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**DOROTTYA KISFALUSI, ESZTER NEUMANN
AND KÁROLY TAKÁCS ***
Ethnic Integration and Interethnic Relations in Schools

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* [dorottya.kisfalusi@liu.se] (Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University; Centre for Social Sciences, Computational Social Science – Research Center for Educational and Network Studies); [neumann.eszter@tk.mta.hu] (Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies); [karoly.takacs@liu.se] (Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University; Centre for Social Sciences, Computational Social Science – Research Center for Educational and Network Studies)

The integration of disadvantaged ethnic minorities and children with foreign, refugee and immigrant backgrounds is a key problem in educational policy and social research. The recent wave of refugees into Europe has once again made educational inclusion and structural hospitality a pressing issue for policymakers and practitioners, and also one educational research has a great social responsibility to engage with (De Haene, Neumann and Pataki, 2018). Existing research highlights that even successful integration policies and committed school-level efforts can have limited impact on social integration at the interpersonal, classroom level with few interethnic friendship relations. At the same time, as research has showed, inequalities and prejudices towards ethnic minorities continue to persist even in hospitable and inclusive school environments (Váradi, 2014). This thematic issue presents important contributions that explore these phenomena in different countries using various research methods, including qualitative and quantitative techniques. In addition to studies that provide deeper insight into ethnic integration in schools, some contributions also address policymaking and aim to compare proven recipes and good practices of integration and educational interventions aiming at decreasing persisting inequalities in academic achievement. In line with the general philosophy of *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, the thematic issue is a good example of multidisciplinary, comparative and critical thinking on ethnic integration in schools in different societies. The country-specific studies also contribute to our general scientific understanding of the nature and dynamics of ethnic integration among children of pre-adolescent and adolescent age.

This editorial first attempts to systematize different kinds of explanations for sustaining ethnic inequalities and the reasons behind the failure or limited effectiveness of integration in schools. Afterwards, preventive methods, possible interventions, and policy measures are discussed in light of these explanations. Subsequently, we address how and in which dimensions qualitative contributions in this thematic issue put these questions into new light, and finally we draw implications on how and what kind of explanations are supported by new quantitative results presented in this special issue.

1. *The problem and key explanations*

A persistent gap continues to exist at schools between the achievements and the opportunities of majority and disadvantaged ethnic minority students, and majority and immigrant students in countries all over the world. In Europe, the Roma constitute the poorest and most disadvantaged ethnic minority group. Their history has been characterized by separation, exclusion and sustained disadvantages (Hancock, 2002). The situation of Roma is different concerning many dimensions from the situation of newly arrived immigrants.¹ Differences in education are the most important factor for their later disadvantages at adult age (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2011a). Roma students bring along multiple disadvantages into school from home, but their disadvantages are reproduced or even accumulated during the years of education. They are more likely to drop out, repeat years, receive lower grades, and are less likely to study in tracks with high earning prospects (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2010; 2011b; Szalai, 2014). Several papers in this special issue focus on the integration of Roma students, but the suggested preventive and integration solutions also apply to various degrees to students belonging to other disadvantaged minorities and to children with an immigrant background. It is because the school in many contexts can be considered as an institution in which inequalities are reproduced (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1992; Rédei, 2019).

Following the studies of Coleman (1960; 1961; Downey and Condrón, 2016), the problem of ethnic segregation and its relation to unequal academic outcomes has received a wide attention both from social scientists and from policy makers. Several explanations have been identified to be responsible for the continued lack of integration in school and for the persistent gap in academic achievement between minority students and their majority peers (e.g. Messing, 2014; Schiff, 2014). In the following, we systematize the underlying mechanisms and causes of persisting inequalities and group them into five major types of explanations. These are centred on:

1. The institutional opportunity structure in school;
2. Differences in the family background with special focus on the socio-economic dimension;
3. Cultural differences, such as in language and conduct;
4. Differences in desires, beliefs, expectations, and aspirations;
5. Informal peer mechanisms of selection, influence, and exclusion.

First, the institutional opportunity structure in school (Walther et al., 2016) affects ethnic inequalities and integration in multiple ways. The curriculum, the daytime schedule, the offer and timing of extracurricular activities, weekend family days, requested contributions to class activities are all examples that could convert ethnic differences into educational disadvantage and might hinder ethnic integration, particularly if they require assets that are more difficult to attain for ethnic minority students and for their parents than for majority students.

¹ For a large-scale comparative investigation into the structural differences and similarities of the position, interethnic relations and educational opportunities of Roma and immigrant children in European education systems see Szalai and Schiff (2014) and Feischmidt (2011).

Moreover, early tracking, streaming and setting (within class groupings) are frequent in ethnically mixed schools and they likely increase inequalities (Horn et al., 2006; Kovai, 2011; Berényi, Berkovits and Eróss, 2008). Transitions between institutional levels are key phases in determining future educational trajectories, therefore study guidance practices and policies are vital aspects of institutional opportunity structures (See Kalalahti, 2019). It also matters how seating places are assigned in the classroom: either by self-selection or by teacher appointment, desk-mates are more likely to be from the same ethnicity (Keller and Takács, 2019; Radó and Takács, 2019). Similarly, the local context around the school plays a considerable role in integration and interethnic relations (Kruse and Kroneberg, 2019; Kruse, 2019). As ‘one cannot marry an Eskimo, if no Eskimo is around’ (Blau, 1987: 79), interethnic integration is unlikely in the case of socially or ethnically segregated educational systems. As residential segregation is persistent in most countries, even if between class and within school segregation has been mitigated, without external policy interventions, schools reproduce and further enhance socio-geographical segregation.

Second, a large literature in sociology and economics of education emphasize that one key mechanism responsible for the ethnic gap in education is the differential socio-economic background of students (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2011b; Papp Z., 2011). As on average, minority students are raised in families with less economic, cultural, and human capital than the majority society (Jæger and Møllegaard, 2017; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Jæger and Breen, 2016), they will not be able to keep up with majority students who can invest in extracurricular activities, prep courses and tuition, buy books, and have easier access to other resources related to the academic context.

Third, language use that is differentiating the ethnic minority groups also creates a barrier in academic achievement at school (Bernstein, 2003; White and Kaufman, 1997; Feischmidt, 2014). Discourses of sexuality and other sensitive topics might show even larger ethnic differences since they are discussed differently in different cultures (Rédai, 2019). Ethnographic studies highlighted how the gender roles and expectations of the Roma families are often in irresolvable conflict with the norms of regular school attendance and hence lead to early school leaving (Kovai, 2008).

Fourth, rational choice explanations in the sociology of education (e.g. Boudon, 1974) highlighted how systematic ethnic differences in desires, beliefs and expectations lead to ethnic differences in aspirations and achievement (Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997), and to the reproduction of inequalities (Holm et al., 2019). These different expectations could even become internalized and lead to the emergence of oppositional cultures (Willis, 1977; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1978; 2004; Downey, 2008; Neményi and Vajda, 2014) and subcultural norms of intentionally decreasing performance (Coleman, 1960; 1961; Miller, 2002). In strong oppositional cultures, researchers described the phenomenon of ‘acting white’, suggesting that high-achieving minority students receive disapproval from their peers and get excluded (Ogbu, 2004; Fryer and Torelli, 2010). Other empirical studies, however, contradicted the predictions of the oppositional culture explanation and the acting white hypothesis among both African American and Roma students (e.g.

Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey, 1998; Harris, 2011; Brüggemann, 2014; Habsz and Radó, 2018; Hajdu et al., 2019; Kisfalusi, 2018; Bocskor and Havelda, 2019).

Fifth, studies focusing on social psychology and social networks highlighted that friends strongly influence behaviour and attitudes. In school, friends' attitudes towards educational performance and their actual achievement may have a considerable impact on study aspirations (Raabe, Boda and Stadtfeld, 2019; Raabe and Wölfer, 2018; Fejes, 2019) as well as on school achievement (Coleman, 1960; 1961; Flashman, 2012; Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin, 2009; Rambaran et al., 2017; Stark et al., 2017). Peer influence creates an interesting problem in ethnically and socially mixed schools with ample opportunities for the forging of interethnic friendship ties. Even in these schools, friendship networks typically remain to a large extent segregated because friendship choice is governed by homophily (Boda and Néray, 2015; Joyner and Kao, 2000; Kruse et al., 2016; Leszczensky and Pink, 2019; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001; Moody, 2001). Peer mechanisms of network segregation, popularity, acceptance, and exclusion all contribute to the fact that diversity does not necessarily imply cross-ethnic friendships in schools (Kisfalusi et al., 2020; Wittek et al., 2020; Bocskor and Havelda, 2019).

2. Key solutions

Educational research has long been occupied with proposing ways to overcome the ethnic gap in education and facilitate ethnic integration. New interventions have been designed, experimental programmes were run, and new policies were introduced. These integrating solutions directly respond to the dimensions that we have identified in the literature as relevant explanations for the ways in which schools convert social differences into educational inequalities. Hence, we can systematize these policies on the basis of which theoretical explanations they respond to as:

1. Institutional arrangements;
2. Student welfare programmes;
3. Cultural programmes, educating minority culture;
4. Motivational programs;
5. Peer interventions.

First, institutional arrangements are aimed at the adjustment of the opportunity structure in school. Different institutional arrangements have been tried out, such as preparatory classes (Steiner, 2019), specialized education programmes and teacher training programmes aiming to raise the participation of teachers with minority background and making the staff more multicultural (Fejős, 2019). In general, the main philosophy behind these policy programmes is to create new opportunities and positive learning environments for minority students while not decreasing the quality of education for majority students.

Second, based on a similar principle, student welfare programmes try to improve the socio-economic conditions of minority students. These programmes target child welfare (e.g. by providing free meals, free books, notebooks, etc.) with the objective of breaking the cycle of disadvantage accumulation, overcoming

family disadvantage and enhancing equity by targeted support or positive discrimination.

Third, it is important to emphasize that cultural differences do not need to be washed away. Related programmes do not try to erase minority culture, but acknowledging needs relating to language style and code differences and giving recognition to minority culture and language within the official curriculum; offering education on minority culture; allowing and facilitating cultural debates (Simonovits and Surányi, 2019); or facilitating the integration of qualified minority teachers (Fejős, 2019). In the latter case, policy interventions are necessary because even if minority teachers are employed in mixed schools, obstacles may hinder their career progress.

Fourth, research experiments have focused on improving the access to information on study options or improving the self-confidence of students when making their study choices. It has been evidenced that information campaigns aiming at influencing secondary school choice effectively increase the share of those opting for academic education tracks by 6–10 percentage points (Barone et al., 2017; Dinkelman and Martínez, 2014; Keller, Elwert and Takács, 2020).

Fifth, building on the research tradition developed from the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), it has been repeatedly demonstrated that cross-ethnic friendships lead to tolerant attitudes, lower level of stereotypes and higher inter-racial trust (Clotfelter, 2002; 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; 2008; Simonovits and Surányi, 2019). Experimental methods have been proposed and have tested ways how to reduce intergroup prejudice via peer mechanisms (Kende et al., 2017; Paluck and Green, 2009; Paluck, 2011; Simonovits and Surányi, 2019). These interventions attempted to facilitate tolerance, curiosity, and an open-minded atmosphere as well as peer acceptance, by rewarding ‘cultural’ dimensions of popularity (Bocskor and Havelda, 2019), activities related to minority culture (Simonovits and Surányi, 2019), increased contact, mentoring, and peer study support.

All these solutions have their challenges and every particular policy implemented requires careful design, experimental testing and evaluation. Some contributions to this special issue highlight examples of implemented programmes. The experience from and the impact of these programmes therefore do not only have a positive impact at the given context, but also reflect back on the social scientific theories concerning the ways of decreasing the ethnic gap, enforcing ethnic integration and tackling interethnic prejudice in schools.

3. Directions in qualitative research

The special issue presents three articles that primarily rely on qualitative methodology. Anna Fejős’s article explores the professional, biographical and identity narratives of qualified Roma primary school teachers in Hungary. The proportion of teachers self-identifying as Roma is extremely low in the Hungarian education system compared to the proportion of Roma in society. Fejős is interested in how Roma teachers who work in schools with a significant Roma intake think about their role as teachers and how they interact with Roma students

and parents. The explorative analysis identifies three types of minority teacher professional identities in the Hungarian context: the respected intellectual, typically older generation males with an established position within the local community; the caretaker, typically Roma females whose professional motives stem from a strong feeling of social responsibility and revolve around the incentive to help their community and lead by example; and the young professional, the new generation of Roma intellectuals who had recently started the profession and envisage the teaching profession as a calling. In the narratives about their relationship with students and parents, Roma teachers emphasized the ways in which their embodied knowledge and experience of being themselves Roma was being mobilised in their teaching practice. With great sensitivity, the article touches on vital issues of how young minority intellectuals navigate within institutions where the colour-blind understanding of interethnic coexistence is the norm.

Dorottya Rédei explores the relation of teachers and Roma students in the Hungarian school system. This Foucauldian feminist ethnographic study explores the intersectionality of class, ethnicity and gender in the vocational stream of a secondary school with special focus on the ways in which gendered sexuality discourses and practices reproduce social hierarchies in education. The paper highlights how from the lens of a middle class elitist majority teacher discourse on Roma girls' sexuality, Roma girls are being constituted as socially and intellectually inferior learner subjectivities. Among other examples, the analysis touches upon how Roma girls are conceived as having lower 'cultural levels' and how they constitute themselves in their narratives on a sexual abuse case committed by one of their teachers. The paper turns attention to an under-researched area barely tackled by national and institutional policies and points at the powerful roles of institutionalized gender stereotypes in shaping female minority educational trajectories.

In her ethnographic research study, Mira Kalalahti explores the ways in which interethnic interactions manifest in the study guidance and counselling programme of a Finnish comprehensive school. The analysis focuses on how interethnic classroom encounters shape the acculturation processes of immigrant students in a school that successfully operates with ethnically heterogeneous peer groups. The discussed ethnographic observations focus on two events, a study guidance session and a field-visit to an upper secondary school. Discussing the earlier event, Kalalahti explores how the students negotiate their ethnic and national backgrounds in the classroom, and by doing so, subjectively position themselves in the informal hierarchy of the classroom that is powerfully carved by wider society's ethnic belonging and prejudices. The study explores how these self- and external positionings ultimately guide immigrant and minority students' educational choices and aspirations. The analysis concentrates on the socio-spatial aspects of belonging, separation and social hierarchies. The discussion concludes with policy recommendations by which multi-ethnic classrooms could enhance bridging classroom social ties, positive interethnic encounters and a positive sense of belonging and acculturation.

4. New results in quantitative research

Borbála Simonovits and Ráchel Surányi combine qualitative and quantitative research methods to assess the impact of informal educational methodologies and tools on students' attitudes and knowledge about Jewish people and identity. The authors followed the classes of a secondary school in Budapest for three years using a quasi-experimental design. During this time period, students in the experimental group participated in various activities, debates, and discussions organized around the topic of Jewish identity. The analysis shows that the interventions changed students' views on how they perceive Jewishness and increased their knowledge on Jewish people and identity, but only to a limited extent. The authors stress the importance of informal educational methods in raising students' awareness on tolerance and minority cultures.

Ákos Bocskor and Anikó Havelda investigate the status dynamics among Roma and non-Roma Hungarian primary school students. They focus on the question how various characteristics and behaviours of students such as athleticism, school performance, aggression, or physical appearance are associated with their reputational status and acceptance within the peer group. Based on a longitudinal analysis of peer nominations they find that, in line with previous findings from other countries (e.g. Cillessen and Mayeux, 2004), being perceived as popular and being accepted by the peers are associated with different characteristics. Aggressive students, for instance, have a higher chance to be perceived as popular but a lower chance to be accepted in the peer group than students who are not aggressive. The authors also find ethnic differences in these associations: while being verbally aggressive contributes to the popularity of non-Roma students, it does not show a significant association among Roma students. In contrast to the predictions of oppositional culture theory and in line with previous Hungarian studies (Habsz and Radó, 2019; Hajdu et al., 2019), the study finds that higher school performance is associated with a higher level of acceptance among both Roma and non-Roma students.

Christine Steiner focuses on immigrant students' social relations in preparatory classes in Germany. Preparatory classes provide education to newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak the language of the host country. Analysing a survey conducted among newly arrived students she finds that immigrant students generally report having a positive relationship both with their classmates and teachers in the preparatory class and feel well at school. However, due to the lack of opportunity, students attending a preparatory class are less likely to have native friendships than students attending a regular class. Moreover, there is a significant gender gap in interethnic friendships: girls are less likely than boys to have native-born friends. The study also shows that friendships with native students can contribute to immigrant students' well-being.

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ANNA FEJÓS *

'There Is an Exemplar because I'm There.' Professional Roles
and Experiences of Roma Teachers in Rural Hungary

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* [Fejos.Anna@tk.mta.hu] (Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences; University of Bremen, Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences)

Abstract

Teachers are fundamental actors in education; without their contribution even the most progressive pedagogical ideas fail. However, few studies address how their individual biographies, community belonging, and intersectional identities impact their pedagogical views and practices. Furthermore, while the Roma are the target of numerous social and pedagogical initiatives, they are rarely considered as actors who shape education. Through an analysis of ten ethnographic interviews with self-identified Roma teachers embedded in two local educational settings, this paper scrutinizes the potential and challenges associated with the presence of qualified Roma teachers in rural Hungarian schools. Interviewees demonstrated a high level of commitment to 'leading by example,' and this was embedded in their relations with students and parents. Most teachers also believed that, besides professional expertise, shared ethnicity provided them with a specific opportunity to build trust, express empathy, implement curricula, and incorporate locally and culturally relevant knowledge. However, while professionalism and ethnicity often complemented each other, difficulties also arose due to the differing expectations and heterogeneity of local Roma communities. The findings suggest that Roma teachers may bring valuable resources for education through mobilizing their personal experiences and social and cultural sensitivity, but tapping these resources is limited by structural and contextual constraints.

Keywords: Teacher diversity, Roma teachers, social inclusion, Hungarian education.

1. Introduction¹

Minorities in the teaching profession have been the focus of much public, policy, and scholarly attention since the 1980s in the United States and European multicultural societies (Villegas and Irvine, 2010). Discussions about the composition of teaching staff have come forth due to the growing diversity of the student body, the significantly lower educational performance of minority compared to majority students, and equal opportunity measures that support professionals from a minority background. Subsequent policy measures targeted the recruitment of minority youth for teacher training, underpinned by the goal of creating teaching bodies whose demographic composition resembles, at least to some extent, that of student communities. This was believed to help narrow the so-called ethnic/racial ‘achievement gap’ and foster the inclusion of minority students (Villegas et al., 2012; Donlevy et al., 2015).

Similarly to the United States and several European countries, there is a growing demographic mismatch between the teaching force and the student community in Hungary. Although the proportion of Roma students, the country’s largest minority group, is increasing, the teaching force has hardly changed: the presence of Roma in the profession is minimal. This is not independent of the fact that Roma students have for a long time faced tremendous disadvantages in education. However, debates regarding the teaching staff have not been articulated in the same way as in the international context, and there have not yet been any targeted policy measures for increasing diversity among teachers (Fox and Vidra, 2013; Donlevy et al., 2015).²

Nevertheless, the experiences of Roma in the teaching profession deserve attention for several reasons. On the one hand, teachers shape their students’ motivation, identities, and learning capacities, and thus play an important role in mitigating or deepening disadvantages (Schiff, 2014). By unfolding the biographical and contextual factors that impact professional identities and practice, this specific sub-group of teachers may bring new perspectives to the education of socially disadvantaged learners which are relevant to teacher education programs. On the other hand, minority teachers face a variety of specific expectations from colleagues, parents, and wider society concerning the education of minority students (Bressler and Rotter, 2017). A focus on Roma teachers’ thoughts on their work and relations with their students and communities might shed light on the

¹ I would like to thank Ernő Kállai and Violetta Zentai for their support, my colleagues and the anonymous reviewers for insightful comments, and my doctoral school for funding. For a longer description of research findings, see the earlier version of this article in Hungarian (Fejős, 2018).

² The exact number and proportion of teachers with a Roma background in Hungary is unknown due to the legal barriers to collecting ethnically de-segregated data, and the ambiguities of surveying Roma populations (Messing, 2014). According to one report, information provided by school administrations shows that 1.95 per cent of schools were employing teachers with a Roma background in 2013 (Donlevy et al., 2015). It is likely that Roma are represented in larger numbers among teaching assistants. However, the latter are usually employed on fixed-term contracts, have no pedagogical qualifications (or these are at a significantly lower level), and, most importantly, are not involved in teaching but rather help regular teachers.

otherwise hidden resources in education, as well as the problems this sub-group of teachers encounter. Reflection on this topic is also important for teaching candidates and staff and the general public as well.

This inquiry takes the first steps towards engaging with the potential and challenges related to the presence of qualified Roma teachers in Hungarian public schools through an analysis of ten interviews with self-identified Roma teachers working in two rural educational settings. It asks how these teachers see their pedagogical work in terms of the influence of personal experience and intersectional identities, and how this impacts their relations with students and families. The paper gives insights into why the teachers chose this profession, what opportunities and struggles they have encountered during their work, and what they think about their role in teaching Roma students.

The first part of the paper briefly introduces the Hungarian educational context and ethnic differences within it, and then provides an overview of the literature on minority teachers, focusing on their potential role in fostering the education of diverse student groups. Following a description of the data and the research sites, the second part of the paper presents three types of professional roles and identities that interview partners developed in their communities, and explores some aspects of their work in class and beyond. Finally, concluding thoughts point to further implications of the findings.

2. An ethnic lens on the Hungarian education system

In order to better understand the experiences of Roma teachers and the local conditions in which they work, it is important to first briefly consider ethnic differences in the broader context of the Hungarian educational landscape. Roma students face tremendous and severe disadvantages that stem from major structural problems with the education system. Most importantly, Hungarian public education is highly selective with regard to parents' socio-economic background. Instead of easing inequalities, the system further deepens disadvantages, above all by concentrating students with unfavorable social backgrounds into one school or specific study tracks (Fejes and Szűcs, 2018; Radó, 2018).

This selectivity particularly affects Roma due to the massive socio-economic disadvantage of the majority of Roma families, and their residential segregation and geographic distribution in economically deprived regions. Moreover, widespread ethnic prejudice also plays a role in selectivity insofar as non-Roma parents tend to relocate their children if the ethnic composition of a school is considered unfavorable (Messing and Molnár, 2008). Consequently, strong *de facto* involuntary ethnic segregation persists in education at the institutional level that leads to the concentration of socially disadvantaged Roma students. A particularly striking type of segregation is observed in many small and marginalized rural settlements, where due to massive 'middle-class white flight' the proportion of disadvantaged Roma students is significant. The problem-stricken schools in these areas are usually badly equipped, provide low quality education, and lead students

into dead-end vocational secondary schools from which drop-out rates are extremely high (Radó, 2018).

When it comes to ethnic differences and diversity at the school level, a 'difference-blind' approach dominates in Hungary; namely, the majority of public schools do not engage with ethnic differences, while some perceive them negatively (Feischmidt and Vidra, 2013; Kende, 2013). The role of teachers and principals is crucial here. Research about teachers' views of Roma students has revealed not only the persistence of deep prejudice (Takács, 2005; Gulyás, 2018) but also that teachers do not see that segregation amplifies disadvantages. They rarely consider their own responsibility for improving learning conditions, but mostly attribute Roma students' failures exclusively to family background (Bereczky and Fejes, 2013; Kende, 2013). In addition, teachers often use the label 'disadvantaged' when they refer to 'Roma,' despite the fact that not all Roma children have a disadvantaged background and vice versa (Kende, 2018). This practice has probably prevented an open talk on inter-ethnic relations in schools that has consequences for how Roma teachers understand themselves and their work too.

3. Diversifying the teaching staff: The role of minority teachers³

One of the core questions that researchers within the sociology of education are investigating in relation to minority teachers is the possible ways they may enhance the education of diverse learners, and minority students in particular. The most tangible contribution of minority teachers seems to be related to the formal educational outcomes of minority students. A number of studies have found a positive link between the presence of minority teachers and minority students' educational performance, such as grades or standardized test scores, and attainment, such as lower drop-out rates and an increase in college acceptance (see Villegas and Irvine, 2010 for the USA). Although these results were not unequivocally confirmed, they reflect a variety of factors that may indirectly affect school performance, such as enhancing motivation, creating friendlier educational environments, introducing new pedagogical tools, fostering positive identity-formation, countering stereotypes, and improving inter-ethnic relations (ibid.).

Two broad approaches have emerged in the literature to unfold the mechanisms through which the presence of minority teachers benefits diverse student groups; one is rooted in the assumption that minority teachers may potentially serve as role models; the other stresses their unique position in teaching minority students (Villegas et al., 2012; Donlevy et al., 2015). Core to the 'role model' argument is the recognition that the composition of teaching staff signals the place and status of ethnic/racial groups in society. When students are exposed to teachers who resemble the diversity of the student community, they receive a positive message about the social roles and positions minorities fulfill in

³ A considerable amount of literature addresses diverse groups of people (colored, black, native, immigrant, immigrating, non-white or ethnic/racial minority teachers, pedagogues, and educators) that are here compressed under the umbrella term 'minority teachers' for the sake of clarity.

society. This is motivating for minorities because it gives them hope that they too will be able to become successful adults, while it also benefits majority students by countering their stereotypes about minorities (King, 1993).

Importantly, the ‘role modeling’ rationale appears in the research on the career trajectories of minority teachers. Studies have found that members of minorities often enter and remain in the teaching profession due to their very high commitment to motivating minority students and increasing their sense of self-worth (Solomon, 1997; Su, 1997; Ochoa, 2007). This is because many develop a strong feeling of responsibility to their respective communities, and consider the profession a ‘calling’ rather than solely a source of income (Irvine, 2002; Dixon and Dings, 2008; Lynn, 2006). However, role modeling can take different forms and have different meanings. Allen (1995) differentiated between role models as ‘symbols of special achievement’ who inspire students with their presence in responsible positions, and as ‘nurturers’ who directly engage with mentoring or counseling. She also noted that, through time, practice, and reflection, ‘symbols’ may become ‘nurturers.’

Focusing more on the interplay between identities, aspirations, and actual teaching practice, the second approach postulates that minority teachers are uniquely positioned because they can bring an understanding of students’ backgrounds to their teaching practice. Research from the United States shows that because many minority teachers come from a *lower-class background* and often grow up in segregated neighborhoods, they are familiar with students’ everyday realities and struggles, and are better able to develop trust and intimate relationships with minority students than majority teachers are (see Villegas and Irvine, 2010 and Villegas et al., 2012 for examples). Moreover, minority teachers may have specific experiences with *ethnic/racial inequalities and discrimination* (Miller and Endo, 2005; Quijano and Rios, 2000), while some teachers also directly address issues of power and embrace ‘emancipatory pedagogies’ (King, 1991).⁴ This helps students to reflect on the disadvantages they face.

Furthermore, one specific segment of literature employs the concept of ‘*culturally-relevant teaching*,’ which may be described as teaching practice that is grounded in teachers’ cultural competence. It includes, for instance, the adaptation of distinct cultural content and codes in class such as children’s everyday language use and way of interacting or approaching tasks. This can help to bring home and school closer, and thus engage students in learning (Ware, 2006; Dixon and Dings, 2008; Lynn, 2006). Finally, minority teachers may also use their cultural expertise and sensitivity to act as *advocates, cultural brokers, or mentors* by easing students’ adaptation to school, maintaining good relationships with parents, or modeling successful integration (Carrington and Skelton, 2003; Georgi, 2016; Schmidt and Schneider, 2016). The different roles and practices that teachers make use of varies according to national contexts, types of minority group, and in accordance with the capacity in which teachers are recruited (Schiff, 2014).

⁴ See also the ‘Black Teachers Matter’ movement <https://www.equitable-schools.org/>

When evaluating the added value that either role modeling or teachers' unique positioning may bring about, a number of risks should be kept in mind too. On the one hand, the presence of minority teachers does *not automatically improve education*. While the former might possess valuable assets, minority teachers can only be successful if their experience is acknowledged (Achinstein and Ogawa, 2012), if they are prepared to tap into their resources and incorporate them into their teaching (Hasberry, 2013; Villegas et al., 2012), and if they are accepted by students and communities (Carrington and Skleton, 2003). Finally, teachers' insights should be embedded in institutional practices such as intercultural pedagogy, continuous reflexivity among staff, and close cooperation with communities. If schools fail to provide a generally inclusive environment, the employment of minority teachers may be only a consequence of the structural inequalities in the labor market; namely, a shortage of teachers in certain areas in which minorities are overrepresented (Schmidt and Schneider, 2016).

On the other hand, even if minority teachers are able to build their commitment and resources into education, *they should not be expected* to represent the sole and ultimate means of enhancing students' education. Resources are unlikely to pay off if teachers feel isolated or are subjected to tokenism at school (Hasberry, 2013). Furthermore, too much reliance on these capacities may lead school management to assign rather limited and simplified roles to minority teachers. There is the danger that these employees will become treated as a homogeneous group, with essentialized identities reduced to their ethnic/racial origin, while the role of other identities such as gender or class remain unrecognized. On the basis of these reductions, such teachers may be pressured to deal with *all* the problems related to minority students, and be made solely responsible for their successful integration. This may lead to the devaluation of the ability of dominant group teachers and a decline in their corresponding responsibility for developing successful strategies for educating minority students (Mahrouse, 2005; Sontoro, 2015; Georgi, 2016).

4. Methods and research sites

4.1 Data collection and analysis

The following analysis is based on a synthesis of qualitative data gathered as part of two research projects to which the author contributed. By and large, both inquiries were designed to scrutinize inter-ethnic relations, the plight of Roma communities, and local educational institutions. Two localities were thus distinguished; a more affluent settlement with an integrated primary and pre-school in Pest County, Central Hungary; and a few marginalized villages with segregated primary schools in Nógrád County, North-East Hungary.⁵

⁵ In the Pest locality, data was collected during 2016–2017 as part of the author's doctoral research under the supervision of Violetta Zentai, while in the Nógrád locality data was collected during the fall of 2017 as part of the 'Roma in Nógrád County' research project under the guidance of principal researcher Ernő Kállai. Interviews and case studies were amassed in Pest by the author, and in

In order to learn about the educational opportunities of Roma students, interviews were carried out in both projects with local teachers and principals. For the purpose of this study, interviews with self-identifying Roma teachers were selected as the primary data sources.⁶ However, local case studies based on interviews with key actors and citizens in the localities, class-visits, and brief ethnographic observations in the villages were also used to better understand how the teachers are embedded in their respective localities. Importantly, the present study does not claim to be representative of teachers of Roma origin in Hungary; however, the interviews are considered suitable for offering insight into some of the specific concerns that this group of teachers face, and for pointing to a few areas in which their biographical insights may be of particular value in the education of Roma and/or socially disadvantaged students.

The seven female and three male teachers had all pursued regular teacher training and were participating in local primary or pre-school education at the time of research. Experience with teaching ranged from half a year to more than two decades. Half of the interviews were undertaken in Pest County, and the other half in the Nógrád educational context. Interview partners were approached primarily for their insights into education, although their biographies were covered within the conversations too. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview partners were given pseudonyms and some personal data have been removed in order to guarantee anonymity.

Data was analyzed following a general inductive approach as outlined by Thomas (2006). On the basis of an in-depth reading of interview texts, the main categories of analysis were appointed, which were then applied throughout the systematic coding process. To collect important biographical data, individual memos were prepared for each interview partner. This was followed by the construction of the most important themes for going beyond individual cases. Narrative passages of interviews which described memories, experiences, or the recall of specific conflicts were of special importance for the analysis, especially with regard to family background, schooling, professional trajectories, and pedagogical practice. Finally, the main findings of local case studies were used to further inform the analysis.

4.2 Sites of research

The first settlement under study is located in the central part of the country, relatively close to the capital. Based on estimations, about one-quarter of the inhabitants are Roma, while most of them, including the teachers in this study,

Nógrád by the author and members of the research team (Mária Bogdán and István Antal). I am grateful to them for letting me use the interview material for this paper, and to all interview partners for sharing their stories.

⁶ Note that although teachers were not approached as 'Roma teachers' in either of the projects, the fact that the category of ethnicity was central to both pieces of research affected the interview situations and the very fact that *these* teachers agreed to the interviews. This may have led to an overemphasis on ethnicity in the interviews.

identify as Romungro and live in a segregated settlement on the edge of the village. In recent decades there has been a slow process of upward mobility in this community which is rooted in the musical heritage of some families, and in the expansion of local educational opportunities during the state-socialist era. Today there are a few tertiary-educated professionals, and several skilled workers and successful entrepreneurs in the community. However, there is also another smaller Roma sub-ethnic group who live scattered throughout the village. They are considerably less educated and are in a worse employment situation.

The local educational institutions consist of very heterogeneous student bodies. Besides low-income parents with a low level of education, a few wealthier and more highly educated parents also enroll their children in the local school and kindergarten. Without any special curriculum or tracking, the school management has defined dual goals: enabling weaker students to 'catch-up,' and encouraging the talented to further develop. Despite these efforts, however, teachers have begun to face the accelerated out-migration of students. A growing number of parents take their children to the nearby church-maintained urban school, sometimes even before fifth grade starts. The teaching staff (so far) have not evaluated these processes through an ethnic lens. It is not the increase in the number of Roma – who by now make up half of the incoming classes, per se – but the perception of the low quality of teaching and infrastructure that is encouraging parents to transfer children, teachers believe.

The relatively significant presence of qualified Roma in this setting (three Roma primary school teachers and two pre-school teachers) should not be seen as a result of a conscious attempt to foster Roma participation. The school principal emphasizes rigorous equal treatment in the school's recruitment process. Roma applicants are welcome if they have the proper qualifications, but are not seen as having any specific assets. A similar attitude is reflected among the teachers in this study, who regard local institutions as generally open although they are believed not to pay specific attention to cultural differences.

Despite its relative proximity to the Pest research locality, in the Nógrád villages poverty and decline of the population are much more evident. During the state-socialist era most villagers worked in the nearby factories as unskilled workers, but these workplaces disappeared after the 1989 transition due to the decline in the region's industrial production. These structural changes in the economy have left many without jobs and a perspective. Today, many locals can find no other source of employment than the public works scheme. About half of the inhabitants in these villages are estimated to be Roma, and most of them live in segregated neighborhoods that often lack basic supplies. Although in recent years local Roma communities have become more heterogeneous, the upwardly mobile Roma are mostly those who manage to complete secondary education and find employment in the primary labor market.

In the Nógrád locality, the elite have long been taking their children to neighboring urban schools, and lately even wealthier Roma families have begun to follow this pattern too. It thus seems that the process of 'middle-class-flight' is 'complete' in many of the villages here. As a result, schools have become fully

segregated: almost all students are severely disadvantaged, and most of them are Roma. In some institutions the number of students has dropped so dramatically that different age groups have had to be merged into one class. These schools have very a bad reputation among parents and inhabitants. Teachers focus on developing the most basic skills, and delivering the most minimal curricula. Many agree that there is a lack of future perspective and role models for these students, while the prestige of attending school is weak.

Along with the student population, the teaching staff has changed too. The local professional strata has been unable to reproduce itself, while the schools cannot attract young teachers from elsewhere. Consequently, the teaching staff is substantially aging and a shortage of teachers is already apparent. Due to such a pressing lack of employees, it is common that some subjects are being taught by staff with no subject-related qualifications. It also happens, especially in administration and assistance positions but also in teaching, that qualified individuals can only be employed through the state public works program. Here, the teacher shortage also affects the perception of Roma teachers. Several key actors in the villages said that they would like to see more Roma in pedagogical positions, primarily due to a desire to strengthen the perceived importance of studying in the Roma community.

Due to the high number of students from disadvantaged families, schools adopted the Integrational Pedagogical Program (IPR)⁷ in both localities, which made it possible to introduce a variety of pedagogical innovations. However, the termination of the program left a tangible mark on the pedagogical apparatus of schools, which in recent years have struggled to identify complex ways to improve material and learning conditions. Nonetheless, interview partners in this study worked in institutions which to an above-average extent experimented with new ideas and innovative methodologies, and there seemed to be agreement that only through pedagogical renewal could students' performance be enhanced. However, teachers, including those in this study, did not necessarily favor integrated education due to the fear that this approach would bring to an end the familiar learning environment in the village and children would get much less attention in urban schools.

⁷ Notably, the Integrational Pedagogical Program (IPR) is a pedagogical framework which was developed and maintained by the National Educational Network between 2003 and 2012 to facilitate integrational education in schools with a high number of socially disadvantaged students. The program was a result of the only comprehensive integration-based attempt at reform between 2002–2010 that defined the target group of educational intervention primarily on social grounds by introducing the category of the 'multiply disadvantaged' and making this the basis of funding schemes and extra educational services. Although its positive impact on compensating for disadvantages was empirically proven, the program was dismantled after 2012 (Fejes and Szűcs, 2018).

5. *The understanding of the teaching profession*

Through the development of their professional identities, teachers ‘construct their own ideas of “how to be,” “how to act” and “how to understand” their work and their place in society’ (Sachs, 2005: 15). Studies highlight that the professional identity formation of teachers is a process that dynamically develops over time and is shaped by the interplay between the individual and diverse contextual factors (Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers and Scott, 2008). Working environments, life experiences (for instance, schooling, interaction with colleagues, students, and families) along with personal identities such as age, gender, and ethnicity are some of the crucial factors that influence how teachers understand their roles (ibid.). Importantly, research on minority teachers also draws attention to the societal and community expectations that may influence the roles this specific group of teachers take on (Bressler and Rotter, 2017; Sontoro, 2015). The three types of teacher roles that emerged through the analysis of this study represent particular intersections of the above-described influences which are all embedded in the respective local social relations.

5.1. *The respected intellectual*

According to the interviews and fieldwork data, the two oldest male teachers have acquired a unique position in their respective communities. They completed their studies and begun their careers in the state-socialist era and, over time, gained considerable professional experience. Bringing up generations of students, they acquired respect and developed a sense of authority in relation to both the dominant and the minority community in the locality.

Being the first in the Roma community of the Pest locality to earn a tertiary degree, István may well be called a pioneer. He began his studies at a time when the pedagogical profession had high prestige and it was often only his strong dedication that kept him going on with his studies. He recalls that ‘when I decided to become a teacher, I immediately dreamed that I was here. And when I entered this holy place as a teacher, I felt the biggest happiness in my life!’ indicating that becoming a teacher in his village was a true honor. István is not only a teacher but an intellectual committed to local education and an inspirational figure for the next generation of students. However, he clarifies that leading by example ‘doesn’t have an immediate effect. But [you can see the effect] when a Gypsy child sits next to the other children and there is no conflict. And when someone tells you that “I became a teacher because of you”.’ To be sure, István's authority today reaches beyond the school; some locals simply refer to him as ‘The Teacher.’

Similarly to István, Pál begun to teach towards the end of the 1980s and has been working for more than two decades in the Nógrád area. He has gained experience in nearly all fields of education, including developing educational materials for teachers’ further training and was involved in several pedagogical initiatives, among them the founding of a successful local after-school program. As he formulated it, ‘I have always worked with children with difficult backgrounds.’

He accepted the leadership of a small school with multiply disadvantaged students because he felt it was time to realize his own ambitions which stem from a recognition that education ‘does not work well the old way. New ways and new methods must be used in order to succeed.’ On the one hand, Pál insists on utilizing new pedagogical methods (for instance, cooperative and interactive pedagogies); on the other hand, he is also committed to strengthening identity and community in the locality, for instance, through conveying multicultural content and promoting education about Roma cultural traditions through the contributions of well-known Roma artists and intellectuals. As a result of his hard work and innovative ideas, Pál believes that today his students enjoy attending school, despite all the difficulties.

5.2. *The caretaker*

Five mid-generation female interview partners define the second type of teacher in this study. For these teachers, negative experiences with ethnic differences in school and work have played a crucial role; for some this factor even influenced the choice of career. The motive of ‘help’ and ‘lead by example’ was so strong in their understanding of the profession that their engagement in teaching reminds one of social work. They have a special sense of responsibility to the Roma and the socially disadvantaged students.

Irma’s narrative is a clear demonstration of this. She chose the teaching profession consciously due to a strong childhood memory, which she describes as follows:

I became a teacher because my first year in school was a catastrophe. I was the only Gypsy in the class, my classmates were always mocking me and my exercise book was full of black marks. I began to show psychosomatic symptoms, like crying every morning when I had to go to school. This went on so much that at mid-term my mother was told that I must be placed in special education.

Luckily, Irma’s mother refused to acknowledge her ‘disability’ and would not sign a request for her removal from class. Irma switched to another class in which she finished the semester with excellent results. Later during her teaching practice at the same school in the Pest locality she met her old teacher again and confronted her with her impact: ‘I told her “thank you very much, it is because of you that I chose to become a teacher. And precisely for the reason that no child should have to experience what I did”,’ she recalls. Even today, Irma is committed to providing a helping hand to children in difficult situations, as will be shown in the next section.

