad, tend to question their parents' orientation towards the place of origin and they often develop expectations of a future life in the host countries. However, such expectations are often damped by racialized education and migration policies, and even pervasive anti-Gypsyism, which effectively preclude upward social mobility (Beluschi-Fabeni *et al.*, 2018) and even prompt migrants to resume migration and move to other countries (Pontrandolfo, 2017).

This paper aims to contribute to this literature by exploring the transformations and continuities of the Korturare funerary system, particularly the interweaving of the tendency towards increased dispersion, the maintenance of territorial links with Romania and the emergence of transnational practices. The analysis looks at three dimensions: where the Korturare have buried their dead since migration started, how funeral rites have changed in response to the internationalization of the community map, and how communication technologies have affected this 'transnationalization' process.

2. Burial and funerals from a transnational perspective

Mobility continues after death. It does so as a result of the preferences of individuals who, as subjects, choose the place they consider special, the place they wish to rest for all eternity. It does so also because bodily remains are objects, with unique and powerful symbolic value, which others, from close relatives to institutions, manage and move, following material, social and spiritual demands. As argued by Marjavaara (2012), Zirh (2012) and Rowles and Comeaux (1986), among others, the observation of this particular final, after-life mobility of the dead and of the surrounding living people's practices can bring to light territorial attachments that otherwise might remain hidden. These territorial engagements can express the deceased person's preference for the real, physical characteristics of the place of burial but they more often express a desired spatial proximity with significant others, dead or living. The act of burial requires a solution for migrants' simultaneous cross-border and multi-stranded engagements (Basch *et al.*, 1994: 6). The corpse is 'less schizophrenic than the self', Balkan notes, as 'it can only be in one place at one time' (*ibid.*, 2015: 120). Burial demands one soil among many to be chosen and it forces identities to be more fixed and less scattered (Hunter, 2016b). In communities that bury their dead (for comparisons with cremation in migrations, see: Ballard, 1990) the act of burial links, though the soil, living generations to past ones (Attias-Donfut *et al.*, 2005) and even establishes new places of origin (Chaïb, 2000: 24). The dilemma between change and the persistence of burial location mirrors the dialectic between segmentation and the social pressure for bond maintenance. Decisions regarding place of burial reflect the moral and social pressure wielded by the people connected to the deceased, for whom the maintenance of territorial proximity helps to reaffirm social links and belonging to groups. The group of 'significant others', entitled to claim a territorial right to corpse disposal, varies according to social, cultural and geographical factors and can consist of a few close relatives, wider kinship groups or entire ethnic and religious communities (e.g. Ballard, 1990; Reimers, 1999; Nieuwenhuys, 2004; Balkan, 2015). Among Roma and Travelers it has been found that the spatial arrangement of the memorial sites tends to reproduce kinship groups (Williams, 1993; Dick Zatta, 1988; Chohaney, 2014) and that conceptions of death are related to long-term practices of tending graves and visiting the cemetery, which contribute to intergenerational socio-territorial attachments (Okely, 1983; Williams, 1993).

Along with cultural dimensions, post-mortem repatriation reflects the relationships migrants have with their host countries, their perception of temporary or long-term presence, and structural inclusion in local societies. The shorter the perception of future permanence, the more likely the burials will occur in the countries of origin, at least when such countries are politically safe (Balkan, 2015; Hunter, 2016b; Mbiba, 2010). In this paper, post-mortem repatriation is analyzed considering the effects that European citizenship and effective integration in the host countries have on international mobility, and the consequent perception of future permanence abroad.

The new distances between the time and place of death and those of burial have given rise to a temporal and spatial restructuring of rituals, transforming funerals into transnational and multi-sited events. Rituals may change locally to accommodate

the role played by people in other countries in organizing, financing and attending ceremonies from a distance (De Witte, 2001; Mazzucato *et al.*, 2006), or they may become ‘funerary routes’ (Zirh, 2012), staged at different stops along the corpse’s cross-border journey to the home-village graveyard. The territorial arrangements of rites are closely related to the possibility of international mobility by the people connected to the deceased – in terms of financial resources, the freedom to cross borders, the time available to them, and the ease of transporting the remains. In this transformation, the use of communication technologies is an important chapter in the pre-death, death and after-death experience (Roberts and Vidal, 2000; Walter *et al.*, 2012; Mosquera, 2014). Preexisting face-to-face communities now in diaspora recreate spaces in which cultural practices pertaining to death are reconstituted and restructured through digital ritual engagement and participation in digital environments (Burroughs and Ka’ili, 2015), in which physical presence becomes virtual and, as discussed in Walter *et al.* (2012), ceremonies are streamed online. Despite these general trends, not all people, groups or communities use communication technologies the same way. Selective and cultural appropriation creates an overlap between ‘technoscapes’ and ‘ethnoscapes’ (Appadurai, 2006), which, in migration, gives rise to technological translocal ‘deathscapes’ (Hunter, 2016a), an expression of the diversity of mortuary practices technologically mediated between separate places.

3. Setting and methods

The Roma Korturare originate in different towns and rural areas of the Transylvanian and Banat regions of Romania. Using data from this study, it was estimated that in 1990 about 5000–6000 individuals belonged to the population studied. By 2015, this had grown three to four times. By that time, the Korturare were found in different cities of 13 European countries and North America. They form a ‘network of family networks’, embedded through ties of filiation and marriage in present and past generations, which members perceive as a diffuse community of reference, with a shared history and common ancestors (see: Beluschi-Fabeni, 2013b). This system of nested family networks is the main context for marriage. Similar to what Berta notes among the Gabors (2007: 33), among the Korturare there are subgroup hierarchies based on patrilineage membership, family status, rural/urban origins and, naturally, economic success, that, in subsequent international migrations, have been conducive to rapid upward or downward mobility. Nevertheless, marriage preferences, aspiration and possibilities also depend on the self-positioning of the families inside the Korturare social structure (Beluschi-Fabeni, 2013a).

In 1990, the Korturare started migrating to Germany as asylum seekers. In 1994, when Romania was declared a safe country, migration patterns started to radiate outward, first to France and, since 1997, to Italy, Spain, the UK, Ireland, Belgium and Portugal. Most of them overstayed their tourist visas, which prevented them from visiting Romania and then returning to the host country. This circumstance, combined with better earning opportunities, led over time to a significant increase in the number of Korturare living abroad for long periods of time. The widespread economic slump prompted long-term migrations from southern Europe to the UK, Germany, and gradually to the US and Canada. While circular mobility between Romania and other

European countries has now increased, migration to non-EU countries has reproduced unidirectional flows, due to situations of irregular presence and high travel costs. For the Korturare, income production is the main motivation for living outside Romania. Since 1990, the different migration trajectories have been associated with different income-generation activities, which in turn also depend on internal family group differentiation and whether the family is of rural or urban origin. The income-producing activities include a wide array of private initiatives – selling cars, carwash businesses, car repair workshops, selling goods at open-air markets, moneylending, scrap metal collection – and salary work in factories and the service sector. Families from rural areas also engage in seasonal mushroom gathering and logging. Begging has been widely adopted in all of the migration processes, usually to complement other forms of household income, but sometimes also, due to its profitability at certain times and in certain countries, as the households' main strategy.

During early migrations to Germany, the Korturare started an intensive process of building houses in their hometowns and villages. In 2015, this process continues and is the reason for constant remittances, made even by generations that grew up abroad. More or less sumptuous, multi-storied Korturare villas have transformed the skylines of towns and villages in the old Roma areas outside the urban margins and in more central neighborhoods where the Roma have moved. While houses inhabited abroad – whether owned, rented or squatted – are perceived as instrumental, the newly-built houses in Romania are viewed as investments in a land the Korturare consider to be secure and 'their own.' They reflect a shared idea of some day returning to Romania to live, displaying the migrant family's economic success abroad and the ongoing competition for greater prestige. Since 2007, Romania's EU membership, intra-EU mobility rights, cheaper flights and greater ease of travel have increased short-term returns to Romania. The frequency of comings and goings to Romania since 2007 was motivated, among other reasons, by the wish of the owners to closely follow the construction or remodeling of their houses, but also to celebrate their children's weddings in them and to participate in the wedding celebrations of others. Attending funerals is another reason for the increased mobility of people living abroad.

The data for this study come from two periods of ethnographic fieldwork, one between 2003–2006 and another between 2013–2016, in Granada, Spain. This fieldwork was complemented with visits to Romania, England, Italy and other Spanish cities where Korturare reside. An audiovisual archive of funeral celebrations occurring between 2003 and 2007 completes the field notes and recorded interviews. Between 2013–2016, as part of the FP7 MigRom project scheme (see: Matras and Leggio, 2017b), a member (male, 24 y.o.) of the Korturare community contributed to fieldwork as research assistant. This made it possible to carry out simultaneous multi-sited observation of ceremonies, joint analysis of the use of Facebook and Youtube, and collaborative theorization during data analysis. A specific sample was gathered of 69 cases of death occurring within the Korturare network between 1997 and 2016. The qualitative data related to each case have been compiled and analyzed with respect to the following basic variables: year, country, age and cause of death, places and dates of burial and funeral celebrations, kinship relations between the dead, the funeral makers and participants. Hereinafter, 'AA' (Abroad-Abroad, 10 cases) refers to cases of death and burial occurring abroad; 'AR' (Abroad-Romania, 26 cases) to

cases of death occurring abroad with burial in Romania; and 'RR' (Romania-Romania, 33) to cases of death and burial in Romania.

4. *Burial locations*

Of the 36 deaths abroad, 15 were in Spain, 11 in the UK, two each in Belgium, France, Germany and the US, and one each in Italy and Ireland. Ten of them (AA), five males and five females, were buried in the city in which they died (six in Granada and one in Tarragona; one in Luton and two in New York while the other 26 (AR) were repatriated to Romania).

Age at time of death is the factor that most strongly relates to place of burial. The individuals in the AA group all died under the age of 17: five of them between four days and six months of age, two at 18 months, three at age three, nine and 17 years respectively. The AR group, in contrast, includes individuals who died between the ages of 16 and 77. This pattern confirms the discourse of informants: when very young children die it is usual – and 'understandable' (*naj lažu*, 'it is not shameful') – for parents to decide to bury them abroad, thus avoiding the costs associated with repatriation of the body, international travel and organizing the funeral in Romania. It is generally justified by saying that people do not yet 'feel that much affection' for the deceased, as affection grows as children become older, speak and interact more complexly with the environment, constructing their own social identity.

The two burials in the AA group of children aged nine and 17 elicited social reactions quite different from those elicited by the deaths of younger children. Marisa⁴ died at age nine, in 2016, in a Spanish facility for persons with severe disabilities, where she had lived since she was five. Her parents were in the UK at the time of her death and for legal reasons they could not travel to Spain to authorize the repatriation. The facility, which was the child's legal guardian, could do nothing but bury her in the city in which she had died. A sizable group of the local Roma community and of facility employees gathered at the cemetery. The parents followed the ceremony by Skype, but, in contrast with other cases of death, they did not mention their daughter's death on Facebook and they asked others not to mention it either. They were concerned that the *lume* (the Korturare people), being unaware of the objective impossibility of repatriating the corpse, would criticize them for leaving their daughter far from their Romanian village graveyard. Tana, the one who died at age 17 in 2014, grew up in a Romanian center for minors until she was 15. She then joined her father and brothers in Luton, UK, but died two years later (for reasons unknown to the author and the research assistant) and was buried there. Tana's burial elicited harsh disapproval among the Korturare. According to one rumor, for example, the girl's eldest brother, considered the most 'prestigious' and 'respected' member of the family, was silenced by a younger man during a minor argument at some public event, when the latter recriminated him for having left his sister far from the graveyard of Calash, the Romanian town from which his *raca* (the patrigroup) comes. Many jokes circulated; one said that the Calash graveyard was moving to Luton and another that the sons of K* would have to go to Luton for *Luminaca*, the Day of the Dead celebration held on November 1 (see: below). Also, a satirical Facebook page,

⁴ All personal names are pseudonyms.

popular among the Korturare, – it is anonymous, although many believe the author is somebody from Calash living in the UK – posted jokes about Tana’s brothers following British funeral customs. Finally, in 2017 a three-year-old boy who died during a sudden respiratory crisis was buried in New York due to the high cost of repatriating the body and also because his parents were irregular residents. No negative comments circulated following that decision, as in the other cases of death in the AA group, and the funeral was streamed on Facebook and followed by many relatives in Europe and North America.

As for the AR group, in seven cases families asked for interpersonal loans of between 5,000 and 20,000 euros to repatriate the corpse and finance the funeral in Romania. This willingness to assume financial obligations reflects the greater importance given to repatriation when the individual dies as an adult. Moreover, while in three cases close family members lent the money at no interest, in four cases the families had to borrow money at exorbitant interest rates, between 60 and 100 per cent per year.

In Korturare discourse, the fear of being separated from the place where loved ones are buried is a primary motivation for repatriating bodies. Korturare migration experience is characterized by the difficulty of residing as regular migrants, in the EU prior to 2007 and later in the United States and Canada. Continuous evictions from informal settlements in France and Italy, widespread anti-Roma sentiment (and political rhetoric) plus abusive police treatment contribute to the Korturare’s perception that their presence abroad is questioned and generally deemed undesirable. They are also aware that shifting political moods such as Brexit or Trump’s policy on migration to the U.S. can easily lead to changes in the permeability of international borders. Moreover, the instrumental meaning of staying abroad and choosing one country or another contributes to a shared perception of potential new migrations, which often become real long-term movements in pursuit of new economic opportunities.

Even with the geographical distance imposed by migration, family decisions about burial location are the object of scrutiny by the *lume*, as indicated by the concern families show about *Iažau* (‘dishonor’, ‘shame’), and about being the object of ridicule (*asal e lume amendar*, ‘so people laugh at us’). At stake is not only the family’s reputation among its close relations, but also the respectability of the entire patrigroup in the eyes of Korturare society as a whole. The ‘right’ to claim the corpse extends to a wider group than the nuclear family and close relatives. This illustrates the greater extension, strength and density of Korturare kin networks compared to those of mainstream European society, as a consequence of endogamic marriage and demographic patterns.

