Classmates
Critical analysis of school integration of Roma children in Nyíregyháza, Hungary

By

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2009

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Abstract

This thesis looks for the nature and properties of Roma children's educational integration in Hungary, offering a critical perspective. The current neurotic and exaggerated climate around ethnic violence and so called "Roma criminality" calls for the reconsideration of ethnic relations. Integration may be a means for promoting a de-ethnicized discourse and more benevolent relations between Roma and non-Roma people by bringing together their children in schools. Consequently, the assumption (following the legacy of Allport) that interethnic contacts may facilitate to overcome hostility and ethnic fallacies, is the focal point of the thesis. Besides, it will analyze the venues of participation of these groups in interactions in order to portray the different representations produced about Roma students. Finally, it is also interested in how the fact that these "integrated" Roma children live in a ghetto influences the narratives of Roma people. The analysis contributes to the discussion on the status of interethnic relations in the context of Hungarian education.

Introduction

Struggle of Roma people is to challenge the history of citizenship as 'minoritization

Though this essentialist but wise assumption of Engin F. Isin (2008:8) refers to the history of citizenship, I suggest that analogically the struggle for integrative education of Roma children should also be seen as a challenge against stereotyped ethnic relations. There is a huge gap between Roma and non-Roma people both in the material and cognitive spaces, which is being reproduced by the drastic problems of Roma people: massive and long-term unemployment, undereducation, historical marginalization. Familiarity, knowledge, contact and a common identity are almost entirely absent from the web of (non)relations between these two groups; rather they are dominated by neurotic, fearful and unstable approaches. Integrative education may be able to recast these properties of ethnic relations, bringing together the hitherto separated two groups, which were consequently invisible to each other. Due to integrated classrooms they can now meet and experience each other; interactions may challenge the socially embodied stereotyping norms. This supposition is the central tenet of the thesis. The site of analysis is two integrated schools' experience in Nyíregyháza, in East-Hungary.

The current social and political climate is far from benevolent for the realization of this prospect of integration. The recent exaggerated debates − escorted by considerable media attention − on "Roma criminality" spread throughout Hungary exemplify well the insecurity of ethnic relations. The debate on integration is similarly heated and brings forth equally important tensions. The educational advantage of integration, its equalizing power and the legitimacy of positive discrimination are the focal points of ethnic and national debates. They all reflect in my view on the lack of a clear, forward-pointing and focused discourse, which can voice the complexity of integration, and of ethnic relations at large. The raison d'être of the thesis is to fill this gap paying special attention to the density of experience comprised in

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different layers involved in integration while presenting them in a loyal, yet critical tone. More precisely, the hope of the thesis is to analyze the mainstream discourses of teachers and of non-Roma parents vis-á-vis integration in order to find answers to the main question of the thesis: does integration and contact could lessen ethnic fallacies. To reach this aim, the thesis sets up two hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is that integration is able to produce a more receptive and less antagonistic relation between Roma and non-Roma people. Secondly, my concern is related to the fact that integrative education was realized due to the closure of a homogenous Roma school in the heart of Nyíregyháza's largest Roma ghetto. I am interested in how the fact that these pupils live in a ghetto affects their accommodation in schools. Also, my intention is to map the extent to which the ghetto-image influences the narratives of exclusion of Roma people. The second hypothesis is therefore that spatial segregation has a significant impact on the way Roma children are perceived in schools; and Roma people at large.

I choose to analyze the perceptions of teachers and non-Roma parents because they are the principal actors in the field of integration: their role is important in influencing the "successfulness" of integration. Regarding the teachers, the model which they present, is at least as important in the development of children as that of the father or mother. Therefore, the disposition of teachers toward Roma children could have a meaningful impact on their development and educational progress; at the same time they shape the quality and form of integration. Concerning the parents, their choice about schooling is decisive in sustaining or controlling integrative education. Their concerns vis-á-vis the presence of Roma children are exemplified in the fact – as Zolnay (2005) shows – that in schools where the Roma students' ratio has reached 10-15%, it is not stabilized at that rate, but dynamically explodes. The reason is that in these cases non-Roma parents tend to enrol their children to a school, where

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the ratio of Roma children is lower. Therefore, their opinion about integration would influence its future as well as success.

To analyze the two target groups' (that of teachers and non-Roma parents) view, I will mainly rely upon the theoretical framework of contact-hypothesis and Isin's typology as well as draw upon the one-month long intensive field-work. Regarding the conceptual frames, Allport (1958) argues that the power of contact is that it promotes tolerance rather than hostility toward excluded groups. Besides, applying Isin's (2002) typology, the thesis will also be engaged in exploring the way Roma children are identified in school according to the nature of the relation between them, their teachers and non-Roma parents. Isin offers three overlapping, but distinct subjects which could be adapted to the context of integration: Roma children may be seen as *strangers*, *outsiders* or *aliens*. In contrast, I suggest that they could be also perceived as entirely *insiders*, as *fellow* (classmates). These hypotheses will be tested, and relations will be examined through the analysis with the help of the semi-structured interviews I have conducted and spontaneous talks with teachers and non-Roma parents throughout the field-work. Besides, the rich experiences of visiting classes and parental meetings as well as of the participant observations contribute to the aim of the thesis to offer a nuanced and critical analysis on integration.

Nevertheless, some preliminary evaluation will already be made regarding the hypotheses. Concerning the first hypothesis, the outcome of the month-long fieldwork, is that contact as such does not reduce stereotypes, but rather enhances them. Visibility of Roma children has been translated into the visibility of problems and conflicts, characteristically along ethnic lines. Nevertheless, there is also a de-ethnicized discourse articulated often in relation to those Roma children who *"are not even Roma"*, meaning those whose parents have already been integrated to a certain extent to the body of the mainstream Hungarian society. This phenomenon, in turn, provides an answer for the second hypothesis too. The

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ethnicized and stereotyped discourse on particular Roma children is produced due to the ghetto-image attached to them. Therefore, I suggest that indeed, spatial segregation as such has a significant impact on the way Roma children and families are identified. The Ghetto has become in many narratives the symbol of difference and the focal reference of problems. It is therefore interpreted as a reason for the failure of integration, being a socio-culturally poor, separate and ultimately *"low"* Roma space.

Three chapters will guide the reader through the thesis. The first focuses on the Hungarian educational context presenting the reasons behind segregation of Roma children, which should lead to a portrayal of the trajectories of integration. This chapter also depicts the theoretical framework, presenting the main assumptions and critique of contact theory as well as the main points of Isin's typological analysis on the logic of exclusion and that of inclusion. The second chapter elaborates the methodology of the analysis. The third chapter describes the particularities of the educational context of Nyíregyháza with a special focus on Roma children. It then will be engaged with the analysis of the case study through three different lenses: image of integration, general concerns and the dichotomy of school and of home.

Before introducing the literature review a brief description of the case of integration in Nyíregyháza is needed. For this reason, the following section will present the peculiar circumstances within which integrative education was implemented.

The field site: the brief history and the case of integration in Nyíregyháza

The integration of Roma children in Nyíregyháza is the result of a Roma NGO's de-segregation litigation against the Local Government for maintaining a homogenous Roma school, named the "Huszár, ("Cavalrymen") school. This school was situated in the centre of the town's biggest ghetto − as the inhabitants call it − in the "Guszev".

The number of Roma people in the "Guszev" ghetto is approximately one thousand. The living and infrastructural conditions are poor: there is a high unemployment rate among these Roma people; poverty is tangible. The usually one-room dilapidated houses are often left without proper electricity and water supply; besides, roads are muddy: hardly useable in winter by car. The buildings were transformed from military-officers' houses and stables in the 19th century.

In 2006, 119 Roma students attended the ghetto school, excluded illegally. Being a segregated school it had all those shortcomings which generally characterize these institutions: the infrastructural and pedagogical conditions were worse compared to the two neighbouring counterparts (Zolnay 2005). For a long period only Russian language was taught here and it had no computer facilities, but surveillance cameras and security service were employed.

