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# Around and Around: The Politics of Mobility in Everyday Lives of Roma in current day Hungary

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## Abstract

Asylum-seeking and significant out-migration have been the response of many Roma communities who continue to face multiple insecurities in their everyday lives, leaving them to their own survival devices. This work seeks to understand how we approach and categorize realities of such internal and cross-border displacements of Roma in current day Hungary. Drawing from an interdisciplinary field of mobilities and borders scholarship, this paper advances the concept of border regimes to approach intersecting regimes of movement control and the dynamics of mobility and enclosure at local and transnational levels. This lens is translated in the case of protracted Roma family evictions, and their struggles with an externalized border regime in the city of Miskolc, Hungary. Fieldwork accounts and snapshots, deriving from on-going ethnographic research in the city's 'Numbered Streets', Roma-populated, residential neighborhood will provide the premises for empirical investigation.

*Keywords: border regimes; mobility and enclosure; location of dispersion; evictions; ETA; Miskolc.*

*'Where do you think that one is going?' 'Lyukó!' He said, replying to my question.*
*Then his sister, pointing at the fading jet stream*
*running perpendicular to the first one, said*
*'That one is going to Budapest!'*
*'Noooo!' He replied, tossing freshly ripped grass in the air.*
*Outraged. 'That one is going to Canada!'*
*The sky reveals the tell-tales that only children can envision.*

## *1. Introductions*

While recent works yield rich empirical contributions to the study of Roma cross-border migration networks (see: Vidra, 2013) and the problematization and racialization of Roma migration (see: De Genova and Yildiz, 2017), this paper proposes a study of border regime formation through the experiential scale, attentive to the ways Roma encounter extended bordering practices across various substrates of governance. A turn to border regimes – social institutions that function to both expedite and impede the movements of goods, ideas, and people along a continuum of uneven status distribution – can approximate emergent and latent powers that condition and manage the everyday of Roma mobilities. While most works on regimes of border control emphasize the spatial or topological effects of bordering practices, my intent – through a micro-analytical entry point – is to comprehend the banal and temporal aspects of border regimes that arise in the process of mobility-enclosure dynamics (Cunningham and Heyman, 2004). This is not an analysis of deportations, detentions, or encampments, but on the personal, affective and normalizing effects regimes of border control are experienced and lived through by individuals. A focus on border *regimes* accounts for changing political environments, and can elucidate how borders are in fact imbued with meaning by and concerning a plethora of actors, institutions, norms, ideas and practices that construct partial and quasi-coherent fields of mobility management.

Discerning border regimes, particularly in studies of Roma migration and displacement, can lead to more attuned understandings of subject formations that reflect the complexity of migration and border security today. To do so, my work is intrinsically tied to and informed by experiences, trajectories and possibilities of migration, with reflection upon the macro- and micro-structures in place that either impede or attempt to control levels of mobility. This paper sets out to study the interstices of border regime formation and how they unfold in Roma-populated communities undergoing out-migration and displacement in current day Hungary. Informed by informal interviews and participant observation conducted since the spring of 2016 within the 'Numbered Streets' residential neighborhood in the city of Miskolc, I aim to provide a different epistemological and ontological entry point into debates on Roma migration. I build from what anthropologist Julie Y. Chu (2011) calls the 'location of dispersion' as starting point and field site for multiple mobilities, and forms of emplacement and displacement, that mark the intersections for regimes of border control. Such a concept disrupts the typical migration spatial analytic that bisects migratory journeys between an 'origin' and a 'destination', and rethinks the idea of permanent settlement in the process of cross-border movement.

The paper will begin with a literature review of current work on Roma migration and mobility, with a focus on what is occluded in research that affords primacy to network and security objects of analyses for explaining Roma migration and mobility. To complement these works, I introduce the dynamics of mobility and enclosure applied through the case of the 'Numbered Streets' residential settlement in the city of Miskolc, Hungary. Of pertinence here is the overlapping of two border regimes: the advancement of the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) profiling mechanism by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), and the inner workings of the city's protracted eviction campaign of Roma populated neighborhoods. Engagement with how these regimes have profound effects on migration knowledge sets, how new border mechanisms are navigated and lived within by Numbered Streets inhabitants will comprise the final section of the paper. The concluding section will synthesize the various analyses teased out of the application of the concept, as well as turn to the prospect of refinement of this research agenda for furthering empirical work.

## *2. Literature Review*

Since EU enlargement and the extension of EU citizenship to Central and Eastern European member states, there has been a documented increase in xenophobic anti-Roma sentiment (FRA, 2009; Sigona and Trehan, 2009), as well as a correlated rise in the problematization of Roma who migrate or Roma as *a priori* migrants.

