

An Educational Policy Implementation Analysis: The Place of the Roma in the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned **László Olivér Jakab** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

The Hungarian Government adopted the National Social Inclusion Strategy (NSIS) in 2011. One of the main goals of the NSIS is to improve the education level of the Roma by ensuring equal access to quality education and the elimination of discriminatory practices in schools. However, Hungary constantly fails to achieve these goals. Roma children still face segregation, discrimination, high drop-out rate, and exclusion in public education. The main purpose of the present thesis is to identify the factors that represent obstacles to successfully implement the educational goals of the NSIS. The thesis makes an analytic attempt to reveal the reasons why policy outcomes represent failure in Roma education. This is achieved by analyzing the implementation process of the NSIS. For this, the thesis is based on an educational implementation theory developed by Meredith I. Honig (2006). The theory focuses on three policy dimensions, namely policy, people, and places. It goes beyond the bottom-up and top-down approaches and provides a synthesized model of educational policy research. The research methodology involves desk research and content analysis. The thesis demonstrates that the major factors hindering successful implementation are the lack of genuine commitment to implement the NSIS, obscure targeting, historically embedded negative attitudes, and the government's policy direction of supporting school segregation.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures and Tables	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	v
Introduction	1
Structure and Methodology	5
1 Theoretical framework.....	7
1.1 Top-down approach.....	9
1.2 Bottom-up approach.....	10
1.3 Three-dimensional educational policy implementation approach.....	13
1.3.1 <i>Policy dimension</i>	14
1.3.2 <i>People dimension</i>	15
1.3.3 <i>Places dimension</i>	16
2 Introducing the National Social Inclusion Strategy	19
3 Analysis.....	22
3.1 Policy dimension of the NSIS	22
3.1.1 <i>Goals</i>	22
3.1.2 <i>Target</i>	25
3.1.3 <i>Tools</i>	28
3.2 People and places dimensions of the NSIS	30
Conclusion.....	35
Reference list.....	38

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Dimensions of contemporary education policy implementation in practice and research.

Table 1: Education of National Minorities: Number of pupils/students in full-time education

Table 2: Number of disadvantaged children in Hungary between 2012 and 2014

List of Abbreviations

NSIS	National Social Inclusion Strategy
NRSG	National Roma Self-Government
RD	Strategic Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme
SAP	Strategy Action Plan

Introduction

At the start of the 21st century, Roma people remain one of the most systematically discriminated against ethnic groups in the Western world. In Europe, despite policy reforms initiated mainly at the European Union (EU) level, in the recent policy research literature the European Roma population is considered to be indeed the most marginalized, socially, economically, politically excluded ethnic minority group (Acton, Ryder, and Rostas 2014; European Parliament 2011; John Shattuck 2012; Nicolae Gheorghe 1991). The situation is particularly dire in Central and Eastern European member states, which have the largest Roma populations on the continent. Among these countries, Hungary scores very poorly in achieving the goal of integrating Roma children into mainstream education. School segregation and unequal access to education have been identified as key reasons for the marginalization of Roma in Hungary (Kezdi, and Kertesi 2013). Segregation and exclusion are historically embedded in the education system. In 1991 32%, in 2007 62% of the Roma children were educated in segregated environment (Szabone, 2009). In 2006, at least 180 Roma-majority elementary schools, 3000 Roma-majority classes, and 1200 homogenously Roma classes were identified across Hungary (Kezdi and Kertesi, 2006).

Even though inclusive education is one of the cornerstones of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, Hungary as a member state has been failing to achieve to ensure access to quality education for Roma students (Kertesi, and Kezdi 2013). In Hungary, nearly 50 “ghetto schools” have been identified as having a majority of Roma pupils (Taba 2013). The increasing problem of school segregation of Roma students has been put on the agenda of the EU, and many documents have been written to redress the situation. However, significant change has not been seen so far in Hungary. The Roma still face discrimination and

segregation in Hungarian schools. The EU sees the approximately 10-12 million European Roma as population facing exclusion and discrimination, xenophobia and racism. The adoption of the EU 2020 strategy with its goal of “smart sustainable and inclusive growth” (European Commission 2010) shifted the language of European integration to economic growth going hand in hand with and conditioning social cohesion. The expressed need for social cohesion has been articulated by the European Commission (Commission) in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (Framework). In 2011, the Commission introduced the Framework focusing on four key areas: access to education, employment, housing, and healthcare. The Framework is setting out common European goals and it boosted the idea of an integration spiral: “Equal access to goods and services will lead to participation in education, which in turn will lead to participation in the labor market, which leads to economic benefits to everyone, both Roma and non-Roma, which in turn leads to social acceptance. Social acceptance, in turn, will lead to greater access to goods and services, and so on” (Goodwin, and Buijs 2013, 2044).

Following this integration spiral, it seems fair to suggest that the first step is to ensure the equal access to education which will, ideally, lead to further economic and social integration of the Roma population. Among many member states, Hungary expressed its commitment to the Framework and formulated a strategy that has undertaken similar targets, called the National Social Inclusion Strategy – Extreme Poverty, Child Poverty, the Roma – (2011-2020) (NSIS). Out of the four policy areas, the main formal commitment of the Hungarian Government is the improvement of Roma education. Seemingly, the Hungarian Government follows the idea of integration spiral and pays a substantial amount of attention to the education of Roma. The NSIS clearly states that its ultimate goals are to increase the educational level, to foster early childhood education, to improve the access to education, and to reduce school drop-out rate of Roma children. However, in reality many Roma students still face segregation as well as other

forms of discrimination in public education. Furthermore, the primary commitment to create equal access to education appears also to be problematic. The Civil Society Monitoring Report commissioned by the Roma Decade in 2012 argues that as a consequence of the lack of access to quality education the number of Roma school leavers is higher and the participation in higher education is lower than the Hungarian average. The drop-out rate of Roma in compulsory education is 51% (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014), whereas this number is 11.4% in national level (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2014). There is no reliable data on the number of Roma in higher education. However, it can be inferred that due to the high drop-out rate in secondary school the number of Roma students in higher education is much lower than the Hungarian average. Discriminatory practices towards Roma students are widespread around the country. The policy direction and implementation of the NSIS are contradicting with its goals.

As an example, the Ministry of Human Resources (responsible for education) in 2015 initiated an amendment to the Act of Public Education that legally allows school segregation under certain circumstances. According to Chance for Children Foundation (2015), the amendment was purposefully created in order to maintain segregated ‘ghetto’ schools. In a lawsuit, initiated by the Chance for Children Foundation against the Greek Catholic Church (school maintainer) to eliminate school segregation in Nyiregyhaza, the Minister of Human Resources Zoltan Balog stated in his court testimony that segregation is necessary for Roma kids in order to ‘catch-up’ to the level of the Hungarian education system (CFCF 2015). Another example is the reduction of the compulsory age limit from 18 to 16. This policy had as a consequence an increase in the average number of early school leavers to 11.8% by 2014. According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, this number is increasing. Furthermore, this statistical data is 20% in the North Hungarian region which has the highest number of Roma population in Hungary (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2014).