The *Luminaca* celebration (from Romanian *Luminăța*), which begins on the eve of November 1, is often used by the Korturare as an explanation of the importance of burying the dead in the home town graveyard. That night, all families gather in the local cemetery to receive the expected visit of their dead. Each family puts a banquet on its respective graves, offering food to the dead and sharing it with the other families that gather around. Migrated families tend to order funeral wreaths that will be placed on their relatives’ graves, and in recent years the cemetery feast is streamed online, using smartphones and Facebook profiles, eliciting intense interaction with people abroad. Since migration started, not being at the cemetery for

Luminaca is considered understandable and respected, while not sending a wreath for the family's own dead is reproachable but tolerated. However, burying the dead somewhere else is perceived as an ignominious amputation of the community. Not burying a loved one in the home village cemetery means depriving the community of both the living and the dead members. Not gathering all the dead in the same cemetery would pose an unsolvable question: 'How can we visit two cemeteries at once?'

5. *Multi-sited funerals*

Since migration began, the Korturare have celebrated baptisms, weddings and Romanian Orthodox holidays wherever they live, even if, as mentioned, the frequency of celebration in Romania has increased since 2007. Funerals, in contrast, have become multi-sited events, celebrated simultaneously in Romania and in migration localities (for both AR and RR cases) or asynchronously (for AR), first abroad, in the place of death, and subsequently in the place of burial.

The Korturare funeral cycle follows the same structure as the one found in rural Transylvania among non-Roma Romanian society (see: Kligman, 1988) and observed also among other Northern Vlach Romani speakers (Stewart, 1997; Sutherland, 1975; Tillhagen, 1952). It involves a wake lasting a minimum of two nights, called the *privedži* (from Romanian *priveghi*, 'wake'), in the deceased person's home, where the corpse is displayed and families from the same and other localities gather. The burial occurs on the third day. The first *pomana*, a meal offered by the mourning family, takes place the evening of the burial and brings together the funeral attendees once again. Additional *pomane* are held nine days, six weeks and six months after the death. Another one, marking the year after the death, contains ritual elements of reincorporation and closes the mourning cycle. Further *pomane* are held on a yearly basis for up to six more years. During this time, rituals and beliefs assume that the deceased for whom the *pomana* is being held is actually present at the gathering and a plate of food and a lighted candle is placed in a corner of the room. After seven years, the annual *pomane* 'with the dead' become public events 'in memoriam' - in their words, they *pomeninen əl mule*, 'remember the dead' - in which it is no longer necessary to offer a meal to the deceased person.

Since international migration started, the *privedži* tend to last longer, because of the days required for repatriation of the corpse (AR cases) and also to give people from abroad time to arrive before the burial (AR and RR). In addition, the dead person's close relatives (descendants and ascendants, spouse and male siblings, and, albeit with a lesser sense of duty, nephews and male cousins) who are unable to travel to Romania organize a simultaneous *privedži*, without the corpse (hereinafter 'secondary' *privedži*, opposed to the 'primary' one in presence of the remains), in the migration localities where they live. In AR cases, all the simultaneous secondary *privedži* started the day of the death - in the death locality, in Romania and possibly in other countries where relatives of the deceased were living. Those *privedži* then continued through the day the corpse arrived in Romania, at which point the mandatory two nights (minimum) of wake in the house of the deceased took place prior to burial. In all AA cases, the events were of lesser importance due to the age of

the deceased, and in three of them – babies who died very young – no *privedži* was held at all. In the AA cases, the *privedži* was held in the dead person's house, in the migration locality, but the corpse stayed at the morgue for legal reasons.

The multi-sited *privedži* celebration, which initially emerged in response to the difficulty of travelling to Romania, has become a stable element in international Korturare networks. Although the number of people travelling to Romania to attend primary *privedži* has increased since 2010, secondary *privedži* abroad continue to be celebrated, mobilizing people from all over the host country and even making it necessary to hire party halls. Starting in 2007, a change in the kinship relations between the secondary *privedži* hosts and the deceased person became apparent. Whereas they had formerly been children and siblings, after 2007 they were nephews, grandchildren and even in-laws, because the closer relatives travelled to Romania. In contrast, there are two cases in which two secondary *privedži* were held abroad (one family organized *privedži* in New York and Chicago and the other in Chicago and Montreal) in which the hosts were children of the dead who could not travel to Romania due to economic and legal constraints.

The significance of family celebrations in Korturare community life and of men's ritual performances at the *privedži* helps to explain this continuity. The Korturare engage in minor or major celebrations on an almost weekly basis. The events may involve a few families that live nearby or hundreds of people from various cities. Such a busy social agenda is a salient feature of Korturare daily life, locally in host countries and in Romania, but also at the international level, such as when people travel from different countries to attend a wedding. Celebrations play an essential role in maintaining and negotiating interfamily relations, in demonstrating an individual's participation in public life and in the creation of individual and family reputations. Death-related celebrations and weddings are considered the most important events and are capable of bringing together the most participants.

As for funerals, the primary *privedži* ritual spaces and performances are distributed by gender and the roles assigned to men and women differ radically. Women spend the whole time close to the corpse, in the room in which it is displayed in an open coffin, and also in the procession and near the grave when it is buried. They *privedžin haj rovaræn* (vigil and cry) with loud, public lamentations. In a different room, usually the living room, on each of the three nights, adult men sit around a table laden with food and beverages, from soft drinks to spirits, the latter being essential at such occasions. They recite the Lord's Prayer just before midnight, and spend the evening engaged in lively conversations and heated debates, interrupted by toasts 'for' and 'with' the dead. Whoever proposes the toast says a blessing loudly (*te jertil o Del X*, May God forgive X), all the others repeat it, allow a sip to fall to the floor, 'for the dead', and take a drink.

Until the mid-90s, the only music at funerals was ritual verses, sung mostly in Romanian, that women commingled with lamentations. Some informants from a medium-sized town in the eastern province of Cluj-Napoca remembered that in their town some Romani women with special singing abilities were often asked to sing, for free, at local Romani funerals. Beyond that there is no memory among the Korturare of externally hired musicians performing at funerals until the mid-90s, when live music was introduced (especially from the *manele* genre) and gradually became an essential

funerary element, especially among the wealthier families (cf. Bonini Baraldi, 2008). This change led to a modification of the toasts, as they were transformed into what the Roma call *dedikacje*, ‘music dedications.’ All through the night, the men take turns giving the singer a tip and requesting certain songs. One by one, the men stand at the microphone and repeat typical formulas, such as asking for divine forgiveness (*te jertil o Del...*) of the dead and for the protection of the living (e.g. ...*haj te ažutil o Del*, ‘may God help’). Each one names first the deceased person and the mourning family, then his own family’s dead, then the dead and living members of the families present, and finally ‘all the Roma and their dead.’ The *dedikacje* keep going all night, as an exchange between the people in attendance, who represent their families and family groups. The secondary *privedži* are simpler than the primary. The women gather in a space separate from the men but do not dramatize the pain as publicly as when the corpse is present. Men also recite the Pater Noster, stay together until late at night, toast the dead, talk and debate for hours. In very few cases have live musicians been hired: instead, music is played through sound systems. Therefore, in secondary *privedži* there is no *dedikacje* circuit as in primary ones.

The toasts and *dedikacje* exchange are ritualizations of the broader reciprocity system that stands behind the gathering of people at the event. Roma say they attend *privedži* to ‘give’ the mourning family *respekto* (or *pačiv*, ‘honor’) as well as to ‘gain’ (*gysčigin*) it. ‘Roma prefer to go to funerals over weddings’, one informant said, ‘because you give *respekto* not only to [living] people, but also to their dead; and you don’t want to be alone when you remember yours.’ Because of their existential gravity, not comparable to that of other events, death-related celebrations make excellent social spaces to express solidarity with and involvement in the lives of others. Beyond the intention of offering emotional proximity, the construction of *respekto* through presence at family events, whether or not death-related, refers to the necessity and the objective of reinforcing mutual obligations and expectations in one’s – usually already quite broad and dense – network of family-based relations, and even the possibility of entering more prestigious family circles.

Such an economy of attendance at family events is in no way a ‘hidden agenda’. Quite the contrary, participation in funerals is an explicit expression of gratitude to the mourning family for having participated in similar events in the past, and unjustified absences from funerals can distance families from one another for years. Similarly, the mourning family’s adult men publicly acknowledge those attending the *privedži* and promise to attend their future ‘happy’ events. Such a promise has multiple meanings. One, if the mourning family’s men were to say explicitly that they would participate in death-related events in the future, it would be like wishing ill on others, even though attending funerals is known to be the ultimate way to ‘give *respekto* back.’ Two, with their words they are offering attendance at future weddings of the families at the funeral, which entails a contribution to the *darro*, the conspicuous money gift for the groom’s father. In fact, a *but respektive* (prestigious) man is *pindžardo* (well-known), because he has attended many other families’ events, ‘many people speak well of him’ and he has the ability to draw many people to his own family events.

Intermarriage is the glue of the Korturare network of family networks and internal differentiations. Endogamy serves to reinforce ethnic bonds and determine the social position of families within them. The Korturare base their income-production strategies on a market economy with non-Korturare society. Among

themselves, however, market-based transactions are sporadic, short-term and generally frowned upon, even boycotted. In this sense, the Korturare are not a merchant community as described by Coleman (1988). The marriage procedure of the *darro* and the *garanċja* (the bride-wealth) is the main channel of wealth redistribution, gift-based, in which the amounts involved – in the form of gold, jewellery and cash – have increased drastically since migration began. Participation in wedding circles, and in their economy, is an important way for men, as leaders of their families and even of family groups, to establish and maintain interfamily links, negotiating social position in the community and improving the marriage options of younger family members.

Attending weddings is by invitation only, but participation in *privedċi* is open to everyone. The painful experience of losing a family member makes ‘open door’ *privedċi* an exceptional arena for *respekto* making – and for establishing reciprocity. The importance placed on ‘not making people laugh at us’ (*te na asal e lume amendar*), which underlies the repatriation of bodies, reappears in discourse on why it is necessary to celebrate parallel *privedċi* abroad. It reflects the pressure by the local groups of families living abroad to reproduce spaces in which members can build and reinforce internal social capital. It is also a result of the family-based migration of the Roma, in which entire households tend to migrate with other kin-related households, forming in the host country local communities comprised of various household networks.

5.1 Technologies of communication

With the expansion of VHS technology in the early 90s to today’s ubiquitous smartphones, the Korturare engage in rich, self-contained production-consumption of audiovisual products of weddings, funerals, baptisms and even birthdays and other family events. Professional VHS and DVD recordings were soon omnipresent and came to be a compulsory budget item in the planning of weddings and funerals, together with the hiring, at both kinds of celebration, of *manele* singers and live music.

Music and celebrations have become indissoluble on VHS recordings, all over the increasingly international Korturare map. Weddings are ‘great weddings’ depending also on which *manele* singer plays. The more famous the artist, the more prestigious the family seems. *Manele* artists, in turn, have made themselves known in Roma society by playing at celebrations and being sponsored by influential Roma families (see also: Giurchescu and Speranta, 2011).

In connection with funerals, VHS complemented and sometimes even replaced the professional photo-portraits that prevailed until the early 1990s as a form of memorialization. Video recordings could last between two and four hours (using even two cassettes), and cover the period from the last night of the *privedċi* celebration to the first *pomana* after the burial and both the male and the female spaces. Shots of women weeping in pain while draped over the coffin, headshots of the dead and portraits of the whole corpse alternated with slow tracking shots of the men at the table, one by one, and of the singer. The music was interspersed with women’s lamentations and cyclically interrupted by men taking the microphone to offer their *dedikacċje*. Then VHS tapes of funerals started to circulate by mail among the migrant families abroad as the only tangible medium in which the funeral could be experienced from afar, even if post-facto. In mourning homes abroad, during the first

few months after the death, the recordings were played often, even on a daily basis, and families living nearby, who had already participated at the secondary *privedži*, gathered again to watch the 'real' funeral, to see the corpse, the people, the faraway home village, the graveyard, the burial. Funeral recordings were then played for the *pomane* which, like *privedži*, were held in several locations at once.

The absence of the corpse in the secondary *privedži* undoubtedly brought about a radical transformation in the experience of bereavement, which is deeply linked to physical proximity, visual exposure and the relatively long presence of the corpse among the mourning group. 'The corpse provides unequivocal evidence of social as well as biological death' (Valentine, 2010: 4) and the VHS partially filled in for the corpse's absence, offering its virtual presence and the reality of death, as well as a perceptive experience of the ritual space and the bereavement of family members.

VHS video tapes were also a medium with which to communicate a family's presence at the funeral, thus transnationally 'putting on the record' the *respekto* given locally. They conveyed women's lamentations with references to people abroad, greetings and funeral formulas pronounced while looking at the camera, as well as men's *dedikacje* directed to family members. For example, women's lamentations, which usually take the form of a dialogue with the dead (e.g. 'get up right now and do not leave these children of yours alone!') or with God ('why didn't you take me instead of him...?') included references to those relatives that would have watched the tape days later and at a distance, as well as respect, greetings and even jokes directed to them. For example, in a recording obtained in Granada in 2003 of the *privedži* for a five-year-old girl who died in Romania while her parents were abroad, the grandmother, kneeling next to her granddaughter's corpse in the open coffin, repeated: 'Oh God, your parents are not at home and they will say I killed you!', while in other moments of the recordings, people stood up before the camera to simply leave their *t'avel baxtalo/i...* - the most common greeting - to another person that would have watched the tape later in Granada. Men also transmitted through the VHS tapes formulas and *dedikacje* intended for the absent family members ('May God forgive our dead, my friends, and may my father live well, as may the others who will be with him while watching this cassette' said a man in a *privedži dedikacija* in 2004).

In 2007, the international circulation of VHS cassettes and DVDs started to decrease and in 2010 it essentially ended, because the increase in international travel of the closest mourning kin made it less necessary and also because of the advent of YouTube. Hiring professional cameras for long recordings continued - until 2016 at least - and, in some cases, entire events were uploaded to the platform. Videos in the form of shorter professional or self-made montages of pictures and video *privedži* moments, accompanied by *manele doine*, became the most frequent format posted to the platform after the event and they also had a general memorialization aim. YouTube became the main means of convergence, circulation and archiving of the professional or self-recorded products of Körturare family events, in which funerals and other celebrations became available to a wider public than the well-defined and more limited recipients of VHS cassettes or DVDs. A 'Körturare digital network' - initially comprising young members and gradually including adult and elders - emerged through the rapid exchange of audiovisual material. However, while the immediacy of the material interchange increased a great deal, using internet depended on the availability of landline phone connections, which were very rare in Romanian

Korturare houses (see also: Benarrosh-Orsoni, 2016: 153). Therefore, it did not bring substantial changes to the celebration of the *privedži* themselves or to other stages of death management.