Melinda and Ildikó, who work in the Nógrád region, reported that their personal struggle with poverty and exclusion had contributed to their drive to work in education. Melinda shared the fact that ‘according to current standards, I was a multiply disadvantaged child too. My mother couldn’t read and write, I’m a

first-generation graduate, as they say.’ Although she always liked to study and easily finished secondary school, she had to start working instead of continuing her studies due to a lack of financial support from her family. Only after ten years did she decide that ‘it’s time to leave’ and enrolled in college alongside her regular job. Her internalized duty to help the children of her village of origin became so strong that it now even seems to override her professional identity, as seen from this quote: ‘I realized that I don’t even want to work elsewhere. It’s not even the profession but the school that I like so much.’

Ildikó used similarly harsh words when speaking about her childhood: ‘I suffered very much due to my origin’ – she shared. She was the only Roma at college and was continuously rejected by her peers. However, she feels that her efforts have paid off. ‘I want to deal with Roma kids in my profession forever, because I would like to help them and show, by my example, that it is possible to break out.’ Today, she uses her personal memories to relate to disadvantaged Roma children and to act as a role model for them.

A teacher from each locality expressed that their sense of responsibility to Roma students was strongly affected by their negative experience during teacher training or previous work. Erzszi in the Pest locality worked in her husband’s small business until her mid-forties, when she decided to enroll in teacher-training college. She encountered serious challenges, above all the deep prejudices of majority students about the Roma. She explained that in the face of a lack of support from her teachers she often had to mobilize her knowledge to counter her peers’ views about Roma students’ ‘inherent inability’ to adapt to school. These encounters eventually led her to write her thesis about Roma children’s education in pre-school.

Finally, Andrea’s story is worth mentioning. For a short time, she worked in public administration in a nearby town in Nógrád, where she often felt undervalued as she was required to carry out menial tasks although she was a university graduate. ‘It wasn’t like school. There, being a Gypsy clearly mattered,’ she stated. Despite the much lower salary and the difficult circumstances, Andrea chose to go back to school, which she regards as a more inclusive environment. Having recently been appointed to a leadership position, she has high hopes of revitalizing the institution and developing a ‘revolutionary, renewed, showcase school’ out of an institution with a particularly bad reputation. One of her colleagues (the previously introduced Ildikó) has high hopes for this, and believed that it was significant that a teacher of Roma origin had taken over the leadership. ‘She knows what the kids feel, she knows how to speak to Roma parents, and she is not ashamed of the Roma. It’s not sure that a Hungarian would dare to take things onto their shoulders’ – said Ildikó in describing the new principal, indicating that in the local community, Andrea’s ethnic belonging clearly brings advantages.

5.3. *The young professional*

The third group of interview partners consisted of three young teachers who had recently begun their careers. These teachers entered the profession much more at ease than their colleagues introduced above. As opposed to some of the aforementioned teachers who had to convince their own parents to let them carry on with their studies, Bianka, Csilla, and Márk enjoyed much emotional and some financial support from their families. They also encountered fewer negative experiences related to ethnic differences at school and university. Being Roma is nonetheless an important component of their identity, thus the presence of these well-qualified teachers with a proud ethnic identity make them what Allen (1995) described as ‘symbols of special achievement.’

Bianka, who was the first in her family to obtain a college degree, claims that it was specifically her pleasant memories of school that made her choose the profession. She reported to having several role models she could look up to, among them István, who taught her in primary school, and Irma, who mentored her when she began to teach. This young teacher appears to be an energetic and dedicated professional who is most motivated by creative tasks and her enthusiasm for teaching. She says that ‘I wouldn’t even call it [teaching] “work,” but “teaching” for which I get money. So, it’s also my hobby. When I go home, I feel it in my guts, “let’s get started!” I get my laptop, get an idea, and wow, the kids will enjoy this so much tomorrow!’ Perhaps not surprisingly, the motive of ‘helping’ is not strong in Bianka’s narrative; she rather presents herself as someone who the children can look up to. This becomes clear when she explains that being a Roma helps her to catch Roma students’ attention because they look at her as an old acquaintance, and they are proud to live in the same neighborhood as their teacher.

‘I come from a family of teachers’ – said István’s daughter Csilla, introducing herself, although she quickly added that she had long resisted copying her father’s career choices. Only after completing vocational training did she decide to enroll in pre-school teacher college. Hence, for Csilla, the teaching profession was not a childhood dream as it was for her father, nor a channel of upward social mobility, as for many others in this study. However, later, out of a drive for self-development, she decided to do an internship in a kindergarten where the number of disadvantaged Roma children was overwhelming. ‘I learned the profession there,’ she said, by which she meant not only gaining new knowledge and skills, but also shaping her thinking about teaching in general: ‘This is a calling. It cannot be only work because then we cannot do it well. It is a calling; you need to put your soul into it. You have to unconditionally love children, all children,’ she said.

Last but not least, let us touch upon Márk’s story. He attended a high school specialized in musical training and then obtained a university degree in violin and music pedagogy. His decision to teach music is not rooted in his local or family belonging, but in tutoring abroad. Upon realizing that as a professional musician he would not be able to sustain himself, he sought employment in education. Only after a long time did he manage to find a job in a segregated primary school in

Nógrád County. He believes that today his musical and teaching engagements complement each other; moreover, he is sometimes able to mobilize his music network for teaching. By familiarizing children with a wide spectrum of musical genres and a number of successful Roma, he believes that he can ‘widen students perspectives’ about their future opportunities.

In sum, the interviews show that a number of biographical and contextual factors influenced how the teachers related to their profession and their role in their communities. Despite the heterogeneity of personal backgrounds and experiences, there were similarities in how interview partners understood their role as teachers. Most importantly, the wish to ‘lead by example’ was present in all conversations; for some, it had even affected the choice of the profession. Teachers’ frequently expressed the hope that they could act as role models, which can be understood as a sense of responsibility and commitment that pervades professional identities and embeds daily work. The next section will give more insight into the latter by expanding on how the teachers’ ethnicity has affected their work in and beyond the classroom.

6. Biographical and contextual resources

Teachers’ relations with students and families are often referred to as important domains in which minority teachers recognize and embrace their diverse personal and professional identities (Bressler and Rotter, 2017). These areas are especially relevant for study, as the interviewees in this study teach at the same location or near to where they live, thus they occupy a particular place in the system of local hierarchies.

6.1 Gaining the trust of students

Several teachers reported that being recognized as a Roma teacher made it easier for them to get closer to Roma students, and they could turn this into a pedagogical asset, such as increasing motivation, developing skills, discipline, or simply by creating a friendly learning environment. Those who adopted a primary ‘caretaker’ role said that earlier negative experiences had directly affected their relations with students. Going through many obstacles that their majority middle-class students had not encountered, they had become more emphatic and sensitive to Roma students’ problems. Ildikó feels that, unlike in an urban school where the main task is to deliver knowledge, students in the small village first and foremost need patience and individual attention. She describes her earlier struggle as similar to that of the students in her class, and believes that this makes her particularly suitable for teaching this group of learners:

I taught in mixed schools too earlier. It was very good that what I delivered, I got back. It wasn’t like, no homework was done. They were also very nice, but the Gypsy children here just give me more. We struggle a lot, there are

so many students with special needs, but still, exactly because they require more care, they give more love too.

Irma gives several clear examples of how she turned her personal memories into educational resource. A few years ago she encountered a very delicate problem. An eight-year-old boy from a severely disadvantaged social background often came to school without changing his clothes or taking a shower. Upon visiting his home, it turned out that there was no running water in the family's apartment. Irma turned to the child and said the following: 'look, when I was a child, we didn't have a bathroom either. Until the age of sixteen, I washed myself every day. You know where? In a little plastic tub. You go to the stove, ask your mum to heat up water and pour it in there...'. The story shows how Irma was able to express empathy through recalling a personal memory. From the position of a teacher, Irma assured the boy that there was nothing to be ashamed about not having a bathroom, and that he was mature enough to overcome the problem on his own with a creative idea. The shared experience of social disadvantage brought her closer to the boy, Irma reports.

Irma's teaching practice involves what Ware (2006) described in relation to Afro-American teachers as 'warm demanders' – that is, communicated personal warmth and strong instructional language. Irma says that 'I can allow myself to do stuff which may offend them [students] if done by a Hungarian colleague. For instance, when they talk dirty I can say "you ought to watch your words! Don't shame me, because I am a Gypsy just like you!".' In this case, Irma makes the children realize that their behavior could negatively affect other Roma, including their teacher. However, she also includes a positive point of reference: her approach makes it seem that the two of them – the teacher and the student – belong to a secret club, which must be a community of honor if its reputation can be destroyed by dirty talk and bad behavior. This framing, which appears in several of her stories, makes it possible for Irma to realize her pedagogical goals but not lose the trust of the children.

Teachers also reported how they make an asset out of their knowledge of the local Roma community, which for some involved awareness and knowledge of cultural practices and traditions in the locality. Instead of leading to major changes in the curricula, these usually unfolded as small interventions in class or during after-school programs. For instance, Bianka drew on family traditions in class that she explained in the following way: 'It's not just that you teach them about "Gypsy culture," but for instance I always say that my father was a famous musician and I bring up examples – that it's like this, or like that with us.'

Class visits gave rare insight into similar examples in István's teaching. In a literature class, students were learning about the short stories of a well-known Hungarian writer from the nineteenth century. Based on a mandatory piece of reading discussion emerged about superstitions and fortune-telling in particular. 'Who were the fortune tellers?' asked István at one point. Receiving no answer, he went on: 'Where did they come from? Don't you guys know that? Then I'll tell you! They were the Gypsy women!' This answer may resemble the deployment of

well-known Roma stereotypes, but István depicted such stories proudly and vividly, and said that fortune-tellers could enjoy respect in the community. In his stories, the stereotypical image of the fortune-teller was replaced by the figure of a confident and proud woman. While speaking, István shuffled a deck of fortune-tellers cards and then read the palm of a volunteer. The performance was so successful that all the students wished to try it. But István fended them off with the following sentence: 'Guys, according to the traditions, only old Gypsies can do fortune-telling, therefore I do it.'

Importantly, the inclusion of the cultural traditions of Roma was positively perceived when mentioned by teachers in this study. Not only was the application of cultural content believed to raise Roma students' motivation and help to develop a positive self-image, but it was seen as recognition of the (local) community and thus a means of fostering inclusion, especially in the Pest locality. This is important in the light of previous studies about teachers' views in Hungary that found that reference to cultural differences contributed to the rather negative perception of Roma students (Bereczky and Fejes, 2013). Furthermore, incorporation of Roma-related knowledge was only embraced if there were many Roma in class; ethnic conflicts occurred; and the community was seen as 'keeping traditions' (*ibid.*).

However, interview partners barely felt that they had been encouraged to enrich their teaching with more cultural content. Csilla, for instance, thought she had lacked relevant courses in her training program, while Erzsi felt that the school leaders 'don't feel how crucial it would be to apply an "ethnic lens".' Finally, István stated that as long as there is barely any scope to deviate from the centrally planned National Core Curriculum, he can only 'smuggle in' additional content, like in the above example.

Employing the advantages of shared belonging was not always easy either. Younger teachers who were at the beginning of establishing their professional authority expressed that it was difficult to balance their different roles. For instance, Márk held that shared ethnic belonging makes it easier to bond with children because 'as they see that I'm also a Gypsy, they somehow relate to me better than to non-Gypsy teachers, and this makes it easier to catch their attention.' However, what seemed to be an advantage at the beginning could later easily lead to a disadvantage because students started to look at Márk as their 'older brother.' He has realized that this is perhaps due to the fact that he is one of the few Roma that students encounter in professional roles, and they have difficulties relating to him as a teacher. As he remarked, 'I think they immediately accept us as persons, but we have to work continuously to be accepted as teachers.' After my class visit he also told me that as a beginner teacher in a particularly hard environment, he is still looking for the best methods to build up his authority.

Although difficulties in relating to Roma students seem to be most striking in the practice of younger teachers, they occurred with the most experienced interviewees too. Teachers in the Pest locality, for instance, were able to build much less rapport with the few Vlach Roma students who had lower

socioeconomic status and did not share the Rumungro's musical heritage – the main source of pride in that community. Thus the potential advantages of Roma teachers also seem to depend on the heterogeneity of local Roma communities – an issue to be further unfolded in the next section about teachers' work with families.

6.2 Connecting school and families

Most teachers had developed connections with families prior to taking up their teaching position, which enabled them to obtain valuable insights into the family background of their students and develop unique ways to act as bridges between the schools and the parents. As a respected teacher in the community, Pál maintains good connections with parents. They often stop him in the street, call him 'Dear Uncle Teacher' and ask for his opinion about a variety of daily matters. Instead of conventional modes of contact, such as written requests and fixed parental meetings in school, he finds that personally interacting with families is more efficient. 'It's very rare that I call for someone in school,' he says, 'I don't call [them], but get in the car and go and just drop by.' However, he also warns that this is only possible because over time he has learned to navigate the fine line between treating parents as equal partners and maintaining professional authority, which would be easily undermined if he treated parents in a way that was 'too friendly.'

The pre-school teachers believed that the teachers' role in connecting school and home is especially important for small children. Being aware of the varieties and nuances of local practices and living situations, these teachers felt they better understood some aspects of their students' behavior. Erzsi lived in the segregated neighborhood herself and had daily contact with parents. Thus, she often took up the role of assisting majority colleagues in their work with families. 'It's important that colleagues can turn to us, asking, "what do you know about that family?" If there is no time, I quickly answer, "look, this and that is the situation. This just happened last week",' she shared. In the case that Roma live geographically segregated from the majority of the village, up-to-date information about families can be turned into important contextual resources. Interestingly, Erzsi was less confident when it came to transmitting school expectations to parents. She had mixed encounters with parents, including cases when shared ethnicity did not help her at all. Some families were, in her understanding, 'jealous' of her position as a teacher and did not take her advice well.

Erzsi's experience was not unique. It seems that the heterogeneity among families and the difference in teachers' and parents' socio-economic status in particular can be obstacles to teachers, despite their ambitions to act as role models in their communities. In the Pest locality, teachers barely spoke about having contact with Vlach Roma families, or even distanced themselves from this group, referring to the involvement of some families in local criminal networks. Such obvious distancing was not encountered in the Nógrád locality; however, the gap between teachers and parents' socio-economic status is more prominent here, leading to more everyday dilemmas.

An example of challenges that status differences result in may be seen in an excerpt from Melinda, who shared ambivalent feelings about being a Roma teacher in a marginalized village in Nógrád County. She was able to establish trust with parents quickly; however, this came with false expectations. This is how she described her relationship with parents:

At the beginning, when parents came to see me, they were very happy. Those who came from another village, I told them that I was a Gypsy too. Then they kind of relaxed a little so that I could understand their problems. And I did, but when I defined the requirements, so to speak, I was already being too 'proud' in their words. (...) On the one hand, they come to me and want to conspire with me because I am Gypsy, but on the other hand, if I make the same demands as all my other colleagues, eighty per cent turn away. Gypsy parents don't like me more, and don't trust me more.

Melinda's narrative reveals that much of what lies behind parents' doubts is the perceived difference in socio-economic status. This social distance has prevented her from realizing certain pedagogical goals, despite shared ethnic belonging. Melinda believes that being a Roma teacher sometimes led to expectations that she alone should 'solve' all the challenges with the children that families are incapable of dealing with. Instead of taking this behavior personally, though, Melinda rather considers it a psychological reaction triggered by feelings of uncertainty and despair.

A few interview partners highlighted that status differences do not determine their relationships, but it takes a long time to develop the trust of parents. Andrea, who generally maintained good relations with families, explained that she had to work hard to maneuver well in a community in which traditional values and lifestyles are of much importance. She believed that growing up in a 'traditional Gypsy family' often helped her to understand the dynamics of the local relations, yet it took time to make herself understood by families, like in the following case:

The other day a real Gypsy grandma came to the school – meaning a [woman with] completely traditional dress and mode of speaking. She started to shout and swear with anger. I said to her, 'listen, I grew up in such an environment, so this does not hurt my ears so much. I have aunts who speak this way, but please tone it down a little because we are now in a school. When I visit you at your place, I will comply with your requests.' And then she told me calmly that I give too much homework.

Andrea was apparently able to reduce tension through distinguishing between 'school' and 'home.' Instead of pointing at the impolite behavior, she searched for shared understanding in the private realm. When the common basis for understanding was defined, she made it clear that one should use different means to convey such messages in public. Dialogue could then begin.

However, in other situations norms and hierarchies could not be replaced by shared ethnic belonging. This is the case, for instance, when strict gender norms persist. Andrea explains that men's and women's roles are profoundly divided here: women rarely fulfill professional roles, take on positions of authority, or demand that men conform to institutional requirements. To achieve her goals, she needs to find ways by which she does not break the unwritten rules – or at least not on the surface. 'The mother is the head; she keeps control from the background. Eventually, what the mother wants happens. So, if I catch the mother, she will mollify the man so that he will stand by me' – displays Andrea her strategy, highlighting that she always approaches women in the community.

Overall, teachers' relations with Roma students and their parents emerged as the most important areas in which personal insights and local knowledge matter through the mobilization of biographical and contextual resources. Teachers often recalled developing trusting relationships, and thus motivating students or forming a bridge between home and school. Being part of the local community, however, posed a particular challenge to the teachers too, because they had to carefully and creatively juggle different expectations deriving from the local and societal hierarchies.

6. Conclusions and further implications

This small-scale explorative study has extended the literature on minority teachers by examining the professional identities, roles, and experiences of ten Hungarian Roma teachers embedded in local contexts. The findings support other studies that argue for the recognition of the potentially novel perspectives that minority teachers may bring to education, but which also draw attention to the specific institutional and structural conditions that limit the tapping of this potential (Achinstein and Ogawa, 2012; Hasberry, 2013; Villegas et al., 2012; Carrington and Skleton, 2003; Schmidt and Schneider, 2016; Mahrouse, 2005; Sontoro, 2015). In the Hungarian context, Roma teachers' commitment to acting as role models was very strong, although it was far from obvious what it takes to realize these ambitions in specific local settings.

These initial inquiries showed that a teacher's potential to improve educational conditions is deeply embedded in the context of institutional settings, local hierarchies, and the conditions of the broader educational system. Professional work always interferes with local hierarchies, hence maneuvering between school and home requires creative solutions from the individual, and embeddedness in communities, or the lack thereof, plays a crucial role. It is thus not self-evident that Roma teachers are able to (better) establish trust with Roma children and parents. The study revealed mainly individual efforts, creative ideas, and ambitions which varied depending on whether the teacher was working in a diverse student group or in a segregated environment.

Although more research is clearly needed to better understand the opportunities and challenges of Roma teachers, it may already be seen that long-term investment in the structural and institutional level and in teacher training are

needed to really tap into the resources that these teachers may bring to education. For instance, a supportive institutional environment is crucial; one that engages positively with ethnic differences. Targeted training and mentoring is also necessary for enabling teachers to reflect on their personal experiences and diverse identities and prepare them for the expectations they may be confronted with throughout their work. Last, while the teaching profession may be a source of local prestige that is vital in small, bounded communities, the findings of the case studies and interviews also warn that this role is functioning as a source of status attainment less and less due to a decrease in both salaries and the prestige of the teaching profession. Because of these and many further constraints, the ideal of the 'role model' position and the potential resources that Roma teachers represent are likely to remain underexploited, instead, those few individuals who enter the profession will become overburdened with dilemmas and expectations.

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DOROTTYA RÉDAI *

Discourses of Inequality: Reproducing Gendered, Ethnic, and
Classed Subjectivities and Social Inequalities through Sexuality
Discourses in a Hungarian School

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* [redaidori73@gmail.com] (independent scholar)

Abstract¹

In this paper I focus on the constitution of intersectional subjectivities and social inequality (re)production and discuss how class and ethnicity are (re)produced through gendered sexuality discourses and practices in a Hungarian secondary school, highlighting an aspect of intersectionality rarely explored in the sociology of education. The data used for the analysis come from a school ethnography I conducted between 2009 and 2011 in a combined secondary vocational-technical-grammar school in Hungary. The students of the school were mostly from lower-middle-class and working-class backgrounds and were ethnically mixed; i.e., there was a significant proportion of Roma students. I apply critical discourse analysis to interview excerpts with students and teachers to show how ethnicity and class are constituted intersectionally through sexuality discourses. Class is an important axis of subjectivity to include in the analysis of ethnic differentiation, as the two categories often converge. I demonstrate these processes of constitution through examples of teachers talking about students' sexuality and about 'Roma culture,' including specific references to ethnicized reproductive patterns, and a case of sexual harassment of a Roma girl by a white teacher with potential consequences for her future professional career and class positioning. I argue that the gendered sexuality discourses and practices I have identified and the subjectivities they constitute simultaneously create binary categories of race/ethnicity and class and allocate people within and outside these, leading to the re-inscription of social inequalities in schooling.

Keywords: intersectionality, sexuality, subjectivity, inequality, reproduction, education.

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1. Introduction

Schools are hierarchical institutions in which social inequalities are (re)produced (see: e.g. Schneider, 2018; Apple, Ball and Gandin, 2010; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1992; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991). Downey and Condrón argue that different streams of the sociology of education consider schools to be institutions that either reduce or compensate for social inequalities, or reproduce or exacerbate inequalities. They call for ‘a more balanced understanding of the relationship between schools and inequality, one where neutral, exacerbatory, and compensatory possibilities are all given serious consideration’ (Downey and Condrón, 2016: 218). While acknowledging the compensatory and exacerbatory aspects of education, in this paper (and in my larger research project, see Rédei, 2019) I focus on the (re)productive role of schools. I look at schools as places where individual subjectivities are positioned in hierarchical patterns in a network of power relations, within a broader social framework in which distinctions between social groups mean subordination, discrimination, oppression, and the exclusion of less privileged or powerful groups by more privileged or powerful groups. This distinction between individuals and between groups is based on – among other axes – gender, class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality. In this paper I inquire into how class and ethnicity are reproduced through gendered sexuality discourses and practices at the institutional level of schools.

To find answers to this question, I use data from research I conducted between 2009 and 2011 in a combined secondary vocational-technical-grammar school I call *Marzipán*, located in a large town in Hungary. The school had approximately 1000 students who mostly came from lower-middle-class and working-class backgrounds and were ethnically mixed. Due to the scope of this paper, I focus only on teacher-student relations.² I look at teachers’ discourses from their positionality, which is a relatively powerful one, although this power is limited to the school environment. In this sense, teachers are ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (see Lipsky, 1980), intermediaries of the state policies of a social system based on gender, class, and race subordination. The former and the school as an institution do have responsibility for the (re)production of social inequalities, although teachers’ discourses and practices reflect wider social relations, which are thoroughly explored in recent work by Kóczé (2011), Kovai (2017) and Szombati (2018), among others.

I refer to my respondents’ ethnic subjectivities as *Gypsy* and *Hungarian*. These are ethnic categories, not ones referring to nationality or citizenship. My Gypsy respondents never used *Roma* to refer to themselves, always saying *Gypsy* (*cigány*). Using the word *Gypsy* instead of *Roma* to refer to my respondents – besides following their self-naming practice – is socio-politically motivated: I use the word in order to interpellate Gypsy subjectivity in ways that offer the chance to ‘misfire’; to contribute to the performative reinscription process of the word (see Butler, 1997). I use the word *Roma* when I generally refer to the ethnic category. My respondents who identified as (ethnic) *Hungarian* used this label for

² See Rédei (2019) for an analysis of teacher-teacher and student-student power relations and discursive constructions of hierarchy within these groups.

themselves or for one another; they never used *White*. Concerning *Hungarian* vs. *White*, I use both categories: *Hungarian* when referring to respondents who identify as Hungarians, and *White* when I am analytically reflecting on their positionality as Whites.³

In *Marzipan*, students are streamed into three educational tracks. The technical and vocational tracks provide training for blue-collar work, whereas the grammar school prepares students for white-collar work and higher education. In Hungary, the completion of technical or grammar school track allows students to continue studying either in adult technical training or in higher education, whereas the vocational track does not, as vocational students do not complete a 'maturation exam.' According to Liskó (2008), within such a highly selective schooling system the proportion of youth from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds has doubled in vocational schools since the regime change in 1990: in the early 2000s, two-thirds of Gypsy youth in education were attending vocational school, and students' achievements in vocational schools were much lower, while dropout rates were much higher (about 30 per cent) than in technical (9 per cent) and grammar (4 per cent) schools.

In Europe, vocational streaming is systemic in countries that use the so-called 'German-type' schooling system (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, and Hungary), while in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries it is much less common, and Southern European countries are mixed in this respect (Robert, 2010). Both Hungarian and international literature about streaming in secondary education shows that streaming 'increases inequality in educational outcomes and aggravates the effects of students' socio-economic status' (Robert, 2010: 435). Pfeffer (2008) found that educational mobility in countries with a highly stratified educational system, including Hungary, is low. Studies also show that parents' educational level influences school choice: more highly educated parents tend to send their children to grammar schools, and vocational school students tend to have parents with low education and low social status (Kogan et al., 2012; Robert, 2010; Horn et al., 2006). Pfeffer argues that 'the association of parents' and their children's educational status is higher in highly stratified systems' (2008: 546).

2. Theoretical framework

As the above-cited and other studies show, ethnicity and class intersect to reproduce social disadvantages and determine future socio-economic status and social mobility. This is why I find it important to include the concept of class in educational research. Class is a contested concept in Hungarian sociology, partly due to the state-socialist legacy; 'socio-economic status' and 'social stratification' are the preferred concepts, which do not entail cultural aspects of class. For my analysis of the constitution of subjectivity, I approach class from a cultural perspective. As Beverley Skeggs argues, 'what we learn to recognize as categorizations of race and class are not just classification or social positions but

³ What group names to use in studies about Roma and non-Roma people in Hungary is a recurring issue in Hungarian anthropological and sociological scholarship. Kovai (2017: 12–14) offers insightful reflections about the issue in a recent monograph.

an amalgam of features of a culture that are read onto bodies as personal dispositions – which themselves have been generated through systems of inscription in the first place’ (2004: 1). Skeggs understands class as a symbolic system and points out that class and other symbolic systems inscribe bodies simultaneously (2004: 3). She shows in her analysis that class has its history of being read onto bodies through moral discourses of sexuality (2004: 3, 85–90).

My analysis of how subjectivities are constituted through discourses is based on a Foucauldian understanding of the subject/subjectivities as constituted through the productive power of discourses (Foucault, 1994; 1980). In her theorization of performativity, Judith Butler argues that ‘(...) gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is *performative* in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express’ (1991: 24; emphasis in the original). Gender is constituted through a ‘stylized repetition of acts’ (Butler, 1990: 140). Based on Derrida’s concept of citationality in the discursive constitution of gender, Butler also argues that gender comes to exist through the iteration of former citations of gender performatives, and this citational chain produces an illusion that there is an ‘original’ gender (1993). Butler claims that continuous reiteration opens up spaces for subversion; because of its repetitive nature, there is always a possibility that the interpellation misfires, and this way the interpellated subjectivity can be reinscribed (1997). Butler uses Foucault’s notion of discursive power and claims that as the subject comes to exist through citation, it simultaneously becomes positioned in discursive relations of power (Butler, 1997).

Butler’s gender performativity (1993; 1990) as a model can be applied to analyze how raced/ethnic and classed subjectivities become constituted. As Joane Nagel (2003; 2000) explains: ‘[e]thnicity is both performed – where individuals and groups engage in ethnic “presentations of self,” and “performative” – where ethnic boundaries are constituted by day-to-day affirmations, reinforcements, and enactments of ethnic differences’ (2000: 111). She adds that ‘[t]he relative power of various actors in ethnic transactions can determine an individual’s ethnic classification as well as the content and worth of the individual’s ethnicity’ (ibid.).

In an essay entitled ‘Gypsy Differentiation,’ Kata Horváth (2008) applies Butler’s theory of performativity to analyze how ‘Gypsiness’ becomes discursively constituted (see also Kovai, 2017). She argues that ‘Gypsy’ is not a pre-existing category but becomes constituted through a differentiation process between Gypsies and Hungarians. She considers the construction of ‘the Gypsy’ to be a process, not a product of a process. In other words, ‘Gypsy’ is constituted through the repetitive citation of differences between ‘Gypsies’ and ‘Hungarians.’ Gypsy differentiation not only happens through the act of calling oneself or someone a Gypsy, but also through referring to ‘welfare queens,’ ‘deep poverty,’ ‘pupils with special needs,’ ‘the minority,’ or ‘skin color’ for example, without uttering the word ‘Gypsy’ (Horváth, 2008).

Classed, ethnic, and gendered inequalities are (re)produced in education (see e.g. Apple et al., 2010; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991). In a social system structured by power inequalities between social groups, the distinction between social categories (such as woman/man, Gypsy/Hungarian) is at the same time the hierarchical ordering of these social categories through which one group is subordinated to the other. School is a central institution in young people’s lives,

both as an institution and a space where groups of people spend a lot of time together and performatively constitute themselves and are constituted by others on an ongoing basis. Thus, subjectivity constitution is interrelated with the (re)production of social inequalities in school.

The intersection of ethnicity and class with gender and sexuality, and the performative constitution processes of ethnicized sexuality or sexualized ethnicity, are undertheorized in Hungarian literature, especially in the field of education. Some recent Hungarian studies about Roma people have explored the intersection of race/ethnicity and class in general (Szombati, 2018), gender, race/ethnicity and class in rural contexts (Kovai, 2017; Kóczé, 2011), and the intersection of race/ethnicity and class in educational environments (Neumann, 2017; Dunajeva, 2014). My aim in this article is to strengthen the axes of gender and sexuality in Hungarian intersectional Romani and education studies. By providing an analysis of performative subjectivity constitution processes in an educational setting, I wish to reveal a discursive layer of institutional social inequality reproduction, highlight the role of gender and sexuality in it, and contribute further aspects of ethnic inequality reproduction to a field of scholarship in which the quantitative features of the discussed phenomenon have been richly explored and documented (e.g. Hajdú et al., 2014; Szalai, 2014; Messing et al., 2010; Ladányi and Szelényi, 2006).

3. Research methodology

School ethnography as a qualitative research methodology is not commonly used in Hungarian educational research, and post-structuralist theoretical frameworks and reflexive self-positioning is relatively new. Two such pieces of work that recently dealt with Hungarian Roma are important to mention here. One is Eszter Neumann's (2017) school ethnography, in which she explores how streaming, ability-grouping, and behavior management influence students' educational trajectories and social positioning in the British and the Hungarian education systems. Her main focus is the intersection of class and race/ethnicity, but gender is present as an analytical category as well. The other work is Jekatyerina Dunajeva's doctoral dissertation (2014), which explores the development and mobilization of images of 'Good Roma' and 'Bad Gypsy' in formal and informal educational settings in Hungary and Russia, and analyses these discourses in a comparative framework.

The school where I undertook the ethnography had approximately 1000 students, mostly from lower-middle-class and working-class backgrounds, who were ethnically mixed. In the course of my fieldwork I used five methods of data collection: classroom observation during lessons; school space observation and informal conversations in breaks; small-group interviews; individual interviews; and data collection from school officials, the school nurse, and from the website of the school. The driving question for my research was how sexuality discourses constituted subjectivities and (re)produced social inequalities in the school, therefore the main questions in the interviews and focal points of observation were related to sexuality. I observed 34 sex education classes and some other lessons and conducted semi-structured, small-group interviews with cc. 90 students (ages 14–20) and individual interviews with the school nurse, five

teachers, and the school director. The single-sex small group interviews involved three or four students. Because of the intimate nature of some of the topics (e.g. relationships, sexual experiences) I presumed that a small group format would be better suited to the elicitation of information and views which students may feel more relaxed about discussing in small groups, but potentially uncomfortable discussing with me alone or in larger groups. Recruitment for the interviews happened on a voluntary basis in most cases (though in some cases teachers selected some students for interviews), and appropriate consent was acquired in the case of each respondent. Both the group and the individual interviews lasted one to two hours; they were audio-recorded, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim. The quotes in this paper are from the interview transcripts and are my translations. The names of respondents and the school are pseudonyms.

Through the manual coding of the transcripts certain dominant and alternative or subversive discursive patterns emerged, but the latter appeared rarely in comparison to dominant patterns. I had decided to focus on dominant discourses primarily, rather than non-mainstream, alternative discourses, as I chose the (re)production rather than the subversion of social inequalities as the main theme for analysis. I have tried to select quotes which best exemplify my arguments that emerged from carefully analyzing the discourses on the given topic.

The reason why I apply critical discourse analysis to explore the data generated by the interactions between my research participants and me (see Youdell, 2005) is that this approach takes discourse as a social practice; it is a form of social action, it takes the social-political-cultural context of the text into consideration, it highlights the discursive nature of power relations, the contribution of discourse to (re)producing or transforming power relations, and the ideological work it does in representing and constructing power relations (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

4. The classed and raced positioning of students in the hierarchical structure of the school

Marzipan is a multilateral vocational, technical, and grammar school.⁴ Two thirds of the students were attending the vocational track, so that form of training was the major profile of *Marzipan* at the time of my fieldwork. The number of students in *Marzipan* in 2010 was approximately 1000, with nearly equal numbers of girls and boys, and about 20 per cent Roma students in my estimation.⁵ In this paper I primarily focus on the school perpetuating social hierarchies, not on the hierarchical structure of the school.

According to the 2008 Pedagogical Program of *Marzipan*, which was in use at the time of my fieldwork, 'the student population of the school is very

⁴ For an analysis of the rigid and complex hierarchical structure of *Marzipan*, see Rédei (2019: Ch. 4).

⁵ The ethnicity of students is 'sensitive data,' meaning it is illegal to record, therefore I rely on my estimation based on the self-identification of students participating in the interviews, and the estimations of peers and teachers. For a discussion of the complexities of students' ethnic self-identification in *Marzipan*, see Rédei (2019: 201–204).

heterogeneous. Approximately half of the students come from broken families;⁶ it is common, especially for vocational school students, to have one caretaker parent, and in some cases not even that one parent takes real care of the child.⁷ The document claims there are many Roma students and students from poor families. 'The socialization level of the vocational students is generally low, in accordance with the educational level of the parents,' according to the Pedagogical Program. The document claims that 'the learning motivation of technical and vocational students is not satisfactory, they are more interested in acquiring practical knowledge than in academic subjects.' As Reay notes, there is a widely circulated public discourse of 'blame culture' which views 'the working classes in terms of a range of cultural deficits that are then portrayed as the reasons for working-class underachievement. Most position the working classes as either victims or deficient in one way or another, and nearly all focus on the home as the locus of class practices' (2006: 397).

Although the picture I have presented about vocational schooling, family background, and socio-economic status corresponds with national trends, the Pedagogical Program also reveals something else: the school management's middle-class elitist intellectual perspective and prejudices against less well educated people. The discursive (re)production of social inequalities occurs on many levels, including in the former document, in which the authors (the school management) simply doom students with less educated parents to remain low educated. 'Socialization level' is a polite phrase for describing degrees of 'sophisticated' or 'uncultured'/'ignorant,' and implies that teachers label students on the basis of the educational level of their parents. I have observed that 'socialization level' is a preferred phrase among teachers, and they always use it to refer to socialization within the family, as if they, as teachers, do not actively participate in the socialization of children themselves. This complaint about the unsatisfactory learning motivation of technical and vocational students reflects a middle-class intellectual approach: even students trained for blue-collar vocations are supposed to be interested in academic school subjects, including literature, history, mathematics, and so on.

According to the school director, the ethnic proportions of students differ by educational track; in forms with approximately 30 students, 'in vocational training there are six or seven [Roma students] per form. In the technical strand there are either zero or perhaps one or two. Many of them drop out of technical school.' Concerning the reason for such differences between the vocational and the technical strands, the director expressed his belief that

[i]t's likely that they enter with such [a level of] background knowledge that they have no chance to get into technical school. I am convinced that they attend even the vocational school – with rare exceptions – not because they are so eager to learn but because education is mandatory and they have to go to school. (School director, interview)

⁶ 'Broken' or 'mutilated' family is a very commonly used Hungarian expression for single-parent families.

⁷ The quotes in this paragraph are my translation; they are from the 2008 Pedagogical Program of *Marzipan*, for which I do not provide a reference to preserve the school's anonymity.

What he says highlights a difference in the education and further employment chances between Roma and Hungarians (see Hajdú et al., 2014), but also between youth from different socio-economic backgrounds. Students from (multiple) disadvantaged family backgrounds are likely not to have received the best primary education due to poverty, poor access to education, an unsupportive family background (Csapó, Molnár and Kinyó, 2009; Liskó, 2008), and a high degree of school segregation in the case of Roma (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2009). At the time of my research, 48 per cent of Gypsy youth did not have any secondary qualifications, 28 per cent had a vocational qualification, 16 per cent had a technical school qualification, and 8 per cent had a grammar school qualification (Hajdú et al., 2014: 15). Although 99 per cent of Hungarian students who completed primary education enrolled in secondary school, and 95 per cent of Roma students did so, the dropout rates in secondary school show a huge difference: whereas the dropout rate among non-Roma youth was 9 per cent, it was 48 per cent in the case of Roma secondary school students (Hajdú et al., 2014: 27). Thus, the gap between students in primary education is carried on to secondary education, where it widens even further (Hajdú et al., 2014: 13–14). The compulsory school-leaving age was reduced to 16 in 2012, and in 2015 the proportion of non-Roma early school-leavers⁸ was 8.9 per cent, whereas among Roma youth it was 59.9 per cent (KSH, 2016).

5. Constituting gendered and ethnic subjectivities intersectionally through sexuality discourses

After the overview of structural inequalities between Gypsy and Hungarian students, in the rest of the paper I offer an analysis of discourses and practices whereby students' classed ethnic subjectivities are constituted by teachers through their talking about one or another aspect of students' sexuality, or, as in the final example, through acting sexually.

In an interview, the school director argued that those students who attended vocational training did not have the same 'sexual culture' as students attending elite grammar schools. When I asked him what he meant, he explained that vocational students used the school space to express their sexuality indiscreetly. The reason for this was, according to him, that

(...) they mature faster, and probably nowadays the kids that come to vocational schools, well, we can say, it's not a great joy, but it's a fact that they are not the most sophisticated kids. This brings with it a kind of culture, and I am not talking about the Roma here, but in general. (...) Because it's possible that if this was an elite grammar school they would treat the issue completely differently. (School director, interview)

⁸ When the school-leaving age was 18, young people dropped out of secondary school before 18. With 16 as the school-leaving age, however, youth who do not finish their primary education until the age of 15–16 are more likely to not even enrol in secondary school.

In his view, sexuality in the school space is related to ‘maturing faster’ and students coming from ‘not the most sophisticated’ background. By saying that students ‘mature faster,’ he means that they become sexually active at an earlier age. According to Liskó, the educational level of parents and the socio-economic family background of children directly influence which type of school they choose – if they have a choice at all: children from the most disadvantaged families go to vocational schools in the greatest proportion (2008: 96–97). The school director connects family and educational background with sexual behavior and draws a distinction between students in the vocational school track and imaginary students in an elite grammar school. In his opinion, students who pursue a vocational education have a kind of sexual ‘culture’ that is not acceptable in an institution based on middle-class values. As Lupton and Hempel-Jorgensen argue, ‘(...) schools are designed and resourced according to a set of assumptions about the school social relations and processes informed by middle-class norms’ (2012: 610). Such middle-class norms are supposedly represented by students in the elite grammar school he refers to, as opposed to vocational students in *Marzipan*, who bring with them a different kind of ‘culture.’

Not an ethnic culture, he quickly adds. As I observed in the interviews with teachers, ethnic differentiation in official teacher talk was taboo. Several teachers took care to reassure me that they did not see any differences between Roma and non-Roma students; it was rather the school track the students attended that characterized their behaviour. Not quite accidentally, though, the proportion of Roma students is the highest in vocational schools. By implying that he does not mean that it is Roma students who have this ‘different sexual culture,’ but vocational students in general, the director ‘whitewashes’ Roma students and hides racial differentiation under a blanket of ‘working-class culture.’ Moreover, he makes a distinction between what Skeggs calls ‘pure white and dirty white’ (2004: 91). These white(washed) vocational students represent a different type of whiteness than (elite) grammar school students because of their working-class ‘culture,’ which includes sexually excessive behaviour and vulgarity (see Skeggs, 2004: 100–102), which conflicts with the middle-class norms of respectable behavior in the school. As Skeggs argues, ‘[w]hen whiteness becomes a marker of excess (...), the working-class become offensively and embarrassingly racially marked as white’ (2004: 91). Thus, in an attempt to deracialize the students in question and classify them according to their ‘culture’ and type of education, the school director constructs two different groups of Whites who are subjected to a classed hierarchy that looks like raced hierarchy.

In the following sections I examine how intersectionally classed, ethnic and gendered inequality is reproduced by teachers through discourses and practices of sexuality. I argue that in White middle-class discourses of teachers, raced and classed discourses converge, while raced ‘cultural’ values and behaviors attributed to Roma students by White teachers are at the same time constitutive of the class positions of both students and teachers.

