



final study

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION AND DIVERGING  
PROSPECTS FOR URBAN YOUTH IN AN ENLARGED EUROPE

CONTESTED ISSUES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION  
THROUGH EDUCATION  
IN MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES ACROSS EUROPE

EDITED BY JÚLIA SZALAI

EDUMIGROM FINAL STUDY

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#### ABOUT EDUMIGROM

The EDUMIGROM research project aimed to study how ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging future prospects of minority ethnic youth and their peers in multiethnic urban settings. It made a departure by recognising that, despite great variations in economic development and welfare arrangements, recent developments seem to lead to similar disadvantages for certain groups of second-generation immigrants in the western half of the continent and Roma in Central Europe. Although formally enjoying social membership with full rights in the respective states, people affiliated with these groups tend to experience new and intensive forms of involuntary separation, marginalisation, social exclusion, and second-class citizenship. By selecting specific communities and schools in nine member states of the European Union (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the project explored in a cross-country comparative perspective how existing educational systems, policies, practices, and experiences in markedly different welfare regimes contribute to these processes of "minoritisation". Considering that schools are key agents in knowledge distribution and socialisation, the project examined how educational practices in compulsory education conclude in reducing, maintaining, or deepening inequalities in young people's opportunities for advancement and their access to the labour market, and, concurrently, how they are forging the social contacts, interethnic conduits, and strategies of identity formation of adolescents from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

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## **PART A**

### **ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION: ASSET OR IMPEDIMENT?**

**Vera Messing, Mária Neményi, Júlia Szalai, Róza Vajda, and Viola Zentai**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS AND METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

Júlia Szalai

This study gives a comprehensive account of the major findings of the EDUMIGROM research project, a cross-country comparative endeavour addressing issues of ethnic differentiation in schools and their environments in multiethnic communities in nine member states of the European Union.<sup>1</sup> The project aimed to reveal the factors and processes behind a most persistent trend in European education: the continuous production and reproduction of ethnic distinctions that unceasingly work to the detriment of youths from ethnic minority backgrounds. The research plan was built on knowledge gained from recent important studies about the disadvantages that children of one-time migrants suffer in education in Western Europe (Heckmann 2008) and about the harsh degradation of Roma in the school systems of Central and Eastern Europe (OSI EUMAP 2007). It was conceived, however, by recognising that comprehensive inquiries into how large-scale institutional arrangements for tackling ethnic diversity impact the workings of the educational systems in the prevailing welfare states, and further, how variations in the social perception of "ethnic otherness" affect daily life at schools have been surprisingly missing so far. This research was designed to address these issues by looking at schools through a comparative lens and focusing inquiries on how schools shape the positions and prospects of adolescents from second-generation and Roma backgrounds.

By considering the plight of Roma an "esoteric" product of belated modernisation, and thus cutting off their case from comparative attempts, the predominant interpretations of systemic differences in education stress, on the one hand, institutional factors and the role of recent mass migration in shaping them, and consider, on the other hand, the interplay of those social, economic, cultural, and political factors that typically accompany migration and that affect, in more or less unmediated ways, the school performance, educational advancement, and adult careers of young people "from immigration backgrounds".

<sup>1</sup> The participating countries were the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, France, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

However, "immigration background" is too broad a term to get to the roots of the differences. First, the effects of immigration naturally differ by the time and generational sequence of arrival to the new home country. If ethnic disadvantages in the quality of schooling, acquired knowledge, level of performance, and attainable opportunities for advancement still remain in place over time, the underlying cause is most probably not immigration per se, but certain deeper historic, cultural, and relational implications. Second, a substantial portion of cross-country movements involves people whose nationality might be different from most of the people in the country where they find a home, but after a period of displayed efforts toward accommodation, they easily become part of their surroundings and – by mastering the language, customs, and ruling behavioural norms – their children's circumstances and opportunities at school will become indistinguishable from those of the domestic majority. The apparent difference in conditions and opportunities for integration between these "white" groups and their "visibly differing" counterparts calls for looking behind the blanket idea of "migration", and urges an exploration of those deeper social, psychological, historical, and cultural factors that find their expression in attaching racialised contents to group-belonging. Third, the notion of "immigrant background" comprises different histories, different affiliations to communities and religions, and different aspirations with regard to positions and ways of life in the new home society. Behind these manifold configurations, it is characteristic ethnic and cultural differences that can be detected. Therefore, there seem to be strong arguments for deconstructing the overly-generalised concept of "immigration background", and make attempts to reveal how variations in ethnicity and the involved departing cultures and experiences affect people's lives in societies where they represent distinguishable minorities. Fourth and very important: the concept of "immigration background" cannot be applied in the case of those who, although "visibly" differ from their majority environment and who are thus continuously "othered", occupy their social position as integral parts of indigenous communities. The most important such group in Europe is several million Roma, people who – and whose ancestors – for centuries were born in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Studies on the sources of socio-economic deprivation, representation of rights, and conflicting interethnic relations of Roma in these countries have brought up factors and mechanisms showing a great deal of similarities in the manifestations of racism and the processes of "othering" to what happens to many important groups of "visibly" differing migrants in countries of immigration. A search for concepts that are powerful enough to look at such commonalities also calls for putting "ethnicity" at the centre stage of our discussions.

The EDUMIGROM research was driven by the leading hypothesis that institutional structures, interpersonal relations, and people's self-images are strongly imbued by perceptions of "sameness" and "otherness" that societies are inclined to translate into ethnic terms with deep cultural implications: those who look "visibly different" from the majority of people around them are considered as "others", and the majorities develop and maintain practices that turn such considerations into value-loaded statements, hierarchical arrangements, and practices of downgrading distinction. At the same time, experienced "otherness" informs, in turn, the self-understanding, aspirations, and ideas of those affected who either

try to escape their ethnic stigma through strong attempts at becoming integrated (that sometimes involves the acceptance of enforced assimilatory pressures on the part of the dominant majority), or – perhaps more often – develop convictions, behaviours, and practices that ironically “legitimise” their being differentiated. Ethnic “othering” takes varied forms and manifestations. However, on the ground of similar experiences of being “othered” by the societies where they live, those from “immigrant backgrounds” and Roma descent share some important commonalities: in all these cases, it is ethnic “otherness” that provides the basis for being singled out for differential treatment and for being confined to follow distinct paths in society. Notwithstanding, the distinctions have far-reaching consequences. In societies that are grounded by the thorough observation of equality and equity as the foundations of equal citizens’ rights, ethnic distinctions and their institutionalisations imply a bifurcation of these rights with serious consequences on the democratic working of the socio-political systems. Based on these thoughts, the EDUMIGROM research considered education as a prime area of citizenship practices. The knowledge that schools distribute, the interethnic relations that they establish and observe, and their authoritative practices of assessment and selection can be conceived of as contributions to how the young generations learn to act as citizens. Whether schools work toward equalising the content of the notion of citizenship or toward justifying distinctions and segmentation by ethnicity (alone or in conjunction with certain social, economic, and religious characteristics), their orientations have decisive implications on how students as future adult members of the social fabric perceive and practice their theoretically undivided, democratic rights as laid down in the constitutions of most of Europe’s liberal democracies.

Concerns about the role of schooling in shaping citizenship led us to turn toward compulsory education. It was assumed that empowering students with equal assets of knowledge and skills that are regarded as the foundations of meaningful participation in society is a primary function of compulsory education in all nation-states. The institutional distinctions that are made between compulsory/comprehensive and further/specialised education are founded in the conviction that the first phase of education should provide the cultural assets that are considered the norm, and thus it should serve “citizenship in the making” with most equality among students. Furthermore, the rights and obligations associated with compulsory education imply equal access to schools that are assumed to offer equal conditions and contents of education. Hence, if one finds substantial differences in how compulsory education is managed and provided, these differences tell a lot about how claims on equality come into conflict with other values and pressures that push early education toward fulfilling claims that follow from the role of schooling in preparing later entrance to the labour market and occupying designated statuses in the prevailing social structure.

We assumed that pulls toward equality and pushes toward differentiation are the product of complex structures and processes. It is the traditions of the school systems that matter in the first place. It is well known that the foundations of the national school systems were laid down during the historical period of the rise of the nation-states, and the initial structures reflected the institutionalisation of



the then prevailing status differences in societies. However, these structures usually have remained in place despite all the later reforms toward democratisation, and for the most part, they still determine the length and depth of universal and equal, as opposed to streamlined and specialised, services in the process of schooling (Bourdieu 1977). It follows that, although compulsory education has been extended in coverage and by age, these early distinctions still inform the opportunities that students from various backgrounds can take. At the same time, the given institutional arrangements are further segmented and differentiated by the needs and pressures of the various social groups in the communities that host the schools. Diverse educational needs, anticipation of competition on the next educational levels and on the labour market, and perceptions about social class and ethnic relations with their implications on "success" in education are all at play, and these factors greatly affect how students are distributed among and within the schools in reach. Additionally, local educational markets do not remain closed to serve only local communities. With the general acknowledgement of parents' freedom to choose the school that they wish their children to attend, the potentials for differentiation among schools within and across communities have greatly increased.

The considerations briefly outlined above informed how the EDUMIGROM research project was designed. The major research questions in the focus of the study were the following:

- How do the domestic school systems accommodate ethnic minority students? What are the channels and forms of inclusion and exclusion in compulsory education? How do arrangements for streaming and tracking affect minority students' opportunities in and among schools? How is the issue of ethnicity addressed by different schools and what are the variations in school-level policies? If trends of segregation can be recognised, what are their sources, forms, and ideologies?
- How do institutional differences, on the one hand, and social, gender, and ethnic factors and their interplay, on the other hand, inform performance, attendance, and the general position of ethnic minority adolescents in school? How do these factors intervene in forming educational strategies and how are they reflected in longer-term career options? What are the group-specific ideologies for the diverging pathways, and how do schools relate to them?
- How do ethnic minority students and their families relate to actual school experiences and to schooling in general? How do they interpret success, failure, and variations in advancement? What are their views on issues of justice, discrimination, and equality in the context of schooling? How do relations between schools and families mediate or countervail the divergent paths of students from different ethnic and social backgrounds?
- What are the typical strategies of identity formation of ethnic minority youth, and what roles do schools, families, peer relations, and the broader interethnic environment play in the process? How do experiences of "othering" inform the shaping of ethnic identity and how do they affect visions on and aspirations for adulthood?

- Who are the responsible agents (persons, institutions) for promoting equal opportunities in education of ethnic minority youths, and for diminishing the gap between majority and minority students? Who are to be considered partners in achieving these goals? What are the sources of hindrance?

Driven by these major questions, the study focused on 14–17-year-old students who attended classes at the concluding stage of compulsory education. Although on certain occasions interviews and group discussions took place in students' homes, local clubs, and community centres, for the most part, the core sites of the research were the carefully selected schools in chosen local communities.<sup>2</sup> By distinguishing four levels of the analysis,<sup>3</sup> the project was built from three consecutive phases that applied distinct methodological approaches and provided distinct perspectives on the institutional, group-related, and individual aspects of ethnic differentiation and the implied personal and collective experiences.

In the first phase, the aim was to overview the fundamental features of the school system and to describe the typical educational pathways of ethnic minority adolescents in each of the participating countries. These comparative studies served to see how compulsory education is regulated and structured: if religious, independent, and other special schools function on this level; how long are pupils involved in this phase, how are they oriented toward different schools, and how do their parents exert their rights to choose the placement and the content of their children's education. The discussions also revealed each country's socio-economic map with regard to the social and ethnic composition of the various school formations; what statistics show about class repetition, dropping out, and being confined to second-rate education, and most importantly: how ethnic minority students are affected by such downgrading processes and what their actual options are for advancement.

In addition to looking at these general features of ethnic minority children's status amidst the country-specific conditions of education, a comparatively designed secondary analysis of the available statistics and major administrative documents brought up the most important specificities of the diverse histories of ethnic minority groups in the participating countries; it mapped their socio-economic standing, housing and living conditions, and the most characteristic occupations that they fulfil; it also described their family formations, religiosity, and the spatial characteristics of ethnic concentration; furthermore, it discussed issues of minority political representation and welfare rights; and drew a general picture about the state of interethnic relations and conflicts at large.

2 Below we return in detail to how communities and schools were selected.

3 Macro-level analyses helped to situate the investigated schools and communities in the socio-economic, political, and ethnic relations in societies-at-large and also explored the prevailing educational and legal arrangements that carry direct implications to the lives of people from minority backgrounds ; community-level discussions with the participation of a variety of key actors in local schooling assisted to explore the diversity of values, traditions, and interests surrounding education; institutionally-framed data-processing (with a focus on schools) informed the analysis of ethno-social inequalities in educational achievements and advancement, and also the understanding of varied patterns of micro-level interethnic relations; finally, data-collections that concentrated on individuals and their informal groupings served to explore the dynamics and built-in drives of varying strategies of identity formation and their influence on the shaping adolescent relations..

This first phase of the country-level analyses brought up results that had key importance for the subsequent stages of the research. The comparative processing of the information about the country-specific historical trends of migration and the forms and structures of interethnic cohabitation led us to cluster the participating countries by their historical commonalities and differences as well as certain institutional and administrative features of the prevailing "ethno-politics" of the involved societies-at-large. Three clearly distinguishable clusters emerged from the macro-social and historical analyses: the first category embraces countries where the prevailing patterns of interethnic cohabitation have been shaped by *post-colonial migration*; the second group is made up by countries where relations between the majorities and the ethnic minorities have been forged by the relatively recent flow of *economic migration*; and the third cluster consists of the four-member block of *post-socialist societies* where it is not cross-country migration but deep-rooted ethnic separation between the majorities and the indigenous Roma communities that rules the structures and formations of interethnic togetherness. As it will be demonstrated in later chapters, these three clusters of historical arrangements, with diverse implications for the social positions and embeddedness of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, markedly differ in the driving forces shaping interethnic relations and also depart from one another in the prevalent patterns of their institutionalisation. Furthermore, the varied historical experiences, transmitted through the shared memories and driving values of families and communities, leave their imprint on adolescent self-perceptions and inform young people's aspirations with regard to adult occupation, status, and desirable way of life. Given the importance of these three historical clusters to both the data collection and later analyses, let us turn to their characterisation in more detail.

In countries where contemporary interethnic relations are shaped by recent waves of post-colonial migration, both majorities and various ethnic minority groups have internalised the prevailing ethno-social hierarchies through a centuries-long history of interethnic exchange in the colonies and have constructed their worlds in response to and in defence of it. In a way, gradual changes in the social structures and the educational systems, respectively, have been built on the evolving forms and patterns of representation and protection that all actors have related to by giving responses that have become the customary ways of interethnic contacts and thus gained the status of the "norm". In these societies (that are represented by France and the United Kingdom in our country selection), the recognition of ethnic distinctions can often give the impetus to extensive attempts at integration and full-fledged social and political participation on the part of minorities. At the same time, aspirations to break through the "ethnic ceiling" fail for the most part and are considered as attempts at questioning the unwritten norms and the status quo, and thus risking the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the involved groups and communities. The case is different in countries where interethnic relations and the patterns of their institutionalisation are shaped by the rather novel experiences of massive economic migration. These societies – that are represented by Germany, Denmark, and Sweden in our sample – still seem to experiment with the "proper" ways of responding to the new social reality. Unlike in their post-colonial

counterparts, majorities here often hope for regaining their country's ethnic homogeneity ("migrants will hopefully go back to their country of origin"), and if frustrated in their expectations, turn toward people from an "immigrant background", either with the will to "Europeanise" them, or with attempts at designating distinct physical, organisational, and social spaces for them through ethnic segregation, or by establishing new patronising relations as if an immigrant background was a "handicap" or a "disease". In reacting to these forms of "othering", ethnic minority groups – especially Muslim communities – often develop arrangements of voluntary separation and strive at full-fledged recognition by emphasising their commitment to social, economic, cultural, and political inclusion on acknowledged multicultural grounds.

In the third group of countries, in the post-socialist societies of Central Europe (that are represented by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia), it is Roma who have been singled out for decades – if not for centuries – to embody "otherness" and also to continuously suffer the malaise of majority/minority relations and to be kept apart as "dangerous strangers". Despite the fact that, for the most part, Roma settled more than a century ago, the rigid hierarchies of their once rural communities worked against their incorporation and concluded in the development of skills and occupations that functioned over generations toward maintaining and reproducing their marginalised positions.

The patterns changed, however, during the decades of state-socialist forced industrialisation. The traditional divisions of labour quickly became outdated, and Roma found themselves compelled to take up the peripheral jobs in the all-embracing system of centrally managed compulsory employment. The process was accompanied by an intense move toward the urban centres, though large groups of Roma were confined in the rural areas from where they commuted to work. These large-scale processes of industrialisation and (partial) urbanisation have not concluded, however, in Roma inclusion. To the contrary, the unfinished projects of occupational and social mobility and the accompanying developments toward gradual integration actually were suspended: after the collapse of state-socialist industry, the Roma were the first to go, qualified as "unwanted" and "superfluous" to the workforce. Massive and lasting unemployment is just one – though crucial – aspect of the problem: in addition, Roma communities have become the victims of a number of concurrent processes – from reshuffling the provision of welfare through restructuring the system of schooling to rebuilding the urban spaces – that all have concluded in their acute impoverishment and utter marginalisation. Under these new conditions, Roma-ness has turned in the public discourse into an encompassing socio-political symbol of all social deficiencies and malaise, and in everyday relations Roma have been singled out as the suitable targets for forceful separation and exclusion.

While the introduced historical clusters helped us to understand the different patterns of interethnic relations that are considered "customary" in societies-at-large, and that thus can be assumed to be translated into practices in schools and in neighbourhoods, the outcomes of the first phase of the study rendered information for immediate methodological use. The macro-level analyses about the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the different ethnic groups and the specificities of

majority/minority relations in the participating countries helped the research collective to identify the ethnic groups whose teenage population was to be approached in the subsequent phase of surveying students in their concluding year of compulsory education in selected schools in carefully chosen multiethnic communities.

This multi-step process of selection was framed by the aims of the survey. The primary goal was to look behind the vague concept of "immigration background" by finding out how ethnicity – mostly in an interplay with a set of social, economic, gender, and cultural factors – shapes distinctions in the everyday working of schools, and how such distinctions gain justification in differently assessed school performances that, in turn, become the bases for departing pathways of advancement. At the same time, it was an equally important intent to reveal how distinctions along the "ethnic label" leave their marks on interethnic contacts, identity development, aspirations, and strategies that, after all, conclude in diverging prospects for youths from different ethnic backgrounds.

This dual aim required samples with a weighty, though not exclusive representation of ethnic minority students. By taking into account the available resources and the time limitations, the investigation was run in classes in the concluding grades of compulsory education by distributing questionnaires to all the students who were then asked to return them anonymously.<sup>4</sup> This implied a rather complex selection procedure with simultaneous considerations of the ethnic groups and the communities, on the one hand, and the makeup of the school system and the availability of the targeted schools, on the other.

The selection of the ethnic minority groups brought up some important conclusions. It turned out that, for the most part, social practice makes it extremely difficult to identify ethnic belonging: it is instead the public framing of "otherness" that allows for designating the communities for closer investigation. The difficulty follows from the fact that ethnicity rarely counts among the formally accepted concepts, and even informal recognition of people's "origin" is missing from the everyday communication in several countries. The clear and simple exception is the United Kingdom where self-declared ethnic belonging is one of the personal data that schools register in a daily routine. At the other end of the scale one finds France, where ethnicity is a concept accompanied by confusion and a certain degree of embarrassment and where discourse even about one's "foreign background" has emerged on the public stage only recently and with contents that are still too blurred to become the foundation of any clear-cut classifications. The countries of economic migration represent another problematic case: while official statistics take notice of "immigrant background", there is a sharp division that, instead of ethnicity, takes religion as a base: racialised/ethnicised categorisations in everyday life distinguish Muslims as the "Other" (with limited importance of people's nationality or ethnic origin). Finally, in Central Europe there is a certain hypocrisy regarding ethnicity: while one's ethnic affiliation is officially considered as a strictly private trait, and while, correspondingly, data collections do not exist (apart from self-declared categorisation

4 Assuring anonymity was important to establish trust between the students and the research team. Furthermore, given the great sensitivity of the issue of "ethnicity", this was also a fundamental legal requirement that the research collective intended to thoroughly observe.

for the purposes of minority representation), a deeply ingrained racial stigma is attached to the concept of "Roma" and the accompanying pervasive discrimination keeps members of the minority group apart from the public, social, political, and physical spaces that are ruled by the majority. These diverse bases for approaching groups that are "othered" led us to turn upside down the initial plan and first identify communities and schools with mixed "visibly different" groups and then consider students' ethnicity as an analytical variable arising from the self-filled anonymous questionnaires of the interviewed students.

After arriving at the compromise to use "visible difference" as the point of departure, some additional considerations informed the selection of two to three urban communities as sites for investigation. First, the communities had to accommodate a significant proportion of the "visible" groups in order to guarantee that teenage members of the groups would be in large enough numbers in the concluding years of compulsory education. Second, in accordance with the research design, it was expected that the targeted "visible" groups have resided in the area long enough for hoping that the majority of the school-age population would come from the second or third generation of people "from immigrant backgrounds". This second consideration was backed by some research in social history: it was mainly one-time industrial towns or parts of cities with a diverse working-class population that gave rise to such settlements in the more prosperous years and provided expanding employment opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s, while Roma neighbourhoods developed around residential areas in the proximity of mines or centres of heavy industry upon massive domestic migration of rural Roma workers in the early 1980s. As a consequence, this requirement often implied the selection of distinctive and visible ethnic enclaves that emerged with clear contours in the middle or on the outskirts of the town or city in question.

The third consideration followed from the second: it was an aim to identify communities that are characterised by some intensity of neighbourhood life. People here would socialise with each other, the local institutions – including the schools – would be surrounded by a general feeling of "this is ours", and people would have a general image about the community with reference to its social, ethnic, and cultural structuring. However, such a "patriotic" relating to the immediate neighbourhood turned out to be rather exceptional: it characterised communities where, in addition to the shared history of migration, strong kinship relations or powerful ties of religion shaped the feelings of togetherness that gave rise to meaningful ethnic enclaves (Zhou 2005). This was the case in several of the Muslim communities in Germany, Denmark, or Sweden, but such a sensation of belonging apparently was missing from adolescents' accounts in the selected neighbourhoods in France, where it was their recurring complaint of feeling downgraded and disconnected from the mainstream. In most of the cases in Central Europe, Roma saw their neighbourhoods as ghettos where they were forced to live a life of sharp social exclusion and hopeless poverty, missing sources of support and cohesion, and where one did not find any cause for appreciation and pride.

Despite all these differences in the relational "density" of the selected sites, the chosen communities had a few decisive features in common. All of them gave home to high proportions of

families from ethnic minority backgrounds with young children of school age; thus, it could be assumed that by visiting the local schools, we would gain insight into the working of ethnicity in education. Additionally, the deprived living conditions that characterised all these sites promised to focus a firm view on one of the most debated issues in education: is it the cultural implications of ethnicity or the structural implications of poverty and relative deprivation that induce adolescents' disadvantages in schooling?

Answer to these latter questions required a closer look at the educational units of the neighbourhood. Thus, in the next step, schools were selected as the major sites of the research. Our agreement to focus on the concluding years of compulsory education resulted in a great variation among the chosen institutional arrangements. First, it was the structure of education that mattered: presented in detail in the next chapter, compulsory schooling is provided in some countries in institutions that serve the entire cohort in a comprehensive form, while elsewhere early tracking is introduced to orient groups of students to departing paths that are embodied in distinct types of schools; in some of the cases, compulsory education ends for students in the last year of primary education; yet in others, the decisive twists and turns in educational and occupational careers are determined by schools on the still compulsory but secondary level of education. Second, regulations on school attendance shape the picture on daily practices of schooling: in some countries, strict legal arrangements and/or decade-long customs confine enrolment to units in a student's immediate residential neighbourhood, while in others, it is general practice that parents seek the school they think appropriate for their children well beyond the neighbourhood where they live – though the concerns that drive their decisions vary by social class and ethnic belonging. Third, the size of the school also matters: in some countries it is large institutions – serving often 800–1,000 students in several parallel classes in each grade – where families choose from, while in others, it is a tradition of education to stick with the notion of "familial service" and schools organise only one or two small study groups for each cohort of their attendees. The fourth consideration on sampling followed from the general aim of the research: even if full correspondence between the selected community and the chosen schools could not be established, it was important to find institutions that host "visible minority" students in large numbers and that can be considered "sample cases" with regards to addressing diversity in the given country. A detailed discussion in Chapter II will present the overall picture about the 105 schools that ultimately have been selected and that gave home to the 287 classes where the survey was run.

By enquiring about earlier school results, liked and disliked subjects, positive and negative experiences with teachers and fellow students, plans for advancement, and the practices in interethnic relations in and outside the school, as well as by asking detailed questions about various aspects of self-perception, desires concerning one's longer-term future, and attitudes and feelings toward others in the neighbourhood and the larger community, the 5,086 questionnaires that emerged from the survey provided ample ground on which to explore how ethnic and social differences in schools and their immediate environments shape adolescents' daily experiences and career paths in education, and how these factors

influence their social relations, the development of their identities, and their ideas about adult life. At the same time, it followed from the nature of a questionnaire-based survey that many of the factors that one assumed to exert an important impact on students' daily life, their relationships, and aspirations remained outside the purview of the study. The questionnaire was capable of revealing their immediate views and considerations about themselves and their surrounding, but it was not the right tool to explore the dynamics of these relations and aspirations, and its potentials were also limited to allow for seeing the role of the parents, teachers, and other adult actors in shaping everyday life in and outside the school.

Driven by the recognition of such limitations, a third phase of in-depth qualitative techniques served to deepen the picture that the survey provided. This qualitative phase was composed of several elements that made up a mosaic-like structure: face-to-face interviews with ethnic minority students and their parents revealed the decisive life events and the important personal relations that framed families' lives in the community, while they also served to explore the events and turns in life that were recognised as meaningful points in "learning" what ethnic otherness means; focus group discussions among students and teachers brought up the diversity of opinions and reasoning about important issues like cultural conflicts or discrimination; observations in the classrooms and the corridors of the schools aimed to highlight the formations and contents of youthful togetherness and ethnicised/racialised separation; interviews with teachers helped to reveal the potency of the prevailing majoritarian convictions when turned into assessment and grading; visits were paid to local clubs and also to influential representative civil organisations to gain insight into the larger environment that assists in enhancing ethno-social inclusion or, for that matter, frames ethnic separation. In this complexity of multiple qualitative tools, equal importance was attached to the viewpoints of the subjects of the research (the students) and of the several agents directly or indirectly influencing their daily lives and school careers. In order to ensure the necessary balance, the fieldwork was designed to focus on interviews and group discussions among ethnic minority students and an adjunct selection of interviews and discussions with parents, teachers, and community representatives as key adult actors: thereby, it was aimed to attract ever-wider circles of the views and ideas that surround adolescents' lives like layers of onionskin. It was hoped that, by putting together in a mutually reflexive way the methodologically diverse pieces of the research, a rather deep understanding would emerge about the social environment of ethnic minority youth. It is in this environment where they are embedded at an important stage of their school careers, where their expectations about the future are developed, their social experiences and bonds are created, their social and ethnic identities are constructed, and experiences of otherness are formed. In order to reflect all major constituents of the schools' environment, the sample of the qualitative phase was drawn as a compression of the survey sample: in each community, a few representative schools were approached to take part in this extension of the investigation, and within the schools, students and their parents were approached on the grounds of the known survey results, while from among the teachers and the school personnel it was those working regularly with ethnic minority students who were invited to participate.



The subsequent chapters of this study will present the core findings of the survey and the qualitative inquiries by giving the floor to various actors to present their views and enter into a dialogue with one another. We hope that such an "interactive construct" will allow the reader to see how the various aspects of ethnic minority adolescents' lives at school and in the community are reflected through their own experiences, thoughts, and explanations, and how their majority peers and the key adult actors around them respond by filtering their views and ideas through the impressions and knowledge that have been accumulated in different quarters of society and/or in different cycles of life.

Chapter II will introduce the communities and the schools that hosted our empirical inquiries. Fieldwork in the nine participating countries comprised some 15 larger and 10 smaller ethnic minority groups. Due to their very different histories of inter-country (often: inter-continental) migration, diverse ways of settling, varied patterns of participation in the structures, institutions, and social relations of the one-time "host" countries – enriched with the particular history of movements of Roma in and among the societies of Central Europe – the current young generation of minority people show great variations in terms of their social embeddedness, socio-economic standing, cultural and behavioural patterns, and political representation. This chapter provides a detailed overview of these differences in comparison to one another and in relation to what can be called "white majorities". The chapter looks at the major demographic and socio-economic features of the respective multiethnic communities and neighbourhoods along their residential patterns, typical family formations, prevailing patterns of education and labour market participation, and the major traits of housing and living conditions.

The second part of the discussion will introduce the schools where the quantitative surveys and the qualitative field research took place. It will provide a characterisation of the visited schools by clustering them into major types according to their position in the respective school systems, the quality of teaching, and, above all, the patterns that they follow with regard to ethno-social inclusion/separation. In this context, school-level policies in response to segregation will be presented as a decisive frame for two major functions of schools as agencies of distributing knowledge and as spaces for socialisation.

By relying on the emerging typologies of the communities and their schools, Chapter III will analyse the general and country-specific causes and manifestations of differences in students' school performances, and will highlight the role of these differences in shaping choices on further schooling. The discussion will explore how these differences are informed by the routines of selection that schools spontaneously or deliberately follow and will reveal how teachers act upon their value-driven understanding of the prevailing social, cultural, and religious differences among their students.

The chapter will consist of two larger parts. The first part will discuss how the performance of boys and girls belonging to different social and ethnic groups is shaped by a range of personal and school-related factors. A major mission of the discussion will be to provide contribution to the understanding of variations in the relative weight of "social class" against "ethnicity" in inducing differences in students' performance, and to show how their intersectionality is played out in different socio-economic, interethnic,

and educational settings. On this ground, variations in overall performance will be revealed against a set of key structural, group-specific, and personal attributes, and differences according to certain cultural traits and interests will be explored. The discussion also will provide insights into students' varying relating to schooling, and the direct and indirect impacts of policies and methods of instruction on influencing their efforts and aspirations. Further, an account will be given of the background causes of severe school failures and their materialisation in inequalities in measured performance. Finally, by building on the assumption that early childhood experiences might leave their long-term imprint on school performance, the analysis will apply the lens of personal life histories to look at group-specific differences in class repetition, undisturbed/disturbed school advancement, and satisfactory/failed performance.

The second part of Chapter III will follow the students on their educational paths, and look at the actors and factors that play a role in influencing the choice of school for further studies. By taking into account the diverse patterns of tracking that prevail across countries, it will discuss how social background, ethnic belonging, gender, residence, attained school performance, and the type and certain qualities of the current school influence students' plans for the future. Against the differences in overt versus covert, voluntary versus involuntary, spontaneous versus institutionalised procedures of selection, it will show how the listed factors affect students' opportunities on their own and in their interplay. It will be shown how students' earlier acquired grades become the powerful foundations of institutionalised differences by only allowing them to choose among a restricted circle of schools and tracks, and how such strong limitations on adolescents' choice come into conflict with the manifold expectations of ethnic minority families toward correcting earlier disadvantages on the secondary level. In this context, the discussion will reveal the driving values that orient students in their considerations on the future and will show whether certain clusters of values are more specific for given groups while others characterise particular other groups – or the choices are mainly influenced by cultural and familial factors.

Chapter IV will go beyond the academic functions of schools and will analyse how schools, independently of or in unison with other public agencies, also act as important agents of socialisation. The discussion will provide a comparative assessment of the manner in which the schools interact with other entities such as outer peer groups, neighbourhood organisations, ethnic communities, or families, and whether these interactions tend to be conflicting, neutral, or cooperative. The impact of these relationships on students' daily lives and educational careers will be introduced. Moreover, school attendance will be scrutinised in its contribution to adolescent identity formation and the shaping of longer-term aspirations and prospects.

In this context, an in-depth insight will be provided into certain basic relationships at schools by looking at ethnic minority students' experiences with their teachers and peers. The analysis will address how these relations vary along social, gender, and ethnic lines; it will introduce adolescents' experiences about cooperation, friendship, aggression, and harassment; and will look at whether these experiences vary between "good" and "bad" schools. Moreover, the discussion will reveal the conditions,

circumstances, and manifestations of being discriminated against on ethnic grounds, and it will highlight the factors that might lead to students' perceiving ethnic bias in their conduct with teachers. By looking behind the walls of schools, racial and ethnic differences and categories also will be addressed in their expressions in everyday community life. Finally, this part of the discussion will be closed by introducing the strategies and responses that minority ethnic students develop in their sometimes conscious, sometimes half-conscious defence against discrimination and "othering".

The subsequent part of the chapter departs from conceptualising ethnic identity and self-perception as reflective notions by pointing out that they are not objective "givens" but perspectives on the surrounding world. With this approach in mind, the section will introduce certain specificities of identity formation of adolescents. It will be explored how ethnic identity is articulated by different groups of ethnic minority students; how they conceptualise "togetherness" as against "difference"; how they see the importance of ethnicity in their life; how educational experiences influence the formation of their identity; how personal and ethnically coloured self-understanding affect further educational or professional aspirations, plans, or visions; and finally, how ethnicity shapes their ideas about the future and their position in society? On the ground of these deliberations, a classification of the characteristic identity models of students and families will be presented. Considered as important constituents of the social construction of ethnic identity, a number of factors will be examined, like the role of the varied socio-economic and educational backgrounds; the diverse ways of life in the community; the different degrees of social embeddedness into the immediate and larger communities; and, in close association with the latter, differences in families' relating to religion, traditions, their countries of origin, and use of language.

Chapter V will cluster the results of the above discussions along certain key topical areas of education as reflected by recent literature in the sociology of education, the currents of social psychology of adolescent identity formation, cultural anthropological research of interethnic relations at school, and the broader context of ethnic/racial discrimination in the processes of instruction and socialisation at school. This comprehensive literary review will assess contributions of the EDUMIGROM research project in two directions. First, it will summarise findings that confirm the results of other investigations on the listed subject matters. Second, it will point to those novel findings of the project that open the door for future research. In the latter context, the conceptual and methodological foundations of a range of new approaches will be outlined to draw attention to the interplay of macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors in shaping the conditions and prospects of ethnic minority youth across Europe. In the latter context, the chapter will introduce contributions of the EDUMIGROM research to the understanding of new aspects of social stratification by pointing to the strong ethnic undercurrents in shaping socio-economic inequalities and also in forging diverging prospects for the new generations in participation in the polity.

The next part of the chapter attempts to open a window to a general discourse on ethnic diversity. The discussion will revisit the recent debates on multiculturalism and will look at some key results of the EDUMIGROM project in its potential contribution to "dialogical multiculturalism" in the

polity in general, and in education in particular. The findings of the research will be placed also into the context of the discourses on inclusionary citizenship. In this context, ethnically informed arrangements of the prevailing welfare regimes will be critically examined against their potentials/limitations to attain socio-ethnic equality, observe minority rights, and facilitate political participation through providing procedures and structures for a colour-blind way of functioning of state/citizen relations. Furthermore, issues of "new scepticism" and their relating to ethnic diversity/homogeneity will be addressed in the contexts of social cohesion and the maintenance of classic forms of participatory democracy.

By presenting the general policy recommendations of the EDUMIGROM research, Chapter VI applies two lenses. On the one hand, recommendations will be contextualised against the theoretical discussions of the preceding chapter. It will be pointed out that policies in education are deeply embedded into larger-scale relations in society, and they cannot be departed from the general views on the "good society" and the prevailing values that guide social development. Hence, the contents, goals, and strivings of educational policies are to a large extent the derivatives of the responses that societies give to the above-indicated key questions. On the other hand, policies on education are certainly informed by the immediate needs that have been brought up to mitigate the tensions between the rapidly changing ethno-social landscape and the sluggish adaptation of education in European societies.

By applying the above two approaches in a combination, and by focusing on the manifold disadvantages of ethnic minority children and youth, the chapter on European-level policy recommendations will address issues of strengthening equal treatment and equal opportunities in education; reducing selection among and within schools with strong attempts toward desegregation; making investments at raising efficiency in early childhood development for children of preschool age; raising and equalising the quality of services and provisions in schools of compulsory education; exerting efforts toward dialogical multiculturalism and honest recognition of diversity; and finally, strengthening policies and measures toward powerful protection against discrimination in combination with enhancing equal treatment and the observance of equal opportunities. In addition to the findings of the EDUMIGROM research project, this chapter will build on recent policy documents of the European Commission on youth, education, and employment.

Part B will deepen the discussions on policies that might enhance social inclusion of ethnic minority youth in education. This section of the study will present the nine policy briefs that were drafted by the country teams by using the country-specific findings of the EDUMIGROM research and by outlining a set of fundamental conclusions and recommendations with regard to the prevailing domestic educational and welfare frameworks that designate the scope of mobility and determine the opportunities for social, economic, and political participation of minority youths.

## CHAPTER II

### COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

*Vera Messing*

In this chapter we will provide a description of the main characteristics of the communities and the schools within them that served as the sites of the research, and attempt to show important differences between them while introducing those processes that inform interethnic relations and education within these multiethnic localities. The overview is based on two sources: data gained from analysing students' responses on the survey questionnaires and information gained from interviews, discussions, and participant observations during the qualitative phase. Due to the closer focus of the qualitative studies on ethnic minorities that revealed the dynamics of students' life histories while the one-time survey highlighted contemporary experiences on interethnic relations at school, one might find some discrepancies between the findings of the two phases of the study, the possible reasons of which will be addressed in each individual occasion.

#### **Communities**

Following from the focus of the research on multiethnic communities, our country-specific samples are most typically ones in which various groups of ethnic minorities occupy an important share: 36 percent of the respondents in the survey had at least one parent who belonged to an ethnic minority group. Altogether, students affiliated with over 25 different ethnic groups comprised the survey sample, and we clustered these numerous ethnic groups into three larger categories to streamline the subsequent analysis. The first category collected students of the ethnic majority (59 percent of responding students), the second category included "visible" minorities (28 percent of respondents) who due to their other than majority appearance may be subject to processes of "othering". Most typically these groups were Roma in Central Europe; Turks and Kurds in Denmark, France, and Germany; North Africans in France; Black

Africans in the United Kingdom, Denmark, and France; Caribbean in the United Kingdom and France; and Pakistani and other Asian-origin people in Denmark, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the third category included "non-visible" minorities (13 percent in our sample), more specifically those ethnic groups whose other than majority background cannot be recognised at first glance. In this latter category the dominant groups were immigrant students arriving from economically developed countries (Portugal, Spain, United States, New Zealand, Australia, Canada) and those autonomous minorities of Central and Eastern Europe (Hungarian and German/Schwab groups in Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary; Ukrainians and Poles in the Czech Republic) who were historical ethnic or national minorities in those countries. Naturally, due to the varying presence of ethnic groups and patterns of interethnic cohabitation in urban areas, there were significant differences across the participating countries in terms of the proportions of minorities in their survey samples.

With regard to the embeddedness of the families, on the whole, the researched communities were mainly constituted by people who had a long history of cohabitation: only six per cent of the students in our sample were born in another country, and only one-quarter of the parents were born outside the country's borders. Thus, the ethnic groups in our samples dominantly consisted of settled minorities, whose histories point back several generations, and who had accommodated themselves in their new home country.

As a result of the methodological consideration to focus on minority-dense communities, most of the students participating in the research lived in locations where the presence of ethnic minority groups was significantly higher than the average for the entire settlement. Residential segregation was the most general tendency that subsisted in all of the researched communities, though its extent and depth differed significantly country by country. Among the "old" European Union member states we found that in France and Denmark half of visible minority students in our sample lived in segregated urban areas,<sup>6</sup> and the United Kingdom represented the other end of the scale, where only less than one-sixth of the responding minority students lived in such an environment. Most of the Roma participating in the survey research in the Central European countries indicated that they lived in a majority or ethnically mixed environment: over 60 per cent of Roma in the Czech and Hungarian sample and over 90 per cent in the Romanian and Slovakian samples mentioned that they lived in an ethnically mixed or mostly majority environment. There are three aspects to be mentioned here. First, from previous EDUMIGROM background studies we know (Moldenhawer et al. 2009) that in some of the participating countries – most importantly in Romania – most Roma students drop out of compulsory education prior to reaching the end of their primary education; hence, those reaching the final grades of primary education belonged

5 Sweden did not take part in the survey. However, the qualitative study among students of a large school in a multiethnic residential area in Stockholm inhabited mostly by families from immigrant backgrounds displayed the greatest ethnic variation among the communities investigated by the EDUMIGROM research.

6 By segregated urban area, we mean parts of the city where a determining share of the population comes from ethnic minority backgrounds.

to the best integrated and highest strata of their ethnic community. Second, as described in the previous chapter, many Roma were excluded from urban areas and were squeezed out into villages that typically provide only a sheer minimum of public services in several of the Central European countries. Those who managed to stay in the cities belonged to the most integrated, upper strata of Roma society. A third factor influencing the interpretation of the data relates to the reliability of adolescents' responses concerning their neighbourhoods. Living in a Roma colony or slum is highly stigmatising in Central Europe, thus we may assume that students residing in such an environment might have felt the necessity to identify a dominantly (but not exclusively) Roma neighbourhood as "mixed". These three factors may explain why an influential share of Roma students responding to the survey questionnaire indicated that they live in ethnically mixed or majority environments, in contrast to the generally high level of residential segregation characterising post-socialist societies. Even in countries where exclusion into villages is less frequent and the number of dropouts is lower – Hungary and the Czech Republic – residential segregation within the urban area was typical. Furthermore, ethnic segregation of Roma intersected with marginalisation and severe exclusion in most of the cases.

In terms of segregation and its consequences, we can classify our sites into several categories. Segregation in the "old" European Union member states occurred in large urban areas, where migrants and their descendants settled in certain parts of large cities. This was the case in all of the sites of the EDUMIGROM research. In Northcity<sup>7</sup> in the United Kingdom, and the two urban sites in France and Germany, migrants and their descendants lived in urban enclaves, in which minority status and low social status intersected on the level of the neighbourhood. Still, living in such an environment did not necessarily mean that minorities were excluded from public services and institutions serving majorities. Minority students had good access to, for example, schools with citywide reputations, as the cases of Northcity or Bordeaux demonstrate: here many students, who lived in a segregated ethnic slum, attended schools that were situated in the centre of the town and primarily served the children of middle-class families.

Another instance was represented by Denmark and Berlin in Germany, where minority communities lived in segregated urban areas and there they formed (and sometimes maintained) their own community schools. These communities somewhat resembled "parallel societies" that maintained their duplicated institutions and businesses for use primarily if not solely by ethnic minorities. In the discussions that follow, we will show that such ethnic separation limits the chances for interethnic contacts and future prospects for adolescent youth yet does leave space for developing positive identity and self-respect. The Swedish site of the research represented a similar level of ethnic separation: here, youth lived but also studied in a dominantly minority environment though later, regarding secondary or higher levels

7 Due to the sensitivity of the issues that were addressed by the EDUMIGROM research through engaging in fieldwork in environments that are rather easy to identify, it seemed appropriate to use pseudonyms to denote the subjects – communities, institutions, and individuals – of the inquiries. Hence, for the most part, localities, schools, and the interviewees are referred to by fictional names.

of education, many of them planned to join majority schools and institutions – and as interviews with teachers and parents about the prevailing practices in the locality demonstrated, they could predict a good deal of success about their attempts.

But what does it mean to ethnic minority youth who live in urban ethnic enclaves? The comparative analysis of the qualitative study showed that living in such an environment may have very different significance and consequences depending on the country and the history of interethnic relations in the wider social environment. We found that living in an ethnically segregated residential area did not necessarily involve ethnicised identity in many cases: whether in Paris, Stockholm, or Copenhagen, students from urban ethnic slums were most likely to refer to their neighbourhoods by making a distinction between "us" and "them". They synthesised all the various dimensions of their identity (i.e., dress style, music preferences, behaviour, etc.) while permitting a degree of mixture between various ethnic groups. This phenomenon was especially true for students in the "old" member states, but also true to a certain degree for Roma youth in Central Europe. As the comparative analysis of the community study stated "[...] the 'ghetto identity' is the major source of belonging for young people, especially for migrant students who feel removed from their parents' sense of community and from the dominant national identity, too." The vast majority of students interviewed in Paris, Copenhagen, and Northcity stated that their friends who they had met at school were of several different origins. Young people living in the urban ghetto in the United Kingdom derived an important part of their identity from so-called "postcode gangs". Postcode gangs were primarily associated with neighbourhoods but residence frequently intersected with ethnic or racial distinctions as well. In the German sites of the research, we found that religion together with ethnicity had a more fundamental role shaping everyday life: Turkish and other different groups of Muslim students socialised with each other, but rarely had German friends because of significant residential and school separation. Many students, however, did not feel bad about this; on the contrary, they argued that it was a very good feeling to be in an environment where minorities were in a majority as they felt more relaxed and regarded such a neighbourhood as protective.

Ethno-social segregation in the Central European countries illustrated different patterns that have a more decisive and devastating consequence on the schooling and opportunities of Roma youth. Roma in the selected medium-size urban sites resided occasionally in dispersed forms in lower-class majority neighbourhoods in town (where adult family members had permanent jobs). In contrast to responses to the survey question concerning the composition of the neighbourhood where stating its ethnically mixed character enjoyed the highest frequency, in the qualitative study we found that Roma most typically experienced various forms and levels of social and spatial exclusion. We distinguished among three categories of ethnic separation/segregation in the region based on their consequences on schooling and future chances of adolescent youth.

A prevalent tendency in the region – in contrast to the situation of migrants in Western Europe – was the squeezing out of Roma from urban areas into *villages*, which due to "white flight" soon became segregated settlements. These rural communities often represented the lowest-quality residential areas;



many of them lacked several public services and basic infrastructure, such as regular public transportation, surfaced roads, educational, social or healthcare institutions, etc. These villages were frequently left to go it alone with their own problems and desperate poverty, as if the state would have forgotten about them; in most of the cases, no investment had been made in the recent past to reduce hopeless poverty and exclusion of its residents from the labour market and other spheres of social life. This state of affairs was evident in Slovakia, Hungary, and also Romania to some extent. Youth who grew up here were denied quality education, interethnic contacts, and chances for further education, and hence social integration. Close to one-fifth of our Central European respondents resided in such remote, ethnically segregated settlements that typically form a cluster around one-time industrial towns where Roma once were employed and lived.

A more prevalent type of residential segregation was represented by *Roma colonies* or *ghettos* situated within an urban area where spatial isolation devastatingly intersected with deprivation. Many of the Roma students and families interviewed in the course of the qualitative study lived in such residential environments, which were typically located on the geographic margins of the settlement and were marked by inhuman living conditions in some cases: overcrowded homes, no public utilities, damp and mouldy hovels inadequate for a healthy life. The most desperate exclusion was found in Romania, where one Roma community was living on a waste dump situated on the edge of the city. Youth (and even younger children) living in such an environment were utterly cut off from society and had no access to its institutions. The social lives of Roma adolescents living in spatial segregation were characteristically denied meaningful relationships with majority peers and their lives were organised around their immediate neighbourhood environments, where their closest family and peer-group relations dominated.

**Minority ethnic students are largely educated amidst segregated conditions that are the key driver of inequality regarding educational opportunities. Segregation is partially a by-product of the given residential conditions, but processes of "white flight" give further momentum to the phenomenon. Segregation by ethnic belonging is often accentuated by intra-school policies of streaming and tracking. Considering the arising ethnic gap, the most desperate is the exclusion of Roma from mainstream quality education in Central and Eastern Europe.**

Concerning residential segregation, an atypical subcategory of the Roma colonies has to be mentioned. A few *Roma enclaves* in Central Europe were formed by the deliberate choice of the residents who willingly separated from the outer world: there were few communities of traditional Roma groups that still continued to keep their traditions alive. One such community was the Gábor Gypsies in Romania and another was a few Vlah communities in Hungary. Their voluntary spatial segregation is related to their traditional economic activities (trade and business), which is built upon strong kinship ties and cooperation.

*Urban slums* represented the third and most characteristic category of ethnic separation among our Central European research sites. Social class had a stronger relevance than ethnicity in the formation of these urban spaces, frequently interpreted by the local middle-classes as Gypsy areas. Most typically,

these residential areas included dilapidated multi-storeyed prefabricated buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Composed of poor-quality buildings that remained in the ownership of the local government as subsidised rentals, these city areas turned into inner-city slums during the 1990s, providing residence for families living most typically on welfare provisions. Overcrowded flats and extreme rates of long-term and hopeless unemployment characterise such neighbourhoods. Still, those living in urban slums remained in the reach of public services and utilities.

## Families

To get an insight into the families and living conditions of adolescents participating in the survey research, first some of the most important characteristics of their home environments have to be introduced. Let us emphasise that these conditions, though typical for the community, do not represent the whole of the population living in the researched neighbourhood as the data lack information about the elderly and those households that do not have school-age children.

An important feature of the researched communities lies in the demographic differences when compared to the countries' populations-at-large. Reflecting fertility rates well above the national averages, more than half of our ethnic minority respondents came from families with three or more children, but students from the ethnic majorities also tended to live in larger families when compared to the national averages. While the number of children in a family seems to be outstandingly high, the household formation followed the mainstream: dominantly nuclear families prevailed for both ethnic majority and minority students. It is important to note, that in contrast to what one might expect, extended families were an atypical formation in our samples: regardless of the cultural traditions, the frequency of this formation was around 22–27 per cent, irrespective of the ethnic background of the families.

Knowing that belonging to an ethnic minority implies a high probability of attaining a low status in the social hierarchy, it is not of great surprise that, in terms of their socio-economic position, families of our respondents occupy the lower echelons of the local society. More concretely: the parents of students had significantly lower educational qualifications compared to the national averages and, for the most part, they engaged in unqualified and low-paid jobs (simultaneously, unemployment rates were very high among them). The picture is not homogeneous though; there were important differences among as well as within countries.

Besides the significantly lower educational attainment, when compared with the national averages for the same age-group, the data reveal another important feature of our survey sample:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The data on educational background of parents have to be handled with certain caution, due to the high level of missing

with some exceptions, there was a significant gap between the average educational level of parents of minority and majority students. It is primary level and vocational education that prevailed among parents of the responding students. There were important exceptions though: one is the United Kingdom, where almost half of the students had at least one parent who graduated from higher education, which was equally true for minority and majority students. The other exception was the Danish sample, which included an important and significant segment of families where at least one parent acquired a university degree. Central European countries showed a prominently different pattern: there was a huge gap in the educational background of minority and majority students. The ratios of Roma parents succeeding in gaining secondary, tertiary, or higher education are dramatically low, especially in comparison to national averages. These patterns were characteristic for the systematic gap between Roma and the ethnic majorities in these countries. Hungarian and Slovakian Roma subsamples showed educational disadvantages in the sharpest way: even secondary level graduation was a rare exception among Roma adults in these countries. In regard to majority students' family backgrounds, we see that they are unfavourable in comparison to national averages, but the disparity is greater in most Western European subsamples between the respective majorities and minorities than in the Central European countries.

Cut by ethnic affiliation, we see again great variations that challenge the popular and generalising picture of immigrants as uneducated people: rather substantial parts of the immigrant communities represented the higher end of the educational scale. Considerable shares of students with East European, Asian, Black African, or Caribbean backgrounds in our sample had at least one parent with a college or university degree. But Muslim and Roma students came from families that possessed a low degree of educational capital: 44 per cent of Roma and 56 per cent of Muslim students had a father with at most primary schooling, and one per cent of Roma and 10 per cent of Muslim students' fathers had university or college degrees. It is perhaps needless to say that these proportions were even more extreme in the case of mothers.

The labour market position of parents was similarly miserable, especially when taking into consideration that given the life cycle and age, our parental generation was at the peak of employability. The rate of employment was calculated to be 10–30 per cent below the country-specific national indicators. Still, the low level of employment of minority ethnic men and women was only partially due to the above presented disadvantages in their educational attainment. As the data of both the survey and the qualitative study reveal, difference in access to regular employment cannot be explained by educational disadvantages alone. Even better educated second-generation immigrants or Roma had few chances to engage in stable employment. The relative disadvantages were especially outstanding again in the case of two groups: Roma and Muslims. Significantly, a lower proportion (20 to 40 per cent) of secondary-school

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responses. Almost one-third of the respondents did not answer the question about the level of schooling of their fathers and almost one-quarter of them did not know the educational level of their mothers. Missing answers were more typical for students who come from poor households; therefore, we can assume that the available data show a more favourable picture than what the full-scale distribution would show.

graduate Roma and Muslim fathers had a stable job when compared to ethnic majorities or even other minorities. The interviews conducted in the qualitative research phase revealed some of the reasons: it is "visible" minorities who were the first to be driven from the realm of stable work in the case of economic crises or transition and squeezed to the margins of the labour market: to individual small businesses that hardly provide a living, or the arena of unreported and unpredictable seasonal day-work in agriculture and the construction industries, as has been the case for many Roma.

These differences naturally closely impact families' income-raising opportunities. The same two groups – Roma and Muslims – stand out but also differ from one another. Our survey data demonstrate that Roma barely have access to any type of work: against 71 percent for the entire sample, it is only 41 percent of the Roma families who could count on any regular monthly income from employment and 43 percent of their households remained utterly excluded from work and are totally dependent on family and welfare support. In the case of Muslim families, the picture was somewhat different: the proportion of families utterly excluded from gainful work was high (22 per cent) but their low level of embeddedness in the primary labour market was rather efficiently countervailed by intensive participation in less stable forms of work. Although the rates of stable employment remained below that of the majority in the case of all other minority groups as well, their disadvantages were substantially smaller than those of the Roma and Muslim families due to their more extensive participation in precarious work.

At large, ours were typical working-class communities where blue-collar jobs provided a living to most families. A distinctive feature of these communities was the relatively high ratio of small entrepreneurs among men, most typically among families from migrant backgrounds. As several of the studies based on the local EDUMIGROM surveys have pointed out, setting up a small business with little need for investment was a typical halfway point along the path to social inclusion; this was especially prevalent among certain migrant groups like Pakistanis, Chinese, Vietnamese, and those coming from other-than-native "white" backgrounds (Swann and Law 2010a, Felouzis et al. 2010, Thomsen et al. 2010, and Ohliger 2009). Based on the ample demand that an ethnic community provided, these small businesses helped to maintain the self-contained character of the community while generating a decent income for the family, who would otherwise be struggling on the official labour market. Small ethnic businesses were mainly absent among Roma though, with two exceptions: the small traditional communities of Vlah Gypsies in Hungary and Gábor Gypsies in Romania who were engaged in unreported trading.

Seemingly, neighbourhoods populated by ethnic minority people tended to be characterised by widespread poverty. Forty-seven per cent of "visible" minority adolescents in the survey sample live in dwellings that were well below the prevailing standards in the given society (overcrowded, sometimes lacked bathroom or toilet, unconnected to the communal sewage system, etc.). Several of the interviewed Roma youths lived in colony-type settlements, which were not only segregated and marginalised but represented inhuman living conditions: a lack of essential public utilities and as a consequence an increased risk of diseases and health problems. Migrants in Western Europe lived more typically in public housing

projects, considered to be the lowest-quality housing in the societies concerned, and still not meeting essential living standards. Interestingly, ethnic majority students of the studied communities lived among only slightly better conditions: 42 per cent of the young in this category lived in poor housing conditions (which is either crowded or lacks certain basic facilities). Sharper differences appeared in regard to the comfort that directly served children: while 85 per cent of students from a majority background lived in an apartment that had a separate room for children, the corresponding ratio was only 67 per cent in the case of "visible" minorities. Almost all children of majority background had their own desk at home, while only 84 per cent of those belonging to "visible" minorities had a separate place where she or he could prepare for school.

## Schools

Schools embedded in the above described communities seem to act in varying roles in the lives of ethnic minority students. In order to be able to situate individual schools and understand their functioning in a multiethnic community, let us first provide some comprehension of the systemic characteristics of educational differentiation and segregation in the researched countries – a factor that proved to be of great significance in terms of school experiences and educational opportunities of minority youth. Later in this section we will describe major strategies of urban schools participating in the research with respect to their ethnically and socially diverse studentship.

### Ways of institutional selection and ethno-social segregation

In all of the countries participating in the research, we found an extensive presence and a wide range of forms of ethno-social segregation in education. The causes and processes that lead to segregation differed significantly country by country. Broadly speaking, organisational differentiation in education can take place at three levels: on the system level, the school level (differentiation between schools and between classes within schools), and the class level (differentiation within the class or the study group). Let us provide an overview of the various mechanisms that lead to differentiated education of minority ethnic youth.

At the primary level of education an important characteristic of the school system in terms of selectivity is whether parents have the right to choose the school and whether schools have the possibility to select from applicants at the age of six or seven. This issue strongly relates to the existence and functioning of *school catchment areas*. The school district system can have a segregating effect, in the sense that pupils from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds enrol in distinctive schools

as a result of residential segregation. This is the case in France and Germany. School catchment areas may, however, work against ethno-social segregation if boundaries of schooling districts are defined by taking socio-ethnic composition and diversity into account. But we hardly found any instances of such policies. In seven of the researched countries – the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom – the free choice of school is a formal parental right. School districts exist in these countries also, meaning that any given school is obliged by law to give preference to pupils permanently residing within its particular school district, but it is up to the parents to decide into which school they enrol their children. A qualified case for the freedom of school choice is when not only parents are in the position to choose among schools outside the catchment area they reside, but the schools are also free to decide whom they accept among those applicants who come from outside the catchment area. Research evidence confirms that factors such as parents' educational level, social status, and knowledge of the majority language not only influence the tendency to use, but also the tendency to be informed of their formal right to choose among schools. As a result, free choice of school supports "*white flight*", a process in the course of which middle-class majority families take their children from schools where the proportion of ethnic minority children reaches a certain level. Evidence from a number of countries shows that, to a large extent, it is the same groups – ethnic majority middle-class families – that actively employ free school choice to leave local schools in socially disadvantaged and often immigrant-dense areas. There are, however, great differences in the levels of tolerance towards ethnic mixing among countries. A telling example is provided by the comparison of the consequences of merging two schools – one with dominantly white middle-class students and the other with a dominantly minority student composition – in one Czech and one Danish site. In the Czech example, the merger of the two schools resulted in the massive departure of 140 non-Roma students despite the fact that the merge was solely administrative, as students of the two pre-merger schools were kept separately in distinct classes situated in separate buildings. In the Danish case, the change of the proportion of minority students from 10 to 40 percent due to merging two schools made only an insignificant number of families to decide to leave the school.

At the secondary level students in most of the countries are already tracked into different school types based on their earlier performance and ambitions. Thus, as far as country-specific educational arrangements regarding system-level selectivity are concerned, a very useful and widely used indicator is the age of first tracking. The age at which children are streamed is a crucial characteristic of school systems not only in terms of opportunities for advancement, but also in terms of equity and performance. There are essential differences in this respect across the surveyed countries. In some countries tracking happens as early as the age of 10 or 11 (Germany), while in others (Nordic countries) children are kept together until the end of comprehensive compulsory education. Primary school systems of the post-socialist countries, which provide general public education for eight or nine years, seem to be universal at first glance. But when taking a closer look, one recognises that in many countries long-track (six- or

eight-year) grammar schools "cream out" the best students at the age of 10 and 12, most of who come from the upper strata of society. The rigidity of secondary school system is also an important factor concerning equal opportunities. In Germany, early selection, together with limited options for mobility between school types,<sup>9</sup> leads to highly unequal chances for working-class and minority students.

Institutional selection in some countries is practiced by means of directing children to *remedial schools* originally designed for educating mentally retarded children with special needs. In all of the new member states the ethnic composition in these schools is characterised by a robustly disproportionate presence of Roma children (ERRC 2004). The practice of stigmatising Roma children as mentally deprived and then directing them into special schools is extensive in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia (in the latter, 60 percent of Roma children study in such institutions according to a recent report of Amnesty International (2010). This practice of segregating Roma children in remedial or special schools also exists in Romania and Hungary but to a smaller, though still significant, extent. Besides the stigmatisation of Roma students, the great problem of such practices is that a transition from special schools to regular schools hardly ever occurs. This is all the more painful, since these schools implicitly serve as dead end to the educational careers of their students due to lower expectations and a reduced curriculum. Even if students graduate from such institutions, they have practically no chance for gaining any qualifications that would be valued by the labour market.

The *internal separation* of ethnic minority and low-status students is prevalent in those schools, which work – at first glance – as integrated institutions. Schools systems where students are kept together for a relatively long time (until 15–17 years of age) might be highly segregated and unequal due to complex and often implicit forms of internal differentiation and hierarchies that surface as in-school or even in-class differentiation. Evidently, socially advantaged parents are the best informed to understand the subtle mechanisms of internal selection and they are also the best prepared to navigate their children among the options. The French educational system as well as those in the post-socialist counties can be regarded as ones where internal differentiation serves ethno-social segregation within the schools. Forms of in-school selectivity include the early separation of children according to performance. Regular primary schools frequently apply internal streaming at the end of the lower stages (after grade four at age 10), grouping students based on their achievements, but often without providing additional services. Another salient example is the Slovak system that induces separation through its zero-class system, whereby children who did not achieve school-age maturity by the age of six for entering into regular compulsory education are enrolled in a so-called "zero" grade. These children come typically from families with multiple disadvantages (social, language, and cultural) and are often kept together in the same class during their later studies, which ensures the dramatic separation of disadvantaged, "problematic" students within the school. Internal streaming and separation according to the ethno-social backgrounds of the students are

9 Only three per cent of seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students swapped across school types, and the direction of such mobility was usually downward.

practiced in other Central European countries as well (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania). Most of the schools try to fight spontaneous processes of segregation ("white flight") by separating students into parallel classes and ensuring middle-class majority parents that their child will not share classes with low-status minority children. Depending on the proportion of ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged students, techniques range from selecting middle-class, well-performing students in classes offering specialisation in prestigious subjects to collecting socially deprived, mostly Roma children into one separate class.

## **Schools selected for fieldwork research**

### *School types and the varied forms of ethno-social selection*

Following from the research design that opted for focusing on a given age-group (14–17-year-old students) living in ethnically diverse environments, the selection of the sample for the empirical research resulted in a wide range of schools as to their types, their position in the local educational market, and their social and ethnic compositions.

Depending on the fundamental conception underlying the construction of the school system – whether to keep students together under the umbrella of a comprehensive school during compulsory education or to employ tracking at an earlier age – students in the age-group focused on by the research were attending various school types in the nine participating countries. They attended primary schools, comprehensive schools (integrating elementary lower and upper secondary stages), or secondary schools, depending on characteristics of the national school systems. In the Central European countries, students aged 14–15 most typically attend the last grade of primary school (eighth or ninth grades). These schools may, however, greatly differ in terms of services, specialisations available for students, and their quality. The largest section of the sample included regular primary schools, but in certain countries (i.e., Czech Republic) special schools educating – at least in principle – mentally deprived children had to be included due to the fact that there were very few Roma students in the final grades of regular primary schools in the selected urban areas. It followed partly from conceptual considerations on providing a valid picture about the educational status of Roma adolescents, and partly from a need to construct a large enough ethnic minority sample, that a relatively large number of such schools had to be incorporated.

In countries where comprehensive school systems function, students aged 14–16 are in the upper grades on the junior level. This was the case in the Danish and Swedish samples and in a few schools in the investigated communities in Germany (*Gesamtschule*) and the United Kingdom. Both in Denmark and Sweden traditional public schools implemented both elementary and secondary school grades in one non-streamed institution. In Germany, as a response to critics of early tracking and its negative effect on equity and the quality of education (OECD 2005), the launch of comprehensive schools uniting primary and secondary school grades in one unit was a relatively new institutional innovation. The



same age-group attended (upper) secondary level schools in France and most typically also in the United Kingdom and Germany. With a few exceptions, country samples in these countries were drawn from vocational schools as ethnic minority children were concentrated in this school type. In France, vocational schools offered a wide range of specialisations, durations (two-, three-, and four-year programmes) and graduation outcomes within the same institution, though there were mechanisms of rigid internal differentiation putting a powerful limitation to the possibility of changing the track and specialisation that one has entered. In Germany, secondary schools have no or very little professional diversity internally: a child is enrolled either into a school representing the academic track (*Gymnasium*) or the vocational track (*Hauptschule*), and the chances to alter once the initial decision was made at the age of 10 or 11 are very limited.

Looking at the ethnic composition of the entire survey sample, where 28 per cent of respondents came from families with a "visible" minority background and over half of them belonged to the ethnic majorities, one could suppose a multicultural mix in schools. But the reality was just the opposite: one-third of children from "visible" minority backgrounds in the total sample attended schools where the proportion of ethnic minority students was dominating or exclusive, while most of ethnic majority students studied in schools where there were hardly any minority students. The intense process of separation followed partly from spontaneous developments (for example, when schools simply reproduce residential segregation), but purposeful developments add to the overwhelming presence of ethnic segregation as well. Among these, most importantly, processes of "white flight" have to be mentioned with their implications on the ethnic profiling of schools.

Schools in the "old" member states fell under a different judgment in this respect: most were secondary schools into which children have been already selected based on their aspirations and earlier performance. Thus, a significant part of the samples of the Western countries were schools where ethnic minority students formed a dominant majority (32 per cent in postcolonial countries and 46 per cent in countries characterised by economic migration), but ethnically mixed schools had an even larger share in the subsample. Most of these were vocational schools which were situated on the lowest end of the local educational hierarchy (France and Germany), while some showed a very different case for ethnic segregation: these were community schools of certain ethnic or religious groups where members of the concerned community enrolled their children. Their decision was driven by the conviction that these schools, even if ethnically segregated, provided the best possible environment for their children's education (i.e., Muslim schools in Denmark, a Turkish school in Germany).

As to the socio-economic composition of the studied schools, we found a high degree of intersectionality between the ethnic and social aspects. One-third of responding students attended a school where the proportion of socially disadvantaged students was over 50 percent, but there was a significant difference in this respect according to ethnicity of the respondent: 22 per cent of majority students and 55 per cent of "visible" minority students attended a school where the share of socially

disadvantaged students was determining. Intersectionality of the social and ethnic composition of the school may be attributed to various factors. Firstly, schools get this high degree of intersectionality as a given. According to our data, 45 per cent of the students in the sample attended schools in their catchment area, but this proportion was somewhat lower among ethnic majority students and significantly higher among students from lower status families. Since ethnic minorities are often concentrated in poor ethnic enclaves, the local schools can hardly do anything but take the concentrated disadvantages as a given. This phenomenon was especially significant in the Central European countries. The provision of parental rights to freely choose schools resulted in unequal access to good-quality school for pupils from low-income families, who, apparently lacking financial resources needed for daily commuting became bounded to the school in their catchment area in contrast to middle-class majority parents who had opportunities to opt out for schools further away. Thus the landscape of the schools showed a deep division in terms of their socio-economic and ethnic compositions. As a rule, minority students from poor socio-economic backgrounds were concentrated in schools far apart in quality from other schools, where children of middle-class families dominate.

#### *Schools' approaches to ethno-social diversity*

Irrespective of the type of the school or its actual social or ethnic composition, educational institutions and their staff may treat an ethnically diverse student population in very different ways, which in turn seems to significantly affect students' attitudes towards school and their educational careers in general. The EDUMIGROM community study classified schools into three major clusters based on their approach towards diversity: *diversity-conscious* schools, *diversity-blind* schools and schools which *deliberately separate* minority ethnic students from their majority peers. The question is whether it is the ethnic and social composition per se that leads to lower quality schooling, or is it the response by the school and its staff towards diversity that makes a difference between schools' – and students' – performance and quality of education. In our comparative study we argued that the two aspects together define much of the outcome with respect to educational quality and chances for continuing education beyond compulsory education (Szalai 2010).

The most devastating outcomes in terms of educational career are created by schools that deliberately *select* ethnic minority students into *separate institutions* (Basic Practical Schools in the Czech Republic or segregated "Roma schools") as a result of categorising them as mentally handicapped or having insufficient abilities to keep up with the regular curriculum. These schools not only segregate but stigmatise their students and by providing restricted curriculum and lowered expectations become dead ends to their educational careers. Even though socially marginalised, undereducated Roma parents might be in favour of choosing these schools for their children, recognising that they are more comfortable, less demanding, and most importantly, their children are not faced with everyday experiences of discrimination and racial hatred. Still many of these schools clearly serve as hospice institutions of schooling.

A softer, still damaging version of ethnic segregation is when schools separate ethnic minority and majority children into parallel classes. Some implications of *in-school segregation* were also revealed by the field-research. Several of the classroom observations made in schools applying internal streaming proved that teachers act very differently in parallel classes: they are energetic, focused when teaching in the prestigious class and are frequently out of control and uninspired in the "minority" class. Although internal separation might have prevented schools from becoming ill-famed "Roma schools", their ethnic minority students suffer disproportionately: the comparative analysis of our survey data (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010) and the respective Community Study Reports of Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary have demonstrated that internal separation deprives students not only from quality education and meaningful interethnic personal relations, but also from their dignity and self-esteem; furthermore, such devastating processes give rise to self-exclusionary trends among minority students by them becoming enclosed in an ethnicised "island culture" (Szalai 2010).

**Educational segregation often concludes in a gradual downgrading of the quality and the content of teaching. This results in lowered performance and the accumulation of disadvantages in the advancement of ethnic minority youth whose rates of attendance at the secondary and higher levels remain significantly below their majority peers from similar socio-economic and residential backgrounds.**

**Internal separation in the schools induces differential standards of instruction and teachers' investments, deprives students from their dignity and self-esteem, and gives rise to self-exclusionary trends among the devalued minority students.**

A more characteristic school policy towards *diversity* is *blindness*: this is the dominating principle among ethnically mixed primary schools in Central Europe and France. The main drive beyond this policy is the principle of non-differentiation of citizens on the basis of ethnic origin. This is the idea in the heart of the French Republican model of integration, but also in the heart of the post-socialist idea of equality, presuming that the recognition of ethnic differences would lead to inescapable harm thereof. Ethnically mixed classes are the norm in such schools, where all students are expected to adapt to the same values: no ethnic group is discriminated against, either in positive or negative way. Although students accept such an approach easily, still in a society, where social exclusion intersects with racial stigmatisation – as is the case for Roma in Central Europe – colour-blind policy ultimately leads to lower educational opportunities for socially disadvantaged ethnic minority students.

In contrast, the majority of researched schools in the United Kingdom and Denmark, but also several schools in Germany and one school in Hungary, employed a *diversity-conscious* policy irrespective of the actual composition of its student body. Such schools try to enhance both equal opportunities and peaceful relations among students by developing and designing a multicultural curriculum and boosting positive self-identification of groups that are usually underprivileged in the wider society. Such schools, if they have an ethnically mixed student body, make sure that students are genuinely mixed in all spheres of schooling while showing a strong commitment towards multiculturalism and consciously pointing

to values of diversity, not only in terms of curriculum but also their employment practices. Teachers of minority ethnic background seem to have a positive impact on the attitudes of students and the general atmosphere in the class. This is even more prevalent if ethnic minority teachers teach subjects that do not relate to their ethnic background (i.e., they teach subjects other than minority culture or language, or do not act as ethnically designated Roma teacher assistants). Another subcategory of colour-conscious schools is represented by institutions that create *voluntary separation*. These schools have an exclusively ethnic minority student population and are established or maintained by the ethnic minority community. Important examples for this category are two researched Muslim schools in Denmark or the Gandhi secondary school for Roma in Hungary. Unfortunately, due to the small number of students in our survey sample studying in this school category and the lack of them among the interviewees in the qualitative phase of the research, we have insufficient knowledge about the functioning of these schools.

## CHAPTER III

### SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND IDEAS ON ADVANCEMENT

*Júlia Szalai*

Since the publication of the first collection of the OECD's authoritative data on the disadvantages that students from "immigrant backgrounds" suffer in comparison to their majority peers in performance and advancement in Europe's highly varied school systems (2006), the study of associations between migration and educational achievements has come to the forefront of research and policymaking in the domestic contexts and also on the European level. Concurrently, mounting evidence about the caste-like differences between the accomplishments and educational opportunities of Roma and majority students in the school systems of Central and Eastern Europe has called academic and political attention to the role that ethnic/racial distinctions play in driving education towards deepening and reproducing social divides and exclusion (OSI EUMAP 2007, Kertesi and Kézdi 2010). Though named in different ways, these two sets of findings and the literature informed by them speak about issues that have a lot in common at their roots: when it comes to evaluating their attainments, those who are not considered to be parts of the domestic majorities – the "ethnic others" – are unfavourably distinguished and degraded in and by the schools, and such degrading processes have long-term implications for their careers and later positions in society. The recently published findings of the 2009 PISA survey add to this picture: while the differences between students from "immigrant backgrounds" and their majority peers have not decreased since 2003 (actually, they have even slightly increased in most of the OECD countries), the phenomenon cannot be explained solely by students' social backgrounds. If same-sex peers from identical socio-economic categories are compared, children from "immigrant backgrounds" still demonstrate significantly poorer results in reading and comprehension than those from the majority (OECD 2010). In other words, parents' education, their position on the labour market, and the poor to satisfactory level of living and residential conditions do not explain the differences in full: if all these aspects are duly weighed, there still remains a good deal of departures in achievement that is unaccounted for and that, upon closer scrutiny, proves to be owed to "ethnic otherness".

While the facts of ethnic differentiation in assessing students' performance and in guiding them toward departing pathways of advancement are widely acknowledged, their explanations show significant variations. Many would argue that there is little new about the registered divergences: figures that we read and interpret as manifestations of departures due to "ethnicity" are in fact a new

materialisation of age-old divides by social class. Since people from ethnic minority backgrounds tend to occupy positions toward the lower end of the social hierarchy, it is the old inequalities of class appearing in a new garment: differential performance by "ethnicity" is nothing but a new name for the persistently reproduced educational disadvantages of the contemporary working class and the lower strata of the (new) middle class sharing the fate of low rates of upward social mobility and high risks of impoverishment (Steinberg 2001, Kroneberg 2008, and for a detailed account, see: Modood 2010). Others see "ethnicity" as an independent factor working in its own right and point out that Europe's school systems and its individual schools have not adjusted themselves to the rapid inflow of millions of people from other than "white European" backgrounds, and thereby the systems blindly reproduce old cultural supremacies both in the ways of instruction and the unreflective "Eurocentric" content of teaching. This inflexibility logically concludes in the disadvantages of those groups that hardly find comfort and support under the unchanged – for them: alien – conditions (Heckmann et al. 2008). Yet another group of researchers and policymakers would take a human rights position by arguing that disadvantages of minority ethnic students in schools mainly follow from the visible and invisible procedures of discrimination that conclude in ethnic separation, devaluation, and stigmatisation – all having their part in forging disinterest, low motivations in performance, and the widespread lack of forward-looking aspirations among youths from ethnic minority origins (Luciak 2004).

By looking at schools in their threefold capacity as acting as agents of knowledge transmission, socialisation, and preparatory "filters" for later occupational and social positions, the EDUMIGROM research provides a unique ground to have a closer look at the "making" of ethnic differences in education. As we will show through the discussion of performance and advancement, it is a blend of all three roles that informs the differential ways how students from varied backgrounds are seen and "labelled" by the stamp of grading at school that society accepts as the sole sanctioned and legitimate form of assessing achievement and then assigning differential paths and positions to the attained grades as the objectified measures of accomplishment. Being aware of the multiple functions and, simultaneously, the high stakes of grading in schools, the involved actors in the process – students, teachers, leaders of educational institutions, parents, and sometimes even future employers – invest into the attainable objectified measure of *personal quality* according to their varied interests. Hence, grading becomes a "playground" where – as will be seen – ethnic, social, cultural, and sometimes political capacities are at play, and where the outcomes (individual grades or average grades as indicators of the "value" of educational institutions) are shaped by partly visible, partly invisible bargains, negotiations, and compromises.

However, it is not only one's grades that matter: the actors see school achievements in broader terms. In addition to acquiring knowledge, parents want their children to find comfort and safety at school; in addition to measuring up to adult expectations, students seek companions and establish lasting friendships; in addition to providing professional instruction, teachers have aspirations to educate their pupils and to implant values that they consider fundamental; in addition to formally satisfying

their legally binding duties, municipalities want to make the schools under their management ever more successful but also more inclusive – and all these varied attempts, drives, and desires translate in the actors' vocabularies as "achievement". In this broader context, tests, exams, and grades carry different messages that are considered with differing importance. Notwithstanding, the departures often give rise to heated conflicts: parents and students see unfavourable marking as the embodiment of injustices and discrimination, while teachers interpret the same results as manifestations of disinterest and lacking ambitions; school administrators look at the grades of the student-body as an objectified ground for internal streaming, while the local public reads the same average scores as indicators of the overall quality of the institutions and ranks them according to "desirability", etc. These differing and conflicting readings then make grades to function as traffic lights on the road toward adult roles by "justly" orienting young people for diverging future positions that imply highly unequal reputations and rewards. As we will see below, it is these measured indicators of achievement that powerfully overwrite the diverse aspirations and ideas of parents and children about advancement and that put substantial power into the hands of schools and teachers to have a strong say in shaping adolescents' opportunities and careers.

With these considerations in mind, the discussions that follow aim to enquire in a multifaceted way into how school achievement and advancement are shaped. First, we take an institutional lens and look at students' performance as appraised by their teachers in the form of authorised grades in their certificates. We attempt to uncover the factors and processes that guide schools and teachers in issuing their formal assessments and reveal how ethnicity comes into play in forming their decisions. Then we turn to the views of those whom schools intend to inform, orient, and qualify by grading: by looking at how ethnic minority students and parents "read" the schools' assessments and how they design strategies for advancement by accepting or opposing them, we will show how expectations on educational advancement, images of future occupations, and complex strategies for upward intergenerational mobility often become thwarted at an early age by acknowledging their defencelessness vis-à-vis the powerful forces and institutions that set a limited frame for individual actions by pushing the red button that declines the desired path of advancement. Teachers' voices also will be heard: we will introduce how they interpret the sources of success and failure at school and how they see the causes of "ethnic differences" in this regard, and furthermore, how they perceive their own role in overcoming the experienced departures.

Before entering the discussion, a few methodological remarks are needed. First, our approach to measuring performance has to be addressed. As it followed from the nature of our survey that was based on questionnaires filled out by the students themselves but had very limited access to other sources of information at the schools, we decided to depart from both of the customary ways of performance assessment: we neither turned to students' certificates or the class registers that take note of their test results and exams, nor did we use PISA-like methods of measuring competences in certain school subjects by internationally comparable tests. Instead, we asked our respondents to recall their grades in

a set of core subjects at the end of the preceding semester.<sup>10</sup> Although it is obvious that remembrance can somehow alter the written results, the conditions of the research helped us to get grades more or less corresponding to reality: since the questionnaires were completed in the schools (classes), it can be assumed that peers and friends helped each other out in cases of uncertain recollection or hesitance. In fact, the dispersion of the results seems to confirm such an expectation: the self-reported grade scores of students as analysed across the influential factors of social background, gender, locality, school type, etc., were in accordance with the findings and trends that one learns from other national and international studies. At the same time, a clear advantage of our method might be added here: our "soft" way of asking about performance gave us a chance to contextualise what achievements actually meant for students by interviewing them about their experiences with schooling, the motives they consider when choosing schools for continuation, and their longer-term aspirations in education and beyond. This picture became nuanced – sometimes underscored, sometimes contrasted – by the views that parents expressed about the same set of issues and, furthermore, by the opinions of teachers about the causes of hindrance and the sources of successful promotion among their minority pupils. By taking into account such a broader embedding of performance, we hope to show how personal achievements are informed by what one can call "the way of life" at school, and the better or less satisfactory adjustment of the prevailing conditions of schooling to the broadly perceived needs of the involved students and their families.

The second remark relates to educational advancement. Although in most of the countries the research took place – as noted earlier – in the final year of primary education, there were notable exceptions from this rule. The first one was France where, upon completing the universal phase (*collège*) at the age of 15, adolescents continue in different types of schools – and within them: in different streams with remarkably different future opportunities – and these departures made it a meaningful choice to focus on the still compulsory first years of secondary schooling. The second case was Germany where, as we have seen, tracking as early as the ages of 10 or 11 orients students toward significantly departing strands with very limited opportunities for later change among them. A third, partial exception was Denmark where students are free to make a choice whether to remain for one or two more years in the comprehensive system of primary education or go on into the tracked system of secondary schooling. Given all these variations, our data on where and how students intend to continue their studies upon concluding the primary stage have to be handled with great caution. Nevertheless, the departures between schools that leave open the gates toward higher education and those that lead one directly to the labour market proved to be meaningful – and we will duly discuss them. Additionally, information about the failures in continuation (either repetitions or reported constraints to suspend

10 While grading is applied in all the investigated countries, the actual scales and indicators show great variation. In order to assure comparability, in the course of analysing the survey data, the domestic grades were translated into the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) that serves as the "Esperanto" of the diverse systems of evaluation. (As expressed in ECTS-scores, outstanding performance values "1", while failing is marked with "5".) This comparable scoring allowed for comparing students and schools with each other, furthermore, it facilitated the construction of a series of aggregate indicators.



studies because of pressing needs in daily life) are telling indicators of disadvantages, as are responses about future plans for a degree in higher education good indicators not only of aspirations, but also of feelings of security and embeddedness. With this additional information, we hope to be able to draw a rather refined picture about the paths that ethnic minority students and their majority peers intend to follow in education and beyond.

What does grading assess?

The employed approach of inquiring about the grade scores that students received in the preceding semester<sup>11</sup> gave us a chance to develop a set of indicators for comparing how assessments of performance are made by schools across the countries and whether the applied techniques and procedures produce similar degrees of social and ethnic departures. In this latter regard, it is of key importance to reveal how far does grading address strictly the attained level of knowledge and skills in a given area or how far does it evaluate the person instead? In simple terms, are schools measuring bits and pieces of knowledge in a "technocratic" way that focuses exclusively on the subjects that are taught or are they actually making "good" and "bad" students by a "holistic" mode of assessing cultural and behavioural aptitude through using a language – that of marking – that hides these ad-hominem evaluations behind the curtain of objectified and duly fragmented tests in independent disciplinary areas? It is needless to argue at length that responding to these questions might lead us closer to the understanding of the great secret of schools: the transformation of knowledge into departing pathways in the educational systems that is mediated by the authorised ways of assessment but that actually concludes in the production and reproduction of highly unequal social and ethnic opportunities and positions.

Let us first take a look at how students' socio-economic backgrounds affect the overall indices of performance. As the processing of the self-reported grades has revealed, our data confirm the associations that have been brought up by a great number of investigations and that also have been repeatedly demonstrated by the subsequent PISA surveys (OECD 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010): out of the multifactorial impact of the parental home, it is especially the cultural capital of the students' families (measured by the level of schooling of the parents) that matters. Despite huge differences in the systems of schooling and variations in the ways of instruction, institutionalised education everywhere proves

11 In order to gain an insight into the "making" of the overall assessment of students, our questionnaire asked about five larger areas of instruction, each incorporating several related but distinct subjects: maths (often including computer science and/or geometry as a distinct discipline), literature (together with grammar, writing, etc.), history (incorporating civic education), science (embracing biology, physics, chemistry, geography, nature, etc.), and foreign languages. An aggregate indicator was computed on the ground of average grades in these areas. The calculated value was then converted into the widely applied international grading scale (ECTS) that has been used in recent years as a base for cross-country comparative analyses of the highly varied national traditions of performance assessment (European Commission 1998).

rather inefficient in countervailing the inequalities in knowledge brought from home that is considered, in turn, the most important constituent of acknowledged performance. As our findings show, students from highly educated families have close to a five-times greater chance to attain an "excellent" qualification than fellow students from a very poorly educated parental background and the ratio is roughly the same, though in the opposite direction, at the other end of the scale where "marginal performance" (sufficiency or failing) is measured. As an outcome, those from highly educated backgrounds enjoy an average score no less than one-third higher than their peers from the lowest educated segments of society.

While families' cultural capital directly translates into the stock of knowledge that is assessed by the school, it is their material circumstances that mould children's home conditions to devote themselves to studying and to keep pace with the requirements that are routinely rewarded by better or worse grading. These known associations were approached in our survey from two perspectives: the level of well-being, on the one hand, and the family's socio-economic embeddedness as a measure of status and the regularity of living, on the other. These two factors proved to induce similar differences to those of cultural-educational background – though their impact turned out to be milder than in the case of the latter. Students from relatively well-off families enjoy the facilities of well-equipped homes, opportunities for quiet studying, and being saved from taking part in income-raising duties. These good conditions are honoured by enjoying the qualification of being "excellent" by one-third of them, and the very rare occurrence of poor marking, while those living under destitute conditions have less than half the chance of concluding their studies with outstanding results, and being assessed as marginally acceptable is the fate for more than 17 per cent of them.

Yet again, the differences are similar, if the families' economic embeddedness and the related regularity of income are taken into consideration. It is perhaps the complex impact of financial hardships, an unsafe feeling due to exclusion from access to work, and the consequent low motivations for respecting schooling as a "worthwhile investment" that are reflected in the very low (14 per cent) rate of "excellent" and the significantly high (13 per cent) proportion of "marginally performing" students among the children of families where neither of the parents have access even to partial and/or irregular work. Since regularity of work is the strongest safeguard against impoverishment, while loss of contact with the world of labour sooner or later concludes in deep poverty, it is no surprise that departures in their living conditions conclude in a rather substantial 22 per cent difference in the average performance scores between students from well-embedded families and those coming from severe poverty.

While the conditions of the parental home are decisive for boys and girls alike, it is an age-old wisdom of education that, when it comes to attained performance, girls from all social classes and from all backgrounds outstrip their male peers. In this regard, our data repeatedly confirm what is known about the gendered differences in achievements, though they suggest milder associations than those of one's socio-economic background. Schools seemingly better "fit" girls than boys, or to put it differently, girls apparently better adjust to the official requirements of schooling than boys do: though

the probabilities of being marginalised by grading are nearly equal among the two sexes, girls have some eight per cent higher chance to finish up with a grading of "excellence" than boys, and their more favourable position is also manifested in a six per cent advantage ahead of boys in average scores. These mild differences might have two, opposite readings. On the one hand, they suggest a certain convergence in interests, performance, and expectations toward the future – and as we will see in later parts of this study, this is a new and welcome reality of compulsory schooling all across our countries. On the other hand, the relatively equalised performance of boys and girls might be an artefact of our survey: given that the EDUMIGROM research investigated modest working-class communities for the most part, such an "evenness" might be the indication of the restricted perspectives for breaking through and aspiring for status and position where wholesale studies indicate a persistence of deep-rooted gender inequalities in access.

Finally, let us consider how ethnic background makes a difference in assessed performance. The most important message of the findings is the outstanding strength of the divisions that "ethnicity" implies: as our data indicate, the impact of ethnic affiliation is close to that of the family's cultural capital, and in its intensity it certainly surpasses the influence of differential living conditions and gender. While close to one-third of students from ethnic majority backgrounds attain an "excellent" qualification, only every tenth of their peers from "visibly" differing groups enjoy a similar chance. It is worth noting that being from an immigrant background does not have the same effect in the case of "other" (dominantly "white immigrant") minorities: 17 per cent of students from such backgrounds end up among the best performing groups. At the same time, the differences are smaller among those who are assessed as "marginally performing": though "visible" minorities take the lead here with 12 per cent, the 10 per cent ratio among children from the majority (with the recurrent in-between position of "other" minorities with their 11 per cent proportion) signals that upward ethnic differentiation is more pronounced as a filter of future educational careers than incentives for "devaluation". The overall averages reinforce the statement about the potency of ethnicity in shaping schools' assessment practices: students from the majority enjoy a position one-fifth higher on this refined ladder of scoring than those coming from "visible" minority backgrounds and "other" minorities occupy their in-between position by heading their "visible" peers by 14 per cent.

We will return to a more detailed discussion of how such a powerful influence as ethnicity comes about when teachers translate their students' accomplishments into measured indicators. Moreover, the issue deserves particular attention because the strength of distinctions along ethno-cultural traits is demonstrated in a relatively homogenised environment. In this context, it is worth recalling that the "majorities" presented in this study are socially selected majorities. They are groups living in the proximity of ethnic minority communities, and – as shown in Chapter II – their socio-economic conditions, family formations, and characteristics of daily living largely resemble those of the ethnic "others" in the neighbourhood. In the present context it means that ethnicity serves some imperceptible social

purposes that help to express differences in status and perspectives among those who look largely "alike" from an all-societal perspective. Below we will attempt to demonstrate how differentiation in assessing performance actually serves such hidden but very powerful claims and how schools respond to these claims by turning performance into the legitimised basis of selection.

The strong associations of students' performance with the educational level of their parents and with ethnicity call forth an important question about some potential causality in the background. Are we facing here the influence of two important, but independently working factors of social stratification? Or is it the relative social disadvantages of people from ethnic minority backgrounds that manifest themselves in the garment of "cultural otherness" that the environment – schools included – relates to group-specific traits? To put it differently, does the role of ethnicity come in addition to the influences that students' home conditions play in shaping achievements by underlining the implied cultural diversities – and thereby forming a message about the departing social acceptance of status that looks alike in the crude terms of positions in the social hierarchy? Or do we simply see two sides of the same types of inequalities of positions and conditions where "ethnic belonging" offers a bio-cultural expression to justify the inevitable hierarchies that arise in the form of assessment but that then provide the grounds for subsequent selective social reproduction? As pointed out above, the involved dilemma is one of the most debated issues of contemporary educational sociology that certainly has far-reaching implications for policymaking and attempts at adjusting Europe's school systems to the increasingly diverse ethnic landscape of recent decades. The restricted size of the EDUMIGROM survey does not provide a safe enough base to give a definite answer on clear statistical grounds, and we certainly do not aspire here at settling the debate about causality. Nevertheless, we hope to make some important contributions by sorting out how schools – and teachers – translate the experiences about the great diversity of knowledge and skills among their students into objectified measures of assessment and how they capitalise on their perceptions of social and ethnic differences in this process.

As the decomposition of the data by social and ethnic backgrounds clearly shows, ethnicity plays a distinct role in students' evaluation: the clearer the signs of "otherness", the gloomier the perspectives of students to catch up in assessed performance to their majority peers coming from similar socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, the better the indicators of the cultural capital that are brought from home, the greater are the differences to the detriment of ethnic minority students: while the deviation between the proportions of "excellently" qualified students of majority and "visible" minority backgrounds is six per cent in the case of those coming from poorly educated families, it jumps to 26 per cent among the children of highly-qualified parents. The same trend is indicated by departures in the average scores, where the data signal only a modest advantage of six per cent for students from the majority, ahead of their minority peers among those from the least qualified homes; however, the difference rises to a remarkable 25 per cent when the corresponding groups of students from the highest educated families are compared. The opening of the ethnic "scissor" clearly indicates: ethnic distinctions

in evaluations become ever more intensified by moving upward in the social hierarchy. These surprising trends suggest as if the entrance of "visibly" different young people from well-educated backgrounds into the competition for the truly good positions in society would entail an "unwanted" risk for the majority – and their relative devaluation actually serves to keep them away from making even an attempt at crossing the invisible ethnic boundaries. Certainly, although such processes of differentiation and relative devaluation rarely arise from the deliberate actions of face-to-face discrimination (below we will return to the issue of how they are still put forward), such an interpretation seems to be confirmed by the data on the departing educational careers of the two groups of youth from highly educated "majority" and "minority" backgrounds that will be discussed later in this chapter. In the case of students arriving from relatively poorly educated families, it is sufficient to rely on social distinctions: poor performance associated with poor cultural capital from home seems to be "enough" to be lowly valued – and ethnicity does not add to this. However, in the higher echelons the expected order is reconstructed in the context of poor grades, too: students from better educated families are three to eight times more likely to prove to be "marginally performing" if they come from "visibly" different ethnic backgrounds than their majority peers, and while "white" minorities also suffer some disadvantages, their chances for becoming devalued remain in the proximity of their fellows from the dominant group. By looking at the trends among boys and girls apart, it is worth adding yet another implication: ethnicity apparently proves such a powerful ground for distinctions that it washes away the customary gender differences in measured performance and forges an even devaluation of boys and girls from minority backgrounds.

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**Native speakers have nearly twice the chance of students with different mother tongues to receive "excellent" results and have just one-sixth of the probability to become assessed as "marginally performing".**

In sum, we can establish that ethnicity is a strong factor that is played out in its own right in informing performance, or to put it more accurately: in informing how performance is assessed and acknowledged by the schools. Furthermore, the importance that the suggested cultural evaluation of "ethnic otherness" implies then sharply increases further up on the social ladder: the more one expects it to be counterbalanced by other components of cultural capital, the more it seems to be in vain to make efforts for letting it be forgotten by the larger social milieu. These associations raise a new set of disturbing questions. On closer scrutiny, can one identify events and conditions in the life-histories and upbringing of ethnic minority youth that make them more vulnerable to perform well at schools than their majority peers? Or is it instead the still widely prevailing prejudices and discriminatory inclinations of the "host" societies that forcefully downgrade the ethnic "others", even if the latter were born to the same conditions and also share the dominant language of the country? Or is it a third set of factors that

institutionalise ethnic differences by translating them to varied forms of organised separation within and among schools and then devalue those units where students from minority backgrounds are concentrated?

Let us first consider the issue of familial conditions. At a closer look, it becomes clear that one induces some undue simplifications by using the level of parental educational attainment as the sole indicator of a family's cultural capital. Although it is true that highly educated parental homes usually bring about rich cognitive and linguistic skills at an early age, and moreover, experiences gained by moving between countries and cultures might even powerfully deepen children's general knowledge about the world, the new conditions only partially allow families to capitalise on these assets. First, in reflection of the new rigorous trends in immigration policies, the higher the level of education, the greater is the proportion of those who arrived relatively late in their new home country (no less than 41 per cent of the highly educated mothers immigrated in adulthood). This involves a great deal of uncertainty in matters of daily life: they can hardly help their children with popular books from mainstream culture taken in a routine manner from most middle-class families' bookshelves, or with detailed information on the history, literature, civic life, politics, and institutional arrangements of the new country. Furthermore, organising daily life takes an intense amount of energy: even the best-qualified parents have to take jobs well below their capabilities in the required skills and knowledge, and much of their time is occupied by mere adjustments. If one draws a balance sheet, all these imply certain "holes" in the parental cultural capital, a great part of which is forcefully set aside under the pressures of the new conditions and challenges of accommodation.

A further important component of the difficulties and disadvantages that appear in the form of ethnic "otherness" relates to the uses of language. Although some 90 per cent of our interviewees from immigrant ethnic minority backgrounds belong to the category of "second generation", the change of language apparently slowly accompany their accommodation to their new environment. Given that the overwhelming majority (some 70 to 95 per cent) of recently arrived parents of children belonging to various "visible" minorities, at best, poorly speak the dominant language of their now home country, it follows as a natural outcome that the language spoken at home remains that of the country of origin for another generation: it will perhaps be the third generation that will find it more comfortable and appropriate to "unite" the languages of their public and private domains. However, our ethnic minority respondents clearly represent a typical in-between situation on this long road toward full accommodation. The proportion of students whose first language is other than the dominant one in the country of study<sup>12</sup> varies according to the departing histories of migration and majority/minority cohabitation: it is no less

12 The registration of this difference does not imply that adolescents born into a family that occasionally or regularly turns to the original language of the ethnic group do not speak the dominant language of their now home country. To the contrary: as experience shows, by the time of entering school, and even more so when finishing, these children usually have a good command of the latter language. At the same time, the situational switching from the "first" to the "dominant" language and back may result in certain holes in their vocabulary, a relative poverty of skills of expression, and even the improper use of grammatical rules. Most probably, it is such "holes" and disparities that manifest themselves in the disadvantages that ethnic minority students demonstrate in reading and storytelling (OECD 2006, Christensen and Stanat 2007).

than 94 per cent among the children of "visible" minority groups in countries where mostly economic migrants make up the group; the ratio drops by some 20 per cent (to 74 per cent) for the corresponding groups in the countries of post-colonial migration, and falls to 39 per cent among Roma in post-socialist Central Europe. All these figures imply that students from ethnic minority backgrounds may suffer certain difficulties and disadvantages due to the mere fact of underdeveloped language skills. And the data seem to confirm such a hypothesis. Taking only the "visible" groups with the best cultural capital, native-speaking minorities enjoy a clear advantage in comparison to their peers whose first language still used at home differs from that of the language of instruction at school: native speakers have nearly twice the chance of students with different mother tongues to receive "excellent" results and have just one-sixth of the probability to become assessed as "marginally performing". Of course, linguistic disadvantages due to a fragmentary use of the dominant official language offer but just a partial explanation for becoming devalued. First, the sharp disadvantages of Roma in Central Europe can only very vaguely be explained by the use of language: in Hungary, where ethnic discrepancies are the strongest in overall grading, 73 per cent of the Roma students speak Hungarian as their mother tongue, and the remaining 27 per cent also state proficiency in the country's dominant language. Secondly, knowledge of a language is hardly a "given": as some school experiments show (especially in the Nordic countries), great advancement can be made by carefully designed developmental programmes and/or by teaching certain subjects in the original languages of the minorities if they claim such services; furthermore, if not suppressed and stigmatised, language skills certainly develop in the course of schooling; hence, the aforementioned differences most probably speak about some indirect consequences of early linguistic disadvantages than about minority adolescents' actual command over the language of instruction.

