

7. "IT'S BETTER TO BE A GYPSY IN CANADA THAN
BEING A HUNGARIAN IN HUNGARY":
THE 'NEW WAVE' OF ROMA MIGRATION

Judit Durst

*University College London, Department of Anthropology
United Kingdom*

"Step aside and wait for further investigation!" the black Immigration Officer instructed my Roma friends, a well-dressed married couple, as we exit the airplane terminal, having landed at Toronto International Airport. I could easily have slipped by, being 'fortunate enough' to have a white complexion - unlike my Roma companions with dark completions, but, instead, I stop and ask him what is the issue with my friends, why they were stopped. The black officer, once an immigrant himself, didn't seem to show much sympathy towards these Roma travelers, and casts a bewildered eye on me: *"Why are you interested? Do they belong to you?"* After a lengthy explanation in which I tried to get him understand that we are together, that we came as tourists to visit our Gypsy friends from Hungary, and we would only stay for a fortnight (as can easily be checked on our return tickets), I also incidentally revealed that I am a sociologist. He then immediately felt inclined to bombard me with a plethora of questions:

"If you are an expert, they must be your co-workers. So, tell me, why are so many [Gypsies] coming these weeks? Sometimes fifty [Roma] in one single plane. They all come from the same place, Miskolc, as your friends are from (he could tell by looking at the passport data). Why are they coming in crowds? I'm telling

you, because they want to exploit this country's generous welfare system. You're telling me this is not the case? Then what? They came to work? We [Canadian citizens] don't have work, either! What do they want? They should go home and sort their problems out at home."

This account is from a May 2012 trip to Canada in which I went to Toronto to do some brief, pilot fieldwork on the Hungarian Roma community that had migrated to this Canadian metropolis in recent years. This fieldwork on migration was a natural continuation of my previous ethnographic work on poverty in Borsod, one of the most economically backward regions of Hungary, where one third of the Roma population in Hungary live (Kemény and Janky, 2004). In the last two to three years, 'Canada' had been one of the main topics of local public discourse among the poor and not-so-poor Roma, as well as among the poor, not too highly educated, unemployed non-Roma¹⁰⁶ - and not only in my (previous research subject) village of Lapos,¹⁰⁷ where ninety-five percent of the local population was Gypsy, but everywhere else in the region, especially in Miskolc, the capital of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county. 'Canada' was synonymous with the 'Land of Opportunity', a 'Good Business' that was worth investing in; it is a 'Garden of Eden', where there is no starvation, indeed, you can eat as much as you want. Canada was the chance to escape from the harsh reality of one's daily life of destitution.

106 Academic literature on Hungary's largest minority group interchangeably uses the designating term: Gypsy or Roma. Although I'm fully aware that the term Gypsy might sound derogatory to 'politically correct' readers, the people I encounter during my fieldwork most often refer to themselves as Gypsy in everyday conversation. Every morning, when we woke up, my host family's little child greeted us jokingly: "Good morning, Gypsies!" Therefore, in this text, I alternately use the term Roma/Gypsy, always keeping their own denotations when citing them. The Gypsies use the term 'Hungarian' to refer to non-Gypsy. In a comparative perspective, it is striking that, in Hungary in recent years, one of the most important distinction-making characteristics used to assert one's social status is one's ethnic belonging. (cf. Feischmidt, 2011). On the level of public discourse, the society seems to be split into two (not interchangeable) categories: the Roma and the non-Roma, or Gypsy and non-Gypsy, population. This might be the case in other Eastern European countries (such as Slovakia), but not in more multi-ethnic societies like Romania (Pulay, informal communication).

107 All over the text, I use fictitious names - both for places and for people - in order to retain my informants' anonymity.

At that time, it seemed to me that almost all the Gypsies I talked to wanted to try to move to this transatlantic, multi-ethnic country, famous for its welcoming, friendly, anti-racist, all-encompassing society, with a generous welfare system. The only ones who hesitated were those who had too much to leave behind: an asset like a valuable (self-owned) home, secure prospects for their personal business initiatives, and/or a good local schooling situation for their children – basically, those who held a well-respected status in their local communities. As one of my friends in this circle put it:

As you have witnessed, we have also been hesitating for a long time whether to go [to Canada] or not. Once, we even got two [plane] tickets [to Toronto], we had relatives there who'd have put us up in the initial period. However, we decided not to go. If I tell the truth, I didn't go because I didn't want to be a refugee. After being 'somebody' at home, I didn't want to put my children in a situation where they would see their father as a refugee."

This statement leads straight to the main inquiry of my pilot study, both in Toronto and then, later on, amongst the return migrants in Borsod County, Hungary. Namely, what factors have triggered Roma migration to Canada in the past few years (since 2008), once the visa requirement was lifted? Can it be considered a 'new wave of migration' as far as the pattern and volume are concerned? Why is the destination country Canada, rather than any other European country? What facilitated the mass migration trend amongst these poor people with seemingly limited resources, who appear – not only superficially, but also according to the research literature – to be one of the groups with the least capacity to practically choose migration as a livelihood strategy, as many do not even possess enough material goods to even invest in the first step of the move: buying their air tickets.

From my ethnographic experiences, I assumed that this latest transatlantic movement to Canada could be labeled as a 'new wave' or new pattern of migration (Cf. Vidra and Virág, 2012): being 'new' not only due to its sheer volume, but also in terms of its characteristics. The previous

wave of migration, between 1998-2001, was described by researchers as 'not considerable' in its numbers and simply as a strategy of some more affluent Roma groups, who were either Vlah Gypsies from the capital (Budapest) with considerable entrepreneurial skill or highly qualified musicians, or young intellectuals (Kováts, 2002) – that is, people with greater migration potential. However, the 'new wave' seemed to consist of a mass movement of a variety of groups defined as having low migration potential: poor, low-educated, lower class Roma, as well as non-Roma. The (many) non-Roma refugees I personally met, or heard of, in Toronto, that claimed to be Roma for the sake of receiving refugee status, raised a second question for me: Does this new wave of migration have an ethno-cultural feature or it is better understood as an economic strategy of the poor, independent of their ethnicity?

This leads to yet another important question: Once started, what perpetuates the migration process in the case of the Hungarian Roma moving to Canada? Although it is obvious from the research literature that the migration network and the so-called 'migration industry' are the facilitators that sustain the process (Massey et al., 1993; da Haas, 2010; Vidra, 2012), in reality, how do these networks and industries operate in the case of the Hungarian Roma migrants?

Although 'network' has been one of the key words in the research literature on migration, the network theory approach does not explain why everyone does not take advantage of the opportunity to move (Black et al., 2006). That is, why do some people move whilst others belonging to the same network do not move? What are the motivations behind not moving for those who do not choose migration as a 'viable livelihood strategy' (Van Hear-Nyberg-Sorensen, 2003)?

And last, but not least, if migration is a self-perpetuating social process, as the research literature suggests, why does it, on some occasions, simply cease – for example, as recently happened in this particular case of Hungarian Roma migration to Canada?

In order to answer these questions and to be able to understand the whole process of migration in regards to some Roma groups from Hungary to Canada, I not only carried out short-term, pilot fieldwork in

Toronto but also conducted a survey amongst both those in Toronto and those who have already returned home to Hungary.¹⁰⁸

“We are all economic refugees”: Comparing previous waves with the ‘new’ wave of Roma migration to Canada¹⁰⁹

A previous migrant’s account

Economic theories of migration (micro or macro, neoclassical, or the new economics approach) are the most developed to explain the social process of migration. Their common central assumption is that international migration is about redistribution of labor. Consequently, migrants are largely equated with workers and economic theories are used to explain everything in terms of labor migration, namely, as the international movement of economically-active individuals (Massey et al., 1993).

108 All in all, my Roma co-worker and I spent six weeks in Toronto, living in one of ‘the buildings’ in the metropolis where many Hungarian Roma families live. We gained access to this observance point through acquaintances of ours, a Roma family with children who moved there 10 months ago, arriving from a middle sized settlement in Borsod County. I, myself, spent only two weeks there. However, my co-worker returned later, for an additional month, to carry on with the fieldwork. Although I was unable to be present, I looked upon this second round as a methodological experiment for me. Apart from providing me with a write up of his research (fieldwork) diary, we Skyped each other regularly and discussed observed events. As a result, the insight gained from his work has organically joined my own and I will not only base my arguments on my own observations and experiences there in Toronto, but also on his accounts, which can additionally be understood as ‘through a Roma’s lenses’. I also carried out a migration history survey amongst both those migrants who were living in Toronto and those who had already returned home. On top of their migration histories and (future) migration potential, the questionnaire asked the migrants about their social, economic, and demographic characteristics. We interviewed 130 migrants in Toronto. The sample size of the Borsod survey is around 800. The return migrants’ sample was collected using a snowball method and the respondents are mainly from Miskolc and the surrounding settlements. Although this return migration research and its associated data analysis is not yet completed, I will use some of its preliminary findings here to support some of my arguments.

109 These two categories serve only to distinguish the timely dimension of a person’s migration process. I call ‘previous’ (or ‘early’) migrants those who left Hungary for Canada before December 2001, when Canada introduced visa requirement towards Hungarian citizens. Respectively, I call ‘new migrants’ those who immigrated to Canada from 2008 onwards to the present, in the so-called ‘new wave’ of mass migration of the poor, after the visa requirements were lifted.

At first sight, this explanation seems to be more valid in the case of the 'previous' or 'early' rather than the 'new' migration wave of the Hungarian Roma – for those who went to Canada in between 1998-2001. According to our interviews with some earlier migrants from Borsod, these were people of younger age, economically active, with around eleven years of schooling; skilled workers, mainly having vocational training in the construction industry, who found it difficult to earn enough money in Hungary to support their families. The main purpose of their migration was to find a better paying job outside Hungary. Most of them moved to Canada on their own: to reduce the risk of migration, many employed the help of their transnational migrants network (i.e. a brother, other relatives, or friends living in Canada already) (Hajnal, 2002). They would reunite with their families in Canada only after some months or sometimes even a year after having settled and having become established on the Canadian labor market. For example, here is Jani's story: Jani can be considered a typical 'previous' Roma migrant from Avas, one of Miskolc's residential areas mostly populated by Roma and also the place from where many Roma (and non-Roma) migrated.