The approach taken by the government is the so-called ‘catch-up’ education, which is a supportive means of school segregation. The Roma have to catch-up to the mainstream education by first studying in a segregated school environment. This approach, however, contradicts with the goal of the strategy namely to eliminate discrimination in school and to support equal access to education. Furthermore, Kezdi and Kertesi (2004) argue that segregation is broadening the social gap between Roma and non-Roma since they do not have the chance to meet in early childhood. The teachers are less motivated to teach in a ‘ghettoized’ environment which will result in a low performance of the students. Vigdor (2007) states that segregated schools provide less opportunity to minority students to achieve quality education. It can strengthen inequality between minority students and majority students. Kezdi and Kertesi (2013) reveal evidence that the Hungarian free school choice system and the government’s policy direction powerfully add to the increasing inequality between schools.

Understanding that the NSIS has been failing to achieve its goals in terms of education of Roma, reveals the existence of a gap between the formal commitment of Hungary in the NSIS, and then the policy making level and the actual implementation process. The main aim of the present thesis is to identify the factors that represent obstacles to a successful implementation of the goals under the NSIS. Furthermore, the thesis makes an analytic attempt to reveal the reasons for the outcomes of the implementation of the NSIS. This is achieved by analyzing the implementation process of the NSIS. For this, I will use a relatively new educational implementation theory developed by Meredith I. Honig (2006). The theory focuses on three policy dimensions, namely policy, people, and places. It goes beyond the bottom-up and top-down approaches and provides a synthesized model of educational policy research. It questions the interactions between the three dimensions that shape policy implementation. This model fits well to the scope of this thesis. In the analysis part of the thesis, I will follow this theory and apply it to the above explained Hungarian case.

The main research question is the following:

What are the main factors that are hindering the implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy in achieving the goal of providing equal access to quality education and the elimination of discrimination against Roma students between 2011 and 2015?

My first hypothesis is that Hungary is lacking the basic political and social conditions that are needed to implement such a strategy. In other words, the reality is that there is no genuine commitment from the Hungarian government to achieve the goal of equal access to quality education and the elimination of discrimination. Furthermore, there are historically embedded obstructive attitudes on the delivery level namely stereotypes and racism against the Roma.

Second, group-targeting in the NSIS is not clear. Namely, it is confusing whether the definition of the target group is based on socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural factors.

Third, policy measures are not in accordance with the objective of the policy; in fact they are formulated in a way that would support contrary outcomes.

Structure and Methodology

The paper is structured into three main chapters. The first chapter outlines the theoretical framework of implementation that shapes the analysis of the Strategy. The second chapter is descriptively introduces the NSIS by analyzing the Strategy document. Following up on this, the third chapter analyzes the current implementation outcomes of the NSIS by using Honig's three-dimensional implementation model. In this part, the main focus is on the policy goals, targets, tools, people, and places. Furthermore, this chapter also presents the possible factors that are hindering the implementation of the strategy. The thesis aims to contribute to the educational policy research literature. It aims to identify the main breakpoints in the implementation process. Thus, it can add to the better understanding of the weaknesses of the implementation of the NSIS.

The analysis focuses on the time period of 2011-2015 by using qualitative research methodology namely content analysis. The research is based on contextual and diagnostic policy research, using desk research. The purpose of the desk research is to orient the research to the major issues and policy debates by analyzing the NSIS and the above mentioned situation of school discrimination and unequal access to quality education. In order to contextualize the research, I will analyze the standard documents as primary sources. The primary sources of the research are the National Social Inclusion Strategy of Hungary, the Strategy Action Plan 2012-2014, the Civil Society Monitoring Report Commissioned by the Roma Decade 2005-2015, the Educational Yearbook of Hungary. Furthermore, in order to better understand the implementation of the NSIS, I will assess secondary sources such as recommendations, articles, online media sources, statistical data, and EU documents.

1 Theoretical framework

One can argue that policy transfer would be the best suited and sufficient theoretical framework to assess the NSIS, based on the nature of the problem since the policy objectives that were set by the EU Roma Framework were taken to the NSIS in Hungary. However, this assumption of having identical policies under the strategies of the member states is not valid. One of the main proponents of the policy transfer theory Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), argue that policy transfer is a process by which institutional setups, administration, and knowledge about policy in a particular area or country is used for the development of similar policies in another area or country. However, in the case of the NSIS, Hungary has developed its institutional setups that are different from other member states' operations. The only similarity is the four policy areas. Since the NSIS works as a guideline for the national policies, the domestic policies are shaped by domestic policy actors that allow creating domestic policies regardless of other countries policies under their strategies. Based on this practical observation, the theory of policy transfer is insufficient for assessing the implementation of the NSIS. NSIS is a soft law tool; therefore, it is left to the member states on how to deal with it. It means that there is no policy model on what to transfer and how. Moreover, little interaction and exchange between states with regards to best practices in the educational sector takes place.

The theoretical framework I have chosen draws on the main characteristics of the implementation theories. More concisely, I will go through the fundamental implementation theories namely top-down and bottom-up approaches. Follow up on these theories; I will introduce a relatively new approach to implementation research based on Honig's (2006) three-dimensional model of educational policy implementation. I have chosen this approach because it helps to understand the factors that are hindering the implementation of NSIS. One of the key elements of the policy cycle is the implementation process. Implementation in public

policy has been preoccupying experts for a long time. This is the stage in the policy cycle when the formulated policy turns into practice. Scholars of the field mainly focus on the question: What happens to a policy or program after it has been formulated? (Birkland 2001). This means that they make a distinction between policy making and policy implementation. Hill (2005) argues that the distinctive study of the two processes can lead us to a misunderstanding because if we study the two processes separately we may not understand the whole. In the case of the implementation of the NSIS, I find Hill's argument valid, since one has to take into consideration both top-down and bottom-up processes of the NSIS that will be discussed in the next chapter. In order to contextualize the implementation of the NSIS, the following part focuses on the conceptualization of the top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Most of the policy analysis handbooks and papers aim to analyze the development of the implementation theories start with the observation that Goggin (1986, 1990) identified three generations of implementation research (Pülzl, and Treib 2007; Winter 2006; deLeon, and deLeon 2002). According to Sabatier (1986), the first generation of implementation scholars focused on single cases and was pessimistic about the ability of government to apply formulated policies (Pülzl, Treib 2007, [Derthic 1972; Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; Bardach 1977]). The main idea of this period was to raise awareness of the importance of the analysis of implementation processes. The second generation of implementation studies was mostly focusing on the two main theories of implementation namely the top-down and the bottom-up approaches (Pülzl, Treib 2007; Winter 2006; deLeon, and deLeon 2002). The third generation's main aim was to further develop new theories that are combining the nature of both top-down and bottom-up approaches. This period was intended to put implementation theories in a more scientific manner. As it was mentioned, in implementation research one can distinguish two schools of analyzing and describing implementation: the first is more likely focusing on policy makers as central actors on the legislative framework. This is the so-called 'top-down'

approach. The term refers to policy that is made at the ‘top’ (governmental level). The second method for studying implementation is the ‘bottom-up’ approach. The proponents of the approach argue that in order to understand a process of implementation one should start identifying actors from the local level, emphasizing target group and service deliverers (Matland 1995).