In December 2006, this Roma NGO, the Chance for Children Foundation, initiated a trial against the school, and as a result the school was closed by the end of March 2007. From September on, all the children were relocated in six heterogeneous, typical downtown schools, designated by the Local Government. The rapid decision and its consequences produced wide protests on the part of both Roma and Non-Roma parents; the socio-political climate therefore was far from benevolent.[1]

Nevertheless, the Local Government tried to do its best to prepare these schools for the receiving of these children. Just to mention a few measures: it organized special trainings for the teachers of the six schools focusing on Roma culture; and held a meeting in the "Guszev" ghetto for teachers and Roma parents. The Local Government also contracted two NGOs for mentoring these children's educational progress and accommodation. In addition,

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[1] Minutes from The Local Government's General Assembly (25th of June, 2007).

it also maintains two separate buses for the Roma children, so that they can commute to the ghetto each day.

Chapter 1. Literature review

1.1. Segregation in the Hungarian education system

Comparative studies show that the Hungarian Educational Model – among the European ones – ensures the least equal chance for disadvantaged groups and it is the most selective one (Zolnay 2005). Ethnic based segregation is only one, although the most decisive and powerful aspect of it. Roma children are often concentrated in schools where the ratio of non-Roma children is low. According to a survey of Havas et al (2002) more than the two thirds of Roma children attend schools where Roma children are the majority. This imbalance is more than alerting since studies show that the quality of education inversely declines with the rate of Roma children. Two representative studies have been done on this topic by Kertesi and Kézdi (2004) and Havas and Liskó (2005), discovering the shortcomings of segregated education. Both of these researches emphasise, again, that segregated schools suffer from meaningfully lower pedagogical and infrastructural symptoms compared to their counterpart, which reduces the overall quality of education. This in turn has meaningful consequences on children's progress.

Educational segregation – or exclusion – is the result of various processes as studies show (see for example Zolnay 2005; Kertesi 2004). One reason lies in the structure of the Hungarian education system. According to the regulation policy of the State, all schools should accept those students who are living in their catchment area (usually in the very agglomeration of that institute). The other regulation is that all schools could accept students from outside the zone at the expense of their free capacity. This rule assumes that free choice of schools and parents sustains the democratic character of the system, ensuring space for free "maneuvering" in the education market. Nevertheless this policy has certain limits. As Zolnay (2005) describes, the local government (which is legally the owner of public schools)

has the authority to define the strategy and educational profile of schools as well as declares the headcount per school. Furthermore, the choice is not ensured equally, because schools have their right to determine who they accept through diverse entrance conditions, like interviews or exams. Consequently pupils who perform poorly drop out, i.e. mainly (but not only) Roma children with low cultural-social-economic capital. The third structural reason, which is strongly connected to the previous one, is the marketization of education. As Kertesi and Kézdi (2004) explain, the interest of the schools to be attractive in the education market is influential. The more prospectively successful students study in given schools, the more attractive (i.e. competitive) these schools become. This trend is supported by the wish of teachers to teach in schools where pedagogical success is more likely. They tend to choose schools where the average learning achievement is higher, hence their qualities and competencies are put into use and acknowledged. In contrast therefore, as Kertesi and Kézdi (2004) continue to explain, segregated schools' curriculum becomes weaker and less valuable.

Havas (2008) adds another dimension to the problem. He radically maintains that "the teacher`s approach to disadvantaged children, especially to Roma children is pedagogical fatalism" (8) which supports unequal education. The reason behind this approach is that teachers face drastic challenges and special pedagogical problems for which they have not been trained. In addition, schools – where they teach – do not own those elementary conditions which are essential for quality pedagogy. Also, I should add, that they do not have significant financial incentives to compensate for their additional work, since the total amount of support which teachers could receive from the State is relatively small, maximum 49 200 HUF/year/teacher.[2] Havas goes on to explain that due to these reasons they tend to believe that shortcomings of disadvantaged children can not be corrected with pedagogical

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[2] Both two selected schools, out of the six involved in integration, are entitled to claim this amount being part of the integration program (IPR) introduced by the State in the fall of 2003/2004.

means. Havas then compellingly exposes the articulation of an ethnicized discourse vis-á-vis educational lags. He explains that since among disadvantaged children many are Roma, teachers tend to explain problems in ethnic terms rather than seeing them as a result of deep poverty, unemployment, and undereducation. They tend to blame Roma people and their disposition toward education for the problems and failure, which perception blocks the formation of constructive social relations in the field of education. The overstated role of the family is more far-reaching since studies show, as it was already presented in the introduction, that the model of the teacher is at least as important – in the grown-up period for a child – as the father-and-mother example. Kertesi and Kézdi (2004) also state that the quality of pedagogical job, and the work done in the class-room, more or less equally could influence the performance of a child as the family and social background.

Highlighting a different viewpoint, scholars (Zolnay 2005; Havas 2008) emphasize that non-Roma parents' attitude is another key impetus for unequal education. Havas maintains that mainly among middle-class parents there is an agreement to avoid those schools where the proportion of Roma children is high. The underlying concern – as Havas explains – is that their children achievement would be paralyzed in these schools and ultimately they would negatively impact them. In this spirit, they could put pressure on schools, even by enrolling their children to another school.

These inequalities in the education system pushed the Government toward policy and legislative changes. In 2003, the Law of Education was amended with an anti-discriminative legislation (Zolnay 2005). This enactment introduced sanctions and created juridical spaces for litigations against discriminative schools. It gave an impulse to the NGO sector and to the establishment of organizations for this end. As it was described in the introduction, the "Huszár" ghetto school was closed also because of a Roma NGO's litigation against the Local Government.

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1. 2. Contact-hypothesis

In this section the paper presents those scholarly assumptions which underlie the benefits of integration. The context within which the idea of integration was developed is the American one, where Black people's social inclusion became part of policy agendas in the 60's. The innovative contact theory of Gordon W. Allport has emerged as the focal reference for supporting integrative practices. This part is engaged with that contact theory and with its critiques.

In his well known book, The Nature of Prejudice published in 1954, Allport claims that contact between different ethnic/racial groups is essential for producing positive attitudes toward the other group. Differently, contact theory assumes that the rupture between different ethnic groups could be reduced by interactions (Allport 1958; Braddock 1980; Sigelman and Welch 1993). Allport (1958) points out that contact as such could transform prejudiced ethnic relations by giving knowledge about the other group. Knowledge and information is believed to destroy ethnic fallacies and overcome prejudice. At best, it will even dismiss discriminatory practices too. In other words, visibility and availability of others is assumed to promote a positive attitude altering ethnic/racial differentiation.

To put it differently, Bouma and Hoffmann (1968) state that integrative education could decrease ethnocentrism[3] between groups, at best. Therefore, they maintain that contact will lead to "see the difference between race and culture" (45-6). In this dichotomy race refers to an inherited feature, while culture is understood as an acquired factor, which can be changed. They believe that personal experiences could promote individual profiles discounting ethnic and racial stigmatisation.[4] Nevertheless, Allport emphasises that positive

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[3] Where one group evaluates and judges another in terms of its own standard (Ibid)
[4] I use the term stigmatization referring to Goffman's (1963:12-3) definition of stigma: it is an "attribute that is deeply discrediting". Therefore, a stigmatized person is "reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one".

attitude changing occurs under special – almost ideal – conditions. Braddock (1980) summarizes them: those involved should

1) Possess equal status,
2) Share common goals,
3) Interact cooperatively and
4) Have environmental support

1.2.a. Conditions of a successful contact

Based on Jackman and Crane's (1986) as well as Brown's (1995) work, I will briefly summarize the meaning of these four specific conditions. The rationale behind the first condition – that of participants of interaction should have an equal status – is that prejudice usually assumes the inferiority of the other group. Therefore, negative stereotypes produced within subordinated relations would be weakened rather than strengthened by possessing equal status of participants. The second condition for a successful contact is to share common goals. In Jackman and Crane and also in Brown's interpretation it refers to the nature of contact. Brown frames it as acquaintance potential. He states that the duration, frequency and closeness (i.e the parameters of acquaintance potentials) of the relation are decisive to positive attitude changes. He claims that if acquaintance potential is high than the contact is stronger. In contrast, if the interaction is infrequent and short – with low acquaintance potential – then it may even strengthen stereotypes and negative attitudes.

Jackman and Crane interpret the nature of successful contact differently. They suggest that firstly, it should not happen in a competitive context. Second, the contact must be long-term rather than episodic. Finally, the contact must be informal and personal. In addition, the penetrating study of Rabinowitz (2001) shows the importance of positive examples in the formation of a "successful" contact. He analyzed a co-existence project in Israel, within which Palestinian and Israeli young intellectuals were called to visit schools in order to

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provide a "good example" for the "Other" group through personal testimonies, for the final aim of reducing constrained and stereotyped images. Though, in a politicized context and in a critical manner, yet the study underlines the importance and likely success of these interethnic "meetings", at least in the moderation of stereotypes.

