TRAPPED IN-BETWEEN: EVERYDAY EMBEDDEDNESS OF STAY-AT-HOMES IN VOJVODINA

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ABSTRACT

Within transnational migration scholarship, emphasis is placed in the pervasive processes through which migrants construct and redefine their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one place. However, there is no address of the impact or occurrences of disembeddedness processes among migrants, let alone among stay-at-homes. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the locality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac (Vojvodina, Serbia), this study moves embeddedness away from the individual to the collective – demonstrating that shifts between levels of embeddedness is experienced individually but also collectively from emergent tensions during this process. It is this tension that establishes a rupture in the locality, which compromises belonging, and thereby consequently facilitates a return to entrapment. By employing a transnational perspective, I return to the sending locality to centre this process and its cross-cutting implications among stay-at-homes. In order to conceptualize and demonstrate the entangled nature of embedding and disembedding, I apply a multiscalar approach and utilize the concept of locality as analytical tools.

Key Words: *embeddedness, disembeddedness, transnational, sending locality, stay-at-homes, entrapment, multiscalar*

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Introduction

Sometimes even the most complex social processes can be felt and understood in just one moment. I experienced such a moment during my fieldwork when I was sitting at a table with a childhood friend of mine, Marika. We were reminiscing about our lives and the friendship we shared during the early years in this small rural village of Székelykeve/Skorenovac. The mood was joyous filling me with a warmth which is often missing, replaced instead with an emptiness or longing. We were embracing the moment, something that we once frequently shared until I departed from this village to a new home, in Canada, during the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. The mention of my emigration from my former home ended this moment and replaced it with an omnipresent silence that befell our conversation. Marika's expression changed, becoming enveloped by a joyful sadness as she said to me:

> *"There are always birthdays but you are not always here. I am really happy that you came and whenever you are here … visit, you can willingly come visit anytime. Come every time. Don't you dare forget it."*

Returning again to the region of Vojvodina/Vajdaság in Serbia, back into the village of Székelykeve/Skorenovac, required me to re-insert myself into the everyday lives of friends and family. While traversing the roads throughout my former home, I felt a degree of belongingness yet a constant feeling of estrangement followed me throughout my time in this space. From my initial interactions it became apparent that with some individuals my relationship is easier to establish, like with Marika, while others were skeptical of my interest in their lives. Even while speaking with her I quickly understood that despite our connection my position as a migrant was

constantly present. In that moment I realized that I am a *halfie* – one whose identity and belonging has been mixed by the virtue of migration and overseas education (Narayan 1989). From then on, I understood that this research would require a careful balance between the ethics and politics of my representations, for as I present the 'other,' I am presenting myself (Abu-Lughod 1991:142).

Spending more time in the locality, my position as a *halfie* became more apparent, to the point that this interplay between both 'local' and 'migrant' determines my ability to engage with individuals. I can relate on one level with struggles that come from migration among migrants but conversely struggle with understanding the impact of migration among those who stay-at-home. My observations during my interactions in the locality with individuals reveals that at times I am embedded, while on many occasions I am disembedded. This relational experience is felt both here in Székelykeve/Skorenovac and there in Canada. Even in Canada, at times I am native, while at others, foreigner; I could pass as a local but it remains a struggle to conform to this role – making me feel constrained in my position. My experience with this process provides me with a level of empathy from which I can relate to such a dialectical relationship between embeddedness and disembeddedness occurring among migrants and those who stay-at-home in this locality.

Migration is part of the ongoing history of Székelykeve/Skorenovac that transforms the lives of individuals historically and presently. Although migration remains present within people's everyday lives, beginning in 2011 things quickly changed. The current migration pattern is now dominated by constantly increasing rates of out-migration. This shift results from access to Hungarian citizenship and subsequently European citizenship, providing individuals the opportunity to participate in the open mobility within the European Union. Within the following years, the relationship and activity by migrants living in Austria and Germany toward

Székelykeve/Skorenovac were maintained. Initially, the relations of migrants toward the village provided a level of economic and social support and movement between migrant communities to the village was frequent. The migrants from Austria and Germany return throughout the year to provide financial remittances to their kin but also to maintain social relations with friends and family. Yet, within recent years the embeddedness level of migrants in the village began to shift in favour of disembeddedness – encouraging the same shift among those who stay-at-home.

Connections are established with the other migrants in both Austria and Germany resulting in a loss of ties with the home locality and consequently destabilizing social relationships between family and friends. Furthermore, return visits become less frequent even during village events and socio-economic support wanes. Migrant incentives to remain embedded are changing, creating insecurities and tensions among those who stay-at-home about their prospects to remain attached to this place. A struggle between embedding and disembedding among stay-at-homes emerges – favouring the latter among many of the remaining inhabitants in Székelykeve/Skorenovac. The continuing escalation of this process transforms inter-local dynamics; disrupting belonging while creating an atmosphere of entrapment among those who stay-at-home. These ongoing processes within this environment reinforces but also progresses the alienation of locality and the residents residing within it. This thesis will problematize the meaning of embeddedness by seeking to understand the conditions which enable the generation and continuation of disembeddedness. I will attempt to answer how this process influences everyday practices within the sending locality and the practices involved in adapting or resisting to such changes. More importantly, the thesis aims to demonstrate how individuals, both migrants and stay-at-homes alike, experience and engage with embeddedness in their everyday lives.

The concept of embeddedness takes its roots from economics beginning with Karl Polayni as a method of analysis to determine the ways in which overarching social structures effect and structure economic transactions. (Portes 1995). Mark Granovetter, an economic sociologist, later appropriated the concept into the Sociology. According to Granovetter, "embeddedness refers to the fact that economic action and outcomes, like all social action and outcomes, are affected by actors dyadic (pairwise) relations and by the structure of the overall network of relationships" (1992:25). Portes and Sensenbrenner claim that despite offering a standpoint to criticize neoclassical economic models, the concept of embeddedness suffers from theoretical vagueness (1993:1321). To remove such concerns Portes (1995) extended embeddedness on two levels: relational embeddedness and structural embeddedness by incorporating it under the umbrella of social network analysis. Portes constructed relational embeddedness as involving actor's social relations with one another, while structural embeddedness referred to the varying scales of social relationships involving other actors than those participating in an economic transaction (1995:6). However, the embeddedness that is presented by both Granovetter and Portes remains limited toward economics and it does not address potential overlaps between cultural and political levels, despite structural embeddedness accounting for different scales of social relationships. With the development of transnational migration scholarship, the embeddedness concept became incorporated into the discourse.

Although the study of migration is not a new phenomenon, the agreement upon the importance of social relations of migrants is viewed as both a "causal and sustaining factor influencing the migration process" (Brettell and Hollifield 2008:6). The development of 'transnational' migration begins to emerge as the focus on social networks challenged the preconceived conception in which migrants cannot be solely characterized as 'uprooted' (Portes

2001, Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1995). Instead these networks are embedded in multiple places, and migrants come to influence the local and national process from the countries in which they had emigrated, thus no longer understood as solely immigrants but rather as transnational migrants. Henceforth, Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc have defined transnational migration as, "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (1992:48). Emphasis is placed on the pervasive process through which migrants construct and redefine their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

Portes (2001) notes that embeddedness is a cumulative process of migration and transnational activities where the action of migrants "can entirely transform the economic and political structure of sending areas as well as their culture" (191). However, Portes realizes that this cumulative process of migration is influenced by various actors (state/non-state, institutional/non-institutional) facilitating the type of embeddedness which will occur and whether it will be transnational or not (2001). Transmigrants then constitute a migrating population which develops and maintains multiple relations whose lives often cross cut national boundaries bringing together multiple societies into a new transnational social field – affecting the political, economic, cultural and familial relations in both host and home localities (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1992; Pries 2001; Portes 2001). Applied in the transnational context, embeddedness is now conceptualized as comprising dimensions that influence the ways "individuals find and define their position in society, feel a sense of belonging to and participate in that society" (Ruben, van Houte and Davids 2009:914).

Despite this, the usage of embeddedness in migration retains its economic focus. The term *mixed embeddedness* developed as an interactionist method that focuses on both actors (migrant entrepreneurs) and opportunity structures (networks) more comprehensively, in an effort to understand the relationships between this micro and meso layers and there link to the macro institutional framework (Kloosterman 2010; Rath and Kloosterman 2000). Further studies made use of this method to measure the transnational economic activities of migrant entrepreneurs analyzing the processes that would accommodate or obstruct migrant's economic entrepreneurial efforts (Rusiniovic 2008; Dahles 2013). Such approaches are conducted through quantitative methods ignoring the qualitative; the individual is overlooked with regard to how embedding processes are constructed and experienced in their daily life.

In this thesis, I challenge these quantitative approaches by approaching embeddedness through a qualitative lens. A qualitative perspective will account for individual characteristics and experiences with the migration cycle; where in each stage it influences the prospect and level of embeddedness which can be achieved (Ruben, van Houte and Davids 2009:914). By acknowledging the individual experience with embedding, my aim is to extend this notion further by moving embeddedness away from the individual to the collective. This thesis aims to demonstrate that shifts between levels of embeddedness is experienced individually but also collectively from emergent tensions during this process.