1.1 *Top-down approach*

The standard model suggests a set of factors that define the main idea of the ‘top-down’ approach. The aim is to define a general theory of implementation. The proponents of the approach like Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) have attempted to explain how implementation could be successful. In their work they distinguished three main variables that are constructing an effective implementation process: “tractability of the problem, ability of statute to structure implementation, non-statutory variables affecting implementation” (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989, 22). According to them, clarifying the legislative framework of a policy is the first step. A policy has to have clearly defined goals or objectives and policy tools. Policy designers have to create a policy message which is applied during the implementation. There is an assumption that policy designers have a good knowledge of the implementers and of the implementing organizations that carry out the policy. The approach suggests that decision makers are the most qualified actors to produce policy objectives and control over the implementation (Pülzl, Treib 2007). Furthermore, Birkland (2001) emphasize that in order to accomplish policy goals policy makers have to create a proper structure for control, meaning that values set at the top have to be shared with implementers, the policy deliverers on the bottom. Basically, the approach is based on a linear idea that disregards the impact of the operation of deliverers at the bottom. This implies that in order to have successful implementation first top-level bureaucrats have to ensure a trustworthy bureaucratic system at the bottom which carries out the implementation as an agency. Furthermore, it means that sufficient resources, reliability,

responsibility, and hierarchical control are needed to ensure a successful implementation process (Pülzl, Treib 2007). The main proponents of top-down approach Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) have also emphasized the importance of the linearity in achieving effective implementation of a policy. As supporters of the top-down approach, they define six conditions for effective implementation which consider statutory and political variables. These conditions are the following: (1) clear and consistent policy objectives (2) the program is based on causal linkages affecting policy objectives and clearly defines the target group (3) structured implementation process for maximizing the policy performance by the actors and assigning the agency that carries out the policy (4) the implementing agency consists of skilled people with full commitment to the implementation (5) the policy is supported by other interest groups and key legislators (6) the policy objectives are not undermined as the socioeconomic environment changes. As every theory, the top-down approach also has some weaknesses.

Matland (1995) brings in three sets of criticism. First, when top-downers focus on statutory language, may not take into consideration broader public objectives. Second, they ignore political aspects as well as how legislation is passed. Third, they misplace the emphasis on policy designers as key actors while not taking into account local actors' role, as who have better understanding of what happens in the policy delivering stage. This argument is pertinent because it seems indeed unrealistic to control discretion on the 'bottom'. Furthermore, the 'top-down' approach seems too technical and based on authority while ignoring other public objectives.

1.2 Bottom-up approach

The bottom-up approach is a reaction to the top-down approach. Its proponents explain that in order to better understand implementation gaps one should start from the bottom rather than the top. The main aim of the bottom-uppers is to give a holistic picture of the implementation strategies and interactions starting from the delivery stage. They reject to have a 'stagist' model

that implies a “textbook conception of the policy process” (Pülzl, Treib 2007, 94[Nakamura 1987, 142]). The supporters of the bottom-up approach argue that in order to better understand implementation one has to analyze the delivery level in terms of what actually is happening there. It is questioning the dynamics of the interactions, causes that are influenced, shaped and structured by the deliverers on the bottom level. Lipsky (1980) demonstrates it with the term “street-level bureaucrats”, arguing that policy implementation is based on the network on the ground and the human interactions thereof. We should start from the deliverers who meet the target population. Lipsky (1980) argues that policy making is actually happening at the recipient level. The ‘street level bureaucrats’ such as teachers, police officers, and clerks are shaping the implementation of a policy. Richard Elmore (1980) calls it “backward mapping” from the microlevel factors to the central planners. Elmore (1980) and Lipsky (1980) argue that local bureaucrats possess a certain amount of discretion by which they shape the policy delivery. Policy making is not only happening on the top but on every stage of the policy cycle. They observed this process as something beneficial since the ‘street-level bureaucrats’ are actually the people who meet the target group, and assumedly they encounter the actual problems of the target group. Berman (1978) explains two levels. First, there is the “macroimplementation” level, where central actors make decisions on a particular policy. Second, there is the “microimplementation” level, where street level actors customize government’s plan and develop their program. “Central planners only indirectly can influence microlevel factors. Therefore, there is a wide variation in how the same national policy is implemented at the local level” (Matland 1995). The approach suggests that the main actors in implementation are local bureaucrats since they deliver policies and negotiate in the network of implementers (Pülzl, Treib 2007). Furthermore, Matland (1995) argues that if local implementers do not have the freedom to suit the program to local conditions the policy may fail. Discretion is, therefore, important for local bureaucrats to cope with institutional

discrepancies by having a loose delivery space by which they can best aim to achieve the success of a certain policy. Furthermore, what the proponents of bottom-up approach suggest is that in order to ensure the proper implementation of a certain policy one has to map out the local implementation network and structure, the interaction between the deliverers. Counter to the top-down approach, where the criteria are clear how to evaluate a program in formal objectives, the bottom-up approach emphasizes that the evaluation is much less clear. Criteria can be anything that the researcher chooses. It depends on the nature of the problem, and the focus is on the interaction between actors on the policy network (Sabatier 1986).

According to Matland (1995), there are two critiques of the bottom-up approach. First, the discretion of street-level bureaucrats usually ignores policy goals and overestimates personal goals toward the target group, while making local agencies uncountable. Second, bottom-uppers usually pay too much attention to the level of local autonomy and less attention to the central government authorities.

All in all, these two fundamental approaches are the basic theories of implementation research. Over time, the scholars of top-down and bottom-up approaches were competing and reflecting on each other that created a clear separation between the two. Following up on Pülzl and Treib's (2007) comparison, there are clear separate goals of the two. While the top-down research strategy starts from the political decision making level to the administrative implementation, the bottom-up research strategy starts at the bureaucratic level and mapping towards the administrative networks. The goal of the analysis is also different. While the main goal of the top-down approach is prediction and policy recommendation, the top-down approach mostly aims to provide a descriptive, explanatory analysis. Top-down approach is dividing hierarchical stages between policy formulation and implementation while the bottom-up approach gives a fusionist decentralized problem-solving aspect whereby they do not distinguish between policy formulation and implementation. It is clear that there is obvious

relevance of both of the approaches that are important to take into account. In researching the implementation of NSIS, one has to understand both the political decision making level at the top and the interactions at the bottom. One can argue that a synthesized implementation model is needed to carry out the research because both of the approaches are relevant. A new wave of implementation research occurred in the middle of 1980's that is trying to synthesize the characteristics of both approaches and to provide a third type of hybrid theory (Sabatier 1986; Elmore 1985; Winter 1990). This approach provides combined elements in order to have a strong conceptual approach that avoids the weaknesses of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Therefore, I will discuss a new synthesized approach of education policy implementation research developed by Meredith I. Honig (2006) that adds to the literature of the hybrid theory. This approach is taking into account educational policy implementation research by using a three-dimensional research model.

1.3 Three-dimensional educational policy implementation approach

This part of the theoretical framework is based on a contemporary research on education policy implementation developed by Honig in her book: *New Directions in Education Policy Implementation: Confronting Complexity*, which was published in 2006. This book reveals up-to-date research on educational policy implementation. It takes into account the previous generations of educational research that were following the fundamental approaches of top-down and bottom-up. This new approach is a hybrid model that is not only questioning what works, but also why, where, when, and for whom. She argues that there are three dimensions defining educational policy implementation (Figure 1.). The three dimensions are policy, people, and places. This new approach developed based on previous waves of research in the field of implementation. It does not only define the three dimensions but also questioning "how and why interactions among these dimensions shape implementation in particular ways." (Honig, 2006, p14).