While the above address certain differences in the content, composition, and straightforward suitability of cultural capital at the possession of various ethnic groups, there is a further set of differences in their practical conditions that requires attention in regards to the implications on performance. The rapidly growing literature on the daily life of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in Europe has introduced a set of difficulties that native people know to a much smaller extent than those who have arrived, at best, just a few decades ago: the hardships of conflicting customs, dress codes, beliefs, and the uncertainties that accompany them; the lack of knowledge, information, and – especially – networks to gain access to proper jobs and to claim support for living up to one's citizens' rights; the oscillation in material conditions and income; the exposure to mental and bodily stresses and injuries due to improper working and living conditions, etc. (Loury, Moodod, and Teles 2005). As our data indicate, despite the shared constraints of unemployment, poverty, frequent family break-ups, poor health conditions, and endured uncertainties in the investigated communities, early experiences of depressing events with lasting consequences is higher to a meaningful degree among teenagers from ethnic minority backgrounds than among their majority peers: the mentioning of such events was 61 per cent in the former, while it was 51 per cent in the latter group (and in this regard, the exposure of

"white immigrant" minorities is more or less equal to the "visibly" differing groups). As it seems, negative events and the uncomfortable feelings that accompany such experiences have a bearing on students' educational careers. Their lasting imprint often becomes the cause for suspending school attendance for a while, which then concludes, in turn, in referral to class repetition: no less than 23 per cent of the group of students from "visible" backgrounds had to face such decisions (the corresponding ratio was only 10 per cent among those from the majority, indicating that perhaps the schools are more ready to cope with the temporary difficulties in the latter case and somehow find solutions to keep the student within the class community, while "problem children" of the minorities are more easily left behind). However, if one is held back a year, the stigma hardly withers away: such an event in one's school career concludes in a 25 per cent loss in average grade scores in comparison to the fortunate majority.

As the above findings suggest, coming from an ethnic minority background implies a good deal of vulnerability – even if paired with relatively favourable socio-economic conditions. Our data indicate that schools show little sensitivity toward the insecurities and difficulties implied in the conditions of daily living of their ethnic minority students: instead, teachers often read these as "easy excuses" for underperformance and a lack of true interest in the values that schools aim to convey, both by teaching and discipline. As it turns out from the rich material provided by classroom observations, focus group discussions, and individual interviews that have emerged in the qualitative phase of our research project, teachers coming from the majority often criticise minority ethnic parents for the lack of support they give their children to properly adjust to the "host" society: in their view, parents do not show up often enough in the school, do not help enough with homework, do not provide strong role models by making efforts to get acquainted with the world around them, and are inclined to enclose themselves within their own group – in brief, as put by one of an interviewed German teacher: *"They're living in a parallel world which does not provide children with the resources needed to succeed in the wider society"*. Looked upon from the perspectives of parents and students, such outspoken or implicit criticisms are often read as signs of non-acceptance, sometimes even as manifestations of prejudices and discrimination. In efforts to countervail these, they sometimes go as far as self-denial: *"I have to tell you that I have just changed my son's name. [...] because my husband faced with the same problem that anytime he took up the phone and introduced himself there was no job. It is such a simple way of rebuff. This is the reason why I changed his name in order to protect him"* (Parent, focus group, Hungary) – At any rate, the systematic differences in performance by ethnicity indicate a good deal of unresolved conflicts: teachers and schools find it a "problem" to work with students from other than majority backgrounds, and vice versa, and even if acknowledging the outstanding importance of school in children's lives, students and parents from ethnic minority backgrounds often look at the school as an "alien" institution that embodies majoritarian prejudices and (open or coded) non-acceptance or, at least, overt ambivalence toward ethnic "otherness".

Such feelings of ambiguity and distrust lead us to the second set of possible explanations for ethnically-informed differences in assessing performance: the working of discrimination at schools,



especially, the orientation of teachers toward their ethnic minority students and how they assess them. Although the degree, intensity, and open manifestation of discrimination and prejudiced attitudes differ to a large extent among the countries in our survey (with the dubious championing of widespread and deep anti-Roma sentiments in the four post-socialist societies), recent research has documented that schools are nowhere exempt of such phenomena: ethnic stereotypes and often masked, or otherwise disguised, racial distinctions are at work everywhere (Luciak 2004). In light of the widely prevailing experience, the exploration of how ethnic/racial distinctions affect the school lives and longer-term career perspectives of our students was of key importance in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the EDUMIGROM research.

The rich material revealed a rather complex picture in which schools as parts of an *institutional system* are charged with discriminating against ethnic minorities; however, one's *own school* as a space of personified experiences is relatively safe from discrimination. As the interviews and focus group discussions demonstrated, ethnic minority students and parents either themselves experienced depreciation or at least were well aware of occurrences of devaluation of their people that frequently concluded in personal downgrading. But such events were usually brought up as manifestations of "white" hostility in a faceless outside world (the street, the shop, the disco, etc.), while one's lowly-esteemed and poor-quality school or class appeared as the victim of an invisible power struggle depriving the institution of its reputation by subjecting it to the pressures of ethnic segregation among and within the local schools. Within this tacitly shared fate of being subordinated to forces and powers beyond their control, adolescents and their parents expressed a certain degree of gratefulness toward those who remained with them: the teachers, assistants, and other members of the school staff. Though complaints about teachers' racist statements or acts came up from time to time, these were always portrayed as insular individual actions, and for the most part, the school personnel were seen as being attentive and caring. Driven by such a widespread attitude of thankfulness and understanding, teachers' leanings toward pupils from the majority were seen as a "natural" consequence of the school being a majority institution by its very nature. (As put by a student in a concise way: "*Why would not the teacher protect the Hungarians if she's Hungarian, too?*") In brief, the interviews and group discussions made it clear that 14–16-year-old ethnic minority adolescents already have rather elaborate views and logically constructed explanations about what is termed as *structural discrimination*, and see their educational disadvantages as manifestations of how the world around them keeps working. At the same time, they rarely experience straightforward animosity in their immediate school environment, but rather look at the relationship with their teachers in the customary framing of the school, which is evidently an institution made up of a mixture of power and support.

This customary framing is reflected in the survey data that brought up a proportion of no less than 77 per cent of students giving witness to injustices on the part of one or another of their teachers; however, 67 per cent of them still state that they are on good terms with them and that injustices are amply countervailed by attention, patronage, and sometimes even friendship. Notwithstanding, the 33

per cent who feel that they do not have a single teacher who would accept them requires particular attention. This third of our student population experience neglect and refusal from all angles: as the detailed analysis reveals, they feel isolated in their class community, and intend to leave education behind in a rather high proportion. As the data show, expressions of feelings of non-acceptance steeply arise in their frequency down the social hierarchy and also according to one's average grade scores. While the proportion of those articulating such complaints is only 20 per cent among those coming from the upper echelons of the community, it jumps to 40 per cent among the poor; and simultaneously, the 21 per cent ratio among the high-achievers reaches 50 per cent among those who are assessed as "marginally performing". However, good and poor assessments seem to cross ethnic and gender boundaries: with a small percentage of bias in teachers' favouring their pupils from the majority, the patterns are the same along the ethnic and gender divides. These associations reflect a deeply ingrained general perception that students seemingly have acquired by this age: in accordance with its fundamental function as the sanctioned institution to distribute knowledge, closeness between schools and their students is a derivative of "social proximity" that is translated through acknowledged contributions to "learning" which is then rewarded by good marking – and teachers praise such achievements in the context of students' entire behaviour and relating. Low-performers are perceived to come from a far-away world that is implicitly devalued in daily life but that acquires its deserved "stamp" in the poor marking. Taken together, ethnicity comes in as a constituent of "distance by knowledge": if devalued, minority students are "reasonably" under-assessed for their poor contributions at school, and the stigma then provides a natural excuse for teachers' neglect, while also reasons adolescents' early withdrawal. In this context, it is no surprise that the school is sensed as a majority institution where even the matters of injustice are differentially perceived. While those from a majority background relate unfair treatment to the institution's basic function of teaching and grading, minority ethnic students report bias and prejudice in how their culture is (un-)accepted and how social distance between them and their teachers is translated into punishment for their "improper" conduct. To put it differently, students from the majority, even if experiencing unjust occurrences, feel more at home at school than their peers from ethnic minority backgrounds, and such a complex relating deeply affects the differential relationships with teachers, which then are reflected, in turn, in the process of formal assessment, that is, in the course of grading that is imbued – and biased – by varied notions about ethnicity.

A further indication of ethno-social biases of schools and teachers in assessing their ethnic minority students came from an "unexpected corner" of the research. Concerning plans for the immediate future, the survey questionnaire enquired about the motives that students and their families considered in making a choice of where to continue schooling upon finishing the given grade. Out of the ten different motives that were listed, inclusiveness of the future institution – meaning acceptance irrespective of social and/or ethnic background – was one of the most frequently mentioned constituents behind the choice: 49 per cent of the respondents put a tick next to this motive – which in itself speaks in a

silent way about claims informed by experiences of relative deprivation that youths in our working-class communities continuously face in their daily lives. However, a closer analysis revealed some significant unevenness in the background: while the ratio of mentions remained at the average level among students of well-educated parents in the majority, it reached a ten per cent higher rate (59 per cent) among their ethnic minority peers from poorly educated families. Even more tellingly, the choice of this motive seems to be associated with how the current school evaluates one's achievement. Out of the group of poorly performing students, inclusiveness of the future school was prioritised for only 13 per cent of those from a highly educated majority background, while the corresponding proportion was more than double (29 per cent) among their peers coming from poorly educated ethnic minority families. One perhaps is not mistaken to read this difference as a signal of experiences and feelings of ethno-social discrimination in grading. Those from the higher echelons of the dominant ethnic group do not have to fear that being qualified by relatively poor grades creates insurmountable difficulties in future advancement – after all, their strong social embedding and the protective actions and interventions of the parental home would amply counterbalance the poor message of their school certificates. The situation is utterly different at the other end of the socio-ethnic hierarchy: besides continuously feeling devalued by the very workings of the school and, especially, by marking, students in this group have good reasons to fear disadvantageous future tracking and other exclusionary developments due to their poor results – hence, for them, inclusion and equal treatment become highly praised facets of the future school.<sup>13</sup> All in all, experiences about overt or covert ethno-social prejudices and about the often half-conscious use of double standards by teachers in marking seem to be present in the everyday school lives of ethnic minority students in general, and especially of those whose ethnic "otherness" is accompanied by socio-economic disadvantages. What is more, the above associations suggest that the affected students are usually well aware of their achievements being unjustly devalued – though rarely do they have the strength or the power to freely articulate their impressions, and neither do their parents feel endowed with the skills and language to start open struggles for recognition on their children's behalf.

Turning now to how institutional selection affects the ethnicisation of differences in assessing students' performance, our survey data signal dramatic departures. By looking at the clusters of schools according to the ratio of ethnic minority students from better-off and poor backgrounds, respectively, school-level average grade scores form a steep hierarchy, with no less than a decline of 35 per cent between the "top" schools<sup>14</sup> and those dominated by disadvantaged ethnic minority students. Obviously,

13 Even the best-performing students of this group cannot be sure that their good results will provide strong enough protection against future disadvantages. This is signalled by the fact that no less than 61 per cent of these outstanding, achieving children of poorly educated ethnic minority families indicated inclusiveness of the future school among the first to third most important motives of choice – while this aspect was "naturally" infrequently mentioned by their peers from the upper groups of majority society: only 17 per cent of the best performing children of highly educated families put a tick in the rubric of this motive.

14 These are the schools that are usually considered the best by the community. Half of them are so-called "elite" schools that provide special courses and are known for performing well in academic competitions. Seventy-two per cent of their students come from well-educated families of the majority, and if at all, they accept talented minority ethnic and/or poor

these differences reflect the diverse compositions of the schools, and in this sense, one could say that the findings of sharp hierarchisation are a socio-ethnic "tautology": they simply reflect what has been discussed so far about the strong influence of social and ethnic background on school performance. However, a closer analysis of the results shows that institutional distinctions by social and ethnic background play a significant role in their own right: they accentuate individual differences by organising them into powerful institutional arrangements. This can be justified by a look at the sharply differing opportunities of students from the same backgrounds to attain "excellent" qualifications or to end up among the "marginally performing" group, respectively. When attending one of the "top" schools, no less than 48 per cent of majority students from a highly educated family finish with "excellent" grades, while the corresponding ratio is as low as 18 per cent among those less fortunate members of the group who, despite the family's high standing, found themselves in the lowest-ranked schools that are dominated by poor children from ethnic minority backgrounds. The distinctions by ethno-social characteristics also work strongly toward the other end: while one seeks in vain "marginally performing" students in the higher ranks of the institutional hierarchy (these students most presumably were transferred earlier to one of the weaker schools), 12–16 per cent of children of the least educated ethnic minority families find themselves among the "marginals" in schools attended in high numbers by poor students from ethnic minority backgrounds. If they show up at all, children of qualified majority parents rarely fall into this group: the figures of two to four per cent most probably reflect personal disorder, disturbed home conditions, troubles in the family, and the behavioural problems that often accompany such circumstances. Institutional differentiations in the average grades reflect the same selective processes from another angle. As the data show, distinctions in grading work in identical directions for all the social and ethnic groups: depending on the position of their school in the hierarchy, students from similar social and ethnic backgrounds are evaluated differently, as if the value of the same social and cultural capital differed in different segments of the institutional market (such institutional distinctions induce differences among the best and the worst average measures in a range of 21 to 40 per cent.)

While the above ordering by socio-ethnic belonging is maintained by students from well-educated families on the top of each category, and by children of poorly educated parents from "visible" minority backgrounds on the lower end of the scale (and additional "other" minorities always in-between), the type of the school powerfully refines the picture. It adds the "quality stamp" of the school to one's results and thereby accentuates the social meaning of individual grades. This way it provides a reading, according to which students from a well-educated majority background rest in the "top" schools, with a "price" of 1.65 points<sup>15</sup> on the educational market, and in contrast, children of poorly educated

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children as rare exceptions. This highly selected type (with less than 20 per cent of minority students and an equally low rate of those qualified by the schools as "disadvantaged") was found only in our Central European communities that are characterised by intense, spontaneous "white flight" and very weak (educational) governance to halt local pressures for setting up units with "countrywide reputation" at the expense of harsh social exclusion.

15 For the computation of the school-level aggregate indicators see footnote 10.

parents from "visible" minority background are devalued by no less than 40 per cent and attain only a 2.73-point average grade if finishing primary education in one of the poorest minority schools of the given community. With these additions, schools help to fine-tune the socio-ethnic ranking that, without such contributions, tells a fainter and simpler story: the 0.8-point difference in average grading between students from highly educated majority backgrounds and those coming from the least educated "visible" minority families is stretched to 1.08 if the "institutional origin" of the grades is also taken into account. After all, such a filtering of the school results – that one fairly can characterise as double grading – fulfils important social functions. From the point of view of the secondary schools as recipient institutions, it posts easily legible messages about the academic strength of the primary schools that send students to them. Thereby grades underscored by their institutional origin provide an orientation for all the involved parties. Such refined measures increase the probability of students applying to the proper school that has been set up "for them", and vice versa, given groups of families and students are automatically attracted to those secondary institutions that wait "for their kind", while distracting them from those schools where their "pedigree" would be unwelcome. In other words, with the help of tacit differentiation on the primary level, selection becomes an easy-going and conveniently objectified process on the next stage where departures by content, quality, and service are a professionally acknowledged and openly installed constituent of the system.

The "gateway" role that the school-level aggregation of students' results fulfils has further advantageous implications for education fulfilling its role in "filtering" students for later unequal social positions. Importantly: it hides sharp differences in social and ethnic compositions by converting their compound impact into objectified academic rankings and thereby creates the ground for comparisons in quality that seem fair by taking into account only one single attribute: the standing of the institution on the academic market. Hence, those aspiring to sending their children to the best institutions on the subsequent secondary and tertiary stages of education will properly "read" these messages well in advance, and already at an early age, they will make great efforts to enrol their child in one of the top institutions.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, poor and uneducated parents – especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds – who often value friendliness and non-discriminatory attitudes of teachers and staff more than the content and actual quality of teaching will "read" the message of lower expectations in schools run for minorities and the poor, and might find good reasons to send their children to such institutions. At any rate, selection by institutional quality becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy this way: the invisible institutional addition to assessments on the individual level boosts ethno-social differences in performance, and this informs and legitimises further selections, while assisting in socialising all the involved actors to look at the distinctions as "natural" and "inevitable" givens carried by the impersonal structure of schooling.

Additionally, the average performance result of final-year students serves as a useful indicator

16 By the way, these attempts are made relatively easy even in countries where school districts imply restrictions for movement and choice: by offering some "specialty" that is not available in other – "ordinary" – schools, these units are usually made exempt from administrative regulations for taking applicants mainly from the designated catchment areas.

for important projections: it offers information about the students' chances for entering different pathways of continuation. In this sense, the aggregate performance score (together with statistics on the "success rates" of alumni) becomes the "brand name" of the emitting school, and as if it was on the market, actors in the educational arena devise their steps, pressures, and ways of expressing interest and disinterest accordingly. As the data reveal and as it will be discussed below in detail, depending on the position of their school in the invisible but widely recognised institutional hierarchy of "trademarks" and attached "scores of institutional performance", students from similar social and ethnic backgrounds with formally the same good results have remarkably different chances on the secondary level. Taking the case of those from highly educated majority backgrounds, the likelihood for continuing in schools that provide graduation and that open the way toward higher education is as high as 83 per cent, if they conclude their primary studies in one of the "top" institutions, but it drops to the relatively low level of 52 per cent, if they happen to finish in the lowest-ranked schools dominated by children from poor ethnic minority backgrounds. Likewise, it is probably the "brand name" of their school that, by carrying some promising alternatives, holds back "marginally performing" children of poorly educated ethnic minority families from leaving education behind. Against the otherwise worryingly high rate of 27 per cent for this group of students as a whole, the proportion of those planning to stop studying is only 21 per cent among those concluding primary-level education in one of the majority-dominated good schools, while it jumps to 33 (!) per cent among those finishing in the most deprived segment, that is, in schools dominated by children from poor minority backgrounds. It is hard to read these latter differences other than indications of hopefulness and hopelessness: relatively good institutional backing probably somewhat countervails failures in individual achievement, while being unsuccessful in a school with a bad reputation rightly entails despair with regard to an acceptable educational future.

By recalling the earlier results about the socio-ethnic aspects of differential individual assessments, we can establish that, all in all, European schools are characterised by a very high degree of intersectionality between the "social" and "ethnic" factors of one's background in shaping school performance that, in turn, significantly impacts young people's expectations, motivations, and perspectives. At the same time, the EDUMIGROM research indicates that the intermingling of these two fundamental aspects of students' positions is played out in a rather complicated way. On the individual level, "ethnicity" works toward aggrandising (or, for that matter, belittling) the importance of social belonging. If similar social backgrounds are compared, schools are inclined to devalue those from anywhere other than majority background, and especially those coming from "visibly" differing groups. These devaluations mainly follow from the distinctions that schools make in appraising the different compositions of ethnically informed cultural capitals by explicitly favouring the dominant culture. Additionally, a rather low level of understanding between teachers and families deprives ethnic minority parents from capitalising on those social and cultural networks that are necessary for proper orientation and successful endeavours in the educational system and beyond (Zhou 2005). On top of all, institutional segmentation proves to work as

one of the most powerful ways of institutionalising, legitimising, controlling, and smoothly reproducing ethnic distinctions in education: sharply differing ethno-social compositions of the schools magnify the differences in assessed individual performance, and thereby deepen the ethnic divides in attainment. The interplay between the institutional and individual distinctions concludes in making the numeric assessments of performance (that is, grades) into a kind of a socio-ethnic "trademark": as we will see, these objectified indices of human capacity then work as socially acknowledged and strongly legitimised foundations of selection for entering the next level of the educational system, and thereby importantly influence departures in the longer-term prospects for youths from different socio-ethnic backgrounds.

**Coming from an ethnic minority background implies a good deal of vulnerability – even if paired with relatively favourable socio-economic conditions. Schools as parts of an institutional system are charged with discriminating against ethnic minorities; however, one's own school as a space of personified experiences is relatively safe from discrimination.**

**Depending on the position of their school in the hierarchy, students from similar social and ethnic backgrounds are evaluated differently, as if the value of the same social and cultural capital differed in different segments of the institutional market. Consequently, the opportunities of ethnic minority students in education and beyond are severely limited by the simple fact of attending low-esteemed segregated schools on the primary level. Due to such institutional affiliations, students' certificates become impregnated by the institutions' unfavourable "trademark" and this invisible stigma accompanies them through their entire career.**

While the objectifying and legitimising functions of grading are in place in all educational systems, there seem to be differences in the degree how school grades are taken as the single most important indicator of *personal value*. In other words, there are variations in the potency of the attached labels in expressing evaluations about individual inputs and achievements against "holistic" assessments of students' personalities.

Let us now turn to a closer exploration of these differences.

Our survey yielded some good news but also a few warning signals in this regard. On the whole, the data suggest that "holistic" evaluations are rarely articulated: in the overwhelming majority of cases, students gave accounts of variations in their grades which carry the message that it is strictly the technicalities of a given subject that are considered, and teachers refrain from crossing the professional boundaries by sending out generalised assessments about their students. Nevertheless, the 13 per cent proportion of the cases where *uniformity* across the subjects indicates a departure from the mainstream and points toward "holistic" evaluations deserves some attention. First, if compared according to the varied historical contexts of education systems in Europe, it turns out that it is still the post-socialist world, with its deeply "disciplining" traditions, where schools, instead of sending out duly-itemised information of distinct capabilities and capacities, prove to be inclined to consider it their task to make authoritative assessments about "personalities". Second, wherever applied, generalised assessments seem to serve to underscore the two extremes of the scale, that is, instead of simply speaking about "excellent performance", "holistic" statements help to single out "persons of excellence", and similarly, instead of

pointing to "marginal performance", they help to designate "bad students". As it turns out, the uniform grades from all subjects that holistic statements about "outstanding" (all-excellent) and "bad" (all-failed) students intend to express make up two-thirds of the cases, with rare occurrences of in-between.

Third, it then makes sense to look at these needs and ask the question: who are those who "deserve" the underscoring by generalised and personified statements? As the detailed analysis reveals, such underscoring techniques are applied mostly by schools where it is students from the majority who are in clear domination; within their student bodies, it is primarily students from "other" (white) ethnic background who, in addition to the numeric assessments, receive personified recommendations from their teachers. The way to report insights into their "excellence" is most probably aimed to compensate for the disadvantages that they might face in applying to the good schools that they deserve and give them some extra assistance with the label of "excellence". At the same time, the "troublemakers" of this group are to be found in schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students: against a six per cent average for the group, 13–16 per cent of students from "other" ethnic minority backgrounds attending "schools for the disadvantaged" receive personified negative evaluations that certainly distinguish them from their peers. It would require further exploration to find out whether it is their difficulties accommodating to a new school environment,<sup>17</sup> or some prejudices on the part of teachers who expect them to behave according to the ruling "white" norms that lead to such symptoms of devaluation. Nevertheless, we probably correctly read these findings as signals of conflicts of those migrant children in school who "otherwise" seem to adjust relatively easily to their new home society. The lack of similar attempts at applying personified "labelling" in the case of students from "visible" minority backgrounds probably reflects sheer reality: since their overall results usually lag behind the "white" groups, this simple fact is self-expressive enough to carry the "right" message. Furthermore, since ethnic minority students are concentrated in highly segregated schools "for them", their institutional affiliation provides strong enough a "stamp" to make sure that they do not orient toward schools and positions where they certainly would not be welcome.

In sum, we can establish that "personalised" and "holistic" evaluations – at least in the form of grading – are more the exception than the rule in the schools of compulsory education. If applied, these methods are more in use for rewarding the label of "excellence" than for punishing uniformly bad results.

At the same time, some reservations have to be made here. For in order to express negative "personalised" assessments, schools have some tougher tools at hand other than grading: it is first of all referral for repetition – an authoritative ruling of the school that, as we will see below, is not concluded on equal grounds at all. In principle, teachers' decisions to tell parents that their children should be held back in the same grade for an additional year could have preventive and corrective functions: repetition might help ease the burden that schoolwork involves, earlier acquired elements of knowledge might be capitalised on for attaining better assessment results, and the advantage in age in comparison to the new classmates might assure some prestige and a leading role. In fact, these are the very considerations that

17 With its 19 per cent proportion, the ratio of first-generation migrants is relatively high in this group.



teachers most frequently bring up in justifying their decision that affect no less than 13 per cent of the students in our schools. However, in reality, being held back does not work this way: instead of yielding positive effects on catch-up and self-assurance, grade retention usually turns into a powerful and lasting stigma that is difficult for the school environment ever to forget. Although 90 per cent of the students who had been kept behind at a point in their career in primary education had faced such a decision in the very early years (two-thirds of the repetitions occurred at some point in the course of the first to sixth grades, that is, at least two academic years prior to our investigation), their performance grades still reflect the depreciating implications: against six per cent among the "non-repeaters", 21 per cent of repeaters are still assessed as just "marginally performing", and their average performance grade scores fall 25 per cent short of the group advancing in an unconstrained way.

The huge gap between teachers' intentions and the actual outcomes is brought about by a number of factors at play. First, a referral for repetition is rarely a decision made purely on academic grounds. It is often a response to behavioural deficiencies and symptoms of non-adaptation, and this way, instead of working as a source of inspiration, it is taken as an expression of power and authority that schools have in making degrading "personified" evaluations.<sup>18</sup> Second, being overage among the new classmates neither induces the boosting of one's prestige nor does it contribute to feelings of comfort in the new setting.<sup>19</sup> But besides these failed personal implications, it is most probably the involved social, ethnic, and institutional aspects that make academic retention a generalised "personified" statement that works as a strong stigma and a powerful source of selection.

This is the point where our welcome words about the self-restraint of teachers to make "personified" statements about their "visibly" different students in the form of underscored performance grades become seriously relativised: for our data show that instead of the fine-tuned message of numeric points, it is the crude and negative substance of referral to repetition that affects students from "visible" minority backgrounds in the first place. While students from the majority very rarely face such depreciating decisions (the rate of occurrence is only eight per cent among them), retention for academic failures is a stigma in the curriculum vitae of no less than 22 per cent of those who "visibly" belong to the category of the "Other".<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, while the decisions roughly equally affect girls and boys, they are very unevenly distributed by social standing: students coming from a poorly educated parental home

18 In the context of the above indicated general attitude to refrain from expressing criticism about teachers and the school, it is a telling signal of their hurt feelings that students who had been kept behind gave voice with a significantly higher occurrence to opinions about injustices on the part of teachers, and especially their "unfair" decisions about class selection, than their advancing peers (23 per cent of the "repeating", while 17 per cent of the "non-repeating" students complained about frequent injustices at school, and out of these groups, the proportion of those who spelled out selection as the source of the problem was 21 per cent in the first, while only 10 per cent in the second group).

19 As an expression of feelings about alienation and solitude, 13 per cent of the "repeaters" (against only seven per cent of the "non-repeaters") complained about the troubled atmosphere in their class due to highly individualised relations.

20 For Roma, the ratio is even higher, with 24 per cent on the average at the four Central European sites. At the same time, there is a significant dispersion around this rate. As it seems, referral to repetition is especially high where otherwise attempts are made for integration, that is, in Hungary and Slovakia, with their 28 and 38 per cent proportions, respectively.

have a three to four times higher chance of finding themselves in the failed category of "repeaters" than their peers from highly educated families.<sup>21</sup> On top of all these, retention rates show high institutional concentration. With an outstandingly high ratio of 24–28 per cent, such decisions seem to belong to the ordinary daily routine in schools dominated by students from minority backgrounds, while practically never come into consideration in "top" schools, and affect only some eight to ten per cent of students in educational units where the ethnic majority is dominant. Such an unevenness implies that it is not only the individual students but also their institutions that get stigmatised: some of the latter – especially minority schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students – become known as the "collectors" of troubled cases, and the larger environment looks at them as such. Other schools tend to send students with behavioural and adaptation problems here and thereby "save" their own institutions. With the growing number of failed students among their attendees, these stigmatised schools then start to use repetition as an ordinary routine of discipline, and thereby forming a feedback loop in their "collecting" role – the arising vicious circle grows self-sustaining, and works toward severe segregation. Together with this, the double stigma of "personified" failure in a "collector" institution leads to the most severe risk of long-term loss: to become a dropout. Although most dropouts are still of compulsory school-age, no less than 36 per cent of ethnic minority students who were once held back and now attend one of the "collector" schools plan to skip schooling next year – and this worryingly high proportion is exactly the double of the 18 per cent all-inclusive ratio of finalisers<sup>22</sup> in the sample as a whole.

**The repetition and drop-out rates are notably different among majority and ethnic minority students. Eight per cent of students of poor socio-economic background from the majority population are kept behind for academic reasons, while the corresponding ratio is 22 per cent for "visible minority" children.**

**Prior to completing compulsory education, seven to eight per cent of majority students consider leaving school, while 22 per cent of their "visible minority" peers are at risk of dropping out. Thirty-six per cent of ethnic minority students in a compulsory school-age who were once held back and now attend one of the "collector" schools plan to skip schooling next year.**

In the light of the rich set of tools at schools' disposal to send out highly structured messages about their students' performance, we have to agree with those critical thinkers, social scientists, practitioners, and innovative policymakers who vehemently argue for giving up traditional test- and exam-based marking and finding alternative ways of assessment that better reflect personal qualities, talent, and motivation, and that leave enough scope for acknowledging the diversity of cultural inputs (Kahn

21 Before one would assume that these differences in occurrence are because of cultural components, it is worth noting that command over the language of instruction as an otherwise important indicator of departing grades does not seem to play a role in the drastic failures of being kept behind: regardless of whether students speak the language of the country as their first or second language, those coming from minority backgrounds have twice the chance to be kept behind than their majority peers. This is another indication of "personified" assessments playing a major role in the background of such decisions.

22 This proportion includes that 14 per cent who are aged above 16 and thus are most probably exempt from compulsory schooling in all the participating countries.

1999, Keesing-Styles 2003). Nevertheless, societies have a great deal of vested interest in maintaining the system largely in its current form. As we saw before, grades are the main tool to calibrate values that are meant to be read as "cultural", and consonant with this, schools gain a good deal of power to send out easily understood assessments about each of the individual students they deal with. This way, educational institutions are and will remain the agents to make the first steps toward shaping social positions: after all, grades are taken as information about marketable knowledge and skills, whereby school results are turned into diverging pathways in our increasingly "knowledge-based" societies.

Obviously, there are no one-to-one relations between the attained performances that grading measures and students' actual advancement. There are a number of important considerations put on the table for weightings before families make the ultimate choice about where their children should go next, what the most appropriate type of school would be to select, and how to make sure that the choice fits longer-term plans. These deliberations are informed by the attained results, but their weight in the decision remains open. At the same time, general experience shows – and we will confirm some facts about it later – that the information on performance and the school where it comes from is highly utilised by the receiving institutions: the units of secondary and higher education. A mostly invisible bargaining between the involved actors concludes in a well-known end-result: students graduating with "excellence" in the best first-level institutions usually boost their advantage by enrolling in one of the best secondary schools, with practically unlimited access to the finest institutions in higher education, while poorly performing students concluding primary education in one of the schools in the lowest section of the educational hierarchy have but a limited choice, and provided that they do not skip the system, usually end up in secondary schools that turn their earlier disadvantages either into early leaving or low-level employment in the least prestigious and low-paid segments of the labour market.

Let us turn now to how these complicated bargains among families, teachers, old and new schools, future employers, local advisors, and students are shaped when the ultimate decisions about advancement are at stake.

## **Where to go next?**

As has been already mentioned, *timing* was an important aspect in designing the EDUMIGROM research: the study aimed to look at adolescents' schooling at a significant turning point when, by concluding the first phase of compulsory education, they arrived at an threshold in the school system with important ramifications that involved compelling decisions about the next stage in their lives. Irrespective of the actual arrangements of schooling in the country, and thus regardless of the actual type of the school and the grade, all students whom our survey and the qualitative fieldwork approached confronted a crucial

challenge in thinking about their educational careers in the context of impending adulthood. In facing the compound of their own and their parents' plans and aspirations, the perceived expectations of kin and the neighbourhood, the attractions of their friends, the orientations of their teachers, and, above all, the given limitations dictated by their conditions at school and in the community, all the pros and cons had to be deliberated. Ultimately, these difficult considerations have to be translated into a definite choice: should one apply to a widely respected high school far away from home hoping for a precious diploma but with the foreseeable burden of studying day and night and in utter solitude? Or should one attend the neighbourhood's technical high school providing a graduate certificate that qualifies, at best, for college attendance but that secures an additional three or four years of youthful enjoyment? Or should one choose a track or school in the close proximity that offers a vocation without an academic certificate but entails the promise of a relatively early entrance to gainful employment? Or should one suspend school attendance as such – or at least, to do so for a while – with a hazy outlook but temporary relief from academic obligations (though with obvious implied risks for the future) and with the dubious freedom to take up any kinds of work on offer?

Obviously, in reality, the choice among these pathways and the educational institutions within each of them hardly ever open up in their entirety: by the time the decisions are made, earlier determinations have significantly narrowed the scope for social mobility. With all the givens that students' earlier educational histories and the above analysed structural constraints imply, we had good reason to assume that the choices at this turning point will inform us about those freedoms and restrictions that allow adolescents to navigate toward their envisioned future careers: the selected directions imply more than just the technical details of schooling and training, and also tell us about some longer-term ideas and considerations. It was thus our goal to dig into the options that still have remained open, even in the case of the most deprived groups, and find out the motivations and rationales that guided their choices. For this purpose, the survey questionnaire inquired about students' priorities when submitting application to one or another school, and this topic also was central in the face-to-face interviews with young people and their parents. Furthermore, the fieldwork attempted to draw up a map of the network of "counsellors" by asking about the partners and companions who assisted the respondents in their search of paths and schools and also inquired about the arguments and considerations that they applied in their advising.

As it will be shown, the responses to the above set of questions brought up a large pool of robust findings that point toward meaningful departures – sometimes it is perhaps more appropriate to call them *fault lines* – in students' prospects. Apparently, choices at the young ages of 14–16 are far from being free: earlier achievements at school more or less define the "playground" for any deliberations; and it is only those coming from families in the best positions in their community who can be said to enjoy genuine freedom to correct earlier academic failures by approaching a strong and acknowledged institution for the next educational stage.

Notwithstanding, our data indicate a high degree of commitment to schooling: regardless of being poor or rich, coming from educated or uneducated backgrounds, leaving behind a stronger or weaker

primary-level institution, and also irrespective of one's ethnic belonging, the overwhelming majority of adolescents think of a future of studentship. Although below we will qualify this statement, it still seems rather important to emphasise that staying on and being involved in education well into the second half of one's teenage years has become a general norm in Europe, and young people and their families observe this norm for the most part. However, it is equally important to pay close attention to those who fall through the cracks of continued education as the most potent safety net against marginalisation and social exclusion. This at-risk group of adolescents (of a magnitude of no less than 15 per cent in our sample) are in a sense the victims of the working of the prevailing highly competitive school systems in which they lost the capacity to keep up long ago – and neither their family, nor their teachers, nor the immediate and larger referential communities have been able to help them.

As the processing of the survey data reveals, earlier achieved performance is one of the strongest constituents in shaping students' ideas about the next educational stage. The proportion of those imaging themselves in a secondary school that provides graduation and thereby draws the contours of a promising longer-term future (either with entrance to the labour market in the hope of relatively good middle-class positions or with securing the way toward higher education) is steeply declining along the line of the numeric grades: while more than four-fifths of the "excellently" evaluated students are determined to head in this direction, the corresponding proportion falls by half among their "marginally performing" peers. Those who earlier failed to get into the "club" of good performers now face very gloomy prognoses: with an equally steep rise in the opposite direction, the ratio of potential dropouts jumps from five per cent among the "excellent" students to the outstandingly high index of 33 per cent among those who belong to the "marginally performing" group (remarking on the latter index, we have good reason to add the 19 per cent of those whose "undecided" responses involve a high risk of probably similar outcomes that may ultimately end in them opting out from education or landing in secondary schools that do not provide useable certificates for the future).

Apparently, vocational training comes along rather infrequently as a prompt choice: only three to seven per cent of the respondents stated their will to head toward this type of school. However, this low rate of interest is probably an artefact that reflects certain administrative categorisations. In attempts to make vocational training more attractive and to ease movement among the different tracks of secondary-level education, important reforms have been introduced in several countries in the last two decades. Vocational tracks have either been administratively drawn under the roof of schools providing graduation through comprehensive exams in academic subjects (e.g., in France, Germany, and Hungary), or several arrangements have been set up to access graduation semi-independently from the type of institution that one had previously attended (e.g., Denmark), and/or efforts have been made to enrich the curricula with academic subjects, making steps toward convergence among the divergent tracks. It follows that some of those who sorted out "secondary-level graduation" as their option will most probably find themselves in a vocational class from where they actually have little hope to graduate at the end – even if their unit still carries the prestigious emblem of a "secondary comprehensive" or "secondary technical" school. The

interviews allowed us to look behind the curtain of such administrative manoeuvres: it became clear that students and parents were well aware of the dramatic differences among the value of the certificates that are issued by one or another track within the same institution. Hence, the competition for placement just changed location and has increased tensions within the walls of the school. It became obvious from closer scrutiny that the choice among more and less prestigious vocational classes is further refined by students' earlier grades in a way similar to the hierarchy among secondary schools and only the most powerful parents can divert this strong association by enrolling their children in a distance school that pays less attention to academic achievements but values dedication to the certain crafts on offer and that secures later employability through an established structure of apprenticeship.

The aggregate data on planned advancement provide a strong general characterisation of the student population of our selected working-class communities. They indicate that, despite widespread commitment to the continuation of studies, one has to be concerned if this distribution is taken in the wider context of the available European-level findings. It becomes clear by a quick glance at the indices of the highest attained level of education of the 25–64-year-old adult population (OECD 2009) that the most optimistic, predictable scenario for our students tells of stagnation. As against the 70 per cent ratio of completed secondary graduation in the preceding generations (with 34 per cent also holding a degree in higher education), the 68 per cent proportion of *planned* continuation toward this end for today's adolescents is just about at the margin of closing, provided that one does not take into account the well-known facts of early leaving – that affects poor and minority populations in the first place (Kritikos and Ching 2005).

However, the most truly distressful indicator is reflected in students' intentions on leaving behind education. The 15 per cent average proportion of leavers – with the mentioned deviations among the different groups – suggests severe trends that imply an unbroken reproduction of social exclusion among the poorest and a spreading of high-risk careers, as yet largely unnoticed. A few data are enough to see this. Although comparative figures are unavailable on the ratios of dropouts, the OECD indicators still give some orientation to assess the magnitude of the problem. As to the latest statistics (OECD 2009), 83–90 per cent of youth in the age-bracket of 15–19 years are involved in education in the participating countries,<sup>23</sup> and within this cohort, one can assume that the rates of participation are higher for those in or around the age of compulsory schooling (age 16 for the most part). In the light of these figures, the 15 per cent proportion of determined leavers<sup>24</sup> is very high, indeed. But the causes for actual concern are

23 The only exception, with its 71 per cent index, is the United Kingdom where vocational training is not considered as part of the educational system; hence, data on a large part of the 16–18-year-old population are unavailable for this comparison. And a further note: not being a member state of the OECD, the corresponding indicator is unknown for Romania.

24 Of course, these determinations should not be taken for granted. After all, respecting compulsory education is a legally prescribed duty everywhere, and there are authorities with tools at hand to enforce its observance – though they presumably act with varying rigour and commitment (European Commission 2008). Hence, many of these students will still remain for a while in one or another educational framework – though their explicit will to skip will sooner or later become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

in the details. It is a serious warning that no less than 44 per cent of the group in question come from among those who will not reach the age of 16, even in the next academic year. Moreover, "dedicated" early leavers are recruited from the most severely marginalised social groups: against the 21 per cent share of students from poorly educated minority backgrounds in the sample, their proportion jumps to 32 per cent among the quitters. Furthermore, it is a telling indicator of their pressing conditions that close to one-third of them reasoned their decisions to leave due to the desperate financial situation of their families that made it a must for them to look for some gainful work. The constraints certainly have to be considered grievous in light of the very high occurrence of truly destitute conditions: no less than 23 per cent of these at-risk students come from families without any regular income while experiencing lasting unemployment. All in all, the large frequency of such desperate "choices" among the poor seems to be grounded in day-to-day realities: due to the lack of support and protection that would help ease their conditions, these families on the margins of society cannot allow themselves the "extravagance" of letting their child continue in education. As Czech Roma parents made clear in their recurrent complaints in a bitter group discussions: although they would be pleased to see their children at school for the coming years, they simply cannot go on paying for travel, shoes, and decent clothes – let alone for books and equipment (Marada et al. 2010). Furthermore, prejudice and stigmatisation often adds to the problem of limited means and motivation except for withdrawal. As put by a Somali father in Sweden: "If they over and over again only see Swedes on the most prestigious positions in society they [ethnic minority children] will give up".

At a closer look at advancement in the context of students' socio-ethnic background, the above outlined aggregate picture becomes refined by a set of important associations. By recalling the conclusions of the previous section that highlighted the significant influence of one's social and ethnic belonging on school achievements and also showed the strong impact of institutional arrangements on extending/limiting the scope of attainable performance results, it seemed important to ask the question: what are the implications of these differences on the freedom of choice that students and families can exert at the time when one's performance grades come to be "exchanged" for positions in the openly selective systems of secondary education and work? In other words, do cultural and social capital, their institutional embodiment, and the power that the emerging different socio-institutional constellations involve come into play for fine-tuning the otherwise strong determinations that prior school results imply for future pathways and careers? And if they do, how are these influences played out in our educational systems that are increasingly built on acknowledging only knowledge and high performance?

As the processing of the survey data indicates, the families' social status as the bearer of greater or lesser magnitudes of social and cultural capital for building on the future career of the subsequent generation is an important factor in shaping advancement. However, the parents' social and cultural capital chiefly come into play in the intense competition for potential entrance into the *higher echelons* of society. This is shown by the clear association between a family's status and the chosen path for advancement among those students who are finishing with "excellent" evaluations. If one comes from the upper ranks

of society, it is an exception to enter any other pathway than continuing one's studies toward graduation: nine out of ten follow this route. At the same time, their equally well-performing peers from poorer social backgrounds seemingly have to take into account other concerns: the speediest access to work is a heavily considered option in their case. This is reflected in the fact that only two-thirds of the best performing students from poor households can dream of graduation, and nine per cent of the group opts for heading straight toward early employment with a quickly acquired vocational certificate in their pocket.

At the same time, socio-economic differences do not seem to imply similar departures among those who concluded the preceding level only with "marginal performance". Although there are minor deviations to the detriment of students from poorer backgrounds among the early leavers and their potential followers in the group of "undecided" students, the demarcation lines between them and their well-performing peers still seem to be more important than these small-scale divergences: regardless of their families' status, almost half of the group in question are at high risk of entirely dropping out from the system. Those from more affluent and better-embedded families apparently try to avoid such a fate by applying to a vocational school; however, knowing the insecure position of these schools in our educational systems, such a safeguard seems rather weak. The critically low rates (42–44 per cent) of those applying to a "proper" secondary school call again for a reconsideration of the implications that the current ways of assessment bear upon students' longer-term future. As the data show, the harm that "marginalised" qualifications imply cannot be countervailed and certainly cannot be corrected by mobilising even the best familial social and cultural capital. In this regard, the "conductor's baton" is in the hands of the schools and the teachers.

A look at students' ethnic background adds important further details. The distinctions by ethnicity regarding access to those schools providing the best quality in teaching and the most freedom for future choices – secondary-level institutions with graduation at the end of studies – are rather remarkable: moving downhill on the socio-cultural hierarchy from the students from well-educated majority backgrounds to the group of those from poorly educated ethnic minority backgrounds, those who accomplished the prior level with "excellence" lose 18 per cent in their probability to opt for such a school (from 86 to 68 per cent), while the ratio of those considering a farewell to education jumps from four to 17 per cent.

When taking parental education and ethnic belonging together with the otherwise undifferentiated gloomy future of those who did not succeed in attaining "marketable" school results earlier (i.e., the "marginal performers"), it is only the dual potency of majority belonging and good educational background that involves some likelihood for meaningful corrections of prior failures. A little more than half of the students in this category drift toward graduation, and one can assume, due to the interventions of their parents and their respective networks, that the exceptionally high (20 per cent) proportion of "undecided" cases will ultimately be settled in this same direction. Interestingly, students from poorly educated majority backgrounds do not seem to be able to maintain the "customary" ethnic advantage in comparison to their minority peers: the low 38–45 per cent rates of applications to schools



with graduation, and the worryingly high proportions of the determined school leavers and those in a "floating" situation, (respectively, 27–37 and 16–19 per cent), carry the uniform message of widespread insecurity and the high potential of ultimate marginalisation and exclusion for all poorly performing ethnic minority students and their equally failing peers from disadvantaged majority backgrounds.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, if applying the institutional prism of schools' socio-ethnic composition, the data seem to confirm what has been said earlier about the secret "mission" of selection among the schools on the primary level: prior attendance to a "good" or a "bad" school yields important implication on one's subsequent educational career, and the departing antecedences greatly deviate the actual value of otherwise identical school results by "inflating" or "deflating" them. However, such a great impact of the invisible "scoring" that prior schooling adds to one's school certificate can only be observed among those – the well-performing students – for whom institutionalised selection makes sense, by reducing the competition for places in the most prestigious institutions on the secondary level that are generally in excessive demand. Apparently, poor performance results provide enough information on their own to make such refining of the scoring unnecessary: the involved careers conclude in risky outcomes in any case.

The competition among those qualified as "excellent" seems to be the most intense for admission to schools that finish with graduation and involve the promise of straightforward continuation toward higher education. Those leaving behind a school dominated by the non-poor majority follow this pathway nearly without exception. At the other end of the scale, such an option is open only for 59 per cent of those "excellent" students who demonstrate diligence and knowledge in an institution that is generally despised and devalued by the community, especially by those actors of the next educational stage who occupy the decision-making positions to determine selection and admission. True, vocational training still seems to be an accessible pathway for many of them: every fifth of the group considers this option.

Although prior institutional affiliation carries much less importance among those with "marginal performance", the quality of the former school still makes some "colouring" among the risky outcomes. While the proportion of compulsive quitters reaches the extra high figures of 35–36 per cent among those who came to the decision to end their studentship in a minority-dominated school, the 23–24 per cent high ratio of yet "undecided" cases among those who finish in a majority-dominated institution implies some hopes for still being accepted by a "proper" secondary institution.

25 It is worth noting in this context that, among the poorly performing students from minority backgrounds, it is the group of "other" minorities whose risks seem the largest of all: 45 (!) per cent of them declared their wish to leave education as such, and a further 18 per cent gave account of yet unsettled decisions (all in all, the proportion of those applying to a school where graduation can be expected fell to the lowest rate of 35 per cent). As the detailed analysis revealed, these students are mostly from an Eastern European background or from another European Union member state from where their families migrated in the hope of better earnings and perhaps a wider and brighter future for their children than back home. The quoted figures signal a good deal of frustration, while also indicate the feelings of considering the situation an only temporary sacrifice for a later happy return home. This latter reading of the data is justified by a quick look at the argumentations, desires, and fears of these students when asked about their long-term visions regarding adult life. Much above the respective averages, 83 per cent of the "leavers" in this group argued for such a decision by strong commitment to work, while their mentioning of fears of unemployment or improper employment superseded the respective average. But the most telling is their dedication to go back to their home country: against 10 per cent on average, the proportion of those articulating such a will was 23 per cent among early marginalised youth from "white" migrant backgrounds.

If taken together, the above findings provide us with firm ground for giving an affirmative answer to the earlier set of questions about the relativity of the determinations that school results imply. Yes, in theory, there is certainly a spacious playground for options that depart from what prior achievement would designate for one's advancement. This playground is, however, highly structured by intersecting social, ethnic, and institutional forces. It is huge and comfortable for those well-performing students who possess the cumulative advantages of coming from the well-educated and strongly embedded families of the majority, provided the parents had been prepared enough to look ahead and enrolled their child in a "good majority school" well in advance. However, the playground is reduced to a tiny space for those "marginally performing" students who can be found on the opposite end of the scale. By coming from poorly educated and marginalised families, and by being squeezed into the segregated quarters of primary education, their fate is largely predetermined: for the most part, they have to say farewell to the "childish" way of life of regular school attendance and take up duties either at home or in the least stable segments of informal labour where uneducated and untrained workers are still in need in substantial quantity.

The described trends and associations seem to prevail across all the countries participating in the research. However, one would hypothesise variations in their strength and the magnitude of the implied socio-ethnic inequalities. After all, it can be assumed that the long history of interethnic cohabitation in communities that have come into being by subsequent waves of migration from the one-time colonies would provide certain established and routinely followed pathways for their minorities; this would be distinguishable from the prevailing patterns in societies that are just about to enter the historic phase of recognising and accepting their changed ethnic character and are currently experimenting with reforms to reshuffle their institutional systems and provisions to the new conditions of ethnic heterogeneity. Yet another constellation can be expected in the new democracies of Central Europe where experimentation with defining the actual contents of inclusionary citizenship has been paralleled with exclusionary attempts at making the concept bifurcated along the lines of ethno-national superiority. In the light of these distinguishable models, one would anticipate rather remarkable deviations in the intensity of how social and ethnic inequalities inform students' options and longer-term pathways in education and beyond, and how the involved determinations portion different degrees of freedom for them.

The processing of the survey data according to the ruling principles of interethnic cohabitation allows us to draw a few conclusions.

The first lesson that the associations show is clear: regarding the potentials for continuation, the Western democracies that are represented in the EDUMIGROM project have uniformly erased differences by ethnic belonging. While inequalities in advancement are significant according to social status, assignment to the dominant pattern of continuing on the secondary level does not differ along ethnic lines – or better to say, minor differences work *in favour* of adolescents from minority backgrounds with some two to four per cent outscoring the 80 per cent proportion among the respective majorities. At the same time, the peculiar character of our investigated communities has to be emphasised in this context.

As we have learned from the reports of the involved countries (Felouzis et al. 2010, Swann and Law 2010, Thomsen, Moldenhawer, and Kallehave 2010, Ohliger 2009), the "majorities" of these communities are characterised by some special traits that distinguish them from the mainstream in their societies: the concentration of poverty is very high and "troubled" family backgrounds are outstandingly frequent among them. By taking into account these facts, the preceding statement thus has to be rephrased in a more accurate way. In these working-class communities, ethnic minority people – regardless of whether they are well or poorly educated, rich or poor – seem to approach or even slightly supersede the state of the lower echelons of the majority society living in their proximity.

With all the implications of this reservation, the situation of students from "immigrant backgrounds" in the West significantly differs from that of their Roma peers in the post-socialist world whose dual deprivation in terms of low social standing and ethnic "otherness" is clearly demonstrated by the data: against a "Western"-standard high ratio of 84 per cent of continuers among the majority, the corresponding proportion falls to 75 per cent among them – which simultaneously implies that no less than one out of four Roma adolescents says farewell to education with a primary-school certificate that destines them for future destitution at the early ages of fourteen or fifteen. At the same time, these departing indices and the details behind them tell the story of strong-handed attempts by the local majority to keep Roma away, even from those small advantages that "white" people living in similar conditions enjoy. The stake of this ethnicised struggle is to gain a modest degree of superiority. The data confirm what the country reports portray in so many convincing details: the status of the deprived strata of the non-Roma majorities are protected by massive movements of "white flight" and the squeezing out of Roma youth from access to the channels of upward social mobility that together induce extreme selection and conclude in the emergence of socio-ethnic ghettos in education and the labour market (Fucik et al. 2010, Messing, Neményi, and Szalai 2010, Kusá, Kostlán, and Rusnáková 2010, Magyarai and Vincze 2009).

At the same time, the figures for those who are determined to leave education do not indicate any specificity along the typology by historical clustering: on average, the proportions are around 20 per cent (with three to nine per cent differences to the detriment of the respective ethnic minority groups). However, the message is clear all across the countries: apparently, neither the welfare states nor the school systems of the "old" and "new" member states of a united Europe are strong enough to prevent high proportions of adolescents living in poor multiethnic communities from becoming severely marginalised and from entering a route that leads straight toward the reproduction of the deprivation of their forebears. Although students from "troubled" families of the majority are not protected either, the risks of social exclusion are exceptionally high for teenagers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Earlier achieved performance is one of the strongest constituents in shaping students' ideas about the next educational stage: while more than four-fifths of the "excellently" evaluated students are determined to head toward secondary education with graduation, the corresponding proportion falls by half among their "marginally performing" peers.

Concerning students' striving for continuing education beyond the compulsory age, there are remarkable differences along the East-West divide. While the differences between adolescents from majority and minority backgrounds have vanished in the western communities with a close-to-universal attendance of one or another form of secondary education, there are significant departures between majority students and their Roma peers in the post-socialist communities of Central Europe. One out of four Roma adolescents says farewell to education with a primary-school certificate at the early age of fourteen or fifteen that destines them for future destitution.

The manifold processes of squeezing out Roma youth from access to the channels of upward social mobility together induce extreme selection and conclude in the emergence of socio-ethnic ghettos in education and the labour market.

Given such a rather complex interplay of influential factors that individuals hardly have the power to alter, one is somewhat hesitant to ask: do otherwise important individual traits play any role in shaping one's future? Do differential attitudes, tastes, and ideas about one's adult life make any contribution here? Or have our school systems made these inputs the "luxury" of only those in the best positions? To put it differently: being well aware of the degree of freedom that has been assigned to them by the givens in their conditions, what are the expectations of families and children when they decide to apply to a specific school? Within the limitations that most of them face, do they still aspire for stretching the personal "playgrounds" by making an ample choice that still leaves open a path toward academia while also offering a good qualification for applying for some acceptable jobs upon graduation? Or is it mainly considerations about the socio-ethnic milieu of the future school that drives them, with the implied hope of becoming integrated members of the community-at-large? Or are they driven primarily by certain external indicators and blindly rely on word of mouth about the good reputation and community-friendly atmosphere of the prospective institution?

True, these and similar ideas, and the personal attitudes that inspire them, do not change the structural features of education. Nevertheless, we consider them as inputs equal in importance to the structural factors discussed earlier – and we have at least two serious reasons to do so. On the one hand, despite the fact that individual aspirations are strongly informed by the recognition of external givens, personal ambitions that point against the "prescribed rules of the game" on a massive scale might also gradually become the source of future alterations on the macro-level. In this context, it seems to make sense to look at our adolescent generation of established "newcomers" – the second and third generation of one-time migrants and the urbanised groups of once rural Roma – as the articulators of new needs and claims.

On the other hand, the personal drives behind the particular patterns of choice throw some light on the longer-term shaping of careers and perspectives. As such, students' one-time plans for the next years ahead can be considered partly as the blueprints of their life histories, with certain important experiences

and impressions, while these ideas are also the reflections of self-perceptions and visions about one's standing in the wider context of social relations. In this sense, the following discussions can be considered as a prelude to the succeeding chapters of this study. Through the lens of students' thoughts about the immediate future, we hope to give an introduction to an understanding of the damage that might be the source of the reasons for opting out of the educational system with resignation or for frustrated opposition to schooling, as well as of those manifestations of strength and self-reliance that point toward the rise of a generation who is no longer inclined to consider the rights of citizenship as a matter of benevolent concession on the part of the "hosting" majority but claims recognition on equal grounds.

As will be shown below, in addition to the survey questions about motivations behind school choice, the face-to-face interviews with ethnic minority adolescents, their parents, and teachers revealed a rich and deeply structured landscape of considerations, hopes, and fears regarding the future. The qualitative material also gave us an insight into the macro-structural shaping of individual paths by providing an opportunity to compare the varying scope of adolescent imaginations against the desired and/or attainable social positions on offer in societies with different degrees of upward social mobility in general, and for ethnic minority people in particular.

Let us first see what the survey data tell us about the socially structured freedoms of choice.

In a search for the major considerations that drove our respondents in selecting the institution where they intend to study next, the questionnaire offered a diverse set of motives to choose from.<sup>26</sup> As pointed out earlier, such important decisions are usually born by concluding a long process of deliberations and a thorough examination of all the pros and cons of a given option. The data indicate the end of this process: students' responses cluster around a few distinguished configurations that are indicated with high frequency and that draw up the contours of a limited number of distinctive patterns. The first among them is academic dedication: it is personal interest, good prior performance, expectations toward later continuation at a higher level, and the necessary secondary certificate that are bundled behind this option. The second decipherable cluster of motives crystallises around expectations toward entrance to the world of labour. Those whose choice had been driven primarily by such concerns emphasise as their leading considerations: straight access to a vocation, predictable easy furtherance toward employment, and graduation for the sake of employability. The third pattern emerges from the responses of those

26 The question was phrased in the following way: "Did the following influence your choice of the direction of schooling for next year?"

The list of items for multiple selection were the following:

- the education provided by the school should facilitate my interest;
- the education provided by the school should facilitate the subjects I am best at;
- the school should be nearby;
- the school should have a good reputation;
- the school should be inclusive, accepting students irrespective of their social background or "ethnic origin";
- the school should provide religious education;
- the school should provide graduation (matriculation);
- the school should provide vocational qualifications;
- the school should facilitate access to higher education;
- the school should facilitate access to a good job.

whose choice of school had been conducted by knowing (or hoping) that the prospective institution highly appraises human rights: for this group, the observance of social and ethnic equality in admittance is a primary motive that precedes the mentioning of claims for religious education.

By considering the decisive impact of previous school performance and the varied degrees of freedom of choice along the lines of socio-ethnic belonging discussed previously, it seems worth disaggregating these indices and inquire about the intersecting components that might shape the patterns that the three most frequently occurring clusters of motivations demonstrate.

The first lesson that the detailed data reveal is the dominance of three very clear constellations that make up 74 to 93 per cent among the kaleidoscope of motives involved. The message is clear: regardless of otherwise important differences among them, by the time of arriving at the gateway of secondary schooling, young people are uniformly aware of living in highly structured societies and this state of affairs compels them to make an early choice among pathways that lead them toward sharply diverging positions in adulthood. A genuine choice is made between two distinct careers. The first of them is ruled by the prescribed route to the higher ranks of society through extensive studying, while the second implies early entrance to the world of labour with predictable lower-middle-class positions as the best ones to hope for. The two patterns depart in an "either/or" way, indeed: while 36 per cent of our respondents listed "academic" motivations and 39 per cent picked up "work-related" considerations, the proportion of those who allowed themselves to remain open toward both directions by postponing the ultimate selection for a while was only 14 per cent in the sample.

However, a secured path toward employability apparently satisfies only the smaller part of the group who intend to follow the second route (even if the door remains open for a later turn to academic directions). For the overwhelming majority (65 per cent) of this group of future workers, in addition to assisting early entrance to the labour market, the observance of human and minority rights is an equally highly prioritised aspect for a future school. What is more, it is primarily the well-performing students who articulate the demand for inclusion, and they do so without any remarkable differences according to social or ethnic belonging. The high occurrence and the close to equal proportions by socio-ethnic status are to be taken as an interesting and important finding of our research that seems to signal widespread frustrations among the youth of deprived communities who, regardless of important inequalities among them, consider themselves discriminated against en masse by the broader social environment. The degree of frustration seems to be the most intense among those coming from the poorer segments of the community: irrespective of their ethnic background, it is well-performing students of the lower segments of the communities heading toward early participation in the labour market but still hoping for respect and recognition who highly appreciate the potential of an inclusive school in decreasing those inequalities and devaluing distinctions that, so far, have kept them at a remarkable distance from the more fortunate strata of society.

The second important lesson suggested by the survey results concerns the power of students' prior school achievements that apparently imprint even their ideas about the longer-term future. The data

demonstrate two simultaneous tendencies. On the one hand, the relative weight of the different options is close to identical, indicating that the major patterns that students' future plans follow are shaped primarily by their socio-ethnic positions and earlier attained better or worse grade scores do not alternate the order. On the other hand, poorly performing students seem to face a good deal of confusion: they appear much less clear about the drives, values, and paths to follow than their well-performing peers. After all, by recalling the decisive impact of one's prior school achievement on the choice of the schools within reach, the high degree of uncertainties among the poor performers is understandable – though it is certainly not self-evident. It speaks about the impact of earlier frustrating experiences well beyond their original frames of reference and demonstrates the enduring influence of one-time devaluations that apparently work as self-fulfilling prophecies that are now shaping into accidental outcomes and risky marginalisation.<sup>27</sup>

While the choice of school is mainly informed by ideas about how one envisions his or her future position in the world of labour and in society-at-large, such decisions apparently carry a good deal of additional implications. As the data show, close to *half* of the poorly performing students from low-status majority backgrounds and a third of their like peers with ethnic minority belonging opt for a path that not only ascertains early entrance to the labour market but also promises a future of respect and recognition. These figures that provide the lead in the respective groups of reference reveal inequities and frustrations that deserve attention. The detailed analysis brings up the vulnerable state of lower-class students from majority backgrounds in the highly selected "minority schools" in our post-colonial communities, especially in the French "*banlieues*", whose primary preoccupation seems to be their social and cultural devaluation. As the French and British studies have pointed out with a range of telling figures, citations, and adjoining explanations, these adolescents often feel excluded and cut off from the society where they actually consider themselves to belong, and perceive their "misplacement" in poor "immigrant" communities a manifestation of severe injustice and discrimination. The extremely high – 62 per cent – mention of claims for inclusion among students who belong to this group can be read as a sign of protest and clear demand (Felouzis et al. 2009, Schiff 2010, Swann 2009 and 2010).

The corresponding 32 per cent proportion opting for the same path among their like peers from ethnic minority backgrounds reveals a somewhat different story in Central Europe. As the details bring into light, this still remarkable occurrence of claiming inclusion is the product of massive Roma objection to the prevailing state of affairs in the countries of post-socialist transformation. While their immediate neighbours from the majority consider it "natural" that Roma should attend segregated institutions and then go on to the least qualified and worst paid jobs that are assigned "just for them", the

27 As the details reveal, apart from the parents of the affected students who themselves face substantial difficulties in navigating the "alien" worlds of education and work, these adolescents often lack adult support. According to the information about the "counsellors" who participated in the deliberations, despite their obvious need for extra support and attention, children with uncertain visions had fewer opportunities to ask for some advice, either from their teachers or from the respected members of the community, than their peers with a clear path ahead.

young generation of Roma apparently question these arrangements. Despite their deep poverty and the marginalised position of their families, they claim admittance to the pathways that have been occupied so far by the majority and emphasise, the most important choice marked at the high rate of 72 per cent, that the way toward "integration" starts with inclusion in education.

The tendencies discussed so far are powerfully underscored by students' responses to inquiries about their longer-term plans for higher education. The aggregate indicators by prior performance and socio-ethnic belonging show what one would expect: while such determinations are very intense among the well-performing adolescents coming from the upper ranks of the social hierarchy, those who have to seriously consider an early start of adult-like gainful work, and especially those whose prior history in schooling does not easily qualify them for catching up in knowledge and skills, demonstrate lesser degrees of clear commitment. Nevertheless, the relatively modest slope of the trend and, especially, the systematically higher rates of dedication among students from ethnic minority backgrounds in comparison to the referential groups of the majority are good news, indeed. Taken together, the figures signal that, despite all the limitations that they and their parents are well aware of, adolescents see their future with a rather high degree of freedom for upward mobility, and consider later entrance into the extended and democratised systems of higher education a path that is still open to them.<sup>28</sup> The data qualify this statement. While determination to go on toward higher education is understandably more intense among those whose choice of school on the secondary level has already been shaped by academic considerations, the proportions are only some seven to 20 per cent lower among those whose primary concern for the time-being is employability.

The qualitative material fleshes out the above findings, and helps us to refine the picture by a closer look at the qualities of social and ethnic constraints in the diverse contexts of our communities whose young members, despite generally living in conditions of ethnic and social segregation, face different degrees of freedom of choice when potentials for breaking out from poverty and marginalisation through continued education come up for consideration.

If one draws an invisible scale of greater or lesser degrees of opportunities for upward social mobility, it is the Nordic countries that take the lead. In these countries (represented by Denmark and Sweden in the EDUMIGROM research), the widely shared and deeply internalised values of *equality* and *equity* shaping public discourse and also people's perception of the mundane relations seem to set the framework in which ethnic minority teenagers formulate their ideas for the future and claim rights for quality education in concordance with their native peers. Although they report painful cases of being unfavourably distinguished and devalued as "bilinguals", experiences about being "othered" apparently do

28 These findings are in accordance with the results of some important recent studies on strong dedication of young people from certain ethnic groups (e.g., Pakistanis and Chinese in Britain, Chinese in the United States) to acquire a degree. These studies came to the consentient conclusion that strong cultural imprints in the family and the generationally-transmitted motivations for attaining a recognised middle-class position through academic advancement are powerful enough to countervail the downward-pulling effects of immigrants' low social-class position and poverty (Loury, Modood, and Teles 2005, Modood 2010).



not hold them back from struggles for highly praised middle-class positions. In their perception, structural discrimination in education and on the labour market concludes in some relative hindrances, but certainly does not lead to exclusion on ethnic grounds, nor does it conduce an emptying of the rich contents of citizenship rights set by the welfare state. In this framework of addressing unjust inequalities, ethnic minority families claim support and affirmative interventions by which they do not find it unimaginable for their children to successfully strive for top middle-class positions with high degrees of recognition, prestige, and material rewards. As put by an Afghan boy in Stockholm: *"Parents have a lot to say about the children's future. They want you to have a job with status, just as a doctor or a pilot"*.

The recurring argumentation makes equality amidst diversity firm ground for claims for inclusion: *"We are citizens as Danes are, and it is great that we have the same right for education"*. Such a strong awareness of citizenship rights helps minority adolescents to engage in personal struggles for recognition: they successfully negotiate needs for extra attention and support – and though teachers often see such demands of students and families as undeservingly shifting the burden of ethno-social disadvantages on them, school administrators seem to be open enough in inventing some solutions, and often respond by employing ethnic minority personnel for some special tasks at schools. However, the interviews reveal that the scope of opportunities is broader than what a school can offer: despite recent cuts in welfare spending and the spreading of anti-immigrant sentiments in both countries, their welfare states are still strong enough to provide support for familial advancement. It is against this backing that strategies for upward mobility can be played out by a variety of solutions from moving to better residential areas to parents' changing employment and to smartly mobilising the social capital that is embodied in the surrounding multiethnic neighbourhood. Hence, schooling becomes a strategy for ethnic minorities much like it works for the majority. As an Iranian parent in Sweden has put it: *"[...] the clue to success is that my children have to attend a school visited by Swedes. They have to get the same education"*. On the ground of such dedications and the skilful capitalising on available resources, aspiring to become a doctor or a lawyer are popular ideas for minority teenagers in these communities, and for the most part, they see it a realistic goal to engage in occupations that are usually far above the horizon of same-ethnic Somalis, Kurds, or Turks living in other countries.

The contextualisation of ideas about the future and of the educational strategies that should be followed to meet one's expectations is markedly different in the post-colonial communities of France and the United Kingdom. In both cases, it is people's firm visions about the *prevailing class structure* and the implications of low working-class positions underscored by a range of strong symbolic meanings (the social implications of one's home address, the culturally perceived behaviours associated with given neighbourhoods, the betraying linguistic patterns of the peculiar "ethnolect" that one speaks, the stereotypical viewing on "who those people are") that frame familial aspirations for breaking through the invisible walls of being downgraded. In this context, residential segregation stands out as a major source of frustration for adolescents and parents from "white" working-class backgrounds that recur in their

accounts of the painful injustices of being confined to poor multiethnic communities and thereby suffering sharp exclusion from the mainstream where they principally would belong. Concurrently, these deprived groups of working-class students from the majority often engage in varied forms of revolting against the unjust "system" that, in their eyes, is embodied by the school. As a result, absenteeism, truancy, and class repetition are frequent occurrences that are followed by being referred to one of the "collector" schools from where one's path rarely ever leads to continued education. These pathways of downward mobility toward marginalisation and social exclusion are also shared by teenagers from certain ethnic groups that traditionally have been seriously devalued in their social environments – exemplified in our research by the fates of early departure from education by Black Caribbean students in Britain and North Africans in France. However, widely experienced apprehension among these latter groups of young people has sources different from their white working-class peers. These students and their parents consider outright *racism* as the primary root of marginalisation and see themselves as victims of white supremacy – be it phrased in ethnic terms as in Britain – or framed as a matter of conflicting cultures, as in France.

Those who see the opportunities for breaking out from poverty and attaining an acknowledged status in society also frame their ideas and claims in social-class terms. However, their perception of the prevailing class relations and their own future positioning seems more refined than that of the above marginalised groups. Without question, the model to follow is that of the upper segments of the urban middle class: one has to go to a good secondary school or attend a track that "speaks for itself" and the name of which sounds good enough when applying to university. All efforts have to be made to remain on the ascribed path – if one fails, future life in its entirety might be risked. A teacher in France characterised this orientation of Maghrebi parents and (especially female) students with the following words:

*And also there's a lot of pressure from the families. We have the case of a girl who's dead set on getting a scientific Baccaalaureat, and for the past two years things haven't been going well. And she's sick over it, really miserable. I'm thinking of another one who missed her Baccaalaureate twice and who wanted to repeat for a third time and who was so unhappy, and whom we had told so many times that there were other things she could do. We don't see the parents, but we feel the pressure, the will to succeed.*

Interviews with students and parents reinforced such a portrayal by emphasising that it is, first and foremost, the credentials that matter, and the actual professional content of the skills that one acquires comes next. Such a strong belief in having a degree to alter one's life also proved rather widespread among Pakistani families in Britain, whose parental generation had focused on embedding themselves in British society, often at a price of taking up low-prestige occupations and setting up a modest way of living, but for whom the reconstruction of an acknowledged familial position was seen through mobilising all means in order to help their children into professional ranks by providing them with good educations:

*A good education means good GCSEs and good A-Levels, then going straight to university and then I don't mind what they want to do. I would love them to be doctors or lawyers but I can't force it on them, whatever they want to do, but I would want them to do something professional [...] because then they will have an easier life, they will have a good job, and if they have had that education [...] you know that is why you want the best for your children. You don't want them to be in the same boat as you.*<sup>29</sup>

Another clear strategy promising a way out from the endless reproduction of multiple ethno-social disadvantages is demonstrated by families who are instigated by the invisible "ethnic ceiling" to invent alternative routes by accommodating in their own ethnic community. The traditions of kinship-based migration and the successful establishment of an ethnic market in significant Turkish communities in France and in important parts of the Pakistani communities in some northern cities in Britain provide entrepreneurial perspectives, decent living conditions, good reputations, and the protection and solidarity of their immediate social environments for many among the young generation. These adolescents use the same frame of reference of social-class belonging; however, they balance outer discrimination by working out clearly upward-pointing pathways of mobility within their own ethnic enclave. The French Community Study summarises the rationale behind such parallel worlds with the following words:

*Parents of Turkish students often discouraged their children from pursuing education beyond the shorter vocational certificates. Because they were able to find ready employment in one of the numerous small local businesses in the building trade held by members of their ethnic group, even high performing students were often discouraged from continuing their studies even when their teachers thought they should. [...] First generation Turks are more likely to serve as models for the second generation, or at least to offer them an initial entry into the job market by way of community-based networks and their ties to ethnic entrepreneurs (Schiff 2010).*

Concerning the macro-social framing of longer-term perspectives and immediate educational outlook for ethnic minority youth, a distinct example is represented by Germany. The EDUMIGROM research clearly reflects the tense relationship between the majority and the dominantly Muslim ethnic minorities that one learns about day after day from the media and that was recently authoritatively summed up by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in her infamous announcement: *"Multiculturalism has utterly failed in Germany"*. The tensions certainly have multiple sources. First, until very recently, Germans' self-perception as being open and tolerant toward ethnic minorities has been coupled with

29 The described strong dedication to education seems to be widespread among Pakistanis in the United Kingdom as the clue to their success in outscoring white middle-class peers in attending higher education. Tariq Modood considers these the preserved and generationally-transmitted "culture of upward-striving orientation" the most important vehicle of certain ethnic groups in successfully countervailing the burdens of shortages in their social and cultural capital. (Loury, Modood, and Teles 2005)

their tacit expectation for immigrants to return home and thus allow their "hosts" to maintain ethnic and cultural homogeneity in their country. Second, the strives for creating a homogenous German nation-state were burdened by the post-1990 unification process that turned out to be far more troubled and harder than had been expected and that, ironically, has induced painful rivalries for work and welfare between large groups of the impoverished "Ossies" and their Turkish, Arab, and East European fellow countrymen. The involved economic struggles often became phrased in conflicts of cultures, moral standards, and conducts of daily life that portrayed "visibly" different minorities as uninterested in progress and disloyal to their hosts. Third, ethnic differences have become heavily laden with deep and stark divides in the social structure: ethnic minority belonging increasingly has become identical with marginalised working-class positions and social exclusion in the form of sharp residential segregation. Thus, the arising conflicts inseparably carry ethnic and social-class implications that are topped by constant cultural clashes on religious grounds.

In this multilayered understanding of majority/minority relations, it is the conceptual creation of sharply differing *cultural entities* of "Us" and "Them" that guides ethnic minority families in defining their position and, especially, in orienting their children toward given pathways of education and occupation. Teenagers' ideas about the future are distinctly less clear than those of their peers in the above Western communities. A case taken from the German country report on ethnic relations clearly demonstrates the cognised uncertainties:

*C. is the best pupil in class. This makes her confident to obtain a university entrance diploma. [...] Obviously, she has a profession in mind. [...] Despite this clear vision of a professional goal, she can't really tell how she might reach it and finally states "I shouldn't exaggerate. It might be more appropriate to get vocational training in the medical realm and then let's see. I'm unsure what's possible and what's not"* (Strassburger 2009).

Future careers are seen in broadly perceived cultural terms and are contextualised in advocating for the recognition and respect of Islam and the traditions of a Muslim way of life. Turkish and Lebanese adolescents of the studied communities clearly see that they have to make a choice between two contrasting alternatives, either by accepting the strong assimilationist pressure that is mediated by the majority of their teachers, or by following the rules and patterns of their own community and establish themselves in a closed Muslim world that is defined as a "parallel universe" to that of the Germans. In their daily lives, children are often torn between these two contrasting ends: the permanent exposure to criticism and clashing requirements contributes to their uncertainties and often concludes in downward mobility across schools and tracks. For those who do not give up, self-protection and the struggles to maintain open doors toward "German-like" occupations with rewarding status and material wealth require a constant involvement in a two-sided struggle for rights and respect. As a Turkish girl phrased it:

*One does not have to adjust in every aspect. The Germans also have to understand that we have a different religion and some different opinions about how we want to live our private lives. But teachers put such a huge pressure on us that I don't know how to react. They should accept the differences. Do we criticise their way of living? No, we don't but we expect them not to do so as well.*

However, it is not easy to keep balance: one either keeps striving for some respected position no matter the costs of adjustment and gives up loyalty to the community, or one abandons high aspirations and frames schooling, working, and living according to the customary norms of the community. As an excerpt from Turkish and Lebanese students' group discussion shows, the price is sometimes extremely high:

*They referred to two of M.'s aunts who had started academic careers. These relatives serve now as the negative counter-example. M. cites her father who asked her: "Do you want to end like your relatives? Look at them. They are unemployed and have to prove to the labour agency that they are constantly applying for jobs. They are controlled all the time, always bothered by officials." You should find a decent vocation (Strassburger and Ucan 2010).*

Finally, the case of the four Central European countries stands out for a caste-like exclusion of Roma that, at best, allows for scattered individual attempts at integration by accepting and internalising the assimilationist arrogance of the norm-setting groups in domination, but that, as a rule, keeps the minority community far apart from the opportunities and positions available for the majority. Generationally-transmitted deep poverty, joblessness, confined residence in separated ghetto-like area in dilapidated one-time industrial towns or under virtually premodern conditions of communal deprivation in the rural surroundings is the usual experience of the majority of Roma from an early age. The shared fate of being cut off from the world ruled by "*gadjo*" people establishes a certain degree of commonality that – despite important divisions by ethnic subgroups and also by a certain degree of internal stratification along well-remembered earlier achievements, material possessions, and varying personal histories of being integrated through employment – uniformly designates an appallingly limited scope of future paths for the new generations. Looked at from a majoritarian perspective, these conditions of utter deprivation are perceived as the Roma-specific traits of the "culture of poverty" that Roma are morally responsible for maintaining and that provides the *ultima ratio* for their distinction and ensuing separation. In these abasing contexts of suffered deprivation and "justified" ethnic discrimination, Roma adolescents and their parents frame their claims for advancement in the language of *human rights* and *integration*. A Roma father in Romania with only five classes of elementary education put it in a telling way: "*Romanians or Hungarians should not believe that they have more fingers than we have; they should not treat us as fools; that's why we need to go to school and to prove that we are their equals, we are gentlemen Gypsies*". Unlike in the case of ethnic minorities in the northern countries that, on the grounds of attained civic

and political inclusion, struggle for equality in the economic and social domains, the claims of Roma target the substance of democracy: their struggle is launched for the fundamental human rights of dignity, respect, and personal safety. Education is seen as the battlefield of such struggles where many are harmed and defeated from the outset. An early departure from schooling (which, as seen above, involves Roma in a proportion exceeding all other ethnic minority groups) is a self-explanatory response to the gradual disaffection that students develop and that is deepened by the amassed experience of the community with the depreciating workings of all majority institutions, concisely expressed by a Roma student in Hungary: *"There is no use in graduating from high school, when your origin prevents you from being hired anywhere. They always say the job has been filled"*. For Roma students, the usefulness of continuing studying is also questioned by the pressing need to contribute to the family's difficult day-to-day struggles for mere survival. Under the conditions of their ongoing struggles to ascertain the minimally required resources for mere sustenance, continued education appears as an unaffordable luxury. As described by the Czech Community Study:

*Boys are responsible for the material security of their family and therefore they need to start working at an early age. Girls tend to stay at home with the children and therefore the support from their parents for other studies is lower. Our Roma respondents indeed stated that early economic activity is very important for them but it is common both for girls and boys (Marada et al. 2010).*

Despite the widespread occurrence of early departures from education, the majority of Roma youth and their parents are dedicated to continuing beyond the elementary level. However, the plans are shaped in consideration of a lowly set "ethnic ceiling": for the most part, adolescents dream of vocations where experience has shown the majority tolerating the presence of Roma: in construction work, in traditional industrial occupations, and in certain services where the ethnic community itself would provide the consumers with the necessary purchasing power, like in hairdressing or cobbling. At the same time, all the mentioned vocations imply an inferred hope for moving toward becoming integrated through decent work. This is clear from the reasoning of a mother in Hungary:

*She must go, and that's it. Why would she work as a dressmaker in a small village? [...]She would not be able to succeed there in that small village. Like it's the case with me: I have three children, so nothing has become of me. I could have attended a boarding school in V., but I didn't go. [...] So what do you have here? Public work and collecting garbage in town – so my son's ashamed of seeing me on the street.*

At the same time, attempts at acquiring a vocation above the invisible but generally known and tacitly acknowledged "ethnic ceiling" are severely penalised by humiliation and exclusion. As a Hungarian mother described:

*My daughter had a classmate who was also Roma and wanted to study food supply. She was accepted at the school and so a shop had to be found where she could do an internship. The reason why she has never become a shop assistant was that, wherever she tried, she was told that if she had touched the ham, no one would come to the store any more.*

However, there are a few who try to break through and aspire to attain a degree in higher education. Those brave girls and boys coming from better-situated families in the Roma community and who bring forward good enough performance results from schools with enough of a reputation to hope for success in striving upward in the social hierarchy usually aspire for practice-oriented professional careers like becoming nurses in hospitals or geriatric care, medical doctors in general practice, economists at a firm, primary school teachers, etc. However, their high-striving aspirations are often broken down by the teachers who intend to "protect" them from future disappointments by mediating the perceived refusal of the majority: *"I told us that she was planning to go to medical high school and when she told it to her teacher, she warned her from going there, arguing that patients would not want Roma nurse to take care of them"* (Kusá, Kostlán, and Rusnáková 2010). Such comments can be even more discriminatory: *"[...] my niece passed her school-leaving exam [...] she was a good student, her skin was dark, she was Roma. She wanted to be an economist. The teacher told her to not even dare to dream about being 'Emese in the Budapest Bank' – like in the advertisement!"* (Feischmidt, Messing, and Neményi 2010).

In the light of such harsh discrimination and the mainstream attempts at fencing off Roma at a clear distance from the majority's world, it is certainly no surprise that the proportion of Roma in higher education ranges only from half to one (!) per cent in all the four Central European countries, whereby the lack of successful role models, who have such an important pulling effect among ethnic minority youth in the West, becomes an additional item on the list of painful shortages for Roma whose contemporary teenage generation is apparently destined to repeat the same fate of exclusion suffered by their parents and grandparents.

In sum, the quantitative and qualitative results on advancement and the potentials for upward social mobility provide a rather controversial reading. On the one hand, the structural determinants that regulate advancement toward adulthood with a high degree of rigour and designate truly unequal positions for students along the socio-ethnic hierarchy are responsible for assigning disadvantaged educational paths and adult careers to the great majority of youths from ethnic minority backgrounds. Despite important differences in the depth and magnitude of hindrances that these young people are faced with in the varied clusters of the European welfare states, their citizenship rights are set at a significantly lower rank than those of their majority peers, and such departures entail dangers for the securing of the fundamental values of equality and equity in European democracies. On the other hand, important changes beneath the prevailing structures point toward a gradual change. Although the framing and phrasing of claims for inclusion differ according to the histories and acknowledged

foundations of the welfare states that are represented in the EDUMIGROM research, our data signal a clear strive for recognition and democratic participation across the borders. Whether the change that minorities call for will yield more respectful interethnic cohabitation and a general observance of human rights that conclude, in turn, in social inclusion for those whose preceding generations have faced harsh discrimination and exclusion – this is, of course, an open question of European social development. However, the silent struggle for recognition and the widely internalised values of modernisation among the adolescents of today's deprived social and ethnic communities certainly provide the potential for such a change.



## CHAPTER IV

### SCHOOLS AS SITES OF SOCIALISATION, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS, AND IDENTITY FORMATION

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This chapter goes beyond the academic functions of the school and analyses how schools, independently of or in unison with other public agencies, also act as important agents of socialisation. The chapter begins by introducing the impact of institutional and interpersonal relationships on students' daily lives and educational careers. Here, we look into variations of teachers' attitudes towards ethnically diverse students in their schools, the variety and impact of teaching styles applied in the classroom, and the significance of the presence of ethnic minority teachers in the school collective. Afterwards, peer-group relations of minority students are examined, and factors leading to various constellations of interethnic peer-group relations will be discussed. Experiences of discrimination and unequal treatment will be discussed next in the section, and factors that make such conduct more likely will be sketched out. The subsequent part of the chapter will depart from conceptualising ethnic identity and self-perception and will provide a framework to understanding identity development of ethnic minority adolescents and show how students develop strategies of handling their relationships with the majority, thereby forming and acting out their identities. Finally, the chapter will close by discussing how minority ethnic students relate to their "ethnic" belonging and how they see their current and future positions in society.

#### **Everyday life at school and interpersonal relations of adolescents**

##### **Teaching practices and student-teacher relationships**

Our research, both its qualitative and quantitative phases, has explored the role that teachers play in shaping students' general attitude towards school, their aspirations, and their educational advancement. The research investigated in a comparative manner the most important factors that influence teacher-

student relationships, including how teaching styles, pedagogical methods affect students' attitudes towards the school and education more generally, how they might affect individuals' performances, motivations, and future aspirations.

The research highlighted immense variations in the pedagogical traditions and their related methodologies across and even within the countries of this study, the one end of which may be characterised by student autonomy and advancement of competences, and the other end by a formative emphasis on disciplining and lexical knowledge. These pedagogical traditions not only mirror but also heavily reproduce frames of interpersonal relations.

An important feature shaping teacher–student relationships, but also more general everyday experiences of adolescent youth at school is the *style and teaching practices* applied in the classroom by teachers. Although this aspect initially did not figure among the principal research questions, classroom observations conducted during community studies found that applied teaching styles may have an influential imprint on the general atmosphere in the classrooms as well as students willingness to contribute actively to the learning process. The most striking experience of the research was the great variety of teaching styles and pedagogical practices that researchers observed. The discipline taught, but more importantly the personality and preparedness of the teacher, defined whether tuition was based on frontal teaching or on dialogue between students and the teachers, whether students were actively involved or passively receiving information, whether the work was performed in small groups or individually, whether students were seen and handled as constructive partners in the learning process or ones whose own ideas were considered as obstructions to teaching. These factors further made their imprints on students' involvedness in the learning process, their willingness to participate, and motivation to contribute to the class, and consequently influenced their general performance.

*Teachers' responses to ethnically and socially diverse student populations* ranged from implementing innovative and creative pedagogy to the most traditional teaching methods resting on teachers' authority. On the one end, certain schools that educated an ethnically and socially diverse student collective became genuine laboratories of pedagogical innovation. Most of these understood that the sizeable presence of minority ethnic and/or socially disadvantaged students required more than the usual customary approaches due to the fact that these students could not depend on parental help with school work and did not have the cultural capital that the school curriculum usually builds on. Several schools in Romania, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Sweden, or France consciously handled the consequences of the above listed factors strategically. On the opposite end, the fieldwork encountered many schools that seemed to be utterly unprepared to handle challenges deriving from the special composition of their student bodies. In these schools teachers tended to resort to traditional mechanism of defence such as isolation of low-performing minority students into separate classes or sections and overemphasised discipline, authority, and punishment.

The research found that applying traditional teaching styles together with stressing discipline typically appeared to be unsuccessful. Teachers in such classes seemed to lose control frequently;

researchers witnessed situations "in which the teacher appeared incapable of maintaining even the semblance of order during the class" (Szalai 2010). In addition to pedagogical styles, teachers' attitudes towards students, their personality, and natural authority (or lack thereof) also played a major role in students' success in reversing authority relations and turning classes into a lost battle for the teacher. On the contrary, in many of the classes where innovative pedagogy was implemented and teachers provided greater, though controlled autonomy, students appeared to be more involved in the class and learning in general, and no less importantly, interactions between students seemed to be more friendly and constructive. Most likely, it is not pedagogical style alone that defines the success of teaching in a multiethnic class, but the attitude of the teacher towards students and teaching, pedagogical experience, creativeness, and devotion play an important role here.

*The attitudes and beliefs of teachers* regarding the obstacles to students' success seemed to play a major influence in the varying responses to ethnically and socially diverse student compositions. Furthermore, attitudes generally characteristic for the teachers' collective in the particular school (school culture) appeared to be at least partly a function of the institutional mode of integration versus segregation. Teachers in those schools that managed to successfully integrate ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged students seemed to appreciate their minority students and tended to interpret any related problems as pedagogical challenges. However, those teachers who taught in a school collective that separated minority students within the school seemed to more frequently depreciate their minority students and also attribute causes of educational failure to external causes such as the students' disadvantaged situation, the lack of motivation and belief in the importance of education on the part of the families, a lack of socialisation of values important for the school, etc. We hardly met any teacher in such (separating) schools who would have spoken about the possible role of the teacher in achieving school success or their responsibility in the failure of disadvantaged students. We found that the extent and nature of the *contacts teachers have with parents* – especially in the case of Roma in Central European countries – played a significant role in the general attitude towards ethnic minority students. Those teachers who hardly ever met Roma parents or contacted them only on the occasion of extremely disruptive behaviour of their children tended to portray Roma families as homogeneously insolent and destructive, while those teachers who regularly met with parents more readily differentiated among families and students and proved to be more ready to understand problems of children and their families.

Experiences from the research suggest that, especially in the case of Central European countries, the *ethos of the school* and its leadership, the ideas of headmasters and principal teachers about how diversity and equal opportunities for all children can be enhanced, and their flexibility of adapting of pedagogical styles and practices to needs of diverse student population play a crucial role in how minority ethnic students succeed at school. The link between teachers' perception of minority students as "impossible" to manage and their own experience of having been relegated into low-prestige school was clear in the case of Central European schools where Roma students compose a substantial proportion and also in the case of German comprehensive schools receiving high proportions of Turkish adolescents. When

teachers felt that they had been placed in a low-prestige school with a high proportion of ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged students and without being prepared for managing such a special student population, they rapidly found themselves encircled, blaming the families and incapable of solving difficult situations. One might wonder whether the generally positive views of Swedish and Danish teachers about immigrant families are a result of the manner in which teachers have been recruited and trained, or the other way round, whereby well- and sensitively-trained teachers are placed in "difficult" schools.

The research, in consonance with other studies, found that *teachers' expectations and attitudes towards their students play an essential role in students' attitudes toward school and studying in general*. Several earlier studies found that children in school encounter attitudes and social arrangements that communicate to them their "expected" aspirations: students who are anticipated by their teachers to fail will very likely perform poorly, while students – even if weaker in certain capacities – who are expected to perform well will do so (Hare and Castenell 1985, Grant 1985, Steele 1992). Kenneth Clark concluded as early as the mid-1960s that the key factor to the academic failure of African-American students was the fact that their teacher did not expect them to learn and anticipated their school failure (Clark 1965). This tendency was also confirmed by our European research, especially in schools or classes, where low social status ethnic minority students composed a majority.

In this respect we have to refer the phenomenon of the "island culture" that evolved among students in many of these low-prestige "minority schools" and partially as a result of lowered expectations by their teachers. Teachers in such schools most typically seemed to be unable to handle behavioural problems, were not ready to adapt their expectations or lower behavioural standards in class; in response, they reduced, however, teaching contents and curriculum to the utmost necessary minimum. Such decisions over teaching priorities were taken because teachers felt obliged to react to the problems related to discipline and social manners of their students from minority ethnic families. Such instances were reported particularly from schools in Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. According to many of the interviewed teachers in these countries, the core of the problem was that too much effort had to be invested into compensating the students' socially disadvantaged situations by introducing them into the basic routines of everyday life "[b]ecause" – as put by a teacher in a Czech school – *"it is well known that those children come to school with handicaps. They come to the first class [...] and they don't know anything. They can't speak, don't know colours, they don't know how to eat, that they have to wash their hands after using the toilet"*. Such compelling tasks leave too little space and time for teachers to enhance the students' academic knowledge or improve their skills.

While the downward spiral of lowering expectations that teachers share in these schools contributes to the formation of an "island culture" that implies significant risks for students' successful advancement, the reduced requirements also bring about a certain degree of comfort among ethnic minority adolescents who feel safe and at ease amidst these conditions. Students in such schools frequently express such feelings because – in contrast to other schools – they are not marginalised; teachers tend to be satisfied with rather limited accomplishments, thus even weakly performing students

may experience a certain level of success which they might not gain elsewhere. This has been articulated most pronouncedly in the French, German, and Swedish cases. The other side of the coin is that even high-achievers among these students are hesitant to leave the confines of their socially detached context. The implied ambivalences of such experiences in schooling were tellingly put by a teacher in Sweden:

*The student coach of Harbour School [in Sweden]... often meets students in ninth grade who are going to attend upper secondary school in the city district. [...] young people from immigrant backgrounds are frightened and worried, even if they're successful in school with high grades. They are concerned that they'll not fit in at their new school and that it will be too difficult to keep up with the teaching. [...] what distinguishes these young people is the fear of facing "Swedish society" and "Swedes".*

The characterisation holds in general: minority adolescents schooled in segregation fear confrontation with majority society because they anticipate (more) discrimination and expect to be unable to meet the requirements, for example, in a secondary school with mostly students from ethnic majority backgrounds.

Personal reservations about entering the majority environment are further increased by the pressure from peers: those who conform to teachers' expectations of higher-mobility aspirations are viewed negatively by their classmates. Thus, attending an "inland culture" school in most of the cases becomes a serious limitation to educational mobility and aspirations. We see these processes also from the survey data: a stunning (30 per cent) gap in educational aspirations of "excellently" performing students studying in ethnically segregated and deprived schools and prestigious schools, respectively, was measured. Eighty-six percent of students with outstanding performance studying in a "good" school thought to continue in secondary school providing graduation, while the corresponding proportion was only 59 per cent for those studying in low-prestige schools dominated by ethnic minority students.

This poses a real dilemma: do ethnic minority students benefit more from segregated schools that serve their anticipated needs, provide a comfortable and safe environment, where they feel good, where truancy is negligible and the formation of their identities is less exposed to damage when compared to peers studying in majority environments? However, studying in such a school often results not only in isolation from majority society but also, due to lowered expectations of the teachers, deprives students from equal future opportunities as compared to peers studying in "majority" schools. Or would they profit more from studying in more prestigious schools, where they are more likely to be exposed to the prejudices of majority students, the lack of success, and thus are more in danger of suffering damaged identities, in particular if this environment is not only alien but also unreceptive, as we experienced in several schools participating in our research? Would such an environment raise their opportunities for meaningful educational career and thus open up the ways for upward social

mobility? There is no clear-cut answer to these questions, as the ultimate balance sheet very much depends on many intersecting factors including the quality of teaching, the ethos of the schools, and the experiences and personalities of teachers.

Here, we have to turn to the significance of the potential presence of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although it was not an explicit research question in the original research design, we nevertheless found that the *ethnic composition of the school's staff* and whether ethnic minority teachers were employed in the school proved to be a significant factor in terms of all facets of students' experiences at school. By looking at several aspects of everyday life at school, we found that the presence of ethnic minority teachers makes a significant difference. Their contribution to observing diversity is important under all circumstances, especially in "island culture" schools where such teachers may play a vital influence by providing a role model for well-performing students who lack self-confidence about continuing their studies. With the only exception of ethnic minority teachers in the observed schools in France (where pronounced distancing from the private spheres of life is the unwritten norm among the staff), most of the respective teachers made a conscious use of their own biographical records to motivate students or ease situations for talented but underprivileged minority ethnic youth. But the presence of minority teachers is important not only within the limits of segregated schools: it appeared to play a significantly positive role in all of the investigated schools. In majority schools they may serve as cultural mediators who moderate interethnic conflicts and provide support to ethnic minority students.

Seeing its importance it might be worthwhile to provide an *overview of the different roles ethnic minority teachers played* in their schools. The presence of teachers belonging to one of the "visible" ethnic groups varied country by country, and naturally depended much on the national contexts. In some of the researched Swedish and French schools, teachers from non-majority origins made up over one-third of the school's staff, while in the researched schools in the Central European region they were basically missing from schools. However, some attempts at enhancing diversity of the school personnel have been made recently: in some schools in the post-socialist countries, one or two Roma staff members were temporarily employed in the framework of some *ad-hoc* schemes financed for a few years from external funds.

Despite the large share of missing answers concerning the ethnic composition of the staff the clearly positive impact of an ethnically diverse teacher collective was also supported by the survey. We found that schools that employ ethnically heterogeneous staff provided a more pleasant and friendly environment for all their students. Data showed that tolerance towards the ethnic "other" is significantly elevated and that genuine interethnic friendships among students are more widespread in such schools. Students reported about hostility within the class in lower proportions when compared to those who attend a unit where it is exclusively teachers from the dominant majority who are employed (28 per cent as opposed to 41 per cent). A clear demonstration of the phenomenon might be illustrated by the German case where Turkish students gave accounts of the important influence that teachers from the same ethnic group had on their feelings and educational aspirations (Strassburger 2010). Similar

trends were revealed by the qualitative study among the students from two Muslim schools in Denmark (Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010).