Even though embeddedness is a central characteristic to defining transnational migration, there is no address of the impact or occurrences of disembeddedness process among migrants specifically. Simultaneous embeddedness is taken as *a priori* among transnational migration scholars despite there being indirect reflections at the presence of disembeddedness processes

occurring among migrant transnational networks. The discussion by Portes (2001) and Molina, Petermann and Herz (2015) concerning the uneven process of embeddedness between geographical and social spaces in which migrants are connected hint at disembedding, especially when the global and local power dynamics affect embedding processes resulting in constant shuffling between these mechanisms. There is an inherent recognition that disembedding processes are occurring across geographical and social spaces but accounting for why it is occurring remains unquestioned within their analysis. This thesis aims to answer this question by accounting for the globalizing dynamics which are changing the spatial and temporal proximities impacting the way actors engage with embeddedness across transnational social spaces (Pries 2001). Within this thesis, I define disembeddedness as the process of becoming disconnected to place(s), through the inversion of actor's preferences occurring under conditions of stress, resulting in the gradual removal of an actor's ability to shape their economic, political, social and cultural attachments to place(s). This process is manifested in the interplay between structural iterations on the local, regional and national levels. Understanding why this relational shift occurs at particular times and not others is crucial as it may also translate to why disembeddedness may arise among migrants and stay-at-homes to begin with.

Migration scholars, notably Waldinger (2015), through his concepts of intersocietal convergence and divergence attempt to account for the relational nature of embeddedness. However, his analysis looks exclusively at cross-border connections, organizing the social with the nation-state, thereby remaining within the confines of methodological nationalism (Glick-Schiller 2015; Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). Utilizing locality provides the thesis with the capacity to account for the local and global processes across transnational social spaces, thereby overcoming methodological nationalism and the boundedness of a community perspective. Looking at locality

means being anchored or attached socially, culturally, economically or politically to both 'here' and 'there' by "developing/having a set of social relations at specific places" (Dahinden 2010:51). Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009) actively call for migration scholars to focus on a comparative theory of locality within transnational social spaces instead of relying on community based analysis. Emphasis must be placed on the processes that contribute to their practices instead of focusing on a specific time or single bounded event (Khagram and Levitt 2007; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Transnational processes cannot be captured by center and periphery as world systems theory would like to do for individuals are simultaneously embedded across time and space (Portes 2001). Therefore, bringing in power relationships and dynamics enables this thesis to account for the cross-cutting conditions that affect actor preferences toward this relational process of embeddedness.

Discussions on embeddedness within the current literature centres around the migrant perspective, ignoring the sending locality and the perspectives of those who stay-at-home. Transnational activity is often associated solely with migrants often discounting the positionality of those who stay-at-home as a group that is often 'left behind' (Mondain and Diagne 2013:504). Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec caution that "not all migrants are engaged in transnational practices and that those who are, do so with considerable variation in the sectors, levels, strengths and formality of their involvement" (2003:569). The thesis will complicate this dynamic by returning to the sending locality to deconstruct such simple portrayals of non-migrants as either 'left behind' or 'embedded' permanently by demonstrating that transnationalism and mobility are conscious decisions – fluid and flexible (Barcus and Werner 2016; Mondain and Diagne 2013). It is fundamental to grasp that both "stasis and mobility are interrelated dynamics that are actuated and differentially perceived and valued within the cross-border regimes that constitute these fields"

(Glick-Schiller 2015:2278; Glick-Schiller and Salizar 2012). By operating within the sending locality among those who stay-at-home I aim to demonstrate the entangled behaviour of embeddedness.

In one geographical space you may also have differences in social spaces or have social spaces crossing geographical space impacting levels of embeddedness. The social space concerns the closeness of individuals which are connected through the formation of transnational networks (Pries 2001). However, there exists a constant disembedding and re-embedding of the geographical and social space. This constantly breaks the social and physical proximity creating transnational social network structures that are unequally embedded (Pries 2001; Molina, Petermann and Herz 2015). A multiscalar analysis is important to highlight the complex entanglements of such processes. It is necessary to recognize the interplay between local, regional, national and global actors that constitute the transformations that are taking place within the locality (Glick-Schiller 2015; Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2011). Incorporating this approach allows this thesis to account for the structural iterations that come to affect modes of life among stay-at-homes who move and act within this transnational social field (Glick-Schiller 2015; Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2011).

Employing this multi-scalar method enables differences and similarities to be addressed across time and space. Robson and Wiest (2014) and Fuller-Iglesias (2015) study among two Oaxacan communities indirectly indicate that disembedding processes are occurring; as out-migration continues, migrant's incentives change to remain attached and invest in capital (human, financial, cultural, or symbolic) back home. The rates of out-migration are both prevalent in each locality as is the lack of migrant incentives to invest back into the sending locality. However, my case differs as the social situation in this locality is affected by historical inter-ethnic dynamics that

continue to shape the current socio-economic and socio-cultural environment effecting institutional capacities. Intra-European migration displaces the cross-border migration indicative of the Oaxacan case adding another point of differentiation in relation to my case. The relations between the Serbian state and the Hungarian kin-state and their policies comes to influence the inter-local relations in destabilizing ways. The uneven spatialization establishes disembeddedness an entangled relational process that affects not only the institutional capacities of the locality across various scales but also creates complications for identity and belonging among those who stay-at-home.

Even though the sending locality remains in situ, the cross-cutting transnational social spaces destabilize belonging among those who stay-at-home. Examining identity has static implications making it an 'overburdened' and 'disabling concept' which limits the focus, context, meaning and practice away from the analysis (Anthias, 2002:493). Pfaff-Czarnecka supports this argument stating, "identity is a categorical concept while 'belonging' combines categorization with social relating" (2013:6). The focus of my research will utilize the concept of belonging for it emphasizes the "social aspects of living in the world with others and relating to other in a certain historical and cultural context" (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016:7). Antonsich (2010) and Anthias (2016) explain that analysis of belonging "denotes what people feel and their orientations, the politics of belonging denoting those contestations and struggles around who does and who does not belong" (176). Furthermore, Anthias (2016) notes that belonging raises questions "about boundaries of 'difference' and 'identity' and also relate to how people are placed hierarchically, i.e. within societal systems of resource allocation and inequality" (181). Taking into account the positionality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac, such structural hierarchies are present at various scales – local, regional and national. There exist points of isolation with the Serbian state, Hungarians state and

even intra-local tensions shaping the political and economic conditions and sustainability of social and cultural conditions in the locality.

Belongingness is left under constant construction affecting the various levels of attachments among migrants and stay-at-homes. Studies within migration highlight that these multiple attachments produce variations in spatial belonging but also feelings of 'in-betweeness' (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016:4). Recent ethnographic work done by Deneva (2012) and Fedyuk (2012) among transnational migrants in Spain and in Italy has highlighted an 'in-betweeness' is present with their position as migrants; for they experience inclusion or exclusion from both their host locality and sending locality (Deneva 2012; Fedyuk 2012; Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1995). This thesis extends this inbetweeness further by situating this feeling within the sending locality among those who stay-at-home; emphasizing that 'inbetweeness' is experienced not only by individuals but also collectively through the constant movement between levels of embeddedness. My research reveals disembeddedness cross-cuts feelings of 'inbetweeness' contributing substantially to the scales of social, cultural, economic and political stress on those who stay at home – facilitating a return to entrapment.

The Hungarian minority in Vojvodina/Vajdaság can be constitutive of what Rabinowitz has termed a 'trapped minority.' Trapped minority, as defined by Rabinowitz (2001), is one that occurs within minority groups that are spread across two states and disconnected from both their mother-state and current state. Although Rabinowitz identifies transnationalism as affecting trapped minorities, his examination does not extend beyond the case of Israeli Palestinians (Rosenfeld 2002 and Pasquetti 2015). Pasquetti (2015) is critical of Rabinowitz's (2001) conceptualization of 'trapped minority' as it fails to capture "effectively the multilayered and at times contradictory interplay of caring, connecting and distancing that marks the symbolic and, when allowed, social

relationships between Israeli and West Bank Palestinians" (2739). Pasquetti's concern is to account for the emotions and perceptions of entrapped individuals as it is a focus often ignored in studies of transnationalism (2015:2739). In line with taking a more qualitative approach to study the experiences of embeddedness, I place heavy importance on emotions and perceptions.

Emotions in many instances are deeply felt, "affecting the lives of those impacted by migration but are more difficult to capture in analysis but are necessary to explain the development of transnational identities and landscapes" (Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec 2003:571). Albrecht also highlights the need to pursue more inclusivity when it comes to emotions as "they are relevant in any social context, social interactions and relationships" (2016:26). This relational experience with disembeddedness among stay-at-homes involves affective flux – destabilizing social relations and creating variations of being 'trapped' individually and collectively. Focusing on the locality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac, the thesis will engage with 'trapped minority' and how it interplays with issues of belonging within the framework of embeddedness. Utilizing trapped minority will further reinforce that society and nation-state are different phenomena; supporting the claims made by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) that "transnationalism reconfigures the concept of society as no longer being bounded to the nation-state" (Menahem 2010:532). The aim is to demonstrate that through the differing movement of migrants and stay-at-homes across level of embeddedness, conditions of stress manifest that disrupt belonging which facilitates a resurgence of feelings of entrapment.

Under the umbrella of locality and multiscalar methodologies, my data collecting methods consisted of participant observation, participant listening and a combination of thirteen semi-structured and unstructured interviews with my informants. My position as a *halfie* provides me

with a level of immediate access to individuals through friends and family. Such conditions allowed me to access a range of people from different backgrounds and age categories. To better understand the relational process of embeddedness and disembeddedness among stay-at-homes, I decided to find informants with varying degrees of exposure to migration: the non-migrants, semi-migrants, and migrants. The informants were selected to include both women (6) and men (7) in varying age categories (20-30, 40-50, and 50-60). I conducted my interviews in the homes of my informants or in the local pub and the interview time ranged from a minimum of forty-five minutes to two and half hours. I did a group interview with three participants, having selected each participant to be exposed to a different level of the migration process.