Much scholarly work has been attentive to the ways Roma are *made* into irregular migrants. The predominant focus of critical scholarship has been on the connection between speech acts that frame Roma migration *cum* national security threats, and a correlative economy of racialized imageries. Cross-border policing of Romanian and Bulgarian Romani nationals, as well as the criminalization of Roma encampments in Italy[1] and France[2] since EU enlargement, have been paradigmatic examples of what Angéla Kócze (2017) has aptly termed the 'racialized regime of representation' of Roma mobilities. These representations circulate 'Romaphobic' imageries of Roma as 'nomads', 'excessively mobile', and welfare dependent 'beggars' and 'criminals' who migrate around the EU (van Baar, 2011; Parker, 2012; Pusca, 2010; Picker, 2010; Sardelic, 2014). These imageries are reproduced to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate mobile classes, and regular and irregular forms of migration.[3] Ultimately, as these works argue, a triaged and unequal distribution of the right to 'freedom of movement' across racial and class divisions constitutes Roma as comprising an 'un/free labour' class (De Genova and Yildiz, 2017).

[1] Such as the de-legitimation of Kosovar Roma refugees in the 90s as 'nomads' (Sigona, 2005) and the criminalization of Roma populated encampments and the policing of Romanian nationals with the passing of the 'Nomad Emergency Decree' in 2008, has been emblematic of the Italian government's treatment of Roma (Hepworth, 2015).

[2] In France, former President Sarkozy's 'discours de Grenoble' and his call to dismantle unauthorized 'savage camps' provided fodder for expulsions of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma nationals. State programs of selective assimilation were also inaugurated as civilizing spaces for migrants (i.e. 'les villages d'inclusion') (see: Bessone et al., 2013), to sort between economically viable versus unviable integration candidates, while also targeting *gens du voyage* and French citizenries as a 'new truancy problem' and thus internal enemies of French republicanism and public order (Guild and Carrera, 2013).

The aforementioned works pull predominantly from Foucauldian and discursive analyses of power and security, providing a top-down perspective (statist, univocal gaze) of how Roma migrants are produced as problematic moving subjects. Meanwhile, ethnographic and empirically grounded studies of chain migration of Roma communities along the East-West conjecture continue to illustrate the polyvocal and "mixed" – both economic (read labour) and political (read asylum seeking) – factors for Roma migration (Grill 2012; Vidra 2013; Durst 2013). While cognizant of the inequalities of migration, these works place an emphasis on how Roma migration networks function and are sustained over time. Motivations for leaving home countries, and the allures of upward mobility, are gleaned to construct representations of entire migratory processes. In doing so, and by practicing multi-sited methodologies of 'following' their research subjects, these researchers have shed light on how certain normative categorizations of migration used to depict Roma migrants are conceptually inadequate for the sociological conveyance of how networks and social ties across borders are formed and cultures of migration sustained.

Running in parallel and in conjunction with these works, this paper aims to comprehend the experiences and affects that border regimes produce. Security discourses that crystallize Roma migration as racialized objects of state power do exemplify the normalized apartheid conditions that Roma populations continue to endure; however, such an analytical position also homogenizes mobility as a realization of the emancipated myth of full EU citizenship that Roma must practice autonomously to access those rights (Aradau et al., 2009; 2010; De Genova and Yildiz, 2017) and experiences of cross-border migration. Furthermore, such an approach overprivileges a spatial conception of intra-EU border politics: the site of spatial segregation and the site of nation-state border crossings.

Pulling from debates in critical border and mobility studies, this paper presents border regimes as indeterminate structures that are made and re-made according to processes of both mobility and enclosure (Cresswell, 2010; Cunningham and Heyman, 2004). Articulated eloquently by Cunningham and Heyman (2004), the dialectical process of mobility and enclosure captures the vacillating quality of contemporary border politics. For analytical purposes, Cunningham and Heyman (2004) argue that enclosure is a social process that binds, or limits the movement of goods, ideas and people, while mobility enables and propels these movements (ibid. 293). The 'border', therefore, is not a fixed, ahistorical site of inclusivity or exclusivity, but a regime. Mobility theorists Glick-Schiller and Salazar (2013) propose a shift to the language of regimes because it 'call[s] attention to the role both of individual states and of changing international regulatory and surveillance administrations that affect individual mobility' and thus '*normalize* the movements of some travelers while criminalizing and entrapping the ventures of others' (2013: 189, italics my own). Regimes of transnational border control inevitably produce and reproduce normalized inequalities of mobility and, by extension, variegated border effects. Borders are politicized on a continuum between mobility and enclosure. Furthermore, they are social institutions constantly renegotiated to differentially include based on prevailing cultural, economic, and social norms and values (Mezzadra and Nielson, 2011; 2013). From a spatial perspective, borders need to be rethought as biopolitical (global political economy – productive) and not solely as geopolitical (international state system – static) boundaries (see: Parker et al., 2009;

Vaughn-Williams, 2009) and as sites of multiple visualities and effects (Rumford, 2006; Johnson et al., 2011). Temporally, the elasticity of border effects and their uneven distribution across status type have, has variegated, protracted and prolonged impacts on the lived conditions of migrants across divergent legal statuses (De Genova, 2002; 2010; Willen, 2007a; 2007b; Giordano, 2014). Additionally, a temporal lens also allows us to think of the politics of waiting and synchronous subject positions of the passive, feminine and docile genuine refugee in refugee camps, or the psycho-somatic effects of incarceration that escaping subjects endure (Bissell, 2007; Conlon, 2011; McNevin and Missbach, *forthcoming*).