Between 2009 and 2010, mobile connectivity and the massive use of smartphones allowed a more pervasive incorporation of technology to more stages of the death experience and ritual practice. Facebook is by far the medium most frequently chosen by the Korturare as a digital platform, where the broader *lume* can be reached and communication is public and diffuse. It has become the space for sharing the news of a death – or informing people about relatives in critical condition or at the terminal phase of an illness – and to message back condolences immediately after the death in the form of religious formulas from all over the localities of migration. It is also a medium by which to exert social control over how the death process is managed; as seen above, such control can take the form of jokes spread by anonymous profiles and of gossip.

Professional camera operators are still hired at funerals, but the people in attendance also take pictures and videos and stream them in real time. The recently released application Facebook Live has even further increased the immediacy of the interaction between the funeral space and people far away, as videos are broadcasted live and messages come back in real time. A transnational space of ritual flows (Castells, 1999) connects ritual places in simultaneous interaction.

Along with the evolution of audiovisual production, it is interesting to note that the territorial element takes on greater importance when the celebration takes place in Romania. When weddings occur in Romania, for example, especially among the wealthier Korturare people, the family's sumptuous house is often carefully depicted and featured as the location and aesthetic framework of the celebration. When weddings occur abroad, at first sight it can be hard to determine if they are in London, Granada or Chicago, as the festivities are held privately in huge, bright party halls, the same wherever they are, and there is no interest in showing the landscape or contextualizing the event geographically. Similarly, funeral recordings in Romania are vivid assemblies of place images. The interior and exterior of the house where the wake takes place is always depicted carefully, both by professional cameras and attendees, and even more if it is a fancy building. The contrast between the luxury home and the fact that it is now the setting of the owner's *privedži* produces two opposing sentiments among the Korturare. On the one hand, living abroad and striving to obtain money for a house back home is seen to be pointless, because in the end it is death that brings the person to the house. On the other hand, seeing the house generates elaborate narrations and memories of how effectively the deceased lifted up (*vazde*) his name and that of his family. Many other images and videos of places surrounding funerals and mortuary rites in the home towns circulate internationally, such as the long procession to the cemetery, the band playing as people walk down familiar streets, which evidence changes as time goes by; or the cemetery itself, which on the night of *Luminaca* is full of candles and life and reverberates on hundreds of Facebook profiles. The Korturare often describe such nights as one of the most beautiful things of theirs.

6. *Conclusions*

The aim of this article is to shed light upon the migration patterns of the Korturare Roma by analyzing the transformation of their funeral practices in terms of choice of burial location, adaptation of funeral rites translocally, and the use of communication technologies.

Since 1990, the Korturare have undergone an intense migratory process; originally from the Northeastern regions of Romania, they are now living in a dozen European countries and in North America. This migration process has occurred in different phases: first to Germany as asylum seekers, then westwards to other European countries, often as irregular migrants, and, after Romania's inclusion in the EU in 2007 as EU citizens. Further mobility within the EU and new migrations to the US and Canada followed the economic crisis.

During this migration process, while localities of origin have remained the preferred burial place throughout the geographical transformation of the community, funerals have become multi-sited, both as simultaneous events to the funeral occurring in Romania and as a diachronic extension of the ritual between the place of death and the place of burial.

The international dispersion of the Korturare is the result of variable adaptation and integration in different countries, intertwined with the capacity to respond to hardships in the place of residence by emigrating to other places. This potential for international mobility is due to the social capital within the broad and dense social network of Korturare family groups. The institutionalization of multi-sited funerals is inherent to the international dispersion pattern and the generation of a transnational Korturare social space, made by this broad, dense system of kinship networks. Multi-sited funerals point to the importance of family events in the community's life, as arenas for the construction of interfamily relations and prestige. Yet, they also show how a decisive adaptation resource relies on the family structure of Korturare migration and its potential in recreating local community life abroad. At the same time, the potentiality of social organization of the Korturare migration in reproducing migration and mobility also provokes a perception of non-definitive presence in migration places, reinforced by current and past experiences of exclusion and the consciousness of possible future limitations to cross-border movements or residence abroad. The fear of one day not being able to visit the tombs of deceased family members is very present in Korturare discourses that express a preference for the repatriation of the remains. The deceased is embedded in a wide kinship network dispersed along several 'diasporic nodes' (Voigt-Graf, 2004) that converge in the Romanian localities, as the only node in common.

Concomitant with structural factors, internal cultural logics intervene in articulating both geographical dispersion and home-oriented migration patterns. Migration, even if it implies extended time abroad, is generally conceived as instrumental for earning money, while the localities of origin are where income is spent or invested. Since 1990, the Korturare have been investing important amounts of the remittances in the construction of houses in Romania. As in other migrant Romani groups, Korturare building projects generally involve luxurious and high-visibility architectures, and continuous reforms and acquisition of plots with better locations in the town or in the traditional Roma areas. Even Korturare couples who

grew up abroad invest in houses of their own in Romania, to the extent that their slow emancipation from the patrilocal households allows. Moreover, since travelling to Romania from other EU countries has become much easier, families, especially the wealthier ones, are more often holding weddings in the Romanian houses. Similar to what Tesâr and Benarrosh-Orsoni observe, remittance flows and conspicuous consumption associated with real estate projects and celebrations are embedded in the developmental cycle of the domestic groups. The importance placed on post-mortem repatriation by the Korturare indicates an analogous connection. As suggested above, mobility does not end with death, but continues as the completion of individual belonging to places and social groups (Marjavaara, 2012). Among the Korturare, the 'funerary route' (Zirh, 2012) foresees the deceased making a compulsory stop at his or her house, where the *privedži* takes place. This is the house that the deceased person 'inhabits' last before physically abandoning the living. Apart from the legal constraints of host countries, which often prohibit the holding of wakes with corpses in private homes, for the Korturare it would be unthinkable for the *privedži* to be celebrated in other places. The *privedži* is the last moment in which the deceased are physically with the living, in a not-yet-concluded separation between the body and the soul (see also: Stewart, 1997: 221-223). This last gathering must happen 'at home', that is, in the family house, with the closest relatives (and the large group of other families) all around. After the burial, the separation will be completed, but even so the dead person continues to be a living presence. For years, it will participate in the *pomane* that, on a fixed date, the household celebrates, even transnationally, reproducing itself as a group and its bonds with other families. Even after the dead family member definitively leaves the household, it will eat at the *Luminaca* meal at the cemetery, when all the dead come back and gather with the living. This long-lasting 'living death', as Piasere (1985: 239) calls the slow process of ritual separation from the deceased, is part of the household and family reproduction. The yearly gathering for *Luminaca* day, and the importance given to it, also imply that, in a certain way, the 'living death' never ends. Yet, the relation of the household and family with the deceased individual becomes, over time, a more diffuse relation in the network of family groups with de-individualized ancestors. Geographical proximity to the cemetery, and its continuity in the future, is then an essential element of Korturare social reproduction. Moreover, as the author notes (*ibid.*), the 'living death' reflects the slow construction of the social person during the initial phases of life, a process that culminates with marriage and the birth of children (see also: Tesar, 2015). Among the Korturare, repatriation of individuals who die very early in life is not viewed as imperative, reflecting a similar slow process of social incorporation. The importance of burying the adult, and near-adult, members at home is linked to the pressure against community segmentation that burial in the place of migration would represent (Chaïb, 2000: 24). The demand for the corpse is a demand made by Korturare society on its living members, whose unity is physically marked by the location of its family tombs.

Communication technologies are progressively permeating the social and symbolic experience of death, reflecting the reinforcement of a transnational society of reference. Professional VHS recordings have been used as a *post facto* medium for experiencing, from abroad, the reality of a funeral taking place in Romania, and as a channel for the communication of ritual formulas from the funeral space to mourning people elsewhere. Progressively, through YouTube and landline internet connection

first and, later, through mobile connections and smartphones, funeral videos have been exchanged simultaneously, in real time and self-recorded. Videos, text messaging and photos have converged in communication flows that connect different ritual spaces and a wider network of recipients than VHS videos ever did. Along with the increase in the simultaneity, convergence and publicness associated with today's communication technologies, they also mediate many more moments of the death experience, from the news of a death to memorialization. The mediatization of mortuary practices also reproduces the death-related home-oriented pattern, by amplifying the presence of and social control exerted by the Korturare notional community.

The increasing international visibilization of the funeral ritual in Romania reduces the perception of distance and helps underline that the primary *privedzhi* is the focal point of the transnational celebration. It amplifies the visibility of its attendees, their ritual performances, as well as their absence, and even creates greater social pressure for travelling to Romania to attend the event in person. Social and moral pressure involves further ideological nuances related to the connection between territory, social organization and perception of social belonging. Satirical jokes posted anonymously in Facebook, verbal humiliations in public gatherings that allow the common age hierarchies of respect to be broken, or the fear of shame and public derision are signs of a shared legitimation of the *amare Roma*, 'our Roma' (the Korturare) as the ultimate moral reference. Thus, the deceased belong not only to a family group, or a local community, but to a whole 'network of family networks', the same one in which marriage is sought and that represents the individual's primary moral world.

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Roma Networks: Ethnic Solidarity in an Internet Age?

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Abstract

Ethnographic studies have hitherto focused on relationships among mobile actors, groups and how inter-ethnic relations are shaped by technologies and online information exchanges. However, little research has included the effects of virtual networks in relation to intra-ethnic structures. Facebook, as a media environment, facilitates ‘doing family’ across distance within transnational families. These routines shape intergroup solidarity through geographic distance by transmitting a selection of inter-ethnic references. What causes people to avoid inter-ethnic references on their Facebook timelines that are controversial, through self-censorship? And what are the social impacts of those choices – if any? How do these transnational socialisation practices ensure solidarity among Roma across borders? These are the questions answered in this paper based on offline and online ethnography of Roma migrant communities. The paper claims that although many coping strategies were learned from other ethnic minorities in the UK, stereotyped messages transmitted a selective narrative about other ethnic groups back to the participants’ countries of origin to uphold ethnicity-based social assurances explained as instruments of ethnic solidarity. In short, the potential liberating power of virtual transnationalism was rather limited, while its potential to help reproduce social asymmetries was more apparent.

Keywords: mobility, social media, co-presence, intra-ethnic solidarity, self-censorship.

1. Introduction

Though online networks like Facebook groups are often seen as additional ‘virtual’ spaces or a representation of previously studied offline networks (Komito, 2011; Slater, 2002; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014), it has been argued that online and offline interactions cannot be separated, as they mutually shape social relations. While migration studies embrace the role of social media use in Roma transnational networks and how this shapes the opportunities of Roma migrants (Vermeersch, 2014), it has not yet been discussed how the use of different social media platforms among transnational Roma networks maintain their intra-ethnic solidarity from distance. Considering ethnicity is a social construct and therefore ethnic solidarity can only be understood in situationally constructed cultural terms, this paper aims to identify those online contexts where ethnicity is primarily used for maintaining social solidarity in the transnational Roma network. Therefore, ‘cultures of solidarity’ refers here to the emergence of a sense of belonging that results from engaging in collective actions online. By scrutinising the role of polymedia use (simultaneous use of media channels such as Skype, Facebook, email or Snapchat) among Hungarian Roma migrants living in multi-ethnic suburbs in the UK, I will explain how online communication shapes Roma intra-ethnic solidarity.

2. Research methods – ethnography on social media

Online ethnography is a relatively new field in migration research, but it plays a significant role in understanding the interrelationships between media technologies and mobility (Hjorth, 2007). In short, this online ethnographic method is not independent of offline ethnography but it should be considered as a subfield of that. Beneito-Montagut (2011) describes social interaction that intrinsically takes place online and offline as an ‘expanded ethnography’ in which online experiences are expanded enhancements of real relationships. Participation in computer-mediated spaces, like social media sites, and in particular participatory observations in Roma network discussions not only enable the recruitment of research participants, but also enable access to offline contacts, and their traces in different social contexts at home and abroad (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014). These routes mirror the changing patterns in participants’ decision-making and show how these new media representations of inter-ethnic relations shape their existing social ties, transforming and facilitating migration paths and future expectations.

This paper is based on a multi-sited ethnography completed as part of a PhD study on financial surveillance of CEE migrants (Nagy, 2016). Besides the content analysis of Social Media platforms, fieldwork was completed between January 2013 and September 2014 in the Roma settlements of Visegrád countries and in larger UK cities. Engaging with these migrant networks online and offline helped me to identify ethnic references on different social media sites, in particular on Facebook pages. Research participants provided a better understanding of shifting representations of inter-ethnic relations within the host society in line with their constantly changing self-presentations as Roma migrants on ethnicity-based social media platforms. The selected platforms on Facebook (the site users are anonymised to ensure

confidentiality) are set up by Roma with the purpose of social networking, data sharing, political activism and to support practical transactions. The sampling for this paper has been limited to Hungarian Roma transnational networks, in particular Hungarian speaking participants being aged 16 or older, self-identifying as Roma, residing in the UK or returnees. For the contextual framework of this paper, three layers of online platforms are differentiated: publicly available social media platforms, membership-based social media groups and online private messages. I also volunteered at an NGO in the UK as an advocacy worker and conducted interviews with experts, activists and migrants. For this study on intra-ethnic polymedia use, only Hungarian-speaking Roma participants are included as regular users of Facebook, Skype and the phone applications WhatsApp and Viber.

3. Social media use of Roma migrants and its social implications concerning intra- and interethnic solidarity

With the cheap accessibility of technological developments, Skype contacts or Facebook chats are part of the migrants' social connectedness in every Roma household. Smartphones are essential for everyday interactions and internet connection is facilitated even in the poorest Roma households not only in the receiving but also in the sending countries. Sharing daily information about local events, gossip, financial dilemmas or celebrations in the Roma community is part of life on online social networks. Roma households switch on their Skype cams in the morning to ensure their availability at home, and Facebook access is ensured by having at least one mobile phone per family, which makes it easier to keep in touch with those who have no computer, or are internet illiterate. The ease of internet access in different spaces and the common use of social media platforms among Roma networks create ever more possibilities to maintain strong ties with family and friends abroad, and to monitor each other's daily activities. These 'virtual fields' on social media not only maintain existing relationships at a distance, but provide information on migration processes, opportunities, practical knowledge about resources, cultural translation for newcomers and locally constructed images about other minorities in the receiving country. Although these online connections are often described in migration studies in terms of social integration (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013; Vertovec, 2010), they also facilitate social surveillance and provide a narrative that ensures intra-ethnic solidarity in one's transnational ethnic network. In the case of Hungarian Roma Facebook users, with the democratisation of information and communication technology, these routines of ordinary online co-presence have increased new modes of transnational communication that impact intra-ethnic relationships from a distance by the selection of social media platforms.