5.1 'Cultural levels' – constituting a lower classed 'Gypsy girl' subjectivity

In the following excerpt, Anna, a form tutor, constitutes a 'Gypsy girl' subjectivity through talking about reproductive patterns:

(...) [Gypsy] girls consummate very early. Technically speaking, they somehow make these girls come of age by this, and (...) quite obviously, the number one task of these girls is not going to be working in a bakery, but giving birth to children for a long-long time. This is what the family prepares them for (...) and that is what their immediate surroundings expect from them. Well, while [the parents] get the family allowance for them they go to school, but, from then on, school is not [a priority]. (...) [T]his is (...) a form of livelihood, giving birth to as many children as they can, because the more children they have the more the support, and (...) on this cultural level it is a biological expectation and a biological system. (...) If we look around among highly qualified young people with university degrees, then a European or North American person who has spent a lot of years in school, has read a lot, and has great insight into things, will not give birth at the age of fifteen, because she would expect, as an individual, that she would only give birth if the child can have its own room, if she can take the child to the doctor in her own car, and if she can pay five hundred thousand forints⁹ for a pram. (...) And how old is she then? At the age of 27, 28, 30–35 it is not such a big deal to have a child. [Gypsies] don't have such (...) social expectations. With a whi... sorry, so a non-Roma person, if a family has a third child, people wonder, 'Where will they get the money to raise them? They must be pretty well-off to take on a third one!' [Gypsies] don't make an issue out of it. (Anna, teacher, interview)

Gypsy girls are positioned here as the bearers of their 'culture' (Yuval-Davies, 1997) and as being at a lower 'cultural' level than White middle-class women. This is manifested in their assumed attitude to work, reproductive patterns, and education levels (cf. Dunajeva, 2014). Anna practically questions the worth of educating Gypsy girls for a profession by saying that on their 'cultural level' the aim is not to work, but to have children. Echoing common public discourses, she positions White people as highly educated and middle-class and as having few children, and Gypsy people as poorly educated, low class, and having too many children, arguing that at the Gypsies' 'cultural level' it is a 'biological expectation and system' that they have many children. Excess (in this case, excessive reproduction) is also a characteristic projected onto the working class (Skeggs, 2004). Anna contrasts a vision of a monolithic Gypsy existence with that of a monolithic White middle-class 'European or North American' existence. In this comparison, 'Gypsiness' becomes a classed category as well, not only an ethnic one, contrasted with a classed category of whiteness. At the end of the excerpt Anna starts to say 'white' but stops and corrects herself to say 'non-Roma.' This suggests that she is using the word 'white' in a colonial sense, and she is aware

⁹ Cc. 1500 euros.

that it is considered racist to use it that way. She is not familiar with critical race theory and discourses about whiteness, but she tries to make sure she uses 'politically correct' language in the interview.

Anna uses the notion of 'cultural difference' a lot when talking about Gypsy students. While she takes great care not to appear racist in the interview, it is implied all along that, for her, 'cultural difference' is in fact a difference in hierarchical 'cultural levels' between Hungarian and Gypsy families, with the latter being on a lower level. Skeggs argues that in discourse 'race' has been exchanged by 'culture,' which involves a shift from biological essentialism to cultural essentialism. 'Whereas nature was used to legitimate racism, now cultur[e] performs this role' (2004: 138). The discourse of 'culture' comes in handy for Anna and other teachers, who are only aware that racist discourses about Gypsies are taboo, but they are not aware that they use the concept of culture in a way that rearticulates race/ethnicity-based distinctions, thus their 'cultural' discourse is disguised racism.

The reference to 'lower and higher cultural levels' also appears as a means of classed hierarchy construction in *Marzipan*, as we could also see in the school director's discourse about the culture of vocational students. In Anna's narrative, classed and raced discourses, which reproduce social inequalities and also hierarchical distinctions in positioning in the school, converge in the discourse of 'culture' and 'cultural level' or 'cultural difference' (see also Jensen and Ringrose, 2013). In her explanation about the different cultural levels of Gypsies and White people, Anna actually couples the cultural and the biological discourses by saying that 'on this cultural level it is a biological expectation and a biological system.' In my reading, she is suggesting that on different cultural levels there are different biological systems; that is, that culture determines biological functioning, i.e. reproductive patterns. The logic of her argument is intriguing: does culture determine Gypsy reproduction, and education and financial status determine White reproduction? If so, do Gypsies have a 'culture' and Whites an 'education'?

If 'culture' and 'education' as Anna means them are distinguished from each other thus, this may explain (at least in her thinking) why it is 'not worth' educating Gypsy girls. The educational institution stands for profession, work, income, high culture, and whiteness, and Anna suggests that most Gypsy girls will remain below the 'cultural level' of secondary professional education and all that it could bring to their life because of their dropping out, not learning a profession, giving birth early and many times, and living on childcare benefits. As I have discussed earlier, educational level and achievement strongly correlate with socio-economic and family background. However, the correlation is two-dimensional: students from disadvantaged and lower educated backgrounds are likely to follow educational tracks that grant lower level qualifications and spend less time in education. Therefore, they remain low-educated and the pattern is reproduced. Schools have a great stake in the reproduction of educational and, correspondingly, socio-economic inequalities (see e.g. Ball, 1993; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1992). Nevertheless, Anna (and other teachers) talk about education as if it had no part in the perpetuation of low-qualification, low socio-economic status, narrow life prospects – as if the family was solely responsible, as if family background overwrote everything education does. This is a common discourse

among teachers: by claiming that their job is ‘teaching only,’ they fend off responsibility for the reproduction of social inequalities.

5.2 Gatekeeping – constituting a higher classed ‘Gypsy girl’ subjectivity

In the following excerpt I describe how I asked Lujza, a literature teacher who mostly teaches forms in the grammar school track, whether she has Gypsy students in her current form. She explains that she has had two, one of whom moved to England with her family, while the other one is still in her form:

This other girl, this one’s mother is at home, they present a completely typical picture, they are this very closed [family]. (...) So, she is one of the girls who I would say is completely innocent, because they are really so well-situated, rich, they bring her here and take her home by car, so she is not really accessible. (...) They only allowed her to go anywhere after the father specifically made me promise that I would almost hold her hand, that I would not let her go anywhere, and if we went on form trips she would sleep in my room (...). [S]he is a very sweet girl, a bit dumb, but a very sweet, nice little thing (...), but they are very well-situated, and the mother has her own chauffeur and what not, so they are rich. But well, I think this is multiple transfer, I mean they didn’t come out of the ghetto just now, but they, I think, came out of there a long time ago, you can see it on both sides, with the mother and the father as well. (Lujza, teacher, interview)

Although gender, class, and ethnicity intersect in the positioning of the girl in an unusual way, in my reading this story does not offer a subversive potential for the constitution of Gypsy subjectivity in the Butlerian sense because it reiterates dichotomous distinctions between different Gypsy girls and reinstates a Hungarian–Gypsy hierarchy, even if this particular family seems to have stepped up in this hierarchy. The story of the girl involves a ‘traditional’ patriarchal setting (see Pateman, 1988): the Gypsy father exercises his paternal right over his daughter’s sexuality and entrusts the White teacher to take care of her virginity while at school or during extracurricular school programs. By cooperating to preserve the girl’s virginity, the two powerful adults constitute the girl’s ethnicity through sexuality.¹⁰ With the father entrusting the teacher to be the girl’s ‘caretaker,’ Lujza, the White teacher, becomes positioned as the gatekeeper of ethnicized social hierarchy in the school and also an honorary member of a family that is so rich that it makes their Gypsiness acceptable. In fact, they are not really ‘that Gypsy’ anymore, because they have gone through ‘multiple transfer’, as Lujza puts it. By characterizing the girl as ‘a very sweet girl, a bit dumb, but a very sweet, nice little thing’ and a girl with intact virginity, Lujza projects the image of a good future Gypsy wife in accordance with the father’s idea of what a good wife is like. The family’s high socio-economic status, in Lujza’s eyes, creates a hierarchical distinction between the girl from this particular Gypsy family and other Gypsy girls. This girl is positioned above other Gypsy girls who, as Lujza

¹⁰ For a discussion of the constitution of Roma girls’ ethnicity through discourses of virginity and marriage, see Rédei (2016), and Rédei (2019: Ch. 6).

argues in an earlier part of the interview, are oversexualized, vulgar, behave in a lewd way, and come from family backgrounds where it is accepted that girls get married at age 14–16 and have children. Not accidentally, this girl is a grammar school student; the other Gypsy girls Lujza refers to are vocational students. As I pointed out earlier, vulgarity and excessive sexuality are markers of both the working class and racial/ethnic minority groups and features of their perceived ‘culture’ in which class and race/ethnicity converge. Thus, the girl’s higher class position grants her a higher ethnic position as well: she is ‘almost White’ – though not quite White, exactly because of the attitude to virginity, attributed to ‘traditional Roma culture.’

5.3 Constituting the class positioning of a Gypsy girl through sexual abuse

In this last section I present an example of how the positioning of students in the school hierarchy by teachers is directly done through sexual behavior. Based on this example I argue that abusive sexuality is a means by which teacher power is deployed to construct a teacher-student hierarchy, and that sexual abuse and students’ response to it may also influence their future (intra-)class positioning.

The 2011 Report of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) on sexual harassment in schools defines school-based sexual harassment as including ‘sexual behavior that interferes with a student’s educational opportunities’ (Hill and Kearl, 2011: 6). This definition highlights a very important aspect of unwanted sexual behavior, namely, the impact it may have on the harassed person’s education. In recent years school-based sexual violence has received increasing attention in Hungary, but research studies and guides focus on student-student sexual harassment (see e.g. Buda, 2015; Simon et al., 2015). Despite the fact that news stories about teachers harassing students occur regularly in the media, no large-scale research data is available about this type of violation. This suggests that this is a particularly difficult issue to research in primary and secondary schools, with their specific power relations. Arguably, sexual harassment by a teacher may have specific consequences for the harassed student’s educational opportunities, as the following case shows.

One Gypsy girl, Imola, asked me in the interview what to do about a male teacher who had been sexually harassing her. She expressed her fear that if she complained she would be streamed into the lowest vocational track in the school hierarchy with the lowest chances of social mobility. She wanted to get a technical school qualification, pass a ‘maturation exam,’ and go to college. Harassment sometimes happened in the presence of Imola’s friend, Detti (also a Gypsy girl), but both girls felt that this fact did not help her prove her case:

Right, he always did it where there was no camera. And then what if Detti stands up and says, ‘yes, I saw it?’ He will say she’s my friend, and that’s it. I have nothing. But if they put me next year into [the factory worker stream], that will be a bit sticky. (...) When we were in his lessons, he was always fondling me, hugging me, I don’t know, it felt so unpleasant, I felt bad, like... he always said, aren’t you staying in after the practice class? (...) I was becoming afraid of him, afraid of entering the room alone. If he was in there

alone, with nobody else, I always called on the others to come. (...) Well, his practice classes were not so good, either. Because [Detti and I] really tried our best, we only went out to smoke if he allowed us, the others were laughing, they were eating more than working. (...) We [worked hard], we got 3 and 4, the others got 5.¹¹ (Imola, 17, interview)

This narrative shows clearly how this teacher used his power position to construct the vocational hierarchy in the school through abusive sexuality, and by extension, how he was able to influence the future class position of his student. Sexual harassment is a violation of personal rights and dignity in itself, but what makes it even worse is that this instance of power abuse is likely to determine the professional future of Imola either way: if she puts up with the abuse and lets it continue, she may get into the technical stream and later perhaps into higher education; if she reports it, she may be channeled into the vocational factory-worker stream. However, as it turns out from the teacher's grading practice that she describes, even passive resistance may put her at risk of ending up in the factory worker stream. Thus, her class position and potential class mobility will be influenced by how she responds to the sexual harassment by her teacher.

Imola, besides engaging in passive resistance and trying to avoid the teacher, made attempts to actively stand up against this abuse of power. She asked one teacher what to do, and the response she got was 'oh leave it, he won't do that anymore, you don't want to go to the police, it takes a lot of time, lot of fuss (...)' (Imola, group interview). She and Detti were also wondering whether to complain to the school director, but Detti argued that it would be pointless because the latest incident had happened a month earlier, and she assumed that the director would turn them away, telling them they should have reported it the next day, not a month later. Then Imola asked me what to do, which may partly have been due to my being outside the school hierarchy, so perhaps she saw me as someone who could help her position in the school without negative consequence. In fact, I believe she was testing how far she could go with resisting: whether accessing external help could be a way to handle the abuse. It was very important for her to know how far she could go: she seemed to understand that to some extent she had to comply and accept the abuse or else risk becoming relegated in the vocational hierarchy. What she was trying to do – with her friend's support – was to resist as much as she could, and stop the abuse without risking her positioning. Although she did not say this explicitly, she knew that as a Gypsy girl who was shortly to be streamed at the end of year 10 following her teachers' decision, she was acting from the lowest possible power position, and if she complained her ethnicity would have likely contributed to her lower positioning in the school hierarchy and consequential severing of her chances of class mobility through higher education. The fact that her friend was also a Gypsy girl probably would not help, either. If they complained it was likely they would have to face the accusation that they were lying, which is one of the negative stereotypical behaviours routinely attributed to Gypsy people (see e.g. Bakó, 2006; Ligeti, 2006) and to women in general who report sexual abuse (Lawton, 2007). The fact that she failed to resist

¹¹ Grades run from 1 (fail) to 5 (top marks).

the sexual abuse completely also shows how difficult it is for those in lower positions to transgress the boundaries of the school hierarchy.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed how schools are implicated in producing raced, classed, and gendered subjectivities, and how the production of these subjectivities perpetuates social inequalities within the institutional structure of schools, using data from a school ethnography I conducted in Hungary. Instead of providing an intersectional analysis of a specific disadvantaged social group, I inquired into the discursive sites where intersectionality emerges (see: Butler, 1993; 1990). Within this framework I have directed the focus at a less well-explored layer of social construction: I have given examples of how students' sexuality was used by teachers to constitute their social positioning performatively via various discourses and practices. Teacher-to-student is not the only direction of power deployment and discursive reproduction, but an analysis of teacher-teacher and student-student relations, which I discuss elsewhere (Rédai, 2019), is beyond the scope of this paper. By involving gender and sexuality in the intersectional analysis of Hungarian Roma youth in education, I have enriched the existing scholarship on the intersectionality of race/ethnicity and class in relation to Roma people. By analyzing discourses and discursive practices, I have demonstrated how they can be directly implicated in producing raced, classed, gendered subjectivities, and how class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality can converge and create well-defined power positions in school, and how sexuality, in the form of sexual abuse by teachers, can directly affect the class positioning of students and perpetuate social inequalities within and beyond the walls of the school.

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MIRA KALALAHTI *

Inter-ethnic Relations and Bounding Agency: The Social Space
of Study Guidance and Counselling

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* [mira.kalalahti@helsinki.fi] (Faculty of Educational Sciences,
University of Helsinki)

Abstract¹

European countries are being urged to reform their educational systems to enhance the integration of migrant populations. In many respects, migrant-origin pupils still lack equal educational opportunities in Finland despite the targeted practices and support. This article concerns the inter-ethnic interaction taking place in study guidance and counselling in the final year of Finnish comprehensive school. It poses a question 'how do young people construct their educational identities in classroom-level interactions in a multi-ethnic class'? The mixed methods research setting offers two sets of data: selective observation (two events) and life-span interviews (n = 8). The outcomes portray how multi-ethnic school classes open opportunities and supportive bridges for the pupils to contact other ethnicities. Nevertheless, the inter-ethnic interaction was also layered with societal hierarchies which constructed and bounded pupils' ethnic and educational identities. Finally, the article emphasises the opportunities that the locality offers to the schools.

Keywords: inter-ethnic relations, study guidance and counselling, bounded agency, educational transitions.

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1. Introduction

The Finnish education system is tackling the issues of integrating migrant-background pupils into education and work. Although education is free of charge and the education system offers multiple forms special education and support, young people with a migrant background underperform at comprehensive school and lack equal educational opportunities in upper secondary education – mostly (but not only) depending on their prior school achievements and family resources (see e.g. Kilpi-Jakonen, 2011; 2012). Among other things, study guidance and counselling fail to guide the young people with a migrant background towards firm educational trajectories and they face multiple and constant negotiations between opportunities, hopes and expectations (Kalalahti et al., 2020). Their migrant background sets boundaries to young peoples' agencies with more evident and individual issues like language skills or study difficulties, but also with some underlying social factors like high expectations, prejudice and segregation (Mäkelä and Kalalahti, 2020; Zacheus et al., 2019).

The aim of this article is to report on analysis of pupils' inter-ethnic interactions at two events that took place at a multi-ethnic lower secondary school located in a relatively-deprived urban Finnish neighbourhood. The 15–16-years old pupils (n = 13) being observed were taking their final year of compulsory education and attending study guidance and counselling classes in which they were prepared for the forthcoming upper secondary choice. These events were analysed as *lived social spaces* (de Haan and Leander, 2011), where the interaction within the inter-ethnic peer relations constructs *figured worlds* (Roth and Erstad, 2016; Holland et al., 1998) and *horizons of actions* (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) of the upper secondary education choices. In the analysis I examine how these events offer building blocks for the pupils' educational identities (Moore, 2006; Yoon, 2012) as platforms for interethnic interaction (see e.g. Kivijärvi, 2013; 2014).

The starting point for this article has been the difficulties the Finnish education system has faced in ensuring that immigrants and their descendants have equal educational opportunities. Finland still has a relatively low proportion of students with a migrant background (similar to the pattern in eastern European countries like Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia (UNESCO, 2018: 42)), but has one of the widest above-average gaps between native and non-native speakers in learning outcomes among OECD countries (along with Sweden and Slovenia (Grunfelder et al., 2018; Ismail, 2019)), and foreign background has an impact on the completion of upper secondary education (OSF, 2018). The question of integration through education has become one of the major policy objectives especially after the rapid increase in immigration in 2015 (MoEC, 2019; UNESCO, 2018). Multiple fields of study underline the importance of successful integration to improve school achievements, educational attitudes and overall well-being, among other spheres beyond schooling (Makarova and Birman, 2016; Madsen et al., 2016; Autiero, 2017). Classroom-level practices could enhance positive intercultural relationships to reduce inter-ethnic tensions, racism and discrimination.

Although integration of the young people with migrant background into the Finnish society is a much-emphasised target of schooling, the ways to improve integration are limited (Kurki, 2019) and schools are still responding to students'

ethno-racial diversity ineffectively (Makarova and Birman, 2016, Vedder et al., 2006). Research has offered several explanations why schools fail to meet the challenge of diversity. Acculturation is a multifaceted construct which involves identity development as well as psychological and behavioural adjustment, as Makarova and Birman have explained (2015: 307). Individuals also have different acculturation orientations, based on how they identify and self-position to the mainstream culture or their ethnic-origin culture: (a) integration (maintaining both the culture of origin and adapting to the host society), (b) assimilation (integration into mainstream society), (c) separation (preserving ethnic-origin culture) and (d) marginalisation (not integrating) (see Autiero, 2017; Makarova and Birman, 2015; also Berry, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001).

As Makarova and Birman stress (2016: 11), minority youth might face a certain 'acculturation dilemma' if they need assimilative orientation to integrate into schools, but acculturative pressure can also burden their psychological adjustment. Since it seems that pupils would adjust to schools more easily if they favour assimilation in their acculturation (Makarova and Birman, 2015), schools try to emphasise the adjustment to the mainstream. Nevertheless, this might lead to acculturative pressure and distance-taking to ethnic communities and heritage cultures (Makarova and Birman, 2016).

2. Positional identities framing educational identities

Acculturation takes place in negotiations within different social contexts. Here the concept of *positional identities* is utilised. Following Holland et al. (1998) I consider that young people construct their understanding of themselves in different contexts and the social interaction in them. Interaction in the classroom, on school trips, in hallways and canteens offer events of negotiations of positional identities, where pupils inhabit self-understandings and changeable identities, understandings of them and others. These events are looked at as figured worlds in which pupils offer different positions to other pupils and 'figure who they are' (Roth and Erstad, 2016: 58; Holland et al., 1998). For example, they might consider others and themselves to be 'immigrant', 'girl', or 'well-performing' pupils.

Ethnic identity is analysed here with *educational identities* (see e.g. Moore, 2006; also *learner identity*, e.g. Yoon, 2012). As Roth and Erstad have demonstrated (2016; see also Holland et al., 1998), positional identities and figured worlds are especially fruitful concepts from which to analyse how young people produce personal and social identities affecting their educational decisions. In the interaction, pupils become aware, negotiate and receive external confirmation of their unique abilities from teachers and peers (Yoon, 2012) and therefore negotiate their educational identities. Educational identity is a social structure, 'based on the meanings formed in the context of education' (Moore, 2006: 150). Study guidance and counselling events bring about young people's understandings about their educational opportunities. In a dynamic process of interaction, they construct and modify the horizons of actions of the young people – i.e. it determines what options are visible for them from their individual and structural positions (see Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997).

3. Classroom-level interaction and ethnic boundaries

The empirical focus of this article is on the interaction that takes place in the social space of study guidance and counselling. The 9th graders are about to make their upper-secondary choices and ponder their abilities and opportunities. This decision-making process is understood here as an identity project. As Stokes and Wyn (2007) highlight, it is important to recognise the role that learning institutions have on the identity constructions of young people. The study guidance and counselling events are social places where social practice of identity work takes place (de Haan and Leander, 2011). They are situations in which young people face the multiplicity of their surrounding social contexts (Stokes and Wyn, 2007), with all the prejudices and expectations. As de Haan and Leander explain, social space is 'a resource for ethnic identity work', where young people 'offer to one another, impose on one another, and choose for themselves subject positions' (de Haan and Leander, 2011: 320; see also Holland and Leander, 2004). These social spaces include and produce power relations where pupils' or their ethnic groups' identities are shaped. Hence they are therefore empirical windows to manifestations of 'new ethnicities' (see Hall, 2005), i.e. windows to the diversity of ethnicities and ethnic subjects.

This interaction in social spaces also produces ethnic boundaries. They are social spaces in practices of 'ethnic othering' (de Haan and Leander 2011: 321), where young people meet with their personal and collective (ethnic) histories and construe their ethnic identities. As de Haan and Leander (2011) have shown, ethnic identities are not stable and are not situated in one specific social space, but they can be connected to multiple spaces. Each of the young people comes to the classes with a unique ethnic background, which becomes 'othered' by other pupils. These ethnicities intertwine with other 'otherings' and construe the young people's subjectivities that 'involve different, diverse and possibly contradictory subjectivities' (Stokes and Wyn 2007: 500).

4. Research setting

The aim of this article is to look deeply into the inter-ethnic interaction taking place in the social space of study guidance and counselling. The research question is 'how do young people construct their educational identities in a class-room-level interaction in a multi-ethnic class'?

The units of analysis stem from one-year fieldwork in a 9th grade school class and eight life-span interviews of young people (approximately 15 years old) from a range of migrant backgrounds. The observations took place during the 2016–2017 academic year in a school located in an urban neighbourhood with a low average education level in the population and a high proportion of immigrants (<40 per cent of population with higher education, the average being >50 per cent in the municipality; >30 per cent of the population speaking a foreign language, the average being >16 per cent in the municipality (OSF, 2016a; 2016b)). The 9th grade is the final grade of compulsory comprehensive education in Finland.

During the fieldwork I made selective observations at all events (two to three hours each) related to study guidance and counselling. Among other things, I

followed lessons, school visits, and parental events. I engaged in the events and supported the work of the teacher. I helped with the tasks the pupils took on and guided the groups at the 'open day' events of upper secondary education.

In this article I focus on the interviews and three events: a tutorial session in which the pupils were trained to complete the joint application for upper secondary education and two excursions to upper secondary education institutions. I analysed these events in two parts and at the beginning of both parts, I briefly mapped out the setting of these events. Interpretations have been strengthened with observations from other events.

The interviews (n = 8) were made during the final month of the 9th grade. They were life-span interviews, which were made around two life spans. First, the pupils drew a life-span of their past and marked their most meaningful life events. These events were then discussed with the interviewer. Second, they drew up a future life-span with future visions, and these were discussed during the interviews. These interviews were used in this article to construct the contexts in which young people with immigrant origins are positioned in the Finnish education system.

The methodology has been borrowed from ethnographic research. The core unit of analysis is narrative field notes, from which I offer some quotations to make the argumentation more vivid. First, all the micro events in which the pupils or teachers positioned them and 'others' were selected for the analyses (Yoon, 2012: 982, 987) and the interactions within them read especially from the viewpoints of horizons of actions (educational identities) and/or acculturation (ethnic identities). From the field notes and interviews, lists of the distinctions (social categories) expressed in these positions, for instance where the pupils took the position of being a 'Finn' instead of 'British' or being a 'well-educated' instead of 'working class', were made. After that, the processes of positioning (Holland and Leander, 2004) were analysed.

The pupils were informed about the research and the research permission was sought from the municipalities' educational authorities. Consent letters were sent to the parents for the interviews. Consent letters for the observation were not sent to the pupils, but the pupils were informed about the research and the ethical issues were explained to them. All pupils gave oral agreement for them to be observed. It was explained that I would not make audio or video records, nor would anyone be recognisable from the analyses or reports. Field notes were made after the observations and all identity information was excluded (names or social security numbers), although they were mentioned or were visible on the screen. No access to official documents was sought from the local educational authorities so that the pupils would be more open in their discussions during the observation. All the analyses and the data were made anonymous so that the pupils, schools, neighbourhoods and the municipality could not be recognized. There is very limited information about the migrant background of the pupils by nation, and all recognizable information was changed when necessary (gender, for instance). We discussed with the pupils their feelings and emotions during the observation and they knew they could interrupt the observations or the interviews at any time.

5. Outcomes

5.1 *Us and them – intertwining distinctions*

The first event was a study guidance lesson in the IT class, about which three analytical notions have been established.

5.1.1 Inter-ethnic interaction and distinctions

Most of the pupils in the class (n = 13) belonged to ethnic minorities and Finnish was just another ethnic position among many. Since there is no official knowledge of their minority status, their migrant backgrounds were analysed from the interviews (eight pupils) and from the observations. Eight of the 13 pupils were visible minorities (they were non-white), explained their migrant background or had a language other than Finnish as their mother tongue. I considered the other five pupils to have Finnish origins based on the interviews, or on the observations (white pupils speaking fluent Finnish). This classification of ethnic minorities and a Finnish majority is artificial, and this was not used in this article for any purpose other than to show that the class was multi-ethnic. Hence, the group was multi-ethnic and more heterogeneous than in the average Finnish school class (within this school, approximately 37 per cent of the students were foreign-language pupils, the average being 5 per cent across the country and 16 per cent in the municipality being studied: OSF, 2016a). All the pupils used Finnish or a mixture of Finnish and English in the class: the group was so heterogeneous that they did not have other common language(s).

Although the school was in a neighbourhood with low incomes and education levels, the pupils said in the interviews that their parents did have a wide variety of education from short basic education to higher education. Some emphasised their family's distinguished societal position in their country of origin and a few also in Finland. Often the family's position was seen as being unprivileged in Finland. Therefore, the first impression was that the group was so heterogeneous that they would not raise the question of belonging to an ethnic minority/majority, nor bring up specific social class(es). Not only was the group very multi-ethnic, but the position of the families was also a mixture of life histories and societal changes. The group was very much providing inter-ethnic contact, which corresponds with lower intergroup prejudice (Toipp and Pettigrew, 2005) and promotes acculturation (Kunst et al., 2015).

The study counsellor, a 30-year-old white woman, had worked for several years in this multi-ethnic school. She did not actively raise the questions of boundary make up but offered a trustful and supportive platform for it. In her teaching she valued all cultures and ethnic cultures, different work and study options equally, as well as all genders. She let the students work with computers alone and with groups and followed their discussions from a distance. When she thought that a pupil needed individual support and guidance, she readily arranged time for personal meetings, and if the pupils got anxious, she turned their attention to other issues. She openly questioned the divisions between general upper

secondary education and vocational training and encouraged the pupils to find information from a variety of sources.

Nevertheless, the question of positions was by no means irrelevant to the pupils, and the analysis showed how they were constantly negotiating their ethnic and class-based identities.

The study guidance lesson in the IT class had me, the study counsellor and 13 pupils in the class The task was to fill out the form for the joint application, print it and to return it the next time with the parent's permission, when we would fill out the application online. The boys do not know their ID-numbers and try to figure what they are and how to get one. Pupils discuss the meaning of the 'double nationalities' and hesitate to add that information to the application. There was vivid discussion on nationalities. Boys get surprised about their peer's nationalities and discuss the benefits or restrictions on them (army and voting, for instance). One pupil stated that he would definitely not record his non-Finnish nationality in the form. The study counsellor and I took part in the discussion, but we also encouraged the students to fill out the form at home, with parents. It feels that the country of origin suddenly becomes very important. The study counsellor lets the discussion flow [...] (field notes)

As this quote exemplifies, the inter-ethnic interaction taking place in the class was rich. During the lesson in which they prepared for the forthcoming upper secondary application, the question of nationalities came under inter-ethnic interaction. Many of the pupils had lived most of their lives in the same local neighbourhoods and they had long-time friends in the class: young people with both Finnish and non-Finnish origins. The atmosphere in the class was supportive and intimate for them to discuss their nationalities, and many of them openly discussed the meaning of their different origins. Yet the upcoming upper secondary education choice and the interaction taking place in the IT class brought into sight many of the underlying tensions, in which they also tested their biographical histories against their ethnic and personal backgrounds. At the same time, pupils were surprised, peculiar, annoyed and emphatic.

In the class there were pupils with a variety of ethnic backgrounds who had just joked about racism and prejudice during the break. The discussion had turned to minorities and majorities and these three pupils, friends and peers from primary school, were jointly laughing at the definition of 'coloured people': 'like hey I am the only really black [pupil] here, like you are actually yellow, aren't you? And what are you then, white? Who cares?' [all laughing together] (field notes). Yet the question of nationalities and ethnic-related histories seemed to divide them and finally it burst into an argument among them:

Three boys [sitting next to each other on computers and filling out the form] discuss their educational aspirations and work expectations. One pupil [Pupil#1] takes a critical stance on Finnish society and its benefits. Another pupil [Pupil#2] raises his voice and complains to the others about he and his family paying lots of taxes which are used to help the families with the first

pupil's ethnic origin. – 'You should be grateful for the support'. The boy in the middle tries to calm his friends down until the teacher takes the first boy to the copy room. The third boy, offended, shuts down the computer of the first boy causing the loss of his already filled-out form. The first boy has calmed down with the teacher and they continue to discuss the next lesson's topic, how to manage in a job interview. (field notes)

In this event, the pupils, friends and peers, turn the discussion from the nationalities to educational aspirations and life in the work force. They start to argue whether Finland is a good place to live and if some ethnic groups face discrimination or prejudice in the work force and in society in general. The 'friendly bullying' and joking that took place during the break turned suddenly to arguments in which they constructed hierarchies based on ethnicities and prejudice. Pupil#1 (with an African background) took the position of the unprivileged minority, and Pupil#2 (with an Asian background) counter-positioned himself with the (Finnish) majority, paying taxes to support the disadvantaged minorities. In line with the outcomes reported by de Haan and Leander (2011), the pupils who previously identified themselves equally with shared non-Finnish positions based on their outlooks, now took hierarchical positions. Within these positions, Pupil#1 domesticated the space as a tax payer who had the power to ask for thankfulness from Pupil#2. The study counsellor did not have any tools to dismantle the situation, other than to take Pupil#1 with her.

This event portrays how the hierarchical position among the pupils is a mixture of personal and collective (ethnic) histories which take place as they negotiate their educational identities and adjust them to their ethnic identities. Their families had very different migration histories and their neighbourhoods had many ethnic narratives. Some families were struggling with low incomes whereas some separated themselves from working-class positions and took the subject position of the well-educated middle classes. When constructing their educational identities, they also adjusted them to many other dimensions. These young people seemed to express their families' migration storylines even more: disappointment with the Finnish bureaucracy, their experiences with different educational opportunities, their own skills and ambitions, as well as their future orientations towards their home country. In the interaction they became aware of their unique abilities and negotiated and received external confirmation from teachers and peers (Yoon, 2012).

5.1.2 Interaction and separation

The interpretations of the *figured worlds* (Roth and Erstad, 2016; Holland et al., 1998) of the immigrant students and students with an immigrant background also characterise their subjective position in the classroom. By positioning each other intentionally or unintentionally, they might limit the sense of belonging and acculturation (Yoon, 2012; Makarova and Birman, 2016). Their positioning might also reflect attempts to integrate, or to assimilate, separate or marginalise others.

In the IT class the pupils seemed to be seated so that there was one group of immigrant-origin girls making similar education choices, one group of immigrant-

origin boys making similar choices, and others were sitting by themselves. My attention was especially on the few pupils who were taking their personal space and working with the task independently, situated firmly at the other side of the classroom. They did not take part in the vivid discussion on their educational opportunities and aspirations.

One of them was a recent immigrant (Pupil#3) who was sitting as far as possible from the other pupils. She was applying for entry to the English-speaking and highly competitive international school, since she lacked the Finnish skills needed for Finnish- or Swedish-speaking schools and she was evidently a talented student. Her spatial separation from the class indicated the overall separation from the class, but she also took the position of being a 'high-aiming', 'well-performing' student and reinforced the separation spatially.

Another pupil (Pupil#4) said that he was moving back to his family's country of origin after getting a Finnish university degree. His family had moved from Estonia to Finland for work but still had a home in their country of origin. They appreciated the Finnish education system and his sister had already returned to Estonia after completing her education in Finland. Although he had many friends at school and he emphasised the importance of them in previous educational transitions, he wanted to choose an upper secondary school that no one would follow him to. He had friends in the class, but in the study guidance and counselling episode he withdrew from the interaction. He did not express any willingness to discuss his educational choices in public. The spatial separation expressed his overall aim to return to his family's country of origin.

The withdrawal interaction was a way both pupils used to separate or even marginalise themselves from the majority. The acculturation process of Pupil#3 was leading towards separation from the local neighbourhoods and reaching abroad to a destination other than her country of origin or Finland. Simultaneously she distanced herself from the class, school and the disadvantaged neighbourhood. She also seemed to possess many strengths and resources required in international education and to study abroad (for instance excellent English competence school achievements). Instead, Pupil#4 was utilising educational choice to separate himself from the friends and peers he had been following in the past, and so preparing himself for the return to his family's country of origin.

The social space, the other pupils and the study guidance reinforced this separation by excluding these pupils from the discussion. However, they did not want to attach themselves to that discussion. Although both pupils expressed the separation themselves, it affected their positions in the school class and became an 'acculturation dilemma' (Makarova and Birman, 2015).

5.1.3 Integrating and adjusting

Although the study counsellor supported the inter-ethnic interaction in the class by encouraging pupils to discuss their abilities, aspirations and options openly, some events showed the bounding agency (Evans, 2002; 2007) of the study counsellor. In Finland, the core question about choice in the upper secondary education is whether the pupils choose to go into the general education or vocational training streams. Studies have shown that migrant-origin pupils are

more often than average guided towards vocational training (Kurki, 2019) and that migrant pupils with lower school grades apply for entry to the general (academic) education stream more often (Kilpi-Jakonen, 2011). On the one hand, the pupils have their aspirations in academic occupations, and on the other, the study counsellors fear that students will not be successful if they take on academic studies. One of the pupils faced this dilemma and constantly negotiated her options with the counsellor:

The migrant-origin pupils work with the form together. One of them is more interested in her nails and the battery of her mobile phone. The girl in the middle [Pupil#5] said she was not satisfied with the support provided by the study counsellor. Her five options on the form were general upper secondary schools. The study counsellor [in the class] quickly tells the girl to make an appointment with her. The girl gets annoyed and mumbles with her friends – ‘the counsellors do not want me to apply for the general upper secondary school’. The grades seem to be between 6 and 7[~7 required for general upper secondary]. The other girls respond and give support. She arranges to meet with the counsellor later. The third girl is applying for the same schools. She also makes an appointment with the counsellor. (field notes)

This tense interaction between the counsellor and Pupil#5 is understood from both positions. The pupil had her aspirations in academic education, and she wanted to make choices according to those. The counsellor knew that she might not be accepted into general education and even if she was, studying there would be difficult. She is also obligated to guide the students left without a study place to additional teaching or other education, and she wished to ensure a study place for the pupil while all options were still open. In the interviews, Pupil#5 explained that in the end, she applied primarily for general upper secondary education, but also for the vocational education stream. She was still restless about the educational choices and did not remember what streams she had applied for.

Pupil#5 reconstructed her educational aims as an academic, capable student, but in a complex relationship with the study counsellor. The self-chosen educational identity of Pupil#5 was distinctly in conflict with the teacher’s positioning (see Yoon, 2012) and in the interaction with the other pupils she positioned the study counsellor as questioning the self-chosen educational identity. The study counsellor was evaluating the skills and talent of Pupil#5 and Pupil#5 felt that she was being discriminated against because of her ethnic background. This tensioned interaction between the pupils and the study guidance they receive is a highly debated issue in Finland (Kurki, 2019; Kalalahti et al., in print). It seems that the migrant pupils are often guided towards vocational training, and girls especially to the health and care sector, since they do not receive enough support for their aspirations for general upper secondary education. Although this misrecognition of talent and competence was met in personal guidance, the tension and suspicion in the class remained. Pupil#5 also seemed to be even in a more complex educational position, since her horizon for action became

fragmented and she lacked the motivation for the vocational education she was most probably going to be guided towards in the joint application process.

5.2 *Urban ethnic spaces and educational attachment*

The second set of events were two excursions to open days at upper secondary institutions. These open days are designed to introduce the institutions and upper secondary education studies to pupils completing lower secondary (compulsory) education. I focus here on two institutions offering vocational training: a) logistics and b) business. Ten to 15 pupils attended both excursions and I led them through the excursions with the study counsellor. Both excursions were male-dominated and multi-ethnic. We began and ended the excursions from the home school. Since both institutions were in suburbs that were some distance from the subway, I analysed the excursions from the viewpoints of social-spatiality and bridging ties. The social-spatial events indicate interethnic ties, which it is argued enhance cultural accommodation and peer support (Kivijärvi, 2013).

Inter-ethnic relations are not only boundary-makers, but they also bind pupils together. The pupils interviewed typically highlighted how they had always had good friends to ease the educational transitions. These friends formed a loose group of Finnish-origin and ethnic-origins pupils who were familiar with each other in the nine years of comprehensive education. They were not a *bonding* group of friends, but more like a *bridging* group of young people sharing the same multi-ethnic neighbourhood and school. They expressed *weak ties*, which are instrumental by nature and do not require trust built into long-standing relationships (Kivijärvi, 2013). The weak ties, as bridging the youth to the same community², are more open to enhancing the social integration of ethnic minority youth, whereas *strong bonding ties* provide emotional support, shared norms, as well as social closure (Kivijärvi, 2013). The weak ties, offering support and trust, have especially proved to be useful for the acculturation process.

The weak ties stem from the locality: most pupils were very local – they were born in Finland or had migrated there before starting school, and they had been living in the area for a long time. Pupils did not visit the centre of the city very often, and their hobbies were also based in the local neighbourhood. The second observation sequence portrays how the subway journey to the open day of a vocational upper secondary school was a social-spatial situation, which empowered the pupils.

Eleven pupils on board. Very rich migrant background, lots of Russian and Estonian language. I'm guiding them with the study counsellor. Pupils are joking about the 'Finnishness' among the group ('what a Finn group'). All of them are boys. We had already lost some of them when entering the subway station. Waited for a while and they came from a nearby shop. They were restless and managed to somehow stop the escalators. All still friendly and in good mood. Went on. Some of them ate noodles in the subway, missed

² Generally all ties can be seen as bonding (see Leonard and Onyx, 2003), but here the weak ties are treated as bridging, since they take place in interaction between casual school friends.

lunch. Lots of energy drinks. [...] At the school we are guided through the department of logistics service education. The atmosphere is very relaxed, and the students followed the introduction closely. The tutor is a female student with an ethnic-minority background, showing videos about pupils training and having fun with forklift trucks. The teacher is also female [in a male-dominant education field]. The boys are excited about the education, the atmosphere is open and supportive. Lots of jokes and fun. They warm up to discuss their choices with the counsellor. (field notes)

As the citation exemplifies, the pupils seemed to be nervous about the forthcoming visit. They were overactive, made more noise than usually and sought the attention of other passengers, especially when entering the subway station. We talked with them calmly and turned the discussion to the school that we were visiting. When we left the subway and walked one kilometre to the school, the mood of the interaction had changed and they were very supportive and friendly, connecting with jokes and laughs.

The socio-spatial situation of the event of the school visit represents a *weak tie*, a loose network built on school peers, young people sharing the same school and neighbourhoods and going to an open day together. The vocational school welcomed them in a familiar and non-discriminative manner, showing how there were pupils from all genders and ethnic minorities. They were able to build their locality and ethnicity into their educational identities, especially if their aspirations were on vocational training. Through the interaction and supported by the bridging ties they 'became' working-class young people who aimed decisively for vocational education and training. The weak bridging ties proved to be a powerful resource when the pupils were leaving the safe working-class multi-ethnic neighbourhood and felt familiar with the vocational institution.

An example of stronger, bonding ties was found in the class and in the interviews between a few pupils who were applying for business college. They came from different ethnic backgrounds, but in their narratives, they built strong trust on their abilities and aspirations towards entrepreneurship connecting their hobbies (sport) and families' expectations (tertiary education).