In addition to the degree of inclusion of ethnic minority staff in the faculty, their assigned role varied greatly country by country. In certain countries, most importantly in France, the role they fulfilled had nothing to do with their origins, while in other countries the ethnic belonging of the teacher was taken as an added value: besides teaching regular classes, they were employed in their capacity as cultural brokers and/or bilingual teachers (Denmark and Sweden). Most of these teachers had also undergone special training in teaching students with an immigrant background. It was also mentioned in the interviews in almost all of the investigated countries that teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds served as important resource persons by providing patterns to follow by minority students, especially by those who were struggling to overcome the cultural gap between the school and home. In the United Kingdom, many teachers from minority backgrounds were involved in special measures designed for Black Minority Ethnic (BME) students through participation in projects that focused on raising awareness and enhancing self-esteem, and also engaged in improving class behaviour and ambitions. Such a broadly perceived approach may be explained by a different understanding of the root of the problems in schools in the United Kingdom: teachers saw that the difficulties of BME students did not primarily stem from their origin, but from the lack of recognition of their community by the wider society and, as a result of this, from their possible inferiority complexes and lack of ambitions.

The Roma teacher assistant and mediator projects that have been introduced in several post-socialist countries also seemed to exert an important impact. Even if the assistants were not considered as equal partners of teachers in the schools, the qualitative studies have revealed that Roma children find their presence important, especially in feeling more at ease and comfortable in the classroom, and in being motivated for studying (Marada et al. 2010, Vincze 2010). Although there were quite a few schools employing Roma people in their staff, still their capacities were not utilised fully: the role of the Roma mediators and assistants was strictly limited to working with Roma students and their families in their capacity as a member of the community. The reality, however, was that schools were unaware of the fact that teacher assistants themselves were also alienated from the Roma population attending the school in terms of their social background, residence, or ethnic subgroup. In talking to teachers and school principals, we got the impression that schools employ staff members of Roma origin with the intention to delegate them the very problems – that is, low attendance, truancy, neglect for school – that the schools had been unable to solve in the long run, and which typically stemmed from severe social deprivation of the families and the pathologies of ghetto life rather than the actual ethnic belonging of adolescents. In addition, the power and competences provided to these staff members remained highly restricted and completely insufficient to manage the complexity of problems that Roma students face.

Teachers' expectations and attitudes towards their students play an essential role in shaping students' attitudes toward school and studying in general. Therefore, the lowered expectations that teachers share in low-prestige "minority schools" contribute to the formation of an "island culture" that implies significant risks for students' successful advancement.

A significant factor in students' experiences at school is the ethnic composition of the school staff and whether ethnic minority teachers are employed in the school. Students reported about hostility, rivalry, and bullying within the class in smaller proportions when compared to those who attend a unit where it is exclusively teachers from the dominant majority who are employed.

It would be simplistic to assume that the presence of ethnic minority teachers would solve difficulties of schooling of ethnic minority students on its own. The relationship is much more likely to be reversed. In comparison to the homogenous units, schools that employ ethnic minority teachers are more open towards "otherness" in a multiethnic society, and they are also more likely to adopt children-friendly pedagogical methods instead of strict discipline, and such openness and inclusiveness gives rise to a friendlier atmosphere among students and their teachers.

Another important factor that plays a role in the significant cross-country differences in teachers' attitudes towards teaching in ethnically diverse schools is the historically shaped traditions of interethnic relations and minority incorporation characteristic of each of the national contexts. These differences are mirrored by the different ways that each of the nationalities *names those students who were in the focus of the research*. Labelling processes encountered during the teachers' interviews and focus group discussions reveal an important fragment of reality: they tell that, despite the varying opinions of individual teachers, there is a general framework of understanding concerning the status of minority students. Without going deeper into socio-linguistic details, let us highlight the point with a few examples. When German teachers speak about "Turks", "Arabs", or "Muslims", they name their students either through direct reference to their nationality or the broader ethnic or religious category. Even though most of these teenagers are citizens of the German Republic, were born in and lived in Germany all their lives, the applied labelling still stresses the cultural, national, and religious division between theirs and the dominant norm represented by "German" students and teachers. In brief, minority students are perceived to be foreigners or outsiders. A contrast to this is provided by the French case, where teachers, in concordance with the French republican model, were not only reluctant to talk explicitly about minority ethnic students, but had obvious difficulties to find names and labels which adequately refer to what they were trying to designate. The British practice is again totally different: the dominating designation "Black Minority Ethnic" (BME) of minority students stresses the racial nature and the visibility of students belonging to groups (for example, Pakistani, Caribbean, or Yemeni) that are all very culturally, nationally, and socially diverse. The political correctness prevalent among British teachers made it almost impossible for them to be openly critical about ethnic minority students or their families. Similarly to their French colleagues, British teachers stressed students' socio-economic situation and difficult home environment when speaking about the reasons behind the poor performance of minority students. In the two Nordic



countries in our study, the most typical term of reference for minority students was their language, more specifically "bilingualism". This was regarded as an added value as well as a potential source of academic difficulties.

The very different perception of Roma in Central Europe is reflected in the expressions and labels attached to Roma students by many of their teachers. Despite great variations across and within countries or even schools, it was a prevalent phenomenon that most of the designations by which teachers referred to their Roma pupils intermixed categories of ethnicity, social disadvantages, and personal deficiencies and stressed individual shortcomings that ultimately had nothing to do with the actual ethnicity of the children: they spoke about "special needs", "problem students", the "intellectually deficient", a "socially disadvantaged situation", or "behavioural problem students" when referring to Roma adolescents. This approach is further emphasised by many teachers who spontaneously referred to non-Roma students as "normal" or "ordinary". Taking into account that teachers' expectations and trust in their students play an essential role in students performance and ambitions, this is even more so in the case of students whose families cannot provide financial or academic support at home, while the widespread perception of Roma students by many of their teachers as "abnormal" or "unable" leads on its own to a vicious circle of low expectations, low performance, and low ambitions.

### **Peer-group relations at school**

Besides family, school is one of the most important locations for the socialisation of adolescent youth: peer-group relations and friendships are formative in this age-group in terms of basic social values, identity formations, and general attitudes. Both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the EDUMIGROM research investigated characteristics of peer-group relations and factors influencing their formation and functioning. The survey questionnaire asked students about their engagement in various activities, together with classmates of different ethnic background, about factors that influenced their decisions about friendships and aspects they considered important when choosing partners. Interviews as well as focus group discussions dedicated a large part to the characteristics of friendships and other peer-group relations at school, and inter-group relations outside the school.

The comparative analysis of the responses to the questionnaire drew important patterns concerning differences in interethnic relations between majority and minority students in various countries and various schools. We found that personal manners, such as taste or the way of thinking proved to be the most important factors considered by youth when engaging in peer- group relations. The qualitative inquiries, however, revealed that these traits were strongly linked to residential neighbourhoods in most of the countries (in France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and in Denmark in particular). At the same time, residential districts and ethnicity often overlapped, especially in urban areas.

We found that the ethnic backgrounds of the respondents and the historically shaped traditions of interethnic relations in the country, and especially their intersection, have a strong impact on the intensity and quality of interethnic relations. It is majority students, in particular in the Central European countries, who expressed the greatest reservations towards engaging in interethnic relations: they stood out (negatively) with respect to the frequency of interethnic activities and expressed the highest level of refusal of interethnic friendships or partnerships when they were asked about factors influencing such choices. This was not the case for students in the "old" member states. Both the qualitative and quantitative analyses demonstrated that ethnic distancing is significantly more articulated for majority students in the "new" member states, where ethnic hierarchies are much more powerful, than for their counterparts in the "old" member states where – despite prevalent inequalities, prejudices, and trends of "minoritisation" – multiculturalism is a widely accepted governing value of interethnic cohabitation. This observation might indicate that interethnic activities and friendship preferences are more a function of minority/majority relations in general – especially of their hierarchical nature characteristic in the given society – than a function of the actual cultural backgrounds of the interacting ethnic groups.<sup>30</sup>

In urban districts of countries sharing post-colonial histories, it appears that the importance of neighbourhood affiliation clearly exceeds ethnic belonging. Both in France and the United Kingdom, students refer readily to their neighbourhoods when distinguishing themselves, which is most frequently symbolised by their dress style and preference for certain music. Although in these two countries neighbourhood identity unanimously overrides other elements of identity, still they function in a somewhat different manner. In the United Kingdom the physical divide between neighbourhoods is represented by postcode gangs and membership is proclaimed by wearing symbolic signs or graffiti. Although ethnicity was not used as a defining characteristic of these groupings in students' talks, still it was rather obvious that certain styles were linked with certain ethnic groups or at least coincided with minority/majority distinctions. In France, identification with the neighbourhood was also a determining factor for youth in forming and maintaining relationships and friendships. However, in contrast to the selected sites in the United Kingdom, the major distinction between the "ghetto youth" (*jeunes de cites*) and the others was not complemented here by a further internal divide according to "white" as opposed to "migrant" cultures.

Major factors behind the formation of peer-group relations were somewhat different in urban areas of countries where descendants of labour migrants prevail (Germany, Sweden, and Denmark). Residential segregation of migrants is a dominant pattern in these localities, which is further reinforced

30 This observation is further supported by findings from the following analysis: we selected one group – those from various Muslim backgrounds – who reside in significant enough numbers in several of the participating countries, and analysed the intensity of their interethnic relationships across the three countries with the largest Muslim populations in our study (Germany, France, and Denmark). The analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed a very clear pattern: Germany provides the case of the strongest ethnic hierarchy among the participating "old" member states, where Muslim students have significantly fewer interethnic contacts than their peers from the same ethnic group in Denmark or France. It is worth adding that similar results were revealed by a recent cross-country comparative project that investigated the educational conditions and career opportunities of second-generation Turkish youth in communities of 12 European Union member states (Crul and Schneider 2010).

by the schools: hardly anybody belonging to the ethnic majority attended schools investigated in the community studies in these countries. As a result, the chance for meaningful and enduring interethnic friendships is rather limited. In Sweden, it is not ethnic background or the common descent by the country of origin, but rather the experience of "not being Swedish" cements closer ties in the community. None of the interviewed students said they had any "Swedes" in their circle of friends or acquaintances. The immediate community provided enduring protection against discrimination, since the majority of the interviewed students have lived their whole life in their neighbourhoods. Adolescents identified strongly and positively with the neighbourhoods they lived in: they felt good and comfortable about having relations with people sharing the same experiences. The neighbourhood was described not only as a residential area, but as a social world that was often similar to the one that migrants (or their families) used to live in the country of origin. Similarly, in Germany ethnic background and neighbourhood were two largely overlapping factors: when students accounted that they had no friends having different ethnic backgrounds, it was not evident if this pattern of making relations was rooted in the identification with the neighbourhood, with their ethnic group, or with religion. Still, we may assume that it is religion and ethnicity together that circumscribe the potential circles of relations for Turkish and Arab students: interviewees from Muslim families frequently recounted the incompatibility of how leisure time was spent by Germans with their basic values and needs. For girls, leisure-time activities were linked to their families in the first place. Muslim girls explained that behaviour and leisure activities of German peers (going to discos, drinking alcohol, emphasising sexuality) were too different from what they considered as desirable and comfortable to allow for the formation of intimate friendship contacts.

However, not all ethnic minority students feel confident or express their pride related to their residence in an ethnic neighbourhood. In the Danish case a group of mainly adolescent girls with rather mixed ethnic identities eloquently argued for distancing themselves from troublesome immigrants and the neighbourhood they lived in. Still, a tendency for social groupings to follow ethnicity, or majority as opposed to minority belonging, was more than evident in their cases, as well.

In contrast to experiences of migrants in the "old" member states of the European Union, the vast majority of whom positively identified and felt comfortable about living in a predominantly ethnic minority environment, Roma in Central European countries, with a few exceptions, perceived their position in terms of the ethnic divide that evidently existed and was forced on them by majority society. Both from the responses to the survey questionnaire and the interviews it was obvious that the lack of interethnic relationships is less an issue of residential segregation than a matter of ethnic distancing on the side of those from the majority. The survey found that among the six factors listed in the questionnaire as potential answers to how one forms friendships, only one was valued differently by youth in the eastern and western parts of Europe, and this was ethnicity. In post-colonial countries neither majority nor minority students considered ethnicity as an important factor in forming friendships, in countries of economic migration there was a small gap in the responses between majority and minority students (minorities considering it relatively insignificant but a bit more important compared to their majority

peers), and in countries of Central Europe both minority and majority students valued the presumed ethnicity of a potential friend as a relatively important factor. Although in the survey questionnaires most Roma students reported about interethnic friendships, during the interviews it became evident that by friendship they meant chatting with non-Roma schoolmates. When the issue was thoroughly discussed, it became obvious that the majority of them had only Roma friends. Girls most typically had one best friend with whom they grew up and shared the most important issues in life, while boys had a circle of friends with whom they hung out or listened to music. The lack of meaningful interethnic relationships was most typically due to the refusal of Roma by majority students. Since Roma students suffer from severe stigmatisation fed by negative stereotypes, they welcomed any classmates who did not make any differences. This experience became also evident from responses provided to the survey questionnaire, which found that primarily students from the ethnic majority in Central European region exhibit clear preferences towards socialising exclusively with same-ethnic peers. Roma students are often denied from meaningful relations with peers from the majority, and they frequently gave account of negative experiences including betrayals and outward rejections by their "white" fellows at school. Most of them were also aware of and talked about severe stigmatisation caused by negative stereotypes made by ethnic majority peers (and also adults) about Roma. Another factor that had a role here was the lack of Roma students' participation in extracurricular activities including sports, afternoon activities, or school trips. Various interpretations were given by Roma students and parents about such issues, but besides lack of financial resources and worries of parents about the safety of their children, their dislike of classmates and teachers was frequently mentioned. A strategy often displayed and developed as a response to refusal from majority peers was the conscious building and maintaining of an ethnically closed circle of relationships and simultaneously strengthening ethnic pride. The more the residential and home environment functioned as a close community, the easier such a strategy was developed: Gábor Gypsies in Romania or traditional Vlah Gypsies in Hungary are good examples. Many students pointed out that they preferred Roma friendships because they did not trust non-Roma fellows due to earlier disappointments, betrayals, or rejections.

#### *Peer-group relations shaped by the type of the school*

The ethnic composition of the school and its smaller units, the class or the study group, proved to be another important factor influencing the extent and quality of interethnic relationships and more generally tolerance towards classmates from different ethnic backgrounds. This is a core issue that is amply discussed in the academic literature in the United States. An important thought behind desegregation measures was the strong argument that a significant part of social learning takes place at schools. Hence, racially or ethnically mixed schools have an effect on inter-group relations of students in one way or another (Schofield 1991). Students have their first in-depth experiences about the "other" at school, and hence school may – willingly or unintentionally – greatly influence interethnic relationships and the formation of

sensing the self, including one's ethnic identity. Research in the United States shows that desegregation did indeed positively shape inter-group relations and social relations between students in multiracial schools, while studying in such an environment has a significantly positive impact on ethnic minority students' academic achievement and their later occupational success (Braddock and McPartland 1982).

Our cross-country analysis demonstrated that the ethnic composition of the school and the class in particular does indeed have important consequences in the formation of interethnic friendships and activities based on togetherness. A powerful finding of the comparative survey research is the difference between the three country groups, representing various traditions of interethnic relations, in how the ethnic composition of the school and class environments affect interethnic activities and preferences in making friends. While peer-group relations of students attending segregated schools and classes in Central European communities differed to a great extent from those of students in ethnically mixed or majority school environments, differences along the same divide were non-existent in the two post-colonial countries and were only minor in countries of economic migration like Germany and Denmark. It is important to note that the worst environments in terms of interethnic contacts seemed to be those where the separation of students along ethnic lines was practiced within the walls of the school: that is, where students of various ethnic backgrounds were separated into parallel classes. Students attending schools with a dominantly ethnic majority student body demonstrated the smallest degree of openness towards diversity. Our analysis supports the assumption that an ethnically mixed school environment significantly enhances acceptance of the "other" – be it defined in social or ethnic terms. An ethnically homogeneous environment deprives adolescents from experiencing the "other", and mutual estrangement increases the fears that further fuel the need for distancing oneself from the imagined "other" (Tajfel 1981 and 1982).

**While in the western communities students did not consider ethnicity as an important factor in forming friendships, in their Central European counterparts both minority and majority students valued the presumed ethnicity of a potential friend as a relatively important factor.**

**The worst environments in terms of interethnic contacts seemed to be those schools where students of various ethnic backgrounds were separated into parallel classes.**

**Schools with a dominantly ethnic majority student body demonstrated the smallest degree of openness towards diversity, but an ethnically mixed school environment significantly enhanced the acceptance of the "other".**

## **Experiences of unequal treatment and discrimination**

In this section personal discrimination experienced by youth will be discussed and cases of institutional discrimination such as ethno-social segregation will be disregarded, as they have been dealt with in Chapters II and III of this study. In both phases of the empirical research experiences of unequal treatment

and discrimination have been thoroughly investigated. As has already been pointed out, the research found that although students are certainly aware of discrimination and many already have been targets of such conduct, the school is most typically sensed as a safe place. Most students in our international sample thought that they had more safety in their schools than they had in broader society, and that their teachers were fairer than most adults of the majority. Seventy-one per cent of the students responding to the survey questionnaire mentioned that they experienced some kind of discrimination in their life, but they least frequently pointed to their teachers' engagement in such deeds. Most typically, it was peers who were reported as having behaved in a discriminative manner, followed in frequency by adult actors outside school. Along the line of gender, we found significant differences in the schools: boys more frequently reported being unequally treated by their teachers than girls (26 per cent versus 18 per cent), while girls experienced insults more often from their peers than boys. Looking at the intersections of gender and ethnic background, our data indicate that it is boys from ethnic minority families who most frequently felt being discriminated against. According to the repeated "stories" of teachers (that are also supported by the literature), male ethnic minority students often behave in challenging ways in the classroom, engage in creating a certain counterculture of resistance, and thus cause teachers to view them as "problem" students (Gilliam 2005).

The perceived unfairness of teachers does leave its imprints on students' attitudes toward the school and more generally, towards studying. When experiences of unfair treatment by teachers are looked at in the light of students' school performances, it can be established that primarily poorly performing students gave frequent accounts of discrimination, and the association between one's assessed achievement and the perception of discrimination was particularly strong at the Central European sites. The explanation appears to be rather obvious: in countries where pedagogical traditions based on discipline, hierarchical relations, and frontal teaching prevail, teachers are more inclined to express their overall assessment about students' behaviour with the "labels" of numeric grading than their colleagues working in more relaxed and – in general – more democratic environments where numeric assessments are used to measure the test results of academic performance, not personality or socio-economic status.

Given the great variations in the vocabulary and concepts of discrimination and differences in the level of awareness about unequal treatment among the participating countries of the EDUMIGROM research, we have to treat responses to the survey questionnaire about students' experiences of discrimination with certain reservations. The community study conducted with qualitative methods, however, completes the picture drawn by the survey and contributes to our understanding of the experiences and handling of discrimination by ethnic minority youth.

Occurrences of discrimination experiences as measured by the survey differed only to a small extent along the line of ethnic belonging. Ethnic minority students in Central European countries mentioned experiences of discrimination in a higher proportion than their peers in western part of the continent (75 percent in contrast to 65 percent). This finding of the questionnaire-based survey is supported by the

qualitative studies and the differences between country groups is expressed even more powerfully in the narratives of students and parents. The qualitative studies revealed a wide range of accounts of Roma students in Central European countries about regular and severe discrimination and openly prejudiced and even racist remarks of teachers, peers, and others in their close surroundings. Still, experiences gained from the qualitative research lead to the assumption that Roma adolescents often do not interpret such behaviour as discrimination but as something that is a regular concomitant of daily life. While British, French, Swedish, and Danish school staff seemed to be very conscious about the role of the teachers in managing conflicts and injuries arising from interethnic relationships, their Central European colleagues declared that this was not their duty. In all four Central European countries students gave account of cases of racially driven harassment (oral or physical) among students not being punished by teachers at all. The interviews with teachers suggested that teachers usually did not even voice these confrontations. When referring to racist or prejudiced incidents among students, most of the teachers thought that school was not about changing cultural habits and presumptions (but they did think that schools should change cultural habits if the "perpetrators" were Roma students). Sometimes, even worse, teachers themselves reproduced anti-Gypsy attitudes and prejudice. As summarised by the Slovak Community Study: "*the use of the adjective 'Gypsy' as a synonym of under-education and bad manners is rather widespread*" (Kusá, Kostlán, and Rusnáková 2010). Roma pupils from one of the Slovak schools talked about a teacher who made racist and humiliating comments on Roma as a regular routine upon entering the classroom.

The situation in the western communities is rather different from their Central European counterparts and, naturally, great variations were observed among them. In France, young people reported having very few experiences of racism. Students abstained from portraying themselves as victims of "othering" and were very circumspect in their answers to direct questions regarding their personal experiences of racism and discrimination. Criminalisation is one of the worst and most oppressing forms of racist perception. We found such perceptions about ethnic slums in the Central European countries but also in a number of the urban ghettos in the "old" member states (the United Kingdom and, in particular, Sweden). In the United Kingdom, the research found that Blackness was symbolically threatening, with its associations of drug culture, crime, and therefore danger, which meant that Caribbean youth were likely to be avoided or shunned in public spaces. But in Denmark and France criminality was more linked to certain neighbourhoods and through this was associated indirectly with minority or migrant backgrounds.

A special form of discrimination is ignoring the right for difference. The most salient manifestation of this is when students are depreciated if they show their religious or cultural identity. Students, and especially Muslim parents, complained about unfair treatment and discrimination by teachers, especially with respect to tolerating religious symbols, rules, and habits. Several Muslim girls gave accounts about discrimination because of their headscarves. Parents in our German and Danish sites protested against the schools' pressure on their children to break traditional rules when trying to convince them to participate in excursions where they would be out of parental control, or banning the wearing of headscarves or fasting

during Ramadan. Students in these countries criticised their teachers for not showing any intention to enter into open discussion about religious and cultural values important for Muslim students in their everyday lives, instead just wanting to make clear their own perspectives.

**Ethnic minority students at the Central European sites mentioned experiences of discrimination in a higher proportion than their peers in the studied western communities (75 per cent in contrast to 65 per cent).**

**Roma students stated being regularly and severely discriminated against and experiencing frequent occurrences of openly prejudiced and even racist remarks of teachers, peers, and others in their close surroundings. Still, they often do not interpret such behaviour as discrimination per se but as something that is a "customary" concomitant of daily life.**

**While British, French, Swedish, and Danish school staff seems to be very conscious about the role of the teachers in managing conflicts and injuries arising from interethnic relationships, their Central European colleagues declared that this was not their duty.**

## Identity strategies

The socio-economic and cultural characteristics uncovered by the EDUMIGROM survey study hint at the viable strategies of identity formation, a research question discussed in depth in the community studies. Thus, good material conditions usually signal considerable social respect, or at least tolerance toward ethnic minority groups, on the part of the majority. These two kinds of circumstances, taken together, support a positive relationship towards origins and provide a favourable situation and climate for cultivating cultural traditions. Deprivation, in turn, is at least partially owing to the mistreatment of minorities and may enhance the deterioration of community ties. Autonomy, this crucial value important in individual and community development – the degree of which depends, first of all, on the attitude of the host society and its policies concerning minorities, but also on the material conditions of the minority group in question – is critical in terms of self-esteem and the creation of positive self-images by minority students. By implication, the lack of social respect and the insufficiency of the means of living usually lead to a lack of self-esteem and negative self-images, even to the extent of self-hatred.

However, these are only general tendencies, the influence of which is not at all exclusionary. Other, subtler mechanisms are also at play in the formation of minority adolescents' self-perception. A common fate of deprivation and the lack of opportunities may breed group solidarity and produce compensatory modes of enhancing self-esteem, which can be observed, for instance, among Roma in the societies of Central Europe. In these cases, it is not necessarily shared cultural traditions and language that act as the cement of community, but rather a sense of belonging together is generated by pernicious outside influences like segregation and discrimination. As for the degree of adherence to traditions, in addition to outward conditions like the varying economic and social situation of minorities or the minority



policies of the given country shaping majority/minority relations-at-large, it differs also along the internal structuring of the minority community: significant differences were observed between ethnic and religious minorities, community ties being apparently stronger among the latter, at least as far as Muslims are concerned. This phenomenon is indicative of the fact that religion is still an important adhesive force and a resource in community development. Another source of group solidarity is represented by mutual help and shared interests, characteristic of immigrant groups living in separate residential areas and running their own businesses. Thus, the families with Turkish minority background at our German and Danish sites are distinguished from other minority groups not only based on culture and religion, but also on account of self-reliance and the resulting strong family and community ties.

Religion, and to a lesser extent language and common origins, but also the fact of intentional migration, represent important elements in the construction of what Ogbu calls "voluntary minorities", as opposed to "involuntary minorities" formed by force (discrimination, segregation), or owing to the vicissitudes of history (Ogbu 1991). But this opposition, too, should be regarded with caution. For instance, economic migrants who, by definition, represent voluntary minorities are greatly diversified not only according to the country of residence or ethnic background, but also depending on which generation of immigrants is under discussion. As it is well-known, first-generation immigrants usually strive to assimilate<sup>31</sup> to the host society, while the second and third generations often tend to revalue, and attempt to rediscover, their origins. At the same time, we saw that many Muslim teenagers want to free themselves from conservative rules represented by religious traditions. By the same token, there are also young Roma trying to get rid of parental expectations and imagine their own future families according to modern values. This kind of projection may reflect a desire towards assimilation but may also indicate the refusal of ethnic ties and categorisations and the adoption of cosmopolitan values. Therefore, originally involuntary minorities may become reinforced voluntarily, and vice versa, the descendants of voluntary ones may find themselves in a situation of being minoritised independently of their will, which situation makes them strive – successfully or hopelessly – for self-affirmation as members of collectives of their own choice.

The measurable traits of groups uncovered by the survey form a set of conditions, functioning as a web of meanings that are employed in the definition of individual and group identity. In this sense, the survey exposed the "building blocks" of minority identity. The "constructing forces" shaping identities, in turn, were revealed by the community studies that allowed for grasping the dynamic

31 In its strict sense, the term "assimilation" refers to cases when minority people are forced by the majority to give up their culture, traditions, and customs; furthermore, their unconditional melting into the dominant group is considered as a mandatory requirement for acceptance and advancement (often such requirements are underscored by legal prescriptions and a complexity of institutional procedures in the public domain). However, a broader understanding of the assimilationist attempts also encompasses those cases when people from ethnic minority backgrounds act without any obvious signs of pressure from outside, but they are driven by the conviction that leaving behind their ethnic traits and fully accommodating in the dominant society would be the only efficient strategy toward attaining success in society. In this study, we refer to "assimilation" in its latter – broader – understanding, and mean by it all kinds of undertakings characterised by the denial of one's original culture for the sake of accommodation in society-at-large.

aspects of identity formation. Such forces included, on the one hand, the approach of the majority society to the given minority (policies and social attitudes, segregation and discrimination, or acceptance and inclusion, etc.), and on the other hand, the relationship of the minority towards the surrounding society and their own community (assimilation, isolation, etc.). Based on observations as well as the analysis of collective and individual interviews, the key characteristics of the diverse identity models and strategies of adolescent youth living in multiethnic working-class communities with different histories and conditions were revealed.

A set of background circumstances characterising students' families (socio-economic and educational background, different family forms and ways of life, relation to religion and traditions, country of origin, language use, and embeddedness in the local community and the broader environment) were taken into account as having a potential impact on attitudes towards schooling and education, and thereby on the prospects for social mobility and integration into the majority society. The same conditions were also considered decisive factors in the construction of ethnic identity. It was assumed that identity models mediated by the immediate environment, especially by the parents, can be analysed in terms of ethnicity; *vice versa*, ethnic identity should be understood as being related to other social identities, derived from all sorts of circumstances. In reflecting upon a wide range of facts, experiences, views and ideologies, related to structural factors determining individual lives, identity models allow for a comprehensive understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity. These models, implying relatively static constructions, were assumed to serve as the bases or reference points of individual identity strategies. At the same time, such blueprints of ethnic identity were not taken as a set of pre-given features characterising ethnic groups. Instead, they were presented as comprising a set of values and norms, constraints and opportunities, ready for individual interpretations and shaping individuals' perceptions concerning membership in the given ethnic minority group.

The dynamic of identity construction was analysed by reference to such identity models. As against presupposing fixed and stable ethnic identities, inherited or acquired by birth, our research focused on the process of identity formation. Ethnic identity was not understood in and of itself as comprising certain characteristics by which a group of people identifies itself or can be distinguished from others. Our research underscored the relational aspects of ethnic identity and its constructed nature, mainly by showing how personal experiences contribute to the formation of individual identities. Minority ethnic students' relations to their own ethnic belonging and their position in society was examined through narrative constructions formulated in interviews and when reflecting upon personal experiences that gained significance in the light of the relevant identity models.

The discussion focused on the positive and negative aspects of ethnic belonging and its relationship with integration, analysing the degree of attachment to the ethnic community with respect to other – social, gender, political, and religious – factors of identity formation. In dealing with minority existence, evidently full of challenges and, as demonstrated by our research, tending to result in disadvantages,

facing and reacting to tough experiences and offences like stereotype threats, stigmatising attitudes, and discriminatory practices constituted important elements of our inquiry. Besides such disruptive effects, the idea of wholesome and finite identities was defied in other ways, too. Speaking about adolescents, the essentially unfinished nature of identities acquired special significance; consequently, many of the questions regarding identity formation aimed at eliciting responses regarding their future plans and aspirations.

Individuals belonging to distinct types of minorities revealed characteristic ways of relating to their minority situation, which correspond to background factors that range from one's socio-economic conditions to the degree of adherence to certain core values by the community and the level of interethnic contacts. The adoption of identity strategies depends on conditions determining individual opportunities and aspirations (including further education, employment, and family life) as well as the possibilities of, and benefits involved in, socio-cultural integration and community development, implying unequal potentials with respect to the formation of positive identities. Based on these compound dynamics – that also may be understood as ordering principles – and in describing ways of identity formation with respect to the (intended) significance of ethnicity, a two-by-two scheme was devised:

*Types of identity formation in "minoritised" communities*

<i>Genesis of minority group and its members' attitude to its ethnic character</i>	<i>Orientation to being "other" than the dominant group</i>	
	Maintenance of difference	Trivialisation of difference
Involuntary group: members' non-reflexive attitude to ethnicity	Ghetto life	Lumpenproletariat
Voluntary group: members' reflexive attitude to ethnicity	Ethnic pride	Assimilation/Cosmopolitan

This typology served as a theoretical construction highlighting certain key constituents of identity formation that have particular relevance for "visible" minorities. Thus, the involuntary/voluntary dimension underscores the fact that, despite commonalities in their conditions and their unequal positions vis-à-vis the majorities, certain groups' minority statuses originate in oppression and enforcement, while in other cases a degree of personal and collective freedom is involved in the genesis of the given community. As a tendency, the group's "ethnic character" is usually externally defined for involuntary minorities, and their members take it as a given, without attempting to reformulate the collective's ethnic traits as parts of their own identities. By contrast, in working out their own identities, members of voluntary minorities enjoy a certain degree of freedom to reflect on the "ethnic" component of their group belonging.

At any rate, being different might involve serious struggles for the members of all kinds of "minoritised" social groups. This idea stands in contrast both with the notion of unproblematic or unproblematised collective identities relying on widely accepted social values (like dominant national identities) and with the idea of a "free play" of identities assumed by certain post-modernist approaches in talking about the multiplicity of attachments as a terrain of unconstrained identity acts or performances.

The other axis of the matrix, that is, personal orientation toward the maintenance as opposed to the trivialisation of difference, underlines that outside pressures allow for some extent of variation in identity strategies, whether exercised consciously or adopted unconsciously. Far from reflecting the free choice of concerned minority individuals, the resulting categories show that identities are mainly reactive, working upon the given circumstances. Differentiation, in the case of "minoritised" groups, is always already there, and should be regarded as a given social fact. However, partially depending on the social status of the given minority, and partially on individual aspirations, difference becomes either supported and maintained, or refused and trivialised in identity strategies.

### **"Ghetto life"**

Isolated and socially deprived urban neighbourhoods, forcefully separated from the majority society along ethnic lines, are commonly called ghettos. Such segregated residential areas are characteristically populated by extended families, where parents are mostly uneducated and do menial jobs. Due to limited educational and employment opportunities and the marginalised status of the inhabitants, these "socially excluded localities" show a high concentration of social problems like poverty and unemployment. Life in the ghetto is characterised by permanence, yet a great deal of instability. The future appears unpredictable and impossible to control by will. It is precisely this insecurity and the lack of anything firm to hold on to that, precluding the possibility of having ambitions or making plans for the future, is responsible for a sense of immovability. Simply, there is no way out. Thus, ghettos have a particular propensity to reproduce low and excluded social status, including educational disadvantages. Nevertheless, these problems are often not addressed properly by the state administration that, instead of devising and implementing comprehensive strategies aiming at the long-term improvement of conditions and the ultimate elimination of all ghettos, tends to intervene only in situations of acute crisis, usually involving interethnic violence. Due to its marginalised status, ghetto society lacks interest in developing its own capacities and thus depends on outside agencies of help, the influence of which is usually insufficient to replace the by and large policing approach to ghetto problems with more efficient and human policies.

Destitution and experiences of refusal by the majority society result in a conflict-ridden life within the ghetto, marked by distrust and envy, rather than a sense of belonging together. If there are any feelings of being different, these, at best, function as a source of compensatory self-esteem, and are played out against fellow ghetto dwellers. As a result of the deterioration of community life, adherence

to traditions or ethnic consciousness does not thrive in the ghetto. Thus, conventional ethnic markers like language, customs, or religion have only very limited significance, if any at all. Instead of communal ties, feelings of not belonging anywhere dominate in the ghetto. The socio-ethnic division from the surrounding society becomes reinforced as the symbolic structures and representations, conveying experiences of dispossession and depreciation, are incorporated to form the core of identities. The coercive means of holding a collective together result in a kind of weak self-determination that fails to produce positive self-esteem. Still, in the face of outside threats, the ghetto community, in particular the extended family, may function as a protective shield. The lack of future prospects also enhances the importance of family values and expectations (like marital rules or those related to gender-specific career choices), so that eventually many among the ghetto youth decide to stay in the familiar environment and continue with the way of life seen in the family. Consequently, even though a product of negative conditions, some level of group cohesion and common values do exist in the ghetto. The supportive network of the family and the role models provided by the immediate environment help young people in coping with difficulties and finding their way. Compensatory self-esteem, developed in reaction to hardship and humiliation, also incorporating elements of the accumulated knowledge passed down by elder generations concerning the ways of survival in the ghetto, comprises the germs of what could become, in more favourable circumstances, a sort of ethnic pride.

The best examples for the state of affairs characterising ghettos are provided by the countries of post-socialist transformation: the Roma minority, representing the largest ethnic group in this region is probably the most disadvantaged and destitute minority group in our sample. At the same time, certain post-colonial minorities, like Algerians in France or the Caribbean communities in the United Kingdom, also manifest the symptoms described above.

The words of a 15-year-old Roma girl in Romania describe the life in the ghetto and explain a typical scenario of giving up on future ambitions and adapting to the desperation and lack of realistic opportunities to escape from the given circumstances provided by the "ghetto":

*[I wanted to] finish school. Law or medicine [...] We live in the landfill. Recycled material, copper, aluminium, beer cans [...] they're giving a better price, 20–30 leis per day. It's what you can do more or less. I think by having children in the house, you only have problems and trouble. If one day there will be shortages, how to give them what they need? But you do tomorrow the same as you do today, as the wheel turns [...] I'd better marry one of your [i.e., white] race [...] When I was little, I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to change my house, human vision, discrimination against Gypsies. I thought if I had a high position, I could help the poor. If I had a place where to stay, where to work, I would do better [...] Of course, you have three options: to steal, beg, or prostitute yourself.*

## “Ethnic (or religious) pride”

By contrast, when separation from the majority society occurs on a voluntary basis, self-enclosure of the community correlates with ethnic or religious consciousness, and differences on such basis are filled with mostly positive contents. As a Roma girl from Romania expressed it, *“I’m proud to be a Roma. [...] they like traditions, we like traditions, Romanians don’t have so many traditions”*. This is the case with well-settled immigrant minorities and their members who manage to win favourable social and housing conditions and the respect, or at least tolerance, of the majority without giving up their collective identity. In fact, it is precisely owing to their ability to utilise communal resources that the residents of these typically metropolitan neighbourhoods can thrive. Like in the ghetto, extended families are also characteristic here: as opposed to the lack of family planning and high fertility, their prevalence is usually the result of accommodation to ethno-cultural or religious norms. The family represents not only the basic element of community life, a socially desirable model, and a resource of cultural and social capital for the young generation, but also an important economic unit, as indicated by the high ratio of family-run businesses. While also producing for outside markets, the economic profile of these neighbourhoods, especially in terms of employment, is marked by self-reliance. The overall impact of economic demands and community expectations supports gender distinctions: small enterprises are managed by men, while the female members of the family usually work there as assistants. As a consequence, while education is usually valued highly by the parents wishing for a better future for their children, attitudes towards schooling differ in the case of boys and girls. As girls gain less support and opportunities for self-development, they are especially prone to adopt a broader perspective on the future, involving some degree of detachment from the original community.

The particularly strong sense of solidarity and group cohesion characterising these minorities who manage to get on relatively well is manifested in a variety of forms including family enterprises, peer networks, and religious congregations or schools managed by the community. As for education, integration into the school system of the majority is also welcome as a way of advancement. It is important to note that in an accepting and tolerant society allowing for multiple attachments, communal solidarity remains high, while negative influences from outside tend to result in severing the ties to the group of origin. While acknowledging the essentially voluntary nature of the adoption of group identity and the positive contents it involves, the moment of coercion should not be dismissed here. At least in part, positive group identity is produced as a reaction to external pressures, represented by anti-immigration policies and majority attitudes. This kind of responsiveness also indicates that these communities possess significant means to protect themselves and are thus much less vulnerable than ghetto populations. Furthermore, membership in the community does not only depend on individual will but, to some extent, is coerced by certain self-disciplining mechanisms of the community. Thus, expectations of the family and the larger community exercise pressure on individuals, and group membership becomes posited as the guarantee of making a decent life in the future. In this sense, beyond representing an attribute of personal identities,

"ethnic pride" should be interpreted as a collective response to a particular situation or group status that may be regarded either as a transitory state in terms of social integration or as a relatively permanent solution reflecting the ideal of society as a multicultural mosaic.

Typical candidates for this category are Muslim minorities in Western European cities, in case of the EDUMIGROM study, those in Germany, Denmark, or France. In such religion-based communities ethnicity and language are also important factors of identification but religious faith and belonging seems to override other types of community ties. The importance of religious belonging often overcomes the significance of national and ethnic ties in terms of providing orientation in life as well as in the formation of the community:

A Moroccan boy living in a Parisian neighbourhood explained:

*[... ] for us, the Muslim community, religion plays a very important role. [...] If he simply respects religion, it means that between the ages of 10 and 12 he'll know the way to the mosque. So if he knows that way, there won't be any problem. Just with his lessons at the mosque, leaving the national education aside, we'll see that that child will be well educated compared to a child who doesn't even know about religion. [...] My friends are Muslim like me, Algerian, Tunisian, Mauritanian, it's mixed. That's why I say country doesn't count. .*

The growing distrust and hostility affecting Muslims in the West heighten a sense of group cohesion and solidarity, while leaving ruptures within the community caused by unseen modernising influences. Although usually not based on religious foundations, some Roma families, typically living in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods and belonging to the higher ranks of the working class, also belong to this category.

### **"Lumpenproletariat"**

The state of living in a "lumpenproletariat" community resembles, in many ways, the ghetto. It also involves forced separation from the majority society amidst the conditions of a severely deteriorated urban neighbourhood. However, the nature of the two formations differs at an important point: while *ethnicity* is a strong organising principle in the ghetto, "lumpen" urban slums are distinguished from the surroundings on *social* grounds and ethnicity does not play a significant role in their composition. The main identifying markers of such slum neighbourhoods are poverty, destitution, low social status, and troubled internal and external relations that invoke frequent police interventions. Alongside social pressures, like the lack of education or the absence of employment opportunities, the origins of these collectives have to do with administrative and policy measures leading to the uneven territorial distribution of resources, including shortages in a whole range of public services, and also education and employment opportunities. As a

consequence, residential areas devoid of essential means for individual and collective development come into being and continue to exist, owing to a downward spiral of social decline reproducing inequalities. The severe socio-economic disadvantages of families become reinforced by cultural projections expressing aversion on the part of the majority society, so that, as a consequence, marginalised collectives are driven virtually below the social hierarchy, which is reflected by the quasi-extra-legal status of inhabitants. Segregation is experienced in all walks of life, including education, although not on ethnic grounds but due to the stigmatisation of poverty and the associated ways of life, involving competitiveness and conflicts, the struggling for scarce resources, rather than mutuality and cooperation.

Given the lack of common cultural grounds and group cohesion, as well as due to the complex family formations and unruly patterns and practices of community life, individuals born into such "lumpenproletariat" urban slums develop weak and uncertain identities that are informed, to a large extent, by experiences of discrimination and marginalisation.

A Somali boy in Denmark reflected upon such multiple feelings associated with ethnic identity:

*When the Danes look at me, they see a perker [a racial slur]. When the perkers look at me, this was more when I was younger, they would call me a Dane. [...] It has a big influence on how I'm looked upon and what expectation I have to live up to. Most people look at me like I'm something else than I am."*

The awareness of stigmatisation, exclusion, and discrimination is high among the members of such communities, leading to a sense of shame or even self-hatred. While ethnicity is not thematised, interethnic differences easily become stereotyped with reference to negative prejudices. Instead of multiple attachments, characterising people who manage to develop ethnic pride, the position of people in "lumpenproletariat" neighbourhoods and their relations to their environment is characterised by amassed experiences of expulsion and the lack of positive ties. The resulting identities are unstable, effectively situational, and reactive in character, and often negative in their effects. The precarious conditions of the adolescents living in permanent exclusion predestines them for low educational performance and very limited perspectives regarding future education necessary for obtaining a better life. As a response, just like ghetto children, most of them entertain futile hopes of getting away, either to a distant place in the same country representing great expectation, to the country of origin embodying nostalgic yearning, or maybe a third country standing for utopian desires. This kind of escapism due to "being excluded" may entail a sense of cosmopolitanism, even though the wish to transcend the narrow social context, in this case, is not so much fuelled by principles and ideologies, but rather driven by disillusionment.

Examples of "lumpenproletariat" neighbourhoods could primarily be found in areas that are heavily populated by recently arrived immigrants in the selected British, French, and to a lesser extent, in the Danish and Swedish cities. Certain ethnically mixed neighbourhoods in some deteriorating and economically decaying Central European cities, where the common denominators of inhabitants are deep poverty and social exclusion, also fit this paradigm.



## "Assimilationism/Cosmopolitanism"

Neither traditionalism nor poverty determines the lives of minority adolescents whose families have managed to avoid, or break out from, ghettos or slums and establish a decent working-class or lower-middle-class lifestyle on their own, without having to rely on the extended family network or the support of the original community. The parents are usually much better educated than minority adults in the other categories, yet their educational attainment still falls short of reaching the average of majority society. While proud of their own moderate accomplishments, they push their children to achieve even more in life, and the way of progress is usually seen to lead through quality education and the adoption of majority values and lifestyles. As students belonging to this category typically reside in ethnically mixed, established neighbourhoods with better living standards, good majority schools where ethnic selection is not practiced and the atmosphere is shaped by multiculturalist tolerance or colour-blind conducts. are usually accessible. Given their secular character and westernised perspectives, families are usually more emancipated in terms of gender than those under the influence of community values marked by ethnic pride or those repressed socially and culturally due to poverty and marginalisation. Nonetheless, as it is usually the father who functions as the driving force in migration and social mobility, it is boys, rather than girls, upon whom hopes for further upward mobility are invested.

Beyond these sociological characteristics, there is not much shared by those who are listed in this category. Obviously, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to the possible outcomes of the described social constellation in terms of identity strategies of the students. The main criteria employed in defining the category have to do with the fact that, for one reason or another, adolescents belonging here have turned their back on the traditions of their original ethnic or religious communities so as to melt into some other collective, whether it is represented by the national majority or some supranational entity. A Moroccan student in France who would like to become a psychoanalyst and travel and live in different countries expressed his thoughts as follows:

*Pride isn't really my thing. I mean, I see a lot of people who claim their country: "I represent this, I represent that", while the guy doesn't even have papers from his country. He's got French papers and all. Frankly, it's not something I take to heart. I feel neither French, nor Moroccan, nor American. For me, representing a country without having a good reason to do so is stupid. A president, if he represents a country, okay, he's a president, it's normal. But a guy who goes once a year to his country and who says he represents it, it's stupid. They just do that to make trouble and to look down on others, to give themselves some pseudo-superiority.*

The type of schools attended by these adolescents, dominated by the social majority and blind towards ethnic differences, reinforces the attempts of the families to trivialise ethnicity. It is partly personal traits and partly contextual features that determine such aspirations, while the pushing forces derive from a sense of incompleteness and instability regarding the "mobility project" initiated by the parents

or earlier generations. Projections about the future (education, employment, partner, and family) reveal a heightened sense of individual autonomy and the adoption of majority values and/or modern ideals. Thus, both assimilationism and cosmopolitanism are nourished by anxieties or practical considerations regarding social inclusion, marking pragmatism and conformism, rather than reflecting personal convictions. To be sure, the rejection of the significance of ethnicity also may be grounded in principles. In any case, the high number of interethnic relationships as well as anti-prejudiced attitudes and a tendency to reflect on social problems are typical among students in this category. The downplaying of ethnicity helps in breaking down walls and establishing groups of solidarity based on other sorts of values, more responsive to actual personal experiences and needs. At the same time, this type of openness and initiative mood may also be an effect of constraints and coercions, in case intolerant attitudes are experienced on the part of the majority society against ethno-cultural or religious differences, or for that matter, if there is a scarcity of demands for traditional professions characterising the economic niche of the given minority. In such circumstances, ambitions to assimilate are instigated by fears and anxieties, which demonstrate that even this category is not exempt from the influence of the prevailing power relations. The voluntarism of assimilation is questionable when considering other alternatives that have been rendered unfeasible by political and historical developments, and especially when facing the limitations of assimilation projects themselves in the case of "visible" minorities. It should be noted that, in an increasingly unfavourable cultural and political climate, minority individuals, independently from their social standing and ambitions or self-identification, easily become stigmatised, thwarting any attempts at social integration involving the giving up of minority membership.

This compound category is typically filled by new immigrants from Asia and Africa and recently urbanised Roma families. As opposed to earlier guest workers, today it is mainly highly-qualified people (usually men) who act as the motor of migration and make efforts to become self-reliant as soon as possible in the new place. Whether full social inclusion through assimilation or cosmopolitanism will be achieved by the next or the coming generations, or remains an illusory project, is another question left to a great extent to larger-scale socio-political trends within the nation-states and across Europe.

**Where integrated education has been realised and the atmosphere is tolerant and diversity-conscious and open towards the problem of minority identities, there are far less conflicts, and peers with different origins and backgrounds are more readily accepted than in segregated and competitive environments. Inclusive services and education favour the development of ethnic pride and the formation of student identities that allow planning for the future and generate a belief in meeting one's dreams and expectations.**

**Likewise, where separation is voluntary, that is, when students and their families opt for special treatment due to religious or ethnic difference, positive identity becomes viable and ideas about a prosperous future are attainable. Nevertheless, the question as to the long-term acceptance and tolerant attitude of host societies remains open: as the German, Danish, or French examples suggest, ethnic minority people across Europe often experience ambivalent or explicitly negative anticipations on the part of the domestic majorities. The recent unfavourable turn in the political climate and in the public attitudes toward ethnic minorities may endanger the achievements of the past decades that European democracies have attained in respecting, recognising, and supporting interethnic cohabitation on multicultural grounds.**

By constructing a typology of identity strategies, we wanted to demonstrate that adolescents' vision about their future life is deeply embedded into their present situation: family background, location, families' relation toward traditions, religion, peer relations within and outside school, and possibilities concerning further education – all these factors influence future plans in terms of identity strategies. Some situations, however, can be characterised by other determining factors as far as identity strategies are concerned that remain outside our typology. Some of these suggest that future life is determined not so much by the conditions of the given country and location where the study was carried out, but by special external facts.

Reading interviews with students from migrant backgrounds, we have encountered, for instance, life histories where the parents were war refugees. This personal experience can provoke emotions and commitments to a combatant behaviour to defend the "motherland", even by means of guns. Another, recurrent situation is when the parental family has an ongoing connection with the country of origin; for example, when they have property, a house, close family members, etc., there. In such cases, identity strategies do not necessarily relate to the country where the student lives at present but reveal, instead, a stronger attachment to the country of "origin", even if the student was born in the Diaspora. Yet in other cases, instead of anticipating and envisaging a future life, we have seen anxieties, fears, defeatism, and a lack of planning on the part of students. Such hopelessness and a desperate state of mind can probably be explained by the immediate effects of actual threats and events like the appearance of neo-fascist extreme-right organisations, the reinforcement of intolerant attitudes and discourses, or other menacing experiences arising from domestic politics.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTESTED ISSUES OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION: NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE EDUMIGROM PROJECT

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In this chapter, we change the perspective of the discussion and review the major findings of the EDUMIGROM research in their contribution to the accumulated scholarly knowledge on the role of ethnicity in education as explored in three important domains of recent social science inquiries. First, we will re-assess our findings in their additions to conceptualise the emergence of ethnic disadvantages in the context of intersecting socio-economic, cultural, and behavioural factors; second, we will introduce EDUMIGROM's contributions to the dialogical process of arriving at a refined typology of interethnic relations in different social, cultural, and political conditions and discuss how various ethno-social constellations affect the development of identities by ethnic minority groups; finally, we will revisit our diverse sites and schools and summarise the experiences of the research with reference to the multicultural experiments launched for preventing social exclusion on ethnic grounds and/or providing protection against deformations in ethnic minority identity development.

The past decades have witnessed a boom of studies on the indicated issues in sociology, anthropology, political science, and, above all, in the classical terrain of ethnic research: in social psychology. There are a few obvious reasons behind the sudden rise of interest that brought ethnicity into the forefront of scholarly concern. The expansion of migration – both on the global level and, especially, toward Europe<sup>33</sup> – has to be mentioned in the first place: the intensifying flow of millions of people has brought to the affected host societies and their welfare states a broad array of new challenges, ranging from new dilemmas in policies of redistribution to seeking responses to the emerging new social conflicts that accompany the difficult process of "societal learning" that goes hand in hand with multiethnic diversity. Second, the strong associations between ethnic "otherness" and social exclusion have induced important public debates about the qualities of liberal democracies, placing into focus the apparent shakiness of certain fundamental values such as equality and equity. In order to reshuffle policies to better

32 Important contributions to this chapter were provided by Róza Vajda.

33 Taking a relatively limited time-slot, the increase in the number of European inhabitants from non-European origins was no less than 25 per cent between 2002 and 2006. According to recent estimates, the proportion of those from immigrant origins makes up eight per cent of the total population of the European Union, but reaches 12–35 per cent in some European states (Herm 2008).

tackle the injustices in education, on the labour market, and also in various domains of everyday life, it has become a pressing need to gain factual knowledge about why and how the inequalities in question are reproduced, why and how they instigate exclusionary tendencies on ethnic/racial grounds, and why and how welfare policies based on the notion of equality prove to be skewed and inefficient when ethnic inclusion is at stake. Third, the widespread struggles of ethnic minority groups for gaining recognition and raising their participation in society, the economy, and the polity have resonated in research on the cultural aspects of collective and individual orientations as the attitudinal foundations of non-dismissible political claims for democratic inclusion. While these new challenges certainly arched over geographical boundaries, the responses of the social sciences to them came with significant departures in timing and also in conceptual framing. It was the civil rights movement of the 1960s that first raised awareness of the racial divide as a fundamental feature of the social structure in the United States, where studies of the "racial gap" between Blacks and Whites in education, labour, opportunities for a meaningful career and a respectful status, shares in redistribution, and access to welfare inspired the evolution of entire schools of thought, and where irrefutable sets of data have been accumulated to monitor historical change. European social science research on ethnicity came with a delay of several decades. For quite some time, studies on "otherness" (meaning "non-native people") came within the broad stream of "migration studies" that raised questions on inequalities and disadvantages affecting people whose presence, for the most part, was perceived as transient. Hence, there was little interest in breaking down the concepts of the "immigrant" or of "people from immigrant backgrounds" or looking at different groups with different histories, cultures, and aspirations, that is: at diverse ethnicities. Hence, for quite some time, European research paid little attention to the overseas studies on Black identity and culture or on Black and White race relations. The disinterest was rooted in perceiving "American problems" as being utterly different in origin and manifestations. It was presumed that knowledge on the late consequences of slavery would have little use in addressing issues of colonial heritage, and that they were even less useful when approaching the short-lived conflicts of economic migration.

The European "discovery" of the relevance of overseas studies and concepts in dealing with ethnic/racial tensions as inherent and lasting constituents of the dramatically changed ethnic composition of the Continent is rather new, following a turn in social science thinking around the late 1980s when the above-indicated recent trends as pertinent aspects of a (new) Europeanness have slowly become cognised and publicly acknowledged. However, as to the soundness and the quantity of empirical facts and the influence of thoughts and concepts on the academic discourse, the American lead still remains unquestionable for the foreseeable future. Hence, in what follows below, our results will be revisited against those decisive American theories and studies that have proven to carry a profound weight in shaping recent European research, and due additions will be made at points where new knowledge has been unearthed by European academic centres. The review will concentrate on research in education, and if necessary, a broader contextualisation of the findings on patterns of interethnic cohabitation and the dialogical processes of identity formation will be considered.

## Ethnic disadvantages in education from a structural perspective

Since the 1960s, research on racial disparities and the affects of discrimination in producing racial disadvantages in education have greatly expanded in topical diversity and geographical coverage. Although some longitudinal studies – particularly conducted on large samples in the United States – have provided evidence for the diminishing of racial gap in academic achievement, nevertheless the phenomenon still exists. Difficulties in evaluating related sociological results include the problem of distinguishing analytically the disadvantages that originate in social structures and those caused by racial belonging. According to some estimates, factors along the lines of racial division make up two-thirds of the racial gap in education, while the independent explanatory power of socio-economic differences explains one-third of the departures between Black and White students in attained performance results and educational opportunities (Mickelson 2003).

When considering the explanations regarding the educational disadvantages of minority students, the controversial propositions of behavioural genetics, referring to inherited and fixed racial differences in children's cognitive abilities, have been discredited (Jensen 1969). Social structural explanations, in turn, have gained prominence, informing a series of research proving that, where social inequalities have, in general, been reduced, educational careers have become less determined by people's social background (OECD 2010, Kymlicka 2010). The powerful results of the repeated PISA surveys (2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009) have underscored the associations between larger-scale social inequalities and the strength of how family backgrounds impact on adolescents' advancement in schooling (OECD 2010). On the basis of evidence from repeated cross-country surveys on students' competences and achievements (e.g., PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS), analysts have filtered out a range of familial traits that seem to be responsible for educational disadvantages. According to unanimous statements based on research conducted in various countries, the configuration of the family, the size of the household, the number of children, the prevailing health conditions, parents' educational level and labour market participation, the level of income, and the quality of housing all correlate with ethnicity/race and thus influence children's school advancement in a combination of direct and indirect affects (for an overview of major results across countries, see: Considine and Zappalà 2001, Schnepf 2007). Investigations of interactions between the family and the school and the role of parents in socialisation and control in the course of the educational career of the child also underline the listed associations and provide insights into these encounters as they turn into certain "cultures" with differential attitudes toward education (Farkas 2008).

Another available explanation is the thesis of reproduction theory claiming that class differences survive in capitalist societies, and thus the school system provides unequal educational opportunities to members of different social classes, including racial minority students who, in terms of class, remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Since the school system, together with its financial and human resources, level of funding, and other related factors (like the composition of the given community in

terms of race and socio-economic status, the social embeddedness of families, the composition of the student community, the motivation of peers, the atmosphere in the schools, etc.) forms part of the social structure, the educational opportunities of the students of different schools are racially correlated (Mickelson 2003).

However, in the academic debate about "class versus race", relatively little attention has been paid to the issue of intersectionality, that is, to measuring how the interplay among certain primary factors (socio-economic status, ethnic/racial belonging, gender, geographic arrangements, and school characteristics) gives rise to multiple correlations of racial inequalities. Based on a hierarchical model that draws on the related data of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey and the Common Core of Data in the United States, Roscigno analysed the impacts of family/peer group and institutional processes in education on the gap in achievement between Black and White schoolchildren. His model provides a comprehensive understanding of reproductive institutional dynamics, proving that family/peer group attributes and access to educational resources are strongly associated (Roscigno 1998). Analysing the impacts on the school performance of students, this research takes into account family background (socio-economic and educational data of the family and the degree of parents' involvement in children's schooling), peer-group relations, as well as the characteristics of the educational institutions (school segregation by social class, funding differences between poor and non-poor schools, differences in the expectations of teachers, etc.). In providing evidence of the strong correlation of racial origin and educational achievements, Roscigno's study also outlines the paths and processes by which such effects are exercised. Racial belonging affects not only the socio-economic situation of the family but also the schools' access to resources, the tracking of students of various backgrounds, teachers' expectations toward their pupils, the racial composition of the classrooms, and the quality of interethnic relations within them, leading to the appearance of racial disparity and racial gap in school achievements.

As for attempts to abolish racially segregated schools, ever since the conscious introduction of a ruling on desegregation, several studies have shown, not just in the United States but also in other countries, that the longer students belonging to the dominant majority and to the ethnic/racial minority study together, the better educational results will be achieved by the latter group, without any deterioration in the performance of the former. At the same time, tracking on the basis of either ethnicity or ability, especially when started at early childhood, causes increasing differences and producing cumulative effects in the performance of students in different tracks and groupings (Cooley 2010).

On the basis of the findings of a much-cited study of 20 multiethnic schools in Britain, Tomlinson (1991) arrived at concluding that, in comparison with the effects of ethnicity, the school itself has a greater part in students' performance. The educational policies and programmes of schools, their segregated nature, white flight, prejudices held by teachers, their lack of motivation and low expectations towards minority students, academic tracking, and discontinuity between school life and home life, taken together, provide sufficient explanation for the weaker school performance of ethnic minority students.

By looking at the intersecting relations among social, ethnic, and institutional characteristics in informing students' differential school achievements, the EDUMIGROM research relates to this latter bundle of inquiries. Our focusing on particular segments of the compared nine societies allowed us to explore how the varied internal structuring of multiethnic working-class communities with differing historical patterns of interethnic cohabitation affects the educational careers of adolescents from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds and how these departures become institutionalised by the distinctive qualities that local schools provide along the line of ethno-social diversity versus segregation. Much in accordance with the above findings of United States and Continental studies on the primary influence of social-class belonging, our data indicate that, by the age of early adolescence, youths from ethnic minority backgrounds coming from low-status families suffer a degree of hindrance that hardly can be overcome, even by strong parental efforts to assist them to catch up with their peers. The study demonstrates that schools use grading as a powerful means to underscore the ethno-social differences in performance by devaluing the achievements of ethnic minority students, due to their cultural and linguistic "shortcomings". At the same time, differences in teachers' expectations and students' demonstrated performance give the foundations of distinctions in organisational arrangements that establish an institutional hierarchy with "majority-dominated schools of the local elite" on the top and "segregated schools of disadvantaged ethnic minorities" at the bottom. Such institutionalised embodiments of socially and ethnically distilled advantages at one end, and concentrated disadvantages at the other, send out messages that induce markedly different paths on the secondary level, with high risks of dropping out for those at the very bottom. The EDUMIGROM research revealed that the stigma associated with segregated schools works as an autonomous factor in suggesting the worthlessness of schooling and thereby socialising children to accept that their fate will be to reproduce the socially excluded, destitute status of their parents and kin. By differentiating according to the "visible" traits of "otherness", the EDUMIGROM study revealed important differences in how the indicated associations affect different groups from "immigrant background". It turned out that European societies make strong distinctions: although the offspring of "white" migrants also experience disadvantages in achievements and advancement, they clearly seem to be on the right road toward successfully integrating into the majority, and teachers smartly support them in such strivings. However, "visible" minorities living in residentially segregated urban communities do not share such a bright perspective. Despite widespread efforts to break out, the majority of them seem to be confined to lower-level secondary schools that hardly allow them to advance toward desired, respectful, middle-class positions. At the same time, our research brought up remarkable differences in the severity of the downward-pressing mechanisms: it turned out that if the equality of citizenship rights with ample contents and provisions is socially accepted, then the resultant generosity of the welfare state works as an important vehicle for a (slow) upward move in the social hierarchy; however, a weak understanding of the human, political, and social rights, accompanied by rigorous hierarchies in welfare provisions, tends to strengthen exclusionary trends in education and beyond.



Since our research focused on communities sharing the common feature of being residentially segregated, cross-country comparisons established a new opportunity to scrutinise the relationship among different forms of ethno-social separation. In this regard, a clear East-West divide could be established. While ethno-social marginalisation in daily living implies segregation in schooling in Central Europe, and thus produces symptoms of ghetto-like enclosure for Roma, residential separation allows for a rather high degree of freedom of choice in matters of schooling for "visible" minorities in the West. True, the latter freedom is not enough to surpass the unfavourable implications of low status and "otherness", yet it seems to open the door for advancement and gradual social integration. Another interesting – and important – finding of the research concerns adolescents from majority backgrounds who are confined to live in low-status multiethnic communities: substantial groups of them feel desperately frustrated and cut off from the mainstream where they consider themselves to belong. Such widespread feelings of frustration find expression in underachievement and unsuccessful school careers, self-depreciation, anti-school behaviour, and early dropping out. These latter findings point toward a need to consider ethnicity in its broader social context, and develop complex indicators that, in addition to the classical measures of social standing and ethnic background, also take into account the social environment where students live and the institutional aspects of their schooling.

**In Central Europe, ethno-social marginalisation in daily living implies segregation in schooling, and thus produces symptoms of ghetto-like enclosure for Roma that, in turn, block young people's opportunities for a breakthrough and hamper their attempts at upward social mobility.**

**Residential separation allows for a rather high degree of freedom of choice in matters of schooling for "visible" minorities in the West. Although low social status and "otherness" imply hindrances in opportunities for successful advancement, a range of targeted welfare services and provisions seems to effectively protect minority communities against ghettoisation and establishes the links toward a gradual social integration of younger generations.**

An influential new strand of analytical approaches to ethnic differences in education originates itself from Bourdieu's widely recognised theory (1977) that has shed light on the strong associations between the structural and cultural dimensions of family background. According to the core thesis in this argumentation, cultural capital as a derivative of class status is transmitted through generations and as a composite of knowledge, orientations, aspirations, and symbolic values, it determines students' relating to the school. Given that the school embodies dominant cultural forms in the fields of knowledge, language, taste, sensitivity, etc., children of families representing a cultural asset that is in accordance with these forms will be more prone to adapt to the expectations of the school, and therefore they will be better achieving at school than those possessing a different quality of cultural capital, who will thus be unable to enforce their values. Another important direction of sociological research centring on the importance of culture in shaping social stratification is represented by the theory of cultural deprivation (Lewis 1966) that sees the school failures of non-mainstream children as originating in values and norms incompatible

with school success. This theory forms the background of the compensatory education movement aiming at the transformation of the culture of concerned students so that their behaviour better conforms to the requirements of the school. The theory of cultural difference has emerged as an alternative of the thesis of cultural deprivation, claiming that the formation of racial differences experienced in education is not necessarily due to the assumed superiority of the mainstream culture, as it is easy to see that the practices and values of certain racial and ethnic groups are more convenient in terms of school success. Such values include, for instance, a cohesive family and hard work as central assets among refugees from South East Asia, who achieve better educational results both in the United States and in Britain as compared with the white majorities (Modood 2005, Waldinger 2005).

This claim is reinforced, among others, by an often-cited American study (Portes and MacLeod 1996) that reports the findings of an investigation among second-generation migrants. Focusing on students belonging to relatively advantaged (Cuban and Vietnamese) and disadvantaged (Haitian and Mexican) migrant groups, 42 schools in California were involved in a survey using a sample of 5,000 students representing the given region by major demographic, socio-economic, and ethnic characteristics. The main dimensions of the survey included family background, the psycho-social factors of the adaptation process, and measurable indicators of school performance, complementing the picture with the local characteristics of the school system. The results yet again revealed that socio-economic background has the greatest impact on school success; however, its influence is exercised not only directly but also indirectly, in accordance with the families' attitude towards the school and the given school context. Similar conclusions were drawn by the authors of another study that, in reviewing current theories of racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment, underline the importance of socio-economic and status differences, as well as of concepts of family and culture represented by minority and class groups (Kao and Thompson 2003). Their findings demonstrated that, despite of desegregationist efforts and the widespread use of affirmative action, racial hierarchy can still be demonstrated in every segment of education: grades, test scores, course taking, or tracking.

In examining the educational disadvantages of different kinds of minorities, a qualitative study points out that both "ethnic capital" and "social capital" (Coleman 1988) should be taken into account just like "ethnic social capital" (Shah, Dwyer, and Modood 2010) that can be interpreted in terms of the intersection of the first two notions. The authors dispute the claim (Zhou 2005) that certain family or ethnic norms and values, in themselves, influence the educational successes or failures of minorities. Based on interviews with British Pakistani students and their parents, they affirm that there are differences among families with respect to how they operationalise the norms and values related to their ethnicity, since the ways of allocation of socially valued resources and life chances are shaped by ethnicity, class, gender, and religion within specific time and space. The contribution of structural conditions, like a selective school system or a racialised labour market, also has to be considered. Migrant ethnic minority families enclosed in their ethnic network, and thus transmitting between generations the values and norms of their group, have a protective influence on their descendents, who thus do not assimilate into the underclass and,

instead, their family norms mobilise towards the school (Modood 2004). However, the implication of all this is not that certain ethnic communities are culturally homogeneous, as advantages and disadvantages originating in social-class belonging also have to be taken into account.

By including some 25 different ethnic groups in its survey and focusing its qualitative inquiries on ten major ethnic minorities selected out of them, the EDUMIGROM research has unearthed a rich trove of data from communities in Western and Central Europe for the refinement of our existing knowledge about the associations between families' social and cultural capital and also about the impact of these assets on educational aspirations. The findings demonstrate that even in the case of those possessing high levels of knowledge gained through good education, ethnic minorities' cultural capital can be characterised by certain "holes" that hinder the efficient advancement of their younger generations. These "holes" originate in living in conditions of residential (and often: institutional) segregation that deprive families from access to the necessary information for choosing the most appropriate schools and also parents' lack of experiences in guiding and negotiating their children's future with teachers and other school personnel. At the same time, our findings confirm the utter importance of parental aspirations and dedications in orienting ethnic minority youth toward academic careers that then lead them toward professional positions with a middle-class level of reputation and rewards. Variations in intermingling social and cultural capitals highlight the above internal stratification of segregated residential multiethnic communities. But despite widespread poverty, immigrant parents belonging to ethnic niches that maintain their own economy (like Turks in France or Pakistanis in Britain) provide their children with the skills and aspirations for a promising upward mobility in adulthood. At the same time, highly educated parents suffering a downward occupational move upon immigration tend to lose the potentials of their cultural capital if they are squeezed into ghetto-like communities based on religious communitarianism: in these cases, the young generation is inclined to follow educational paths that point toward long-term enclosure within the tightly defined ethnic enclave – as reflected by the educational choices of a substantial group of Muslim youth in Germany or Sweden. The weakness of familial aspirations in serving as potent drives for upward mobility is shown in the educational careers of a large group of Roma adolescents whose families are deprived from even the minima of the necessary social and cultural capitals to back up their desires. These young people often internalise their parents' will for advancing in education; nevertheless, the profound needs of mere sustenance overwrite all such aspirations and they gradually develop a culture of disaffection toward schooling. In brief, our results show that neither the familial transmission of deeply ingrained values nor the attraction of the surrounding conditions are enough on their own to assist students' successful educational career; rather, it is a favourable constellation of these factors that can be considered to open the doors for ethnic minority youth for successful advancement toward social integration.

The easy thwarting of minority adolescents' ambitions for advancement is resonated in the "resistance theory" developed by the most widely cited educational anthropologist, Ogbu, who takes a similar point of departure to the above in assuming that youth from disadvantaged conditions discover

a contradiction between the promise that education leads to social mobility and the everyday reality of social stratification. Ogbu (1978 and 1991) argues that, in the case of certain categories of racial minorities, bad school achievement is caused by a refusal to adapt or an explicit confrontation with the values transmitted by the school. He assumes that, due to the collective experiences of students belonging to racial groups related to discrimination, such students define themselves in opposition to the dominant group, strive to maintain their own cultural and linguistic norms, and are distrustful towards the dominant society. For them, "acting black" and "acting white" represent mutually exclusive notions.

In Ogbu's typology, racial and ethnic minority groups differ in terms of how they first became part of the given society. He regards immigrants – especially economic migrants – as voluntary minorities having adaptive advantages in comparison with other kinds of minorities, as they consider education a convenient means in achieving their economic objectives. Instead of the in-group, they compare themselves to the social majority. By contrast, involuntary minorities, in the case of America, the descendants of Blacks carried to the country as slaves, often reject educational achievement as an avenue for success, as they are aware of the permanent barrier that is embodied in labour market discrimination, and that they are unable to overcome even by means of education. Since differences between the two groups impact also the personal characteristics – system of values and level of motivation – of the students, social conditions and personal acts are linked.

Since the publication of Fordham and Ogbu's article in 1986, there has been an ongoing debate about the phenomenon of "acting white". Conducting research in a poor neighbourhood of Washington, D.C., the authors found that Black students regard good performance as part of white students' terrain. In their eyes, Whites are prioritised in the American society, thus good school performance is a manifestation of "Whiteness". According to the authors, negative reactions to experiences of subordination, racism, and discrimination express collective protest on the part of involuntary minorities. The reason why their identity is distanced from that of the white middle class is that the latter put their minority identity and group solidarity at risk. Failure at school, therefore, refers to an underlying culture of protest.

Several empirical studies have tried to reinforce or refute Ogbu's statements that are based on the results of ethnographic research he had conducted over many decades. A study involving a large sample of high school students and giving account of empirical research based on follow-up surveys (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998) tested Ogbu's oppositional culture model. The outcome of this research disproved the authors' first hypothesis stating that involuntary minority (African-American) students perceive fewer returns from education and more limited occupational opportunities than do their dominant (white) or immigrant minority (Asian American) peers. Black students seemed more optimistic than those belonging to the majority, and a greater percentage of them thought that the school was important with regard to later position in the labour market. The results were mixed with respect to the second hypothesis claiming that involuntary minority students exhibit greater resistance to school than do students from majority or immigrant minority backgrounds. While features of oppositional culture

were present in the customs of African-American students as regards their neglect of homework and judgement of teachers, they nevertheless appeared more positive than majority students considering their actual attitudes towards the school. The third hypothesis referred to oppositional identity, that is, avoidance of the burden of "acting white", proposing that high-achieving involuntary minority students are negatively sanctioned by their peers for their achievement. The research results refuted this hypothesis as well. Finally, the fourth hypothesis, according to which resistance to school accounts for the racial gap in school performance between students from involuntary minority background on the one hand, and those from the dominant or immigrant minority groups on the other, seemed to be justified. African-American students received worse, while Asian American students obtained better grades in the important subjects than those belonging to the white majority. However, when school results were controlled using the socio-economic and cultural background data of students, differences became smaller, and what is more, taking into account indicators about skills, habits, and styles, the results were not significant any longer. The study highlights that although it is true that under certain conditions – like experiences of discrimination in employment, residential segregation, or differential treatment – Blacks consider educational advancement less useful, when examining a representative group of Black students, there are indications contradicting the oppositional culture model. In other words, one should refrain from making generalised statements and assuming homogeneity among minority groups. .

This research also raises attention to the paradox of "attitude-achievement" of Black students (Mickelson 1990). Mickelson claims that when using abstract indicators (like education being a key to future success), African-American students show positive attitudes towards the school, while at a concrete level they are frustrated by the school, which shows in their school grades. Although attitudes also have a role in school success, other "hard" variables (socio-economic situation of the family, education of the parents, etc.) have a more determining impact.

A study that takes stock of what recent ethnographic research on immigrant and involuntary minority youths reveals about variability in school performance criticises simplifying dual categorisations like accommodation and resistance, success and failure, or immigrant and involuntary minorities (Gibson 1997). In Gibson's view economic migrants want to adapt to the host society, and they consider the schooling of their children necessary in order to achieve their economic objectives. The strategy of this group is accommodation and acculturation without assimilation. However, people forced to escape from their country of origin see their place of residence as temporary, and thus they are less motivated to adapt. The same holds for guest workers who are also prepared for temporary residence in the host country. However, people coming from previous colonies cannot be regarded either as migrants or as an involuntary minority. Language proficiency and knowledge of the culture of the colonising country provide them with certain advantages as compared with economic migrants, thus colonial past does not necessarily create conflicts or antagonisms between the students on the one hand, and the school and the teachers on the other.

At the same time, Gibson thinks that generational belonging has a greater impact on social identity, ethnic relations, and the structure of opportunities than the story of inclusion into the majority society. The school success of the first generation is greatly influenced by the age at immigration, length of stay in the host country, previous schooling history, and the kind of support in the host country to aid educational career (Tomlinson 1991). Two patterns of adaptation are distinguished in the ethnographic literature on migrant youth. First-generation migrants, as long as they find education in the new country better than in their country of origin, are able to rationalise incidental prejudice and discrimination. Second-generation migrants, in turn, who have experienced their family's economic hardship and difficulties of integration, as well as marginalisation and discrimination, do not see their efforts successful and do not believe in the long-term effects of sacrifice. They are just as vulnerable as involuntary minorities. Research indicates that there is no linear relationship between the time spent in the new country and upward mobility, thus among certain migrant groups school performance is becoming worse with each generation. Skin colour also plays a role in this, when racial differences appear to be characteristics of individuals, while their significance is determined by the host society.

Thus, instead of Ogbu's categorisation, the factors promoting or inhibiting school success should be focused upon, as well as the ways in which related statements may inform educational practices. For instance, the observation that racial/ethnic minority students perform well at school when they *"[...] feel strongly anchored in the identities of their families, communities, and peers and when they feel supported in pursuing a strategy of selective or additive acculturation"* (Gibson 1997). The state also has a determining role in relating to minority students. Policy decisions may generate, perpetuate, or ameliorate conditions and structures responsible for racial disparities in education.

Ogbu's work and the inspiration gained from the wide international debate around his notions of a clear oppositional school culture among involuntary ethnic minority groups greatly influenced the analytical perspectives applied in the EDUMIGROM project. We found it productive to reinterpret the initial distinctions between involuntary and voluntary groups so that the arising categories better reflect the European reality. It has been revealed that, if people's free will is considered as the base of distinctions, then the terms "voluntary" as opposed to "involuntary" minority can neither be easily translated to the pathways of immigration toward the Continent, nor fully comprise the situation of indigenous people of colour. To take a few examples, let us consider the expanding groups of refugees and asylum-seekers – who represent the *majority* of recent immigrants in Sweden and Denmark, but who are also numerous in all other Western countries. These people clearly acted according to "involuntary" motives when they left behind their countries of origin hit by war or under the threat of political persecution, and although they enjoy a substantial degree of freedom in their new country, still, given their in-between status, one would be reluctant to apply the category of "voluntary" minority to grasp their case. Yet another dubious example is provided by the case of Roma in Central Europe: though their ancestors were mostly free nationals, generations of them have suffered extreme social and political exclusion and dramatic

subordination that rightly would qualify them for being considered as an "involuntary" minority whose situation resembles that of the most disadvantaged groups of one-time Black slaves in the United States (and also in the United Kingdom).

Considering resistance and oppositional school cultures, even the refined voluntary/involuntary divisions proved to be rather poor in their explanatory power. The closest to Ogbu's characterisation are manifestations of opposition among white working-class students in the post-colonial societies where a refusal of the values and rules represented by the school is articulated along the lines of social degradation, but the argumentations mostly lack an ethnic momentum. However, cultures of resistance embrace other behavioural manifestations than sheer opposition: disaffection with schooling among the youth from the most deprived groups of Roma is generating apathy and a soundless rejection of schools that is often coupled with absenteeism and truancy. True, declining regular school attendance is often less motivated by neglect than following from the pressing needs of early entrance to work which, in turn, is a dictate of deep poverty. A third type of "resistance" is demonstrated by Muslim students from less educated, religious family backgrounds who find the school an offensive institution against the values and traditions of Islam and who thus express a certain degree of opposition by declining to participate in activities otherwise considered compulsory for all students attending a "mainstream" (majoritarian) school.

## **Impacts of racism and racial discrimination from a psychological perspective**

As we have seen above, sociological inquiries into the educational disadvantages of ethnic minorities have centred around the intersecting relations of class, ethnicity, and gender in forging the positions of minority students in the world of schooling and have explored those dominantly institutionalised forms and processes of discrimination that limit their opportunities for advancement. At the same time, anthropological approaches to the subject matter focus on cultural differences along the line of ethnicity and display the attitudinal and behavioural patterns that minority youths develop in response to culturally framed conflicts in interethnic relations and that, consequently, inform their relating to the values represented by the school as a majoritarian institution. Neither strand of scholarly work is, however, really sensitised to following up on the psychological and social psychological phenomena related to race, racism, and face-to-face discrimination. The significance of turning attention to these micro-level dynamics of how social groups function comes from the fact that, through them, one can gain insight into the practices whereby individuals define themselves in relation to the group where they belong or, for that matter, where they intend to depart from.

The professional literature, in particular, studies in developmental psychology and social psychology, suggest that ethnic identity is formed as the result of a long development, over the course

of which a young person born into a minority group consciously builds up the notions of recognising ethno-social membership as a trait of the self. This development does not take place in a vacuum: impacts of the in-group and the out-group deeply affect it. An important element of the process is the ongoing consideration of values associated with the given group, which determines whether the individual arrives at a positive identity by appreciating the group of belonging (Tajfel 1981) or a negative self-image and a defying identity will evolve by denying belonging because of the negative connotations attached to it, either in inter-group comparison or owing to some outside threat (Voci 2006).

The formation of ethnic identity involves the development of a certain understanding, whereby young people from minority backgrounds can position their group in society-at-large. This kind of consciousness may be acquired only gradually, as a result of a process that, according to the influential work of Phinney (1992), consists of three stages. The first or "*unexamined*" phase is when the child does not yet question, but simply adopts, the opinions and attitudes of the own group, mediated by the family and the immediate environment. The next phase is that of "*exploration*" when the young person born into a minority group starts comparing the customs and *cultural* traits of that community with those of the dominant social group. Finally, the third or "*achieved*" stage is characterised by an elaborate knowledge of ethnic heritage that, besides including ample knowledge about the group in question, also entails a commitment to its values and aspirations. Insofar as awareness regarding ethnic identity is attained in this way, ethnicity plays an important role in a young person's life. However, depending on the given social setting, this process of psychological development may be intensified and accelerated or hindered and prevented from becoming fully realised.

Minority adolescents are subjected to social categorisation from outside (Tajfel et al. 1971). The group image related to their ethnicity does not only imply direct behavioural norms for group members but also determines the range of experiences they might meet in school and broader social life. Given their strong influence on the transformation of the order of social relations, and the involved power in determining the life experiences and opportunities of members of minority groups, race, racism, and discrimination are the most fundamental bases of hierarchical differentiation that designates their disadvantaged positions.

As an effect of the involved, highly uneven, interethnic relations, identification with one's own minority group may be frustrated by normative expectations arriving from the majority that specify the way toward successful social integration. The pressure exercised by the majority puts individuality, differentiation from others, the coherent internal organisation of identity, and positive self-esteem at risk. Any group easily distinguished by the social majority based on outward appearance is an easy target of such identity threats. Skin colour, gender, or even characteristic behaviour and clothing attached to cultural belonging represent typical points of reference for stereotypical notions resulting from the perception of the group in question as a homogeneous whole. Members of the indisposed minority, in turn, who notoriously experience being treated not as individuals but as the representatives of a stereotypically viewed group, inadvertently internalise such majority projections in their self-regard.



Although not in a positive direction, the formation of ethnic identity may be facilitated by everyday experiences, for example, the scarcity of opportunities available for members of a minority or their inability to access services, activities, or practices open for their majority counterparts. Racism and stigmatising differentiation faced by minorities, including ethno-racial discrimination experienced either on a personal or an institutional level, represent serious threats contributing to minority consciousness to an even greater extent. At the same time, reactions to discrimination also are assumedly related to the adoption, awareness, and acknowledgment of ethnic identity. Being unfavourably distinguished is viewed differently by those perceiving its manifestations as simple and isolated events and those identifying racism as a system of thought historically developed in the given society. Responses to discrimination may take a variety of forms, too, depending on personal differences as well as being conditioned by the possibilities made available to the community and society in general. Typical reactions include withdrawal from pernicious influences and enclosure into one's own community; resigned acceptance of the status quo; and the active and confronting opposition to majority society perceived as a hostile entity.

"Otherness" manifested in physical characteristics, too, serves as a simple starting point for the formation of stereotypes, and stereotyping perceptions often lead to the illusory correlation based on the false presumption of a connection between minority belonging and deviance (Hamilton 1984). Such humiliating presumptions then tend to deepen the feelings of a permanent threat of being excommunicated. The reaction to stereotype threat is *stereotype anxiety* (Steel and Aronson 1995), referring to the situation when assumed schematic opinions, taking the place of judgements and assessments addressed to a particular person, may also hinder a balanced and healthy development of the self. Stereotype anxiety thus functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy that may be manifested in various destructive ways that include – as a typical example – the weak, and declining, educational achievements of young people from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. Those viewing themselves through its distorting lens will virtually justify the validity of the stereotype with their poor performance.

It can be assumed that ethnic/racial minority children and young people know full well the stereotypes concerning their own communities, held and transmitted by the majority, even though they are not necessarily aware of the consequences of these schematic images that nevertheless may curtail their self-esteem. When, however, they recognise the pressure of their group belonging as a stigma, arriving at a state of so-called "*stigma consciousness*" (Pinel 1999), the responses to this recognition range from apathy and disaffection to disruptive behaviour and militant opposition. Obviously, there are individual differences with respect to the actual damaging impact of stigma consciousness, as well as regarding the interpretations, offered by members of stereotyped groups, concerning their own weak performance that is in accordance with the schematic expectations. Paradoxically, when prejudices held by others in identifying the reason of one's weak performance are referred to by a member of the stigmatised minority, thereby protecting one's self-respect and self-esteem, it is precisely weak performance that will raise the level of stigma consciousness (Brown and Lee 2005).

The EDUMIGROM research provides an impressive display of telling examples that confirm the above summarised major findings of psychological inquiries into the identity development of ethnic minority youth. Given that our study has focused on minority students living in multiethnic urban communities with a strong (over)representation of ethnic groups that "visibly" differ from the surrounding majorities, it is primarily the various ways of distortions in personal development due to disadvantageous distinctions by the outer world that our fieldwork has revealed. In addition to the individual variations that our study identified in accordance with the typologies provided by Tajfel, Turner, and Phinney, it turned out that there are two sets of underestimated factors that prove fundamental for the strategies that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds follow in cognising their self-perception and also in drawing the ethnic boundaries of their identity.

The first set of factors concerns the particular categories for justifying the disadvantaged (in certain cases, even subordinated) status of one's own group that is strongly impacted by the history of the community and its relations to the majority. Such a historical and relational embedding of the self largely determines how young people see their opportunities in society-at-large and whether they associate the experienced limitations with the prevailing social, economic, and political inequalities (seeing themselves as members of poor communities with weak representation), or interpret experiences of the "ethnic ceiling" with radical criticism by pointing to exploitative tendencies and practices of direct oppression on the part of the group in domination.

The second set of factors relates to the many forms of ethnic separation that range from exclusionary segregation at the will of the majority to voluntary withdrawal into one's own ethnic community driven by an appreciation of the cultural and/or religious values that are cementing the group's cohesion. The drives behind separation, whether forced from outside or motivated from inside the community, set the points of reference for viewing the self as a recognised and integrated member of society or sensing it as being refused and excluded.

By looking at the typical strategies of identity development of ethnic minority youths through the prism of historical formations, the EDUMIGROM research encountered a sharp East–West divide. Young people in the established democracies of the "old" member states of the European Union tend to formulate distinctive categories of "us" and "them", whereby they designate the boundaries between the majority and *all* those – the reified collective of ethnic minorities – who do not belong to the group in domination and who thus are predestined for carrying the stigma of being "othered". However, these distinctions still are reasoned on the ground of a profound equality – the equality of acknowledged social membership that assumes the principal rights for participation in society and the unconditional safeguards of enjoying the protection of its democratic institutions. On this ground, the perception of ethnic "otherness" as a constituent of the self may entail the simultaneous recognition of being disadvantaged, but the acknowledged disadvantages do not implicate deprivation from practicing one's basic citizens' rights, with all its involved freedoms. An important accompaniment of framing one's identity is the

language of expressing the ethnic self: young people in our Western communities either use clear terms to denote the ethnic/religious group where they belong, express their multiple bondages (yet again in clear terms), or deliberately articulate the insignificance of ethnicity in their self-perception. Such a self-evident use of ethnic terminologies can be translated as a certain degree of acceptance –from inside the community as well as from outside. The discursive bridge to society-at-large that provides the linguistic categories of determining the self in universal terms is perhaps one of the most important prerequisites of a healthy identity development. By the same token, adolescents of these communities do not escape the sufferings of discrimination and of being minoritised by the majority: such destructive experiences are reflected in varied manifestations of the stigma threat and the accompanying disturbances in self-respect and the responsive unruly behaviours. Nevertheless, even in these difficult cases the strength of the community serves as a protective shield that allows for inviting the institutions and services of the welfare state for social re-integration.

The conditions of identity development of Roma adolescents are distinctively harder in the "new" democracies of Central Europe. Concerning one's self-perceived position in society, the post-socialist transformation has brought about general feelings of uncertainty, regardless of people's objective conditions. Moreover, corruption of the safe yardsticks for self-determination has proven an enduring experience affecting the subsequent generations and thus perceived as an all-societal condition of the new era. Widespread impressions of the fragility of attained status, and the perceived injustices that are associated with them, undermine the socio-political process of distilling the universal contents of citizenship: the arising fierce competition and heated social struggles conclude in a fragmentation of the privileges, rights, and entitlements implied in the notion. The unceasing fights for securing advantages through hierarchically determined institutional channels have produced an effective bifurcation of social rights that confine Roma and the poor to second-rate services and provisions often with racialised substances. The emerging racialised fault-lines in all spheres of social practice leave their marks on how young members of the ethnic minority comprehend their position and how they see their future perspectives. Despite variations in the strategies of identity formation, the self-perception of young Roma reflects a high level of stigma threat and deeply internalised stigma consciousness: "us" and "them" are not only sharply distinguished in their self-reflection, but are seen as belonging to two different worlds that are in hostile relations to each other and that may invigorate even life-threatening attempts on the part of extremist groups in the dominant society. True, Roma teenagers often express a hope for becoming accepted and integrated, but such imaginations are always articulated with a great deal of reservation due to the profound uncertainties beyond one's control. The conditions of a healthy identity development are further endangered by ruptures in the public discourse and the flaws of democratic notions of unconditional human rights. It follows that being Roma carries exclusionary contents from outside that allow for acknowledging ethnic belonging only with reference to one's own community, while it often implies abnegation, shame, or angry opposition if articulated in relation to the outer world. Such

a dualist self-perception becomes in itself the source of threats and disruptive taboos. In an interplay of the outer pressures for self-denial and the liberating defensive responses of the community, frail ties to the majority often become even weaker which, in turn, give rise to tendencies of apathetic enclosure into one's own group as the only entity providing safety – even if such a refuge is rendered at the price of abandoning all desires for a better life.

Experiences about the causes and motives behind being separated on ethnic grounds further refine the picture. As we have seen earlier in this study, although ethnic segregation is a widespread phenomenon with discriminative contents that cuts across the East–West divide, its implications on the identity development of ethnic minority youths are far from being uniform. If not accompanied with exclusionary practices in other domains, the simple fact of living in a residentially segregated community barely impacts the self-esteem of adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds: being compensated by free access to schools and a wide range of the amenities of urban life, they tend to internalise the positive facets of a closed community that provides solidarity and protection. This is not to deny the implied inequalities and deprivations if compared to the fortunate majority. However, in their eyes, relative poverty seems to be a transient phase of life that one can overcome with strong commitments to attain integration. The situation is different if segregation becomes institutionalised in schooling as the major arena of teenage daily life: in these frequent cases, the stigma of negative distinctions is inescapably implicated, and consequently, the perceived stigma threat becomes a constituent of the identities of those affected. However, a lot depends on how such a threat is counterbalanced by the freedoms of choice and movement that allow for developing certain positive associations with being distinguished as the “other”. As we have seen, the degree of such freedoms is greatly determined by the working of the welfare states and their universalist versus selectivist character. Further down the hill of forceful ethnic segregation, our research identified the most harmful formations of intra-school selection in those exclusionary ways of streaming and tracking that tend to devalue ethnic minority youths by attaching shortcomings as traits of the “ethnic personality” to stigma. In such cases – that were identified in both our Western communities and their Central European counterparts – personal degradation becomes an important constituent of the self, and thus the destructive tendencies in identity development hardly can be effectively countervailed, even by the principally preserved entitlements that are entailed by legal rights. Finally, the imprints of ethnic separation on identity development significantly differ, whether the given state of affairs has been forged by the will of the ethnic community, or on the contrary, whether it has been forcefully created from outside, most often by powerful groups and potent agents of the majority. Voluntary separation – a phenomenon frequently experienced in Muslim communities – usually entails the recognition of the group in question, and is seen by its young members as a symbol of strength and as a source of hope for upward mobility in society-at-large. By contrast, involuntary separation – be it motivated by exclusion and/or by openly oppressive conducts – is usually a source of internalised self-degradation that is coupled with a high level of stigma consciousness. Of course, individual techniques to cope might differ, but feelings of endangerment hardly ever can be put to rest.

Educational systems across Europe have diverse ways for tracking students into different areas of study that end up as ethnicised selection. The most harmful formations of intra-school selection are those exclusionary ways of streaming and tracking that tend to devalue ethnic minority youths by stigmatising their shortcomings as traits of the "ethnic personality". In such cases personal degradation becomes an important constituent of the self, the stigma is considered as an inescapable personal attribute, and thus the destructive tendencies in identity development hardly can be effectively countervailed, even by the principally preserved entitlements that are entailed by legal rights.

By reference to terms well-known from sociological literature, categories developed by psychologists to classify identity strategies usually evoke a particular theory of acculturation or argument concerning the relevance of culture in perpetuating a way of existence, which facilitates the understanding of their implications. By either taking the individual, the family, or a generation, as the basic unit of observation, or discussing the situation, character, and development of the entire community, these scholarly works often make statements and judgements on the basis of individual endeavours. What is notoriously missing from such approaches is an account of the structures of dominance and subordination and the workings of power involved in processes of acculturation and influencing the development or deterioration of communities.

This is the case, for instance, with Berry's two-dimensional model of acculturation (1997), analysing the processes of identity development of ethnic minority youths by reference to the individuals' involvement with the culture of the original group on the one hand, and that of the majority society on the other. Based on these critical factors, Berry defines four possible modes of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation. On the surface, these ways of dealing with cultural difference resemble those developed in Chapter IV of this study. However, as opposed to the considerations informing the multifactorial analysis applied in the EDUMIGROM research, the underlying assumption in Berry's approach is that individuals choose freely among these alternatives. Considering the ultimate implications of his cultural argumentation based on anthropological observations, Lewis (1959) also assigns the responsibility on the subjects of socio-cultural processes for their situation and problems. In assuming that the destitution of populations of deteriorated urban neighbourhoods correlates with or, indeed, is caused and reproduced by the deterioration of their culture, he disregards outside factors in the creation and maintenance of slums and exercising permanent pressure on its inhabitants.

As opposed to Berry's static and decontextualised scheme or Lewis' description of the internal dynamic of slum populations as if taking place in a social and political vacuum, the approach applied in the EDUMIGROM research takes into account a variety of determining factors that impact strategies of self-identification beyond the individuals' will, and influence the ways in which minority communities may or may not survive. While focusing on individuals, just like most acculturation studies, identity strategies are analysed here mainly on the basis of future plans and aspirations, which, in turn, are deeply embedded in the present conditions of life, determined, in addition to the previous history of the family and the community, by socio-economic factors and political and cultural contexts. Such a

multisided understanding of individual identity developments opens the door for establishing associations between certain constellations of private orientations and actions on the one hand, and the politicisation of minority representation and democratic participation on the other. Based on the exploration of such associations, new trends in research in political psychology, to which the EDUMIGROM research subscribes, bring up the scope and limitations of structural changes in majority/minority relations that point toward multicultural politics as a genuinely reflective arrangement of the new ethnic heterogeneity of European societies (Ross 1997, Kymlicka 2010).

One barely can discuss the educational opportunities of ethnic minority students, the impact of majority/minority relations on self-esteem and self-confidence, the strategies of identity development, or the conditions of adapting to socially expected norms without considering the vast literature on the role of stereotypes and prejudices in how majorities relate to different ethnic minority groups, and how members of these groups perceive themselves and their future perspectives.

In summarising the results of a focus group inquiry, Kao (2000) argues that adolescents formulate their educational aspirations and ideas on the future primarily in terms of the stereotypical images related to the in-group. Socialisation realised together with peers in their own racial group (often reinforced by segregated peer relations) result in concepts of success comparable to those held by others in this racial community. Relying on how the compound concept of the self is framed by notions of the hoped-for self, the expected self, and the feared self (Markus and Nurius 1986), Kao sums up the future-oriented ideas that determine the potential behaviour of students. She concludes that the image of the in-group may influence association between the individuals' aspirations and their performance both in positive and negative directions. Drawing on her quantitative and qualitative data, Kao demonstrates that young people formulate their educational aspirations by evaluating their level of performance with reference to that of members of their own group. This concerns school success in a variety of ways: it defines the range of competences supported by the stereotypes associated with the group, maintains group boundaries, and helps individuals in adjusting their own expectations to the minimal requirements set by their community.

Social psychology has studied inter-group prejudices and bias for almost a century. The background of the bias is formed by stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination: in other words, cognitive, affective, and behavioural reactions are at play that, instead of allowing for valuing someone as an autonomous individual, provide the base for viewing him or her simply as a representative of a group that is seen in generalised terms. Although the bias is mostly implicit, manifested in underground forms, research shows that racial categories automatically trigger various stereotypes even in persons who are relatively free from prejudices (Dovidio and Gaerter 1986). A range of surveys run in different western democracies about the experiences of ethnic minorities provide evidence for at least mild bias in the greater part of the population, while dangerous or blatant bias in a smaller segment of it.

Subtle bias plays a role in supporting simple inter-group distinctions by reinforcing attachments

to the in-group, while causing avoidance of the other group. Biases of the moderate and good-intentioned majority are mostly hidden and camouflaged. Often they are manifested only in less positive emotions related to the minorities seen as a unified out-group: there is no hostility against them, but respect is not paid to them either. Mildly biased individuals are prone to favour their group in contrast to that of the ethnic "other(s)". By the same token, they exaggerate the significance of cultural differences: this follows from the mere fact that categorisation according to an in-group and an out-group tends to magnify the departures between categories and reduces the significance of within-group variations. Ambivalent bias helps the members of the group in domination to justify the status quo by expressing the advantage of their group. Biased persons expect subordinated and occasionally pitied groups to cooperate with them in exchange for their support, without letting their entrance to take an advantageous position in the hierarchy that has been developed. Biased expectations function as self-fulfilling prophecies in reinforcing behaviours justifying inter-group differences. Attitudes of domination driven by prejudiced biases manifest themselves in practically all aspects of life, ranging from discrimination against minorities as members of the out-group in the fields of employment and housing, to education or jurisdiction. Thus, it has to be seen that even mild bias results in squeezing members of the minorities into unfavourable positions which then easily might be turned into exclusion.

