ACCEPT
PLURALISM

The embodiment of (in)tolerance in discourses and practices addressing cultural diversity in schools in Hungary – The case of Roma

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Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)

ACCEPT PLURALISM is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme. The project aims to investigate whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies but also social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured and how the degree of tolerance of a society across time or of several countries at the same time can be compared (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium reviews critically past empirical research and the scholarly theoretical literature on the topic, and conducts original empirical research on key events of national and European relevance that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe targeting policy makers, NGOs and practitioners, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe aimed to be used at upper high school level and with local/national policy makers, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and a book on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe, mainly aimed to an academic readership. The ACCEPT PLULARISM consortium is formed by 17 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou (anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu).

The **Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship** is based at the University of Bristol. Its research theme recognises the importance of ethnicity to the study of contemporary societies and polities, and to prospects for social justice and social cohesion. Research focuses on two main dimensions: the politics of multiculturalism, ethno-religious identities, challenges to secularism and the nation state; and ethnicity and socio-economic structures, with a special focus on racialised exclusion.

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Executive Summary

Major challenges of the Hungarian education system with regards to the Roma minority

Hungarian pupils' scores are among the lowest in the PISA tests in international comparison. These results reflect the two most important characteristics of the school system: its ineffectiveness, and its selectivity (favouring children of higher social status, contributing to social inequalities, and failing to compensate for students coming from disadvantaged family backgrounds).

There are various structural factors that explain this ineffectiveness and selectivity. Despite being well-intentioned, the educational policies that emerged out of the democratisation process of the 1990s to erase the tight controls of the earlier decades have produced a number of unintended (and grievous) consequences. The selectivity of the education system channels pupils of higher social status into better achieving schools whilst pupils of lower social status remain in lower achieving schools. A second problem following from the decentralisation of the school system concerned their financial regulations. Local communities, as school administrators, all receive the same per-capita educational grants for administrating their schools. These grants, however, do not cover the full costs needed for running the institutions, so wealthier local communities thus obviously give more to their schools whereas poorer ones are unable to contribute any extra funds. A third structural problem relates to schools maintained by private organisations or foundations (and to some extent by churches). These schools have become the reserve of children of higher social status. A fourth legacy of the state socialist system has been that Roma children whose learning difficulties derived from their social and economic marginalisation have nevertheless come to be viewed as students with as mental disorders. Huge numbers of these children were channelled into special institutions that often became the places of racial segregation. When placed in 'normal schools', Roma children were also often segregated into 'C' ('Gypsy') classes. In other cases, Roma children simply went to schools where there were mainly or only Roma children.

Questions of the cultural difference of minorities in education are governed by the Public Education Act, the Act on Minority Rights, and the National Core Curriculum. The Public Education Act provides minorities with the right to establish 'nationality schools' (nemzetiségi iskola) where the language of instruction is the minority language.

This policy measure became a tool for segregation when policy makers linked 'cultural difference' with 'social disadvantage'. Schools with Roma children were eligible for supplementary subsidies on the condition that they provide 'Gypsy minority education' for Roma children. In practice this meant the separation of Roma and non-Roma children within schools. In the end, the government realised its negative effects and cancelled the policies in 2002.

The National Core Curriculum in turn stipulates that schools must incorporate minorities' history and culture into their local curricula. In practice, however, this policy is ignored: little is taught about minorities and representation of minorities or 'otherness' are largely missing from textbooks. A further problem is that pedagogical practices and educational culture can therefore be characterised as a policy of non-toleration. Most teachers are trained to work only with culturally and socially homogeneous ('white middle class') children and there are hardly any pedagogical practices that have been developed to deal with any sort of differences. This

leads to frustration among teachers and intolerance towards 'otherness', be it cultural or social or both.

The education level of national minorities and the majority population does not vary significantly. The case is much different for the Roma whose school achievement is far below the national average. This is the case today and it was the case during the state-socialist regime. Today, the major issue for the Roma is not diversity but their segregation. There are three types of mechanisms that contribute to this segregation: a system of special schools (for children with mental disabilities), segregated institutions, and segregated classes.

Focus of the research

The present case study report addresses two issues that are of major importance from the point of view of 'tolerance' and 'diversity' in present day Hungary. The first deals with the complex and multifaceted issue of the segregation of Roma children in the education system, and the second focuses on the curriculum: how diversity questions related to the Roma minority are manifested in the content of the curriculum.

The most important educational issue for the Roma in the last decade has been the desegregation of the school system and the (failed) integration of Roma pupils into mainstream education. In 2002 the government launched a set of policy initiatives designed to tackle these issue. Many of these initiatives have been formally integrated into the current system, but the overall social and political reception of the policy has been negative, thus contributing to strong opposition at all levels of policy implementation. This opposition makes it important in the framework of the Accept Pluralism project: it reveals many aspects of the concept of 'non-acceptance-tolerance-respect' in the Hungarian context. The second case, the teaching of minority (Roma) content both in the framework of 'minority education' and the National Core Curriculum intended for the entire student population, raises important questions about how Roma cultural difference is understood and taught and how it contributes (or not) to the issue of the three-fold conceptualisation of Accept Pluralism.

Data and Research Method

The two case studies were developed using identical data collection techniques and methodologies. The primary source of data was interviews conducted with policy makers, civil servants, politicians, teachers, church representatives, and civil activists. Interviewees were selected based on significant roles they had in either or both of our two cases. For the first case, we chose people who were responsible either for making or implementing desegregation policy measures. In the second case, we identified people who were active in the field of 'cultural accommodation of Roma in the education system'.

For the desegregation policy discourses, we interviewed the parliamentary commissioner on education, two ex-civil servants who were the main architects for the desegregation measures, one current civil servant working on educational matters, a Roma MP and member of the green party, two civil activists (one with right wing leanings and the other running a foundation that advocates school desegregation by prosecuting local governments), and a teacher who was an 'equal opportunity expert' employed in the desegregation program.

For the second case study, we interviewed two civil activists working in the field of Roma culture and intercultural and multicultural education, three teachers, two authors of textbooks on Roma culture designed for nationality/ethnic education, and three church representatives, all of whom had been active in Roma missions in their respective churches. In all (between both cases), 18 interviews were conducted.

We also consulted relevant policy documents and some newspaper extracts for our case studies. We employed discourse analytical techniques for our interview data, whereas documentary evidence was mainly used for purposes of illustration. Discourse analysis began with the thematic coding of the interview transcripts. Once major themes were identified, we looked for typical argumentation techniques to reconstruct different discourse types.

Main findings

The Hungarian school system is highly selective that leads to severe inequalities in the education system. Due to various structural and attitudinal reasons children of higher social status end up in incomparably better schools than their peers from lower social status. The selectivity of the system is further exacerbated by the fact that the proportion of Roma among the low status children is significantly high. Thus, the Hungarian education system can be characterized as having separate classrooms and/or schools for children of low social status of whom a huge percent is Roma. This situation is referred to as school segregation regardless of the fact whether it is the result of conscious techniques of separating children or the outcome of unintentional practices or structural processes. Desegregation, on the other hand, refers to state policies that intend to stop and reverse these tendencies and achieve to have socially and ethnically mixed or integrated classes and schools.

The cultural accommodation of Roma in the Hungarian school system pertains to the question of how the Roma culture and history is represented in textbooks, whether there is a need for separate minority education and how 'tolerance issues' with regards to the Roma is manifested in schools, especially in pedagogical methods.

In our analysis of the desegregation/integration policy debates we identified three main discourses: the 'firm advocacy for desegregation', the 'unintentional segregation' and the 'justified segregation'. The 'firm advocacy' discourse is a clear-cut case of tolerance insofar as it emphasised acceptance of the 'other' as the ultimate goal. This acceptance could only be achieved by teaching Roma and non-Roma (disadvantaged and middle-class children) in the same classrooms and schools. Early socialisation is thus an essential ingredient for learning toleration of the other. The next discourse type, 'unintentional segregation', similarly stressed that learning to accept others required early socialisation. In contrast to the 'firm advocacy' view, however, the 'unintentional segregation' discourse interpreted segregation as a 'natural' and irreversible process. From this perspective, segregation could thus be justified and even be beneficial to the children. As such, the meaning of tolerance is blurred since it is not clear how the distant other would be or should be viewed or treated. The third 'justified segregation' discourse is an example of what we have termed 'reverse respect'. In the name of respect for cultural diversity, proponents of this view endorsed separate education for Roma so that the Roma may better preserve their customs, language and identity. It is questionable whether those articulating such views had the best interests of the Roma in mind. To the contrary, they may have been more interested in protecting the cultural integrity of the majority nation against encroachments from the Roma; hence the term, 'reverse respect'.

Indeed, proponents of this view tended to associate Roma culture with low social status, deviance, and undesirable behaviour – hardly cultural traits in need of preservation.

The discourse analysis of the issue of the cultural accommodation of Roma in the school system revealed three types of formulations of the problem. The first, the essentialist-culturalist type sees Roma cultural difference basically in essential terms. Although well-intended, this approach results in promoting a type of curriculum that treats Roma not as an integral part of the society but as a group apart characterized by specific cultural traits. This approach can be contrasted with the second type, the multiculturalist, that also emphasises the cultural distinctiveness of Roma but it starts from a constructivist understanding of culture. It underlines that Roma culture should be seen as a social historical construction. The social integrationist perceives Roma cultural difference also from a constructivist point of view but it ascribes difference to the 'culture of poverty' arguing that Roma otherness is a result of their historically low social status.