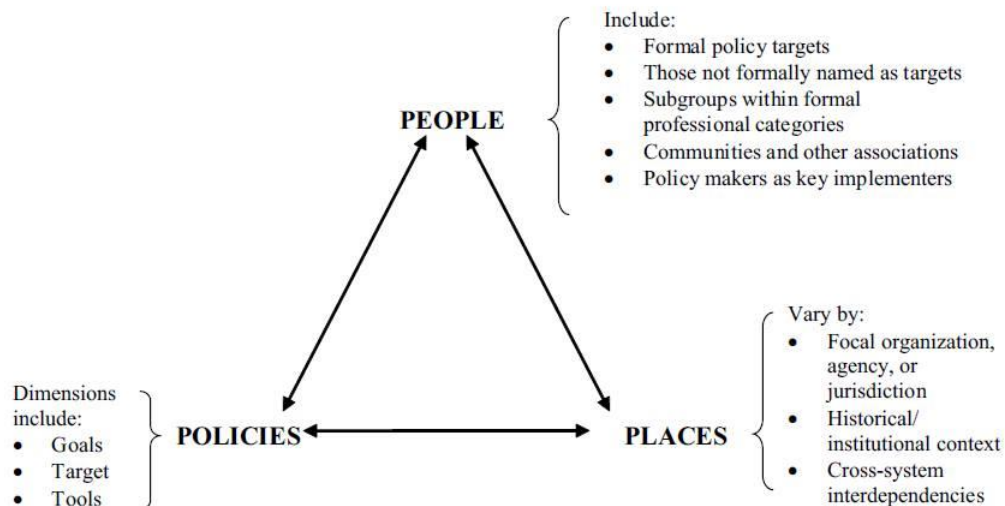


Figure 1: Dimensions of contemporary education policy implementation in practice and research. *Source:* Honig (2006, 14).

1.3.1 Policy dimension

Honig provides three dimensions of policies namely goals, target, and tools. She argues that educational policy goals have changed in general. Today, the main goal of an educational policy is to ensure achievement of a high standard for all students. Therefore, one can observe the most systemic change in education policies including school districts, centralization or decentralization and large-scale change initiatives. However, these systematic goals create new challenges such as resistance from schools due to historical school conventions or for a low-performing school to achieve higher standards. Furthermore, systematic goals may achieve change, but there is a danger to enhance side effects such as increasing drop-out rate by introducing a reduction in mandatory age limit from 18 to 16 as Hungary did under the NSIS. Moreover, if the policy resistance on the delivery level is strong, the set of goals become counterproductive in practice. Honig argues that there is a change in policy targeting as well. Today, the target is not only the school staff, but also institutions, families, service organizations and youth agencies, all of which matter. Furthermore, the naming and labeling of a target group shapes the perception of a certain group which perception can influence the

outcome of the policy. For example, it matters whether Roma are targeted as an ethnic minority or a socioeconomic category in the NSIS. Implementers play a crucial role in creating and reinforcing group labels. These labels may function to frustrate goals such as equal access to education or the reduction of school segregation (Honig 2006, [Stein 2004; see also Datnow et al. 2001]). Honig states that tools are also influencing policy implementation. She refers to teacher motivation, capacity, incentives, and other factors. However, systemic changes require a certain level of learning ability at the bottom level that can reshape the relationship between the actors. The historical social institutions in a particular area already shape the chosen policy tools by the implementers. Some implementers already have the new knowledge some might not. The embracement of a policy tool depends on contextual supportive conditions and starting capacity of the school or school district.

1.3.2 People dimension

Honig distinguishes five dimensions included in the category of people. The first dimension contains those who are formally targeted. These people are both inside and outside of formal education system. Therefore, targets formally named and labeled in the policy design are subjects of policy researchers. They mostly examine how targeting refers to the current policy demand. Second, those people who are not formally targeted in policy design but have an influence on policy implementation. For example, in an educational policy, mayors have a huge impact on implementation. Third, subgroups within formal categories consist of those professionals who are assumed to possess values, ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that are influencing implementation. Honig argues that contemporary implementation research is mostly focusing on the sub-groups in this category. The implementers on the bottom level cannot be seen as one entity that shares the same values, beliefs, and identity. Furthermore, the differences in identity between formal professional implementers shape the decisions made

during implementation. The fourth dimension is taking into account different communities that can shape policy implementation. According to Honig, the relationship between particular communities in a particular school district strongly influences the implementation process. Furthermore, one example is the observation that how racially diverse communities influence teachers' discourse on a racial issue. According to Pollock (2001 [Honig, 2006]), even if teachers tried to avoid negative stereotypes of students, they reinforced the stereotypes in the implementation process so the policy was counterproductive just because of the used language of the deliverers. This is just one example how communities influence policy implementation. The fifth dimension is an attempt by which Honig overcomes the clear distinction between policy makers and implementers. She claims that policy makers are key implementers. The roles of policy makers and implementers overlap especially in a classical top-down policy control.

1.3.3 Places dimension

Contemporary implementation research focuses on where the implementation actually happens. It refers to the governmental organizations, school districts, and other implementer agencies in the field of education. The main idea is to reveal the differences at these policy actors in the formal organizational system. Honig argues that each organizational system that delivers policies has different political and institutional resources. Furthermore, contemporary studies show to what extent these political and institutional settings and resources are historically seated. Meaning, a nationwide educational problem might vary in local educational institutions. For example, some schools might support segregation historically, and some might have an integrative identity. Therefore, place-based studies can give an overview of the local problem that requires different resources to implement a systemic policy change. The local

institutional, economic and political set-ups ultimately reveal the main implementation challenges.

All in all, policy, people, and places as the three main dimensions of educational policy implementation are conceptualizing the implementation process. In order to better understand implementation one has to look at all three dimensions. They are strongly interconnected meaning one cannot be understood without taking into consideration the other two. However, as every theory it also has limitations and critics. One of the main critics is that it does not function as a sort of guideline for practitioners. Honig made the conception of implementation a complex, hardly-understandable process that gives a blurred picture what is implementable and what is not. On the contrary, Honig argues that the approach is for broadening research knowledge that can result in deep interest of producing practical knowledge for policy actors. However, at this level the main idea is to increase the learning ability of new ideas in the policy area of education that is essential for policy deliverers. One can argue that policy actors might also take into consideration the three dimensions in order to better understand the ultimate policy implementation questions of what, where, and for whom. Honig claims that policy implementers should not look for perfect guidelines for implementation, but rather focus on local communities and their needs and use policy research as evidence and ideas for better implementation. For example, leaders of a policy implementation might question whether legitimizing school segregation will contribute to the aim of equal access to education for Roma students. The limitations of the top-down and bottom-up models would not allow me to assess comprehensively the NSIS. Therefore, I find Honig's new implementation research approach applicable to the analysis of the implementation of the NSIS. I argue that assessing the three dimensions is necessary to better understand the factors that are hindering the implementation of the NSIS in achieving the goal of equal access to quality education and the elimination of discrimination against Roma students. Thus, in the following chapter I will give a descriptive

overview of the main document of the NSIS with a special focus on the part of ‘Education and Training’. After that I will analyze its implementation based on the three-dimensional model by Honig.