Jani moved to Hamilton, a small settlement not far from Toronto in the spring of 2001. He went on his own, leaving a wife and two small children at home in Miskolc, to follow his brother who had already begun working there. He bought his air ticket from his savings.

"It was different in those days. In those days, only the normal ones went; not like now when one and all are going, even those illiterate, know-nothing Gypsies. At that time, there was no scrap metal collecting. Nobody thought of collecting scrap iron.¹¹⁰ In those days we went there to work. And, if you worked there, you had everything. You just took up the same rhythm of life as they [the Canadians] lived. But if you don't work, it's a different story. Then you need to do something, something like

110 In recent years, almost all 'new migrant' Roma go regularly to collect scrap metal from the streets of Toronto. This is their additional income earning activity, complementing their main income source, the state welfare.

collecting scrap metal. But with this view of life you won't fit in anywhere. You don't work, you live on welfare, and you cost money to the state. Meanwhile if I work, I pay tax, I live a normal life, and the State earns money through me, by letting me lead a normal life, letting me work. It is good for the state and good for me, too."

Jani's opinion of the 'new' migrants' economic practices in Canada can be read as a highly judgmental critique of his fellow Roma. Firstly, he uses the same generalizations (the social practice of judging this 'newcomer' group by 'lumping them together'; a practice which is often the critique of Hungarians' (non-Roma) behavior towards the Roma – treating them as one selfsame homogenous group. Secondly, he assumes that the 'newcomers' didn't "come here to work." As I will demonstrate it later, this is not the case and the 'new' migrants' move to Canada can clearly be analyzed as labor migration – if we understand the meaning of work (or labor) in a broader sense, as the Roma themselves do. Jani's (unconscious) drive to negatively judge the 'newcomer' migrant Roma can be better understood from the below citation. It may also be analyzed using Elias' analytical framework 'the Established and the Outsiders' figuration (Elias, 1994) – we only need to replace the word 'established' with 'previous migrant' and the 'outsiders' with 'newcomer' migrants. As Elias put it, "an established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the 'bad' characteristics of that group's 'worst' section. (...) In contrast, the self-image of the established group tends to be modeled on its exemplary, most norm-setting section, on the minority of its 'best' members" (ibid, p. 5).

Jani's statements clearly show his fear: the newcomers are threatening his 'established' position as a Roma migrant. Due to their 'bad behavior', they are leveling down, discrediting, and ruining the reputation of the whole Roma migrant community.

Let's return to Jani's own account: After seven months of living on welfare and working under the grid, Jani managed to find a 'proper', that is, formal, or reported job in the construction industry.

“These new Roma (migrants) have spoiled it all. Nowadays, the Canadians do not even wish to speak to Hungarians... however, Hungarians were welcome in Canada in those days. We had a good reputation (as hard workers); they knew that you could work even twenty hours a day if it’s needed, you don’t shout back as the Canadian, the Indian, or the Sri Lankans do. In the beginning, I worked in a salad factory. Boring, you don’t need to know anything; you’re just cutting peppers and all kinds of vegetables. But considering that you don’t speak the language, don’t know the city; it was an okay job that enables you to survive. ‘Cos you can’t really make a living off of welfare. Then I moved to Toronto and worked for a cleaning company. It was an unreported job, too, and nobody spoke any English. Here, I was taught the language by a (Hungarian-speaking) Czech entrepreneur whom I worked for. Once you have learnt the language, you can speak and the world begins opening up to you. Whilst I earned \$8.00 or \$9.00 in the cleaning company, just like I got at the construction industry, all of the sudden I started to earn \$18.00 per hour. And it was a legal, reported job with a proper insurance number, and so on. I quit getting welfare. Since then, I’ve had a good life. My children went to school, I worked with nice people and I wasn’t exploited or deceived anymore.”

Jani considers himself an economic refugee.

“You can claim refugee status if your life is in danger... We who leave (Hungary) are economic refugees. ‘Cos we flee from poverty. Sure there is racism in it for, as many of us said, you don’t get a job (in Hungary) because your skin color is black. There is racism, for sure. But whether one’s life is in danger, I can’t tell that... If somebody comes to Canada from Somalia, that is okay. I had a Somalian mate; he couldn’t leave his village for three days, for if he would have left his home, he

would have been shot dead. He is a refugee. But I, whose life is not in danger, am only an economic refugee, who only flees from poverty. On the other hand, you need the refugee status since it gives you the right to stay in the country, to get health care, etc. Otherwise, you would be an illegal migrant and they would throw you out immediately.”

Although the Immigration Board rejected Jani's refugee claim (he reflects that he knows he 'made a mistake') after almost three years of having stayed in Canada,¹¹¹ to date, he continues to migrate. He has worked in the UK in a bread shop, in Ireland on a farm, and just recently in the Netherlands for three years in the construction industry. Prior to the interview, he had just returned home with his family to Miskolc to discover that there are no jobs for Roma people throughout the entire region. Therefore, he is planning his next move – this time to Belgium, where not only does he have a relative but also knows from experience that it's easy to find regular menial labor. Jani is one of many Roma from Miskolc who can be classified according to academic literature as a 'chain migrant'. However, they can also be described as 'forced migrants' who migrate out of a 'necessity for livelihood' as many of have emphasized, just like Jani.

“I wouldn't go anywhere if they would give me a job paying 300,000 (Hungarian forints, equivalent to CAN \$ 1,200) a month. Why would I go? Then I could have a normal life, my kids would go to school, we'd have our friends around, I could regularly see my parents if I want. This (migration) is a livelihood necessity. That's why I said we are all economic refugees.”

111 When asked, Jani admitted that he didn't turn up at his hearing: “At that time, I was thinking with a child's mind. I didn't take the whole legal procedure seriously. I was young.”

The 'new migrants' stories

As I stated above, the migration process experienced by those Roma who left Hungary in the previous wave between 1998-2001, like Jani, seem at first sight to be more grounded in an understanding of the framework of labor migration than the new wave. However, contrary to all appearances, we will soon see that the 'new wave' of refugee migration can also be interpreted as partly labor migration – if we consider 'labor' or 'work' in terms of how the Roma migrant themselves consider it to be.

What is misleading in regards to the new wave of movement is that, on the surface, it seems as if this particular group's (namely, the Hungarian unemployed Roma [and non-Roma] lower class people) international migration would be fed by the differences not in the level of wages between the sending and the receiving countries but by the disparity between the two countries' social welfare systems. Applying the logic of the economic model of labor migration, we should refer to this pattern as 'welfare migration'. However, choosing this alternative, but, nevertheless, economic explanation of the current (but temporarily coming to an end) migration process of the Roma and non-Roma people from Hungary to Canada, would be over simplistic and concealing. Instead, we will try here to demonstrate that this transnational movement should rather be seen as a multiplex, multi-layered social process. Admittedly, my research is still rudimentary in its development; however the foundations of this argument are able to be made. According to this process, not only economic factors (making a better living) but also the political climate (a rise in hate crimes and anti-Gypsy campaigns waged by the vigilant far right movement and the Hungarian Guard), social factors (ethnic discrimination, among others, specifically, on the labor market) and psychological motivations (e.g. post-traumatic stress) all play a part in triggering the transatlantic movement of those Roma who profess they wanted to get away from the socially and economically destitute situation in their home country.

The desire of both Roma and non-Roma from the Central Eastern European region to migrate has been significantly growing in recent years and is well demonstrated by survey results on the subject of the Hungarian

residential population's migration potential. Recent surveys show the "highest ever migration potential" measured in the country in recent decades (Sik, 2012). From 2004 to 2011, Hungary's migration potential doubled, not only in the Hungarian national sample, but also in the Roma subsample, too. A survey that came out in 2011 shows that 17% of the country's population had planned to migrate at the time of the interview. Within the Roma subsample, this proportion was even higher: every fifth Roma respondent (20%) planned to move (Bernath, 2012, personnel communication). Although this number is still lower than it is in other European countries, it is a trend that is significantly on the rise.

The survey also indicated that among those who plan to migrate, students and the unemployed are overrepresented. As far as the target countries are concerned, Hungarians' top target destinations are Germany, Austria, and the UK, in respective order (Bernáth, 2012). However, the preliminary results of our own survey, conducted during the summer and autumn of 2012, indicates that the pattern is different for the Roma: the vast majority of the respondents said Canada was their target country and when asked about their next possible migration plan, many of them named the UK and some Germany.

Almost all researchers state how difficult it is to get reliable statistical data on migrants who leave the country. We only know their numbers from the receiving country's immigration statistics.¹¹² However, data from the Canadian Council for Refugees seems to support our ethnographic findings. According to its statistics, there was a vast increase in the number of Hungarian refugee claimants arriving in Canada in the past few years. While there were only ten Hungarian citizens who claimed refugee status in Canada in 1994, this number has steadily increased after 1998 (982 people claimed asylum that year). In 1999, 1,579 people arrived in Canada as refugees. By 2000, this total was 1,936 (Kovats, 2002). After a temporary break, due to Canada's introduction of visa requirements for the

112 Another problem is that there is no official data on the number of 'unreported' or 'irregular' migrants, those who moved in search of informal or unreported job or to work in the informal economy (Portes, 2010), unless they claimed refugee status.

Hungarian citizens, the Hungarian Refugee Claimants' numbers started to grow rapidly again from 2008 onwards. In 2011, a total of 4,423 'Roma' left Hungary to claim refugee status in Canada: this is almost double the statistics (2,300) from 2010.

There is a long-standing debate amongst researchers about the characteristics or patterns of Roma migration to Canada, whether these can be regarded as labor migration or asylum seeking (cited by Vidra, 2012). According to the official status of these migrants, it is technically refugee migration (cf. Kovats, 2002). Of the 800 migrants (from Hungary to Canada) that we interviewed to date, there was not a single respondent who had not migrated there as a refugee or, further, who did not claim to be a refugee.

The question to naturally arise from this line of inquiry is: Why does (almost) every Roma (and some non-Roma!) people want to make their move as a refugee? And why have these people chosen Canada as their migration destination? Our survey provides some insight into these questions; however, we have to treat our (preliminary) findings carefully, as they are not a representative sample of the whole Hungarian Roma population that has migrated to Canada.