In order to find this range of informants, the snowball sampling method was used in conjunction with my existing social network, in order to find a suitable number of participants. However, a bias occurred here as the participants recommended individuals who share similar backgrounds affecting the diversity of the data collection. A more selective approach was necessary in understanding stay-at-homes experience with disembeddedness among a diverse spectrum, thus I incorporated a random sampling method. Furthermore, participant observation did not provide a holistic account of how people are related to scales of power configurations impacting individual mobility and embeddedness efforts. To account for the limitations of participant observation, I incorporated participant listening (Forsey 2010) into my methodological approach to understand the role of actors (local/non-local and state/non-state) in setting the conditions for disembeding processes to emerge. Given the short time frame to conduct primary field work, I maintained others modes of communication; social media such as Facebook and Skype were utilized to establish contact with members in the locality as well as keep track of any other events that are occurring or

have occurred that impacted the research. This form of data collection and communication I began prior to the primary fieldwork time frame.

Following the introduction, the first chapter of the thesis will provide a contextualization of the sending locality, tracing the temporal transformations and experiences with migration. Then in the second chapter, I will progress into demonstrating the various scales of embeddedness that are present in the sending locality on both regional and national levels. The third chapter builds upon the second to demonstrate the existing scales of embeddedness produces varying scales of disembeddedness in the locality, creating both inter-local and intra local tensions concerning stay-at-homes and migrants. Progressing from this, the fourth chapter will include an analysis regarding the way in which this relational experience with embeddedness imbues particular stresses upon those who stay-at-home, that encourages a resurfacing of feelings of entrapment through patterns of disrupted belonging. The final summation will engage with the current discourses on migration by contributing disembeddedness as part of the wider embeddedness process to emphasize the entangled nature of stay-at-homes experiences within transnational social spaces.

Chapter One: One Village, Two Names: Contextualizing the Locality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac

Riding on the train from Budapest to Székelykeve/Skorenovac, I felt particularly at ease about my impending research in my former home. After crossing the border, we entered into Vojvodina/Vajdaság[1] – more colloquially known as the bread-basket of Serbia. Looking out the window I was admiring the vast openness of the Pannonian Plain covered in rich dark chocolate fertile soil contrasted by newly sprouting leaves of the first crops of maize. While embracing the splendidness of such scenes I could not help being reminded that beneath the surface, the punishing realities faced by many people undermines the natural beauty of this region.

The province of Vojvodina is one of the "ethnically most heterogeneous regions of Europe" (Stojšin 2015:26). It is estimated that roughly thirty national minorities constitute the territory of Vojvodina making up almost thirty-five percent of the population (Trombitas and Szugyi 2013). During the early 1990's under the Milosevič regime, the inauguration of the new Serbian Constitution on September 28th 1990 removed the legislative and judicial competencies of Vojvodina and Kosovo. This removed the autonomous powers of the local governments that provided authority for these governments to enact "sub-legal acts of a provincial jurisdiction, always in accordance with republican legislation" (Petsinis 2008:264). It should be noted that prior to 1990, the Vojvodina constitution enabled the region to regulate and enact legal matters independently (Petsinis 2008). For a heterogeneous region such as Vojvodina, this resulted in the

[1] Two names exist for this place in Serbian and Hungarian. I will utilize the current official name for the region, Vojvodina for simplicity. It should be noted that both names are utilized in everyday speech.

irregular implementation of legislation concerning minorities creating opportunities for discrimination between ethnic majority and minority. Repercussions of such legislations, although stabilized and reformed, continue to unfold within contemporary Vojvodina.

In recent years, migration rates from the present territory of Serbia is the highest in Vojvodina (Molnár 2010). Within Vojvodina, "the most intensive emigrational regions were the relatively underdeveloped South Banat and North Bačka, which on the other hand was economically and culturally the most developed" (Molnár 2010:5). This migration is having a significant impact upon not only the region but also the minorities living within them. In spite of the ethnic heterogeneity of the province, I focus my research on the ethnic Hungarian minority as it is the largest transregional ethnic Hungarian minority population of which the Vajdasági-Székely are associated with and I am part of (Stojšin 2015).

The locality of the Vajdasági-Székely is positioned in the southern most point of Vojvodina known as the Banat region, where they established three settlements in the late 19th century: Hertelendyfalva/Vojlovica, Sándoregyháza/Ivanovo and Székelykeve/Skorenovac. The migration toward this locality resulted from waves of out-migration from the Erdély and Székelyland regions, which are a part of modern day Romania, in the late 18th century and early 19th century. My

ethnographic research focuses within Székelykeve/Skorenovac,[2] established in 1886, as it is becoming an increasingly more isolated Hungarian settlement in the locality today (see Figure 1.0).

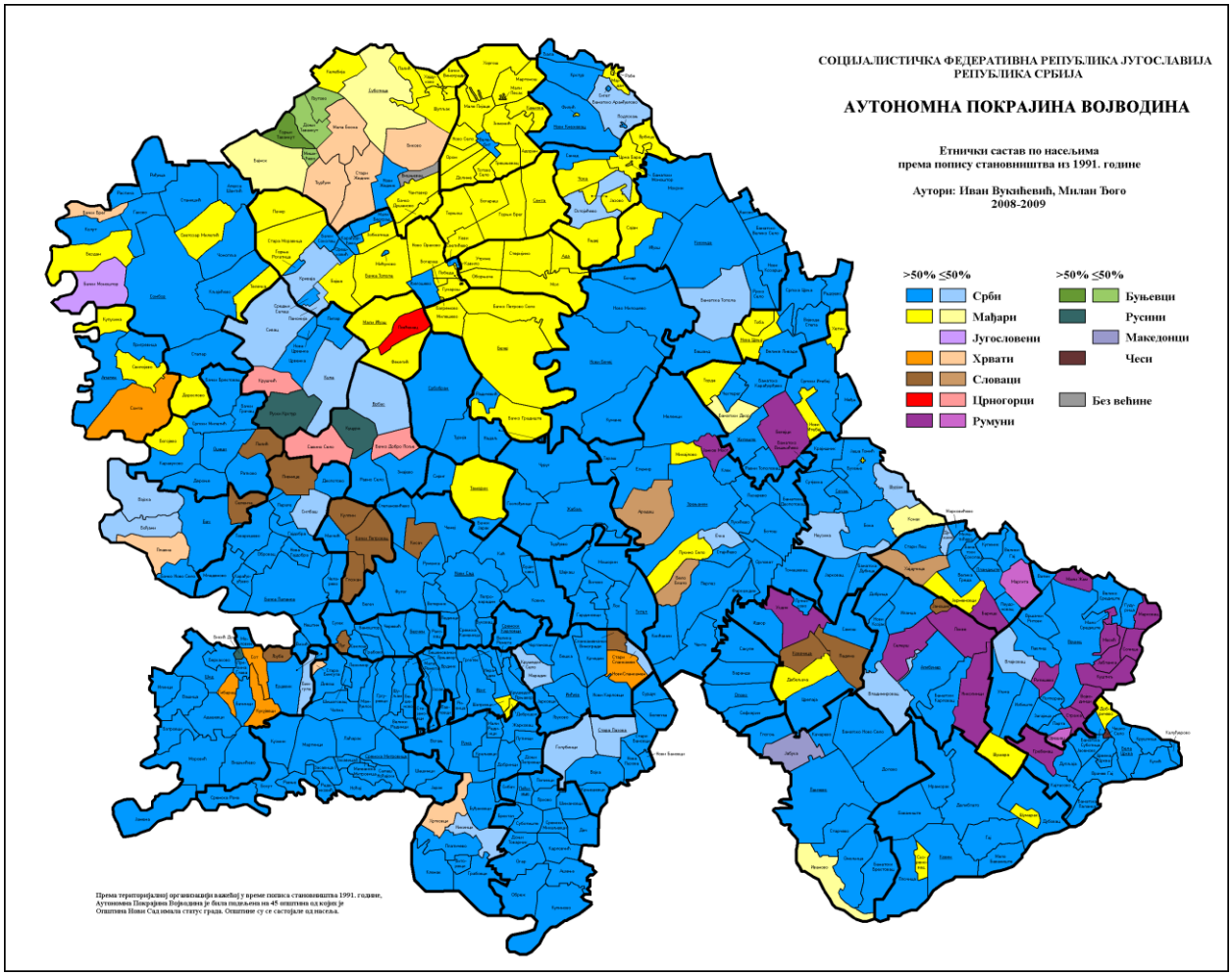

Figure 1.0 – Ethnic Population Map of Vojvodina 1991

The village itself is modest, there is one main road that runs through it leading to neighbouring towns and villages and a secondary road in the centre which is lined with pine and chestnut trees on either side. The white steeple of St.Istvan's Church dominates the skyline and can be seen from any place in the village (Figure 1.1/1.2). The end of the central road ends with the definitive Székler Gate which stands the marker of the first inhabitants common in many Székely

[2] The village also carries two names one Hungarian and the other Serbian. Although both names regarded as official, the usage of each name varies among my informants; therefore, both names will be used interchangeable within the thesis.

villages. (Figure. 1.3).

Figure 1.1 – Schematic Layout of Székelykeve/Skorenovac

Figure 1.2 – Central Road in Székelykeve/Skorenovac

Figure 1.3 – Székler Gate

Despite the settlement having a dominant Székler Hungarian presence, there are small numbers of ethnic Paltyán(Catholic) Bulgarians, Germans and Serbs residing in this place (Balassa 1989). However, with time there has been assimilation (Bulgarians) and emigration (Germans) of the other ethnic groups resulting in their adoption of the Hungarian language and culture – ethnic Serbians remaining an exception. The historical separation of this locality from the Transylvania region and Hungary due to the The Treaty of Trianon in 1920 allowed for the development of a unique Bukovina-Székely folk culture (Bodor 1999). The village and its inhabitants were able to maintain archaic medieval ballads, wedding customs, funeral processions and the Christmas Hussar walk (Bodor 1999). The continuous emigration from the locality in recent years (post-2011) combined with high mortality rates makes efforts for cultural sustainability and reproduction problematic.