Nevertheless, the groups' excursion to the business college did not empower them like the first event with the logistics training. The field of business is much more competitive, and the welcoming information was more exclusive for the pupils. There was also a female tutor describing the education, but she stressed many skills that were a mismatch with some of the pupils I observed. She was multicultural, but in a transnational way (had travelled to many countries, attended English language courses and had studied abroad), and she was a top-performing student in the school. The institution's teacher explained about the reputation and success in the school's skills competitions. Much emphasis was laid on multiculturalism and language skills, but the emphasised languages (English, German and French) and other appreciated transnational competencies were not the ones possessed by most of the African, Asian and Eastern European students in my group.

For some, the visit to the business college confirmed the ethnic 'othering' and it was layered with other social 'otherings' (Holland and Leander, 2004). The

pupils followed the event closely and quietly and were silent about their educational aspirations. I was not sure whether they were worried about their success in the application, or if they were hesitant in their overall choices, but it seemed that the horizon for action constructed with bonding ties and individual personal aspirations had become fragmented. In this event, the bonding met the structural boundaries set by the institutions' profile and competition.

6. Discussion

In this article, I have addressed the question 'how do young people construct their educational identities in class-room level interactions in a multi-ethnic class' with multi-sited observation data and interviews. The guidance counselling events open opportunities for the young people to contact other ethnicities in an adult-supported environment. The inter-ethnic interaction revealed that the teacher was able to support the pupils' positive contact situations, which enhanced equality and cooperation. In the interviews, the pupils described these events from the very beginning of their school career. The school had therefore always offered them the institutional support to meet different ethnicities, in a multi-ethnic class, reducing the prejudices between the minorities and majorities (Tropp and Pettigrew, 2005). Following the outcomes of Kivijärvi (2013) on leisure time activities, the schools had succeeded in providing ethnically-heterogeneous peer groups and a solid platform for undermining ethnic boundaries.

Nevertheless, as the events in the IT class portrayed, the inter-ethnic interaction was layered and the pupils 'othered' pupils by their individual life histories, ethnicities and families' societal position. As Tropp and Pettigrew (2005) have shown, it is not self-evident that all ethnic minorities benefit equally from the inter-ethnic interaction. Among the young, the multi-ethnic interaction was open to constant identity negotiations as the pupils took equal positions in another event and hierarchical positions in another. Since there was no ethnic or social-class dominant faction in the class, the hierarchies were flexible but also unpredictable, difficult for the teacher to see and respond to.

As in de Haan and Leander's (2011) social-spatial analysis, it was evident that the inter-ethnic interaction was positioning and status marking between the (ethnic) majority and minority. However, it was also foremost about ethnic othering among ethnicities, others 'domesticating' the social space in another event and rendering the power in another event for 'common good' and bridging ties (see also de Haan and Leander, 2011: 335; Kivijärvi, 2013). The pupils expressed and recognised societal power relations and reproduced ethnicities and social classes. These stem from prejudices concerning the low employment rates of some immigrant groups (commonly families with refugee background and/or origins in African countries, see Eronen et al., 2014) or socially less valuable linguistic knowledge (commonly non-European languages, see Paakkinen, 2014).

Hence, some episodes of positioning did not reduce the prejudice but portrayed how some positions become laminated over time (see Holland and Leander, 2004; de Haan and Leander, 2011) instead. The pupils had feelings and bodily reactions which left memories not only on them but for the whole class. When repeated in time, these episodes laminate, 'thicken', the layers of positions.

It is difficult and incomplete to categorise the pupils into binary categories, since identity is always unstable and adjustable (Yoon, 2012), but it is also blind to treat ethnicities as equals and separate from other societal hierarchies. Inter-ethnic peer-relations can both unravel and reconstruct hierarchies.

Beside the hierarchies, the inter-ethnic peer-relations set boundaries to *educational identities*. In the observed events, young people actively constructed their identities (Stokes and Wyn, 2007), sometimes with the support of the bridging ties of school community and sometimes separating themselves from the class. Pupil#3 and Pupil#4 separating spatially from other pupils portrayed how the educational identity work can actively distance the pupils from the class. They faced an 'acculturation dilemma' (Makarova and Birman, 2016: 11) which excluded them from the 'common group identity' (Kunst et al., 2015). Pupil#3 who had strong educational ambitions was marginalised in the class, but she tried to achieve integration in another school and an upward societal position. Pupil#4 with a work-related migrant background had instead integrated well and utilised the ethnic ties but was nevertheless separating and returning to his family's country of origin. In both cases, the pupils expressed their forthcoming separation from the school and neighbourhoods through the interaction, and the pupils were marginalised in the class.

As the outcomes of the 'acculturation dilemma' showed, successful acculturation at school does not follow from bare adjustment to the mainstream culture or ethnic group. As Yoon has argued (2012: 994), successful acculturation requires 'adaptability and flexibility in knowing how and when to use cultures for their best social and learning needs.' Differences were evident in how the pupils were able to use their multicultural competence. For instance, for pupil#5, the discrimination she experienced limited her agency in the class, and in the excursion to the business college the expected multicultural competence was a mismatch with the competence of my study group. These events did not offer any positive interaction or positioning, but they fragmented the educational horizons of action of the pupils (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). Instead, the interaction during the excursion to the logistics service education not only confirmed the horizon of actions of the pupils, but also unravelled ethnic hierarchies and prejudices concerning gender. This male-dominant institution was actively dismantling gendered stereotypes concerning educational fields (see e.g. Kurki, 2019) and emphasising their multi-culturality.

The observed events also showed how most pupils have bridging ties with the school community, which ease and empower their educational transitions, as well as affect their educational identities. Although the intertwining of the ethnic and educational identity is sometimes a complex and nuanced representation, belonging to a local (multi-ethnic) peer group served as a clue in educational transitions. Bridging ties were built on life histories in the local neighbourhoods and since the school was in an urban multi-ethnic working-class neighbourhood, it offered building blocks especially for choosing the vocational track at a nearby institution, which also welcomed different ethnicities and all genders. In this respect, these outcomes replicate those in studies showing that heterogeneous peer groups easily produce bridging ties (Kivijärvi, 2013). Adding to

this knowledge, the pupils used these bridging ties to empower and strengthen their educational transitions.

Nevertheless, not all are included in these ties and not all neighbourhoods offer such multi-ethnic spaces in which pupils would benefit from the bridging ties (see Kivijärvi, 2014). Only social-spatial spaces with high levels of the minority population and multiple ethnic minorities entail enough variation to challenge the dominant faction. As neighbourhoods like this are often located in working-class areas, the class-based positioning intertwines with ethnicities in the socio-spatial boundary-making. Some of the pupils recognised and enforced the working-class position, but others were actively othering themselves from it and taking a position of transnational or inner-city youth.

This highlights how important it is for the school to understand how multidimensional and laminated the ethnic boundaries and bridges are. Immigrant background comes with multiple otherings, and among young people there are boundaries that are not related to migrant background at all. Concerning the educational identities studied in this article, the issues of educational aspirations, language, support for learning difficulties and prejudice set up boundaries which make the negotiation between the pupils, parents and study counsellors highly complex. To foster the psychological adjustment, the acculturation gaps and lack of culturally relevant practices need to be addressed in schools and school cultures (Makarova and Birman, 2016).

To sum up, this study has strengthened the outcomes of research by Scholle and Overbeek (2010), that multi-ethnic schools do not automatically produce bridging ties and bringing ethnic minorities together in one school class does not automatically enhance positive inter-ethnic countering. Teachers need wider knowledge and understanding of multicultural competences to cherish cultural diversity and enhance equality and justice in education. As Vedder et al. (2006) summarise, multicultural teacher education should be developed in three areas: knowledge, attitudes and skills. Schools should not emphasise the adjustment to mainstreams (Makarova and Birman, 2015), but should enhance multicultural skills so that all cultures and ethnicities are met as equals.

Yet in Finland, although the urge to develop positive intergroup relations in schools has been acknowledged, the prejudice-reduction interventions have not been able to promote harmonious intergroup relations (Liebkind et al., 2014; 2018). Further, policies including multicultural education do not seem to contribute to social justice in education and teacher education automatically (Hummelstedt-Djedou, Zilliacus and Holm, 2018). Foremost there is a need to rethink the concepts and comprehensions of multiculturalism and inequalities in education (Hummelstedt-Djedou, Zilliacus and Holm 2018). According to Mikander, Zilliacus and Holm (2018: 51) the 'Nordic policymakers, schools and teachers who desire to include intercultural education in policies and practices are required to draw on a number of different fields of research, not only those called intercultural or multicultural.' The power relations and subjectivities expressed in the events and interviews of this research emphasise how the intercultural relations are not only inter-ethnic, but are also constructed by gender and class (see also Mikander, Zilliacus and Holm, 2018).

Approaching inter-ethnic interaction with an ethnographic-oriented methodology has proven to be fruitful in this research. It enabled us to see the shifting power relations, identity processing and bridging ties that were not there to be seen based on the interviews. Ethnographic methodology with observations helps us to comprehend the intersectionality taught in teacher education, but also the policymakers need to look at intercultural competencies critically to see the power dynamics that they conceal. Interaction takes place in social-spatial events which ‘intervene in the creation of identities and “cultures”’ (Dervin et al., 2012: 5).

Since the migrant background adds one dimension to the decision-making process of young people (see Varjo et al., 2020; Walther et al., 2015), the interaction in guidance events and classes becomes even more important. From the social-spatial viewpoint of this article, educational studies and policies could borrow methods from youth studies and enhance the importance of peers and group identities which supported pupils’ educational and ethnic identities (see Kivijärvi, 2014). These *local identities* (Ahonen, 2001) could be constructed in schools with interactions with other actors within the neighbourhoods, e.g. youth work, libraries, entrepreneurs and religious communities. This could strengthen the overall recognition of different cultures and ethnicities. The Finnish National Core Curricula offer many tools to bring the common and long history of minorities and immigrants in local neighbourhoods into the learning processes. These tools could assist the overall awareness of the immigrant positioning and make the images of immigration more equal and positive (see Yoon, 2012). As Kunst et al. (2015: 1449) have put together, ‘the common group identity positively predicts majority members’ efforts to integrate immigrants.’ As the ethnographic approach brings about ‘the struggles around positionality’ (Hall, 2005: 444) in local socio-spatial contexts, it creates opportunities to enhance a new comprehension of ethnicities.

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**BORI SIMONOVITS
AND RÁCHEL SURÁNYI ***

'The Jews Are Just Like Any Other Human Being.'
An Attempt to Measure the Impact of Informal Education
on Teenagers' Views of Intergroup Tolerance

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* [simonovits.borbala@ppk.elte.hu] (Eötvös Loránd University,
Institute of Intercultural Psychology and Education);
[suranyi.rachel@gmail.com]

Abstract

Our paper presents the results of a study which was conducted between 2016 and 2019 in a high school in Budapest. The research attempted to measure the impact of the Haver Foundation's activities on high-school students. The Foundation implements activities about Jewish identity, thus we intended to see whether the different activities of the Foundation changed the attitudes of high-school students, and whether they affected the formers' level of knowledge and the associations they make with Jews. In line with the sensitivity and complexity of the research topic, and in order to create the broadest analytical framework, we followed several classes in a longitudinal setting by triangulating our methods. Results confirm the importance of these activities, especially with regard to the increase in the level of knowledge about Jews and Judaism. They also indicate that there is a need for such informal settings in high-school education. However, more extensive research needs to be carried out to obtain more accurate results about the reduction of prejudices.

Keywords: informal education, inter-group tolerance, controlled field experiment, mixed methods.

1. Introduction

Prejudice reduction has become a widely researched topic in social psychology in past decades (see an extensive review of hundreds of published and unpublished studies by Paluck and Green, 2009). Our goal was twofold: First, we wanted to assess how the Haver Foundation's activities affect students' mindsets. This could have been manifested in a tolerant (open-minded) attitude (towards Jews and other minorities), some development of a culture of debate, and actual knowledge about Jews and Judaism. Second, the research was meant to be a pilot study for examining whether the former methods were applicable in such settings: Could we measure the impact of such activities on the teenage target group with our specific research design, or was the issue more complex and nuanced, thus needing to be tackled somewhat differently? To the best of our knowledge, only sporadic experimental research has been undertaken in Hungary in this field; most importantly, by Váradi (2013) and Kende and her colleagues (2016) who both focused their attention on the impact of peer influence on anti-Roma prejudice; and also by Orosz and his colleagues (2016) who recently pointed out the effectiveness of the 'living-library' intervention for reducing prejudice towards Roma and LGBTQ people.

This issue seems to be relevant in Hungary, taking into account the alarming findings of recent research into intergroup prejudice. Hungarians can be characterized as typically having strong prejudices towards different ethnic and religious minorities. International comparative research found widespread prejudice against various minority groups, such as immigrants, Jews, and LGBTQ people, indicating that levels of negative attitudes towards the out-group in Hungary are among the highest of all countries in Europe (Messing and Ságvári, 2018; 2019; Örkény and Váradi, 2010; Zick et al., 2011).

When it comes to anti-Semitic incidents, according to Kovács and Barna (2018) the number has decreased over the past two decades (since 1999), and the number of actual incidents is much lower than perceived by the Jewish respondents of a survey implemented in 2017. It is important to note, however, that even though the Jewish community constitutes the most significant religious community, making up approximately one per cent of the total Hungarian population (Kovács, 2011; Kovács and Barna, 2018), it is mostly concentrated in Budapest. It is worth mentioning that most Jews are not members of a synagogue (Kovács and Barna, 2018); however, the trauma of the Holocaust is one of the main cores of their Jewish identity.

As far as the political and social context is concerned, Hungary is a rather homogenous country in ethnic and national terms, but xenophobia has been strong since the change of the socialist regime. A relatively low level of anti-Semitism was initially paired with strong anti-Roma sentiment, which even led to incidents of homicide against Roma (Vágvölgyi, 2014). Since 2015, however, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee campaigns¹ have been instigated which have affected Jews, as George Soros (an American Jew of Hungarian origin) was made one of the

¹ It is important to emphasize that the likelihood of immigrants/refugees staying in Hungary is low. Furthermore, the size of the migrant population is small; the number of immigrants per 1000 inhabitants remains well below that of all Western European countries.

scapegoats for the so-called 'refugee crisis.' The present research took part after this highly intense period of enmification (involving a series of billboard campaigns).

2. The role of informal methods in the Hungarian education system, with a special focus on the Haver Foundation

In most Hungarian schools, traditional frontal teaching is the usual method, and the application of project-based or informal elements in the official curriculum is only sporadic (Lannert and Nagy, 2006). Furthermore, topics related to the subject of the present research, such as inter-group tolerance and the protection of and respect for minority groups, are scarcely included in the official curriculum (Csákó, 2009). Regarding content, the National Curriculum includes latent anti-Semitic features (such as the inclusion of Albert Wass, a poet with anti-Semitic views; Szily, 2019), and does not give space to education about minorities (for example, TEV [2015] research focused on the lack of a Jewish presence in both Hungarian literature and history), and such tendencies are strengthening (Szombat, 2020).² Therefore, most students have no or very little knowledge about Jews, apart from concerning one historical event (the Holocaust).

To compensate for the shortcomings of the Hungarian education system, certain non-governmental organizations provide informal education classes to high schools. These NGOs typically aim to fight hatred against immigrants and refugees, the Roma, LGBTQ people, and Jews. (A list of organizations with their sensitizing activities can be found in Appendix 1.) The Haver Foundation is one of these organizations: their young, voluntary team (who self-identify as Jews) regularly go to high schools (upon invitation) to hold ninety-minute sessions about Jewish identity, using various means. This inter-religious/intercultural form of interaction is aimed at familiarizing non-Jewish students with all things Jewish.

In an increasingly centralized and formal educational system, the role of informal (non-formal) activities is becoming more and more important in schools and classes, about which teachers are also interested or concerned (via oral correspondence; it also happens that teachers or directors do not permit such activities, or only some of them are welcome³). Most such activities focus on one of the minorities, or a specific deprived group. The *main goal* is increasing students' social responsibility and tolerance towards their classmates. Most of these activities are led by volunteers: (i) who are 'experienced experts' (e.g. members of a minority group); (ii) who are close to the students in age; and, (iii) whose activities are based on informal educational methods as opposed to frontal ones. Regarding age, peer-group relations can promote specific effects or meanings in these

² The government changed the national curriculum into an even more patriotic framework, which will be implemented from the 2020/2021 academic year. A lot of criticism has been formulated against it since its release (by teachers, students and experts) focusing their disapproval on literature and history teaching. (Thorpe, 2020)

³ While in some schools activities related to LGBTQ communities are not allowed, in others activities with a Roma focus are banned (information gathered via oral correspondence). When teachers are simply interested in inviting civil organizations into school, they sometimes become suspect (Szurovecz, 2019).

settings, in contrast to the teaching of much older individuals. This claim is supported by the research of Rogers (1967).

Concerning *methods*, Coombs and his colleagues (1973) have defined non-formal education as that which takes place within educational institutions, but with different or unconventional methods, while informal education includes every type of organized educational activity which takes place outside of these educational institutions. According to Coombs, students learn the most in non-formal and informal settings. Csoma's (1985) differentiation slightly deviates from this definition (however, his research involved adult learning). According to Coombs, formal education is equivalent to school; non-formal education to courses; and informal means 'unbound' learning.

The Haver Foundation's mission is to foster dialogue and spread tolerance through informal education. The activities they provide for classes cover topics that include identity, heritage, the Holocaust, the Jewish quarter (a city area of Budapest), and community challenges, and are implemented using informal educational methodologies and tools. From their view, dialogue between Jews (trained volunteers between the age of 20 and 35) and non-Jews leads to tolerance and common understanding, a claim which is also in line with Rogers' experimental learning methods. Furthermore, the age of the high-school students is also a crucial point with regard to attitude formation. It is almost common knowledge that ethnic, racial, and other stereotypes and prejudices are developed during (early) adolescence (Piaget, 1970) – the period when individuals develop their own identity (see Erikson, 1950).

However, the Foundation faces numerous difficulties when its volunteers arrive at high schools because students have mostly been exposed to a frontal, knowledge-based educational system in which critical thinking, creativity, and other skills are not taught. Therefore, they need to adapt to a new style of teaching. Furthermore, because of the high concentration of Jews in Budapest, as opposed to the scarce Jewish communities in the countryside, most students do not encounter Jews in person outside of these classes.

3. The theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework of our research is primarily based on Intergroup Contact Theory, originally developed by Gordon W. Allport (1954). The basic idea of Allport's theory – also known as Contact Hypothesis – is that under appropriate conditions interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways of reducing prejudice between majority and minority group members. While Intergroup Contact Theory originally held that Allport's optimal conditions⁴ are essential for reducing intergroup prejudice effectively, a comprehensive review of more than 500 empirical studies that examined Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) helped refine the original theory, drawing attention to other important elements of the working mechanisms of intergroup contact. In their meta-analysis, the latter authors highlighted that intergroup contact has a positive effect on

⁴ Allport (1954) listed the following four conditions under which intergroup contact reduces prejudice: 1. Equal status; 2. Common goals; 3. Intergroup cooperation; 4. Support of authorities, law or customs.

negative stereotyping, and scholars have drawn attention to the effect that the *quantity of intergroup contact* has on reducing prejudices as frequency of contact helps with the decategorization of out-group members and diminishes stereotypical ways of thinking (see also Velasco-Gonzalez et al., 2008). Pettingrew and Tropp concluded that 94 percent of the more than 500 studies they reviewed – including surveys and different types of experiments – found that intergroup contact significantly reduces prejudice.

Paluck (2011) carried out field experimental research among high-school students in the United States that was aimed at testing peer influence on intergroup prejudice; more specifically, on assessing students' perceived social distance from stigmatized social groups and overheard cases of harassment against gay and overweight students. Paluck's study is somewhat similar to ours in terms of its target group (teenagers) and method (field experiment); nevertheless, the scale of the former was much larger (ten high schools were included in the US field experiment vs. only one high school in the present Hungarian study) and the experimental treatment lasted much longer (the five-month presence of selected Peer Trainers in the experimental schools vs. only three ninety-minute occasions in our study). Paluck pointed out that at the end of the experimental period a significant and widespread pattern of effects had occurred that could be attributable to the intervention. The researcher concluded that peer influence on intergroup prejudice can spread throughout social networks; moreover, the effects of peer influence across time and in a context outside of school was also measured.

Furthermore, a meta-analysis (N=985 published and unpublished reports) was carried out by Paluck and Green (2009) who evaluated observational, laboratory, and field experimental studies aimed at reducing prejudice. The authors concluded that most of the studies that focused on prejudice-reduction interventions, (e.g. workplace diversity training and media campaigns) were unable to identify causal effects. Although some intergroup contact and cooperation interventions were evaluated as promising, the authors suggested a much more rigorous and broad-ranging empirical assessment of this work. Beyond the methodological concerns that emerged from the meta-analysis, a summary of prejudice-reduction approaches, theories, and future directions for research were also compiled which may serve as a useful guideline for further research in this field. From a methodological point of view, the most important point the authors made is that, based on non-experimental research, we are unable to measure prejudice reduction in real-world settings through applying experimental designs. Field experiments are primarily evaluated as the most useful and promising, but also underutilized approach.

Focusing more on the target group of our study (Hungarian high-school students), extensive research (Váradi, 2014) has aimed at increasing understanding of the formation of Hungarian teenagers' attitudes towards the Roma. As adolescence is a crucial period in identity development, Váradi's objective was to determine to what extent classical and more recent theories about the formation of prejudice can be applied in a context in which there is no public consensus about the need for respect towards minorities. Váradi concluded that students' attitudes towards the Roma do not considerably differ from those of their parents, as 'every third participant [was] fully prejudiced, rejecting all social contact with the Roma, agreeing with derogatory remarks against the Roma, and willing to take action

against the members of this group' (Váradi, 2014: 206). Furthermore, it is important to mention that Intergroup Contact Theory was reinforced by Váradi's research, as students who had Roma friends or acquaintances were much less prejudiced towards the Roma, generally.⁵

As we have already stated, only sporadic experimental research has been done into the ethnic prejudices of Hungarian youth, and the studies we describe below both focus on anti-Roma attitudes. Váradi (2013) tested how majority students reacted to UCCU's⁶ Roma Informal Educational Foundation's programs. We treated this study as a pilot project in relation to our research, as both in terms of its *focus* (analysis of the same methods of informal education among teenagers⁷) and *methods* (qualitative and quantitative pre- and post-tests with students, completed with group interviews with teachers) it was similar to our study. Váradi (2013) attempted to measure changes in attitudes based on the answers of 228 students from ten classes in Hungary in 2013. We also used this questionnaire as a starting point, but adapted some questions for our research. The most important lesson from this research is that these kinds of short-term informal educational programs cannot significantly reduce prejudices towards the Roma in the case of the vast majority of students. To be more specific, the proportion of those students who reported 'feeling awkward when other people criticize the Roma' slightly increased after the program. Moreover, increasing empathy and getting to know how Roma people live their lives in Hungary was more successfully accomplished by Roma volunteers. In summing up, Váradi (2013) concluded that the UCCU program successfully initiated the process of questioning prejudices towards outgroups.

Most recently, Kende, Tropp and Lantos (2016) tested the effects of intergroup friendship between Roma and non-Roma Hungarians on attitudes, relying on a quasi-experimental research design of a small sample (N=61) of university students. Comparing pre- and post-test measures for the experimental and control group, the researchers observed significant positive changes in attitudes and intentions in terms of contacts exclusively created among participants subject to the contact condition in the experiment. Kende and her colleagues also concluded that positive changes were moderated by perceived institutional norms, which finding might corroborate the potential of contact-based interventions. In contrast to Kende and her colleagues' intervention – which was implemented in a university setting – our experiment was carried out in a high-school environment in Budapest, led by an open-minded headmaster who is also supported by mostly liberal and open-minded teachers. Based on the former two experimental pieces of research we conclude as well as assume for our own

⁵ For further research on the identity, intergroup attitudes, and prejudices of Hungarian adolescence, also see Váradi (2014: 63–70). Furthermore, Váradi is presently leading an ongoing research effort in Hungary entitled 'Class climate, attitude climate' that includes 60 school classes of approximately 1500 Hungarian teenagers who started secondary school in the academic year 2016/2017. The aim of the longitudinal study is basically to understand the interplay between group norms and prejudice. See more about the project at <https://nationalism.ceu.edu/dynade>

⁶ See the Foundation's homepage at: <http://www.uccualapitvany.hu/english/>

⁷ The UCCU foundation applied the same methods of informal education as Haver does. UCCU adapted the curriculum of the Haver program and adjusted it to have a Roma focus.

study that contact-based intervention may work (i.e. affect intergroup relations positively); however, also that the measured effect is not comprehensive.

As in our study the experimental groups were exposed to interactions only three times, which cannot be considered 'frequent contact,' we did not expect major changes in the target groups' attitudes but rather a 'first step' towards the long process of questioning intergroup prejudice.

4. Research methods

We used a series of field experimental interventions to test whether different approaches to informal education can foster intergroup tolerance in the form of intergroup attitudes. Designing an appropriate measurement for impact assessment was indeed a challenging task. To make our approach as comprehensive as possible, we decided to use mixed methods (Denzin, 1978).

The advantage of triangulating methods is that quantitative methods can be combined with qualitative ones. In our case, with quantitative data we benefitted from a high level of outreach and comparability, while with the qualitative approach we could obtain answers to more in-depth questions. Furthermore, there were phases during which quantitative research would not have been possible due to the sensitivity of the research topic.

4.1 Experimental context

Our research was partly based on a quasi-experimental design that included control and experimental groups, as well as pre-and post-tests carried out before and after each intervention (i.e. in the Haver-affected classrooms and during related outdoor activities). Both the pre- and post-tests included quantitative measures (repeated question blocks for measuring shifts in attitudes) and qualitative ones (namely, focus groups with students and an extensive content analysis of study participants' associations with the word 'Jewish').

In more technical terms, we used a 2x2 (two conditions x two time points) mixed factorial design with one experimental condition (interventions with the volunteers from the Haver foundation) and one control condition (no intervention apart from the 'dilemma café'⁸), and the measurement of changes in intergroup tolerance and levels of information about Jewishness over time through comparisons of pre-test and post-test scores and associations. This was completed with the above-mentioned qualitative and observational research tools.

The selection process for the experimental and control subjects, however, was far from 'ideal,' 'textbook-type' randomization or matching. Originally, we wanted to select the members of the control group randomly, across the four classes, but for logistical reasons and for the convenience of the school⁹ this was

⁸ As the effect of this final intervention was not tested by a third post-test, we agreed to include the control group into this phase and intended to make a comparison between their and the experimental subjects' reactions.

⁹ According to our original randomized research design, some members of the classes should not have participated in the interventions, but this approach was not supported by the school as they would have had to have provided alternative activities for these 'control subjects.'

not possible. Instead, one entire class (namely, 'Class B') served as the 'control' group, which approach obviously caused some selection bias. Moreover, as the study school was committed to taking part in the experiment but only one class could serve as a control group, this resulted in an uneven distribution of experimental and control subjects in the design.

The experimental subjects took part in an 'Identity' activity, as well as a walk through the Jewish quarter in Budapest and a 'dilemma café,' whereas control subjects only took part in the dilemma café. The Identity activity involved a ninety-minute session during which students sat in class with Haver volunteers and discussed topics related to Jews and Judaism. The main goal was to create a safe space where students were not shy about asking questions from the two Jewish volunteers. Such sessions are typically split into several exercises (see Appendix 2), using different tools to reach as many students as possible. The ninety-minute interactive walk took place in the historical Jewish quarter of Budapest. The volunteers showed students places and buildings which are related to Hungarian Jewish history, and talked about the past and present of the community, touching upon traditions and religion. The dilemma café is a ninety-minute activity that involves students – in small groups – discussing four dilemmas. The topics are introduced in Section 5.4.2 and are elaborated on in Appendix 3.

4.2. Materials and methods

While the quantitative research was carried out both with the experimental and the control groups, the qualitative research was only partly implemented in an experimental setting. Questionnaires were developed jointly by our research group and representatives of the Haver Foundation.¹⁰ Some of the questions were based on the materials from the Identity activity, while some were borrowed from earlier research; most importantly, from Váradi (2013) who carried out similar research involving an impact assessment of UCCU's informal training. We carried out interviews with all the four form teachers, but we only organized focus groups among those students who were included in the study due to the lack of further research capacity. Further details about the research design and schedule of the experimental research are shown in Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, we gathered data in four waves – before and after each intervention during 2016 and 2019. The almost one-and-half-year gap between the second and the third intervention was not optimal, but due to organizational and other management issues we could not complete the fieldwork earlier. On the other hand, in this way we could follow the experimental groups for more than three years.

¹⁰ We are grateful to Júlia Dés for her continuous support throughout our work, especially regarding the development of the questions, as well as to Blanka Szeidl who helped us with data gathering and data processing. Last but not least, we are thankful to our volunteers from the Foundation and the MA students of ELTE PPK, as well as to the student and teacher participants of the study high school.

Table 1: Qualitative and quantitative research design and process by class and number of respondents (2016–2019)

	Class A (exp)	Class B (control)	Class C (exp.)	Class D (exp)	Total
Phase 1: pre-testing and first intervention (November-December 2016)					
Focus group with students (11-26, November 2016)	5 students	-	4 students	4 students	13 students
Interviews with form teachers (From 12, November 2016 to 2, February 2017)	1 teacher	1 teacher	1 teacher	1 teacher	4 teachers
Student survey (pre-test)	32 students	24 students	22 students	21 students	99 students
Intervention 1: 'Identity' activity: associations (15 November- 9, December 2016)	33 students	-	32 students	approx. 30* students	95 students
Phase 2: post-testing I (December 2016-March 2017)					
Focus group with students (From 5 December 2016 to 19, January 2017)	5 students	-	5 students	5 students	15 students
Student survey (post-test I) March 2017	33 students	25 students	22 students	23 students	103 students
Phase 3: Jewish quarter walk and post-test II (October-December 2017)					
Intervention 2: Walk in the former Jewish ghetto (October-November 2017)	29 students	-	21 students	27 students	77 students
Student survey (post-test II) including open-ended questions (December 2017)	33 students	27 students	22 students	27 students	109 students
Phase 4: Dilemma café and observation (March-April 2019)					
Intervention 3: Dilemma Café incl. observation	32 students	31 students	15 students**	39 students	117 students

* There were no associations, therefore we are not sure about the exact number of participants.

** Only half of the class participated in the Dilemma Café as the class had been split up due to a foreign language course.

One of the pillars of the qualitative research was the two focus groups conducted in three classes, while the other involved the interviews with the form teachers. The participants of the focus groups were chosen by one of the teachers (not the form teacher) through random selection. It is important to mention that the students were the same in the pre-activity and post-activity discussions. Four or

five students – selected randomly – participated from each class. We also took into account pre- and post-activity associations.

The dilemma café was the third intervention. This time – as opposed to in the earlier waves – the activity constituted the research itself: the dilemma café was organized with the help of observers who paid attention both to the students' and the volunteers' activity. Similarly to the previous waves, all classes took part in the research. Approximately five groups were created in each class. The number of participants in one group varied from three to eight. The groups participated in a dilemma café: they were presented with five dilemmas from which they had to choose four, based on their titles. They discussed each dilemma in depth for fifteen minutes with a moderator (a Haver volunteer). Every group had an observer who took notes according to the researchers' detailed instructions, which were later analyzed by the researchers. The goal was to assess the impact of the previous activities: first, whether participants had managed to acquire a certain culture of debate; second, to what extent they had received and processed the main message of Haver (tolerance towards minorities, and open-mindedness) and third, whether they manifested any sign of an increase in knowledge about Jews and Judaism. In other words, the analysis was undertaken in line with the Foundation's goals.

The quantitative research was based on a self-administered questionnaire consisting of a *core* question block, with repeated questions about attitudes and knowledge about Jewishness, completed with an additional block of questions about various topics. The core blocks of the questionnaires, as well as the topics of the qualitative research, are compiled in Appendix 3 (the entire research materials are available upon demand). Also, because of the lack of space, we present only the most important results from the quantitative survey in Section 4.

4.3 Methodological concerns

While with the complex design we tried to eliminate many possible flaws, we encountered some difficulties. Generally, the high school we selected can be characterized as a very liberal and open-minded community. This school does not represent the average Hungarian or even Budapest-based high school well, but they let us carry out our extensive research due to their openness. Another important issue that should be mentioned here is that it transpired during the implementation period that the form teacher of the control group (Class B) had already paid significant attention to discussing social issues such as tolerance with their class. In this sense, selecting this class as a control group was not the best choice.

Regarding the dilemma café, there were two further concerns. First, the volunteers moderated the groups in various ways – as they were instructed to be flexible –, therefore intergroup comparison was rather challenging. Second, in lacking recorded data (due to ethical issues), we had to rely completely on our observers who understood their jobs differently. However, even with the above-mentioned problems, we managed to carry out a limited content analysis.

We are well aware that the study school we based our analysis on was chosen due to 'convenience' sampling, and that the selection process of experimental and control subjects was far from ideal for the above-mentioned

reasons. While interpreting the results of our study, these facts should be kept in mind.

5. Results

We present our findings in a more or less chronological order, mixing qualitative with quantitative results. In order to place the study in its context, in the first section we show what the form teachers and the students in the focus group discussions said about the school's values, focusing on the dynamics of the intergroup relations. The second section illustrates results related to the first activity – i.e. using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The third section shows the results of the quantitative survey regarding the students' perceptions about Jewish identity, which is followed by results connected to the second activity. The last section describes the third intervention.

5.1 Exploring the research context: Values of the school

Regarding the mentality and values of the examined high school, the form teachers had different opinions. While three of them said there are no values to which the school is committed, one believed that freedom is an important concern. Concerning the approach towards students, they agreed that the school is more humane: while keeping high standards, they try to accommodate students' needs. The philosophy of the form teachers – compared to that of teachers in an average state school – is more student-oriented. All of them seemed to be open towards minorities.

Students who took part in the focus groups seemed to like going to the school: 'all students here like the school... everyone participates in the programs,' said one of the students from Class C. None of the groups were specifically interested in public affairs: they read and listen to things which were important to their parents.

As far as attitudes towards minorities are concerned, opinions differed among the students, but were not class specific. Some students believed in a multicultural country, but 'if people are similar, there are no conflicts... so it might be better' (class A). In both discussions students tried to approach this issue by referring to a real topic which concerns Hungary; namely, the situation of immigrants and refugees. Their opinions clearly reflected the arguments which divide society and the pros and cons of the former issue which can be heard in the media.

In every class there was someone who belonged to a minority group, but the participants did not perceive them as 'others' because they were born in Hungary and were familiar with Hungarian culture, etc. According to the students, this cannot be compared to the situation of refugees who come from a less familiar culture: 'the Arabs lie down at noon and do their praying or whatever' (Class C), while their (half-Polish) classmate would never do such thing. This quote indicates rather limited and stereotypical thinking. The distance between the former culture and that of Hungary seems to be the main determinant of students' judgments. Furthermore, some believe that negative sentiments and a fear of Arabs are

understandable, and should not be judged. According to these individuals, this is not discrimination; calling someone a Jew or gay is already embedded in their vocabulary. ‘You cannot do anything about this. [...] You don’t stop, but accept this’ (Class D). The other group – when they were asked – emphasized the positive impact of their Chinese classmate, who had given them a presentation about Chinese history when they were studying this topic. They did not study about Jews (or the Holocaust) because they had not reached this topic in their history class, but many have Jewish acquaintances or even relatives. One of them said that he likes him/her,¹¹ ‘but (s)he has his/her own typical Jewish characteristics as well’ (Class D). This again refers to stereotypical thinking. They agreed that those who have acquaintances from a given group are less discriminative, which suggestion supports Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis. Participants agreed that the students’ attitudes are influenced mostly by their micro milieu (family and friends).

5.2 First intervention: the ‘Identity’ activity

Below, results concerning the first intervention are discussed. Associations were surveyed just before and right after the identity activity, while data were collected about students’ opinions in a focus group afterwards. Quantitative comparative results are also discussed in relation to the perception of Jewish identity.

5.2.1 Associations

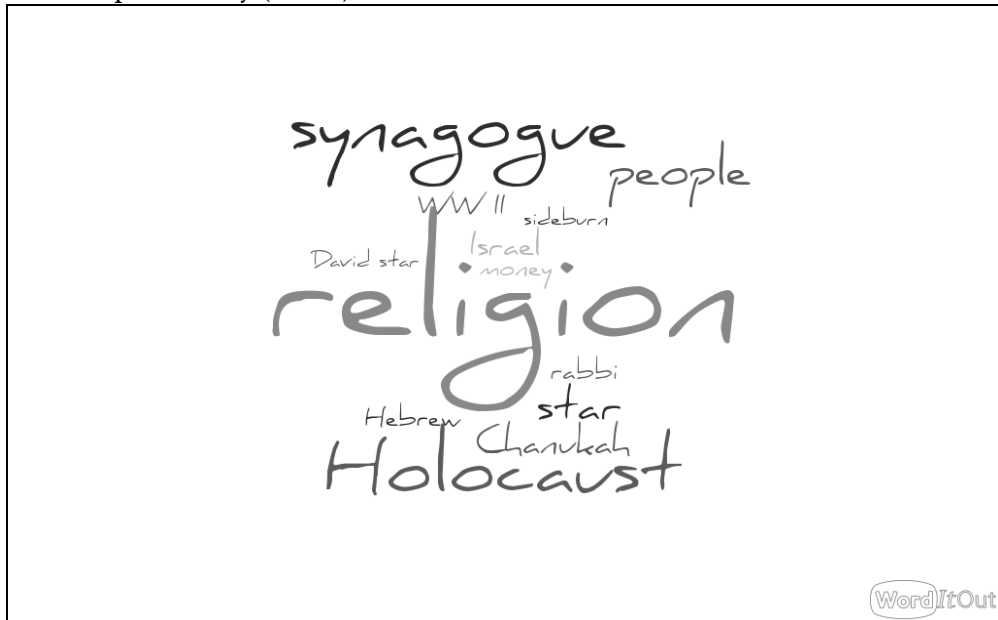
This examines the short-term impact of the ‘Identity’ activity based on the associations. Every activity started off and ended with a short game during which the volunteers asked the students to write down their associations related to the words ‘Jew, Jewish.’¹² This activity – in contrast to that of the focus groups – was appropriate for measuring short-term impacts because the students’ experience was still fresh. On average, there were 33 participants during each activity and they wrote down approximately three of four words,¹³ resulting in approx. 200 and 240 words before and after the activities, respectively.

¹¹ In the Hungarian language there is no linguistic gender differentiation.

¹² The word ‘*zsidó*’ in Hungarian means both.

¹³ Associations could be sentences as well – depending on the volunteers’ instructions – but single words were most frequently used.

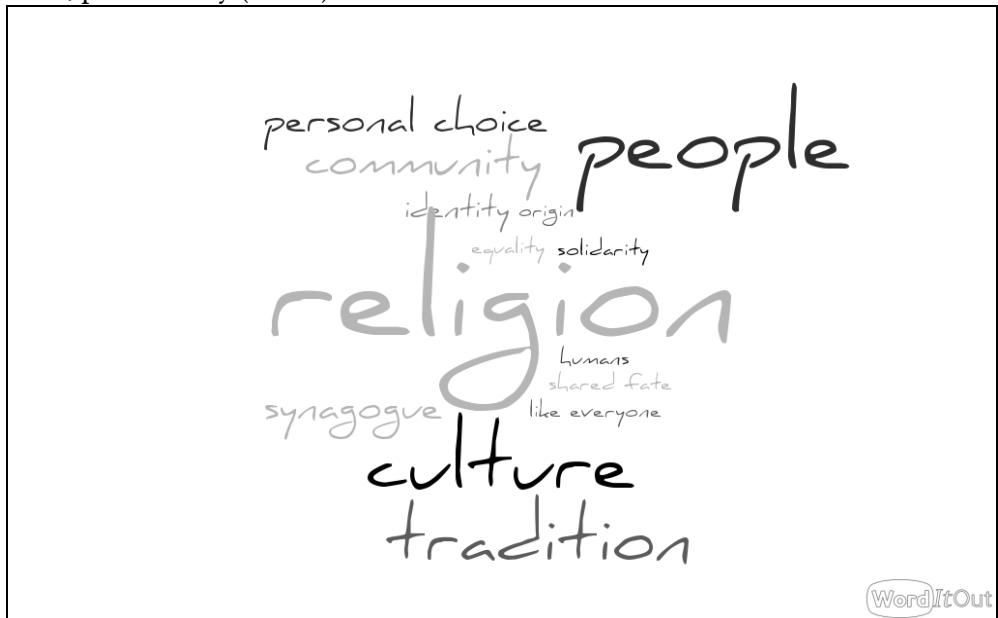
Figure 1: Aggregated word cloud based on all words which occurred three times or more, pre-activity (n=199)



Source: Prepared with MAXQDA 18 and Word it Out

Font size is correlated to word frequency (the bigger the font, the greater the amount of mentions).

Figure 2: Aggregated wordcloud based on all words that occurred three times or more, post-activity (n=238)*



Source: Prepared with MAXQDA 18 and Word it Out

* Font size is correlated to word frequency (the bigger the font, the greater the amount of mentions).