For recent approaches to Roma migration, multi-perspectival lenses have prompted researchers to think through the more 'unseen' governmentalities of legibility. Advanced functions of virtual identification and biometric profiling now make up technologies of 'dataveillance' to sort deserving and undeserving subjects (see: Nagy and Oude-Breuil, 2015). Other researchers have begun to look at the politics of reclamation and counter-membership occurring in policed encampments populated by Roma inhabitants (Sigona, 2015). These approaches give us a tiered perspective on the complexity of governmentalities, adding breadth and scope to analyses of moving subjects, including the viewpoints of migrants, or migrants-to-be themselves. Reminding us of how Barak Kalir (2013) argues that studies of mobility would do well to import border perspectives through 'the eyes of those involved in them'.

What is not conveyed in the approaches to Roma migration above is how simultaneous change in or intensifications of border regimes produce contingent expectations on mobilized or immobilized subjects in their everyday lives. By focusing on realities of extended border regime effects in sites, far from geopolitical borders, I wish to showcase how the dynamics of mobility and enclosure function simultaneously within the everyday. Various aspects of everyday life are highlighted to accentuate the contradictions that traverse the constant process of mobility and enclosure.

## *3. Case & Context*

To approach the politics of border regimes and Roma mobility, my research has taken me to the Northeastern Hungarian city of Miskolc. There are two factors of social and political inquiry that make Miskolc a critical site of research on Roma mobility and border regimes: the events of on-going displacements of Roma neighbourhoods, as well as the phenomenon of significant out-migration and asylum seeking of Roma families and households.

The reality of Roma forced evictions, resettlements and displacements has been an on-going, pan-historical period political reality in the city of Miskolc (Lengyel, 2009). The ethnification of property relations between Roma and non-Roma has been a politicized issue in the city and the region more broadly during the post-socialist period (Havasi, 2013; Ladányi and Szelényi, 2006; Ladányi and Virág, 2009). Recently, in 2014, the city's local government began a city-wide 'slum' (*nyomortelepek*) eviction and eradication campaign to rid the city of settlements over represented by Roma inhabitants (Rorke and Szendrey, 2016) and the socially subsidized housing stock, more generally. 'Slum' neighborhoods slated for or policed for eviction, have been discursively constructed as hotbeds of crime, with disorderly

(*rendetlen*) tenants who have incurred too much debt (*tartozás*), lacking fences or clean yards. At the center of this campaign is the 'Numbered Streets' residential neighborhood.

Marches and anti-eviction demonstrations, part of the 'We are staying in Miskolc!' (*Miskolcon Maradunk!*) campaign, were organized by the Roma National Self Government and local activist groups in solidarity with the residents of the Numbered Streets. Additionally, civil rights organizations such as the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) and the National Minorities Equal Rights Authority (NEKI) launched a lawsuit against the city for denying alternative housing provisions and have had a presence in the neighborhood through the local Roma National Self-Government. International attention from journalists, lawyers and human rights activists, as well as transnational actors such as the U.S. Department of State, the American Ambassador to Hungary, and the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutes and Human Rights (ODIHR) have all, to varying degrees, been present within the neighborhood and have spoken out against the eviction proceedings. International pressure has not halted the evictions outright, but rather changed the language and tactics of eviction and relocation of the residents.

The 'Numbered Streets' settlement was built by the state in the early 20th century, and used as housing units for labor migrants and steel factory workers during the socialist period. On the Western periphery of the settlement is the city's Olympic sized football stadium project, which, beginning in 2015, received large quantities of national government funding to enlarge and rebuild. As a result, several of the streets were taken over, the residents evicted and the units demolished, all in the name of what Prime Minister Orbán Viktor calls the rebuilding of Hungarian 'self-esteem' (*önbecsülés*) (Boon, 2016). At the other edge of the neighborhood lie the Order of Malta Hungarian Charity Service[4] (MMSZ) offices, a humanitarian aid organization that has been granted *de facto* authority in the neighborhood by the local government's mayor's office. Their purpose is to build 'community' and to oversee an 'integration' and social housing project funded by European Union territorial rehabilitation and social cohesion funding (TÁMOP). While direct evictions have been curtailed, the protracted status of housing insecurity and uncertainty whether the social housing project will succeed or impeded by political agendas is still very much a part of the inhabitants' everyday life.

Cutting through these local political issues, is the reality of significant out-migration and asylum seeking, or what Zsuzsa Vidra (2013) calls 'cultures of migration' within the Roma communities of Miskolc. While not causally linked with the eviction proceedings 'per se', many Roma families have left Miskolc due to housing and labor precarity, with a significant number of families seeking asylum in Canada. Over the past decade, however, the Canadian external border regime has isolated the city of Miskolc as an origin of 'bogus refugee' claimants (CBSA, 2012). In 2007, 34 claims were made, whereas by 2010 the asylum applications spiked to 2,298 (Tóth, 2013). Between 2009 (one year after visa requirements were first lifted for Hungarian nationals due to the country's accession to Schengen and the EU) and 2012, roughly 9,000 Hungarian Roma sought asylum in Canada (Tóth, 2010; Vidra, 2013).