Blatant bias characterises extremists who consciously and directly distinguish the group of devalued "others". The representatives of blatant bias see the world as governed by a strict hierarchical order that is potentially endangered by those at the bottom, and thus amplify inter-group conflicts on the ground of such convictions. Generally, those feeling threatened in their own group by worsening economic conditions or by the shake up of attained statuses, subscribe to this type of bias. They assume that different race-, culture-, gender-based, and sexual groups may occupy their position in the majority and receive different kinds of support without any merits. Such blatantly biased people do not tolerate the proximity of "others"; therefore, they openly fend for segregation, exclusion, or even physical aggression against the devalued out-group. So-called "hate crimes" are a manifestation of such extreme prejudices (Fiske 2002).

Although ethnic discrimination is subtle and elusive in most western democracies, its objectively recorded occurrence does not necessarily coincide with how discrimination is perceived. Ethnic/racial discrimination embodies intentional acts that are unfair for making injurious distinctions based solely on (often assumed) group belonging and that have favourable effects for the acting in-groups while bring about negative consequences for the out-groups that are the subject of such conduct. Perceived ethnic discrimination, in turn, refers to the subjective perception of unfair treatment of group members. Recalling the arguments of Phinney and his colleagues, discrimination and prejudice are pervasive aspects of the lives of ethnic minorities, thus dealing with these is central to identity formation. Furthermore, it can be assumed that youths from minority backgrounds are more likely to be confronted with negative attitudes and behaviours than their peers from the majority; hence, it is important to consider the

damaging imprints in their affects on the processes of acculturation and psycho-social adjustment. Empirical evidence has been found in different countries showing a negative relationship between ethnic discrimination and self-esteem (Verkuyten 2003).<sup>34</sup>

On the basis of a study conducted in Portugal among majority and ethnic minority adolescents from Angola, Cape Verde, and India, Neto powerfully argues for the legitimacy of engaging in scholarly inquiries exploring discrimination through the eyes of its victims (Neto 2006). In this study, individual motives in the perception of discrimination in connection with acculturation attitudes, language use, in-group social interaction, and behavioural problems were examined. In measuring acculturation attitudes, Neto used Berry's two-dimensional model (1997) that we referred to above. This model assumes that the way of acculturation is determined by two critical factors: the extent to which individuals consider it of value to identify with and maintain the cultural characteristics of their own ethnic group, and the importance one attributes to maintaining positive relationships with the greater society and with other ethnic groups. Based on this model, members of ethnic minority groups face, as mentioned, four alternatives: assimilation, when one identifies exclusively with the dominant society and severs the ties with the original group; integration meaning strong identification and involvement both with the culture of the dominant society and the traditions of the ethnic community; separation, when one identifies only with the values and practices of his or her own ethnic group and hardly interacts with the dominant society; and finally, marginality implying the absence or leaving of one's culture of origin and, simultaneously, lacking engagement with the dominant society. Integration can be considered the most adaptive path, while marginalisation is the most disadvantageous. Neto found that the various strategies affect the perception of discrimination, while experiences of discrimination may contribute to the reinforcement of the sense of belonging to the in-group. This, however, cannot be regarded as a positive influence, as perceiving oneself as victim of pervasive prejudice is associated with lower personal and collective self-esteem.

By applying the lens of the victims in exploring the patterns of discrimination against ethnic minority adolescents within and outside schools, the EDUMIGROM research supports Neto's work and reiterates his ethical arguments for considering minority students' subjective sense of being harmfully distinguished as a significant part of the objective reality that surrounds daily interethnic encounters in ethnically diverse communities. An important finding of our study is that, by the age of 14–16, young people from "visibly" distinguished ethnic backgrounds have gained an impressive experience of being "othered" in a variety of *minoritising* forms that often involve degradation by fellow students belonging to another (relatively more resourceful) ethnic minority group. Interethnic prejudices and attempts at devaluation seem to be integral part of life at school, though the manifestations of "othering", if compared to impressions from the outside world, appear to be softer, and often are dressed as youthful

34 Our study showed that youths from majority backgrounds also experience various forms of discrimination like gender, social background, etc. Therefore, the majority/minority difference should not be overemphasised in this regard.



teasing as if impregnated by a certain degree of cohesion. Nevertheless, even such milder expressions of abjection induce a feeling of being imperilled by exclusionary separation, especially if one belongs to the most disadvantaged segments of the community. In these latter cases, experienced devaluation comes as a mixture of negative charges against poverty and ethnic minority belonging that are amalgamated into a stone-like ideology that serves to justify refusal on the ground of culturally framed, unappeasable stereotypes of the dominating majority. Teachers from majority backgrounds often share the involved prejudiced views that many of them try to compensate by a supportive, though deeply paternalistic, orientation toward their minority students. However, the research revealed a number of occurrences of offensive and hostile relating by the schools' staff to children and their families: the latter pattern, reflecting intense anti-Roma sentiments among the dominant groups, proves to be rather frequent in segregated schools in the Central European communities.

By involving a range of characteristically differing ethnic groups, the EDUMIGROM research revealed a great diversity of the applied terminologies and the arguments used for justifying the degrading statements on the depicted minorities. Much in accordance with how public discourse affects the cognisance and categorical perceptions of the self, the language of discrimination also differs along the lines of the prevalence of democratic versus authoritarian practices in society-at-large on the one hand, and it is also informed by the strength versus the weakness of the struggles for recognition and self-defence on the part of the attacked minorities on the other. Differences along these two dimensions yet again suggest a sharp "East-West" divide: it is Roma adolescents in the first place who face the most harmful manifestations of degradation – in recent times even accompanied by threats of physical annihilation – in communities of Central Europe. At the same time, the groups most heavily targeted by prejudices and discrimination in the West – ethnic minorities affiliated with Islam – can countervail the painful impressions of being devalued by relying on a strong solidarity in their communities, and also by trusting the jurisdiction system that would protect their rights on constitutional grounds.

A review of the psychological literature on identity development and the manifestations of ethnic/racial discrimination among youth would remain incomplete without considering a further strand of research that puts interpersonal relationships and interactions between adolescents from dominant and subordinated social groups into its focus. Following the famous case of *Brown versus Board of Education*, with the start of the desegregation process in the United States, schools of mixed ethnic composition provided excellent grounds for researchers to study the dynamics of interracial relations.

A comprehensive undertaking relying on the notions of macro-structural theory, contact theory, and group threat theory accounts for research examining interracial friendships and conflicts (Goldsmith 2004). By applying the structural perspective, it is revealed that a key determining factor in the development of interracial relations is racial heterogeneity of the given institution or place (schools included). The addition of using the lens of contact theory is in highlighting the circumstances of interracial relations, that is, in identifying the psycho-social conditions that may positively or negatively affect the relations between different ethnic groups. According to Allport's classic definition, four components are required

for the development of positive interpersonal relationships: equal status of the parties, authoritative support, cooperation, and shared goals (Allport 1979). However, schools differ in their location, the socio-economic composition of their student bodies, the application or refusal of streaming, the distribution of resources within the organisations, and whether it is skewed along racial lines. A positive influence of teachers may be manifested in authoritative support for amicable racial relations, and after-class activities may realise cooperation toward interdependent goals. Through the prism of group threat theory, this general reasoning comes, however, into question by calling attention to the dependence of interracial conflicts on group size. When the groups are of a similar size, competition is likely to develop between them; however, when the majority outnumbers the minority group, tendencies of exercising power and authority over the latter are most likely to arise (Pettigrew 1998). Furthermore, the strong affects of within-school ethnic/racial separation have been pointed out. A "modern" means of segregation is streaming, when students are grouped separately based on abilities or other criteria. Given the limitation in opportunities of interracial encounters, friendships and contacts are less frequent between students belonging to different streams than within the same one. Moody (Moody 2001) claims that integrated schools can also be segregated, at least as far as friendships are concerned. The results of his nationwide research on networks of friendship among adolescents in the United States demonstrate that the more heterogeneous the school, the better the chances of interethnic friendship, while friendship-segregation is especially intense where minorities are highly concentrated.

In sum, despite the widespread efforts to attain racial mixing and deconstruct the visible and invisible walls of segregation in public education, the sharp Black and White divide in peer-relations still persists and powerfully governs everyday life at schools in the United States. In comparison, the EDUMIGROM research has uncovered the rather colourful constellations of interethnic encounters among schoolmates from different ethnic backgrounds. While our findings confirm the significance of the size and the ethnic composition of the school as factors facilitating or hindering ethnic mixing, and the data also underscore the destructive affects of streaming and tracking as constituents that condition ethnic/racial segmentation and mutual alienation, a few significant additions have been identified concerning the impact of larger-scale social relations on life at school.

Our study reveals the profound influence of the prevailing general patterns of interethnic relations in society-at-large on how teenagers relate to each other by supporting tolerance, or on the contrary, initiating practices governed by mutual distrust or even hostility. In communities with a long tradition of interethnic cohabitation, it is mainly social-class belonging – underscored by neighbourhood relations – that informs the shaping of adolescent friendships, while ethnicity seems to lose its significance in the process. In the newly arisen multiethnic communities in societies of economic migration, strong awareness of the distinctions between "us" and "them" inspires practices of ethno-religious separation at school, though a sense of interethnic togetherness based on mutual respect and support is maintained in the course of classroom work and other formal school activities. The conflicting character of interethnic peer relations in schools in the countries of post-socialist transformation manifests itself in the high

occurrence of bullying driven by ethnic hostility, and also in the infrequent accounts of true friendships that would transgress the sharply set ethnic boundaries. The unceasing feeling of Roma adolescents of being looked down and excluded by their peers from the majority comes through in their countervailing efforts to embellish simple interethnic acquaintances as genuine friendships.

The EDUMIGROM research encountered a sharp East-West divide. Young people in the established democracies of the "old" member states of the European Union tend to formulate distinctive categories of "us" and "them", whereby they designate the boundaries between the majority and all those – the reified collective of ethnic minorities – who do not belong to the group in domination and who thus are predestined for carrying the stigma of being "othered".

Despite variations in the strategies of identity formation, the self-perception of young Roma reflects a high level of stigma threat and deeply internalised stigma consciousness: "us" and "them" are not only sharply distinguished in their self-reflection, but are seen as belonging to two different worlds that are in hostile relations to one another and that may invigorate even life-threatening attempts on the part of extremist groups in the dominant society.

A further meaningful result of the study concerns the role of teachers and other school personnel in moulding interethnic relations among students. In addition to their shaping the philosophy of the institution toward a colour-blind or colour-conscious direction, which also impacts the mundane interethnic relations in class, focusing on ethnic heterogeneity among the staff proves to play an important role on its own: ethnic mixing among the authoritative adults provides a strong model for adolescents that carries the implications of ethnically balanced power based on mutual respect.

## Multicultural attempts at preventing social exclusion on ethnic grounds

For many decades, group identification and inter-group relations were studied by social psychology as cognitive and affective processes. Nowadays, legitimisation processes, with various ideologies in the background, receive more attention. Examples include the system justification theory (Jost and Banaji 1994) or the social dominance theory (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Both theories are based on the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner, according to which people originate their social identity from their social group membership. Therefore, understandably, they want their own group be recognised, accepted, and valued socially. However, when differences are impossible to perceive, this might lead to the devaluation of the social identity of a given group and the development of a sense of threat.

More recent research on stereotypes and ethnocentrism calls attention to the fact that the avoidance of making distinctions between groups, the so-called colour-blind perspective, is more characteristic of the majority, while the multicultural viewpoint that supports inter-group distinctions, and thus ethnic pride, is particularly frequent in the case of minorities. According to the multicultural hypothesis, commitment

to the in-group results in positive ethnic identity, while also making one more open towards ethnic out-groups, thus implying a higher degree of acceptance of otherness. Despite the scarcity of empirical data, or perhaps just because of this, multicultural ideology is criticised both scientifically and socially. It is often considered a "daydream" of liberal philosophers who engage in utopian ideas and neglect empirical reality (Kymlicka 2010). In recent responses to such accusations, by re-interpreting the Anglo-Saxon tradition of social liberalism, Bhikhu Parekh (2006), Tariq Modood (2007), Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (2006), and Glenn C. Loury (2005) have developed new models for justifying the moral political foundations of multicultural regimes, and started to develop evidence-based analyses of the working of modern welfare states to point out that, despite their current unpopularity, multicultural approaches are viable and produce efficient results in education, jurisdiction, and welfare redistribution.

In a study summarising the results of several empirical investigations, Verkuyten argues that assimilationist thought represents the dominant ideology of the majority group, which it tries to support by both moral and intellectual arguments, while multicultural ideology formulates its views relating to minority identity and efforts to improve their situation more from the standpoint of minority groups (Verkuyten 2005). The author examined the impact of multicultural ideology on group identification and the evaluation of ethnic groups by minority and majority group members among adolescents and youths of different ethnic (Dutch and Turkish) backgrounds. The research was focused on the process of the formation of social identity. Verkuyten claims that the prevailing interethnic ideologies (that either consider or ignore ethnic group differences) also influence the degree of identification with the in-group. In the case of members of ethnic minorities, he assumes a positive relationship between multiculturalist orientation and in-group identification and evaluation, while the multicultural commitment of the majority indicates the probability of positive relations towards the out-group, and less likeliness of identification with the in-group. The author also points out that laboratory experiments are insufficient in understanding fundamental cognitive processes, as ethnic relations are also determined by the various historical and ideological contexts as well as the ideologies and social beliefs colouring struggles related to ethnic and cultural differences.

Phinney and Ferguson (Phinney and Ferguson 1997) also conducted research among adolescents, dealing with inter-group relations and out-group attitudes. The results of their research support the legitimacy of the approach of development psychology, suggesting that ethnic identity and positive relation to the in-group become stronger with age, as well as that of multicultural views, according to which ethnic diversity makes various out-group interactions available, also reinforcing positive out-group attitudes. All this, however, is greatly determined by the social structure, particularly the comparative status of different ethnic groups and their equal or hierarchical positioning.

The discourse on cultural differences has lately been intensified in multicultural Europe and the United States. Various urban riots, widespread segregation, and a lack of social cohesion across ethnic boundaries have shifted thought from multicultural policies towards integration discourse. Acculturation

is a central topic of social psychological research on cultural difference. According to its definition, acculturation is *"prolonged inter-group contact between two or more cultural groups and the changes that this purportedly brings in both parties"* (Bowskill et al. 2007).

The examination of strategies of acculturation and attitudes to cultural maintenance of minority persons as well as of the impact of cultural contact is misleading and deficient when concentrated solely on the individual. This approach takes the responsibility from the broader, collectively managed socio-political powers and devalues the role of the majority, thereby relegating the responsibility concerning the acculturation process to its subjects. The reason why the role of the dominant in-group in the acculturation of minorities has to be revealed is that this does not only provide insight into the "us" versus "them" distinction but also shows who is interested in the maintenance of the status quo (Berry 1990). While it highlights the categorical differences that inform identity development, Berry's much cited model remains – as has been pointed out – static and decontextualised, as if individuals from a minority background were free from external pressures and limitations when choosing which path to follow in moulding their identities.

When not seen as static and one-dimensional, the issue of ethnic identity is usually examined at the macro-structural, cultural, and individual levels. In the course of studies concerning the school performance of ethnic minorities, some researchers tend to attribute binary characteristics to (racial) minority students, for example, "native" versus "immigrant", "oppositional" versus "adjustive" minority groups, "acting Black" versus "acting White" ways of accommodation, and they rarely examine behavioural variations within the group. Sometimes racial identity is prioritised; at other times social identity is seen as determinant. A study accounts for "acting White" and the possible ways of confronting it with respect to collective identity and the status hierarchy formulated by the school (Carter 2006). By applying quantitative and qualitative methods, a study involving majority, Black, and Latino students examines along various dimensions the cultural behaviour and network of relationships of adolescents from different backgrounds in school and peer-group contexts. . The considered dimensions include language and speech codes; racial/ethnic in-group/out-group symbols (clothing, music, taste, interaction); the significance of group solidarity in friendships and other relationships; and the inter-racial dynamics in constructing the superiority of Whites or the subordination of racial and ethnic minority groups. In contrast with simplifying research that disregards differences within the group, three groups of minority students are distinguished. Cultural mainstreamers, who underline the similarities between ethnic (racial) minorities and the white majority, believe in the possibility of minorities entering majority structures, and support the cultural, social, economic, and political integration of the minority in question. All this does not preclude racial/ethnic awareness. Noncompliant believers, who characteristically do not perform well at school, nonetheless believe in the values transmitted by the school, while they are also critical concerning systematic disparities. The group called cultural straddlers, having multiple attachments and a bi-cultural perspective, forms a bridge between the former two categories.

Despite equalising and desegregating efforts in education, the inquiry based on concepts and methods of social psychology regarding the relation of racial and ethnic stigma with identity and educational motivation apparently still has validity in the schools of the western world. A great part of visible minority youth struggles to define themselves and their ethnic or racial identity in "white" majority institutions (Tatum 2004). In the hands of the young members of stigmatised groups, ethnic identity may function as a strategy of protest against degrading, stigmatising, and stereotyping judgments that they are subjected to. Strong ethnic identity may contribute to school success, providing a means against racial and ethnic discrimination and to avoid feelings related to threat (Zirkel 2005).

Another strand of research into this matter deals with the ways in which the school and the school system may improve the educational achievement of minority students. Methods include culturally relevant pedagogy, anti-racist education, supervision of the curricula, the introduction of cooperative educational models like jigsaw classroom techniques (Aronson and Patnoe 1994), and examination of the role of teachers in these dynamics. Likewise, peer relations are important since peers play a crucial role in understanding the knowledge of students about ethnicity and race.

Another issue to be considered is the connection between school evaluation, grading, or other means of qualifying performance (like tracking) on the one hand, and academic self-esteem and school disengagement on the other (Régner 2006). Besides, it is also important to examine the relations of minority students' parents with school: the acculturation orientation and ethnic identity of students can also be interpreted with respect to parental involvement. In her study, Régner gives account of her research that adopts a holistic perspective in identifying the factors influencing the school performance of all students, including parental involvement, and other factors concerning only minority students (like ethnic identity, acculturation orientation). She conducted research in a population that had not been examined before, among students from North Africa, forming the largest ethnic minority group in French schools. Experience shows that these students are, to a great extent, characterised by school failure, thus Régner raised the question how minority students themselves cope with bad grades. She analysed the relationship between grades and self-esteem in the school and, as the latter is a part of self-esteem as it were, she also dealt with the correlation between bad school self-esteem and self-esteem in general.

According to Régner, in the case of ethnic minorities, instead of a one-dimensional approach to relevant acculturation attitudes, the simultaneous presence of attitudes towards the culture of the in-group and that of the host society should be taken into account. Attitudes towards the two cultures are not mutually exclusive but may show variations: students may adopt positive or negative attitudes towards both cultures. Régner found that students integrated into the host society show less acculturation stress and anxiety and they have less psychological problems than marginalised or separated students. The danger of distress is the highest in the case of marginalised ones. Those who are assimilated and integrated show better school performance, thus school grades are positively correlated with integration. The subjective feeling of belonging to the in-group appears in achieved ethnic identity as a specific aspect

of acculturation. This identity changes with time, depending on attitudes related to the dominant group. Those able to integrate are characterised by a greater degree of ethnic commitment, compared with the marginalised and separated ones, and this greater degree of ethnic identification may contribute to the formation of a healthy self-image in adolescents (Phinney et al. 2001).

Summarising the results of several research projects, social psychologists explain the school disengagement of ethnic (racial) minority students with racial-ethnic self-schema (RES) (Oyserman et al. 2003). Self-schemas are organised generalisations about the self: they are dimensions along which persons hold clear and distinct perceptions about themselves. Individuals are not schematic for all of the characteristics (traits, skills, and abilities); they only reflect domains that are valued in one's social context. According to the authors, when a domain becomes self-schematic, it gains importance to maintain a particular view of the self within this domain. According to the authors, not all minority members are schematic for their ethnicity or race, since some of them, although aware of their racial belonging and social position, have not developed a self-scheme, that is, a coherent cognitive structure concerning their membership. Their empirical research deals with the question whether negative stereotypes regarding school performance affect primarily those having, or those lacking, racial-ethnic self-schema. Is it RES *aschematics* who are more vulnerable, unable to defend themselves against negative feedback based on race or ethnicity, because they do not possess an appropriate cognitive structure? Or is it RES in-group only-s, of mostly low social status, in whose case good school performance would be considered incongruent both by their own in-group and the out-group? The authors' hypothesis makes reference both to Ogbu's oppositional culture theory, in claiming that caste-like minorities are not expected to perform well either by the outside world or by their own group, and to the social creativity strategies described by Tajfel and Turner, according to which, because of the negative opinions regarding their academic success, in-group schematics are more likely to turn away from school, looking for alternative means to maintain positive group belonging (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The authors assume that the vulnerability of RES *aschematics* against the majority and the turning away from the majority by in-group schematics both have negative consequences for school performance. By contrast, those having minority RES and conscious of their membership in an in-group that is discriminated against by the majority are able to focus on the issue of defence against the majority and avoidance of the negative psychological consequences of minority status.

Finally, it can be asked as to whether racial discrimination in education originates in the institutional or in the individual acts – attitudes, ideologies, unequal-unfair treatments – of state actors. The distinction of racial discrimination from inequality may well be an intriguing issue of intellectual, legal, and statistical debate; however, even a thorough analysis of the question may fall short of having any real effects on decision-makers and policymakers to eliminate the racial gap in education. *“Even if we conclude that discrimination does not cause racial disparities in education, we should not conclude that schools have no role in addressing them. If public schools do not address educational disparities, then who or what institution will?”* (Mickelson 2003).

While Mickelson rightly points to individual schools' responsibility to actively stand up against ethnic/racial disparities in knowledge distribution and in providing equal access to opportunities for advancement, evidence shows that their potentials remain painfully limited without the backing of multicultural policies that respect and support diversity while striving for justice, equity, and equality. Obviously, the launching of such policies is not merely a matter of political will of the governing elites: without public support, they fail to work. At the same time, research findings on contemporary public orientation toward the ethnic "others" – especially, toward those who "visibly" differ– suggest a good deal of ambiguities on the part of the dominant majorities who have moved away from interethnic support during the lengthy and ongoing global economic crisis. While repeated studies on prejudices suggest the diminution of discriminatory views, it is widely agreed among scholars that obsolete prejudice and racism in their extreme form actually have not altogether disappeared; instead, old formulations have been replaced by new manifestations of symbolic racism and racial resentment displayed, for instance, in the argumentations for rejecting multicultural education or affirmative action. Representatives of the social structural theory see competing group interests in the background. As individuals identify with their own ethnic or racial group, members of the dominant group often tend to support ideologies that maintain and legitimise their own higher social status by developing devaluing ideas about the "threatening" ethnic "others". Thus, prejudice is not irrational but originates from a competition and interest-driven struggle for real or symbolic resources and privileges (Tayler 1998). Others claim that, by reference to "principled politics", the refusal of racial politics by influential groups of the white majorities rather arises from political orientations leaning toward race-neutral values and ideologies like fairness or individualism. Therefore, it is a matter of the chosen societal values and political convictions that these groups are not supportive of policy measures like affirmative action, residential integration, or native-language education for minorities (Bobo and Fox 2003).

No matter whether measures for tackling racial/ethnic disadvantages and injustices are resisted by the ruling groups on the ground of "principled politics" observing liberal values, or whether they are driven by prejudiced orientations toward ethnic minority citizens, the new challenges of ethnic diversity remain a most burning issue of contemporary democratic politics that urges for seeking new societal responses. The contribution of the EDUMIGROM research to such a painstaking process is limited by the very nature of our inquiry. By focusing on designated segments of nine European societies – on ethnic minority youths in multiethnic working-class communities – our results certainly do not speak about interethnic relations in general. What is more, by deliberately concentrating on how minority people perceive the conditions and relations in their social environment, we have gained just limited insights into how majorities see the same conditions and relations. Nevertheless, we believe that by accentuating the voice of those who, as a rule, are deprived and often subordinated, we can perhaps contribute to the formulation of some further research toward the political conditions that might frame policies of interethnic understanding and advancement toward more ethnic/racial equality and equality.



The conditions that we briefly outline below might then provide the macro-level backing to those policies for better inclusion in education that Chapter VI addresses in the context of the European Union and that the country chapters in Part B of this study argue for with respect to the domestic conditions.

As demonstrated throughout this study, the ethnic identities and interpersonal relations analysed in the EDUMIGROM research are conjectures based mainly on personal life histories and future plans, thus revealing patterns of self-positioning. At the same time, the relevance of individual identities and interethnic experiences concerning community development or its use in collective endeavours aiming at obtaining recognition for particular minority identities largely remained outside of the scope of our fieldwork. Thus, taking our inquiry further, it seems important to broaden the scope of studies by incorporating political aspects and implications of individual identity strategies and mapping the imprint of departing strategies on various forms of collective engagements within one's own ethnic communities as well as those that cross ethnic boundaries.

Taking into account that the EDUMIGROM research demonstrated a huge overlap between material deprivation and ethnic minority degradation – furthermore, our findings show that one's broadly perceived living conditions (with their social symbolism) are important constituents of his or her identity strategy and interethnic relating – the suggested future inquiry certainly has to address both the material and ethnic aspects of individual and collective experiences. An important theoretical resource for such an engagement is provided by Nancy Fraser's discussion of the possible strategies of dealing with material inequalities and injuries of social respect. Fraser's two-by-two scheme comprises these two aspects of justice (redistribution and recognition) and the two general responses providing remedies (affirmation and transformation). The resulting matrix allows for locating four regime types in the following way: the liberal welfare state that corrects ethnic/racial inequalities in redistribution through targeted affirmative action; mainstream multiculturalism which puts ethnic/racial recognition into the focus but weakly addresses (at best, corrects through targeted actions) inequalities in redistribution; deconstruction, which concentrates on eliminating the dividing socio-political implications of ethnic/racial diversity, but which proves weak to address material inequalities; and finally, (genuine) socialism that transforms the fundamental structural conditions of capitalism toward justice and equality as much along the line of material well-being, as according to a fair and equal status among diverse ethnic groups.

Fraser's comments on her model emphasise two important points: first, that problems of redistribution and recognition should be dealt with in conjunction, as opposed to being addressed separately; second, that while some kinds of remedies go well together, other pairings are rather incompatible. Thus, the liberal welfare state becomes associated with mainstream multiculturalism as both rely on affirmative solutions, while socialism is on the same terms with deconstructive methods in prioritising transformative procedures. This latter kind of approach is obviously privileged by Fraser, for the very reason that it proposes the use of means to modify deep structures, thereby producing radical changes.

Fraser's scheme has various advantages as compared with the above introduced models of acculturation. Besides providing a framework for understanding identity strategies and interethnic relations that links them with the socio-economic context, it also highlights that attitudes regarding both sets of issues necessarily involve political considerations and implications. Thus, the definite focus on political strategies justifies Fraser's insistence on becoming aware of the consequences of individual and group-level decisions. This idea suggests that, without forgetting about the less explicit and controllable aspects of identities and interethnic dynamics, it is worth studying them in the light of what they may contribute to political (and cultural) processes.

Much in concordance with Fraser's line of reasoning, Glenn Loury (2002) also argues for a compound approach to redistribution and recognition. In his important book on the construction of racial inequalities, he points to the potency of the *racial stigma* in regulating social contacts, the working of the markets, and also the structures of redistribution. Deeply ingrained perceptions of the stigma function for both parties: on the one hand, they govern the conducts of the dominant white majority that, in turn, induce and reproduce racially unequal access to education and the labour market; on the other hand, by ways of internalising the degrading attitudes of Whites, the stigma helps Black people to accommodate themselves in the lower positions of the rigid economic and social hierarchies. Fifty years of civil rights movements and struggles for equal recognition have "smoothened" the mentioned racial inequalities, but have not succeeded in undermining the racial construct that provides the fundament of the American welfare state: at their peak, a rather firm embedding of affirmative policies into the otherwise undisturbed functioning of the racialised relations of American capitalism have been achieved (with recurrent waves of openly questioning them in heated public debates). By emphasising the importance of the stigma as a synchronic macro- and micro-level regulator of social relations and societal redistribution, Loury's work provides yet another important theoretical foundation to study the politicisation of ethno-social relations – especially where racial stigma seems as strong as it does concerning the case of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe.

A study of minority youth focusing on important components of commonality (ethnicity, religious background, and poverty) and on certain shared dynamics (social exclusion, stigmatisation, discrimination, or the self-protective mechanisms of minority groups) that inform the constitution of collective *political* identities adds further dimensions to our concerns related to responses to experiences and challenges of minority existence, in terms of analysing them solely from the perspective of individuals. While the EDUMIGROM research primarily addressed problems of education, trying to find out why and how early disadvantages of children from "visible" minority backgrounds are transformed into permanent deprivation during the course of schooling, a subsequent research project could focus on other areas of young people's lives that are explicitly involved in the formation and articulation of group identities, thus exerting influence on their future prospects. Having, for instance, youth organisations (clubs, professional and political associations, institutions of entertainment like music bands, artistic partnerships, etc.) as the

main sites of research, the cultural and political orientations of young people can be investigated in terms of the transformative potentials of shared understandings of ethnicity, cultural traditions, religiosity, as well as participation in a trans-ethnic youth culture and political enterprises like anti-racist movements and engagement in transnational representations of minority rights. Such an inquiry concerning the *politics of identity* could go beyond classifying individual identity strategies and micro-level interethnic conducts and demonstrating the relational nature of identities, to show how identities become politicised as they are employed in social activism aiming at the transformation (or affirmation) of minority/majority relations. Additionally, such a dynamic and dialectical approach to individual and group experiences that are involved in the permanent exchanges between majorities and minorities can provide fertile ground for developing policies that mean social inclusion as a constant flow of practices based on mutual recognition and a shared interest in constructing a culturally diverse world driven by notions of equality and justice.

## CHAPTER VI

### POLICY DEBATES, DILEMMAS, AND PROPOSALS: LESSONS FROM THE EDUMIGROM PROJECT

*Viola Zentai*

#### **EDUMIGROM results on a European policy map**

##### **Introduction**

Education in primary and secondary schools is one of the oldest public services that states deliver, organise, or at least closely monitor. Concordant with its role as a public service, education also concerns wider issues of public finance and the distribution of human resources. Moreover, education articulates societies' authoritative social norms and ideas on law and order, and promotes dominant patterns of socialisation embedded in the political structures and concepts of nation-states. The educational system is an interface of families, schools, and structures of governance and local institutions, all motivated by different sets of interest and understandings of their agency to shape this interface. For the EDUMIGROM agenda, educational systems and their services are considered as embodiments of the distribution of these agencies, while at the same time, they also demonstrate the *quality of thinking on social diversity and inclusion* in societies in both the investigated "old" and "new" European Union member states.

Educational systems have been exposed to a number of important changes in European societies in the past two decades. Discontents and challenges concerning the established welfare regimes in various western democracies, and the delegitimation of former state-socialist practices in the post-socialist region of Central and Eastern Europe have given rise to new concepts on the cooperation between states and citizens. Questions of efficiency, choice, and quality of service have come to the fore, sometimes directly challenging the principle of universal accessibility to basic provisions. By now, the role of knowledge in social and economic progress is discussed throughout Europe as often in the context of competitiveness

as that of social inclusion. The growing global role of the markets, diversified, and customer-tailored services, and controls on spending converge in new ideas on the role of the state and structures of public management. All this comes about when, due to global currents and expected as well as unexpected political changes, people choose to move across borders more intensively than before. As a consequence of such moves, new types of social inequalities emerge, whereby national and ethnic minorities, settled migrant communities, stateless people, and undocumented newcomers all face departing possibilities, choices, and constraints of adjustment or inclusion into societies still dominated and ruled by and in the interest of their "hosting" majorities. Conflicts and misunderstandings between majorities and minority groups often conclude in intense domestic political and policy debates on how to balance claims for increased competitiveness and improved social inclusion.

Educational systems, shaped and reshaped by the wider transformations, nowadays do not deliver their services to a homogenous body of citizens. "Old" and "new" member states in the European Union embrace differently structured societies allowing various patterns of inequalities – forged, among other things, by interethnic relations and intersecting forces of class and ethnicity. Across the continent, educational service providers encounter both similar and differing problems related to improving the participation of minority ethnic youth in education. These problems arise from the diverse traditions and institutionalisations of citizenship and consequential access to schooling. The involved differences are informed in the "old" member states primarily by the widespread processes of labour migration that challenge the long-established frameworks of the ethnically homogenous welfare states, whereas in the "new" member states it is the need for repositioning the indigenous Roma minorities that challenges the prevailing policies and structures of welfare redistribution. In all the countries concerned, minority communities are divided by their socio-economic status and cultural traditions among and within themselves that further differentiate the needs and claims for equity, equality, and recognition. The EDUMIGROM research community conceives these varied minority groups' access to good quality education as a basic human right and a matter of social justice conducive to social integration in Europe – in times of both progress and distress.

The European Union has limited competence over educational policies of its member states. More competence is assigned to European policy making in the fields of vocational training and higher education. The member states run their education systems within a complexity of potentials and limitations that are informed, on the one hand, by the traditions and deeply internalised values of schooling, and on the other hand, by the prevailing administrative, political, cultural, and financial choices and constraints. Similarly to other social policy fields, the European Union can use soft political power and the Open Method of Coordination to support member state policies and evaluate their performances. There are some policy arenas intersecting with the field of education in which the European Union has more pronounced competence and regulatory power, most notably in those of anti-discrimination, migration, and the rights of children. The most recent policy field of this sort, very specific in its scope but far-reaching in its political relevance, concerns the inclusion of Roma.

From the late 1970s, the European Union developed very strong *human rights and anti-discrimination* provisions and softer objectives and mechanisms to ensure inclusion in socio-economic terms. By the 1990s, European anti-discrimination policymaking had made important steps towards specifying the types of acts that are considered incompatible with European norms of fair treatment of individuals, among others, based on ethnic (racial) belonging. The most important embodiments of this progress are the *Race Directive* (2000/43EC) and the *Employment Directive* (2000/78EC) that compelled member states to transpose key anti-discrimination principles in their domestic laws, to stipulate implementation measures, and to establish monitoring institutions. As key European policy reports and the broader academic literature reveal, the actual social practices are changing at different speeds in different member states, and in some cases creating major backlashes against anti-discrimination principles. Yet, European-level political agreements and newly launched policy experiments are building benchmarks in the spirit of the directives against which the workings of different political regimes can be judged, and from which the social expectations and minimum standards for different professional analyses and monitoring can be set.

The European enlargement process starting in late 1990s and the Copenhagen Criteria forcibly engaged the then-candidate states in this equality policy progress. Moreover, critical, academic, and political actors made tangible efforts to bring the concept of multiculturalism into the centre of European policy thinking by referring to some established non-European democracies (e.g., Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) and their experiments with managing social diversity to the benefit of their minorities and society-at-large. The notion of multiculturalism conveyed the hope of making diversity a value rather than a burden for society, and of creating citizenship regimes and identifying models in which multiple group loyalties are encouraged. In the first decade of 2000s, especially towards its conclusion, the transformation of welfare paradigms and regimes, new waves of migration, smaller and larger economic crises, and fears of terrorism created major challenges to the progress of European multiculturalism. The interlocking outcomes of these forces called for the sharpening of European migration policy in which the protection of Europe has become as pronounced as the protection of immigrants' rights.

Ideas on policymaking in the educational field are shaped amid these broader contexts. The key political and policy statements of the European Union do not fall short on stressing the importance of education of children irrespective of their origin and belonging. Article 3 of the *Treaty on the European Union* (Lisbon 2009) enshrines the European Union's obligation to promote the protection of the rights of the child. The *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*, by now of the same legal status as the Treaty, spells out the obligation to respect the Union's cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity (Article 22). In the adoption of the Stockholm Programme, the Council of the European Union sets out the guidelines within the areas of freedom, security, and justice for the years 2010 to 2015. The Programme has incorporated minority issues on its agenda, by emphasising that the European Union and the member states must make a concerted effort to fully integrate vulnerable groups, in particular the Roma community, into society by promoting their inclusion in the education system (Council of the European Union 2010).

The European Union launched its Education and Training 2010 Work Programme in 2001 (hereafter: Education and Training). Six annual Progress Reports (2004–2009) were published on the work programme with detailed analysis of performance and strategic guidance for education policy cooperation at the European level. These reports have a chapter that discusses equity and social cohesion aspects of education. The chapters include a special section devoted to the issue of migrant children in education, but the case of Roma, as a significant community among the many ethnic minorities in Europe, is not discussed. The most recent policy statement within the Education and Training frame was given by the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2009. Among the four main strategic objectives, the third point advocates for “promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship”. More closely, it is pronounced that education and training systems should provide a proper environment for learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs, and migrants. Furthermore, in the words of the Framework, “education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds”. This statement offers a firm support to multicultural and inclusive thinking in organising education in the member states (European Commission 2008). The most elaborate document in terms of targeting equality and social inclusion, The Council’s Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training, adopted in Brussels in May 2010, calls for reconciling the quality and equality aspects with the competition and inclusion requirements of European education systems:

*Increasing international competitiveness requires high professional skills combined with an ability to create, innovate and work in multicultural and multilingual environments. Together with the demographic squeeze, this makes it even more important for education and training systems to raise overall attainment levels, whilst ensuring that all people, young and adult – regardless of their socio-economic background or personal circumstances – are enabled to develop their full potential through lifelong learning. In this respect, particular attention should be paid to the requirements of persons with special educational needs, those of persons with a migrant background and those of the Roma community.*

This convincing endorsement of the inclusion-driven policy frames of the European Union on education makes it clear that it is the arenas of implementation as well as the frames of other related key policy areas where one has to look for obstacles to policy changes and reasons for plummeting outcomes in inclusive education.

## EDUGMIROM research results positioned

To position EDUMIGROM findings in the broader landscape of European policy debates, it is essential to link our research results with the relevant themes of the findings and recommendations of other recent major research projects policy analyses, and evaluations that the main decision-making bodies of the European Union have recently released. This linking exercise will be rather selective in contrast to the comprehensive set of policy proposals that the EDUMIGROM project developed for domestic interventions (see in the next section of this chapter). In this overview, sorting out diagnostic and prognostic policy knowledge has been the organising principle, even if actual policy debates not only enact but often blur this distinction. In diagnostic statements, policymakers and critics highlight a problematic state of affairs by often offering causal reasoning as well. In prognostic statements, policymakers and critics elaborate a vision or implementation proposal for policy problems with explicit or implicit reference to diagnostic statements. EDUMIGROM outcomes directly speak to a host of diagnostic policy considerations but may inspire and endorse prognostic thinking as well.

Our policy review has examined in details the following research reports and policy documents, in addition to key European policy texts:

- *The Education of Migrant, Minority, and Marginalised Children in Europe* (EMMME) (2008)
- *The Second Generation in Europe: Education and the Transition to the Labour Market* (TIES) (2009)
- *Education and Migration: Strategies for Integrating Migrant Children in European Schools and Societies* (NESSE Report) (2008)
- *Roma Inclusion in Education* (Position paper of the Roma Education Fund 2010)
- *Developing Indicators for the Protection, Respect and Promotion of the Rights of the Child in the European Union* (Working document of the Fundamental Rights Agency 2010)

### Diagnostic observations

#### *Persistent problems in the access of minority children to good quality education in Europe*

It was already in the early 1990s that the European Commission highlighted the risks associated with a lack of improvement of educational opportunities for children of migrants, such as: widening social divisions that are passed down across generations; cultural segregation; social marginalisation and exclusion of minority communities; and interethnic conflicts. Recent reports on educational policies acknowledged



that Europe still grapples with a hiatus in children's and young people's access on equal grounds to compulsory education. For instance, nearly one in six young people in the European Union are early school leavers and one in four young adults (25 to 29 years of age) have not completed upper secondary education. (European Commission 2007). In sum, EDUMIGROM results also warn that educational and inclusion shortcomings will remain with European societies in the current decade.

The findings of the EDUMIGROM research correspond with other cross-country comparative studies that reveal that ethnic minority communities both in "old" and "new" member states often face different forms of exclusion. The hopes and ambitions to escape from ethnic "otherness" and socio-economic disadvantage accompany minority youth's educational careers. Along a key thesis of the relevant literature, the EDUMIGROM project viewed education systems as sites of *social reproduction* that offer differential access to socially relevant knowledge. Schools facilitate and constrain young people in shaping their identity, family and community ties, and career aspirations. In the social contexts our research concerned, inequalities in schooling take part in, as well as mirror, wider processes of social stratification. Providing differential knowledge and skills to youth, often along ethnic (religious, cultural) lines, schooling determines their later positions on the labour market and thus prepares them to occupy adult social statuses involving markedly different rewards and recognition. EDUMIGROM data indicate a high degree of commitment to schooling among youth and their parents in different parts of Europe. Regardless of being poor or rich, of educated or uneducated backgrounds, or of one's ethnic belonging, the overwhelming majority of adolescents think of education as key to successes in life. This implies the intention to remain in education in the second half of one's teenage years has become a general norm in Europe. Ethnic minority youths and their parents are equally aware that successful advancement in schooling is the major avenue for leaving behind one's marginalised conditions and aspiring for meaningful integration in society. It is all the more important to pay close attention to those who fall through the cracks of elementary and then continued education, and become or remain the subject of social exclusion. In our community-based sample, this at-risk group of adolescents amounted to no less than 15 per cent and the majority of them belong to minority youth. Their school life is a struggle rather than a smooth journey from childhood to adult life. Notably, the rest of minority youth in our study also often face uncertain academic and personal outcomes far different from those of their majority peers.

In authoritative European policy statements, it is acknowledged that persistent weak points prevail in certain children's and young people's access to education from early childhood to the upper secondary level of schooling. Children from families suffering socio-economic disadvantage and children from a migrant or ethnic minority background are particularly vulnerable to educational exclusion and underachievement (European Commission 2008, Fundamental Rights Agency 2010). The Commission report titled *Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training* published in 2009 (hereafter: EC Progress report 2009), the latest of the annual progress reports to the Education and Training strategic scheme, argues that many children from migrant backgrounds suffer from educational disadvantages demonstrated in limited access to good quality and non-segregated schooling matched with lower

achievements in education. Among the underlying factors, the report identifies insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction, children's and families' often confused attitudes towards education, limited access to childcare facilities, lack of support from the educational environment, and poor socio-economic conditions compared to mainstream society.

The hindrances faced by ethnic minority children and their families are especially worrying in the case of Roma. A recent position paper prepared by the Roma Education Fund, the leading policy expert and advocacy group in the field in Europe, argues that closing the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma is both a matter of urgency and a top priority for improving the situation of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. One should acknowledge the modest progress made towards inclusive education in the region but visible changes in the everyday lives of the majority of Roma children are still to come. *"The attention given to equity and inclusion of minorities varies, and this goal may not always appear consistent with actions focusing on quality education or the more political push towards rapid decentralization"* (Roma Education Fund 2010).

#### *Significantly lower educational outcomes of migrant and Roma pupils in comparison to their majority peers*

The EDUMIGROM comparative outcomes endorse that the overall educational performance of minority ethnic youth in Europe looks much less favourable than the average, with some important internal variations. Coming from an ethnic minority background implies a good deal of vulnerability, even if paired with relatively good socio-economic conditions. Ethnic distinctions in academic assessments become ever more intensified by moving upward in the social hierarchy. Towards the lower echelons of society, ethnic difference does not sharply separate students in their achievements at school. The performance of second-generation youth displays a correlation with the social capital of the ethnic group concerned and the domestic conditions in schooling, social assistance, and the state of interethnic relations. Furthermore, "visible" minorities have the weakest chances to keep in step with their majority peers in educational performance. There are less significant variations in the performances of Roma children across the "new" member states when posited against the majority. Our data also show that even though ethnic minority students perform worse in comparison to their majority peers in general, performance correlates more strongly with the composition of the school and the class in particular than with students' ethnic identity. It has become of paramount significance in the EDUMIGROM investigations that schools frequently show little sensitivity toward the insecurities and difficulties of minority children: teachers often read these as "easy excuses" for underperformance and a lack of true interest in the values that schools aim to convey.

The *EC Progress report 2009* quotes the OECD PISA surveys to highlight that the differences in the educational performance of migrants and domestic majorities vary between countries. On average, these differences are significant, exceeding a score equivalent to one year of instruction. Second-generation migrant pupils perform better than first-generation migrant ones in most countries where data exist (EC 2009: 94). Regarding the problem of early school leaving, the gap between migrants and

students from the domestic majority is significant. In the European Union as a whole, the probability that a young migrant is an early leaver from education and training is almost double compared with natives (27 versus 14 per cent) (Ibid.). The report reveals that progress in combating early leaving from education and training has been slow in general in the European Union. Interestingly, some "new" member states (the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia), partly overlapping with the EUDMIGROM country selection, are acknowledged for succeeding to keep the early leavers below the European Union benchmark of 10 per cent. Due to a lack of ethnic data, one can only guess that good results in some "new" member states mean that Roma pupils are overrepresented among actual school leavers. One may also assume that these relatively good results are explained by that fact that many Roma children still study at segregated schools that keep them in the system (Ibid.).

According to the review of PISA 2006 and TIMSS data (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), the EMMME report suggests that second-generation migrants usually do better than new immigrants. However, in some countries (e.g., Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Norway), the performance gap between students from second-generation immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds is quite wide. Indeed, the proficiency level of second-generation students is alarming: 10 per cent of second-generation students in France and 20 per cent in Germany scored in the bottom proficiency level. The EMMME research did not target Roma children as it had the chance to rely on accumulated experiences of the Open Society Foundations in this area. Nevertheless, the EMMME initiative did uncover that the disadvantaged situation of migrant children was very similar in many areas to the situation of Roma children. Resonating with EMMME's account, EDUMIGROM research proved that Roma and migrant children face similar forms of exclusion and discrimination resulting in educational disadvantages. Accordingly, the educational attainment of migrant students is better in comprehensive schooling systems with the late selection of students for different ability tracks and worse in systems with high selectivity. Corroborating the experience of the EDUMIGROM study, it was also proven by a recent cross-country comparative research among children from immigrant backgrounds that the educational attainment of migrant students is comparatively higher in countries with lower levels of economic inequality, high investments in childcare, and a well-developed system of preschool education. Concentration of migrant children in schools hinders their academic performance (Heckmann et al. 2008).

*Inter- and intra-school segregation as an outcome of broader social conditions as well as the product of educational policies*

The EDUMIGROM research revealed that, as a result of a variety of intersecting causes, minority children often suffer from educational segregation. The workings of the school systems and the use of the educational institutions by different social groups induce various forms of inter-school segregation. By the same token, schools apply sophisticated means for intra-school segregation through selecting and tracking children. The harshest forms of segregation place minority children in separate schools for special

education needs and keep them apart from the mainstream through their entire schooling careers. These findings are largely in accordance with the outcomes of the *Education and Migration* report concerning migrant children (Heckmann et al. 2008). Accordingly, there is an overrepresentation of migrant children in schools for children with special educational needs. The denial of any proactive support to overcome any initial disadvantages that will nearly inevitably be carried forward has clear consequences on the educational careers of minority children. A surfeit of research results have proven that early tracking and the selection of children itself are strong segregation mechanisms, formally along achievement potentials, in reality along social status.

The EDUMIGROM research uncovered an assemblage of dramatic results in how structural discrimination through institutional selection and segregation affects the assessment of students' performances. By looking at clusters of schools from the better-off to the most disadvantaged in our sample, the school-level average grade scores showed a steep hierarchy: one can measure a 35 per cent difference between the "top" schools attended by children of the local elites and the ones dominated by disadvantaged ethnic minority students. The type of the school adds the "quality stamp" of the school to one's results and thereby accentuates the social meaning of individual grades. A common opinion among teachers is that teaching in a school with too many students from poor families makes their work extremely hard, while social appreciation and political support remain thin.

In order to explain the inequalities in educational outcomes, the academic and policy literature primarily point to a strong correlation between attainment and socio-economic status. However, the extent to which this explains the educational disadvantage faced by each different minority group varies, and a number of other factors both within and outside the school system interact to affect the educational careers of ethnic minority children. Most importantly, in full accordance with EUDMIGROM findings, the EMMME report refers to the structure of the educational system, with the practice of "tracking" at the forefront; segregation within and between neighbourhoods and schools; direct and indirect discrimination in the classroom and playground by staff and other students, including bullying and lower teacher expectations; and curriculum bias. In addition, "home-based" factors include language deficits, parenting styles, and in some cases social, cultural, and religious practices (Brind, Harper, and Moore 2008). In an important document issued in late 2009, the Council of the European Union takes notice of the nature of disadvantages that migrant children often face with the following wording: "*Such disadvantages, coupled with a lack of permeability within school systems and with quality differences between schools, may lead to a situation in which large numbers of children with a migrant background are clustered together in underperforming schools*" (Council of the European Union 2009).

The trove of materials gathered during the EDUMIGROM field research reveals a rather complex picture about schools' practices of discrimination against ethnic minorities; however, one's *own school* as a space of personified experiences is felt to be relatively safe from discrimination. Although adolescents often complained about teachers' racist statements or acts, these were always portrayed as individual

shortcomings, and the school personnel were seen as protective. The interviews and group discussions made it clear that ethnic minority adolescents already have elaborate views of structural discrimination, in which educational disadvantages are tied to broader social injustices. At the same time, they wish to maintain trust in their immediate school environment in which they find less pronounced or cushioned encounters with a hostile or discriminatory social environment.

## **Prognostic observations**

### *Schools as imprints of systemic conditions and as sites of experiment and innovation*

Local school policies making true sense of diversity in their student bodies and teaching staff can make an important difference. Dedicated local leadership at schools and in the municipal administrations can assist ethnic minority students to catch up with, or often even outperform, their majority peers. Creative teachers can demonstrate remarkable achievements in assisting their students in successful advancement and strengthening their self-esteem. Innovative attempts of local school personnel, frequently backed by civil society organisations, may inspire and empower community leaders and advocates. These attempts, however, often remain isolated and are engulfed by reproduced forces of social exclusion. There is a long way to go from local innovations to systemic reforms.

Earlier comparative European reports had already stressed that a single school matters. In its recommendations, the *Education and Migration* report (2008) proposes that good-quality schools do good services for migrant children and broaden their educational opportunities as well. The EDUMIGROM research underlines this observation but with a word of caution. Our in-depth school case studies reveal that minority children may not be easily acknowledged corresponding with their capacities in the good-quality majority schools. The other end of the achievement axis is, however, less debated by the EDUMIGROM results. Our findings confirm that the low expectations by teachers towards minority students in lower-quality schools generally have a negative influence on their performance.

The European Union's *Education and Training 2020* strategy highlights that educational system should "*care for learners with special needs by promoting inclusive education and personalised learning through timely support, the early identification of special needs and well-coordinated services*". The main course of action to pursue this objective is to integrate services within mainstream schooling. Thus, although local initiatives and good practices are always welcome, a key European strategic statement – for good reasons – concentrates on systemic solutions (Council of the European Union 2009). If there is such a concern for underperforming schools, EDUMIGROM findings seem to be justify the case: school-specific good practices that transgress well-known systemic obstacles demonstrate the exemplary pedagogical patterns of school professionals and/or models of their cooperation with local communities. Nonetheless, these local achievements may not yield sustainable change.

It seems that the best contributions by school-based innovations test and endorse the spirit of the inclusive educational approach that focuses on all students, including those with special needs. These experiments turn schools into learning communities in which a sense of inclusion and mutual support is nurtured and in which the talents of all pupils are recognised (Council of the European Union 2009). The findings of the EDUMIGROM research also suggest that in certain contexts, local school innovations can produce brave, creative, and far-sighted practices that creatively apply a strong multicultural frame to the benefit of all ethnic, religious, and nationality groups in the school community.

#### *Language and early childhood education as the key to inclusion driven education*

The focus group discussions and a number of interviews with teachers drew attention to a set of conflicts that arise around language use in ethnic minority families. The research revealed that an imperfect knowledge of the language of the host country is one of the main obstacles to minority youth's good performance in school, and contributes to their loss of self-confidence and their ultimate distrust in those teachers who prove insensitive to students' diverse linguistic backgrounds. Language capabilities are eminently connected to early childhood development. The role of quality early childhood education and care is not contested in European contexts. It is widely known that the foundations for subsequent learning and achievements are laid in early childhood. This educational support, however, is inaccessible for many immigrant families. Based on EDUMIGROM's experience, the proposals of the *Education and Migration* report can be fully endorsed. It is argued that supporting the universal accessibility of early childhood care is an investment that aims to break the cycle of disadvantage. Those migrant and low-income families with stretched resources and few opportunities to pursue activities that provide their children with skills for successful advancement can be compensated with different kinds of early childhood programmes that support general development and learning the language of the immigration country (Heckmann et al. 2008).

The situation of Roma communities poses a systemic challenge to rendering suitable educational opportunities for Roma children – claims a fresh communication of the European Commission on *Early Childhood Education and Care* (2011a). In their case, poor command of the language spoken by the majority and officially used for instruction in schools appears as only one of the problems that constitute the huge disadvantages that Roma pupils are faced with when entering education. Although their needs for support are greater, the participation rates of Roma children in early childhood development programmes are significantly lower than for the majority populations. The Commission document states that expanding these opportunities is a key policy challenge across the European Union. Mainstreaming specific attention to Roma communities, due to their outstanding exclusion problems in several European countries, in a sector-specific policy text is certainly highly appreciated by the EDUMIGROM research community. At the

European Union level, the governments of the member states are being encouraged to take measures for improving the availability and accessibility of childcare services:

*Early childhood development and care has the potential to give all young people a good start in the world of tomorrow and to break the cycle which transmits disadvantage from one generation to another. [... it] is also particularly beneficial for the disadvantaged, including those from migrant and low-income backgrounds. It can help to lift children out of poverty and family dysfunction, and so contributes to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty (European Commission 2011a).*

It is also hoped that, by comprehensive investments into education from the early years on, leaving school ahead of time can be reduced below 10 per cent within the foreseeable future (Ibid.).

For sure, immigrant children need a full command of the lingua franca of the immigration country for decent integration. Difficulties in the language of instruction can severely hamper children's success at school and hinder parental involvement, preventing prompt communication between schools and families (Eurydice 2008).

The EMMME project also underlies that migrant families are often unfamiliar both with the language and with the educational system of the host country; thus supporting their children's learning can pose a particular challenge to these families. At the same time, the findings of the project clearly show that participation in early childhood development programmes can be highly beneficial for migrant children's cognitive and linguistic development. Providing early language assistance to children with a different home language is an important part of improving their school-readiness and allowing them to start on an equal footing with their majority peers (Brind, Harper, and Moore 2008).

In the light of the conviction that imperfection in the official language of education is one of the main obstacles of successful school integration, it is quite surprising to learn that the educational performance of second-generation migrant students is often lower than that of their peers from the first generation in several member states, and that rates of early school leaving are, on average, twice as high in the former than in the latter group. This finding highlights the complexity of interethnic relations and the impact of schooling on pupils' achievements and that linguistic disadvantages offer but a partial explanation for becoming devalued.

The paramount disadvantages of Roma in Central Europe can hardly be explained by the use of language. In Hungary, where ethnic discrepancies are strong according to the EDUMIGROM research results, 73 per cent of the Roma students speak Hungarian as their mother tongue, and the remaining 27 per cent also state proficiency in the country's dominant language. Further, knowledge of a language is hardly a "given": as some school experiments show, language skills develop in the course of schooling. Hence, differences in linguistic competence most likely speak about some indirect consequences of early linguistic disadvantages than about minority adolescents' actual command of the language of instruction.

### *Shifting frames: from multiculturalism to intergenerational justice?*

The EDUMIGROM research uncovered that education systems in Europe are shaped by and actively shaping broader interethnic relations in society. The integration of diverse student bodies that embody various community and family heritages into the culture of the host country as represented by mainstream society is seen as one of the major functions of schools. But the quality and the outcome of integration depend on many forces that schools can control only to a limited degree. Schooling systems have the authority to tailor curriculum content, teachers' placement, pedagogical programmes, academic assessment of pupils, etc., and the encounters, clashes, and cross-references across ethnicities, cultures, and nationalities are managed within the framework of such authorities. At the same time, schools have less direct means to master the dominant discourse of wider interethnic relations, the institutions of political participation, the compromises that welfare systems make between redistribution and recognition claims, and the consequences that these phenomena and processes carry for young people's lives. Nevertheless, the EDUMIGROM project and the akin research initiatives have to articulate the nature of schools' limited abilities and their modest yet tangible potentials to respond to the challenges of social diversity.

The comparative statements of the EDUMIGROM project are crafted in the understanding that a (re)turn to multiculturalism and incorporating diversity in European societies require the reorganisation of social relations against ethnic hierarchies and the rendering of conditions that effectively halt the widespread practices of "othering" and discrimination. The frames and sequence of transformative interventions in education embedded in the broader structures of social policy and political participation were beyond the scope of our research. Nonetheless, by the persuasive power of comparison, we aimed to call public attention to the need for abolishing educational practices that systematically punish or ignore certain groups because of their different origins.

Although framing claims for inclusion differ from country to country, the findings here indicate a clear striving for recognition and democratic participation by the ethnic minorities in the member states of the European Union. Such desires for recognition among the adolescents of deprived social and ethnic communities make the objective of inclusion-driven schooling even more pressing and advocate for the values of multiculturalism in all spheres of public life. But the EDUMIGROM project revealed a marked difference among the sample countries in this regard. In the urban communities of the "old" member states, most respondents positively identified with and felt comfortable with living in a predominantly ethnic minority environment. Conversely, Roma in the "new" member states, with few exceptions, perceived their ethnically-racially enforced marginalised position to be imposed by majority society. In-depth interviews unveiled that the quality of interethnic relationships is less an issue of residential segregation than of purposeful distance willed by the majority.

Concerning the European-level policy implications, the findings of the EDUMIGROM research strongly support the major proposals of the EMMME project regarding the major policy roles that the European Union should pursue in the field of inclusion-based education. First, the European Union should



strive to collect the relevant data to register disparate impacts of schooling on various ethnic groups. Second, the EU should be able to notice racial segregation and other forms of ethnicity-based exclusion as a threat to the realisation of the Europe 2020 goals. EMMME statements propose that:

*some progress has been made on social inclusion, the social dimensions critical to the ability to learn are often ignored. Attention to the efficiency, quality, and equity objectives of the education system has not yet received equal consideration at the EU or national levels. It is therefore clear that the EU could do more to use existing tools and reports to monitor how governments meet the needs of their increasingly diverse societies (Brind, Harper, and Moore 2008).*

The current state of affairs may mean that European political and policy processes concerning minorities are not very likely making a radical departure. In this context, the EDUMIGROM research collective envisions a policy response that is more muddling through a corrective system than radically transforming it. The former is close to the general nature of the political and policy cooperation within the European Union. The current economic crisis and its consequences may make the problems of social exclusion even more serious and the responses slower due to serious cuts in public funds. This trend may trigger discontent and more pronounced cleavages within the societies of the European Union, in spite of its Schengen measures and other constraints. Thus, the consequences of the global economic crisis may necessitate changes more radical than expected now. But none of the potential scenarios will benefit from discrediting the frame of multiculturalism that has started to gain legitimacy among a critical mass of respected and powerful politicians in Europe. No intellectual efforts to renew the frame and language of social-diversity-bound public policy shall be spared in the near future to accomplish this without simple and harmful political manoeuvres to discredit them. The most recent European experiments to cautiously replace the diversity-based framework by introducing and elaborating programmes that are centred around intergenerational justice should be seen as benign efforts that the EDUMIGROM research community will follow with critical attention.

### **Hopes and limitations in regard to a European youth policy**

Due to the fact that EDUMIGROM was clustered together with projects related to youth in Europe, in this policy chapter it is our duty to reflect upon the accompanying main trends and statements. In addition, an emerging policy challenge with regard to intergenerational justice invites equality policy thinkers to introduce the category of youth in broader equality debates.

The *Youth on the Move* strategy of the European Commission (2010a), as one of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives, sets ambitious goals for education and employment of young people in the European Union. The EDUMIGROM project and its results address the following agendas of the Strategy:

- *Early school leaving (targeted by the strategy to be reduced below 10 per cent by 2020) and early childhood education:*  
Relatively high drop-out rates among minority youth can be connected with internal segregation in schools, inadequate pedagogical support of language knowledge for school starters, and a generally low level of expected competencies. Early childhood education is less accessible for minority youth than for other families in spite of the fact that their need for this public service is greater.
- *Apprenticeship in support of smooth transition to the labour market:*  
Apprenticeship training should respond to changing labour market needs and also help develop skills for life-long learning opportunities. Minority ethnic youth are typically channelled into vocational training with lower possibilities for engaging in further or life-long education. In the "new" member states, the vocational track is known, due to its current qualities, to prevent young people from further education.
- *Youth at risk:*  
The *Youth on the Move* strategy acknowledges that there is major labour market segmentation across Europe that creates certain risks for young people (due to temporary and flexible contracts favoured by employers). Moreover, the strategy devotes a whole separate section to youth at risk, referring to the concept of NEET (neither in employment, nor on education, nor in training). The photographic illustration of the official strategy document calls attention to the fact that this risk is disproportionately shared between majority and minority populations. Yet, the text only refers explicitly to disability and health as potential risk factors.

The EDUMIGROM project provides ample evidence that the education systems in Europe form ethnic relations, school performances, identity patterns, and aspirations among minority youth that make them potential targets for NEET. Further strategic and monitoring efforts should specifically refer other grounds of vulnerability endangering youth on the move, including ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, and gender in particular.

The *Council Resolution on a Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010–2018)* (2008) sets a broader horizon for European action than the *Youth on the Move* document. Accordingly, youth issues are addressed through training, anti-poverty actions, and participation and representation of young people in the democratic process. The Council Resolution proposes to mainstream of youth issues into other policy areas. The document stresses the differences in the living conditions of young people and also the significance of equal opportunity issues in education and employment in reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Education is listed among the eight fields of action.

The EDUMIGROM research proves that, in addition to age, other grounds of social distinction create important status differences in European societies, and thus differential access to citizenship rights, services, and opportunities for a good life. Further, intersectional inequalities, in particular when age, ethnicity, and often gender intersect with socio-economic inequalities, create major challenges to educational policy, school systems, and social policy choices. As a consequence, the *language of European youth policy should be sharpened* and informed by that of education which, in turn, has been sensitised toward diversity during the past decade. The European Union Youth Report to be drawn up by the Commission during each triennial work cycle seems to be an apt framework to gauge the achievements and shortcomings of the member states in youth policy development in education and training. It is essential, however, to similarly pay special attention to *equality* issues in the progress reports on the European Union strategy on Education and Training.

### **The newest distinctive European policy field: Roma inclusion policy**

EDUMIGROM's novel approach to contrast and compare the schooling experiences of minority youth has incorporated two very different large groups of children: second-generation migrants in Western Europe and Roma in Central Europe. Here, we are not discussing in detail the anti-discrimination and migration policy arenas of the European Union, though in previous sections of this chapter we did point out how the fundamental norms of these policy areas appear in certain key education and youth policy documents of the European Union. At the same time, we offer a short summary of the relevance of EDUMIGROM findings in a relatively new official European Union policy area: Roma inclusion policy.

During the process of the European Union accession negotiations, the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria for European Union membership (specifically the demand for the protection of minorities) offered a frame to monitor Roma integration policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Some authors, however, argue that the plight of Roma in the candidate countries was not a high priority for its highest authority, the European Commission, because they were not perceived as potential threats to European stability, unlike national minorities with territorial claims. Others argue that the Copenhagen Criteria and the annual accession reporting were used by nongovernmental organisations to turn the spotlights on Roma.

Following the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, Roma communities have become one of the largest ethnic minorities in the European Union. Although the European Union is reluctant to mark any ethnic group as a target of special policy attention, it has made the step to develop a special attention and policymaking frame for the inclusion of Roma, who face multiple discriminations in several "old" and "new" member states.

Several policy mechanisms have been established to coordinate Roma inclusion policy at the European level. Two European Roma Summits were organised, the first in Brussels in September 2008 and the second in Cordoba in April 2010. These brought together European Union institutions; governments of member states, candidate countries, and potential candidates; and international organisations and civil society representatives. The financial instruments of the European Union are also used for tackling Roma inclusion problems in the member states, including the structural funds (European Social Funds, European Regional Development Fund) and different community actions programmes (e.g., EQUAL, PROGRESS). The directives for utilising the structural funds are underscored by a European cohesion policy that has also developed social inclusion components. The *Decade of the Roma Inclusion (2005–2015)* programme has also emerged as a unique policy coordination mechanism that brings together major international organisations, most of the governments of the Central and South Eastern Europe and civil society actors.

The European Commission has been especially active in promoting European Union Roma policy for the last three years. In its April 2010 Communication on *The Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe*, the Commission acknowledged the heterogeneity of Roma communities in the member states and the corresponding need for the development of differentiated "model policy approaches" to address more effectively the various legal needs of different Roma communities. The much awaited *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* acknowledges that policy discussions on the European Union level resulted in very modest tangible changes in the lives of Roma people. The European Union's Roma integration goals should cover, in proportion to the size of the Roma population, four crucial areas: access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing. These minimum standards should be based on common, comparable, and reliable indicators. The achievement of these goals is seen to help member states reaching the overall targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

These key policy texts advocate for strong anti-discrimination measures but acknowledge that targeted actions and mainstreaming Roma inclusion objectives in a number of other policy areas also should be applied. The *EU Framework* document gives a detailed account of the inclusion challenges for the education of Roma that are in full correspondence with EDUGMIGROM results. Accordingly, in some member states, only a limited number of Roma children complete primary school and they are overrepresented in special education and segregated schools. The *Framework* document also acknowledges that Roma children who drop out of school or remain low performers will subsequently experience significant difficulties, ranging from illiteracy and language problems to feelings of exclusion and inadequacy. As a result, they will have a harder time continuing in education, going to university or getting a good job. The *Framework Strategy* advocates for school mediators, churches, religious associations, or communities, and through the active participation of Roma parents, to improve the intercultural competences of teachers, to reduce segregation and to ensure compliance with the responsibility to attend primary school. Furthermore, second-chance programmes for young adults who have dropped out are encouraged, including initiatives with an explicit focus on Roma children. Support should also be given to reform teachers' training curricula and to elaborate innovative teaching methods.

Attendance of multiply disadvantaged children requires a cross-sectoral cooperation and the appropriate support programmes. Moreover, the above mentioned *Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care* document of the Commission (2011a) highlighted that the participation rates of Roma children are significantly lower, although their needs for support are greater than even those of other vulnerable groups. Increased access to high-quality, non-segregated early childhood education can play a key role in overcoming the educational disadvantage faced by Roma children. This assumption is also endorsed by the country-specific experiences of the EDUMGROM researchers.

The general scholarly and policy assessment agrees that the European Union's *Roma Policy Framework* has produced the necessary comprehensive statements, strategies, and guidelines. The issue is high on the agenda of international and domestic civil society actors. The implementation of these policy measures, however, shows little success. This can be proved by the fact that the EDUMIGROM research has found in its sample the most pressing needs and the least prospects for any exceptions in the lives of Roma children. The least enthusiasm and devotion to this complex social issue can be seen by the national governments of the member states, in this case mostly the "new" Central European member states. But it should also be noted that some differences prevail among each national government's capacities and willingness to shape Roma inclusion policies. Some tangible policy initiatives in the field of education should be acknowledged, especially in Hungary and Romania, but in the most recent political circumstances these initiatives are controversial. The authority of European Union is still high but not as pressing as it was during the accession period.

## **Policy dilemmas and proposals in the domestic contexts**

### **Policy environments and landscapes for education**

The EDUMIGROM research has developed an understanding of the policy landscape of inclusive educational policies along the lines of diverse challenges, varied key decisions, and different arrangements for accountability of minority education in the domestic contexts in the investigated countries. The organisation of the arising typology takes due note of the fact that policies concerning minority youth education are embedded in broader policy debates and frames on diversity and social inclusion. These debates, that are genuinely political as well, revolve around the desired, the tolerated, or unwanted consequences of labour migration, the claims of indigenous minorities, the normative and critical articulations of multiculturalism, tolerance, and forms of equality that societies deem to pursue against all other considerations.

In addition to these broader debates, there are usually three distinctive and interrelated policy areas that scrutinise and respond to the composite issues that the inclusive education of minority youth

and the inclusion of minority youth in general trigger: (1) *interethnic relations and anti-discrimination*; (2) *social policy and welfare regimes*; (3) *general educational policy* (concerning primary and secondary education). It should be noted that in some countries *youth policy* is named and promoted as a distinctive field at the intersections of these three policy areas in several countries.

### **The historical country clusters and the framing of policies of inclusive education**

Debates on social diversity composed by ethnic, religious, linguistic and other cultural and regional traditions have shown important changes in European countries over the last four decades. These changes are connected to trends of migration, the end of the Cold War, the enlargement of the European Union, and shifts in a European thinking on inequality and social inclusion. The major debates are also structured by historical sets of relations between mainstream societies and their respective minority and immigrant groups. As discussed in the previous chapters, in this latter regard, the EDUMIGROM research identified three types of domestic conditions among the participating countries: post-colonial states with a variety of migrant waves and groups with which mainstream society has developed multilayered relationships and integration patterns; states embracing significant labour migration (and to a smaller extent, refugees) from various regions of the world in the 1960s and 1970s; and post-socialist states with sizable Roma communities whose unresolved problems and unmet needs became more visible and more pronounced after the collapse of the old regime than during the decades of state-socialism.

These three clusters seem to master the understanding of social diversity and inclusion in the different European contexts the EDUMIGROM project observed. The involved historical traditions and the prevailing different patterns of interethnic relations are present to varying degrees in most domestic debates and arenas. First, the different notions of inclusionary citizenship reflect the perceptions of equal membership in society and allow for differing degrees in access to social services and welfare provisions. Second, varying concerns with inequalities tailor social inclusion objectives in view of fairness and equal opportunities in different domains of life. Third, the causes and consequences of ethnic distinctions are differentially understood in their contributions to disadvantages and also as the entry points to address social inclusion. These distinct approaches and their junctions assign specific characters to welfare provisions, migration regimes, educational policies, etc. in the three country clusters of postcolonial, labour migrant, and post-socialist constellations in the countries that the EDUMIGROM research comprised.

In the following, framing and frame shifts in policies concerning education of ethnic minorities are portrayed in brief in the context of this classification.

#### *Nordic states and Germany*

In the Nordic countries, with some variations, immigrants were seen as guest workers and thus expected

to leave the country after a limited period of time. However, many of them settled and, started to raise children, who today are second- or third- generation descendants of one-time immigrants. (Moldenhawer and Padovan-Özdemir in this volume). In the last two decades, "ethnicity" has become a widespread concept for categorising immigrants and their descendants originating from Southern Europe and/or Third World countries. Within the last decade, the "bilingual" category has also appeared side by side with ethnicity, partly out of political correctness, partly as a base for strategies of inclusion. But it is important to acknowledge that when discussing social justice and distinctions, the value of equality (social rights) appears to be deeply ingrained in Nordic societies' ideas of welfare and solidarity. Hence, it could be argued that the process of promoting equality in the Danish or Swedish contexts has historically been interpreted as the process of making people *the same* – ethnically and socially (Moldenhawer and Padovan-Özmedir, and Carson et al. in this volume). As a consequence, public and political discourses are less prone to the European Union's discourse on the recognition and the rights of ethnic minorities (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010).

EDUMIGROM researchers identified those discourses that advocate for multicultural "rights and recognition" especially in understanding the educational gap between ethnic minority students and majority students (Moldenhawer and Padovan-Özmedir in this volume). But these multicultural positions are primarily confined to critical research and alternative practices which seem to be excluded from mainstream policymaking. The "monocultural" position constructs the ethnically diverse school as an *a priori* societal problem due to its concentration of ethnic minority students. Ethnic diversity and ethnic underachievement in education are considered through minority families' lacking cultural, social, and linguistic resources, in other words, within the "*deprivation paradigm*" (Ibid). The early understanding of multiculturalism entailed the assimilation of people from non-Swedish backgrounds into Swedish ways of life (Carson et al. in this volume). But diversity and individualism have grown in Sweden over the past several decades, making it more ambiguous what "Swedishness" means and opening avenues to definitions in terms of national origins and also of populist-nationalist mobilisations against migrants. Schools have an especially difficult task communicating values, for that matter more progressive values, than those pronounced at home in mainstream families (Ibid).

In political debate, public discourses, and academic research in Germany, the notion of "guest-workers" referred to immigrants from Southern Europe and Turkey. The respective public and political discourse was primarily focused on the issue of the assumed non-integration of these people. The Turkish "guest workers" forming an unskilled, often uneducated, or even illiterate labour force in the 1960s and 1970s, became the main representatives of *cultural otherness* in Germany (Mannitz in this volume). While the culturalist perception scheme has always included references to different religions (Mannitz and Schiffauer 2004, Mannitz 2005), the latter dimension has gained importance in the past decade. The current debate in Germany is, in fact, an overlap of different discourses with altogether negative connotations of "the other", all of which represent the Muslim immigrant population as a cultural,

civilisational, juridical, and not least demographic danger for "our" society model. In general, the school education of migrant youth is depicted as being *highly problematic* and the common perception is that these students and their families do not come up to the standards, routines, and expectations of the system. The debate is embedded in and influenced by the general discourse on "lacking" or "failed" integration also linked with the above rejection of multiculturalism and the alleged incompatibility of Islam with German or European culture and civilised conventions.

### *France and the United Kingdom*

The modern French school system was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century republican state to promote a strong national identity and a universal culture to "civilise" the children of rural patois-speaking peasants as well as the children of the colonised people in Africa and from African descent. By the mid-1970s, a more democratic understanding of social equality replaced the old civilising and levelling principles in the French school system. The colour-blind republican ideology denies the necessity of ethnic and race registering and statistics. Recent studies have revealed ethnic inequalities in education, only partially explained by socio-economic distinctions. Notwithstanding, policy measures aimed at combating inequalities in education and in other domains are formulated in reference to social class or residential segregation. This is what the dominant frames of social distinctions and social statistics engender.

*The school system is regarded more as an involuntary recipient of the negative effects of discrimination in areas over which it has no jurisdiction or control (housing inequalities, avoidance strategies by parents, discrimination in vocational employment schemes, etc.) rather than as a factor in producing ethnic and racial inequalities (Schiff in this volume).*

The education of ethnic minorities is addressed in French policy debates through measures aimed at "disadvantaged" youth, in view of the disparities between school performance and the careers of children from different socio-economic categories and neighbourhoods. The integration of the descendants of immigrants concentrated in disadvantaged suburbs, particularly from North Africa, is considered to be framed only very recently in terms of discrimination, ethnic relations, or multiculturalism. This shift may challenge the former notion of "the urban question" and its corresponding urban social policy frames. Local governments, the prime agents facing the problems of social exclusion, are successfully pressured to resonate with the perceptions of the majority. The French EDUMIGROM research team argues that "*there exists almost no public policy initiatives in France aimed specifically at modifying negative perceptions of immigrants and ethnic minorities and at encouraging harmonious interethnic relations*" (Ibid).

The United Kingdom has come to embody an ethnically diverse population stemming from complex migration patterns and conflicts associated with state formation, empire building, and decolonisation. Contemporary social debates there address the social and cultural consequences of globalisation,



Europeanisation, devolution of power, and post-colonial and post-Cold-War migration waves. The professionals in British education services face substantial dilemmas in responding to the needs of a society that many have recently characterised as culturally "super-diverse" (Vetrovec 2006). A complex system of citizenship rights, forms of membership and restrictions and exclusions cut across differing categories and groups of migrants who have arrived in the United Kingdom. The British EDUMIGROM research team portrays a deteriorating domestic policy climate in which fundamental race equality and ethnic diversity objectives are challenged by white working-class sentiments of exclusion and rancour.

Cultural pluralism and integration dominated the policy rhetoric that intended to help minorities adapt to mainstream society in the 1970s. Anti-discrimination and multicultural convictions promoted in school practices on the basis of ethnic, religious and racial inclusion were implemented across many local education authorities throughout the 1980s. Schools, however, had great freedom to divert from these practices. From the late 1980s, this process was turned back by central initiatives. Following 9/11, government policies moved from "naïve" to "cynical" multiculturalism, encouraging integrationist and assimilationist priorities to guide patterns of schooling. After the 7/7 attacks, the claims of the white majority gained prominence and the policy frames became saturated with the notions of integration, community cohesion, and security. The new trend of "aggressive majoritarianism" in education demonstrated itself in attacks on Muslims wearing the veil in schools, and in new guidance on school uniform codes (Law and Swann in this volume).

### *Post-socialist societies*

In Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the political opening invited critical thinkers, emerging civil society actors, and enlightened governmental bodies to explore key agendas of the human rights' tradition in a European (and global) context. The economic decline generated by the collapse of whole sectors of the economy, cutbacks in welfare provisions, and the encroachment of the global capitalism after the fall of the Berlin Wall started to shape new inequalities in society. Low educational and social capital did not allow most Roma to preserve their fragile positions in the labour market and the forces of the free market rapidly pushed them to the margin of the stock of housing. Some minority political organisation and Roma grassroots organisations also started to emerge in almost all of the countries concerned. But their actions and interventions could not balance the intersecting forces of social marginalisation. Furthermore, freedom of speech not only brought plurality, debates, and deliberations but freedom of expression of prejudices and discriminatory language as well. The European Union accession process put the issue of the inclusion of minorities, and specifically the cause of the Roma, high on the political agenda. It also implanted the language of anti-discrimination in critical, legal, and policy discourses. At the same time, it has also generated social and political resentment towards minority protection, Roma inclusion, and the spirit of multiculturalism. In a condensed historical time, the intellectual and policy proposals of multiculturalism arrived in this part of the world together with its harsh critiques.

In general, there are shifts and cleavages between two major positions to frame the problem of social exclusion of the Roma. One uses the notion of ethnic discrimination and minority rights: the other refers to socio-economic (class) deprivation and welfare or anti-poverty principles. Professional convictions and political considerations may contest or reinforce one another when positions are taken and voiced. Of course there are scholarly and critical accounts that argue that the two axes are inextricably intertwined in processes of exclusion, and thus policy interventions should combine a dual approach. The political contexts, interethnic relations, their entanglement with other minority issues, and strategic compromises result in different framing trends and accents in the countries of the region participating in the EDUMIGROM research. These countries are all members of the *Decade of Roma Inclusion* policy coordination mechanism which advocates for the explicit but not exclusive understanding and targeting of Roma inclusion policies. This means recognition of *intertwined ethnic and socio-economic distinctions* as grounds of action, yet framing strategies in policy implementation are often reproduced along a single axis.

In the Czech Republic that was moving very reluctantly to implement the European Union anti-discrimination directives, a very humiliating case has increased public and political attention about the "Roma problem" and the issue of discrimination in education. The case of *D.H. and Others v. Czech Republic*, starting in 2000 and ending with a guilty verdict in 2007, was judged by the European Court of Human Rights as violating the "non-discrimination protections" set in the European Convention on Human Rights (European Court of Human Rights 2007). This judicial decision shed light on discriminatory practices against Roma in the Czech educational system and made the issue salient and sensitive in the domestic context as well as internationally (Marada et al. in this volume).

In Hungary, the policy frame has clearly shifted in the last decade. The left wing government ruling between 2002 and 2010 regarded ethnic and social segregation as a symptom of extreme inequality. The dominant approach to treating inequalities was framed by colour-blind inclusion policies: that were complemented by several affirmative measures applying a colour-conscious approach. In the current political regime, former policies on educational integration are critically revalued and matters of Roma inclusion are left to negotiations on the local level. Concurrently, the dominant framework tends to ethnicise social problems, including poverty, long-term unemployment and welfare dependency, and extreme regional inequalities prevalent in the country (Messing, Neményi, and Zolnay in this volume).

In Romania, several national and sub-national governmental structures were created to implement a national strategy for the improvement of Roma's lives in the 1990s. The policy discourse embraced a three-dimensional reasoning on ethnic relations and minority education: equal opportunities and anti-discrimination; inclusion and anti-segregation; and recognition of the language and cultural claims of ethnic minority groups. The positive trend of gradual complex integration was interrupted after 2008 when senior politicians started to voice racist attitudes against Roma and the mass media was ready to manipulate anti-Gypsy feelings (Vincze in this volume).

In Slovakia, we can see again a complex interplay of policy frames: the civic and ethnic principles of integration policy have been competing, superseding, and complementing each other. Despite the fact

that public opinion tends to identify some social programmes as "Roma programmes", the state policy has typically been "colour-blind". Only pilot programmes funded from abroad had clear ethnic focus. Complex social integration policies target primarily the Roma who live segregated in marginalised Roma settlements (Kusá, Rusnáková, and Borovánová in this volume).

In all four post-socialist countries, aversion and hostility towards Roma communities and Roma people have intensified in recent years. The majority of the public shares the view that Roma communities can be blamed for their current miserable conditions, and their "over-assistance" and "over-support" has to be ceased or strictly limited. With few exceptions, current governments make some attempts to de-ethnicise poverty and social exclusion problems – at least in their actions. More closely, while the political language often prefers ethnic frames and explanations even in official communications, in outlining the policy paradigms the same actors seem to prefer to talk about "socially excluded communities" instead of or parallel to "marginalised Roma communities". These shifts and dynamics are informed by growing negative reactions of the public towards any redistribution programmes in favour of Roma communities but also by the objectives of European regional cohesion policy and structural funds better prepared to speak the language of social inclusion.

## **Outstanding policy problems and dilemmas**

As it has been pointed out in previous chapters of this study, according to the recently published findings of the 2009 PISA survey, differences in performances of students from "immigrant backgrounds" and their majority peers have not decreased since 2003. The discussions also revealed that the persistence of these differences cannot be explained solely by variations in students' social backgrounds. If pupils of the same gender and of the same socio-economic position are compared, children from "immigrant backgrounds" still demonstrate significantly poorer results in reading and comprehension than their majority peers (OECD 2010). In other words, parental education, labour market position, and residential conditions do not fully account for the attainment differences. The EDUMIGROM research results underscore that closer scrutiny should be given to the problem of "ethnic otherness" in how schools distribute knowledge and how they evaluate students' performance.

## **Organisation of the school systems**

*Diverse quality supply and competitive demands; tension between the principle of equity and freedom in education services*

In all the countries participating in the EDUMIGROM research, a general democratisation in education

took place in the postwar period that induced vast upward mobility and guaranteed a certain level of schooling principally accessible for everyone. Notwithstanding, this democratisation process has moved hand in hand with the emergence of new and subtle differentiations in the benefits that families and young people can get from schooling. Differentiations are partly due to the growing space for choice that seems to have both positively and negatively spiralling effects. Those schools that face at least some competition generate better student performances than the ones that are exempted from competition. At the same time, more choice tends to create involuntary separation and segregation for certain groups that have relatively low chances to take part in the competition due to their conditions in the given social structure (OECD 2007: 7). Those who are capable players in the competition can take better advantage of the increasing performance of schools, whereas others converge on those segments of the system where the culture of resentment and low expectations determine the position and outcome of the service users.

Placing children in primary schools is one of the most debated elements of the entire education system in all the countries concerned and has a special relevance to the lives of minority ethnic youth. *School districts* are the most commonly used device to regulate catchments areas based on travel distance, head counts, and resource allocation considerations. Furthermore, school districts are also designated to ensure a balanced mix of students from different social and ethnic backgrounds. Today, this administrative arrangement is challenged from two angles: neither does it seem to give enough space for competition nor does it appear very successful at serving equity objectives. A geographical division in school districts exists in most countries of the EDUMIGROM sample, whereby any given school is obliged by law to give preference to pupils residing in its particular school district, at least in primary and lower secondary education. Where ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated in certain urban localities or rural regions, the rigid district system turns schools into ethnically compartmentalised zones by default. In France and Germany, and all the "new" member states in our sample, it is acknowledged that school districts are reproducing the territorial inequalities among near-by communities: the academic resources of the schools tend to mirror residential segregation.

Parallel to district arrangements, *free school choice* is a formal parental right in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Even if all parents have the formal right to choose among schools for their children both inside and outside their residential district, our research evidence shows that educational level, migration status, and knowledge of the majority language not only influence the tendency to use, but also the fact of being informed of, this right. When more space for parental choice is allowed, differentiations in student achievements among schools often incite "white flight" from certain schools or districts. The policy of free parental choice in Sweden, a country with a fairly equalised system of compulsory education, has resulted in the increased socio-economic and ethnic segregation of schools, at both the primary and secondary educational levels. Socially disadvantaged schools situated in the suburban areas are becoming increasingly segregated as the best-qualified pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds move on to schools in better-off inner-city areas (Kallstenius 2007).

In most countries, *secondary education* has become more competitive in recent years and, as a concomitant, access often depends on the financial possibilities of parents. In secondary schools, managing authorities and boards have a larger role in defining curricula, subject areas, requirements, etc. according to certain needs than in primary education. It is noteworthy that different patterns have emerged from similar traditions of secondary education in countries with very close geographical and cultural proximity.

Secondary level *vocational training* is often not only a dead end for schooling but it is saturated by discriminatory practices that minority ethnic students have to face. Even among those advanced countries that have relatively stable and low unemployment statistics, the problem of finding apprenticeships is grave (Denmark, France). Students have their own responsibility in obtaining proper placement – a troublesome duty for minorities with a limited social network and exposed to potential overt and covert discrimination by employers. In other words minority ethnic youths in vocational training are often subject to mechanisms that not only multiply their disadvantages but make them feel redundant early in their careers.

*Supervision* in most educational systems is ensured by national, federal and/or regional authorities, although in more decentralised systems local school boards and local authorities also have quality control and evaluation responsibilities. Our background reports show that a fair amount of decentralisation does not necessarily bring about the loosening of quality control and performance inequity monitoring on the national or subnational levels. Well-functioning supervisory systems may send warning signals to national policymakers and school managers on tangible inequality problems across and within schools. Yet, due to a lack of governmental will to incorporate standardised supervision, this role sometimes has been passed to researchers and civil society actors (e.g., in Hungary). In some countries, teacher placement is centralised in spite of differences in school administration (e.g., France and Germany). Merit recognition, as a main placement principle, fosters procedures that conclude in the best teachers taking positions at the best schools and thus leaving pedagogical work in the problematic schools to colleagues who often accept the job under severe constraint and as a "last resort". Attempts at implanting affirmative action in hiring teachers with a view on the needs of minority ethnic students are often blocked by formal equality considerations (Germany) or fear from the accompanying stigmatising perceptions (Romania) (Szalai et al. 2009).

School entrance is not unproblematic for a number of minority groups in Europe in spite of a generally accepted norm that elementary education should be accessible for all children regardless of their status in society. According to internationally available statistics, roughly five per cent of children on average, even in the best-performing countries are not in school. The most obvious groups vulnerable to disappearance from school are refugees, internally displaced people, nomadic groups, and illegal migrants. Our background reports portray different systems for regulating the access of undocumented and documented migrants and minorities to schooling. In Germany, the policy differs by *Länder*, some

allowing, others blocking a smooth path to education by undocumented migrants, while in the United Kingdom, elementary schooling is universally provided, whereas in Romania authorities could deny access to those who do not have birth certificate, frequent among the Roma.

### *Entangled school and residential segregation; enrolling and tracking students*

As it has been discussed in detail in previous chapters of this study, in consequence of a variety of intersecting causes and processes, minority children face high risks of being segregated in education. Regardless of whether deliberate considerations or spontaneous movements play the major roles in the background, segregation is always a manifestation of structural discrimination, when not only individuals but a particular social group suffer from disadvantages on a systematic basis. Segregation may take the form of *inter-school* separation of minority children stemming from three major causes: regional and residential selection transposed to the school enrolment through districts or parental choice; culturally-biased testing for entry that concludes in placing children in separate or remedial schools; and private, independent, and religious schools imposing extra requirements or fees for admittance (Farkas 2008: 4).

The EDUMIGROM research reveals that inter-school segregation occurs in all the nine countries of the inquiry. In France, the school system is regarded more as an involuntary recipient of the negative effects of discrimination in areas over which educational institutions have no jurisdiction or control (housing inequalities, avoidance strategies by parents, discrimination in vocational apprentice schemes, etc.) rather than as an agent in producing ethnic and racial inequalities. Even when specific policies are developed in response to observations concerning the absence of minority students in the most prestigious educational establishments or with regard to their overrepresentation in certain schools considered as ethnic "ghettos", these are carefully formulated in a manner that does not point explicitly to the racial and ethnic characteristics of the groups in question, but rather to their "disadvantaged" social status (Schiff in this volume). Altogether, scholars emphasise that school segregation does not simply follow residential segregation, but arises from a complex interplay of factors in differing local contexts including geographical location, material conditions, historically shaped social positions, racism, mutual distrust, the history of particular schools, the emphasis on parental choice or the actual arrangements of tracking within the school system (Zentai 2009).

In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, the vast exclusion of Roma students from majority education and their segregation in special schools or certain classes within regular schools is a common practice. Furthermore, ethnic segregation among schools is described as a consequence of the increasing competition among schools for "non-problematic" children. The less Roma students are enrolled in a school the more attractive it is for the public. Non-Roma elite and middle-class parents exert their influence on school administration and local decision-makers to keep certain schools "Roma-free". By choosing such schools or schools outside of the districts with a high percentage of Roma they join the ongoing "white flight" to majority schools and further segregation. At the same time, some of the

background reports describe that parents of Roma pupils are often not aware of the possibility of opting for a school outside the district, or that they are content with schools with a high proportion of other Roma students as they expect better marks for their children, the standards being lower and curricula reduced, or they hope for less discrimination from classmates in these schools.

In all of the countries included in the EDUMGIROM research, a concentration of minority and immigrant population could be observed in certain districts, types of schools and classes (these trends were especially pronounced in Denmark, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia). The tangible presence of minorities often calls for preparatory and special classes for language and competence development. Special-needs-driven education triggers little concern if it is optional and leads to integration into mainstream courses. But these classes frequently become permanent institutions fostering or endorsing separation. Moreover, in all of the countries special schools and classes serve the education of disabled children. According to various investigations, these classes show a high percentage of minorities: the cluster of physically and mentally disabled children is merged with that of learning and behavioural problems often attributed to minority children. Cultural competence, differentially distributed in society and faulted by ethnic and other lines, thus becomes cemented in social categories of abilities/disabilities that hide the ethnic or often racial nature of the division.

The category of *children with special educational needs* (SEN) denotes a practice through which students from migrant or Roma backgrounds are shepherded to separate spaces, in numerous cases in a blatantly discriminatory manner. In several countries covered by the EDUMIGROM research, the ethnic composition of these SEN schools is characterised by a robust and disproportionate presence of Roma and migrant children, most of whom do not require this kind of education (ERRC 2004, Berth and Klingner 2005, OSI EUMAP 2007). Despite the fact that such segregation has been banned or seriously limited by national (and international) regulations in the past five years, the practice continues (Katzorová et al. 2008, Molnár and Dupcsik 2008, Harbula and Magyari-Vincze 2008, Drá et al. 2008). Due to the poor quality of teaching in these schools, there are very few chances for students who attend them to continue to secondary education or obtain marketable qualifications.

The sheer statistics on SEN placements in the "new" European Union member states are enough to prove the impact of institutional segregation, but sophisticated research also reveals the main practices to be flawed (Kende and Neményi 2006). Testing students for such SEN status often happens without the necessary competence and fairness, and even in the case of elementary sincerity and good intention, testing is saturated with the perceptions of skills and competencies of the dominant mainstream culture. Roma parents often willingly accept the SEN clusters as safe environments for their children, but as it is reported in Hungary, Roma parents have started to contest the decision of selection bodies and fighting for recognition of their right to good-quality education.. Notably, special schools receive extra funding, creating incentives to perpetuate the recruitment of SEN pupils (Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia). In Hungary, as a result of recent decisions, SEN students cannot be clustered in special schools, yet

their integration through internal, within-school methods to regular classes so far has proven an ill-fit, whereby many of former SEN students drop out or lag behind. Moreover, in November 2007 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that segregating Roma students into special schools is a form of unlawful discrimination not only an indictment of the practice in the Czech Republic, but also of countries in Central and Eastern Europe that nearly universally confine Roma students, regardless of their intellectual abilities, into "special" schools for children with learning disabilities.

*Separate education* organised to the benefit or by the initiative of minority groups requires special attention because of its ambiguous messages and controversial impacts. In response to discontent and distrust, new schools often free from state monitoring have been established to meet the educational and religious needs of certain minority ethnic groups (e.g., *madrasas* in the United Kingdom or Muslim schools in Denmark). While such schools usually enjoy strong support on the part of the minority communities, their mere existence is often viewed with suspicion and distrust by the dominant majorities. Private schools for minority ethnic middle-class groups also convey the message of solving multiethnic education through separation (e.g., German Turks), but in a less adversarial manner. In Romania, the discontent of some minority leaders with school services inspired them to lobby for and organise special Roma schools that would respect their identity and culture, and do away with majority biases.

## **Internal school and classroom practices**

### *Tracking and grouping*

The tracking of children across types of schools and placing them in different programmes within schools in principle matches their interests and capabilities with the different variants of education and contents of knowledge that schools offer. The relevant academic literature does not dispute that the key dividing line in regards to social mobility appears to be between those tracks and programmes that lead to higher or post-secondary education, or at least continuing education, and the ones that conclude students' learning careers. (Brunello and Checchi 2007, Huttova, McDonald, and Harper 2008). Accordingly, the earlier selection takes place and the more it follows pure performance indicators, the more it blocks social mobility. The timing of the first selection is normally between the ages of 10 and 17 in OECD countries. Within this range, it is rather early (age 11 or below) in the Czech Republic, Germany Hungary, and Slovakia, whereas it is delayed (age 16 or above) in Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (OECD 2007: 38). The PISA Survey from 2006 demonstrates that institutional tracking is closely associated with the impact of parents' socio-economic backgrounds on their children's performance. The key findings indicate that the earlier students are clustered and directed in different programmes, the more the school's socio-economic profile affects the performance of students in an unmediated manner (ibid.: 7).

Channelling children based on academic performance rather than tastes and preferences is a rule of thumb in France and Germany. In the United Kingdom, parents' and children's desires and choices



are better heard and weighed in the decisions. In the post-socialist countries, tracking is also driven by children's performance that arranges the disadvantaged Roma students in schools with limited mobility potentials and high drop-out rates.

In most of the countries concerned inflexibility characterises the tracking systems. If any move occurs, it is usually *downwards*. Comprehensive schools in avoiding early tracking (as examples from certain reform schools in Germany and the United Kingdom show) show success in reducing the involved inequalities by dissolving pre-determined paths for students. Some other examples indicate that tracking could be delayed, without risking the quality and efficiency of the entire system, to the transition from lower to upper secondary stages (Denmark and Sweden). The Swedish system, compared to other European models, seems to be better at integrating since it stresses civic and academic knowledge at the expense of vocational training, even in schools of practical orientation.

Hierarchies of the more and the less desirable schools have become crystallised throughout our country sample and the tracking and placing of children across these schools also display regularised patterns. Although the ethnically divided societies show major differences in their potentials for integration and antagonism, in general, it is fair to argue that ethnic minorities, or at least substantial segments of them, have become the low-performing users of the school systems. They also tend to have access to the lower levels of the educational hierarchy leaving limited potentials for life-long learning. Intra-school segregation also often occurs when remedial or special classes are organised for minority students with poorer language skills and other competencies (Farkas 2008: 4). From these classes there is hardly any way back to the regular paths and programmes. Consequently, segregation within schools invariably results in disadvantaged groups being confined to a social space that limits their exposure to social encounters, decreases the quality of their education, and seriously restricts the further school careers of many young people.

### *Curriculum and teaching routines*

In several European schooling systems, traditional classroom pedagogy and the accompanying evaluation of students still prefer *codified knowledge* to creative skills and multiple competencies. Assessment is based on the accumulation of the normatively defined contents of knowledge that are built and stored by cultural frames and forms that have been elaborated and sanctioned by the majority society. Thus, the dominant school practice is based upon values and norms closer to the experiences base of majority children than to that of ethnic minority pupils. As a consequence, the latter groups may quickly or gradually develop a sense of inferiority, irrelevance, and resentment. In "benign" cases, the well-intended lower expectations of teachers towards minority ethnic youth often become self-fulfilling prophecies. More often, however, teachers' distrust generates or confirms a perception of undisciplined and low-performing ethnic minority students. As a result, mutual distrust often emerges between schools and minority students and their parents (Zentai 2009).