2 Introducing the National Social Inclusion Strategy¹

The NSIS was adopted in December 2011 by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, State Secretariat for Social Inclusion. The document is 133-page long and divided into six main policy areas namely child well-being, education and training, employment, housing, health care, and fight against discrimination. The NSIS emphasizes that it is following one of the ten basic principles of Roma inclusion namely the ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’². Therefore, the main targets are not only the Roma but also other disadvantaged groups. The NSIS targets, besides the Roma, extreme poverty and child poverty. One of the most important statement of the NSIS is that it is aiming to encourage Roma participation in the decision making level. Therefore, it finds it important to work in collaboration and partnership with the Hungarian National Roma Self-Government (NRSG). Furthermore, NSIS combines its aims with those of the Hungarian Social Inclusion Policy: “(1) reduce the rate of people living in poverty or social exclusion, (2) reduce the social arrears of disadvantaged children and weaken trends underpinning intergenerational transmission of poverty, (3) reduce social differences between the Roma and non-Roma population” (NSIS 2011, 15). Since NSIS is considered to be a vertical strategy that has to be in line with other strategies and policies, in its strategic landscape it provides for policy alliances. The first one is the Government Program which indicates social cohesion amongst its policy measures. The second alliance is the Europe 2020

¹ This chapter is a descriptive part of the thesis based on the National Social Inclusion Strategy document with a special focus on the commitments to education of Roma.

² “This approach implies focusing on Roma people as a target group without excluding others who live under similar socio-economic conditions. Policies and projects should be geared towards ‘vulnerable groups’, ‘groups at the margins of the labour market’, ‘disadvantaged groups’, or ‘groups living in deprived areas’, etc. with a clear mention that these groups include the Roma. This approach is particularly relevant for policies or projects taking place in areas populated by the Roma together with other ethnic minorities or marginalised members of society.” (The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, European Union, 2011)

strategy. The NSIS highlights the commitment to collaborative measures with the Europe 2020 Strategy in reducing poverty and enhancing smart economic growth and social inclusion including the investment in education. The third strategic alliance is the National Strategies³ including the Strategic Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme (RD). Even though the RD has highlighted the importance of tackling school segregation and creating opportunity to equal access to education, school segregation is not included as a systematic problem in the NSIS (Civil Society Report 2012). The NSIS encompasses a comprehensive situation analysis of the Roma. One can argue that this analysis is a well-written part and based on the works of well-known researchers and statistical data. It emphasizes the problem of discrimination and prejudice against Roma. It also highlights the low level of education. However, it does not talk about school segregation as a major problem. The situation analysis part in the document highlights that the Roma population is younger compared to the non-Roma population. They are mostly affected by poverty, child poverty, multiple discriminations, and spatial segregation, therefore; they live in a disadvantaged situation. The analysis draws the conclusion that comprehensive measures are needed to deal with the social and economic problems Roma face with. The NSIS document comprehensively identifies goals that are based on political principles of inclusion. One of the main principles is the ‘principle of integration’ that is the most relevant to discuss in this thesis. It is the only part of the document which states that segregation and discriminatory social patterns have to be reduced. It also pinpoints that integration is necessary to be enforced parallel to the European principles of tolerance and inclusion of minorities. The principle promotes equal opportunities by taking into account local needs. Nevertheless, it supports the idea of integrated education as an effective mean of the promotion of inclusion. As it was mentioned, the Hungarian Government agreed with the

³ Hungarian Labor Plan, Semmelweis Plan, Strategic Plane of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme, ‘Making Things Better for our Children’ National strategy, Public Education Strategy (NSIS, 2011, p17.).

National Roma-Self Government to implement a Strategy Action Plan (SAP) that covers the period of 2012-2014⁴. The action plan contains eleven tasks related to education. Furthermore, the agreement sets specific goals with numbers: “In accordance with the agreement of the Government and the National Roma Self-Government, top priorities are: [1] 20 000 young Roma may obtain marketable vocational qualifications in 50 vocational schools participating in the social inclusion institutional framework, [2] 10 000 young Roma may attend courses offering final examinations, [3] 5 000 talented Roma individuals may prepare for successful participation in higher education [...]” (NSIS 2011, 79). All in all, one can argue that the NSIS is a well-written document that follows EU principles and shows formal commitment from the Hungarian Government to promote and implement social inclusion. In the next section of the thesis, I will analyze the implementation of the action plan based on Honig’s three-dimensional model.

⁴ Government Resolution No. 1338/2011 (X.14.)

3 Analysis

3.1 *Policy dimension of the NSIS*

As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework, Honig (2006) distinguishes between three dimensions of policies: goals, targets, and tools. I will give an analysis based on these three dimensions.

3.1.1 Goals

The ultimate goals of the NSIS in terms of education are the following: “[1] Raising the educational level of Roma and other individuals of active age living in extreme poverty, [2] Development of early talent fostering and early childhood education and care, [3] Improving the access of Roma children and children in extreme poverty to education, [4] Reduction of school drop-out rates” (NSIS 2011, p62-63). These goals are manifested in numbers and policy tasks that were mentioned above. However, these goals face challenges in the period of 2011-2014. Data (Table 1) provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2014) shows that the number of Roma children attending public education did not increase significantly or in any way. Meaning, the chance to increase the overall educational level of the Roma is lower if fewer students attend to public education.

Table 1: Education of National Minorities: Number of pupils/students in full-time education

Tanév	Óvoda	Általános iskola	Szakiskola	Gimnázium	Szakközépiskola	Felsőoktatási intézmények
<i>School year</i>	<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>Primary (general) schools</i>	<i>Vocational schools</i>	<i>Secondary general schools</i>	<i>Secondary vocational schools</i>	<i>Tertiary institutions</i>

Cigány kisebbségi – Minority Roma

2001/2002	7 000	24 268	802	216	.
2002/2003	8 270	22 502	880	352	.
2003/2004	11 964	27 259	1 258	544	117
2004/2005	15 637	31 503	974	299	.
2005/2006	16 780	38 304	1 107	405	402
2006/2007	17 383	40 944	1 323	364	109
2007/2008	18 406	45 319	1 345	345	144
2008/2009	20 500	50 024	1 566	399	288
2009/2010	21 279	49 230	1 661	504	195
2010/2011	24 309	53 054	2 162	856	290
2011/2012	27 193	54 232	2 941	1 185	371
2012/2013	26 193	53 006	1 858	758	259
2013/2014	18 234	37 961	1 217	612	250

Source: Statistical Mirror 2014/39, Hungarian Central Statistical Office April 24, 2014.

Comparing the number of students attended in 2010/2011 academic year with the 2013/2014 academic year, one can conclude that at every stage of the public education a significant reduction is observable in the number of Roma pupils and students. It is worth noticing that this reduction is not due to demographic factors. In the SAP, the first task that is mentioned is the action to broaden kindergarten education for disadvantaged children with the deadline of 31 March 2012. In the table above it is visible that by 2012, each level of the public education was increased in terms of the number of Roma kids. However, an academic year later, this trend went on the opposite track. Every level of education shows a downward trend. Since the NSIS identifies most of the Roma belonging to the category of disadvantaged, the numbers of the Central Statistical Office show that this task was a failure. In 2010/2011, in kindergarten, the number of Roma pupils was 24,309 while after two years of the NSIS was introduced this number reduced to 18,234. It means that in 2013/2014 the number of Roma pupils was less by 25% compared to 2010/2011. In the same comparison, the number of Roma pupils in primary

school dropped by 28% in the assessed period. The number of students in vocational school has dropped by 59%. Even though the goal was to increase the number of Roma students in vocational school up to 20 000, the latest data shows that less than 10% of the targeted number has been achieved. The number of students in secondary general school has dropped by 48%. The number of students in secondary vocational school has dropped by 33%. Despite the fact, that the NSIS aims to increase the number of Roma students, the statistical data shows a downward trend in the number of Roma students in the given period. Overall, it seems that all the ultimate goals and the tasks in the SAP in terms of education face serious challenges.