[4] Hereafter: MMSZ.

Rather than instate the interdiction technique of visa requirements, which set a bad precedent with Czech nationals in 2009 (Salter and Mutlu, 2011), alternative methods of deterrence have been continuously adopted. During the winter of 2012, the Canadian government funded a billboard and radio campaign in and around Roma populated communities in Miskolc warning any Roma potentially seeking asylum in Canada that their claims would be swiftly rejected. Additionally, the Canadian government instituted a Designated Country of Origin (DCO) list defining and naming 'safe' countries, thereby segmenting the possibility of legitimate refugee claims. As a consequence, many were deported back to Hungary, and in 2013, a year after the reforms were introduced, the number of asylum claims was '7... down 98 per cent from 412 in the same period a year earlier' and deemed a 'success' by the then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Jason Kenney: the ability to keep out 'bogus' refugee claimants (CIC, 2013). With the reforms to the Canadian refugee regime, many have either been deported or 'voluntarily returned'[5] to Miskolc since. Between 2012 and 2016, 6,942 Hungarian nationals were 'removed' from Canada – 3.4 people were removed for every person accepted (McClearn, 2017).

What the data of Roma migrating to Canada does not tell us about is the experiences of those who are turned away at airports within the EU due to the newly instituted and required Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA)[6] formally introduced by the CBSA. It is the latest biometric interdiction technique with the purpose of collecting vital information pertaining to the travelling individual's financial resources, criminal record, health record, and intentions upon arrival in Canada. The ETA is part of a bilateral agreement put in place between the United States and Canada in 2011, fully implemented in 2017 on the CBSA's front. An email and credit card are necessary to purchase and receive the ETA, presenting multiple barriers to access and receiving the form. Earlier iterations of the form, from 2015 until early 2017, did not offer Hungarian instruction sheets, which presented difficulties to complete without the assistance of an English language speaker.

While difficult to empirically attribute airport boarding queue removals to the ETA mechanism alone, these are not isolated cases. More generally, experiences of EU citizens, with visa free travel authorization to Canada and the U.S., unable to board their flights accentuates a recent shift in border interdiction cartography that at least places Hungarian nationals, of a particular socio-economic and ethnic background, as marginalized within the formal routes of travel. Within the Numbered Streets, the ETA and the non-linearity of cross-border migration, is a reality that takes shape in the neighborhood and comes across in how individuals speak of migratory possibilities.

This phenomenon of significant out-migration of Hungarian Roma communities to Canada, has been studied from the angle of asylum seeker experiences enduring the various failures associated with return migration, home sickness and the deep family ties that render cross-border migration a difficult task (Durst, 2013; Vidra and Virág, 2013). Legal theorists have also criticized the

[5] Voluntary return was a program put into motion by the International Organization on Migration (IOM) to ensure the 'reintegration' – loosely defined – of failed asylum seekers in their countries of origin by paying their return flights home and a payoff of 500-2000 CDN (based on size of family and number of children) (Rehaag et al., 2015). This program was cancelled in 2014.

[6] Referred to in Hungarian as the *beutazási engedély*.

institutional mechanisms of the Canadian refugee regime with its racial, and corrupt underpinnings (Beaudoin, Danch and Rehaag, 2015; Kernerman, 2008; Levine-Rasky et al., 2014; Macklin, 2013; Tóth, 2010; 2013). Yet, what necessitates further elucidation are the conceptual worlds that individuals build within a changing border regime: where new interdiction techniques, migration policies and security measures, alter the ways in which mobilities are curbed, expedited and created.

The Numbered Streets is a space of contradictory, and paradoxical relations: emblematic of slow processes of eviction and domicide, alongside the promise of community rehabilitation and integration programs, with a sustained economy of out-migration to Canada. By taking these divergent forms of mobility management – the reality of eviction and the management of out-migration – as a site of grounded research, I do not see the Numbered Streets as a site of migration 'origin', nor as a place of spatial segregation, but rather as a junction or 'location of dispersion' (Chu, 2011). By seeing the Numbered Streets as a location of dispersion, whereby multiple forces are inhibiting, propelling and ordering the mobility of Roma, I place emphasis on the narratives and experiences of circulation and how they inform us on the changing mobility management context at a more macro-level.

## *4. Methodology & Positionality*

This paper draws on data collected from fieldwork conducted over the course of 18 months. Alongside participant observation, I have conducted informal in-depth biographical interviews with Roma inhabitants of the Numbered Streets neighborhood in the Northeastern Hungarian city of Miskolc. Portions of these interviews and observations compose the field sights and empirical backbone of this article. The snapshots are to serve as windows into individual connections within a field of mobility and border regimes.

Spurred by a political and epistemic interest in the lived experiences of deportation, preliminary visits to Northeastern Hungary began in 2014 and 2015. Informal meetings were coordinated by Roma and non-Roma civil societal organizations involved in the city of Miskolc and in its outer townships. These networks offered me initial contact, and granted me audience, with families around the city, but also in the Numbered Streets neighborhood. Research focus on the politics of the Numbered Streets began due to my initial analysis of the overlapping complexities of the neighborhood itself: on-going spatial workings of intra-city segregation, the temporality of waiting and eviction, the micro-histories of displacement and the nexus between development and security discourses with regards to Roma related integration programming and associational groupings that vie for power within a given space.