First of all, migration to Canada has definitely been facilitated by a 'transnational migration network' already in existence (Hajnal, 2002). According to our survey, almost all of the respondents said that they had family, friends, or acquaintances in Canada who helped them through the first critical period following their arrival and who also assisted them in finding (informal) work.

Secondly, over half of our sample additionally stated that the receiving country's social and economic structure (cf. Massey, 1987) and its immigration policy made their migration possible. A common and formulaic answer to the question "why did you choose Canada to migrate to?" was the following: "Because Canada gave us refugee status" or "I wouldn't have had the talent to go to another country and support my family there: to feed them and shelter them until I find job there. Canada backed the Roma, supporting them with food and accommodation."

Our survey also provides us with some idea about the pattern of this 'new wave of migration,' in terms of mapping the social and demographic characteristics of this migrant group from Borsod County.

According to both our (preliminary) results and interviews conducted with both those who remain in Toronto and those who have already returned home (to Borsod County), it seems that there is indeed a new pattern to the Roma migration to Canada that has occurred in the last two to three years. Whereas only the more affluent and some lower-middle class Roma managed to migrate before 2008, in the last two to three years, the uneducated, lower-class are now also choosing migration as a viable livelihood strategy in an attempt to escape the hopeless economic and social situation they face in their home country. This new wave has additionally been further assisted by previous waves. As one of our respondents put it: *"the middle-class families helped their poor relatives to move to Canada."*

However, not everybody who migrated had 'well-to-do' relatives. Those unlucky ones who didn't acquire this social capital, but still desperately wanted to escape the destitute economic situation at home (long-term unemployment, accumulated debts including unpaid utility bills, etc.), had two choices. Many of them sold all their assets (if they had any): cars, furniture, even their flats. Some accepted the "help" of informal moneylenders (one of the agents in the 'migration industry' that makes it possible even for the poorest to migrate). We will soon see (in the case study below) how the whole migration process plays out for the two groups.

Amongst the sample of 130 'new migrants' (those who migrated in the last two to three years) we surveyed in Toronto, the educational level is notably low. Almost 60% (mostly those from Miskolc) had one to three years of vocational training. The other 40% (mostly Roma from rural areas) had only finished primary school (eight years of primary school). Their low educational status (and a lack of command of the English language) makes it difficult to get jobs, even unreported ones. One Roma man aptly explained their labor market situation in Canada by saying that, *"we are uneducated, therefore, we can't take up any job but dosser work"* (in Hungarian, 'csicska munka').

Although, for a layperson, it may seem counterintuitive that Roma migrants might complain about their inability to speak English, which hinders them from finding a decent job in Canada, there is one obvious explanation for why they do not manage to gain command of the language. Even at first glance, the preliminary findings of our surveys on current and the already-returned migrants were, in fact, surprising to me: out of the 130 respondents in Toronto and 800 returned migrants in Borsod, only ten (!) attended the free English language classes whilst in Toronto. As well as a being a service provided to refugees, it is a precondition for immigrants receiving state benefits to attend the compulsory English language classes (three times a week, for three hours in the morning, free of charge). As those surveyed put it, with a bit of “cleverness,” one could find a way to escape from this “unnecessary” duty.¹¹³ When I asked the respondents why they didn’t want to study English for free, almost all of them reasoned equivocally: they did not have time for this. The men were busy with collecting scrap metals and garbage, meanwhile the women needed time to cook and to do other household chores.

One way of interpreting the migrants’ aversion to attending the allegedly compulsory language classes is that it is part of their overall economic and social practice: they came here to work, not to go to school. Schooling would only take time away from their work, from garbage rummaging, scrap metal collecting, and/or from other casual, informal types of work. So, the background behind many in this group’s poor English language skills itself can also support our thesis, namely, that Roma migration to Canada may be interpreted as labor migration (Vidra, 2012).

At the same time, there is another easily distinguishable, highly educated group of Hungarian Roma people in Toronto, whom one can meet at the Roma Community Centre, a highly active volunteer organization dedicated to supporting and celebrating Romani culture

113 A well-established Hungarian Roma migrant, for instance, might make an agreement with a Canadian English teacher to issue a fake attendance certificate for the fee of, say, CAD 200. No wonder some Roma migrants have come to the conclusion that “one can arrange everything with a bit of cleverness.” As many also said, “even in Canada, people can be corrupted.”

as well as defending the rights of Roma refugees in Canada. While this group's members are highly educated, and well meaning, it does not seem to have much interaction with the uneducated Roma from Borsod.

What is common to all the Hungarian Roma migrant groups in Canada, independent of their various social statuses and educational levels, is that – when it comes to the Canadian political discourse – they are all lumped together as 'bogus refugees'. This loaded title is used freely, despite the fact that most Hungarian Roma refugees, educated or uneducated, have fled from ethnic discrimination in their home country, experienced on the labor market, in the schools, and in the health care system.

Although almost all Hungarian Roma migrants consider themselves 'real refugees' on the basis of their everyday discrimination and stigmatization in their home country, it is worth investigating on what basis a refugee claim may be considered 'justified' according to the law.

The rough definition of a 'Convention refugee' is a "person in need of protection." This protection can be necessary for many reasons, including protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 1 of Immigration and Refugee Protection Act).¹¹⁴

All the way up to December 2011, when the new immigration law was introduced, refugee claimants (in our case, the Hungarian Roma person or family) had approximately one year from arrival to prove that he or she is a Convention Refugee and/or that their sending country poses a "risk to life or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment and/or a danger of torture, all within the meaning of sections 96 and 97(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act" (IRPA).

If we take this text literally, we might conclude that many Roma migrants in Canada cannot be regarded as 'conventional refugees'. However, if we listen to the stories told by those Roma who are able to articulate their feelings about what it means to be a Gypsy in present day Hungary, we

114 As presented in the official letter from the authorities addressed to my host family in Toronto. During my stay, they were summoned to appear at a scheduling conference to fix a date for their refugee claim hearing. This is the kind of letter that all Roma migrants dread getting. For, in most cases, it means that - in a maximum of three to six months - the family will be sent back home.

might stop for a minute to consider what the terminology defined in the article above ought to cover.

Some refugees decided to flee from Hungary for political reasons. Some migrated to escape the ill natured, anti-gypsy social milieu which has caused some of their children to suffer from psychological troubles, including post-traumatic stress disorder related to past anti-Gypsy attacks against them. One woman had this story to tell:

“A Canadian can’t grasp it, that’s fine, there might not be a life threatening situation, however, there are sometimes, but there are generations who have to grow up with the recognition that you are second rate, inferior, you don’t count as a human being...For goodness sake, I bleached my skin, almost my entire life, to whiten it. I always bleached my hair and never dared to wear as colorful a flower-patterned blazer as I’m wearing now. For, I thought it “looks Gypsy” (in Hungarian:“cigányos”). Now, here in Toronto, I started to grow my hair long, even putting in black hair extensions and wearing what I want to wear. For the first time ever in my life I feel free. I don’t know what’s gonna happen to us, I fear. I do not want to go home. If I need to, I’d rather get married [in Canada]”.

Even those less-educated Roma migrants who couldn’t articulate their experiences as ‘Gypsies’ quite as eloquently as the above-cited degree-holding Roma woman have expressed similar reasons for emigrating. When asked about their ‘story’ (the reasons why they fled from Hungary which they must present at their refugee claim hearing), all our informants and survey respondents stated the same factors: poverty, unemployment, and racism (or, as many described it, a “hatred” for the Roma). They almost all had a personal account of various everyday humiliations faced based on their ‘visible’ Roma characteristics or origins (i.e. their dark skin color). Many reported racial discrimination on the part of a potential employer. The most prevalent story was the accounts of being turned down for a job because they were Roma; the job would go to a Hungarian:

"They told me on the phone that I could go for the job interview in an hour. By the time I arrived, they just had a glance at me and said the job is filled. It was enough for them to see my dark skin."

Another frequent account is of bullying or abuse of Roma children at school or in kindergarten on the basis of their ethnicity. More than one woman told me a story akin to the following:

"I had an incident with my little son [which demonstrates this abuse]: many years ago, the nursery teacher scrubbed his little elbows and his knees, until they were almost bleeding, because she thought they were dirty." Another experience Roma parents commonly recall is that their children were excluded in the nursery by the Hungarian kids who do not want to play with the 'black' ones.

Also, in almost all accounts, refugees mention some threatening incidents in which they had an encounter with a far-right vigilante group called the Hungarian Guard (Magyar Gárda), a paramilitary organization in Hungary, which is very active in Borsod County, especially in Miskolc, where the majority of the Roma migrants come from.¹¹⁵ Many recalled frightening memories of the period when the serial murders against Roma families took place (2008-2009). Those who came from rural Gypsy colonies, usually located on the outskirts of the settlement, reported 'post-traumatic stress disorder' in their children, conditions, for instance, induced merely by hearing a motorcycle approaching the Gypsy colony after twilight.¹¹⁶

115 The Hungarian Guard (Magyar Garda) is a semi-illegal paramilitary organization with clear ties to of the third biggest Hungarian political party, the far-right Jobbik Party. The Guard has several thousand self-appointed members who undertake, from time to time, law enforcement in their community (or other people's communities) without legal authority. Their reasoning is that if the legal authorities can't handle the "Gypsy problem" (sometimes they formulate it as the "Gypsy crime"), then they will sort it out for the sake of the (Hungarian) community members.

116 A common attack method, usually committed by young men on motorcycles, is to firebomb Roma families' homes on the outskirts of the Gypsy colonies.

The Roma migrants' conviction that "nothing good can be expected by going home" was reinforced, for example, after they heard about the latest anti-Gypsy demonstration led by the Guard in Miskolc.¹¹⁷ Their transnational migration network, which has been functioning brilliantly and effectively thanks to newly available Internet tools, allows them access to updated information about what is happening at home with families, friends, and neighbors.¹¹⁸ The Roma migrants hear from relatives at home about the not-so-public slogans of the Guard in Miskolc, private (but public) statements like: "All Gypsies should be turned into soap" or "One should make Gypsy stew¹¹⁹ out of them" (instead of letting them come home from Canada and resettle).