During my time in the field, fourteen deaths occurred within the month of April (2016) without any newborn births highlighting the pervasive flux in population. To try and comprehend the fluctuation I went to the local municipality to find more concrete data regarding the status of the current population. My data reveals that population levels of the village in 1990 was measured

at four-thousand inhabitants however even at that time the population was steadily decreasing. The onset of the Balkan Wars in the 1990s put considerable economic pressure on Vojvodina and many ethnic minorities felt vulnerable due to possible military draft or even persecution. In 1994, it was when my family decided to disembed from the locality and immigrate to Canada, thereby constructing my *halfie* identity. The most recent census concerning the demography and ethnic populations in Vojvodina occurred in 2011. The census indicated that there were roughly two-thousand five hundred remaining inhabitants within this locality.

My initial communication with the residents lead me to discover that an internal census was conducted by Csaba and Ferenc during the month of January (2016) in order to determine the remaining number of inhabitants within the locality. Both Csaba and Ferenc remain heavily involved in the happenings of the village as they hold important positons. Being the mayor of Székelykeve/Skorenovac, Ferenc initiated the call for the census and he partnered with Csaba who is the local priest to go around the village to try and figure out the exact numbers of inhabitants remaining. My interview with Ferenc emphasized not only my *halfie* position but also as researcher, making his responses much more formal instead of personal. Although I explained to him my ties to the locality to try and establish rapport, my migrant experiences estranged our relationship. This made me feel powerless in steering our conversation in a particular direction. However, his position within the locality provided much needed contextualization during the early research period.

> *"Due to continuous emigration, had us not knowing how many people left. Therefore, we decided that an internal census conducted by us was necessary. We went from house to house in the village to survey the situation and it was not a difficult task,*

because everybody knows everybody here, and we also know which houses are empty. So now we know that approximately 1890 are left. But this is not finished as we cannot continuously record every emigration, who moves away from the village, or even who's back as it is constant. Only unfortunately, this latter is less. In addition to this exodus, roughly 40 people a year leave from among the living, and during this time 12-14, 15 fewer children are born"

His explanation provides a clear indication that emigration from the locality continues to occur at a constant rate each year. There is an ambiguity in terms of identifying those who leave and 'return' as migration is continuous and in flux; even during my field time in April two other families recently emigrated but there were a number of 'returnees.' However, during our conversation he emphasized that those who return remain only for a short period either to take care of some documents, finalize the sale of their home or bring their family with them if they have not all left together.

"The time they spend when they come back is short, even during the Magyar Konyha Napok or Szent István celebrations. It's not like before when they would come home more often, it's the opposite, that they leave more often." Ferenc.

It is evident that the consistency and meaning of return by migrants back to the sending locality is shifting. The attachments toward this place is a pragmatic one where the desire to remain embedded is being overtaken by a process of disembeding. It is early to assume the prevalence of disembeding, however the fact the emigration is so constant among the residents speaks to the current precarious conditions within the locality. While walking through the village there were

signs of the lack of economic resources such as the abandoned Metallurgical Plant (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4 – "Metalac" Former Metallurgical Plant

I asked Ferenc to explain to in more detail the current situation.

> *"Why do many people leave, well because lack of job opportunities in Kovin and notably Skorenovac. Ruined agricultural enterprises in the village, left many families without a livelihood. There was a small metallurgical plant, it is also ruined. The facility is overgrown with weeds. There remain small manufacturer positions in the tap water plant, which has about ten women working and some sales outlets and rural tourism. That is all. The fact that remains is people can rely on a little bit of agriculture. In Skorenovac more than half of those living here, live off the cultivation of land and are just making ends meet. From little you cannot live."*

From his initial explanation it appears that conditions to sustain oneself in the locality are problematic to say the least. The current situations he described drive many individuals to emigrate but the prevalence of such conditions which enable emigration must be placed into the broader global networks of power. Kin state politics have had an insurmountable affect in creating the circumstances enabling migration while simultaneously facilitating the dissociation between the locality, the Serbian state and other Hungarian minorities residing in Vojvodina (Egedy 2015). Particularly, the reconfiguration of the citizenship law by the FIDESZ government in 2011 granted citizenship to Hungarian kin-minorities (Egedy 2015). The access of such citizenship was extended as a gesture which would allow for the 'symbolic' expansions of the size of the homeland by gaining influence of external kin populations (Pogonyi, Kovacs and Körtvélyesi 2010; Pogonyi 2015). This event radically transformed the opportunities available for members in the locality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac. One of my informants a local school teacher named Magdi described this change:

> *"When the Hungarian Citizenship Law came into the village this really changed everything. If there was not this passport from Hungary than I don't believe that so many people could have left or even thought about leaving. I don't think so. Because all of them that have left was because of the passport."*

Her statement is indicative of the new citizenship laws transformative nature as it provides a new passport offering greater mobility. For her, the passport is the essential 'x' factor that affected migration decisions among individuals in the locality. Quite rapidly after 2011, the access to European citizenship through Hungary became the primary catalyst enabling the migration from here (Stojšin 2015). It is worth noting that although the law was intended as a gesture to facilitate

symbolic national unity, the Vajdasagi-Székely identified with neither Hungarian national identity associated with Hungary today nor with the Serbian nation to which they are attached (Veres 2015:104). This dissociation stems from the failure of the initial referendum over citizenship due to low participation among Hungarian residents (Veres 2015). Many perceived it very negatively as a "rejection of them from the symbolic national unity" (Veres 2015:91). Instead, they heavily considered themselves as a separate Hungarian community of 'Vajdaságians' that stem from their Székely and Csango heritage and consider Vajdaság as their homeland (Veres 2015:95).

Magdi also emphasized this difference by noting that language and cultural differences keep the locality separate and unique. She even compared the 'Hungarianness' of the Vajdasági-Székely to that of the Hungarian minority in Erdély (Romania) due to the similar impoverished Csango heritage common between both groups. Despite such attitudes, "being Hungarian is perceived as a strong positive social identity due to the emotions it entails" (Veres 2015:104). A positive social identity is central for the survival and preservation of a minority groups's particular identity (Tajfel 1978). When I spoke with Magdi she elaborated on the complex nature about the issues of being a minority here in Serbia:

> *"I went two years ago to Erdély and there they are like us, poor and you know the country there the pressure is different because it is such a big region they can develop the language and their culture as compared to here. Now granted, we have a bit more space and freedom to do that now than before but it is not there. However, despite us having more opportunity it is still restricted, it is still difficult. Since we are trying to get into the European Union then Serbia has made some changes to the laws in allowing us for example to get documents translated into Hungarian but they can't*

guarantee to be able to do this service everywhere. I agree that you should learn the country's language if your living here but in the end you are a minority.

From Magdi's explanation it became evident that there are challenges faced by individuals within this place. Engagement and access to resources is complicated as Serbia's relation to their minorities is still developing. As a result, even within Vojvodina access to claim-making becomes problematic as the capacity for the state and region to provide services to minorities remains difficult. Hagan (2009) notes that much of the meaningful autonomous power has been lost in this province. Therefore, the establishment of cultural institutions as well as adequate political representation is lacking for minorities (Hagan 2009). In most cases, the state "does not fully protect the minority from growing threats of ethnic violence and discrimination" (Hagan 2009:613). The Serbian government made some compromises and effort to work with the communities in the province but "they avoid recognizing the Vojvodina Hungarians' claim of abuse and discrimination" (Hagan 2009:623). Support from the EU since Hungary joined in 2004 encourages the Serbian state's involvement and protection of minority rights for Hungarians in Vojvodina yet the impact remains largely minimal.

The circumstances of this locality are reflective of being a trapped minority (Rabinowitz 2001). However, it is important to recognize that some of the conditions that are constitutive of a trapped minority are not met. The problems of differential mobility and border entrapment have been removed with the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship allowing members in the locality to engage in the Schengen mobility of the European Union (Egedy 2015). Yet, marginalization continues for stay-at-homes and is felt in Székelykeve/Skorenovac to a greater extent because they are not members of the dominant ethnic group. The language barrier and cultural disassociations

due to being Hungarian make it problematic for many to relate with the broader Serbian culture. Rabinowitz identifies that "members of a trapped minority have difficulty in participating in the production and consumption of language, theatre, music, cinema, media, and folklore in the hegemonic culture of the state" (2001:77). Such experiences are consistent with being trapped.

In the present environment, questions of local embeddedness emerge with continuing migration which reinforces their existing minority status – resulting in the locality to remain in a marginal position. It occupies a minority position locally, regionally and nationally enabling uncertainty to circulate among stay-at-homes about their future prospects here. Due to their ambiguous position, access to claim-making and resources is challenging, thus their very existence raises the question of how much residents in the locality can be considered embedded in the first place. The next chapter will demonstrate the varying scales of embeddedness that result in the progressive alienation and continued marginalization of the locality.