My non-native Magyarness pegged me immediately as an outsider, especially when I was introduced, or introduced myself, as a 'Canadian researcher'. This designation became both barrier and access point of research. Experiences and memories of my interlocutors' lives in Toronto were readily shared and granted windows for which I could see differentiations made between personal desires, livelihoods, expectations, and conceptions of 'the good life' attributed to the process of becoming migrant. Presenting myself as 'Canadian' also pitted me as a *de facto* immigration expert and thus resource with presumed political capital to exert pressure

on the Canadian government to reverse deportation verdicts, or to sponsor the claims of interlocutors or relatives of interlocutors themselves. These, particularly during early fieldwork encounters, presented challenges, but also ushered in reflections on how individual understandings and expectations with regards to my presence in the neighborhood and the city placed me in the web or economy of the migration industry. A measure that is virtually unavoidable in this type of research.

I lived a 10-minute walk away from the Numbered Streets, and went to the neighborhood daily by foot. Early days were spent re-acquainting myself with families I had met during earlier visits, and going door-to-door to meet new residents. During a second phase of fieldwork, I began to meet more frequently with social workers at the humanitarian aid organization the Order of Malta (MMSZ). Taking part in work performed by the community work program, and helping the laborers (all employees are residents of the neighborhood) with various tasks: repair and renovate housing units under the ownership of the Order of Malta, cut grass around the neighborhood, lay brick to board up vacant housing units, and pick up garbage, and various other tasks. Daily coffee chats, or gossip (*pletykázás*) meetings, with mainly the elderly and the unemployed during the day took up my afternoons, sometimes into the evenings when their spouses arrived home from work.

In the snapshots below, I highlight how preparations to move abroad are made, yet never materialize; how confusion, imperceptions, and uncertainties on how to navigate new border regulations and controls, capture the frailty of networks individuals enter or choose to disengage from; and how processes of waiting produce certain forms of action, inaction and adaptation. Elongations, unknowns, and processes of waiting, are very much a part of the politics of mobility. They are underanalyzed social contexts in literature concerning the politics of inequalities in EU and trans-Atlantic Roma migration and in studies on the changing dynamics of border regimes, writ large. I present them in an anecdotal manner to convey their experiences *in situ* and real time, as extensions of field notes. Demographically, my interlocutors ranged in age, employment status, and gender. All names presented in this article are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of my interlocutors. Some interviews were recorded, but most were written down in my notebook.

## *5. The Onflow of Indeterminacy: Migration and Displacement in 'The Numbered Streets'*

### *5.1 Circulation within the streets*

Lajos arrives and plops himself on the crate beside us. Exhausted and reeking of sweat and petrol, he pulls out a plastic bag from his backpack full of cherries and hands them over to Ágnes, his wife. With his head cradled in his hands, he doubles over from an excruciating headache. Visibly in pain, he struggles to take off his shoes and leans back beneath the shadows that cover us from the searching sun. He was outside working near the Szinva River[7] with a string trimmer for well over 10 hours. Now, withdrawn under the walnut tree in their backyard, he can relax. Apart from his

[7] A river that cuts through the city of Miskolc.

workman's overalls, his face scarred, sunken, layered with residual coats of gasoline permanently mark him as an employee of the public works[8] program. A job that adds a decade or so to his image. After gathering himself he begins chatting about the Euro Cup and we laugh at how 'Orbán will gain 10 kilos,' when the Hungarians beat the Austrians later this week. Ágnes comes back out with a bucket of water for the cherries and dumps them for us to pick through and clean, then proceeds to seat herself and roll some Ukrainian tobacco.

At this point, I had known Ágnes and Lajos for several months. This is how we spent our afternoons a couple of times a week during the spring and summer of 2016. Topics of conversation ranged from football, news from the Serbian–Hungarian border, the fear of 'refugee terrorists', neighborhood gossip and life in Canada. Like many others in the Numbered Streets, Ágnes and Lajos became housing tenants without rights (*jogcím nélküliek*) when their housing contract was not renewed, rendering them tenants liable for eviction.

At the beginning of September 2016, news pertaining to new MMSZ and MIK[9] housing units hit the Numbered Streets around the same time Lajos and Ágnes received bailiff papers notifying them of their impending eviction. This news presented both problem and solution for Ágnes and her family. I arrived at her place to speak with her son Jenő, but he had yet to arrive home. Ágnes put on a pot of coffee, came back out and handed me an eviction letter asking her, the tenant, to vacate the lot in 30 days' time. This, to Ágnes, became a possible rite of passage to Canada. With the date written, Ágnes flicks the paper in the air telling me that this is exactly what the Canadian government wants and needs to discern who is a genuine versus illegitimate refugee. She went on to say that it is 'fresh' (friss) denoting its currency and value. Earlier in the day, she brought the letter to the Order of Malta office and spoke with the director to have their eviction halted and see if they could secure a renewed housing unit from the Order of Malta's resettlement program, upon qualification. The director, however, apparently could not grant them any assurance leaving them with a waiting period.