However, this transatlantic migration seems to be a temporary social process. Our preliminary results show that the average duration of a stay in Canada for our respondents was fourteen months. Most of the Roma families were forced to come home after their refugee claims were rejected. Many decided to return to Hungary of their own free will after their friends or families were refused residency. Some came home even before their hearing process would have taken place due to homesickness, a serious illness, an urgent need to care for elderly parents, or just because they "had enough."

However, the majority of them were forced to return home once the Immigration and Refugee Board rejected their claims for refugee status.

117 On 17th October, 2012.

118 My host Roma family told me many times while I was with them in Toronto that they couldn't have moved so far from their home and families if they could not have managed to communicate with them every day via the internet. Whilst I was there, they started every single morning to switch on the computer, which every family in Toronto possesses. After greeting their families at home in Hungary, they exchanged the latest news about everyday life in Toronto and back at home. Occasionally, they even asked grandparents to look after their small children via the Skype camera while they popped out for a quick shopping trip. The very next day after I had left Toronto, and went to carry on the research in a Gypsy settlement near Miskolc, almost everybody there knew from their relatives in Toronto that I was "okay," and that I would not cause any trouble to them if they spoke to me about their migration experiences.

119 A play on words using the name of a (delicious) Hungarian dish of fried pork cutlets. The recipe has nothing to do with Gypsies, in fact.

The recent change in the Canadian Immigration Policy is a good example of the theory that migration is as much about state policies as it is about the mobility of people (Black et al., 2006). The mass migration of poor Hungarians, Roma or non-Roma (all declaring themselves Roma in front of the Canadian authorities), and the saturation effect it caused, resulted in a declaration by the Canadian Immigration Minister, Jason Kenney, that the Roma from Eastern Europe are “bogus refugees” and a national security threat. Kenney promoted the introduction of Bill C31, intended to protect the country against the mass migration of these “bogus refugees” from Eastern Europe who he contended “were economic migrants coming to take advantage of the generous provision of the Canadian welfare system” (Levine-Rasky, 2012). The new Law entitled “Protecting Canada’s Immigration System Act” sorts refugees into ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ groups as Canadian sociologist Levine-Rasky put it. The new law was to designate some countries as ‘safe’ – to which refugees may be returned – in contrast to those that are not. On the list of the Designated Countries of Origin (DCO), Hungary (alongside with the Czech Republic and Slovakia) appears as a safe country. Accordingly, since the enforcement of the new Act in December 2012, refugees from Hungary are taken as ‘irregular arrivals’ and are not entitled to any provision from the state.

Although this latest ‘new phase’ in the Canadian migration story once again seems to come to an end for the Hungarian Roma with the introduction of a new regulation by the Canadian government, the (politically) disturbed migration trend seems to have already found its way to other destinations (Cf. Kováts, 2002).¹²⁰ With a knot in their stomachs, many of the Roma refugees in Toronto are now awaiting their official removal letter from the Refugee Board and are already planning to move forward. Some are planning to use their migration network to go to the UK in search of (unskilled) works. Some will come home temporarily, just to save enough money for the next journey, and will travel on either to

120 The political interruption of the social process of migration between the two countries is historically nothing new. A previous example took place in December 2001 when Canada introduced the visa requirement for all Hungarian citizens entering the country.

Germany or to Malta. Malta is a seemingly new target country, where a few Roma have already got their foot in the door of the (informal) service sector, facilitating more relatives and friends to follow in their footsteps. And no wonder: the ‘push factors’ that are the incentives for Roma to migrate out of Hungary (e.g. poverty, unemployment, and racism) are still prevalent, if not worse than before. Many of those who plan to continue to migrate stated almost unanimously that, these days, Hungary “is not a country where people like Gypsies.” At the same time, due to the overwhelmingly good experiences of Canadian Roma migrants, the ‘culture of migration’ (Massey, 1993) – that is, the “culture where migration is considered to be the only way to improve one’s standard of living” (Hearing at al., 2004) – is widely diffused nowadays amongst poor Hungarian Roma from economically disadvantaged regions in Hungary.¹²¹

The life of migrants in Toronto

I would now like to consider the migration stories of two Roma families, both which can be regarded as ‘ideal types’ of the migration process from Hungary to Canada: whilst the first one exemplifies a (so far) ‘success story’; the other one is a prototypical example of unsuccessful or ‘failed migrants’ (cf. Vidra, 2012).

We look first at the ‘success’ story: Turdy (alias Zolika) moved with his family (wife and two young children) from a middle-sized settlement in Borsod County to Toronto in the beginning of 2011. Turdy and his wife are in their early thirties. They belong to the Roma lower-middle class. They have completed primary school (eight years of formal education), one or two years of vocational training, and went on to work for many years in menial labor. Even though they had worked hard doing exhausting, semi-skilled physical jobs, they were not able to earn enough money in the past

121 It is so widely diffused that the Canadian Embassy in Hungary recently initiated a four-week billboard campaign in Miskolc discouraging Roma from seeking asylum in Canada, highlighting the changes to the refugee system. The posters say that unjustified refugee claimants will be deported and sent back home much more rapidly than before. (HVG-online, 20130118/itthon).

few years to be able to support their family or even pay the utility bills necessary for keeping their house up, now in a state of disrepair.

After a few years, Turdy reached a stage in his and his family's life where he was fed up with their destitute economic situation. At the same time, both he and his wife's parents died, freeing them of the obligations related to strong family ties (Granovetter, 1987). Freedom, though gained within sad circumstances, still facilitated their free movement.¹²²

"Just think of it: I work day and night, me and my wife, too. [One day] I had a craving for canned Sardines. And my wife says to me, 'do not buy them, Turdy,' for every penny has its place (in the household budget). Then I sat in my car and thought about it: you work hard and you can't even buy a 300 forint (CAN 1.2) can of sardines. And you have, every single month, an outstanding (utility) bill. And these bills are just piling up. Right then and there, I just decided to try [to move to] Canada. I didn't see other way out [of the poverty]. It was just after my father, and Kate's (his wife) parents died, too. You ask us 'why [we came] Canada [and not somewhere else]?' I came here because they (his migrant friends already in Toronto) said: 'Canada is good money.' They said, 'you could save up a hundred thousand (forints, around \$400) in a month from your welfare [check].' And I needed one million forints (\$4,000) to get my house done [renovated, back in Hungary]. So, I tried and came here."

Turdy's motivation for migration was clearly economically motivated: his goal was to get his family out of poverty. He hoped to not only to have a better livelihood temporarily, in their new home in Canada, but also to save enough money so that they could one day return to Hungary. In fact, practically none of the Roma migrants I met in Toronto planned to leave their home country, Hungary, forever. They saw migration as a temporary

122 Also see Portes (2010) on the downsides of social capital. As Portes states, one of the negative consequences of social capital (in terms of one's strong social ties with kin) is that it restricts individual freedom.

economic strategy worth investing into in order to get out of poverty (cf. Stark, 1991): A poverty both caused and exasperated not only by unequal access to social, economic, and political resources (unequal opportunities in education and employment) but also by mainstream anti-Gypsyism in Hungarian society.

Turdy also had clear political motivations for migrating, too: to escape the widespread, everyday experience of ethnic discrimination against Gypsies in Hungary. Not just Turdy, but also almost everyone I spoke to mentioned, when I asked about leaving Hungary, that “it is not good to be Gypsy in Hungary.”

After brooding over his hopeless, destitute economic and social situation at home, Turdy decided to invest in the process of migration. He sold the family car, used up all his wife’s severance pay, and even borrowed some money from close family members to buy airplane tickets for his family of four: he, his wife, and their two children.

His migration network strongly facilitated this transatlantic move. Migrant friends and family provided information about life in Canada and gave the useful tips and tricks as to how to make ‘quick money’. Additionally, his network actually provided accommodation for him and his family in the first period after his arrival to Canada. The ‘transnational migration network’ (Hajnal, 2002; see also Lewitt, 2001; Portes, 2010) is the strongest facilitator of Roma migration: not only by disseminating the ‘culture of migration’, but also by reducing the cost of migration.

Let us listen to Turdy’s own account:

“You come here [to Toronto] and you don’t have any money on you. And you need money for everything. Your first three months go by, as you save up every penny and you just manage to eat. I swear to you, that is how it is. We came out here, another family, a friend of ours put us up, but not for free. Nothing here is free! Our first welfare [benefits] went to this family who gave us shelter. While we were living with them, we didn’t have a penny. We gave our welfare to them for putting us up. When we came here, it was winter; the days were so cold

that you couldn't even go out on the street, 'cos you didn't have (proper) clothes for it. I managed to buy my first (winter) hat after the second month - for five dollars."

One of the central features of this migration network is the principle of reciprocity regarding all social practices or business conducted amongst its members. This network – a source of social capital for those who belong to it – can be seen as a web of mutual obligations according to a code of norms, with reciprocity at the center: A web of “social chits” in which its members provide different kinds of ‘help’ (access to scarce resources) to other members in need with the expectation that these favors will be fully repaid sometime in the future (Portes, 2010). The writer Paulo Coelho (2005) coined the phrase “favor bank” in one of his novels: a system, he says, that governs most of our lives. In what way, you ask? We can say, rather significantly, since those who have not accumulated any ‘social chits’, any obligation or favors to be returned from the other members of this transnational migration network, are resource less during the process of migration. Either they will not be able to migrate, despite their desire to do so, or they might be the ‘losers’ in the migration process, an ‘unsuccessful migrant’, as we will soon observe in our second, ‘ideal typical’ migration story about Esther, a mother of four from a Gypsy colony near Miskolc.

Another main cost-reducing factor for poor, lower-educated Hungarian migrants in Canada is the affluence and openness of the Canadian society. Many Canadian families dump their abundant superfluity in the bins back home – goods that will no longer be needed in their new households. On the streets of richer neighborhoods in Toronto, one can find almost everything what one needs to start a new life: second hand furniture, cutlery, old and (even sometimes) new clothes. Occasionally, one can even find treasure boxes filled with antique jewelry and watches. These consumer goods or products are in such good condition that not only poorer Roma (and non-Roma) but also better-off, educated, upper-middle class new Roma immigrants will use them to start their new life in Canada – with almost no initial costs, one can begin again.