In view of diversity challenges, schools often introduce special courses to target *cultural competence* and normalisation (civilisation), that is to make all students think and feel democratically in a "Western" or "civilised" manner (Denmark and Germany). Health programmes, catering, and the "teaching" of certain hygienic rules are seen as welfare provisions to combat poverty with an explicit secondary aim of attaining "civilising" achievements at an early age. Migration is often presented as a problem rather than a potential resource (Germany). When group differences along ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. are thought to be acknowledged in school practices, multiculturalism, driven by identity politics, reinforces boundaries instead of nexus. A widespread outcome of this limited multicultural spirit is that white people are put in the centre of representation and carnival-like difference is placed around the "other" (United Kingdom). In multicultural debates in Germany, a static approach of culture is faulted with its universalistic approach to promote either Western supremacy or a perplexed notion of diversity lacking efforts to introduce the concepts of conflict and hybrid (Szalai et al. 2009)

In schools of mixed social composition, *language* is considered as key to all competences (e.g. in the Czech Republic all immigrants are classified automatically as SENs). In general, the knowledge of the official (majority) language is viewed as the sole tool for adaptation and assimilation (Denmark). In reverse, language insufficiencies are perceived as systemic barriers for educational integration. It is the minority parents who are often blamed for not investing enough in obtaining the official language of education. In Denmark, Sweden and Germany, language is understood as the key vehicle of social integration and investments in language competence are perceived as the main ingredient for the integration of immigrant groups.

Regardless of the duration and status of minorities and migrants in a country, genuine bilingual education is rare. In some places, language specific classes seem to assume that migrants will return home (Germany). Minority-language schooling is allowed or even supported for several national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, yet Roma students do not have such support. Due to a lack of their own resources, they are unable to establish or maintain this sort of schools (Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia). The poor quality of bilingual education turns out to be detrimental to school performance: bilingual students perform badly in lower secondary schools, producing the greatest gap in science education (Denmark), but this outcome of course should not be attributed to one single cause.

Native-speaking minorities enjoy a clear advantage in comparison to their peers whose first language at home differs from that of the language of instruction at school: those who belong to the first group have nearly twice the chance of students with different mother tongues to receive "excellent" results and have just one-sixth of the probability to become assessed as "marginally performing". Linguistic disadvantages offer but partial explanation for becoming devalued. Most notably, the sharp disadvantages of Roma in Central Europe can hardly be explained by the use of language. In Hungary, where ethnic discrepancies are the strongest in overall grading, nearly three-quarters of Roma students speak Hungarian as their mother tongue, and the remaining one-quarter also state proficiency in the country's dominant language. Furthermore, knowledge of a language is hardly a "given": as some school

experiments show (especially in the Nordic countries), great advancement can be made by carefully designed developmental programmes and/or by teaching certain subjects in the original languages of the minorities if they claim such services. Moreover, if not suppressed and stigmatised, language skills certainly develop in the course of schooling; hence, the aforementioned differences most probably speak about some indirect consequences of early linguistic disadvantages manifesting themselves in a complexity of hindrances rather than about minority adolescents' actual command of the language of instruction.

### *Evaluations and academic performance*

When comparing ethnic/migrant background categories to other social distinctions, the interpretation of school performance data becomes ever more complex. In all of the countries in the EDUMIGROM project, education research repeatedly confirms that performance differences between ethnic groups are *intertwined with class distinctions*. The poorest ethnic groups have the lowest achievements, underlining that social class is the bigger factor affecting attainment in education (United Kingdom). By building on the potent "ethnic capital" of their communities and motivated by deep-grained parental aspirations for upward intergenerational mobility, minority adolescents sometimes do better within the same social class than their majority peers – as the case of Pakistanis shows in the United Kingdom (Shah, Dwyer, and Modood 2010). In some countries direct parental influence on children's careers has decreased, yet the indirect effects of one's socio-economic background remained in place or have become even more pronounced over time (France). Elsewhere it is believed that the cultural capital and educational level of parents add to class divisions (Czech Republic).

Much in accordance with other research results, the EDUMIGROM project also found a high degree of intersectionality of socio-economic background, ethnicity, and gender in shaping inequalities in attainment. For example, in the United Kingdom where the general pattern of boys conspicuously underperforming girls is in place, white working-class boys prove the worst performing and are the single most important group needing policy attention. Yet, social class can reverse the gender gap: higher-status boys are outperforming lower-status girls. In Romania, ethnicity and gender intersect in higher drop-out rates of Roma girls compared to boys. This divide is complicated by an urban-rural split: rural communities offer significantly lower-quality school services to pupils, among whom Roma are overrepresented in several regions.

The EDUMIGROM comprehensive results reveal that the impact of *ethnic affiliation* is close to that of the family's cultural capital, and in its intensity, it certainly surpasses the influence of differential living conditions and gender. Ethnicity is a strong factor that is played out in its own right in informing how performance is assessed and acknowledged by the school. Grades *calibrate values* by sending out messages about individual student's cultural competence. This way educational institutions are the foremost agents in shaping social positions: after all, grades are taken as information about marketable knowledge and skills and as such, school results are turned into diverging pathways in our increasingly "knowledge-based" societies.

An apt indicator of academic performance is *repeated grades* during a student's school career. Although the frequency and significance of repeating class relates to the individual traditions of various countries (quite usual in some, quite rare in others), but the comparison of schools with varying student composition is telling. In the new European Union member states, there is a very significant and alarming difference (with a multiplier of five!) between ethnic minority and majority students in the proportion of those repeating a grade between ethnic minority and majority students. In the "old" member states such difference is insignificant (16 per cent of majority and 20 per cent of ethnic minority students are kept behind during their school career). Another important finding is that students attending segregated institutions or segregated classes tend to be referred to class repetition much more frequently than other students, which is a clear indication of the low quality and low prestige of such schools (or classes). It should be noted that, due to their troubled school history prior to enrolling in an ethnically segregated environment,, in "old" member states students from a majority background perform worse and repeat a grade more frequently than their minority peers in these same institutions. In the "new" member states, meanwhile, irrespective of the ethnic composition of the school, Roma students, far more than other students, are required to repeat a grade.

As it was discussed in Chapter III, the EDUMIGROM survey also measured the self-reported *academic performance* of students. Data show that even though ethnic minority students perform worse in comparison to their majority peers in general, performance correlates more strongly with the composition of the school, and in particular, the class, than with students' ethnic identity. Both ethnic minority and majority students perform relatively well in "majority" schools, and both group of students perform poorly in schools where segregation is paramount, either because the vast majority of students are "visible" minorities, or because parallel classes are composed of different ethnic groups. The performance of students tends to be higher in those schools where ethnic minorities make up solely or dominantly the student body ("Roma schools", "Muslim schools") than in those schools where ethnic separation is an outcome of the varied practices of streaming for internal segregation. This is probably due to distinct factors in the cases of "new" and "old" European Union member states. The academic expectations of teachers in segregated Roma schools are considerably lower than in regular schools, coursework grading is more flexible and permissive, and the standard curriculum is comparatively lower.

Much in accordance with the regularly run OECD surveys (PISA, TIMMS, and PIRLS) and previous other comparative investigations, the findings of the EDUMIGROM project also endorse that the overall *educational attainment* of minority ethnic youth in Europe looks much less favourable than the average, with some important internal variations. Statistics show that second- and third- generation migrants are making significant academic progress in the old member states (Sweden and the United Kingdom), although some minority ethnic groups stand as negative exceptions (e.g., Caribbeans in the United Kingdom, Somalis in Denmark). In other countries, descendants of labour migrants from the 1970s are doing worse than the children of more recent migrants (Germany). In essence, ethnic belonging appears

to be a motor of high achievement and motivation to learn, and by the same token also an explanation for school failure and source of oppositional identity (United Kingdom).

It is well documented that immigrant parents' aspirations can be higher than that of ordinary citizens. Some minority ethnic groups may do better than the mainstream in getting to higher education, whereas others do worse (France). European and other white groups of migrants usually do better but some exceptions do occur (e.g., Portuguese students and those of Eastern European descent in Germany). In countries with a large amount of social diversity, it is far from evident how the school performances of the most "visible" migrant groups, such as Asians, Africans, Black Caribbeans, and Turks vary. In "old" member states, a particular hierarchy of the ethnic groups transpires when regarding all major performance indicators: in an all-round comparison, Roma are gaining the least from the educational system (Zentai 2009).

Additionally, the average performance of final year students serves as a useful indicator for important projections: it offers information about the students' chances for entering different pathways of continuation. As it was discussed in Chapter III, in this sense, the aggregate performance score (together with statistics on the "success rates" of alumni) becomes the "brand name" of the emitting school, and as if it was on the market, actors in the educational arena devise their steps, pressures, and ways of expressing interest and disinterest accordingly. Notwithstanding, our data indicate a high degree of *commitment to schooling*: regardless of being rich or poor, coming from educated or uneducated backgrounds, leaving behind stronger or weaker primary-level institutions, and also irrespective of one's ethnic belonging, the overwhelming majority of adolescents think highly of future education. In communities in the "old" member states in the EDUMIGROM project, while inequalities in advancement are significant according to social status, assignment to the dominant pattern of continuing on the secondary level does not differ along ethnic lines. More closely, minor differences work *in favour* of adolescents from minority backgrounds with some two to four per cent outscoring the 80 per cent proportion among the respective majorities. The picture is different in the Central European communities where the "ethnic gap" indicates a significant hindrance of Roma adolescents. While the interviews with Roma students and parents demonstrated intense aspirations for continuation, when it came to the actual decisions on "where to go next", the ratio of Roma students striving for enrolling in a secondary school with graduation fell short more than 10 per cent of the average indicator for students from the majority.

The educational attainment and school trajectories of second-generation youth in Europe are influenced to a greater extent by standard institutional arrangements than by specific measures aimed at migrants and minorities, such as special second-language classes or the development of a multicultural curriculum (Crul and Vermeulen 2003). The extent of early education, the routes into higher education, the timing and nature of tracking, and the impact of residential segregation on the content and quality of teaching are all factors having a decisive influence on the educational prospects of disadvantaged minority and majority students alike. Compared to countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, or the

Netherlands, the French school system produces greater polarisation of educational outcomes for second generation youth. In other words, such students may "reach higher, but fall deeper" (Crul and Vermeulen 2003) than their counter-parts in many other European countries.

The performance of the second generation hinges above all on two factors. First, it depends on the background characteristics of the immigrant population. Generally, children of immigrants who bring low levels of social capital into the country are the most disadvantaged. On the continent, this means mainly the children of migrants from North Africa and Turkey. In Britain, it is the children of parents from former British colonies in South Asia and the Caribbean. The performance of the children of refugees further demonstrates the importance of socio-economic background. Children from better-off, educated families from Iran or Iraq tend to do well or very well, while children from rural Somalia and Ethiopia experience great difficulties in school. Second, the performance of the second generation depends on the country of destination. The differences among countries overlay differences among immigrant groups. This is most clearly seen when we compare the same group with the same starting position in different countries. Such an exercise can potentially offer insight into practices that help or hinder the educational advancement of the second generation across countries (Crul 2007).

#### *School atmosphere, self-esteem, aspirations*

Both the quantitative and qualitative parts of EDUMIGROM research endorse the preliminary knowledge that one's ethnic minority background implies a good deal of vulnerability during one's school life. Our data indicate that schools frequently show little sensitivity toward the experiences of insecurities; instead, teachers often read them as "easy excuses" for underperformance and a lack of true interest in the values that schools aim to convey, both by teaching and discipline. When accounting for school and classroom atmosphere, the EDUMIGROM survey research traced tangible differences within Europe. In old member states, there is no significant difference among students' responses in terms of their ethnicity or the type of school they attend. In the new member states, however, answers vary significantly along these two facets. Interestingly, majority students often sense hostility in their class, and Roma students attending ethnically segregated "Roma" schools are the least exposed to this. Bullying is reported much more frequently in schools where ethnic minority and majority children are taught in separate classes than in mixed arrangements. Once the differing ethnic composition of parallel classes becomes visible, interethnic hostility becomes acute; furthermore, everyday experiences of being separated may deeply and negatively impact identity development of minority ethnic students in their formative years of adolescence.

The EDUMIGROM comparative analysis of survey data reveals that the self-esteem of students in the Western communities shows higher scores on average than their peers' in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast to our hypotheses, the degree of self-esteem generally does not correlate with ethnic background. At the same time, students' self-esteem appears to correlate significantly with the schools' ethnic composition. This is especially true in the "new" member states, where the lowest scores of self-

esteem were measured among students studying in schools dominated by the ethnic majority. Most probably, the reason behind this unexpected finding is the "boomerang effect" of high expectations and competitive atmosphere in these schools. Emphases on high performance, pressures on quick progress in studies, and good behaviour – to the detriment of personal or character development – create a stressful environment for the students in question. Children studying in low-prestige schools dominated by Roma students are less stressed to perform well; therefore, their self-evaluation is less influenced by their actual school results. However, the price they pay for the more relaxed school years is high: they have very few choices but to continue studying in low-standard, vocational schools. Thus, they have dramatically curtailed opportunities for eventual employment and successful adult careers (Messing 2010).

Due to the troubled relationship between minority ethnic parents, teachers and school managers, absenteeism is also more frequent among these groups. According to our research results, while absenteeism shows great variance among minorities in the United Kingdom, it is universally high in "Roma" schools in the Central European communities (especially in Hungary and Romania). Antagonism often is spurred the clash of teachers coming mostly from the majority population and young minority male students who are considered not only undisciplined and disinterested but misogynists/sexist (Denmark, United Kingdom). In Germany, Muslim boys are viewed as the most problematic, developing an adversarial behaviour, language, and culture in school. In the studied community in the United Kingdom, the Caribbean males appear to cement racial categories and become a minority within the minority.

The experience of the minority youth is far from homogenous within countries and across communities. For example, closer scrutiny reveals that atmosphere in the classroom provoked different responses along ethnic lines in the United Kingdom. Forty-five per cent of white respondents viewed their class as "friendly and cohesive" compared with 35 per cent of African-Caribbean, and just 26 per cent of Pakistani pupils. This is a telling finding and may reflect the fact that Pakistani pupils are more likely to feel less social support in school from both their teachers and peers – which is significant when these social relations are often seen as an important protective factor. Overall, most pupils indicated that several teachers liked them, showing that despite the different power positions of teachers and pupils, there are good interpersonal relationships. In the eyes of students, teachers are likely to be supportive and are likely to motivate and enhance self-esteem (Law and Swann in this volume).

Though some ethnic minority students tell of interethnic interaction outside of school, primarily in connection with sports activities, school seems to act as a *zone of exception*. Ethnically diverse schools are safeguarded from the negative representations of ethnic minorities in public and political discourses (Moldenhawer et al. 2010). Roma pupils in Slovakia view schools as more or less oppressive institutional settings however, after the transition to the second grade of elementary school, they are more exposed to peer-group culture than are, for instance, Slovak majority pupils whose after-school time is much more institutionally controlled. Roma pupils might tend to develop a certain indifference or unconcern toward teacher's assessments by learning how to cope with bad school marks without losing their self-esteem.

They like school mainly because it is a place for meeting friends and having fun. There are also other important reasons for appreciating school. Some students suggested that their schools are the only place where ethnic differences are not noted (Kusá, Rusnáková, and Borovánová in this volume).

The detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative data brings up the vulnerable state of lower-class students from majority backgrounds in the highly selected "minority schools" in our post-colonial communities, especially in the French *"banlieues"*, whose primary preoccupation seems to be their social and cultural devaluation. As the French and British studies have pointed out, these adolescents often feel excluded and cut off from the society where they actually consider themselves to belong and perceive their "misplacement" in poor "immigrant" communities as a manifestation of severe injustice and discrimination (Felouzis et al. 2009, Schiff 2010, Swann and Law 2010a, 2010b). Across the studied communities, highly complex and differentiated positions, strategies, and perceptions were articulated by young people in relation to their experiences of school and community life. Adolescents' yearning to escape from being "othered" was strongly voiced with some able to articulate narratives of emancipation and liberation from differential and discriminatory treatment. But many felt locked into and unable to escape from a tangled web of constraining circumstances resulting in serious consequences, such as declining educational aspirations and potentially dropping from the educational system altogether.

With relevance to most of the studied communities, our survey data show that *"minority students aim for a white collar job to a higher degree than majority students despite their parents' lower average education level"* (Thomsen et al. 2010: 63). One might argue that this runs contrary to the evidence of a performance gap between ethnic minority and majority students. Where does minority students' extended trust in the educational system come from? A tentative answer is that the political discourse of workfare has been internalised by the minority communities to such a degree that it directly influences young people's life strategies. Even the most school-reluctant minority students express an understanding of the importance of schooling, often posited as a way to escape a life of crime (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 56).

## **Targeted inclusion measures**

### *Controversial school-based inclusion efforts*

The EDUMIGROM background reports reveal that the introduction of more innovative and inclusion-driven changes is preconditioned by conceptual shifts in understanding multiculturalism, subsequent pedagogical renovations, and altered resource allocation. Recent experiments in multicultural education include not only knowledge on other cultures but on oppression and racism in the curricula (United Kingdom). Intercultural education contests how cultural heterogeneity is accepted within the liberal Western tradition. Experiments in integration-driven educational models are in progress, yet in most cases evidence for their larger-scale impacts is still to be seen. Yet, intercultural education seems to remain marginalised in policy terms (Huttova, MacDonald, and Harper 2008: 5).



A genuine multicultural thinking has been transplanted into education in Sweden since 1995. This implies non-compulsory first-language education with mandatory service delivery by schools, late tracking, and mobility allowed across tracks. Bilingual education was institutionalised as a right in Denmark in 2007. Since then, debates have been addressing the proper targeting of bilingual teaching (language for life or for school) and evaluating the achievements of experimental schools for integrated education (e.g., the Copenhagen model). Likewise, in the United Kingdom, proactive anti-discrimination and equality policy is initiated by special government funds and programmes for fighting social exclusion (explicitly named). Individually targeted financial support based on needs-assessment is combined with language education. Mechanisms to better inform and enable students to move within tracking systems are put in place and some flexibility is also introduced, but the results are not yet known (Law and Swann in this volume).

Within the frame of the internationally agreed and nationally implemented *Decade of Roma Inclusion* policy initiative embracing countries in Central and South Eastern Europe, new European Union member states are pressed to take seriously the debate on the education duties of the state. Roma school inspectors and mediators responsible for enrolment, special support, and language education are in place in Romania. It is feared that they could be blamed for any failures, and their potential impacts will be limited. However, in Hungary, the first accounts of a special programme in support of integrated schools with sizable Roma student bodies shows modest but promising signs. Yet, perverse incentives in resource allocation and a lack of proper inspection tools remain. Experiments in integration are often placed on the shoulders of nongovernmental organisations with fragile funding. High hopes have been placed in the potential distribution of European structural funds in giving a much-needed boost to Roma integration in all Central and Eastern European countries. It warrants a critical examination that big PHARE projects in the recent past did not seem to deliver any major impacts and hardly any partial ones. It is also argued that financial support for minority youth in secondary education is a proven technique for lowering the stigma of "not-qualifying" for certain tracks as an ethnic group (Hungary and Romania). In sum, experiments for integration-driven educational models are in progress, yet in most cases the evidence for their ultimate impacts has yet to be pronounced.

### **Policy recommendations in the domestic context**

In general, intersecting fields in support of fair and good quality education for all should facilitate the access to high standards of schooling for all children, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic condition. Education should guarantee both equal opportunities for a decent life and cultural recognition for all, while effectively facilitating everybody's right to negotiate on the acceptable social order within and outside the school.

Given the great diversity of the European welfare regimes and school systems, these general aims translate into different concrete policies and measures in the different countries. Part B of this study presents how the case of the domestic ethnic minorities is reflected in the public discourse, how the major conflicts in interethnic relations are perceived, and how policies of inclusion are shaped in the nine participating countries of the EDUMIGROM project. While there are great variations in the concepts, interpretations, and remedial interventions that are applied in individual countries, a surprisingly large set of the arising problems seem identical that invoke for collective thinking and that draw the common lines of policymaking.

Below we attempt to summarise those issues and solutions that come up in their country-specific translation in all, or at least, most of the subsequent country-specific discussions in Part B.

### *Education and schooling*

#### *Integration by anti-segregation measures*

- School districts should be regularly adjusted to ensure a mixed social composition of catchment areas.
- Minimum standards should be implemented regarding the quality of teaching and achievements. Schools not meeting these requirements should be reorganised, merged or school bussing should be enforced.
- Schools that are maintained by private foundations and churches should be financed by state normative subsidies exclusively when they are willing to take disadvantaged ethnic pupils.
- Ordinary youth (not only the *crème de la crème*) from disadvantaged urban and rural areas must have access to schools located in privileged centres. In reverse, excellence programmes should be introduced in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- The school system has to be reformed in a way that eliminates institutional segmentation and pursues a comprehensive system that educates children in integrated institutions throughout their compulsory school-age.
- Municipal authorities should be charged with the duty of inclusive education similar to the duty of providing access to clean drinking water.
- Financial incentives and conditionality should be introduced to obtain state and European Union funding for educational development and investments.

#### *Support for all children to achieve fair competence*

- The possibility of establishing "special classes" in standard schools should be banned. Psychological diagnostics should be continuously updated and the lines that divide "normal pupils", "pupils with learning difficulties", and "pupils with disabilities" should be set carefully and monitored.
- Early childhood education should be made accessible to all families and special efforts should be made for minority children. The age of compulsory education can be lowered towards younger ages (age three or four) while access to nursery schools, kindergartens and preschools has to be secured for every child, irrespective of the region and type of settlement she or he lives in. In parallel to this the rigidity of the transition from preschool to school has to be significantly reduced.
- The length of compulsory education should be extended to 12 years and a vocational certificate should be targeted as a basic minimum for those who will not continue their studies through upper secondary education.
- The language proficiency of young people from immigrant backgrounds is clearly a central element in any strategy to combat inequalities between children from immigrant and majority backgrounds. The availability of computer-assisted tools for language training might well be a comparatively new development that merits investment and evaluation.

#### *Support for learning irrespective of social capital*

- To secure a more open and inclusion driven educational system, streaming and tracking should be postponed as much as possible in students' lives.
- In order to make the individual integration of pupils with special needs and the teaching of children from socially disadvantaged environments effective, an assistant teacher should be provided for each and every class concerned. Ideally, they should be of the same ethnicity as the target group.
- Textbook selection must take into consideration the immigration history and actual heterogeneity of the community and society.
- The interethnic team work of students in the classroom should be encouraged and facilitated.
- Extracurricular activities focused on socially disadvantaged students in the form of after-school education and support programmes have to be standardised and financed by normative state subsidies.
- Students feel most comfortable in schools that have a community life that does not centre only on formal teaching. Regular cultural and leisure activities help to sustain dialogue between teachers and parents and between teachers of mixed ethnic backgrounds.

- Transforming disadvantaged schools into places of socialisation by encouraging extracurricular activities, the development of cultural projects, class trips, and outings would make for less formal student-teacher relations and would make it possible for students who have some potential in non-academic areas to build their self-esteem and gain recognition through means other than the display of anti-school behaviour. Participation in such activities and forms of togetherness should be voluntary; non-participation should not involve any punishment, the least any sanctioning by grading. Given the cultural sensitivity of the issue, extracurricular activities should be designed with and supervised by ethnic minority parents and communities.
- There should also be stronger support for those NGOs that provide free-time activities for children from disadvantaged areas. These activities give children opportunities to spend their free time in a meaningful way and can also give them more self-esteem – especially when they can share what they have learned or created.
- Training in multicultural awareness promotes self-reflection, dialogue and tolerance, and provides other related benefits. In such training schemes, priority attention should be given to categories of people whose roles put them in a position to positively (or negatively) influence many others: people in gate-keeping roles such as school counsellors, professionals who have regular daily contact with students and their families, such as teachers and administrators, and students themselves.
- Measures to combat the exclusion of the most vulnerable students should focus on improving the efficiency of vocational training and on developing a proper apprenticeship programme. Regular contacts between schools and employers can help to build up mutually sensitive relationships that can, in turn, contribute to better and more extensive placement of ethnic minority youth (as successful experiments in Germany show).
- Special programmes to support the retraining of Roma students at school should be devised and special assistance/counselling should be targeted at secondary school students that are at risk of leaving school. Labour offices and other institutions operating in the region should be involved in these programmes.
- The principle of equality should be at the forefront, and education about the social destructiveness of prejudice should be incorporated in curricula on civics and ethics. In addition, curricula should both encourage and require critical thinking in matters of history and society.
- There is a need for a pedagogy that captures and sustains pupils' interest in learning. The goal of educational work with disaffected pupils should be seen as an issue of social justice and schools should provide the space and resources for pupils to broaden their horizons, build their self-confidence, and capture the connections between learning and a better life.

- Schools are well placed to address gender issues through specific units that explicitly discuss conceptions of gendered identity. Programmes may be either gender-specific or gender-relevant but should address social justice issues that allow pupils to build and explore individual identities and also girls' assertiveness and issues of sexual exploitation. In such discussions, cultural sensitivity and the differing concepts of gender relations should be respected, and attempts at a Eurocentric ideological domination must be avoided.

### *Competence building and incentives for teachers*

- The work of teachers who deal with disadvantaged groups should be recognised both financially and symbolically.
- A supportive atmosphere and encouraging role models are key to the positive development of minority students in schools. The employment of teachers with immigrant and/or ethnic minority backgrounds should be encouraged.
- Affirmative action should be introduced in teachers' education with the aim to increase the number of Roma and migrant background teachers in regular primary and secondary education.
- It should become an obligatory part of teachers' training to take a course in awareness raising and anti-racist, non-discriminatory teaching.
- There must be sufficient resources to provide professional development and training for both teaching and non-teaching staff working in multi-ethnic schools. Greater attention needs to be paid to how teachers work in inner-city schools and segregated ones.
- Interethnic conflicts in the educational arena can effectively be eliminated and managed by teachers using integrated pedagogical programmes and interactive, project-oriented teaching techniques.
- The system of teachers' education and in-profession training has to be essentially reformed. Innovative methods of competence-based teaching should replace the dominance of lexical knowledge-based tuition in the regular curricula of teacher training.

### **Schools and community relations**

- It is essential to improve communication between representatives of the educational institutions and ethnic minority families concerning the training and employment

opportunities offered by the schools. Although minority parents usually place great store on schooling, they have little in-depth knowledge of the actual workings of the system and of the range of existing programmes and opportunities.

- Successful projects encourage the skills and competence of members of the ethnic minority community to act as mediators to parents who cannot offer an educated, literate environment to their children. For example, after being trained as “neighbourhood mothers”, bilingual women instruct a group of other migrant mothers and familiarise them with the German school system, discuss social issues around schooling and provide them with further material for the education of their children.
- Schools should foster cooperation with professionals and voluntary civic organisations. The openness of schools encourages a grounded local commitment to the educational institutions and thereby their students.
- The most common suggestion for desegregating urban areas is to foster the development of disadvantaged districts by improving the infrastructure and encouraging civic participation and local networking. Schools can act as “integration centres” that connect students, parents, and teachers as well as ethnic minority organisations, the local economy, and other relevant agents. According to this idea schools are to define their specific profiles and offer particular services to attract middle-class parents and their children in order to stop or even reverse the effects of voluntary ethnic segregation.

### **Educational policies in the context of general citizenship rights**

- Beyond education but essential to larger policies to promote a broader social and political discourse is the understanding that migration is a regular feature of life for some members of society. This way, migration is not to be seen in opposition to the national welfare state, but rather to be understood as the outcome of global transformations in which the transnational movement of people is either a form of freedom or necessity.
- Representatives of the white mainstream's cultural and political elite should recognise their responsibility and outstanding roles in shaping the public discourse on issues of race, ethnicity, and interethnic relations. Accordingly, they should emphasise values of diversity and admit that contemporary society is comprised of many ethnic/racial, religious, and linguistic groups that all contribute to the material and cultural wealth of the nation-state, and that thus deserve equal recognition and rights. In this vein, the elites should make all efforts to halt the spreading of racist ideas and attitudes and should safeguard the general observance of anti-discrimination regulations and mechanisms in the micro-level environments and in society-at-large as well.

- The dominant discourses of "becoming the same" in relation to immigrants and ethnic minorities need to be challenged by a fundamental recognition of the flexible and strategic character of ethnic identity (like any identity).
- It is necessary for schools and local educational authorities and agencies, and central government to acknowledge, recognise, re-affirm and prioritise racial and ethnic equality and multiculturalism in educational contexts. In a broader perspective, racial and ethnic equality should be supported by legislation and the re-tailoring of institutions, services, and provisions of the welfare state according to the principles and values of multiculturalism.
- Municipalities should support the creation and participation of ethnic (cultural, religious and linguistic) minority NGOs and ad-hoc advocacy groups. These organisations should be consulted and involved in the assessment of policies that could have an impact on their communities. Municipalities should also prepare an action plan on minority and civic rights in cooperation with NGOs and the representative bodies of all ethnic groups and cooperate with them during monitoring and assessment.
- National governments should be encouraged to take part in policy coordination mechanisms that compare the performance of school systems in improving the educational performance of disadvantaged ethnic minority groups within the state under their administration.
- The concepts, methods and routines of the prevailing colour-blind data-collections on education should be changed to illuminate the inherent racial and ethnic inequalities of the national school systems. The purposefully designed alterations are of fundamental importance for preparing policies and measures to effectively reduce these inequalities in education and beyond.
- Regular monitoring, information gathering, and ongoing assessment are essential in policy development in the complex field of education for minorities. It also has to be acknowledged that the emphasis on the measured criteria may result in less attention to those factors that are equally important, but less suitable for quantified evaluation. Such incentives are especially powerful when financial rewards are attached to certain indicators of performance. Therefore, continued special attention should be paid to the possible ripples of segregating effects of systemic reforms such as school choice and recorded grades at too early age.
- State and/or municipal support should be made accessible for community centres that provide complex assistance to families from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds and in which school services are used to connect with mainstream society. Ideally, an interethnic environment is ensured in these centres, in addition to some targeted services. The financing of these centres/programmes should not be project based (and thus dependent on European Union structural funds) but receive regular funding from the state budget.

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## **PART B**

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH EDUCATION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT**

**CZECH REPUBLIC  
DENMARK  
FRANCE  
GERMANY  
HUNGARY  
ROMANIA  
SLOVAKIA  
SWEDEN  
UNITED KINGDOM**

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Ela Klementová, Radim Marada, and Michal Nekorjak**

## Framing public and political discourse in Czech society

Minority rights and ethnicity in the context of public and political discourse in the Czech Republic have predominantly been shaped by the so-called "Roma problem" over the last two decades. While Czech society has accepted the permanent residence of other non-Czech ethnic and national communities and individuals, their problems, characteristics, and views are infrequently the topic of policy debates, media coverage, academic research, civic activism, internet discussions, and private conversations at home.

When these other, non-Roma ethnic or national minorities do become an issue –especially in the media –they are usually articulated within and through largely stable, generalised frames.

*Slovaks* (the largest national minority in the country) are basically not an issue for the Czech majority as a minority group with special characteristics, problems, needs, or claims. Their presence in the country is seen as completely unproblematic, by and large, a view assisted by the close relationship between the Czech and Slovak languages; the common presence of Slovaks among the country's intellectual, cultural, business, and political elites; as well as other factors mostly related to the shared recent historical experience of living in the undivided state, state, Czechoslovakia.

The *Polish minority* (located especially in northeast Moravia) has also been largely presented as unproblematic, even if already construed in the context of minority rights (education in the native language, their own libraries, or the official naming of public places in Polish in locales where the percentage of Poles exceeds a certain number). Reports and talks concerning the occasional problems or conflicts with the Polish minority or Polish immigration seldom reach or appeal to audiences beyond the northeast Moravian region, perhaps with the exception of the issue of temporary immigrant workers employed (for lower wages than the same skilled Czech workers would expect) in firms close to the Czech-Polish border.

The various small *expatriate communities* (American, British, Dutch, Italian, Hungarian, etc.) are mostly seen and depicted as a contribution to the country's cultural diversity and, especially in the case of Westerners, as contributors to the country's economic wealth and as cultural civilisers of a sort. That is, these communities and individuals are perceived and presented outside the political (minority rights) context, and the focus is mostly on lifestyle habits (like national cuisines) and individual strategies of accommodation in a foreign country. What is specific about their media portrayal is that, unlike other immigrant or ethnic groups, their members are usually allowed to speak for themselves, which also contributes to the general acknowledgement of differences inside these communities.

Somewhat more specific yet ambiguous attention – although certainly not as widespread and intensive as in the case of the Roma minority (see below) – has been paid in the public discourse to the presence of the two other largest immigrant communities in the country (besides the Slovaks), the Vietnamese and the Ukrainians.

The *Vietnamese* are often presented as an example of successful integration, especially with respect to the second-generation immigrant youth and their educational achievements. On the other

hand, the Vietnamese are also perceived as a relatively closed and self-separated community, which also contributes to their uncomplicated minority status: "When they fight, they do it among themselves." The problematic side appears through the issue of illegality, related to their publicly visible (almost representative) involvement in street vending and its consonant problems like smuggling, counterfeiting, etc.

*Ukrainian immigration* has almost exclusively been represented by the image of immigrant construction workers (in the case of men) and housekeepers or nannies (in the case of women). On average, more direct experience with Ukrainians (as colleagues at work or in households) has contributed to a more understanding attitude towards them as an immigrant community among the general public, and also given the fact that the jobs they take in the Czech Republic often (or in the general image) contrast with their former professions at home (academics, state officials, etc.). The problematic aspect of Ukrainian immigration publicly appears less in the form of labour market competition ("willing to work for less money, and thus taking jobs from the Czechs – like the Poles") and more in relation to the illegal presence of some of them in the country, which in turn is associated with organised yet informal networks and often illegal activities (the so-called "client system") exploiting and helping to reproduce their status as unauthorised immigrants. Some movies and TV series also add to this the stereotypical picture, with the portrayal of Ukrainian men as low-ranking mafia members (e.g., the bodyguard of a mafia boss or a man who performs dirty work) – and less frequently, of Ukrainian women as prostitutes.

As stated above, the general position of the Roma community, their typically low socio-economic status, and the problems they face or represent by far have been the major trigger for public and political discourse on minority rights and ethnic relations in the past two decades. The close and intense association of the "Roma problem" with public reflections on these more general issues was particularly accentuated by the first wave of Roma emigration to Canada (and subsequently to the United Kingdom) in the second half of the 1990s. Another spectacular event that increased public and political perceptions about the "Roma problem" within the context of human rights (and directly related to the issue of discrimination in education) was the legal case, *D.H. and Others versus Czech Republic*,<sup>35</sup> that began in 2000) and its final 2007 verdict from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) declaring a violation of the "non-discrimination protections" in the European Convention on Human Rights. This rule convinced the Czech state of the existence of discriminatory practices against Roma within the Czech educational system, and the international attention that it attracted (like the Roma emigration waves before and afterwards) made it an even more salient and sensitive issue in the domestic context.

In the preceding paragraph, we explicitly and repeatedly refer to the "*Roma problem*", as this is the *predominant general frame* within which the depiction of the Roma as an ethnic minority enters

35 For a detailed description of the case, see (Goodwin 2006). Summarised accounts can be found, for example, at the following websites: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/litigation/czechrepublic> (The Open Society Justice Initiative, which "acted as co-counsel before the Second Section of the European Court of Human Rights and then before the Grand Chamber."), [http://www.pili.org/dadel/D.H.\\_and\\_others\\_v.\\_Czech\\_Republic](http://www.pili.org/dadel/D.H._and_others_v._Czech_Republic) or [http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=servis/z\\_en\\_2006\\_0061](http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=servis/z_en_2006_0061).

the Czech public and political discussions on all levels and in all major arenas: policymaking, the media, academic research, social activism, internet chat rooms and blogs, and to be sure, private conversations among individuals. In general, in all of these arenas, among the majority and often also among themselves, the Roma as a community or minority have been perceived and represented as a "problem", whether sympathetically or adversely.

The more *specific contexts* within which Roma-related issues of minority rights and ethnic relations appear in the Czech public and political discourse include the following:

**Welfare and social benefits:** Roma are widely perceived as proportionally the major beneficiaries of social welfare, which is mostly associated with the relatively high unemployment and fertility rates among Czech Roma. It is especially in this respect that NGO representatives and public advocates of Roma call for more efficient state policies (focusing on employment and education opportunities in particular), which would lift a larger number of Roma beneficiaries out of this position. "Targeting causes rather than effects" is the major catchphrase here. But it is the widespread image of Roma as typical abusers of the social welfare system that supports the strong and ethnically coloured aversion against Roma among the general public (massively overrepresented, for example, in various internet forums, chat rooms, blogs, etc.) as well as the calls for less generous welfare policies or stricter control of the beneficiaries. The mainstream media take a more distanced and sensitive stance in this respect, yet the tabloids at times powerfully contribute to creating the public image of Roma as typical abusers of the system.<sup>36</sup> Given the widespread anti-Roma sentiment among the general public, it does not come as a surprise that many state and local officials also seem to share these opinions, albeit not publicly. Lately, there have been at least four cases of politicians (typically at the local level) who in their electoral campaigns addressed the issue of abusing the welfare system in direct relation to Roma – and (also typically) they were successful in their run for office. All of them have faced harsh critiques in the national media (sometimes paradoxically including the tabloids) and they also have been opposed and criticised from within their own political parties.

**Petty crime:** Related to the former context is the image of Roma as petty criminals as well as cheaters of the welfare system. Similarly to portraying them as people who overuse the welfare revenue, this view is also articulated through various internet platforms, letters to editors, informal discussions, etc. Here, the media, as well as politicians with supposedly anti-Roma sentiment, take an even more careful stance. The notable exception in this respect was a public accusation against Roma parents for

36 It is not only the specific language that frames this issue and reproduces a widely shared reputation and depiction of Roma as undeservedly benefiting from welfare policies, but also the use of visual images. It was a symptomatic coincidence that as we were working on this text at the Prague Airport, one of the major Czech TV channels reported, as the headline updated (the sound was off) the "reform of social benefits" while illustrating the issue by picturing only Roma families as they collect social benefits in a respective office. Moreover, the moving pictures were evidently taken from a short circuit camera installed in the office (it is illegal to shoot documents and take photographs in these places), which may easily make the otherwise ordinary act look as something rather suspicious. Yet it also suggests that many state and local officials (especially of a lower or middle rank) share the general negative view of Roma as social beneficiaries as they do not hesitate to provide (most likely anonymously and illegally) such pictures to a commercial TV station.

"not sending their children to schools, but sending them to steal instead" by the former government Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities (sic!) in spring 2008. The minister met harsh criticism in the media, and shortly afterwards, advocacy NGOs urgently asked for an apology, which she had already issued in the meantime. Symptomatic about this case was the minister's explanation stressing that by no means had she spoken about the Roma community or Roma ethnic groups in general, but had only addressed particular cases of this problem with and in some Roma families. Yet even some journalists and politicians sometimes tend to reproduce the general image of Roma as troublemakers, for example, by freely using the phrase "socially non-adjustable co-citizens" which was coined publicly during the 1990s and soon acquired the pejorative meaning of an ironic, politically correct label for Roma.

Ghettos and inhumane living conditions: Obviously, this context is not unrelated to the question of social welfare and benefits or to the issue of crime and public order. It has attracted stronger public attention, especially through media-reported cases of severely deprived neighbourhoods (typically housing projects) within smaller cities in the northwest of the country and inhabited predominantly by Roma, and more recently also through state-sponsored, semi-academic research on the "ghettoisation" publicised by the media.<sup>37</sup> In an acknowledgement of its scale, the Czech authorities have earmarked two billion Czech crowns (approximately EUR 80 million) for the period of 2007–2013 to tackle this very problem.

Roma emigration: As suggested above, this was the first articulate and politically dramatic context within which – under international pressure – the issue of ethnic relations and human rights, in direct relation to the Czech Roma community, became at once an urgent public and political concern in the second half of the 1990s. It attracted the attention of the media to the "Roma problem" as one of the topical issues of Czech public and political life, and it compelled politicians to take the issue seriously, yet it also provided the ground and opportunity for an open polarisation of the non-Roma Czech majority around the Roma issue, quantitatively in favour of anti-Roma sentiment. Since then, the prevalent view voiced among the majority has been: "If they want, let them go." It is difficult to estimate whether the widespread anti-Roma sentiment escalated in 2009 when Canada re-introduced a visa for Czech citizens (with an explicit reference to Czech Roma immigration). Yet many of the Roma's public advocates (besides political representatives and most of the media) opposed this step by the Canadian authorities exactly in anticipation of this very consequence.<sup>38</sup>

Minority education: Only since the much-publicised D.H. and Others versus Czech Republic case

37 The research project was conducted by the GAC agency, and it has identified around three hundred "ghettos" inhabited by Roma population in the country of approximately ten million inhabitants. These deprived neighbourhoods are of different kinds, ranging from larger inner city areas (especially in larger cities like those in which we have conducted our research), through housing projects (especially in mid-size cities) to the outskirts of smaller towns. The project estimates around 80,000 people living in these neighbourhoods in total, yet it should be noted that, particularly in the inner-city ghettos of larger cities (and partly also in the housing projects), it is not only Roma who live there. The average estimate of Roma living in the Czech Republic is around 250,000.

38 There are no reliable statistics available as to how many Czech Roma have left the country to apply for asylum in other countries. The common estimation is, however, that before re-introducing the visa requirement for Czech citizens in mid-2009, approximately 3.000 Czech Roma had arrived in Canada to seek asylum over the previous years.

in the beginning of the 2000s, and especially after the ECHR's verdict against the state, has the issue of education of minorities become publicly visible throughout the mainstream media, working its way onto the political agenda. To be sure, many of the representatives within the NGO and advocacy sector have until recently blamed the Czech government and its legislators for not doing enough in this respect – to some extent with the exception of 2007–2009, when the Ministry of Education declared the education of minorities as one of its priorities.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the advocates' criticisms, it has been in the context of the ensuing public debate on minority (Roma) education that more information started to be provided by the state authorities about the previous and more recent legislature and programs designed to improve the position and prospects of Roma within the Czech educational system: the Education Act of 2005, which implemented the Framework Educational Program, providing basic schools with the opportunity to introduce specifically designed (Roma-oriented) multicultural teaching techniques, courses, or programs into their curricula and extracurricular activities; transformation of the former Special Schools into Basic Practical Schools (with the aim of improving the chances of children with mental or behavioural disorders for further – vocational – schooling and in the labour market<sup>40</sup>); the establishment of preschool educational programs especially in socially deprived (often Roma populated) urban areas; establishing and financially supporting the institution of teaching assistants at schools in these areas (that is, Roma teaching assistants at schools predominantly attended by Roma pupils); the annually announced "Program of the Ministry of Education for Support of Education in Languages of National Minorities and Multicultural Education"; the National Action Plan of Inclusive Education accepted by the government in January 2010; etc.

With regard to public and political discourse, however, it is symptomatic that information about these legislative measures and government-sponsored or initiated programs has been provided to the public by state officials and/or political representatives (and also by school teachers and principals) rather hesitantly. Rather than being advertised (seeking public support) or advertising the state's good will in the direction of improving the educational chances of Roma children, they have primarily been used simply as a defence mechanism under the pressure of third-sector representatives and journalists advocating Roma interests. Speculatively, we may ascribe this hesitance to the fact that these measures have not yet brought the expected effect and to the apprehension that a more massive public advertisement of these steps would rather decrease than increase the popularity of political representatives and state administration.

39 The Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports, Ondřej Liška (Green Party), replaced the former Minister (also from the Green Party) in the same government and during the same term after her one year in office. Yet the whole government was brought down by the opposition's no-confidence vote in the Czech Parliament in spring 2009, one year before the next regular parliamentary elections.

40 Yet just this has been one of the major targets of criticism coming from journalists and NGO activists. They have repeatedly and stridently pointed out that the problem consists exactly in the fact that the basic practical schools continue to be disproportionately attended by Roma children, and thus institutionalising the highly unlikely or fictive fact that while among the non-Roma population it is only two to three per cent of children who show "mental and/or behavioural disorders", it is 27–28 per cent among Roma children.

On the other hand, the continuing (if not mounting) problems related to the education of Roma children, despite all the legislative but also concrete grassroots efforts of schools, NGOs, and local authorities, have to some extent negatively affected the attitudes of those otherwise devoted to the task of improving the educational chances of Roma children. What we can sense behind the rhetorical slip by the former Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities when accusing Roma parents of sending their children to steal rather than to attend school is a feeling of resignation and frustration, which can occasionally be identified (although articulated in less drastic words) among local activists, too.

As is clear from the preceding account, while Roma-related public discourse on human (minority) rights and ethnic relations is articulated in various arenas, the arenas' dominant representatives often find themselves in opposition and severe disagreement among one another. Here, we especially speak about the conflicting views of political representatives (state officials), journalists, civic activists (advocates of human and Roma/minority rights), and the general public. And these all are joined by another dissonant voice, coming from teachers. Briefly speaking, not to exceed the expected length of this part of the report, politicians and state officials claim that policies targeting the problems widespread in or typical for Roma communities are numerous and well-designed, but they are not properly implemented at the local level. On the contrary, civic activists and advocates (and partly, also journalists) usually see state policies in this respect as insufficient in scope and wrongly targeting the effects rather than the causes of the problems in question. Meanwhile, a large part of the general public tends to oppose any policies perceived as specifically designed for Roma as undeserved and in vain.

## **Contribution of Czech EDUMIGROM research in informing debates on policy measures**

Since the 1990s, the segregation of Roma pupils in the Czech educational system has been symbolised by their concentration in Basic Practical Schools. Both public debates and many accepted or planned policy measures have focused on these pupils.

Let us remember that putting children into Basic Practical Schools is based on an examination carried out by an expert in a specialised pedagogical-psychological centre (see Katzorová et al. 2008). In case a child is found to not have the appropriate predisposition towards attending common basic school, he or she can be placed into a specialised institution with trained pedagogical staff. These schools, however, provide less demanding, substandard education, which limits the possibility of future educational success. Already during state-socialism, the proportion of Roma pupils in these types of schools was high. Nevertheless, after 1989 the number of non-Roma pupils in these schools declined significantly. Research commissioned by the Ministry of Education (GAC 2009) found that approximately 30 percent of Roma pupils attend Basic Practical Schools, whereas for children from non-Roma families, this proportion is far lower (approximately two percent).



Measures striving for change can be analytically divided into those aiming at eliminating "system failures", and those intended to restrict unjustified assigning of Roma pupils to Basic Practical Schools. The main system measures focus on objective (and controllable) definitions of reasons for putting certain children under the custody of special education in Basic Practical Schools. So that the system measures cannot be evaded and manipulated, a rule has been introduced that mandates parents' explicit consent when placing their child into a Basic Practical School. Thus, since the 1990s, the rules that allow for the systematic and involuntary segregation of Roma pupils into Basic Practical Schools – which was the main reason the Czech Republic was designated as a country where the right to equal education is infringed – have been gradually transformed.<sup>41</sup>

In parallel with the above-mentioned prevention of the unjustified placement of Roma pupils into special schools, a policy of inclusive education has gradually been established. Its premise is the support of children with so-called special educational needs in common basic schools. However, this does not refer solely to Roma children but generally to all children endangered by social exclusion, physical disabilities, etc. This focus on inclusiveness has been present in the educational system for several years. Nevertheless, its principal support of, and more significant orientation towards, the issues of social exclusion started to be accentuated only in recent years, primarily at the beginning of 2009. Concurrently, there are two strategies: a traditional approach that favours the education of children in specialised institutions with trained staff, and a newer one, which prioritises the integration of such pupils into common schools. At present, there exists a certain tension, above all manifested by the fact that Basic Practical Schools are unmotivated to participate in supporting inclusive education, as they find such an approach competitive. It means that they try to persuade the parents to send their children to their facilities.<sup>42</sup> A significant motive for applying such actions comes from within the system of school financing based on the number of pupils, which can cause serious problems to schools in long-term demographic decline. On the other hand, however, we cannot reduce this "fight for pupils" solely to the question of money. As we have discovered, teachers are strongly convinced that a special educational system makes sense and a number remains sceptical about the possibility of integrating all children into common basic schools. This scepticism is practically confirmed in cases when a pupil is transferred from a common basic school to a Basic Practical School in the higher grades (sixth to eighth grade) on

41 Despite this fact, there are still potential ways to evade this measure, and even a paradoxical situation occurs when pupils and parents themselves struggle for unjustified placement into a Basic Practical School. This happens in those cases when pupils, due to disciplinary problems, expect to be excluded from common basic schools and to be put into a preventive-corrective institution. In such cases, a pupil can try to pretend to be suffering from a learning disorder and/or a minor mental disability and start attending Basic Practical School, thus staying with his or her family.

42 This includes more than just verbal persuasion. Some Basic Practical Schools establish preparatory classes for children of preschool age that are intended to help them to adapt to the environment of (not only Practical) basic schools more easily. In doing this, they (indirectly) arrange for parents to eventually enrol their children in these very schools. Another important mechanism is the interconnection of a portion of pedagogical-psychological counselling centres with particular schools. If a school establishes such a counselling facility, it makes it possible for the school to record better diagnostic and counselling activities while educating children. However, a negative consequence can be seen in the fact that such a facility tends to recommend to the parents that they agree with enrolling their children in a particular Basic Practical School.

the basis of his or her serious behavioural and disciplinary problems, as these pupils often have very poor attainment levels. In other words, many factors– including the perception of what a low IQ is and what consequence it has for the education of children, how a common basic school should work (i.e., its orientation towards achievement), and what the mission of specialists and specialised schools is – play an important role in teachers' conduct (and not only for those from Basic Practical Schools with their specific interests). This "cognitive dimension" of the whole problem cannot be omitted when reflecting upon changes in the educational system and the introduction of inclusive strategies. To conclude, we emphasise that if both system approaches (inclusive and specialised) exist concurrently, it does not only signify problems. For parents, ideally, it means that they will have the opportunity to choose how their children will be educated in cases where they require a supportive approach.

In our research, we also focused on schools where Roma pupils dominate but that do not belong to the system of Basic Practical Schools. We found that both types of schools are relatively similar in three fundamental aspects:

- In comparison with non-Roma schools, both school types provide substandard education (although Basic Practical Schools offer lower-quality education).
- Roma pupils do not carry on with further education, regardless of what type of school they attend.
- At present, the segregation of Roma pupils takes place at both school types on the basis of very similar mechanisms.

These conclusions indicate that it is worth conceiving of the issue of the exclusion of Roma pupils in a more complex way, and the whole debate should not be restricted only to the functioning of Basic Practical Schools. Segregation mechanisms in the Czech educational system are based on the interconnection and concurrence of several heterogeneous actants – the attitude of the majority towards Roma populations, the strategies of particular schools, the educational strategies of Roma and non-Roma parents, the setting of the educational system (marketisation and introduction of market principles in the 1990s), and urban structure, to name just a few.<sup>43</sup> This implies that the question of segregation and inequality in education – at least in the case of our researched schools – cannot be restricted to the problem of the setting of educational system and it cannot be expected that its (technical) modifications can bring about more than just partial, even if significant, results.

To conclude this section, we highlight some under-investigated issues, which we suggest would contribute to an increase in the reflexivity of measures aimed at reducing inequalities in the Czech educational system:

<sup>43</sup> We described this segregation mechanism in detail in *Being Caught in Marginality: Educational Market, "Roma Schools", and Reproduction of Social and Spatial Inequalities* (Nekorjak, Suralová, and Vomastková 2011).

- *Barriers to subsequent education at high schools:*  
In comparison with their parents and grandparents, significantly more Roma students finish their basic education, but large numbers still do not start or finish their secondary education. The drop-out rate is extremely high but the circumstances that determine the critical moments in their subsequent education are not well known.
- *Education of Roma pupils at schools where they represent a minority:*  
Since the most attention is paid to Basic Practical Schools, it is unclear exactly how the process of education of children attending common basic schools proceeds. They may face other specific kinds of obstacles. Among these children, there can also be found those from families seeking to secure a better future and social position through the educational system.
- *Mapping successful strategies for going through the educational system:*  
In the context of the previous point, it is unknown how some Roma families successfully cope with the situation of social exclusion and how they support their children. Some of them are also successfully supported/assisted by NGOs. But examples of both types of successful cases are not well explored.
- *Evaluation of instruments used by NGOs to support the education of pupils from socially excluded Roma families:*  
During the last two decades, a large number of NGOs (but also state institutions, policy measures, etc.) have targeted the problems of Roma social exclusion and the related problem of education. It would be useful to conduct an "audit" to enumerate and evaluate rather fragmented strategies and practices.

## Policy recommendations

The following recommendations result above all from the findings that we encountered during our research – that is, we react specifically to the problems mentioned in the previous discussion. Put differently, these recommendations do not cover all possibilities that could be suggested. Also we do not mention those measures that are already widely practiced – for example, the support of establishing pedagogical assistants and preschool education of Roma children.

We have to stress that not all Roma pupils are educated in ethnically segregated schools. Unfortunately, the exact numbers are unknown and it is almost impossible for us to provide here any qualified estimation. What should be kept in mind during the discussion on segregation of Roma pupils in the Czech educational system is the fact that we can distinguish its three modes:

- Functional segregation (high proportion of Roma pupils educated in specialised Basic Practical Schools),
- Spatial segregation (segregation between or within the schools),
- Combination of both previous types.

Here, we do not present specific measures for particular modes of segregation, as those instruments could be used for more than one type of segregation. Moreover, we do have to mention that the intra-school segregation into separated classes does not seem to be an actual problem in the Czech Republic, although it may arise in the future.

### **Support for integration<sup>44</sup>**

The integration strategy is aimed to assist (a) the transfer of a pupil from a school with a predominance of Roma (Basic Practical Schools as well as common basic schools) into a school where majority students prevail. However, it is also used to indicate cases of (b) transfer between Basic Practical Schools and common basic schools with a majority of Roma pupils in both facilities. Currently, these activities refer to rather a small number of pupils, as integration is a relatively new idea, which is exacting at the same time, since it is necessary to persuade the children, parents, and teachers at schools among which the transfer is to be accomplished. As we have already mentioned, schools do not wish their pupils to leave because of the financial resources that they would lose as a result of successful integration. A possible solution could come from addressing the financial interests of schools actively participating in integration, especially with regard to sufficient financial compensation for a pupil leaving to another school; for example, this compensation could be related to the cooperation between both institutions. This collaboration would ensure a transfer of information and experience with a particular pupil and the selection of an appropriate strategy for his or her further education. The second problem is the issue of the competencies of teachers at common basic schools in working with children requiring a specific approach. This dilemma can be partially mitigated by the measures described below.

Measures targeting the problem of segregation beyond the most problematic and highly discussed Basic Schools/Basic Practical Schools dichotomy are not still widely discussed in the Czech Republic (both publicly or by experts). We strongly do not recommend measures based on quotas or any interventions driven by "social engineering" that miss the support or at least tolerance of affected teachers and parents. It seems to be more effective, initially, to work out strategies and methods for the individual integration of selected children and convince the broader public that guided ethnic mixing in schools may be possible.

<sup>44</sup> In the Czech Republic, the term re-integration is also used for the strategies we describe here, although it is not clear why this term is accepted because it does not correctly denote the situation when pupils with no prior experience with mainstream education are transferred from ethnically segregated schools.

## **Diagnostics**

The current system of pedagogical-psychological examination is based specifically on determining IQ, and although the existing tests are declared to be "cultural bias free", it seems that they are not necessarily "poverty bias free". In other words, the possibility that social disadvantage is, in the process of IQ measuring, transformed into an embodied low mental disposition and has been discussed here earlier. Yet the tests are likely to predict the success or failure of pupils in the current Czech educational system. In any case, it is worth carrying out a reassessment of the current tools and methods. Another measure that can be taken into consideration – especially within the context of integration – is repetitive testing during the course of education at Basic Practical Schools. We can assume that in some cases the competencies of children can improve over time, even at common basic schools without special assistance.

## **Further education of teachers, transfer of knowledge, and fusions of schools**

The educational system currently in place at the faculties of education does not put enough emphasis on obtaining competencies in working with children with special educational needs, as the existing curriculum has been based on the fact that these very pupils will be taught by specialists. The policy of inclusive education may require a change in such an opinion and is more demanding as regards the pedagogical competencies of all teachers. The enhancement of teachers' abilities to educate children with specific needs can be supported by these changes in curricula at the faculties of education, in order to create enough space for them to acquire these competences.

A greater dilemma occurs in the case of those teachers who have already finished their university studies. Here, an opportunity exists for making use of the competences of teachers from the Basic Practical Schools, who are able to provide their colleagues with useful advice about how to educate the students who lag behind and need special didactical and psychological approaches in order to improve their school performance. Eventually, the collaboration of teachers from both institutions and a tighter liaison of the organisations as wholes could represent a path towards better and durable practices of inclusion and integration of socially-culturally disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs. Another advantage of this measure, aside from the better collaboration of the educational institutions, is that the practices of integration and social rehabilitation co-realised by Practical schools would foster a better image and higher levels of trust in Practical schools and their work methods. This is important in light of the fact that there have been some declarations suggesting the closure of all Basic Practical Schools. Understandably, the teachers from these schools feel threatened and underestimated. If this was to be enforced, it would definitely be worth considering the idea of integrating those teachers into the larger educational body as needed professionals.

## Enhancing legitimacy and mainstreaming

As indicated above, a feeling of social distance, together with the xenophobic or even racist attitudes toward Roma, characterises daily life in the Czech Republic. Thus, the problematic status of the Roma minority appears to complicate the implementation of a policy of inclusive education and the reduction of inequalities in the educational system that takes public resistance for granted. It is worth pointing out that, above all, this inclusive agenda was initiated in response to external pressures from international institutions and NGOs – neither the Ministry of Education nor pedagogues or academic experts were the primary initiators of change. Moreover, after accepting the first concept and planning other measures, a certain decline in interest occurred after a new minister settled into office, and this agenda is no longer a priority.

It is difficult to imagine that any new measures can be introduced successfully if they lack the necessary support and legitimacy. The lack of legitimacy seems to be critical, especially in the case of teachers. Thus, measures of inclusive education should be accompanied by an endeavour to garner their support. It is not only the successive change in the attitude of the majority to Roma that is important, but it is also imperative to persuade teachers about the benefits of such a change. In addition, it is necessary to consider the fact that the Czech educational system has been continuously reformed over the last 20 years, and very often these reforms have been incomplete. Therefore, the policy of inclusive education may be perceived as another set of useless obligations that do not solve anything.

Further, we have indicated that the inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the Czech educational system depends on the conduct and attitudes of parents, and according to our findings, the "white-flight" phenomenon (children from majority families leave schools when the number of minority children increases) is significant. For this reason, we should consider enforcing measures that can positively influence the cultivation of civic solidarity with marginalised out-groups such as the Roma over the long term. This discourse is typical mostly for the NGOs involved in creating a more general, eventually civic view on the inclusiveness of society, which would bring about benefits for everybody. They endeavour to show and persuade that the benefits of inclusive education are profitable and salubrious for all participants and for society as a whole. It should be taken into consideration to set up grant schemes for NGOs to fund their work with media outlets (providing them with information and stimulating public debate). At present, it is still very common for the media to spread bias and stereotypes when it comes to Roma (as well as with other ethnic groups and immigrants). In short, it is hardly possible to change the *functioning* of the school system in a desirable way without mainstreaming the leading ideas and rationality of the reasons for change.

## Examples of good practices

### *Centres for Inclusive Education (CPIV)*

Centres for Inclusive Education (CPIV) were founded by the Ministry of Education and the Institute for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling (IPPP) in order to cooperate with the directors of schools and enter into the endeavour by creating the conditions that furnish adequate education according to the possibilities of the pupils. The main tasks of the organisation include tracking pupils and setting up the right to equal access of education for those who need supportive measures in learning. The activities of the centres focus on the agency of schools, teachers, and other pedagogical employees. The target group is children with specific leaning/educational needs. The CPIV were created at the central level, but act relatively autonomously at the regional level, in so-called districts.<sup>45</sup> Participation in the project is voluntary and the schools themselves define what they consider to be the major problems they face and would like to resolve. Subsequently, the CPIV team, in cooperation with different professionals and invited consultants, sets up a particular plan, consisting of training and counselling that is provided to the pedagogical employees. Therefore, the strategy of the CPIV is primarily the work with the teachers and their teaching methods, which are expected to procedurally offer the benefits of better performance, well-being, and inclusion for children with special educational needs or at a social/cultural disadvantage. In their conception, no particular ethnic, national, or social group is explicitly targeted: "The inclusion is expected to cover everybody". Employees of the organisation consider the platform beneficial for schools that are willing to face and deal with their problems, which might not always be the case, according to their experience. This can lead us to reflect upon a better system of motivation for schools, which would stimulate educational institutions to participate and implement similar projects. This could include, for instance, a form of extra salary remuneration for the teachers who take charge of such an initiative.

The CPIV project is intended to continue until 2012, if it is not prolonged. But losing an already coordinated and relatively experienced team at the scale of the region is wasteful, and they could prospectively transform into an agency for the oversight and inspection of the above-mentioned practices. As an inspecting institution in charge, they should act primarily as supervisors and counsellors. Moreover, the position of the institution may be considered advantageous for this role because of the following reasons: the CPIV have a foundational interconnection with the government and the central administration of the Ministry of Education. This also includes the legitimacy to suggest non-committal proposals on legislative changes in the field of education. A good communication with the relevant nongovernmental actors (offices, counselling centres, etc.) might help to facilitate the communication between the stakeholders and contribute to harmonising the encounter of their needs. Homogenisation of the system of evaluation of educational outcomes would certainly be a welcomed measure as well.

<sup>45</sup> In the Czech Republic, there are fourteen districts in total and CPIV have bases in nine of them. They enter into cooperation with fifteen schools annually.

Nowadays, each school is obliged to provide its own evaluation of the education it provides, but each of them does so on an individual basis. Consequently, the results are scattered and impossible to compare or process statistically.

### *'Community schools'*

Teachers working with children who come from socially or culturally disadvantaged environments frequently report difficult and/or insufficient cooperation with their parents. An inspiring idea regarding this topic can be found in converting and extending the schools into *community centres*. A few basic schools as well as some nursery schools have put this into practice.

The principle aim is to underpin the local community and to support its development and its own resources in various aspects. The space of the school serves in this context as a natural centre for information, encounters, and events. Most of the activities are centred upon children, schooling, and after-school activities. Children visiting the school bring in their younger or older siblings, and eventually their parents, simultaneously serving as a way to get to know the needs of the community and potentially to create important social bonds. The community centre can tailor its functioning to the specific exigencies of the community – for instance, by organising different kinds of relevant discussions, workshops, performances, etc. These activities can take place strictly at the local level and on the condition of intensive agency and motivation on behalf of the crucial actors. Besides pedagogical employees, assistance is also needed from the side of social workers, supervisors, and other professionals. In cases where the endeavour is successful, the organisational charge could eventually be transferred to various people coming directly from the community. Consequently, the community school type can become an attractive, open place, furnishing useful information about the needs of the community and its surroundings and fostering a positive image in the public's mind, which could also facilitate communication at the school level from both sides. Unfortunately, evaluation of the impact and functioning of those schools still has not yet been elaborated.

### *Integration programmes*

Some schools and NGOs have tried to change the impact of the exclusionary functioning of the Czech educational system through programmes for integration, that is, the transfer of Roma children from Basic Practical schools to standard ones. The programmes/projects are based on an individual approach. Mostly, teachers choose talented children whose families are addressed with the offer of being involved in a programme. In the case when the family agrees, a period with varying length (from one to several years) commences while the pupil is prepared for entering a more demanding school. The assistance usually continues for a certain period after the transfer.

As the main issue in the Czech Republic is the segregation of Roma pupils into substandard specialised schools for mentally handicapped pupils, a number of integration programmes are actually



based on the transfer between schools with high proportions of Roma pupils. This practice is due to obstacles stemming from the reluctance of many "non-Roma schools" to educate Roma – mainly because of the aversion of parents from the majority ethnic group. Many schools are also discouraged by the amount of effort needed to establish specific supportive programmes for some transferred pupils to assist them during the process and sometimes after the integration. In other words, the term "re-integration" (see footnote 41) is conceived, first of all, as a change of school, but not as an ethnic desegregation strategy. Exact numbers are not at our disposal, but it seems that only a few facilities go beyond this narrow notion and try to transfer selected pupils to schools with non-Roma majorities. To conclude, integration strategies are not widespread, as they are quite demanding, and participation in those kinds of projects, for both sending and receiving schools, is based only on the good will and enthusiasm of teachers and headmasters.

## **Conclusion**

In the above account, we have presented the major contours of Czech public discourse related to the issue of minority education and the problems of ethnic minorities in general, and after summarising the major findings stemming from the Czech EDUMIGROM research, we have suggested a set of policy recommendations aimed at the problems in question. In the last part, we have primarily focused on educational policies and programs, with the view that the goal of improving educational and life chances of Roma youth is a complex task requiring a coordinated action not only of different sorts of actors, but also policies oriented at a much broader range of factors and areas. Any advancement in designing the educational system will only have a limited impact in the case of children who live in deprived neighbourhoods and in almost daily contact with petty crime, alcoholism, drug abuse, and sometimes violence, sharing small cramped apartments without any private space or a desk where to do homework. Relatively widespread unemployment and poverty in such neighbourhoods may also exert negative effects on pupils' performance at school, like when their families have other priorities than providing them with any tools, books, or learning equipment beyond the most basic provisions supplied by the schools. Such an environment easily socialises children into a world in which unemployment is perceived almost as a normal state of affairs, leading young people to an early resignation regarding their educational and career achievements, while also unfavourably shaping the daily routine away from regular learning and assisted preparation for school.

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## DENMARK

**Bolette Moldenhawer and Marta Padovan-Özdemir**

This policy brief will discuss on an introductory level how ethnic categorisations are produced in public and political discourse concerning educational inequalities in Danish society. Taking as its point of departure this discursive framework, the paper seeks to illuminate how public and political discourse on ethnic minorities influences the administrative and pedagogical responses to ethnically diverse schools and educational inequalities between minority and majority students. Summarising the Danish country-based findings from quantitative and qualitative studies within the EDUMIGROM research project, this paper contributes with new perspectives on schooling and life strategies of ethnic minority youth in the everyday context of interethnic relations at ethnically diverse schools. In conclusion, we offer policy recommendations based on our research findings and knowledge of best practice.

## **Framing of public and political discourse in Danish society**

The popular use of "ethnicity" in Danish public and political discourse is closely related to the historical process of labour migration from third world countries since the 1960s (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 5–9). This immigration's demographic effects on Danish society are today still being presented as something rather new, hence the discursive and statistic maintenance and reinterpretations of the term immigrant (in Danish: *indvandrere*). This imagined "newness" of immigration might be explained as a result of a continuous political effort to maintain a monocultural definition and understanding of Danish society (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010). In the beginning of this historical period immigrants were termed guest workers and thus expected to leave the country after a limited period of time. However, many of them settled and reunited their families in Denmark. Children of these immigrants were born and raised and are now termed descendants or second/third generation immigrants.

The categorisations above still find resonance in the present public and political discourse. However, in the course of the last 20 years "ethnicity" has become a widespread concept for categorising immigrants and their descendants originating from southern Europe and/or third world countries, thus represented as "people with another ethnic background than Danish" (in Danish: *folk med anden etnisk baggrund end dansk*) and/or "ethnics" (in Danish: *etnikker*). Within the last ten years categorisations as "bilinguals" (in Danish: *tosprogede*) and "New Danes" (in Danish: *Nydanskere*) have appeared side by side with the ethnic categorisation as attempts at both political correctness and strategies of inclusion.

The category of *ethnic minorities* seems to be delimited to anthropologic, sociological, political, and educational research on immigration, though the category of ethnic minorities is used publicly and politically in relation to the German minority in southern Denmark holding special cultural and educational rights, opposed to other ethnic minorities residing in Denmark.

When assessing "ethnicity" in Danish public and political discourses, the perspective of

equality seems to present further explanatory value. This is perhaps due to the equality mindset deeply inherent in the Danish welfare state that is built on social rights not least after the implementation of comprehensive social political reforms during the period of 1969–1974 (Jønsson and Petersen 2010: 147). Due to its historical development in an ethnically rather homogenous Danish context, the interpretations and applications of the concept of equality have had an implicit understanding of the target groups of societal care to be of Danish ethnic origin – that is Danish citizens. This implicit understanding of those less advantageous who are supposed to be equal to the rest of "us" are already part of "us" – the ethnic majority. Hence, it could be argued that the process of promoting equality in a Danish context has historically been interpreted as the process of making people *the same* – ethnically and socially (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 31, Buchardt, Kampmann, and Moldenhawer 2006).

When understanding the use of "ethnicity" in Danish public and political discourse from the perspective of equality, one must understand that "ethnicity" appears to be a "disturbing" category for the promotion of equality, exactly because the target groups of equalising interventions are historically and socio-economically categorised yet share the same ethnic background as the majority. The socially deprived ethnic Danes are, so to speak, already in advance of a potential social intervention recognised as a legitimate part of society and therefore entitled to social benefits and interventions. In principle, ethnic minorities hold the same rights of the welfare system as do the ethnic majority, but in public and political discourse there seems to appear a general mistrust of these principal rights of ethnic minorities, since they are not like "us" – the ethnic majority.

Social equality being an inherent universal right within and goal of the Danish welfare state, the public and political discourses seem somehow to be less prone to the European Union discourse of recognition and rights of ethnic minorities (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010). This might be explained as an effect of the universalism of social equality, of which the ethnic "sameness" is taken for granted (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 31).

The above attempt of a historical contextualisation of "ethnicity" in Danish public and political discourse hopefully illuminates why there seems to be an intriguing intersection between social categorisations and ethnic categorisations when speaking about the promotion of equality. Hence, the public and political discourse seems to reflect a constant commuting between social and ethnic categorisations and understandings of the less advantageous. For this reason there seems to be a tendency in Danish public and political discourse that people from the socially deprived segments of the majority, to a larger extent than ethnic minorities, are made legitimate receivers of social care and welfare benefits, whereas ethnic minorities' social deprivation is mistrusted and usually explained in essentialist cultural terms. Jöhncke even argues that equality actualised as "sameness" is a fundamental productive imaginary for the formation of the Danish – and even Scandinavian – welfare state (Jöhncke 2007: 37, 49).

There are of course counter discourses which advocates a multicultural "rights and recognition" approach in order to even the educational gap between ethnic minority students and ethnic majority

students (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010: 145–50). Nevertheless, these multicultural positions are primarily confined to critical research and alternative practices, which seems to be excluded from policy making (Kristjansdottir and Timm 2007).

The general public and political discourse on ethnic differences in education appear, so to say, as a monocultural position that interprets equality as "sameness" and thereby promotes an assimilationist approach that must compensate for ethnic minority students' supposed lack of Danish cultural knowledge and Danish language competencies. The monocultural position, so to speak, constructs the ethnically diverse school as an *a priori* societal problem due to its concentration of ethnic minority students. This becomes the predominant explanatory framework for understanding the educational underachievement of ethnic minority students, and thereby also the basis for administrative and pedagogical intervention.

These interventions take the form of compensatory approaches, in which schools with a substantial number of ethnic minority students (25 per cent appears to be a "magic" number) are economically compensated with the allocation of extra resources. In recent years many of such schools have embarked on major image make-over projects in order to attract and sustain ethnic majority students. Such development projects have appeared under the headings of "magnet schools" (in Danish: Magnetskoler) and "championship schools" (in Danish: Spydspidsskoler) branding themselves with special school profiles<sup>46</sup> focusing on creativity, sports, high academic standards, etc. (Københavns Kommune 2006). Many of these schools are at the same time also promoting themselves as "7-11 schools", that is, whole-day, 16-hour schools (in Danish: Haldagsskoler), a school model, in which students attend school for eight to sixteen hours a day, supposedly keeping the "exposed" ethnic minority students off the streets and out of deprived homes while engaging them in healthy activities at school.

It should be noted in this context that all these interventions concerning the ethnically diverse school are not talked about in terms of ethnicity. Rather, the ethnic category is reinterpreted in the form of the bilingual category (Thomsen, Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2010: 3).

It could be argued that speaking of bilingual students instead of ethnic minority students has paved the way for the interventions mentioned above. Not least, it has paved the way for the relocations (dispersion or bussing) of many ethnic minority students having a "not unimportant need for 'Danish as a Second Language' training" that supposedly could be compensated for by attending schools with smaller concentrations of ethnic minority students. Furthermore, it could be argued that relocation of ethnic minority students on the basis of language deficits dismantles accusations of discrimination.

Within these compensatory restructurings of the ethnically diverse schools, there appears to be a substantial focus on the responsibilities and obligations of the ethnic minority parents in supporting their children's performance in school. Recently, there have been major investments in supplementary training of teachers in dealing with school–parent partnerships. Additionally, parental classes have been established in order to introduce ethnic minority parents to the proper ways of supporting their children in school.

46 Available online: <http://www.tosprogede.kk.dk/Folkeskolen/Koebenhavnermodellen.aspx>

In summary, there seems to be a problem-oriented way of categorising and dealing with ethnic minority students, which according to Horst and Gitz-Johansen (2010) presents *"the issue of ethnic diversity and ethnic underachievement in education as a question of minority children and their families lacking cultural, social and linguistic resources or, in other words, the deprivation paradigm"* (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010: 147).

Assessing the category of ethnicity in Danish public and political discourse illuminates how the ethnic "other" and/or ethnic minority is constructed as a problematic issue when speaking of equality in education and in society as such. In this discourse ethnicity becomes associated with the constructions of "the dangerous radical Muslim", "the leeching unemployed immigrant", and/or "the suppressed immigrant woman" feeding the deprivation paradigm with mythical figures (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008).

Hence, approaching the process of integration as something a priori problematic accentuates the assimilatory interventions in the promotion of equality in the welfare society with reference to securing social cohesion (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008). In addition, when promoting the examples of successful integration of ethnic minorities, it is often within the vocabulary use of terms such as the "quiet" integration or the "invisible" integration of educated and/or employed self-sustaining immigrants<sup>47</sup> (Pedersen and Rytter 2006). Such a vocabulary for the supposedly successful integration of ethnic minorities accentuates and sustains both the "workfare" approach (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008) to integration and the category of the problematised ethnic "other".

## **Main findings of the Danish EDUMIGROM reserach and their new contributions**

The aim of the Danish country-based EDUMIGROM research on ethnic differences in education has been to illuminate how social, gendered, and ethnic categorisations intersect, and how this complexity appears in educational strategies and identity formation processes of ethnic minority youth in lower secondary schools.

The empirical study consists of a quantitative survey conducted in the eighth and ninth grades of seven schools in two different areas in the city of Copenhagen, in which a total of 392 students filled in questionnaires, supplemented with school and teacher questionnaires. The two areas were chosen due to their large proportions of ethnic minority populations (above the Danish average). Moreover, the selection of the two areas was connected to the fact that the municipality of Copenhagen has targeted both areas for special educational interventions due to the high concentrations of ethnic minorities in order to promote equality in education outcomes, social cohesion, and interethnic stability.

47 Available online: <http://www.kvinfo.dk/side/539/?personId=21>

As an effect of the high ethnic diversification rate in the two areas the study has been forced to operate with rather pragmatic ethnic groupings of Pakistani, Turkish/Kurdish, and Middle Eastern groups. In order to ensure statistical significance in cross-tabulations with these ethnic groupings, we have neglected a more detailed ethnic categorisation. The same ethnic diversity of the numerically limited ethnographic sample inhibits the significance of the selected visible minority groups in the qualitative part of the study. Thus, it has been difficult to qualify one group of ethnic minorities to be more integrated or separated than others (Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010: 57).

The quantitative survey study of the seven selected schools has presented insightful knowledge of correlations between socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity. Moreover, it has functioned as a mapping of the landscape of selected schools in order to inform the selection of two schools for further ethnographic field study.

The two selected schools are located in the same area, but divided by two rather distinct neighbourhoods of different socio-economic and ethnic compositions.

*These differences are further reflected in the very different levels of public and political attention paid to the two areas. Whereas Belleview seems to receive very limited public and political attention, Fraser is often characterised as a ghetto and as an area dominated by lack of integration into the Danish society (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 11).*

Fifty per cent of Belleview School's student body is from an ethnic minority background, whereas 90 per cent of Fraser School's student body is from an ethnic minority background.

Though interethnic relations have been a key research interest, this part of the ethnographic inquiry has been limited by the fact that only *two* students out of the entire student sample had an ethnic Danish background. In addition, it is worthwhile noting that the ethnographic investigation of interethnic relations has been delimited further by the short period of observations inside and outside school.

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations of the investigation, we find that new and complex perspectives on ethnic differences in education have been gained due to the fundamental understanding of the intersectionality of socio-economic, gendered, and ethnic categories. Hitherto, in an analytical perspective it has been fruitful to operate with "ethnicity" "as '*a plastic and changing badge of membership which is located in wider set of linked identities*'" (Ball 2006, cited in Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010: 5). This conceptualisation of "ethnicity" has enabled us to analytically grasp the complexities of ethnic differentiation as it appears in the narratives of the ethnic minority students, teachers, and ethnic minority parents. Since the process of migration can be said to represent a fundamental life condition for visible minority groups in Denmark, we have found useful inspiration in Abdelmalek Sayad's (1999 and 2004) conceptualisation "of migrants whom he characterises as agents of simultaneously emigration and immigration" (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 6). Identity formation processes of ethnic minority youth is hence to be understood as constant processes of coming to terms with one's history of emigration



and immigration. This conceptualisation of ethnicity and migration counters immigrant, state-centred research on migrants and ethnic minorities.

The key findings of the quantitative and qualitative studies will be presented and discussed below, and then related to existing research on ethnic differences in education.

The quantitative study clearly confirms earlier research on the matter of the correlation between parents' levels of education and socio-economic status and student performance in school. The lower the level of education and socio-economic status is in the family, the lower academic performance of the student, regardless of ethnic background. Ethnic minority families primarily being of lower socio-economic status, it is evident that ethnic minority students score lower in school than their ethnic majority peers. When elaborating further on the category of gender, it appears that ethnic majority girls receive the highest grades, whereas ethnic minority boys receive the lowest. This confirms earlier and present research often explaining this pattern as a result of female gendered socialisation processes being more adaptive to the education system (Jakobsen and Liversage 2010: 49–51). This explanation may additionally be qualified by our qualitative teacher interviews, where they often explain the ethnic category in gendered terms differentiating between "the quiet hard-working ethnic minority girl" and "the misbehaving Muslim boy" (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 33; Gilliam 2010). Nevertheless, our data show that minority boys from lower-status families report that they get higher grades than majority boys from the same social position.

All students aspire across ethnic and socio-economic differences for upward mobility by means of education. Our quantitative data set even shows that "minority students aim for a white-collar job to a higher degree than majority students – despite their parents' lower average education level" (Thomsen et al. 2010: 63). One might argue that this runs contrary to the evidence of a performance gap between ethnic minority and majority students. The teachers, on the other hand, speak of the too-high ambitions among ethnic minority students and their parents. We, on the other hand, would like to pose the question for further inquiry: namely, where does minority students' extended trust in the educational system come from? Our data might suggest a tentative answer to this question, that being, that the political discourse of "workfare" has been internalised by the minority students to such a degree that it shapes their life strategies. Even the minority students most reluctant to cooperate at school express an understanding of the importance of schooling, if not for appreciating knowledge but feeling safe and protected against crime (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 56).

Education and crime – being a vocalised binary pair in the above example and echoed in most of the interviews with ethnic minority students, their parents, and even teachers – confirms the reproduction of the public and political discourse problematising the ethnic minority category in terms of associating it with crime, violence, unemployment, etc. – in other words, all that is excluded from the norm of the workfare paradigm. The ethnic minority students show a lucid awareness of this workfare discourse and, as said before, internalise it in the form aspiring for the ideal of an educated immigrant.

*Although both parents and children think of themselves as different from ethnic Danes, we conclude that neither students nor parents explain their positioning in solely victimised terms. Rather, they emphasise the possibilities one has if working hard, and underscore the importance of education as means of social mobility (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 67).*

Thus the ideal of the educated and/or employed immigrant is strongly connected to the idea of free choice and individual responsibility. These presumptions of success being prevalent categories of the knowledge society and workfare paradigm may offer an explanation to why the majority of ethnic minority students aspire for higher education degrees in spite of the fact that some of them receive grades below average (Mørch et al. 2008).

### **Schooling strategies**

In order to understand ethnic minority students' aspirations, attitudes toward, and practices in school, we have found the concept of *strategy* valuable. The analytical avenues of the notion of strategy explore not only the consciousness of students, but just as much their practical knowledge and experiences of what is possible and impossible within their accumulated personal and cultural history (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 25). By this analytical device we have extracted two schooling strategies among ethnic minority students. One is a *strategy of commitment* in which education is an existing tradition within the migrant family. A so-called *committed* student values education itself and presents a rather disciplined approach to schooling, not at least because education is less a means of individual success as it is a dimension of a common family social mobility strategy of the migratory pattern of investment (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26). In opposition, the other strategy is a *strategy of instrumentation*, where education is solely a means of success for the individual student. Though the family presents positive attitudes towards schooling, social relations are valued just as importantly as academic accomplishments, which might be explained by a weaker tradition of education within the family (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26).

In relation to the earlier mentioned public and political discourses on 'the educated immigrant' one might ask if the two schooling strategies should be understood in the theoretical perspective of late modernity, where education and work are understood as projects of individual self-realisation separated from the bonds of family (Mørch et al. 2008: 10-17; Kallstenius et al. 2010: 140). In this perspective, late modern self-realisation often stands in contrast to collective life-forms of migratory background. However, we argue that our use of the analytical category of strategy instead of the socio-psychological category of identity implies a fundamental reflexivity, which is not restricted to only late modern identity formation. Rather, the category of strategy offers an inherent reflexivity of all human practice and decision-making. Perceiving strategy as inherently reflexive implies that the two schooling strategies, though not individualised, are (collectively) reflexive. Hence the identification of the two schooling

strategies offers alternative understandings of ethnic minority youth's identity formation in late modern European knowledge societies (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 65, Mørch et al. 2008).

Nevertheless, when correlating attitudes towards school and future life with socio-economic background and gender our quantitative findings point out that ethnic minority students of higher socio-economic status are more prone to "late modern majority" values, that is, living in nuclear families. Whereas ethnic minority boys are more likely to prefer a life within 'traditional' extended families, etc. (Thomsen et al. 2010: 69).

However, our qualitative findings suggest a much more complex understanding of ethnic minority students' life strategies. When combining the students' school strategies with their identity strategies (see below) from the perspective of intersecting social, gendered, and ethnic categories the students seem to perform an adaptation to a late-modern Danish knowledge society, nonetheless, proactively (re-)positioning their ethnic othered and migratory identities (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26, footnote 35). Thus, we believe that our analytical integration of the category of inherently reflexive strategy and theoretical understanding of migrants as agents of simultaneous emigration and immigration challenges the general immigrant state centred approach of socio-psychological investigations of identity formation and integration processes among ethnic minority youth in late-modern Europe (Mørch et al. 2008, Alsmark et al. 2007). Our findings, so to speak, suggest alternative identity configurations and processes of adaptation among ethnic minority and migrant youth in Europe.

Our identification of ethnic minority students' non-assimilative adaptation to Danish society may also offer an explanation to why our data sets do not suggest any clear strategy of opposition, as both the Danish scholar Laura Gilliam (2010) and other country-specific investigations of the EDUMIGROM project (Schiff, Messing, Moldenhawer and Kostlán 2010: 21–31) find among ethnic minority students (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 36). "*[A]ll students strongly insist on being part of the majority society with equal rights and to some degree equal opportunities. (...) [Nevertheless] most students acknowledge that they are and also perceive themselves as ethnic minority*" (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 60).

## Identity strategies

Together with the two schooling strategies we have identified three strategies of identity among ethnic minority students. In the following paragraphs we will first present them individually and then discuss them in relation to their intersection with schooling strategies and categories of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, and migration.

The identity strategy of *ethnic pride* presents itself in the form of the student's nurturing of close relationships with their parents, extended family, and the wider ethnic community in Denmark and abroad. However, this does not mean that students with the identity of ethnic pride alienate themselves from the Danish society. The second strategy of identity is termed *reflexive ethnicity*, and thereby

characterised by an adherence to a cultural diversity that perceives mixed ethnic identity affiliations as an advantage. This identity strategy also displays a positive attitude towards the values of the workfare paradigm and the knowledge society. Third, we have identified an identity strategy of *downplaying ethnicity*. This last strategy is displayed as a distance towards ethnic identification. Instead, it promotes mixed ethnic/immigrant identities that are converted into subcultural and locally-anchored identities (i.e., "hip hop"/"gangster" – attitudes). This identity strategy seems to be produced due to a general feeling of not being accepted as an immigrant by the majority society and in opposition to society outside the subcultural arena (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 42–47).

These three identity strategies point to the ethnic minority students' overall understanding of "ethnicity" as something positive and advantageous. But when associated with the immigrant category, "ethnicity" becomes a burden and a label of failure and disintegration. From the perspective of the students' non-assimilative schooling and identity strategies, our findings display a desire among the students to escape the logic of exclusion learned and experienced by their parents – but even more important, they consciously are making an effort to escape the general stereotyping of "the immigrant on the dole." This stereotype can be said to be constructed on the grounds of the deprivation paradigm.

In contrast to ethnic minority students' general positive perceptions of "ethnicity," teachers explain this ethnic attachment as a result of the students' lack of rootedness in Denmark. Teachers try to compensate this supposed deficit by explaining to the students "what they really are" (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 34, citing a teacher). This example of negotiations of the ethnic category suggests that the teachers reproduce the discourse of deprivation, hence understanding successful integration as becoming "the same" (as the ethnic Danes).

The above negotiations between teachers and ethnic minority students may offer an explanatory framework for understanding why it appears in our quantitative findings that students of a mixed minority-majority identity feel twice as good in school as students identifying with only one ethnic identity (Thomsenet al. 2010: 72). Namely, it could be that mixed identity students simply find it easier to navigate in relation to teachers as well as in relation to their peers of different ethnic backgrounds, and thus display a general feeling of recognition and safety in school. These findings find resonance in earlier research on immigrant transformation processes (Mørck 1998; Røgilds 1995, Lindholm and Vinderskov 1997) that suggest hybrid identity formations among ethnic minorities. This empirical hybridity challenges the assimilationist understanding of adaptation as an "either-or" position. Instead, it suggests a "both-and" position, in which ethnic minority students can feel strong attachments, for example, to the Pakistani ethnic community, and yet appreciate the value of education and employment (Moldenhawer forthcoming: 10). These findings may perhaps disturb the traditional majority/minority dichotomy and pave the way for further investigations into new and complex "ethnic" differentiations (Thomsen et al. 2010: 72).

As mentioned earlier, the correlations between and intersections of schooling strategies, identity strategies, and gender point further to the investigation of these "novel ethnic" differentiations

in education. From this pattern of schooling strategies, identity strategies, and gender we may extract three configurations of ethnic minority students' strategic practices in school.

The first configuration displays ethnic minority girls who are *committed* to schoolwork and represent either a reflexive ethnicity or an ethnic pride identity strategy. The fact that these girls do well in school is explained in popular terms as a result of a rather disciplined and traditional upbringing, by which ethnic minority (read Muslim) parents try to keep their daughters away from "Danish" leisure activities, etc., preparing them for marriage. However, the girls interviewed strongly emphasise their strategic use of various ways of negotiating expectations and (re)construction of ethnic identities that combine an adherence to traditional as well as modern values and educational goals (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 62).

The second configuration shows evidence of a male gendered relation between a schooling strategy of commitment and an identity of downplaying ethnicity. These ethnic minority boys do well in school, but feel rather burdened with the troublesome categorisation of the "criminal trouble-making immigrant." In order to escape this negative categorisation, they downplay their individual ethnic backgrounds, replacing it with a mixed minority identity turning the problematised "immigrant" category upside-down. They, so to speak, reinvent the immigrant category in a positive subcultural youth strategy of empowerment among interethnic minority peers. Yet they feel a need to be a step ahead of the Danes in regards to academic performance in order to escape the aforementioned exclusionary categorisations of the troublesome (male) immigrant (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 63). As such this points to ethnic minority students' continuous negotiations and reinterpretations of possible and impossible categorisations of "the immigrant" and/or "the ethnic othered" in regards to the minority students' positioning in- and outside school.

The third configuration includes both boys and girls, who display an *instrumental* approach to schooling by putting more effort in sustaining their social relations within the ethnic community, and thereby showing an ethnic pride identity strategy. These students often do poorer in school due to little educational capital in the family. However, they seem to take advantage of close relations to the family and larger ethnic community, inasmuch as the boys seem to find potential employment in family businesses, if failing at school. The girls, however, do not seem to have this opportunity, and therefore are more at the mercy of the school system's selection processes.

In summary, our findings point to ethnic minority students' general positive understanding of "ethnicity" when it comes to matters of identity, however, sharply distancing the "ethnic" category from the negatively loaded immigrant category. Nevertheless, when "ethnicity" in the form of "bilingualism" appears in academic matters, it is valued negatively by the students. This is further sustained by the teachers' vocalisation of "ethnicity" in terms of language deficits and a limited horizon among the ethnic minority students. Interestingly, the teachers do not perceive "ethnicity" to matter inside of school, which they describe as an educational institution of inclusive pedagogy with almost non-existent conflicts with ethnic connotations (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 32–37).

## Zones of exception

The same understanding of the school as a place where ethnicity does not matter is to be found among the ethnic minority students as well. Except, as mentioned before, when it comes to understanding hindrances to academic achievement.

Hitherto, our quantitative findings show evidence of a high level of interethnic interaction among the students that may challenge dominant views on ethnically segregated peer-cultures in ethnically diverse classroom practices and school life (Thomsen et al. 2010: 72). Correlating the level of interethnic interaction with the socio-economic and gendered categories, we find that girls interact more than boys, and boys with a socially higher status interact the least. Furthermore, minority students prove to have a higher level of interethnic interaction than average. This being said, interethnic interaction among minority students might include majority students to a lesser degree, hence pointing to a high level of interethnic interaction among ethnic minority students exclusively.

Though some ethnic minority students tell of interethnic interaction outside of school, primarily in connection with sports activities, it is our impression that the school stands out as a *zone of exception*. By this, we suggest that the ethnically diverse school may be understood as a sanctuary from the negative representations of ethnic minorities in public and political discourses, especially when it comes to social interaction and social well-being of the students (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 57). However, when considering the question of "ethnicity" in relation to academic performance, the zone of exception dissolves and the deprivation paradigm comes into play.

Thus, we see the teachers commute between a "colour-blind" inclusive pedagogy, at the same time explaining academic difficulties with reference to nationalised ethnic categorisations supplemented by socio-economic categorisations. Hitherto, the ethnic minority students seem to commute between positive ethnic identifications and internalisations of public discourse on the quiet but successful self-responsible minority student, on the one hand, and the experience of othering along the borders of residential areas accentuated by the forceful dichotomy of the immigrant category versus the native category, on the other hand.

Following in the footsteps of the presumption of schools being shaped by the communities where they are embedded (Szalai et al. 2010: 3), our findings have shown a strong localisation of the "ethnic" category, in which the residential area becomes the main distinction of belonging for ethnic minority students – and hence dismal prospects for academic success and future "integration." At the same time, the content of this distinction is not entirely negative: it implies complex strategies of identity that simultaneously belong to a certain neighbourhood and long for something else – outside the "ghetto." Thus, the notion of the school as a zone of exception becomes intensified when speaking of a school situated in a so-called ghetto area, as is Fraser school in opposition to Belleview school.

The notion of simultaneous belonging and longing further complicates the investigation of ethnic

differentiations in stigmatised schools with high concentrations of ethnic minority students. The fact that our research samples consist of both Muslim independent schools and public schools with different concentration levels of ethnic minority students has not proven a straightforward correlation between high concentrations of ethnic minority students and low academic performance. However, we do tentatively suggest a correlation between high concentrations of ethnic minority students and a general feeling of safety and recognition among the students. Therefore, it might to some extent be through the strong self-esteem that is cultivated in Muslim independent schools, which are characterised by "voluntary" segregation and a student body from upper-status families. Hence, the question is whether it is feasible to operate with a distinction between "voluntary" and "involuntary" segregation – the argument being that segregation is a structural factor and not reducible to subjective accounts of voluntary/involuntary actions (Thomsen et al. 2010: 65–73). In her transnational study of a Pakistani independent school in Copenhagen, Marta Padovan-Özdemir (2010) points to a possible critique of understanding segregated schools in victimised and disintegrated terms. We should rather understand segregated schools and their catchment areas in the perspective of their interdependence with and strategic positioning to the surrounding society, state policies, and transnational networks (Padovan-Özdemir 2010). This might be true for Muslim schools established by the community, but hardly holds for the schools that became segregated due to the processes of exclusion and marginalisation of ethnic minorities.

In addition, we would like to raise in this discussion whether the performance gap between majority and minority students should be explained in terms of the concentration rate of ethnic minority students, and whether on that basis it should lead to political interventions in the shape of compensatory language stimulation and relocation of ethnic minority students (Kampmann 2003: 111)? We might ask the question where such an explanatory framework and its interventions leave the competencies and influence of teachers and school managers.

In conclusion, we argue that the inquiry of ethnic differentiation in education cannot be understood solely in terms of "ethnicity" as a pure independent category. Ethnic differentiation in education is rather to be investigated as processes of inclusions and exclusions in and through different political, economic, and social arenas on global as well as local levels (Alsmark et al. 2007).

### **Suggestions for future inquiries**

The key findings from our quantitative and qualitative investigations of ethnic differentiation in education in Denmark point to the need to challenge immigrant, state-centred research on migrants and ethnic minorities. Hence, we suggest further research on how ethnic differentiation is produced through the discourses and practices of the welfare state system. Hitherto, we stress the importance of understanding the welfare immigrant state responses to its immigrant population from the perspective

of its transnational relations to emigrant states (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 44). In this vein, we emphasise the resurgent need for exploring the migrant category in its transnational social, economic, and political relations in order to embrace the complexities of ethnic differentiation in education, and in society as such.

The transnational perspective further highlights the importance of critical education research, which is able to feed the political system without reproducing popular normative notions of integration as a one-way process of assimilating the culturally deviant migrant. In other words, a research that can problematise naturalised constructions of differentiation along ethnic, gendered, and social lines (Buchardt et al. 2006: 11).

Along the deconstructional work on the production of ethnic, gendered, and social categories, we suggest further longitudinal, comparative inquiry into the educational, social, and family-related pathways of minority vis-à-vis majority students (Thomsen et al. 2010: 38, 71). Such comprehensive research must include vertical as well as horizontal multi-level analyses correlating state policies and public discourses with interethnic relations in everyday life and pedagogical practices in order to understand the (re) production of inequalities. Moreover, the EDUMIGROM research project has proven the strength and fertility of comparative research inasmuch as it challenges empirical as well as analytical/theoretical concepts and categories of the educational subject and educational system/organisation.

As our findings have challenged the popular dichotomy of majority/minority, we see the need for further inquiries into the relations between particular ethnic, gendered, and/or social minorities and the education system, presumably demanding new ways of objectifying the "othered" subject in education (Øland 2007).

## **Policy recommendations**

By a utilisation of our key findings and our framing of the public and political discourse, we address a number of policy recommendations in four major aspects below.

### **Improving education for minority ethnic youth and enhancing their inclusion in education**

Earlier in this summary, we discussed whether to look for explanations of and solutions to the performance gap between ethnic majority and minority students in the concentration level of ethnic minority students. With inspiration from David Gillborn (Institute of Education, University of London), we would recommend to move the focus from the level of ethnic minority concentration to the actual practices of teachers in ethnically diversified classrooms. According to Gillborn, it is not as much a question of equal opportunities



but rather a question of equal performance. The teachers have a responsibility to diminish that gap in performance by turning with equally high expectations to *all* students (Burchardt et al. 2006: 10).

The change of teachers' practices may be supported by extensive supplementary training in the subjects of Danish as a Second Language and Intercultural Pedagogy, supplemented with collegial observation in daily classroom practices.<sup>48</sup> The curriculum of this supplementary training programme encourages teachers and school managers to meet the challenge of mobilising the cultural and linguistic capital of minority ethnic students in order to promote an inclusive teaching and learning context (Kristjánsdóttir and Timm 2007).

On a governmental level we recommend that the above suggested changes may be supported by policies that appreciate diversity and allow people to forge new identities that are recognised and valued on equal terms at school and in wider society. Such policies should be echoed in the national curriculum as well as in local schools' set of values.

However, we do recognise that in order to enhance social cohesion in ethnically diverse schools and in their local districts, it is crucial to reinforce the societal role of the school. We recommend the school to elaborate its cooperation with professionals and voluntary civic organisations outside of school. A good example of such civic cooperation could be the case of the highly ethnically diverse H.C. Andersen School in the municipality of Odense, which characterises itself as a "7-11" offering its free facilities to the disposition of local organisations and initiatives. One of the two selected schools in the Danish community study, Fraser school, is one such similar "whole-day school" (in Danish: *Heldagsskole*). The openness of schools encourages a grounded local commitment to the school, and thereby its students.