One month later, Ágnes and Lajos were evicted from their house on October 6th, 2016. The walnut tree where they had sought refuge during sweltering summer heat waves, has long been cut down; windows and the front door, and furniture have become firewood reserves for the brutal winter. On that day, all they took with them was their clothing, stuffed into grocery bags, and the stroller for their newborn. Unable to move in with extended family a couple streets over, due to overcrowded living situations, they spent a few days in a small shelter part of a church in the nearby Vasgyár district. During this time, they begged the MMSZ to move them back into their house, but there was nothing the organization could do. Due to the local government's 'back and forth game' (*csapda játék*) with the MMSZ leadership, new housing units had not been granted to the humanitarian organization. Instead, Ágnes and her family were moved into a small summer kitchen (*nyári konyha*), fixed up in one of the residents' backyards. However, the rent was steep, and tensions quickly

[8] The mass public employer of lower income earners in the Hungarian economy. They work as street cleaners, as well as city and town landscapers.

[9] The local housing agency overseeing the maintenance, provisioning and asset administration of social housing in the city.

began to rise with the main tenant. According to Ágnes, the resident did not give them any personal space, no room to store anything, and the tenant constantly policed the orderliness and cleanliness of the small room, for which they paid five times the amount in rent compared to their initial housing unit.

After roughly half a year living in the summer kitchen, they moved one street over and into a small makeshift unit (*mellékkamra*). Despite renting the unit from another resident, MMSZ social workers were concerned that such a move would make them illegal residents (*önfoglalók* and *önkényesek*) in the eyes of the local government. While it has turned out that their arrangement is allowed, in the span of eight months, Ági and her family went from living in an orderly (*rendes*) home to a 'here and there' (*össze-vissza*) mode of living within a three-block radius. 'All we can do is wait', she said. 'The MMSZ cannot help us, if we move back in though. Every time I pass the house now, my heart aches. We want to return, but if we do, we cannot receive a new contract', she explained to me, using some of the other families as examples. 'All we can do is wait'.

'Canada', as an imagined and a material place of success, income and work, is very much engrained in the everyday order of things of the Numbered Streets settlement. In Ágnes' life, especially. Her eldest daughter and son received refugee status in Canada two years ago, with her other son, Jenő, leaving for Toronto during the fall of 2016. Unemployed, and formerly part of the Order of Malta work crew, Ágnes receives welfare and childcare payments every month, as well as occasional remittances from her children in Canada through the local Western Union branch. Her kids have been pressuring her to move to Canada with the three little ones, a prospect she entertains on and off, about which I have spoken with her at length on numerous occasions. Her concerns rest with how such a move would divide the family, in many ways. Lajos earns more in income per month than other public works employees. His job is grueling, but claims to be paid well and does not wish to part from his work for the unknown instabilities of work abroad or processes of seeking asylum in Canada. He would much prefer finding manual labor somewhere in the EU. Furthermore, her extended family and sisters still live in the Numbered Streets, a place that became their home when her grandfather moved from the town of Sárospatak in the 1950s and 1960s to build apartment buildings found adjacent to the neighborhood.

The stop and start uncertainty that Ágnes' and Lajos' case reveals, is a thread of prolonged effects of banishment and anticipation. These elongated and variegated effects make-up 'spectrums of mobility' in Anne McNevin's terms (2014) and come to define a person's or a group's mobility over a lifetime. Spectrums, conjures the constitution of one's mobility by 'varying degrees of force and autonomy, subject to varying degrees of regulation and control, and experienced with varying degrees of risk, reward and hardship' (ibid.: 2014: 648). By highlighting the gradients of power that govern individual and group mobility, we can conceptualize how mobility regimes are multiple and function at various distances. Embroiled within the vacillating and oscillating reality of the city of Miskolc's eviction regime, also places them within a position vis-à-vis the Canadian external border regime as well.

Deferring an attempt to leave for Canada, despite having procured, what Ágnes has termed 'fresh' evidence by virtue of receiving an eviction order, is a decision that is considered and dropped constantly due to various motivations and impossibilities.

Some relatives and old neighbors, who are now awaiting refugee claims hearings (*tárgyalás*) or have received permanent residency in Canada, are passing along information about how all Numbered Streets residents will be eligible to receive refugee status if they come to Canada.[10] Yet others, who have attempted to travel to Canada in 2016 and 2017, have noticed that the 'way is shut' (*nem engedjük át*).

## *5.2 'The money all flowed away'*

A few streets down, Laci and his wife Ibolya live with their two children and another on its way. Every time I attempt to visit them, no one is ever home. Unlike others in the neighborhood, their house is enclosed by thick and tall wooden stakes that line the one side of the property, tethered together by a long chain link fence that stretches to the back corner of his self-marked territory. The other side is a mix and match of aluminum and plastic siding placed one over the top of each other, and a door with their names scrawled under where the letter slot should be found. When I first met them a year ago, they lived on another street before their housing unit was taken over by the MMSZ for their office space. They were relocated in one of the newly renovated MMSZ housing units during the fall of 2016. Unlike their previous home, where Laci had set up a small knee high fence made of objects, and collected materials, this one seemed to have been made to last. This is a place for the kids to play, it is protected, and he can feel at peace leaving for work in the morning knowing that no unwanted strangers will be able to get in.