Turning back to the prerequisites of a contact to be effective, the third one is to involve cooperation among participants. Brown explains that the cooperation for a common goal produces a basis for benevolent relations. Depending on the other's performance may even support the formation of friendship. The fourth and last condition of a positive interracial contact is to possess environmental – i.e. institutional and social – support. Brown shows that comprehensible support of integration by authorities highly contributes to the success of integration in different ways. First, institutional authorities may have means for sanctioning or rewarding acts which hinder or endorse integration. Moreover, if the idea of integration, tolerance and open-mindness are protected and promoted by authorities, participants may internalize these values and norms. Lastly, it may even contribute to positive attitude change in the society at large.

Nevertheless, all these scholars emphasise that these conditions are mutually given only in a laboratory context. In much interaction they are partly or not at all offered. The circumstances of an interethnic contact may be far from benign but are competitive or even adverse. Contact may be (and usually is) made between people with unequal status, with different goals to reach.

1.2. b. Critique of contact theory

Powers and Ellison (1995) present some more critiques based on the literature. They criticize the very basic fundament of contact-hypothesis, that of causal effect. The authors emphasise that it is one's prevailing approach which determines the nature of the contact

rather than the contact itself. More precisely, one's ethnic attitude which controls the duration, frequency and quality of ethnic relations, i.e. which classifies the outcome of interethnic contacts. Powers and Ellison formulate the problem as follows: "Initially tolerant attitudes may lead individuals to engage in, or even to seek out interracial contacts, while less tolerant persons eschew such contacts." They label it as the selection effect (1995:206). If this interpretation is accurate then contact theory has been overestimated in scholarly literature, according to the authors.

The authors present another limitation of the theory claiming that it does not touch upon the question whether interpersonal ethnic contacts have any effect on public attitudes, in general. They also show that recent studies on contact theory have not taken into account the consequences of social locations – like age, socio-economic status – on the outcome of contact. In addition, the study of Rabinowitz (2001) shows another weak point of contact theory. His study approves that a "successful" contact shall be made between other agents than students portraying that those graduated young Palestinian intellectuals who visited "Jewish class-rooms" were also able to "produce a meaningful moment for Israel youths and sometimes transform their earlier generalised misconceptions"*(71).*

Others strive for a more political understanding of ethnic relations. Jackman and Crane (1986) see contact theory as over-neutralized and highly optimistic. They suggest contact itself does not change racial attitudes, precisely because it is a political construction rather than an individual property exclusively. Hence they argue for a more political analysis of interethnic relations. They assert that it is a political, cultural and material interest to leave inequalities unaltered for the end of sustaining dominant "racial privilege" (1986:482). These arguments almost entirely undermine the promise of contact theory.

The following section will present Isin's typological analysis considering the different subjectivities produced according to the logic of exclusion. This typology will be adapted to

the context of integration for the sake of examining the nature of relations between Roma and non-Roma.

1.3. Isin`s typology: considering images and relations as the product of integration

Following the Hegelian argumentation, one's identity is not a given and immanent fact, but rather it is a result of diverse social relations (Taylor 1992). Identity therefore always entails views about "otherness" and negotiated through web of interactions. Differently, identity is an intrinsic relation between self and altering. As the social psychologist Tajfel (1978) highlights it, the self is not only defined by its orientation and disposition but also importantly shaped by the nature of a group, to which it belongs. Consequently, a formation of a group is a formation of an identity which "values certain attributes and devalues others" (Isin, 2002:30). It is about distancing ones from others and defining the group's internal strategy. It necessarily excludes some, but it is also negotiated through relations. Therefore, as Isin puts it, it has the logic of exclusion, but also has the logic of altering referring to its relational nature.

The logic of exclusion is to separate ones from others labelling them as outsiders or aliens. It assumes a clear cut, 'non-relation' with others. To put it differently, exclusion reduces relationships to a categorical (and usually to a negational) ones. By contrast, the logic of altering assumes fluid, overlapping and contingent boundaries where agents are engaged in different relation with others. According to Isin these relations could be: solidaristic (based on recognition and affiliation), agonisitic (based on domination and authorization) or alienating (based on exclusion). Therefore, this logic signals a dynamical understanding of identification across group boundaries and various social positions. Ghetto, as such, blocks this level of relations. Those altering relations though, are struggles over identities, which are in flux but strive for stabilization. Identity therefore is in a dichotomous relation with the

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"Other" since it needs it, but also rejects it. Or as Isin puts it: "identity needs difference, but difference also threatens identity" (2002:32). These dialogues between groups are permanently recreating their own identity and that of the others, as long as difference does not become incommensurable, since then it is settled.

These relations could produce three overlapping but distinct subjects: the *stranger*, the *outsider* and the *alien* (Isin, 2002).The *stranger* refers to a subject who is both insider and outsider at the same time. Stranger is the person who is a member of a group but distant from it too. Usually it is the result of the combination of solidaristic and antagonistic strategies toward him. This definition of stranger is originated from Simmel (1950). He states that the stranger "is near and far at the same time", who he has been trapped *"between nearness and distance"* (1950:407) in relation toward the "Other" group. In contrast, as Isin further nuances the typology of Simmel, *outsiders* are neither belonging to the group nor cooperating with it, but still belong to the city and are necessary to the city. Outsiders are constituted through antagonistic and alienating strategies. And finally, *aliens* are entirely out of the context of the group and of the city whatever strategies are applied. The alien subjectivity is produced by the logic of exclusion often with the strategy of othering.

The relation between Roma and non-Roma people could be scaled differently within this framework. Those who live in the Roma ghetto are constituted as aliens vis-à-vis the city and its citizens, since there are very rare interactions, but total exclusion. Spatial segregation itself denies the multiplicity of relations. Nevertheless, in the context of integration different subjectivities are expected to be produced. As a consequence of interaction, *stranger* and *outsider* subjects may be produced depending on the venues of participation. Also, I would add that we should not abandon the possibility of the entire incorporation of Roma (children), producing *insider or fellow* (classmates) *subjectivities*. Certainly, these categories are harsh and narrow, could not at all embrace the complexity of relations. Rather, they will function as

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basic referential categories to describe the density of interethnic relations considering their particular context and special terms.

This power of dominant groups to construct an image about the dominated will affect the social positioning of Roma people. According to Bourdieu (1991) the power of labelling, naming and categorizing subjects is a symbolical capital, which has practical implications. It is symbolical in the sense that it consists of knowledge, signs, beliefs, thoughts and expressions. Nevertheless, it also has the power to dictate tactics, strategies and acts toward the dominated (Bourdieu 1991). As he puts it more generally: "struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes...which are the basis of the representation of the groups and therefore of their mobilization or demobilization" (Bourdieu 1984:479). The constructed image about Roma people therefore affects every-day ethnic relations, but also locates them in the social and political reality of the city. Nevertheless, the thesis is engaged mainly with the first view, analysing the repositioned status of ethnic relations in that town.

Chapter 2. Methodology

As it has been already stated six schools were involved in the integration of Roma children. The reason behind selecting only two schools is that due to time limitations the visit of all schools could have potentially reduce the quality of the work[5]. Due to research ethic consideration, the schools will be referred to simply as *school 1* and *school 2* instead of using their official name. Besides, the reason why these particular schools were chosen is that my previous experiences in the field – spending the winter of 2007 in Nyíregyháza for the same reason, but with a different focus – suggested choosing these schools due to their "richness". In addition though, there was one school which did not respond to my request for access, the one, whose directors personally refused to let me in the school that winter of 2007. In contrast, the selected schools were receptive, though one must note that there were a few teachers who refused to give an interview or even to have a conversation, more frequently in *school 2*. Moreover, another (the most respected) school was dropped from the potential sites of research since from the current – 2009/2010 – fall they stop accepting (integrating) children from the ghetto.