Roma migrants do not create a universal ethnic self-presentation, but a strictly calculated one in which they do not publicly share information (like inter-ethnic friendships) that might threaten ethnic bonds with co-present users in a shared online environment. Yet, these practices cannot be generalised to Facebook use. Though all the participants were familiar with social media, they displayed different patterns of use. They varied in the types of social media used, the frequency of use and the way in which they used social media (actively or passively). Facebook serves as a key

ethnographic site to trace these actions and the meanings of inter-ethnic relations via multiple channels. The following analyses will differentiate between three social media channels to present the implication of selections in polymedia use of Roma migrants.

Based on the data collected about the online participation of Roma migrants and how they use polymedia in their ethnic network, I have differentiated three types of platforms where co-presence and information exchange are taking place. The first is open access platforms that require no authorisation for registered members to access them (e.g. timelines of Roma events, radio stations, platforms for Romani transnational networks on Facebook). The second platform is closed groups where only group members are authorised to participate and post messages (e.g. Romani activist groups, location-based sites like Roma in London). The third and most intimate platform is personal conversation via Social media messengers or online video chat.

4. Ethnic references as tools of solidarity

Social media provides new platforms for migrants to select and exchange information that includes inter-ethnic references (e.g. Roma migrants reflecting on their Pakistani neighbours online, of which more to come in this paper). The use of polymedia (Oiarzabal and Reips, 2012) provides inherent features of everyday life, which function like any other face-to-face interaction (e.g. enables even babysitting on Skype). In most cases, social media facilitates ordinary co-presence routines, nourishing a sense of proximity across distance within transnational networks. More importantly, each social media channel is selected for a specific type of reference, transmitting often controversial opinions about other ethnic groups based on the audience. These online routines not only shape inter-group solidarity between Roma and other minorities at a geographic distance, but also transmit stereotyped inter-ethnic references about other minorities through selected channels that affect trust relations among different nationalities and subgroups, even in the sending communities. Current hostile discourses about Muslim communities discussed among Roma minorities in Central Europe¹ are not only shaped by the media and anti-immigrant political narratives but also by narratives of migrant family members shared online and offline.

4.1 Inter-ethnic references on open access social media

Open access social media sites with ethnicity-based audiences (e.g. Facebook pages for Roma networks) contain far fewer (or no) inter-ethnic references than sites with no such audiences from the home country (e.g. pages about retail or housing issues). On these ethnicity-based websites where network members from the sending countries share their posts with their transnational networks, Roma use symbolic references of belonging by posting images of Romani dishes, music, and even political messages about ethnic discrimination of Roma in different localities. Participants use these platforms to express their ethnic solidarity by discussing cases internationally in which

¹ http://kettosmerce.blog.hu/2016/09/18/migransok_a_ciganyok_ellen_2_0_habiszti

Roma are subjected to injustice, violence, political representation or corruption by Roma representatives. Followers share images of incidents against Roma, comment on each other's posts and share their collective experiences transnationally in which ethnic identity is considered as the shared ethnic attribute that emphasise social belonging and the shared experience of disadvantages based on ethnic identification. Although these intra-ethnic references emphasise the importance of the stigma of Romani minorities, Hungarian Roma do not share these experiences in their publicly available social media platforms with Roma from other countries like Vlach Roma from Romania or Bergitka from Poland (e.g. Polish or Slovak). Some platforms are even said to belong to specific Hungarian Roma subgroups, such as Romungro, also known as 'musician sites'.

Differentiations among intra-ethnic groups facilitate stronger ties among smaller networks where offline contacts are maintained by these online expressions of availability and community engagement. Hungarian Roma participants are said not to share with other Roma subgroups those platforms where their relatives from the sending countries are also active, because they have different cultural values and social concerns. They claim that there is no need for cooperation between them and argued that self-representation among different subgroups would only represent conflicting values and increase tensions, in particular between Romungro and 'Olah Roma' families. Vlach or Olah Roma families generally consider themselves to be more traditional, while Romungro Roma migrants represent themselves as modern and better versed in local integration processes. However, these differences were never emphasised by social media users in this study and the websites I reviewed did not contain references to subgroup relations, not even in relation to other Roma groups living in the same neighbourhood. Hungarian Romungro Roma participants emphasised that other subgroups are not investing in their education but focus on short term financial benefits. In the meantime, Olah participants described Romungro migrants as Roma who lack traditional Roma values and have thus lost their dignity. These values are also evaluated in closed discussions, where examples of Roma women who wear clothes associated with the black British subculture are often described as lacking self-respect. Inter-ethnic references are also absent on these sites. Older generations of migrant Roma claim that multi-ethnic closeness is a threat to Romani traditions and to the dignity of Roma women. According to one Facebook user, Roma participants living in London are concerned that having publicly visible references to their contacts with other minorities might give the impression that they are betraying their Roma kin and that they are losing their cultural values, which might lead to rejection by their home communities, which is a concern as they need support from them. There are references to young adults in migrant Roma families, who are mixing with other minorities or even get married to Pakistani men as negative examples. These inter-ethnic relations are used as illustrations for perceived risks of losing the security of intra-ethnic bonds and the reason to justify social exclusion by Roma network members.

However, it does not mean that these social ties with other Roma subgroups or with other ethnic minorities are not important in the daily lives of these Roma families. Those who move around and therefore often find themselves living in communities of strangers tend to look for commonalities that make strangers into

neighbours. Participants referred to Pakistani entrepreneurs in their boroughs as exploitative, unclean, but successful. These descriptions illustrate the tensions in ethnic relations due to the relative deprivation of the newcomer Roma who felt vulnerable in the new social environment. In face-to-face reflections, many participants in the same conditions explained that they are glad to live around Pakistani and Indian minorities, because they are able to hide their Roma identities in these mixed neighbourhoods due to their skin colour and the similarities in their clothing. As one of the participants explained: 'You know, we are similar to these Pakistanis. We do not let you in, we have our own rules, protect our dignity and safeguard our femininity.' As another young Olah women explained to me: 'You know who was willing to help me out when I was in trouble? My Pakistani English teacher! He lent me 200 pounds to pay the rent.' Similarly, another participant emphasised: 'You know who told me [how to fix my credit]? I was standing in the queue in the bank and there was a Pakistani entrepreneur guy who was standing behind me [...] He gave me that hint.' However, Roma network pages on publicly visible sites rarely reflect the inter-ethnic relations between Roma and Pakistani immigrants, at least not in terms that might disclose social or financial dependency relationships. Also, shared experiences with institutional discrimination in the UK or cultural similarities between Roma and Pakistani minorities remain hidden in these social media platforms.

New media platforms not only help migrants maintain strong ties with family and friends and lower the threshold for migration but they also help to establish a digital infrastructure consisting of latent ethnic ties that serves as a social security mechanism. However, by hiding inter-ethnic relations in the host society, these infrastructures create strong self-censorship among migrants in order to ensure ethnic solidarity at a distance. Hungarian transnational Roma networks use co-presence on Facebook in order to maintain social ties within their intra-ethnic networks that fosters their social organisation, which facilitates informal commitment to ensure social security by expressions of solidarity. In this transnational ethnic context, solidarity stands for 'socio-moral responsibility of one individual towards the other; or "one for all, all for one", which is associated with the feeling of togetherness and commonality of interests, as well as the sharing of resources with people in need' (Martinovic, 2015: 336). Solidarity means affiliation in spite of differences and in spite of inequality, but it also means affiliation because of differences (Stjernø, 2004: 327). Consequently, in the ethnic narratives presented online, Roma differentiation from other ethnicities ensures latent reciprocity (Puljiz et al., 2005: 467). In the context of Facebook use of Hungarian Roma ethnic platforms, the social construction of ethnicity and belonging through polymedia use reflects the social security purposes of users when they use symbolic values of Roma ethnicity online. The selection of ethnic references and the differentiation from other groups aim to maintain a social insurance within the ethnic community, through affective reciprocity at the horizontal level. Participants select their inter-ethnic references to other minorities or ethnic groups consciously to prevent the loss of intra-ethnic security. Offline experiences are filtered for different media platforms for those who stay in sending countries and how perceptions about ethnic others effect intra-ethnic relations among Hungarian Roma migrant Facebook users.

4.2 Inter-ethnic solidarity in membership-based Social media groups

Transnational intra-ethnic solidarity among Hungarian Roma is also impacted by their co-presence at other Social media platforms. Besides open access social media platforms, Roma migrants participate in membership-based social media groups that are defined along Roma ethnic group activities (monitored by group admins). Participants living in the UK were generally referred to their use of social media groups on Facebook as International Roma Internet network, *Ide tartozunk* (We Belong Here), *Romák és nem Romák Antirasszista csoportja* (The Anti-racist Group of the Roma and Non-Roma) and local Facebook groups such as *Roma in Manchester* and *Londoni Romák* (Roma of London). As a member of these closed groups, and as an advocacy worker, I was also addressed on these sites to provide information for network members: I was asked questions about the costs of rent in East London, barriers to benefit applications, educational challenges and labour opportunities for newcomers. Reviews on activities of Roma entrepreneurs who recruited newcomers for unskilled jobs were also discussed online among Roma returnees and those who were planning to move to London (e.g. how expensive are these services, do they really help with bureaucracies, do they really arrange housing and jobs). The public nature of such websites facilitated a transnational digital community among Hungarian Roma with migration aspirations. Since the members of these Facebook groups are visible online and many of their profiles contain photos and visible lists of associates, these public sites not only safeguard ethnic social ties but they also create social transparency that enables members to determine what kind of relations are maintained abroad by whom, what the socio-economic impact of their national or ethnic identity is, and how the reception of Roma in the foreign context affects their Roma cultural practices. By constantly checking personal profiles and timelines, members obtain information about each other that they can use in offline discussions. My offline interviews and conversations on these sites confirmed that participants consciously screen each other and judge their foreign lives based on the data available online.

In comparison with open access Facebook platforms, Roma migrants present their inter-ethnic relations differently in membership-based social media groups. One reason is that these groups are not primarily framed by Roma ethnic group consciousness, but by other main attributes Roma migrants are involved in. As the *Romani in Liverpool* Facebook group illustrates, online communitarianism among Roma migrants presumes some shared history, language and culture that provide the symbolic capital for the reproduction of a community in online meta-space, but this may also provide platforms for other shared interests. Information exchange on this website includes members from different ethnic groups where Hungarian Roma use English to share their questions and interest. Most of the posts shared in the group are practical issues about housing, selling second-hand goods or advertising job opportunities. This communitarianism is based on existing offline networks (many of the group members know each other already) that create online social media platforms that grow as other ethnic migrants with similar interests join them. In these social media groups, Hungarian Roma participants commit their personal selves to

new socialisation processes of learning and acculturation, adopting and abiding by the rules, norms, cultural codifications and hierarchies of the groups they join.

Many participants were interested in other people's opinions and ways of life in the UK and mentioned that these online interactions changed their images of others. When they reflected on these interactions, they also stressed inter-group differences such as traditions and values. However, these experiences were hardly ever framed as inter-ethnic relations and Roma participants did not emphasise the relevance of these contacts when they were transmitting their ideas about other minorities to their home communities. This could be a result of the implicit role ethnic differences play in these topic-based social media groups.

Participants claim to avoid Roma ethnic references, as they explained offline, not because they use censure but because these are not relevant in their interactions about the goods or services they discuss here. Hungarian Roma participants learn many local trade and social communication skills from others and use them according to the communication style of other Facebook users in the group. Even references to other Roma ethnic minorities are denied on these pages. Through these meaning-making processes, such online communities become new habitats for social experience in a transnational context. Inter-ethnic relations are valued differently in these virtual groups than on open media websites. Participation in a membership-based social media group sends an implicit message about the users' intentions and the role they intend to take in inter-ethnic contacts, such as selling goods, collecting information about accommodation or promoting events to socialise with other Hungarian speakers. These social media groups are on the edge of two types of inter-ethnic references: those that reflect self-censorship practices where Roma hide their own ethnicity (e.g. 'LION) and those that explicitly use such ethnic references to emphasise common interests (e.g. FB *Ide tartozunk!* or *Romani Čhib* for Roma speakers).

In ethnicity-based online groups, web technologies are producing, representing, consuming and articulating various aspects and new figures of ethnicity, nationhood and community in closed controlled social networks. The controlling mechanisms and exclusivist norms of Roma communities invite participants to publicly open up about their inter-ethnic relations and reflect on their ethnic closure or solidarity with other migrant groups. On these platforms that facilitate contact for Roma to sustain their relationships with their networks, group members use ethnic references to express intra-ethnic solidarity and claim virtual support from each other at a distance. These relationships might function as 'virtual insurance', providing network members with emotional support and information about risks in foreign countries (e.g. cases of labour exploitation collected from newspapers). While on open access social media websites, inter-ethnic references were hidden by lack of references to other ethnicities or migrants; in closed social media groups, Hungarian Roma migrants might hide their own ethnicity to avoid inter-ethnic references and ensure social inclusion online. The first type of social media group is meant for information exchange among Hungarian-speaking migrants in London, where Roma participants might self-censor references to inter-ethnic differences that could make them vulnerable in a group that includes Hungarian non-Roma migrants. This is generally to avoid racist comments and Romophobic notions of other network members. The second group encourages

the use of ethnic references, since it targets Roma and non-Roma who are interested in exchanging news and information about Roma or the Romani language. Also, many of the posts are meant to trigger offline action against social injustices and encourage Roma protests. Inter-ethnic references serve different purposes in these narrow social media contexts than the previously discussed purpose of maintaining social security and mostly refer to Roma Non-Roma relations in the sending countries. From the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979), groups in society stand in specific status and power relations to one another; thus, social change processes have the potential to alter those relations. Such alterations may in turn lead to the need for individuals to renegotiate their ethnic identity and group membership. Threat perception has been found by research to be a function of the relative status of groups, their history, and the way they traditionally interact with each other (Grant, 1992; Milburn and Waltman, 1981). Bowman (2001) suggests that just like individuals, communities draw boundaries not so much to assert presence, but to mark exclusion of that which is perceived to be threatening. Bowman posits that autonomous communities are 'inherently antagonistic to any extra-communal logics of generalised exchange because such logics call on the members of autonomous communities to identify with others beyond the bounds of that community' (Ibid.: 29). These autonomous communities 'see social concourse beyond the demographic limits of their immediate communities as antagonistic to the "we" in which they find their identities' (Ibid.).