As is clear from Figures 1 and 2, the pre-activity associations are focused more on Judaism, stereotypes, and the Holocaust (or Jewish history), while the post-activity associations reflect more on the Foundations' messages. In the second round there were fewer words related to religion – albeit this topic still dominated – and the words 'culture,' 'tradition' and 'people' occurred more. (These concepts arose during activities when students defined five pillars of Judaism: religion, culture and tradition, people, shared fate, and personal choice.) Apart from these words, 'identity,' 'community,' and 'personal choice' also appear as elements of identity formation. Associations related to WWII disappear and human values such as solidarity and equality appear. The words 'humans' and 'like everyone' refer to the idea – heard also during the activity – that Jews are just like any other human being.

It is worth expanding a little more on the importance of religion-associated and Holocaust-related words. For centuries, Jews defined their Jewishness through religion (Webber, 2003), which explains the strength of this concept. A ninety-minute activity can hardly erase this association. Regarding the Holocaust, students hear about Jews when they study twentieth-century history. Furthermore, the Holocaust is also widely discussed in the media and public discourse, as well as frequently represented in the cinema. The Haver Foundation was initiated partially based on the experience that students relate the word 'Jew' to the Holocaust, which was perceived as unfortunate.

Even if we cannot draw far-reaching conclusions from the associations of students in the two classes, they first serve as a good basis for comparison with the quantitative results, and second they illustrate well that activities are conducted in various ways. Therefore, their impact may be different as well. This is also true of students: not everyone reacts the same way.

5.2.2 Evaluation of the activity: A 'friendly discussion' (Class A)

Regarding the activities of Haver, everyone was satisfied. Participants mostly emphasized the interactive and personal nature. The former claim was supported in the survey as well, according to which relatively few students experienced boredom (5 percent said they were bored, and 17 percent said they were 'neither bored nor not bored'). It seems that students are in need of an informal style of education during which they can discuss and ask about topics which are not every day. Answers to the question 'what is this activity good for?' during the focus groups went hand in hand with the answers given in the survey: participants understood that the main goal was to expand their knowledge. Despite this, they remembered relatively little of what they had heard during the activity (even though they mentioned that informal education is more effective).

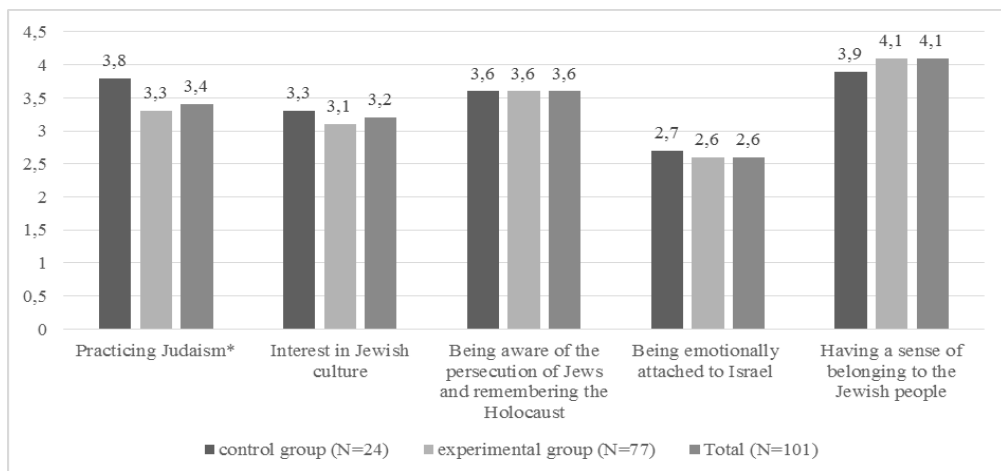
Most of the focus group participants mentioned the 'Identity' activity at home, but did not expand on the details. As someone from Class A summarized, 'I talked about the activity at home but not what it was about.' None of the classes had the chance to discuss it at school, which some of them missed. This might have been useful for helping process the information and remembering better what they had 'learnt.' Hearing someone called a 'Jew' or 'gay' triggered similar reactions: it bothered them, 'but what to do?' One student said that this is embedded into their vocabulary. These results indicate that the activity made them

think, but did not inspire them to be proactive. In other words, it involved rather a passive reaction than an active one.

5.2.3 The perception of Jewish identity

We also assessed the potential impact of the first intervention using quantitative tools, comparing control and experimental groups' views about Jewish identity based on pre-prepared answer categories.¹⁴ Figure 3 presents how students defined Jewishness after the first intervention along the five identity elements, as discussed in relation to Haver's Identity activity.

Figure 3: The perceived role of identity elements of Jewishness according to the control and experimental group, averages on a 1–5 scale (post-test I)



* based on ANOVA F-test (p < 0,05)

Among the various identity elements, we only found a significant difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of the religious component: Those who took part in the Identity activity found the role of practicing Judaism to be a less important component of being Jewish than the members of the control group. This result is in line with what we found based on the analysis of associations presented above.

One of the most important goals of our quantitative research was to measure the level of knowledge about Jewishness. In Table 2 we have summarized the items which were included in the core questionnaire (therefore, these questions were asked a total of three times). In our analysis, 'do not know' and incorrect answers were coded together, as we were primarily interested in the proportion of those who correctly answered these questions.

¹⁴ The exact question can be found in Appendix 3.

Table 2: Items measuring level of knowledge about Jewishness (used in pre-test, post-test I, post-test II)

Items	True or false
a. During the Holocaust a minor part of the Hungarian Jewry died.	False
b. Synagogues are Jewish temples.	True
c. 500 thousand Jewish people currently live in Hungary.	False
d. Many Hungarian Jews celebrate Christmas.	True
e. Kosher is a set of rules that regulates Jewish weddings.	False
f. According to Judaism, Saturday is a day for recreation.	True
g. Judaism is not only a religion.	True

Based on the seven elements above, we created an index to measure the level of knowledge about Jewishness. With this index we aimed to compress information and measure potential changes in students' level of knowledge about Jewishness. Comparing the rows in Table 3 (based on t-tests), it is obvious that the 'knowledge-index' only changed significantly within the experimental group, meaning that the students who took part in Haver's activities provided more correct answers after the first intervention than beforehand.

Table 3: Level of knowledge about Jewishness; pre-test and post-test I results (Mean on a 0–7 index, N=85)

	pre-test mean (standard deviation)	post-test I. mean (standard deviation)	paired-sample T Test (p value)
Control group (N=19)	3.36 (1.605)	3.57 (1.609)	1.043 (0.297)
Experimental group (N=66)	3.187 (1.25)	3.88 (1.29)	4.983 (0.000)*
Total	3.22 (1.33)	3.81 (1.36)	4.956 (0.000)*

*Significant difference based on paired-sample T-Test ($p < 0.05$) (Excluding 'do not know' answers)

5.3. *Second intervention – A walk in the ghetto*

While the first section analyses the open-ended answers to the questionnaire (therefore, we may call these semi-qualitative results), the second section focuses on the close-ended answers.

5.3.1 Evaluation of the walk

Regarding the walk, most students enjoyed this activity – based on answers to the open-ended questions¹⁵ incorporated into post-test II. It seems that they rarely participate in such alternative programs, and the method itself was an innovation for them (even if they had participated in the previous Identity activity). The results of the first question can be classified into two bigger themes. One is related to learning, and the other to the activity. Students 'learnt a lot of new things.' Some mentioned Jewish references (i.e. that they had learnt about Jews or Judaism), while others were happy 'to get to know this part of the city.' Regarding the second item, some comments were connected to the methodology, such as 'we were walking in the city and were not sitting in a classroom' and 'because we walked in the quarter, I could imagine better what they were talking about.' Other comments described the volunteers who led the activity: 'they were very informal,' and 'they answered our questions.' Two complained that they 'had to deal with the topic of Jews again,' and someone wrote that there was nothing (s)he liked. Negative comments were mostly related to the weather and the fact that students had to carry their bags.

Answers to the third and fourth questions can be classified into two categories. One concerns the general information students acquired, captured in statements such as 'I got to know this part of Budapest better.' The other answers referred to specific, Jewish-related knowledge. For example, someone said they had learnt how Jews 'celebrate their weddings and how they eat' and 'I learnt about some Jewish traditions.' There were very few comments referring to the activity's attitude-framing nature: '[I brought home with me that] Jews are people just like us.' Someone else wrote '[I brought home with me that] I should be open to the world.' Only a very few students wrote negative answers.

In summary, students learnt a lot of new information and most of them enjoyed the activity. Once again, it seems that students were receptive to these innovative methods.

5.3.2 Shifting knowledge on Jewishness

Based on the core questionnaire, the same process of measurement (as presented in Table 3) was repeated to assess the level of knowledge about Jews and Jewish culture. The change in the level of knowledge about the latter was tested using paired-sample T-Tests that compared the change among those students who had filled out all three questionnaires (Table 4.)

¹⁵ The questions were: (i) what they liked about it, (ii) what they did not like about it, (iii) what new information they had acquired, and (iv) what their experience was.

Table 4: Level of knowledge about Jewishness; pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II results (Mean on a 0–7 index, N=60)*

	pre-test mean (standard deviation)	post-test I mean (standard deviation)	post-test II mean (standard deviation)	Paired-Sample T Test (p value) (post II mean vs. pre-test mean)
Control group (N=10)	3.40 (1.8)	3.50 (1.72)	4.00 (1.25)	1.406 (0.193)
Experimental group (N=50)	3.22 (1.36)	4.02 (1.33)	4.58 (1.52)	5.542 (0.000)*
Total	3.25 (1.44)	3.93 (1.40)	4.48 (1.48)	5.649 (0.000)*

*Significant difference based on paired-sample T-Test ($p < 0.05$) (Excluding 'do not know' answers).

Comparison of the rows in Table 4 (based on t-tests) showed that the 'knowledge-index' had only changed significantly within the experimental group – taking into account the whole study period –, meaning that students that had participated in Haver's activities provided more correct answers after the two interventions than before the experiment.

However, according to the linear regression models that were designed to measure the treatment effects more accurately by estimating the difference in the post- and pre-measures,¹⁶ only the third model that tested the effect of the second intervention (the Jewish walk) has significant explanatory power (see F-test statistics in Appendix 4). In line with this, we only found significant t-values (at the 0.05 level) in the model that tested the separate effect of the second intervention. In interpreting the results of the regression models, it is important to bear in mind that our data was not perfectly appropriate for regression due to the low number of observation (especially in the control group), as well as due to the 'quasi continuous' measurement level of the dependent variable (the level of knowledge about Jewishness was measured using a seven-item scale).

5.4 Third intervention: Dilemma café

5.4.1 Associations

The associations were repeated before the dilemma café (in all classes). The results showed little improvement. The experimental groups wrote similar words as prior to the Identity activity, which means that the effect was indeed short term. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to erase a centuries-old mindset. Comparison of the

¹⁶ The following three types of regression models were used to estimate the effects of the two interventions: (1) $\text{post_I_mean} - \text{pre_mean} = a + b_1T_1 + e$; (2) $\text{post_II_mean} - \text{pre_mean} = a + b_1T_1 + b_2T_2 + e$; and (3) $\text{post_II_mean} - \text{post_I_mean} = a + b_2T_2 + e$

experimental groups with the control group shows that the word 'human' appeared more often in the former, which means that some students remembered the message that Jews are like other human beings.

5.4.2. Dilemmas

There were five dilemmas associated with different topics: in one of them, the issue of traditions and their importance came up (Topic 1); another focused on stereotypes (Topic 2); the third one involved a dilemma between hate speech and free speech (Topic 3); and the fourth and fifth were both about inclusion versus discrimination based on dietary restrictions (being kosher; Topic 4) and origin (being Jewish; Topic 5). About the dilemmas, see more in Appendix 3.

Part of the method aims at developing a culture of debate, which is otherwise not supported by the national school system. The results of the dilemma café show that this debate culture is still in its infancy: most of the time the volunteer (or moderator) had to initiate conversation by asking supporting questions. Sometimes this was due to the topic of the dilemma, which was not found to be interesting enough, or was perceived as too obvious. However, we believe that most of the time the response was because students are not used to this kind of setting. This claim is supported by the fact that several students said they were happy to participate in such activities in which 'we could talk without having to do anything else but talk' (Class A).

The second issue is the participants' open-minded way of thinking (or a lack of this). A student from Class D said that 'calling someone a Jew does not mean the person is anti-Semitic.' This statement goes hand in hand with the results of the focus group: many students regard any kind of negative speech as 'normal' because of its embeddedness. In some groups, students explained stereotypes against Jews by saying 'Jews are indeed financial [sic]¹⁷ (Class D). In comparing these responses to the survey results and the general impression about these classes (which was positive), a contradiction arises: it appears that students try to comply with the expected behavior while thinking otherwise, or that these type of statements do not carry much weight for them. Calling someone a Jew, or holding stereotypical views, may still be regarded as something normal. Inclusion was viewed differently: many students believed it was fair if someone could not join a community easily, because 'when someone wants citizenship, there is also a procedure' (Class D), and 'we do not accept someone into a swimming team if the person cannot swim' (Class A). This represents a rather exclusive way of thinking. However, in this case the students were defending a hypothetical Jewish community that was not willing to accept a non-Jewish person (in line with the dilemma).

The third question concerned whether participants had acquired new information regarding Jews and Judaism. The observers did not notice in most cases any special knowledge that could be attributed to the Foundation (which may also be a result of the shortcomings of the methodology that was applied). However, in four out of the fifteen experimental groups students explicitly

¹⁷ The flawed translation is due to the original text. The statement was not correctly worded in Hungarian either.

mentioned an experience from one of the Haver activities. Furthermore, some additional sentences could be the result of their experience, such as 'everyone can be what (s)he considers themselves to be' (Class A), referring to personal choice as a form of self-identification. The answers in the control groups were very similar to the rest of the responses, therefore no conclusions can be drawn from this point of view.

6. Conclusion

Our research, which uses an innovative method, involved implementing a pilot experiment to see whether it is possible to measure the impact of the Haver Foundation's activities. As the Foundation has multiple goals, the results are presented in line with these. Regarding the 'knowledge factor,' we can say that the goal was reached partially: while participants knew more about Jews and their lives, many students still related Jewishness to religion, as opposed to having a wider understanding. From their responses, it is clear that even after several activities they had difficulty saying the word 'Jew,' 'tolerance,' etc. out loud. They rather said 'this topic.' The second focus is enhancing open-mindedness. Many students spoke in a problematic way, saying things such as 'they [the Jews] are totally normal despite what they believe in.' In order to change their way of speaking and thinking, a few ninety-minute activities are not enough: teachers should also deal with these issues by giving feedback at the end of each activity. Last, the Foundation also intends to foster a culture of debate among high-school students. Based on the last activity, it seems that the interventions were not enough. However, it is also the task of teachers to (want to) develop this skill.

The potential impact that can be achieved by such a short series of informal education programs is limited, as is this study. The most important result of our research is that in the experimental group students' views changed to some extent, both in terms of the perception of Jewishness, and their level of knowledge about the topic. In line with Váradi (2013), we think that with a limited number of interventions the Foundation will struggle to change students' views, but the former represents a good starting point for raising awareness about tolerance and minority issues. Moreover, the main methodological limitations of our study are the following: (i) the selection of the study school was based on convenience, therefore the external validity of our study is low; (ii) the uneven and not perfectly randomized distribution of the control and experimental subjects does not let us draw far-reaching conclusions, even using the statistically significant results of the tests we employed; (iii) finally, even with the process of repeating the measurement, the long-term impacts of the interventions remain unknown. Therefore, our future goal is to carry out similar, but better designed experimental research based on this pilot study in other high school(s) which are more 'typical' in terms of the attitudes of teachers and the socio-economic background of students.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of organizations with their sensitizing activities (in alphabetical order)

Organization(s) involved	Topic	Volunteers
Amnesty International + Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ)	rule of law, democracy	employees
Artemisszió Foundation	refugees, immigrants	Hungarians + refugees, immigrants
Haver Foundation	Jewish people	Jews
Labrisz Association + Szimpozion Foundation	LGBTQ community	LGBTQ people
Menedék Foundation	refugees, immigrants	Hungarians + refugees, immigrants
Shelter Foundation (Menhely)	homelessness	homeless people
Women for women (NANE)	women's rights	women
Patent Association	sex, porn	women
Positively (Pozitívan Alapítvány)	human rights	
Uccu Foundation	Roma people	Roma

Appendix 2: Identity activity in detail

Activity	Goal/function
1. Introduction and 'rules' of informal session	To obtain a common understanding of this new setting
2. Associations/1.: students write words related to the word 'Jew' or 'Jewish.' ¹⁸	To find out what the most common stereotypes are (both negative and positive).
3. Opinion-line: volunteers read statements one by one about more general questions. Students have to position themselves on a line between 'completely disagree' and 'completely agree' and discuss why they are standing there.	For the students to be able to relate the question of Jewishness to their own context and to make them more comfortable about speaking their minds openly.
4. Students are distributed (photo) portraits and each of them have to decide whether their picture depicts a Jewish person. At the end, students are asked whether the two volunteers are Jewish.	The conclusion is that it is hard to decide only by looking who is Jewish and who is not. By having Jewish volunteers, the students have the chance to ask personal questions.
5. In the main part of the lesson, five pillars (religion, people, shared fate, personal feeling, and tradition and culture) of being Jewish are put up on the wall with descriptions. Students have to choose which one is the most important aspect. Then they form five groups accordingly and discuss their positions. At the end, the educators open the circle to discussion: the groups have to convince each other (individuals from the other groups) about the importance of their own pillar.	This activity focuses on building a debate-culture in classrooms as well as emphasizing the diverse understanding of Jewishness.
6. Key statistics: educators tell the class the key statistics regarding the number of Jews presently in Hungary and about the victims of the Holocaust.	Share factual information, and disabuse students of false ideas.
7. Associations/2: repeating the first exercise.	Feedback: one of the ways to collect students' impressions about the lesson.

¹⁸ In Hungarian language both the noun and the adjective are expressed with the same word, 'zsidó.'

Appendix 3: Supplementary research materials. The question blocks analyzed in the present study

Table A1: Questions measuring the level of knowledge about Jewishness (repeated in pre-, post I and post II questionnaires)

What do you think of the statements below? Are they true or false?

	True	False	DK	
a. During the Holocaust a minor part of the Hungarian Jewry died.	1	2	9	X
b. Synagogues are Jewish temples.	1	2	9	X
c. 500 thousand Jewish people currently live in Hungary.	1	2	9	X
d. Many of the Hungarian Jews celebrate Christmas.	1	2	9	X
e. Kosher is a set of rules for regulating Jewish weddings.	1	2	9	X
f. According to Judaism, Saturday is a day for recreation.	1	2	9	X
g. Judaism is not only a religion.	1	2	9	X

Table A2: How important do you think the following factors are for a person who thinks of him- or herself as belonging to the Jewish community? (used in the post I questionnaire) Please evaluate the statements below on a 1-5 scale (where 1 means not important at all, and 5 means very important).

	It is not important at all	It is not that important	I cannot decide (It may both be relevant and irrelevant)	It is somewhat important	It is very important	DK	
a. Practicing Judaism*	1	2	3	4	5	9	X
b. Interest in Jewish culture	1	2	3	4	5	9	X
c. Being aware of the persecution of Jews and remembering the Holocaust	1	2	3	4	5	9	X
d. Being emotionally attached to Israel	1	2	3	4	5	9	X
e. Having a sense of belonging to the Jewish people	1	2	3	4	5	9	X

Table A3: Interview topics (form teachers)

	Introduction to the research
	Personal information about the teacher (family, education, career)
	Professional questions (about teaching mostly, educational philosophy)
	Attitudes (general attitudes towards minorities, acquaintances, about the class)
	About his/her class (minorities, attitudes, in-class methods for handling conflict, sensitivity in the class about these issues, details about parents, etc.)
	Other: is there anything he/she wants to talk about?

Table A4: Focus group topics (with students)

PRE	POST
Introduction, rules	
Warm-up questions: about the students' background	Quick round with names (the students already know each other)
School life: do they like it, what programs do they have, how are student-teacher relations, are there extra-curricular activities?	School life: the same questions + any change (if relevant)
Attitudes, public affairs: their attitudes, their opinion & knowledge about Hungary's minorities, do they know anyone from a minority, their perception of the importance of this, how they inform themselves about public affairs	
Their class: are there minorities and is this a topic, do they talk about Jews specifically, what programs do they have, what are their attitudes, has there been abuse against minorities?	
-	About the activity: how they liked it, what would they change about it, any new information they gathered, anything they were surprised by
Closing	

Topics for the dilemma café*Topic 1: The importance of traditions*

A girl is getting married to a boy and she just found out that her boyfriend does not want a Jewish (religious) wedding, unlike her. She loves him very much, but her parents also insist on a religious wedding. What should she do?

Topic 2: Stereotypes

Two friends are chatting. One of them tells the other that she has fallen in love with a Jewish boy, and she is confronted with stereotypes by her friend, such as 'Jews are rich and tricky' and 'they own the media.' Are the statements anti-Semitic?

Topic 3: Free speech versus hate speech

A Scottish Youtuber puts up a video in which he is teaching his girlfriend's dog the Hitler salute. The court finds him guilty. His argument is that he only wanted to prove a point by show his girlfriend that her dog is not cute. Some people defend him in the name of free speech. Is this hate speech or free speech?

Topic 4: Inclusion and discrimination

A new family arrives to Hungary from the US and the parents want the child to eat according to kosher rules. The school refuses this request, saying that they cannot meet the parents' whims. The parents argue that other kids are lactose intolerant and their requests are accommodated. Who is right?

Topic 5: Inclusion and discrimination

Bruno recently moved to Pest and became friends with someone who goes to a synagogue. The community in the synagogue is organizing a trip to Israel, but Bruno cannot go because he is not Jewish. He could go only if he converted. He is rather considering going to another community where he is not discriminated against. Is he right?

Appendix 4: Regression models to test treatment effects of interventions
(t1=identity, t2=Jewish walk)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
Model 1: POST TEST I -PRE TEST (N=85) Y = a + b1T1 + e							
	(Constant)	0.351	0.178		1.978	0.051	
	intervention 1 (identity)	0.419	0.236	0.191	1.775	0.080*	
Adjusted R Square 0.025							
F stat (sign) 3.149 (0.08)							
Model 2: POST TEST II- PRE TEST (N=60) Y = a + b1T1+b2T2+ e							
	(Constant)	0.414	0.494		0.839	0.405	
	intervention 1 (identity)	0.051	0.760	0.012	0.067	0.947	
Adjusted R Square	0.038	intervention 2 (Jewish quarter walk)	1.016	0.718	0.256	1.414	0.163
F stat (sign) 2.151 (0.126)							
Model 3: POST TEST II- POST TEST I (N=67) Y= a + b2T2+ e							
	(Constant)	0.625	0.482		1.295	0.200	
	intervention 2 (Jewish quarter walk)	1.240	0.552	0.267	2.248	0.028**	
Adjusted R Square 0.057							
F stat (sign) 5.054 (0.028)**							

***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

ÁKOS BOCSKOR AND ANIKÓ HAVELDA*
Status Dynamics: Popularity and Acceptance in an Ethnically
Diverse Hungarian Primary School Sample

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* [akos.bocskor@uni-corvinus.hu] (Corvinus University of Budapest;
Centre For Social Sciences, CSS-RECENS); [aniko.havelda@gmail.com]
(Corvinus University of Budapest)

Abstract¹

Status among peers has been one of the central themes of peer relations research for decades. While the topic has been extensively researched in the Western European and North American literature, less is known about such dynamics in ‘non-Western’ contexts. The paper intends to address this gap by analyzing the status dynamics related to the two most frequently investigated dimensions of status – popularity and acceptance – in a Hungarian, ethnically diverse, longitudinal primary school database. Additionally, we apply a novel multilevel regression model, the within-between random effects model (Bell et al., 2019), which combines the strengths of fixed- and random-effects models and makes the decomposition of within-individual and between-individual effects possible. The paper analyses the first four waves of the panel dataset (N of observations = 4441, N of individuals = 1313). Most of our results are in line with the Western European literature, highlighting the important role of being good at sports, verbal aggression, being considered smart, and physical appearance. With regard to ethnic differences, our results show ethnicized patterns in the relationship between aggression and popularity.

Keywords: status, popularity, acceptance, Roma students, Hungary, within-between random effects regression.

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1. Introduction

The investigation of the correlates and dynamics of status among peers has been one of the central areas of peer relations research for decades. While the two most common conceptualizations of status, popularity and acceptance, have been widely discussed in the Western European and North American literature, less is known about such dynamics in 'non-Western' contexts; for instance, in Hungary. In addition, although most of the Hungarian peer relations literature has explicitly focused on interethnic relations, the relationship between ethnicity and status has mostly been assessed based on friendship nominations (e.g. Hajdu et al., 2019) or measurements of social preference (e.g. Habsz and Radó, 2018), while the relationship between ethnicity and the direct nominations of reputational status (e.g. popularity, 'coolness') have been less at the centre of attention (for an exception, see Pethes, 2015). Further, to our knowledge, multiple dimensions of status have not been studied simultaneously in Hungary so far. Therefore, we intend to address both gaps by analyzing (reputational) popularity and acceptance dynamics in an ethnically diverse primary school sample. The Roma population is the largest and most disadvantaged ethnic group in Hungary. Their multiple disadvantages involve low household incomes, low levels of labor market participation, poor housing conditions, low levels of educational attainment, as well as residential, educational, and labor market segregation and discrimination (see, for instance, Bernát, 2019; Kemény et al., 2004; Váradi, 2014; Zolnay, 2016). Consequently, the investigation of ethnic differences between Roma and non-Roma students in status dynamics may be of particular importance. Additionally, the paper applies a novel methodological approach, the within-between random effects (REWB) model for panel regression (Bell et al., 2019), which makes it possible to decompose and estimate both within- and between-individual effects.

2. Peer status and ethnicity

2.1 Popularity and acceptance

The concept and dynamics of *peer status* have been widely discussed in the literature. Predominantly, two main dimensions have been distinguished; a reputational one, typically called 'perceived' or 'reputational' popularity or simply *popularity*, and another dimension related to the extent someone is liked by their peers, typically called *acceptance*. Importantly, these two constructs have been found to be only moderately correlated (e.g. LaFontana and Cillessen, 2002; Parkhurst and Hopmeyer, 1998). Their most remarkable and distinctive feature is their relationship with aggression; while popularity has consistently been found to be positively associated with aggression, relational aggression in particular, acceptance is negatively associated with it (e.g. Cillessen and Mayeux, 2004; Mayeux et al., 2008). Although the notion of *popularity* has historically been used somewhat inconsistently in the literature, often referring to social preference, in contemporary research it is understood as a status dimension of social power, prestige, and visibility (Cillessen and Marks, 2011). Simultaneously, researchers

have been experimenting with alternative constructs in the measurement of this reputational dimension, most importantly through the concept of ‘coolness’ (e.g. Bellmore et al., 2007; Kiefer and Wang, 2016). Bellmore and colleagues (2007) argue that coolness captures reputation-based peer status well, as it is a measure of students’ perceptions of the possession of valued traits in the peer group.

Popularity has been associated with a wide range of behavioral and personality traits such as athleticism (e.g. Kennedy, 1995; Shakib et al., 2011), physical and relational aggression (e.g. Mayeux et al., 2008; Schwartz et al., 2006), school disengagement (e.g. Engels et al., 2017), physical appearance (e.g. Vaillancourt and Hymel, 2006), and extraversion (e.g. van der Linden et al., 2010). Similarly, acceptance has been positively associated with athleticism, physical appearance, and extraversion, while negatively with aggression (e.g. Cillessen and Mayeux, 2004). Additionally, several studies have hypothesized ethnic differences in status dynamics, most importantly in relation to athleticism, aggression, and academic performance. The following sections will give a brief overview of these differences.

2.2 Athleticism

While essentially all studies have found a positive association between popularity and athleticism, it has been presumed that for disadvantaged ethnic and racial minorities sports might be of particular importance. For instance, some research in the United States found that Black students attribute higher importance to sports than their White counterparts (e.g. Greendorfer and Ewing, 1981). Kennedy (1995) found from a nationwide sample of eighth-grade students that although athleticism was most strongly correlated with (self-rated) popularity for both Black and White boys, as well as for White girls, this association was the strongest for Black males. However, in the case of Black girls, popularity was most strongly associated with academic status. On the other hand, some more recent studies have found opposing results; for instance, Shakib and colleagues (2011) found that Black athletes were less likely to report (self-rated) popularity than White athletes, while Chase and Machida (2011) found that Black students ranked the importance of sports lower than their White counterparts (Chase and Machida, 2011). With regard to gender, a large body of research has shown that athleticism contributes to status to a greater extent for males than for females (e.g. Eder and Kinney, 1995; Holland and Andre, 1994).

2.3 School performance and ‘oppositional culture’

Several theories have been suggested to explain ethnic differences in academic performance. For the present analysis, it is worth reviewing the main ideas represented by the ‘acting white’ hypothesis (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1992). According to this hypothesis, for ‘involuntary’ minorities in a subordinate social position in the United States, good performance in areas that are believed to be the ‘prerogatives’ of White Americans can be interpreted as learning to ‘act white’. For instance, minority students who perform well and are engaged

academically can be perceived by their same-ethnicity peers as 'becoming acculturated into the white American cultural frame of reference' at the expense of their minority culture (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986: 182–183). As a consequence, academic success can be 'resisted' both socially and psychologically, and sanctions from the peer group can take multiple forms (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). In order to cope with the 'burden of acting white,' academically successful Black students adopt a variety of strategies, involving becoming the class clown, pretending not to put much effort into getting good grades, excelling in other areas such as athletics, aligning themselves with bullies, 'putting brakes' on academic performance, or developing a 'raceless persona' (Fordham, 1988; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986).

While Fordham and Ogbu's work was based on in-depth ethnographic research, other ethnographic studies at the time also found similar results (e.g. Miller, 1989: 181). However, some more recent ethnographic studies (e.g. Horvat and Lewis, 2003; Tyson et al., 2005), as well as research that tested the hypothesis on large quantitative databases, have been more contradictory. Some studies using large national samples in the United States found support for 'acting white' (e.g. Fryer and Torelli, 2010; Fuller-Rowell and Doan, 2010), while most of them did not (e.g. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey, 1998; Cook and Ludwig, 1997; Wildhagen, 2011). Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) even found higher peer support for well-performing African American students. However, it is important to note that these studies, due to the properties of the large national samples they relied on, did not investigate peer-reported popularity, but relied on other conceptualizations of social standing, such as self-reported popularity (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey, 1998; Cook and Ludwig, 1997), friendship networks (Fryer and Torelli, 2010), self-reported measurements of social acceptance (Fuller-Rowell and Doan, 2010), and negative sanctions (Wildhagen, 2011). Consequently, little is known about the potential racial or ethnic patterns of the relationship between popularity and school performance/engagement. One exception is Kiefer and Ryan (2008), who found that Black American girls with popularity goals were less academically engaged than Black boys or White students (Kiefer and Ryan, 2008).

Although the 'acting white' hypothesis was formulated to account for Black students' school disengagement in certain social contexts, the hypothesis has been extended to other disadvantaged social groups, such as Latin Americans in the United States (e.g. Flores-Gonzalez, 2005) and immigrant and ethnic minority students in Europe (e.g. Stark et al., 2017). The case of the Roma population in Hungary might also be a comparable example, due to the group's disadvantaged economic and social standing, the widespread prejudice they face (e.g. Keresztes-Takács et al., 2016; Váradi, 2014), the significant residential (e.g. Ladányi and Virág, 2009) and educational (e.g. Fejes and Szűcs, 2018) segregation, as well as to the significant academic performance gap between Roma and non-Roma students (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2011; 2016). These conditions create a situation in which an 'oppositional culture' could, it is assumed, be developed. Accordingly, some Hungarian research has also tested the 'acting white' hypothesis on Roma students, using the measurement of social preference (Habsz and Radó, 2018), friendship and adversary nominations (Hajdu et al., 2019), and victimization

measures (Kisfalusi, 2018). However, none of these studies found support for the presence of an ‘oppositional culture.’

2.4 Aggression

Some studies have found aggression to be strongly associated with popularity for African American students in Black-majority and multi-ethnic settings (e.g. Luthar and McMahon, 1996; Meisinger et al., 2007; Waasdorp et al., 2013). For instance Luthar and McMahon (1996) found that African American students were overrepresented in the aggressive-popular group in a multi-ethnic urban high school. Similarly, Meisinger and colleagues (2007) found that in Black-majority classes, ‘tough’ and excluding, relationally aggressive behaviors were positively associated with higher levels of popularity, while in White-majority classes ‘acting tough’ (bullying and not following school rules) was negatively associated with popularity. Bullying in schools can be seen as a serious form of aggressive behavior involving an individual or a group of individuals repeatedly attacking, humiliating, and/or excluding a relatively powerless person (Salmivalli, 2010: 112). Research has also shown that skilful bullies tend to have higher status in their peer group (e.g. Sijtsema et al., 2009). In the Hungarian school context, Kisfalusi (2018) found that low-SES Roma students were more likely to be the perpetrators of cyberbullying and verbal bullying, and the victims of physical and cyberbullying than low-SES non-Roma students, while there were no ethnic differences in the case of higher SES students. She found an inverted U-shaped relationship between physical and verbal bullying and popularity; up to a certain level of popularity, students were more likely to be nominated as perpetrators. However, since her paper focused on the relationship between bullying, ethnicity, and academic achievement, ethnic differences in the relationship between popularity and aggression in Hungary remain unexplored. In addition to ethnicity, some gender differences have also been found. For instance, Cillessen and Mayeux (2004) found that overt aggression was more strongly associated with popularity for boys, while in the case of girls relational aggression seemed to be more determinative (Cillessen and Mayeux, 2004).

3. Methods

3.1 Sample

We used the first four waves of a Hungarian panel dataset. The data were collected among primary school students in six waves between 2013 and 2017 in Northern and Central Hungary. One of the main objectives of the project was to explore ethnic segregation in the social relations of students, and to examine the interrelated status hierarchies and social dynamics in classes. Due to this aim, schools with a higher proportion of Roma students were overrepresented in the sample. The first wave of the data was gathered in the autumn of 2013 when students enrolled in the fifth grade, and the fourth wave of the data was collected in the spring of 2015, when students were in the sixth grade. The first wave

involved 1183 students in 61 classes, while in wave four there were 1054 students in 53 classes. Our combined panel database of the first four waves involves 4441 observations for 1313 students. Fifty-three per cent of our panel database are male, 36 per cent ethnic Roma based on self-reports, and 35 per cent have a disadvantaged social background. Self-administered surveys were completed by the students on tablets during regular classes under the supervision of trained research assistants. Data collection in each classroom and wave took no more than 45 minutes. As the respondents were between the age of 10 and 14, permission was required from parents to allow their children to participate in the study. Students with parental permission filled out the questionnaires and were assured that their answers would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

3.2 Variables

Likeability score. In each wave, students were provided with a list of all classmates and asked to indicate their relationship with all of their peers. Positive and negative relations were measured on a five-point scale: 'I hate him/her' (coded to -2), 'I do not like him/her' (-1), 'He/she is neutral to me' (0), 'I like him/her' (1) and 'He/she is my friend' (2). We created a binary variable by coding the positive answers ('I like him/her' and 'He/she is my friend') to 1 and all the other categories to 0. We then calculated the score by dividing the sum of the incoming 'like' nominations by the number of respondents.

Coolness score. In each wave students were asked to select those classmates from the list of classmates whom they considered 'cool.' Selected students were coded to 1, all other students to 0. Incoming nominations were aggregated and divided by the number of respondents.

Smart score. In each wave students were asked to select those classmates from the list of classmates whom they considered smart. The score was calculated as described above.

Looks score. In each wave students were asked to select those classmates from the list of classmates whom they considered pretty or handsome. The score was calculated as described above.

Mock score. In each wave students were asked to select those classmates from the list of classmates who regularly mocked or insulted them. The score was calculated as described above.

Hit score. In each wave students were asked to select those classmates from the list of classmates who regularly pushed, hit, or beat them. The score was calculated as described above.

Grade point average. For every student, grade point averages were calculated from the following four subjects: Hungarian literature, Hungarian grammar, mathematics, and history. For each wave we used the end-of-semester grades students got at the end of the previous semester. The Hungarian school system uses a five-point grading scale ranging from 1 (fail) to 5 (excellent).

Behavior and diligence grades. In the Hungarian school system, students are also evaluated on their behavior and diligence, receiving grades on a four-point scale ranging from 2 to 5 (failure is not possible).

Good at sports (binary). In each wave, form teachers were asked to select those students from the list of students who are good at sports. Those students who were selected were coded to 1, all the other students to 0.

Engagement score. In each wave, form teachers were asked to select those students from the list of students who they consider hardworking, who had received an official written warning, who had an official written laudation,² and those who had unjustified school absence/s. For each of these variables, those students who were selected by the teacher were coded to 1, and all other students to 0. Then, we created a composite school engagement score by adding the hardworking and laudation scores and deducting the warning and school absence scores from them. Thus our composite score ranged from -2 to +2.

Ethnicity. In each wave students were asked about their ethnicity. They could choose from the following four options: Hungarian, Roma, both Hungarian and Roma, or 'member of another ethnicity.' For the present analysis, we considered those students who selected either 'Roma' or 'both Hungarian and Roma' at least once during the four waves as Roma (coded to 1) and the others as non-Roma (coded to 0).³

Gender. In each wave students were asked about their gender. For the present analysis we coded boys to 1 and girls to 0.

Low SES. In the Hungarian school system there are two official categories for low SES: 'disadvantaged' and 'multiply disadvantaged' social backgrounds. In each wave, form teachers were asked to select from the list of students those pupils who belonged to these categories. For our present analysis, we coded those who were selected for either of the two categories to 1, and all the other students to 0.

Smoking. Students were asked in each wave whether they smoked. They could choose from the following four options: 'No, never'; 'No, but I have tried it'; 'Yes, but only in company'; and, 'Yes, regularly.' We coded those students who selected the last two options to 1 (smokers), and the others to 0.

3.3 Analytical strategy

Multilevel regression models are applied to data that are hierarchically structured; for instance, when subjects are nested within larger organizational units (e.g. school classes) or when repeated measurements of the same subjects are available (panel data). In these data structures, individual observations (level 1) normally cannot be assumed to be independent from one another, and the different multilevel techniques aim at accounting for their clustered nature in order to provide unbiased estimates. For panel data, two widely used models are fixed-effects (FE) and random-effects (RE) regressions. The FE approach first demeanes the data in order to eliminate any higher level variance, and only estimates the effect of within-individual changes, while the 'traditional' RE estimator is a

² In the Hungarian school system, subject teachers, form teachers, and principals can register written warnings and laudations in students' report books. While the latter are mostly symbolic, the culmination of the former can eventually lead to the dismissal of a pupil.

³ The 'other ethnicity' option was selected by fewer than three per cent of respondents in each wave (between 10 and 28 students).

weighted average of within- and between-individual effects. Bell and colleagues (2019) propose a modified version of the RE model, the *within-between random effects (REWB)* model, which, they argue, combines the strength of both the FE and the RE models, and is able to estimate both the within- and the between-individual effects separately. (For a more detailed discussion of the FE, RE and REWB models, see Appendix A).

For our analysis we built random-intercept REWB regression models, of which the following equation gives an overview:

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1W}(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i) + \beta_{2B}\bar{x}_i + \beta_3z_i + \beta_{4B}(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i)z_i + \beta_{5W}\bar{x}_iz_i + v_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1.)$$

Where y_{it} is the dependent variable for individual i at time t , x_{it} is the time-variant (level 1) independent variable for individual i at time t , \bar{x}_i is the individual level average of x_{it} , and z_i is the time-invariant (level 2) independent variable. β_{1W} is the estimate of the average within effect of x_{it} (the effect of within-individual change) for individuals for whom $z_i = 0$, while β_{2B} is the estimate of the average between effect of x_{it} (differences between individuals) for individuals for whom $z_i = 0$ (for individuals for whom $z_i = 1$, these estimates are $\beta_{1B} + \beta_{4B}$ and $\beta_{2W} + \beta_{5W}$, respectively). β_3 is the estimate of the effect of the time-invariant (level 2) variable. Cross-level interactions between the time invariant and some of the time-variant independent variables are also included. v_i is the individual-level (level 2) random effect for individual i , attached to the intercept β_0 , while ϵ_{it} is the idiosyncratic error term. In our models there are two time-invariant independent variables (z_i), gender and ethnicity, and nine time-variant independent variables (see section 4.1), out of which GPA, physical and verbal aggression, being good at sports, physical appearance, and being considered smart were interacted with gender and ethnicity. The within-effects estimates (β_{1W}) are the same as the estimates of a FE regression (see Appendix B).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

If we compare the mean popularity (*coolness*) and acceptance (*likeability*)⁴ scores along the key binary explanatory variables (Table 1), we can see that, on average, boys, Roma students, students with a poor socioeconomic background, and smokers are more popular but less liked than girls, non-Roma students, students with non-low SES, and non-smokers, respectively. Students who are considered to be good at sports are both more liked and more popular than students who are not considered as good at sports. Independent t-tests were conducted for each pair respectively, and all the differences were found to be highly significant.