Like all of the six schools, the selected two enjoy a high reputation in the city. More precisely, the second one is said to be one of the best schools in the local education market. *School 1* is situated at the edge of the city in a poor environment, being surrounded by some family houses, and more block houses. In contrast, the "inside" life of the school is vivid and energetic as the posters in the hallways which advertise various events and competitions, and as the colourful and creatively arranged venues and class-rooms indicates. Its teachers stated that characteristically children of middle class, but also of working class families attend the school. The total number of children in the current fall is estimated around 650. The number

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[5]The fieldwork was carried out mainly during April 2009.

of Roma children who arrived after the closure of the ghetto school (from the fall of 2007 till now, the fall of 2009/2010) is around 22.[6] *School 2* is situated in the centre of the city, within a noisy and busy environment; however, it is characteristically dull and blurred inside. In addition, a quasi security service is employed in the school, consists of two men. One of them has been working for more than 10 years in a so called "special school for disabled children", among Roma children are overrepresented due to the segregative mechanism of the Hungarian education system, which was described in chapter one. In *school 2*, generally, middle and upper class children are said to attend. The total number of children is around 665 and the number of Roma children who were relocated following the decision is around 17.

In order to explore the effect of class-room integration to the alienated ethnic relationship in Nyíregyháza, I used the social constructionist and interpretive approach. It regards each social act as an outcome of social interactions and interpretations, as something constructed through social processes. On that ground, ethnic perceptions and social distances were regarded as subjects of change with interactions, meetings take place, rather than as stable and fixed. In this spirit, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the two target groups: with teachers and non-Roma parents, altogether 13 in *school 1*; while 10 in *school 2*; besides the several spontaneous talks taking place. These narratives were than systematized with the method of edge-coding, being schematized along the main themes emerged. Furthermore, I did participant observation by visiting some lessons and also two parental meetings. The strategy of analysis is to employ quotations from the informants, which were selected due to their representativeness in the sense that their message (in various forms, but identically in substance) appeared in many narratives. Also, the selection is a reflection on the intention to produce a systemic and multilateral analysis which considers the variety of perceptions. During the analysis I will not separate the experience of the two

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[6] This data combines what has been extracted from the report the author prepared in 2007 December as well as of the updated estimation of teachers.

schools, because there are more similarities than differences, but I will indicate from which school each quote originates.

Chapter 3. Case study

3.1. Local Educational Context and the closure of the Ghetto School

According to a survey done by Zolnay in 2004 in Nyíregyháza, the schooling inequalities are tied together with ethnic segregation in this town too. This inequality stems from two processes: from the spatial concentration of Roma people and from the local government's educational policy.

In the majority of state-owned elementary schools (namely 12 out of 19) no Roma children were studying at that time. Altogether a bit more than 8000 students were enrolled in all state-owned schools, out of which the Roma students' ratio was 8.7%. Nevertheless, the majority (80%) were attending 8 schools only (Ibid). On the other hand, Roma students were overrepresented in schools for students with special needs, with disability more precisely, half of the students in these schools were Roma. As a result, the aggravated segregation ratio of the city was high (Ibid). In 2004, 20.5% of the Roma students were attending homogenous Roma classes. One reason for this is the already presented "Huszár" homogeneous Roma School, which was closed in 2007.

The children from the "Huszár" Roma School were sent to six schools, as it has already been noted, in a way that approximately 15 Roma children were put to each school, on average. The logic of the relocation was to ensure the low rate of Roma students per school in order to control the migration of non-Roma children. The following table (Table I) shows the ethnic division of the six schools before and after the arrival of Roma children. The two schools which are the focus of the study are marked in yellow. Again, due to ethical considerations, the names of schools are kept anonym.

Table I: Ethnic proportion in the six schools involved in integration (comparing the period before and after the decision)

Schools	Number of [7]	From which the number of Roma students[8]	The number of Roma children arrived from the Ghetto school in 2007 September	Rate of all Roma students in the fall of 2007/2008 (%)
I.	448	14	14	6,2
II.	487	25	18	8,8
III.	690	16	13	4,2
IV./*School1*	662	13	17 (5)	4,5
V.	434	0-1	7	1,6
VI./*School2*	680	10	12 (5)	3,2

These data expose clearly that the rate of Roma children is low in each school, even after the decision. Including the new students who arrived from the Ghetto school, the overall rate of Roma children ranges between 1, 6 – 8, 8%. The average is therefore 4.75%. In addition, (as it is marked in brackets) the number of Roma children, who arrived in the subsequent fall – that of 2008/2009 – in the two selected schools is around 5 per each.[9] Still, we can conclude that the overall ratio of Roma children remained low. It is therefore, a scholarly valid assumption that integrative education as such has been realized in these schools considering this very low rate of Roma children. This postulation is supported by the decision that in each class maximum two Roma children were put excluding the formation of homogenous Roma classes within the schools. In addition, one may predict that the low number of Roma children shall lessen social discontent which welcomed the decision.

In the following part I will analyze the two selected schools' experience and view on integration. The focus is on the perceptions and evaluation of teachers and non-Roma parents.

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[7] www.nyirhalo.hu

[8] The number of Roma children is defined on the basis of information directors provided. Data has been extracted from the report the author has prepared in 2007 December.

[9] This data combines what has been extracted from the report the author prepared in 2007 December as well as of the updated estimation of teachers. Unfortunately, these data available for the research exclusively from the two selected schools.

The analysis is structured around three themes: Image of integration, general concerns, and a summarizing part which will deal with the explanation of interethnic relations.

3.2. Image of integration: common perceptions, different approaches[10]

During the interviews and spontaneous talks usually the first thing which was articulated is a consistent disagreement with integration. Nevertheless, the provided explanations were varied on a wide scale. Some teachers and non-Roma parents see integration through the interest of Roma children and parents in a way to emphasize its inadequateness due to those extremely high expectations with which they should cope. Indeed, as it was described in chapter two, both schools are regarded as prominently good schools, besides, children are specialized to either language or gym subjects. Consequently, their curriculum is demanding and their reputation is lofty, which was implied and honoured in many narratives. In this competitive context, as informants underline, Roma children could not at all easily succeed, producing an unnecessary hardship for them. It is summarized by a teacher through a powerful analogy:

> *Integration is like when we expect a ladybird to fly like an eagle, but it can fly only 3metres and not 3000, what an eagle can. In that form, integration should be banned. (Teacher, school2)*

This quotation implies another often mentioned critique of integration, which is more of a policy-orientated assessment than a phenomenological one. It claims that the nature of decision itself was wrong and *"violent"*, as evaluated by a young mother. More precisely, they criticize the fact that all children from the Roma ghetto were integrated. They hold that only first grade children should have been integrated, or at maximum, the junior classes (from the 1st still the 4th grade). In contrast, seniors should have finished their education in the

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[10] Here, I will be mainly engaged with the semantic representation of integration in order to expose the image of integration, leaving untouched its content. A substantial analysis will be done later.

"Huszár" ghetto school. The educational, social and psychological advantage of that – more careful – implementation of integration is sometimes interpreted as the chance for easier assimilation. This terming may imply that the difference between integration and assimilation by definition is unclear. On the other hand, it may also imply the appreciation of complete cultural incorporation, of assimilation.

This hope of teachers that the small children may be accommodated/*"assimilated"* smoother could be theorized with Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus, which expresses the way particular dominant ideas and beliefs are taught to us without even recognizing them. These internalized norms and beliefs constitute habitus, the embodied disposition which has practical implications and also which organizes and reproduces the given order in a way that it remains in the level of unconscious. This is what he calls "symbolic domination" or "symbolic violence" (1-2). The same token, junior children, due to their youngness and receptiveness, can easier internalize the norms of school ensuring a more fluent adjustment to and the reproduction of the dominant norms of schools. Although, schools' indoctrination is a conscious, politically defined and institutionalized "project" it is also socially inscribed in a way that it is sustained by individual and unconscious practices.

There is a different framing of integration, which uses an inverse discourse. All those hints – segregation, negative discrimination, and separation – which often characterize the situation of the Roma people take a semantic turn and become the focal points of self-positioning of the non-Roma people. It usually means that the positive discrimination of Roma people is put into conflict with the negative one of non-Roma. In other words, all those advantages which Roma people have – like separate bus for the children, financial relieve in terms of schooling expenses – are seen as a "damage" for non-Roma people. Therefore, unequal sharing in common goods is confronted and presented through an ethnicized discourse, in a way that non-Roma people see themselves as being negatively discriminated.