The different understandings of Roma culture have implications as to the 'tolerance framework' devised in the Accept Pluralism project. Similarly to the discourses on the desegregation/integration theme, we have found a case of 'reversed respect': the essentialist-culturalists argue for a type of 'respect' that has the intention to keep the other at a distance. Cultural difference is glorified as long as it remains intact and does not assimilate to the mainstream culture. The argument lacks references to human rights or excluded the possibility of cooperation between the majority and the minority culture. The multiculturalists, on the other hand, could be argued to support 'real respect' since they stress recognition of cultural difference along with the respect of human rights and mutual understanding of majority and minority. Finally, the social integrationists could be seen as promoters of 'tolerance' by drawing on such values as human rights and cooperation between groups without giving importance to culture and cultural difference.

Keywords

Segregation, desegregation, integration, Roma, intolerance, tolerance, acceptance, respect, education system, curricula, cultural difference.

1. Introduction

The present case study report addresses two issues that are of major importance from the point of view of 'tolerance' and 'diversity' in present day Hungary. The first deals with the complex and multifaceted issue of the segregation of Roma children in the education system, and the second focuses on the curriculum: how diversity questions related to the Roma minority are manifested in the content of the curriculum.

To understand the context and the relevance of these issues it is necessary to briefly outline the main characteristics of the Hungarian education system. Hungarian pupils' scores are among the lowest in the PISA tests in international comparison (Berényi and Neumann 2009). These results reflect the two most important characteristics of the school system: its ineffectiveness, and its selectivity (favouring children of higher social status, contributing to social inequalities, and failing to compensate for students coming from disadvantaged family backgrounds) (Molnár and Dupcsik 2008). As a matter of fact, until the first PISA tests, the Hungarian politicians, policy-makers and the public looked the education system as a success story. Pupils, when compared to ones form other nations, did indeed score higher. It was, however, due to the fact, that earlier tests measures more factual knowledge and less the ability of children to understand and apply the knowledge they have (Molnár and Dupcsik 2008).

The various elements of the school system – structure, pedagogical traditions, the curriculum, etc. – should thus be analysed with regards to these basic features. The current education system, responding to the problems associated with an over centralised state-socialist education system, was (re-)built on the principle of autonomy for the schools, their administrators, the teachers and the parents. In real terms this meant the decentralisation of the system, handing over school maintenance primarily to local governments. In addition, some schools are run by churches, private organisations and foundations. Granting any legal body the right to found and maintain a school was viewed as an important achievement in the area of civil rights. The National Core Curriculum was designed to provide a loose framework for curriculum development, thus ensuring the autonomy of educators[1]. Equally, it was welcomed as an important democratic achievement that parents were provided with the right of free choice of school for their children.

The education level of national minorities and the majority population does not vary significantly. The case is much different for the Roma whose school achievement is far below the national average. This is the case today and it was the case during the state-socialist regime.

Before the 1980s the Communist party assiduously suppressed national minorities and there were no schools where minority languages were taught). In the 1980s, minority schools were revived as a result of the changed attitude to the 'minority question'.[2] After the regime change the number of nationality schools increased further to about 10% of the total education system (Vámos and Szvoboda 2004).

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[1] The National Core Curriculum defines only the general educational targets that schools are supposed to reach. Each school maintains the freedom to develop its own curriculum and freely choose its textbooks (Molnár and Dupcsik 2008).

[2] The so-called reform communists in the 1980s became interested in the issue of transborder ethnic Hungarians that also changed their take on minorities living within the borders of the country (Föglein 2004).

In the 1950s most Roma either did not attend school at all or attend for only a few years. This situation started to change in the following decade when the state put special emphasis on the schooling of the Roma, so that by the late 1970s, most of the Roma attended some school but still with only 25% finishing primary education resulting in 39% of Roma over age 14 remaining illiterate. The increase of Roma in schools prompted a backlash from non-Roma parents, teachers and children. The state responded by gradually establishing separate classes (class C[3]) for Roma children. This practice became widespread and was legitimated by claiming that this way of teaching was more efficient and for the well being of all (Csovcsics 2002).

Today, the major issue for the Roma is not diversity but their segregation. There are three types of mechanisms that contribute to this segregation: a system of special schools (for children with mental disabilities), segregated institutions, and segregated classes (Molnár and Dupcsik 2008).

2. The treatment of diversity in the education system

Structure of the education system

Despite being well-intentioned, the educational policies that emerged out of the democratisation process of the 1990s to erase the tight controls of the earlier decades have produced a number of unintended (and grievous) consequences. The selectivity of the education system channels pupils of higher social status into better achieving schools whilst pupils of lower social status remain in lower achieving schools. Inequalities stemming from family background are thus further exacerbated by a selective educational system. The decentralised school system is not able to correct for these inequalities for several reasons. Historically, despite the egalitarian ideology of the state-socialist system, a hierarchy of schools reflecting and maintaining the social stratification of the given community has persisted throughout (Csanádi, Gerő, and Ladányi 1978; Ladányi and Csanádi 1983). Through post-transition decentralisation policies, local governments became school administrators but with little interest in disturbing the local power relations and the hierarchical order of social groups. The fact that parents were granted the right to choose their children's school simply reinforced the inequalities between schools: parents continued to choose the school where their children would receive the 'best education'. This phenomenon of white-flight contributed greatly to these segregation tendencies. (Havas and Liskó 2005; Gerő, Csanádi and Ladányi 2006)

A second problem following from the decentralisation of the school system concerned their financial regulations. Local communities, as school administrators, all receive the same per-capita educational grants for administrating their schools. These grants, however, do not cover the full costs needed for running the institutions, so local governments have to supplement their school budgets with other sources of income. Wealthier local communities thus obviously give more to their schools whereas poorer ones, in most cases, are unable to contribute any extra funds. These are problems that come from structural issues and are first of all the results of decentralisation (Varga 2008).

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[3] C means 'cigány' or 'Gypsy' in English.

A third structural problem relates to schools maintained by private organisations or foundations (and to some extent by churches). These schools have become the reserve of children of higher social status. Indeed, many of these schools were established to provide education to middle class children, using various strategies (like tuition fees) to keep lower class children away. To be sure, some of these schools were founded with the opposite aim of educating disadvantaged children. The overall outcome still produces social segregation since these schools teach higher and lower class children separately (Kertesi and Kézdi 2008).

A fourth legacy of the state socialist system has been that Roma children whose learning difficulties derived from their social and economic marginalisation have nevertheless come to be viewed as students with as mental disorders. Huge numbers of these children were channelled into special institutions that often became the places of racial segregation. When placed in 'normal schools', Roma children were also often segregated into 'C' ('Gypsy') classes. In other cases, Roma children simply went to schools where there were mainly or only Roma children.

Curriculum and pedagogy

Questions of the cultural difference of minorities in education are governed by the Public Education Act, the Act on Minority Rights,[4] and the National Core Curriculum. The Public Education Act provides minorities with the right to establish 'nationality schools' (nemzetiségi iskola) where the language of instruction is the minority language. These schools provide instruction either in minority and majority languages (a mixture) or exclusively in the minority language. The Act also stipulates that schools with minority children must have classes where the culture of the given minority is taught (Beck 2008). This policy measure became a tool for segregation when policy makers linked 'cultural difference' with 'social disadvantage'. Schools with Roma children were eligible for supplementary subsidies on the condition that they provide 'Gypsy minority education' for Roma children. In practice this meant the separation of Roma and non-Roma children within schools. This is an 'old technique' dating back to the state-socialist regime when separate classes existed for Roma children (class C), now with 'good' students separated from 'bad' ones. The classification and sorting of pupils based on achievement simultaneously reflected both their socio-economic status and ethnic background. Despite the policy's aim to empower Roma children and eliminate discrepancies between them and the rest of the student population, in practice these inequalities persisted and were reinforced without achieving improvement in Roma children's education level. In the end, the government realised its negative effects and cancelled the policies in 2002 (Varró 2008).

The National Core Curriculum in turn stipulates that schools must incorporate minorities' history and culture into their local curricula. In practice, however, this policy is ignored: little is taught about minorities and representation of minorities or 'otherness' are largely missing from textbooks.

Pedagogical practices and educational culture can therefore be characterised as a policy of non-toleration. Most teachers are trained to work only with culturally and socially homogeneous ('white middle class') children and there are hardly any pedagogical practices that have been developed to deal with any sort of differences. This leads to frustration among

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[4] Both Acts were first passed in 1993 and have been amended several times since then.

teachers and intolerance towards 'otherness', be it cultural or social or both (Liskó and Fehérvári 2008).