Table 1: Mean coolness and likeability scores⁵

	Coolness (mean/SE)	score	Likeability (mean/SE)	score
Boy	.26(.004)***		.49(.004)**	
Girl	.22(.004)***		.51(.005)**	
Roma	.30(.003)***		.50(.006)**	
Non-Roma	.23(.005)***		.52(.004)**	
Low SES	.26(.005)***		.48(.005)***	
Non-low SES	.23(.004)***		.51(.004)***	
Smoker	.32(.015)***		.46(.139)***	
Non-smoker	.25(.003)***		.51(.003)***	
Good at sports	.32(.007)***		.55(.006)***	
Not good at sports	.22(.003)***		.48(.004)***	

** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: independent t-tests were conducted for each pair respectively, and all the differences were found to be highly significant

If we look at the correlation table of the two dependent variables and their potential (non-binary) regressors (Table 2), we can see a picture that is mostly in line with the international literature. While the two constructs of status are moderately correlated (.47), verbal and physical aggression are negatively correlated with acceptance (likeability) and weakly but positively with the reputational dimension of status (coolness). On the other hand, being considered smart or good looking is positively associated with both dimensions, while good grades, diligence and school engagement are positively correlated with acceptance and are uncorrelated with popularity. In the case of the behavior grade, better grades are positively correlated with acceptance and negatively with popularity. In

⁴ In the rest of the paper, when we refer to *popularity* we mean the reputational dimension of status, which was measured by the construct of 'coolness' in this particular database, and when we refer to *acceptance* we mean the score calculated from the like nominations.

⁵ All calculations presented in the paper were made using Stata/MP 13.1.

terms of the correlation between the potential regressors, we see that there is a very strong positive correlation between the GPA and the diligence grade (.88). This implies that the diligence grade, in practice, is almost exclusively based on students' GPA (i.e. performance), not on diligence (i.e. effort) per se. This makes this variable theoretically redundant, thus it was excluded from our models. Similarly, although the behavior grade seems a promising composite measurement of behavior-related factors, its strong correlation with the diligence grade (.74) and moderate to strong correlation with the GPA (.68) simultaneously with its somewhat weaker correlation with physical (-.45) and verbal (-.49) aggression, implies that teachers may also take multiple non-behavior-related factors into consideration when they give this grade. Since this makes the interpretation of this variable also somewhat problematic, it is not included in our models either. Finally, although school grades and being considered smart could refer to different dimensions in theory, their strong correlation (.71) means that students' judgment about smartness is mostly in line with one's school grades. Thus, these variables will not be run in the same models either, although in order to check the robustness of our results, we include smartness in separate models.

Table 2: Correlation table with non-binary independent variables

	Coolness	Likeability	GPA	Engagement	Smart	Diligence	Behaviour	Mock	Hit	Looks
Coolness	1.0000									
Likeability	0.4666***	1.0000								
GPA	0.0293	0.3240***	1.0000							
Engagement	-0.0341*	0.2487***	0.5781***	1.0000						
Smart	0.2929***	0.5659***	0.7111***	0.4987***	1.0000					
Diligence	-0.0158	0.3086***	0.8788***	0.5957***	0.6518***	1.0000				
Behaviour	-0.1463***	0.2552***	0.6798***	0.5932***	0.4827***	0.7351***	1.0000			
Mock	0.1310***	-0.2635***	-0.3380***	-0.2981***	-0.2768***	-0.3683***	-0.4849***	1.0000		
Hit	0.1103***	-0.2159***	-0.3088***	-0.3029***	-0.2416***	-0.3331***	-0.4485***	0.6939***	1.0000	
Looks	0.4938***	0.4940***	0.1601***	0.0891***	0.4110***	0.1247***	0.0294	-0.0305*	-0.0052	1.0000

* p<0.05, *** p<0.001

4.2 The REWB regression models

We ran separate models for popularity (*coolness*) and acceptance (*likeability*) as dependent variables.⁶ In both cases, we included the other status dimension among the control variables. For the time-variant explanatory variables both their demeaned values (denoted with the labels ‘diff’) and their individual level averages (denoted as ‘mean’) were involved in the equation. Gender and ethnicity were involved as time-invariant (level 2) independent variables. The first model only involves the overall effects of the explanatory variables, while the second model also includes the interaction of ethnicity with verbal and physical aggression, GPA and being good at sports. The third model further adds the interaction of gender with verbal and physical aggression, being good at sports, and physical appearance. In models 4–6, GPA and the engagement score are replaced by the score calculated from the smartness nominations, otherwise they are identical to models 1–3. The same six models were run both for popularity and acceptance.

In the case of popularity (Table 3), we can see that being good at sports, verbal aggression, being considered good-looking, being liked, being a boy, and being ethnic Roma have significant positive overall effects, while being academically engaged has a very limited (-0.02) but significant negative effect (Model 1). In this model, changes within an individual over time had significant effect only in the case of verbal aggression, smoking, perceived physical attractiveness, and being liked. Somewhat surprisingly, positive changes in perceived physical appearance decreased one’s popularity. This is remarkable, considering that being perceived as good-looking on average is a strong positive predictor of popularity in this database. After adding ethnic interactions for verbal and physical aggression, GPA, and being good at sports (Model 2), we can see that within-individual changes do not follow an ethnicized pattern, while between-individual differences showed significant interaction effects in three out of the four cases. While verbal aggression positively contributes to non-Roma students’ popularity, its contribution to Roma students’ popularity is not significant statistically (for the joint significance tests of the main and interaction effects see Appendix C). On the other hand, the effect of physical aggression is statistically nonsignificant for both Roma and non-Roma students (see also Appendix C). Additionally, while becoming more verbally aggressive did have a significant positive overall effect on popularity, after introducing ethnic interaction this effect lost statistical significance for both Roma and non-Roma students. In the case of GPA, a negligible but statistically significant positive effect (0.01) is observable for non-Roma students, while this effect is not significant statistically for Roma students. In the case of the effect of sports participation, no significant ethnic differences are observable.

In the next step, gender interactions were also introduced (Model 3). Significant gender effects were found in the case of every observed variable. Being good at sports only turned out to be a significant predictor of popularity in the

⁶ As mentioned above, popularity is measured by coolness nominations, and acceptance by like nominations in this paper.

case of boys, while becoming better at sports actually had a slight negative impact on girls' popularity, while the effect for boys is nonsignificant. In the case of verbal aggression, there are larger returns on popularity for girls (0.40) than for boys (0.40-0.20 = 0.20), while the effect of physical aggression is nonsignificant for both genders. Interestingly, being perceived as good-looking results in greater returns for boys than for girls, while within individual changes in this perception (becoming perceived as better looking than before) yields a nonsignificant effect for girls and a negative effect for boys. In Models 4–6, GPA and academic engagement (i.e. more 'objective' measures of performance and effort) are replaced by peers' perceptions of smartness. As we have seen previously, the strong correlation between the GPA and the perception of smartness implies that students base their assessments on peers' smartness to a great extent on their school performance. Therefore, not surprisingly, the results of Models 4–6 are very similar to the results of Models 1–3. However, the main within effect of being perceived smart yields a significant and relatively large coefficient; i.e. students who are perceived as having become smarter over time have a significant positive return on popularity, without ethnic or gender differences.

Table 3: Within-between random effects (REWB) models of popularity

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sports (diff)	-0.01	-0.00	-0.05***	-0.00	-0.01	-0.05***
Sports (mean)	0.06***	0.06***	0.01	0.05***	0.05***	0.01
GPA (diff)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00			
GPA (mean)	0.01	0.01*	0.01*			
Engagement (diff)	0.01	0.01	0.01			
Engagement (mean)	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02**			
Smart (diff)				0.18***	0.16***	0.20***
Smart (mean)				-0.03	-0.03	-0.00
Mock (diff)	0.12**	0.07	-0.05	0.16***	0.11*	-0.00
Mock (mean)	0.14**	0.27***	0.40***	0.14**	0.25***	0.36***
Hit (diff)	0.00	0.08	0.09	0.02	0.09	0.10
Hit (mean)	0.01	-0.14	0.15	0.03	-0.11	0.19
Smoker (diff)	0.03*	0.03	0.03	0.04*	0.04*	0.03*
Smoker (mean)	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Looks (diff)	-0.26***	-0.26***	-0.03	-0.27***	-0.27***	-0.02
Looks (mean)	0.72***	0.71***	0.62***	0.74***	0.73***	0.63***
Likeability (diff)	0.26***	0.26***	0.23***	0.23***	0.23***	0.19***
Likeability (mean)	0.15***	0.15***	0.15***	0.16***	0.16***	0.16***
Disadvantaged (diff)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Disadvantaged (mean)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02
Boy	0.07***	0.07***	0.04***	0.08***	0.08***	0.05***
Roma	0.02***	0.10***	0.10***	0.03***	0.04**	0.04**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Roma x Mock (diff)	0.11	0.13			0.10	0.12
Roma x Mock (mean)	-0.26**	-0.26**			-0.20*	-0.22*
Roma x Hit (diff)	-0.15	-0.14			-0.14	-0.14
Roma x Hit (mean)	0.26*	0.28*			0.26*	0.28*
Roma x GPA (diff)	-0.01	-0.01				
Roma x GPA (mean)	-0.02*	-0.02**				
Roma x Sports (diff)	-0.00	-0.01			0.01	0.00
Roma x Sports (mean)	-0.00	-0.01			-0.01	-0.02
Boy x Mock (diff)		0.15				0.14*
Boy x Mock (mean)		-0.20*				-0.17*
Boy x Hit (diff)		-0.02				-0.03
Boy x Hit (mean)		-0.27*				-0.32*
Boy x Sports (diff)		0.06**				0.07***
Boy x Sports (mean)		0.06***				0.06**
Boy x Looks (diff)		-0.34***				-0.38***
Boy x Looks (mean)		0.22***				0.25***
Roma x Smart (diff)					0.04	0.04
Roma x Smart (mean)					-0.01	-0.01
Boy x Smart (diff)						-0.05
Boy x Smart (mean)						-0.03
Constant	-0.08***	-0.11***	-0.09***	-0.07***	-0.08***	-0.06***
N of observations	3005	3005	3005	3400	3400	3400
N of individuals	1113	1113	1113	1153	1153	1153
sigma_e	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
sigma_u	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06
r2_w	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.12	0.16
r2_b	0.64	0.64	0.66	0.65	0.65	0.68
r2_o	0.54	0.54	0.57	0.54	0.54	0.57

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

In the case of acceptance (Table 4), being considered good-looking and being considered 'cool' have positive overall effects, while being verbally aggressive has a negative overall effect on popularity (Model 1). Within-individual changes for these variables (i.e. being perceived as having become better looking and cooler, or becoming more verbally aggressive), also have significant overall effects in the same direction as the between effects. Additionally, while the individual average does not yield significant results, becoming more physically aggressive also has a negative effect on acceptance. There are small but significant positive effects for

GPA, academic engagement, and becoming better at sports, while receiving better grades has a slight negative effect on acceptance. Being a boy also has an overall positive effect, although ethnicity does not have such an impact. After including the same ethnic interactions as above, we can see that none of them yield any significant results (Model 2), which implies that there may not be significant ethnic differences in acceptance dynamics.

Gender interactions also yield limited results (Model 3). Becoming more aggressive verbally has a smaller negative effect on acceptance for boys ($-0.29+0.14 = -0.15$) than for girls, while positive changes in the perception of one's physical appearance has a smaller positive effect for boys ($0.31-0.22 = 0.09$) than for girls. Additionally, becoming better at sports only has statistically significant returns for girls (0.04), while none of the other interactions yielded significant results. Models including perceived smartness (Models 4–6) show that both being perceived as smart on average and positive changes in this perception have a significant positive effect on acceptance, without statistically significant ethnic or gender differences.

Table 4: Within-between random effects (REWB) models of acceptance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sports (diff)	0.02**	0.03**	0.04**	0.02**	0.03**	0.04**
Sports (mean)	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.00	0.02
GPA (diff)	-0.03***	-0.03**	-0.02*			
GPA (mean)	0.02***	0.02**	0.02**			
Engagement (diff)	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00			
Engagement (mean)	0.02***	0.02**	0.02**			
Smart (diff)				0.20***	0.22***	0.20***
Smart (mean)				0.23***	0.23***	0.20***
Mock (diff)	-0.19***	-0.19***	-0.29***	-0.17***	-0.13**	-0.23***
Mock (mean)	-0.40***	-0.48***	-0.62***	-0.38***	-0.43***	-0.52***
Hit (diff)	-0.17***	-0.16*	-0.11	-0.18***	-0.13*	-0.11
Hit (mean)	-0.09	0.10	0.18	-0.06	0.09	0.16
Smoker (diff)	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Smoker (mean)	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Looks (diff)	0.18***	0.18***	0.31***	0.13***	0.13***	0.29***
Looks (mean)	0.36***	0.36***	0.36***	0.28***	0.27***	0.30***
Coolness (diff)	0.19***	0.19***	0.16***	0.17***	0.17***	0.15***
Coolness (mean)	0.31***	0.31***	0.34***	0.27***	0.27***	0.28***
Disadvantaged (diff)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02**	0.02**	0.02**
Disadvantaged (mean)	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Boy	0.05***	0.05***	0.05*	0.04***	0.04***	0.03
Roma	0.02	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Roma x Mock (diff)		0.00	0.02		-0.06	-0.05
Roma x Mock (mean)		0.14	0.14		0.07	0.07
Roma x Hit (diff)		-0.02	-0.04		-0.07	-0.09
Roma x Hit (mean)		-0.31	-0.31		-0.23	-0.21
Roma x GPA (diff)		-0.00	-0.01			
Roma x GPA (mean)		0.01	0.01			
Roma x Sports (diff)		-0.02	-0.01		-0.01	-0.01
Roma x Sports (mean)		-0.01	-0.01		-0.02	-0.01
Boy x Mock (diff)			0.14*			0.15*
Boy x Mock (mean)			0.22			0.16
Boy x Hit (diff)			-0.07			-0.03
Boy x Hit (mean)			-0.16			-0.13
Boy x Sports (diff)			-0.03*			-0.03
Boy x Sports (mean)			-0.02			-0.02
Boy x Looks (diff)			-0.22***			-0.27***
Boy x Looks (mean)			-0.05			-0.07
Roma x Smart (diff)					-0.05	-0.04
Roma x Smart (mean)					0.02	0.02
Boy x Smart (diff)						0.07
Boy x Smart (mean)						0.05
Constant	0.29***	0.31***	0.31***	0.32***	0.32***	0.33***
N of observations	3005	3005	3005	3400	3400	3400
N of individuals	1113	1113	1113	1153	1153	1153
sigma_e	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10
sigma_u	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
r2_w	0.11	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.17
r2_b	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.56	0.56	0.56
r2_o	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.48	0.48	0.48

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

5. Discussion

In this paper we analyzed the status dynamics related to the two most frequently used dimensions of status, popularity and acceptance, in an ethnically diverse primary school sample. The novelty of our paper is twofold: on the one hand, to our knowledge our paper is the first in the Hungarian literature to include multiple status dimensions in the analysis of the relationship between status and ethnicity; on the other hand, we applied a novel methodological approach, within-between random effects regression analysis (Bell et al., 2019), which makes the separation of the effects of within-individual changes and between-individual differences possible. The inclusion of the two most frequently used conceptualizations of status, as well as the most frequently used explanatory variables, makes our results comparable to those found in North American literature. In line with the international literature, we found in our sample that being good at sports, verbal aggression, perceived attractiveness, and being liked had an overall positive effect on popularity, while being academically engaged had a minimal but statistically significant negative effect. For physical aggression and GPA, no significant overall effects were found. Similarly, in the case of acceptance we found that being verbally and physically aggressive had an overall negative effect, while being perceived as good-looking and cool had a sizeable positive effect, whereas being good at sports, having a good GPA, and being academically engaged had a minimal but statistically significant positive effect. Additionally, in line with the ‘maturity gap’ hypothesis (Moffitt, 1993), becoming a smoker had a slight but statistically significant positive effect on popularity.

With regard to ethnic differences, some ethnicized patterns were found in the relationship between aggression and popularity, while no ethnic differences were found in the case of being good at sports, and a minimal but statistically significant difference in the case of GPA. In the case of acceptance dynamics, no ethnic differences were found. In contrast to the claims in the American literature, verbal aggression only contributed to the popularity of non-Roma students, whereas the effect of physical aggression was nonsignificant for both groups (in spite of the positive and statistically significant interaction effect for Roma students). While Hungarian studies on interethnic relations usually consider African Americans to be a reasonable ‘reference group’ when discussing the situation of the Roma in Hungary – and we have also argued for the similarities in the social situation of the two disadvantaged groups above –, one has to acknowledge their potential differences as well. In the case of the returns of sports participation on popularity, we have seen above that even in the case of African American students, more recent research has found limited or no ethnic effects. Additionally, this may be a good example of a situation in which the Roma and the African American population potentially differ: while in the United States a significant portion of elite athletes are African Americans in many sports, there are smaller proportions of Roma athletes in all the popular sports in Hungary. Thus our findings about the lack of an ethnic effect in the case of sports may not be

surprising after all.⁷ Finally, in the case of GPA, we found a minimal (0.01) but statistically significant positive effect for non-Roma, and a minimal (-0.01) but a statistically non-significant negative effect for Roma students; however, this difference is so small that it would be unreasonable to assume any real ethnic differences. In the case of GPA, our results, to some extent, may be comparable to those in the Hungarian literature about the relationship between ethnicity, status, and academic performance, even though these studies use different conceptualizations of status. Hajdú and colleagues (2019) found that having better GPA resulted in more non-Roma friends and fewer non-Roma adversaries for Roma students, while the proportion of their Roma friends and adversaries was unaffected by GPA. Habsz and Radó (2018) used a measurement of social preference, calculated from friendship and antipathy nominations, and found a slightly larger positive effect of GPA on status in the case of Roma than non-Roma students. Similarly to these studies, our models of acceptance measure the dimension of status related to social preference (as contrasted with the reputational dimension). Our results show a small, positive, and statistically significant overall between-individual effect of GPA on acceptance, and a small, negative, and statistically significant overall within-individual effect. This implies, similarly to the results of the two former Hungarian studies, that individuals with a higher GPA have, on average, somewhat higher status. However, we found no significant ethnic differences, which might be due to the different conceptualization of status. Additionally, our results show that, on average, Roma students are more popular than non-Roma students, while no such ethnic effect is observable in the case of acceptance.

In addition to ethnicity, we found interesting gender differences in status dynamics. The finding that being good at sports only contributed to boys' popularity, while the effect for girls was nonsignificant, is partly in line with the international literature. Interestingly, however, positive within-individual changes in athletic ability contributed negatively to girls' popularity. Additionally, while the literature suggests a stronger positive association between overt aggression and popularity for boys, our results show a positive effect of overt verbal aggression that is twice as large for girls as for boys. However, in the case of acceptance there is a larger negative effect of verbal aggression for girls. Similarly surprising is the result that perceived physical appearance contributes more to boys' than girls' popularity.

Finally, the limitations of our study must also be emphasized. First, our findings are not generalizable to the Hungarian school population, as ethnic Roma students and students with disadvantaged social background are overrepresented in our sample. Second, our composite school engagement score might not represent actual school engagement well, as interpreted by peers. Thus, similarly

⁷ Additionally, one has to keep in mind that the variable that measures athletic abilities is a binary variable based on teacher nominations, as the first three waves of the database, unfortunately, do not contain peer nominations concerning athletic abilities. The binary nature of the variable, as well as the different nomination procedure compared to the peer-nominated proportional variables (verbal and physical aggression, physical appearance, smartness, etc.), limits the conclusions one can draw about athletic abilities.

to the teacher-nominated variable on sports, we might not have been able to measure the full impact of this variable on status. Third, for modeling network dependencies such as triadic relationships, social network analysis may be a more appropriate method. Despite these limitations, we believe that our paper provides a valuable contribution to the literature by being the first Hungarian study to simultaneously analyze the dynamics of the two most widely used status dimensions.

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Appendices

A. Multilevel panel regression models⁸

Consider the following general equation:

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_3 z_i + a_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2.)$$

Where y_{it} denotes the observed value of the dependent variable for individual i at time t , x_{it} is the observed time-varying (level 1) independent variable for individual i at time t , z_i is the observed time-invariant (level 2) independent variable for individual i , a_i is an unobserved, person-specific (level 2) characteristic (e.g. cognitive ability), and ϵ_{it} is the idiosyncratic error term. If we apply standard regression models to this equation, two main problems arise. First, they provide biased estimates for β_1 and/or β_3 if a_i is correlated with x_{it} and/or z_i (omitted variable bias). Second, β_1 is a composite estimate of the effect of within-individual changes and between-individual differences for the time-variant independent variable without the potential to decompose these within- and between-individual effects. The *fixed effects (FE)* estimation model aims at solving both problems by demeaning the data first and then running a pooled OLS regression:

$$y_{it} - \bar{y}_i = \beta_{1W}(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i) + (\epsilon_{it} - \bar{\epsilon}_i) \quad (3.)$$

After deducting the individual-level means, the time-invariant observed and unobserved variables a_i and z_i drop out of the equation. Since all higher level heterogeneity is wiped out, β_{1W} becomes the estimate for the within-individual effects. While this estimate might be particularly useful when evaluating the impact of policy interventions, some problems arise. First, the effects of within-individual changes and between-individual differences may not be the same (for some examples, see Bell et al., 2019: 1053), and the latter would also often be of interest for social science research. Similarly, if key explanatory variables are constant over time (e.g. gender), the application of FE estimations might be problematic (Wooldridge, 2016) as their effect cannot be estimated.

A different approach is taken by *random effects (RE)* models. In random-intercept models, individual-level random effects (v_{i0}) are added to the intercept of equation (2.):

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_3 z_i + a_i + v_{i0} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (4.)$$

These random effects are treated as random draws from a normal distribution (Bell et al., 2019: 1060).⁹ Consequently, while the FE model assumes non-random

⁸ This description is based on Bell and colleagues (2019), Brüderl and Ludwig (2015), and Wooldridge (2016, Chapter 14).

individual-specific intercepts, the RE model assumes random individual intercepts, thus allowing for the estimation of coefficients for higher level (i.e. time-invariant) variables. However, this model assumes, similarly to the model in equation (2.), that the unobserved confounders are unrelated to any of the explanatory variables (Brüderl and Ludwig, 2015; Wooldridge, 2016). According to Wooldridge, the key issue when selecting between the FE and RE models is whether we can ‘plausibly assume’ that α_i is uncorrelated with the explanatory variables (Wooldridge, 2016: 445). If this and some other RE assumptions are met, the RE estimation is consistent and also more efficient than the FE estimation for the time-variant explanatory variables (see Wooldridge, 2016: 458–459). Bell and colleagues (2019) propose an alternative model, *the within-between random effects (REWB) model*, which combines the strength of the FE and RE models and effectively decomposes the within-individual and between-individual effect of the time-variant explanatory variable:

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_{1W}(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i) + \beta_{2B}\bar{x}_i + \beta_3 z_i + v_{i0} + v_{i1}(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i) + \epsilon_{it} \quad (5.)$$

Where β_{1W} is the estimate of the average within effect of x_{it} and β_{2B} is an estimate of the average between effect of x_{it} , v_{i0} is a random effect attached to the intercept and v_{i1} is a random effect attached to the within slope. Similarly to the FE model, this model prevents any bias on the coefficients of time-variant (level 1) variables deriving from unobserved time-invariant (level 2) variables, and yields the same estimates for β_{1W} as the FE regression (Bell et al., 2019: 1058–1059). However, unobserved time-invariant variables can cause bias in estimates of the between-effects (β_{2B}) and the effects-observed level 2 variables (β_3). Bell and colleagues argue that this is a problem only if we want to measure the direct causal effect of these variables, but not so much if we consider these variables as proxies for group-level characteristics that also include unmeasured social processes, as long as we interpret the coefficients with these unmeasured variables in mind (see Bell et al., 2019: 1059–1060). Finally, the authors demonstrate through simulations that not including random intercepts generates anti-conservative standard errors, and assuming that the random intercepts are normally distributed, when in reality they are not, only introduces modest biases into the estimates.

⁹ In random-slopes models, in addition to random intercepts, individual-level random effects (v_{i1}) are added to β_1 , thus allowing for individual-level variation in the effect of some of the explanatory variables.

*B. Fixed-effects regression results***Table 5:** Fixed-effects models for popularity

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sports	-0.01	-0.00	-0.05**	-0.01	-0.01	-0.05***
GPA	-0.01	-0.01	0.00			
Engagement	0.01	0.01	0.01*			
Mock	0.11**	0.06	-0.09	0.16***	0.10*	-0.03
Hit	-0.03	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.04
Smoker	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.04*	0.04*	0.03*
Looks	-0.28***	-0.27***	-0.05	-0.27***	-0.27***	-0.03
Likeability	0.26***	0.26***	0.22***	0.23***	0.23***	0.19***
Disadvantaged	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00
Boy	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Roma	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Roma x Mock		0.11	0.13		0.12	0.15*
Roma x Hit		-0.17	-0.19		-0.13	-0.15
Roma x GPA		-0.02	-0.02			
Roma x Sports		-0.02	-0.02		0.00	0.00
Boy x Mock			0.20*			0.16*
Boy x Hit			0.05			0.04
Boy x Sports			0.06**			0.07***
Boy x Looks			-0.33***			-0.35***
Smart				0.18***	0.16***	0.20***
Roma x Smart					0.04	0.03
Boy x Smart						-0.04
Constant	0.22***	0.21***	0.19***	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***
N of observations	3005	3005	3005	3400	3400	3400
N of individuals	1113	1113	1113	1153	1153	1153
sigma_e	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
sigma_u	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.18
r2_w	0.11	0.12	0.15	0.12	0.12	0.16
r2_b	0.04	0.08	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.01
r2_o	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.02

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 6: Fixed-effects models for acceptance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sports	0.02**	0.03**	0.04**	0.02**	0.03**	0.04**
GPA	-0.03***	-0.03**	-0.02*			
Engagement	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00			
Mock	-0.20***	-0.18***	-0.27***	-0.17***	-0.12**	-0.21***
Hit	-0.17**	-0.16*	-0.12	-0.17***	-0.13*	-0.11
Smoker	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Looks	0.17***	0.17***	0.31***	0.13***	0.13***	0.29***
Cool	0.19***	0.19***	0.16***	0.18***	0.18***	0.15***
Disadvantaged	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02**	0.02**	0.02**
Boy	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Roma	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Roma x Mock		-0.03	-0.02		-0.10	-0.08
Roma x Hit		-0.00	-0.02		-0.06	-0.09
Roma x GPA		0.00	-0.00			
Roma x Sports		-0.03	-0.02		-0.02	-0.01
Boy x Mock			0.13			0.13*
Boy x Hit			-0.07			-0.02
Boy x Sports			-0.03*			-0.03
Boy x Looks			-0.24***			-0.28***
Smart				0.19***	0.22***	0.20***
Roma x Smart					-0.06	-0.05
Boy x Smart						0.05
Constant	0.56***	0.56***	0.54***	0.39***	0.38***	0.38***
N of observations	3005	3005	3005	3400	3400	3400
N of individuals	1113	1113	1113	1153	1153	1153
sigma_e	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10
sigma_u	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.13	0.13
r2_w	0.11	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.17
r2_b	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.54	0.51	0.46
r2_o	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.45	0.43	0.40

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

*C. Joint significance tests of the main and interaction effects***Table 7:** Joint significance tests for the popularity models (p-values)

	Model 2	Model 3	Model 5	Model 6
Mock (diff) + Roma x Mock (diff)	0.006	0.275	0.000	0.043
Mock (mean) + Roma x Mock (mean)	0.838	0.085	0.499	0.072
Hit (diff) + Roma x Hit (diff)	0.460	0.644	0.539	0.664
Hit (mean) + Roma x Hit (mean)	0.156	0.000	0.093	0.000
GPA (diff) + Roma x GPA (diff)	0.156	0.311	-	-
GPA (mean) + Roma x GPA (mean)	0.478	0.269	-	-
Sports (diff) + Roma x Sports (diff)	0.683	0.008	0.933	0.010
Sports (mean) + Roma x Sports (mean)	0.000	0.950	0.004	0.493
Mock (diff) + Boy x Mock (diff)	-	0.063	-	0.007
Mock (mean) + Boy x Mock (mean)	-	0.001	-	0.010
Hit (diff) + Boy x Hit (diff)	-	0.563	-	0.540
Hit (mean) + Boy x Hit (mean)	-	0.218	-	0.184
Sports (diff) + Boy x Sports (diff)	-	0.417	-	0.425
Sports (mean) + Boy x Sports (mean)	-	0.000	-	0.000
Looks (diff) + Boy x Looks (diff)	-	0.000	-	0.000
Looks (mean)+ Boy x Looks (mean)	-	0.000	-	0.000
Smart (diff) + Roma x Smart (diff)	-	-	0.000	0.000
Smart (mean) + Roma x Smart (mean)	-	-	0.196	0.601
Smart (diff) + Boy x Smart (diff)	-	-	-	0.000
Smart (mean)+ Boy x Smart (mean)	-	-	-	0.142

Table 8: Joint significance tests for the acceptance models (p-values)

	Model 2	Model 3	Model 5	Model 6
Mock (diff) + Roma x Mock (diff)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Mock (mean) + Roma x Mock (mean)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hit (diff) + Roma x Hit (diff)	0.016	0.153	0.002	0.030
Hit (mean) + Roma x Hit (mean)	0.033	0.545	0.130	0.802
GPA (diff) + Roma x GPA (diff)	0.000	0.004	-	-
GPA (mean) + Roma x GPA (mean)	0.000	0.000	-	-
Sports (diff) + Roma x Sports (diff)	0.518	0.080	0.271	0.065
Sports (mean) + Roma x Sports (mean)	0.337	0.954	0.356	0.842
Mock (diff) + Boy x Mock (diff)	-	0.003	-	0.099
Mock (mean) + Boy x Mock (mean)	-	0.000	-	0.000
Hit (diff) + Boy x Hit (diff)	-	0.012	-	0.045
Hit (mean) + Boy x Hit (mean)	-	0.916	-	0.786
Sports (diff) + Boy x Sports (diff)	-	0.591	-	0.446
Sports (mean) + Boy x Sports (mean)	-	0.371	-	0.691
Looks (diff) + Boy x Looks (diff)	-	0.000	-	0.502
Looks (mean)+ Boy x Looks (mean)	-	0.000	-	0.000
Smart (diff) + Roma x Smart (diff)	-	-	0.000	0.000
Smart (mean) + Roma x Smart (mean)	-	-	0.000	0.000
Smart (diff)+ Boy x Smart (diff)	-	-	-	0.000
Smart (mean)+ Boy x Smart (mean)	-	-	-	0.000

CHRISTINE STEINER *

**Bridge or Hurdle? Social Relationships in Preparatory Classes
and Beyond within German schools**

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* [steiner@dji.de] (Deutsches Jugendinstitut)

Abstract

The massive influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016, among them many school-aged children and youth, sped up the debate about Germany as a country of immigration, in particular about the fairness and social inclusiveness in the German school system. As in many other European countries, in Germany newly immigrated students without knowledge of German initially attend preparatory classes. The strong focus on learning German and the separation of the students from native-born peers are seen to hinder both their educational progress and social belonging within school. Based on data from a survey of newly arrived students conducted in 2018 and with regard to the students' well-being, this paper examines the question as to whether or not attending a preparatory class is an obstacle to integration within the school community. The findings show that immigrant students generally have a good relationship with their new classmates and teachers and feel well at school. Attending a preparatory class does lead to some restrictions, i.e., it limits the chance to establish friendships with native-born schoolmates. At the same time, there are also advantages connected with learning in separate learning environments.

Keywords: Immigrant Students, Schools, Preparatory Class, Peer Relations, Friendships.

1. Introduction

Today, many children and youth living in Europe have an immigration background, either because they have migrated themselves, or because they were born into an immigrant family. In Germany alone, in 2016 more than every third person aged six to fifteen had an immigrant background (Authoring Group Educational Reporting, 2018: 26). The majority belong to the second-generation immigrants, meaning they were born in Germany to parents who were born outside the country. However, in recent years the number of children and youth arriving in Germany has been increasing (von Dewitz et al., 2016: 10). To date the apex of this development was reached in 2015 and 2016 when immigrants fleeing from the civil wars zones in the Near and the Middle East, as well as in African countries, brought several hundreds of thousands of children and youth, many of them in a school age, seeking sanctuary in Germany. According to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, alone in the school year beginning in 2015 around 300,000 immigrant children and youth were enrolled in general and vocational schools; the majority, with up to 250,000 children and youth, were refugees (Standing Conference, 2016).

In most countries, these first-generation immigrant students perform worse than native students and second-generation immigrant students, the latter performing somewhere between the two (Rumbaut, 2004; OECD, 2015). Regarded to be among the main causes for this achievement gap are the families' limited or devalued resources due to the migration process; not only in an economic sense, but also, and in particular, culturally and socially (Heckmann, 2008: 23).

A common assumption is that, over time, their familiarity with the social and cultural conventions of the host country, and in particular the ability to use the national language, increases; and so, too, their sense of belonging to the majority culture. Such better cultural adaptation should affect the way in which parents care about their children's educational success and, in the end, lead to a better school performance, especially among second-generation immigrant students (Schüler, 2012: 3). Although there is some empirical evidence that these assimilation benefits are indeed helpful for the educational success, the results also indicate that the intergenerational differences do not follow the pattern of a straight-line assimilation (ibid.; Kao and Tienda, 1995). In particular, the studies on the so-called 'immigration paradox' made it clear that the developmental outcomes decrease the longer the immigrant children and youth have gotten acculturated in their host country (Marks et al., 2012). This is especially true if development outcomes like motivation and attitudes toward school are taken into account (Stanat and Christensen, 2006: 2). Based on their findings, Özek and Figlio suggest supporting newly arrived students intensively in their acclimatization in school, because this gives them the best chance to catch up with their peers (Özek and Figlio, 2016). However, with regard to the recent discussion, there are doubts that the widespread form of enrollment and schooling of newly immigrated children and youth in Germany delivers this kind of support. As in many other European countries, in Germany newly immigrated students without knowledge of German initially attend preparatory classes, lessons, or courses. They provide more time for

the teaching and learning of the language of instruction. However, both the strong focus on learning German and the separation of the students from native-born peers are seen to hinder their educational progress (European Commission, 2019).

This paper focuses on the social effects of learning in preparatory classes or lessons and is based on a survey of newly arrived students in lower secondary schools in Germany. The focus here is peer relations and peer acceptance, especially friendships with native-born classmates, as one of the most important factors for adapting to a new learning environment and for school-related well-being. Well-being is seen to be an important educational goal, as well as being a prerequisite for the students' further academic achievement. Therefore, the findings are a contribution to the social and educational policy debate about the potential positive and negative effects of preparatory classes and lessons.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Empirical Findings

Empirical results such as the 'Immigrant Paradox' have forcefully challenged the assumptions of traditional assimilation theories. Meanwhile, a range of new theoretical approaches are available, which are searching for adequate explanations for the persistent inequitable distribution of social opportunities and resources, even after long-term residency and intensive learning processes, and which suppose various courses of social integration. Berry's concept of an acculturation strategy (Berry, 1997), for example, is based on the assumption that according to the degree in which the culture of origin is maintained and relationships with other groups are taken up—in particular relationships with majority groups within the receiving communities—four different acculturation strategies will be probable: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. The more successful integration strategies are regarded to be those in which the cultural identity is maintained, but for which at the same time contact and participation with other cultural groups, including the receiving community itself, is typical. Such an interaction- and participation-oriented integration rests upon the idea of striving for equal opportunity, so that all members and social groups of a community might participate (Pries, 2015: 24). Accordingly, one can speak of social integration when social participation within community life and the formation of social, interethnic relationships has been made possible. Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012) have formulated this in a very similar way. In their study of the adaptation processes of youth both with and without a migration background within Greek schools, they center developmental tasks that apply for all youth in modern western societies. How good the youth are at school, whether or not they display behavior that is prosocial and conforms to the rules, if their peers like them and if they have friends—these are important indicators for a successful adaptation and for future processes of adaptation. From a theoretical perspective, the indicators can be accounted for either by the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2008), which has its origins in psychology; or by theories of social capital, which have arisen primarily within sociology. Both additionally shed light on the relationships among the indicators.

2.1 Self-Determination Theory and Well-Being

The self-determination theory is based on the assumption that human activity is motivated by an instinctive wish to understand the environment. This motivation is dependent on the degree to which the three psychological basic needs of competence, social relatedness and autonomy are thereby satisfied. It is assumed that such modes of behavior will be followed, and social relationships entered, that make possible the satisfaction of needs, and this leads both to an integration appropriate to the situation as well as to well-being. It is further assumed that the satisfaction of needs leads to an internalization of the actions' goals; the actors experience themselves as self-determining. When students experience learning as self-determined, this has positive effects for their experience of competence, their feeling of self-worth, and finally for their well-being and for their school performance as well (Vasteenkiste et al., 2004). Additionally, the well-being of the students supports their academic achievement at school (Roffey, 2012: 9). It is known that both the well-being of the students as well as their academic achievement (Fredricks and Eccles, 2002) depends on their ages, with a decline in both as their schooling continues. Some authors see the reason for this in the discrepancy between the developmental tasks in adolescence and the school's performance demands (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). Others trace the decline back to the change in learning context, for example owing to the transition from the elementary to the secondary school or because of having to repeat a year (Urdu and Midgley 2003, Vocker et al., 2019). Knoppick et al. (2015) have shown that for the transition to the secondary school, a decline in both the well-being at school and of the academic self-concept does exist, but mainly for the students transitioning to the *Gymnasium* (high school). In comparison, the students who moved to schools that were less focused on performance did not show any such decline, and to some extent even an improvement. All of the students exhibited greater contentment with their new schools. The authors explain this as resulting from the students' perception of the change in schools as being a new start, which they connected with hopeful expectations. This novelty-effect brings to mind the initial advantage of the first-generation immigrant students, which was described above. In comparison with their native-born peers, they demonstrate a more positive attitude concerning school, have higher aspirations and are more optimistic about the future. Max Weber already noted the positive effects of a simple change in context with respect to labor migration (Weber, 2005 (1930): 136–137).

2.2 Social Capital Approaches and School-Based Social Relationships

According to the self-determination theory, social relationships – especially close relationships such as romantic attachment or friendships – are not only essential for satisfying our need for relatedness; they also support our need for autonomy and competence. Thus, they are vital for self-determined action, and all the positive effects that are connected with it. The importance of social relationships has been noted in particular within sociology, through theories of social capital. For example, Coleman (1988) assumes that a high level of trust in the community

encourages an open exchange of information and mutual assistance, thereby improving the living conditions of the members of the community. In this way, trusting social relationships within the school, as well as among the students and their parents and the neighborhood contribute to the academic success of the students. Putnam (1993), too, emphasizes the advantages of close, trusting social relationships within a community. But he also notes the usefulness of relationships that transcend the group, which make possible access to social circles and resources that would not otherwise be available. Trusting and supporting social relationships are a core element of the school climate (Thapa et al., 2013: 363). A trusting, responsive school climate oriented toward participation supports not only the identification with the school; it also supports the students in their learning and well-being in the school. Such a school climate is considered to be especially important for ethnic minority students and students from poor families (ibid.). The factors listed above are also regarded as essential characteristics for fostering student-teacher relations, as well as parent-child relations (Agirdag et al., 2012: 1139). With respect to success at school, what is most beneficial is the parents' interest in school attendance, with attentive supervision and active support, for example through assistance with the completion of homework (Plunkett et al., 2008). The same thing applies for the parents' active involvement in the school; whereby, precisely for the immigrant parents there are enormous hurdles to overcome (Turney and Tao, 2009). Primarily seen as important for the exchange of information and ideas, classmates also provide help and support. Such respectful interactions strengthen the cohesion of the group of learners, of the class and the school community; and thereby support academic achievement (Furrer et al., 2014: 106). As explained above, it is also important that the children are appreciated and liked, and most important that they find friends. For children and youth, friendships play an extraordinary role in their lives. They are seen as the most important social relationship of their self-socialization, but also as the source of help and support. An outstanding role in this is played by the school. Between the ages of six and sixteen, friendships are primarily formed with classmates, with whom time is spent outside of school as well. These friendships are not just occupied with school matters, then, but also with issues connected with growing up, such as problems with the parents or romantic relationships. However, friendship is defined by its exclusivity. It is impossible to be friends with everyone. Additionally, friendships do not happen by chance. Rather, they are taken up between interaction partners who are similar in various ways – for example, with respect to sex, social position, level of education or even ethnic heritage. This structuring principle is called 'homophily' (McPherson, 2001). For young people with an immigration background, close friendships are often intra-ethnic relationships (Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009; Leszczensky and Pink, 2015). Winkler et al. (2011) have pointed out that not all relationships within a network of friends share the same intensity, some of them being more on the vague side. Drawing on Mark Granovetter's (1973) differentiation between strong and weak ties, findings show that the weaker relationships, which are nevertheless called friendships, are inter-ethnic relationships. According to Putnam's concept of social capital, inter-ethnic relationships, even if less intense, could be useful for both native and non-native students. Moreover, in terms of the strategies of

acculturation, they can be seen as an indicator of integration. Jugert et al. (2017) examined the effects of ethnic minority adolescents' ethnic self-identification on friendship choices, and show that a host country and dual identification is beneficial to friendships with both ethnic majority and minority peers. In contrast, heritage country identification was detrimental to relations with both of them.