During one of our many conversations in Toronto, Turdy once said to me:

“Here, you become a millionaire in no time. In three months you can start a completely new life. Back at home, a whole life is not enough to start up a new life. I’m telling you, you come here [to Toronto] and you have nothing: no fork, no knife, no spoon, no carpet, nothing. In three months, you have a flat and everything. You have a full life. ‘Cos it’s a full life for me (in Hungarian, “fullosan élek”). Here, all my clothes come from the garbage. I have trousers, t-shirts, and shoes for the kids – everything from the garbage. Here the rubbish bin (garbage can) is like the “Chinese market” at home. Indeed, it is even better here - you find designer clothes in the garbage, not only those ‘made in China’ [poor quality garments].”

‘A full life’ or a ‘millionaire’s life’ (in Hungarian: “fullos élet”) for the Hungarian Gypsies from Borsod County means when the basic needs, plus a bit more, are met: one has everything that he/she wishes for his or her family: enough food, clothes to wear, a furnished flat, a television, and even a second hand car. For migrant Gypsies, having these things means satisfaction with their lives.

Migration and the informal economy

What factors enable somebody to become a successful, or fortunate, migrant in Canada? It is common knowledge in the Hungarian (Gypsy and non-Gypsy) migrant communities that one cannot make a living from receiving welfare exclusively – not even in Canada. Therefore, the key to success is to make some ‘quick money’ on top of the welfare allowance. There are many ways of achieving this end: all you need is ‘cleverness’ or ‘craftiness’, as many informants put it. In this respect, the only difference between the Gypsy and non-Gypsy migrants is that, while the Gypsies will celebrate their ‘cunningness’ or ‘craftiness’ (i.e. the art of navigating the informal

economy, which needs both skill and a special personal quality (Pulay, 2012)) aloud, non-Gypsies seem to keep quiet about it (cf. Stewart, 1993). The latter also conduct their 'small informal businesses' and employ their own 'small cleverness' to acquire quick money, but, unlike their Gypsy comrades, they do not speak about it publicly. The scale of these crafty 'businesses', as they call them, is wide: ranging from the most innocent informal economic activity like scrap metal collection, to more fraudulent activities like acquiring extra state benefits on top of their welfare allowances (i.e. state supported 'dietary allowances') or even illegal enterprises like credit fraud.

I would like to clarify at this point that I interpret the economic practice of 'cunning' or 'crafty' business amongst Hungarian welfare-dependent migrants in the theoretical framework of informal economy. According to the official definition, as defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO), informal economic activities are those practices that generate income but fail to be registered by the relevant authorities and, thus, avoid taxes (Kim, 2005). In the case of our refugee migrants, collecting scrap metal is such an activity, since it is a kind of unregistered self-employment. Economic anthropologist Keith Hart, who coined the term 'informal economy' and applied it basically to self-employed, informal workers (in contradiction to wage-earning employment) in African urban settings, has emphasized the dynamics and diversity of these activities (Hart, 1973).

At the same time, economic sociologists stress that there is a universal character to informal economy, noting its 'cushioning affect' in advanced countries in relation to the marginal segments of societies – a sector that would otherwise have meager access or be completely deprived of subsistence. Therefore, societies would be politically less peaceful without informal economy's income generating opportunities (Portes, 2010). Portes also points out that combining welfare with off-the-books temporary work has become a 'way of life' for many marginalized groups all over the world (cf. MacDonald, 1994). The Hungarian migrant (Gypsy and non-Gypsy) welfare claimants are just one of many examples of this practice. While, it is not my intention here to detail how these 'crafty businesses' are practiced, I would like to emphasize that, according to the Gypsies I lived together

with in Toronto (non-Gypsies refused to discuss their informal economic practices with me), the 'crafty businesses' they are engaged in are, by definition, victimless. Indeed, in their minds, such a business can only be called 'clever' or 'crafty' if it provides them with quick money but does not hurt anybody. One informant defined it like this:

"What do I call cleverness?! When everybody makes his own business, makes money of it, but still can be restful in his sleep."

When we say practices that do not hurt 'anybody', in this context we mean does not hurt 'any individual person' who has a 'face'. As these 'businessmen' see it, the state (any state), is a faceless entity (Hajnal, 2002; Horvath, 2001), therefore, it is not vicious to rip it off. A good example here is the case of the 'diet money'. In Canada, people with special dietary needs are entitled to an extra social provision called 'diet money'. The maximum allowance per person per month is \$250 – almost half of one's monthly welfare allowance. To acquire diet money, one need only find a mediator, a key agent in the migration industry. The mediator is usually a more established Gypsy migrant, who will take the client to a Canadian doctor who provides him with the necessary medical certificate of 'having special dietary need'. It costs approximately \$100, out of which the Canadian doctor gets fifty dollars. It is a good business for everybody, except the state.

Some people may feel that the way of life described above is nothing to brag about and might wonder why low-educated Roma would actually celebrate their 'cleverness' or 'cunningness' so openly and proudly. Why, for instance, would they celebrate having to make a living on the informal economy? This 'cleverness' is indeed something they are proud of. For low-educated people, as the vast majority of the new Roma migrants in Canada are, finding a regular, stable job on the formal labor market with which they can support a family is almost impossible. If they are lucky, they can be offered unregistered work, but this is usually unstable and badly paid. Still, some Roma migrants in Toronto were employed (still unreported) in jobs. Frequently, the businesses are owned by well-established Canadian citizens of Hungarian decent who were once migrants themselves. However, the

jobs are always in menial labor; for instance, packing at factories or working in construction. Due to their unreported nature, these jobs are neither safe nor long lasting: they never last over three or four months. Additionally, it is common for workers to get less money than they were promised for the work. It is no wonder that they prefer more 'calculable' economic activities that promise 'quick money'. In the survey that we carried out in Toronto amongst Hungarian migrants, everybody who had arrived in the last two to three years had the same answer to the question about their means of livelihood: "*We get welfare benefits and, on top of that, the men collect scrap metal.*" They told us that one can earn \$700 (HUF 160,000) a month if one is "clever" or "good at" it. In this case, cleverness means that he has the skills to differentiate valuable scrap metal from cheaper varieties and is able to sell it to the scrap yard. A good scrapper has a good knowledge of public spaces and knows where one can find quantities of good quality scrap metal on the city streets. One also has to be industrious enough to be able to find enough scrap metal per day, given the growing competition as an increasing number of migrants arrive on the scene.

Migrants consider their scrap iron collecting and garbage rummaging activities "work" and accordingly construct their identity as (informal) migrant workers around this work. Their economic and social practices are very similar to other informal workers. For example, one can draw parallels with Brazilian catadores, who collect and sell recyclable materials at garbage dumps in Rio de Janeiro (Miller, 2009). In the context of the officially unemployed, welfare dependent Hungarian migrants in Canada, I would concur with Miller and Perelman (2007) that we should "integrate poverty studies and the anthropology of work" (Millar, 2009: 26) as well as conceptualizing informal labor as a form of work, rather than framing the activities of the poor and officially unemployed as survival strategies of those members of society on the margin. Within such a context, we can indeed consider the refugee migration process that is experienced by the Hungarian Roma (and non-Roma) a form of labor migration.

As demonstrated above, migrating to Canada is only a good strategy if someone can make use of the opportunities provided by the refugee provision

system, as well as the formal and informal economy, 'cleverly'. 'Cleverness' or cunning means finding economic opportunities that produce 'quick money'. Although this quick money is accrued mainly through borderline informal (in that they are unreported) economic activities (collecting scrap metal or returning recycling bottles to supermarkets), sometimes they cross the line of illegal businesses. A common example of this is credit fraud.

In Canada a refugee is a solvent, creditable person. They even get their welfare allowance by credit card. Low-educated migrants who have never before experienced the advantages and disadvantages of an advanced economy's financial culture have quickly learnt through their migrant friends that "*in Canada, credit is the essence. Refugees become millionaires from credit.*"

For example, according to some, it is one sort of 'cleverness' to buy a valuable mobile phone with a monthly contract using their credit card, even if they have little money at the moment of their purchase. Resale of the phone to another person will yield quick money and be economic success for many. The fact that they have to pay installments at a high interest rate is a matter for the future – a future where they may not even be in Canada.

The problem for these 'businesses' with the quick money made from illegal activities within the informal economy is that it is restricted to that short period of time until the formal economic institutions (banks, mobile phone companies, etc.) find out that they are being 'ripped off'.¹²³ This realization may take some time, but it definitely comes sooner or later. Although formerly it could be said it was worth the risk: as one of the previous Roma migrants put it, "this country is not clever yet, there's still time to be craftier" (Hajnal, 2002). These days, Canadian institutions have wised up to these practices. As hundreds of new migrants, rather than just a few, try their luck with these strategies, it becomes increasingly obvious what and how they are doing it and institutions will catch up with and put an end to it. Nowadays, due to the saturation effect, there are not many banks that would give a credit card to a new Hungarian refugee.

123 According to contemporary definitions, illegal economy "encompasses the production and distribution of legally prohibited goods and services" (Portes, 2010: 133). This includes activities such as credit fraud.

This saturation effect has also led to the creation of the “making of the Hungarian refugee” as a problem in Canada. Contrary to the situation in Western Europe, where researchers have aptly described the ethnicization of a migrant group: e.g. the formation of the phenomenon of “making of the Roma/Gypsies” from all the Slovakian migrants in the UK (Grill, 2012), we can witness in Canada the “nationalization” of all refugees from Hungary. Paradoxically, those who have been stigmatized at home on the basis of their ethnicity, now have to struggle with the stigma of their nationality. A Roma migrant woman happily wrote about it on Facebook shortly after her arrival a year ago. She said that, for the first time ever in her life, she feels free: *“my skin color is not my scarlet letter (the basis for being stigmatized) anymore.”* The catch 22, however, is that she now has to suffer from bearing the label of being a Hungarian refugee. In response, she decided to change her identity strategy by actually using her - now beneficial - skin color: *“I’d rather [tell people I am] Italian or Greek, than admit to being a Hungarian.”*

In this context, it is also understandable why those more affluent Roma musicians from Hungary who migrated some time ago and are now Canadian citizens are reluctant to speak Hungarian in public spaces. They do not interact with Roma who have recently migrated (except if they are ‘decent families’) and do not live in the same building as them. In fact, even the more established, middle-lower class Roma migrants look down upon those of their poor, lower-class, uneducated brethren who have most recently migrated.