3. Methodology and Research Design

The most important educational issue for the Roma in the last decade has been the desegregation of the school system and the (failed) integration of Roma pupils into mainstream education. In 2002 the government launched a set of policy initiatives designed to tackle these issue. Many of these initiatives have been formally integrated into the current system, but the overall social and political reception of the policy has been negative, thus contributing to strong opposition at all levels of policy implementation. This opposition makes it important in the framework of the Accept Pluralism project: it reveals many aspects of the concept of 'non-acceptance-tolerance-respect' in the Hungarian context. The second case, the teaching of minority (Roma) content both in the framework of 'minority education' and the National Core Curriculum intended for the entire student population, raises important questions about how Roma cultural difference is understood and taught and how it contributes (or not) to the issue of the three-fold conceptualisation of Accept Pluralism.

The two case studies were developed using identical data collection techniques and methodologies. The primary source of data was interviews conducted with policy makers, civil servants, politicians, teachers, church representatives, and civil activists.[5] Interviewees were selected based on significant roles they had in either or both of our two cases. For the first case, we chose people who were responsible either for making or implementing desegregation policy measures. In the second case, we identified people who were active in the field of 'cultural accommodation of Roma in the education system'.

For the desegregation policy discourses, we interviewed the parliamentary commissioner on education, two ex-civil servants who were the main architects for the desegregation measures, one current civil servant working on educational matters, a Roma MP and member of the green party, two civil activists (one with right wing leanings and the other running a foundation that advocates school desegregation by prosecuting local governments), and a teacher who was an 'equal opportunity expert' employed in the desegregation program.

For the second case study, we interviewed two civil activists working in the field of Roma culture and intercultural and multicultural education, three teachers, two authors of textbooks on Roma culture designed for nationality/ethnic education, and three church representatives, all of whom had been active in Roma missions in their respective churches. In all (between both cases), 18 interviews were conducted (see Annex for further particulars).

We conducted structured interviews on each topic. Although interviewees were selected on their centrality to one or the other case study, all interviewees were asked the same questions. This is because that all interviewees were active participants in the broader field of the educational and Roma issues and since their was overlap between the two topics, we decided to ask the interviewees their opinion and experiences on both topics. This proved to be a fruitful strategy since all interviewees had important points to make not only on the topic more closely linked to their expertise but also on the other one as well.

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[5] Interviews were conducted by Anna Szász, Márton Rövid and Zsuzsanna Vidra.

We also consulted relevant policy documents and some newspaper extracts for our case studies. We employed discourse analytical techniques for our interview data, whereas documentary evidence was mainly used for purposes of illustration. Discourse analysis began with the thematic coding of the interview transcripts. Once major themes were identified, we looked for typical argumentation techniques to reconstruct different discourse types.

4. Segregation of Roma children in the education system

Historical background

The selectivity of the Hungarian school system means that children of disadvantaged families and/or Roma origin are more likely to go to lower status schools where the level of teaching and the physical conditions are significantly worse then in other schools (Havas and Liskó 2005). This leads to poorer school achievements and contributes to the reproduction of low educational attainment for the Roma.

The publication of PISA tests in 2002 shocked a Hungarian public that had been long been proud of its education system.[6] It revealed the ineffectiveness and inequalities of the school system compared to other schools around the globe. It also coincided with the year when a new socialist liberal coalition took over the government. The ministry of education, headed by a member of the liberal party, was set with the task of education reform to respond to the deficiencies highlighted by the PISA results.

The major policy objectives developed at the time focussed on desegregating the school system to make it more inclusive and capable of fostering equal opportunities (Borovszky 2008). The approach outlined in the policy emphasised that desegregation and integration must be promoted simultaneously. Desegregation concentrated on putting an end to practices that separated children, whereby integration was intended to assist schools and teachers by providing pedagogical methodology trainings to mix children from different backgrounds in the same classrooms and schools. These desegregation/integration policies were underpinned by three pillars: first, the development and improvement of pedagogical methods; second, the modification of legal regulations; and third, the introduction of financial means. The EU would be the primary source for this extra financing. Prior to 2004, this came in the form of pre-accession funds and after Hungary joined the EU it took the form of the European Social Fund, making billions of Forints available for programmes promoting integration.

This set of policies was based on methods that had proven successful in other countries. The integration part of the policy was fully voluntary, which gave local governments discretion in implementing them. The desegregation element was partly voluntary and party obligatory. It was voluntary insofar as local governments (school administrators) were given discretion as to whether or not they would participate in the integration programme. Incentives were provided in the form of access to extra financial support as well as methodological innovations. It was obligatory in that it stipulated the re-organisation of school districts to be regulated by the enforcement of a new law.

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[6] Bonifert, Mária: 'Sokkolt a PISA- teszt' Népszabadság 2002 1 March. http://www.nol.hu/archivum/archiv-50558

The policy initiatives also established the Office of the Ministerial Commission for the integration of disadvantaged and Roma children. A National Educational Integration Network tasked with providing assistance to schools to introduce and implement new pedagogical programmes for integration was also established at the same time.

Policymakers were crucially concerned with referring to 'disadvantaged' and 'multiple disadvantaged' pupils instead of relying on ethnic forms of categorisation. In order to apply for support to introduce the integration programme, schools had to account for the number of disadvantaged and multiple disadvantaged pupils - not the number of Roma pupils. Policymakers preferred socio-economic forms of categorisation to avoid ethnic stigmatisation, especially given that among the multiple disadvantaged pupils about half were estimated to be Roma.

The government also implemented financial incentives (extra per capita grants) for school administrators (local governments) to apply for the integration programmes. These initiatives were supplemented by a government decree that regulated the proportion of (multiple) disadvantaged pupils in a school in case they applied for targeted normative per-capita grant. In 2007, the government also modified school district regulations to curb white-flight.

These desegregation/integration policies had some major drawbacks. They were designed to promote voluntary participation, but the majority of the population perceived them as 'forced integration', something they had to do comply with against their will. This was mainly due to the government's inadequate communication of the details of the programme and its voluntary nature. It was also exacerbated by the growing intolerance of majority Hungarians that were in turn reinforced by negative discourses coming from both government and opposition politicians. The policies, as many experts stressed, was initially only supported by a small handful of liberal politicians (not even the entire party) but later lost all of its support after the socialists took control of the ministry of education following the 2006 elections. The programme was officially still in operation but the political will to implement it was gone completely.

As the political backing for desegregation/integration policy shrank, political discourse became increasingly hostile to questions of integration, thus further contributing to the weakening of public support. The major structural causes of segregation were left untouched by the political elite and many of the education policy measures proved in fact to be counterproductive to fostering equal opportunities and desegregation/integration. For example, more state support was provided for local governments to form school alliances while there was no guarantee that such initiatives would hinder segregation (the opposite result was often achieved as two or more schools typically allied to separate the children into one or the other school based on their social/ethnic background). The system of 6-8 grade high schools and private foundation and church schools continued to be in operation, which basically remained the institutions where children of higher social status could escape to.

With the new, national-conservative government came into power in 2010, education policy became the reserve of the ultra-conservative Christian Democrats coalition partner. The new education conceptions they promoted envisioned a conservative turn in education which translated into more support to elite education and 'talent nurturing' rather then focusing on providing equal opportunities for the entire population.[7]

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[7] Lannert Judit: 'A köznevelési koncepció visszatérés az 1970-es évekhez' 2011. szeptember 2.,

The implementation of the desegregation/integration policy measures generated huge public debate, including open protest and conflicts. The main actors involved were policy-makers, politicians, local governments, schools, teachers, Roma and non-Roma parents, experts and civil organisations promoting desegregation.

Public and political debates

Our analysis considers the perspective of the main actors involved in the formulation and implementation of the desegregation/integration policies in an attempt to uncover the most important discourses they expressed.

Civil servants, policy makers:
The main policymakers were civil servants working in the Equal Opportunities Department, which had been established to design and implement desegregation/integration policies. The Department was created in a somewhat unusual way, with people recruited from the civil sphere to work in the ministry of education on the desegregation policies. *It was a romantic story. 'About twenty people, who had been involved in journalism, civil rights protection, education, got into state administration (...) and managed to establish a new culture within the ministry. We were not burnt out and we did not know any hindrances.'* (2.)

But the main message of the policy to make the school system more inclusive and effective in the interest of the whole society did not reach the public. This message found expression neither in political discourse nor in the public media. (3.)

Politicians:
The role of politicians is crucial to understand how school desegregation/integration was perceived in the public and how local conflicts developed. As one of the Department policy makers (3.) pointed out, a successful implementation required much more serious political commitment than they enjoyed. The liberal minister who initiated the programme lacked the full support of his Liberal Party as an important fraction of the party opposed centralised policies in the name of defending liberty and autonomy. From this view, the desegregation/integration policy was therefore conceptually flawed insofar it was designed to be centrally administered.

Following the 2006 elections, the Liberal minister of education was replaced with a new minister from the Socialist Party. Political support for the desegregation/integration policy under the new minister was significantly weakened for several reasons. First, the government's desegregation/integration policies had sparked strong opposition from various actors (mayors, non-Roma parents, and teachers in particular) that led to the total withdrawal of political support. The Prime Minister and the socialist party began to blame problems with integration policies on their supposedly forceful nature in a ploy to appease their increasingly unsatisfied political base (3.; Varró 2008).