Chapter Two: Scales of Embeddedness: Progressive Alienation and Continued Marginalization

During my initial few days in the field, I arrived during the pinnacle of the federal elections for the state of Serbia as well as the province of Vojvodina. Although in Székelykeve/Skorenovac it was difficult to tell that there was any form of political representation present. While traversing through the streets, I only noticed political flyers displayed across from the local administration building which were plastered onto the electrical station off to the side of the road. I thought that perhaps since it was early in the electoral period more parties would come to set up campaign posters here in the coming days. Being familiar with the area, I decided to take a trip by bus from Kovin to Pančevo to try and gauge the extent of the political campaigns in other areas. As we continued driving through various other localities (Kovin, Brestovac, Vojlovica) the number of posters amazed me especially when I compared it back to Székelykeve, there were hardly any. Every other locality we drove through on our way to Pančevo had multiple posters and campaign signs up which were not present in Székelykeve. I only recall seeing two posters representing the VDMSZK (Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség) in Vojvodina and a few posters for the party of Aleksandar Vučić (Srpska Napredna Stranka) only on the electrical station and nowhere else.

The visibility of the locality's marginal position is evident here as there appears to be no active effort by political parties to campaign in this place. This immediate political alienation stems from the fact that the inhabitants of the locality constitute a minority, embodying a precarious position on both regional and national levels. As was already noted, the level of embeddedness is in question. However, as my fieldwork progressed it became apparent that actors were susceptible

to the cross-cutting structural iterations occurring locally, regionally and nationally. The discussion that follows, highlights that this interplay diversely affected actor preferences leading to progressive alienation and continued marginalization of this locality and its members.

I had an interview with a man who has some kin members that have emigrated abroad and is currently an unemployed labourer named Jani, who frustratingly described the lack of political representation here in Székelykeve/Skorenovac.

> *"The Serbians don't care about us and it is not like people from the village go and vote anyway, nothing changes no matter who is in power. They don't need us besides people in the village are not even politically aware, everyone is too concerned about their own selves let alone the country."*

It seems that the more people I spoke with around the locality all indicated some form of dissatisfaction with the political system and refused to go vote. The scale of political disinterest both on the national and regional levels permeated within this place. Even though there are political parties that represent the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, many individuals expressed frustration with their campaign. In a conversation I had with a man in his sixties, who defines himself as a peasant agriculturalist, named Dezso, he angrily explained that was due to instances of exploitation by this Hungarian party.

> *"The last time we supported some political party they really screwed the Székely over. Attila was representing the party here in the village, he took over the grainery from the locals and kept buying all the good and bad quality grain from farmers outside of*

the village. The he sold it back to us and what happened, a couple weeks later the livestock started to die off, the pigs, then chickens, and then some cows to. He took the money from the people who gave him and the party their support and then he messed up the conditions here. That was in the early 90's that began to happen and after that people were not so inclined to support any party for what had happened even the Hungarians. We played up that we were 'big Hungarians' to get some support form that party and look where it got us, nowhere."

It would appear that this historical stress brought about by political participation is what inverted individual preferences toward engaging in political action. The virtue of being a minority that has both historically and presently been marginalized contributes further to the inversion of actor preferences affecting their desire to shape the political situation. However, this is partly the outcome of the existing tensions between Vojvodina and Serbia. A lack of political representation combined with deteriorating institutional capacities continue to leave minorities vulnerable (Hagan 2009). Nevertheless, there is a realization and acceptance by members in the locality that participating in party politics on a national level will mean nothing for them – even on the regional level concerning Vojvodina. It is precisely such attitudes combined with political inactivity that facilitate the continuing alienation of this place. Despite the feelings of political powerlessness expressed by individuals, political transformations taking place on the broader national level continue to affect their everyday lives.

"They just keep selling everything here he said, they don't care about the average worker. The Russians just built a new refinery outside of Pančevo and the state closed the old one, many workers lost their jobs. This refinery only hires Russians and some

Serbs, I don't even know if any Hungarians work there. The state keeps selling and privatizing everything leaving nothing for the everyday man. It was not like before, the world was different then, people had money, had work a life. Now, there is nothing you can barely make a living, the private companies just steal from the people and take their money. The state keeps selling to private companies left and right, what will become of us." Jani.

Another one of my informants, László, who is one of the few remaining *embedded* agriculturalists also emphasized the uncertain economic conditions regionally.

"We used to grow beets which earned the most but the sugar factory in Kovin closed. To survive we needed to switch to growing corn, sunflower or wheat. Earlier when we sold a haul of corn we could even go for holidays to the sea, but now you cannot even to save enough or buy enough seeds for next year. When there is drought then you cannot save anything let alone for a holiday. It doesn't really matter what we sow because the government dictates the price so that we have little profit out of it. They keep selling the land to foreigners leaving little state land for us to rent, cheaply. So for those who don't have a good amount of land to work, to sow then they don't have a livelihood. No wonder that young people migrate and don't remain a farmer or laborer. A 150-dinar hourly rate is not profitable wage to live off of. I do not know what will be the fate of this village."

Both Jani and László's explanations elaborate on these difficulties. They showcase the actions which are occurring on the regional and national levels affect the employment opportunities

for individuals – directly and unevenly. However, these regional and national changes occur in relation to the present global conjuncture and its forms of dispossession. Harvey (2003) defines dispossession as a process of capital accumulation involving neoliberal policies from the 1970s to the present; that constitutes the seizure of the public of their wealth, land and labour into the hands of a small elite. The privatization of public resources and progressive land seizures among this minority leaves them dispossessed leading to various forms of displacement (Harvey 2003). As members within this locality struggle to find their agency within these intersecting conjunctures they remain marginalized; they lack the resources to reconfigure the power relations resulting in emerging tensions at the local level.

> *"There is no work, no opportunity to work that is the biggest problem. Even if they do find something then it is not paid, they work for black money meaning that their pensions are not paid or healthcare. They don't want to register you and they keep you working for 'black' money. So for a young person who is stuck in this situation when can they do, what should they do I mean you were working at one point and now you are not, how should they feel. Then you become depressed, you cannot provide for your family. You become stressed and it creates tensions with your family and friends."*

As Magdi described, this economic stress is brought on by the inadequacy of the state and increasing privatization that prevents individuals from reaching sustainable levels of economic prosperity. As I spoke with more residents, common themes emerged over agricultural insecurities that cross-cut precarious employment opportunities. Frustration and anger seeped into our conversations, where many stay-at-homes felt a lack of control over their own lives. What little

economic capital is acquired by individuals becomes invested elsewhere, notably in preparation for migration as a means to achieve stability. For Dennis who was once a stay-at-home but has now recently migrated to Austria this was the case.

> *"I have eighteen years which has been recorded into the social system but when the company went bankrupt I lost my job and my payments into social service system stopped and I had to work 'black' and so I will have very small pensions. I tried to find another job but the private companies would only pay me 'black'[3] money. Back home, it is really difficult. The wages are low and the work difficult. The work is much easier here, I am only painting, not doing everything like I did back home, working every day of the week for black, working on the field, on the house or with the animals. The work is better here."*

His statement is reflective of the general attitude among the migrants whom I spoke with concerning their reasons for emigration. While others, such as Natalia, who is a recent migrant to Germany had an even more direct response - making a distinction between the locality and state.

> *"Our lives are here now, besides for Serbia we would <u>never</u> dream of going back, for the village maybe but not how it is changing."*

Speaking with Natalia, it became clear that although having migrated, the experience of being part of a trapped minority remains with her. Even now, she makes the separation between

[3] The term 'black' is used to connote individuals whose employment is unregistered and who receive payments that are untaxed and in cash.

the locality and society as separate phenomena (Menahem 2010). However, her attitudes to both phenomena are negative even though she acknowledges a potential return to the locality if the conditions there were favourable. Both their expressions are indicative that ongoing intersecting formulations pervading on the local, regional and national planes help to constitute the preferences of actors operating within this transnational social field.

Continuous unemployment triggered by the oppressive status of the domestic economy resulting from political self-interest, directly encourages emigration from this locality (Molnár 2010). These current conditions, although prevalent, are uneven. It is the unevenness of the structural embeddedness of the locality on both regional and national levels that begins to destabilize horizontal ties (Portes 1995). Being a minority only adds to this development rather than preventing it. Furthermore, the active political disembeddedness by stay-at-homes progresses further the alienation of the locality and its people. As the alienation progresses and marginalization continues, individual embeddedness within this place begins to change; actor preferences shift resulting in decreasing attachments to place creating tensions. The next chapter will discuss the relational experiences of embedding and disembedding through the interactions between migrants and stay-at-homes.

Chapter Three: Scales of Disembeddedness: Migrant and Stay-at Home Tensions

The initial focus of embeddedness acknowledged that it is maintained by actors but within the confines of bounded time and space. However, as transnational discourse embodied the deconstruction of time and space, accounting for various levels embeddedness including re-embeddedness of migrants proved critical. Waldinger (2015) describes such circumstances as "migrants increasingly find themselves not just *in* the receiving state but increasingly *of* it, leading intersocietal *convergence* to give way to intersocietal *divergence*" (7, my emphasis). Despite intersocietal divergence explaining migrants cutting connections toward the 'home' it entails a complete and linear process moving from convergence to divergence. Yet, the uneven process of embeddedness between geographical and social spaces in which migrants are connected provide the opportunity for disembeddedness to emerge, especially when the global and local power dynamics establish and/or enable the appropriate conditions.

Due to Waldinger's (2015) methodological nationalist perspective, he fails to account for the interplay of the local, regional, national and global processes that establish the conditions affecting actors' movements within such a process. Having previously discussed the interplay of these processes, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the shifting behaviours migrants and stay-at-homes have toward each other and the locality – creating tensions. Such tensions become exacerbated within the existing transnational social space the locality occupies, as the differing scales of disembeddedness occurring among migrants becomes more prevalent. This facilitates a

collapse of relational embeddedness among those who stay-at-home inverting their preferences and attachment to this place – albeit unevenly.