In Facebook groups where inter-ethnic references are highlighted in the posts of Roma migrants, these contain mainly negative connotations of other ethnic minorities. In these closed Roma social media groups, selective images of Pakistani minorities are transmitted which become common knowledge among the network members of migrants in the sending countries. Relatives of Roma migrants who remained in sending countries provided detailed outlines of the inter-ethnic frames of their relatives abroad. They often referred to exploitative Pakistani entrepreneurs who set up sham marriages or engage in labour exploitation. Though they noted that Pakistani immigrants live in the same neighbourhoods as many Roma families in Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester and London, they described the Pakistanis as unintegrated and filthy. This migrant phenomenon is often explained by relative deprivation and relative whiteness (McDowell, 2008), or deflecting ethnic stigma (Moroşanu and Fox, 2013). Although much of the social media platform is not used to emphasise ethnic belonging, Roma members might emphasise their identities in comparison with other minorities when sharing sensitive content (e.g. experiences with inter-ethnic solidarity) to stress their success in protecting ethnic dignity in order to ensure ethnic solidarity from their sending community. Although participants often argued offline that they got support from their Pakistani employers or Indian neighbours, they felt that these opinions would elicit moral disapproval from their online Roma networks.

In one of the most popular local Facebook groups like *Londoni Romák* (Roma of London), respondents transform or amend ethnic boundaries in specific de-stigmatising discourses and regularly capitalise on ethnic resources in managing their everyday problems. For instance, by jettisoning the Pakistani and other ethnic Roma subgroups, group members transfer the stigma to others and position themselves

more advantageously in Britain's ethnic hierarchy. In response to stigmatisation efforts by others, they dissociate themselves from the stigmatised group by blaming other Roma. This contributes to redrawing ethnic boundaries. Diverting the stigma to other minorities in inter-ethnic references online increases ethnicity's everyday relevance in social media interactions. Some Roma erect a boundary between themselves and other minorities by 'educating' others in closed groups about their ethnic difference, their roots and the consequences. By diverting stigma to the economically less deserving, they also emphasise their own dependency position. When they suggest that Pakistani women are uneducated and dirty, though they have spent far longer in the host country, Roma respondents are conflating stereotypes to redress their own minority status (Moroşanu and Fox, 2013: 447).

In short, offline inter-ethnic relations among Roma families in East London were hidden in the semi-public or public online platforms. Positive references about supportive ethnic minorities in the host countries were hidden too. The fear of accusation that they had lost their ethnic identity was a common argument when participants reflected on these issues offline. Such identity loss was explained in terms of social exclusion, lack of social support in the sending communities and in case migrants failed in their host society. Inter-ethnic references and images of closeness to other minorities, whether negative (e.g. exploitative Pakistani employers who did not pay Roma employees) or positive (e.g. Pakistani entrepreneurs who helped newcomers learn English), were never made in group conversations. Although many coping strategies were learned from other ethnic minorities in the UK, stereotyped messages transmitted a selective narrative about other ethnic groups back to the participants' countries of origin to uphold ethnicity based social assurances explained as instruments of ethnic solidarity. In short, the potential liberating power of virtual transnationalism was rather limited, while its potential to help reproduce social asymmetries was more apparent.

Based on the examples above, it can be concluded that, in closed groups, transnational ethnic networks expand the spectrum of contested social spaces into the digital public sphere (Karatzogianni, 2006), where avoidance of inter-ethnic references is a tool of identity formation to ensure social inclusion from distance. These virtual platforms therefore visualise the power relationships in extended transnational Roma networks (e.g. Madianou and Miller, 2011). When Roma migrants choose closed groups to create discursive spaces, these are not meant to extend the content of online discussions beyond practical information. Still, based on the shared content and images of success and family life, these closed group interactions provide insights into the self-perceptions of group members, their views on integration processes and the socio-economic conflicts between different groups (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Everett, 2009; Mallapragada, 2000).

Roma migrants consciously choose to share and discuss their concerns, such as their conflicts or debts, in closed groups where inter-ethnic references are filtered. This confirms the intimacy and secrecy of these interrelations, especially when they occur in the private sphere of Roma migrants. These selections also confirm why only interpersonal communication contains these references, which are treated with high confidentiality. This can be considered to be censored information for the extended Roma network, in particular the selection of data for those who stay in the sending

countries. Polymedia use provides a multifocal analytical framework for identities, social positions and the power relationships that exist between various social actors with varied degrees of openness to different cultural and territorial commitments to specific places, traditions and institutions. This also imparts meaning to migrants' conservative or transformative behaviours in relation to the transformation of social roles and status in a foreign context (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2003; Vertovec, 2009).

In the emergent virtual environment of polymedia, social media platforms serve the type of relationship being maintained among Roma migrants in London (Alampay, 2012). Weaving the social fabric of Roma is thus becoming a complex, deterritorialised process in which inter-ethnic socialisation shapes the learning process of cultural norms online and offline (Dubar, 2000). Transnational families are the exemplary social matrix generating new patterns of socialisation, since intergenerational exchanges and the transmission of values increasingly tend to take place within online deterritorialised contexts (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Nedelcu, 2010; Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002). These can be illustrated by intimate private messages about decision-making processes of participants in the foreign context and their daily chats with family members. In the following and final part of this paper, I will analyse how polymedia use and personal messages are used to transmit affective inter-ethnic references in intimate online conversations.

4.3 Inter-ethnic references in personal online messages

'They do no harm. Really!' I was awakened by a loud Skype conversation between a Roma woman and her sister-in-law in Hungary, who she wanted to move into her house in London. She spoke in an enthusiastic tone while trying to convince her relatives that local Muslims are not as dangerous as they thought. 'These covered people are almost like us', she continued. 'You'll see! The blacks are different, but they also do not bother us. They just smoke all day.' The louder she tried to convince the others on Skype, the more I understood of the conversation as they tried to arrange for her mother-in-law's other sons to move to England. 'The landlord is Pakistani', she said. 'He also has houses in Manchester. We can move there if we cannot find a house to live together here.'

Although many Roma families do not keep in touch with other Roma ethnic subgroups when they are in their home countries, ethnic or minority identity is intensified in the foreign context. Interrelations with well-established minorities from different countries and daily inter-ethnic contacts in grocery shops, housing agencies and schools also shift the inter-ethnic experiences of Roma migrants. These experiences are then transmitted through Messenger chats and Facebook calls. Roma migrants express different affective relationships in personal messages and private video chats about their inter-ethnic relations than they do in Facebook timelines or in open virtual social media groups. Transnational Roma migrants share their friendships or intimate contacts with other ethnic minorities in confidential personal chats. However, there is a difference between the content of these references and the choices about polymedia use made by different migrant generations which deeply impact transnational socialisation processes when they are used in intra-ethnic interactions.

Older Roma migrants are more distrustful towards other ethnic groups, making judgemental references to their lifestyles, religions and public behaviour. These are the Roma newcomers who are most vulnerable to exploitation and extortion, or who have more lived experiences with discrimination and racism in their home countries. Their lack of language skills leads these Roma migrants to attribute more importance to their traditions, ethnicity and relationships with extended families. Conflating ethnic stigma to other ethnic minorities is common in their conversations, as are references to criminality and lack of integration. These references are made in their mother languages, which is also a central cause of intergenerational conflicts. As one Roma participant explained to his fellows: ‘Sometimes, when you think how these blacks make you feel, it's just like the Gypsies you used to meet at home, as you walk into the street, and as they stare at you like you feel they are killing you now! What the hell is it, why do they behave like that? I hate them. We should move them to a special island and separate the blacks and whites there...’

Participants also told me that they had transformed or amended different ethnic boundaries in specific de-stigmatising discourses and regularly capitalised on various ethnic resources when managing everyday difficulties. For instance, by jettisoning the Pakistani and other ethnic Roma subgroups, several Facebook sites transfer the inferior stigma to position themselves more advantageously in conversation with someone considered ‘white’. These strategies contribute to redrawing ethnic boundaries to emphasise the importance of social and cultural loyalty, even when in physical proximity. In these interplays of shifting identity management on different virtual platforms, the Roma ‘ethnic lens’ is in a state of constant fluctuation (Schiller et al., 2006).

By discursively invoking differences to describe both ‘self’ and ‘other’, differences between Roma become even more salient. The valorisation of differences, in turn, offers certain social-psychological benefits by giving expression to the migrants’ anxieties and frustrations and helping them restore the ‘reversals in status’ that are part of the migration process. Roma migrants invoke and assert their own putative whiteness and Europeanness to darken ‘less white’ Jamaican and Asian segments of the labour market. In short, ‘race’ is often a culturally mediated interpretation, representation and reproduction of social differences (Brubaker et al., 2004). When Roma refer to Pakistani minorities in the UK as ‘dirty’ and ‘illiterate’, it draws on home-grown and local contextual referents to construct a meaningful framework for arranging the sorts of differences that Roma encounter in comparison with other minorities in the UK. The selection of online settings explains whether and how inter-ethnic contact is established. Fears of inter-ethnic relations are transmitted in personal chats, but these often conflict with other online narratives on inter-ethnic distance.

While many Roma parents try to preserve their culture and values, the younger generations are raised though the popular multicultural media both in sending and host countries. Therefore, young Roma migrants frame their inter-ethnic friendships online by highlighting shared subcultural preferences (e.g. shared dress codes, hand signs, YouTube videos) or shared leisure activities. These friendships are normalised in foreign educational settings, but Roma parents try to hide these activities of their children from their extended Roma networks at home. I found that many Roma girls

were not allowed to have their own smartphones or social media IDs and all their family members intensively monitored their online activities. Consequently, migrant youth shift their preferences to different types of social media than their elders and use it for different purposes. Ethnicity remains a relevant factor for them and they are less conscious with their self-censorship online which results in unintended inter-ethnic encounters. Online and offline interactions are very much integrated and they co-construct notions of ethnicity and belonging (see e.g. Marotta, 2011). One of the key finding is that when using social media, young participants preferred to interact with others from their ethnic community in the country of residence than with someone from their country of origin. Social media serves, in contrast with elderly Roma, not as an alternative for telephone contact, but they use it to engage with other migrant youth in exploring their own decontextualized ethnic identity by intra-ethnic contact to compare their principles (one of many topics they are exploring on social media).

Roma migrants shape the meaning of their own mobility and build their own worlds in a dialogic relation within the social spaces and societies they encompass. Consequently, online migrants control the mechanisms that disengage their social relations from local contexts of interaction and transform space-time perceptions of social ties. By contacting participants offline and studying the broader range of their social media activities, I found that social media supports intra-ethnic contact, but counters transnational inter-ethnic solidarity as online socialisation processes filter and reinterpret these experiences of migrants for their home communities in terms of deflected stigmas. Inter-ethnic contact is mostly established in interest-based online venues where Roma users use these references to emphasise their ethnic solidarity with their home community.

5. Conclusions

The instrumental use of inter-ethnic references, or the avoidance thereof, can be traced in the polymedia use of Roma migrants on social media platforms. Self-censorship of inter-ethnic references on open access sites is meant to emphasise the importance of belonging and loyalty to the Roma community left behind. By emphasising ethnic cohesion among Roma groups, virtual timelines are used to reflect shared values with other Roma transnational groups. These references not only ensure intense co-presence of network members at a geographic distance but these also reflect the need of social security and affective support Roma migrants need in a foreign context. Restricted online communication channels like personal messages are used to transmit more confidential inter-ethnic references based on lived experiences in the host countries. These are not only reflecting the references of Roma migrants to relative deprivation in the host society, but also their fears of losing Roma network ties in the sending country due to their extended inter-ethnic relations abroad. These selections of personal channels are also indexical themselves. By using multiple media platforms, alternative personal messages might open new ways of transmitting ethnic references of similarity and share information about the fruitful inter-ethnic relations within the migrant's ethnic group in the host country. These secured invisible social

media venues might also open new opportunities for transnational socialisation of sending communities in migration networks.

Although intra-ethnic references are age and internet literacy specific, polymedia use of migrants shapes the role of intra-ethnic solidarity in transnational networks by ensuring the impression of social security for members who keep inter-ethnic distance. When ethnic migrants are afraid to publicly stand for an inter-ethnic relationship and pretend to keep a distance from other minorities in their daily lives, they transmit a censored social construction of their social identity abroad. This constructed boundary starts to live its own life among those who were left behind and creates a new inter-ethnic frame based on selected amplified images received online. When these images are challenged by those who receive other inter-ethnic references through private messages, it might create intra-ethnic conflicts, confusion and divisions between the receivers.

In short, transnational transmission of solidarity does not follow a linear path and is not necessarily and inevitably a progressive process. As Nedelcu (2012: 15) notes: 'The reach, scope and effects of transnational activities are contingent on the interaction of multiple contextual (state of origin-migrants' relations; state of origin relations with country of destination; context of reception of immigrants abroad) and group factors.' This study has highlighted the transnational dimension of socialisation processes, and thus the emergence of a transnational illusion. It has shown how online migrants develop a transnational habitus that combines heterogeneous cultural references inherited from their physical and virtual journeys. It has also highlighted the ongoing blurring of boundaries between migrants. Social life is gradually becoming a deterritorialised process for both mobile and sedentary populations.

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GERGŐ PULAY *

Crises, Securitizations and the Europeanization of Roma Representation

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During the last decade, we have witnessed significant changes in the scholarly field that is commonly identified as ‘Romani Studies’. Apart from a variety of other recent publications (such as: van Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide, 2018; Beck and Ivasiuc, 2018; Matras and Leggio, 2017; Vincze, Petrovici, Rat and Picker, 2018; just to name a few), the **Special Issue of *Social Identities* edited by Yildiz and De Genova (2018)** provides an opportunity to assess the recent trends in scholarship about the plight of the Roma in Europe. Not unlike some other authors of these current publications, the editors of the Special Issue also position their work as fundamentally different from earlier waves of Roma-related research in terms of scale, foci, and conceptual toolkit. The aim of this review is to consider the prospects as well as the potential pitfalls of this recent shift that puts the issues of mobility, racial governance and securitization at the heart of research. In fact, the shifts in scholarly attention also respond to changes in the social and political contexts of research, so it is first worth providing an overview of these far-reaching transformations.

The Europeanization of Roma representation refers to the development of legal, political and institutional frameworks that aim to address the plight of diverse communities brought together by the unifying Roma label and to represent them as Europe’s largest minority. The transnational dispersal, social marginalization, and the prospects of shared identity-building of the Roma have been recurrent themes among scholars and policy makers for several decades. Especially after 1989, the terminology of the ‘human emergency’ has been crucial to the efforts of human rights organizations and activists who have worked to represent the Roma in the legal and institutional forums of Europe. In such contexts, the plight of the Roma was handled either in terms of the development of their own conditions, or as a security threat to others (van Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide, 2018: 15-16). According to van Baar’s argument in the Special Issue (as well as in the aforementioned edited volume), the Roma-related development projects represent a continuation of European developmentalism – this time not in the postcolonial territories or the Global South, but in spaces ‘at home’. As I clarify later, the assumption of this developmental continuity is crucial to efforts that seek to find conceptual

bridges and political analogies between the plight and struggles of the Roma in Europe and those of other postcolonial or subaltern categories.