The next government's rhetoric, which took office in 2010, should be understood in two different ways. On the one hand, education policy reforms are on the whole much less

integrative and contain a number of elements suggestive of anti-poor and anti-Gypsy inclinations.[8] On the other hand, the newly established State Secretariat for Social Inclusion communicated that the aim of the new policy is to elaborate a comprehensive and inclusive public policy for the integration of the Roma: *'The essence of the new conception is its composite nature, which means that qualitative improvements in disadvantaged areas can only be seen if educational, social, healthcare and employment conditions are improved simultaneously.'*[9] Thus there is a contradiction in the policy initiatives of different government bodies. At the same time, the state secretary for social inclusion frequently expressed controversial views on social integration. He has frequently used the expression, 'conditional social integration', meaning support for integration is made available if an effort is made to prove integration is indeed desired.

Local communities: schools, teachers, parents:
The actual conflicts arising from school desegregation/integration policy implementation appeared in local communities. Non-Roma parents pressured school administrators not to accept Roma children by exercising their right to choose (different) schools (thereby threatening schools with reduced enrolments with closure). Many teachers also opposed integration policies and thus sided with the non-Roma parents. Teachers objected to teaching 'problematic' Roma children. In addition, teachers feared of losing should integration policies lead to the closure of segregated schools.

Civil organisations:
Another important actor was the civil organisation that pursued legal action against desegregation. As the head of the organisation said: '*What we do is we step up against segregated education by trying to achieve the enforcement of laws. It is an experiment, but we are the only ones doing this.*' (7.) In fact, successive governments have not enforced existing laws that prohibit segregation. This has motivated this civil organisation to try to achieve the enforcement of existing laws, thus obliging local governments and schools to desegregate.

Framing strategies and evaluating policies

Both public and political discourse, as illustrated above, increasingly converged around anti-integration stances. The general scepticism of the public has been increasing since anti-government riots in 2006. During this period, we have witnessed the rise of the extreme right wing, evidenced most spectacularly in the Jobbik party's successes in elections for the European Parliament and then the Hungarian parliament.[10] At the same time, mainstream public discourse on both the left and right has adopted a much less tolerant language towards issues related to the Roma. Mainstream discourses have thus become less tolerant, whilst radical, racist views have enjoyed increasing legitimacy in ways that influence wider public opinion.

The views expressed by our interviewees (civil servants, policy-makers, experts, civil activists, and teachers) represent this mainstream public discourse. W=e did not include any extreme right wing people expressing openly racist opinions in our sample. Our aim was to collect a wide range of views within the mainstream to allow for detailed analysis. More

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[8] This can be seen for instance in policies aimed at lowering the age for school attendance and abolishing policies that prohibited failing pupils in the first four grades.

[9] http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-public-administration-and-justice/offices-of-the-ministers-of-state

[10] The group called Magyar Gárda was finally banned by the court but were reactivated with new names.

extremist views also contain anti-integration arguments that are only partially framed by radical discourses. The more 'moderate' general public employs more subtle discursive strategies in arguing for segregation. Our analysis will thus contain examples of this sort of variation in opposition to integration that will be contrasted with other pro-integration positions.

Below we elaborate three typical framings for these issues that were expressed by the interviewees. The first is **firm advocacy for desegregation**, the second is **unintentional segregation**, and the third is **justified segregation**. In the following paragraphs we will summarise how each of these discursive strategies are constructed by the speakers. We explore the main and most typical elements of their arguments, the justifications they use to support their position, and the main differences between the various strategies and how they are related to the three-fold conceptualisation of the Accept project (non-acceptance, tolerance, respect).

(1) Firm advocacy for desegregation

The most central argument for the 'firm advocate of desegregation' is the necessity of teaching Roma and non-Roma children together. Advocates emphasise that an integrative approach to education is beneficial to both majority and minority children. Through integration, these children get to know each other and get used to each other from early childhood.

> *I absolutely agree that for Roma children it is better if they study together with non-Roma children, this is very positive, they can learn a lot. And vice-versa, for non-Roma children it's good if they have Roma classmates, they learn a lot. So the objective is good*. (16.)

> *It's better for everyone to be together, even for the non-Roma [children] because they see them, not only when they are adults. That's how life is, this is the reality that we have to live together*. (7.)

The underlying assumption in these arguments is that the Hungarian education system is unjust insofar as it does not provide equal opportunities for everybody. It segregates social groups on the basis of social status and ethnicity. As one of the policy-makers responsible for the desegregation policy expressed:

> *The ideological background for the integration programme was the American civil rights movement. … Where there is segregated education in Hungary, the access to quality education is limited, the infrastructure is worse and the human recourses are weaker. (...) In Hungary, children of families in deep poverty suffer huge disadvantage and if they are Roma then they basically don't have any chance to break out from their situation.* (2.)

The same rationale was formulated by an MP of the ecological party:

> *The Hungarian education system is very unjust,[it] reinforces social inequalities. (...) Today what we see is that the new education concept is emphasising centralisation. This would not be a problem if it was based on social justice. But I don't believe that this is the case. ... The whole general public supports the idea of helping the middle class and this can be found in education measures too.* (5.)

Another justification favoured by the civil rights organisation that initiated lawsuits against local governments and schools is that segregation is simply illegal. Despite this, there are no official bodies with responsibility for preventing or stopping segregation:

Neither the present nor the previous government, I don't want to make a difference. Nobody dares to touch this problem but it must be dealt with. Studies show that segregation is growing. ... Nobody monitors what local governments do with their Gypsy schools. (7.)

Additional arguments stress the negative sides of segregation. A 'pedagogical reasoning' line of argumentation emphasises that it is a 'pedagogical nonsense' to think that separate classes are good for the children:

And the other thing is that Roma children will not learn anything in a segregated school, only bad things from each other. (7.)

In a similar vein, others argue that no serious education policy in the world supports segregation:

There are different views, some people think that the better pupils with higher achievements should be taught separately from worse pupils since a better result can be achieved in both types. However, there are those who say that integration is necessary. Disadvantaged children can be best helped if they are together with better children. ... No serious education expert in Hungary or in the world would support separate classes. This is a joke what they are doing now [the current government]. They don't have any experts. ... Their political base are the conservative, rural teachers and what they say they just put it into the new education bill. (9.)

Economic reasoning is also favoured to defend desegregation as most sensible approach.

It would be worth thinking about segregation from an economic point of view. Many Gypsy schools are run to avoid integrating these children in other schools. And this costs a lot of money because these schools are half empty, teachers are paid whether or not they work. ...For example, in one school that was recently closed, pupils were absent a lot so ... the teacher went to class, nobody was there and so she went home. (7.)

Examining this line of argument in view of the non-acceptance, tolerance, and respect conceptual scale, it is clear that the main goal they seek to achieve through desegregation and integrated teaching is tolerance: tolerating the Roma, their presence in the classrooms and in the society at large. Proponents emphasise that the education system is of crucial importance because toleration must be learnt through early socialisation. If it does not happen at this early stage then the basic capacity to tolerate others will always be lacking.

(2) Unintentional segregation

The next discursive strategy views segregation in more fatalistic terms as the inevitable outcome of certain social processes that are impossible to change:

This is not segregation, this is life itself. (...) It seems as if Roma children were separated in such schools, but this is simply due to the composition of the population [where the whole population is Roma] ... I don't like the word 'segregation' or 'segregated'. I think it's very good for majority children if they are together with their minority peers. Integration would be good for their interest. Accepting the other culture is easier at an early age. If children grow up together, they will be tolerant and can live nicely together. (4.)

Families that are good at representing their interests establish their own schools. This would not be a problem if it started at the age of 15. But the problem is that parents take their 6 year-old children to schools where they can be sure that there are no Roma. ... Segregation is bad for everybody, for the country and for individuals, however, it has just happened and neither you, nor I nor anybody cannot do anything about it. It has been a very long process. (12.)

School segregation is thus presented as the result of more general social processes, such as regional segregation. In economically deprived areas the more mobile parts of the population exercise their ability to move to other areas (and schools), and so people lacking this ability stay. Typically (though not always), lower status correlates with ethnicity. This means that there are certain villages or even smaller regions with the majority deprived and Roma. In cases like these, segregation is not the consequence of intentional discriminatory practices. The 'white-flight' of the non-Roma population that contributes to the segregation of these schools is not in the first instance 'ill-intented'. These are processes instead that are the result of complex social and political factors, making it difficult to pinpoint any single factor responsible for segregation.

According to proponents of this view, segregation is thus unavoidable; it cannot be counteracted. It is only a short leap from here to finding some sort of legitimation for 'certain types of segregations':

> *Fighting against all sorts of segregation is very stupid because in certain cases it can be reasonable. ...When children are separated in order to compensate for their disadvantages, it is done in their interest. When children are not allowed to attend a school because they are Roma, it is serious and unforgivable segregation. And when non-Roma parents take their children out of the school, they have the right to do that, it happens unintentionally. We may call it 'unintentional segregation'. But either way it's not good because it means majority children will not have experiences with minority children.* (6.)

Although the interviewee supports integrated teaching in general and recognises its benefits, he also argues that in some cases separate classes are preferential. This argument is consistent with an important strain of public debate concerning whether children with learning difficulties deriving from their social background should be dealt with in integrated or segregated classes. In Hungary, many policymakers argue that it is better and more effective to keep children separate (Váradi 2010).