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There is a story, I was told by a teacher, which illustrates well this belief of the informants. The driver of the *"Roma bus"* once got into conflict with a Roma child because of his misconduct – *"he wanted to destroy the bus"* as the teacher simply (and most probably over- exaggeratingly) postulated it – and therefore the driver took off the child from the bus. Nevertheless, it is not the child who was punished, complained the teacher, but the bus-driver, reducing his salary by five percent. The material loss of the bus-driver is seen by the informant, I suggest, as a symbolical gain on the side of Roma people. This loss is even quantified by indicating the precise amount of reduction from his salary. All of these frustrations are modelled in the following quote:

> *We are now negatively discriminated. Irritating. They have their own bus, don't pay for food. I raise my child alone, but don't have these benefits. Millions of insults and discrimination is a result of integration. (Teacher, school1)*

In contrast, others use the inverse terminology for describing the difficulty of integration for Roma children. They usually articulate that integration only brought spontaneous segregation for Roma students within the schools due to their educational and accommodation problems.

So far two mainstream presentations of integration have been identified. The first mainly emphasize that this form of education is unnecessarily difficult for Roma children suggesting that it would have been better if only junior children were integrated. The other one emphasizes the material and symbolical loss of non-Roma people due to unequal distribution and positive discrimination.

Other opinions – which reject the idea of integration – are based on nostalgia for past educational practices. It is a nostalgia toward separated classes and more harsh pedagogical

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means, which can discipline and order the life of schools, ensuring morality and good conduct.[11]

Two other legitimations of the rejection of integration lie in a liberal culturalist argumentation. I use the concept of liberal culturalism according to Kymlicka (2001) who claims that "liberal culturalism is the view that liberal democratic states should not only uphold the familiar set of common civil and political rights of citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; they must also adopt various group-specific rights on policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups" (42). Or as Ahmed (2005) formulates it, liberal culturalism is able to mix the principle of common social justice and group rights, where citizens become universal right bearers but besides their cultural and ethnic affiliation is also recognized.

In this spirit, teachers emphasize that segregation aids to preserve the peculiar cultural practices and institutions of Roma people. They explain that segregated education facilitates Roma children's educational progress by leaving them in their *"own cultural environment"* which is more comfortable and *"humanistic"* than separating them from it by integration.

The second principally liberalist argument attacks integration at a policy level instead of articulating a critique at the level of schools. They tend to underline that the decision about the accommodation of Roma children ignored Roma parents' right to the free choice of schools. As it was already presented, indeed, the Local Government selected the six schools to which Roma children were placed.

Nevertheless, there are but a few narratives which clearly attach a positive image to this form of education,[12] therefore they advocate integration. These teachers and parents usually emphasize that integration benefits society, immediately (through equal access to

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[11] It is interesting that the need for more strict educational practices to be applied is usually coupled with the appreciation of separate classes. I suggest this has a reference to the educational policy of the Socialist regime, under which both of these practices were legitimate and dominant.

[12] The order of the presentation of narratives follows the frequency of arguments.

quality education) as well as in the long run (ensuring better occupational chances for Roma people). Also, the proponents highlight that it does promote cultural sensitivity through "*meet (ing) differences*" and through making Roma and non-Roma people familiar with each other.

To conclude**,** there are a few positive perceptions on integration, but most of the narratives stress its shortcomings with the means of different reasoning. They emphasize the loss of interest of children and parents from both groups. Some others underline – using an inverse discourse – that integration negatively discriminates non-Roma people. Some narratives nostalgically underscore the benefits of harsh teaching methods and separate classrooms.

In addition, some narratives highlight the problems through the critique of the policy behind the decision claiming that not all, but maximum the junior students should have been "relocated". Others criticize that the policy ignored the free-choice of parents about schools. Using also a liberal culturalist argument, some emphasize that segregation is better for Roma children, preserving their own cultural particularities.

Having highlighted the prevalent approaches and arguments for and against integration, the following part will reveal those frequent concerns and challenges schools face and which explain the image of integration drawn above. To do so, I will separately analyze the junior classes and the middle/upper classes - from the 5th to the 8th grade – take into consideration of the significant differences.

3.3. General concerns: narratives on the presence of Roma children

To be a better Man, this is the essence of integration, isn't it? (Teacher, school1)

This unanswered question indirectly represents the essence of the main concerns: the emergence of different problems and difficulties with integration. However, in this question

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the challenges are formulated in a constructive way and in a generalizing and moralizing manner.

3.3. a. Junior classes

Usually the everyday experience of teachers is that even small children have significant educational lags: reading and spelling problems, lacking basic knowledge of orientation and expressions. Besides, behaviour and accommodation problems of Roma children are also frequent. The following narrative depicts them:

> *In the beginning of the semester we had many problems. He was fighting with the whole school. He was a small "bellwether". Now he seems more peaceful and relaxed ...besides I am surprised sometimes how he knows the answer to difficult questions, but can not write properly " (Headteacher, 2nd grade, school2)*

Class-visits support these argumentations in a way that educational lags, but more significantly conduct problems influence very much the nature of relations among children. In addition, those visible disadvantages which arise from the scanty material and living conditions of these children contribute to their low ranking in the honest and astute world of children.

Although, the analysis of interactions among children is not the aim of the thesis, I would note that more than once there was a conflict between Roma and Non-Roma children over pens and pencils. Usually the borrowed item was taken care of and supervised when it was used by a Roma child, and it was the dominant topic and site of tension between the children. It is noteworthy that teachers tend to rationalize these distrustful relations emphasizing that Roma children are still new in the classes; although it is already two years since they were integrated to the schools, certainly exclusive of first grade student.

All these phenomena necessarily produce challenges to the teachers, which they regard as an *"everyday battle"*. It refers to that teachers should pay special attention and provide extra classes for these children to accomplish as much as their non-Roma fellow.

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Although regarding the size of the classes – usually 26-30 children per class – these additional "tasks" are demanding for them. They tend to emphasize that the overloaded, hard and fast educational curricula and the classes – which bring together children with different learning potential – make it difficult to provide extra "services" for children with significant disadvantages.

Nevertheless, there are teachers who devotedly emphasize that lags could be compensated for even within these conditions with pedagogical means and extra attention. They underline the importance of their own teaching role, in this *"everyday battle"* against disadvantages.

3.3. b. Middle school

In the upper classes, the problems and gaps presented above are more dominant and significant. Besides, the accumulated educational disadvantages, teenage (and related more serious conduct) problems also aggravate the accommodation of older Roma children. In addition, lack of motivation and intention to cooperate are identified as the field of problems. Some narratives articulate more radically the perceived problems claiming that Roma children have *"no knowledge"*, and usually their behaviour is *"aggressive and ignorant"*. Therefore, as one teacher formulates it, they tend to regard integration as a domain for *"educating a criminal mob"*. Some narratives even talk about a threat, a feeling of insecurity due to the presence of some Roma children. One teacher even told me that she feels threatened when leaving the school she meets Roma children gathered in a gang. In order to avoid trouble, as she explains, she usually walks close to the wall and waits for them to pass. Although, she acknowledges that it is likely to be an imagined fear, since *"they most probably do not hurt me"*, she admits that still can not help her feelings.

Opposed to the constructive problem resolution strategy of teachers of small children, these teachers emphasize that they are not equipped to cope with these problems. They do not believe that their own pedagogical means and power are enough to handle these educational and conduct problems, therefore they try to ignore them. The narratives tell that this perceived "weaponlessness" pushes teachers to regard problems as "invisible", so to say. It means that they do not intervene in any kind of activity of these "problematic" children, even if it is disadvantageous regarding their learning achievement, as long as it does not disturb the progress of the lesson or the order of the classroom; as long as it does not become "visible".

These concerns reflect upon a conflictual and insecure relation between teachers and Roma children, which produces an ignorant disposition on the side of teachers and withdrawal on that of Roma children. This in turn blocks interactions or leads them toward a hostile and alienated direction. In addition, it creates an exclusive border between Roma and non-Roma, where the "us" and "they" distinction becomes harsh, as the following quotation suggests *"let **them** do what they want"* and *"**we** should try not to interfere". (Teacher, 6th grade, school2, emphasis added)* Therefore, these relations endorse separation rather than promoting commonness and a unifying, inclusive identification. In this relation, Roma children create their own, exclusive identity through intra-grouping. They usually get together in breaks, even though they attend separate classes, for the aim of "hanging together", reproducing their culturally distinct community and ensuring protection. As one Roma boy of the gang told me *"we get together, of course, we should stand for each other"*.