Another interesting data shows the ratio of drop-out rate between elementary and secondary school. One might assume that those students who were in the first grade elementary in 2005/2006 would have finished in the academic year 2012/2013 and would have been in the first grade in the secondary school by the academic year of 2013/2014. The data show that the number of Roma pupils in elementary school was 38,304 in 2005/2006. Assumedly, these students should have been in the secondary school by 2013/2014 after an 8-year elementary education system. However, the data reveals that the number of students in secondary education is 693⁵ students in average. Meaning that only 2% of these students continued their studies in secondary school based on the given data. Seemingly, the goal to reduce drop-out rate is still a huge issue. Furthermore, according to Hajdu (2015) Roma students are 27 percentage points more likely to drop out of secondary schools than non-Roma students.

⁵ This number is an average number calculated by the number of students attending in the three forms of secondary schools in the academic year of 2013/2014: Vocational school (1217), Secondary general school (612), and Secondary vocational school (250).

3.1.2 Target

Targeting a group of people inherently influences the implementation of a policy (Honig 2006; Schneider and Ingram 1993). It easily shapes and at the same time can be based on social constructions. These social constructions are manifesting in policies that are shaping the discourse about a particular target group. These factors contour the requirement from the government in what it is supposed to do, which citizens are part of the target group, and the attitude towards these citizens (Schneider and Ingram 1993). As it was mentioned, the NSIS follows the idea of the ‘explicit but not exclusive’ targeting. It means that Roma cannot be separated from other vulnerable groups. However, they need special measures based on their ethnicity. On the one hand, NSIS conceptualizes Roma as an ethnic minority and a national affair. “[...] it wishes to treat the problems of the Roma as a national affair, rather than as a mere poverty policy issue.” (NSIS 2011, 7). On the other hand, it also emphasizes that Roma is a socioeconomic category, the most disadvantaged group. “At the same time, we must pay particular attention to the ethnic group of the Roma as experiences show that they are the poorest of the poor [...]” (NSIS 2011, 6). It is not clear in the document whether Roma is a socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural category. What can be observed is that all of them and none of them at the same time that causes frictions in the implementation. In terms of education, the main target is the category of disadvantaged children. NSIS claims that Roma belong to this category, however they need special attention. This kind of definition fits in the category of ‘explicit but not exclusive’ targeting. However, it also shows inconsistency between socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural categories. This conceptualization is a fluid unit that somewhat fits in every category. Therefore, in many cases the category of disadvantaged child equals to Roma and at the same time there is a categorical difference between the two. Furthermore, disadvantaged child as a legal term has been changed by the Hungarian legislators several times. Meaning, there is no constant understanding of the term. In 2005, the category

was in the Act No. LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education 121.§ according to which a child is considered to be disadvantaged if he is under child protection and his or her parents receive child protection benefits and one of his or her parents has low education meaning he or she finished maximum elementary school. In 2008, it was the same with the amendment that indicates that the parents had to self-declare their low education. In 2011, the newly enacted Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education did not contain the definition of a disadvantaged child. The category was transferred to the Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration which amendment was enacted on September 1, 2013. Whereby, the conditions by which someone is considered to be disadvantaged child contains low education and employment of the parents with an extra condition: “[...] have an insufficient living environment or housing conditions, if it can be established that the child lives in a living environment declared to be segregated in the integrated urban development strategy, in a home with only half of the modern conveniences or with no modern conveniences at all, in a temporary accommodation, or in housing circumstances where the conditions required for healthy development are ensured only to a limited extent” (Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration 67/A. § C.). In the Hungarian Civil Society Monitoring Report commissioned by the Roma Decade (2012) the above mentioned changes are reported as constantly ‘stricter’ categorizations, since it does not take into consideration those families that are unable to receive child protection benefit based on low income, so they are out of the scope. Furthermore, nobody knows which authority or institutional body is responsible to determine the insufficient living environment. Even though the NSIS strongly emphasizes Roma as the most disadvantaged group in Hungary, in the legal framework the category of disadvantaged child does not consider ethnic background as the condition of disadvantage. There is an inconsistency between the strategy’s target and the legislation. Furthermore, the legal restrictions caused a reduction in the number of

disadvantaged children. Meaning, fewer children fall under the scope of the policies targeting disadvantaged children. After the category of disadvantaged children was restricted, the number of disadvantaged students rapidly dropped between the academic years of 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 (Table 2.).

Table 2: Number of disadvantaged children in Hungary between 2012 and 2014

Level of education	2012/2013	2013/2014	Percentage change
Kindergarten	103016	86932	16%
Primary school	257525	220559	14%
Vocational school	37796	28588	24%
Secondary general school	20498	15785	23%
Secondary vocational school	36836	26715	27%
Total	455671	378579	17%

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Education 2012/2013; Statistical Yearbook of Education 2013/2014.

The data demonstrates that such legislative changes in defining the category of disadvantaged child function to make more difficult to achieve policy goals that implementers aim to advance. Furthermore, it is obvious that the definition of disadvantaged child is a political construction that enables policy actors to show statistically that the program was successful since they achieved to have less disadvantaged children. However, such a significant reduction in one academic year means, according to the current definition of disadvantaged child, that the parents became able to have higher level of education, they got jobs, or they moved to another house with better living conditions. Taking into account the current Hungarian economic

situation and structural unemployment, to reduce the number of disadvantaged children by 17% was impossible in one academic year. One can see targeting as a bottom-up initiative. Honig (2006) argues that bottom-up reforms are relying on systemic change. Such a systemic change takes place at the legislative level. Furthermore, these changes cardinally influence implementation tools.

3.1.3 Tools

Tools are policies that are being implemented in the name of NSIS. Since, the above analyzed targeting is not clear, policies under the NSIS are rather reinforcing educational differences between Roma and non-Roma students. The Updated Civil Society Monitoring Report (2013) claims that policy measures support school segregation which is not a hidden expression of the government. The Ministry of Human Resources label school segregation as ‘catch-up’ opportunities that help Roma students to ‘catch-up’ to the Hungarian mainstream education (Civil Society Monitoring Report 2012). It means that they can maintain the historical educational institution of school segregation that is accepted and embedded in the Hungarian education system. Even though Hungary’s commitment to promote equal chances in the field of public education, the country’s mainstream educational policies show different faces. Introduced policies under the framework of the NSIS are inconsistent with the promotion of equal access to education. A progress report to the European Commission from 2014 highlights the measures have been done to ensure equal access to quality education for disadvantaged children, however, these actions are more likely triggering segregation and educational differences than promoting equality.