Laci, a tall, gregarious and hard-working man, held a year-long position with the community work program supervised by the MMSZ in the neighborhood. Now, he makes almost double working under the table for the rebuilding of the stadium, as well as from scavenging (*lomozni, horgyázni*). Day in and day out, he digs up gravel and dirt and old housing foundations of plots that used to mark the ends of the neighborhood he grew up in. While the possibility to work at the stadium is an offer that the company has extended to the residents of the Numbered Streets, according to Laci, he is the only one willing to work for them. His workdays range from 6am until 6 or 8pm, he earns 5,000 forints per day. Up front, each morning, he receives 2,000 forints, which is enough to buy a pack of cigarettes and food for his children at school. In the end, it is not much, and is quite dangerous, he claims, but much better than the money the public works program can ever offer.

Not soon after his fences were completed, however, Laci left for Canada. He had always joked about me sneaking him 'inside my suitcase' the next time I left Hungary. It was not long before murmurs of his departure turned into rumors of his return. Several elderly ladies (*figyelő nénik)* one day told me that the security officers in Rome did not allow Laci to board his Toronto bound flight, and that he told others in the neighborhood it would have cost him 200,000 forints to bribe the border security to let him through. This story raised suspicions of spun lies, and added to his already somewhat at odds relationship with other inhabitants. When I met with him

[10] This is not necessarily fact and is only representative of one or two views of Roma who have been living in Toronto and have long since gone through the refugee status process. Whether true or not, it connects with the circulation of information that does not reflect the reality of those experiencing newer forms of border control previous migrants had not endured.

later that month, his description of events was quite different. Since he is one of the four residents granted the new housing units that the local government had given to the MMSZ during the fall of 2016, the others 'cry' about his privileged position, and stories circulate (*Körbe Körbe*) about him and his family. 'The security guard (*tiszt*) did not even look at my tickets or documents, and told me that I was not allowed to board'. 'They purchased my ticket back to Budapest, and gave us money to stay in a hotel for the night, but I did not receive the 900 dollars in reimbursement for my plane ticket'. By the time the airport transfer brought him back to his house here in the Numbered Streets, he had no money left to reimburse his brother for the plane ticket, who had sponsored his travel to Canada and purchased his ETA for him, let alone to purchase bread to eat. '[The money] all flowed away' (*úszik az egész (pénz)*). His brother, who runs a mechanic (*vasszerelő*) business in Toronto, had filled out his ETA application for him and also purchased his tickets. There was no way of knowing why he was not allowed to board, only speculation.

For the moment, there is not much he can do except work for the stadium rebuilding project. While he gestures in the backyard to areas where he wishes to construct a storage unit for wood, and for the steel, glass, and old furniture that he has accumulated, his plan of working in Canada for his brother's company has been derailed, yet seemed to take precedent. He is not certain if he can risk going back, considering the costs. Their housing contract, at the moment, is also on a fluctuating scale. 'The first contract with the MMSZ was for three months, then it was four, then five, and now back to three', he said, adding that even though the MMSZ has received 60 new housing units to renovate and rebuild the homes for these inhabitants, there is still uncertainty of whether or not it will only be a temporary fix. An attempt to 'integrate' despite a reality of zero long-term stability. The Numbered Streets may no longer exist in a year or so, despite the renovation of these housing units. 'It will not go wrong once we have succeeded' he told me, 'and then we will be able to drink a cold Canadian beer together in Toronto', he always reminds me with a smile.

### *5.3 'Refugees Welcome'*

Not dissimilarly, an elderly couple, attempting to reunite with their family who sought asylum in Canada roughly seven years ago, were not allowed to board their flight from Paris to Toronto. Their grandson, whom they have not seen since then, will be married later on during the summer. They want to be there to celebrate the ceremony together with him, but know that the chances will be slim. With tourist season, ticket prices will be more expensive and they may have to wait until the fall to go visit them. Yet, every day, Gyula bácsi checks the internet to see, in his words, 'if Canada has opened its borders'. He knows what the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, said in January of 2016, after Trump's electoral victory: 'Refugees welcome' as he put it to me, plainly, in quite possibly the only two words in English he knows. To Gyula bá, there are not two words that ring truer or bring more of a smile to his face. One minute, he could be speaking about state corruption, the funneling of EU money into the coffers of Orbán and his buddies (*havérok*), and conspiracy theories about whether Orbán's last name is actually 'Orsós' and thus Roma; and the next, the fact that he has run out of housing options, with no certainty of abode on the horizon. The idea of 'open' borders in Canada, on the other hand, is something that brings a smile

to his face. Every time I see him, whether at the 'központ' office, or at his home, he asks me how things are in Canada, as if he were asking about the weather. Nevertheless, he checks his phone every day to see if the borders have *truly* opened. He puts on his glasses and holds his phone out at a readable distance, eyes crinkling in search of a sign on the interwebs. I ask him what he is searching for in particular, and how he would know if he could tell when the borders are open. But when I do so, he quickly hands the phone over to me, to read the articles and to search for more; as if my fingers were savvier than his own, and thus more capable of finding a solution. Maybe Google will tell us when the 'Free World's' darling's words begin to reflect the truth. 'So, did you find anything?' He would impatiently ask, a minute or two after taking a sip of cola.