Once again, we can observe here the same logic inherent in all the Established-Outsiders relationships that we analyzed earlier. We see how the established migrants stigmatize the newcomer migrants, labeling them as “know-nothings”, “untalented”, “different way-of-thinking” people. All the while, the newcomers represent a threat to them, too: they will downgrade the whole Hungarian migrant community’s image in the mainstream society’s eyes – especially for the Gypsy community, an already stigmatized group. Therefore, the Established feels it necessary to constantly make distinctions and differentiate between their own group and the others, marking them as inferior and with less human worth (Elias, 1994).

Turdy's opinion about his fellow Gypsy migrants in Toronto demonstrates this logic well:

"The problem is that these newcomer Gypsies have ruined our good reputation...I've been thinking about it a lot...I bet the only solution could be if someone, a well-educated Gadjó¹²⁴, would select the normal [Gypsies]. Those like me...or Caspar¹²⁵ – the ones who want to break out of poverty, of stigmatization. One should select the normal Gypsies according to cleverness, education, and attitude. Then I would separate them from the worse Gypsies. You know, those whom you can decide at the first sight that [they] can't think of anything else but roguish [criminal behavior]. I would lock up these worse ones and let them live in their own, separated environment. And then we can see what the Hungarians think of the Gypsies?! [I would say to the Hungarians] 'You judge them, but don't judge me!' Only in this way I could stick to myself. Otherwise, the whole situation is hopeless."

The established Roma migrants blame the newcomers for causing their situation to deteriorate in regards to every aspect of life in Canada. It is not only that they are no longer able to get credit: almost all other money making opportunities will eventually cease due to this latest mass migration of the new Roma migrants. Even collecting scrap metal has become harder since summer 2012. This was the point at which Canadian authorities themselves became 'craftier': they borrowed Hungarian-speaking policemen from Hungary to get the Roma out of the practice of scrap metal collecting.

A scrapper shared his experience with this change in affairs:

"Nowadays, there is a Hungarian policeman in every police car. The Hungarian policeman says to you (in your own language), 'My Brother, what are you doing here, collecting scrap metal?!'"

124 A non-Gypsy

125 My co-worker, who asked me to call him 'Caspar Iron' (in Hungarian 'Vasas Gazsi') in this text to retain his anonymity.

One of these kinds stopped my brother the other day. My brother answered that 'I'm only picking up rubbish from the street, why, is it not allowed?!' Then the policeman told him it was not. My brother didn't understand why not: 'I'm not cheating, not stealing, not robbing anyone, so, what's wrong with it - to pick up metal from the street?!' The policeman explained to him that you can't collect metal when you are on welfare. You should pay tax after collecting metal, even at home (in Hungary). Full stop. He even asked for his welfare identification number and arranged to get his welfare money withdrawn for three months. And he was a Hungarian policeman. Yet, I can't be bothered; I'm still going to collect [scrap metal]."

When a newcomer's migration is unsuccessful

According to established migrants, another problem with new migrants, apart from the saturation effect they create in terms of the Canadian informal economic market, is that there are many uneducated Gypsies amongst them who do not even have the 'talent' of 'Gypsy cunningness' and who can only make money through illegal activities. Many established migrants mentioned to me that, after many years of maintaining a friendly relationship with the Hungarian Roma 'metal collectors', nowadays, the Toronto scrap yard even has a little sign posted up on the board saying (in Hungarian) "we don't buy stolen tracks."¹²⁶

Many examples of our second ideal prototype, the 'unsuccessful migrant', can be found within this group of newcomers. Some of them sold

126 During my stay in Toronto, I sometimes visited the scrap yard with my Roma friends. Every time, they were welcome by the friendly greeting: "Szozsi Mo?" (in Romani: "How are you doing?"). When I asked the yard's workers about their experiences with the Roma, considering their derogatory note (about stolen tracks), mentioned above, they said, "in every nation there are good and bad people, one can't generalize." However, my Roma friends emphasized that, from time to time, although Canadian people have been helpful with them so far, recently, they have started to eye Hungarians suspiciously because of the 'knowing-nothing' newcomers.

all their assets just to buy the plane tickets while others managed to move to Toronto with the 'help' of informal moneylenders. There are some illegal (but definitely professional) 'migration agents' and some are Hungarian businessmen, whose business practices are catered to address the needs of the uneducated poor. They not only lend money (with an interest rate ranging from twenty-five to a hundred percent) to them, but also arrange to buy their plane tickets and provide them with (bus) transport from Miskolc to the airport – either the one in Budapest or in Vienna. These agents have their own people in Canada, who welcome the migrants upon their arrival in Toronto and begin collecting their monthly welfare allowance (in some cases they simply confiscate the bank card through which all their welfare money is transferred).

Another important agent in the migration industry that specializes in services for the uneducated poor, and who usually does not speak a word of English, is the 'interpreter'. Interpreters are usually established Hungarian migrants, who claimed and gained their refugee status many years ago and have since become Canadian citizens. Some of them realized that they can make a good livelihood out of this business: the price of a piece of advice or a brief visit to a local Canadian doctor or other administrative office goes for between \$20-50 (or, as the Hungarian Roma always convert into Hungarian forints, HUF 5,000-12,500).¹²⁷ However, there is also a subgroup of interpreters (especially amongst the older generation of the Hungarian migrants who became Canadian citizens a long time ago) who have taken it on as their 'mission' to help defenseless, low-educated Roma migrants (Vidra, personal communication).

The disadvantage of having an interpreter's help became obvious during my fieldwork. For the low-educated Roma, lacking cultural capital (formal education and a working knowledge of English), their interpreter becomes their 'Lord', the one whose local knowledge and organizational

127 The migrant Roma, who mostly have no more than eight years of schooling on average, prove to be brilliant mental mathematicians. Their everyday practice of converting all the Canadian prices into Hungarian forints suggests that, although living abroad, they are still very 'Hungarian' and their main aspiration is to save up enough money to facilitate a better life when they return to Hungary.

skills determine their 'life and death'. They can become so dependent and become so accustomed to being ripped off by their interpreter that, after some time, they cannot even recognize it anymore. The incident described below demonstrates this situation quite well.

One day, my Gypsy host family and I went off on a trip to the Niagara Falls, a sixty-kilometer drive from Toronto. Finding our way from the city to the motorway proved to be tricky, so, we thought we had got lost. Turdy's automatic reaction was to instruct his wife: "*Let's call Ani!*¹²⁸, *right now, and ask her how to get to the motorway.*" This short phone call would have cost him twenty dollars, but it would cost Ani, their otherwise helpful interpreter, only two minutes of her time.¹²⁹

This incident is only a tiny illustration of how defenseless migrants can be without speaking the language of their host country and how they have to live at the mercy of their interpreters. This defenselessness applies to many aspects of everyday life in Toronto: from the visit to the welfare office, where a good translator can easily arrange some extra provisions for the Roma refugee, to seeing a doctor, arranging one's driving license or the most important event in a migrant Gypsy's life, the legal hearing. Here, even a mistranslated word can change the outcome of the judgment of his/her refugee claim.

For the majority of Roma migrants, Canada is – or was – a good experience: Canada means a "*full life*", a "*Canaan, regarding food*". (That is to say, as many of them put it, "*you can eat as much as you want here, unlike at home.*") For other migrants, moving to Canada proved to be a bad idea, an unsuccessful turn of events, given the outcome of their migration experience. Although, according to our survey, this 'unsuccessful' group makes up approximately no more than 10% of all migrants, their experience is not without a cautionary message.¹³⁰

128 Their interpreter

129 After a few minutes, my Gypsy co-worker and I managed to convince Turdy that, rather than calling Ani, we could just stop and check the route on the map that we bought on our arrival. Finally, we found our way to the falls and saved twenty dollars for the day.

130 We asked the following question in our survey: "Do you consider your move to Canada a good or a bad experience; do you have a good or a bad memory of Canada?" I consider migrants 'unsuccessful' if they said that Canada was a bad experience for them.

Esther's case is a good illustration of the 'unsuccessful' migration in this group. Esther left Petersland in February 2010 with her husband and four children. She left the settlement in Hungary with twenty other Gypsy families.

"The whole plane was full of us Gypsies. The previous flight was all Gypsies, too. We went on the same bus from Petersland to the airport in Budapest, but we were not allowed to speak to each other: not on the bus, nor on the plane, either. All us Gypsies told the same story when they arrived to Toronto; that we fled from the Guard. It was silly and they didn't swallow it. You want the honest truth? We all went because we were penniless."

According to Esther, they were 'coaxed' to migrate, persuaded to make the move by relatives and neighbors from the settlement who had just come back from Canada, saying that it was 'Canaan' and, of course, by moneylenders who lent them the money for their plane tickets.

Esther's biggest hope was to "make some money" out there in Toronto and to "have a better life." Instead, she ended up living in a big block of flats, the West Lodge, where almost all the Gypsies from Petersland lived at that time. Some of them were luckier than Esther. Esther's rented flat was full of bed bugs. One of her adolescent sons' legs was so badly bitten that he needed several months of medical treatment for the bed bugs after their return to Miskolc. However, the main reason Esther decided to go home was the drug issue. Her boys, both in their late teens, had such easy access to marijuana and other drugs and hung around with such dangerous gangs that Esther started to fear for their lives. They did not go to school. As the boys themselves said: *"We were afraid of the niggers there."*

So, after five months, Esther decided that it was better to move the family back home, although, to date, she has yet to pay back her debt (with significant interest) to the local (informal) moneylender.

What Canada means to Esther, looking back after one year after returning home, is very different from the experiences had by more successful migrants:

"It was not a good experience for me. It's better for me to be at home. What comes to my mind regarding Canada? That building, the stink, drugs. The people there are out of their minds; they go there to rip each other off. We didn't bother with anybody though; my husband went to do 'garbage' [rummaging] and I was at home with the children and didn't really go anywhere. I planned to stay there for one year, however, I couldn't bear to be locked up and [I had] all the worries about the boys. They were so spaced out; they could get drugs so cheap. At home, at least they have to work to be able to buy it. But out there, everything came so easy for them. It got dangerous, so I decided to take them home."