This view, unintentional segregation, is not only shared by many but, as can be seen from the following citation, can serve to legitimate inaction in terms of challenging the legal basis of these practices. Court decisions often differentiate between intentional and unintentional segregation despite the fact that no such distinction can be found in law:

> *In a court decision, for example, it was declared that there was segregation but not discrimination, so neither the school nor the local government was responsible, it just happened. But the law does not make a difference between intentional and unintentional (by default) segregation. So if the local government just let it happen, it equally breached the law.* (7.)

The unintentional segregation argument views segregation as an inevitable fate. As a consequence, no justification for desegregation policies is put forward. This sort of argument posits that children irrespective of their background should be taught together. The arguments to underline the importance of integrated teaching are similar to those found in the first discursive strategy: tolerance ('accepting the other culture') is the main goal. It differs from the first strategy insofar as it treats segregation as an inevitable and somehow natural process, thus calling into question the meaning of tolerance.

(3) Segregation justified

We saw that viewing segregation as an unintended consequence of other social processes and practices can ultimately contribute to its justification under at least certain circumstances. This argument, however, still presents mixed classes as important and indeed beneficial for both Roma and non-Roma children. In this respect, it is different form what we have labelled 'justified segregation', which draws a strong boundary between Roma and non-Roma culture:

> *I am convinced that segregated education should be maintained until the conditions are good enough for integration. (...) They should get to know their own Gypsy culture first, and then the other's culture. When the child is not strikingly different any more, then he or she could be integrated.* (18.)

> *Many of them* [the Roma] *think that the way of life they have is part of their collective identity and if this changes then they will lose their identity.* (16.)

> *We force children with different problems in one class (...) which creates tensions in parents, children and teachers who are supposed to deal with this irresolvable situation.* (16.)

The message contained in these discourses is that the Roma are simply too different, meaning that it would require too much time and effort to get them to adopt the majority culture. From this perspective, placing Roma children alongside majority children in the same school would cause numerous problems given the cultural distance that separates them. The most revealing part of the argument is that this imagined cultural distance is used to justify segregation: in the name of respect, they should be given the time and space (in separate classes and schools) to get to know their own culture and nurture their collective identity. We might call this a 'reversed respect' approach to cultural difference if we are to place it in the ACCEPT conceptual framework.

While evaluating the policy measures, the following positions were formulated:

(1) Forced integration

The interviewees all shared similar backgrounds as experts and practitioners in the field of education. More specifically, they were all involved in desegregation/integration policymaking and implementation. It is perhaps surprising, then, that they all demonstrated a surprisingly low level of knowledge of concrete policy measures. Except for those directly involved in the policymaking process, the majority of interviewees were aware neither of the concrete components nor of the general ideology that informed integration policy. The mainstream discourse that took the view that the policy was 'forced upon the society' reflected the general opinion of the population rather than the views found in 'expert discourse'.

> *It was an 'enlightened' top-down policymaking process and instead of integration being a means, it was an end. ...The integration policy did not have any social support because policymakers didn't explain anything to anyone, why they were doing this and how they were planning to get from A to B. ... Everybody who was not an expert was excluded from participating in the debates on integration. ... Although the minister was a liberal, this issue of non-communication with the population resembled of the darkest of dictatorships.* (1.)

> *I can't see this question clearly. It is not a simple problem and it is not so simple what should be done. In 2002 The EU had a recommendation ...where they said integration should be assisted but not forced by legal actions. And since 2000 when we pushed for integration, the opposite has been happening: segregation has been growing at an unanticipated speed. My impression is that the best legal measures have not been invented. ...The non-Roma parents take away their children and as far as I can see the local governments or schools do not have any means to stop this. So without the mayors or schools breaching any laws, the school becomes a Gypsy school and according to the law they have to be closed. ... The places where it was stopped, the local government restricted parents' rights. ...I have no idea how this process could be stopped.* (16.)

I didn't find integration policy the best solution because it was a forced integration. It wasn't the right way of doing things and it brought the opposite results from what the government wanted to achieve. Schools, teachers, parents and children became even more anti-Gypsy. If five Gypsy children are forced upon a Hungarian community, ... this is not very fortunate situation. It cannot be done like this. ... This biggest mistake was to force integration. It wasn't voluntary, and there was no proper communication with the majority society. They should have asked the Hungarians, the Gypsies, is this was what they wanted? Children and families have to be listened to because there are families that want their children to learn Roma language and there are others who don't. ... Obviously it is not good if we segregate them, but it is not good either if we try to integrate them by force. So we would need something in between. (14.)

A number of discursive tropes are applied in articulating criticism of the integration policy as being forced. A first strategy is to refer to the force used by the government: the policies were 'forced by legal actions', they constituted 'forced integration', they were 'forced upon a Hungarian community', and the government 'pushed for integration', the 'government restricted parents' rights', resulting in a 'lack of voluntarism'. The second strategy emphasised the government's failure to involve the wider society in the design and implementation of the policy: the government 'didn't explain' things, there was a 'non-communication' problem, meaning that 'society [was] excluded, leading one interviewee to describe the government's actions as those of a 'dictatorship'. All these explanations, according this discursive strategy, led to the 'failure' of integration policies insofar as they instigated conflicts and tensions and contributed to anti-Gypsy attitudes.

A more professional criticism from another policy expert makes similar claims but uses a different, more scientific register, basically arguing that the biggest mistake was that ineffective policy procedures were used:

So the policymaking of the liberals ... wanted to force upon the stakeholders the changes they thought to be the right ones. Generally speaking their policymaking tools were incredibly poor because they used only two: regulation and financial incentives. ... The problem is that the success of policy measures depends on local contexts. ... In local communities where the social pressure to segregate is huge, such policies won't work.
There is a difference between addressing the symptoms or the real causes of the problems. The concept of segregation should be extended because it is one of the subtypes of selectivity. ... And selectivity is a symptom. It is a symptom of the segregation pressure in the system itself. ... We could use the image of a steam engine where the steam is the segregation pressure. And still the pressure is huge, the steam is leaking from time to time. The integration policy is like putting our fingers where the steam comes out, in other words, where the Roma children fall out from the system. But as soon as one hole is covered a new one appears somewhere else. ...This is because these policies did not aim at lowering the pressure in the tank, in other words they did not address the problem of selectivity. Thus, the whole integration policy targeted only the symptoms. ...Tools have to be applied that can override local contexts and local networks of interests. (8.)

This more professional variant of the discourse starts from the same position as its non-professional counterpart: policymakers wanted to force their policy ideas on the society without their consent. This version of the discourse, however, does not conclude that this is why the policy failed. It points out instead that the tools chosen were ineffective because they only addressed symptoms instead of the structural problems.

This difference is crucial in understanding the real nature of the negative attitudes towards integration policy. In the professional variant, the selectivity of the system is emphasised as the main problem that needs addressing. Correcting for the system's selectivity would redress the structural problems discussed in the introduction of this report. This of course would

require that both the political elite and 'white middle class' accept that the integration of the lower classes (and thus the Roma). This is a classic problem of social competition between the lower and the middle classes. Ultimately the general public disaffection expressed in these critical discourses originating from both the public and the politicians was a reflection of the majority society's unwillingness to integrate the social and ethnic 'other'.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the 'forced integration' premise is that there is no special need for integration/desegregation since the target group itself often prefers segregation (e.g., to keep their segregated schools):

> *There are places where it works and there are places where it doesn't. ... So the school had to be closed because it was a segregated school. I don't know if it was good or bad. Maybe the school was not bad, the teachers were nice. But in the end, as I heard, it worked (children were scattered in other schools). ... These things seem so simple but they are in fact very complex. (12.)*

> *Certain Roma organisations are extremely self-conscious and wanted to close some schools and sued these schools claiming that they were segregating. Roma parents protested to save their school and said their children received a good education in them, they like it there and they are successful. I don't know of any study that looked into the achievement level of these schools. (6.)*

(2) Lack of political support

At the opposite end we find the discourse of the most involved and invested actors –a member of the policymaking team and an activist of a civil organisation fighting for desegregation. These interviewees did not blame the integration policy itself or the way it was implemented but instead claimed that its 'failure' (popular rejection) was due to a lack of political support:

> *The programmes were very well-designed. Of course, there are some minor problems in the law. ... But the basic programmes were well-elaborated and there was professional support as well as money allocated to the programmes. ...However, the socialist minister did not do anything so the programmes started to fail. (7.)*

> *Over the years, probably as a result of the attitudes of politicians, very strong misconceptions developed in the public. Many people think that integration means the forceful mixing of mainly Roma and poor children with the other pupils. But the programme is not ethnically targeted. ...In fact, only about 50% of the disadvantaged children, the target group of the programme, are Roma. ... The other thing is that integration is never forceful, it is not obligatory. It was not an obligatory programme, it was a voluntary programme where the schools could receive extra financial support if they participated in the programme. (2.)*

It is telling that the integration policy was positively evaluated (in terms of its favourable impacts), only by those policymakers directly involved in its design.