In contrast, there are some teachers who emphasize the need for distinctions. They report cooperative and productive relations with these children. Like the case of an 8th grade Roma student, who

> *Has been accepted well. She is different. She has friends. One of them is the best in the class who has respect. She came in the last year, she hardly even dared to breathe, it took her three months to be accommodated. She dresses relatively*

well, and I think she likes me too, I see in her eyes. She has no personality problem. Her knowledge is less but she does her best. (Head teacher, 8th grade, school2)

3.3. c. Theoretical implications

In this part, we have seen that the main concerns of teachers vary with the age of Roma children. Educational and conduct problems were revealed both in the junior classes and their senior counterpart, but they were less significant vis-á-vis younger children. However, conflicts and misunderstandings among children were present there as well. Besides, teachers emphasized their tiredness due to exhausting school agenda and exploiting huge classes with children of different skills.

Nevertheless, the teachers of younger children emphasized that with extra classes and attention disadvantages may be reduced, while in contrast, teachers of the older children tend to ignore problems indicating a conflictual and sometimes fearful relation. In addition, in both cases positive examples were articulated.

Viewing these experiences through the lens of contact theory, we could see that the conditions of a "successful" contact often are partially (or entirely not) given. The conditions as outlined in chapter one are that participants of interethnic interactions should

a) possess equal status

b) share common goals

c) interact cooperatively and

d) enjoy environmental support

Regarding the status of younger children, two conditions are missing: they do not possess equal, but have lower status and the interaction is dominated by authority rather than cooperation. This is embodied in hierarchical and unstable class-room relations as the example of the pen (or property) conflict suggested. This low social position of Roma children is the outcome of poor material conditions, educational disadvantages, conduct

problems and also – I may add – of the categorical nature of ethnic relations. Nevertheless, the perception of the teacher is very important. They seemed to believe that with their support these tendencies could be softened and though it is an *"everyday struggle"* these children could benefit in the long run. Therefore, I suggest that the two other conditions of a "successful" contact are realized: there is an environmental support (of teachers) and also a common goal (reducing educational inequalities).

To further understand the features of contact I would combine this outcome with the typology of Isin (2002) regarding exclusion and altering strategies. Besides, the observation of Braddock (1980) and Rouhana and Fiske (1995) will be applied too.

As it was presented in chapter one, the *logic of exclusion* is to separate ones from others labelling them as outsiders or aliens. It assumes a clear cut, 'non-relation' with others. By contrast, the *logic of altering* assumes contingent boundaries in interethnic contacts where agents are engaged in different relations with others. According to Isin these relations could be: solidaristic (based on recognition and affiliation), agonistic (based on domination and authorization) or alienating (based on exclusion). As detailed in the same chapter, these relations could produce three overlapping but distinct subjects: the *stranger*, the *outsider* and the *alien* (Isin, 2002). Since the relations between young Roma children, non-Roma fellows and teachers, I suggest, are based on solidaristic but also on antagonistic relation, they are perceived as *strangers* in Isin's typology, where stranger is the person who is a member of a group but distant from it too. This dubious relation is embodied in the dichotomy of conflicts and problems and the supportive attitude of teachers. Differently, the low social status of Roma children is a product of dominative and authorative (agonistic) approaches; nevertheless, the expressed concern of teachers for the educational achievement of these children is a symbol of affiliation (solidaristic) relation.

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Regarding the status of contacts in the upper classes, we may state that besides the lack of equal status and cooperative interactions, the shared common goals and environmental support are all missing from the conditions required by contact theory. Having stated that there is a conflictual and discomfort relation between teachers and parents, the perceived commonness or togetherness, which are necessary for the realization of common goals, are usually absent. In addition, the support of teachers (environment) is lacking as well. Difficulties and sometimes dramatized conflicts produce unstable relations where antagonistic, but more often alienating strategies are applied. The latter is based on exclusion, as Isin (2002) defines it, which is embodied in the withdrawal of Roma children from the classes and in the ignoring approach of teachers. It reduces interactions and definitely directs the nature of contact toward a hostile and discounting relation, where often neutralization tactics are applied. Isin states that these relations produce *outsider* subjectivities, who are neither belonging to the group nor interacting with it, but still belong to a bigger entity, in our case, to the school. Therefore, the articulation of a common identification is blocked and instead a distinctive, othering and separative one is formulated, usually along ethnic lines.

These insecure relations can be put into a different light with the analysis of Rouhana and Fiske (1995). They examine the asymmetrical power-relations between Israeli and Palestinian citizens of the Israeli state. The authors underline that both groups distinguish between institutional, social and political integration power. According to the authors, both groups agree that Israeli citizens asymmetrically control institutional power; nevertheless, there is less consent in the second type of power. Rouhana and Fiske explain that Palestinians might gain social and political power by controlling the extent they would like to be integrated. This in turn poses a threat to the Jewish majority, as they put it: "It seems that the dominant group's sense of power is not accompanied by a sense of security" (30). Analogically, the rejection of Roma children to cooperate and be mobilized for common

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goals is the means for controlling integration power. I would add that this could be seen as a compensation for asymmetrical power-relations in schools. Braddock (1980) formulates it differently claiming that these unequal relations could be realized through minority students` rejection of class participation or aggression because of frustration, which in turn explains the teachers' (imagined or real) feeling of threat and insecurity. At last, it blocks the articulation of a unified identity, and in turn this is the power of remaining different.

Class participation, spontaneous talks and observations clearly underlined the spatial embodiment and symbolical power of these unequal and insecure relations. Usually Roma children were sitting alone, having rare means to participate in class-work: neither material (pens, books, compasses) nor symbolical (like knowledge and fellow respect). As a result, some started to initiate talks, interactions or provoke classmates. While others were sitting in the desk voicelessly, and perfectly detached from the reality of class-room engaging in some activities: drawing, papers arranging, wondering, just to overcome loneliness.

Nevertheless, as it was continuously emphasized there are positive examples too, where neither antagonistic nor alienating features were noticed. Rather, solidarity, affiliation and even personal attachment to the children were prevailing. As a result, the accommodation of these children was more fluent. In addition, the interactions they engage in were more frequent, comfortable and went beyond ethnic borders. This relation, as I suggested in the chapter one, produces the subjectivity of the *fellow*, or of the entire *insider*.

3.4. Explaining interethnic relations: The dichotomy of school and home

In this part I will look for more substantial answers to the two questions of the thesis: does contact help to overcome prejudice and to what extent does ghetto-image influence the narratives on Roma children, and on Roma people at large. To do so, I will list the reasons given by teachers and non-Roma parents for the different – successful or failed –

accommodation of Roma children. In that way, the outcome of the analysis of the previous part – that is three distinct subjectivities (the *stranger*, *outsider* and *fellow*) have been produced in the context of integration – will become more explicable.

The most frequent framing of problems is to situate school and home into a dichotomous relation, in which schools are usually presented as the place for "bettering"; while homes are identified as the source of problems. Both teachers and non-Roma parents tend to emphasize that the education children get in schools are in opposition to the norms of Roma families. This is formulated in different ways. Some are stereotyping, while others use an explicit racial discourse to clarify this opposition. Nevertheless, all of the circulating arguments put an emphasis on differences and otherness, demarcating the peculiar properties and particular traits of that group, after all the substance of Romaness. More precisely, the representation of Roma children and their parents is often constructed through well-known images like withdrawal from production ("*no intention to work*"), relying on social benefits (*"living on our money")* and the overall cultural inferiority. It was many times echoed in the conclusive short phrase that *"they know their rights, but not their obligations"*. This is exemplified in more detail in this quotation:

> *The Guszev (Roma ghetto) is a very low socio-cultural environment and children see no positive example. They (Roma parents) are undereducated and it causes the low mental capability of these children. Plus, they marry within own kinship system, live on benefits. These all affect the mental status of children. It is in their blood, it is genetic. (Head teacher, 2nd grade, school2)*

We see here that the stereotyped image of Roma families, in turn, influences the narratives on children: *"low mental capacity"* which is seen as a genetically inherited quality. In addition, the Roma ghetto is seen as a "discounting" space although neither teachers nor non-Roma parents had ever been to the ghetto, with the exception of one or two visits[13]. Still they usually regard this information as accurate and correct. I suggest, that this firm belief

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[13] Teachers should do a family visit in the beginning of each term.

may also be informed by the often expressed fear to go there. To put it differently, the fear itself may serve as a steady legitimation for the rejection of interethnic actions, therefore, physical and symbolical distance is regarded as the guarantees of security.