2.3 School Attendance of Newly Immigrated Students in Germany

Children and youth who arrive in Germany with their families or on their own are generally required to attend school, independent of their residential status. Until what age they are required to attend school differs among the Länder, each Land being responsible for itself in deciding on the laws for this. In general, school attendance begins at the age of six, and the requirement for full-time attendance ends as a rule when the child turns 16. School attendance should follow quickly, usually no later than three months after arriving. This also applies for children of those seeking asylum, or children and youth who apply for asylum themselves. However, the waiting period to attend school is often longer, among other reasons because school attendance in some Länder only begins after leaving the reception centers and having been assigned to a particular locality (Lewerk and Naber, 2017: 39). Enrollment of the children and youth is through the local school authorities or the local integration centers. Again, the residential status is not relevant, but rather the ability to work in the language of instruction, as well as additional criteria such as the previous schooling. Within the schools themselves, there are various possibilities for taking in the newly immigrated students who have not yet learned German. In addition to the direct placement in a regular classroom and additional support with German, there might be preparatory classes that permit a gradual participation in the regular classroom or a transition to the regular class at a particular time (Terhart et al., 2017: 239). Preparatory classes are thus a central element in the education of newly immigrated students who do not know German. There has been a large increase in their numbers over the course of the past few years, owing to the large number of newly immigrated minors in all of the German Länder (Authoring Group Educational Reporting, 2018: 93). Preparatory classes have been available in Germany since the 1960s. They were set up as a result of educational policy debates concerning what forms of education the children of the so-called guest workers should receive. Their parents had been recruited to work in Germany and came from countries in Southern Europe, but in particular from Turkey. The question became pressing once the families were permitted to move to Germany. Their establishment is to be judged as advantageous with respect to opportunities for integration. Even if they owe their existence to the intervention of the EU, they make access to the regular school system possible for children with a migration background (Radtke, 2004: 635). Controversial at the time, however, was the organizational structure, the content of the lessons, as well as the educational goals in these classes (Boos-Nünning and Schwarz, 2004). Overall, it is the same today. In addition, very little is known about what the students are gaining by attending preparatory classes, and what is made possible for them in and beyond the school through their attendance (Brüggemann and Nicolai, 2016).

Only in the last few years have the preparatory classes (again) attracted greater attention. A few details about them were included in the national educational report. In addition, several research findings are available. There are now indications that preparatory classes are not evenly spread across all school forms. In school systems that differentiate performance, the classes appear to be primarily a part of less-demanding academic tracks (Kemper, 2016). Since these schools have a high percentage of youth with an immigration background, one can suppose that by taking in the newly immigrated children, the ethnic segregation between the schools has increased. Possibly contributing to this inequality are informal, pragmatic regulatory practices such as the assignment of refugee children and youth to schools near their place of residence (Baier and Siegert, 2018, for a general review Eule, 2016). Newly arrived families usually live in the neighborhoods that are open to them, under consideration of their limited financial means due to their uncertain residency rights (Helbig and Jähnen, 2019).

Although some findings show that the majority of schools have set up preparatory classes, the pedagogical practice is observed to be directed at integration (Otto et al., 2016). Thus, there are schools in which the models mentioned above are combined in order to have more options to support students. In particular, the extra-curricular activities are seen as both an opportunity to bond with native-born classmates and to offer additional support for learning. These activities are open to all students as a rule. In many schools additional offerings were put together specifically to support the newly arrived through group activities together with students already enrolled, such as peer-to-peer mentoring.

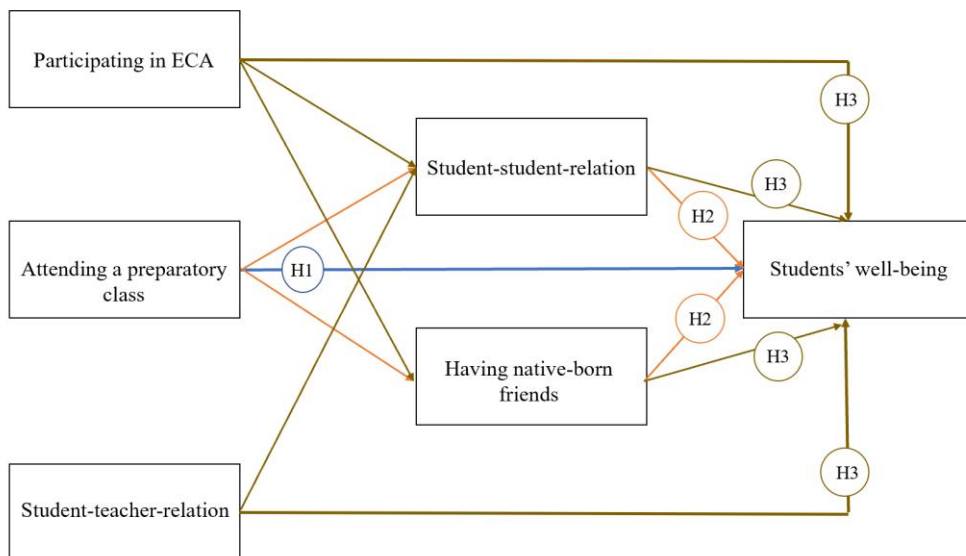
Finally, volunteers and refugee initiatives have also found their way into the schools in order to support the new immigrants, especially refugee youth, both in and outside of the school. The most recent immigration, with its many refugees, has led to an intense and often controversial public discussion in Germany, as it has in other European countries. However, the acceptance of the refugees (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017) and the commitment to helping them has remained comparatively high (Karakayali, 2016). Relatively few results are available detailing how the newly immigrated students assess their educational situation. The students in these classes were often unable to evaluate the meaning of attending these courses for themselves personally. The content of the lessons was perceived as not demanding enough (Barth and Guerrero Menesses, 2012: 7). Schmiedebach and Wegner (2019) report that learning in a regular class is perceived by the immigrant students as more frustrating and boring and there is a greater fear of speaking. With regard to social integration, the findings from Steinmann (2016) show that children and youth mostly structure their everyday interactions according to their gender, but also according to their ethnicity or social affiliation. In addition to this, tendencies to draw institutional and individual lines vis-à-vis the refugee students were observed. Refugees who attended preparatory classes also stayed together for everyday practices, such as eating lunch, because of the school's rules. Thus, an exchange with other classmates was no longer possible.

3. Methods

3.1 Research questions and hypotheses

Children and young people from abroad face a number of challenges with regard to schooling in the host country, for example, the new language, new teaching content and, last but not least, new classmates and teachers. There are different ways in which newly immigrated students can be integrated into the school community and participate in learning processes. However, there are doubts as to whether the preparatory class attendance, which is widespread in Germany, will succeed. The (temporary) separation of the students from their schoolmates is seen as a difficult hurdle for their social integration within the school community.

Figure 1: Hypothesized relations between Attending a preparatory class, Participation in extracurricular activities, Students' social relationships and perceived Well-being



Therefore, this paper asks the question if the attendance in a preparatory class indeed hinders the social integration of the newly immigrated students within their new school community. If so, the attendance in a preparatory class should have a direct negative effect on students' well-being in the school (hypothesis 1). However, since attending a preparatory class is linked to a limited social bonding, this effect on students' well-being should at least partly be mediated by the perceived quality of the student-student relation and the chances to develop friendships with native-born friends in school (hypothesis 2). Participation in extracurricular activities and a positive student-teacher relation should support and improve the students' relationships and also have an immediate positive effect on students' well-being (hypothesis 3).

Attending a preparatory class thus combines both a temporal and a performance-based differentiation, which could be linked to two different effects on well-being in school. Therefore, the time a student has spent in the current

school is included in the model, and there are indicators for gender and the families' social or educational background as well. Gender as well as the families' educational background are linked to both, finding friends and students' well-being.

3.2 Participants

The participants consisted of 694 students from 67 lower secondary public schools in four German Länder. With the exception of the grammar schools and the schools for special needs education, all the school types available in Germany are included in the sample. All participants had come since 2015, arriving with almost no knowledge of German, and had been attending school in Germany since then. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2018. It was a standardized multi-thematic survey and took place within the school. In addition to the migration and present personal circumstances, the students were asked to provide information about various aspects of their education to date and about their current school as well as their private situation. Among the questions were ones concerning their relationships with their classmates and the educational staff, as well as ones about existing friendships with their classmates. The students could use a questionnaire in German, English, French, Spanish, Arabic or Farsi. At 53.8 per cent, about half of those surveyed used the German version; around every third student (35.8 per cent) answered in Arabic or Farsi; everyone else in one of the remaining languages.

Of the participants, girls and boys participated in almost equal measure (47.8 vs. 52.2 per cent). Students between the ages of ten and nineteen took part; the average age was 15.2 years. With about two-thirds (65.0 per cent) the majority of the young people came from refugee regions in the Near and Mid-East or Africa, one in five (19.3 per cent) coming from an EU-28 country, 8.7 per cent from other European countries and 7.0 per cent from other countries. Almost 73.0 per cent of those surveyed who are not from one of the EU-28 member states, said that their parents, or they themselves, had officially asked for asylum. The vast majority (87.0 per cent) arrived in Germany with at least one parent; nevertheless, 9.0 per cent came without parents, but with relatives or an unrelated person. However, 4.0 per cent of the participants arrived alone.

The students' information was supplemented by data from the 67 schools' principals, who, together with principals from other schools, had been asked about the integration of the newly arrived students at their schools one year before. According to the information provided by the principals, 68.7 per cent of these schools offer different school tracks within the school. Students can achieve different types of diplomas, according to the tracks they are in and their school performance. The average proportion of students with an immigrant background within these schools is 19.2 per cent (SD=24.0 per cent).

3.3 Data Analyses

For analyses, a structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted to analyze the impact of preparatory class attendance on social relationships within the school

and on the well-being of newly arrived students. The model allows the simultaneous examination of multiple mediational paths. The direct and indirect associations are all examined in one model. Therefore, all variables were z-transformed. The MLR with missing values-option was used to deal with missing values. A multi-level model was not implemented due to the small ICC (0.07). Due to the clustered data structure, the standard errors were corrected with robust standard errors clustered for 67 schools.

3.4 Variables

Students' Well-being (independent variable) (WB): Students' well-being was measured using a 3-item self-report scale. It includes statements like 'I feel comfortable in this school.' There were four possible answers ranging from 'does not apply at all' (4) to 'applies completely' (4). The scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha = .76. The mean score is 3.22 (SD=0.69) (see Table 1).

Attending a preparatory class (PC): It is difficult to ask students about organizational characteristics of their school. That is even more the case when newly arrived students are surveyed and different models of schooling are used. To make it clear but at the same time keep it simple, the participant was presented the question 'Are all of your classmates recently arrived to the school from another country, like you?' (yes/no). If the answer to this question is 'yes' the student count as attending a preparatory class (yes (1) = 60.3 per cent).

Time spent in the current school (DUR): When the survey was conducted, a part of the participants had already been enrolled for one year or longer in the school. Based on the students' information about the year of enrollment, this variable differs between students who enrolled before 2017 and during 2017 and 2018 (44.9 per cent).

Participation in extracurricular activities (ECA2): As mentioned above, the participation in school-based extracurricular activities is seen as an opportunity to bond with schoolmates and to find friend among them. Such activities usually take place in the afternoon. A student who stays in school at least one day per week in the afternoon and attends at least in one offering (i.e. sport clubs, additional courses) counts as a participant. Among the participants, more than half (55.8 per cent) are using additional offerings.

Having native-born friends (FRIENDS): For the purpose of this paper, it is not important how many friends a student has, how ethnically diverse their group of friends is or how close their relation is. According to social capital approaches, it is important to have at least one inter-ethnic relationship because of their potential to function as a 'social bridge'. Nearly every student reported to have friends in school. Not everybody had a native-born friend, but with 70.5 per cent the majority of the participants did. Included in this proportion are students who could not report the ethnic origin of their friend(s). This decision was made due to the similarities to clearly noticeable German friends regarding, for example, received support or the links with well-being.

Table: Descriptive Statistics for Variables, Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviation (SD)

	N	Mean or in %	SD
Students' well-being (WB)	682	3.22	0.69
Attending a preparatory class (PC)	662	43.7 %	—
Time spent in the current school (DUR) (1= since 2017)	644	44.9 %	
Participation in extracurricular activities (1= yes)	694	55.8 %	
Having native-born friends (FRIENDS) (1= yes)	662	70.5 %	
Student-Student-Relation (SSR)	680	2.71	0.59
Student-Teacher-Relation (STR)	675	3.56	0.51
Academic Background (AB) (1= at least one parent with a completed academic education)	694	24.2 %	
Gender (GIRLS) (1= girls)	691	47.8 %	

Student-Student Relation (SSR): The measurement of the quality of a student-student relation is based on five items. It includes statements like 'My classmates listen to me.', 'My classmates help me.', but also 'My classmates tease me.' There were four possible answers ranging from 'applies completely' (1) to 'does not apply at all' (4). For scaling, items like the latter one were inverted (Cronbach's alpha =.72). The mean score is 2.71 (SD=0.59).

Student-Teacher Relation (STR): A scale consisting of four items measures the student-teacher-relation. 'My teachers take me seriously.' is an example for the statements that were used. The scale has the same range as the scales described above. The mean score is 3.56 (SD=0.51) (Cronbach's alpha=.67).

Gender (GIRLS): According to Hascher (2004), gender plays a crucial role for students well-being. The proportion of girl within the sample was already reported above.

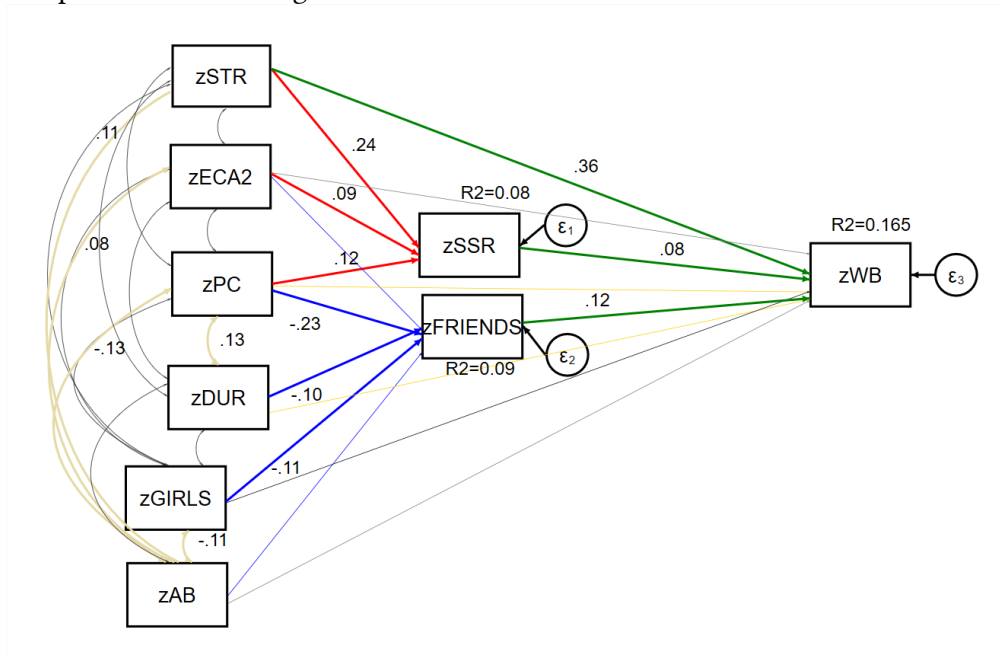
Academic background (AB): According to the students' reports, in nearly every fourth family (24.2 per cent) the mother or the father had completed an academic education.

4. Findings

As the mean score for the self-reported well-being indicates, the newly arrived students feel, overall, quite well in the new school environment. This seems to be in clear contrast to the expectation that the attendance in a preparatory class is linked to reduced well-being (hypothesis 1). According to the findings mentioned above concerning the decrease in well-being with as time spent at school increases on the other hand, it can be assumed that students who have only recently arrived

at the school feel more comfortable there than youth who have been at the current school over a longer period of time. As can be seen in figure 2, it makes no difference whether or not the student attended a preparatory class, or not or how long the student has already attended this school. Both variables—highlighted in yellow—have no direct impact on the well-being of the students. Other than expected, there is no immediate effect of the preparatory class on students' well-being.

Figure 2: Impact of preparatory class on school-based social relations and students self-perceived well-being



z=standardized variables; zSTR= Student-Teacher-Relation; zECA2= Participation in extracurricular activities; zPC=Attending a preparatory class; zDUR=Time spent in the current school; zGIRLS=Gender; zAB= Academic Background; zSSR= Student-Student-Relation; zFRIENDS= Having native-born friends; zWB= Well-being

CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.046, N=694; Thin lines are non-significant paths.

In addition, neither participation in extracurricular activities nor gender or the parents' educational background affects students' well-being in school. What is highly relevant are social relationships within the school (highlighted in green). This is true for the relationships with other students and teachers as well as the friendships with native-born classmates. They all significantly contribute to the students' well-being. It is presumed that attending a preparatory class is linked to limited social bonding and this has an effect on students' well-being (hypothesis 2). There are indeed two effects of attending a preparatory class on students' relations. Firstly, attending a preparatory class has a positive impact on the student-student relation (β : .12) (highlighted in red). Furthermore, the student-

student relation is also shaped by participation in extracurricular activities (β : .09), but especially by the student-teacher relation (β : .24). Since there are no mediating effects due to the non-significant main effect for participation in extracurricular activities and attending a preparatory class, the student-teacher relation has not only an enormous immediate impact on students' well-being (β : .36), but a mediated positive effect on the student-student-relation (β : .02 (SE: 0.1), $p <= 0.05$).

Secondly, attending a preparatory class has a negative effect on immigrant students' potential for friendships with native-born students (β : -.23) (highlighted in blue). This is not the result of the limited time the students in preparatory classes have usually spent in the current school. The time span is taken into account in the model. Unsurprisingly, the results show that new immigrant students have (more) friendships with native-born classmates the longer they have been attending the current school (β : -.10). In addition, there is an indirect effect of time spent at school on friendships with native-born schoolmates. This effect indicates that to be the new kid in school is a hurdle for friendships with native schoolmates and that as a result the student's individual well-being is reduced (β : -.01 (SE: 0.01), $p <= 0.03$). More surprising is that it is less likely for girls to have native-born friends (β : -.11), also with a negative indirect effect on well-being (β : -.01 (SE: 0.01), $p <= 0.03$). In contrast, the participation in extracurricular activities does not support the establishment of friendships. The same applies to family's educational background. In sum, there is only small evidence in favor for hypothesis 2 and 3. With regard to hypothesis 2, the results show that the preparatory classes limit the opportunities to develop friendships with native-born peers, but do not limit social bonding. The restrictions on making friends reduce the students' well-being, but this restriction itself is due to time and gender, not the class context. With regard to hypothesis 3, it should be noted that the positive effect of the student-teacher-relation on students well-being is partly mediated by the student-student relation.

There is a negative correlation between attending a preparatory class and the educational background of the parental home as well as a positive correlation with gender of the students. Students from families in which at least one parent has a university degree are less likely to attend a preparatory class. This also applies to the girls, whose mothers or fathers have an academic background. That could be seen as an indicator for a socially unequal practice in regard to attending a preparatory class or participation in (more) regular learning environments. The findings discussed above are based on a model with an acceptable quality (CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.046, N=694). All discussed findings are significant at least at $p <= 0.05$.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In Germany, as well as in other European countries, students with an immigration background are facing severe educational disadvantages. This is especially true for first-generation students and in a country with a highly stratified school system like Germany, where immigrant students often learn in less demanding school tracks within schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This explains the concern about an even greater social segregation through the newest immigration—and

this could still happen. This paper does not examine the educational progress of the newly arrived students, but rather their social integration within the regular school system. That the new immigrant students generally feel well at school and have good relationships with their new classmates is, therefore, a finding that deserves to be appreciated. It is also in line with what teachers and pedagogical practitioners have been experiencing over the past few years. Nevertheless, there are some remarkable differences. First, learning in preparatory classes correlates positively with the quality of the student-student relation on the one hand, and negatively with friendships with German classmates on the other hand. This could indicate that not only the learning, but also the social relationships are strongly geared to the preparatory class. Although positive social relationships between students contribute to their well-being, the restrictions on being able to make friends with German classmates are limiting the well-being at the same time. It seems that social bonding among the classmates within a preparatory class is actively supported by the school. With a view to the positive effect of participating in extra-curricular activities on the student-student relation, it could be assumed that schools are actively trying to turn a rather random class into a social group and a positive learning environment. However, because preparatory class is designed as temporary, such social grouping could become problematic during the future transition to a (more) regular setting. Furthermore, the findings suggest that sorting the new immigrant students in preparatory classes seems to follow the well-known pattern of inequality. Whether a student attends a preparatory or regular class seems to depend on their parents' educational backgrounds. Given the data this paper is based on, it is unfortunately not possible to explore the consequences for the social composition of the student body in these classes. Above all, friendships with German students and good relationships with the teachers strengthen the well-being of the new immigrant students in the school. Considering that the well-being of students at school is a prerequisite for the learning success of the students, there are (possible) disadvantages as well as advantages connected with separate learning environments.

6. Limitations

In organizing and conducting the survey, both the school management and the newly immigrated students were given the best possible support. Due both to the very different distribution of newly arrived families (especially those with a refugee background) across the German Länder, as well as to the very different types of schooling and learning contexts, there are spacing and timing effects that appear. These not only limit the analysis options but also might have had an influence on the response behavior of the students. Furthermore, the well-being used in the study aims at individual satisfaction with the school. Students tend to rate school satisfaction quite well. In any case, with this concept, the multidimensionality of well-being is not taken into account.

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Book Review

Vincent, Carol, Neal, Sarah, and Iqbal, Humera (2019) *Friendship and Diversity: Class, Ethnicity and Social Relationships in the City*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. 243 pages.

Sociological and educational inquiries have long been attempting to understand the role of schools in reproducing difference and inequality in society, as well as their potential to transform or negotiate dominating power structures on the micro-level. Schools are embedded in their larger contexts that make them often filled with controversies and dilemmas (e.g. Bunar, 2011); they are platforms conditioned by the structural and societal, but also contain the lived experience of children and adults who inhabit them. These tensions are clear for those exploring diversity and inequalities in schools (e.g. Abu El-Haj, 2006; Gynne et al., 2017; Watkins and Noble, 2019), instead of a number of educational and political agendas condition diversity, children, parents and school staff are key social actors to accept, negotiate or transform dominating views on difference and normality. As socio-political agendas, educational policies, and local communities constantly change over time, responses in schools remain relevant for the investigation of these mechanisms. Carol Vincent, Sarah Neal and Humera Iqbal continue to explore this fundamental question in *Friendship and Diversity: Class, Ethnicity and Social Relationships in the City*. Looking at three socially and ethnically mixed primary schools in urban London, the authors set out to explore children's and adults' friendship practices, and the nuanced ways they dynamically conform to or disrupt social ordering. Looking at the overarching themes of the book, this volume brings in some new perspectives for those interested in multicultural, inequalities in education and society, and individuals' agency and lived experience.

The first three chapters introduce the main theoretical and methodological concepts and perspectives of this research. From the fourth chapter onwards, readers become familiar with the findings of the study organised thematically along children's friendship practices, school staff and adults' interventions in managing children's social networks, friendship practices that reach beyond the school context, and parents' friendship practices. Chapter 1 and 2 describe the main theoretical perspectives applied in the study. Here we also find a literature review and the authors' take on friendship, conviviality and encounters in urban and multicultural cities, super-diversity, habitus, and school as a space of 'urban change and everyday social relationships' (68).

Chapter 3 informs readers about the methodological aspects of their research. The authors developed a classic in-depth qualitative study that is mainly built on interviews and observations. The interviews were conducted both individually and in pairs, which gave richness to the interview data. Although the authors do not identify their study as ethnography, they make hints that their observation (one intensive term in Year 4 classes) had an 'ethnographic inflection'

and was methodologically conceptualised as ‘focused ethnographic engagement’ (18). Rather than segmenting datasets, Vincent and colleagues’ approach is to treat data holistically, to triangulate the rich perspectives from children’s, parents’ and school practitioners’ experiences, which adequately allows for portraying school life as an integrated social world. Yet the reader may wonder what alternative methodological possibilities the datasets might offer. For example, the interviews in pairs might bring in a different light to how children positioned themselves or talked about their friendship experiences in a social situation when analysing conversational data. An interesting fact is that children’s drawings about their social networks were also collected, and then aggregated into one classroom scenario as part of the class descriptions (101–103). It might be relevant to incorporate children’s own visual representation in the analysis, and to contrast and compare children’s expressions about friendship through visual means, too.

We read about children’s friendship practices at school in Chapter 4. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal show that children recognised and reflected on difference, and they also mixed frequently across ethnicity. However, this mixing was much less prominent across gender, disability, class and religion. Therefore, we also get an insight into how certain school routines and activities (e.g. playground games, sport activities, etc.) reinforce cultural and social divisions. The authors highlight children’s agency in forming their friendship circles, and the importance of context in how fluidly they related to difference. Ethnicity and class played different roles in different situations in their everyday school life. It is an interesting finding that all children reported a certain level of unease and insecurity about their friendships, and that they all expressed a ‘desire for inclusion’ and ‘uncertainty around the security of that inclusion’ (91). This important insight alerts parents and school staff to take into consideration, and indeed a warning to take into account all children’s experiences with friendships seriously, including the legitimacy of their fears and insecurities, and possibly provide support in balancing these dilemmas.

Chapter 5 then turns to exploring teachers’ and parents’ roles in managing children’s friendships. Regarding school staff, their perception of children’s friendship corresponded well with children’s accounts, yet their active position in supporting social interactions seemed to be limited. This was often explained by other obligations of teaching and school life, and partly by the assumption that children develop ‘light and flexible relationships’ (123–124). They also perceived some children as more capable of forming social relations, and others as having problems, with the latter receiving more attention and intervention. This is an important insight for education professionals and researchers, and an encouragement to critically monitor how being ‘socially capable’ can form a type of dominant normality that impacts the ways school staff may think about their students. Furthermore, it also raises awareness for the need to implement more inclusive and sustained approaches to supporting all children’s social relations rather than simply managing ‘problematic’ cases. Regarding parents, they all welcomed diversity in the schools, yet not many preferred their children to have friends from a diversity of peers, and they strongly exhibited a tendency towards homophily (123). This finding is somewhat in contrast with children’s practices,

who seemed to be more at ease with heterogeneity and difference, at least in terms of ethnicity. Parents had a strong role in organising children's out-of-school life. Thus, children's friendships reaching beyond school were often conditioned by parents' views, dilemmas and opportunities to manage children's friendships.

The authors embark on exploring the school as an avenue of starting friendships, and how it facilitates social interactions to continue in out-of-school environments in Chapter 6. They show how the schools operated as a social resource (153), and bridged boundaries between institutional and non-institutional contexts. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal here expand on how social encounters in school are different from other places in the urban city since children and adults interact on the basis of habitual school practices, moreover they engage with the common education commodity, and this condition allows for encounters to transform into sustained social networks outside school. Almost all parents formed social networks beyond the school, yet with varying degree and intensity. Their encounters took place in other places of the neighbourhood, such as cafés, parks, and in their homes. While local parks seemed to be socially and ethnically more mixed sites (Neal et al., 2015), groups of people walking on the streets together to school, and adult friends visiting cafés were highly divided socially. Home-based friendship practices seemed to be divided even more, as they were usually seen as a site of difference and were managed with ambivalence and complexity or were simply avoided (168). While some parents did not prefer their children to visit other parents' homes, on the requests of children some made active efforts in negotiating their anxieties, and let children go or invite others to their own homes. Showing these complexities, the authors argue that schools can be socially productive sites, yet they do reproduce social inequalities too (156).

In Chapter 7 we continue learning more about parents' friendship practices. The authors describe a continuum in understanding how adults can refuse difference, accept homophily and be reflexive about it, and enable relationships across difference. Almost all participants acknowledged, appreciated and identified with diversity as a common feature of their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, when it came to their own attitudes and actions, there was a range of responses on the continuum. While only a minority refused diversity, most parents accepted homophily. This acceptance, however, seemed to be a result of either avoiding reflection on homophily and difference, or critically reflecting and yet taking actions that drive friendships to comfortable homophily. A small group of parents were described as enablers, those actively seeking opportunities to cross social and ethnic boundaries. However, this was often an emotionally laborious task for the enablers. Reproduced divisions in parent friendships were also related to 'the different degrees of privilege and social resources that different networks bring' (198–199) to school life. Parent-Teacher Associations were clear examples that had White-British parents in their governing bodies. This again may carry some implications for schools. There seems to be a need for opening up the school space and think about not only the inclusion and exclusion of children in school life, but equally, of parents. If schools operate with a whole-school vision that involves children, school staff and parents in education, this may potentially also enable adults to feel more comfortable with difference, and cross social divides.

Organising events collaboratively and providing equal opportunities for all parents to participate in school activities and decision-making about schooling would be crucial steps in reaching this vision.

The main themes of everyday multiculturalism, social inequalities and agency are brought together dynamically in *Friendship and Diversity*. The idea of diversity and multiculturalism has been long introduced to and proliferated in the research landscape of the social sciences. Perspectives, epistemological and ontological stances are numerous, and the multicultural even today remains a contested conceptual idea, a 'floating signifier' (Bhabha, 1996). While Vincent, Neal and Iqbal's main focus is not solely on the multicultural, they return to interrogate diversity in the urban space by applying Vertovec's (2007) concept of 'super-diversity'. Since its first appearance, this notion received immense popularity among scholars of migration, language, culture and diversity studies as a relevant concept frequently used to describe current conditions of diversity, but not without critique. For example, in the field of sociolinguistics, Pavlenko (2018) critically examined the concept's meaningfulness and contested its dominant position in academic knowledge building. By mobilising this construct, Vincent and colleagues' interpretation is similar to the original idea of super-diversity being a descriptor for signalling social complexity, contemporary plurality and intersectionalities of the multicultural, especially in those urban areas where gentrification appears. In the words of the authors, it is applied to 'describe localities' and 'dynamic processes of change, the fluidity of local populations' (37). While the analysis explicitly focuses on social class and ethnicity, research participants' accounts also attest to the interactions between migration experience, religion and language background in children's and adults' friendship practices in and out of school. Importantly, the authors also point out that diversity is not a 'flat' concept, but that structural inequalities impact the multicultural idea. As they put it, 'diversity is hierarchical, structured and graded, not flat, and our understanding of how conviviality works must take social inequality into account' (49). With these views, the authors combine approaches from, on the one hand, the 'everyday multiculturalism' stream that zooms into the dynamic production of cultural differences and the interaction of social relations and identities in the process (Arasaratnam, 2013: 817); and, on the other hand, structural critique that carefully maps children's and adults' opportunities and experiences with the friendship circles they are involved in, or are excluded from, on the basis of class and ethnicity. With a constant attention to triangulating the personal and the structural dimension of friendship, the notion of super-diversity in Vincent and colleagues' work remain meaningful, and they add a new perspective to discussing the multicultural in contemporary times.

Another key theme of the book is interrogating the possibilities of individuals and human collectivities in disrupting usually dominating socially and ethnically divided practices in school and society. Following Bourdieu's work on the habitus (1999), and expanding on Borrero's (2009) interpretation on the tendency towards homophily (sameness) in habitus, the authors map out the possibilities and constraints that friendships in socially and ethnically mixed urban schools may carry. They argue that although a tendency towards homophily still

exists, children and adults can take different positions, attitudes, reflections and actions towards the established norm. They specifically take friendship as a meso-level sociological construct when exploring both the multicultural idea, and more dominantly, the positions taken towards social norms. Friendship as a mediating concept between the micro and the macro-structural levels (and not as a psychological concept) is indeed a much-needed fresh perspective in the field of social inequalities and diversity. This angle is important in finding new focal points of inquiry for the literature on social inequalities and diversity in school. It is also valuable in moving beyond both naïve assumptions about the ultimate power of individual agency and intercultural relations, and pessimistic determinations about the inevitable role of dominating power structures in personal lives. Vincent, Neal and Iqbal carefully navigate through the chapters to show multiple facets of friendship practices, and the ambiguities and dilemmas children and adults have when relating to difference. They emphasise tensions and complexities in limiting as well as allowing for social transformation, rather than presenting clear-cut solutions. They present their main findings by portraying specific examples from children's and adults' everyday life, while also making it clear that the illustrative personal narratives may not stand for the whole group with which the participants identified.

Multiculturalism, structural inequalities and individual lived experience are weaved through the book in the particular site of schools. The authors take a stand that schools can spark social transformation when looking through the lenses of friendship. Schools are understood rather from a sociological point of view and are taken as a platform to explore social relations and their connections to the proximate social worlds. Vincent et al. argue that schools are specifically potential places of transformation, since unlike in other places of the urban city, here children and adults do not only repeatedly meet, but also engage in education which is a 'shared social good' (68). This way, schools are places of 'shared, situated and embedded social "commons", generative of invested and affective social interaction' (23). As the book demonstrates, the school space ignites social interactions that reach beyond the school environment to home and to the larger neighbourhood, yet the often classed nature of these relations is also evident.

Friendship and Diversity offers valuable insights for researchers in sociology, education and the multicultural, and it also has practical implications for schools and educational professionals (even though the educational output is less highlighted in the book). By combining several research fields that may not often communicate with each other and adding new perspectives to respond to some long-sought questions of school research, this book continues to stir meaningful conversations about diversity, schools, and power.

NIKOLETT SZELEI

UIDEF, Instituto de Educação, Universidade de Lisboa

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**JUDIT ZSUZSANNA KELLER
AND ALEXANDRA SZÓKE ***
A Sure Start? Implementing Early Childhood Prevention
Programs under Structural Constraints

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* [keller.judit@krtk.mta.hu] (Centre for Economic and Regional Studies); [szoke.alexandra@krtk.mta.hu] (Centre for Economic and Regional Studies)

Abstract

Early childhood prevention programs, fueled by the idea of social investment, have been the focus of policy making for a few decades in Europe and the USA. Amongst these, the Sure Start program in Hungary has evolved into a nationwide service incorporated into the child welfare system. The program aims to combat social exclusion and compensate unequal opportunities related to socio-spatial inequalities through providing assistance, developmental intervention, and social activities to families. The article examines the socio-spatial consequences of the program by bringing together an analysis of the current regulatory and financial framework and the everyday working of several Sure Start houses in different parts of the country. The analysis relies on the findings of two post-doctoral research projects (NRDIO PD 112659 and Premium PD 3300405), combining sociological and anthropological fieldwork in three settlements. The study reveals that the current institutional structure is based on structural deficiencies and institutional asymmetries characterized by the disproportionate allocation of resources and obligations for Sure Start houses. This results in large differences regarding the implementation of the program in different localities, which are largely influenced by the positionality of the settlements, as well as the resources that the maintainers of the service can draw on. The article argues that in its current form the program appears to strengthen rather than alleviate socio-spatial inequalities, as it is exactly the most disadvantaged remote rural places that lack the resources that would be needed to compensate for their multiple disadvantages.

Keywords: early childhood prevention, Sure Start, social investment policy, street-level bureaucrats, socio-spatial inequalities.

1. Introduction

The past decades have seen a growing interest in policies concerning children's well-being which have materialized in various national and EU programs (see e.g. 'Investing in Children – Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage' Cohesion package 2014-2020; and 'Give Kids a Chance' Hungarian National Program 2009). In many countries, including Hungary, this has been paralleled with an increase in the importance awarded to early childhood development and prevention (see Danis et al., 2011). Consequently, early childhood education and prevention programs have emerged in various places as important measures for tackling social problems such as segregation, poverty, and unequal opportunities (e.g. Head Start in the USA, and Sure Start programs in the UK and later in Hungary). These have appeared particularly attractive to policy makers based on the premise that investing in early childhood development in the long term will cost less than other measures designed to correct problems at later stages of life (such as unemployment schemes, poverty alleviation programs, and criminal correction programs). Early childhood prevention has also become an important part of welfare provision in Hungary.

This study scrutinizes the opportunity structure that the existing institutional framework presents for Sure Start houses through a study of varying forms of implementation of the latter in three Hungarian settlements. It argues that the current institutional framework is weakly institutionalized and biased in ways that: lead to the allocation of a disproportionately small amount of resources for Sure Start houses compared to the tasks assigned them; systematically disinvests in welfare provisions; and constrains small settlements' capacities to mobilize resources. The weak institutional environment refers to the selective enforcement of rules regarding Sure Start provisions: qualitative standards relating to service provision are weakly enforceable, while administrative standards are easily enforced through bureaucratic checklists.

The study of these institutional aspects and how they can influence local implementations is expected to inform us about the fulfillment of the service's stated goals. By examining institutional constraints and opportunities both at the level of national regulations and local level of actual implementation, our study furthers current understanding of the complex effects of early childhood welfare service provisions. It does so by highlighting the importance of local actors (street-level bureaucrats) as well as the spatial embeddedness of policy making. While our analysis is informed by familiarity with numerous Sure Start houses that was obtained through shorter research visits over the past few years, the current article discusses the three chosen cases in more depth, drawing on extensive sociological and anthropological research in three settlements: a small village of 2000 inhabitants in one of the most disadvantaged districts of North-East Hungary; a sociologically and ethnically mixed district in Budapest with accumulated social problems; and the Roma segregated neighborhood of a small town of 5000 inhabitants located within the agglomeration of the capital. The cases represent three contrasting examples regarding the capacities of local service providers to guarantee high quality Sure Start services. Not only are the different localities positioned in the socio-spatial landscape of the country very differently (albeit

they are all considered disadvantaged to varying degrees), but the service is maintained by a different type of institutional provider in each settlement. Our analysis shows that both aspects significantly influence the opportunities of local implementers to navigate within the current regulatory and institutional frames, leading to large variation in the organization and quality of the service.

2. Conceptual framework

Since the turn of the millennium, the social investment paradigm has become the cornerstone of European social inclusion strategies and welfare state reforms. The new welfare state model has emphasized the need to change welfare systems from ex-post compensation schemes to 'ex-ante capacitating interventions' in response to the new social risks of the post-industrial age, such as precarious employment, youth unemployment, single parenthood and the difficulties of work-life balance (Hemerijck, 2018). Instead of *equality here and now*, social investment policies focus on equalizing opportunity structure and life chances and are thus directed towards the future and children (Esping-Andersen, 2015; Hemerijck, 2018).

Welfare reforms aimed at equalizing life chances have historically considered schools and public education as a means of promoting social mobility (Esping-Andersen, 2015). Extensive research in cognitive psychology, economics, and sociology has however called attention to the fact that the shadow of family background is cast over even the most equitable educational reforms, and high-quality pre-school services are far more effective at equalizing the opportunity structure (Esping-Andersen, 2015). By the time children 'reach' public education (i.e. at six–seven years old), discrepancies between children of different socio-economic background regarding their learning capacities and social skills can be so substantial that not even the best prepared schools with a value-added pedagogical background can *equalize* them (Esping-Andersen, 2015; Heckmann, 2000). This calls attention to the decisive role of early childhood development in educational attainment and life chances (see Esping-Andersen, 2015; Heckmann, 2000). According to Heckmann's *learning begets learning* model, the first three years of life are momentous in terms of the development of learning capacities (2000). Since children do not choose their parental homes, providing equitable opportunities for children from different socio-economic backgrounds is a community duty implemented through the provision of equitable public services. Early childhood care, educational services, and healthcare and education programs are important building blocks in children's wellbeing as these programs can develop their capabilities and strengthen their individual aspirations (Sen, 1999; Evans-Heller, 2012; Evans-Huber-Stephens, 2014).

Social investment studies have also diverged from previous welfare studies in their emphasis on the *quality* of social spending rather than its *quantity* (Korpi, 2004; Palme, 2006). Attention has shifted towards studying the institutional design of welfare systems, their qualitative differences, and policy effects (see Palme, 2006; Esping-Andersen, 2015). Institutional readings of the social investment state argue that qualitative differences in the design of the regulatory framework of welfare systems play a fundamental role in policy effectiveness (Palme, 2006; Esping-Andersen, 2015). By way of specifying entitlements and rules for resource

distribution, institutions can be biased and generate structured constraints and opportunities for particular groups of actors in terms of their choices and actions related to accessing resources and public goods. They can affect actors' capacities directly by limiting their choices for action, and indirectly by increasing only one group of actors' capacities to access resources without actually constraining others. Such asymmetrical empowering takes place without actual coercion, but it still reshapes the sets of alternatives that are available to actors, endowing one group of actors with more capacity than another (Heyman, 2004; Knight-Farrel, 2003; Lukes, 2005; Scott, 2001; Kolpi, 2004; Palme, 2006).