My active ethnography involved spending time being within the space and walking through the place to acquire a taste of life here. During this time, there were moments when I was recognized as a stay-at-home but I often struggled to conform to this role. Again and again I felt the emergence of my migrant self, pervading through my interactions with individuals. Having to deal with this internal tension became part of my everyday practice, which required a heightened awareness during encounters with informants and my movement through this place.

While traversing through the streets, I observed that the maintenance of public space (roads, sidewalks, fences) are deteriorating even though there are some areas such as the municipality and the church buildings which have recently been renovated. However, while walking through this place, I noticed that there are a number of houses that are beginning to or have fallen apart while others are left halfway constructed. After leaving from an afternoon coffee, I saw that the roof on the house next to my informant Jani's has had their roof collapse in. I asked him what had happened and he explained that there was a strong wind one night that blew it in. I wondered if there are people living inside and asked him to explain why it is left in such a condition.

> *"Yes there are but they don't own the house, just renting it form foreigners. They are living in Australia right now but as you can see they don't care to fix it. The renters have contacted them but nothing has happened, it shows how much they care. They have really almost completely disconnected from this place. My wife and I helped the old couple clean up the rubble there is nothing much more we can do. It was strange*

to see such a house with half its roof missing and people still living inside but that is how things are here. They should replace the entire roof and parts of the house but when they will get around to doing something like that who knows, they hardly come back to the village at all even during the big holidays or summer."

His response is indicative of destabilizing relations between the residents and migrants, to the point that the attachment among those migrants toward the locality is to a large extent absent. Such circumstances leave those who stay-at-home to deal with poor housing and lack of economic support from them even though they are renting. As I continued to walk through Székelykeve/Skorenovac, it became clear that signs of economic differentiation are prevalent and visible through the houses here. There are some new houses which are well maintained located mostly on the main road or on the fringes of the locality. By chance, I happened to catch a woman named Erika leaving her home and I asked her about who is owner of the grandiose fluorescent pink home across the road from her. She explains to me that they are migrants who left to Austria in the seventies but have returned to retire here. However, she said that she does not see them outside of their home and that they hardly speak to anyone in the neighbourhood but mostly keep to themselves. She emphasized although quietly:

"That they never sent any money while they were away. Even when there is an event going on in the village at the school they don't come, sometimes I wonder why they even came back."

Her discontent with their isolationist behaviour is strongly felt during our conversation and even the location of their home is in-between two older more impoverished homes. Signs of visible

economic disparity is observable and is constantly experienced among the everyday lives of those who stay-at-home; reinforcing individual frustrations over the opportunities for economic stability here and with returned – but disembedded migrants. Conditions such as this contribute stay-at-homes to favour migration over remaining *in situ*.

The more I spoke with the residents, I discovered that the flow of remittances by migrants fluctuates but is now in steep decline. Collective remittances that would be sent by migrants to benefit the locality as whole is almost non-existent. Moreover, the distribution of the remittances that continue to flow among migrants toward their own kin-networks is uneven. Faist (2010) analysis of intra-European migration indicates that there is a growing inequality on the micro and household level among both sending and receiving regions. Particularly he notes that "not all benefit equally from remittances; the spillover effects are unclear" (Faist 2010:308). However, such expressions are not collectively shared as there are individuals whose level of embeddedness is increasing.

I spoke with an informant named Inci who remains a resident in the locality despite both her daughters and husband having emigrated. Her husband engages in cyclical migration practices, redistributing the economic capital obtained from abroad back into their home. Rather than emigrating entirely, they were able to take advantage of the conditions at hand and have decided to remain economically active and attached to this place.

> *"Up to this I have had tourists come and stay with me here, this year they are also coming although not has many as before I admit. So the tourists come and I do make a decent amount of money you know. So even here at home I can do some kind of*

work. But for me to leave here, all of this and go there, rent some nice and big apartment, we just cannot afford it."

Even though she described experiencing a form social isolation on account of members of her household having emigrated, she is still embedded into the locality. In one way her being in the locality provides a level of physical attachment while she actively participates in the local economy. I was told by Inci that the local rural tourism began to develop here about ten years ago but its popularity grew only within the last five years. Despite this local rural tourism providing a level of economic security, it is only beneficial for some. Many individuals I ran into while traversing through this place complained that the tourists who come benefit only those who had the houses for the tourists to sleep in and Dani, who is the main organizer of the local rural tourism.

I managed to speak with some of the tourists here who explained to me that they only walk around the village, to the cemetery to learn the history of the Székely Gate, to the canals where they sing some traditional songs and then they go back to the restaurant at Dani's for their meal. I asked if they spoke much with the locals and many said, "*no not really just those in the restaurant*." I went to sit down at the local pub and while on my way I walked past Dani's restaurant and saw that it was full while the other pubs were empty. In the pub I was in, I asked the bartender if the tourists are ever here.

"They don't really come over here; Dani organizes everything for them because he has all the connections. We are lucky if they are able to come here and have a coffee or drink because the tourists usually only eat breakfast then are out for the whole day,

come back for dinner and sleep. They don't spend too much time wandering around the village."

What potentially could provide a form of collective benefit seems to be monopolized by a few individuals in the village leaving little room for other businesses or residents to interact within this 'tourist bubble.' This monopoly explains the sour relationship of the residents with Dani and other individuals who are part of this tourist economic network. Even though efforts by some stay-at-homes exists, involving an increase in their economic embeddedness to this place, it is enabling the conditions for others to disembed, especially if individuals are unable to participate or benefit from this emerging local tourist economy. This relation creates a tension between individuals as not all actors can take advantage of the current conditions. This situation emphasizes the uneven economic embeddedness of stay-at-homes present in the locality. Such conditions foster a destabilization of relations, often having wider socio-cultural implications.

After attending Easter mass, I was invited by a woman named Boris for coffee and cakes. When I arrived, I was greeted by Boris and at that moment we exchanged painted Easter eggs with one another. This was a traditional custom that was practiced by many individuals in the village and she was very happy to have me participate. While she was preparing coffee, she was reminiscing to me about the old days when the women would gather on Good Friday from around the neighbourhood and colour eggs. With a grand smile she described how they would colour eggs from morning until the evening, gossip, have coffee and have fun joking. She laughed but then her mood quickly changed, and became more somber as she continued.

"*I was waiting all day yesterday but nobody came over here. Its not like it was before. There are no young people anymore who are interested in it because they have all left, even the ones that stayed they don't care about those things. The old ways that once were, no longer are happening but maybe that's because life is not the same anymore."*

Despite occupying a *halfie* position, it became evident that I was unaware of the extent of Vajdaság-Székely cultural traditions. After speaking with Boris, I learned more about these traditions but it became clear that some cultural practices which were once common and frequent are in decay. As my attachment to this place continued to develop, it was apparent that the socio-political and socio-economic tribulations are impacting efforts of cultural sustainability. Although emigration is in part to blame, the ongoing intersecting transnational, local, regional and national contexts produce iterations impacting the everyday social relations of stay-at-homes here.

"To put it simply, the thing that will happen and is happening is that the entire village will completely become old. The problem is mostly that the younger people are leaving. For us, the Petofi Culture Club cannot grow, we have about 20 students now who are playing the Citera and even that was created out of pocket. The materials to craft all the Citera they are using we had to collect ourselves and purchase ourselves without any external support. One of our friends, Pisti even made all the 20 Citera's for us but after that we didn't have the money for all of the strings and from the municipality we asked for money but didn't receive any. But then individuals form Kovin heard that we need some help and they knew my son Ede did not receive any money from the village to buy the Citera than they provided about 30,000 dinars for

him to go and purchase the strings. From the village, we cannot wait for any form or amount of help. Now for example, we are renovating ourselves one of the spaces here in the old hall for us to practice in. Not only are we renovating mind you without any money from the village, but we even have to pay a monthly rent to use it. Now it depends on how long we can keep this up."

These words were spoken by Janos, a sixty-year-old president of the Petófi Sándor Culture Club. His description highlights a clear struggle to maintain a level of cultural preservation within this locality. Preservation is not merely his goal but revitalization, by engaging individuals toward continuing cultural traditions such as in music, through the Citera. However, efforts to maintain socio-cultural embeddedness in the locality is constantly problematized by emigration due to a declining populace. Migrants themselves are not remaining embedded within the socio-cultural environments within the locality as many indicated would require investments of time and money, many of which they were not willing to provide. The experience and process of embedding into the host locality enables the acquisition of a lifestyle that estranges migrants from the sending locality (Benson and O'Reilly 2015). Despite efforts by some migrants to maintain their socio-cultural embeddedness by providing remittances it is undermined by perpetuating horizontal destabilization among those who stay-at-home. Janos made this relation quite blatantly.

"Yes we did receive some from Geza and Magdi. When they saw the conditions of our clothes because they were about forty years old. Then they sent about $500 AUD so that we could buy new dress shirts to perform in. We were able to buy 12 authentic shirts from Erdély. This was the only time that we received anything from any of the foreigners. It is not that it matters because sometimes we don't even receive the money

anyway. There were some foreigners that sent 300 euros to us with the priest who was visiting them but we didn't even know about it. He came home after six months but we did not see the money. I received a letter from abroad about how disrespectful I was about not thanking everyone who collected money for us. I was really embarrassed and I sent a letter back to them asking for forgiveness, explaining that I did not even know it had been sent because the priest did not give it to us. I went over to the priest's home and asked for the money, he just laughed and said that there is not anyone here to give the money to and he did not give it to us. What can we do when people behave like this?"