Local commitment may be further nourished by a dialogical approach to the development of intercultural school-home partnerships and cooperation. A sustainable intercultural school-home partnership is characterised by mutual recognition, clear alignment of expectations from both parties, awareness of intercultural communication, availability of professional translators, and not least the acknowledgement of the school's/teachers' responsibility for the success of such cooperation (Padovan-Özdemir 2008).

This being said, we emphasise the importance of a radical change in public and political discourse on "immigrants". The forceful discourse of deprivation and integration as "becoming the same" in relation to categories of immigrants and ethnic minorities needs to be challenged by a fundamental recognition of the fluid and strategic character of ethnicity (Moldenhawer forthcoming). Hitherto, we recommend an understanding of migration as a condition of life to some members of society. This way migration is not to be seen as standing in opposition to the national welfare state, but rather to be understood in its interdependent relations to both the immigrant and emigrant state as well as to transnational communities.

48 Available online: <http://www.dettevirker.dk>

## Interethnic relations

Challenging the popular idea of the "ghetto" area/school as being something *a priori* problematic, accentuates the potentiality of voluntary segregation as a way to combat inequality (Buchardt et al. 2006: 13), as has been shown earlier in this summary with the example of Muslim independent schools.

However, we do not suggest ethnically segregated and socially exposed residential areas and schools be left on their own. They are still to be recognised and included as a community within the wider community and society. Such recognition and inclusion presupposes a fundamental understanding of the diversity within these targeted areas and educational institutions and their potential contribution to wider society.

With reference to the countrywide social, cultural, and environmental interventions in socially exposed residential areas around the municipalities of Denmark under the headings of "Neighbourhood Boosting" (in Danish: Kvarterløft) and "Area Rejuvenation" (in Danish: Områdefornyelse),<sup>49</sup> we recommend to sustain and further develop this work in the spirit of civic inclusion. Though the aforementioned residential area interventions all stem from a governmental level, they are inherently executed in terms of a bottom-up approach. In other words, on the local government level the financial funds are allocated and broad political goals are decided for the use of these funds. However, Gl. Valby Area Rejuvenation (part of the municipality of Copenhagen) is a good example of how project managers have invited local inhabitants to participate in the development of ideas on how to spend the funds so that the intervention actually meets the needs of the local people. Furthermore, local inhabitants have been given the opportunity to take part in the actual distribution of funds among different projects.

One such project is the "Project Manager Training" project that offers a course on the management of voluntary projects and that includes intercultural communication skills, networking skills, and basic project management. The overall aim of the project has been to gather local inhabitants from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds to cooperate and create interculturally sustainable social projects that bridge the rather segregated neighbourhoods of Valby in Copenhagen.<sup>50</sup>

This approach stands in strict contradiction to less inclusive interventions in socially exposed residential areas. Such interventions have lately been characterised by subtle relocations of "unwanted" inhabitants – that is, unemployed ethnic minorities – by means of raising rents or evicting whole families on the grounds of one family member's criminal activities.

Activating interethnic relations by means of inclusion instead of exclusionary measures may enhance the feeling of safety and recognition in school that our sample of ethnic minority students display in the area outside of school and in wider society (Moldenhawer forthcoming: 20).

49 Available online: <http://www.kk.dk/Borger/BoligOgByggeri/OmraadebaseredeIindsatser/Omraadefornyelse.aspx>

50 Available online: <http://www.kk.dk/Borger/BoligOgByggeri/ByfornyelseVedligeholdelse/Omraadefornyelse/Valby/HvilkeProjekterErDer/Projektmanagerkursus.aspx>

## **Ethnic inequalities and welfare**

It has been widely acknowledged throughout this paper that the universal welfare state is not a "colour-blind" administration. It is rather a culturally specific system of a certain social order that promotes and sustains an exclusive common "we" in opposition to, that is, the ethnic "other" (Jöhncke 2007: 59). On the basis of this acknowledgement, we recommend a revision of the ethnic categorisations that are constructed in order to explain social inequality in education, since they are inherently "a product of an administrative imaginary of the problematic and culturally deviant immigrant and descendant" (Moldenhawer forthcoming: 229, our translation).

In other words, we pose a challenge to the structural blindness of the welfare system in order to illuminate the inherent inequalities of the national education system as a framework for displaying the difficulties in operationalising multicultural, anti-racist, and/or intercultural values into a pedagogical practice (Buchardt et al. 2006: 11, Kristjánsdóttir and Timm 2007).

## **Minority and general citizens' rights**

Challenging the negative rhetoric of integration spurs the implementation of citizenship education on the educational agenda. The actualisation of citizenship education based on key international human rights conventions delimits the possibility of equating equality with "sameness" (Buchardt et al. 2006: 12). The Danish national curriculum does still not include exclusive citizenship education. This might have to do with a long-standing tradition and self-image that citizenship education is part of all school activities and subjects, and therefore does not need special attention. There is and has been a tendency in Denmark to equate Danish national identity with democracy, leaving those who are rhetorically non-nationals (immigrants and ethnic minorities) outside of the (national) democratic community.

In recent years several development projects in education and ministerial campaigns have been undertaken as a result of the discourse on the "democratically deprived immigrant" and "the radicalised Muslim" (Ministry of Education 2009). Though we do recommend the promotion of citizenship education, we would also criticise the grounds on which citizenship education programs are enacted.

In spite of our critique of the ministerial campaigns in Denmark, we recognise the positive substance of some different public campaigns such as "Democracy Because"<sup>51</sup> and "Co-Citizen"<sup>52</sup>

51 "Democracy Because" is a Danish national education campaign offering lower and upper secondary schools to engage in a joint effort to better understand and communicate democracy and social citizenship. The campaign challenges all students to reflect upon what it means to be a co-citizen in a democratic and inclusive community. The teaching materials cover the themes of rights, responsibility, equality, community, democracy, and participation and the students can participate in a national competition for the most creative expression of democracy. Available online: <http://www.demokratifordi.dk>

52 The "Co-Citizen" project aims at creating a network of researchers, school managers, teachers, and school boards, who can exchange knowledge on the promotion of active citizenship in education. Moreover, the project aims at developing positive

– both of which promote active, social, and inclusive citizenship that appreciates diversity and its contribution to society.

This double-sidedness of the promotion of citizenship points to the need for further inquiries into the relations between political governmental levels of education, public discourse, local educational practices, and the everyday life formations of ethnic minority students and their families. How can we promote inclusive citizenship without stigmatising certain minority groups? How can we close the educational gap between ethnic majority and ethnic minority students without compensating for but rather building upon the cultural and linguistic resources already existing among ethnic minority students? These are the key questions to be answered in future research and future policymaking in relation to ethnic differentiation and educational prospects for urban youth in Denmark and in an enlarged Europe.

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diversity management models and inclusive schools policies. This should be sustained by the development of pedagogical programs to prevent marginalisation of minority students and promote active citizenship and equal participation. Through these programs the students should acquire knowledge of the ideas that the Danish democratic polity is build upon. Based on this knowledge the students are encouraged to make use of the liberties, rights, duties and responsibility they have in regards to the school and the wider society. Available online: <http://www.medborger.net>.

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**FRANCE**

**Claire Schiff**



## **Framing of public and political discourse in French society**

### **Social and ethnic inequalities in the French school system**

The modern French school system was conceived as the means by which the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Republican state was to free its citizens from the influences of religion and to promote a strong national identity and a universal culture capable of "civilising" the children of rural patois-speaking peasants as well as those of the colonised peoples of Africa. This conception of schooling as the process by which children of various backgrounds are to be "transformed" into free and equal citizens of the Republic, explains why French schools traditionally remain impermeable to pressures and influences from civil society, especially those which demand an adaptation of pedagogy and teaching content to the particular cultural or social needs of students.

Until the 1970s, lower-class children were separated from their more privileged peers by age 12 or 13, upon leaving the educational system, or when entering into early vocational training. Social selection essentially operated outside of the school system, by way of the "natural" transmission of parents' social status to their children. Moreover, these children were relatively certain to find stable employment in a booming industrial economy.

With the extension of mandatory schooling to age 16 at the end of the 1950s and the subsequent creation of a unified comprehensive lower secondary school system in 1975, the long-standing culturally unifying function of the French school system was superseded by a more democratic concern for social equality. Indeed, secondary schools, which previously enrolled only the children of the elite and those few representatives of the labouring classes who showed exceptional merit, were henceforth accessible, and even mandatory, for all children. This profound structural reform was not, however, accompanied by substantial changes in the content of the core curriculum and in the organisation of teacher training and allocation. Thus, the problem of how to ensure equal opportunities in education for an entire generation of young people in a system that was initially conceived for the elite became a major issue in national debates, one which successive governments have been forced to grapple with over the past thirty years.

The decades following the creation of comprehensive middle schools witnessed a very substantial rise in youth unemployment (presently over 20 per cent of those aged 15 to 25) and an increase in residential socio-ethnic segregation, particularly in and around the larger metropolitan areas in the country. Persistent inequalities in educational performance, attrition rates, and tracking into vocational or non-vocational high schools still largely coincide with differences in social status and ethnic origin. However, because all students now attend comprehensive middle school and then vocational or non-vocational high school, these differences are increasingly experienced as the result of a form of "hidden" selection and of processes of segregation operating within schools as well as among them.

Inequalities among schools have lasting affects on young peoples' future prospects. France is one of the countries in which academic credentials and titles most strongly determine one's social

and professional trajectory, and conversely, one in which social class, as well as immigrant origin, have a considerable influence on young peoples academic performance (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, and Veretout 2010). The most recent PISA results for France show that inequalities of performance according to both socio-economic status and immigrant origin are quite substantial (OECD 2009). Even after accounting for socio-economic background, the performance gap between students from immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds is about 30 points (OECD 2009: 71). First generation immigrant students' performance levels are particularly low, since over 40 per cent of them are below proficiency level 2 (OECD 2009: 73).

Even though existing studies reveal the existence of ethnic inequalities in education which are not only explained by socio-economic origin, the Republican ideology of colour-blindness and the scarcity of available data on race and ethnicity in France explain why most policy measures aimed at combating inequalities in education and in other domains have traditionally been formulated in reference to social class or residential segregation. Due in large part to pressures from the European Union, the struggle against racial and ethnic discrimination has nonetheless slowly become a governmental concern over the past decade, and several state-sponsored or state-led institutions, such as the Higher Authority Against Discrimination, have been created to combat inequalities of access to the workplace, to housing, and to leisure activities. Still, these efforts remain rather limited and have not been extended to the domain of education, where there exists virtually no measures specifically designed to address the problems encountered by ethnic minority students. The school system is regarded more as an involuntary recipient of the negative effects of discrimination in areas over which it has no jurisdiction or control (housing inequalities, avoidance strategies by parents, discrimination in vocational employment schemes, etc.) rather than as a factor in producing ethnic and racial inequalities. Even when specific policies are developed in response to observations concerning the absence of minority students in the most prestigious educational establishments or with regard to their overrepresentation in certain schools regarded as ethnic "ghettos", these are carefully formulated in a manner which does not point explicitly to the racial and ethnic characteristics of the groups in question, but rather to their "disadvantaged" social status.

Issues concerning the education of ethnic minorities are therefore addressed indirectly through measures aimed at "disadvantaged" youth, in an effort to remediate the obvious disparities between school performance and the careers of children from different socio-economic categories and neighbourhoods. This creates an ambiguous situation in which ethnic minority youth are at one and the same time absent from the public policy agenda on education and omnipresent in the sense that they embody, in public opinion, the media, as well as in most public discourse, the stereotype of marginalised urban youth considered to be such a threat to France's social equilibrium, particularly since the violent urban outbursts of November 2005. While problems facing school personnel, such as in-school violence, early dropouts, disrespect for authority, or tensions between the sexes, are often implicitly conceived as being more prevalent among ethnic minority pupils, rarely do official measures for treating such problems rarely make any open reference to cultural or ethnic issues.

## The centrality of the urban question in issues of 'integration'

Since the massive recruitment of unskilled labour from North African countries such as Algeria and Morocco in the 1960s and 1970s, social and ethnic inequalities in schooling, employment, and residential patterns have largely overlapped in France. The existence of a large low-income public housing sector, in which non-European minorities and newly arrived immigrants are overrepresented, has led to the formation of residential areas increasingly referred to as "urban ghettos" (Lapeyronnie 2008). In such neighbourhoods processes of stigmatisation and "white flight" have had inevitable repercussions on local schools. In a society in which schooling is regarded as essential to the social and cultural integration of the Nation, and in which formal educational credentials have a very decisive impact on individuals' employment prospects, public policy cannot remain impervious to the problem of school segregation.

Yet issues concerning the integration of the descendants of immigrants, particularly those of North African origin who are concentrated in disadvantaged suburbs, have not until quite recently been framed in terms of discrimination, ethnic relations, or multiculturalism, but rather have largely been subsumed under "the urban question" and treated within the framework of urban social policy (*les politiques de la ville*).

In the 1980s, urban segregation in public housing areas increased with the slowdown of government-subsidised housing construction, the rise of unemployment, increased immigration from Africa, and the exit of middle-class families from the HLM (*Habitation à loyer modéré* – low-income housing) areas. Thus, the principle aim of public housing offices and the priority in public discourse on the issue of urban planning became that of ensuring a proper social mix in such neighbourhoods. The notion of "*mixité*" has become the principle rallying cry for government, public administrators, and housing officials as well as the main justification for recent urban renewal policy, such as the destruction of high-rises containing a large number of sizeable apartments and their replacement by smaller-scale housing units designed for smaller families. While the notion of "*mixité*" is never clearly defined in public discourse and seldom refers explicitly to ethnic or racial factors, the general unspoken consensus is that the opposite of "*mixité*", and that which public policy must attempt to avoid at all costs, is the concentration of visible minorities and immigrants in stigmatised suburban areas and the phenomenon of the American-style ghetto associated with such concentrations.

Public measures in favour of immigrants and their descendants, still referred to as "policies for integration", are rarely developed in response to mobilisations and struggles for recognition emanating from immigrants or minority populations themselves (Gaxie et al. 1999). At the municipal level, programs aimed at aiding such groups rarely constitute a distinct domain and are not unified under one specific unit or administration. They are certainly never instigated by representatives of particular communities. Instead, policies for integration are dispersed among a multiplicity of services and domains such as housing, health, welfare, education and training, and prevention of delinquency. A variety of institutions and administrations, as well as local grass-roots organisations, which may or may not be specialised

in the treatment of issues of "integration", all participate in actions that are generally not reserved for immigrants and minorities, but which may concern them to the extent that they are overrepresented among socially disadvantaged categories, such as residents of public housing sectors and certain age-groups. Publicly funded activities such as remedial education classes may or may not be classified as policies of "integration", depending on the position of the particular municipality as to whether or not it is politically advantageous to display their contributions in favour of that particular segment of the local population or not (Gaxie et al. 1999).

Local as well as national public policy regarding the integration of immigrants and their descendents is of symbolic and political importance in a context where attitudes and ideological discourse on the "immigrant problem" often constitutes the major channel through which the right and the left mark their differences in the eyes of public opinion. Despite the politically sensitive nature of the issue of "integration" and the fact that local governments are often obliged to adapt their discourse and policies to the perceptions of the majority, there exists almost no public policy initiatives in France aimed specifically at modifying negative perceptions of immigrants and ethnic minorities and at encouraging harmonious interethnic relations. Policy initiatives concerning such groups have traditionally been part either of the domain of immigration and integration policy aimed at migrant workers and their families or asylum-seekers with specific needs linked to their recent arrival (linguistic, administrative, etc.), or part of a larger urban social policy designed to address a variety of issues, such as public housing, remedial education, delinquency, and social relations at the local level, none of which are specific to immigrants and minorities.

## **Main findings of the French EDUMIGROM research and their new contributions**

The most original and notable aspect of the EDUMIGROM research, and of the French study in particular, is that it analyzes the school experiences and the differences and relations between minority and majority origin pupils who actually attend the same schools and classes, and who are therefore "true" peers. In most other large-scale international or national studies on the schooling of immigrant and second-generation youth, the position of minority pupils is compared to that of a control group representative of "average" majority origin pupils in order to assess the relative advantage or disadvantage of pupils of immigrant origin (for example, PISA, The Integration of the European Second Generation study, the French study "Trajectoires et Origines"). While such studies offer pertinent information about the general position of minority students within a larger local, national, or international context, they do not tell us much about concrete interethnic relations in disadvantaged schools attended by very significant proportions of minority origin youth. Moreover, they reveal nothing about the profiles and experiences of non-immigrant youth who are enrolled in such schools and who often represent a rather specific segment of the general majority population.

The second original aspect of our study is that it combines an extensive survey of students in such schools with in-depth ethnographic observations and individual interviews on actual interethnic relations. While the survey study offers detailed information about the characteristics of the school population and permits comparative analyses among students according to a variety of factors, the qualitative study makes it possible to delve more in-depth into their experiences and perceptions. As we shall see, some of the most interesting results of the research are those derived from a comparison of the quantitative and the qualitative data. Indeed, as far as issues of ethnic identity, interethnic conflict, and experiences of discrimination are concerned, answers to the survey questionnaire tended to show the rather limited pertinence of such issues when they were formulated explicitly and independently of other problems. In contrast, the in-class observations, individual interviews, and group discussions revealed how such issues could become very salient in certain situations, and how intricately they were linked to other dimensions of students' identity, such as residence, social status, academic profile, and youth culture style. In other words, the relative absence of the effect of ethnicity as a descriptive variable in terms of the more objective academic dimensions of schooling contrasts strongly with the importance of ethnicity in the more subjective areas of interpersonal and groups relations and as a source for self-identification, particularly for students whose self-esteem is threatened by their low academic status.

#### *Who and what is the study about?*

The EDUMIGROM research for the French study was carried out in six different high schools, four of which participated in the community study phase. These schools are located in a disadvantaged Parisian suburb of the Seine-Saint-Denis district and in the agglomeration of Bordeaux. These two urban contexts differ substantially in relation to the size of the local population of immigrant descent. While the working-class suburb of Paris in which the study took place has a much higher proportion of residents originating from Africa than the national average, the urban agglomeration of Bordeaux has a relatively limited minority population compared to other French cities of similar size. In the schools under investigation the proportion of students belonging to our "selected" minority groups (Maghrebi-Turkish, African-Caribbean) ranged from approximately 40 per cent in Bordeaux to over 90 per cent in Paris. Among the over 500 students surveyed, less than 20 per cent declared that they had no foreign or immigrant background, more than 30 per cent declared North African or Turkish origins, about 20 per cent declared Caribbean or African origins, while the remaining 30 per cent were of mixed background, of other immigrant origins, or did not answer the question. In choosing two such contrasting sites, we wished to observe the manner in which schools recruiting students with similar social and academic profiles might differ in their treatment of ethnic minorities, depending on whether they constituted the majority of the population or simply a very significant minority.

Because of the concentration of our selected minority groups in certain "disadvantaged" schools, we limited our choice to establishments in which the student population was overwhelmingly of lower-class status. The socio-economic profile of students in all of the schools studied are similar, with over half

of the overall student population falling into the "very disadvantaged" category, while less than 10 per cent belong to the "advantaged" category. Moreover, two-thirds of the students surveyed have parents with a low or very low level of educational certification.

We decided to carry out the study at the high-school level and to observe students enrolled in their first and second year of various programs leading to a variety of different vocational and non-vocational degrees, such as the scientific or technical *Baccalauréat* or the shorter vocational certificates, because we wished to analyze the role of tracking and its influence on ethnic inequalities and identities. Most of the students were 16 or 17 years old, due in part to the widespread practice of grade repetition in France. Although we could have chosen to carry out the study in middle schools in order to target an age group which was closer to that studied by other country teams, our decision was influenced by the scarcity of existing studies on minorities at the high-school level in France and by the fact that it is at this level that the major divergences between students in terms of future career prospects become most obvious since pre-tracking takes place at age 15. While the schools are very different with regards to factors such as size, ratio of girls to boys, programs offered, and general atmosphere, they are all attended by many students who would have chosen a different school and/or course of study had their academic results permitted them to do so, as well as by a significant number of students who live in low-income housing areas.

Despite the similarities in the socio-economic profiles of the student body, the two sites differ substantially in terms of the relative position of the observed students within the local educational market. Students from our sample are clearly located at the bottom of the local hierarchy of schools in Bordeaux, while in the Seine-Saint-Denis district they are roughly representative of the local norm given the lower-class status of the area's residents as a whole.

As a result of our choice of sites, schools, and neighbourhoods, the population studied can be qualified as ethnically very diverse and socially rather homogeneous. Our study is therefore about lower-class youth enrolled in low-prestige schools, more than it is about a particular ethnic group or a particular local community. The recruitment of students at the high-school level, particularly into vocational programs, is much less locally circumscribed than is the case in the comprehensive middle schools. For reasons linked to the residential dispersion of our population and to the difficulties we encountered in accessing their parents, the major part of the study was carried out within the confines of the schools. Hence, the information obtained on parents and on students' home lives turned out to be quite limited. However, the material gathered from class observations, discussions, and individual interviews with students and with a variety of school personnel are very rich, since we were able to interview close to 60 students of minority and majority ethnic origin and over 35 teachers and other school personnel. During the qualitative phase, we observed two schools in each site and two different classes in each school, and were thus able to compare the information gathered from three different perspectives: that of the sites, the schools, and the classes.

Our study aims at understanding the construction of ethnicity and the nature of ethnic relations in the French context among working-class youth enrolled in low-prestige urban schools. It addresses the relations that specific ethnic groups have to schooling only in a very indirect way. In this respect, our focus is on ethnicity as a process of identification or as a practical category at work in the school context and one which reveals a variety of relations and inequalities that cannot simply be reduced to ethnic differences (Brubaker 2000, 2002). The study should be regarded as a sociological approach to the educational institution and the manner in which the various actors participating in such institutions experience and understand ethnic differences. How are such categorisations played out in schools receiving students who have often been negatively selected according to a variety of factors such as low social status, poor academic performance, and residence in disadvantaged urban areas? How do students and teachers make sense of the apparent contradictions between the values and practices of a school system which makes a point of ignoring the cultural and ethnic characteristics of students, and the fact that certain minority groups are clearly overrepresented among students enrolled in the least desirable schools and streams? These are some of the major questions to which our study offers some answers.

### **The structural determinants of students' school experiences**

The most striking feature of the results from the French survey was the lack of any significant correlation between students' ethnic and social characteristics and their answers to survey questions concerning their school performance and school experiences. The ethnic identity of students and the social status of their parents had no effect on their attitudes toward the school and their experience of discrimination, nor for that matter did the ethnic composition of the class. We observed, on the contrary, that educational circumstances, as measured by the institution (vocational, non-vocational) and the stream (short vocational, technical, general academic), were very influential in defining the relationship students had toward their schooling. In other words, we observed that the effects of contextual variables were much stronger than were students' personal characteristics.

Interestingly, we did observe variations in the subjection to discrimination according to parental level of education. This revealed the frustration of a limited proportion of students whose family's cultural capital did not destine them to be schooled in these institutions and who clearly felt subjected to processes of downward mobility. Only 15 per cent of students from the least educated families against 25 per cent of those from the most educated families gave positive answers to the question of whether they had even experienced discrimination by a teacher. The higher sensitivity to discrimination of students from more educated families was equally obvious in answers to questions on discrimination by peers and outside of school: it was still students from the most educated families who stated most frequently that they were victims of discrimination, whether such discrimination was based on ethnic origin or other factors.

In the community study as well, the most differentiating factor of students' general attitude towards school and of their evaluation of their own trajectory was by far the particular school, the stream, and the class in which they were enrolled. In this phase of the research we observed how much the relative position of the school and the class within the general local or institutional hierarchy impacted the feeling of satisfaction and self-worth of students from minority and majority origins alike. For instance, students enrolled in the least desirable classes of a vocational high school located in a working-class suburb of Bordeaux held the most negative views of teachers and of the institution, while students enrolled in similar types of classes and schools in the Paris area felt much less stigmatised, even though they generally faced many more objective problems in their lives due to difficult living conditions, local delinquency, and crime rates, as well as the school's lack of resources. In this respect the material gathered from the individual student interviews tended to confirm the major results of the survey questionnaire. Indeed, it showed that contextual factors and differences born of the structural inequalities between schools, classes, and educational tracks all played a central role in shaping students' perceptions of themselves and of their educational and professional opportunities.

These results are explained by the nature of the French sample that focused on schools and that receive the majority of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that account for relatively poor reputation. Due to their limited academic performance, students here often had been negatively selected at the end of middle school as a last resort. These cases of downward selection are also a result of the rather inequitable nature of the French school system as a whole. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that both students' socio-economic status and the socio-economic status of the schools attended are strongly correlated with educational performance and trajectories. The latest PISA results for France show that students' performance is very strongly affected by the particular socio-economic profile of the school attended. While advantaged students attending disadvantaged schools perform very significantly worse than their socio-economic characteristics would lead one to expect (about 100 points less!), disadvantaged students in advantaged schools perform significantly better than expected (80 points more) (OECD 2009: 94). Our observations thus confirm the extent of the processes of homogenisation that exists in a relatively segregated school system in which similar types of students tend to be grouped together, thus contributing to the formation of similar identities, performances, and expectations among young people who are in fact very ethnically and culturally diverse.

Some important distinctions between majority and minority students were nonetheless revealed by comparisons between the survey results and the results of the qualitative study. The survey results revealed that our minority students had experienced significantly lower rates of grade repetition than their majority origin peers before entering high school, that they were more often enrolled in the non-vocational streams and that they more often wished to pursue their studies into higher education. By contrast, the qualitative study revealed that minority students in the high schools were clearly overrepresented among students enrolled in remedial type classes or in classes that were in relatively low demand, as well as



among those who had dropped out or been expelled from high school during their first year, and were equally numerous among those receiving poor grades or who were considered by school personnel to be "troublemakers". One might be tempted to explain these discrepancies as being a result of ethnic discrimination operating against minority students in the observed high schools.

Our observations, as well as those of other studies on the school trajectories of minority students (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2009, Beaud 2003, Felouzis 2005) lead us to believe that other, more structural mechanisms are at work here that explain why students of immigrant origin often face deep discrepancies between the aspirations which they develop during their primary and middle-school years, and which are largely encouraged by their parents, and the possibilities which are available to them once they enter into upper-secondary school where tracking takes place and where academic requirements are more demanding than in disadvantaged urban middle schools.

The minority origin students in our samples tended to reside in low-income public housing areas and to have been educated in local schools that are quite segregated both socially and ethnically, while majority origin students, even those of lower-class status, often lived outside of such areas and had therefore attended more mixed middle-class schools (Felouzis 2005). For this reason, minority students are much more likely to have been average students in very disadvantaged schools, while majority origin students are likely to have been disadvantaged and poor-performing students in more mixed mainstream schools. Upon entering into vocational or technical high school, the children of immigrants thus experience a disheartening drop in their relative academic status, while members of the majority group experience, on the contrary, the relief of finding themselves in an institution that better conforms to their working-class status and to their potential and aspirations. The phenomenon of relative frustration and disillusionment, which is much more prevalent for minority pupils, explains the propensity for many of them to rebel against the system or to become disengaged from their studies.

The fact that a significant proportion of students enrolled in vocational programs have been negatively selected against at the end of junior high school, as well as the general disregard for vocational education within the French educational system, create the conditions for the development of anti-school behaviour and resentment towards teachers. Students in France frequently experience transition into a vocational stream as a form of "punishment" inflicted upon those whose academic performance and behaviour do not fit the norm. This sentiment is particularly pronounced among the descendants of migrants from Africa whose parents have suffered disproportionately from de-industrialisation and the economic crisis and who view schooling as the only means for their children to escape from their inferior condition. These parents tend to view vocational schooling as a last resort, since they want their children to avoid the types of low-status jobs that they were obliged to occupy after migrating. Their disappointment and feeling of failure are proportional to the hopes and aspirations placed on the school system. The burden felt by students who carry the guilt of having failed to live up to both their parents and the school's expectations seems particularly heavy for second-generation boys, who are awaited to redeem the family's honour and status that has often been tarnished by the immigration process.

## Ethnicity in interpersonal relations and group dynamics

The similarities and differences between the school experience of majority and minority origin adolescents in disadvantaged urban high schools produce complex social dynamics that create commonalities as well as tensions among students in their everyday school lives. The paradoxical position of majority origin students, who often constitute an atypical minority in such schools, has received virtually no attention from researchers.

In both the quantitative and the qualitative research we observed no clear-cut opposition between ethnic groups as such, but rather a subtle reversal of certain patterns that prevail in society-at-large. In the least desirable classes and in schools in which teacher-student relations were the most tense, the tendency was for minority students, especially boys from Maghrebi origins, to have the upper hand in displays of youthful social competition and power relations. The French survey study revealed that "white" students experienced more isolation in their everyday peer relations than other ethnic groups. The survey study also showed that ethnic identity represents more of a social resource than a stigma for minority origin students. It is a source of pride and solidarity for most of them, though this in no way prevents them from also having friends and intimate relations that are, more often than not, mixed. Within this world of interethnic sociability, however, the students in the majority group seemed less cohesive than those in the two minority groups. They were less proud of their origins and displayed less solidarity with their schoolmates. Indeed, for the minority groups, the conversion of stigma into pride and solidarity plays a role in the construction of their social identity. The lesser degree of ethnic solidarity displayed by "white" students also reveals the relative fragility of these individuals who benefit less from collective resources in their everyday school lives, while suffering equally from the negative reputation and low status of their schools.

Although reports of ethnic conflicts between students were more frequent in the schools with the largest proportions of majority origin students, the general consensus among students was that there existed no racism among peers. But our observations did reveal that racial characterisations and ethnic tensions (as well as interethnic friendships) were part and parcel of students' everyday social relations. These were also issues that students rarely spoke about in earnest as a "problem" or as ones that might warrant intervention from adults. While most students admitted that racial slurs, put-downs, and teasing about each others' ethnic origins were a common feature of their daily exchanges, this was never interpreted as being a form of racism, but rather was deemed to be simply the expression of friendly joking and ordinary banter. Even isolated incidents of bullying and confrontation, which appeared to teachers and researchers alike to be racially motivated, were never openly regarded as such by students whose natural tendency was to downplay (or to deny) any form of ethnic hostility among peers.

Teachers and students alike thus expressed their attachment to a form of Republican neutrality and colour-blindness that tends to downplay the importance of ethnic differences and to make such issues as racism and intercultural conflict taboo, but in ways which often created misunderstandings between

the two. While teachers considered any behaviour that stressed ethnic distinctions to be dangerous and potentially divisive, students, particularly those of minority origins, felt that it was precisely because they could not be suspected of harbouring racist sentiments that they were free to make fun of one another's culture or ethnicity.

Although instances of bullying and victimisation among students were observed to a certain degree in all of the schools, they were most pronounced in schools in which student-teacher relations were the most aloof and formal and where students felt judged by teachers, mainly because of their academic positions and performances. Ethnicity or race did not appear as a cause in and of itself of interpersonal or group conflicts between students, but rather as a vehicle through which they acted out competitive relations and expressed identifications and distinctions that were in flagrant opposition with institutional norms and values. We could detect no direct relation between the level of verbal or physical violence among students and the ethnic or social composition of the student body or of a particular class. It appeared quite clearly, however, that the general atmosphere of the school and the more or less cohesive nature of student-teacher relations had an impact on these phenomena. Within the schools, ethnic identification of self and others, interethnic tensions, and demands for recognition of cultural or religious differences were very much a function of the manner in which students related to their schooling and how they felt about themselves as students. Students from the least desirable classes and those who felt most constrained in their educational prospects tended, much more than students in the more prestigious programs, to refer openly to their ethnic, national, or religious origins as a source of pride and to denigrate their peers using racial terminology. This did not mean that the higher performing students had a weaker ethnic or religious identity than those who had been negatively selected, but simply that they did not feel the need to assert such an identity as a way of compensating for their inferiority within the educational hierarchy and that this remained relatively independent of their educational experience and of their view of themselves as students.

### **The importance of the local context and school atmosphere in determining the salience and meaning of ethnicity**

One of the major lessons we learned from our research was that, despite similarities in students' social, cultural, and academic characteristics, significant differences between the two sites, and to a lesser degree within each site between different schools, in terms of their local urban contexts, the ethnic school mix, and the position and status of the schools and neighbourhoods relative to other schools and neighbourhoods in the area all have a considerable influence on the way interethnic relations and identities are formed and evolve. It is one thing to be a student from a "visible" minority in a medium-sized provincial city like Bordeaux, where the immigrant population is relatively small and where there is frequent mobility between neighbourhoods of varying social standing and reputation. It is quite a

different experience to be a minority youth in a city like Saint-Denis located in a sprawling working-class area comprised of many public-housing complexes and which may have the highest concentration of African migrants of any major European city.<sup>53</sup>

Another important finding of the study was that young people do suffer at least as much from the negative image associated with their schools and neighbourhoods – as well as from the social pressures exerted by peers who most conform to the roles and reputations associated with such neighbourhoods – as they do from the objective disadvantages of their residential situation like limited access to cultural resources, urban insecurity, or poor living conditions. While the minority students encountered in Bordeaux appeared much less exposed than their Parisian counterparts to the ills of urban life, such as gang violence, police brutality, limited geographic mobility, and overcrowded living conditions, they were clearly more deeply affected by the stigma associated with their inferior position relative to that of other young people living in more middle-class areas and attending more prestigious secondary schools.

Similarly, the objective dimensions of the schools observed, such as their resources, the quality of the infrastructure, the employment and training opportunities they offered, and the stability of the teaching staff did not determine their reputation and the general sentiment of attachment or rejection, of comfort or discomfort, which students expressed when they spoke about their high-school experience. Because we were dealing with an age-group that is engaged in a process of identity construction and who is very vulnerable to the opinions of others, and because most of the students encountered felt inferiorised by their failure to conform to the standards of academic success set by the elitist French school system, they strongly aspire to be respected and accepted both by peers and by adults. The content of their course of study and their chances for future employment therefore weigh less on their judgments than do the general atmosphere and cohesion of the school, the degree of solidarity among classmates, and the benevolence of teachers.

The two schools in our sample in which students clearly felt most at ease and in which social relations were relatively peaceful, have managed to foster a sense of belonging and trust by developing an in-school social life and exchanges among teachers and students that are not centred only on academic issues. These are the schools in which extracurricular activities, exchanges with parents, outings, and the awareness of students' often difficult home lives were the most developed. In these schools students felt that they were not judged solely according to their position within the hierarchy of classes and streams, or according to their performance and their behaviour in class. They felt the school to be a space in which they were likely to find support and help dealing with difficulties that were not strictly academic. One might say that an important aim of these schools was to create a place for even the lowest performing students and to attempt to reconcile those who had been negatively selected against by the system with the educational institution and its personnel.

53 According to recent results from the *Trajectoire et Origines* study on the descendants of immigrants, among young people aged 18 to 20 living in the Paris region (Ile-de-France) close to 40 per cent have at least one immigrant parent (Insee Première N°1285, March 2010). This is likely the case for only about one out of 10 of such youth in the Bordeaux area.

In the two other schools involved in the community study, student-teacher relations appeared much more tense and volatile and peer relations more competitive and aggressive. In these schools, more stress was laid on the formal and academic dimensions of schooling. Teachers' collective work was relatively limited, and relations with parents mainly took place on an individual basis when a student was failing academically or causing disciplinary problems. In these schools, adults appeared mainly as questionable authority figures, to be either feared or contested, and whose treatment of students was often regarded as unfair or condescending. Although students often had very different appreciations of individual teachers, they held a negative view of school personnel in general. In such a context, conflicts and power relations between students were exacerbated as a response to their feeling of inferiority. In these schools, where there exists a clear hierarchy between classes and streams, low-performing students, particularly those from minority origins, are tempted to adopt an oppositional stance and to impose the values of a peer-group street culture which denigrates those students who most conform to teachers' expectations and who are identified as "outsiders" for a variety of reasons, of which ethnicity is not necessarily the most salient.

The school experience of minority students reveals many of the problems inherent in the functioning of the French school system, such as negative selection, limited communication with parents, the lack of integration between in-school training and the realities of the job market, and last but not least, the entrenched belief that social and professional destinies are almost entirely dependent on academic credentials. It also reveals some of its successes. Based on the existing literature and on our fieldwork observations, we can safely say there exists no outright racial or ethnic discrimination of minority students in terms of grading, tracking, or the treatment of students in class. Although some teachers might harbour racist sentiments or hold negative stereotypes of minority students, they clearly appear as exceptions to the rule. We were struck much more by teachers' voluntary ignorance of the issue at hand and by the almost total absence of any mention or discussion of students' ethnicity in normal everyday school interactions and official discourse. Because the focus of the research was precisely the issue that is most ignored by French schools, we often had the feeling that institutional representatives were literally blind to certain phenomena which appeared very flagrant to us, such as the unequal distribution of ethnic groups across streams or the overrepresentation of minority students among school leavers and among the lowest performing students of certain classes.

To the extent that these realities are not the consequence of conscious in-school discrimination, this ignorance may serve a positive function of keeping alive for students and teachers alike the idea that success is not dependent on factors such as ethnicity. Yet, however much they try, schools cannot shield themselves entirely from the realities of the outside world and from the effects of ethnic discrimination in the workplace, of residential segregation, and of heightened anti-immigrant sentiments. While the shared values of Republican neutrality and colour-blindness prevent teachers from expressing individual judgments about students based on considerations of cultural or ethnic differences, it does not prevent students from voicing their feelings of injustice or their difficult relationship to authority in terms or

racial or ethnic discrimination. The contrast between a student body for whom ethnic, racial, and religious distinctions are an integral part of social interactions and a vehicle for expressing a range of feelings and opinions about one's self and others, and the Republican school culture for whom such references remain largely taboo, creates a real cultural divide between students and teachers in the most disadvantaged urban schools.

Such schools can serve as a safe-haven for those who are most exposed to the harsh realities and strict social controls of the "ghetto". Yet they can also exacerbate students' feelings of exclusion and lead to forms of bullying among students that constitute a way of inverting the dominant hierarchies and norms of success through a process which transforms the victim into the victimiser. The problem of this often-invisible form of youth violence, much less spectacular than the highly publicised urban riots and local gang fights, concerns both majority and minority students alike and should be treated by school personnel as a serious issue. Not only can it lead to early school dropouts and to student transfers, it also undermines the institutional efforts at maintaining or reinforcing the social and ethnic diversity of the student body.

## **Policy recommendations**

The educational attainment and school trajectories of second-generation youth in Europe are influenced to a greater extent by standard institutional arrangements than by specific measures aimed at migrants and minority, such as special second language classes or the development of a multicultural curricula (Crul 2003). The extent of early education, the routes into higher education, the timing and nature of tracking, and the impact of residential segregation on the content and quality of teaching are all factors that have a decisive influence on the educational prospects of disadvantaged minority and majority students alike. Compared to countries such as Germany, Austria, Belgium, or the Netherlands, the French school system produces greater polarisation of educational outcomes for second-generation youth. In other words, such students may "*reach higher, but fall deeper*" (Crul 2003: 983) than their counterparts in many other European countries.

Our focus on the school experience of students enrolled in the more disadvantaged low-prestige, mainly vocational high schools has permitted us to observe directly the manner in which those who are at risk of social exclusion actually face the challenges of a school system whose weak point is the lack of an effective apprenticeship training program and the stigma associated with entry into the lower vocational tracks. Given the decisive influence of the local context of schooling and existing structural inequalities within the educational system which we outlined in the preceding section, this section shall first address the issues of how to combat the negative effects of ethnic and social segregation among schools and of tracking into vocational education. We will then suggest ways to improve the well-being and appreciation

of students for their schools and teachers. These recommendations concern both majority and minority students, but the latter may benefit more from them, to the extent that they face a greater threat of discrimination in the job market as well as greater risk of disillusionment with education and the subsequent downward assimilation into urban anti-school "gang" culture (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2005). We shall then formulate a few recommendations aimed specifically at minority students and their families.

Although our policy recommendations focus essentially on the educational arena, we consider that problems in schooling cannot be disassociated from issues of residential segregation, discrimination in access to the job market, and the types of integration and exclusion experienced by our selected minority groups within French society.

### **Combating the negative effects of residential segregation on educational inequalities**

French school districting rules, commonly known as "the school map" (*la carte scolaire*), make it mandatory for students to attend their designated local school and for schools to accept all students residing within the area outlined by the school zoning rules. This system tends to produce a student body that reflects the social and ethnic composition of the local neighbourhood. However, it is estimated that approximately 10 per cent of students obtain a dispensation in order to attend a public school located outside of their school district, while approximately 20 per cent of secondary school students attend private, mainly Catholic schools, which are not subject to such rules. Although school districting rules also apply at the upper-secondary school level, the existence of vocational and non-vocational high schools, of a wide variety of different training schemes with unequal levels of desirability, and of establishments which have different policies for selecting students means that this rule is more loosely applied in upper-secondary school districts that are already much larger and less exclusive of each other than at the lower levels of the education system. Hence, the strategies of individual families and of particular schools tend to produce further inequalities between schools, thus further aggravating the effects of residential segregation.

Recent studies on school segregation have shown that the French school market has indeed become increasingly varied and competitive, with certain of the most desirable middle schools, located in privileged city centre neighbourhoods, receiving over half of their students from outside of their immediate catchment area, while the least desirable ones, located in low-income housing areas of the urban periphery, have to face a continuous exodus of their best students. In such cases local authorities are very reticent to enforce a stricter respect of the *carte scolaire*, since this would result in a considerable disorganisation of allocation procedures and possibly in a worsening level of segregation, since more parents might be tempted to enrol their children in private-sector establishments.

Over the past few years, school districting policies have been at the centre of an ongoing debate about how to reform the French educational system in a manner that will ensure both more equal

opportunity and more social equality. It is generally admitted that the policy has failed to significantly contain processes of social and ethnic segregation, although opinions differ sharply about what should be done. The general trend of educational policy since the beginning of the 1980s has been to introduce minimal but ever increasing degrees of flexibility into the system, without fundamentally changing the underlying principles. In 2007, however, the government announced its intention to launch the first phase of a process meant to lead to the complete suppression of the *carte scolaire* for the secondary school level by 2010 (this objective has presently been suspended). The explicit aim was to "offer new freedom to families", "to encourage equal opportunity and increase significantly the social diversity in secondary schools".<sup>54</sup> The justification for such a reform was the following: because dispensations are overwhelmingly obtained by middle-class parents and because the most undesirable schools are located in working-class neighbourhoods, less privileged families are more constrained by the negative implications of school districting rules. The few existing analysis of the changes which have taken place over the past three years indicate that, although the increased flexibility was explicitly meant to privilege the requests of those families who, for instance, receive public aid, it has in fact resulted in worsening social segregation, especially between the most advantaged and least advantaged schools (Obin and Peyroux 2007; Cours des Comptes 2009, Merle 2010).

All these trends create unequal conditions for learning as well as unequal levels of expectations and grading scales between schools in a system that nonetheless remains administratively centralised. One of the major aims of public policy since the 1980s has been to make it possible for at least 80 per cent of graduating classes to attain a *Baccalauréat* degree, implying that an increasing number of students pursue their studies at the upper-secondary school level, while the variety of programs offered at this level have become increasingly unequal in terms of their desirability and prestige. The process by which middle-school students are allocated into the various high schools is based on a complex bureaucratic procedure taking into account the openings and requests for a variety of types of programs in a given school district. Students' grades throughout middle school and their performance on more or less standardised tests remain the decisive factor. In a segregated school system, this produces some perverse effects.

Indeed, students coming from the most disadvantaged middle schools are handicapped by the lower quality of the schooling they have received while also being paradoxically "advantaged" for entry into high school. Indeed, they are competing with students from more socially and ethnically mixed schools whose lower grades may simply reflect the higher standards of their schools. This phenomena, which has yet to be studied in depth, may well explain why minority students appear at one and the same time to have higher rates of entry into the non-vocational streams which prepare them for continuing in higher education as compared to their majority origin peers of similar socio-economic status, and to be overrepresented among those who drop out of high school (as well as university) without having obtained proper certification.

54 Note to administrative personnel from the Ministry of National Education, June 4, 2007.



Increasing levels of segregation in a system that devalues vocational disciplines, encourages prolonged schooling, and maintains the illusion that all students have received the same quality of education and covered the same curriculum, and that grades therefore essentially reflect individual merit, serves to make the disillusionment and resentment of the most vulnerable students all the more harsh when they are finally confronted with standards which they cannot live up to. Because these students have few marketable skills, lack effective social networks, and are more vulnerable to discrimination in the workplace, they are likely to experience prolonged unemployment upon leaving the educational system.

The general trend of educational policy reforms in France over the past few years has shifted from one that previously centred on "place" and on offering more resources to schools located in disadvantaged areas (such as the Educational Priority Zones policy) to a more "people"-centred approach that seeks to offer more opportunities for mobility and success to the highest achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the aim of diversifying the French elite. This has been the case of certain measures of positive discrimination developed to encourage the best performing students from disadvantaged high schools to try for entry into such elite higher educational institutions as Sciences-Po Paris. The same can be said of efforts to develop programs for "excellence" in disadvantaged schools that aim to keep or attract better students. (In line with the French Republican model, none of these policy measures define their target population in ethnic terms.) At the same time, high schools in low-income neighbourhoods are no longer included in the Educational Priority Zones that previously made it possible for them to receive additional resources. While this policy shift may have succeeded in offering more opportunities to a handful of the best and brightest, it has worked to the disadvantage of those at the bottom of the pack, especially for students enrolled in the least desirable vocational schools that offer poor opportunities for job training and employment. Even the recent reforms of vocational high school training have tended to follow the logic of the ever-increasing push towards more prolonged schooling and the development of a curriculum that gives more weight to more abstract academic disciplines than to applied vocational ones.

Throughout our qualitative research among vocational school students, we found that in addition to the considerable time spent travelling to school, they were frequently subjected to 8- to 10-hour days, many classes of which were lectures of a rather abstract nature. Especially for students who have ended up in such programs because of poor grades and learning problems, the fatigue and boredom induced by such long days of passive learning only adds to the risk of absenteeism and abandonment. Measures to combat the exclusion of the most vulnerable students should focus on improving the efficiency of vocational training and on developing a proper apprenticeship programme, similar to Germany's, where second-generation students who attend the lowest vocational streams have much lower unemployment rates than their counterparts in France (Tucci 2010, Crul 2003).

Certain vocational schemes that offer particularly poor job prospects, such as low level secretarial training or certain more or less obsolete industrial programmes, seem to continue to exist essentially through the force of inertia and because there are teachers who hold the corresponding training certificates. By contrast, a few of the observed schools have set up innovative partnerships with

public and private sector employers which make their training programs particularly attractive. Yet the proportion of minority students in such classes is often distinctly lower than in other more traditional classes. A concerted effort on the part of schools heads and teachers to both attract minority students into such classes and to convince employers to take on these students as interns and apprentices would certainly have a positive impact on the success rates of second-generation students and might decrease the risk of interethnic conflict among students from the more and less prestigious classes.

Another measure that would help to combat the negative effects of school segregation and to reduce the general feeling of exclusion and unworthiness of vocational students would be to implant such schools in more advantaged central-city neighbourhoods. While this might be difficult to implement at the middle-school level where schools need to be close to students' homes, it would be quite feasible at the high-school level, where students already travel long distances between suburbs that often have poor connecting networks of public transportation. This measure would in effect be the complement to existing measures to develop "élite" programmes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In both Bordeaux and Paris we were struck by the considerable impact that the reputation of the immediate neighbourhood had on students' identity and social relations, even when they did not reside in the area. While the ethnic, social, and academic profiles of the students were virtually identical in the various schools under study, in those located in more mixed neighbourhoods close to the centre of town students felt distinctly less stigmatised, even though the programs offered were actually less prestigious than those in the schools located in disreputable neighbourhoods. Students who attended schools in mixed neighbourhoods, located in more anonymous, busy commercial areas, were able to distance themselves objectively and subjectively from the pressures associated with "ghetto" life.

Such a measure would also make these schools more attractive to teachers, who usually do not live in the more disadvantaged neighbourhoods and who are very sensitive to the general urban environment. It might well contribute to a lower turnover rate of teachers, one of the major obstacles to the development of quality teaching and of long-term projects to combat problems such as student attrition. Similar to their students, vocational teachers are often looked down upon by their colleagues from non-vocational schools and suffer from the added stigma and discomfort of having to work in disreputable neighbourhoods. Moreover, both teachers and students alike are fearful of the possible overflow of neighbourhood-based "gang wars" within the schools, which constitutes one of the major sources of in-school violence. Such a measure would reduce the potential for inter-group conflicts, hostility, and social competition based on identification with or exclusion from the local neighbourhood, since physical distance from the "ghetto" obviously attenuates the importance of such factors. Given the difficulties that schools in disadvantaged urban areas have of attracting more privileged majority students, and the risks of social exclusion that such students face in these schools, it would be more effective to make it possible for ordinary youth from such neighbourhoods (not only those with exceptional merit) to have access to schools located in privileged city centres.

It should be noted that no significant policy measures have been developed in France to counter

the natural tendency for the best and most experienced teachers to end up in middle- and upper-middle-class schools. Within the highly centralised and bureaucratic system of teacher appointment based on a point system, those who have accumulated the most points, through seniority, higher certification, and favourable inspection results, are most likely to obtain their preferred choice of neighbourhoods. Thus, newly certified teachers are often obliged to start their careers in the most unfavourable conditions. The bonuses offered to those who teach in schools that are located in Educational Priority Zones with high concentrations of minority and socially disadvantaged students do not appear as a sufficient incentive to attract more experienced teachers, or to ensure that those who are initially appointed there will remain after they have gathered enough points to try their luck at obtaining a position in a more attractive establishment.

One of the paradoxes of the French secondary school system is that it is one in which students spend an inordinate amount of their time in comparison to most other European systems, yet also one which does not offer much in the way of extracurricular activities and occasions for student-teacher or teacher-parent exchanges about non-academic issues. French schools are a central factor in shaping young peoples' cultural dispositions, in orienting peer-group sociability, and in forming adolescents' individual identities, yet they are also places that are not very cohesive and socially integrated, especially from the perspective of relations between young people and adults. Teachers are mainly present during class time, while specialised non-teaching personnel deal with most non-academic issues. Thus, there is very little time or space for students and teachers to engage in more informal, personal exchanges. This exacerbates the natural tendency for disadvantaged low-performing students to regard the world of peer-relations and that of formal education as two distinct entities whose values and norms collide. Transforming disadvantaged schools into places of socialisation by encouraging extracurricular activities, the development of cultural projects, class trips and outings would make for less formal student-teacher relations and would make it possible for students who have some potential in non-academic areas to build their self-esteem and gain recognition through means other than the display of anti-school behaviour. Throughout our qualitative research it became clear that students felt most comfortable and most trusting of adults in the schools that had succeeded in developing an institutional life which did not centre only on formal teaching but also on youthful social relations by offering activities which integrated these two dimensions, such as theatre groups, sports teams, class trips, and a sustained dialogue between teachers and parents and between teachers and those in charge of student life.

Measures to encourage exchanges between teachers and parents and efforts to involve parents more actively in the life of the school would be particularly beneficial for immigrants and their children. Throughout our research it appeared that the distance and lack of communication between school personnel and parents created a space within which students could develop oppositional or avoidance strategies that were detrimental to their academic success. In some of the observed schools, teachers had virtually no contact with parents. In such cases, teachers tended to entertain rather stereotypical views of immigrant parents, for instance, concerning their use of corporal punishment. This occasionally

resulted in unequal treatment of minority students by teachers. Indeed, some minority students were tempted to play on such stereotypes in order to dissuade their teachers from notifying their parents in case of bad behaviour or poor results, while others complained that in exchanges with their parents teachers lacked the spontaneity and sincerity that they had with native parents.

On the contrary, certain schools had institutionalised a welcoming week before the beginning of classes during which lengthy individual interviews between teachers, students, and their parents were the occasion to gather information about students' previous school experiences and future aspirations and to create an initial friendly contact with school personnel. The initial approach was very different in those schools in which students first encountered their teachers in a group during their first class. In such cases they were also required to fill out a form answering questions about their nationality, their parents' employment status, their previous school, and their neighbourhood of residence ; all elements which minority students, in particular, might perceive as contributing to labelling them as potential troublemakers and which set the tone for rather tense student-teacher relations.

The fact that parent-teacher exchanges often take place in a formal context, under the gaze of students (who must occasionally act as translators) and in response to some failure on their part to conform to the norm, means that each party is tempted to overplay their "official" role as disciplinarian, rather than engaging in a dialogue with the aim of unravelling the often complex processes that lead students to become disengaged with their studies or to display oppositional behaviour. Indeed, a more relaxed, one-on-one dialogue with teachers would undoubtedly constitute a more constructive means for understanding the true sources of students' difficulties.

It would also be beneficial to improve communication between representatives of the educational institutions and immigrant families concerning the training and employment opportunities offered by each school. Although immigrant parents usually place great store on schooling, they have very little knowledge of the actual workings of the system and of the range of existing programmes and opportunities. For example, a former head of one of the all-boys' vocational schools under observation set up a consultative network of North African fathers in order to convince them that there existed real opportunities for proper job training in the vocational trades and in order to get them more involved in issues of discipline that tended to be dealt with rather ineffectively by mothers.

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# **GERMANY**

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**with contributions from Frauke Miera, Rainer Ohliger, Gaby Strassburger,  
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## Framing the public and political discourse on ethnic differences in German society

In the general political debate, public discourse, and corresponding academic research on immigration, it is the former "guest workers" from southern Europe and Turkey, in particular, who have attracted the most attention as an ethnic minority population in Germany. They make up the largest minority group in the country, have a relatively low socio-economic status, and predominantly serve as German society's "other" in terms of presumably traditional cultural habits and, increasingly, the Islamic religion that mark profound differences.

Depending on the statistical approach and definition, Germany's immigrant population ranges between 7.3 million (foreigners in terms of formal citizenship) and 15.3 million people ("with a migration background").<sup>55</sup> The two largest groups are former guest workers and their children and ethnic German immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, in particular from the former Soviet Union. Among the former guest worker population, five main groups (Turks, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks and ex-Yugoslavs) make up around 3.2 million persons, out of which 1.7 million are Turks. In addition, there are roughly 700,000 former Turkish citizens who acquired German citizenship. Thus, with regard to the ethnic fabric of contemporary Germany, labour immigrants from Turkey constitute the largest visible minority group in the country. They are also the most relevant group in terms of the public discourses surrounding integration (problems), and receive the most media attention.

The respective public and political discourse is primarily focused on the issue of integration, or rather the assumed non-integration of these people. This has changed over time: during the recruitment phase (late 1950s to early 1970s), the Turkish "guest workers" came as an unskilled, often uneducated, or even illiterate labour force, and they were only perceived in these economic terms. The intention was to bring in labourers only on a temporary basis and let them rotate in and out of the country. But since the idea of rotation did not succeed, the guest workers became immigrants: they settled, brought their families, and created economic and social networks as well as distinctive social and ethnic groups. In the course of this development, the dominant perception of the immigrants changed, too. Often, the labour immigrants had come directly from rural backgrounds to urban industrial environments. With their unintended permanent establishment, questions of minority existence emerged along questions of

55 Until very recently official statistics in Germany followed the classification of German citizens versus non-German citizens ("foreigners"). Thus, the public discourse about and the statistical labelling of immigrants was dominated by the discourse about the "foreigners" (Ausländer). Yet this category included people who actually were born in Germany (as "second" and even "third generation of immigrants" born and socialised in Germany but without German citizenship), while it excluded millions of persons who came as ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe since 1950 and enjoyed the privilege of immediate naturalisation upon immigration. Only within the last years has this situation been controversially discussed, and as an effect a more encompassing term emerged, the "persons with migrant background" or "persons of immigrant origin". This category originated from debates within civil society and the media. The newly created category includes immigrated foreigners, foreigners born in Germany, naturalised foreigners, and ethnic German immigrants. As an effect of the redefinition that entered the 2005 micro-census, the relevant group under consideration for questions of immigration and integration roughly doubled from 7.3 million "foreigners" to 15.3 million "people of immigrant origin".

social integration, schooling, language, and most recently religion. The guest-workers' children started to enrol in German schools; Turkish food stalls, tea houses and grocery shops appeared in the streets; the differences in habits and lifestyles came into view; and in this vein the whole discourse switched from a language of economics to that of culture: From about the late 1970s on, labour immigrants from Turkey have come represent *cultural* otherness. While the culturalist view has always included questions of religious difference (see Mannitz 2004; Schiffauer et al. 2004), this dimension has gained importance in the past decade. One could say that there has been an "*Islamicisation*" of the way in which this minority group is represented in the dominant German discourse (Spielhaus 2006). Increasingly, for instance, the target group for policies or political calls for an improving of the integration processes is not addressed as being a particular ethnic group, or an immigrant group of a particular national origin, but being Muslims, Muslim families, and especially Muslim adolescents.

This tendency in the dominant discourse has most recently been confirmed by the Annual Report 2010 of the newly founded "German Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration"<sup>56</sup> (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration; hereafter quoted as SVR 2010; here: 18f.). What the Council presents in regards to the main discursive threads that mark the current debate in Germany is in fact an overlap of different discourses with altogether negative connotations of "the other", all of which represent the Muslim immigrant population as a cultural, civilisational, juridical, and not least demographic danger for "our" society model. The most prominent examples of this alarmist discourse were given last year by the spectacular book publication "Germany Gets Rid of Itself" by Thilo Sarrazin (2010), then Board Member of the German Federal Bank, and Chancellor Angela Merkel who, together with the Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer, stated before young party members of their Christian Union Parties that multiculturalism – which had never been the concept that informed German policies – "totally failed".<sup>57</sup>

At the core of this coherently negative image one finds the combination of factual findings about Germany as being a demographically-shrinking and ageing country with a high level of heterogeneity in terms of the ethnic and national origins and religious affiliations of the different populations groups, and the negative assessment of the Muslim population as bringing backward traditions and unwanted cultural habits into this setting (see also: SVR 2010). Some experts argue that Islamophobic attitudes have increased in recent years in response to such elite discourses (see: Hafez 1999, Spetsmann-Kunkel 2007, Heitmeyer 2002–2007). However, the conflict between desirable modes of integration (multicultural approaches versus assimilationist approaches) that dominates the political debate and much of the media's coverage is in fact a rather distant phenomenon for most of the ethnic minority population in their daily lives. Due to the socio-economic structure of the Muslim community and the negative stereotypes that mark the

56 The Council is funded by several German Foundations and consists of renowned experts in migration and integration studies of all relevant academic disciplines.

57 Available online: <http://www.ksta.de/html/artikel/1287045499164.shtml>.



dominant discourse in German society, the offspring of its former guest workers must navigate many complex barriers in order to access both higher education and the labour market. Besides being impacts of the discursive "othering" processes, this is partly also a consequence of the changing parameters of economic growth in Germany, where industrial labour has diminished in favour of the new competences sought after in the "knowledge society".

The emergence of visible Turkish communities and segregated residential quarters in the industrialised urban regions in the late 1970s was accompanied by a decrease in the industrial job market: opportunities for unqualified immigrants decreased considerably over time. Low-skilled industrial jobs were made redundant via rationalisation and outsourcing. As a consequence one can observe two parallel trends: rising unemployment as well as rising self-employment rates among the former guest workers since the second half of the 1980s. Although it has still not reached the German average, second- and third-generation immigrants who passed through German institutions of (higher) education have made some gains in their qualifications. But children from Turkish families are still regularly among the underachieving groups in the German school system, their unemployment rates diverge from those of Germans, nearly double at present, and they are overrepresented in the lower ranks in service industries and underrepresented in higher managerial positions, also with regard to self-employment and the ethnic business sector.

By international standards, school attendance rates are high in Germany, but there are marked differences between the school attendance levels of students with and without migration backgrounds. The lower school attendance of students with migration backgrounds is partly related to their lower socio-economic status (Bildungsbericht 2006). Within the group of students from migrant families, those with parents or grandparents from Turkey or other countries involved in the labour recruitment schemes of the guest worker programme show significantly low attendance (Bildungsbericht 2008: 37). According to the first federal *Bildungsbericht* (2006) that gave special reference to students with migration backgrounds (based on micro census data) in 2000, 32 per cent of ninth grade students with migrant backgrounds attended the lowest-ranking *Hauptschule*, nearly twice the number of their German peers. Only 25 per cent went to the highest-achieving *Gymnasium* compared to 33 per cent of their native German peers. This disproportion is even more dramatic amongst the largest group of students with migrant backgrounds, that is, those of Turkish origin: every second pupil of Turkish origin attends a *Hauptschule* whereas only every eighth attends the *Gymnasium* in Germany. Even if they have the same reading competence as their German peers, children from migrant families are less likely to receive a recommendation from their primary school teachers for *Gymnasium* enrolment (Bildungsbericht 2006: 162). The uneven distribution of students in German schools reveals segregation processes. Every fourth student from an ethnic minority background attends a school with a majority of other such students, but only every twentieth German native does (ibid.). Moreover, the percentage of ethnic minority students attending so-called "special-needs schools" for students with learning disabilities is disproportionately high. In 1999, 4.5 per cent of all foreign students but only 2.33 per cent of ethnic German students attended such a school (Kornmann 1999).

The proportion of young people from ethnic minority groups entering the labour market or attending further education is consequently decisively lower than among ethnic Germans. While 60 per cent of the Germans find a position within the fully qualifying system of dual vocational training or vocational schooling and only 40 per cent depend on the transition system (qualifying programs), the proportion is just the opposite regarding students from the focused minority groups (Bildungsbericht 2008). Overall, these misrepresentations are well known and have been documented repeatedly in empirical surveys, inclusive of the OECD-run PISA studies: compared to other industrialised countries, Germany has the most pronounced correlation between a student's social background and migration history and their educational achievement – even despite the fact that the correlation has slightly diminished since 2000. The secondary analysis of the PISA survey nevertheless confirmed the strong disadvantages of students of lower socio-economic status and/or migration backgrounds. However, these surveys have as yet not provided sufficient answers to the question whether the students from ethnic minority groups are primarily disadvantaged because of their immigration backgrounds or rather because of their socio-economic position for both categories often coincide. One major reason for this considerable discrimination can be found within the multi-track school system – with its highly selective and extremely early streaming after fourth grade (or in some German *Länder*, sixth grade) and the lack of permeability and upward mobility options within the school system. Institutional mechanisms inherent to the school system in this way contribute to discrimination effects against the minorities of "the others" (Gomolla and Radtke 2002). Their most frequently taken path through either a "special needs school" or a low achievement level *Hauptschule* – both of which are also linked with low social status – commonly predetermines a disadvantaged and difficult school career and a long lasting or even completely unsuccessful transition to vocational training and into the labour market; the fact that in many such schools the ethnic minority groups are in a majority position contributes further to societal segregation effects.

While the elite discourse of educational experts is marked by an acknowledgement of the negative net effects of these pupils' poor socio-economic backgrounds and the institutional mechanisms in the German school system that foster segregation and discrimination – yet shows a lack of effort in intercultural education and the teaching of multilingual classes – public opinion tends to be remarkably one-sided: in general, the schooling of migrant youth is depicted as being highly problematic and the common perception is that these students and their families do not measure up to the standards, routines, and expectations of the educational system. The problematic situation is illustrated, for instance, by reports of classes being unmanageable because of the high proportions of pupils with migrant backgrounds, deficiency in German-language skills, lack of discipline and willingness to learn, and heightened aggression levels. The debate is embedded in and influenced by the general debate on "lacking" or "failed" integration, also linked with the above-mentioned rejection of multiculturalism and the alleged incompatibility of Islam with German or European culture and civilisation. The responsibility for the high rate of school failures of ethnic minority students is thus ascribed implicitly to these students and their parents. The tendency that the situation is predominantly perceived in the public as a cultural specific problem – and

primarily attributed to students from Turkish or Arab origins, if not Muslim specific (see: Spielhaus 2006) – remains quite dominant even if media take into account the relevance of an educated environment for school success. This underlines the necessity of investing particular resources into the children's school careers that many of the concerned families do not offer. Their "otherness" is thus even underscored by reports on ethnic minorities' poor living conditions or illiteracy rates, since these are hardly ever framed as being a more general problem for disadvantaged families, beyond national or cultural origin or religion.

## **Main findings of the German EDUMIGROM research**

The results for the German country case are based on a quantitative survey that was run in 16 schools in three German cities (Berlin, Cologne, and Leverkusen), and a qualitative fieldwork that was conducted in two districts of Berlin. All three cities have been shaped considerably by immigration and immigrant minorities, though in different ways as a matter of their different immigration histories, socio-economic structures, and sizes. In the selected schools, we focused on students from grades nine and ten, and 1,110 of them filled in the student questionnaire completely or nearly completely.

The in-depth qualitative research for the German case was done in two typical immigrant districts of Berlin. Both selected neighbourhoods are classified for urban development and a special social work program by which the city administration is trying to improve the socio-economic situation. Schools, in particular those on the lower achievement level, play a crucial role in this process: as long as they have a bad reputation as "ghetto schools" for ethnic minorities, many middle-class families leave the neighbourhood when their children come of school-age, or after grade six when streaming takes place in Berlin. This is not only true for the German middle classes, but also for the (emerging) middle classes of the Turkish population.

In Berlin, one-third of all students speak a "non-German mother-tongue". Turkish and Lebanese represent the two largest groups and they were focused on in our study. Both groups appear to be disproportionately affected by the exclusionary effects in the school system since they belong to the category of students whose performances are significantly below the average. Moreover, they appear to be the main target group of public discourse on failed integration, increasingly denoted as "Muslims" (see above). To get a differentiated picture of these two minorities' experiences in school, we conducted our investigations in two schools which represent, at the least officially, both ends of the educational ranking: an integrated comprehensive school that could be regarded the typical school for students from this minority background (especially since most students enrolled there ranked on the *Hauptschule* level with their exam results), and one grammar school (*Gymnasium*) to gain insight into the situation of more successful students with the same family background and find out about factors that made them more successful than their peers on the lower achievement level.

## Experiences of diversity

An interesting finding of our survey relates to the experiences of diversity that were reflected in the self-declaration of students. Our respondents tended to overestimate their families' socio-economic status as well as the social and economic quality of their neighbourhood. Sixty-three per cent of the students characterised their families' economic status as very good or good, another 27 per cent thought that it was average, and only two per cent classified their families' economic status as bad or very bad. This differs from the overall picture provided by the schools or the headmasters and the factual socio-economic background variables of the analysis. This is particularly interesting if one compares it to the students' sense of ethnic differences: 93 per cent of the students were aware of the fact that they live in ethnically diverse districts or neighbourhoods and that schooling takes place in a multiethnic environment.

The sense of correctly classifying the surrounding world according to ethnic categories, but failing to do so in terms of social and economic differences is an observation that might be explained by two factors: first, it confirms the impact of the dominant discourses that stress the ethnic and cultural otherness of the groups that we focused on. Turkish or Arab residents of Kreuzberg in Berlin are hardly represented in the public sphere on equal terms with ethnic Germans, not only in respect to their socio-economic resources but also as immigrant others who, moreover, are often portrayed to be taken good care of since many of them receive benefits from the state. The latter narrative may be a second explanation for the students' overestimation of their families' and also of the wider neighbourhood's status: when measured against a comprehensive picture of German society, they are poor and range at the lower educational levels. But due to the high degree of socio-economic residential segregation in big cities, these teenagers do not have much, if any, contact with more privileged circles of society and thus cannot draw an informed comparison. In addition, many of them compare their own lifestyles with what they know from their relatives back home in their families' countries of origin where the material standards tend to be lower and public welfare systems are less developed or non-existent. Even in regards of the relative chances for upward social mobility, the Turkish and Arab students (who are the least successful groups in the German system) are relatively successful in relation to their own parents and in particular to their mothers' educational backgrounds.

However, ethnic German students were more likely (52 per cent) than those of non-German ethnicity (41 per cent) to plan for a higher school career, and the actual enrolment of students at preferred schools showed a similar structure. The data also revealed a general divergence between educational ambitions and reality, again with important variations for socio-economic background and ethnicity: Students from low socio-economic backgrounds were less likely to succeed in attending their preferred school-type, and among the various ethnic groups significant differences were found as well. Students of non-German ethnicity managed less often to actually attend their preferred school than their German peers.

## The role of teachers and the atmosphere of the school

One crucial finding in comparison of the two school environments that we studied in our qualitative research phase is the high extent to which it depends on the supportive or discriminating behaviour of individual teachers whether school is experienced as a positive part of life and encourages young people to develop ambitious aspirations for their adult future even if their family backgrounds do not provide an ideal environment for that. Related effects were clearly observable in the studied schools. In the case of the *Gesamtschule* very few students gave an example of supportive, motivated, and friendly teachers. Students in the *Gymnasium* generally stated that most teachers there were good. The impressions we got matched with the pupils' feelings: In the *Gesamtschule* some teachers tried to "tame" the class to ensure an atmosphere where learning was possible, while others simply did not really interact with the students or constantly blamed them for several aspects, be it with or without reason. In the *Gymnasium* the general atmosphere was open, respectful, and friendly. Teachers were motivating the students with positive responses to their ideas and suggestions. This difference in attitudes applied as well to the relations with the parents.

All in all, teachers in the *Gesamtschule* did not regard the parents as partners in solving education problems but as an important cause of these problems. They felt they were being blamed for failures of the families: "We can't make up for their mistakes" was the message given in many variations. There, the educational level of parents was rather low, so much so that they were often unable to help their children with homework or provide an educated environment to influence their children's academic career in a positive direction. This was also conceded by the students. Yet, most of them stressed that their parents were interested in their school success and told them to study hard. Although the teachers of the *Gesamtschule* were well aware of the underprivileged situations their pupils lived in, they mostly saw it as a burden that made their job too exhausting, and responded to it by reducing their teaching standards. Language problems and other difficulties of their students were blamed on the (wrong) input from the side of the families. In sum, this created an atmosphere where the adolescents clearly felt that their origins were not appreciated at all.

The teachers in the *Gymnasium* tended to evaluate the family situation in a different way. They rather acknowledged the success of many students with Turkish or Arab background, because they were well aware that most of the families were unable to support them in learning and thus saw it even more as the school's charge to provide information on career options and promising educational paths. Compared to the *Gesamtschule*, the educational level of the parents was in fact also slightly higher. Some had attended *Gymnasium* or high schools themselves, and in the extended family there were usually some members (uncles, aunts, or cousins) with an academic background who served as reference points or positive role models for the pupils. Even if this is only a small difference in the cultural capital of a family, it seemed to render an influence on the support and motivation for higher education. Other parents in the *Gymnasium* who lacked a comparable background themselves were convinced that their

children had a chance to succeed and put a lot of effort into supporting them emotionally or materially. All of these students in the *Gymnasium* had been familiar with the projection of higher education from childhood. Most of them had been successful in primary school and were therefore advised to attend a *Gymnasium*. In two cases the parents had contravened the primary teachers' advice and sent their children to the *Gymnasium* because they were convinced of their children's abilities. The interplay of active and conscious parents and committed teachers made a huge difference here in comparison to the pessimistic and disrespectful atmosphere in the *Gesamtschule*.

### **Experiences and consequences of 'othering'**

We wanted to find out what factors influence the probability of ethnic minority students' closer interactions with German peers as well as what factors are either discouraging closer contacts to Germans or even lead to outright avoidance.

- Schools, classes and neighbourhoods of the groups focused on by the research are spaces where the probabilities to enter interethnic relations with German peers are rather limited because of residential segregation. The separation along the Muslim minorities versus German majority boundary is further aggravated by the different conditions under which teenage lifestyles unfold: the timeframes for leisure activities differ (e.g., evenings to be spent within or outside family), different locations are preferred where peers meet (with or without opportunities to consume alcohol), and different compositions of friendship-groups (mixed-gender versus gender-separated groups). From the beginning of adolescence, meaning after primary school, these differences seem to gain importance and the separation effects increase.
- Students of Turkish, Arab, or Muslim background who live in a community with many peers of similar background find it easy to make friends there. Many expressed the feeling that they understand each other without words and expect this to be very different with their German peers. Thus they are not tempted to get into closer contact with German peers: there is no added value attributed to closer contacts with Germans, while a lot of difficulties might occur. Whenever we heard that it would be better if there were more Germans at school, this was not motivated by an interest in closer interactions. The argument was either that it helped to become fluent in German or that it would improve the image of the school.
- Past experiences of being "othered" discouraged Turkish and Arab students from approaching Germans unless necessary. They expected the need to explain themselves in many aspects that German peers are unfamiliar with. This would be even more annoying if the counterpart does not really want to understand the "other" but is convinced of already knowing better. This experience seems to be part of everyday

life of Muslim minorities in Germany. One controversial subject in public discourse is the freedom of choice in the realm of sexuality. Students of Muslim background who subscribe to norms of premarital sexual abstinence are perceived by the majority as representing outdated attitudes, or as being the objects of family oppression, and do not want to justify themselves all the time. They prefer to spend time with peers who share similar thoughts and accept them the way they are. Some students even argued *expressis verbis* that it is better to be in a school where minorities are in the majority because it offers a kind of protection against discrimination.

- For the students we interviewed, the most important actors of "othering" along lines of ethnic group belonging are teachers or other adults working in the school environment. This comes at no surprise: Due to the high degree of ethnic segregation in the districts, the school is *the* site where students interact with members of the majority population most regularly, and school activities absorb much of their time – at least if students attend lessons as foreseen. Several Muslim girls felt discrimination because of their headscarves. Some explained that they felt bothered by interrogations in school lessons about arranged or forced marriages and family life in Islam as well. This feeling seems to be due to the fact that teachers present these issues in such a way that the Muslim students feel non-acceptance: the teachers' intention in most cases seems to be to make the students adopt German majority views and not to resolve negative stereotypes about Muslims and Islam by deliberative discussions in class.

### **The formation of minority identities**

Adolescents' identity discourses are embedded in struggles of collective as well as self-representations, and the state schools are the major institutions where the related contestations surface. One important empirical question was hence how the pupils from ethnic minorities act in this discursive field: what group boundaries do they delineate, and how do their own group categories, as expressions of identity, refer to the wider context of classifications? How do they ultimately perceive the value and meanings of their "cultural otherness" in respect of their recognition and future participation in German society?

In our study, this whole complex of identification and future aspirations appears to be related to two dimensions of experienced boundary drawing in the students' perceptions: (1) family solidarity was seen by many as being an outstanding positive trait of their own circles, and as something the Germans were lacking; (2) constructions of "us" and "them" were used to resist discrimination and exclusion experiences. In their sum, these two reflections of the experienced categorical exclusion reconfirmed the dominant discourse and boundary drawing on the vernacular level along collective lines of the "other" culture, Muslim belief, and ethnic origin.

Solidarity with the family became an issue in many different contexts. The need for ethnic minority students to close ranks with their parents by stressing how much they agree with them, and their own obedience of certain norms, as completely deliberate has to be interpreted as a reaction to the mainstream discourse about Islam as a repressive force: our interviewees were well aware that most Germans regard norms like chastity, covering of the hair, or marriage at an early age as signs of parental oppression. In their schools students are often faced with discussions about these issues, and they then feel that they are unable to change their teachers' or German peers' negative perceptions of their families and religion.

Constructing "us- and them-groups" in such a way that the content of discrimination is reversed is an important component of minority identity building. Some students used the strategy to extend their "us-group" to all Muslims in Germany and sometimes even to non-Muslim minorities who were described as sharing similar cultural norms of respect, chastity, and honesty. In our sample we observed this strategy more often in the Arab than in the Turkish group, which might be related to the fact that it is more convenient for smaller communities to represent themselves as parts of larger communities. This strategy is enhanced by the neglect of internal differences and strong emphasis on the perceived differences of the others: irrespective of the variations in formulating the own identity, there was a complete absence of identifications as Germans, although almost all students in our sample had German citizenship. When asked what this meant for them, the students told us that it would just be impossible to identify oneself as German. "Look at my hair, look at my skin! How could I be German? On top of that, we are Muslims!" is the kind of answer they gave. Some students also argued that the Germans would not accept them as being alike. To fully assimilate and finally become a "real German" is evidently not within the range of options that students of Turkish, Arab, or, generally, Muslim background regard as realistic. In this respect, the findings of our research evidence once again what a host of studies on the formation of minority identities in Germany have been presenting for years (see, for example: Schiffauer et al. 2004).

Sure, legislative changes in 2000 have made it easier for foreign residents and especially for their German-born children to acquire German citizenship, and on the whole, attempts to develop integration policies have been made since then as well. (Before – with the official creed of Germany being a no-immigration country, there was no such policy at all but rather *ad-hoc* measures to react to eminent problems). However, the ethnicised notion of German citizenship and who is a "real German" does not seem to have changed. According to the students and parents whom we interviewed, Germanness and Muslim identities are still regarded as being incompatible in public discourse and daily interactions with "real Germans"; and therefore also ingrained into the minorities' own perceptions of belonging and relevant group boundaries. The understanding of belonging we encountered in our interviews with students and parents, on the one hand, and with teachers and other school staff, on the other, is either that Islam is not really accepted (minority students and parents' views) or that Islam does not really fit (teachers' view) in German society.



## Policy recommendations

In many respects, the findings of the German EDUMIGROM study lead to exactly the same set of recommendations that were issued and explained in detail in the fall of 2010 by the already quoted Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration in their annual report (SVR 2010). This is not coincidental. It rather reflects the fact that there has not been any scarcity of policy recommendations in this realm in Germany for years. Rather these were presented and discussed again and again, became more refined and precise in this process, but many have remained the same in their core substance because too little has been done to actually translate these recommendations into political practice that touches the ground. With respect to the focus of the EDUMIGROM research, some of these general statements must be specified or else qualified.

## Measures of inclusion in the field of education

It is of eminent interest for Germany to improve the educational situation for ethnic minority youth and to better assist their societal inclusion by way of state education: because of the conflict potential inherent to ethnicised patterns of resource distribution; because of the necessity to have as many people who are qualified as best as possible to be employed in order to contribute to the social welfare system of an ageing and demographically-shrinking society; and because of minority youth's equal basic rights to enjoy assistance for their adult participation in the polity, society, and economical life of the country. Given the much-evidenced fact that German-language skills are decisive for good school performances and also necessary for participation in wider society, children with deficient language skills need better and systematic support across all the German *Länder* to improve their opportunities.

Current suggestions for school reform do in fact aim to improve individual pupils' achievements, implement equal opportunity structures, increase the autonomy of individual schools, and introduce whole-day schools. Within this general debate on school reform, the specific needs of migrants and issues of cultural diversity have not been seriously taken into consideration. Still, the majority of policymakers refuse to abolish the multi-track school system and early streaming, although these two markers of the German system have repeatedly been rated to be most detrimental for this target group. Since education has remained to be a domain of the German federal *Länder*, a systematic reform of the German school system would imply the need to find a common solution on the federal state level and reform the system in such a way that comprehensive schooling and the extended time spent jointly in elementary education is not a mere additional option in some *Länder* but becomes the normal track.

The EDUMIGROM findings have shown (once again) how important a supportive atmosphere and the existence of encouraging role models are for the positive development of minority students in schools. Here, an initiative to employ more teachers with an immigrant and/or ethnic minority background would be helpful and could easily be promoted in all German *Länder*. Ethnic German teachers should also have to absolve courses in awareness-raising to make them familiar with anti-racist, non-discriminatory teaching as an obligatory part of their in-service training. This would have to be implemented on the *Länder* level, but as long as the *Länder* governments do not take action, it can also be organised on the school level to enrol teachers in further education courses of this nature.

Some grass-roots initiatives and projects, either by or in cooperation with migrants or migrant organisations to improve the parent-school relationships in schools with high rates of ethnic minority pupils, have been initiated in a number of German cities with some considerable success. For instance, there is a Turkish parents' organisation in Berlin that cooperates with individual schools by discussing current problems with teachers, advising them, consulting parents, translating between both parties not only regarding language but also in terms of respective expectations and cultural customs.<sup>58</sup> It would be easy, not costly, and probably most efficient if that was proactively encouraged more by schools and/or district school councils. Successful projects encourage competent migrants to act as mediators to such migrant parents who cannot offer an educated, literate environment to their children. For example, after being trained as a "neighbourhood mother", bilingual women instruct a group of other migrant mothers and familiarise them with the German school system, discuss social issues around school, and provide them with further material for the education of their children. Another successful form of networking that can be initiated on school level is the cooperation between schools with a high percentage of socially disadvantaged and migrant students, and local companies offering internships.

## **Societal interethnic relations**

The dimension of interethnic relations within and outside the educational arena is perfectly caught in the nutshell of the following core messages on the discourse of the elite and political mainstream culture:

*The published elite discourses on the crisis and failure of integration, on the one hand, and the marginalisation and exclusion of the immigrant population, on the other, seem to have little in common with the everyday realities of the immigration society. (...) Following a long period of denial –'The Federal Republic of Germany is not an immigration country'–, integration and migration have finally entered the political mainstream. Much has been achieved. Yet some political initiatives even if declared priorities remain quite remote for the addressees (SVR 2010: core messages 5 and 6).*

58 Available online: <http://www.tevbub.de>; [www.hippy-deutschland.de](http://www.hippy-deutschland.de).

Representatives of political mainstream culture and elite discourse should refrain from spreading (even false) alarmist stereotypes and rather stress the normalcy of the fact that German society comprises immigrant groups, that it is marked by an ever-growing internal heterogeneity and therefore needs to develop a positive attitude towards these people. Germany' political leadership is far from issuing anything comparable to the British Race Relations Act or Equal Opportunities Act. Any affirmative self-description as being a multicultural society is unrealistic. However, there will be no alternative to acknowledging the factual situation and promoting the concept of immigrant groups as being an integral part of contemporary German society if discriminative mentalities shall seriously be dissolved. It will only become possible to address conflicts at eye level, for example, surrounding the rights of religious minorities, if their principle entitlement to make claims is no longer rejected by leading figures of the political establishment and powerful media. Although such a change can be assisted with positive action measures, or a codification of the ethical norms of political correctness, the principle problem is the persisting expectation of wide societal and party political circles that the "others" have to assimilate rather than make claims. Surely, citizenship is a crucial instrument in enabling access to equal rights, but it should be made much clearer by opinion leaders on all levels that naturalised citizens or German-born children from ethnic minority families are by no means second-class citizens:

*An essential feature of social peace in an immigration society is the acknowledgement that integration means equal participation to the furthest extent possible in key areas of social life. In an immigration society, which is becoming increasingly heterogeneous for other reasons as well, the criterion migrant background is only one among many socio-economic indicators that denotes a potential need for assistance. It must however be allocated sufficient importance until it can be replaced by criteria related to milieu-specific needs. We have not yet arrived at this point (SVR 2010, core message 8).*

The recognition claims of minority groups, be they religious, cultural, ethnic, or whatever else, will continue to contest and challenge majority concepts. It will thus be increasingly important for all members in our "super-diverse" societies to develop capabilities regarding conflict resolution strategies.

In the realm of education, school textbooks deserve to be critically looked upon before chosen for teaching. They are powerful mass media, and some of them spread incredibly stereotypical images of the immigrant population and their countries of origin (Mannitz 2005). The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig has been running numerous projects for years to analyse the available school textbooks in respect of the way they represent immigrants, ethnic diversity, and Islam in Germany.<sup>59</sup> Schools are free in their choice of the teaching materials in Germany once the textbooks are accredited by the respective Ministry of Education of their federal state. Hence, it is easy to

59 Available online: <http://www.gei.de>.

make a difference: on both levels, it should become a self-evident criterion for the selection of textbooks that they take into consideration immigration history and the actual heterogeneity of German society and represent it in a fair way.

### **Ethnic differences and the welfare system**

Ethnic and social urban segregation is a major issue in the debate about integration and education. The interrelatedness of ethnic inequalities and dependency on welfare is one of the notorious markers of underprivileged school districts. The most common suggestion to desegregate these urban areas is to foster disadvantaged districts by improving the infrastructure and encouraging civic participation and local networking. Within these urban policy programmes schools are regarded as "integration centres" that connect students, parents, and teachers, as well as migrant organisations, the local economy, and other relevant agents (Federal Government 2007). According to this idea and in line with the current conception of school development, schools are to define their specific profiles and offer particular services in order to attract (German) middle-class parents to stop or even reverse the ethnic segregation effects. Related strategies in favour of attracting better-off students and their families in socially underprivileged neighbourhoods are the reduction of class sizes, an increase of the numbers of teachers, co-teaching by two teachers in one class (in a few cases also for bilingual teaching), implementation of whole-day schools in order to offer qualified supervision of homework in afternoon hours, as well as the consequent implementation of intercultural pedagogy. These measures as such deserve to be implemented, not only in order to attract students from more ambitious or more education conscious families, but in particular in favour of those less privileged students who attend the ill-famed "minority schools". However, in the light of restricted funds of urban policy programs, the feasibility of these strategies to radically change classroom culture and ethnic structure, conflict management, and school performances in the "multi-problem" neighbourhoods is rather doubtful. Moreover, increased competition between schools may also contribute to further segregation in the schools of a district.

Direct welfare investments that reach disadvantaged groups of students appear to be more realistic at present, for example, the currently discussed, and partly already decided reform of what/how the welfare system pays for children and adolescents: instead of just increasing the monetary transfer to those families who are in need of welfare provisions, vouchers for the specific educational needs of children shall be issued which can then be used for special courses, homework assistance, a visit to a museum, etc. The monetary value of these vouchers must, of course, be sufficient to make a real difference. It is questionable if that will be the case.

## Minority rights and citizenship

All children who are born in Germany automatically acquire German citizenship, but some of them are also entitled – depending on the nationality laws of their parents' country of origin – to become citizens of these countries (e.g., in the case of Turkish parents). Notwithstanding, these children must opt for one of the two on attaining their full legal age because Germany does not grant dual citizenship. The latter would, however, make it much easier for many of the so-called second- and third-generation immigrants to keep German citizenship and thereby full access to political rights. The paradox of the one-time West-German way to cope with the societal consequences of immigration was that a broad range of participation rights, social and economic inclusion, and access to the welfare system were made available to immigrants irrespective of their formal political citizenship. This has made it comparatively unnecessary to "become German" in the proper sense of full formal citizenship. Moreover, as the students we interviewed confirmed as well, being a German in terms of citizenship does not prevent discrimination. The crucial dimension of the inclusion of ethnic heterogeneity in the imagined community of the Germans has been left remarkably untouched so far. However, if young people from families of Turkish or Lebanese origin prefer to keep their parents' citizenship – and there are many good reasons to do so – then the collective imaginary is hardly challenged to change. The federal government would thus send an encouraging signal of acceptance to the offspring of the former guest workers if dual citizenship would finally be made possible.

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## HUNGARY

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## **Background: Roma and education in Hungary**

The collapse of state socialist regime brought about fundamental changes in all spheres – political, economic, and societal – of Hungarian society, all of which have considerably affected both Hungary's majority and its ethnic minorities. On the political level the one-party political leadership was replaced by democratic parliamentary arrangement and the centralised public administration was changed into a decentralised municipal system. As a result, each settlement, even the smallest village, elected its own municipal council and mayor and this concluded in an extreme fragmentation of local politics and policymaking (Pálné Kovács 2001). This change brought about an overly decentralised arrangement for education: local municipal councils became responsible for organising public education, local welfare, the institutional structure of primary and secondary schools, local pedagogical programmes, and curricula. This had major consequences on the workings of the entire educational system. Due to significant differences in the sizes of the local educational markets and the impacts of diverse historical heritages, social and personal conditions, and local political leaderships, inequalities among schools have grown significantly in terms of human resources and infrastructure.

The democratic transition also significantly changed the political and legal situation of ethnic minorities. Act No. LXXVII of 1993 on National and Ethnic Minorities provided the right to registered ethnic and national minorities (among them the Roma) to form their political representation in the form of minority local self-governments, which had – at least formally – a say in various fields of public and local politics that concerned members of the minority community. They received the right, for example, to establish "ethnic" schools or to comment or veto the curriculum of the local public school if it had a programme targeting ethnic minorities.

Roma have been the major losers of the transition of the political and economic regime over the last two decades. This general observation is supported by statistical data, revealing that the disadvantages of the Roma population – with regard to unemployment, low education, poor living and health conditions, and shorter life expectancy – have dramatically increased, and despite some improvements in residential and housing conditions in certain areas, their segregation has been further increased: new Roma colonies and ghettoised slums in have begun to appear in larger cities (Kemény, Havas, and Kertesi 1994, Kemény, Janky, and Lengyel 2004). Employment rates began to fall already during the economic crisis of the late 1980s, and this process accelerated due to privatisation, the deterioration of outdated branches of industry, the ceasing of agricultural cooperatives, the following disintegration of rural communities, and the loss of external markets after 1989. With the collapse of the state socialist economy – and the closing of large industrial enterprises – masses of Roma, characteristically employed as unskilled workers, lost their jobs, and therefore often their subsistence, too. Presently, the most significant share of working-age Roma are excluded from the primary labour market and are forced into the arena of unstable and short-term public employment complemented by low paid and unregistered daily work in the construction



industry and agriculture, providing unstable employment and little or no security. By 2003, only 28 per cent of Roma men aged 15–54 held jobs, and the employment rate was down to 15 per cent among Roma women (Kertesi 1995, Kemény 1997, Kemény, Janky, and Lengyel 2004). The increasing residential segregation of Roma into regions of economic depression, the continuing economic crisis of the 2000s, and increasing discrimination on the labour market has most probably further reduced the proportion of officially employed Roma in Hungary. Alongside the growth of social and economic disadvantages of the Roma minority and the widening of the income gap between them and majority society, an internal differentiation started within the Roma population, whereby a small group of entrepreneurs and intellectuals developed, facing masses living in despair and dependent on the welfare system. (Dupcsik and Vajda 2008).

Residential and housing conditions represent a critical factor in the fate of Roma, who characteristically live in dilapidated, overcrowded buildings with little home comforts in segregated colonies, slums, and neighbourhoods located in economically disadvantaged areas, with no perspective of employment or upward social mobility. Another important factor in the increase of poverty is of a demographic nature: the fertility rate of Roma women is significantly higher when compared to the ethnic majority while the life expectancy is radically – over a decade – lower. Since urbanisation was important during the last decades of state socialism, housing conditions were somewhat improved, but these positive tendencies stopped or were even reversed during the 1990s when new forms of segregation started to emerge (Havas and Kemény 1995, Kertesi 2000). As a result of a process of re-ruralisation (i.e., escaping from the expensive cities due to the collapse of the "socialist" heavy industry, the chance for work, and acceptable living conditions evaporated), most Roma live in the northeast and southwest of Hungary (parts of which serving as the sites of EDUMIGROM empirical research): an estimated half of them reside in small villages, while the other half are concentrated in urban slums of the deteriorated industrial areas in these regions and in the capital, Budapest, respectively. As a result of the process of "spontaneous segregation",<sup>60</sup> 72 per cent of Roma lived in more or less segregated circumstances by 2003 and 40 per cent were residents in small villages (Kemény, Janky, and Lengyel 2004). The "ghettoisation" of villages and small regions has been intensified due to "white flight" of middle-class families. If the middle-class starts to abandon the settlement (move away or simply work and use public services – education, healthcare – elsewhere), the trend seems to be irreversible. The poor, and first of all the Roma, are trapped in those settlements and their surrounding institutions.

Under-education became a major factor in the exclusion of Roma from the labour market, in the two decades since the transition. This is because the demands and requirements characterising the labour market of the market economy involve new types of challenges, producing a shift in Roma educational disadvantages from the level of primary to secondary education. In other words, although young Roma

60 "Spontaneous segregation" was a widely used expression in the Hungarian public discourse of the 1990s with a similar meaning to Western sociologists' expression of "white flight".

have better chances to complete primary education since the 1990s (Havas and Kemény 1995; Kemény, Janky, and Lengyel 2004), they are still lacking opportunities to receive the secondary or higher education that has become the critical factor concerning employment opportunities. At best, young Roma continue their studies in vocational schools, but the inflexible structure of these institutions, which are incapable to accommodate their training to actual market demands, and the delay of a radical reform in this sphere of public education, contributed to the growth of a redundant workforce. Thus the grasp of the vicious cycle of poverty – lack of education – unemployment – poverty – has become ever more powerful, constantly widening the social distance between the Roma minority and the social majority (Kertesi 2000).

Increasing social and residential segregation also makes its imprints on the school system, reflecting a widening gap in performance and educational opportunities linked with social status. According to the PISA surveys (OECD 2005, 2010), the Hungarian educational system is one in which parental background is not only the most determining factor in students' academic performance, but education even amplifies these disparities. Twenty-six per cent of the variance in reading competences is explained by students' family backgrounds, which is not only the highest rate among OECD countries but almost twice the OECD average. This fact may be attributed to several parallel reasons: extreme regional inequalities, the above-described acute fragmentation of the municipal system which is in part responsible for the financing and maintaining the schools, and the free choice of schools by families accompanied with the above-mentioned "white flight," all adding up in the extreme disparities of teaching and infrastructural quality of schools. These conditions, together with numerous harmful factors associated with unfavourable family origins, underpaid and often disillusioned teachers, hostile interethnic relations, and prejudice toward poor and Roma students, contribute to the diverging performance and opportunities of 14-year-old children in Hungary (Dupcsik and Molnár 2008, Zolnay 2010).

Some additional information has to be added here concerning the processes characterising everyday life and schooling of Roma children. First, the process of segregation: local politicians, even if dedicated to desegregation and social integration, are most typically incapable of managing the problem of enduring low employment, poverty, and increasing educational segregation of their socially marginalised population among circumstances of fragmented municipal system. One important driving power behind increasing educational segregation is the flight of non-Roma middle-class families as a consequence of which schools in smaller settlements or poorer districts of larger urban areas become "ghetto schools". Schools often try to mitigate white flight by offering internal separation for middle-class students in the form of initiating parallel classes, one of which offers specialisation or intensive language teaching (separate class for talented students in maths, bilingual classes, etc.). A third factor in the increasing gap between schools is systematic: a special type of secondary school, six- and eight-year *Gymnasia*, operating mainly in larger settlements are institutions which "cream out" the best performing, most talented, and highest status students in the mid of their primary school career causing early institutional selection in settlements where they function.

The result of these complex and intersecting processes is, that despite normative (per capita) financing of education from the state budget, municipalities in difficult financial straits use these restricted resources for tasks that do not have even indirect bearing on education. As a consequence, students studying in "selective" elite schools or classes receive high-quality education, with a number of extracurricular activities and pedagogical services, while students in "ghetto" schools of the poorest settlements, which are in desperate need of educational services, are provided low-quality education and are deprived even the most essential services, such as afternoon classes (a non-compulsory but generally provided educational service in the course of which children receive teachers' help in doing their homework and making up any arrears), adequate heating and sanitary conditions, and school equipment, not to mention leisure, cultural, or sport activities.

After the above description of the complex nature of the causes leading to extreme inequalities in the educational system of Hungary, it might have become evident that a change in the present situation necessitates a complex reform not only of legal regulations in the educational sector but also in the municipal system (including its tasks, rights, and financing). These changes necessitate laws that require two-thirds of the votes. In the parliamentary election held in April 2010, the right-wing Fidesz Party won an unprecedented two-thirds majority in the Hungarian Parliament, thus the party was, in theory, empowered to modify or change all the regulations that have proved to be an utter obstacle to meaningful educational reforms. The new government coming into office in June 2010, however, had an ambivalent attitude towards educational policies targeting social inclusion, and so far it is uncertain how profoundly it wishes to rebuild the legal framework and financing system of public education, and how committed it is towards enhancing equity in education (Kende 2011, Messing 2011, Radó 2011).

## **Framing of public and political discourse on education and the 'Roma question' in Hungarian society**

The necessity of ethno-social inclusion in education is a widely debated issue in public and political discourse on education. The majority actors in the Hungarian political arena have recognised that education is an essential tool for integrating socially marginalised communities that are permanently excluded from the labour market and condemned to long-term poverty and destitution. This aim has been arrived at now after twenty years of intensives discussion and debate in the political, policy, and public arenas. The most powerful policy agenda of the left-wing government ruling between 2002 and 2010 was ethno-social integration. Still, as a consequence of the above-described fragmentation of the local municipal system, municipalities' capability to influence segregation depended on their size, the social composition of the settlement, and power relations in the local educational market. Small settlements,

for example, with a dominantly poor and/or Roma population operating one primary school cannot do anything about the ethnically and socially segregated schooling of their children.