> *I can see that where they decided to adopt new pedagogical methods, schools became more open and cooperative. Something has started. (13.)*

> *One of the very positive outcomes of the integration programme was that it introduced long-awaited pedagogical innovations into the system. (...) These methods were known in Hungary but only in elite schools. (...) The programme started with 45 schools and over the years, 1,800 schools joined in. (...) This means that about 300,000 pupils and 10-13 teachers are reached by the programme. This is about one third of the total pupils' population. (...) As studies show, teachers are very prejudiced towards both the Roma and the poor and they have a strong attitude of pedagogical fatalism. Our programmes aiming to change teachers' attitudes were not very successful in their primary goal, but all teachers who participated agreed that these programmes were very useful for them to improve their pedagogical methods and culture. (2.)*

To sum up it can be pointed out that the issue of school segregation is hotly debated. The problem begins with the inefficiencies, selectivity, and segregation tendencies of the education system. This is thus a serious structural problem that has not been adequately addressed by any Hungarian governments.

The implementation of desegregation/integration policies generated social conflict on both national and local levels. The dominant argument proffered in public debate claimed that the policy had failed. Our case study identified the types of arguments and discourses employed with respect to questions of desegregation. We also applied the conceptual framework of non-acceptance-tolerance-respect to our analysis.

5. Cultural accommodation of national and ethnic minorities in the Hungarian education system: the case of the Roma

Major policy measures and historical background

This case focuses on curriculum issues with regards to Hungary's largest minority, the Roma. In Hungary, the 'debate on the curricula with regards to the Roma' has been a debate that is simultaneously hidden and omnipresent. To date, there has been only been notable public debate around one issue: the 2003 publication of a textbook on Roma culture that was strongly criticised by certain Roma activists who claimed it contained racist language. The book was ultimately withdrawn by the government. Ultimately, however, this was only a marginal debate that mobilised only a few actors active in the field. At the same time, more fundamental questions like 'What is Roma culture?', 'How are Roma different?', 'What are the consequences of their difference in the education system?', and 'How are Roma perceived by the majority?' are at the centre of discussions on issues on Roma and education. That is to say, when debates on 'education and the Roma' occur, Roma culture and the ways in which it can be accommodated in the school system become the concern of a larger field of actors. We have thus chosen to address these larger issues in this case study despite the fact that the specific public debates around this particular issue are not easily discernible.

The most frequent themes discussed are (1) representation of the Roma in textbooks (including Roma history and culture); (2) minority schools and minority education more generally (including schools and/or classes organised for minority children with the express purpose of nurturing their cultural/ethnic identity); and, (3) 'tolerance' and the issue of the Roma (pedagogical methods for teaching toleration, especially with respect to the Roma). All of these questions are informed by a more fundamental question of what Roma culture is. In all of these discussions we find Roma culture and otherness interpreted and framed in different ways. Our analysis w will consider how different actors express different interpretations of Roma culture, and how these interpretations inform and relate to the three major questions outlined above.

Three majors periods can be distinguished for major policy measures on minority education over the past twenty years: first, the essentialits-culturalist period, second, the multiculturalist-emancipatory period, and finally the social integration period (Neumann, Berényi and Bajomi 2010).

The **essentialits-culturalist** period (1990-1995) was notable for its attempts to overcome the assimilationist politics of the previous state-socialist regime. The 1993 Act on Minorities gave

cultural autonomy to minorities so that they could cultivate their identity, traditions and language. The law also gave minorities the right to establish minority schools and to participate in 'minority education' (time and materials dedicated to minority cultures for schools where at least eight minority parents requested it). Minority education provided a minority only educational environment for children to learn about their own history and culture.

The **multicultural-emancipatory** period (app. 1995-2002) approached 'minority education' from a cultural rights and cultural recognition perspective. This approach had a double aim: one, to enable minority children to become more familiar with their own cultural heritage, and two, to give the opportunity to majority children to become familiar with other cultures.

The third period (2002-2010) was the **social integration** approach, in which cultural questions were completely ignored. The objective of this approach was to achieve desegregation and integration in the school system. The target group of the policy measures was defined in social rather than cultural terms. The beneficiaries of the programs were therefore 'disadvantaged' and 'multiple disadvantaged' children. The integration policy measures introduced as a part of these initiatives were consciously colour-blind (see our first case study).

Public and political debates

The main questioned that informed public discourses on these issues was 'what Roma culture is'. Here, we develop a brief overview and typology of the major discourses types formulated by different public actors (politicians, policymakers, journalists, Roma intellectual elite and activists, NGOs, etc.).

The first discourse type can be labelled '**biological racist'** because it emphasises the genetic roots of 'difference' and attributes cultural difference to these putative essential difference.. '*It's in the Gypsy's blood*' is an oft-heard expression that is informed by this sort of biological racism. The second discursive type we discuss is '**cultural racism**', which is functionally similar to biological racism but emphasises cultural instead of biological difference. Culture from this perspective is nevertheless just as deterministic as biology. *'The Gypsies' marginal position is in the first instance not the result of the majority's exclusionist practices '*, wrote one representative of this perspective in a liberal weekly magazine.[11] '*The presence of Gypsies in all developed countries raises the same questions and the reasons for should be sought in their particular culture that can be described as a 'culture of self-exclusion'. (...) This is not about poverty but survival patterns that follow historically evolved cultural codes.'*

A third discourse type might be called '**romantic essentialist**'. This discourse type is also essentialist, but it differs from the previous ones in that it portrays Roma culture in a positive light, drawing on positive stereotypes.

The remaining more positive discursive strategies can be divided into two subgroups. A '**culture of poverty**' discourse denies the existence of a separate Roma culture, arguing instead that majority Roma culture in Hungary is characterised by the loss of the Roma language and their traditions , suggesting that it would be misleading to portray the Roma as a

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[11] Pózcik Szilveszter, HVG 2009.

separate group with its own culture. This view also holds that Roma customs and behaviours are derived from their socio-economic circumstances and therefore are closer to a 'culture of poverty' rather than the specificities of their ethnic culture. The final discursive type emphasises the '**social historical roots**' of Roma culture: cultural difference is be understood from analysing the past social position of Roma in various periods of the history of the country.

These ideal discursive types are in practice never so clear-cut or self-contained. They often overlap, with elements of one mixing with elements of others. They are nevertheless useful as ideal types to help us analyse discourses on education.

Framing of Roma culture/difference

The main topics touched upon by the respondents included the **representation of Roma in textbooks**, **minority education** and the **issue of tolerance with respect to the Roma**. All interviewees were actively involved in policymaking during one or more of the periods. Their discourses revealed opinions on 'minority education' that reflected tendencies from the three periods. In what follows we explore these discourses in our interview data. Although we find particular policy discourses corresponding with particular periods, we also find additional evidence of other discourse types present at the same time.

As a first step, we begin with the ways in which our interviewees described 'Roma culture'.[12]

Most common was the constructivist social historical approach:

> We should be clear that the history of Gypsies should not be viewed as a history of suffering in Hungary or elsewhere in Europe. (...) We should also explain why 60-70% of one Roma group has degrees in higher education degree whereas they only represent 10% of the whole Roma population. ... It's simple, since they have always had their place in Hungarian society. They were better integrated. They lived in a culture similar to a poor peasant culture. (17.)
>
> My positive experience is that for about 300 years, from the beginning of the 1400s, there were no significant conflicts between the Roma and the non-Roma populations. ... I think this is a very important conclusion. (16.)
>
> I cannot talk about Gypsies in general, I can only talk about what I know. There are no Gypsies in general just as there are no Hungarians in general. (9.)

There was also evidence of the culture of poverty approach, which emphasised the Roma's lack of culture:

> Many people emphasise that Roma children have a different culture. I don't think this is the case, there is no difference in culture. It's negative, regrettable side is that the culture of the Roma had been taken away from them. (...) In fact, their culture is closer to what we could call the culture of poverty than some ethnic culture. (2.)

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[12] Two discourse types are missing from our interview data: thebiological and the culturalracist. Whilst both types of discourses are widespread in everyday practice, including in schools,these discoruses are not found in policy documents, which suggests they are consciously avoided in education policy. The 'romantic essentialist' discourse is, however, is present. It will be interesting to observe what impacts this essentialist approach has on questions of 'tolerance'. Furthermore,it needs to be empasized that.

The romantic essentialist view was also articulated by some of the interviewees through the invocation of positive stereotypes:

> *This beautiful Gypsy religion, this world view that we organise our lives around God. This is what the Catholic and the Reformed churches should embrace. (…) They destroyed our Roma culture, they did not let our culture develop. (…) If India had been our homeland, we would have brought something from there. A people can change its language but it can't change its customs or relationship to God. Our Gypsy customs are still different from the Hungarian ones even though we are Hungarian speaking Gypsies. (11.)*

> *Gypsies, their culture, their fabulous gracefulness, vitality, their love for their children and their strong solidarity are a social value. (…) As they often say, nobody who visits a Gypsy family will stay hungry. In that sense I have a very positive opinion of Gypsy communities.(4.)*

Most interviewees were, however, stressed different understandings of Roma culture and some even framed this as a dilemma that contributes to problems for policymaking:

> *The basic problem has always been whether the Roma are a social group characterised by their poverty or a group with specific cultural features. (…) In the past they were expected to assimilate, and now they are expected to be self-conscious Roma. (…) It becomes a social scientific dilemma, however, when it gets mixed up with education policy. (13.)*

Framing the case

(1) Representations of Roma in textbooks

The question of the representation of the Roma in textbooks concerns their portrayal both in the general curriculum and in textbooks written specifically for Roma children. There are textbooks 'with Roma cultural content' intended for majority children and there are other textbooks intended for Roma children.