In early post-socialist times, academic and policy-oriented commentators discussed the challenges of poverty, discrimination, and anti-Gypsy racism among the outcomes of the regime change as such. In other words, the plight of the Roma appeared to be a test case (or 'litmus-test') of the actually existing conditions and development prospects of post-socialist societies. Therefore, the scholarly engagement with the intersections of poverty and ethnicity permitted taking a critical stance with regard to social injustices as constitutive features of an emerging post-socialist market economy. At the same time, when it came to the underlying assumptions of post-socialist democratization efforts – such as the policy incentives dedicated to tolerance work (see: Dzenovska, 2018) – the ubiquitous forms of discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes were usually apprehended as unfortunate symptoms of social change 'within' Eastern European societies. From the rather hopeful perspective of early post-socialist times, anti-Gypsy racism was expected to diminish, similarly to other forms of ethnic or national animosities, with the process of 'catching up', the declining significance of borders, the expansion of democratic institutions and, eventually, the EU accession of formerly communist states. The collaboration of governments, international organizations and the bodies of an emerging Roma civil society were expected to undertake the political and human-rights-related duties that are usually associated with the role of kin states in the case of other ethnic or national minorities.

The Eastward enlargement of the EU gave previously unforeseen impetus to policy-oriented attempts dedicated to the social integration and political representation of Roma. Moreover, from 2008 onwards the Europeanization of Roma representation continued in the midst of the financial crisis, as did recurrent inter-state conflicts due to the controversies surrounding the Westwards migration of citizens from the 'new Europe'. The resulting political conflicts coagulated around incidents such as fingerprinting in the nomad camps of Italy and the expulsion of Roma migrants from France. The plight of the Roma came to be discussed in public as part of an emerging security- or migration-crisis in Europe, hence the criticism regarding the putative failures of Roma integration (and the need for new alternatives) foreshadowed the themes of a much broader crisis-talk after 2008, and the debates about a unified but still highly unequal European super-polity. In the meantime, an increasing number of actors were making claims for titles of expertise and civil and political representation with regard to the Roma, or the right to speak about (or for) them. Academics found themselves in inconvenient situations as their seemingly marginal research subjects came to occupy highly central positions in an expanding and deeply politicized field of relations. In fact, the crisis and the transformation of the discursive landscape

were apparent in all the cases when discussion partners were not simply exchanging and criticizing relevant ideas, but they were preoccupied with questioning whether the others are entitled to speak at all on the issues at stake.

Amid the reverberations of the financial crisis, we witnessed the increasing political exploitation of moral panics and anti-Gypsyism as a fruitful vote-seeking strategy by the populist right wing in countries like Hungary (see: Szombati, 2018). Nevertheless, this time the spectacular rise of racism against Roma was not limited to the ‘not-yet developed’ post-socialist democracies that had just survived the shock therapy of rapid marketization. Instead, the related hate campaigns were now omnipresent in the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ Europe alike. States and governments seemed to be hesitant – or spectacularly unable – to cope with the controversies around free movement between countries such as Romania and France or Italy. A now all-European public preoccupation with national abjects or moral outcasts as objects of disgust (see: Tyler, 2013) further expanded in the 2010s as the rising social insecurities were projected onto dreadful figures such as Gypsy beggars or welfare tourists (among other folk-devils of the new age). The Europeanization of Roma representation remained a highly ambiguous project as it offered pretexts for individual states to ward off their related responsibilities and to overlook the challenges, as well as the shortcomings, of Roma inclusion on their territories – as if Roma issues were now to be handled rather by ‘Europe’ instead of them.

The plight of the Roma turned out to be a litmus-test again, this time with reference to the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in the practical uses of EU citizenship and belonging. This was the case with the implementation of the right to free movement without that of labor mobility, and the claims for asylum of some EU-citizen Roma in Germany due to their past persecution – in spite of the legal principle that denies any justification for asylum-seeking within EU space (see: Caglar, 2016; and also van Baar’s article in the Special Issue). Apparently, one of the conditions for the continuing Europeanization of Roma representation was the exposure of Western European countries to the outcomes of deprivation in the post-socialist periphery of Europe – this time in their own territories as migrant-receiving countries. In this context, the challenges of development or security may be related to a particular subordinated social category; they still affect a wide set of social relations beyond spatial units such as specific sending or receiving countries, regions, settlements, and communities – just to list a few of the categories that commonly define the field-sites of the empirical social sciences. In the course of these interstate conflicts, perhaps Romania occupied the most highlighted position in media accounts and public debates as a major migrant-sending country, as well as the home of the most populous Roma community in Europe. Under the disciplinary auspices associated with Europe, media-saturated campaigns and various Romanian politicians recurrently affirmed the

ethno-racial division of citizenry in order to distinguish migrant wrongdoers and decent (non-Roma) Romanians (see: Pulay, 2017). These cases all illustrated the ways in which a shared European citizenship was rather enhancing instead of alleviating ethno-racial cleavages and social inequalities in the course of crisis-ridden EU integration.

Especially since 2015, these past controversies have appeared in a different light. The troubles of interstate cooperation, the obsession with securitization and national borders, as well as the uses of moral panics and fearmongering in populist mobilizations remain persistent features of contemporary European politics. In fact, the crisis with the governance and control of Roma migration around the late-2000s and early 2010s now seems like a major political rehearsal of that complex phenomenon we call the global migration or refugee crisis today. Similarly to the latter, the Roma security crisis (Demossier, 2014) could be also conceived of as an instance of the EU's remarkable weakness (if not impotence) at handling the major challenges it faces as a bureaucratic organization that unites, but also stands beyond individual nation states. As Böröcz noted (2009), while the EU has certain features that are associated with states or state formations (including its geopolitical importance or capacity to exercise power over territories beyond its borders), it still cannot be conceptualized in terms of a uniform statehood since that would require an actually existing constitution, executive power, entitlement to sanction, or legally codified and enforceable forms of solidarity. Therefore, the crises and other instances of chaos in the course of the last decade do not seem to be mere exceptions but rather regular outcomes of the operation of the EU.

As De Genova and others have already argued elsewhere, we are witnessing a permanent proliferation of crises and a language of emergency as a defining feature of our contemporary existence (see: De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016; De Genova, 2017). Moments of crisis and various forms of social criticism are intertwined and mutually provoke one another. Any postulating about a specific crisis entails retrospective or comparative judgement of what went wrong, as it also allows for new types of resistance in the name of 'how it should be/have been' (see: Loftsdóttir, Smith and Hipfl, 2018). According to De Genova's approach to the autonomy of migrant subjectivities, mobility and the freedom of movement are elementary features of the human condition which are only followed by state technologies that produce borders. The contemporary movements of migrants or refugees have a postcolonial character as they call into question the prevailing world order. In other words, such instances of migration should be approached and evaluated as practices of resistance through exit, or as claims for the right to escape (see also: van Baar, and Ivasiuc-Kreide, 2018; Durst and Nagy, 2018). Moreover, De Genova suggests that discourses on migration in the European context always contain

certain racial subtexts: the concept of migration serves as a proxy for race, while the notions of Europe and European identity are reinvented in terms of a postcolonial racial formation of whiteness. The concept of securitization serves as another main pillar of this approach that focuses on the (discursive) production of insecurities, particularly by agents who seek to defend states, communities, or other entities against putative existential threats.

Following these broader considerations, the editors make an ambitious proposal in the introductory text of the Special Issue of *Social Identities* to reposition research on Roma mobility and racial subjugation to the center of critical interests with regard to citizenship and the politics of European identity. As they suggest, migration in general and Roma im/mobility in particular serve as important flashpoints (or 'litmus-tests', to refer back to an earlier phrase) for critical scholarship in terms of raising questions about governance, borders, state-control and, ultimately, the very idea of Europe. To be more precise, the editors argue for the necessity of at least three shifts in Roma-related scholarship: first, the need to put migration, movement, or mobility at the center of inquiry; second, the need to replace the apparently false analytical concept of ethnicity with that of race and racialization; and third, the requirement of abandoning the restrictive frames of minority studies and working towards a research program that places the plight of the Roma right at the heart of the emerging critical studies of Europe.

The introduction to the issue positions this research program in opposition to earlier studies that are described by the futile polarization between two stances: one that fetishizes ethnic difference, and another that focuses on social and economic forms of subjugation while overlooking the cultural politics of racism. For those who are familiar with the research field, it is easy to discern that these two lines of scholarship broadly refer to the scholarly positions in the debate about post-socialist deprivation, social exclusion, and the concept of the underclass around the late 1990s and early 2000s (see: Emigh-Szelenyi, 2001; Stewart, 2002). According to the editors' view, dominant representations depict the Roma in an isolated, self-contained, or reified manner that leads to the exaggeration of their differences, making it 'virtually impossible to recognize them as participants within wider social formations.' In fact, this point is valid for a wide array of accounts about marginality (and not only about the Roma) that reinforce social exclusion at the level of analysis by representing their subjects in almost complete disconnection from the rest of their societies. As a way of returning to the familiar argument against 'victim blaming', the editors argue that the aforementioned fetishization of Roma differences reinforces a misconception that traces back marginalization to the inherent peculiarities of a group or social category. Apparently, the editors define the concept of ethnicity precisely by such assumptions about genealogically inherited, essentialized cultural

integrity or homogenized identity. In other words, the introduction of race and racialization are supposed to avoid the pitfalls of ethnicity as a rigid analytical concept which is not able to account for the diversity of Roma communities that is due to highly different national and imperial contexts.

Besides the criticism of ethnicity as an essentializing concept, the editors propose a framework that operates with a variety of ‘-izations’ (such as: minoritization, racialization, securitization, criminalization, and irregularization) in order to shed new light on processes that have been grouped together under analytical concepts such as social exclusion or marginality. The apparent aim of introducing these multiple concepts is to emphasize the active or processual nature of the respective phenomena – instead of depicting putatively reified, passive or idle states or conditions (it is worth recalling here that, in the aforementioned earlier debate, the concept of social exclusion itself was supposed to serve a similar analytical purpose: maintaining the focus on dynamic procedures instead of the rigid terminology of class, or underclass in particular). In addition, the authors propose the notion of the security-development nexus for the purpose of pointing at the multifaceted forms of social reproduction and discrimination that maintain ‘subordinate inclusion’, rather than a general state of exclusion. This concept defines two major forms of policies, one of which is dedicated to the local improvement of social conditions or life chances, while the other is aimed at subjecting its target groups to forms of governance and policing in order to reduce insecurities. Both of these policies are conducive to the production of the Roma category as an essential problem for the racial order in Europe. According to the article by van Baar, development and security practices have been targeted at the Roma since the 1990s as part of neoliberal governance in Europe. Instead of ameliorating their hardships, securitization exposes the Roma to deportability and evictability, while institutional developmentalism serves as an asset of governing poverty through segregation. The interrelation between policies of development and security became all the more apparent after the EU accession of Eastern European states, when local development projects were introduced in order to ameliorate poor living conditions and through this to prevent the risk of further migration waves to Western countries. As mentioned above, van Baar depicts the development projects dedicated to the plight of the Roma in terms of an internal colonialism: a peculiar form of policy import which brought the colonial models of governance from the Global South back to European territories. These models typically rely on an idea of social inclusion in terms of a certain gradualism: ‘underdeveloped groups’ (such as the Roma) can take steps to eventually reach the stage of the developed majorities in terms of their capitals and capabilities.

As van Baar notes, there is a distinction between desired and undesired movements in the EU that juxtaposes the preferable ways in which persons,

capital or services circulate (as is the case of business, skilled labor or tourism) with those that threaten social and national security or endanger the functioning of the market. Such distinctions between normal and dangerous movements and social categories are conducive to the ongoing racialization of Roma in Europe. Expulsions, evictions and deportations are instances of the forced mobility of Roma, while their ghettoization, containment and segregation are the modes of their forced immobility. In her article, Kóczé also argues that the discourse on Roma migration has produced racialized divisions between white, non-Roma citizens (who can enjoy the freedom of movement) and the Roma. Kóczé engages with visual representations, media campaigns and narratives that influence everyday practices and policies by designating a subjugated place for the Roma as irregulars, and keeping whiteness in an unmarked position. The development of populism and anti-Gypsy politics have been an 'unintended consequence' of EU enlargement that have taken place in the broader structural context of neoliberal restructuring with the exaggeration of meritocracy and the denial of racial inequalities. According to the article, France and Italy are key examples of the way in which the racist rhetoric about the Roma (particularly Roma migrants from Bulgaria and Romania) has been mainstreamed in national politics during the last decade. At the same time, the state of exception and the discourse about the security threat caused by abject citizens recall the earlier colonial justifications of control, and are also akin to the subordinating representations of women in patriarchal settings.

Sardelić provides a historical account of citizenship regimes and the temporarily changing precarious statuses of Roma migrants from the states of the former Yugoslavia to demonstrate how the EU's boundaries work through a process of racialization that leads to the disciplinary legitimation of governing non-EU citizens. These migrant statuses were affected by the policies that ruled the hierarchical relations between the states of the former Yugoslavia and the EU - especially Germany as the main destination of Roma who left during wartime. In these shifting contexts, Roma migrants were rendered liminal statuses (as temporary visitors or refugees) without full integration into the host countries, while as minority citizens they had limited rights in the sending countries where some were persecuted. As in other cases, Roma from the former Yugoslavian territories were part of broader migration waves together with other citizens from their countries, but the causes and patterns of their migrations remained specific because of their minority position and the obstacles to their permanent settlement in the host countries. Their typical form of mobility remained circular, including instances of deportation. Solimene offers a case study about the migration of Bosnian Roma families between Rome and other cities in Italy and Europe. He also departs from instances of the European border spectacle, followed by the reinforcement of

internal boundaries, as well as the legal and political proliferation of categories that name various forms of otherness and non-belonging. As he argues, these practices strive to maintain a sense of European identity by pointing at those who are excluded from it. As part of this ‘invasion syndrome’, political and media discourses in Italy have represented the Roma and Gypsies as ‘social waste’ to be expelled or contained in nomad camps. The Bosnian Roma protagonists in this ethnographic piece are rendered illegals with no Italian citizenship or legal permits (in spite of having lived in the country for decades); hence, their livelihoods are founded on the verge of legal and illegal practices that include begging, scrap-metal collection and informal trade. Nevertheless, they manage to respond to repression, police control and eviction by employing a set of tactics based on continued mobility and dispersal as ways to reduce the disturbance caused by their visibility. As the author convincingly argues, these Bosnian Roma can maintain a constant presence in Italy precisely because they appear to be in a transitory phase in each locality or encounter. Family members maintain their ties by paying occasional visits to one another even at great distance, while movement can also be a way of exploring new opportunities or avoiding conflicts and repression. In this perpetual state of mobility, these Bosnian Roma do not maintain idealized images of their homeland or a later return there. Solimene’s account of tactics and the management of life and space among Bosnian Roma in Italy is quite special with regard to the robust forms of governance and subjugation, as reported in most other accounts on multiple ‘-izations’.