This expression by Janos is indicative of the entanglements the uneven scales of embeddedness are having locally. Such actions make it problematic for residents who are trying to uphold cultural reproduction as the actions by even one individual compromises embedding efforts from migrants and those who stay-at-home. Janos elaborated that his desire to continue is diminishing especially when he experiences such behaviour. Although this is one exemplary case, many residents expressed similar social destabilization stemming largely from the weakening political and economic conditions. This precarious environment encourages youth particularly to deprioritize efforts to remain culturally active.

Many from the younger generations expressed to me that finding stable employment is their focus – stability which can only be found abroad. The continuing unstable political and economic conditions experienced by individuals in this locality reinforces the inversion of their preferences toward disembedding from this place, as they feel stability cannot be found here. Yet many

residents felt that such changes combined with the continuing emigration cross-cut into the socio-cultural environment of the locality having broader collective indications of a social nature.

> *"I don't know what to tell you, if something will happen for us or not … if we will leave. We have friends but I don't dare to ask them for help because as it is now their priority to help Leona's boyfriend, Nandi, to go to Germany and work. We are not a priority now and I have a feeling a lot of time will pass before we will be."* Marika

Marika, my old childhood friend explained to me her experience with her friends who have just emigrated to Germany. She elaborated further on how close they were, helping to support each other economically under such difficult circumstances. She expressed that they kept close ties while they continued to live in the village however her friends first moved away from here last year to Pančevo, a city thirty-five kilometers away from this locality. Even when they initially left to another city, relations between them were already weakened. This indicated to me that even with the first instance of migration there is already a destabilization in social relations in terms of who is given priority to receive help in order to migrate. This situation repeated among many of my informants, however many explained that the fracturing of broader social relations stems from who receives help to emigrate next. Migrants feel pressured by stay-at-homes to assist their emigration by providing employment or economic support to engage in migration. For some, this weight put immense stress on their social relations.

> *"There is too many of us, Székely here already. I don't know what to do with you all. It is hard to find work for how many are here already. Everyone looks to me for help but I can't help everyone, I have my own family to worry about."*

This was said by one of the migrants from Austria who moved out in early 2011 and has been acting as a gatekeeper helping individuals to emigrate. However, my conversation with him indicates a distancing from the social relations he once had within the locality. His social embeddedness is transferring in the direction of the developing network in Austria. Other migrants expressed similar experiences, articulating greater social attachments and belonging toward their locality in Austria rather than back home. The emphasis on providing for their own household was also reflected in our conversations thus making resources more centralized away from Székelykeve/Skorenovac and more toward the host locality.

In such instances, the previous social relations were cut as actor preferences inverted, in an effort to ensure the maximum resources would be directed toward their families. Even though kin-ties cross-cut within this transnational social space, the immediate household took precedence over other social relations – thus remittance flows wane and migrant social disembedding increases. Where remittance flows marginally continue providing a level of stability for some, creates jealously among others, continuing the destabilization of horizontal relations among those who stay-at-home.

Although migrant disembedding have implications on the sending locality, the lack of institutional capacity to provide stability, exacerbates the initial implications. However, this also stems from local village dynamics. Intra-local actors involved in this place are concerned for their own welfare and not of the collective; individual self-interest overrides group cohesion, undermining institutional capacities to establish stability while producing tensions. This highlights how disembeding processes affect the lives of individuals in multi-relational ways occurring on various scales; involving actors that work across cross cutting social and geographical spaces

producing unequal embeddedness structures (Pries 2001; Molina, Petermann and Herz 2015). However, this unequal and uneven process provides opportunities to re-embed at particular points in time and space when individuals can take advantage of power relations – even by stay-at-homes.

It is important to keep in mind that embedding and disembedding can occur in conjunction, but it is the interplay between the local, regional and national contexts which establish conditions determining opportunities for actors to embed or disembed. Tensions erupt between stay-at-homes and migrants who engage in this process within this transnational social space. The effects of these tensions destabilizes the intra-local and inter-local relations of the locality disrupting stay-at-homes sense of belonging – allowing instead for the emergence of entrapment. The next chapter will explore how disrupted belonging produces a pervasive inbetweeness creating a perpetuating experience of entrapment.

Chapter Four: Perpetuating Entrapment Through Disrupted Belonging

Afternoon coffee is a common ritual among many people in Székelykeve as it is the point at which people break from their daily labours, to come together and engage in conversation. Smelling the freshly brewing dark roasted Turkish coffee in the afternoon reminds me very much of home, something which I expressed to Mari, a migrant from Székelykeve who is now living in northern Germany for about ten years. The moment I expressed this feeling of home it triggered our conversation about what is a home and what does that mean for her. When she sat down I asked her about her home and she jokingly laughed saying which one do you mean. I asked her well where do you feel at home here or there? She cracked a small smile and said, *"well here in Germany I don't feel like I am at home because for me home is where my family is, so in that way Germany could never be like Székely."* Perplexed by her comment I asked her, *"well your family is here though, you have two young daughters and a husband, is that not enough to make you feel at home?"* I immediately knew that I was pushing a boundary, taking power away from her by challenging her sense of belonging. Taken aback by my question, frustration along with a flood of emotions overwhelmed her in her response:

> *"Yes, you are right in one way this is my home because I mean my family is here and I know this but I still don't feel like it is my home or at least the home that I left back in Székely. That is why I still did not take German citizenship yet because I am not German or ever want to be. I keep the Serbian one because I feel like the moment I give it up I will lose a part of who I am, my time back home. You should know how*

this feels too or at least your parents, there is something back there that is special even though it is only in the village and not outside of it."

My being a *halfie* is ever present where my experience with migration enables a level of openness without which I could not have achieved this response. This trope of home or rather 'feeling at home' (Yuval-Davis 2006:197) is expressed throughout my interviews with both migrants and stay-at-homes alike. The idea of home refers to spaces that involve emotional attachment and stability that become disrupted by "unfamiliar or unsecure environments" (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016:5). Although it varies between individuals, degrees of 'inbetweeness' surrounds their existence; where their emotional attachments to place is reflected in moments of the past, understandings of the present and in many cases prospects for their future (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). With Mari, her attachments to place remains through the material possession of her Serbian citizenship, an indicator for her that keeps her embedded in the place symbolically while providing her security for future return. This is despite her having disembedded to varying degrees politically, economically and culturally from the locality. Mari's statement relays that issues around belonging encompass an entanglement of intersecting affective, spatial and material conditioned relations which are context specific (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016:10). However, the emotional attachment that some migrants noted to place is uneven; where many of them decreased their level of embeddedness as the emigration continued and estrangement was experienced when returning home.

"When we visit back home, people ignore us or pretend like they did not see us sitting in the bar as we walked past. They are jealous probably what can I say I mean not everyone can leave that is true but still. That's why we don't go back often and to be

honest we don't need to, there are enough Székely here in Austria so it's like the village is here now."

I was told this by Pista, a recent migrant to Austria who just migrated there in 2012 bringing his entire household with him, almost immediately after finding work there. I was conveyed very similar experiences with many of my respondents I spoke with leaving me to conclude that despite developing an 'inbetweeness' and maintaining it, such as Mari, many began increasing their embeddedness into the host locality and disembeding from the home locality in order to remove this feeling of being *in-between*. The feelings of 'inbetweeness' that arise through migration and experienced by migrants (Huot et al., 2014) are now being transposed and experienced among those who stay-at-home as migrant's embeddedness decreases. This experience further destabilizes actor preferences to belong, generating differing articulations by stay-at-homes between embedding and disembeddeding in an effort to cope with this experience. The conversation I had with Marika reflected this quite clearly expressing that her desire to belong to this locality is waning.

"I would not stay here either, I wouldn't. I would also leave right now to be honest with you for her sake [looking in direction of daughter] because there is nothing to come next. Where will she go, nowhere. I don't want her to live this life, because truthfully it is hard, very hard."

The desire to not remain a part of this place stems for her daughter's future, yet there is a clear expression of feeling trapped by the uncertainty now enveloping this place as no options are available to move forward for her or for her daughter. However, this is in contrast to Nellie, a friend

of Marika's who was present during the interview we had together who was irritated by everyone's desire to not stay a part of this place.

> *"We both have our jobs here, have a house so where would I go. Its not bad here and I don't have the desire to go anywhere else. I believe it is better here than there, when both of you are working and you have some in the garden and you don't have to buy this or that, then what's your problem, nothing. You just have to work. Everyone says that abroad is better but I don't know. I am not going anywhere, I told myself that the village here is amen. To me everyone can come and go as they please."*

Her explanation came in response to what Marika had just finished explaining to me and after Nellie spoke there was a tense atmosphere in the space. This tension within this space figuratively represents the collective atmosphere in the locality; where the political, economic and socio-cultural implications of the movements through levels of embeddedness unevenly by individuals is manifested in the collective. Stay-at-homes whom I engaged with while walking through the village expressed such feelings of insecurity, isolation and even those of suffocation within their position here. The flux in which these emotions come to embodied and experienced in stay-at-homes everyday lives in the current context – fractures attachments to place (Albrecht 2016). The disembeddedness by migrants compounds these inter-local dynamics exacerbating such emotions. Not only does the transposition of 'inbetweeness' among those who stay-at-home create tensions through the processes of embedding and disembeding but it also emphasizes the issue of ways of being and belonging. Harkening back to Magdi, she clearly put this relation into perspective.

"Even though you have been living here for over 100 years you are still a minority and reminded of it. For example, when there was a performance in March third put on by the school, the Kovin Mayor came but the whole time he kept emphasizing that we are Hungarian minority over and over again. So we can never, its like being a guest in your own home all the time, we can live here but cannot have our home here."