The public and policy discourse on education and more specifically, its role in providing equal chances for Roma and non-Roma children, have been extensive in the past couple of years. Several frames of argumentation have come up in the political and public discourse. In the following section we introduce the most dominant ones.

### **'Colour-blind' approaches**

A colour-blind approach to education was the dominant attitude of governments – both right- and left-wing administrations – in the past two decades. The educational integration policy during the period 2002–2010 also has followed this framework, when it defined its targets in terms of social disadvantages and not ethnicity. The government considered ethnic and social segregation as merely a symptom of extreme inequality within the broader context, disregarding its ethnic dimension. Without using ethnic terms, two target groups were named instead: *multiply disadvantaged children* and *children with special educational needs*. There are objective criteria for the category of "multiply disadvantaged": it involves families where the level of education of the parents is not higher than eighth grade, and that, due to their low income per capita, are entitled to regular child protection support. Undoubtedly, this policy assumed that not only Roma pupils are affected by an unequal distribution of educational goods and services, but rather every pupil who does not have the opportunity to choose among schools or who does not have access to at least medium-quality education. The introduction of the other category – children with special educational needs – has emerged in the anti-segregation discourse, as well. According to this conception, children with learning difficulties or with physical or mild mental disabilities have to be integrated with their majority peers in regular classes. Following the contemporary debates among experts, politicians and representatives of civil movements, it is obvious that to some extent, this category also overlaps with the category of Roma children from disadvantaged family backgrounds who lack adequate early education in kindergarten and who are often considered as immature for school at school-age and, consequently, frequently are directed into "special" schools originally established for mentally handicapped children (Kende and Neményi 2006).

The policy was built on positive incentives: constructing integrated classes was supported by providing additional financing for improving infrastructure, additional teacher training including courses on innovative pedagogical methods, and courses on the specificities of teaching a socially and ethnically diverse student population. Another important aim of this policy framework was desegregation. A prevalent institutional formation of ethnic segregation (not only in Hungary but the entire Central European region) was a separate type of special schools. The whole framework of educating special need children was reexamined: both the process of defining who falls into the category of "special needs" and

the necessity of maintaining segregated institutions were revised and the need to integrate these children – when possible – into regular schools was formulated as a priority. Still, in many cases, the integration of special needs students in advanced grades (or mature age) proved a failure, because it was not tied to any further special care or services needed by these children in regular schools.

Many critiques have been raised concerning measures aiming at integration. First, the policy could not do anything about schools in marginalised, ghettoised settlements; second, it was also unable to treat the consequences of white flight; third, integrating special needs children at an advanced age proved to be problematic in practice. Leading politicians – both on the right- and left-wing – also questioned whether educational integration was the best route to social integration. The dominant majority of municipal councils providing schools – irrespective of their political affiliation – considered the government's arguments incorrect. Local educational officials interpreted the government's claims as a violation of parents' right for free school choice and found that, in practice, non-Roma pupils were forced to attend schools and classes together with socially disadvantaged Roma peers.

As a response to accelerated process of white flight and municipalities' resistance to desegregation, two elements were included in the Education Act after amendments in 2007 that restricted the schools' opportunities for selection and limited the municipalities maintaining schools in their practices reinforcing segregation:

- *Rules referring to reshaping catchment areas* were amended to make sure that in settlements where more primary schools operate the proportion of multiply disadvantaged pupils would not differ between their catchment areas by more than 25 percent.
- *Rules referring to admittance of children from outside the catchment area* were amended so that the freedom of schools to select freely from children applying from outside their catchment area was severely restricted.

A main conclusion about the reforms might be that the process could not handle the immense power of the counteracting middle classes, and only those few towns were successful in implementing educational integration where the elite and leadership of the town had an honest belief in the policy's success on the long-run. In those towns – and these represent the majority – where the local elite was convinced that separating their children from low-status peers was in their best interest, integration was unsuccessful. This is also supported by the fact that educational segregation – despite powerful integration measures by the government – has increased in the last decade (Kertesi and Kézdi 2010). An exceptionally telling index of inequalities in public education demonstrates that, while in the case of pupils learning in OECD countries the differences in performance of reading and comprehension are due to differences between schools is 36 percent, in the case of Hungarian pupils this proportion is 71 percent. The performance of children at school and chances for further education is determined by early school choice to a much greater extent than in most other OECD countries.

There is, however, a significant, though small development: reading competences, as measured by PISA, have improved due to the decrease in the number of the lowest performers (functionally illiterate) by 2009. Some experts attribute this improvement to the increase of pedagogical quality in those schools participating in the integration programme and the decrease of the number of students with special needs studying in segregated institutions (Szira 2011, Radó 2011).

### **'Colour-conscious' approaches**

Although the dominant approach to treating inequalities was framed by colour-blind policies, several measures were introduced that applied a colour-conscious approach. Such measures are justified by considering that ethnic "otherness" adds to the disadvantages that Roma children suffer in education due to their deprived social status. Affirmative interventions are all the more needed because prejudices and hostility on the part of the majority often pervert programmes to reduce social and educational inequalities in a colour-blind way and conclude in the exclusion of Roma from access to many spheres of public life. Colour-conscious measures include scholarship schemes for Roma students in public education that solely address Roma students. Nonetheless, this scheme addresses social disadvantages, providing a modest monthly scholarship, but not offering any other services that would add to treating disadvantages stemming from the prejudiced and hostile environment Roma students often face (i.e., courses on how to treat prejudice, community programs enhancing positive ethnic identity, educational support) (Messing and Molnár 2008).

Another scheme that might be categorised as colour-conscious policy is the founding of after-school academy ("*tanoda*") network. These are institutions organising extracurricular activities that are usually maintained by the local Roma self-governments in cooperation with the local schools. These academies provide after-school tuition for talented (or less talented) Roma children where they can catch up with school with the help of some teachers. A number of leisure activities – excursions, computer courses, Roma cultural/ music/ dance courses – are also organised here that aim to enhance positive ethnic identity and create a community for children who live among desperate conditions (Messing 2007). Many of the after-school academies function in ghettoised settlements or in rundown urban areas with a high concentration of poverty and are visited by children in destitute social conditions, irrespective of their actual ethnic belonging. The program proved to be successful in most of the places where it functioned; still the arbitrary nature of the financing (mainly from competitions on European Union funds) made the network disintegrate.

Some of the schools also operate Roma courses, which provide Roma-language teaching and a syllabus on Roma traditions, history, culture, and crafts. Still, such courses/classes became most frequently a means of ethnic segregation rather than a tool for multiethnic education (Zolnay 2010, ÁSZ 2008).

## The legal framework of human and minority rights

A third approach to inequalities that Roma children experience in public education (and other spheres of everyday life) is a legal one. Two basic discourses – equal opportunity discourse and anti-segregation discourse – may be identified within this framework.

Act CXXXV on Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities (2003) has a special section on school segregation emphasising that segregation – both in educational institutions and its subdivisions (classes, streams) – is qualified as the violation of equal treatment. This Act filled important gaps by providing the legal base for revealing discrimination cases and offering remedies for them. It formulated the definitions for both direct and indirect negative discrimination and identified protected groups. An important constituent of this act is *actio popularis*, or the "claimed enforcement of public interest", that is to say, it is possible to initiate a lawsuit without an actual plaintiff, if the rights of a larger group are violated and the persons concerned cannot be defined.

The most influential organisation that frames the segregated educational environment as a manifestation of ethnic discrimination and fights against it with legal means is the Chance for Children Fund, which sues schools and school-providing municipalities for maintaining ethnically segregated schools or branches, as well as for separating Roma children from their peers in other everyday activities of the school (lunch in the canteen, physical training).<sup>61</sup> The Fund has succeeded in many of its suits to prove that Roma children have been unlawfully segregated and discriminated against, and as a consequence denied the right for equal quality education. The consequences can range from stopping segregating and discriminating practices by the school-providing municipalities to the complete negligence of the courts' decision.

In 2005, an important governmental agency – the Equal Treatment Authority – was created, the main task of which is to treat complaints about discrimination, to prove such cases, and to fine discriminating institutions. Most typical cases relate to discrimination based on gender, age, handicap, and ethnic belonging, and only a few of their cases report about public education. Another important institution regarding protection against discrimination is the Ombudsman's Office, which regularly initiates investigations and issues recommendations to Parliament and other public bodies.

## Ethnicisation of social problems

The dominant framework of discourse in the local arenas and also in the media ethnicises social problems, including poverty, long-term unemployment and welfare dependency and extreme regional inequalities prevalent in the country. Aversion and hostility towards Roma communities and Roma people have

61 Similar activity is done by the European Roma Rights Fund in Slovakia and the Czech Republic

intensified in Hungarian press as well as in the political discourse in the past few years. A large part of the public shares the view that Roma communities have only themselves to blame for their current miserable conditions in most cases, and their "over-assistance" and "over-support" should cease or should be bound by strict conditions. Local municipal councils have to interpret what common good, social justice, public welfare, equal distribution of resources, transfers, and services mean in local context. Actors in local politics are inclined to describe not only educational inequality by using ethnic terms but all social problems in general as the "Roma problem" or the "Roma question" in their localities. Worryingly, the phrase implies that the existence of Roma population is the problem in itself. The "Roma problem/Roma question" discourse has become noticeably more hostile in recent years.

The norms of local public discourse are largely "permissive" of the generation of hatred or incitement against Roma communities in Hungary. Using abusive language, slander, or insults when talking about Roma, or the Roma community as a whole, is generally accepted in local political communication, even in the general assemblies of local councils. Many of the local elites: mayors, local councillors, notaries, or police officers unscrupulously state that Roma children are inferior, that Roma women give birth to many children in order to maximise the amount of child-care allowance and social benefit as a source of living; and the increasing number of the Roma population violates national security, etc., while never pausing to relate these behavioural patterns to the social and physical exclusion that these people experience.

The above discourse, i.e., blaming the poor for their desperate situation, is an inherent element of struggles for scarce public resources in the local arena and a powerful means to exclude the most vulnerable groups from resources such as welfare services, schools, health and paediatric services, and most importantly, access to labour. These are spheres of life that the local elites do not want to share with those living in desperate poverty. This assumption is supported by the fact that highest racial discrimination and ethno-social exclusion is registered in regions that are the most economically disintegrated and where the lower-middle classes fear that economic failure is all too realistic.

### **Discourses of the extreme right**

A relatively new development in the Hungarian public and political arena is the immensely rapid gain of the extreme-right's discourse and power which has built on anti-Roma and anti-Semitic prejudices. Increased demands for public order, leaning towards autocratic power, together with conveniently scapegoating Roma, have characterised the response of large segments of the Hungarian population to the economic mismanagement of the post-transition economic crisis and impoverishment of large segments of society. The proportion of those responsive to extreme right's ideology have risen from 9.9 per cent in 2003 to 20.7 per cent in 2009 according European Social Survey data; for comparison, this ratio is below 2.7 per cent in Germany, 5.1 per cent in the United Kingdom, and 7.4 per cent in the Czech Republic. Only Latvia



and Bulgaria have demonstrated similarly high proportions of respondents agreeing with the extreme right's ideologies. As a result of these processes, the extreme-right party (Jobbik) gained support in the political vacuum that emerged after the left-wing government lost its political credibility and most of its public support in the autumn of 2006. The party also exploited a tragic incident that brought about a change in Hungarian society's general attitude towards Roma: in October 2006, a teacher was lynched by a group of Roma men and women in a village after he accidentally hit a Roma girl with his car. The incident triggered a "moral panic"; extreme and moderate right-leaning media blamed the government for mismanaging its policy targeting Roma, and their arguments met a willing audience among the public. Following this event, anti-Roma prejudice welled up, and open discrimination and racial hatred became an acceptable frame of discourse.

Roma were attacked not only verbally but physically: a racially-motivated series of murders in segregated parts of villages inhabited by poverty-stricken Roma took place in 2009. Several murders occurred until the police realised that there might be a link between these cases and the motivation of the perpetrators might have been anti-Roma hatred. These tragic incidents reflected well the general attitude of the authorities: they were reluctant to assume any racial motivation behind crimes, even if it was a rather obvious possibility.

Jobbik formed its paramilitary unit in 2007, the Hungarian Guard, which regularly organised marches in settlements where the cohabitation of Roma and non-Roma was problematic and where Roma people were living in physically segregated parts of the settlements. These marches were intended to demonstrate physical power and threaten Roma communities. The state was unable (or unwilling?) to stop the unlawful marchers till 2010. The general atmosphere of threat and fear has deepened significant interethnic mistrust, conflict, and related problems in the most disintegrated settlements, while Jobbik gained increasing political power in these regions.

During the parliamentary election in 2010, Jobbik gained over 16 percent of the votes and got into the Parliament. They openly voice racist ideas and support direct discrimination and segregation of Roma people in Hungary inside and outside the walls of Parliament.

## **Main findings of Hungarian EDUMIGROM research and their contributions**

The context of EDUMIGROM research was broader than most research focusing strictly and exclusively on inequalities of public education, for example, ethnic and social segregation, school achievement, national or local decision-making, etc. Our study confirmed that the extreme inequalities in Hungarian public education originate from the multiplicity of selective processes driven by diverse social, political, and economic interests that coalesce in the serious segmentation of the school system. We can also claim

that segmentation in itself works toward deepening already existing inequalities. The primary aim of our research was to reveal the interplay between institutionally framed structural arrangements in education and the personal reactions and reflections on them.

We approached this duality by looking at the entire spectrum of primary schools in two urban areas where the estimated number of Roma students was higher than the average in Hungary. In our questionnaire-based survey research, all students in their concluding year of schooling were asked about their experiences, future plans, and longer-term ideas about adult life. The qualitative fieldwork research allowed us to deepen our knowledge about several aspects of our central research query: factors behind differences in the school performance and the educational careers of ethnic minority students. This design allowed us to concurrently apply two prisms, "structural" and "personal", and seek the mechanisms about how they affect each other.

### **Performance and future opportunities**

Two rather closed communities of this study provided an opportunity to look at a refined, internal socio-economic and ethnic structuring of them, and thus we were able to map three intersecting factors that gave rise to diverging quality of schools:

- The impact of recent socio-geographic trends, in the course of which residential inequalities in and around urban areas have increased and that brought about "elite" units as well as impoverished ethnic slums and Roma ghettos/villages;
- The right of free choice for schooling manifested itself in a massive flight of the middle classes, and thereby has further intensified selections conditioned by socio-geographic disparities;
- Divergent policies of the schools that, by responding to parental pressures, concluded in varied techniques of "streaming" children into homogenous class communities.

The design of the research made it possible to see how these three distinctive processes of selection strengthen one another. Our data revealed the depth of ethnic divides from a novel angle by showing that, in terms of acknowledged school achievement (i.e., grading), ethnic belonging overrides the strength of social background and gender and concludes in the devaluation of Roma students' performance en masse. It is not only social and ethnic divergences in assessed performance, but the institutional framing of them that matters: being aware of the massive inequalities among the primary schools of the community, local secondary-level institutions apply a refined differential reading of students' certificates, and strongly devalue those school results that come from weaker institutions. The selective power of "scoring" proves to be efficient in turning earlier segmentation into now visible forms of separation, and distribute students along the dividing lines of social class and ethnic belonging – where students from

lower-status backgrounds, with a heavy overrepresentation of Roma, find themselves at the bottom of the scale. As a result, the last phase of compulsory education loses ground in the eyes of these most disadvantaged groups, and what is more, aspirations for upward mobility quickly dissolve after being squeezed into low-prestige institutions known for hardly-useable, poor-quality training, disinterest in students' occupational advancement, and the concomitant high rates of early leaving.

### **Composition of the school and the class**

The research found that the school setting and the social-ethnic composition of the class, in particular, have a major influence on everyday experiences of adolescent youth at school. The analysis of data demonstrated that performance, future aspirations, peer-group relations, and student-teacher relations are similarly affected by the actual composition of the class and school community. Apparently, it is the internal separation of Roma and non-Roma students into parallel classes that brings about the most damaging environment for both ethnic majority and minority students. The everyday experience of separation and discrimination is damaging in terms of relationships as well as performance and aspirations. In such a school setting, bullying, teasing, and rivalry dominate the general atmosphere of the school. Segregated schools provide an inferior environment for school advancement and future aspirations, but inter-group relations and identity formation seem to be less damaged than the surrounding environment, where separation and discrimination is an everyday experience of adolescents. It is rather evident that an integrated school and class environment provides the best circumstances for the healthy development of adolescents' personality, and it does not necessarily hinder the academic advancement of majority students but occasionally is able to improve school achievement of ethnic minority students.

### **Interethnic relations**

Despite the rather general feeling of comfort with the given setting, it seems that the school is a harmful place as well: it is especially teenage peer relations that are badly affected by daily conflicts, direct experiences with discrimination, and a lack of solidarity along the lines of social class and ethnicity. Given their young age, it is a worrying that the majority of Roma students have collected a lot of degrading experiences due to their ethnic belonging. At the same time, these perceptions are informed by the actual arrangements: by far, it is the segregating schools (especially in cases when intra-school selection is evident) where frustrations about institutionalised discrimination and manifest exclusion turn most frequently into conflicts, quarrels, clashes between gangs, and a general negative viewing of the entire surrounding. Social and ethnic divisions do not leave unaffected the most personal spheres of self-

evaluation and placing it in the surrounding relations: low self-esteem and self-degradation is frequent among students whose most fundamental daily experience is devaluation from their direct environment.

In the qualitative part of our research project, we realised during our fieldwork that while both sites are of similar dimensions and industrial in character, with more or less the same percentage of Roma population, yet they do not provide identical conditions for Roma students in their final grade of primary education. Although the central effort of Hungarian educational policies – the integration of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with special educational needs, or of Roma origins – was present in both towns, and thus measures have recently been taken in all local schools, we found significant differences in the achievements and opportunities for further education characterising Roma students who attended the classes selected for investigation.. A comparison showed that Roma parents and children feel more secure in places where the immigration of Roma population was linked to a common workplace – for instance, a mine – for several decades; where there are/were other forms of ethnic difference apart from being Roma; where ethnic mixing started in the previous generation; and where, partly as a consequence of intense Roma civil self-organisation, a local Roma elite has been formed. On the contrary, the "ghettos" provide experiences day after day of visible marginalisation, hopeless physical and mental enclosures made of lost perspectives, and a futureless outlook, which develop into a general feeling of insecurity and a pronounced need to cut off ties with the outer world considered a source of danger. Roma students in segregated schools and the ghettoised enclaves of the distressed villages demonstrate all the symptoms of threatened identity.

### **Responses of schools and forms of 'othering'**

While the intentions of municipal educational administration are unambiguous with respect to integration, school management and, even more, teachers relate to central educational policies in a highly ambivalent manner. The ways in which they actually connect with integrative school policies, as manifested in discourse and pedagogical practice, range from superficial and apparent acceptance through passive resistance to active rejection. Several causes were identified behind these approaches, including: teachers are unprepared for the changes in school policies and their consequences; teachers have neither the means to adequately adjust pedagogical work to the new circumstances, nor the experience in how to employ those means, so that they are completely helpless when implementing new school policies. In addition, as the teachers themselves are not exempt from the cultural prejudices adopted by their own social strata, they also may contribute to sustaining the cultural and social distances between the majority and the ethnic minority. Most of the actors we contacted, save one school and a few teachers, have been unable to overcome these obstacles.

When examining teachers' discourses and classroom interactions, three discursive strategies were reconstructed with respect to "othering" children:

- *"Fatalist discourse"* suggests that the fate of children coming from undereducated Roma families is predetermined. Teachers may not necessarily communicate their conviction explicitly, but their indirect messages chisel away at pupils' motivations. Students perfectly understand that their teachers do not believe in them or that their efforts can be successful. This unsaid communication by teachers suggesting that the students' fate is predetermined, prevents pupils from being successful at school and lowers their aspirations towards further education on its own.
- *Social argumentation* claims that the lower performance and aspirations of Roma students and the greater frequency of "problems" are primarily due to their socially disadvantaged situation. This is the only discursive framework among teachers that also reflects the experiences and interpretations of parents. This type of argument is common, especially in places where the concept of pedagogic work includes the consideration that it should be shaped by liaising with the local community.
- *Cultural fundamentalism*: this attitude can be best described in terms of racism, supposing hierarchical relations, in which the speaker, that is, the teacher, talking from an invisible position, as opposed to the culturally and/or racially different subordinated subjects, holds on to the moral claims of his or her own superiority. Here, "Gypsy" is a synonym of not only social but also "genetic" or "racial" inferiority in this discursive framework.

As to schools responses to desegregating school policies, three types of school were identified:

- The *colour-blind* school that, on the one hand, eliminates differences by structural means and that, on the other, creates an environment that enforces taboos. As we have seen, this approach offers a chance for some minority students, as well as providing the impetus to help them continue using the strategies of assimilation already employed by their parents. For some other Roma children, however, this makes school a strange and hostile environment that does not deal with their real problems.
- The *colour-conscious* school offers a (Roma) cultural framework to dealing with otherness. Yet this type cannot be considered as a source of multicultural alternative because it does not meet with students' needs of a more positive ethnic identity and preventing their sense of racialised exclusion. Moreover, at the point when it was introduced, it was too late since the cultural assimilation of the Roma population in question was already quite advanced.
- The *segregating* school where tensions and mutual fears between families and the staff are constrained within the walls of the school. Instead of treating these problems, teachers try to maintain the illusion of immovability, for their own acquiescence as well as to serve middle-class parents. Roma students do essentially the same thing when they continue living their lives linked to the outside world, that is, to their families, relatives, and the ghetto, when also at school.

## **Ethnic minority students' responses to 'othering' and patterns of identity formation**

In our experience, the different social-historical traditions characterising the two sites, the various forms of accepting or rejecting Roma minorities on the part of the institutions or the their representatives in majority society, and the structural givens and qualitative standards of the schools under investigation, all impact the attitude of Roma students towards school and learning, and thus their aspirations for further education and ideas about the future. As selective mechanisms at schools already reflect on family categories – distinguished by the social background of families, the educational attainment of parents, their employment status and social integration – it was expected that the school performance and career choices of Roma students we examined would also depend on these factors. In the majority of cases, it is hardly probable that significant changes would take place with respect to their position in society when compared to their parents' generation.

At the same time, the weak school performance and limited future aspirations of most Roma students are closely connected with a sense of ethnic discrimination, mentioned in nearly every interview, and felt by our adolescent respondents both in and outside the school, in their relations with their teachers, and with fellow students. We perceived the most extreme forms of "othering" in segregated classes attended by Roma students. In this environment the school failed to enable Roma students in establishing friendships outside their close social network. But, in responding to racist threats, Roma students isolate themselves by forming their internal network into a protective shield. In this sense, their ethnic perception of the world is grounded on the dichotomy of "Roma versus Hungarian" and plays a decisive role in the evaluation of social interactions and of society as a whole.

Discrimination threatening minority ethnic identity, sometimes perceived as racist, also determined the identity strategies available to students. By pushing their Roma identity into the background, most of these children expressed a desire to melt into the social majority, which they wished to realise by giving up their traditions, occasionally still followed by the families, and by adopting majority norms. Thus their ethnic identity, still in the process of formation, is predominantly negative in the examined age-group, and its most important constituting elements include following another reference group instead of the group of origin and turning away from, or even against, the community provided by their family backgrounds. The adoption of identity did not seem to entail positive aspects, even in cases where the attachment to the group of one's own was maintained more by outside threats than by striving to preserve the cultural/ethnic inheritance. Our research experiences clearly suggest that the policies of educational integration, in their present form, are unable to stop the process of the social/ethnic dividing of Hungarian society. The residential, social, and lifestyle disadvantages of children of Roma origin, making up nationwide about 10 per cent of the age-group targeted in the research, are not only not diminishing but, instead, are further increasing during school years. Thus, the new generation still does not have much opportunity for upward social mobility and for reaching an equal status in terms of citizenship. As long as "Roma" remains Hungarian society's

pariahs, synonymous with social malaise, deviance and public disorder, there is no chance that the social majority will acknowledge the dignity of ethno-cultural difference and make Roma ethnicity a source of viable identity for Roma youth.

## **Policy recommendations**

The problem of ethnic and social segregation is just a symptom of extreme inequalities characterising Hungarian public education as a whole and cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. Failures of the significant efforts and measures by the government in the last decade have proved that within the current administration and financing system, the possibility of enhancing social and ethnic inclusion in education is rather limited.

From the above account about policy and discursive frames, it is obvious that the extreme inequality of the Hungarian educational system and educational exclusion is not a Roma-specific problem, although Roma pupils are affected to the most. Therefore, defining the target group might be the most complex dilemma of an educational policy targeting inclusion. By using "colour-blind" categories, inclusion policies might cover Roma if correct and benevolent data collection and data management is secured. At this stage such data collection is unavailable or unreliable (municipalities often manipulate data on socially disadvantaged students in order to draw on extra budgetary support, while the collection of ethnic data by public service providers is prohibited by law). But at any rate, colour-conscious policies are insufficient to reach out to all who are in need (many Roma are reluctant to identify themselves as Roma due to striving for assimilation or for fear of stigmatisation), while such an approach might cause unnecessary social tensions (i.e., many non-Roma are in a similar situation and would need similar support, while this approach easily leads to ethnicising social problems).

Below we list some of our recommendations relating directly to equity and equal opportunities in education originating from major lessons learnt during the EDUMIGROM project in Hungary.

### **Recommendations aiming at structural changes in education**

- The school system has to be reformed in a way that eliminates institutional segmentation (elimination of the six- and eight-year secondary schools which cream out best students in the mid of their primary school career) and that provides a more comprehensive system educating children in the same institutions throughout their compulsory education age.

- Schools maintained by private foundations and churches should be financed by state normative subsidies exclusively in the case they are willing to make an educational agreement with their respective municipal councils and to share the teaching of socially disadvantaged and Roma pupils.
- Knowing that disadvantages develop at a much younger age than the legally defined age of compulsory education (currently: age six), the age-limit of entrance to the educational system has to be lowered including younger ages (three- to four-year-olds) while access to nursery schools and/or preschools has to be secured for every child, irrespective of the region and type of settlement she or he lives. In parallel, the rigidity of the transition from preschool to school has to be significantly moderated.
- The minimum standards of primary school should be defined (e.g., building, infrastructure, curricula, etc.) as well as the required minimum competence results that are measured among pupils. Schools that do not meet these requirements should be closed if they do not improve their indicators after a period of monitoring.
- The scales of segregation regarding multiply disadvantaged and/or Roma pupils has to be maximised in relation to the proportion of the target group(s) in the localities. Schools that do not meet the requirements should be legally obliged to take measures aiming at desegregation.
- In order to enhance mobility and equal access to quality education, free school bussing should be organised and financed by state subsidies.

### **Recommendation aiming at improving the content and quality of education**

- The system of teacher's education and in-service training has to be essentially reformed. Innovative methods of competence-based teaching should replace the dominance of lexical, knowledge-based tuition in the regular curricula of teacher training.
- Interethnic conflicts in the educational arena can effectively be eliminated and managed by teachers using integrated pedagogical programmes (IPR) and interactive, project-oriented teaching techniques. Implementation of these programmes must be continued.
- Introduce differentiated wages in public education, which would take into consideration the difficulties of teaching socially disadvantaged students.

### *Recommendations targeting specifically Roma education*



- Extracurricular activities focused on Roma and socially disadvantaged students such as after-school courses, and after-school academies have to be standardised and financed by per capita budgetary funding that should be allotted much in line with the general routines in public education.
- In order to enhance Roma children's positive identity and acceptance by their non-Roma peers and teachers, several measures might be taken such as anti-discrimination training for teachers, including the culture and history of Roma in the regular curriculum, extracurricular activities aiming at awareness raising, etc.
- Introduce affirmative action in teachers' education with the aim to increase the number of Roma teachers in regular primary and secondary education.

It is obvious, however, that measures implemented exclusively in order to secure equal educational opportunities for Roma students are insufficient on their own. As we have seen, the disadvantages of Roma students originate from a complex system of different intersecting factors: regional disadvantages, destitute residential environments, substandard and overcrowded housing conditions, poor health, and most importantly, an underprivileged labour market status. Even if both parents and their children explicitly express the need of studying, the lack of employment possibilities for undereducated parents, together with experiences of labour market discrimination that leads to the long-term hopelessness of unemployment, discourages families from investing in education. Everyday experiences stemming from families' backgrounds obstruct students in their belief that schooling would lead to any meaningful upward mobility, and the value of studying is frequently questioned. The vicious circle of low education – unemployment – ethnic discrimination on the labour market – desperate poverty – is inherited generation by generation and cannot be broken by education alone. There is a necessity for complex programs to target simultaneously the shortage of employment possibilities, poor housing conditions, inadequate welfare and health provisions, and low-quality education for inhabitants of the most disadvantaged regions. Programs that adopt such a complex approach could be the only possibility to significantly improve Roma's social integration and enhance their equal social membership.

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# ROMANIA

**Eiko Vincze**

This last chapter of the series of reports produced on the case of Romania as part of the EDUMIGROM project summarises: (1) the frames of national public and political discourse on ethnic relations and minority education, (2) the major results of the Romania-based empirical research conducted in two urban settings on ethnic Roma school pupils, and (3) policy recommendations for improving the social inclusion of minority ethnic youth.

Similar to the other participating country teams, since 2008 we have produced two background studies on policies (related more generally to ethnic minorities and interethnic relations, and more specifically to ethnic minority education), a report on the survey conducted in schools from two urban centres, and a community study report (based on our community and ethnic minority case studies); we have also participated in writing two comparative reports (one on the educational policies for social inclusion, and the other on the EDUMIGROM community study).

This very final paper relies on all of our previous reports, but it mostly restructures the main findings around the issue of (school) segregation as related to one of the most prevalent phenomena of post-socialist transformations (the production of inequalities among rich and poor), which is visible, among others, in the spatial/residential manifestation of socio-economic differentiation underpinned by cultural distinctions. In the case of our selected minority group (ethnic Roma from Romania) connections between social marginalisation and cultural devaluation are expressed in the way in which poor settlements and/or ghettos are defined as "Gypsy vicinities", how "Gypsyisation" is referred to as a danger to economic development and civilised living, and how Gypsiness is defined as the radical or total "Other" that needs to be kept at a safe distance. Most recently, in Romania, the racialisation of poverty and of all negative phenomena is manifested in the newly reformulated legislative proposal regarding the denomination of "Roma" as "Gypsy" in order to avoid all the unwanted associations between Roma and Romanians.

## **Framing of public and political discourse in Romanian society**

The general public atmosphere for Roma issues worsened in the last three years. After the 1990s (during which several anti-Roma pogroms happened across the country), the period before Romania's accession to the European Union (that happened in January 2007) was dominated by an optimistic state of mind. Majority politicians were ready to find consensus with Roma nongovernmental organisations and to accept the European Union's recommendation regarding the treatment of Roma as full citizens. Several national, regional, and local governmental structures were created in order to implement the government's strategy for the improvement of the Roma populations conditions (but without allocating sufficient public funds, yet using some financial support from the Phare program). The media celebrated these initiatives but expressed its doubts if the funds dedicated to Roma were to have successful results and if Roma

were going to change (e.g., be willing to go to school or to work, to pay taxes etc.). Roma civil society initiated and implemented a series of projects on education and health, later on employment, and even later on housing. This positive trend was interrupted after 2008 due to a widespread recession as well as the actions taken by Italy and France against Roma immigrants from Romania. High-level politicians (among them the state president and ministers for foreign affairs) started to voice racist attitudes against Roma and the media was ready to manipulate anti-Roma feelings. Romanian public discourse ended up being dominated by the majority's concern regarding the confusions made abroad between Roma and Romanians, which culminated in the fall of 2010 with a legislative proposal about changing the denomination of "Roma" into "Gypsy" (the proposal recently was approved by the human rights and equal opportunities commissions of the Senate). Anti-Roma racism that had been kept under control during the accession process once again boiled to the surface and now is expressed explicitly without fear of penalties. The fact that this shift in the public discourse could happen so sharply questions and endangers all the positive initiatives taken by the Romanian state in the past two decades, or at least it creates a dangerous context that might legitimise the backlash.

The education of ethnic minorities in Romania is defined in two general frames: policies "for minorities", and policies regarding "the access to education of disadvantaged groups". These are delineated institutionally at the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth: the first is dealt with by the sub-department for policies on minorities, functioning under the General Directorate of the Teaching/Learning in the Languages of Minorities and of the Relationship with the Parliament; the latter pertains to the General Directorate of Pre-University Education.

Policies for teaching in the languages of minorities are shaped by legacies of the socialist past,<sup>62</sup> and old and new international and European regulations. The frame of the "disadvantaged group" is a later development in Romanian policymaking in the domain of education. It is not necessarily shaped in ethnic terms, but often emphasises a "focus on Roma".

In the specific ethnic minority context, ethnic Hungarian identity politics dominates the field and occasionally functions as a "model to follow" with respect to educational policies, even if differences among ethnic groups are recognised. Why is this so? Generally speaking, we should acknowledge that any type of policy or politics – identity or other – uses the familiar and known elements in circulation as its "building blocks" or reference points. Furthermore, one needs to note that the political participation of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania (DAHR) is regarded as a success story among other ethnic minority groups. At the same time, this Alliance, through its representatives in Parliament and government, has acted like an agent that "knows" (in the sense of an omniscient "big brother") what needs to be done in terms of ethnic minority rights. Under these conditions, it is no wonder that, between 1996–2000, when the DAHR entered for the first time into the Romanian government and

62 During this period, teaching in Hungarian language was recognised as a right of the Hungarian national minority, though, mainly during the 1980s, it suffered many attacks and cuts.

there was no governmental strategy or organisation representing the Roma, governmental ordinances and notifications regarding Roma schooling were modelled after the Hungarian pattern. This pattern, moreover, was dominated by a cultural perspective: access to school for the Hungarian minority in Romania was about the right of the Hungarians to cultural autonomy, which included provisions for Hungarian-only educational institutions from preschool to the university level, learning of the Hungarian language, Hungarian literature and history, and studying all disciplines in Hungarian. Schooling was considered to be an instrument for the maintenance and development of Hungarian identity, both in an ethnic and a cultural/national sense, as a way of belonging to the Hungarian ethno-nation while also being part of the Romanian civic nation.

During Romania's European Union accession process, different European institutions and other organisations played a major role in defining what needed to be done in Romania in terms of increasing access to school for Roma and general policies for Roma. Strictly monitored during the accession process, the Romanian government developed some general policies for Roma, which had important references to education. Unfortunately, as several evaluations reported, these policies achieved little due to the lack of allocated funds and concrete implementation plans at the local levels (EUMAP 2007: 365–368). A National Strategy for Improving the Condition of Roma, adopted on April 25, 2001 and modified and completed with Government Decision No. 522/19 in April 2006,<sup>63</sup> called for a significant improvement in the condition of Roma through the promotion of social inclusion measures. The Roma Strategy was intended to last for a decade (2001–2010), and complemented by a Master Plan of Measures for the Period 2006–2008 (developed in the framework of the Strategy), so at the moment it has no more relevance. Besides many other issues, the Roma Strategy observed problems related to education, namely: poor school participation in the education system as well as early school abandonment; the tendency to create separate, Roma-only classes; non-involvement of members of Roma communities in programs for school recovery; lack of adequate housing and infrastructure; the high number of unemployed within this ethnic group; and the absence of readjustment or re-qualification and vocational courses for Roma. Evaluations of the implementation of the Roma Strategy were critical, indicating that, at the local level and in terms of central coordination, little progress could be identified.

Altogether, we might conclude that, under the influence of local legacies and global/European regulations regarding ethnic minorities in Romania, the policy discourse on ethnic relations and minority education is framed in three main directions: (1) the assurance of equality before the law, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination; (2) the formation of an inclusive/cohesive society and desegregation; and (3) the recognition of language and culture-related claims of ethnic minority groups.

63 Government Decision No. 522/19 April 2006, for the modification and completion of the Government Decision No. 430/2001 regarding approval of the Governmental Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma; Government of Romania, Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma (hereafter, Roma Strategy).

## Main findings of the Romanian EDUMIGROM research

Our survey was run among 13–14-year-old pupils in nine secondary schools during the school year 2008–2009. The schools were located in two regions of Romania. In particular: (1) in Multiculti town and the neighbouring Sunny village (from Multiculti county, western region) and (2) in Transilvan town and the neighbouring Mountain village (from Transilvan county, northwestern region). The two cities were having similar ethnic composition: they were multicultural settings with significant proportion of Romanians, Hungarians, and Roma, and also with some other ethnic groups like Germans or Serbs. But they were also characterised by dissimilarities in interethnic relations (mostly due to the fact that the proportion of Hungarians is much larger in Transilvan than in Multiculti, so Roma in the former setting might have had experiences of "minoritisation", not only in front of the Romanian majority, but also in front of the local Hungarian minority).

Our qualitative investigation was conducted in three schools from Transilvan town and the related neighbourhoods. This town is one of the biggest urban centres of Romania, with a large Romanian majority population, and a quite large Hungarian minority, its history being marked by several geopolitical changes around the Romanian–Hungarian state borders. Politically and symbolically its interethnic map is dominated by the Romanian–Hungarian relationship, while the "Roma issue" entered into public consciousness only recently as a socio-economic problem, or at the best, with the occasion of some festivals, as an exotic cultural presence. Interethnic relations within the town are mostly "peaceful". With the exception of few occasions (like the street celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, Hungary's national holiday, when extreme right groups on both sides claim nationalist demands) the Romanian–Hungarian relations flow without major public disputes. There are basically no open conflicts in the Romanian/Hungarian–Roma relations either. Nevertheless, strong Anti-Gypsy prejudices structure discriminatory attitudes towards Roma both in the case of the majority and the ethnic Hungarian population, and by time-to-time (as it happens recently) local administration fosters "urban planning" projects that increase the gravity of Roma ghettoisation and, as such, reinforces marginalisation as source of further discrimination and social tension.

As far as school segregation is concerned, the qualitative school case studies offered us a slightly different picture on this phenomenon than the survey data. While on the basis of the latter, we could not detect significant differences among the students of the same schools, the qualitative methodology allowed us to get a sense of the more subtle relationships and hierarchical orderings that shaped pupils' positions at these educational institutions. We could learn, for example, that the frustrations of teachers, resulting from their marginal position in the broader teacher community due to the positions of their schools in the larger local educational system, could become a source of their discriminatory attitudes towards the children who were causing them so much trouble. Or we could observe that many children with disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, performing badly and being devalued at school, showed



a strong resistance to the school regime: on the one hand, they acted as victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy, but on the other hand, they practiced an agency that made fun of school and of teachers, thus acquiring a respected position in their immediate peer group. And last but not least, we could note that despite sustaining that there was no conscious principle of differentiating among the parallel classes, or between Roma and non-Roma, or between boys and girls, teachers eventually constructed hierarchies among them, and willingly or not, under the pressure of many institutional arrangements, they preferred and valued more positively disciplined communities and individuals with whom they could better perform their teaching duties.

From another perspective, this qualitative research reinforced the main conclusions of our survey: in the case of those schools situated on the poor margins of Transilvan town, the main inequalities between children are not produced by their immediate school environments, but result from a broader regime of unequal (re)distribution of wealth in Romanian society. So the disadvantages faced by Roma children in accessing and advancing in school education should be viewed in the context of the juxtaposition of many factors that in the strict sense are external to their immediate schools: their parents' material conditions (housing, occupational status, school education) and familial and health circumstances; their teachers' professional formation, personal convictions, and positions in the broader educational system; this system's mechanisms of differentiating between schools and sustaining the segregation between "good" and "bad" units, but also the degree of its commitments towards consequently supporting disadvantaged groups and of its financial incentives that might really ensure the implementation of inclusive policies; and the broader socio-economic environment of the market economy and of a general societal crises. As far as ethnicity is inscribed in people's bodies and minds, in face-to-face relations, but also into systems of classification and differentiation – and ways in which institutions function and in which space is divided – it plays a role in shaping one's educational and career. As far as ethnicisation of poverty is an ongoing phenomenon in our society, disadvantaged socio-economic conditions and stereotypical cultural conceptions will continue to reinforce each other and to locate, for example, the Roma children living in poverty in positions that they hardly can change or bypass (structurally being subjected as "Gypsy" because they are poor, and becoming poor because of their treatment as "Gypsies").

The Romanian EDUMIGROM team conducted its qualitative community study in three neighbouring northeastern marginal areas of Transilvan town and in three schools serving these districts. We named them Flower, Water, and Forest districts, served by School 1, School 2, and School 8. Their immediate environment is marked by a mixture of pre-modern/rural and industrial/post-industrial elements. The hybrid nature of the area as a whole can be observed in the housing conditions, but if one would like to identify general patterns that differentiates among cases, than he or she should note that individual houses are predominantly present in Forest district; blocks of flats host Roma from Flower district; and improvised homes mostly distinguish the condition of Roma living in Water district. The investigated territory, on the large, is also characterised by a relatively diverse pallet of occupational

statuses (farmers, petty traders, manufacturers, industrial workers, unemployed, day labourers, and small entrepreneurs), less rooted in traditions than in strategies of survival as reactions to socio-economic conditions.

Developed as industrial zones during socialist times, these areas became highly populated, and linked to this, the investigated particular schools enrolled large numbers of students. The current shrinking of their student bodies might be explained by the collapse of local industries, but also by the fact that schools from downtown established classes at the level of primary education, and as well as by the ageing of the general population. According to unofficial estimates, approximately 2,000 Roma live in these areas, today, out of the total of 5,000 Roma inhabiting Transilvan town. Despite these figures, our survey found a low number of Roma children enrolled in the seventh and eighth grades of schools situated in the catchment areas of the selected Roma communities.

Schools	Total number of students	Per cent of Roma students as declared by school	Per cent of disadvantaged students as declared by school	Total number of seventh and eighth graders	Number (and per cent) of self-identified Roma among seventh and eighth graders	Per cent of self-declared Roma seventh and eighth graders in the total Roma student body
School 1	415	24	40	61	8 (13)	8
School 2	273	29	75	42	8 (19)	10
School 8	290	15	40	62	10 (16)	23

Due to the EDUMIGROM research methodology (taking schools as starting points of our investigation) in our research, we focused on those self-identified Roma youth who, in socio-economic terms, were doing relatively better than their peers who abandoned school earlier or never enrolled in school. But these were Roma pupils who attended schools on the cities' peripheries due to their residence in these neighbourhoods, which were, in turn, socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Visiting them at home, we could encounter other school-age children who were not enrolled in school mostly due to the economic shortages their families had to deal with.

This is why one should note that the term "Roma community" used in our analysis does not cover a homogeneous group of people, as far as the latter is shaped by several internal differentiations generated – among others – on the line that separates families living in deep poverty from those with better socio-economic status. The community of Water district (living in improvised homes in an area

harshly separated from the outer world) massively lacks the elementary conditions of a decent life and is pushed to the edges of legality (in terms of housing, labour, or identity documents). Inhabitants of Flower and Forest districts (living in compact groups or dispersed families) were doing slightly better; the block apartments or the houses they owned (or not), in the majority of the cases (often small spaces of one room plus kitchen) besides electricity, did have running water inside, gas supply, and access to sewerage.

However, the studied families shared some major common concerns (even if these had consequences of different severity), among them: living on the margins of the town; frequent changes of address; unemployment and day labouring in the informal economy; low level of school education (which is the lowest in the case of the mothers in their 30s) and difficult access to quality school education; but also higher educational aspirations of/for their children and a desire of integration into the majority society. Last but not least, these families (living in compact groups or dispersed) became a community because they were perceived as "Roma" by the outer world (a term designating a supposedly homogenous entity living in poverty) and shared experiences of unequal treatment and exclusion in different domains of life (labour market, schooling, public health, or housing).

During our qualitative community study we could observe several manifestations of segregation that had an impact on Roma students' schooling practices and experiences. In what follows, I am going to:

- outline some of the macro-structural and policy-related forces,
- highlight processes of detrimental differentiations within and between schools, and
- sketch the cultural conceptions about separation and integration.

These all structure the relationship between segregation and schooling, while transforming differences into inequalities.

## **Macro-level structural and policy-related forces**

### *Socio-economic conditions*

The general trends characterising the conditions of Roma in Romania since 1990 are applicable also in the case of the communities studied here. The collapse of socialist urban industries that formerly integrated the Roma population (even if mainly into unskilled and poorly appreciated jobs) relocated the majority of Roma into the most disadvantaged socio-economic positions. Those who lost their jobs – in many cases due to their low educational level, but generally to the severe decrease of job opportunities – could not reintegrate into the labour market in the long term, and even abdicated to register as unemployed. Those who formerly were able to make a decent living out of their traditional crafts cannot compete today on the capitalist market, but some of them, like the Gábor Roma or the Florist Roma, adjusted their former

occupations to this market's demands. The majority of Roma, because they did not possess properties during the pre-socialist regimes before and during the Second World War, could not benefit from the recent process of restoring property to its original owners. Furthermore, as the conditions of recent economic crises became widespread, many of the domains on which they worked, like construction, collapsed, and the relative condition of impoverished and unemployed Roma grew worse, while the majority's intolerance towards and rejection of Roma increased. Impoverished Roma families' survival strategies cannot structurally support children's long-term school education, so the latter experience the effects of cumulative and structural disadvantages or the vicious circle of poverty.

### *Residential segregation*

The severity of ghettoisation is a factor that produces and maintains differences within the studied communities. The space of a Roma settlement might be a source of both solidarity and support, and of deprivation or even exploitation. We could learn about cases with relatively better socio-economic conditions (like those in Flower district) showing that compact groups of Roma could attract more support in their living arrangements than families who lived isolated from their Roma peers. However, on the overall, Roma families dispersed across the town (and as such integrated into the broader urban community) are doing much better economically than the ones living in Roma colonies on the town's peripheries.

This is because these colonies are formed and maintained by "attracting" people from or outside town who have lost their apartments and jobs and are desperately looking for solutions to their housing problems and for the support that informal networks supposedly offer. The mechanism of reciprocal assistance might indeed function in some cases and aspects, but it could happen that under these conditions marked by severe shortages, competition for scarce resources, mutual suspicions, and the inability to jointly organise would structure the order of cohabitation. Moreover, as the case of families finding "home" at the rubbish dump in Water district illustrated, people living in encapsulated spaces might become dependents on and at the mercy of local informal leaders and entrepreneurs, who exploit their cheap labour force. The huge difference between the case of the Roma group from Flower district and that from Water district rests in the degree in which the Roma colony transforms into a ghetto, the latter being characterised by an acute isolation from the outer world, as its inhabitants are living and working in the same space, where resources are very limited and children do not have any opportunities for schooling.

### *Liberalisation of schools' catchment areas*

Linked to the socio-economic changes after 1989, Transilvan town's schools are differentiated on the lines among the central, elite, and the marginal "weak" schools. As the principal of one of such schools declared:

*This is about segregating schools: those schools that have a low number of students turn out to be schools with pupils struggling with socio-economic difficulties, because well-situated families move their children to downtown schools. They have more material possibilities to support their kids, so these schools become the "good schools". They become overcrowded, and we keep losing children, and also the possibilities of being attractive. And from here it results in the idea that we are "weak schools". This idea then slowly becomes a common ranking.*

Despite the recent liberalisation of school enrolment that affords choosing any school regardless of its catchment area, disadvantaged children's choices remain hostage to the chances that their immediate environments really offer them. The choice for the school where the interviewed students are enrolled is inscribed into their austere material conditions and into their perceptions about what they might aspire to as ethnic Roma, and most importantly in the way by which "Roma" becomes synonymous with "poor" and vice versa. All this is even more dramatic in the case of self-identified ethnic Roma who define themselves as "non-traditional", that is, as ones who aim to integrate into and become accepted by the majority society and who, despite this wish, remain – both geographically and socially, and sometimes also legally – on the margins. As a result, the malfunction of catchment areas reinforces the effects of residential segregation.

### *Educational policies*

During the last two decades, educational policies for Roma were marked by at least the following deficits: many times they were only experimental; they were insufficiently backed by governmental financial support; their implementation at the local level was not ensured by consequent measures; they did not clarify the relationship between promoting cultural rights and eliminating socio-economic disadvantages of Roma; they did not enforce interculturalism. Under these conditions, despite its achievements, the institution of the Roma school mediator, the assurance of separate spots for Roma at high schools and universities, the Second Chance Program, the program for Children with Special Educational Needs, the Summer Kindergarten program, the right to learn Romani language or Romani history in schools, or conceiving school segregation as form of discrimination could not structurally improve the access of disadvantaged Roma children to quality school education. In addition, without an intersectional approach and without structural transformations aiming to redress socio-economic inequalities, educational policies do not have the strength to generate sustainable changes. Moreover, during times of economic crises they are endangered by being neglected and cut.

All these deficiencies are also reflected in the new Romanian Law on Education. This includes a chapter on the right to school education in minority languages, an issue negotiated by the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania and supported by representatives of the Roma Party. But it totally neglects the issue of school segregation, so the ministerial notes from 2004 and 2007 regarding the

eradication of segregation as form of discrimination still remained the only and weak instruments of reference for desegregation policies. At the same time, the new law does not clarify the position of school mediators (it barely states that they offer mediation services, but does not refer to the obligations to or ways of hiring them). Moreover, it affirms that schools might extend their regular curriculum with after-school programs (that could offer remedial education for disadvantaged groups), but it only mentions that the state might support them financially, so it does not offer any guarantee for organising them. As far as special schools or special classes integrated into mass education are concerned, the law keeps the denomination of "children with sensorial, motor, psycho-motor, mental, communicational, and relational disabilities" (the latter being an extremely vague condition), and continues supporting them with free meals and school supplies. The law keeps the programme offered for children with special educational needs integrated into mass education, covering them with so-called "support" teachers. It reduces compulsory education to the age of 16, and in this way endangers children with eight grades by their potential taking of unqualified and heavy jobs on the labour market that might be dangerous for their development. And last but not least, the new law defines attendance in the Second Chance Programme at the age of 14, whereby it excludes younger children to enrol. However, joining into this programme could be a preferred alternative for those adolescents who – due to earlier class repetition – are two to three years older than their classmates, and feel uncomfortable in their current setting where they are often stigmatised and alienated.

#### *Detrimental differentiations within and between schools*

Even if the elimination of ethnic segregation in schools would be taken seriously, segregation could be reproduced by other means. Our research observed phenomena like: differentiating between the elite/good and marginal/weak schools; selecting majority children from good socio-economic backgrounds in foreign-language classes starting with the fifth grade, but even grouping them according to their presumed scholarly abilities immediately in the first grade; and then directing socio-economically disadvantaged Roma children to special schools. In each of these cases, it is obvious that the main reason why all forms of segregation should be combated is that they prevent access to quality education, they reduce the chance of competitiveness both in continuing school education and on the labour market, and eventually they reproduce the vicious circle of poverty and socio-economic inequalities. Altogether, school segregation cannot be eliminated without changing many other aspects educational as well as broader social life (like the existence of isolated Roma ghettos). In what follows I am going to briefly outline the consequences of such detrimental differentiations within and between schools.

Teachers who end up teaching at schools classified as "weak" tend to have ambiguous attitudes towards their own conditions and towards the students with whom they work. A school principal told us:

*It is easy for the "elite schools" to present brilliant results and school performances with children whose families have better socio-economic conditions and are taking care of their school education; our*

*satisfaction here is that we can do a good job with disadvantaged children who have material problems and who maybe are neglected by their parents.*

Despite the fact that this dedication might be sincere, one may conclude that teachers from these schools do have feelings of inferiority in their relation with their colleagues from the "good schools". Moreover, their frustrations, resulting from their marginal position in the broader teacher community due to the position of their school in the larger local educational system, could become a source for their discriminatory attitudes towards children who were causing them so much trouble. Despite sustaining that there was no conscious principle of differentiating among the parallel classes, or between Roma and non-Roma, or between boys and girls, teachers eventually constructed hierarchies among them, and willingly or not, under the pressure of many institutional arrangements, they preferred and valued more positively the disciplined communities and individuals with whom they could better perform their teaching duties (understood as transmitting knowledge).

In the case of the observed schools, one way of dealing with problems from above was to group students in classes with a foreign-language curriculum, which resulted in the formation of "good" and "weak" parallel classes. Under pressure from the educational system (that evaluates teachers according to the school performances of the best pupils), our schools separated "good" and "weak" classes not necessarily due to their ethnicist/racist and/or classist attitudes, but in order to correspond to the expectations that impregnate the system as a whole. During our participant observations we noted some important differences in the ways in which pupils and teachers treated each other in the case of the "best" and the "worst" classes. Students of the latter were most active to resist the teachers, while the ones of the former had a collaborative strategy of participation. Depending on how individual teachers were acting and how they were perceived by students, even children from the "weak classes" could accept replying positively to teachers' demands (but always with an attempt on their side to disrupt the order imposed by the teachers), while in the "best class" pupils were usually teacher-friendly; even when they were upset they did not bully their teachers who they did not like for whatever reasons. Probably linked to these two different kinds of strategies of participation, there are at least two different sorts of feelings about "being at this school", both on the side of teachers and students. Even if they are open to interactive methods and try to understand children's behaviour in the context of their social background, teachers might be more comfortably satisfied while working with the "good classes", and reducing to the minimum their involvement and demands towards the "weak classes". At the same time, the children from "good classes", being appreciated by their teachers, more often do have good feelings about being at school (or in their assigned class), and they even have extracurricular activities, and not only scholarly talks and events, to share. However, pupils in the "trouble classes", also under the impact of the disagreements coming from their teachers and the dominant system of assessment, might more easily feel that they do not really belong to the school, and they could have a strong impulse to manifest their resistance to the school's order, reinforcing their sense of belonging to a marginal peer-group. Moreover,

absenteeism, early school abandonment, or the avoidance of enrolment might be forms of protest against a school and a system that constantly reminds them that it is not really theirs. The frustration and shame felt by these students due to their socio-economic background, compounded by a generally contestant attitude characteristic of their age, were found to be fuelling the tension in their relationships with the school that erupted from time to time in explicit conflicts.

An even more harmful form of differentiation within and between schools is that of separating children with special educational needs from the "normal" student body. In many cases, these special educational needs do not result from children's mental disabilities but from lacking preschool education or from home environments that are deficient in sources that adequately support children's school performances. From the students' perspective, if the program for children with special educational needs would be run in an integrated form, it could have a corrective impact; however, remedial after-school programmes would be even more successful and better suited to achieving better education among all age-groups in Roma communities. Notwithstanding, the practice of enrolling healthy Roma children into separate special classes or special schools unquestionably results in the transformation of social disadvantages into real handicaps with a long-term impact on people's lives and careers. Children from Water district were and are faced with this problem. By the middle of the 1990s, one of the schools in the area initiated the formation of separate classes for Roma, a project sustained both by governmental and nongovernmental forces, but more or less covertly, these classes were functioning as classes for children with special educational needs. When desegregation became the agenda of the day in the middle of the 2000s, these classes were closed and the vast majority of students were directed towards the separate special school. In some cases parents were not told in time about these changes, but in many cases they accepted this "proposal" due to the free transport and free meals that this school offered to their enrolled students. Once again, material restraints structured the "option" for a path that in the short term seemed to partly solve economic shortages, but in the long-run prevented these children from having decent educational and professional careers.

### *Cultural conceptions about separation and integration*

Besides the structural mechanisms discussed above, the predominant modes of thinking about cultural diversity, separation, integration or (ethnic) mixing, and the existing ethnicised prejudices are also sustaining segregation.

In Romania, by and large, "multicultural education" is based on the idea that ethnic minorities should learn (in) their mother tongues and should have their own educational units. For the Hungarian minority this is an achievement of the politics for cultural autonomy and is a way of cultivating ethnic distinctiveness with pride. But for the Roma minority, as far as it struggles with marginality, exclusion, and discrimination, separation means segregation as long as it involves stigmatisation and lower quality of education.



Besides, our society is characterised by a resistance towards mixing both on the side of parents and on that of schools, while both are legitimising separation by referring to each other's supposed desires. In this context, more fortunate families and elite schools/classes prefer the elimination of the socially disadvantaged from their life-worlds, while the latter might choose being among themselves where they do not need to face humiliation and shame about how they dress, what snacks they bring to the school, or to what degree they might contribute to the schools' or classes' funds.

Our interviews with Roma parents and students show that, in terms of separation or isolation from the outer world, an intergenerational change is going on. The strategy of sharp isolation or enclosure into kinship networks, one such signal of marginality, is less pronounced in the case of youth. In all of the studied cases we observed that younger people had a more powerful desire to comply with the requirements of majority society. They did not interiorise mechanisms of exclusion as profoundly as their parents did.

Behind their general way of discussing "*acceptance of anybody as my friend regardless of his or her ethnicity*", there were some hints in the children's words that signalled a stronger will to open up more towards the outer world than their environment allowed. Andrea from Flower district complained about living in this neighbourhood because "*too many Roma do live here, and I would like to see around myself more Romanians*". She, like her older sister, has a boyfriend from another part of the town, but dislike of her and her sister, Anca, would mean staying in the neighbourhood when she marries. Anca was the only child who stressed that she was proud of being "Gypsy": "*Gypsies help each other, and help the ones who are in a need, offer them food and so on. Romanians don't do that, and they say that we're black, but they go to the solarium to get bronzed, we are naturally bronzed, and this is good*". Andrei, from the same vicinity, told us that he has only two friends and they "*avoid hanging around this building like the other kids do all day long*", and like visiting the far-off after-school educational centre. Aron, who was accepted by her aunt to stay in their apartment alongside eight other persons, was dreaming about times when "*I'm going to have a job and may afford to move out and to have a home of my own*". While protesting against the strong control of her mother, Laura, whose family lived isolated in a Romanian neighbourhood, was happy about having more friends outside her immediate environments (school and home), mostly from the milieu of her older brothers.

The strategies of integration or separation of Roma students observed in Water district differ from those experienced by their parents. There is definitely a youth orientation toward cultural assimilation in the sense of adapting to the challenge of consumerism in today's society. They are open to wider societal values and means of their achievement, so they are more open to the majority. The students' narratives show an ambiguity around their relations with the inner group and interethnic relations. They affirm that they have Hungarian or Romanian friends and colleagues, buddies that get along very well with. But usually meet them only in the school or in public places. These friends, no matter how sincere they are, keep a certain distance from them: they "*never forget that we're ethnic Roma*", as Bianca said. Daniel explained that his friends were Roma, but "*we also get along well with Romanians*".

Interviewed families from Forest district try to organise their living with or next to majority society in a different manner. For older members of the Gábor Gypsy community, staying apart from majority is the accepted norm. For their children, especially for sons who attend school and stay close to the educational system for a longer period, integration serves also as model. The rest of the families from this district are pro-integration. They see successful integration stemming from education. Families with more stable economic and material status want a better and easier life (or jobs like a football player, car mechanic, or waiter) for their children compared to their own hard lives as blue-collar workers. Mobility and better life through work appears as a real and relevant possibility for families living in extreme poverty. In their case, however, perseverance is much more often impeded by the hardships of their existence.

## **Policies and recommendations**

The main issues in post-socialist policymaking to promote schooling for Roma have changed many times in Romania since 1990. Focus has shifted from a wave of interventions like Roma School Mediators; Roma School Inspectors; the learning of Romani language, history, and traditions; the Second Chance Programme; and the positive discrimination measures ensuring separate spots for Roma pupils in lyceums and universities – to the issue of segregation and strategies for desegregation; access to preschool education and summer kindergartens; and inter- and multicultural education. During the past years, in one way or another, all of these initiatives were having an impact on the schools selected for the EDUMIGROM qualitative research. Some of these enterprises (being part of an ethno-cultural paradigm) advocated the recognition of cultural and linguistic rights; while others were "socially-oriented", focusing on the access to school education for Roma as a disadvantaged group.

In the paragraphs from below, we are going to: (a) signal the policy frames of the initiatives regarding school mediators and inspectors, the Second Chance and the Children with Special Educational Needs programmes; focus on the issues of language rights and multicultural education; and highlight policy efforts to eliminate school segregation. This will be followed by (b) an attempt to underscore some of the Romanian particularities that prevent the proper implementation of the existing policies. Last but not least, on the base of the signalled weaknesses of existing policies, (c) our report formulates some policy recommendations regarding the improvement of Roma access to quality school education.

### **Policy initiatives on Roma school education in Romania**

In Romania, Roma school mediators were trained for the first time in 1998–1999 under the scheme of a pilot project entitled "Second Chance for Older Dropouts", initiated by the Soros Foundation Romania

and continued by the Center Education 2000+. This enterprise, together with all the measures meant to improve the development of Roma through the promotion of social inclusion, was sustained by the National Strategy for Improving the Condition of Roma (2001–2010), adopted in April 2001. The Strategy gained considerable European Union funding through the multiyear projects run under the Phare Programme. Due to Government Directive No. 721/14 from May 2004, the position of school mediator was introduced into the Code of Occupations in Romania. However, in reality, the status of the mediator continued to be very confusing. They were hired by schools or by the county school inspectorates as auxiliary personnel. They received very low salaries and faced job insecurity, while performing the difficult work of representing the Roma community at the school and the school within the community, and preventing and mediating conflicts among families and schools. While investing a huge amount of work into this mediation, they were not involved in the decision-making on either side, being perceived by families as parts of the school system, and by the latter as belonging to the Roma community. In May 1998, the General Directorate for Teaching in the Language of Minorities at the Ministry of Education named a Roma School Inspector to function at the ministry. One year later, a ministerial ordinance was launched regarding the hiring of a Roma School Inspector at each county inspectorate. Their real impact depends on their prestige at the inspectorate or at the school, a prestige acquired also due to their informal networking abilities. The Second Chance Programme was initiated by the Center Education 2000+ in 1999 and started in 2000 as an experimental programme. This programme aimed at:

*[...] preventing the social and professional exclusion of young people from very poor families who have dropped out of compulsory education and have not achieved the minimum competencies for getting a job. The program was initially piloted in eleven schools for 350 students, and was taken over by the Ministry in 2003 and had national coverage through the PHARE program (EUMAP 2007: 369).*

It was supported by funds within a project called "Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on Roma", initiated in 2000 by the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Roma. This project involved four phases, out of which, especially the second phase, without focusing on a specific ethnic group, included activities in twelve counties and aimed, among others, to stimulate enrolment in "Second Chance" local programmes at the primary and secondary levels for those who did not complete compulsory education. In the Romanian educational system, if an individual is two years older than the official age set to enrol in a certain educational level, he or she may not attend school at that level any longer. The Second Chance Programme offers an opportunity for everybody who is in this situation, not necessarily only Roma.

More recently, the Romanian educational system has provided education for "Children with Special Educational Needs", referring to children with physical, sensorial, mental, or behavioural deficiencies and related learning problems, but who are not necessarily mentally disabled. In this sense, this measure is meant to avoid the enrolment of all the "problematic" children into separate special schools, so it is a

measure for inclusive education. The schools and teachers receive some financial incentives if they have such children, for whom they offer extracurricular education as a group at the school or at special centres or other locations, and who might benefit from the assistance of a specialist. However, on a daily basis, as we observed at the selected schools, it is unclear who should be included in this category, and the human and financial resources of schools put a limit to the successful implementation of this measure. The educator or teacher might suggest that a child "has a problem" to an educational psychologist, who in turn might perform different tests, and then send the results to a county committee that decides if the child under scrutiny should be treated as one with special educational needs. Theoretically, as schools are endangered by the decrease of the number of school-age children that determine their funding, they should be interested in recruiting and keeping as many children as they could within their units. However, the success of the Children with Special Educational Needs Programme is doubtful, mostly in terms of what happens to these children during national testing, and after finishing the eighth grade. Altogether, the problem of placing disadvantaged Roma children into the category of "children with special educational needs" at the normal schools or directing them towards special schools has raised critical dilemmas about the capacity of these measures to really improve the access to quality education of vulnerable groups.

The special schools are designated for children with different types of disabilities. If a child fails one grade twice, a teacher may suggest sending him or her for psychological testing. After the fourth grade, normal schools might refuse the enrolment of some children into the fifth grade on the basis of their school behaviour and performances, and might guide them towards special schools. On the other hand, parents might apply for a special school at the moment of enrolling their children into the first grade, and in this case, too, the mentioned test is applied. Based on its results, and with the parents' consent, the child is sent to a special school. Specialists consider that the test in itself is carefully constructed, but its administration might have shortcomings due to the person who administers it. It is also should be mentioned that most recently, as the staff from the studied special school in Transilvan town told us, the criteria of socio-economic risk is also applied during the process of selection into special schools. These schools provide free lunches and educational materials that can be valuable to the household economy of impoverished families as a stopgap, but in the long term they may increase the difficulties these children encounter further along in their school and professional careers. Even if there are some schools of this sort that teach the compulsory national curriculum but in another rhythm and way, usually children finishing these schools are not competitive on national tests, so they cannot continue their studies at *gymnasium*. On the base of the governmental decision from 2005, special schools at the primary level started to function with a renewed curriculum, while education at secondary level was supposed to continue according to an ordinance from 1998. The new curriculum for children with moderate or mild disabilities requires around twenty teaching hours per week, and includes the discipline "Special therapies" (adapted according to particular cases), and a complex educational therapy under

the supervision of a special teacher/educator. Among the selected schools, children from the catchment area of one of the "weak" institutions are more likely to be sent to a special educational unit, especially since – as discussed in the relevant paragraph – applying the desegregation policy raised a good deal of resistance among the teachers here. The other two schools make more effort to integrate (Roma) children from disadvantaged families, and implicitly with bigger learning problems. The most successful in terms of children's recruitment is School 1 (which is also reflected in the extension of its student body), while School 8 tries other solutions for surviving the demographic deficit (like accepting its unification with a nearby alternative educational unit). In Romania, by and large, "multicultural education" is based on the idea that ethnic minorities should learn (in) their mother tongues and should have their own educational units. As such, it lacks the core elements of interculturality. The right to learn in one's native language is a right enshrined in the Constitution of Romania; differentiation by language is not conceived of as a something that generates a disadvantage or segregation. When comparing differentiation by the teaching language of the schools or classes in the case of ethnic Hungarians, on the one hand, and the case of Roma from Romania, on the other hand, we notice several differences.

In the eyes of Hungarians, Hungarian-only school or classes are a matter of cultural autonomy, and as such they are a positive aspect: even if the quality of education at these schools is not necessarily good, or better than in the mixed or "Romanian" schools, this perception is still maintained by teachers, media, and politicians. In the case of Roma, the Roma-only educational units are defined as segregated schools, which effectively offer an education of a lower quality. According to the current official consensus – shared by Roma and non-Roma – schools or classes where pupils study in Romani (e.g., Romani language and history, and rarely, in other disciplines) are not considered as segregated units.

All of our selected schools declared that they offer Romani-language courses. But this was not practiced at each educational level in each school, and was organised differently from school to school. Some of the interviewed children and parents said that they do not see the significance of learning Romani at school, or because children already know it, or because they do not use it anymore. Moreover, they suggested that Romani was not as highly valued as other languages, was not necessarily considered as their mother tongue, and it was even suggested that children learnt it only at school but had no practice at home.

During the approach to 2000, authorities could even "defend" segregationist practices by affirming that they did not understand school segregation as being discriminatory, even if by then research on segregated schools had already shown the negative impact of segregationist practices on the access to education of Roma children.<sup>64</sup>

By April 2004, the Ministry of Education and Research issued an internal regulation, in the form of a notification (No. 29323), recognising and condemning segregation, and calling for collaboration with Roma School Inspectors in developing action plans for desegregation. But desegregation was still difficult

64 See, for example, Surdu 1998, 2002 (and later on Surdu 2006).

to implement for several reasons, including the decentralised administrative structure of the Romania education system and the lack of a strong legislative tool and administrative instrument to punish segregation. School inspectorates were not handling segregation "seriously". As a result, "segregated classes continued to exist and Roma parents seeking to enrol their children in ethnically mixed schools continued to be directed back to their segregated neighbourhood schools" (Andruszkiewicz 2006: 6).

In 2006, leading NGOs Romani Criss and Împreuna Agency wrote and submitted an alternative country report to the European Commission, which provides the background on how the issue of segregation was handled in Romania:

*An official problem acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Research is segregation of students in ethnic criteria within the educational system. On [20.04. 2004], as result of the civil society and other actors' lobby, the Public Ministry issued Notification no. 29323 that bans segregation of Roma children in the educational system.*

*The Notification condemns segregation as a "severe form of discrimination"<sup>65</sup>, and shows that its consequence is "unequal access to quality education."<sup>66</sup> In addition, the Ministry implements projects and programs, such as the PHARE program, Equal access to education of disadvantaged groups, with focus on Roma (2006: 21).*

The report observes that despite the Ministry's official acknowledgment and addressing of this issue, cases of segregation in education are still encountered at the level of schools or classes in different regions of Romania. The report recommends the initiation of a public campaign against segregation in education that should focus primarily on Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth representatives (teachers and school principals, school inspectors, etc.), as well as on Roma and non-Roma parents, and state representatives, civil society, and the general public. At the same time, Roma organisations suggested that the:

*The 29323/2004 notification for desegregation must be granted greater legal force, by adopting a Ministerial Order or a Governmental Decision; it's necessary that the court of law sanctions the cases of segregation so that a message could be sent: segregation is, in fact, illegal and may be repercussions as result of law violation (ibid.: 22).*

65 Concretely, the Notification stipulates that "Segregation is a very serious form of discrimination. Except for schools/ classes where all subject matters are taught in Romani language, segregation in education involves the intentional or unintentional physical separation of Roma from the other children in schools, classes, buildings, and other facilities, such that the number of Roma children is disproportionately higher than that of non-Roma compared to the ratio of Roma school-age children in the total school-age population in the particular area" (Romani Criss 2004: 21).

66 Segregation has as consequence the unequal access of children to quality education. Separation in kindergartens and schools leads invariably to a lower quality of education in the groups, classes or schools with other ethnic majority of school population (ibid.).

Later, in 2007, Romani Criss identified and documented other cases of Roma school segregation and presented them to the National Council of Combating Discrimination. The National Council defined cases of discrimination in two villages from Harghita County, at a school from Dolj County, and at two schools in Craiova. Following this, in February 2007 Romani Criss initiated a Memorandum of Cooperation regarding the access of Roma youth from Romania to an education of good quality through school desegregation (Romani Criss 2008). This document was signed by the Ministry of Education, the National Agency for Roma, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR, Roma Centre Amare Rromentza, the Intercultural Institute from Timisoara, Save the Children-Romania, the Regional Centre PER, and the Foundation Ovidiu Rom. All of the co-signers committed themselves to the elaboration of a strategy regarding desegregation.

As a result, the Ministry of Education adopted Ordinance No. 1540/19.07.2007 regarding the prevention, elimination, and banning of school segregation of Roma children, and in doing so, defined segregation as a serious form of discrimination that has negative impacts on the access of children to an education of good quality. The Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth then adopted Order No. 1539/19.07.2007 on the hiring and activity of School Mediators, and Order No. 1529/18.07.2008 on the development of the issue of diversity in the national curriculum. The anti-segregation Ordinance states that those who are not respecting its prerogatives will be sanctioned accordingly. Later, Romani Criss, in partnership with the National Council for Combating Discrimination, recommended to the Ministry of Education that the latest Ordinances concerning cultural diversity, the banning of segregation, and the need to offer courses about intercultural education to school teachers be introduced into legislation on pre-university education. At a press conference organised by Romani Criss on 23 July 2008, under the title of "Roma Children Want to Study – Say No to Segregated Schools", it was pointed out that Romania still has schools or classes that are exclusively or predominantly comprised of Roma pupils. Organisers of the press conference noted that they had documented 27 such cases in 2008.

It is worth noting that a form of financial incentive that is linked to integrated education has been introduced in Romania. In 2005, the Ministry of Education introduced a merit salary for teachers at the amount of 20 per cent of the minimum wage for a period of four years, starting in July 2006. The Order specifies desegregation activities among the eligible activities for which a merit salary can be awarded. However, this incentive provides an option, but not an obligation, for desegregation – that is, schools/school authorities may choose not to take advantage of this form of reward. At the same time, a problem remains that in Romania, government efforts aimed at eliminating the physical separation of Roma and non-Roma children have been developed and implemented in the framework of separate projects. They are not necessarily coherent, nor do they inherently entail the revision of legislation and policies that would ensure the sustainability of particular project activities. Altogether, the implementation of existing regulations made evident the limitations of non-binding school desegregation measures. Schools that were entirely segregated or had some form of segregation have been able to refuse to undertake desegregation actions.

## Obstacles in the implementation of policies for Roma

During the past two decades, Romanian public policies in the domain of Roma schooling could not result in the systemic and sustainable improvement of equal access and quality education of socially disadvantaged and culturally devalued groups. Even if by the middle of 2000s, Romania could have been positively acknowledged for its pioneering initiatives (like the Roma School Mediator, or the assurance of the possibility to learn the Romani language in schools), several institutionalised particularities have prevented the *de facto* equalisation of chances for Roma in this country:

- The former socialist welfare state – due to the combination of the communist ideology with nationalist party-state politics, and due to the severely stressed economy and assimilationist policies towards Roma – could not ensure equal citizenship rights and could not eliminate the persistence of anti-Roma attitudes (the combination between ethnocracy and public patriarchy resulted in the "equality" of citizens as far as they were equally lacking private property, but even within this "equality" inequalities among different social categories, national minorities and ethnic groups persisted, also due to the way pre-socialist legacies shaped the by-then socialist present);
- The post-socialist transformations (including the impoverishment of many; the way in which the state understood to make amends to its citizens by restoring former properties and how it orchestrated privatisation, neglected public housing, and failed in its redistributive role; but as well as the degree to which different national minorities managed to gain powerful political representation) created new inequalities and reinforced the multiple disadvantaged positions of Roma, from where it became more and more impossible to benefit from their *de jure* rights;
- The late accession of Romania to the European Union, and the fact that the country was on the top of the blacklist regarding "Roma issues" and had to prove its readiness to solve it according to the most recent European recommendations, forced the state to make advanced legislative and institutional efforts on this domain; but (due to the socialist legacy of duplicity, or the practice of living in the official world of what is prescribed and in the real world of everyday life at the same time; due to the fact that European monitoring stopped as Romania became a full member of the European Union; as far as the decentralisation process advanced; but also due to the high level of poverty that characterizes the whole country and the state) the implementation of legislation meant the "adaptation" or even perverting of the rules according to local power relationships;
- The impoverished part of the majority, both in the sense of its material conditions and (lack) of self-respect and dignity, shares its experiences with the destitute Roma and in many cases might not pay attention to ethnic differentiations within the socially disadvantaged, which might increase the acceptance of policy provisions for Roma;



but in different situations the vulnerable majority population feels a strong need to express its distinctiveness from the disadvantaged Roma (the recent transnational manipulations of and national reactions to the "confusion" created between "Roma" and "Romanians" enforce in many the desire to protect the "lost dignity of Romanians" and to racialise differences even within impoverished groups; or the "too much money for Roma" concern sustained by the media strengthens the sense of injustices lived by Romanians who, "in their own country" have to observe the "unfair privileges" that Roma are supposed to benefit from);

- Romanian policies (for Roma) do not implement into their internal logic a mainstreaming, integrated, and intersectional approach; they do not correlate the redistributive and recognition strategies; they are not sustained by structural transformations in terms of redressing socio-economic inequalities; they are not completed by anti-racist interventions, nor by changes in the cultural evaluation of the ethnic other and of sharing joint social spaces, and at best, they might only achieve isolated and immediate results.

### *Recommendations*

While identifying mechanisms of segregation but also of integration at schools and in their broader context (as our research reports did in their subsequent chapters<sup>67</sup>) we observed the negative impact of the former on the access to quality education and life conditions, and the advantages of the latter in terms of interethnic mixing and improving the circumstances of livelihood. Consequently, our policy recommendations should regard both the neutralisation of the sharp isolation of "Roma community" and the strengthening of exchanges between different social and ethnic groups, while sustaining the desire to nurture those particular elements of their identities that Roma children and parents are proud of. Altogether, educational policies should support the access to quality education of all children, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic condition, which would ensure them both a decent life and cultural recognition. They should guarantee both equal opportunities and cultural recognition for all, while effectively facilitating everybody's right to negotiate on the acceptable social order within and outside the school.

Acknowledging the weaknesses of the Romanian educational system in these aspects, below we sketch out a few principles that would need to be respected if these aims from above would be accepted:

- Strengthening the governmental ordinances as regards the elimination of school segregation and assuring actual desegregation;
- Combating, on a societal level, the phenomenon of isolation and ghettoisation as responsible factors of the unequal distribution of resources;

67 Available online: <http://www.edumigrom.eu>.

- Promoting intercultural and anti-racist education and joint programs for children with different ethnic backgrounds as core elements of school curriculum and extracurricular activities;
- Promoting cooperative relationships between families and schools, and also among families with different ethnic and social backgrounds;
- Training teachers on issues of social inequality and marginalisation, and on ways in which these produce disadvantages that might urge them to reconsider and avoid culturalist and racist explanations of differences;
- Promoting on a societal level the value of cultural diversity and respect for the "other", parallel with the recognition of the value of cultural exchanges and respect for the right to mix with "other" cultures;
- Acknowledging, both financially and symbolically, the work of teachers who deal with disadvantaged groups;
- Supporting by all the means the integration of disadvantaged children into mass education (by consequently sustaining the jobs of school mediators and the running of the after-school programmes and the Second Chance Programme);
- Allocating funds for material support (free lunches, transport, school supplies) of disadvantaged students enrolled in mass education.

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## **SLOVAKIA**

**Zuzana Kusá, Jurina Rusnáková, and Monika Borovanová**

As the largest "visibly other" ethnic group among youth in Slovakia, Roma adolescents have been the focus of the EDUMIGROM research. Our subject has been Roma youth living or studying in towns – and who, in theory, have an advantage in comparison to their same-ethnic peers living in rural areas since they have more opportunities resulting from living in an urban milieu.

## **Framing of public and political discourse in Slovak society**

During the past two decades of post-communist development in Slovakia, there have been several more or less distinctive shifts in the content and mutual relations of public and political discourses about Roma. In the beginning of the 1990s, minority issues, together with the so-called Roma issue – Roma had been placed in the de-ethnicised category of "citizens who are in need of special assistance" – were significantly reframed. Roma ethnicity was officially recognised by the Constitution and – together with all ethnic minorities – granted special rights, including those pertaining to the domain of public administration, education, and cultural protection.<sup>68</sup> The former state-socialist regime's strategy for the comprehensive integration of Roma was labelled as "forceful assimilation" and social work services targeted at Roma in the field were considered offensive and cancelled.

The search for a new integration policy was rather half-hearted. Development of the welfare state has been continuously based on civic principles. But special assistance for Roma was also considered unjust preferential treatment. Yet the development of a Roma political and cultural identity and their political and cultural participation were perceived to be the issue of the day (Bacová 1992).

Since 1989, and to an even greater degree after the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993 when Czechoslovakia was dissolved, minority issues have prominently featured on the political agenda and in accompanying public discourse. However, these were almost exclusively concerned with Hungarian minority issues, and Roma and other minorities were seldom targeted (Ondrejovic 2003).

The crisis of the Slovak economy (a loss of markets) led to massive layoffs and unemployment. In many areas, there were no prospects of new openings for years. Roma employed in declining sectors and in marginal positions lost their jobs first. Growing numbers of Roma have been living on social benefits. Moreover, financial protection for the unemployed has not been supplemented by public and social services for jobless families and communities.

68 Special programs promoting Roma housing, education and living conditions had been unmasked as offensive for Roma by both Slovak and Roma experts. On the other hand, some newly granted rights, such as the right to use mother tongue in communication with public administration, are not available yet. In spite of the fact that Roma make up more than 20 per cent of the inhabitants in many Slovak villages (20 per cent is the present minimum condition for exerting this right), there is almost no staff conversant in the Roma language. The present government, which intends to lower the minimum to 10 per cent, are confronted with this problem (besides the budgetary aspect of an increased cost for bilingual public administration),

Today, Slovakia has rather large regional disparities (in employment, unemployment, average wages, the availability of services, transport network density, and other areas), and the risks of poverty are concentrated in marginalised regions. The possibility of exclusion is increased for Roma living in settlements located in these regions. However, though it is obvious that these are the structural factors of the Roma's desperate situation and that they can hardly be overcome individually or through self-help within the group, a perspective that blames Roma for their poverty is certainly dominant.

As Roma were overrepresented among clients of labour offices and as welfare beneficiaries, the apparent connection between welfare and ethnicity revived and deepened stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma. Public opinion had soon made joblessness identical with idleness and viewed Roma unemployment as evidence of their "moral otherness."

Assumptions about cultural and moral differences (and apparent social differences) evolved into a considerable social distance. In general, the majority holds that Roma neither want nor know how to adapt to social norms. This negative opinion is not necessarily based on personal experience. To the contrary, according to surveys, those who have more frequent contact with Roma as neighbours, colleagues, friends, or relatives, express less negative attitudes. Thus, we must look for other causes of this image of Roma besides experience (Vašecka 2001: 225–50). However, more recent surveys do not support the positive impact of personal experience on social distance/accepting attitudes toward Roma. They show that the general concern about the living conditions of Roma is very low in comparison to the concern about the living conditions of other groups in Slovakia.<sup>69</sup>

The image of the idle and unemployed who do not want to accept that "there is no gain without pain" in our culture has often been used by all sorts of assailants and reformers of the social security system. Since 1990, all the Programme Manifestos of successive governments (with exception of the 2006–2010 Manifesto) have spoken about the necessity to increase the individual and group responsibility of citizens for their economic and social situation and decrease state paternalism and redistribution. The 1994–1998 Manifesto (Vladimir Meciar's third government) even defines social justice (an equitable, ordered society) as the goal of the transition from state paternalism. It states: "*we consider it social injustice if social benefits are taken by citizens who can work but do not want to*". The Manifesto also suggests that the transition to a new social policy would include the "*elimination of social sponging*" (Manifesto 1994: 49). An explanation of which social groups were meant as "spongers" was brought about by the next steps of the government. In accord with its Manifesto, the government launched the first reform of social assistance in 1998. The Act on Social Assistance classified long-term unemployed

69 According to the 2008 European Value Study, almost half of the adult Slovak population is not very concerned or is not concerned at all about the living conditions of Roma in Slovakia. This is a positive development when contrasted with the 2004 survey, where almost 70 per cent respondents were of this opinion. This attitude does not vary according to level of education or other socio-demographic characteristics. In 2008, paradoxically, less than 10 per cent of Slovaks said that they were not very concerned or were not concerned at all about the living conditions of children in poor households. It is apparent that a declared sensitivity to the situation of children growing up in poor families is not transmittable to children in Roma families. Group prejudices are clearly stronger than the culturally expected compassion for small children.

(more than two years) as poor for "subjective reasons" and stipulated benefits for them on the level of 50 per cent of those who were poor for "objective reasons". These measures hit Roma families markedly as Roma were preponderant among the unemployed and were one of spurs of Slovak Roma asylum-seeking in 1999–2000.

From the perspective of the *integration* policy, the prominent group that should be targeted by various inclusive and anti-discrimination instruments were Roma who live segregated in the so-called marginalised Roma settlements. According to estimates based on the last registers of district administration (1988), between 280,000 and 320,000 Roma live in Slovakia. About one-quarter claim Roma ethnicity in the census (Vano and Mészáros 2004: 5). Out of these, approximately 60 per cent live mixed with the majority population (though often in specific streets or blocks of flats) and one-third lives in separated or segregated (mostly) village communities, the so-called settlements. At least since 2002, the situation in segregated settlements has been recognised as a complex problem that calls for comprehensive solutions in all domains: education, employment, housing, health care, and others.

On the other hand, due to their relatively frequent "staging" on television (coverage of crimes, disasters, misery, neglected children, etc.), Roma living in the most desperate conditions have become representatives of typical Roma for the majority population. Almost all Roma who took part in our research complained that the fact that this image stood for the typical Roma in the eye of the public was painful.

As was already suggested, in the domain of policy, the "civic" and "ethnic" principles of integration policy have been competing and superseding each other in some periods, but in other periods they have supplemented each other instead, as these principles are connected to and operate in different sectors. Despite the fact that public opinion tends to identify some social programmes as "Roma programmes", for instance, the construction of lower standard housing, the state social protection policy has always been "colour-blind". Only pilot programmes and projects that were funded from abroad had clear ethnic targeting. However, targeted programmes for ethnic groups, not to speak about positive discrimination, have been considered violations of the principle of equal treatment.<sup>70</sup> The concept of "cultural distinction" or "cultural difference" has been vague and still remains ill-defined, even making a rather dangerous identification of language difference with cultural difference.

The Romani language is the mother tongue of the majority of Roma children. According to official estimations, the Romani language (its Slovak dialect) is actively used by 80–85 per cent of the Roma living in Slovakia<sup>71</sup> (Rómsky 2002). Despite this, the Roma language has not yet been used as a language of instruction at any school. The resulting language barrier is recognised as the root of difficulties that many Roma children experience in the formal education system. Instead of using their mother tongue as a

70 Good example is the debate about the Anti-discrimination Act, in which equalising measures were blamed for bringing about unjustifiable advantage for some people because of the very fact of belonging to some ethnic group. On the other hand, speaking about "ethnic distinctiveness" is hardly discernible from group stereotyping, which is taken as offensive, too.

71 Roma living in southern parts of Slovakia speak the so-called "A-HI" dialect, which is close to Hungary. Small groups of Roma living in eastern Slovakia, the so-called "washtub makers", speak a Roma dialect with some Romanian mixed in.

tool of integration (which is hardly possible since teachers do not know it and because teaching materials are lacking in the Romani language), zero grades and teacher assistants were introduced to reduce the initial barriers. Emphasis on the enrolment of Roma children in preschool education has also strengthened in the last decade. But being competent in the Romani language is not explicitly required from teachers and teacher assistants.

In 2008, the Romani language was officially declared as a re-codified and standardised language. The Eastern Slovakia Romani dialect was taken as the basis for re-codification as it is most frequently used in Slovakia. However, this act did not result in a drive to establish the Romani language as a language of instruction. It has been estimated that this process will take another two decades.

Debates about Romani language development and the recognition of language rights are often mixed with debates or claims for recognition of cultural differences. However, the frequent confounding of language and cultural distinctions, which is typical for an imported discourse like multiculturalism, has led to confusion in the Slovak language context, in which the term culture has a rather strong moral connotation. The phrase "cultural difference" can be easily understood as difference in morality and the line between claiming the recognition of cultural difference (of Roma) and suggesting that Roma do not accept general moral principles is very fragile.<sup>72</sup>

What naturally follows is a differentiated perception of the actual target group of both types of policies that can run parallel: the marginalised Roma settlement population versus the whole Roma ethnic group. An example is the social-democratic government of 2006–2010, which presented strong ethnic emancipation claims for Roma (the officially completed codification of the Romani language, for example), but on the other hand, continued with a colour-blind welfare policy and also programmes for marginalised groups (such as a preparation for comprehensive development projects for marginalised settlements that should draw resources from several European Union structural funds) which had been designed by the previous government.

## **Media discourse**

There are not many systematic analyses of media discourse about Roma. Ondrejovic, in a study carried out in the 1990s, suggests that reports about Roma in the Slovak daily press at the time were rare and linked almost solely to reports about crime. At the same time, Roma incidents reported on Slovak Television seemed to imply that the Roma issue was the only real problem in Slovakia (Ondrejovic 2003: 149). In the political discourse of the 1990s, the two main characteristics that were ascribed to Roma

72 An important finding of our research is that the majority of Roma students interviewed feel quite uncomfortable with all questions concerning a "special or unique culture", and they tend to understand "the offer to display your culture freely" as a form making difference and of othering. "Non-making difference" and "not taking into account the colour of one's skin" was more desirable in their view.



were criminality and a sponging lifestyles. A critique of Roma's desperate living conditions was considered a "propagandistic smear of Slovakia and Slovak treatment of Roma". Ondrejovi notes that in 1995 the media also reported some positive aspects of living with Roma. However, all of these examples were depicted as a miracle – because in the common sense, real Roma are lazy, they sponge on "our" work (also presented in the media). As a result, these reports do not have a positive effect, but just the reverse: prejudices are strengthened. In that period, the media dedicated very little space to the victims of racial violence (ibid.: 153).

### **Public policies and related discourses**

The European Union accession process induced the Slovak governments to make new and more thoughtful efforts toward creating Roma policies. The Slovak Government has repeatedly recognised the priority of addressing the broad issue of Roma integration in several documents focusing on virtually all spheres of public policy. A document titled *Basic Positions of Slovak Government's Roma Communities Integration Policy* was adopted in 2002 and its main aim was to set out solutions and concrete steps that would translate the declared political will to integrate the Roma in Slovakia into real life (over the long term). It recognised the generally disadvantaged status of Slovak Roma. It also asserted that the protection of minority rights is necessary but insufficient for stable integration, and therefore called for an adoption of temporary positive discrimination for disadvantaged groups in order to equalise their opportunities. No such measures have been implemented thus far. This hard-bitten assessment follows from the fact that teacher assistant and zero class programmes are in fact mere compensations for the government's incapacity to secure similar rights for the Roma minority as are secured for other ethnic minorities such as Hungarians.

At present, the document does not exert a significant influence on political discourse. Principles and objectives have been introduced, including a program of comprehensive development for segregated Roma communities, but only on paper. All of the existing programmes have a partial character. The interconnection and harmonising of housing programmes with local social work programmes, and other programmes including systematic work with children and youth are still an exception to the rule and usually a result of NGO efforts. The only connection with present practice is an emphasis on education, which has been seen as a key to solving the various problems that Roma in Slovakia currently face. In actual political discourse, this emphasis has been mostly verbal, with only modest contributions to practical policy measures (these are the teacher assistant and zero classes programmes and the launching of a stricter and more transparent testing system when placing children in special elementary schools). More can be found in the policy programmes section.

However, in practice, integrated education means co-presence and not a special system of teaching. The 2008 School Act defines integration simply as the "*common education of children with different abilities in the same class*".

Discrepancies in opinion about the appropriateness of an ethnic or civic approach have also been reflected in practical policymaking and policy language. On the one hand, there has been a recurrent effort to avoid making links between Roma ethnicity and destitute poverty. During the social-democratic government of Robert Fico (2006–2010), there was a rhetorical emphasis on the development of Roma ethnic identity and drawing on European Union structural funds in favour of marginalised Roma communities. The report that there is EUR 200,000,000 dedicated for this priority has repeatedly incited furious debates about preferential treatment of Roma as compared to the Slovak majority.

Iveta Radicová's government (2010–present) has shifted again towards the de-ethnicisation of poverty. For instance, the term "socially excluded communities" is used instead of "marginalised Roma communities" (Programme Manifesto 2010). This shift seems to be chiefly informed by the growing negative reactions of public opinion toward any redistribution programmes in favour of Roma communities.

It is clear that an emphasis on the "civic approach" does not necessarily prevent stigmatisation and blaming the poor. Insufficient conformity with social norms and the moral insufficiency suggested by the name given to the targeted social category can also be a rich source of othering. Slovak (and Czechoslovak) legislation has traditionally used the term "socially maladjusted citizens". If in older legal language (Act No. 100 of 1988 on Social Security) the term "maladjusted" was reserved for alcohol abusers and those released from prison, this term has since lost such specification in recent years. In Act No. 195 of 1998 on Social Assistance, the expression "maladjusted" is used to denote homelessness (described as lacking a place to reside and needing public provisions for bathing or washing). In the 2008 Annual Report on the social situation of the population, the target group for services for socially maladjusted citizens is specified by mentioning Roma communities in brackets. The phrase "socially maladjusted citizens" was publicly advocated as the politically correct term by Katarína Tóthová, the former minister of justice. In her view, if we speak about Roma rowdiness (which "provoked" Neo-Nazi marches on Roma settlements), we should avoid the term Roma and "[...] all the issue should be transferred to more general level dealing with socially maladjusted citizens" (Pravda 2009).

## Policy programmes in education

Compulsory school attendance lasts ten years in Slovakia. The schools' catchment areas are not compulsory for parents, and they can choose a school for their child outside the school catchment area in which they have permanent residence. On the other hand, the school in whose catchment area a pupil has permanent residence is obliged to enrol that child. There are several educational paths that compulsory education can take. The basic difference is between special and standard schools. The differentiation and tracking of students at standard schools take into account and include:

- enrolment or non-enrolment in preschool education and the resulting differences in preparedness of pupils at the time of their entry into primary education;
- enrolment in zero grade due to a pre-detected lack of preparedness for school and the subsequent continuation of study in the same class or the dispersion of zero-grade pupils into different classes of the given elementary school;
- differentiation and re-clustering of pupils according to their foreign language preferences, if this starts already at the primary level; and
- streaming of pupils in the beginning of the second stage of elementary education (lower secondary education) due to the transfer of accepted pupils to eight-year secondary grammar schools and due to their sorting according school results and special talents into specialised language and maths/science classes or less demanding classes.

All of these processes of repeated streaming are structurally embedded into the education system and directly or indirectly affect the schooling of all children, including pupils from minority backgrounds.

The so-called *zero grades* have existed since 1993 as a response to growing number of children not having attended preschool. In schools where zero classes are established, the regular first class curriculum is divided into two years – the zero and the first class. After completing the zero class, pupils may either continue their first class within the same class or be dispersed among other regular classes. The decision depends on the number of classes at the given school and is at the sole discretion of the school headmaster. Given the composition of zero grades, which are attended almost exclusively by Roma pupils, this decision may both track Roma children into *de facto* segregated schooling or, on the contrary, secure their schooling in ethnically mixed classes. There are no specific regulations in effect that would explicitly ban the grouping of Roma students proceeding from zero classes to separate classes in the first grade.

Importantly, enrolment in the zero class counts as part of the 10-year compulsory school attendance. If a pupil later repeats at least one class and she or he had been enrolled for the zero class in the past, compulsory school attendance is considered to be completed earlier than completing the last grade of elementary school. As pupils are not allowed to continue their elementary school studies after ten years of schooling, this measure implies that the chances of zero-class pupils to study in higher education are seriously curtailed.

Pupils with special educational needs that attend standard school – so-called “integrated pupils” and “pupils from socially disadvantaged environments” (SDE)<sup>73</sup> are important categories that are used to finance education and to define the targets of the teacher assistant programme.

73 A pupil is defined as being from a socially disadvantaged environment if he or she (1) is in material need and lives in a segregated settlement, (2) lives in an unsound household environment, including hygienic conditions and a high number of household members per dwelling, so there are no proper conditions for doing homework at home, (3) does not speak the language of instruction, (4) is in material need and did not attend preschool, and (5) is in material need and his parents did not finish nine classes of compulsory education. (School Act) This definition does not directly refer to Roma pupils, but it can serve this purpose as the SDE pupil can be used as a proxy for the most disadvantaged Roma pupils.

In 2003, the Slovak government introduced a fundamental change in the financing of elementary and secondary schools. At present, the so-called normative limits stipulate annual funding per child and take into account the location and size of schools, the number of schools in a municipality, the attendance of individually integrated pupils, the number of pupils from socially disadvantaged environments, the establishment of zero grades, and other specific conditions.<sup>74</sup> The normative scheme of school financing produces differences in the scope and amount of funding for individual schools as it accounts for several external factors (such as geographical location or the size of the school), but more importantly, also for the internal composition of the student body and teaching staff (the presence or absence of individually integrated pupils or classes, the presence or absence of pupils from SDE, the presence or absence of zero grades and teacher assistants,<sup>75</sup> instruction in the official language or minority language or both, the existence of a school dormitory, etc.). These features of the general framework further support and reinforce the possibility of divergent educational paths for different pupils within a single educational system.

### **The teacher assistant programme**

This programme, which aims at mitigating disadvantages following from the difference in language of instruction and the pupils' mother tongue as well as other aspects of the pupils' situation, has been implemented since 2002 and is based on experimental projects with Roma teacher assistants which occurred in 1990s as a result of an experimental project run by the nongovernmental Wide-Open School Foundation. In 2010, the clause expired according to which teacher assistants do not need to have secondary or university (pedagogical) education. If in 2005–2006, the number of teacher assistants was 729 in 484 elementary schools, in 2009–2010 less than 400 teacher assistants worked at schools.

The responsibilities of teacher assistants are extensive and vary from cooperating with teachers during lessons, helping children from SDE to adapt to the school environment, eliminating language and cultural and social barriers, and organising extracurricular activities for pupils. The content of their work is designated by the school headmaster. Being conversant in the Romani language is not explicitly required from teacher assistants.

74 The financing of special schools is set out in a separate regulation and these are allocated a higher amount of finances per child in comparison to regular schools. Importantly, the limit for a zero grade pupil is 170% of the normative limit for a pupil in other grades of elementary school. The limit for a pupil with special educational needs in standard school (an "integrated pupil") is 250 per cent of the normative limit for a pupil without special educational needs.