This role of the Roma ghetto to define the distinctiveness of Roma people could be unfolded with Isin`s and Caglar`s analysis on the relation of social and material space. Isin (2002) emphasises that the spatial distribution of relations can not be ignored, claiming that each space is a "socially ranked geographical space"(41). To put it differently, a symbolic space where social relations – through domination, alienation, familiarity – are produced could be translated into a physical space too. The symbolic space has a cognitive structure, while the physical means a geographical territory. More importantly, this social (or symbolic) space is in a dialogical relation with the material one. In other words, social struggles take place in space, but also space itself shapes them.

In that context, the isolation of Roma people in the ghetto indicates their social isolation. Having no (or rare) contact with the city results in their segregation in the social and cognitive spaces too. Therefore, the mere existence of the ghetto contributes to the bounded social, economic and political position of Roma people. Also spatial distance characterizes the orientation toward and the perceptions from each other. In our case, spatial separateness is associated with a cultural distinctiveness. As a result, Roma people are defined as a distinct ethnic group within a bounded territory and consequently, the demarcated Roma ghetto space deterministically remains a distinctive "ethnospace", as Appadurai (1996) puts it.

Caglar (2001) emphasises the power of ghetto-image as a symbol for influencing the discourse on exclusion and distinctiveness. Although she writes about the narratives on Turkish immigrants living in ghetto in Germany, her findings are highly relevant in our case.

She compellingly notes that the metaphor of ghetto becomes the basis for the ethno-cultural understanding of citizenship of Turkish immigrants.[14]

Analogically, we see that the perceived relation between space (ghetto) and traits (low education profile of children) often become ethnicized in the narratives. To be more precise, the ghetto image attached to Roma people, as we saw, is able to mobilize mainstream discourse in a way that it emphasises their discounting cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. It is the more interesting, since those (Roma) children's educational lags – who do not live in the ghetto – are less to be explained in ethnic terms. Besides though, there are teachers and also non-Roma parents, who certainly make distinctions among the children, live in the ghetto. What is interesting however, that the "outstanding" disposition of these exceptional (ghetto) Roma families is usually put into conflict with the norms of the ghetto. A teacher of a 7 years old Roma boy told me that since this family *"want good and change"* rejecting the norms of the ghetto they are excluded from the community in a way that they are even the target of provocation and violence, according to her. She reported that the house of this *"better"* family was set in fire in Christmas by other Roma and she expressed her (most probably under-informed) concern too that they will be attacked again: "*the knife will soon be used against them". (Teacher, 2nd grade, school2).*

Having internalized the belief that the educational norm of school is unfamiliar and distant from that of Roma families, teachers tend to underestimate their power to reduce disadvantages. Instead a pessimistic, ignoring and desperate approach is produced toward difficulties, toward Roma children. Havas (2008) calls it as "pedagogical fatalism" (8). It is often expressed through the submissive phrase that *"it is only 8 hours that they spend here"*, but then they go home, to that substandard space, which *"destroys"* the symbolical (internalization of dominant norms) and the material (educational) progress of Roma children

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[14] Although in the context she is working within this discourse even informs policy making, I would emphasise here its potential to shape public discourse.

produced during school time. The underestimation of their own teacher's role is the more far-reaching since, as it was presented in the introduction also, studies show that the role of the teacher in the development of children is as decisive as the model of the family. In addition, this pedagogical despair is also surprising since there were obvious examples – mainly in the junior classes – of caring and trustful relations between children and teachers, dominated by strong emotional attachment, respect and mutual affiliation. This in turn was (and still is) a powerful personal and pedagogical means to influence the performance of a child, as it was formulated by teachers themselves in a way – for example – that:

> *He is really attached to me, so am I. This is a 'weapon' I have in my hand to manipulate and control situations. (Teacher, 2nd grade, school2)*

Interestingly, other teachers and non-Roma parents explain educational lags and accommodation problems through the critique of positive discrimination, which was analyzed in the second section of this chapter, but from a different perspective. The critics usually emphasize that positive discrimination has produced a protection for Roma children, which is either devaluated or mobilized by some of them according to their interest.

Some narratives emphasize that all those advantages – like their own bus, extra classes, and special attention – are not appreciated by Roma children, but rather perceived as rightfully given or worthless. Therefore, teachers maintain, that the help and commitment offered by them to fight disadvantages is not coupled by the intention to make use of them, therefore this fight lacks cooperation, and future success. In addition, these opinions usually put the gains of Roma people in relation with their loss legitimating its unfairness by stating that Roma people can not appreciate them. From this perspective, positive discrimination becomes a dichotomous site of the empowerment of Roma people and of the devaluation of the interest of the non-Roma. Consequently, if we put it into the field of power relations, positive discrimination symbolizes a threat to the dominancy of the majorities' interest.

Overall, positive discrimination – through this lens – is a source of furthering the social and political gap between Roma and non-Roma people.

In this context the rationale behind the powerful role of the separate bus in the interpretation of differences, becomes accessible. The bus, in which Roma children travel from and back to the ghetto each day, is often interpreted as the emblem of separation. It separates the two groups by providing advantage to Roma children. But also, it is the symbol of differences because the bus trip is often interpreted as a liminal but already an exclusive phase which detaches Roma children from the reality of schools and transfers them to their culturally different home, to the feared world of the ghetto.

In addition, others who criticize positive discrimination usually claim that some children abuse it misinterpreting and ethnicizing those pedagogical means with which they do not agree. To give an example:

> *There is a kind of dark side of integration. Once when I tried to call her into the classroom, she told me: "don't touch me, I will call the police". My husband is a lawyer, he suggested putting not even a finger on these children, since then I could go to court. They say that if we try to keep the order with them as well that we are treating them like this because they are Roma. It is not about that. It is about conduct, education and respect. (Teacher 5th grade, school2)*

This story illustrates well that positive discrimination provides a defensive strategy for Roma children, rearticulating the properties of Romaness which become in that way the site of claim-making. This ethnicization of teachers' act functions for some Roma children as a legitimation for their rejection of general rules and overall it provides and excuse for the non-participation in the life of schools. I suggest that this abusive strategy of ethnic-based advantages by some Roma children is in dialogue with the ethnicization of problems by some teachers. Nevertheless, both things – acting out Romaness and stereotyping – indicate as well as enhance separateness; decreasing the chances of "successful contacts". In addition, as the quotation implied, these phenomena obstructs the genesis of a normalized and de-ethnicized

discourse where problems and difficulties could be addressed properly without producing an imagined fear in teachers of *"go(ing) to the court"*.

I suggest that all these difficulties which integration should face produce the subjectivity of *outsiders* or *aliens*, depending on the extent of cooperation and on mutual affiliation.

Nevertheless, on the other side, we could meet more nuanced, self-reflexive and de-ethnicized explanations for the difficulties of integration. They underline that the lack of kindergarten education, the low quality of education of the closed ghetto school and the embodied biases are responsible for Roma children's hardships. They usually tend to ignore or neutralize any kind of distinction – making; be it positive or negative. Rather, they promote equal demands and standards introducing individual- and skill-based teaching methods as well as treatment. They stress the importance of positive examples for the demolition of prejudice in two fronts. They address the need of the employment of Roma teachers in schools; on the other hand, they also criticize the stereotyping agency of the media. It resonates well with the study of Rabinowitz (2001) on a co-existence project in Israel. This study, as chapter one already articulated, though in a politicized context and in a critical manner, yet underlines the importance of positive examples for the transformation of hitherto generalised fallacies, but at least for the moderation of stereotypes.

In addition, teachers emphasize that good cooperation with parents is a very important factor in solving problems: reducing disadvantages and ensuring better accommodation of children. The positive parental attitude – as they argue – facilitates best the work of teachers. This positive disposition is understood as the appreciation of the institutionalized norms (either of schools or of working places) and the ambition to break out of the vicious circle of poverty. Therefore, those students are seen to perform better whose *"parents have already been integrated"*, as some teachers formulate.