Two further articles in the issue venture into the scholarly domain one may define as the ethnography of policy and bureaucratic intervention. Humpris provides a case study on migration control in the UK and the outcomes of the strict transitional restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens after EU accession. The article deals with the perceptions of racialization that unfold in the interactions of migrants with front-line workers, who represent the face of the state in everyday practice. These interactions take place in highly uncertain conditions because of the ambiguous legal and policy environment and the manifold rumors that circulate about the prospects and possibilities of migrants who have to rely largely on their own problem-solving networks. Front-line workers became experts about these new migrants who were EU citizens yet lacked access to state resources. Decisions about providing help to certain clients, the distinctions between Roma and non-Roma Romanians, as well as the different practices dedicated to the Roma have been produced and routinized on the basis of migrants’ self-presentations and also on the ways in which front-line workers shared their experiences with one another. Vrabiescu and Kalir offer a similar grounded perspective about the street-level bureaucratic practices of civil servants – mostly women – who work with racially marginalized female Roma migrants in Spain. After social services

were privatized and decentralized from the 1980s onwards, these civil society actors came to represent a caring 'left hand' in everyday practice, opposed to the repressive 'right-hand' of the state. Through their interventions and evaluations, care-workers have a decisive role in mediating between official concepts of 'vulnerability' or 'failed integration' and the actual cases of the migrants with whom they strive to nurture trustful relations. For the migrants, the title of being a deviant or 'failed subject' means the withdrawal of state provisions and even the imposition of penalties. On the contrary, 'good subjects' can enter further phases of integration programs as they meet the neoliberal requirements of efficiency and progress (by acquiescing to mainstream norms of formal wage labor). According to the authors, these forms of decision-making represent a process through which care transforms into surveillance and control. The state of vulnerability is of crucial importance in these procedures: it represents the liminal condition in which poor migrants can obtain protection and provision as clients, but it also prepares the ground for possible punitive measures against them. Akin to the classifications by front-line workers in the UK, the Roma from Romania also represent a specific, inferior category of migrants in the eyes of social workers in Spain. Moreover, similarly to front-line workers in the UK, street-level agents in Spain are also aware of the ambiguities and deficiencies of the very programs in which they participate. In fact, they strive to do their best to make the system work, and they can end up blaming the victims if they perceive that migrants do not similarly endeavor.

As the authors argue in the Special Issue, the Roma have become a new racialized minority through their transnational movement in the EU due to their recently acquired visibility as unwanted migrants in Western states. In other words, racialization – a way of producing the Roma as an unruly problem-category – has taken qualitatively new forms with migration after the enlargement of the EU. At the same time, the Roma can also represent a certain supra-national formation that resembles the contested ideals of EU belonging. Consequently, the scapegoating of Roma reflects the incomplete integration of mutually hostile or distrustful member states, while it also serves as a symbolic mediator of fears concerning social downfall, foreign invasion, and the loss of national sovereignty (see also: Appadurai, 2006).

As a new core concept in Roma-related research, racialization creates a couple of dilemmas. First, the editors of the Special Issue introduce race and racialization on the basis of a severe and putatively new criticism that addresses the concept of ethnicity with reference to the Roma. This putatively new criticism of the view that links cultural particularity to shared ancestry and a monolithic and homogenized Roma identity is possible only if one deliberately ignores already existing contributions that have questioned the very utility of 'ethnicity' as an explanatory model of the actually existing, divergent ways of

being and becoming Roma/Gypsy (for example: Stewart, 2013). In social anthropology and other disciplines several scholars have argued already for constructivist and relational analyses to avoid essentialized approaches to ethnicity in general and the Roma in particular (for example: Ries 2008 among others). The editors' call to refuse 'cultural obsessions about Roma specificity' or 'pathologized otherness' may sound rhetorically convincing as a preface to engaged forms of anti-racist criticism, but under closer scrutiny rather proves to be an instance of academic shadow-boxing.

Second, the way it comes across from these recent accounts is that the visible appearance of (Eastern-European) Roma as migrants in Western states is the key event that legitimizes their inclusion among the subjects of scholarship on racialization and the European politics of identity. By this analytical move, critical scholars can work towards exposing the prevailing connections between racist anti-immigrant discourses – whether these target the categories of the 'Roma', or those of threatening '(Muslim) migrants', 'terrorists', 'criminals', or 'blacks'. In this framework, racialization is defined on the one hand as a form of sociopolitical domination that produces (and historically reproduces) distinct subjugated groups in hierarchical relations of power, but on the other hand the constitutive mechanisms of othering seem to follow more or less the same logic in each of the cases. Shall we assume that the concept of racialization is analytical shorthand for all those processes that distinguish the plight of Roma migrants from other precarious people on the move – including their Eastern-European fellow citizens? Or, on the contrary, does racialization refer to forms of governance and subjugation that render all these cases similar to one another? In order to accept that the transnational movement of the Roma has opened a new epoch in their history as a European racialized minority, we have to assume that the racialization of Roma has become prominent due to this recent migration wave, or that racialization – as a mode of governance – takes specific forms in the case of Roma as opposed to other minorities (or minoritized categories). However, as argued elsewhere (for example: Fox, 2013), in Western states such as the UK the 'uses of racism' also target non-Roma Eastern European migrants who strive to improve their situation in segmented labor markets by referring to their putative whiteness as a mark of social worthiness that is often denied to them. Apparently, the racialization of migrants as a form of governance and control affects a wide range of people in Western states (and beyond), including many Roma co-citizens from the states of the post-socialist European periphery. As the editors of another recent volume also noted, while the migration of Roma has been irregularized and framed as a threat to public order in the host countries, the labels 'poverty migrants' or 'social tourists' have also been deployed in relation to Eastern European migrant citizens in general in appeals for forms of governance different from those employed with fellow EU citizens

(van Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide, 2018). If the concepts of racialization or securitization are supposed to account for all such distinctions between more or less desirable migrants and forms of mobility in Europe, the conceptual grounds for developing a separate analytical category for Roma migration may turn out to be uncertain. As part of the long list of ‘-izations’ that Roma are exposed to, the concept of nomadization refers to forms of governance based on repeated evictions, expulsions and other instances of forced mobility. The claim for the specificity of racialization with regard to Roma in ‘EU-rope’ is usually justified by reference to the existing stereotypes that present nomadism as an inherent feature of the Roma as such. In fact, one can rightfully refuse any racialized labeling of nomadism, or other notions about any Roma-specific inclination for moving around, on the basis of the long-term historical experience of sedentarization among the Roma populations of Eastern European states. However, such an overall refusal is still difficult to reconcile with the historical record of ways in which concepts of nomadism or travelling have been codified in the cases of autochthonous itinerant groups such as the Travellers in the UK or the Voyagers in France (see: Gheorghe and Pulay, 2013: 63-73). One may assume that the aforementioned resurgence of the nomad label was at least partly also due to these histories and legal traditions – besides the sheer racism of local majorities during the hectic times of the Roma-related security crisis in Europe. The reconciliation of these divergent histories of Roma as a European racialized minority is still largely ahead of us.

It has already been argued that the recent accounts of racialization and the governance of the poor and Roma in Europe tend to focus on the (discursive) production of subordination, while the related accounts often remain ethnographically weak in terms of the histories or the practical adjustments of their subjects to structures of domination (see: Grill, 2017). It is perhaps an effect of the analytical preoccupation with securitization in these accounts that the potential roles of the acting subjects seem to be limited to a pair of options. One of these options is to make certain negative policy effects visible (as occurs with highlighting human rights violations), and hence to occupy a position of victimhood that can be a starting point for humanitarian assistance and political claim-making. The other related option is to exercise some form of resistance to such forms of conduct which can be evaluated or interpreted in terms of ‘pre-’ or ‘infra-political’ action. However, the scholarly qualification of certain acts as ‘pre-’ or ‘infra-political’ is often just a way to say that in the respective practices are already embedded certain seeds of subversion and revolt that the engaged observers would wish to see unfolding in the future. Because of similar biases, students of resistance often tend to exaggerate the hopes their research participants share *against* and not *for* the state or certain types of state-intervention (Jansen, 2014). Some recent ethnographies of Roma migration have already pointed out the limitations and

ready-made assumptions of these perspectives. Legros and Lievre consider the multiple initiatives of Roma migrants (primarily from Romania) who search for better lives in the midst of constraints on their free movement and residence in France (2018). The main protagonists in their account do not refuse institutional conduct, but try to penetrate the structures of social protection and integration in order to gain access to its prospective benefits and opportunities. Not unlike the Bosnian Roma in Italy (as introduced by Solimene, see above), these migrants strive to avoid open confrontation with the authorities even when they anticipate evictions, move to other places or rely on the help of their relatives back home or in the receiving country. In his account of the movements of Roma migrants between Slovakia and Great Britain in search of better lives, Grill (2017) coins the concept of ‘migrating racialisations’ to account for the transformations of knowledge and dispositions regarding the move between societies with divergent racial histories, classifications and fantasies. Upon their arrival in Great Britain, Roma migrants from Slovakia found themselves in different and diverse settings where their skin color was not necessarily perceived as an indicator of the same subordinated status that was familiar to them in their country of origin. Nevertheless, this was not a durable state of affairs as anti-Gypsyism gained prominence in Britain, and the issue of Roma migration came to the forefront of interest among media-workers and public authorities, as well as activists and academic experts who were striving to fight negative stereotypes and to develop their own expertise about the Roma as a general category.

In sum, based on the recent Roma-related scholarship, it seems that the arrival of East-European Roma migrants to Western receiving states became an event that eventually legitimized the inclusion of the Roma (in general) among the subjects of critical scholarship on racialization and the European politics of identity. As mentioned above, during the 1990s and early 2000s the plight of the Roma was typically understood in scholarly and policy-related terms through putative analogies with the situation of Afro-Americans in deindustrialized US inner cities. In the current discursive setting, we come across similar analytical efforts aimed at making connections between the situation of the Roma and that of refugees, postcolonial migrants, or stateless people. In a rather paradoxical manner, while these approaches aim to be part of broader emancipatory projects, in practical terms they might reinforce the subordinated situation of the Roma as ‘late-comers’ in the fields of academic knowledge-production, as well as political and recognition struggles: as if their ‘right to exist’ as legitimate subjects of critical inquiry were limited to the extent that their situation fits (or at least its comparable to) the cases of other social categories that are exposed to ‘more advanced’ forms of marginalization. Similar to the concept of the ghetto in earlier scholarship, racialization is also an umbrella term that lumps together a wide set of different cases, hence it

entails the risk of conflation instead of the fostering of well-established comparisons (see: Wacquant, 2008). The focus on the recent forms of Roma mobility in Europe may foster new analytical (and with this, political) linkages between the case of the Roma and that of other migrants from postcolonial or other (semi-)peripheral regions. Even if the current modes of governance rely on similarly essentialized representations with regard to a wide variety of Europe's 'others', this fact should not serve as a basis for analytical misrepresentation – and therefore political misrecognition – that depicts the actual social positions and histories of the respective people as akin.

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Book Review

Celia Donert (2017) *The Rights of the Roma: The Struggle for Citizenship in Postwar Czechoslovakia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celia Donert's impressive study of the changing situation of Roma in Czechoslovakia since the Second World War is to be welcomed for its thorough treatment of this important subject matter. For those interested in this topic, her book is essential reading as it reveals a 'largely forgotten history'. The careful and informed scholarship is evident throughout - often drawing on previously restricted official sources - and arguments are supported by a comprehensive bibliography and detailed footnotes. While the principal focus of the book is on developments in Czechoslovakia, there are frequent comparisons with neighbouring socialist states. The commentary is enlivened by the experience of key Roma individuals, while references do not detract from the lucid explanations of policy shifts and their causes.

A major aspect of Donert's account is that it challenges conventional Cold War narratives which locate 'the apparent emergence of Roma rights in the context of the Eastern European "democratic transition" after 1989.' Instead, she argues convincingly, 'socialist regimes in the Soviet bloc played a crucial role in the future development of discourses and practices of Roma rights by providing the Roma with equal rights and economic opportunities as citizens after 1945.' (p. 273) As a consequence, the 'redistributive, egalitarian logic of the socialist economy had reduced the relative deprivation of Roma populations.' As Donert points out: 'by 1960, Czechoslovakia had the lowest income inequality of any country in the world.'

A 1967 study of social stratification in Czechoslovakia showed the average monthly income of employed Roma men to be higher than that of Slovaks. This remarkable transformation from their impoverished situation in the interwar period had come about following the post-Second World War migration of many Roma from rural Slovakia to Czech cities and industrial areas in search of better-paid labouring jobs.

Given the numerous criticisms made by human rights organisations about the treatment of Roma during the Communist era, Donert's positive view of this period may seem surprising. However, she presents Roma as political actors helping to shape their future identity rather than as passive victims of state policy, emphasising the important role played by Roma activists, many of whom were Party members such as the sociologist Miroslav Holomek, lawyer Tomáš Holomek and author Elena Lacková. This is in marked contrast to the Canadian historian Gordon Skilling's dismissal of Czechoslovak Roma as 'culturally backward and unorganised.'

Her nuanced account also reveals the conflicting views of Roma held by key officials within the state apparatus, some of whom offered forthright support for Roma rights. As early as 1949, the Communist-dominated Central Council of Trade Unions had opposed the establishment of special labour camps to re-educate Roma migrant

workers, arguing that Gypsies had shown 'better adaptability to the new conditions... than many other classes.' Party newspapers also complained about the 'overcrowded, flea-infested wooden shacks' provided by the country's largest steelworks to house its Roma workers. Later, Vladimír Srb, the leading demographer at the State Statistical Office, protested officially against the government decision that Roma were not to be classified as a nationality.