Textbooks that form part of the general curriculum are the province of the National Core Curriculum:

> *The NCC states that minorities' history and culture should be incorporated into the curricula. It was a requirement. (6.)*

Textbooks for Roma children are governed by the Act on Minorities:

> *Culture and language must be taught if eight parents demand it in a school. (13.)*

There are two opposing strategies for representing Roma in textbooks. The first argues that **Roma themes should be incorporated into the general curriculum:**

> *I wouldn't make it a separate class. It should be integrated into the wider curriculum. (…) (4.)*

> *So I would not do separate teaching for majority and minority children. …[T]his content could be incorporated into all subjects. (9.)*

The second strategy supports **separate textbooks on Roma for the Roma**:

> *More teachers are needed who know the language and culture so that they have some insight and can give something extra to their teaching of Roma children. … Governments should provide financial*

support to activities that are aimed at reviving local cultures and introducing them to classrooms. If schools don't emphasise the importance of dealing with Roma culture, the communication between the different Roma groups as well as the minority and majority will be very difficult. (14.)

I developed a Roma culture and history curriculum for the Roma so we can get to know ourselves. (11.)

The first strategy is supported by the **multiculturalists** and to a certain extent by the representatives of the **social integration approach**. The multiculturalists do not necessarily opposed separate textbooks as long as the general curriculum addresses the Roma issue as well. One of the major concerns with the general curriculum, however, was that at present it contains practically no information on the Roma in any of its textbooks:

Today's education materials don't convey any image of the Roma or other minorities, or just in a very few cases. (...) It's up to the teacher to decide what to teach about the Roma (5.)

How many pages can you find about Roma in history books? Zero. This is absurd. (12.)

This lack of mention of the Roma (or their culture, history) contributes to a wider silence on the issue:

The situation is tragic. (...) Teachers are mostly afraid of talking about the Roma. (13.)

This silence is attributed not only to the textbook problem but, also to the inadequate knowledge and negative attitudes of teachers toward the Roma:

Teachers are confused, they don't like the Roma and they say 'in our school there aren't any Roma children'. (12.)

There are lots of stereotypes about the Roma derived from inaccurate ideas about their history. For example this 'why are Gypsies poor and why can't they integrate' and related biological racist idiocies are widespread. But the idea that this has social, social historical roots and this should be talked about is rare. (...) One time I heard a lesson in a teacher training college by the person responsible for courses on Roma culture. What she said was complete nonsense and stupid. (9.)

At the same time, many interviewees expressed as scepticism regarding the possible impact of incorporating Roma themes into the general curriculum given these knowledge and attitude problems but also because of the prevalence of negative and even biological racist public discourses.

Whether prejudices can be reduced by incorporating different narratives into history teaching?, yes, probably it's possible. But I can't recall very many good examples. And especially where the problems are on a more primitive level. In the last couple of years, the consensus that racist views and discourses are not acceptable... has broken down. In a country without this minimum consensus, it's rather futile to use such subtle methods as widening the history curriculum. (8.)

The most vocal critics of separate textbooks for the Roma are made by the **multiculturalists** and **social integrationists**. These people pointed out that, like with the lack of textbooks in the general curriculum, there are no proper textbooks for minority education.

But I wonder how many institutions are actually prepared to provide minority education. (...) Those who want to teach Roma culture have no materials they can use. (...) Teachers don't know what to teach, it isn't part of the curriculum of teachers' training. (13.)

Others criticised on the treatment of Roma culture in textbooks as generally 'naïve science':

In the 90s, the education ministry supported a book series written partly by Roma on Gypsy history and culture. You can find it in schools everywhere. It's completely fraudulent science. It's completely ridiculous. (...) In the last eight years the government failed to give any thought to how Gypsy culture should be taught by future teachers. Now, a new book was published by a Catholic bishop. They'll teach from this in Catholics school. This isn't as crap as I though it would be. And this is already something. (...) LGY wrote a textbook about ten years ago. This isn't bad [either]. (9.)

What some people think or teach regarding Roma history (...)is not real science. (...) [It's] myth creation. There is no serious Roma historian. (...) It would be in the interest of the Roma intellectual elite to have a realistic view of Roma history. (...) All the curricula I have seen are usually based on naïve science. (17.)

There aren't any textbooks that achieve scientific standards. On that basis we could say that any money given or accepted for textbooks is fraudulent. The contents aren't scientifically proven and what is even worse is that they spread misinformation. (2.)

(2) Ethnic schools and minority education

Underlying all these discourses on textbooks is a more fundamental question regarding whether minority education (schools or classes for minority children to nurture their cultural/ethnic identity) is in the interest of the Roma at all:

Since the regime change the view that Roma need separate nationality schools similar to other nationalities to nurture their culture and language has been accepted. (...) On the other hand, there's the view that most Roma are disadvantaged and therefore need extra help to get them out of their misery. According to this view there is no need for separate Roma schools. (12.)

Opinions are sharply divided on this issue. The question can be framed as a debate between colour-conscious versus colour-blind approaches: should policies towards the Roma be colour conscious or colour blind, and which approach do the Roma support. There are strong and convincing arguments on both sides.

The main argument for a colour-conscious approach to minority education is consistent with the intentions of the law intends for all minorities, including the Roma: to cultivate minority culture, traditions and language. It finds support among both **multiculturalists** and the **culturalist-essentialists**:

There is a need for minority education for several reasons. For the minority itself, because if they can't experience their own culture at school, if the school doesn't confront their difference, then the children will feel excluded. (14.)

You can develop in a healthy way if you accept your identity, if you don't cut your roots, if you don't refuse your roots. We have to help the Roma reinforce and nurture a healthy identity that is not opposed to their Hungarian identity. For this, they need institutions, for example Roma secondary schools where they can nurture their culture and language. ... Integration is not assimilation. ...Roma people have the right to nurture their culture. ...I don't think a healthy Roma identity is antithetical to integration. ...And if you want to conceal your origin, family background,... you [should] have the right to do so. We can't say you're from there, you have to go back and for example teach in the Gypsy colony. (16.)

The arguments against minority education were expressed by those who prioritised **integration**. This view held that treating Roma children as culturally different does not serve their real interests; rather integration in the education system is needed. Colour-consciousness, according to this view, does not help, but rather hinders integration:

The basic problem is that the Roma don't have access to quality services and as long as this is the case it's completely futile to teach Roma culture, it won't help them to learn how to read and write and calculate. ... I would warn everyone against imposing more Roma cultural education to try to improve the educational situation of the Roma. It's a dead-end, for sure. ... Roma cultural education doesn't increase the educational level of the Roma, it's not the key to equal opportunities. (2.)

Teachers don't need to be experts on Roma (trained in Romology) in order to teach Roma children. (17.)

Gypsy children are actually the same as all the others, they will learn or not learn the same things as the others if they are given the same opportunities. The problem is that those with the loudest voice who can influence public opinion don't have any contact with the Roma, they have an abstract image of them. ... Roma children are stuck in ghetto schools and that is why this savage image has developed. (2.)

The problems with a colour-conscious approach are further stressed by pointing out that minority schools and classes may lead to segregation. In other words, minority schools become a pretext for segregation:

So parents have the right to demand ethnic-minority teaching for their children. If there are eight of them, the school has to provide minority education (extra classes on minority culture). In legal cases we often saw that schools use minority classes as a pretext for segregation. It's a good opportunity for them to make sure that non-Roma children don't hear anything about the Roma. So they don't incorporate the material into the general curriculum, even though the goal is for all children to know something about the Roma. (7.)

Nationality schools receive support, but my party takes the view that they should only be supported at the level of secondary school, otherwise they lead to segregation. (5.)

(3) 'Tolerance' and the issue of the Roma

Finally, we considered these discourses in view of their appropriateness for achieving and maintaining tolerance. The most frequently expressed view was that tolerance depends on getting to know one another and learning to cooperate:

There is no doubt that children need more information about minorities. (...) And besides getting to know each other, children need to cooperate more. Prejudices can be overcome if children cooperate, do things together, resolve problems together. (1.)

Tolerance can be taught. (...) We organise training for tolerance, cooperation and our students love it. (12.)

We can't just say, let's be tolerant! It needs to be based on an everyday working relationship. (14.)

A somewhat different view was formulated when the importance of getting to know one another culture was emphasised:

If I know how a community functions, I will obviously be less prejudiced towards its members. Prejudices mainly come from a lack of knowledge. (...)Everyday experience tells us they are loud on trams, that's where prejudices come from. And we, teachers, should work to undo these attitudes. (14.)

For the majority, for middle class children, that is non-Gypsy children, it's important for them to understand and get to know and like difference and diversity. (9.)