1. School centralization including harmonization of curriculum, centralized textbook publishing, professional services, financing and aspects of human resource management (European Commission Progress Report 2014, 29)

The idea of school centralization could be beneficial for disadvantaged and Roma children in providing equal opportunities and financial support to schools. Also, it can help to close the gap between schools in terms of school performance of the students by allocating resources to the disadvantaged school districts. Furthermore, it can enable the government to introduce new methods that support equal access to education such as mandatory school merging, modification of school districts, or giving a central answer to the enhancing problem of school segregation which is concerned at the local level (Updated Civil Monitoring Report 2013). However, taking into account the supportive attitude towards segregation, the government seemingly does not have the will to reinforce its commitment to show the path to opening equal opportunities for all. Therefore, based on the above showed statistical data, this governmental policy does not make any further step to achieve any goals of the NSIS. As Kezdi and Kertesi (2013) found in their research, the quality of education in a segregated school is lower but the drop-out rate of Roma students is higher than the majority average. Furthermore, the centralized curriculum may include the expectation of higher school performance in segregated schools that can result in low school performance rate of the students which may end up increasing the drop-out rate of the particular school.

2. Reduction of mandatory age limit in compulsory education (to the age of 16) accompanied with shortening of vocational cycle and the introduction of a dual system. (European Commission Progress Report 2014, 29)

This policy tool has triggered an increase in drop-out rate and reduced the number of children attending public education. This measure would be justified if the Hungarian education system encouraged and promoted Roma students to finish secondary school. Contrary, it is encouraging students to leave school. Furthermore, one cannot see the connection between this measure and the aim of promoting equal access to education and the reduction of discriminatory practices in school. As the data shows above this action will further increase the drop-out rate of Roma and disadvantaged children instead.

3. Planned introduction of compulsory preschool attendance from age three with measures to encourage participation in including cash incentives and the extension of Sure Start Children Centres. (European Commission Progress Report 2014, 29)

The aim of the Sure Start Children Centres is to encourage the participation, and cooperation of disadvantaged families and professional partners such as teachers and professionals of physical, mental and social developments. It aims to eliminate child poverty, and to help disadvantaged children and their families (Ministry of Human Resources 2015). Out of the three measures, this is the most problematic. Since, the policy is relatively new, there is no data on the current situation of the Sure Start Houses. It can be, however, anticipated that without real political commitment the program will continuously support the separation of the disadvantaged children. It may promote early childhood segregation. A Sustainable effort is needed in order to avoid a new type of segregation in the early childhood.

All in all, these policies are not in line with the NSIS's goals. Therefore, the question arises who the people are carrying out the policies under the NSIS. In the next section, I will talk about Honig's second dimension namely about the 'people'.

3.2 *People and places dimensions of the NSIS*

In the people dimension, Honig (2006) refers to the institutional arrangement that aims to implement the policy. This category includes formal and informal people. The formal people are those who belong to an institutional setup and formally responsible for the implementation. Informal people are those who are formally not involved but informally influencing implementation. In this part, places are considered the levels where the implementation takes place. In other words, at the top level and at the bottom level. The NSIS indicates the NRSG as the number one partner in the implementation and monitoring. Therefore, NRSG is considered to be a formal implementer. The NSIS states that the Government and the NRSG are together responsible for the Roma specific interventions and programs that were set in the

SAP between the two actors. The NRSG is supposed to be a Roma representative political body that safeguards the interest of the Roma minority (NSIS 2011). However, the Minority Self-Government system is not Roma specific and initially meant to be an organizational set up that preserves cultural institutions. Over time, NRSG became a powerless, quasi-governmental structure which does not foster mainstream political participation of Roma but work parallel with decision making governmental bodies (National Democratic Institute 2006). Since the members of the NRSG are elected by formal democratic rules, the Government claims in the NSIS that it is a representative body that knows the best what Roma needs. However, the Civil Society Monitoring Report (2012) claims that the NRSG is a body which is dependent on the current Government. Furthermore, since it is not a professional body, it lacks the capacity needed to work as a policy coordination agency. A research conducted by the National Democratic Institute (2006) reveals that the notion of ‘self-government’ is associated with the political representation of the Roma. However, in the Hungarian NRSG system the scope of this body is limited. The work it does is similar to an NGO’s work. ‘Self-government’ implies a body that is able and capable to make decisions and implement actions and measures for the Roma. In this case, these expectations are far away from the reality. “In truth, the very design of the system prevents it from having a significant impact on issues of greatest concern to most Roma [such as discrimination, equal access to education, and segregation] and hinders political integration” (National Democratic Institute 2006, 6). The expectation from the Government’s side towards the NRSG is mere political misconduct, which expectation pictures NRSG as the most credible and legitimate body in implementing NSIS. The Updated Civil Society Monitoring Report (2013) reveals that even though the NRSG is formally committed to influence mainstream educational policies in a pro-Roma direction, it has not taken any steps to fulfill this commitment. For example, when the government decreased the mandatory age limit from 18 to 16 the NRSG had no objection despite the fact that data shows that it has

increased the drop-out rate of Roma (Central Statistical Office 2014) which is against the goal of the NSIS and the SAP agreed between the Government and the NSIS. Another example is when the Ministry of Human Resources proposed an amendment to the parliament that allows school segregation under particular circumstances; the NRSG did not have any objection. Even though the amendment obviously supports school segregation, no step had been done against it by the NRSG. Moreover, NRSG is also a maintainer of some of the so-called ‘catch-up’ schools that are known as a form of segregation (Updated Civil Society Report 2013). Furthermore, the NRSG is not capable to foster integration due to the murky division of function and responsibilities.

National politics usually use the NRSG for building clientele. Thus, the organization does not have a strong stand in implementing the NSIS (Rorke 2011). Therefore, the main power is in the hand of the Ministry of Human Resources which is responsible for the implementation of most of the educational tasks that were set in the SAP agreement between the Government and the NRSG. However, the Ministry’s attitude towards the implementation is almost aiming the opposite of the goals of the NSIS. The Updated Civil Society Report (2013) claims that none of the implemented policy measures had a positive impact on the goals set in the Agreement. The Minister of Human Resources, Zoltan Balog, emphasized in many occasions that in order to integrate Roma children to mainstream education; the government has to ensure a ‘catch-up’ opportunity to them (Hungarianspectrum 2014). It basically says that the Minister supports school segregation based on the assumption that Roma students are not as able to go to school as their non-Roma peers. It is not hidden, but open discrimination that manifested in an amendment to the Act of Public Education. This amendment was actually proposed by Zoltan

Balog after the trial of the Nyiregyhaza case⁶. The bill was passed by the Parliament and it gave the power to the Ministry to decide whether a particular school can segregate or not. Furthermore, there is a dissonance between the formal commitment from the Government's side that highlights the importance of shaping mainstream policies according to the NSIS and the reality. The Updated Civil Society Monitoring Report (2013) reveals that the government supports to re-open segregated schools such as in the case of Nyiregyhaza and another city Piliscsaba. Moreover, the Government's policies support the so-called 'white flight'⁷ by financially supporting a particular school if children attend there from another school district. By the centralization of education, the maintenance of many of the so-called elite schools was given to the church. The core of the problem is that the church schools can have enrollment exam that otherwise prohibited for public schools. Therefore, it is supporting unequal access to education. Overall, it is obvious that the policy direction of the Government and the Ministry of Human Resources is a reversed direction compared to the formal commitment in the NSIS. Furthermore, the NRSRG does not have any influence on the mainstream educational policies that are hindering the goals of the NSIS due to its political impotency.