In a generally weak institutional environment in which rules change repeatedly and rule enforcement is low, actors thus endowed with more capacities enjoy broader *de facto* discretion in applying regulations flexibly when they mobilize resources. The behavior of actors who enact rules at ground level can either reinforce or weaken asymmetrical and weak institutions. Street-level bureaucrats – teachers, policemen, social workers, and nurses, amongst others – represent one concrete group of such actors who, through their everyday interactions with clients, put policies into practice (Lipsky, 1980). In his seminal study on street-level bureaucrats Lipsky (1980) argued that policies are not primarily made through laws and regulations, but through the everyday practices of the frontline workers who control access to services/benefits and can practice a high level of discretion in the application of regulatory prescriptions. The possibility to exercise such power arises from the fact that regulations are vaguely drafted, policy goals are not clearly defined, and frontline workers are relatively free from organizational control, while they need to respond to complex cases that cannot be reduced to formulae. However, their work is largely influenced by the conditions in which they operate, such as a situation of inadequate resources, ever growing demand for their services, and vague or conflicting organizational expectations, amongst others. As a result of their discretion and the pressures of working conditions, street-level bureaucrats can end up *making policy* in unwanted or unexpected ways that sometimes contradict the stated goals of policy directives and their organizations. Several studies have further complicated the understanding of this phenomenon by highlighting the different forms and degree of discretion street-level bureaucrats can have in varying contexts and institutional conditions (e.g. Evans and Harris, 2004; Wastell et al., 2010; Durose, 2011; Ellis, 2011).

We join these pieces of work by pointing out the varying opportunities and constraints local implementers have to mobilize extra resources and make choices about different aspects of service within the current institutional framework. A recent working paper on Sure Start houses in Hungary (Németh, 2018: 24) also highlighted the importance of staff, their professional expertise and experience, and their frequent fluctuation and local acceptance on the quality of service provided by the houses. Our study, however, goes further by highlighting the structural opportunities and constraints they navigate within and the sphere of movement the different providers can access in these frames. We show that the institutional structure can influence the degree and kind of discretion that street-level bureaucrats can exercise. By degree of discretion, we mean how much room is left for the discretionary decisions of street-level bureaucrats and whether and to

what extent these are limited by policy circumstances (e.g. scarcity of human resources) in terms of resource mobilization. By kind of discretion we mean what kind of leeway the former have to mobilize resources.

We furthermore highlight the importance of spatial differences that also influence the opportunities of bureaucrats. State policies are embedded in spatial processes (Brenner, 2004) and the *positionality* of places strongly affects the local implementation of policies (Sheppard, 2002). As Sheppard (2002) argues, the prospects and opportunities of localities depend on place-based processes that both shape and are shaped by the regional, national, and global territories in which they are embedded. Furthermore, state policies often have important (intended or unintended) spatial effects that can alleviate, but also reinforce, existing spatial inequalities or create new ones (see e.g. Jessop, 2002; Costa-Font, 2010; Kovács, 2010; Moulbourne, 2010). Such spatial embeddedness influences the possibilities and constraints that local bureaucrats face in their everyday decisions when they implement regulations and policies. It largely determines the resources they can draw on during their work, as well as the social tensions and relations they need to accommodate (Schwarcz and Szóke, 2014).

Thus, we argue that only by studying the institutional aspects and regulatory context along with the local decisions and implementations of street-level bureaucrats and their spatial embeddedness can we fully explore the effects of various policies and state programs. In other words, policy effects can be understood as the interplay between structural pressures and agency, knowing that the latter depends on who the actual agents are, and how their action is influenced by varying degrees and kinds of structural and spatial constraints. In the following sections we first present the main characteristics of the institutional environment, pointing to features of the selective institutionalization and asymmetrical resource supply of the weak regulatory framework of Sure Start provisions. We then turn to an analysis of two aspects of institutional constraints – financing and human resources – in more depth by discussing the constraints and opportunities of local implementers when organizing their services in the differentially positioned settlements.

3. Methodology

The article draws on extensive sociological and anthropological research conducted within the frames of two post-doctoral projects. Sociological research applied in the post-doctoral project 'First steps towards integration: institutional variations in providing access to crèche service' (NRDIO PD 112659) relied on mixed methods to study institutional mechanisms that constrain disadvantaged children's access to early childhood care services in crèches, beyond variables associated with spatial location and employment-based entitlements. The settlements for the qualitative research were selected through multi-stage sampling with an eye to the proportion of disadvantaged children in the local crèche and whether the settlement had an extensive network of early childhood services, including crèches, Sure Start houses, networks of nurses, and family and

child welfare services.¹ Four settlements were selected from a sample that included a high vs. low proportion of disadvantaged children using cross-table analysis of data provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The four rural towns in the final sample – two from each sample group – represent similar cases in terms of their demographics, the number and size of surrounding villages, and their institutional background as defined by their geographical location and spatial positionality. In this vein, two of the towns were located within the agglomeration of larger urban centers, while the other two were situated at the geographical periphery of the country. All four towns had an extensive network of early childhood services, which enabled the research to analyze the complete institutional systems and policies of early childhood provisions in these localities. The qualitative part of the research project included 40 semi-structured interviews with local professionals involved in early childhood provision and representatives of local governments. Prior to field work and interviews, extensive document analysis was conducted, covering research into the national regulatory framework of early childhood policies and the demographics and institutional and policy systems of the localities.² In addition to local field work, 13 expert interviews were also conducted with representatives of the state-level agencies overseeing the institutional development and coordination of early childhood care and education policies in Hungary.

Within the post-doctoral project ‘A Sure Start? The effects of early childhood welfare programs on parenting practices, social belonging and spatial inequalities’ (Premium PD 3300405), 12 months of ethnographic research was conducted in three locations in Hungary from February 2018 to February 2019. As explained earlier, the locations were chosen to reflect the different positionalities of the settlements within the current socio-spatial structures of Hungary. One of the main goals of the project was to examine the way such positionality can influence the local practices and organization of early childhood welfare services. During the research daily observations were undertaken in three early childhood welfare institutions in each location: the child protection/welfare service, the network of nurses (*védőnő*), and Sure Start houses. In the current article, however, we only draw on the material collected about Sure Start houses. Within the project, regular visits were conducted by one of the authors (Szóke) for a period of three months in the three houses under analysis. The author spent from two to four hours in each house, three-four times per week. These visits usually took place during the public opening hours of the houses, usually focusing on the

¹ Having crèche services as the focus of the research strongly limited the number and type of settlements in disadvantaged rural regions compared to those in urban areas. Before 2017, the maintenance of crèche services was mandatory only for settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants. Partly as a result of this legislation, but also due to women’s employment activity in urban areas, demand for crèche services was mainly limited to the urban middle class. Act 223 of 2015 made the establishment of crèche services mandatory for all settlements in which at least five families stated a demand for such services, or where the number of children of less than three years of age was higher than 40. The post-doctoral research on crèches began in 2015, therefore sampling did not consider the new types of crèche services established after 2015.

² This part of the qualitative research relied on integrated settlement development and the equal-chance strategies of the local governments, as well as the local governmental decrees on crèche-, kindergarten-, and child-welfare services of the past five years.

busiest periods which varied between the houses. During the visits, participant observations were undertaken about the daily running of the house as well as the relations between the professionals and the attending parents. Thus, observations focused on: the organization of the daily programs and regular activities, the approach of parents to these activities and their actual participation in them, the ways in which staff tried to induce participation, the ways that staff dealt with resource-related problems (e.g. through creative ideas for daily activities), the ways that staff tried to offer advice about parenting and lifestyles to the attending families, and the relations of staff to the families. During these observations, informal data was collected as staff and families commented and reflected on different aspects of the daily life and activities of the house. Sometimes this took place naturally without intervention from the researcher, while other interactions were induced using directed questions or the researcher instigating discussion. At the start of these observations, formal consent was secured from the Sure Start staff and informal consent was received from all participating families, to whom it was explained what type of information would be collected, for what reason, and how this would be used. Field notes were written after every observation concerning the above aspects and following ongoing conversations and informal talks with staff and attendants.

In addition, at each house semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the Sure Start house employees as well as the other professionals who regularly visited the houses about their jobs, activities, changing conditions and changing participation, as well as their views about parenting and the circumstances of the families. The first interview with each professional was usually more formal, semi-structured, recorded and transcribed, while the follow-up interviews and informal talks that took place during day-to-day participation were only documented through notes and were less structured in style. Finally, semi-structured (mostly unrecorded) interviews with 40 families were undertaken in each location that were written down in detailed note form directly after the interviews.

4. The institutional environment of Sure Start houses in Hungary

Child welfare reforms conceived within the conceptual framework of social investment have abounded in Hungary in the past 15 years. Hungary's National Social Inclusion Strategy (NSDS) which summarizes the principles of the domestic child welfare system emphasizes the significance of early childhood care and education for improving disadvantaged children's educational attainments. More concrete policy reforms have followed in this vein, including the introduction of mandatory kindergarten attendance from age three, extending crèche services to settlements with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, institutionalizing Sure Start houses as one of the basic services provided by Act 31 of 1997 on Child Protection, and providing funding for the latter from the central state budget.

The Hungarian Sure Start Program (*Biztos Kezdet* program) was adapted from the British model in 2003 with the goal of providing access to early childhood care and education and child welfare services for disadvantaged children living in disadvantaged localities before they enter kindergarten (at the age of five, and

since 2015 at the age of three),³ as a way of compensating for socio-spatial disadvantages. The Hungarian Sure Start Program initially began as a pilot project in six deprived localities in Hungary, and in 2009 was extended to other localities financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). Since 2013, Sure Start houses have been incorporated into the nationwide state-run child welfare system. Sure Start houses thus became public services funded by the state through local implementers using an annual per-capita funding rate of approximately €20,000. Currently, 113 Sure Start houses exist throughout Hungary, although most have been established in disadvantaged remote rural areas or segregated urban neighborhoods. Sure Start houses are maintained through two types of maintainers: by the local government (or a local government; typically a nursery), or by a religious charity organization. According to data based on our interviews in 2017, around 80 per cent of houses are run by local governments.

The overall objective of the Sure Start program has been to remedy spatial inequalities in early childhood service provision by decreasing segregation in public services, and to modernize the child welfare system by enhancing cooperation among child welfare professionals. Sure Start houses provide a range of services, including early prevention sessions, speech therapy, movement therapy, and pediatric counseling with the active involvement of parents whose parental competencies were expected to be strengthened. Families living in disadvantaged settlements do not have access to these child welfare services and/or the quality of accessible child welfare services is low. Based on the EU principle of *explicit but not exclusive*, Sure Start houses were created to operate in settlements with high unemployment and poverty rates and, as a low-threshold provision, to provide services for all families within the settlements without prior entitlement, with a special focus on the most vulnerable. In this vein, the methodology of Hungarian Sure Start provisions combines principles of early prevention and the social investment state (Heckmann, 2000; Esping-Andersen, 2015).

Notwithstanding the future-oriented character of measures, changes introduced to domestic public policies since 2010 have been widely criticized for their incongruence and hierarchical governance modes. Two seemingly contradictory policy processes emerged in the aftermath of the 2010 national elections which brought about the second victory of the right-wing Fidesz party. Institutional reshuffling in public administration and in nearly all policy areas was characterized by intensive centralization which worked through centralizing financial resources and withdrawing power from local governments. As a result, the latter lost a large part of their administrative capacity in relation to local education when school education was re-nationalized in 2011. Parallel to this, targeted central funding was re-introduced to support local service provisions such as kindergartens, crèches, and family and child welfare services. In 2013, public administration districts were re-established and directly connected to central state

³ Bringing disadvantaged children into the public educational and care system as early as possible was seen an important measure for tackling disadvantages and ameliorating the effects of family background. Sure Start houses thus became important as the first sites of institutional assistance/correction/control due to the scarcity of crèche availability or the complete lack thereof in disadvantaged localities.

agencies with a mandate to represent the functions of state authority in child welfare and education service provisions as well. The loss of direct control over financial resources and the coordination of service provision was particularly devastating for small settlements in which local governments had limited room for maneuver in terms of resource mobilization. This strengthened the dependent position of small settlements at higher policy levels and generally reshaped the role of local governments in local affairs, further constraining them from influencing local spheres of life.

The central state's increasing involvement in the administration of some policies, however, was carried out in a selective manner. Welfare policy changes such as the new family tax allowance scheme, and the extension of means-tested parental leave allowance, benefited families with a higher income (Szikra, 2014; 2018). Additionally, anti-poor, punitive measures embodied in provisions targeting lower-income families and disinvestment in welfare policies both in financial terms and in human resource provision reflected the withdrawal of the central state from its role in managing poverty and inequalities. The systematic erosion of provisions for low-income families, such as the non-indexation of the flat-rate child care allowance and universal family benefit since 2009 illustrate these trends. All in all, centralization and state disinvestment in welfare have been interlinked with increasingly bureaucratic procedures guided by the administrative and compliance-driven control of the local level and the poor by the central state. Despite laudatory phrases about social investment and its inclusion in policy documents, the Hungarian policy landscape has thus re-institutionalized a bifurcated system (Szalai, 2007) that marginalizes those at the social and spatial peripheries. Social vulnerability/marginalization and the spatial position of residence are strongly correlated in this bifurcated system. Small settlements in disadvantaged regions have a high concentration of poor families, amongst which Roma families are overrepresented (Kovács and Bihari, 2006; Virág, 2009; Koós, 2014). The complex nature of bureaucratized state disinvestment and centralization appear to reinforce socio-spatial inequalities; small disadvantaged settlements with the least capacity for resource mobilization suffer most from the scarcity of welfare professionals (teachers, nurses, social workers) and services (Virág, 2009; Farkas, 2015; Uzzoli and Szilágyi, 2013; Velkey, 2013). Under these structural constraints and spatialized political-economic processes, local governments in small settlements struggle to ensure minimum standards of child welfare services.

5. Institutional constraints and local implementations

5.1 Selectively weak institutionalization

Policy incoherence in Hungary's welfare system can be observed in the selectively weak institutionalization of the criteria for Sure Start service provision. In practice, this means that some methodological principles concerning quality are not regulated by the institutional framework, while others are turned into administrative requirements. What is more, the regulatory changes in 2018 increased administrative control over Sure Start provisions by assigning additional duties, such as the mandatory organization of one community event and two inter-

professional workshops, each month. The new regulatory framework also requires more intensive mobilization of disadvantaged families and the participation of more disadvantaged children in Sure Start programs coupled with strict administrative conditions about documenting families/children's disadvantaged status, their developmental status, and the like. More stringent administrative requirements, however, were not coupled with the provision of resources for implementers to cover the increased expense of mandatory community events and the employment of further personnel needed to fulfill administrative requirements and engage in professional work.

The complex methodology of Sure Start houses is laid out in the document entitled *Methodological Criteria for the Operation of Sure Start Houses – Professional Recommendations* (Methodological Criteria, 2013), issued by the National Rehabilitation and Social Office. The document defines the basic principles and goals of the Sure Start program and provides detailed methodological guidelines about the personnel and infrastructural criteria needed to provide high quality services and includes a list of furniture, toys, and educational equipment Sure Start houses should be equipped with in order to satisfy hygiene-related and pedagogical standards for the age group of zero to three years of age. The document, unlike the Basic Crèche Program, is not included in the appendices of the Act on Child Protection, and is only indirectly referred to as an external document that may be found at the Ministry of Human Resources' website and the Social Sector Portal. On neither of these websites, however, does following the relevant link lead to the document. This makes the service criteria listed in the core professional document of Sure Start houses difficult to enforce, as opposed to the service criteria for crèche provisions, in spite of the fact that both documents are central collections of standard principles for their respective services.⁴ In addition, the quality of crèche provisions is also guaranteed by cross-sectoral regulations (e.g. regulations in the healthcare sector about hygiene-related standards), while Sure Start provisions lack similar veto-points in the overall child welfare system. However, multiple veto-points may guarantee stronger enforcement of rules across sectors and also make them more difficult to change. Moreover, the weak institutionalization of Sure Start provisions can also be traced in the way that even the administratively selected guidelines that have been defined as mandatory assignments for Sure Start houses are put under financial and human resource constraints by the disproportionately low level of funding for mandatory tasks and the structurally inhibited supply of human resources. The asymmetrical funding scheme that provides a budget that is disproportionate to the legally binding assignments of Sure Start houses not only constrains the implementation of high quality early prevention and child welfare services, but

⁴ Crèches and Sure Start houses are both basic services provided by the child welfare system guaranteed by Act 31 of 1997 on Child Protection. They both provide early welfare services for children between zero and three years of age, but while crèches have a long tradition of providing day-care services, the more recent Sure Start houses focus on early prevention. Disadvantaged and Roma children are traditionally underrepresented in crèches due to their parents' unemployment status and/or their residence in smaller settlements of disadvantaged localities that have no capacity to maintain such services (Blaskó and Gábos, 2012). The objective of incorporating Sure Start services into the domestic welfare system was to fill gaps in crèche services, the availability of which has been limited to the urban middle-classes.

also recreates existing spatial inequalities in service provision. Given the disproportionately low rate of funding in comparison to the assigned tasks, local implementers often have to provide additional supplies for Sure Start houses to make sure they fulfill and implement their mission. Financial and human resources, however, are gradually decreasing in proportion to the size of settlements (i.e. it is particularly those small settlements in which the greatest concentration of disadvantaged children live that are unable to complement central state funding with their own resources, hence the quality of service provisions suffers in these localities the most).

5.2 Financing and socio-spatial inequalities

Before the institutionalization of Sure Start provisions in 2013, Sure Start houses had been financed by the European Social Fund through a tendering system. Project-based financing provided 30–60 million HUF (€100–200,000) over the three-year project cycle. This meant €33,000 of discretionary funding each year for Sure Start houses. The financing of Sure Start provisions is currently phased and is based on two institutional sources: domestic and ESF funds. In the current EU programming period, proportionate funding is allocated from ESF for four years based on the size of settlements: settlements with a population of 1000 to 4000 inhabitants receive 35–40 million HUF (€116,000–133,000) and small villages with a population of fewer than 1000 inhabitants can receive 40–44 million HUF (€133,000–150,000). By offering more funding for small settlements, this financial scheme reflects the spatial disparities in socio-economic conditions and public service provisions. In comparison, the domestic funding system that Sure Start houses are phased into at the end of the ESF project cycle does not consider socio-spatial inequalities and provides a lump sum of 6.2 million HUF (€33,000) per year. At this funding rate, Sure Start houses find it difficult to sustain their services, resulting in a decline both in visits by developmental professionals and in the supply of new toys and healthy nutritious snacks, as both earlier working papers (Balás et al., 2016: 3; Németh, 2018: 25–26) and the current research reveal.

In contrast to project-based funding that provides Sure Start houses with wide discretion in the use of funds, in the domestic framework 60 per cent of annual funding is earmarked for paying for the salaries of two Sure Start employees (Balás et al., 2016). The remaining 40 per cent must cover expenses related to tasks assigned by the regulatory framework on the one hand, and those recommended by the Methodological Criteria (2013), on the other. The latter include providing healthy, nutritious snacks for children, supplying toys and teaching equipment specifically designed for the age group, and coordinating and ensuring the visits of pediatric developmental professionals. Non-indexed since its introduction, the annual lump sum funding of Sure Start houses allows for only limited restocking of furniture and age-specific toys and educational tools (Balás et al., 2016). Sure Start employees in the small village explained that

Developing skills and capabilities is really different here. We have never met a child here who knew the numbers and colors. So, we wanted to paint a hopscotch outline to promote movement and cognitive development at the

same time. But the special paint costs 3000 HUF (€9) per color. What we are using now for painting was paid for from our pockets.

Calculated at 2017 prices, domestic funding provided 25,000 HUF (€83) per month for healthy nutritious snacks and left Sure Start employees without reserves to supply age-specific developmental teaching equipment (such as books or toys). The domestic funding scheme is also inconsiderate of those mandatory assignments that were introduced by the 2018 regulatory changes. The new regulation requires more intensive mobilization of disadvantaged families, but the funding scheme does not provide additional resources for covering the provision of snacks for more disadvantaged children. The head of one of the Sure Start houses under analysis pointed out that ‘this is a contradiction in the system, as the goal is having more children participate in sessions, but from this amount of money I cannot provide snacks for so many kids. There is a limit to how many kids I can bring into the house, as I cannot give them food.’ The budget allocated by central state funding also falls short of covering the additional expenses of mandatory community events and inter-professional workshops. The lump-sum funding scheme of the domestic institutional framework thus puts small settlements in deprived areas with a high concentration of poverty but low capacity to generate their own resources under considerable pressure as they struggle to maintain a reasonable quality of service that is comparable to that which families became used to during times of project financing.

A recent working paper also observes that the shift from EU project scheme to domestic financing has resulted in a reduction of the ability of Sure Start houses to obtain equipment and to run professional programs (Németh, 2018: 25–26). However, our research reveals that this does not affect Sure Start houses in the same way. Our empirical data shows that it is very important who the maintainer of the service is, and what resources they can draw on to complement centrally assigned funding. This largely determines their opportunities to satisfy the stated goals of the program and the related methodological recommendations, hence the provision of a high quality service. In the small remote village, the Sure Start house is currently maintained by the local government, which is largely dependent on central state resources due to the lack of local companies and other income-producing resources. It also cannot redirect resources from other state directives such as earmarked central grants for the public work scheme and the local kindergarten. Consequently, the Sure Start house must operate using only the very limited central fund of 6.2 million HUF per year. In addition to the two employees (and one more assistant employed through public work), this grant only covers the cost of daily food for participants, and sometimes even this has to be financed by the staff of the house if they want to provide more than just bread (the cheapest wheat-based type) with butter and cheap salami, which is usually the only menu. ‘We simply can’t make more healthy and varied food from this money. Here in the village even the cheapest bread costs more than in bigger towns,’ explained the head of the house.

Similarly, the house is short of developmental and activity-stimulating toys. Apart from a big trampoline and toy motorcycles which are set up inside the activity room, and a few pencils and baby activity toys, the house only has some

used soft toys and cars which were donated by better-off families from the village. Most of these are broken or missing some parts. So, the children usually use only the trampoline and the motorbikes or play in the garden. There are no toys at all for movement development/therapy sessions or music sessions. Moreover, the house also lacks the resources to pay development professionals to hold weekly sessions for participants, which should be one of the main aims of this early prevention service. While during the EU financing period a movement therapist was paid to hold weekly sessions at the house, there are currently no external professionals working with the children. These professionals are difficult for local inhabitants to access, especially poorer more disadvantaged families, for various reasons. First, these services are only available in a larger town that is approximately one hour's drive from the village, and would take even longer with public transport, which has scarce services. In addition to the distance, for poorer families the cost of the trip would pose difficulties, while according to the staff for some very disadvantaged families even just the planning and execution of such a trip would be difficult. Thus, due to financial limitations and the lack of local assets of the maintainer, the service cannot really compensate for the place-based disadvantages of the village.⁵

In comparison, in the small town near Budapest the program is run by a nationwide religious charity.⁶ Both the better positionality of the place and the opportunities of the maintainer result in wider and more readily mobilizable resources. The charity has ample resources to draw on, both financially and in terms of human resources. Consequently, it is less dependent on state financing, which allows for much higher flexibility for the maintainer, as well as for the local staff in terms of acquiring equipment, organizing programs, and involving professionals. In addition, the house is run as part of a larger socio-development program for the Roma neighborhood. This also allows for the temporary reshuffling of resources or filling of gaps, as needed. In this house, printing drawings for the children and buying the type of food they plan to serve does not pose a problem. In addition to bread and salami, sausages and yoghurt and sweet bakery products were also offered at least once a week. The resources that are available furthermore permitted the cooking of a warm meal of participants' choice on a weekly basis, which took place in a community spirit.

Toys also arrived in abundance through donations to the charity, but were also regularly acquired from the additional budget. Accordingly, the activity room contained a wide variety of toys, including baby activity toys, building blocks, dolls and a play kitchen, train tracks, puppets and even a few books. The developmental session toys, however, were locked away and were only used occasionally, from fear of them becoming damaged. The house also operates with a full complement of personnel, employing two assistants and a head, as well as one part-time cleaner through the public work program. The charity is also able to mobilize human

⁵ We witnessed similar problems and outcomes in several disadvantaged villages in which the service was maintained by the local government.

⁶ Various religious charities exist as maintainers, but in our study we only analyze one specifically. While the resources the different charities can draw on might differ, their opportunity as providers to mobilize extra resources that are less dependent on central state budgets is similar, so to varying degrees our analysis can be also extended to them.

resources, partly through volunteers who regularly visit the house with various programs who are paid in part from extra resources. Thus a movement therapist, a psychologist, and a speech therapist arrived weekly to organize extra activities, some of whom were paid from extra resources, while others worked as volunteers.⁷ However, despite the good physical conditions, the staff often adjusted their activity to the expectations of the families who came to the house more for socializing and for charity, and were uninterested in the daily activities led by the assistants that were meant to enhance parenting skills and develop child-parent connections. Thus, the latter have been increasingly abandoned in favor of gift distribution and community events, leading to the loss of the service's main focus.

Finally, the Sure Start house in Budapest was the best provided for in every sense. Even though it is also maintained by the local government, it operates through the central nursery of the district, which also allowed for more flexibility and the ability to draw on wider resources. Being situated in the capital also meant that resources such as support and donations from various civic organizations were available, involving both volunteers and donations of various goods (ranging from nappies to healthy food products and toys or decorations for the activity room). Furthermore, in the capital a wider variety of products are available more cheaply than in the vicinity of the remote village, which meant that for less money better/more goods could be acquired. Consequently, the house offered a varied and healthy menu every day that included various types of fruit, yoghurt, vegetables, and the weekly communal making of cakes as well as freshly baked cakes for birthdays. The staff put special emphasis on offering healthy and varied food that participants often could not afford or would not buy.

Furthermore, the house was equipped with a large variety of good quality toys in excellent condition, constantly renewed and refreshed. Numerous developmental and activity toys were available for participants, even adjusted to different age groups, such as musical instruments, a ball pool, climbing frames and jumping balls, a puppet theatre, along with different types of building blocks, a fully equipped toy kitchen and baby activity toys. Acquiring tools for activities such as playing with dough, coloring and painting did not pose a problem. In fact, craft activities for parents were commonly held during which seasonal decorations and toys were made. Numerous development-based sessions were held by external professionals including a special music session (*Ringató*), movement therapy, visits by a psychologist, diet advisor, and a puppet theatre, all implemented either through volunteers or by employees of the central nursery. Some of these activities were channeled from the nursery and could only be achieved through the sharing of resources. In this respect, the house in Budapest appeared to achieve the goals of the service to the greatest extent.

These empirical examples reveal that the current institutional and financing framework permits large differences in the way the service is run which are largely dependent on place-based opportunities and constraints, as well as the extra resources that the maintainer can draw on. As the presented cases show, the program was least able to provide a good quality service and fulfil its targeted goals in the most remote rural location where it is needed most to compensate for

⁷ In other houses situated in other settlements but maintained by the same charity we experienced similar conditions.

socio-spatial disadvantages. In comparison, in the capital, where a wider variety of goods, services, and programs are in general more readily available for disadvantaged families, the service could best fulfil its stated goals.

5.3 Availability of professionals, human resources

The stability of the professional operation of Sure Start houses across the various funding schemes has been maintained by Sure Start mentors who regularly visited houses, observed and participated in sessions and provided methodological-pedagogical counselling to Sure Start employees. Mentors employed during project cycles were laid off when Sure Start houses were integrated into the domestic child welfare system. New mentors were trained, but their employment conditions had not been specified even in 2018. As a result of institutional instabilities, many mentors left the field, leaving the remaining employees with an overwhelming number of houses to visit (one mentor for fourteen houses in 2017).

Left without the professional support of their mentors, Sure Start employees faced increased pressure after changes in the regulatory framework in 2018. Although the Methodological Criteria (2013) recommend three employees per Sure Start house, the domestic framework provides funding for the employment of two: the head of the house, and one assistant. Methodological guidelines recommend the employment of a local member of the marginalized community as second assistant, whose role is to actively support the mobilization of disadvantaged families through direct personal contact and the work of the other two employees during sessions with mediation. In the domestic institutional framework, local maintainers of Sure Start houses had to find alternative ways of providing the two employees with such support. As a result, the third employee is generally a public worker paid for by the local government.

The employment conditions of the head and assistant of Sure Start houses fuel further institutional instability. Although more than half of the annual lump-sum funding is needed to cover the salaries of the two employees, these are still tragically low compared to their complex responsibilities. As one Sure Start head explained: 'we have to fulfil many different kinds of roles: early childhood professional, parental counsellor, community developer, administrator, etc... [...] we work in difficult localities with children who do not have an easy life; we compensate for their disadvantages [...] and we often work more with parents.' The regulatory changes in 2018 modified the employment status of Sure Start employees who can now receive some additional benefits as public servants, but also increased the requirements relating to their educational attainment without raising salaries or transforming working conditions. Sure Start employees, who now have the same educational qualifications and public servant status as early childhood professionals in crèches, are still not entitled to the same allowances and period of rest. Sure Start employees are not entitled to receive a regular allowance for occupational clothing and only have five days of holidays each year (when Sure Start houses are closed), as opposed to crèche employees who are entitled to 25 days per year.

These structural constraints were also evident in the Sure Start houses we examined. In all three houses there has been significant turnover of permanent

staff, which was usually explained by the low salary and high level of responsibility and demands of the job, the poor working conditions (job instability, limited resources), and difficult-to-satisfy requirements. Significant fluctuation particularly strongly affected the *head* positions, which involve major responsibility with very little freedom to dispose of resources. The heads of several Sure Start houses mentioned that the current requirements pose extreme difficulties in terms of the everyday organization of tasks with the limited staff they have at hand. As one of them very acutely described the situation:

For me the most important aspect of this job was always working with the families. I think that should be the main point of our job. But instead I spend my time filling out forms and documents as now we have two parallel documentation systems. Because if I don't do this, then it doesn't matter if we do a great job here at the house, if it's not documented, then we appear to be under-utilized and will have a funding shortfall. And now with the new regulations we are supposed to recruit disadvantaged families, so regular family visits are prescribed. But we didn't receive additional staff for this, and no one thought about how this can be coordinated with the same amount of personnel, who are already stretched. And most families with young children are most likely to be at home between 10–12 a.m., exactly when we are the busiest here as well. So, in the end I have hardly any chance to spend time with the families in the house. And that should be the main point of this whole program!

In fact, administrative criteria were often mentioned as one of the main obstacles to organizing a good quality service and fulfilling the main goals of the program. Due to limited personnel and a high workload related to administrative criteria (upon which the central funding and hence the survival of the house is dependent), the quality and quantity of professional work (such as intensive daily activities with parents – which are mostly uncontrolled and unmonitored) often fell short.

Nonetheless, there were still important variations between the Sure Start Houses we examined linked to the opportunities and limitations of the maintainer of the service. In the small remote village, the struggling local government cannot provide a long-term service. While the staff in Budapest also felt somewhat insecure due to instability linked to the yearly financial cycles, they trusted that the provider would secure funding for the maintenance of the house if it fell short of central financing. However, this was not the case in the village, where the local government made it clear they would only maintain the service if it could operate with zero contribution on their part. As an assistant explained about her decision to leave the house and become a teacher:

One thing was the salary, which is much higher in the school now that I have an MA as well. In the Sure Start program I received the same as the other assistant who only had training certified by the National Training Register (*OKJ*)! That made me so mad. And to be honest even then I was thinking of staying. But since the mayor could not guarantee that the House would be still there during the next financial cycle, that decided it for me!

The circulation of professionals between different positions in the social welfare and education sphere was very evident during our research, and the instability of Sure Start houses linked to the yearly financing cycles was often mentioned as one of the main disadvantages in comparison to other positions. In this respect, the nationwide religious charity with its wide networks and autonomous resource mobilization capacities appeared to guarantee the greatest security/stability, along with great flexibility in terms of jobs and opportunities for training, thus proving more attractive to professionals than employment through the other maintainers.

The strict criteria regarding the qualifications of the head of the Houses also created further difficulty, which was especially evident in the more remote rural locality where there is a significant shortage of professionals with high-level qualifications. This not only affects the quality of professional work in the settlements concerned, but also the utilization of the service. In every house we researched we witnessed changes in staff (usually involving the head, but often both the head and assistant together) during our field work, which resulted in a period of low participation as families had become attached to the former staff and stopped visiting the House when they quit. The new staff explained that after months of investment into recruiting participants, only a small segment of the formerly regular participants usually return after such changes.

The availability of professionals appeared as a major problem in terms of satisfying the main objectives of the service from yet another perspective, which also had a spatial aspect. Sure Start houses should organize sessions with various developmental experts and therapists in order to provide inhabitants who are otherwise inhibited in their access to quality services with access to these specialized services. This is a major prerogative that is meant to compensate for socio-spatial inequalities. However, the general lack of professionals is especially severe in disadvantaged, remote, rural areas, such as our example. Professionals are even lacking in the nearest town, which is a 30-minute ride from the village, and public transport is scarce. Thus, the maintainer would need to pay supporting professionals a considerably higher than average fee to cover their travel cost and time for providing weekly sessions for the house. However, the local government has no extra resources for this. During the EU financing cycle, the program was able to mobilize a speech- and a movement therapist on a weekly basis, but this service was stopped after the funding was centralized. In contrast, the maintainers in Budapest and in the small town are able to mobilize a network of volunteers concentrated in the capital (and linked to the religious charity in the case of the town) to lead various activities and sessions and also have the resources to pay professionals for developmental sessions. Thus, in this respect the current framework also appears to strengthen socio-spatial inequalities rather than alleviating them.

6. Conclusion

The combined effects of institutional weakness and the asymmetrical allocation of resources vis-à-vis mandatory assignments leave local implementers with broad discretion in relation to the quality of services provided in each Sure Start house.

As a consequence, variation in the qualitative content of service provision is high; implementers with greater resource capacities can ensure that Sure Start houses fulfil the qualitative standards for Sure Start provision as defined in the original methodological guidelines, while implementers whose capacities are weak in terms of their ability to obtain external financial and human resources must put up with poorer service quality. The institutional framework of child welfare policy, which lacks institutional guarantees for equitable service provision, can generate asymmetries and biases by further ‘decapacitating’ providers in small and disadvantaged localities that need investment the most due to the high concentration of disadvantaged individuals.

Our research reveals that in such contexts it is of great significance what type of organization the maintainer of the service is, and what its capacities are to find extra resources to compensate for the shortcomings of current central financing. Correspondingly, local governments appear to be more exposed to central budgetary constraints than other maintainers who dispose of other resources and have greater human capacity, such as religious or civic organizations. Thus, the latter have greater scope to make choices in relation to the content and quality of the services they provide, while local governments are more directly influenced by budgetary constraints determined by central financing and regulations.

These differentiated capacities are further complicated by spatial aspects as well. More remote and/or small rural localities in disadvantaged areas lack the extra financial and human resources and capacities (such as early childhood professionals) that would be needed to compensate for the place-based disadvantages of their inhabitants. Consequently, due to the shortcomings of the institutional and regulatory frame and the differentiated spatial embeddedness of different localities, it is exactly the places that would need such services the most where the maintainers and employers of the service have the least leeway to make choices and influence the quality and content of the service. This situation can be partly corrected if the maintainer is less dependent on central regulations and budgets, such as in the case of religious and civic organizations, whereas local governments in these localities have the least opportunity to operate good quality services. As such, the current institutional and regulatory context of the Sure Start program, in contrast to its goals, appears to further strengthen socio-spatial inequalities rather than alleviating them.

Overall, the tightening of centralization in Hungarian public administration, coupled with state disinvestment in social policy in the post-2010 era, is more palpable in peripheral locations. Peripheral communities are less resilient with regard to the hierarchically controlled withdrawal of resources due to the absence of sources of capital in these localities than centrally located, larger settlements, where alternative pathways for external resource mobilization may exist. As a result of the state’s withdrawal from its public role in the field of social service provision (early childhood prevention in our case), local governments in disadvantaged localities fare much worse than religious or civic organizations that can draw on external resources due to their autonomous organizational background. This appears to be particularly important in several respects. First, the majority of Sure Start houses are run by local governments, many of which are

situated in disadvantaged localities; a situation which may trigger discussion about the role of the state in mitigating socio-spatial inequalities. Second, similar mechanisms of state withdrawal are occurring in other spheres of welfare provision, raising further questions about whether the state is fulfilling its public responsibility as a social investment state.

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Authors' Biographies

Ákos Bocskor is a Doctoral Candidate and Assistant Lecturer at Corvinus University of Budapest and an Assistant Research Fellow at Centre for Social Sciences, CSS-RECENS (Computational Social Science – ‘Lendület’ Research Center for Educational and Network Studies). His research interests include sociology of education, interethnic relations, qualitative and mixed research methods, and anti-immigration discourses. He holds a master’s degree in Sociology and English Language and Literature.

Anna Fejős is a doctoral candidate at the Bremen International School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS), in the field of Social Inequalities, Welfare State and the Quality of Life, and a junior research fellow at the Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences in Budapest. A sociologist by training, her research interests include the study of ethnic and racial inequalities, social inclusion and professional careers. She is writing her doctoral thesis on opportunities and barriers in the professional trajectories of highly skilled Roma in Hungary.

Anikó Havelda is a Doctoral Candidate at Corvinus University of Budapest and a former member of the CSS-RECENS (Computational Social Science – ‘Lendület’ Research Center for Educational and Network Studies) research group at the Centre for Social Sciences. She has got a master’s degree in Sociology. Her research interests include sociology of education, social network analysis and status network dynamics.

Mira Kalalahti (D.Soc.Sc.) is a Collegium Researcher (Turku Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Turku) and she holds a Title of Docent in Sociology of Education (The Research Unit focusing on the Sociology and Politics of Education, University of Helsinki). Her research focuses on the equality in education, educational trajectories, life biographies and education policies, with a special focus on intersecting dimensions of social class, gender and ethnicity. She lectures on the education politics and sociology of education. Her ongoing research focuses on the agency and professionalism in the career guidance policies and practices. <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/mira-kalalahti>

Judit Keller is a research fellow at the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies. She obtained her PhD in social and political science at the European University Institute. Recently she has conducted her post-doctoral research project on institutional conditions of early childhood care and education services for children below three years of age, with a special focus on inequalities in accessing crèche services. She has participated in RELOCAL (Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development H2020/727097) as a lead researcher of the national team, studying spatial (in)justice in the governance of Give Kids a Chance program and in child welfare services. Her research focuses on socio-spatial inequalities in education and welfare structures, the sociological analysis of the governance of public policies and the institutional reproduction of socio-spatial inequalities.

Authors' Biographies

Dorottya Kisfalusi is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University. She received her PhD from the Corvinus University of Budapest. Her research interests include the sociology of education, adolescents' peer relationships, interethnic relations, and ethnic classification processes. She has published recently in *Social Networks*, *Network Science*, and *The Journal of Early Adolescence*.

Eszter Neumann is a sociologist of education with a longstanding interest in educational policy, school inclusion and segregation, and the production of social inequalities and normalization processes in schools. She obtained her PhD at King's College London in 2018. Her thesis explored categorization, ability grouping and behaviour management in English and Hungarian schools. She is currently a Junior Thyssen Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Central European University.

Dorottya Rédei is an independent scholar working in the field of gender, sexuality and education in Hungary. She has a PhD in gender studies from Central European University. Her research interests include gender equality in education, sex education, and the intersectional reproduction of social inequalities in education. Besides her research and training work, she is also active in LGBTQ and women's non-governmental organisations. Her monograph *Exploring Sexuality in Schools: The Intersectional Reproduction of Inequality* was published in 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan.

Bori Simonovits is a Senior Lecturer at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Institute of Intercultural Psychology and Education. She holds a PhD in Sociology (ELTE University, Budapest, 2012), and an Advanced MA in Social Policy Analysis (Catholic University of Leuven, 2004). Her major research interests include international migration, discrimination, the sharing economy, and experimental research methodology.

Christine Steiner is a senior researcher at the German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut [DJI]) in Munich. Her research interests include educational and youth research as well as life course analysis and labor market sociology. Her recent research topics have addressed topics such as all-day schooling, non-formal learning and the engagement of civil society in education and social integration.

Ráchel Surányi holds a PhD in Sociology (ELTE University, Budapest, 2020) and a Nationalism MA with Jewish Studies Specialization (Central European University, 2013). Her major research interests include migrants' integration and identification, the so-called 'refugee-crisis' and the use of mixed methods.

Nikolett Szelei is an early stage researcher in teacher education at the Institute of Education, University of Lisbon. Her main areas of research include cultural and linguistic diversity in schools, focusing on critical multiculturalism, social justice and students' voices. As a former teacher, she also focuses on teachers' context-based experiences and professional development on the same fields.

Authors' Biographies

Alexandra Szőke is a research fellow at the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies. She obtained her PhD in sociology and anthropology jointly from the Central European University and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Currently she is working on her Premium Post-doctoral project, which examines the complex relations between parenting, social belonging and socio-spatial inequalities by examining the effects of early childhood state intervention on parents. Her research interest lies in ethnographic study of welfare policies, the anthropology of the state, social security and social belonging, early childhood education and welfare services.

Károly Takács is a senior lecturer at the Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University and a senior research fellow at the MTA TK Computational Social Science – Research Center for Educational and Network Studies (CSS-RECENS) at the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He received his PhD from the University of Groningen / ICS. His main research interests are the theoretical, experimental, and empirical analysis of the dynamics of social networks and status relations, in relation to problems of cooperation and conflict. He published recently in *Social Networks*, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *PLOS One*, *Scientometrics*, and *Scientific Reports*.