At the same time Donert does not flinch from discussing the significant shortcomings of Communist policy towards Roma. These were highlighted in a fiercely critical 1978 report by the dissident organisation Charter 77 which accused the government of a series of human rights abuses.

More than 20 years earlier, alarmed by mounting non-Roma concern at the emergence of virtual Roma ghettos in Czech towns and cities, the government had decided that 'a final solution to the gypsy question' was required. Roma were accused of 'sitting on piles of gold and cash ... destroying our economy while the toiling masses are building socialism in our homeland'. The chosen solution was a 1958 law against nomadism, partially influenced by a similar 1956 Soviet decree outlawing Gypsy vagrancy. Donert argues that these laws were part of an attempt to legitimise socialist regimes after the arbitrary rule of Stalin.

Although nominally aimed at the few genuinely nomadic Roma of the Vlach minority, the real target of the Czechoslovak law was the settled Roma majority. At this time, most Roma still lived in Slovakia, concentrated in isolated, segregated settlements lacking basic infrastructure, which were the reservoir from where migrant workers were drawn. For those registered as 'nomads', moving elsewhere without local authority permission was punishable by up to three years imprisonment. Implementation of the law largely failed, as Donert recognises, because 'local and national state agencies pursued contradictory approaches to Roma migration; local authorities supported migration to get rid of their Gypsies, while central bodies attempted to limit or stop migration.'

Poor results led, in 1965, to the adoption of a 'dispersal and transfer' programme aimed at the elimination of Roma concentrations. The intention was to assimilate Roma into the wider population, partly to eradicate their 'cultural backwardness' but also to avoid demands for national minority status. This new initiative collapsed after three years, again largely due to resistance by local authorities. After three further years – and in the aftermath of the tumultuous Prague Spring – the now permitted Slovak Roma Union pointed out that the 1965 measures violated the constitutional right to freedom of movement of Roma citizens.

One of the strongest charges in the Charter 77 report was that Czechoslovak doctors were carrying out what amounted to genocide. Not only were Roma women offered cash incentives for sterilisation but this procedure was often performed without their consent or even knowledge. This was confirmed by a 2003 report which disturbingly 'revealed [that sterilisation without consent] was continuing into the post-socialist era.' Such practices occurred within the context of official concern about the rapid growth of the Roma population and amid allegations that Roma had many children in order to maximise their income from child benefit payments.

After the failure of the dispersal plan, several all-Gypsy housing estates were built in the 1970s and after in a reversal of the previous policy. Donert explains that

these were presented as model housing improvements, but that Charter 77 criticised them as segregated ghettos. The first example was Chanov in the North Bohemian city of Most, where the previous Roma district was demolished to make way for an open-cast mine for brown coal. This was followed by similar schemes in Slovakia, such as the Luník IX estate on the outskirts of the East Slovak regional capital of Košice. The local Slovak population had resented the large Roma concentration in the town centre and welcomed the demolition of this quarter. The scheme to resettle Roma was supported by the mayor, Rudolf Schuster, later to become Slovak president.

At the same time that physical segregation of Roma was increasing, there was growing educational separation of Roma children. These were often unjustifiably consigned to special schools for those with learning disabilities, a practice denounced by Charter 77. By the mid-1980s, almost half of school-age Roma attended a special school, which limited their employment possibilities to unskilled jobs.

With the emphasis on rights as its theme, an important topic in Donert's book is the role of Czechoslovak Roma activists in the developing international Romani movement. While Roma attempts to mobilise in Czechoslovakia before 1968 had been rejected as counter-productive nationalism, the failure of the dispersal policy - coinciding with the arrival of the Prague Spring - prompted a fresh approach and Roma activists were allowed to form their own cultural associations and related economic organisations. Donert explains that although representatives from the Czech Roma Union were permitted to attend the First World Romani Congress, held near London in 1971, they were closely supervised by embassy staff. These officials reportedly praised the delegation's positive account of the situation of Roma in Czechoslovakia in comparison with those living in the capitalist West.

Nevertheless, 'the Roma Unions survived for just four years, before being forced into "voluntary" liquidation' following 'an internal [Party] report that "the Gypsy intelligentsia, supported by outsiders, is starting to ... [make] demands for Gypsies-Roma to be recognised as a nationality".' Meanwhile, the economic organisations were accused of corruption because, instead of using their state funding 'supposed to support "traditional gypsy crafts (coppersmiths, blacksmiths, pottery)"', they were using them to "conduct entrepreneurial activities for socialist economic organisations", frequently by "selling labour force" - in other words, hiring out Roma construction workers on an informal basis for short-term work in state companies.'

The bulk of this book focuses on Czechoslovakia and only the final chapter deals with post-Communism and the failure of neo-liberal, post-socialist governments to secure effective rights for their Roma citizens. In the first post-Communist parliamentary elections, Czechoslovakia returned 11 Roma MPs - more than any other Eastern European country - but after 1992 only a single one remained. The Velvet Divorce of 1993 - hailed as the peaceful separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia - was manipulated by the Czech government in an attempt to deny citizenship to an estimated 150,000 Roma residents. Meanwhile, Roma - working in low-skilled, labour-intensive occupations before 1989 - 'experienced the transformation as a *loss* of rights in all fields of life: employment, education, housing, and health.' Meanwhile, racist attacks on Roma drove many to seek asylum in Western Europe.

Significantly, virulent anti-Roma prejudice is not only a populist phenomenon. Unfortunately, there was not space in the book to document the racist utterances and attitudes of leading Czech and Slovak politicians, which helps explain the lack of progress in improving Roma rights in key areas. However, reluctance in acknowledging complicity of Czechoslovaks in the labour camp at Lety, where Roma were held before being transferred to the Nazi death camps, and the reluctance to commemorate these victims, as well as the continuing large proportion of Roma children in special schools, tell their own story.

In Donert's view, 'human rights for Roma ... emerged not as a solution to the problems caused by Communism but as a response to the vacuum created by the collapse of citizenship rights in the socialist bloc after 1989.' (p. 276) A Slovakian research report on returned Roma emigrants conveyed a similar message: 'Every single Roma whom we have spoken with claimed that for Roma it was easier to live in this country before 1990. As one of them put it: "It is necessary to return the Roma where he was ten years ago".'

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Book Review

Yaron Matras & Daniele Viktor Leggio (2018) *Open borders, unlocked cultures. Romanian Roma Migrants in Western Europe*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge.

The Romanian Roma migration towards Western European countries has attracted considerable public and scientific interest in the last decade. The role of social networks in migration process of Romanian Roma (e.g. Pantea 2012), the integration into the host society (e.g. Vrăbiescu-Kalir 2017), their experiences, strategies and opportunities in the host country (e.g. Moroşanu-Fox 2013; Manzoni 2016; Humphris 2017), the identity construction (e.g. Nacu 2011), and the attitudes of the host society (e.g. Roman 2014) have been studied as well.

This book seeks to contribute to the literature by providing the ethnography of Roma migration, its aim is to understand the push and pull factors of their migration, the internal social organisation of the migrating communities, and the development of transnational networks that facilitate it. Furthermore, it investigates the social and political reactions to the settlement of Roma migrants at a local level.

The studies of the book were born within the framework of the MigRom project ('The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects and future engagements strategies'), which was supported by European Commission's Seventh Framework research programme for four years (2013-2017). The project was coordinated by the University of Manchester, the project's partners were the University of Manchester (UK), the Fondation Maison des Sciences Hommes (France), the University of Granada (Spain), the University of Verona (Italy), and the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. The non-academic participants were the European Roma and Travellers Forum and the Manchester City Council.

The project applied a cross-disciplinary approach combining history, anthropology, sociology and linguistics as well. All the main destination countries (the UK, Spain, France, and Italy) of Roma migration were covered by the research. This multi-sited nature of the research allowed it to employ a transnational comparative perspective in the analysis of conditions and circumstances of the Roma migrants in different host countries. The inclusion of the sender country into the investigation enriched the research by providing information on the motivations to migrate and on the effects of migration on the home communities.

The project employed a wide array of research methods: it relied on surveys, participant observations, different types of interviews, archive research, document analysis and in some sites additional methods were used as well.

The Migrom project proposes an innovative research model that emphasises the involvement of Roma community members in the research design, analysis and the dissemination of the results, thus contributing to the capacity building and

empowerment of Roma migrants. Another original feature of the research is the involvement of a local authority (the Manchester City Council) in the project, which allowed them to draft, examine, implement and evaluate the measures affecting the Roma migrants, and to influence the reports and meetings of the City Council. Additionally, the project has put a great emphasis on public engagement and on the dissemination of the project's recommendations among policy makers.

After the introductory chapter, the structure of the book follows a historical sequence, beginning with a chapter on the history of Romanian Roma from the 19th century onwards, continuing with chapters on the process of migration and the role of networks in it, and ending with chapters which are connected to the life of Roma migrants in the host society.

In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) Matras and Leggio provide the definition of the term 'Roma', present the approaches and research areas in the study of Roma migration, highlight the role of Roma involvement in research, and describe the MigRom project. The term 'Roma' is applied by the authors "... to refer to those populations that employ that label as their community-based self-ascription, irrespective of lifestyle, social status or occupational patterns, or who otherwise self-identify explicitly as belonging to communities whose members self-ascribe as Roma." (p5).

Asséo et al. (Chapter 2) introduce the history of Romanian Roma in the 19th to 20th century and highlight how the integration of Roma into Romanian society relates to their migration in each era. The chapter highlights that the Roma participated in seasonal agrarian labour, because they were able to organise large mobile work brigades around their family networks. The preservation of their internal community organisation and a distinct ethnic identity was due to this work organisation mode. After the regime change, when the job opportunities in the agrarian sector narrowed, the pioneers of the migration relied on those broad family ties, which resulted from the formation of work brigades.

Toma et al. (Chapter 3) examine the different migration patterns of the Roma at five Romanian sites and the effect of migration on home communities. They found that some of the local Roma migrated after the regime change, however their migration emerged with the accession of Romania to the European Union in 2007. The pioneers of Roma migration relied on close kinship networks, while the later migrants engaged in the migration of the majority population. That is, the migration of the local Roma was not based on ethnic networks, but on narrower or broader networks. Despite the different migration patterns, the consequences of migration were identical in the cases of the five settlements. The migration resulted in status increase for both migrants and non-movers, which was often accompanied with residential and ethnical desegregation. The most typical status investment, the construction of houses contributed to the flourishing of the local informal job market and to the development of informal economic activities in some settlements, which eased local unemployment.

Gamella et al. (Chapter 4) study the role of kinship networks in the migration of a Roma family (Jonesci) to the West. The first adults of Jonesci family started to move abroad after the death of Ceauşescu, today more than 1,000 family members live in Western Europe and in the United States. In the absence of human capital, the strong

and dense kinship network enabled their successful transnational migration. However, the reliance solely on social capital has negative consequences as well, for example it can limit the relation with outsiders, it can restrict individual freedom or it can impose downward levelling norms.

Pontrandolfo (Chapter 5) investigates how local policies influence the capacity to aspire of two Roma family networks in Italy by determining the terms of their recognition. According to the results allowing and supporting stable living conditions by local authorities has a positive effect on the future plans of the Roma migrants. Those Roma, who live in frequently evacuated unauthorised settlements, plan for the short term, while those interlocutors, who have access to a permanent home and experience some forms of political participation as citizenships, can afford to have long-term future plans. Furthermore, Pontrandolfo found that the recognition of Roma migrants by local policies contributes another way to the capacity to aspire: it enables them to give a voice to their discontent and thus they can influence the status quo. The conclusion of the study is that local authorities should encourage recognising Roma since it facilitates their well-being – through the development of their capacity to aspire.

Cousin (Chapter 6) shows the establishment and the eradication of a Roma shantytown in France. On the one hand, it was examined what legitimised the power of the founder and leader of the settlement. Cousin identified that his power was based on neither the family prestige nor the monopoly of domination, but on the necessity to maintain internal order in the shantytown, that is, it was a form of territorial power. On the other hand, the study investigated the factors that have led to the destruction of the settlement. According to the author, the fact that local institutions regarded the shantytown as illegal means that the negotiation with its representation – with the headman – was denied. In other words, the lack of formal recognition of the community caused the destruction of the shantytown.

Matras and Leggio (Chapter 7) show in their study how some young members of a Roma migrant community in Manchester reacted when the issue of ‘safeguarding and early marriage’ appeared in the discourse of local institutions and voluntary sector organisations. First the group initiated a consultation with the Manchester City Council on that the ethnicisation of these issues is harmful and problematic for their community, but the authority refused it. Therefore the group established the ‘Roma Voices of Manchester’ and started to organise public statements and events and to consult with local officials about policies that relate to them. The aim of their collective action was the re-privatisation of discourses on Romani identity and to emphasise the similarities – rather than the differences – between them and their non-Roma neighbours. Their mobilisation activities were successful: the City Council recognised Roma Voices of Manchester as a representative of the Roma community and admitted that some of their previous reports contained false information. According to the authors, the focus on inclusion and mainstream participation instead of a demand for public recognition of cultural rights suggests a new perspective on the questions of identity politics and ethnic mobilisation.

A major advantage of the book is that it provides a comprehensive picture on the transnational migration of Romanian Roma. On the one hand, the research covers all the main destination countries of Romanian Roma migrants, as well as different

sites in the home country, which allows the project to apply a comparative perspective. On the other hand, the project uses numerous research methods of several disciplines, which allows it to create multifaceted and thorough analyses.

However, the book is a great contribution to the field of migration studies, it has some shortcomings. Firstly, the individual chapters provide readers with little theoretical background and a common theoretical platform cannot be discovered. This may be related to the fact that the research question in some studies is not well-defined or is not presented, hence some of the chapters are highly descriptive. Secondly, Chapter 2 on the history of Romanian Roma considerably contributes to the understanding of the context of migration, but the presentation of the socioeconomic status of the Roma population in Romania is lacking from the book. Thirdly, the introductory chapter describes that several research methods of different disciplines were used by the project and it obtained very rich empirical material, however, it would have been useful to explain in more detail the methodology of each chapter. Finally, the title of the book and Chapter 1 suggest that open borders can unlock cultures, however, some studies (see e.g. Chapter 6) support just the opposite and therefore the title could be a bit misleading.

As I see it the main message of the book is that it emphasises the dilemmas on identity politics and ethnic mobilisation: while some studies of the book highlight the importance of the recognition of cultural rights, another chapter underlines the significance of inclusion into mainstream society and equal opportunities.

Due to its multi-disciplinary approach, the book is of interest to researchers from several fields such as history, anthropology, sociology and linguistics, as well as of policy makers in the field of migration.

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