The above Roma Canadian migration story can also be read as a metaphor of how the habitus of the poor Gypsy survives residential changes, whether a transnational movement or just an intra-country migration. Due to a lack of (even weak) ties within the receiving country's community, Roma migrants coming from Petersland, a rural settlement near Miskolc with a significant local Roma population, they continue to live in Toronto almost identically to how they did in their Gypsy community back home. They created an ethnic enclave in the heart of the metropolis by once again ending up in residentially clustered neighborhoods. This area was once a flourishing neighborhood in Toronto (at least, according to the established migrants) but has now, in the last two years, been turned into ethnic enclaves of the Hungarian Gypsies. West Lodge, the infamous block of flats where Esther and her family once lived, accommodates almost five hundred Roma families. Everyone lives off of social welfare. It gained its reputation as "infamous" by the media, the established migrants, and by the police who all dubbed it a "dangerous place." Before I went there myself in order to visit some Roma migrant families whom I got to know through an interpreter friend of mine in Toronto, even my host family, Turdy, and his friends warned me: *"You should not go there, that is a dangerous place, a ghetto, they will kill you there."* This reaction struck me as ironic since it is a typical stigmatization of many urban slums, some Gypsy villages in

Hungary, and all over the world. Yet, admittedly, it is a stigmatization that gains power partly from the reality that, among the dwellers of these slums, drug addicts also live here.

Nowadays, the majority of the tenants come from the same rural settlement in Hungary: Petersland. This is partly because Canadian landlords are not willing to rent out flats to Hungarian refugees anymore – only in West Lodge. On the other hand, people from Petersland, who do not speak English, do not feel safe anywhere except amongst each other. This is how the ‘red belt’ of Toronto came to be created in the past few years.

In West Lodge, one can observe pastimes from rural life in Petersland’s Gypsy colony. Youngsters on drugs crowd the entrance lobby queuing up for (and obstructing others from) the elevator. Crying babies in buggies cram the upper corridors. Women offer tit-bits of their

cooking to their next-door neighbors; the time of day, mid-afternoon or ten o’clock at night, does not seem to matter. The vibrant life of the Hungarian rural Gypsy colony has been recreated. Non-Gypsy neighbors (mostly Asian or Canadian welfare recipients) complain to the local authorities about the “unbearable amount of noise” coming from their new Gypsy neighbors’ apartments. They say they also find the ‘rural’ Gypsy colony lifestyle intimidating.¹³¹ However, there is a mutual fear of the ‘other’ within the West Lodge neighborhood; non-Roma, Canadians feel unsafe with their Roma neighbors, but also the Roma themselves are scared of the ‘others’ that live amongst them (‘niggers’,¹³² drug addicts, etc.)

131 It is a commonly observed conflict in Europe, too, within neighborhoods comprising of Roma and non-Roma migrants. One of the reasons for the conflict is, as Grill put it, that “the Roma sense and use of public space does not fit in easily with local practices.” For the Hungarian Roma migrant coming from a rural Gypsy colony, spending leisure time in the lobby or in the public corridor of the block of flats, even at late hours, is “simply part of their daily habitual sociability, but it is also a practice that makes them highly distinctive” and even an “unwelcome, intimidating sight” in the eyes of their non-Roma neighbors. (Grill, 2012: 46).

132 Migrant Gypsies call the Afro-Americans ‘nigger’ (in Hungarian: ‘Feka’), and they are scared of them since they believe many of them are involved in drug traffic.

Class-related or ethnicity-related migration?

This new migration pattern to Canada seems to be more class-related than ethno-culturally defined. That is, it is not at all specific to the Roma. In fact, we met many Hungarian (non-Roma) migrants in Toronto who come from Miskolc, or other cities, and who are only claiming to be Roma to be entitled to the refugee status. 'Switching ethnicity' is a beneficial economic strategy for migrants coming from Hungary to Canada. One of the entries in my Roma co-workers fieldwork diary goes like this:

"I met with an interesting thing today: Hungarian people from Hungary who are not Roma. I asked them how come they are here. They didn't want to answer. Then one of them said: 'It is better to be a Gypsy in Canada than a Hungarian in Hungary. But if they force me to go home, I'll be Hungarian again; I will not want to hear from the Gypsies then.' I think it is disgusting, tasteless. I'm sending my word to the members of Jobbik [a right wing political party with ties to the Magyar Garda], that they should filter out these people who declare themselves Gypsy in Canada and then upon returning home, join the Hungarian Guard. I have to laugh."

These two-faced Hungarian migrants typically did not want to answer our survey questions, or even talked to us, even briefly. They seemed to have something to hide.

However, of the Hungarian non-Roma refugees, originating from all over Hungary, we have met some who had frequent interaction with the Roma migrant community. Not only did their Hungarian children play happily with their Roma migrant friends, living in the same block of flats in Toronto, but also there were examples of 'mixed marriages' among young Hungarian men and Gypsy women – a social relationship that is far from commonplace in Hungary these days.

I have chosen to include the story of one Hungarian young man from this latter group. Although this migrant group deserves much more thorough research in the future, based on the ethnographic experience I

gained both in Toronto and Miskolc, I believe his story to be in some way a kind of typical narrative for this group.

Robi is in his mid-thirties. He used to live in one of Miskolc's better housing estates, the third block of Avas. Since it is an ethnically mixed part of the city, he had not only Hungarian but also Roma friends, too. Regarding his family circumstances and social status, his life didn't differ too much from the Roma living in Avas. However, his life got off to an unfortunate start as his father died when he was six years old and his mother then went on to have nine children from three different fathers.

Regarding his social status, he was in the same position as many of his Gypsy friends in the city: he had eleven years of schooling with vocational training in the construction industry. He never worked as wage laborer. He enjoyed autonomy and worked as a self-employed peddler. He recently became unemployed, as his business fell apart. He moved to Toronto two years ago with his sister, after his cousin coaxed them to leave Hungary; first migrating to the UK and then, when that did not prove to work out, to Canada.

When I asked him about his ethnic affiliation, he tried to avoid the answer jokingly: *"I don't know. You should ask my mum."* However, his Roma girlfriend did not leave room for doubt about his ethnicity:

"Why do you always have to joke?! Just look at him, how white he is. There is no one who would say you could be a Gypsy. You know how it is: one recognizes it immediately who is Gypsy. Not only his family members but also all his friends are Hungarian," she asserted.

After a while it became quite obvious that Robi was only reluctant to admit in front of me that he used the opportunity to identify himself as Roma in Canada merely for the sake of the refugee status.

Later on, in the course of our long conversation, it became clear that he considers himself a non-Roma Hungarian: somebody who has a higher social status than his Roma girlfriend and her other Gypsy friends. This sense of status is confirmed by a Hungarian ethnic identity that is not stigmatized and by his Hungarian friends, who all have a higher social status.

However, it is important to reiterate that, despite the fact we have focused here on a description of the new wave of migration as a mass outmigration of lower-class, poor, low-educated Roma (and non-Roma) families, there is no exclusive homogeneous stream of migrants coming to Toronto. Some highly educated, relatively well-off Roma intellectuals have also recently moved to Canada. A few of them have even publicly demonstrated their well-grounded reasons for leaving their anti-Gypsy home country behind.

**What awaits Gypsies when they return home from “doing Canada”?
(in Hungarian: Kanadázó cigányok)**

We mentioned previously how greatly Roma migrants fear receiving their asylum refusal letter. They have good reasons, too. The account below foreshadows the kind of social milieu that welcomes many a migrant Gypsy back in their hometown, after returning to Miskolc.

One evening, a van carrying an extended Roma family and their friends back to Toronto from Niagara Falls, was knocked off the motorway by a lorry. The lorry did a hit and run, leaving behind the broken van. As a result of this accident, an eleven-year old boy died, three adults were put into intensive care at the local hospital and almost all of the passengers had more or less serious injuries. The family had only wanted to see Niagara Falls, a ‘must see’ for almost all Gypsy migrants in Toronto, on their last day in Canada before they were forced to return home to Hungary.

Friends and acquaintances in Hungary heard about the tragic event just hours after it took place via Facebook and by speaking to the family via Internet video calls. What was shocking, was that, even under these tragic circumstances, people from the extreme right (members of the Miskolc Hungarian Guard) felt no shame in posting comments on Facebook, directed towards their Gypsy acquaintances (more accurately, their enemies) from the same settlement, stating that “*it’s a shame that only one of you died*”, and “*should all the fucking Gypsies have passed away in the accident, it would have been better for everybody.*”

This story, although extreme in its callousness, is indicative of the ill-natured social context in which Gypsies and non-Gypsies are forced to endure in Miskolc and of the general political climate, together with its far right local government, that dominates the surrounding settlements. Regardless of their ethnic affiliation, the ruthless remarks of these individuals lacked all human feeling and sympathy for the victims of this road accident. However, if you ask a Gypsy from this area, they would tell you this is the crux of daily life in this region.

Another striking example of this disheartening social milieu is from another settlement near Miskolc. In this case, the local municipal leadership called an exclusive meeting behind closed doors to discuss the ‘issue’ of the returning Roma migrants to the township. According to one of our local informants, the crucial dilemma was whether to welcome back the Roma who have already returned (or were soon to return) from Canada or to try to displace/relocate them somewhere outside the border of the settlement. In the eyes of the local leadership and their followers, excommunicating them would be the best opportunity to get rid of the “*undeserving poor*” who have anyway “*betrayed the Hungarians,*” and ruined “*our country’s good reputation abroad.*” The returnees were also seen as having created an unbearable social burden upon their return, which the local government was not prepared to deal with. As one of the local clerks put it, “*it is proved that they [the Gypsies] are not welcome anywhere in the world, so why should we need to welcome them [back home] to our settlement?!*”

Concluding remarks

While many elements of our research and analysis are still rudimentary in terms of their development, I hope that I was able highlight here some of most important features and patterns that we identified in this latest Roma migration wave to Canada.