During my conversation with Magdi the conceptualization of 'home' is precarious as it is constantly problematized by the position of the locality in Serbia. Even though many of the conditions of being trapped have been removed, the feelings of entrapment are still felt and present within the locality but they affect every individual differently. With the continuous emigration from this place combined with an atmosphere of entrapment among individuals, it challenges stay-at-homes preferences remain here during these ongoing processes. Magdi's emotive description is a representative concern that arose among other stay-at-homes whom I spoke with, demonstrating that there is a clear distinction between being in a place and belonging to a place. Historically and today, the locality composes an ethnic minority living within the boundaries of a state with a dominant Serbian majority. Although the parts of the historical entrapment have been removed belongingness remains in constant process. The normative aspects of belonging entail it a positive phenomenon but within a locality composed of a national minority it is problematic.

"The problem is, I wish it won't turn out like in Hertelend and in Deli Blat where they allowed the Serbian education. Allowing Serbian education here will attract more Serbians families, then they will move here and put their kids into our school now that there is education in Serbian. But we are Hungarians, and we speak Hungarian, our mother tongue is Hungarian so it is easier for us to learn in

Hungarian. We study easier, I am not saying that it is impossible to learn Serbian, its possible. But my culture, I like it and I try and foster it so I won't allow for this change to happen in our school. It is the only school in Southern Banat left that continues education in Hungarian. Imagine, that in all of the surrounding areas we are only the school and village of Hungarians left."

When Magdi was explaining this to me she was quite conflicted as there is on one hand a desire to allow this to happen to preserve the school but on other there is a potential risk toward their way of being. There is constant negotiation especially in terms of the local school to allow Serbian education or not. An inherent fear looms that by providing such access to education will destabilize the ethnic composition of the locality thereby potentially resulting in the loss of the local language and culture. A struggle emerges from the general uncertainty by stay-at-homes of whether to adapt or resist to current changes enveloping the locality. Already among some parents, I noticed that there is resistance. A form of hyper-ethnicization occurring by preventing their children from exposure to Serbian culture – notably the language. Conversely, among some other stay-at-homes adaptation is seen as necessary. Other stay-at-home parents I spoke with, there is an acceptance of making such changes despite the loss of cultural identity that could occur. These divergent paths further develop tensions between stay-at-homes over decisions concerning whether to adapt or resist to the emergent conditions.

During a conversation I had with István more locally known as Pityu who worked as the principal of the school for over twenty years, he explained how central the school is to such debates.

"Change is needed there is no question, otherwise the school will close leaving us vulnerable. However, the way that the change is done with introducing Serbian or not needs to be thought out otherwise there will be problems. This is something only the village can decide and no one else. I have heard from former colleagues that many small minority schools are facing these issues in Vojvodina, not just us. The biggest problem that remains, however, is emigration. People are leaving and taking their children abroad this is something a bit more difficult to change."

The school plays a pivotal role as Pityu emphasized to me about what is in store for the residents in this place. The implications of either decision is uncertain. However, as Pityu elaborated, the school remains the keystone of the village and the decision made their will determine the future direction of the locality.

"You know what the truth is, I feel that this is not just a concern for the Hungarians here but any minority, any people. The school is instrumental in sustaining a people, a minority. In places where you have lost the school or even kept the school but in a different language, it is those people who become lost and the place forgotten."

Thus, the local school acts as a microcosm of the collective processes that are encircling the locality, being the site at which the growing tensions will play out. This divergence of stay-at-home's preferences concerning their future is only exacerbating the 'inbetweeness,' complicating the acts of embedding and disembeding among those who stay-at-home. The interplay and inversion between belonging as negative phenomena by some stay-at-homes while non-belonging as positive phenomena among others, reinforces the uncertain position of this locality.

This constant reshuffling between belonging and non-belonging stems in part from this historical relationality between majority and minority. However, it becomes contrived from the uneven scales of embeddedness, locally, regionally, nationally and within this transnational social space. Entrapment then emerges through these cross cutting effects, across these various scales, becoming embodied and affectively felt by individuals and yet extends as a collective experience. However, the collective experience is divergent; contributing more to the entrapment among stay-at-homes rather than migrants – increasing uncertainty while preventing solidarity to create positive change. Entrapment perpetuates as the scales of embeddedness favour disembedding, thereby exacerbating the alienation and isolation of stay-at-homes. As the current conjunctures continue to facilitate disembeddedness, though unevenly, the processes of adapting or resisting to the ongoing changes will remain unresolved in the locality – leaving this place and its members trapped in-between.

Conclusion

Shifting the focus of transnationalism away from migrants and towards stay-at-homes, it offers an alternative perspective on the meanings of embeddedness. This thesis has demonstrated that embeddedness, although a defining characteristic of migration, is also disrupted and is experienced among those who stay-at-home. I have shown that processes of embedding occur on various scales – locally, regionally, nationally, globally and within transnational social spaces. Focusing on the everyday lives of stay-at-homes, my thesis has emphasized that this process functions on a multi-relational level, affecting the creation of solidarity resulting in the breakdown of horizontal ties. I have made evident that this repercussion is due to the cross-cutting scalar dynamics transforming the spatial and temporal proximities creating relations that are unequally embedded. These overlapping geographical and social spaces blur the lines between migrants and stay-at-homes; facilitating the opening up of different fault lines of belonging and the sites in which those encounters occur. I have demonstrated that it is through acts of disembedding within such spaces that tensions emerge among stay-at-homes toward each other and migrants. It is this tension that establishes a rupture in the locality, which compromises belonging, and thereby consequently facilitates a return to entrapment – not only as an individual experience but a collective one.

Though this research focused on the locality of Székelykeve/Skorenovac, it also carries the potential to offer insights into other cases in different localities. The study conducted among the Oaxacan localities by Robson and Wiest (2014) and Fuller-Iglesias (2015) is one such case. Employing a comparative multiscalar approach would enable studies of migration to consider the conditions of embedding processes across time and space. Such an approach is necessary, as I have

highlighted the interplay between local, regional, national and global constitute transformations occurring within sending localities. Therefore, accounting for these elements should not be separated as they are "part of mutually constituting institutional and personal networks of unequal power within which people both with and without migrant histories live their lives" (Glick-Schiller 2015:2276). Bringing back the focus to the sending locality offers important insights into the way in which transnationalism affects the lives of stay-at-homes. Yet, the development of transnational migration scholarship still places the migrant first. The non-migrant or stay-at-home is disregarded merely as left behind or embedded within place. Throughout this thesis, I attempted to deconstruct such simple portrayals, demonstrating that stay-at-homes are actors, whose preferences come to be shaped by both the structural iterations and migration, consequently destabilizing their embeddedness to place.

I have made use of qualitative methods in order to move away from the initial quantitative approaches to analyzing the embeddedness concept. This was in an effort to capture the way such a process comes to be affectively experienced by individuals. Accounting for emotion adds another dimension to the experience of those impacted by migration – both migrants and stay-at-homes alike are often overlooked within studies of transnational migration (Levitt, DeWind, Vertovec 2003). However, by taking this stance, I realize that a theoretical limitation is apparent within my use of the embeddedness concept. Even though embeddedness offers discernments into multiple processes, a more normative approach is necessary. I suggest that a combination of both quantitative (ie. Social network analysis) and qualitative methods should be utilized in order to diminish the vagueness surrounding the concept. This convergence of methods could enable the measurement of structural and relational embedding within transnationalism without sacrificing affective elements. With this change, further research could explore directions regarding 'virtual'

embeddedness; where being embedded may no longer require a physical attachment to a particular place.

Generally, examining embeddedness in sending localities requires a pervasive presence to account for the various cross-cutting process. Despite my *halfie* identity providing a level of familiarity, the rate and entangled nature of embeddedness requires more time to tease out the nuances. Therefore, it is necessary to dedicate more time to discover how such transformations will play out; determining whether localities undergoing such processes will adapt or resist to such changes. Furthermore, the overlapping social spaces creates tensions which problematizes belonging. I have shown in this thesis that the locality is constitutive of an entrapped minority constantly in-between, making their belongingness liminal within this transnational social field. The collusion of migrant and stay-at-home confirms that both must be accounted for as social actors conscious of when and how they choose to engage with embeddedness in an effort to shed this 'inbetweeness.' Yet reflecting back to the *Citera Music Club*, a local cultural club, I cannot help thinking about how despite the uncertainty surrounding the future of the sending locality, it impacts individuals differently to the point that it allows efforts to maintain some level of local developments by those who actively choose to remain embedded. It is this which allows for a glimmer of hope for those who stay-at home to continue being embedded in order to create positive change

Expression of A *Halfie*

The expressions of an anthropologist about an individual, a people, a community or a village require a deep level of reflexivity. Being a *halfie*, my position is constantly negotiated between both a local and a migrant, estranging me from some while uniting me with others. Such situations

made me feel deeply conflicted as the more I became embedded to individuals and to the place it became difficult to step back into the position of researcher. When writing against culture, it becomes the responsibility of the anthropologist to ensure that the voices are heard and a community represented instead of turning informants into an objective other – a theoretical construct (Abu-Lughod 1991). This piece is written to convey a level of reflexivity to the residents of the village, especially when I, as an anthropologist, am being overtly critical of the way in which individuals live their everyday lives. My expressions, bound in interpretation, that are presented in this work, is not in an effort to destabilize the everyday thereby making the informants question their openness and honesty with me. My aim in this thesis is rather the opposite, to ensure that the voices are heard and honesty reflected so as to represent the locals, and the village, in the way they have expressed to me.

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