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This explicates the phenomenon – which was noted some lines earlier – that the educational lags of those Roma children who do not live in the ghetto are less prone to be explained in ethnic terms. Therefore, any kind of integration – residential, occupational – seems to lessen ethnic-centred representations and fallacies.

To further extend the findings, cultural differences are less emphasized in relation to Roma children who live outside the ghetto, and usually who are in the school from the first grade. Moreover, ethnic-centred representation of teachers and non-Roma parents become almost entirely incommensurable in relation to half-Roma students. When I asked a question about the half-Roma children, usually it took time to identify them, but respondents were able to do so. Still, both the Roma who do not live in the ghetto as well as the half-Roma children tend (but definitely more consistently the half-Roma ones) to be seen as *insider* students entirely belonging to the life of schools in a way that their Romaness is often neutralized and become irrelevant.[15] Further researches may be done for a more substantial analyzes of the far more benevolent and de-ethnicized status of half-Roma children.

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[15] Though the limited information of the thesis does not allow for any sort of generalization, I would still suggest considering the situation of half-Roma children.

Conclusion

Struggle of Roma people is to challenge the history of citizenship as 'minoritization'

To go back where we started, in agreement with Isin (2008), the thesis assumed that integration may be able transform and challenge the ethnic representation, the 'minoritization' of Roma people ensuring interethnic meetings beyond the edge of the Roma ghetto. Nevertheless, as we have seen, integration as such can challenge hostile interethnic relations only partly. The analysis has highlighted those obstacles which hamper integration and overall burden the struggle of Roma people against ethnic framing. From the perspective of contact theory we have seen that the four conditions for a "successful" contact (equal status, common goals, cooperative interactions and environmental support) are partly or entirely missing from the web of interethnic relations.

Regarding the status of younger children, two missing conditions have been identified: the participants of interactions are not equal, but Roma children have lower status and the interaction is dominated by authority rather than cooperation. This is embodied in hierarchical and unstable class-room relations as the example of the pen (or property) conflict suggested. The low social position of Roma children is the outcome of poor material conditions, educational disadvantages, conduct problems and also I may add − of the categorical nature of ethnic relations. Nevertheless, the teachers seemed to believe that with their support these tendencies could be softened and though it is an *"everyday struggle"* the children could benefit in the long run. Therefore, I have suggested that the two other conditions of a "successful" contact are realized: there is an environmental support (of teachers) and also a common goal (reducing educational inequalities). In Isin`s typology these children could be seen therefore as *strangers*.

Regarding the status of contacts in the middle school, I have suggested that besides the lack of equal status and cooperative interactions, the shared common goals and environmental support are all missing from the conditions required by contact theory. Having stated that there is a conflictual and discomfort relation between teachers and parents, the perceived commonness or togetherness, which are necessary for the realization of common goals, are usually absent. In addition, the support of teachers (environment) is lacking as well. Difficulties and sometimes dramatized conflicts produce unstable relations where antagonistic, but more often alienating strategies are applied. The latter is based on exclusion, as Isin (2002) defines it, which is embodied in the withdrawal of Roma children from the classes and in the ignoring approach of teachers. This produces distinctive, othering and separative identities usually along ethnic lines as well as defines Roma children as *outsiders.*

To sum up, there is an every-day struggle on the part of teachers for order and for the protection of mainstream norms, inherited pedagogical methods, and for the fairly well defined everyday practice of classrooms. These are all being challenged through integration; conformity and authority are contested and rearticulated. Sometimes, both teachers and Roma children are weaponless. On the part of teachers the protection strategy is ignorance, imagined invisibility of problems, and avoidance, but also in other cases it is hope in their work and belief in integration. On the part of children, the discomfort of the situation may result in the silent withdrawal from participation, or sometimes in aggression. I suggest that integration and its different layers need (more) positive examples. There is no yet equal participation in the school's life and effective decision as well as there is no real communication, but paternalistic or fearful approaches on the part of teachers and non-Roma parents. The relationship carries all those historical distances and prejudices which can not be eradicated in a year and the half.

Examining the rationale behind the different outcomes of contacts, and venues of participation we found that the separateness of the ghetto powerfully influences relations. The ghetto – as a symbol of low profiled cultural distinctiveness – informs a stereotyping ethnic-centred perception of teachers and non-Roma parents. This antagonistic ethno-cultural framing still limits the images constructed about Roma people and burden the success of integration. When teachers and non-Roma parents talk about Roma children, they usually refer to the ghetto Roma children and to the problems. Integration therefore has brought conflicts and tensions – perceived along ethnic lines – to the forefront, rather than lessen stereotypes. Consequently, these (ghetto) Roma pupils are integrated to the dominant society in schools, nevertheless they remain separated in the ghetto before and after school; and this binary relation between integration and separation has become an every-day experience for them. Therefore, their social inclusion is only a liminal status.

Also, the analysis has revealed that positive discrimination is another important impetus for the reproduction of hostile relations between Roma and non-Roma people. It is perceived by the informants as a dichotomous site of the empowerment of Roma people and of the devaluation of their interest. To put it differently, teachers and non-Roma parents tend to regard positive discrimination as a threat to the dominance of their interest, as a loss on their side.

Nevertheless, it has also been emphasized that there are positive examples, where neither antagonistic nor alienating features are noticed. Rather, solidarity, affiliation and even personal attachment to the children prevail. As a result, the accommodation of these children is smoother. In addition, the interactions they engage in are more frequent, comfortable and go beyond ethnic borders. This relation, as I have suggested, produces the subjectivity of the *fellow* (classmates), that of the complete *insider*.

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This more benevolent approach was usually presented in relation to those Roma children who do not live in the ghetto and those who are in the schools from the first grade. Moreover the analysis has implied that the perceived ethnic distinctiveness (Romaness) of half-Roma children becomes almost entirely incommensurable; although teachers are in everyday contact with all of these children as well as non-Roma parents too have more chance to meet them. The rationale behind this de-ethnicized discourse vis-á-vis some Roma children is that their parents have been already *"integrated",* as many teachers as well as non-Roma parents articulated it. It refers to the fact that they have already participated in interethnic relations, be it occupational, educational or residential. Therefore, frequent and durable interethnic contact seems to have the power to produce a less stereotyped, but a more nuanced narrative. In contrast nevertheless, the representation of those families who are physically separated in the ghetto, remains locked in the stereotyped discursive field of ethnic relations.

In the end, I would make some recommendation regarding integration. In compliance with teachers' opinion integration would benefit all those involved if only the small, junior children are integrated to heterogeneous schools rather than the whole body of the students. In this way, the accommodation of the different groups would be easier and smoother. In addition, I suggest that schools should promote contacts between teachers and non-Roma people, since as the analysis have underlined, there is a fear in both groups' members toward meetings. The demonized image about the ghetto which non-Roma people tend to construct prevent them to go there; while Roma parents tend to fear the school too, perceiving it as a majority dominated, unfamiliar space.

Concerning the frequently expressed overloadedness of teachers and the educational difficulties of disadvantaged (among them Roma) children, schools – with state support – should recruit additional teachers, who could treat these children individually regardless their

ethnic background. In addition, we have seen that teachers generally get a relatively small amount (49200 HUF/year) for their work with integrated children. I suggest that this compensation system should be re-set in a way that it motivates teachers and at the same time acknowledges the social importance and prestige of their work. Overall, I maintain that the introduction of these measures may reduce class-room conflicts and hostile dispositions, improving the educational performance as well as ensuring the well-being of the integrated children. In the long run, a more sophisticated implementation of integration may contribute to the lasting and far-reaching inclusion of Roma children.

Moreover, there is a call for rethinking positive discrimination considering that it is a very sensitive issue in the field of ethnic relations. As we have seen it was one of the main frontiers of the discontent of non-Roma people, as the separate "Roma bus" powerfully symbolized. Positive discrimination therefore shall be rethought in a way that both groups' interest is considered in order to lessen its consequences: its power to reproduce antagonistic approaches toward Roma people. This in turn could lead to the articulation of a social and political discourse, where problems and not only the benefits of integration could be addressed in a constructive and forward-looking manner without the fear of social "sanctions". The raison d'être of this thesis was to encourage a debate of this kind to contribute to the more frequent formation of insider − fellow classmate − relations instead of the hitherto prevailing outsider and stranger ones.

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