The other category is the people that are non-formally influence implementation. One of the most influential non-formal groups is the far-right political elite. In Hungary, the far-right party Jobbik is currently gaining power and became the second most popular political party in Hungary after the ruling party Fidesz (Reuters 2014). The party is well known of its extremist

⁶ The Chance for Children Foundation sued the Greek Catholic church for segregating Roma kids. Even though the church is the maintainer of two schools, one is mainly attended by Roma students the other one is a full non-Roma-attended school. Zoltan Balog took part of the trial and testified that the maintenance of the segregated school is necessary and he will do anything to save this.

⁷ The so-called 'white flight' is a form of segregation when non-Roma parents tend to take out their children from a particular school where the number of Roma kids tends to increase. It usually results in Roma-only segregated schools since only Roma kids remain in the school.

standpoint regarding Roma. They introduced the term ‘Gypsy criminality’ which is a concept of a list of criminal action that are usually committed by Roma people. Nowadays, the term received a legitimate connotation amongst centre-right politicians. Furthermore, they influence the whole discourse on Roma that shapes the implementation of the NSIS as well. As they operate with the negative image building of the Roma, the use of anti-Roma speeches is getting more popular in the center political level. For example, Albert Pasztor the mayor candidate of Miskolc city, member of the liberal democrat party DK (Democratic Coalition) stated in a public event that “I do not believe in the integration of the Gypsies” (Zolnay 2014). Zolnay (2014) argues that the tendency according to which Jobbik is getting mainstream party by reformulating its rhetoric is not the case. In reality, the whole Hungarian political spectrum is revolving around Jobbik, and center political parties are getting extreme. Not only does the political elite promote anti-Roma attitude, but the society as well. Using Lipsky’s term, ‘street-level bureaucrats’ in this case mostly teachers in some cases have preconceptions regarding the education of Roma. A research conducted in 2002 (Geczi, Huszar, Sramo, Mrazik, et al. 2002) reveals that the trainee teachers attitudes towards Roma are rather negative. They consider teaching Roma children more problematic than non-Roma children. They also consider if the number of Roma children is higher in a particular class, the teaching is more difficult. In this research, the interpretation of Roma is connected to problems. Therefore, the attitude towards Roma in both top and bottom levels makes the implementation of the NSIS difficult and hopeless. All in all, one can observe a resistance of the policy implementers both on the top and at the bottom levels. Policy makers as key implementers are already put a label on the implementation process by nurturing and anti-Roma attitude that finds legitimacy at the bottom level among teachers and other ‘street-level bureaucrats’. Of course, it has historically embedded sides such as racism and xenophobia making the implementation of the NSIS more difficult.

Conclusion

The most affected group facing with unequal access to education and school segregation is the Roma. Generally speaking, the Roma population is more uneducated than the non-Roma. Therefore, their chance to be represented on the labor market or reach a higher social and economic level in the society is lower as well. The European Union recognized this problem and articulated the importance of the introduction of the National Roma Strategies. Hungary also has a strategy called National Social Inclusion Strategy up to 2020. Obviously, the implementation of the NSIS is having difficulties in reaching its goals in terms of education of the Roma. The Hungarian education system is still characterized by unequal access to education, school segregation, and political misconduct.

The thesis made an attempt to find answer to the question: What are the main factors that are hindering the implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy in achieving the goal of providing equal access to quality education and the elimination of discrimination against Roma students between 2011 and 2015? In order to answer this question, I used a very recent educational implementation theory namely Honig's three-dimensional model. This model worked as a guideline in the thesis. Furthermore, the analysis part was based on the three dimensions of policy, people, and places. The research focused on mainly document analysis.

The main sources were the NSIS, monitoring reports, and educational statistical data.

The analysis substantiates first hypothesis namely that there is no real commitment from the Hungarian government to achieve the goals of equal access to quality education and the elimination of discrimination. Data reveals that after the introduction of the NSIS and the SAP the ultimate goals of raising the educational level of Roma children, increasing early childhood education, and the reduction of drop-out rate were a failure. The number of Roma children did not increase in public education, in matter of fact this number decreased between 2011 and

2014. Furthermore, the government introduced policies, such as decreasing the mandatory age limit from 18 to 16 that counterproductively increased the drop-out rate of Roma students. This failure is an indication of lack of commitment. Theoretically, Hungary is genuinely committed to implement the NSIS and still failing. In reality, the policy direction of the government is more likely to promote school segregation which is the opposite direction towards the goal of providing equal access to education. The NRSRG is a powerless organization which is controlled by the current government and have no political power to influence mainstream policies in a pro-Roma way. There is no significant collaboration between the Roma and the Government. The Roma are still seen as beneficiaries rather than partners. Therefore, one of the main factors that hinder the successful implementation of the NSIS is the lack of political will and commitment that result in an inappropriate organization of the implementation.

The second main factor which hinders implementation is group-targeting. It is confusing whether the definition of the target group is based on socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural factors. One cannot understand whether Roma labeled and named as socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural category. It is none of them and all of them at the same time. This factor strongly influences the understanding of the problem by the policy deliverers. Out of these three labels, the most dangerous is the socioeconomic one, namely, how to define disadvantaged children. Since, the legislators are changing the definition and eligibility criteria of the term, there is an inconsistent fluctuation in the statistical number of these children that mostly affect Roma children. In other words, Roma children are constantly falling out of the category of disadvantaged. Therefore, they are not eligible to benefit from the policies targeting this category.

Third, the policies that are aiming to achieve the goals of the NSIS are more likely boosting inequality and segregation of the Roma. Policy measures under the NSIS are not accordingly designed and implemented compared to the formal commitments in the document. According to the amendment in the Act of Public Education, segregation is allowed under certain

circumstances. Those circumstances are not defined. This power is in the hands of the Minister of Human Resources who openly supports ‘catch-up’ education which is a form of school segregation of the Roma. Furthermore, generally speaking, the attitude towards Roma children on the policy delivery level is negative. Studies on the field reveal, that ‘street-level’ bureaucrats possess negative preconceptions toward Roma students. Furthermore, preconceptions and prejudices are historically embedded in each and every stage of the implementation of the NSIS.

Based on the conclusions of the analysis undertaken for the purpose of this thesis, my recommendations are the following:

- The Hungarian Government has to consider the Roma as partners, not as beneficiaries in implementing the NSIS.
- Decision makers should define the target group more precisely. Furthermore, if the NSIS considers being Roma as a disadvantage in Hungary, the legal definition of disadvantaged child should consider it as well. Thus, data collection based on ethnicity is needed to precisely target Roma. It, however, can be dangerous, so data collection should follow the principle of data protection.
- It is necessary to recognize school segregation as a problem in the NSIS. Furthermore, it is also important to make policies that are aiming to eliminate this phenomenon. Also, Hungary should legally reinforce the prohibition of school segregation. It is urgent because the policy direction of the Government goes towards is legitimizing school segregation that later will cause irreversible social, economic, and political problems.
- It is essential to establish a credible and accountable monitoring system not only at national but also at local levels.
- The Government should make steps to weaken the anti-Roma discourse, measures, and attitudes all over the country.

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