These opinions were expressed by **multiculturalists** and **social integrationists**. Proponents of these views also stressed the importance of teaching civil and human rights:

> *It's important that children learn about human rights, the civil rights movement mean, and, from the opposite perspective, right wing ideology. They also need to know what hate groups are and that we have them in Hungary today. (5.)*

Multiculturalists and **social integrationists** differ, however, in at least one important respect: how they understand Roma culture. The **social integration** discourse explicitly rejects the multicultural approach on the grounds that claiming a culturalist view is 'essentialist':

> *The consequence of our integration programme is that Roma and non-Roma children met one another. But the programme didn't directly address cultural difference; i t only emphasised sensitivity and tolerance to change attitudes. (...) Multicultural education is based on an understanding of different cultures. I've emphasised that the Roma in Hungary have the same culture even though many people say it's different. (...) I don't think that this reflects the Hungarian situation, it would be contrived and ridiculous, like 'the Gypsies like colourful skirts'. (2.)*

The **multicultural** discourse, on the other hand, accepts colour-consciousness and thinks that 'dialogue' – getting to know each other and each other's cultures – is the path to tolerance.

> *The question is whether policies are colour-blind or colour-conscious. If you emphasise social problems, you're using a colour-blind approach. If you're trying to apply multicultural methods, then it's colour-conscious (...). When I worked as a vice state secretary under the first liberal education minister, we launched a programme called 'Dialogue' that aimed to provide incentives to schools to develop multicultural programmes. (...) Sociologists attacked me for turning a social problem into an ethnic question. (...) The second liberal minister did not put forward even one programme that contained any colour-conscious elements, except for some affirmative action type measures. (...) So today you can't find any multicultural initiatives. (8.)*

The **culturalist-essentialist** discourse similarly stresses the importance of getting to know one another's culture. But in contrast to the multicultural approach, culturalist-essentialists rely on a 'romantic essentialist' understanding of Roma culture. As such it constructs its discourse by drawing on stereotypes about the 'other culture'. The ability of these stereotypical views of Roma culture for promoting tolerant attitudes and behaviour is questionable.

> *I think Hungary's in a special position because our diversity is an important value. (...) If we know the other and their values and the richness of their culture then we already feel closer to one another. This very colourful Carpathian basin is a source of pride. (...) At the same time, they can also learn a lot from us, especially about child rearing, so that by the age of six they won't be disadvantaged. Of course they are somewhat 'natural people')[13]. For example, a[Roma] priest in Kaposfő is always saying his people were born in tents, lived in the woods, and he'd always remark how beautiful the morning dew was. Us white people, or I don't know how to say it, how should I say it? (...) if we know each other we can learn from each other. There can be a synergy between the two cultures, they flow into one another. (4.)*

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[13] This can be understood as a euphemism for uncivilised.

To summarize the main findings of we have created two summary tables: the first shows the different discourse types on 'Roma culture', the 'textbook question' and 'minority schools', and how these discourse types relate to questions of tolerance.

Discourse type	'Roma culture'	Separate textbooks on Roma	Integrated curriculum	Minority schools	Educational approach to tolerance
Essentialist-culturalist	Romantic essentialist	+	-	+	Culture as value in itself
Multiculturalist	Constructivist: social history	+	+	+	Multicultural education
Social integrationist	Constructivist: culture of poverty	-	+	-	Civic education

The second table summarises each 'educational approach to tolerance'. We conclude that the 'multicultural education approach' promotes respect insofar as it emphasises the acceptance of cultural. The 'civic education approach', on the other hand, corresponds with tolerance: accepting other without reference to cultural difference. The 'culture as value in itself' approach also promotes 'respect', but the inverted commas suggest that this strategy is not based on a genuine understanding of cultural difference since it is constructed through stereotypes.

	Getting to know the other culture	Getting to know the other (regardless of culture) (cooperation)	Getting to know civil, human rights with regards to minorities	Type of attitude/behaviour/social relation aimed for
Culture as value in itself	+	-	-	'Respect'
Multicultural education	+	+	+	Respect
Civic education	-	+	+	Tolerance

6. Concluding remarks

The Hungarian school system is highly selective that leads to severe inequalities in the education system. Due to various structural and attitudinal reasons children of higher social status end up in incomparably better schools than their peers from lower social status. The selectivity of the system is further exacerbated by the fact that the proportion of Roma among the low status children is significantly high. Thus, the Hungarian education system can be characterized as having separate classrooms and/or schools for children of low social status of whom a huge percent is Roma. This situation is referred to as school segregation regardless of the fact whether it is the result of conscious techniques of separating children or the outcome of unintentional practices or structural processes. Desegregation, on the other hand, refers to

state policies that intend to stop and reverse these tendencies and achieve to have socially and ethnically mixed or integrated classes and schools.

The cultural accommodation of Roma in the Hungarian school system pertains to the question of how the Roma culture and history is represented in textbooks, whether there is a need for separate minority education and how 'tolerance issues' with regards to the Roma is manifested in schools, especially in pedagogical methods.

In our analysis of the desegregation/integration policy debates we identified three main discourses: the 'firm advocacy for desegregation', the 'unintentional segregation' and the 'justified segregation'. The 'firm advocacy' discourse is a clear-cut case of tolerance insofar as it emphasised acceptance of the 'other' as the ultimate goal. This acceptance could only be achieved by teaching Roma and non-Roma (disadvantaged and middle-class children) in the same classrooms and schools. Early socialisation is thus an essential ingredient for learning toleration of the other. The next discourse type, 'unintentional segregation', similarly stressed that learning to accept others required early socialisation. In contrast to the 'firm advocacy' view, however, the 'unintentional segregation' discourse interpreted segregation as a 'natural' and irreversible process. From this perspective, segregation could thus be justified and even be beneficial to the children. As such, the meaning of tolerance is blurred since it is not clear how the distant other would be or should be viewed or treated. The third 'justified segregation' discourse is an example of what we have termed 'reverse respect'. In the name of respect for cultural diversity, proponents of this view endorsed separate education for Roma so that the Roma may better preserve their customs, language and identity. It is questionable whether those articulating such views had the best interests of the Roma in mind. To the contrary, they may have been more interested in protecting the cultural integrity of the majority nation against encroachments from the Roma; hence the term, 'reverse respect'. Indeed, proponents of this view tended to associate Roma culture with low social status, deviance, and undesirable behaviour – hardly cultural traits in need of preservation.

The discourse analysis of the issue of the cultural accommodation of Roma in the school system revealed three types of formulations of the problem. The first, the essentialist-culturalist type sees Roma cultural difference basically in essential terms. Although well-intended, this approach results in promoting a type of curriculum that treats Roma not as an integral part of the society but as a group apart characterized by specific cultural traits. This approach can be contrasted with the second type, the multiculturalist, that also emphasises the cultural distinctiveness of Roma but it starts from a constructivist understanding of culture. It underlines that Roma culture should be seen as a social historical construction. The social integrationist perceives Roma cultural difference also from a constructivist point of view but it ascribes difference to the 'culture of poverty' arguing that Roma otherness is a result of their historically low social status.

The different understandings of Roma culture have implications as to the 'tolerance framework' devised in the Accept Pluralism project. Similarly to the discourses on the desegregation/integration theme, we have found a case of 'reversed respect': the essentialist-culturalists argue for a type of 'respect' that has the intention to keep the other at a distance. Cultural difference is glorified as long as it remains intact and does not assimilate to the mainstream culture. The argument lacks references to human rights or excluded the possibility of cooperation between the majority and the minority culture. The multiculturalists, on the other hand, could be argued to support 'real respect' since they stress recognition of cultural difference along with the respect of human rights and mutual understanding of majority and

minority. Finally, the social integrationists could be seen as promoters of 'tolerance' by drawing on such values as human rights and cooperation between groups without giving importance to culture and cultural difference.

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ANNEX: List of interviews

Interviewee	Position	Notes
(1.)	Civil servant	parliamentary commissioner on education
(2.)	Civil servant, policymaker	government bureaucrat, working on school integration for Roma children in the Socialist government (2006-2010).
(3.)	Civil servant, policymaker	government bureaucrat, working on school integration for Roma children in the Socialist government (2006-2010).
(4.)	Civil servant, policymaker	government bureaucrat working on current education bill in the Young Democrats government (2010-present).
(5.)	Politician	current Roma MP, LMP (Greens) party (2010-present)
(6.)	Civil activist	activist in Roma Polgári Tömörülés, civil organisation promoting the integration of Roma, right wing orientation, close to Young Democrats
(7.)	Civil activist	activist in Esélyt a Hátrányos Helyzetű Gyerekeknek Alapítvány – Chance for Children Foundation promoting school desegregation
(8.)	Policymaker	education expert working for an independent organisation promoting educational reform
(9.)	Teacher	equal opportunity expert at Collegium Martineum, Arany János programme
(10.)	Civil activist	author of a textbook on Roma history and culture, director of Kurt Lewin Foundation (promoting equal opportunities and diversity)
(11.)	Teacher	author of a textbook on Roma history and culture (banned for being racist); head of Utolsó Padban, an association teaching disadvantaged Roma children
(12.)	Teacher	head of Romology department, University of Pécs, expert on Roma culture
(13.)	Civil activist	activist promoting Roma culture
(14.)	Teacher	author of a textbook on Roma history and culture, Romani language teacher
(15.)	Church official	Roman Catholic priest, leader of a 'successful' Gypsy mission
(16.)	Church official	Roman Catholic bishop, author of Roma culture textbook and head of the Gypsy mission of the Church
(17.)	Church official	head of Protestant Gypsy mission
(18.)	Church official	Protestant church