These snapshots, while limited in their scope and depth, and surely only focus on the retelling of a specific relationship with emigration officers (*tisztek)* at the airport, point towards the on-going and persistent nature of security governance measures of interdiction and their palpable effects. They also lead us to understand how experiences are built into the persistent telling of a person's mobility. One that links with the overlapping of governance structures and the social relations that are conditioned by, and simultaneously condition, the way they ground themselves within specific social environs. In these cases, the ETA is not the only concern, but how a virtual border has crossed families and how gossip circulates with respect to an individual's inability to succeed at a border crossing.

Though tempting to create immediate causal links between precarious housing statuses, evictions and the endeavor to seek asylum, I see such a correlation as one-dimensional and less conducive to an approach that takes the politics of movement and mobility as a central concern. These snapshots paint a picture of motivations and legitimacies of/for genuine refugee status, but also highlight how measures such as the ETA circulates as knowledge, and, following such a comprehension, how such material manifestations of security rationales are translated within different contexts. Pragmatically, due to the ETA's immaterial format, and due to a lack of linguistic, monetary and infrastructural (i.e. lack of personal wifi, email, credit) capital there is not a way for these inhabitants to know precisely what the ETA's effects even entail, despite having them approved. In a sense, if this were the reason for their inability to board flights, then there is a complete lack of knowledge concerning how such extra-legal security measures are diffused transnationally, and what economies are built around their diffusion.

Uncertainties in border openings and closures, in this regard create risks as well as adaptations on the personal level. Recurrences and attempts to potentially realize the possibility of cross-border migration, or to solidify one's own form of secure haven in the Numbered Streets, is a precarious and insecure undertaking. What becomes abundantly clear is how multiple mobility management structures, from local evictions to transnational security governance systems, function in tandem to continue a history of marginalization. A marginalization that is not solely derived from the inability to exercise mobility and movement per say, but the inability to exercise social, economic and political freedoms that still striate and subjugate the Roma in the EU today.

## *6. Conclusions*

Through field excerpts from on-going ethnographic research in the city of Miskolc, Hungary, this article has presented how Roma experience deep inequalities in changes in border regimes, as profiling mechanisms of cross-border interdiction transnationally, and as constituted statuses of evictability at the local scale. This paper has examined the extension and segmentation of border regimes through processes of mobility and enclosure with an emphasis on how these regimes have very immediate effects on how individuals are capable of navigating encountered migration uncertainties. Waiting and uncertainty, as we see in the cases of Ágnes, Laci and Gyula, is political. Access to certain knowledge sets, or to circulations of knowledge pertaining to border security navigation is increasingly beset by linguistic and socio-economic barriers that are difficult to circumvent. Moreover, waiting, as an embodied experience of time, is controlled and manipulated by power structures that define its very contours and challenge individuals to adapt or divide their lives accordingly. What I have proposed in this article is to think about how the protracted eviction process and the additions made to CBSA interdiction mechanisms, produce experiences that situate these particular Roma inhabitants at the interstices of mobility and enclosure dynamics. In doing so, such an empirical reality forces us to think of the multiple sites along paths of escape and removal that holistically challenge our conception of migration trajectories and also the impact border regimes have across extensive social space. The article was not able to engage with a full social composition of the neighborhood through experiences of mobility, nor does it delve into experiences of intra-EU labor migration, and deportations and removals by the CBSA. The elongated research project proposes to combine an analysis of the multi-directionality of mobility from within the disappearing Roma populated settlements of Miskolc.

In proposing the border regimes concept, and in light of the empirical evidence provided, we are left with additional questions to ponder. This conceptual rubric, examined through the case of the Roma in Miskolc, can be a piece of a larger genealogical puzzle concerning the logics of displacement and bordering practices across pan-historical dynamics in mobility and property regimes, and Roma political membership from the Habsburg Empire to the European Union today. This *longue durée* perspective in comparison with the history of forced resettlement and displacement of Roma throughout continental Europe is an important site of further research.

Moreover, there is the possibility to extrapolate and rethink, albeit situationally, the types of life that emerge in post-socialist provincial and economically precarious contexts. In Northeasern Hungary, particularly in settlements overrepresented by marginalized and impoverished Roma populations, the Hungarian state has all but retreated and exported their means of welfare and social security to non-state *de facto* authorities, such as the MMSZ. Critical examinations of actors who enter into the field of Roma integration management, can help rethink their practices as part of a field of mobility management and their role in either facilitating or inhibiting intra- and out-migration of Roma from villages and towns in the countryside (*vidék*).

On a normative level, development and integration projects coupled with advanced security governance structures, that pre-empt the migration of precarious

subjects, ought to be continued sites of research engagement and issue area visibility. This double valence produces a context where transnational publics must converge to communicate and simultaneously bring these concerns to the fore.

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