For us, the most striking discovery is that this wave appears to feature a new pattern of Roma outmigration from Hungary (cf. Vidra-Virág, 2012). Up until two years ago, only those who possessed either some social

and cultural capital (secondary education or some entrepreneur skill) or economic resources (savings or property) could choose a transnational migration strategy. Yet in the past two to three years, Gypsies (and non-Gypsies) from the lower strata population have also managed to migrate, especially – or mainly – from the most economically and socially backward region of Hungary, Borsod County, known for its vivid anti-Gypsy, racist far right movement. Migrants decided to move not only for economic reasons, but also to flee from a social environment engulfed in hatred against them, a place where being a (visible, that is, black) Gypsy means being the lowest-of-the-low on the social strata and where one can expect to be treated like an inferior, undeserving being; unworthy of assistance or taxpayer's money, unfit for the decent, upright mainstream society, the rightful subject for multifaceted discrimination on the labor market, in education, and in healthcare.

We have also been able to demonstrate how the prevalence of 'professionalized' informal emigration brokers (primarily moneylenders) has recently facilitated migration even for uneducated, lower-class Roma groups with no resources. Out of all the migrants in Toronto, this group is the most defenseless. Not speaking a word of English, they can only manage their migrant life at the mercy of their Hungarian interpreters. With few exceptions, these two agents of the migration industry, the informal travel brokers (money lenders) and the interpreters, can make a good deal of money off the ignorance and neediness of poor, desperate people. The poor and illiterate, serve as a good basis for one's profit-making economic activities – a maxim that holds true not only in terms of Hungary, but also for Canada and everywhere else for that matter (cf. Yasar, 2008).

It is also important to note that, although the culture of migration has spread out widely from the better-off, middle class Roma to the lower-class Gypsies, this minority's very lowest class has still missed even this opportunity. While this is partly because their social networks do not contain migrant members, it is also partly due to their larger family sizes (meanwhile the migrants have around three, they have five or six children on average) (Durst, 2007) and they simply are not able to afford to take

even the first step in the migration process: collecting the money to travel. Another reason they have also stayed behind is due to the strength of their family ties (and obligations). For those with many children and a large extended family, the greatest possible resource to insure their survival, the possibility of migrating (including even moving from their village) is unimaginable (Durst, 2011).

Another important element of the Roma's recent migration story is the relationship between poverty and development. The positive benefits of migration for the poor, the important role played by migrant remittances in poor people's livelihoods (cf. De Haan, 2000 - as cited by Black et al., 2006), is clear in the case of Hungarian Roma migrants. The vast majority of our migrant respondents (both returned and current) reported that they had managed to save up money whilst having been in Canada. Many sent back remittances regularly, almost every month or every other month, to their parents to pay for the rent of their council flats or to start renovation or refurbishment of their houses (having left them in the care of their parents or other close relatives at home). In the case of the young adults, some sent money back to pay a mortgage on their first home or for saving up to buy a new house when they return. However, family networks and resources were not just mobilized for the starting point of a migration journey – either when money was collected at home or sent from Canada to finance a migration trip for lower class migrants or when the established migrant family members send air tickets from Canada to their poorer family members at home. These networks come into play on their return, too. Those from Miskolc who did not have a place to stay when they were forced to leave Canada moved into the homes of their parents or siblings until they managed to find their own accommodation.

However, unlike other returned migrant groups (cf. Portes, 2010; Lewitt, 2001), remittances sent back home by the Roma from Canada do not facilitate the social mobility of the returnees and their families. These remittances are not spent on their children's education, on better healthcare, or starting up a new small enterprise but on everyday subsistence. They are used for renovating houses, settling outstanding utility bills, and, in many cases, for covering daily subsistence in a future period when the returnees

will be left without any social benefits or state support. For they all know, based on the experiences of friends and relatives who have already moved back to Hungary, that they will not be eligible for unemployment benefits and/or social welfare for at least one year after returning home.

Last but not least, I would like to draw attention to the multiple policy implications of this latest Hungarian Roma migration story. With its new Immigration Act, Canada has indicated that the Eastern European Roma's economic and social problems should be sorted out in their home country.

Another one of my intentions in the context of this piece is to draw attention to the increasing emigration flow that is currently taking place, which the media has dubbed the 'new exodus' from Hungary. This departure from Hungary pertains to both Roma and non-Roma people and demonstrates that the social process currently taking place can and should be understood against the backdrop of the rapidly deteriorating economic and political situation in this country. Further, the rise and empowered presence of vigilant far right political movements, with their anti-Gypsy and anti-Semitic hate campaigns against minority groups – their chosen scapegoats during this time of worsening economic circumstances – is not to be taken lightly. This is another, worrying, dangerous social process taking place in Europe today that is putting people's lives at risk.

The majority of the Roma migrants in Canada are in a sense economic refugees – even according to their own accounts – who have to face discrimination of all kinds in their everyday lives from birth to death. As we have observed, many of them have chosen migration as a short-term economic strategy. Many would have stayed in Hungary, should they have been able to find regular employment there. They have invested in the process of migration in the hope of saving up some money and being able to lift themselves out of poverty when ultimately returning home.

All in all, one of the core messages from this latest mass Roma migration is that: as long as the state and the local governments do not promote economic development, creating more job opportunities for unskilled laborers – a workforce in which the Roma are overrepresented (Kollo, 2000) – the culture of migration will be the only viable livelihood strategy for many able bodied, working age people.

Nonetheless, I add a thought here – with a bit of sarcasm – that some Hungarian, anti-Gypsy, Nationalist ‘wishful thinkers’ probably would not mind if this is exactly how the situation evolves, that Roma mass migration to the West continues, since Gypsies represent, in their eyes, the most troublesome, malfunctioning, unmanageable social problem the country has, or will ever have, to face. They might wistfully think that this would be the easiest way to rid Hungary of the Gypsies and solve the Hungarian “Gypsy question” once and for all.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Zsuzsa Vidra, Michael Stewart and Attila Melegh for their invaluable comments on the first draft of this paper. I am also indebted to Emily Hillman and Esther Holbrook for their editing work.

REFERENCES

- Black, R. and Biao, X. and Collyer, M. and Engbersen, G. and Heering, L. and Markova, E. (2006) *Migration and Development: Causes and Consequences*. Oxford University Press.
- Coelho, P. (2005) *A Zahir*. Athenaeum 2000 Kiadó: Budapest.
- Durst, J. (2007) ‘Kirekesztettség és gyermekvállalás - A romák termékenységének változása néhány „gettósodó” aprófaluban (1970 - 2004).’ PhD thesis: Corvinus University, Budapest.
- Durst, J. (2010) ‘Minden évben máshogy fordul a világ - A telepfelszámolástól a szegregált cigány faluig.’ (From the elimination of the Gypsy settlements to the segregated Gypsy village). *Anblokk* (4): 34-38.

- Elias, N. (1994) 'Introduction: Towards a theory of established-outsider relations', in Elias, N. and Scotson, L. (eds.) *The Established and the Outsiders: A sociological enquiry into community problems*: 1-36. London: Sage.
- Feischmidt, M. (2011) *Etnicitás. Különbségteremtő társadalom*. Osiris Kiadó: Budapest, 1-36.
- Granovetter, M. (1991) 'A gyenge kötések ereje. A hálózatelmélet felülvizsgálata', in Angelusz R. And Tardos R. (eds) *Társadalmak rejtett hálózata*. Budapest: Magyar Közvéleménykutató Intézet: 371-400.
- Grill, J. (2012) "It's building up to something, and it won't be nice when it erupts": The making of Roma/Gypsy migrants in post-industrial Scotland.' *Focal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* (62): 42-54.
- Hajnal, L. (2002) 'Roma in Canada. Outmigration from Hungary from the second half of the 1990's.' *Roma migration*. Budapest-International Organization for Migration: 41-66.
- Hart, K. (1973) 'Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana.' *Journal of Modern African Studies* (11): 61-89.
- Kemény, I. and Janky, B. and Lengyel, G. (2004) *A magyarországi cigányság 1971-2003*. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest.
- Kim, B.Y. (2005) 'Poverty and informal economy participation. Evidence from Romania.' *Economics in Transition*, 13 (1): 163-185.
- Kováts, A. (2002) 'The migration of the Roma from Hungary.' *Roma Migration*. Budapest-International Organization for Migration: 13- 33.
- Köllő, J. (2000) *A pálya szélén*. Osiris Kiadó, Budapest.
- Ladányi, J. (2010): 'A miskolci gettóügy', in: Neményi, M. and Szalai, J. (Eds.). *Kisebbségek kisebbsége*.
- Levine-Rasky, C. (2012) 'How are you calling Bogus? Saying No to Roma Refugees.' *Canadian Dimension Magazine*. Human Rights, September/October edition.

- Lewitt, P. (2001) *The transnational villagers*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- MacDonald, R. (1994) 'Fiddly jobs, undeclared working, and the Something for Nothing Society.' In: *Work, Employment, and Society* (8): 507-30.
- Massey, D. (1987) 'Understanding Mexican Migration to the United States.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 92 (6): 1372-1403.
- Miller, K. (2009) 'Making trash into treasure: Struggles for autonomy on a Brazilian Garbage dump.' *Anthropology of Work Review*, XXIX (2): 25-34.
- Portes, A. (2010) *Economic Sociology. A systematic inquiry*. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford.
- Pulay, G. (2012) 'A civilizált, a csavargó, a rafinált és a balek. Utcai élet és informalitás egy bukaresti szegénynegyedben.' *Beszélő*, 12.17: 60- 74.
- Sík, E. (2012) 'Csúcson a migrációt tervezők aránya.' http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2012/kitekint/20120523_migracio.html
- Stark, O. (1991) *The Migration of Labor*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- Stewart, M. (1993) *Daltestvérek. Az oláh cigány identitás és közösség továbbélése a szocialista Magyarországon*. T-Twins Kiadó, MTA Szociológiai Intézet, Max Weber Alapítvány: Budapest.
- Van Hear, N. and Nyberg, S. (2003) *The Migration – Development Nexus*. Geneva, International Organisation for Migration.
- Vidra, Z. (2012) *Roma migration to and from Canada – The case of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia*.
- Vidra, Z. and Virág, T. (2012) *Some hypothesis and questions on the new wave of Hungarian Roma migration to and from Canada*.
- Yasar, A. G. (2012) 'Contested money.' A paper presented at the workshop entitled "Two sides of the coin: Gypsy Economy" Lisbon, 2012.