75 The way of supporting teacher assistant programme has changed several times during the EDUMIGROM research. At present, only schools with more than 100 pupils from SDE are now required to use the half of lump sum for SDE pupils for establishing the position of teacher assistant. It is clear that also in such schools there would be maximum of two teacher assistants.

## School welfare programmes

School welfare programmes for children from households receiving material needs benefits were introduced in 2004. Support has been provided through meals and subsidies for school supplies. A motivation scholarship programme for elementary school and special elementary school pupils who have improved their marks was also introduced in 2004.

These programmes were meant both to compensate for cuts in social assistance, which had severely affected large families, and to increase pupils' motivation. In 2005, eligibility for welfare-related school programmes increased when children from households with income below the minimum subsistence threshold were also entitled to receive help, and not only children from households of benefit claimants.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, with the exception of the motivation scholarship, welfare programmes have been made universal for all children in schools where at least 50 per cent of the pupils come from households that receive material needs benefits. This amendment has partially lowered the risk of stigmatisation, which had not been taken into account. On the other hand, such an arrangement encouraged parents to enrol their children in schools where such perks are accessible easily. Unfortunately, these are special schools. In 2009, the motivation scholarship programme was replaced by an allowance for school attendance that is preconditioned solely by regular school attendance.

Another programme that is more or less directly beneficial to disadvantaged children is *community social work*. It targets primarily, but not exclusively, segregated Roma communities. Its aim is "to eradicate the causes of their social deprivation through the permanent work of a community social worker and an assistant to the community social worker". Community social workers and their assistants provide daily consultations, advice, the mediation of information, or contacts to various institutions; accompany clients on their visits to official institutions and proceedings held in the clients' interests; and make other professional interventions as necessary. In addition, community workers cooperate with municipal representatives (mayors and town clerks) and local organisations. In some localities, they accompany children to school. Community social work is provided by municipalities and funded on a project basis from the Social Development Fund. The limited period of projects and the lack of regular calls for funding community social work have caused irregularity in this service and often a loss of trust on the part of clients. The 176 settlements in which community social workers were active during this period represent less than one-third of all settlements containing the larger Roma communities. In 2010, about 300 social workers and 350 social work assistants worked in the field in marginalised Roma communities. According to experts, several thousand such social workers would be needed to have an actual impact on life in these communities (Topky 2010).

<sup>76</sup> The maximum amount of benefits with all allowances is lower than the amount of the subsistence minimum for the majority of household types.

## Main findings of the Slovak EDUMIGROM research

As was mentioned above, Slovakia has a stratified educational system that streams pupils according to their school results. This characteristic is most visible at the second stage of elementary education, where students either attend more prestigious grammar schools, standard elementary schools, or special elementary schools. Within standard elementary schools, streaming is manifest in classes with better students or classes that specialise in maths, languages, or other subjects.

Our research has covered all elementary schools (both standard and special) in the towns under study. However, as we discovered later, the so-called "collected special classes" that existed in two elementary schools were not included in the sample.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the often-quoted evidence of brutal segregation of Roma youth is lacking. Although Roma children prevailed in the special school in Hrdé, Roma formed a smaller proportion in the same type of school in Krásne. According to the teachers, the predominance of Roma children in the special schools is also a consequence of the resistance of non-Roma parents to this form of schooling.

Neither town has a large segregated community of Roma. Instead, they are spread throughout the town. However, there are localities in both towns where the concentration of Roma is higher, and there may be blocks of flats where they are the sole inhabitants. Moreover, the instable housing situations of many poor Roma families, partly caused by the municipalities' privatisation policy for public housing in the 1990s and 2000s, forced them to move from town and settle in nearby villages. Because of these currents, few urban Roma youth who were dispersed among their peers from the majority appeared in the town schools. However, segregated Roma schools are mostly to be found in villages located nearby. Meanwhile, "white flight"<sup>78</sup> of children from better-off families living in these nearby villages is rather easy and they target the town schools. In the sites under study, the results of this "white flight" are such that certain town schools work with almost a 100 per cent concentration of non-Roma students. These are, as a rule, local elite schools in which non-Roma students with mostly middle-class backgrounds separate themselves from all the others.

Most of the Roma pupils in our survey attend schools that belong to average or less prestigious schools according to local criteria. Most of the graduates of these schools continue their study at vocational or technical secondary schools. This preference is closely interlinked with lower school performance and socio-economic and educational family background. Destitute living conditions (about 60 per cent of the Roma pupils in our sample live in families without a regular monthly income), contributing to parents'

<sup>77</sup> This is because pupils from these classes did not bring proof of informed consent from their parents, which was a precondition for their participation in the survey. In one case, the headmaster decided that special class pupils would not manage to fill in the questionnaire and therefore did not disseminate the request and informed consent forms among these children.

<sup>78</sup> "White flight" is the strategy of non-Roma parents to enrol or reassign their children to another school if the number of Roma pupils in their current class or school is judged to be too high.

expectations that their children would provide for their household livelihood as soon as possible, seems to be the main reason why Roma pupils leave school too early: in fact, about one-third of the Roma pupils surveyed intended to quit school in the following year.

With one exception, all the interviewed pupils attended ethnically mixed classes. Both Roma parents and teachers advocate the benefits of mixed classes. They consider the presence of "white children" to be important for providing a pattern to follow and stimulus for striving harder. Despite the fact that a majority of pedagogues support the integrated education of non-Roma and Roma, almost all elementary schools implement streamlining and divide pupils according to their school grades and special talents for math and languages. In large schools with several parallel classes, the A class is without Roma as a rule, while the least demanding classes have a (relatively) higher share of Roma. As a result of streaming, such schools have elite classes based on competitiveness filled with strongly motivated pupils striving for knowledge, while other classes are dominated by relaxation and fun as the main principle of, and reason for, school attendance.

A concentration of lower achievement pupils in one class means that, most of the time, Roma pupils attend class with non-Roma classmates who also have poor results, low motivation, and who can hardly be expected to "pull them" into majority society. Almost all of the interviewed Roma pupils attended such classes.

Teaching in classes with individually integrated students<sup>79</sup> was valued by different parties differently. Parents of these students point out that at some schools better students get more attention from teachers than their weaker classmates. But the parents of the better students complain that the demands of individually integrated students have been retarding the teaching process. Complaints about teaching occurred in those classes with individually integrated students. School headmasters confirmed that such classes are often overcrowded with more individually integrated students than is allowed. Pedagogues teaching in these integrated classes do not yet have special preparation for this teaching (it is still not a part of the pedagogical curricula) and teachers lack supervision and assistance.

We have observed that, with parents' cooperation, schools are prepared to support (very) weak pupils, smooth out their problems, and promote the regular continuation of their studies. Without the parents' willingness to cooperate, the school behaves passively, as it has neither the tools nor a mandate to lend a helping hand to children who are not especially motivated.

According to teachers, a high level of absenteeism in the second class of elementary school<sup>80</sup> is the main cause of Roma failing at school. Schools consider themselves rather helpless in their fight against Roma absenteeism. Both schools and municipal social workers criticised their counterparts as

79 As we have already explained, individually integrated students are students with learning difficulties and or health problems that are taught jointly with students who do not have such difficulties.

80 Not all absences are unexcused. According to teachers, Roma pupils and their parents are very skilful in securing doctor's notes without justification and even without medical examination. If absences are excused in this way, the family does not lose child allowances and allowances for school attendance.

insufficiently responsive and both sides felt overburdened. Social workers said that they could hardly keep up with their versatile and contradictory tasks and an undue number of clients/pupils. They thought that teacher assistants should have to work "in the field", too. The situation is also complicated by the intervention of physicians who tend to issue sick notes for Roma pupils without examinations and after the fact (after the real or assumed recovery).

In general, our survey has brought additional support to the PISA (2007) findings concerning two important aspects of the school system in Slovakia. First, the impact of family backgrounds, that is, of the highest attained education of parents, on the school performance of children was shown to be decisive. Our data suggest a particularly strong correlation between parents' education and children's school results. This implies that children with less educated family backgrounds are seriously disadvantaged in schools. The second important finding of the PISA survey that is confirmed by our data is the existence of significant differences among schools concerning the overall school achievements of pupils enrolled in these schools. Strong differences among schools, as the PISA survey also recognises, are the outcome of the formal existence but permeability of school districts and right to choose a school, which is fully granted to pupils' parents. The extensive application of this right, mainly by more affluent, well-educated families, has gradually resulted in a concentration of pupils with a particular type of family background in specific types of schools. In our sample of all the elementary schools located in the two selected towns, there are, on the one hand, schools in which children of university educated parents or parents who have at least a graduation certificate predominate and where children from blue-collar families are rather rare. On the other hand, there are schools where children with parents who have university degrees are almost absent and where children from families without an educational tradition dominate.

As a result of teachers' and pupils' lowered expectations towards school performance, the majority of pupils from these classes choose vocational schools. Besides decreasing the pro-educational atmosphere in "standard classes", streaming, and related types of class reorganisation at the second stage of elementary school, other difficulties are created. Reorganisation, required by middle-class parents who want more demanding specialised education for their children, puts preadolescent-age children (age 11) in the complicated situation of having to build their personal relations anew. Such an emotionally demanding and personally disconcerting situation has made both sides tend to fall back on stereotypes and prejudices. As a rule, Roma pupils who experienced this situation in the fifth grade remembered long-standing interethnic tensions and fights. A similarly demanding situation is experienced by pupils who have had to change schools several times.

In sum, our research supports the findings of the PISA surveys that selection of pupils for advanced classes and the desertion of the most active and motivated students negatively alters the composition of the class and decreases the motivation of those who remain, including teachers.

- Roma pupils are concentrated in the "weaker" schools in town according to local criteria



- The school results of Roma pupils are worse than the school results of their classmates, but coming from jobless households and/or households without regular income seems to have a stronger relationship with school results than ethnic origin.
- The school attendance of Roma pupils in the higher years of elementary schools is poor.
- The economic and social background of the family strongly determines the motivation of pupils to continue further in their education.
- Schools are not able to counteract the disadvantages of children from poor household backgrounds and "convince" unmotivated pupils of the necessity of further schooling.

Somewhat contrary to our expectations, Roma pupils do not express a higher level of dissatisfaction toward school in comparison to their Slovak or Hungarian peers. Instead, the contrary is true. Pupils from upper-status families, studying in better schools and having better school results are more critical about interpersonal relations and the school atmosphere than pupils from lower-class families, studying in "weak" schools and having worse school results. Although some students complained about the insensitivity of teachers and verbal hints at their ethnicity,<sup>81</sup> a majority of students in both towns consider school as a neutral or pleasant place. We formulated several preliminary hypotheses to explain this. One claims that there are huge differences in how teachers deal with pupils at different schools. Because teachers at weak schools have lower expectations towards pupils, they feel happier since they do not feel that they are under so much pressure. This explanation was supported in interviews and focus groups with students as well as teachers who admitted that they lower their expectations in the case of weaker students and only demand attendance and from time to time "an interest".<sup>82</sup> The majority of the teachers interviewed suggested that their credo is to uncover "anything weaker students are good in" and to encourage and appreciate these skills. They stated that they try to use every occasion to praise Roma students for their achievement in any area. Mostly, they appreciate their willingness to help them with organisational issues and other things that do not concern their school results. Simultaneously, the majority of teachers expressed great frustration about the educational prospects of Roma students. They see only a minor and temporary effect of their pedagogical effort. Without instruments to attract Roma pupils (at the second stage of elementary school), they feel helpless and consider the situation desperate.

81 Examples of such behaviour were given mainly during the Roma pupils focus group in Hrdé. The initiator of their recalling was Paula, a very eloquent and self-conscious Roma girl, who was a smart and sensitive observer as well. During the follow-up workshop, Paula submitted both sides to a fierce critique: teachers as well as Roma students.

82 Regardless of their various "surviving education" strategies, students share an unwillingness to learn at home. Furthermore, their parents usually do not want or are not able to help them learn. According to the students, success at school depends on one's willingness to learn and to work hard, but also on the pressure and control of one's parents. However, one important finding is that Roma students do not reject those Roma students who manage to have good marks and do well at school. In fact, the opposite occurs: successful Roma children are admired by their peers, though not followed. This finding that excellent school results are not "punished" by exclusion from the peer-group is important. At the same time, peer-group socialising in cool attitudes to school seems to be important way in which Roma pupils protect their self-esteem.

According to the second hypothesis, however, pupils from better schools and who generally have well-educated parents are more prepared (by their family milieu) to openly express their views, and thus are more critical than pupils from weak schools. The higher satisfaction of Roma might be an artefact indicating their reluctance to express their feelings to a stranger like a researcher. Moreover, the atmosphere in the classes that they attend is far from "pro-achievement" for a majority of classes in the Slovak schools under study.

Our experiences from the case study suggest that the original assumption of the project – that school is perceived by Roma pupils as a more or less oppressive institutional setting – is not completely groundless. However, after the transition to the second grade of elementary school, Roma pupils are to a large extent released from the systematic impact of the education system and much more exposed to peer-group culture than are, for instance, Slovak pupils whose after-school time is much more institutionally controlled.<sup>83</sup> In peer-group socialisation, Roma pupils learn from older schoolmates "not to be so immersed" in how the teachers frame the education process, examinations, and other school situations. It seems that Roma pupils might tend to develop a certain indifference or unconcern toward teachers' assessments by learning how to cope with poor school marks without losing their self-esteem. They like school mainly because it is a place to meet friends and have fun. There are also other important reasons for appreciating school. Some students suggested that their school is the only place where ethnic differences are not noted. For a majority of students, teachers are those who do not make distinctions according to ethnicity. This does not mean that there are not incidences of incorrect behaviour by teachers. We have several documented cases of insufficient sensitivity in teacher-pupil communication.

Instances of inappropriate pedagogical communication were reported in both towns.<sup>84</sup> However, more frequent reporting need not mean that there is more rudeness and discrimination at a given school. Silence can often cover oppression and linguistic expropriation, while more emphasis on discrimination, monitoring, and a prompt critique of any infraction can suggest more self-consciousness and self-assuredness on the part of Roma students.

In addition to ethnic and socio-economic differences, gender differences seem to be a division line that produces conflict situations and injustices at schools while also influencing interpersonal relations among pupils and between teachers and pupils. Above all, girls perform better than boys in almost all subjects. However, we have found that gender differences in school grades are significant among Slovak and Hungarian pupils but they disappeared among Roma pupils. Roma girls do not perform better than Roma boys. If a gendered disposition makes Slovak and Hungarian girls more adaptable to school, more responsive and skilled in dealing with the rhythm of the education process than boys, then

83 School clubs are available only for pupils in lower classes (first stage) in Slovakia, and Roma pupils are far less engaged in extracurricular activities than non-Roma pupils are.

84 Teachers' verbal attacks occur in stressed, conflict situations and as technique of discipline pupils by using "jokes" or "hints" about Roma pupils.

Roma girls do not appear to have this special quality. Interviews in the community study do not bring any evidence of different expectations of Roma parents about the behaviour and school results of their sons and daughters.<sup>85</sup>

For Roma pupils, ideas about adult life are much more connected with blue-collar jobs than for non-Roma pupils. Secondary vocational school is an easy option for most of them. Due to the demographic decline and finances that depend on enrolment figures, secondary schools compete for students and they lower their demands/entrance conditions as much as possible. Contrary to non-Roma students, who, as beneficiaries of the massively lowered entrance requirements, tend to enrol into all types of junior technical and higher secondary schools, even with poor grades, Roma pupils' ambitions reflect better their real school performance than the ambitions of non-Roma pupils.

Good relations with non-Roma peers are far from being taken for granted. In both residential communities, Roma students recall experiences of being rejected by their classmates: such experiences occur already in preschool. One important finding of the community study concerns circumstances that make interethnic friendships and friendships among children from different social strata (children from families with different levels of attained education) increasingly difficult. Besides territorial separation, which has been growing, non-Roma parents intervene actively and negatively if they sense the formation of cross-ethnic relationships with their children. They sometimes ask teachers to prevent contacts between their children and Roma children. Non-Roma parents with small children also carefully examine the ethnic composition of school in order to avoid schools with an undesirably high number of Roma pupils.

The majority of pupils say they do not make a distinction between friends on the basis of ethnicity. As in the survey, they emphasise the role of mutual understanding and common interests. On the other hand, most Roma pupils have only Roma friends. In practice, interethnic friendships are rare. Interethnic cooperation in the school setting is often formal, a courtesy cooperation that is limited to practical, functional issues. Dominant frontal teaching reduces the experiences of more authentic cooperation. Shrieking abuse at Roma pupils is one of the most common practices used to exclude Roma pupils from the in-group.

In the only school that does not implement streaming (pupils attend the same class from the first to last year of elementary school), all the actors involved report good cross-ethnic relations. The time that has been spent together helps to rob skin colour of its distinctiveness, to discard stereotypes that could be used in interactions with strangers, and allows children to know each other personally.

In this regard, our research identified several institutional gaps or gaps in the pedagogical process. In neither of the schools do special programmes exist to promote newcomers' integration in the class. No attention is given to the quality of relations in ethnically mixed classes. Although collaborative interethnic relations are a desirable state of affairs for all school headmasters and educators, their development

85 We only interviewed a limited number of Roma parents (13), and we are not sure that our sample was sufficiently diverse and covered all possible types of parenting.

and maintenance are not deliberately organised, neither by the schools nor by any other institution. Pedagogues avoid interfering among students, and they rely on the "spontaneous" development of friendly relations. (Since parents of non-Roma children have often discouraged them from establishing friendships with Roma children, the development of interethnic relations is hardly "spontaneous" in character.) In individual interviews, neither pupils nor teachers suggested the existence of any targeted programmes to improve this situation.

Though all schools have teacher assistant programmes, this programme in fact consists of one employee who usually works exclusively with pupils attending the first class.<sup>86</sup> Neither of the schools has programmes targeting Roma pupils and/or cross-ethnic communication at school. There is a lack of methodical aids, teacher in-service training, and a clear system of rules. Disappointingly, except for one teacher assistant, no one recognised these shortcomings.

According to our findings, due to their precarious financial situation, Roma pupils have more often been deprived access to various leisure-time activities that other pupils enjoy. They usually do not participate in school trips or other school events, such as song contests or dancing lessons. Several reasons have been presented to explain this. The problem is that schools have neither the resources for free-of-charge spaces nor funding for extracurricular activities. Moreover, the preferred model of one-semester's enrolment for free-time activities is too restrictive and inconvenient for Roma students.

In the narratives we collected, there is an apparent lack of "positive ideology" about being Roma, and it is evident that Roma families do not develop, sustain, or transfer such an ideology. Both teachers and pupils divide Roma into two groups according their "civilising habits" or lack of them. Although Roma accept this division, they have to work hard to distinguish themselves from the broad and very stereotypical category of Roma as people with deficient hygiene, unclean clothes, and bad manners. In the interviews, many Roma criticise this unjust generalisation and lumping of all Roma together. There was an evident wish among interviewed students to be approached individually and not as members of an ethnic group or any other group. A desire for autonomy and agency, constrained until recently, has overlapped with a desire to earn money as soon as possible.

We have also examined delicate issues of personal identity and various experiences with one's ethnic identity. We have found that Roma pupils, especially Roma boys, show significantly higher levels of strong approval for all self-appraising statements. However, a higher level of self-appraisal by Roma pupils is reflected neither in their school results nor in their higher aspirations for further education or type of work. We think that we should be very cautious about the interpretation of these findings as in-depth interviews with Roma students and the follow-up workshops with research participants (November 2010) have supplied us with very contradictory information in this regard.<sup>87</sup> The possibility of different patterns

86 There was one exception: one teacher assistant also organised after-school activities/sports.

87 During the follow-up workshops that were intended as a form of participant validation of our findings and interpretations, we have been confronted with both zealous support of the finding that non-Roma students are far less self-confident in comparison with Roma students as well as its fierce refusal: "I would keel over if this was true of Roma."

of "questionnaire behaviour" should be taken into account. The most workable interpretative solution of ethnic and gender differences in self-appraisal might possibly remain on the level of communicative practice and socialised patterns of speech behaviour. A positive self-regard might also be linked with other practical concerns of everyday life. Roma pupils have to learn to cope with frequent doubts about their abilities from those in their environment. Slovak pupils live in much more stable conditions in this regard; they are not "forced" to prove that they are "better" or "not the same" as "other schoolmates of the same ethnic origin". Roma pupils' high level of self-appraisal may simply be a continuation of their more persistent struggle against the negative presentation of Roma in general opinion. Self-recognition may often be a very individual attitude that they form thanks to their well-developed ability to "ignore them".

## **Policy recommendations**

Although it is now very popular among the Slovak politicians to emphasise that the destitute situation of Roma (in Slovakia and other Central European and Balkan countries) is "a problem which the EU must reflect on and solve",<sup>88</sup> it is clear that the main responsibility is on domestic policymaking at all levels of the government and on well-orchestrated efforts on the state, regional, and local levels. Though the following policy recommendations in four key areas are addressed to individual levels of government, it is clear that almost every recommendation addressed either to the central government/state level, regional level, or local/municipal level should be implemented in cooperation with all of the levels.

### **Improve education for minority ethnic youth**

An aspiration to improve education for ethnic minorities is crucial not just because of the need to provide human rights and equal opportunities to all the citizens of the Slovak Republic, but also because of the obligation to protect their human potential from waste and destruction. The main aim here is to propose measures that could contribute to improving the educational inclusion of children with Roma minority backgrounds.

There are some complications we face in this endeavour. The imagination and impetus for social reform (though supported by strong research evidence) is seriously blocked (or at least aware of its limits) by two important conditions that can hardly be removed. One is the actual objective of financial consolidation (due to the economic crisis), which guides decision-making on all public administration

88 For instance, see the deputy prime minister Rudolf Chmel's comments on January 14, 2010 in the daily Slovak Spectator.

levels. Cuts in public expenditures are the task of the day, and it is difficult to suppose that any proposals that create demands on the public budget will be considered seriously. The second limiting condition is dominant public opinion and the existing habits and ambitions of parents belonging to the majority. It is more than probable that the recommendations given below would be intensely objected to. For that reason, a systematic campaign explaining the importance of integrated education (in the widest sense), and a better and more comprehensible advocacy of both the increase of public expenditure in the domains of education, public housing, employment policy, and welfare (and an advocacy of the necessity to promote and secure egalitarianism in Slovak society) is also urgently recommended.

### *State level*

- In general, it is necessary to lower the weight of economic criteria in educational policy and strengthen the understanding of the educational system as the fundamental mechanism for developing and reproducing democratic relations in society.
- It is necessary to increase the value of the financial standard for schools with pupils from a mixed social background (for all pupils if the share of pupils from SDE is higher than (the agreed) quota), in such a way that classes can have less pupils than at present and more teacher assistants. It is important to increase the normative so that a given school can offer teaching, curricula, and after-school programmes that are attractive for pupils from all types of family background. The attendance of such a socially/ethnically mixed school will be beneficial for all pupils, not only for those from SDE that need to be "pulled" upward. A change in the normative can prevent further closings and mergers of elementary schools caused by the overall population decrease. It is of great importance to stop school closures in smaller villages since schools are often the only institutions that can organise or provide space for leisure-time activities.
- In order to make the individual integration of pupils with special needs and the teaching of children from socially disadvantaged environments (SDE) manageable and effective, an assistant teacher should be provided for every class with individually integrated students. For that reason, it is necessary to multiply resources for this programme.
- The present way of funding teacher assistant programmes does not secure a sufficient number of teacher assistants at schools.<sup>89</sup> A higher number of teacher assistants is also desirable at the second stage of elementary school where problems with absenteeism culminate. Ideally, they should be of the same ethnicity as the target group. Being competent in the Romani language should either be a precondition for this job, or those who know it should be paid a bonus.

<sup>89</sup> The means of support for the teacher assistant programme has changed several times during the EDUMIGROM period. At present, only schools with more than 100 pupils from SDE are required to use half of the lump sum for SDE pupils in order to establish a teacher assistant position. It is clear that in such schools there would be a maximum of two teacher assistants.

- The worst school results and decreased motivation for further education often occur in classes where Roma children have ended up during the streaming of students. To secure a more open educational system without the premature closure of educational opportunities, this *streaming has to be eliminated or at least restrained*. However, such steps are not possible without a thorough and long-term discussion with parent organisations and the general public.
- In addition to streaming, a "white flight" tendency also contributes to the segregation of Roma students. The escape of non-Roma children from ethnically mixed schools is facilitated by the lack of compulsory school catchment areas. It is probably not realistic to propose that the government reintroduce compulsory catchment areas. However, the government can require the *delineation of new catchment areas in such a way that a more even social mix of pupils would occur* (that is, children from all social strata, from better and worse neighbourhoods) in each catchment area and to require strategic planning of the composition of school neighbourhoods to be part of the municipal economic and social development plan (which municipalities are obliged to have and update in order to be eligible for European Union structural funds).
- The government (the School Act) should strengthen the rights of schools and teachers to actively influence the collaboration of children with different ethnic origins and involve parents in devising the most suitable forms of support for interethnic collaboration.
- Teamwork among students during the lesson should be required to a greater extent and teams of mixed ethnicity should be promoted for these activities. The right of the class teacher to form the groups and designate seating arrangements should be strengthened (though in negotiation with parents).
- Appropriate material and organisational conditions should be created to make sure that the integrated education of children with learning difficulties and children with health and mental disabilities will be fully inclusive. The possibility of establishing so-called "collecting special classes" in standard schools should be banned. Psychological diagnostics should be continuously updated and the line which divides "normal pupils", "pupils with learning difficulties", and "pupils with disabilities" should be set carefully, keeping in mind the demand of inclusion.
- Preschool preparation should be much more generously supported than it is currently. Preschools are not available in the most deprived areas. Transport to and from preschool should be free of charge.
- Attendance of zero class should not be included among the years of compulsory school attendance. The length of compulsory school attendance should be extended to 12 years and a vocational certificate as a basic minimum for those who will not continue their studies through upper secondary education.

- Teachers who work with children from socially disadvantaged environments (SDE) should be better rewarded and provided with free-of-charge supervision and further education and training. Trainings should focus on the competency to deal with SDE children. This may be implemented in study programmes of specialised schools and pedagogical universities or by a national centre that would also offer supervision for teachers of SDE students.<sup>90</sup> The training should be compulsory and the Slovak Ministry of Education should cover most of its costs. The unqualified teacher would have to take this course before beginning his or her post or during the first months of employment.
- The government should follow the Hungarian example and also make completing the first nine years of compulsory education a precondition for acquiring a driving licence.

### *Regional level*

- Each regional self-government is responsible for the organisation of secondary education in its region. Therefore, sustaining Roma children at institutions of secondary schooling and strategic planning for how to prevent massive school leaving after the tenth completed year of schooling should be a more focused on aspect of regional social planning. At present, there are no programs dealing with early school leaving. Special programmes to support the retainment of Roma students at school should be devised, special assistance/counselling should be targeted at secondary school students that are at risk of leaving school. Labour offices and other institutions operating in the region should be involved in these programmes.
- Since high unemployment and the impossibility of finding a job despite having a vocational training certificate or an even higher education diploma is very discouraging for Roma students and is the rationale for early school leaving, it is of paramount importance for labour offices to improve programmes for school graduates as well as job mediation services within and outside the region. Individual plans for job-seekers should be less formal and involve less paper-work.
- As school absenteeism is often covered by the confirmation of illness (a sick note) issued by physicians without examinations, it is necessary to punish such behaviour as a professional failure. Since regional self-government is responsible for the organisation of healthcare in Slovakia, it should take away physicians' licences as a sanction for such actions.

<sup>90</sup> Such a centre can, for example, organise psycho-social trainings for teachers or facilitate a communication network between teachers of SDE students to share experiences. At present, a platform for the exchange of such experiences does not exist.



### *Local level*

- There should be better organisational linking and cooperation among schools in particular municipalities. One school on its own is too weak to have an impact on its external surroundings and to resist the pressure of middle-class parents towards more streaming and ethnic segregation of students. Municipalities should discourage competition among schools for more (gifted) students and create more cooperation in the effort to provide good schooling for all children and to decrease the number of dropouts in their areas.
- Municipalities should stimulate the improvement of cooperation among social workers in the field and schools, especially in dealing with pupils with absences. The municipalities should have a special plan for decreasing school absences and dropouts in their districts.
- Students' clubs should be made available both at the first and second level of the educational system and should be free of charge. This may be very useful for SDE students who often have inappropriate conditions at home for doing homework. Such clubs can be jointly run by several schools in the municipality or by specialised NGOs.
- There should also be stronger support for NGOs that provide free-time activities for SDE children. These activities give children opportunities to spend their free time in a meaningful way and can also give them more self-esteem – especially when they can share what they have learned or created.

## **Improve interethnic relations within and outside the educational arena**

### *State level*

- Improving interethnic relations is a crucial task in Slovakia since the improvement of other areas is essentially preconditioned by public consent. A high level of animosity and prejudice requires a much more concerted state intervention. According to historical experiences, novels and other forms of art have strong power to rouse sympathy towards vulnerable groups, probably much more efficiently than various analyses and theoretical argumentation. For that reason, the state should start supporting art projects that can stimulate imagination, empathy, and understanding. In Slovakia, the last non-historical film that had Roma characters as its key heroes was made in 1977. It is time to support the creation of films that would emotionally educate the Slovak population and teach them to empathise with the life of children growing up in poor families and neighbourhoods, as well as their struggle to escape poverty and succeed in concert with majority society.

- Social mixing should be also a principle that directs the state support of housing policy. State support for providing rental municipal housing should be preconditioned by securing a social mix of tenants in housing units.

### *Regional level*

- Regional self-government has various competencies that can influence the inhabitants' quality of life and, indirectly, interethnic relations as well. Areas with concentrated poverty have many problems, such as housing, which cannot be solved at the municipal level, and even if there is direct municipal responsibility (for construction of public rental housing), the present arrangement blocks mobility to places with job opportunities (only those with permanent residence in the given municipality can rent public apartments). Regional self-government should carry out its functions through the organisation of important public services (public transport, healthcare, etc.) and can require that these services become more considerate and more inclusive.
- Regional self-government should also support the active participation of Roma citizens in public affairs.

### *Local level*

- The development of public spaces where children can spend their leisure time free of charge through sports or cultural activities should be supported. Effort should be invested in protecting the reputation of such facilities against being stigmatised as an infrastructure exclusively serving poor people and certain ethnic groups.
- Municipalities' housing policies should be open to public discussion. The conditions required to create a social mix in rental housing should be thoroughly debated and consensus should be sought. Examples of socially mixed housing policies from Denmark and other countries should be thoroughly studied to feed such debates with good examples and evidence.

## **Issues of ethnic inequalities and welfare**

### *State level*

- The entitlement to social benefits and social inclusion programmes is income dependent, and the national poverty line or "subsistence minimum" is the key instrument in

determining this. It is, therefore, necessary to regularly examine the adequacy of this testing instrument in relation to the cost of living and the requirement to secure the social integration of the citizen.<sup>91</sup> The easiest way to approximate the subsistence minimum to the real poverty line is to use the standardised measurement developed for comparing the populations' living conditions across the countries in the European Union (the so-called EU-SILC surveys). The EU-SILC surveys set income poverty line at 60 per cent of the average income and define the subsistence minimum at this level. Making the testing instrument more realistic in relation to living costs will increase the coverage of students by social inclusion programmes and decrease the current stigmatisation associated with them.

- Insufficient school attendance at the second grade of elementary school and ending compulsory education without finishing eighth or ninth grade is fatal for many Roma youth as it complicates their possibilities to continue their education on a secondary level. This situation can be partially improved by changes in the allowance for school attendance.<sup>92</sup> It is recommended that the age of entitlement for the school attendance allowance be increased to 13 years (as the start of entitlement) and to change the conditions of its payment so that it gives schools the main (or much more important) word in deciding when to suspend allowance payments.<sup>93</sup> Such a practice can be based on the generally well-assessed experiences of paying motivational scholarships to students by class teachers or schools. In contrast, the present system (mediated communication with the intervention of labour offices and social workers) leads to unclear responsibility that is shifted from one institution to another. At present, the monitoring procedure is complicated, intermediary, and very protracted. (The school reports the absentee to the labour office, a letter is sent to the family, and if the situation does not improve, the municipality and its social fieldworkers are asked to communicate with the absentee's family.) If teachers were sufficiently rewarded for this extra administrative task, there should not be any special problem with such a change.
- It is necessary to continue the meal and school aid programmes, ease the conditions for participation in these programmes,<sup>94</sup> and extend these programmes to secondary schools, as the costs for school materials at vocational schools are often unmanageable for low-income families.

91 A testing and upgrading of the subsistence minimum in relation to living condition costs (by the minimum basket method) was last completed in 1997 in Slovakia.

92 This allowance was introduced in 2009 and replaced former motivation stipend. The allowance is designated for all children fulfilling compulsory school attendance. Students attending secondary schools can apply for social stipend.

93 The amount of the school allowance is an important part of the budget of a poor household as the total amount of benefits with all allowances is less than the substitute minimum. We recommend using the allowances that currently belong to younger pupils to make all meals at school, including snacks, free of charge.

94 See the recommendation on subsistence minimum testing.

- The current program for the reimbursement of travel costs should be extended both to pupils from low-income households who have to travel to school within their school catchment area and to secondary school students from low-income families. In the case of secondary school students, the present system of social stipends does not take travel costs into account at all.
- It is necessary to set minimum standards of housing and neighbourhood/public services which should be secured for all inhabitants of Slovakia no matter where they live (access to electricity, drinkable water, access to hygiene, public transport, etc.) These standards should become included among the criteria used when allocating state support for housing and other projects.
- It is necessary to define low-income community centres as a social service and to finance them through the state budget. The financing of other important programmes such as social fieldwork should no longer be project based (and thus dependent on structural funds) but receive regular funding from the state budget.
- It is also desirable to set a norm for social workers and for social custody workers concerning the number of clients (families). Thirty families per social worker should be the maximum.<sup>95</sup>

### *Regional level*

- The Slovak settlement structure is a very dispersed and comprises many small municipalities that are often unable to provide sufficient services to their residents. Regional self-government should become more active in coordinating and securing access to public and social services. Access to sport and leisure-time activities for vulnerable youth should become a priority in regional planning.
- Regional government should also improve the dissemination of information about secondary education facilities and all support programmes (such as allowing poor students to live free of charge in some secondary vocational schools' dormitories). There should be changes made in students' travel tickets, whose price is still very high.
- Regional government should actively assist municipalities with social planning and preparing projects to improve access to social and public services for youth, which has been totally neglected in such planning thus far.

95 At present, it is common to have to work with more than 300 families.

### *Local level*

- Securing access to drinkable water, electricity, and hygiene should be the standard followed by all municipalities by law. A legal requirement would eliminate municipalities' reluctance to do social planning and prepare social development projects. Hygienic stations (washroom, laundry) should be easily accessible. Insufficient personal hygiene is generally the most stigmatising, and washrooms should also be made available at schools, as many children travelling to schools from distant settlements do not have the possibility of caring for their most basic hygiene at home.

### *Improving the achievement of minority and citizens rights*

Although the 12<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees social and human rights for all minorities in the state, in reality their implementation is often problematic. Many prejudices still exist which could only be removed through long-term endeavour and edification.

### *State level*

- In national politics, struggles and fluctuations between a civic and ethnic approach toward the Roma minority should be replaced by the peaceful division of appropriate spheres for the application of these principles. We recommend and support the present trend to de-ethnicise welfare and social service programmes (for instance, using the term "socially excluded communities" or "concentrated/cumulated poverty" instead of the term "marginalised Roma communities"). A continuous reference to the ethnic target group of these programmes strengthens the association of Roma with "dependency", which is personally humiliating and also nourishes prejudices against Roma among the "taxpayer" majority.
- At the same time, outside the welfare field it is necessary to support Roma ethnic self-awareness and self-confidence in various ways and to assist them with the habituation of declaring Roma identity even in written communication. Public education should be provided when forms that ask about ethnic origin ("*národnosť*") need to be filled out. It also seems very important that teachers start to provide small encouraging and clarifying counselling and assistance (according to clear rules) when parents enrol their child at school.
- Special attention should be given to devising programmes that would dissociate Roma from backwardness and social dependency. The role of television is crucial. Roma men, women, and children should appear on TV not only as "examples of destitution" or "examples of successful escapes from destitution", but in many neutral contexts in which colour and its stereotypical associations would be irrelevant.

- There is the necessity to (re)launch a wide public discussion about the rationale of introducing ethnic quotas in (some) occupations, jobs, and positions.
- In Slovakia, the level of ethnic prejudice, especially prejudice against Roma, is high and growing. Therefore, all possibilities for human rights education should be used and strengthened. The principle of equality should be at the forefront, and education about the social destructiveness of prejudice should be incorporated in the Civics and Ethics curricula.<sup>96</sup> In addition, curricula should both encourage and require critical thinking.

### *Regional level*

- Regional self-government should support the creation and participation of Roma NGOs and ad-hoc advocacy groups. These groups should be consulted and involved in the assessment of policies that could have an impact on Roma communities and the living conditions of poor people in the region.
- Regional self-government should support the networking of Roma organisations and a forum for sharing experiences among them.
- Regional self-government should cooperate with municipalities in uncovering all cases of ethnic inequalities and in preparing and monitoring an action plan on minority and civic rights.

### *Local level*

- Municipalities should also support the creation and participation of Roma NGOs and ad-hoc advocacy groups. They should be consulted and involved in the assessment of policies that could have an impact on Roma communities and the living conditions of poor people in the municipality.
- Municipalities should prepare an action plan on minority and civic rights in cooperation with NGOs and ad-hoc groups (all ethnic groups) and cooperate with them during monitoring and assessment.

96 Perhaps this could be best achieved by creating a new subject that would include this kind of "social education" and the current Civics and Ethics contents. However, this may prove difficult to implement since a new subject might demand specially qualified teachers.

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## SWEDEN

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## Background

Providing equal educational opportunities regardless of class background, migration background, gender, or disability has been an explicit goal of the Swedish educational system (Swedish National Agency for Education 1996, 2004a). Education has been viewed historically in Sweden as a means to strengthen social equality between individuals, and across geographically diverse communities (Lindbom 2007). Such goals are an in-built component of an egalitarian universal welfare state model that has tended to identify a variety of forms of disadvantage as amenable to remedy through providing public support in the form of social work services, job training and retraining, education, and special support for both adults and children for whom Swedish is not a mother tongue (Carson and Burns 2005). Programs aimed at remediation of individual and group disadvantage have been implemented in each of these policy areas, then later revised as problems have changed or as program shortcomings have been recognised and acknowledged. A general conclusion that can be drawn from the diverse results is that, while many of the most overtly discriminatory structures have been reformed and forms of discriminatory behaviour discouraged, there remain clear patterns of discrimination that manifest themselves in Swedish society. Not surprisingly, these discriminatory patterns are also reflected in Swedish schools.

The educational system in contemporary Swedish society is marked by increased diversity, differentiation, and increasing cleavages (Swedish National Agency for Education 1996; 2004a, b, and c, 2006, 2007). Socio-economic and ethnic school segregation has been the target of repeated investigations (see, for instance, Lindbom 2007, Lindvall 2009, Nordström, Skans, and Åslund 2010, Statistics Sweden 2007, SOU 2004: 33, Swedish National Agency for Education 2005).

### Increasing Diversity in Sweden

The Swedish population has become increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse since the late 1960s. Due initially to labour market immigration in the 1960s and 1970s, such diversity has further expanded since the 1990s with growing numbers of refugees (Nordström, Skans, and Åslund 2010). In 1960, the number of foreign born in Sweden was approximately 300,000. The corresponding figure in 2000 expanded their number to nearly one million. As a result of this development Sweden has a relatively large foreign-born population from a variety of countries of origin. The most frequent national origins (based on citizenship) for the immigrant population in the country are Iraq, Poland, Denmark, and Somalia. Over the past few years, the percentage of inhabitants born in Africa has also increased, especially from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea (Statistics Sweden 2009).

Immigrants are concentrated primarily in the larger metropolitan regions in the country, especially the Stockholm metropolitan area. Due to housing shortages in central Stockholm (especially

regarding public rental housing<sup>97</sup>) and limited financial resources, newly arrived immigrants and refugees are often limited in their choice of areas to live, even if they formally have the right to live where they wish<sup>98</sup> (Borevi 2002). Many of them are directed to the public housing in socially disadvantaged and immigrant-dense districts in the outskirts of Stockholm (National Board of Integration 2006).<sup>99</sup> These districts consist largely of first- and second-generation immigrants (Bunar 2001 and 2009, Bunar and Kallstenius 2006 and 2007/2008), and are often referred to as "segregated" or "multicultural", or more bluntly, as "immigrant-dense suburbs".<sup>100</sup> As might be expected, this housing segregation contributes to school segregation (Statistics Sweden 2009), and public schools located in these immigrant-dense suburbs have, in many cases, significant student mobility. They experience both a large inflow of students who are newly arrived refugees and immigrants, and a considerable outflow of students who transfer to other schools. A similar trend has been reported from the other larger city regions in Sweden (Bunar 2009).

### **Weaker average school performance among students with immigrant backgrounds**

Several Swedish studies that focus on neighbourhood effects on education show that ethnic segregation has a negative effect on a student's length of education and educational outcome (Nordin 2006, Grönqvist 2006, Andersson and Subramanian 2006). As a whole, students in the category "students with immigrant background" do not achieve the same results within the Swedish educational system as their Swedish-born peers (Swedish National Agency for Education 2004). Students with an immigrant background more frequently receive an "incomplete" among their final grades when graduating from nine years of compulsory school, and they are overrepresented among those who are not qualified to apply to the national programmes in upper secondary school. The most vulnerable group is students who immigrated to Sweden after starting school. The older the students are when they arrive, the more severe the difficulties they tend to face. Poor skills in the Swedish language are one of the most frequently offered explanations.

Students' school performance continues to be deeply influenced by social-structural factors. The primary explanatory factors influencing school performance do not appear to be students' foreign

97 Public rental housing in Sweden is not marginalised as in many countries, but rather a core part of the mainstream rental housing market.

98 A person with the permission to work and live in Sweden, or a person belonging to a category that does not need such a permit, is allowed to live wherever he or she wants in Sweden ([www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se)).

99 Similar processes are evident in other parts of Sweden as well, especially the larger city regions around Malmö and Göteborg.

100 Some researchers prefer to label these kind of districts as "sparse on Swedes" to underline that the problem is that the native-born residents move away, not that people with an immigrant background live there (see, for instance, Sundlöf 2008).

backgrounds or school activities (Swedish National Agency for Education 2004 and 2005). Instead, students' school performance varies in conjunction with several socio-economic background factors. For example, there is a strong link between the parents' educational level and the students' school performance (the higher parental educational level, the higher average grades). The educational level is generally lower among members of the immigrant population. A significantly larger share of students from foreign backgrounds also have parents who are unemployed. This is mirrored in the school performance of students from foreign backgrounds, who generally have a less favourable starting point based on these socio-economic background characteristics. An additional problem is that socio-economic and ethnic housing segregation have a severe effect on schools (see below), since most students are enrolled in compulsory schools close to where they live. The Swedish National Agency for Education emphasises the connection between segregated housing and school segregation, and points to the fact that districts with a dense immigrant population most often generate immigrant-dense schools. This is hardly surprising, even given the fact that students may choose to commute to another school (see later). Students enrolled in these schools tend to attain poorer results compared to students in schools with a mixed composition of students (Szulkin and Jonsson 2004).

Among students from immigrant backgrounds, these characteristics are linked not only to socio-economic factors and country of origin, but also to the particular period and reason for immigration. This means that the aspects of young peoples' identity that are grounded in their ethnic and national backgrounds may also carry with them a complex of other factors that influence school performance, and consequently identity formation, and future options in Swedish social and economic life. While there are identifiable status differences among groups with a non-Swedish origin, they share the common trait that they are not considered fully Swedish. As elsewhere, this inheritance is carried in clearly identifiable traits such as their foreign-sounding names, physical appearance, social background, and pronunciation of and competence in Swedish.

Many immigrants – and non-European immigrants and their children in particular – encounter great difficulties finding qualified employment, regardless of their educational achievement. However, participation in the new home country's education system does not directly correspond with employment in the Swedish labour market. Educational background is clearly an important variable for understanding the employment market, individuals' rate of participation, and the quality and character of employment to which they gain access. The goal is that education should not only provide individuals with the knowledge and tools for civic participation in society, but also the concrete qualifications for particular employment settings. However, young people from immigrant backgrounds enter the employment market with different prerequisites in terms of grades and educational level – for example, in the Swedish case, the content of knowledge gained in education that immigrant youth bring to the employment market does not qualify them for posts comparable to those attainable for Swedish youth with similar educational prehistory (Arai et al. 2000: 11).

Differences between the various immigrant and minority groups are often conflated, as if these populations were homogenous. Some immigrant children do very well compared with both immigrant and native Swedish students, and some ethnic groups are more highly represented in education at the university level compared to others. In Sweden, there are clear differences between enrolment levels in higher education between groups of immigrants: Iranian students are overrepresented while Somali students are clearly underrepresented. The use of aggregated statistical data and broad generalisations about "immigrants", as if they were one group, tend to render these differences invisible.

In response to the many problems linked to segregation, Swedish policymakers have tried a variety of strategies to disperse new immigrant groups, but with mixed results. For example, there are several efforts underway to invest extra resources in areas considered disadvantaged. As elsewhere, results range from impressive quality improvements on the one hand, to little impact on the other.

## **Swedes and immigrants: public and political discourse**

In the Swedish context, the central cleavage between "us" and "the others" is between "Swedes" and "immigrants" (Mattsson 2001). An official government investigation from 2005 (SOU 2005: 41) discusses the existence of a strong conception of the Swedish population as divided into two major groups, "Swedes" and "immigrants", with distinctive characteristics. The term "immigrant" was coined in the 1960s, replacing the previous term "foreigner" as an administrative category. The purpose was to facilitate the keeping of statistics and take affirmative measures to support the immigrant population.<sup>101</sup> However, the term "immigrant" was soon associated with stereotypical conceptions of "the others" and different kinds of social problems (Brune 1998, Molina 1997).

To be conceived of or categorised as an immigrant is often associated with difficulties in all societal arenas like employment, housing, or education. One important theme in the investigation is the obstacles and difficulties that the immigrant population faces in their aspirations to integrate into Swedish society. The study that summarises the results of the of the EDUMIGROM research in Sweden

101 The distinction between the native-born and the immigrated population is still clearly defined in official statistics. Statistics Sweden (2005) recommends the following classification: Foreign origin (a person born in a foreign country respectively a person born in Sweden with both parents born in a foreign country) and Swedish origin (a person born in Sweden with one or both parents born in Sweden). The Stockholm Office of Research and Statistics apply a definition based on the recommendations from Statistic Sweden. The Swedish National Agency for Education (2005) has developed a more detailed grouping to enable a specific analysis of different student categories. The recommended grouping is as follows: Student of Swedish origin (a student born in Sweden with one or both parents born in Sweden), Student of foreign origin born in Sweden (a student born in Sweden with both parents born in a foreign country), Foreign born – immigrated prior to first year of compulsory schooling, and Foreign born – immigrated after first year of compulsory schooling. In this report we will apply these official definitions. However, we will use the definition ethnic Swedish origin to enable a distinction between those persons who are born in Sweden, with both parents born in Sweden, from those with mixed ethnic origin with one parent born in Sweden and one of foreign origin.

states that *"the status of being immigrant is a condition that becomes permanent over time and is passed on from generation to generation"* (Kallstenius and Sonmark 2010: 12). One consequence of this is that the children of immigrants are also considered "immigrants" – in spite of the fact that they were born in and have lived in Sweden their entire lives (see also Mattsson 2001).

The principal explanation of the frequent occurrence of "othering" identified by the respondents from our fieldwork is the segregation in housing and schools in Stockholm. As a result of spatial separation, groups with different social and ethnic backgrounds have fewer opportunities to interact in the kinds of social settings that contribute to developing personal relationships, which gives rise to prejudice and stereotyped views. However, seeking to create a multicultural environment does not provide a simple remedy, as tensions can arise among groups of Swedes and immigrants, and among different immigrant groups. Such tensions are obviously not limited to ethnic or cultural differences, as evidenced by the tensions and occasional violence of football hooligans.

But school personnel and parents have developed somewhat different strategies to counteract "othering" and discrimination. The first category holds an active line of action and works with supporting adolescents with their applications for upper secondary schools, job applications, and so on. They try to improve their integration by helping overcome existing obstacles. In some cases, parents seem more resigned to this condition, and want to protect their children from "othering" by keeping them closer to people from the same background. This is mostly the case among parents with low levels of education. More highly educated parents tend to be more oriented toward the surrounding society.

Our fieldwork identified three distinct patterns or strategies of identity formation among the students regarding their ethnic belonging and relationship to the native Swedish population. First, we find students with a strong ethnic identification sometimes combined with a voluntary ethnic differentiation and distinction from the Swedish society. Second are the students with a more open and distanced attitude towards their ethnic origin. Third, we find students with a self-conscious acceptance of and pride in their ethnic belonging, and at the same time, they attribute great importance to integration into Swedish society. The most frequently expressed aspiration for this third group was to become an integrated part of the Swedish society, and this is also reflected in their identity formation. They strive for some kind of "Swedishness", which is a manifestation of social mobilisation and a higher social status. Some students express a wish to move to a more "Swedish" area, learn "better Swedish", and find "Swedish friends". Some students express the same aspiration for integration in terms of establishing a position on the educational and labour market, but want to keep their cultural and religious values and the close contact to their family and relatives.

## The Swedish school system

### The values discussion

In Sweden, research on the mono- and/or multiculturalism of schools has focused on discussions of values, that is, different values between "immigrants" and "Swedes" in relation to education, and in particular the value of equality between the sexes. Other researchers have pushed the question of values to look at the interpretation of values, that is, how values are being used in debates about schools and ethnic diversity (Parszyk 1999). Bunar (2002) describes a particular ambivalence toward the key value of equality in Swedish education policy and praxis. He notes that *"what is creating this ambivalence is that the majority society is torn between on the one hand, portraying itself as democracy where all citizens are acknowledged as having the same rights, and on the other hand, limits this acknowledgement to only that which conforms to the majority's imagined or real cultural frames of reference"* (ibid.: 149).

Clearly important here is how meaning is constructed in schools and how understandings of culture, particularly students' cultures, are constructed in relation to the key term of equality. Previous research has examined how teachers often interpret equality as similarity, which means providing children with a similar education (Burns et al. 2005). Teachers' interpretation of equality as meaning similarity, or treating students similarly, has discriminatory effects on students from foreign backgrounds. Thus, a school actor's norm-sustaining practices yield discriminatory effects. Instead, educational systems and those working within it need to meet students differently, that is, by recognising differences among students, and thus equality can be reached. In this sense equality and difference are not viewed as an "either/or" choice, but interconnected and part of broader strategy in achieving more equal outcomes.

### School choice

A potentially very serious development is currently underway in a dramatic expansion of a decade-long experiment with independent schools. At the core of the experiment is the principle of allowing independent schools to be established (which must meet nationally defined criteria for curriculum, expected financial stability, etc.), and which students may choose to attend based on their own preferences. These schools operate at the preschool, primary, and secondary school levels. The key financing principle is that the financing (public funding only) follows the student. An early concern with such schools was that students would elect to leave struggling schools, thereby triggering a downward spiral of student loss, contributing to deepening resource shortages and contributing, in turn, to greater student loss. Others were concerned about a parallel downward spiral linked to the potential for "brain drain" – a situation in which the best students would gravitate to the same schools, while poorly performing students would be left concentrated in struggling public schools. There is now evidence to support both of these concerns,

with some schools closing or on the verge of closing due to falling enrolment and subsequent financial shortfalls (Kallstenius 2011).

In the initial decade of this experiment, these problems did not emerge to any significant extent. However, a second phase of Sweden's independent school experiment is characterised by a quite new dynamic. The path to establishing independent schools has been greatly streamlined, and combined with a school-age population that is currently dwindling, this is already leading in the direction of significant overcapacity problems in densely populated areas like Stockholm. Schools will fail, and some schools will likely be forced to close down due to a lack of financing linked to diminishing student populations. It remains unclear to what extent this development will ultimately impact students from immigration backgrounds. However, the evidence suggests that selection pressures are making it increasingly difficult for schools located in areas considered less desirable. Students who suffer from the disruption of closing schools appear at this point more likely to be members of groups that have immigrated to Sweden.

Two other policy changes underway in education also might reasonably be expected to disproportionately impact students operating with any type of disadvantage. The first is a set of reforms to adult education programs that have been used by students with previously poor to mediocre academic performance to fill in missing credits or to improve their grades in subjects that were previously weak. Some options available through adult education have been removed, including the chance to use it to improve one's grades. Given that school performance among students from immigrant backgrounds (as well as native Swedes from lower socio-economic groups or with parents with lower levels of educational achievement) is weaker than among native Swedes, this change will likely reduce opportunities to learn from previous mistakes and redo certain courses. Since these changes are quite recent, it remains too early to evaluate the effects of this policy change; the extent to which students with immigrant backgrounds have made disproportionate use of this option remains unclear.

Finally, grading and written evaluation that approximates grades has been reintroduced for students down to the sixth grade (it most recently began in eighth grade). The debate on this topic has been couched in terms of the need for feedback, but has generally oversimplified the usefulness of grades and overlooked problems of subjectivity. Also largely missing from the debate are phenomena such as subtle and overt tracking effects at an earlier age, which are made more possible when there are comparable evaluations that are recorded in formal records. Given differences in the rates at which students mature,<sup>102</sup> and the differences in learning capacity influenced by family backgrounds, one might anticipate that early grading would contribute to reinforcing family-linked inequalities that are connected with ethnic/immigration backgrounds.

102 Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers* (2008) provides striking examples of how social feedback can reinforce early advantage.

## **Guides and gatekeepers**

Parents play a significant role in informing their children of their options and both encouraging and supporting them in pursuing them. Many Swedish young people who come from educated families are alert to the benefits of university studies. For immigrant children, it is often quite different, because their parents often cannot tell them much about university life in Sweden. Many of them have studied in their home countries, but they have no experience with the Swedish university system and are therefore less familiar with how it works.

School counsellors play an important role in Sweden in informing students with immigrant backgrounds of choices regarding continuing their education. These students suffer when school counsellors do not perform this role adequately – or when expectations or biases channel these students into low-qualified educational and employment tracks. This has been found to be a surprisingly common occurrence (Burns et al. 2005).

## **Policy considerations and recommendations**

This section on policy considerations and recommendations begins with three important caveats: one pertaining to the generalisability of our data, the second to the unwanted side-effects of well-intended policies, and the third to social system complexity. The first point is straightforward; Swedish EDUMIGROM case study research is limited to a single school in which the vast majority of students have immigrant backgrounds. We believe that it is broadly representative of schools in immigrant-dense areas and we selected the school with this in mind. However, a larger sample including a greater number of such schools would be essential to increasing confidence that the observed pattern of social processes, struggles, and coping mechanisms represent a generalised phenomenon in Sweden.

The second caveat is that Swedish efforts to improve equality between native Swedes and recently-immigrated Swedes has inspired many model policies. But deep divides remain, nevertheless. Few policies achieve all their explicit goals and all policies produce unwanted side-effects. Making matters even more complex, organising and managing multiculturalism is a far more difficult challenge than originally understood.

The early understanding of multiculturalism entailed assimilation into Swedish ways of people from non-Swedish backgrounds (Carson and Burns 2005). But as diversity and individualism have grown in Sweden over the past several decades, the core of what it means to be Swedish has also become much less clear. This has had two consequences that feed back into the schooling of young people. First, with the core values that define "Swedishness" in flux, there is a greater danger of Swedishness being defined in terms of national origins. It is not only immigration that has contributed to this flux, of course; first



and foremost, it is a function of broader socio-economic development taking place. Sweden has yet to resolve the discussion on non-negotiables, in part because it is a sensitive and highly charged discussion about core values. For example, gender equality is considered a core value, but the areas in which Sweden fall short that are linked to particular immigrant cultures are often most difficult to discuss and resolve (in part because issues such as girls not attending gym class or participating in sports, or the wearing of the *burka*, are stressed out of proportion by opportunistic or populist actors). Another clear example is discrimination against people from immigrant backgrounds, which is considered incorrect, but which is apparent across a wide range of social settings. Second, contemporary Swedish multiculturalism's lack of a clear core has opened the space for the kind of populist-nationalist mobilisation that led to a nationalist party, the Swedish Democrats, clearing the threshold to gain seats in the Parliament. As the place where societal values are communicated, schools have an especially difficult task communicating values that are not at least reasonably consistent with social practices. It is also difficult to communicate values that are in obvious conflict with those practiced at home.

The third caveat comes from the compound character of identity formation. As our case study and other research have made clear, inequalities reified during the period of identity formation among youth are a product of a complex tapestry of factors: some of which are social-structural, some of which are linked to particular school and classroom dynamics, some to the families' cultural/class backgrounds, and some are a function of individual young people's particular strategies for navigating to their future. Policy remedies may successfully alter conditions known to perpetuate inequalities, yet those inequalities may remain stuck in place with the glue generated by multiple social and individual/personal factors. This means that even potentially effective policies may produce apparently lacklustre results. It also means that the best-designed reforms may easily produce side-effects that are neither anticipated nor wanted.

Students navigate an already complex social world with their particular personal mix of skills and capabilities, social position, and personal strategies. Through navigating in the social environment as it is (rather than how we would prefer it to be), young people make their own very personal contribution to fix that structure and many of its cultural and systemic inequalities – even as they challenge and sometimes attempt to alter the prevailing structure.

### **Redefining 'Us' and 'Them'**

The dominant us/them distinction in the Swedish context remains Swede/immigrant. Our field research provided a striking reminder of both the number of subcategories that are created, and of the dynamic nature of these subcategories. We found significant gender differences – an increasingly important and bewildering factor in school performance across Sweden's school-age population – but also important differences by ethnic group or country of origin. Our research does not provide a basis for assessing just how fixed these subcategories are or become, but it is clear that there is a highly dynamic process of

creating subcategories. It is also clear that the Swede/immigrant distinction is extremely robust – to the extent that some students and their families opt to change schools as one social strategy for improving their position by at least becoming more “Swedish” in terms of language competence, social codes, and contact networks.

The importance and robustness of the Swedish/immigrant dichotomy suggests the need for vigorous and ongoing efforts to redefine Swedishness in broader terms. For such a redefinition (or expanded definition) to take hold, it would likely require a sense of shared mission – not unlike the solidarity that characterised the development of a successful, growing economy, a highly developed welfare state, and generating a high degree of social equality by improving the status of the least well-off. This is particularly challenging in the 2010s given both the level of economic uncertainty and the increasing level of individualism in Swedish society. Another important component in this broadening of the definition of Swedishness would be to seek to broaden the sense of history to include the histories of immigrant groups so that it becomes a more integrated part of the Swedish narrative. It might also include at least rudimentary training in some of the immigrant languages spoken by immigrant groups in Sweden. The United States and Canada provide concrete examples of countries in which the national narrative includes successive waves of newcomers who have proven important for the country's success – even if one must put aside ongoing difficulties with immigration and integration in those countries.

### **Accounting and reporting**

Part of gender mainstreaming in the European Union has included more fully developed systems of accounting and reporting on the status and progress with respect to equality goals. While such systems are inevitably more complex with respect to different statuses, ethnic backgrounds, and places of origin of immigrants, it is especially important that such data becomes more systematically available. The development of additional tools for making country comparisons of the performance of school systems in improving the educational performance of disadvantaged minority/immigrant groups would be useful.

### **Ongoing evaluation and adjustment of incentive structures**

Ongoing improvement of the systematic incentive structure to promote better integration and improving educational outcomes is important. For example, a more complete cataloguing and evaluation of those methods already in practice would be a valuable contribution. Incentives – either in the form of benefits, or in the form of “carrots and sticks” – can be structured for providing the additional impetus that is often necessary to change entrenched practices and habits. Some general categories might include:

- Identification of and recognition for especially positive results
- Recognition for good practices or creative approaches
- Grants and financing for promising experiments in diversity and multiculturalism

*They should be applied to organisations at all levels:*

- Performance of local level public bodies or authorities
- Performance of individual schools
- Performance of individual classes and instructional personnel

### **Expanded multicultural training in education**

We consider it to be particularly important that instruction supporting greater intercultural knowledge and understanding be implemented in primary and secondary schools, and in higher education. There are numerous efforts underway and these should be evaluated and adopted on a best-practices basis. Such efforts should not be limited to students. Expanded multicultural education for teachers and other personnel with ongoing contact with students would increase the capacity to sensitively manage multicultural environments and teach skills and values that promote tolerance.

Instructional materials, including textbooks, should be reviewed both for negative stereotypical ideas that they can perpetuate, and with special attention to how well they might serve to strengthen the communications and conceptual tools available to students for communicating across boundaries including class and cultural differences.

Given its especially strong significance in cultural identity (see Oaks 2001), language should remain an especially high priority. In addition to training in Swedish and English and a third European language (typically German, French, or Spanish), basic instruction in a national or immigrant minority language would likely prove beneficial for students. Their strengthened intellectual capacity would likely prove an asset in a rapidly shrinking world – and enhance tolerance for the imperfect language skills of newcomers

### **Competence in Swedish**

As is the case elsewhere, a person's level of linguistic competence in Swedish has an enormous influence on the life chances of young people and on their sense of identity and self-perception. In several instances, students mentioned the need to be better at Swedish if they want to have good future prospects for changing to more "Swedish" schools. In the Swedish context, competence is not only technical proficiency,

but also has to do with pronunciation. Strengthening the Swedish language proficiency of young people from immigrant backgrounds is clearly a central element in any strategy to combat inequalities between native Swedes and those who have recently immigrated. However, it is hardly a new insight and how to achieve the goal has been a long-standing policy dilemma. The availability of computer-assisted tools for language training might well be a comparatively new development that merits investment and evaluation. The point noted above about building rudimentary training in immigrant languages into the general school curriculum might also merit additional consideration – not only for the direct effects of basic familiarity with the home languages of many Swedes, but also for the cultural and socio-cognitive differences embedded in other languages. Once again, such thoughts ideas are not new, but merit ongoing consideration and experimentation because of the central importance of language – in this instance, Swedish – in influencing young peoples' life chances.

### **Cascading effects of choice**

Sweden's system of school choice both opens and undermines opportunity for students from immigrant backgrounds, as it does for Swedes whose family histories date back many generations in Sweden. One student exercising choice for him or herself is also influencing the choices available to others. In the most extreme case, young people may find themselves without a viable local school. The reverse of this problem is when students may find themselves unable to exercise their preferred school choice due to limited capacity and waiting lines at their preferred school.

Sweden's school choice system generates a set of cascading effects. As youth migrate away from schools in immigrant-dense suburban areas, they may, as already noted, leave behind schools with too few students and reduced resources that further undermine their capacity to provide a good-quality education to the students who remain. In the second tier of cascading, inner-city schools that are deemed generally attractive find themselves educating a quite different student population with different competencies and struggles. Their survival is perhaps not so much in doubt, but the challenges they face in their task of providing education are likely to change, if not increase. In the third tier, students migrate out from local inner-city schools that have become culturally diverse to often private schools that are deemed to provide a higher-quality education (Kallstenius 2011). Some of these schools are known to employ pedagogical strategies that are quite suitable for mature students with strong support and high scholastic capacity at home, but do not provide the backup and support required by students without such resources.

*Choice Criteria:* as already noted, finding objective quality criteria for choosing a particular school is extremely difficult, with the possible exception of the schools that are most highly ranked. Under such conditions, symbolic criteria increase in importance, and this is precisely what has been observed. Criteria such as location of the school, ethnic composition, and reputation weigh heavily in

the choice exercised by many students from immigrant-dense suburbs to move to inner-city schools. Interestingly enough, students who live in the city may also choose to stay or go elsewhere based on their (and their parents') perception of whether the school's particular balance of cultural diversity is an asset or a liability (Kallstenius 2011).

What all this suggests is that Sweden's school choice system may have significantly reorganised school segregation and the effects on young people from immigrant backgrounds, but has had little effect at the aggregate level. What remains to be seen is the long-term effect on students attending schools that are experiencing declining enrolment, and what disproportionate effects might fall on students from immigrant-dense areas. Such developments require ongoing research and monitoring.

## Conclusions

Many of the policies and measures suggested above have already been tried, often as parts of experimental efforts, and in some instances more systematically. The scope of the EDUMIGROM project does not extend to map these experiments and the various results they have achieved, and in any case, the actual results are frequently a function of the intersection between particular measures, the specific context in which they are implemented, and the way the those measures are executed. We can say, on the basis of research carried out for the EDUMIGROM project and a review of other related research, that several distinct themes are apparent.

- *Monitoring/information gathering and ongoing assessment* is essential. Yet, it is quite clear that the desire to be judged as doing well can lead to an emphasis on the criteria that are measured, and consequently less attention to those factors that are equally important but more challenging to summarise and quantify measured. Such incentives are especially powerful when financial rewards are attached to certain measures of performance. Continued special attention to the possible second-level segregating effects of systemic reforms such as school choice and recorded grades at early level of education is extremely important.
- *Linguistic Competence* – We know that the ability to use the Swedish language skilfully is an advantage for members of all groups in Swedish society. Early shortfalls in this capability can be magnified over time, and therefore fall especially hard on young people. Continued efforts to support the development of stronger Swedish-language competence for new Swedes are essential, while an emphasis on foreign-language competence for native Swedes provides a range of openings for commonality between native Swedes and Swedes with an immigrant background.

- Training in *multicultural awareness* promotes self-reflection, dialogue, and tolerance, and provides other related benefits. In such training, priority attention should be given to categories of people whose roles put them in a position to positively (or negatively) influence many others: people in gatekeeping roles such as school counsellors, professionals who have regular daily contact with students and their families such as teachers and administrators, and students themselves.

As already noted, a range of activities is being carried out and/or under development in various forms each of these categories. Experience to date suggests that where such activities are carried out with inspiration and/or a high level of skill, they are likely to produce positive effects. Where resources, inspiration, or sufficient competence is lacking, they can easily become a target of criticism – criticism that may be mistaken when identifying the reasons for lacklustre results.

Schools operate, of course, within a larger social context which schooling influences, but which also operates outside the short-term influence of the school system. This makes tackling phenomena such as the Swede/immigrant divide highly important, yet both a difficult and long-term process. Many of the measures listed above are likely to have a longer-term influence on the nature of these two largely mutually exclusive categories, but the question of Swedish identity will likely need to be tackled directly as well – especially under current conditions with the immigrant-hostile populist Swedish Democrats now in Parliament. Here, there are no simple answers to be summarised in the final lines of policy recommendations, only a recognition that an inclusive redefinition will require both time and a multitude of small-scale actions that emphasise what these two groups of Swedes have in common.

Finally, the experience of the past three decades has proven the goals of non-discrimination, successful integration, and a vibrant multicultural Sweden to be a moving target – even with what have often been arguably high-minded goals and ideals. At times, the very success of Swedish integration policies, both within and external to education, has proven an obstacle to further progress – built on the perception and belief that the problems have been solved and therefore no longer exist in Sweden. This leads us to the final observation: that the above policy measures should be implemented with the intention of facilitating some reflection and an ongoing revision of even those measures that prove successful. Frequently, when policies are adopted as wishful remedies to particular problems, the goal is to take that problem off the policy agenda. In this case, however, we can see that the very process of navigating the social and academic challenges of school leads to the formation of social groupings, categorisation, and segmentation. If we do well, new policies and strategies will not only challenge existing discriminatory social structures, but also facilitate a heightened alertness to the processes that create them and lessen the likelihood that the more destructive ones will be allowed to grow undisturbed.

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## **UNITED KINGDOM**

**Ian Law and Sarah Sann**

## The Framing of public and political discourse in British society

### Ethnicity and public and political discourse

The United Kingdom has always been ethnically diverse, its population developing from complex historical migration patterns and periods of conflict, conquest, state formation, empire, and decolonisation. Periods of sporadic in-migration have brought Gypsies and the importation of African slaves and servants from the sixteenth century onwards, mass migrations of Irish and Jewish people in the nineteenth century, and postwar economic migration to Britain from the Caribbean, the South Asian subcontinent, China, and Africa. Since the Second World War there has been an increasing mixing of ethnic groups and a rising "super-diversity", both of which have created an ethnically complex society. The differentiation in economic position, migration history, political participation, and perceptions of social citizenship are significant across minority ethnic groups in the United Kingdom and they are becoming increasingly evident. Recent debate has highlighted the problem of hyper- or super-diversity where professionals and managers face substantial dilemmas in responding to the needs of culturally complex societies, for example, in education provision. The United Kingdom is also undergoing substantial social and cultural change due to globalisation, Europeanisation, devolution, the end of Empire, social pluralism, and the acceleration of migration. There is a complex system of citizenship rights, forms of membership, and restrictions and exclusions which cross-cut differing categories and groups of migrants to the country. This produces an ad-hoc and variable pattern of denial of service and responses to individual needs so that people in the same migrant category may receive different services and entitlements.

In the United Kingdom most migrant groups have been subject to racism, xenophobia, hostility, violence, and practices of restriction and exclusion during the process of migration and settlement there. Diverse and highly durable forms of racist hostility provide a constant source of tension and conflict including, anti-Gypsyism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, and anti-Semitism. Despite significant developments in policy and procedures across many institutions there is a "racial crisis" where increased understanding and evidence accompanies entrenched racism. Sources of interethnic and intercultural conflict are cultural, political, and economic, and include opposition to the recognition of difference and super-diversity, contested control of territory and land (particularly for Gypsies and Travellers), and disputes over access to social housing, schools, and other resources. Newly articulated forms of hostility, hatred, and grievance have been suffered by refugees, asylum-seekers, and other migrant groups. More widely, everyday cultural ignorance, miscommunication, and misrecognition of difference lead to offensive behaviour, affronts to dignity, and a lack of respect that have all led to various forms of conflict.

These groups have also been subject to and active in achieving varying levels of political and cultural recognition, acceptance of racial and ethnic difference, interethnic marriage and cohabitation, and incorporation into political, economic, cultural, and social spheres of activity. A comparative overview of the three selected groups chosen for study in the United Kingdom shows that the Gypsy, Roma, and

Traveller population are in the most vulnerable position of economic, political, and social marginality of any these groups, although data for this group is much more limited (Cemlyn et al. 2009). The African Caribbean population tends to be economically disadvantaged and socially assimilated, in terms of cohabitation and marriage patterns, and with some significant degree of political incorporation; the Pakistani population tends to be in a position of greater economic marginality and poverty, with more social distinctiveness, due partly to social closure, and less political incorporation. Both of these latter two groups had the right to settle in the United Kingdom, to acquire citizenship, and to participate in electoral politics due to previous British colonial relations and obligations. A continuing linkage between Blackness, violence, masculinity, and dangerousness, and the ensuing misrepresentation of young Black men in the news media, has been exacerbated by both government and media responses to a series of shootings, stabbings, and other violent incidents. National controversy over Black male youth has focused on the problems of gangs and gang-related violent crime, underperformance in education and the labour market, school exclusions, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, absentee fathers, and low aspirations. In response, it has been argued that there are a large number of young Black men who have highly-conformist aspirations, together with strong aspirational capital (Yosso 2005, Byfield 2008, Finney 2011) and who succeed, despite institutional racism in school environments including receiving harsher punishments, being overrepresented in the lowest ranked teaching groups, and being taught by less experienced staff, with lower expectations and assigned the lowest "tier" of examinations (Rollock and Gillborn 2010). National controversy over Muslim male youth has also been increasing. Muslim boys, once regarded as passive, hard-working, and law-abiding, have been recast in the public imagination in recent years with hostile images of volatile, aggressive hotheads who are in danger of being brainwashed into terrorists or would-be gangsters who are creating no-go areas in English towns and cities, preying on white girls (Shain 2011). Gypsies, Travellers and the Roma are still seen, portrayed, and stereotyped as thieving scum, scroungers, gangsters, and child traffickers (Leeming 2010). The recent Equality and Human Rights Commission's triennial review of fairness in Britain confirmed the extent of racial and ethnic inequalities, with Black Caribbean and Pakistani infants being twice as likely to die in their first year as Bangladeshi or White British infants, and by the age of 22–24, 44 per cent of Black people are not in education, employment, or training, compared to fewer than 25 per cent of white people (EHRC 2010). The relative vulnerability of minority ethnic groups in a variety of market contexts means that the current economic recession and associated cuts in welfare are having and will have a greater negative impact on these groups. Almost half (48 per cent) of young black people are unemployed compared to the rate of unemployment amongst white men (21 per cent) with mixed ethnic groups having the greatest overall increase rising from 21 per cent in March 2008 to 35 per cent in November 2009 (IPPR 2010). Lower employment means more poverty. Minority ethnic minority women experience higher rates of poverty than white women and a recent report has argued that the economic recession presents two major risks (Moosa and Woodroffe 2009): first, that minority ethnic women will be locked into their destitution for the foreseeable future, and second, that anti-poverty approaches marginalise the needs of minority

ethnic women through failing to recognise and address those needs, and that they are being pathologised and ignored. There is a deteriorating policy climate in British society that it is filled with greater concern for white working-class sentiments of exclusion and resentment and that makes it increasingly difficult to prioritise fundamental race equality and ethnic diversity objectives. This accompanies deteriorating prospects for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and a wider context of increasing patterns of long-term poverty for minority ethnic groups.

### **Ethnic differences in education and the public and political agenda**

Education has often been the most high-profile policy field where changing national and local government priorities are signalled and implemented. From 1945 to the late 1950s racial discrimination legislation was seen as unnecessary despite strong popular racism. These issues and ethnic diversity were largely ignored in government policy. But from the late 1950s to the late 1960s a cross-party political consensus emerged advocating strong racialised immigration controls and weak protection against discrimination to manage the perceived destabilising effects of minority migration. In education, assimilation was a key goal with a focus on dispersal and English-language teaching. Cultural pluralism and integration came to dominate policy rhetoric into the 1970s with an emphasis on minorities changing and adapting to "fit in". Increasing community, ethnic, and religious-based and anti-racist protest led to the popularisation of multicultural and anti-racist education across local education authorities through the 1980s, but schools had great freedom to ignore these developments if they wished, and many did. From 1986 onwards there was a weakening of these movements and a government drive to curb and push back these developments. The introduction of a National Curriculum that missed acknowledging race and ethnic diversity is indicative of this position.

New Labour from 1997 onwards signalled a change of direction with a welcome and explicit focus on the significance of these issues, but this more progressive stance lacked a fundamental understanding of racism and equity issues (Somerville 2007, Gillborn 2008). Since 2001, in the wake of "9/11", government policy has moved from "naïve" to "cynical" multiculturalism (in other words, a move from promoting the values and organisations concerned with different minority cultures with little commitment to equality, to a view that this was misguided and primarily led to increasing divisions among communities which then required action to promote social cohesion) and signalled a return to integrationist and assimilationist priorities with an increasing perception that multicultural policies had failed by encouraging greater ethnic division. In the wake of the urban rioting of 2001, much policy discussion has focused on the goal of community cohesion. To some extent, this has replaced an earlier emphasis on social exclusion and inclusion, in part because some analyses of those events suggested that self-segregation of minority ethnic communities was a factor in undermining cohesion. Following the July 7 attacks of 2005, the rights and perspectives of the white majority became increasingly asserted, with calls for stronger intervention to improve integration, community cohesion, security, and contemporary

assimilation, summed up by Gillborn (2008) as "aggressive majoritarianism". In education this has been exemplified by attacks on wearing the veil by Muslim females in school, along with new guidance on school uniform codes that has emphasised security, integration, and cohesion, quickly interpreted by the media as "a school ban on veils". Here, looking different is seen as a "common sense" threat to national society and local community cohesion. This indicates a deteriorating policy climate and one in which it is increasingly difficult to prioritise fundamental race equality and ethnic diversity objectives and which shows greater concern for white racist sentiments. The attacks in the United Kingdom provided justification for increasingly punitive and disciplinary policies in a range of fields.

At the heart of recent policies concerning the education of children with regard to issues of race is the notion of citizenship. Citizenship education as advocated by *The Crick Report* (1998) covers social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy; citizenship studies were later made compulsory for all children in 2002. Some interpret the introduction of citizenship studies in schools as the government's (deeply inadequate) response to the *Macpherson Report* (1999), which said all public institutions must deal with their "institutional racism" (Gillborn 2006) that followed after the failure of police to charge anyone for the death of a Black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. The report's inadequacy is seen to be an attempt to promote universal values but without an understanding of difference; it is also seen to contribute to a trend in educational policy of "deracialisation" – that is, of reducing racism to individual ignorance and prejudice. Other problems with this approach include an absence from *The Crick Report* of any direct mention of racism, either personal, institutional, or structural. The targets set for citizenship education do not include ethnic equality, international and global issues, conflict resolution, and anti-racism. When *The Crick Report* does talk about ethnicity and diversity it makes neither mention of inequality nor power imbalances nor anti-racism; but it does regard ethnic minorities as a homogenous mass. The report states that minorities must "learn and respect the codes and conventions as much as the majority", implying that minority communities are outside current conventions in a way that white people are not; this also reflects the move by the former Home Secretary to create a "citizenship test" for all those acquiring British nationality. Finally, when racism is mentioned in citizenship educational literature, it reduces it to a matter of personal prejudice.

The Education Act of 2005 obligated local authorities to set targets for schools to meet with regard to promoting "community cohesion". This resulted in additional pressure on schools, which were regarded as accountable and blameworthy if their application of these measures failed. Community cohesion is also promoted by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, a government strategy for facilitating conflict resolution, though owing to New Labour's focus on education as the principle way of addressing multicultural tensions, schools still bear a great responsibility for this. Additionally, schools were given more powers to exclude pupils and make their parents responsible for them; this latter measure particularly impacted Black parents.

Government focus on parental choice with regard to the schools that children attend served only to exacerbate these difficulties. Headmasters became reluctant to promote race issues in case the school became branded as "radical" and put off potential pupils. White parents attempted to segregate

their children from schools in which there were a large number of minority ethnic children. Faith schools were not obligated either to accept a considerable group of children not raised in that faith or to teach human rights common to all groups as opposed to faith-based values; this remained a problem despite Ofsted inspection (Office for Standards in Education). A study carried out by the University of Lancaster revealed that segregated white pupils held more stereotypical attitudes about minority ethnic groups than those who attend mixed schools (Tomlinson 2008). The relationship between ethnic segregation and racism is not clear, and closer contact may bring increased conflict, not necessarily understanding and lower hostility. Lack of contact may bring less conflict but not necessarily greater hostility.

Overall, there is official government recognition that the raising attainment of minority ethnic groups is a key component of national strategy. However, initiatives and policy implementation are highly uneven and ethnic inequalities remain highly durable with deteriorating outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller young people. A recent critical review of this field argues that such inequalities are locked into the British education system and that policy is not designed to eliminate this but to *"sustain it at manageable levels"* (Gillborn 2008). Initiatives to improve minority ethnic achievement at school include the "Aiming High" Programme, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), the Black Pupils' Achievement Programme, and a cross-national programme to raise attainment among Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller pupils that was launched in September 2006, with 11 local authorities and 48 educational settings being offered targeted support. The "Aiming High" scheme has a component dedicated directly to the schooling of minority ethnic groups that advocates strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, and parental involvement in education. There has also been a drive towards recruiting teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, as well as programmes designed to assist white teachers to effectively teach minority ethnic pupils, particularly with regard to difficulties born of different languages. Despite policies and initiatives designed to improve the educational achievement of minority ethnic groups, it is admitted by the government that much work needs to be done to achieve parity and progress among all groups. Amongst minority ethnic groups the children of Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers; Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils from poorer backgrounds; and Black Caribbean children (particularly boys) are among those most in need of additional support and empowerment.

## **Main findings of EDUMIGROM research in the United Kingdom**

### **Sites and methods**

General patterns of ethnic inequality in education determined the selection of minority ethnic groups for this study, and as identified above, these were Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, African-Caribbeans, and Pakistanis. Two cities in the north of England were chosen as sites for the research, the bulk



of the research was carried out in Northcity, and most of the qualitative research with Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers was carried out at the second location. Northcity was the main site and here a quantitative survey of 434 pupils in year-ten in three multicultural secondary schools was first carried out in 2008–2009. This city has over half a million inhabitants and a fairly typical pattern of ethnic diversity with an 11 per cent Black and minority ethnic population of which the Pakistani and African-Caribbean groups were the largest. All the three schools had about one-third minority ethnic pupils but varied widely in their intake from inner-city areas (from 93 per cent, 68 per cent, and 23 per cent respectively) and hence their socio-economic profile. The quantitative survey both provided background data and information on key aspects of interethnic relations as perceived by the pupils. This was followed up by qualitative research that included, focus-group discussions and in-depth personal interviews with students, school personnel, and parents; further interviews with community and educational informants; classroom observations; case studies of schools and minority ethnic groups; and ethnographic fieldwork into youth and community cultures. The purpose of this stage of the research was to investigate the factors and motivations behind varying school performances and diverging educational careers, the impact of ethnicity on everyday life in school, experiences of being "othered", and perceptions of identity. Since very few of the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller year-10 pupils on the school rolls were in school and hence included in the quantitative survey, and because the local population also was fairly small and difficult to access, a different city location was chosen for a qualitative community study of these groups. This second city location also has a fairly typical pattern of ethnic diversity, it is also contains over half a million people, and over 500 Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children have been identified here.

## **Research findings**

The findings of the EDUMIGROM research in the United Kingdom confirm the general trends in the literature on education and ethnicity (reviewed in our earlier background reports) and contribute new evidence on the importance of ethnic differentials in school experiences, patterns of informal ethnic segregation, and the significance of interethnic and peer hostilities in school life. The study identifies the negative impact of gang and "gangsta" culture, racial stereotyping, and streaming on educational experiences. This research also challenges any connection between ethnicity and low educational aspirations, apart from the case of Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, where high numbers of dropouts and high levels of disaffection with school are particularly marked. Our research experience shows that persistent patterns of hostility, segregation, and inequality remain despite significant achievements in developing integrated, non-discriminatory educational systems.

*Formal secondary education is not working for many Gypsies, Roma, and Traveller young people*

Non-participation, particularly in secondary education by pupils from these groups, is the most serious problem of ethnic segregation in this field. This is compounded by increasing levels of poverty and immiseration, high levels of racial hostility, and the limited scope of constructive interventions. This study has highlighted the complex and multidimensional causes of this educational outcome including school inaction, difficulties in attending school because of poverty and poor health, perceptions of school as being unsupportive of Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' lifestyles, parents being fearful of what their children will experience at school, despite otherwise valuing education, and a less than positive school experience including bullying and discrimination which leads to a cycle of non-attendance further exacerbated by peer pressure. Norms and values within these communities also tend to reinforce traditional roles and occupations for young people and depress educational aspirations. But there is evidence that targeted inclusion work with recently arrived Roma has been successful in substantially increasing school attendance, particularly at the primary level, but it is unclear yet whether this will have an impact on the secondary level (Leeming 2010).

*Negative perceptions and experiences for Pakistani and African-Caribbean pupils confirms ethnic differentials in life at school*

There are significant ethnic differences in pupils' perceptions of their school. Pakistani pupils were least likely to view school positively, as just 34 per cent of this group took this view compared to 48 per cent of white pupils and 44 per cent of African-Caribbean pupils. Most pupils did feel positive about their schoolwork, particularly Pakistanis (85 per cent) with African-Caribbean pupils feeling least positive (74 per cent). But a significant group of pupils felt that they were unjustly treated in terms of their individual academic performance, particularly Pakistani pupils (31 per cent compared to 28 per cent of white, and just 20 per cent of African-Caribbean pupils). School responses to pupil behaviour were cited as another site for unjust treatment and this did differ according to ethnicity. White and Pakistani pupils had the same perceptions on this measure at 55 per cent. Despite this, punishment, or the way sanctions were distributed among pupils, was not seen as a significant reason for unjust treatment. Just 10 per cent of Pakistani pupils, and 12 per cent of white pupils identified this as an issue.

Seventy-three per cent of African-Caribbean pupils felt that they had experienced unfair treatment because of behaviour. This factor would therefore seem to strongly shape African-Caribbean pupils' feelings about the school and is significant in light of the fact that they are most likely to be excluded from school at the national level. At 30 per cent, African-Caribbean pupils were twice more likely to feel the way sanctions were distributed among pupils was an issue compared to white and Pakistani pupils. This factor would seem to strongly shape African-Caribbean pupils' feelings about school and impacts on academic achievement. Combined with contextual factors such as the likelihood that pupils in this group were more likely to have suffered a dramatic life event, this has adverse social implications.

School should be a safe non-confrontational space for pupils that is achieved through the school climate and ethos. Most teachers would say that they do not treat pupils in a discriminatory manner (i.e., treating some pupils differently than others) and it is perhaps too simplistic to lay the blame on teachers.

Atmosphere in the classroom provoked different responses along ethnic lines. Forty-five per cent of white respondents viewed the atmosphere in their classrooms as "friendly and cohesive", compared with 35 per cent of African-Caribbean and just 26 per cent Pakistani pupils. This is a significant finding and may reflect the fact that Pakistani pupils are more likely to feel less social support in school from both teachers and peers, significant when these social relations are often seen as an important protective factor. Overall, most pupils indicated that several teachers liked them, showing that despite the different power positions of teachers and pupils, there are good interpersonal relationships. In the eyes of students, teachers are likely to be supportive and are likely to motivate and enhance their self-esteem.

#### *Everyday informal ethnic segregation was common in school*

Although much research has focused on teacher-pupil relationships, what emerged strongly in this study is the need to consider pupil-pupil dynamics. While the relationships pupils have with teachers seem to be generally positive, apart from criticism of unfair treatment, social relations among pupils seemed to be more fraught with tensions and conflicts. Working-class pupils living in the inner city were more likely to report a negative social experience than middle-class pupils living on the outskirts (90 per cent compared with 60 per cent). Hostile groups were identified in classrooms among white, Pakistani, and African-Caribbean pupils (21 per cent, 26 per cent, and 26 per cent, respectively). Between one-fifth and one-quarter of all respondents reported hostility and this warrants further investigation about how pupils define their identities by drawing boundaries among themselves and others. Pupils perceived bullying to occur between pupils living in different neighbourhoods and between pupils of different ethnicities.

Pupils self-segregated themselves according to ethnicity to varying degrees in all three schools. At the school with highest prestige among the selected institutions (School 1), there was also the added dimension of a predominantly white middle-class catchment. Like so many other studies of teenagers in school, social groupings and peer networks were easily identified and made visible through discussion of cliques. Particular groups hung around in particular areas of the school. Pupils openly discussed social groupings in each school. Dress styles and music tastes were sites of "coolness" that characterised pupils' discussions of social groupings. Pupils reported socialising with pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and for many the role of ethnicity was not recognised or acknowledged, but in practice, it operated to differentiate pupils' everyday social experiences. There was also a general reticence amongst teachers about discussing and addressing issues of racism and ethnicity.

"Emos" and "chavs" were universally disliked. This was a pattern that emerged through all schools but to varying effect. "Emos" and "Goths" invoked a particular type of white ethnicity which sat uncomfortably with all the Pakistani and African-Caribbean pupils interviewed. In understanding why

"emos" were a peripheral group, four main dimensions of this identity emerged. First was the salience of ethnicity, "it's mostly white people". Identities were marked by particular clothing choices: *"They just wear dark clothes, grow their hair right long, and everything they wear is black"*. Some pupils displayed blurred identities: *"There are some people where they are kind of goths because they like listening to the rock music and that, but they don't dress themselves like goths, I don't know they just like listening to rock music and all that"*. The boundaries that demarcated social identity could be fluid and could be experimented with. However, it was pupils who fell fully into "emo" identity that provoked discussion. Emo tastes were marked differently, with a preference for heavy metal rock rather than the mainstream's preference for R 'n' B music. Emos were at the polar opposite of "chavs", which was another branch of "white" identity embodied by pupils at Schools 2 (the medium-ranked school in our sample) and School 3 (the unit with the worst reputation) in particular. Chavs were constructed as a version of working-class white identity. Pupils' descriptions fit Tyler's (2008: 17) interpretation of "disgust reactions" received by "the grotesque and comic figure of the chav". "Hardness" was a term widely used to delineate prestige to physical strength, "he's real hard", and on corridors at Schools 2 and 3, chavs would talk of "banging people out". However, African- Caribbean pupils in particular associated white chav identity with physical weakness and empty threats. In lessons chavs were viewed as being the group most likely in school to get into trouble. White identities were also seen as under attack, apart from perceptions of emos and chavs, white boys in School 3 complained of being called "white bastards". White middle-class boys at School 1 felt they had tried to forge friendships with African-Caribbean boys but these were often rebuffed.

Many of the schemes aimed specifically at minority ethnic youth have been received positively and have had real effects on improving academic performance; this was the case for pupils attending the Fellowship and Pakistani Study Support programmes evidenced by attendance and achievement records. However, despite pupils' enjoyment, in the Fellowship programme they tended to organise themselves in seating arrangements according to ethnicity. A mentoring programme aimed at African-Caribbean pupils had an antagonistic effect on some through its specified ethnic focus. African-Caribbean boys, in particular, showed strong opposition to the creation of ethnic boundaries.

#### *Interethnic hostility was particularly focused on Pakistanis*

The main area of interethnic antagonism was not between white and Black pupils, but between African-Caribbeans and Pakistanis, and this has not been identified adequately in existing research. This finding was based on analysis of a range of evidence and observations of a number of interactions within the schools. Sometimes these divisions came out seemingly playfully but they were always instigated by African-Caribbeans against Pakistanis. However, this was a feeling in all three schools that suggests a wider social division between the two groups than school-based issues. Although there was evidence of active challenging, this was not a case of resistance within accommodation but seemed to signal subservience.

*African-Caribbean and Pakistani groups were strongly aware of negative and hostile stereotypes and attitudes about themselves*

Pupils had very definite ideas in identifying stereotypes for Pakistani and Caribbean communities. This is a point that featured in equal measure across all three schools. Since stereotypes have social implications and can provide a picture of how different groups are perceived, it is useful to consider how pupils believe they are seen. These young people had learnt and were exposed to the fact that people occupy different structural positions in society. For Pakistanis, their choices were often limited to working in the service industry. For some pupils limited ethnic stereotyping of their identity provided the motivation (and internal resistance) to "prove them wrong".

Pakistanis were also commonly linked with terrorism. For example, one Pakistani girl reported comments like, *"He's a suicide bomber, he's from the Taliban"* from both boys and girls. Being viewed as having an identity that is at odds with British cultural norms meant that Pakistani pupils felt more prone to stigmatisation. Pakistani ethnic identity could thus constrain future life projections. Being Pakistani with its linked associations of terrorism meant being labelled and set apart.

The stereotyping of African-Caribbeans was viewed completely differently. Unjust stereotyping of the African-Caribbean community arose frequently in discussions with pupils from this group, and with it a sense of outrage. Stereotypes for Caribbean boys, in particular, were highly negative such as *"[...] either being drug dealers, criminals, being in jail", "not getting any GCSEs"* (national exam passes at age 15–16), or *"messing up their lives"*. Blackness and Africanness is seen as symbolically threatening with its associations of drug culture, crime, violence, and therefore danger. Although there is a sense of empowerment that comes from being conceived of as a dangerous entity, this also functions a form of disempowerment. African-Caribbean girls considered the masculine stereotype in terms of actors in potential romantic relationships. This too presents a negative image: *"He's a woman beater, he's a slag, he cheats on his girlfriends. That's the typical Black guy"* (African-Caribbean girl, School 3). African-Caribbean girls shared some of the same stereotypes, and despite being aware of ethnic groupings within school, pupils displayed ambivalence and lack of understanding about why they occurred. Probing into why these groupings occurred always received a uniform, "I don't know".

*Neighbourhood location was a significant marker of identity*

Pupils saw their neighbourhoods as an important context and unpacking respondents' perceptions and experiences of where the boundaries around particular places lay emerged as an important identity activity. Neighbourhoods are made up of people and communities in places and there is great stability and cohesion in familiar settings. At School 3, Pakistani respondents felt uncomfortable being in a particular street location after-school hours because this meant waiting at a bus stop with the threat of physical and verbal abuse from the immediate white community. This shaped their decisions about whether to stay for after-school clubs.

Another analytical strand of identity and place lay with belonging and memory through public sites. This gave an interesting angle on how ethnic identities mesh and intersect with spatial location. The material culture of Northcity's industrial past seemed to resonate with Pakistani respondents as interviews and conversations often highlighted both their family's role and the collective contribution that the Pakistani community had in Northcity's past. For one high-achieving Pakistani girl, her connection to Northcity was deeply rooted in narratives of her grandfather's working life in heavy industry. When shopping in the centre in the east of the city, her presence in Northcity today was represented in statues of industrial workers, which for her re-activated her grandfather's past life and created for her a sense of spatial meaning. This illustrates the ways in which minority ethnic pupils made deeper connections to neighbourhoods, to cities, and to the United Kingdom, with the family often playing an important role in preserving a sense of rooted connection and "cultural imagination".

*Neighbourhood location, postcode gangs and masculine 'gangsta' culture are imported into everyday school life*

Divisions by "gangsta" culture fuel violence and bullying that undermine attainment: this was reported by 43 per cent in School 1 and 28 per cent in School 3. The physical divide between neighbourhoods was entrenched further through the existence of postcode gangs in the wider community. An important part of identity for both African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils and particularly for boys was bound up with allegiance to area: *"It's basically if you live in Northcity4, you are with Northcity4, if you live in Northcity3, you are with Northcity3"*. It was physically evident in graffiti around the schools that as an act prompted competition: *"There's 'Northcity4' and 'Northcity5' written all over, then someone writes across 'Northcity3', then some people put threats up, then someone crosses that off and puts 'Northcity4'"*. Trying to ascertain whether postcode gangs were linked to ethnicity received mixed responses. For some these were associated with minority ethnic groups only. But some white pupils at School 3 did, however, align themselves to the Northcity3 gang. Overall, much of this was bound up with ideas of a "hard" masculinity and involvement in gangs marked the transition to adulthood. It was a way to assert identity but the seriousness of the implications of this can, however, not be underestimated since there had been shootings in Brunsmere linked to gang wars. Visual reminders of this were very *much evident*: *"If you walk past the barbers now when the shutters are down you can see the bullet holes"*. It served as a stark reminder of what a Pakistani mother said: *"If you have not got your mind over matter, you can get pulled in to things but it is your choice [...] you go the right way or the wrong way"*. Pupil involvement in postcode gangs cut across disaffected and conformist identities in school.

*Minority ethnic pupils did not appear to benefit in terms of attainment from attending a 'better, more middle-class' school*

Although all the schools have large multiethnic catchments and similar proportions of minority ethnic pupils (one-third), they differ in terms of achievement and attainment rankings. School 1 is the fifth largest

comprehensive in Northcity. It is a high-performing school positioned fourth highest in Northcity's 2008 league tables and above the national average. Fifty-six per cent of these pupils are shown to come from affluent families but 10 per cent are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM).<sup>103</sup> School 2 was originally built in the 1960s and is situated in the northeast of Northcity, including pockets of severe social deprivation, as 54 per cent of pupils come from poor families and 23 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In School 3, 67 per cent of pupils come from poor families and 38 per cent are entitled to free school meals and the school has a negative external image, with a historically poor reputation for out of control pupil behaviour and low performance. Over 40 per cent of pupils reported strong positive feelings about their school and this differed little across these schools, but School 3 had a particularly high levels of pupils who felt they received unfair treatment from teachers, yet it was also the school where the highest proportion of pupils reported "friendly and cohesive" classroom environments (62 per cent). Pupils from Black and minority ethnic groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds did not appear to benefit educationally from attendance at School 1, a "better, middle-class" school, compared to their peers at School 2 and 3, despite parents' perceptions of the significance of behaviour problems in "working-class" schools reducing educational outcomes.

Other key findings include the following:

- Institutional processes of streaming fuelled dynamics of inclusion/exclusion but there is evidence that some pupils could negotiate differing roles, for example, across "boffin" (achievement orientated) and "gangsta" (street orientated) positions, challenging the binary of academic achiever/disaffected.
- Over 70 per cent of pupils from all ethnic groups strongly recognised that education was a key means of improving life-chances, and despite widely varying home backgrounds and school experiences, aspirations were high with no significant ethnic differentials. However, over a quarter of pupils did not take this view and this educational disaffection across all groups needs addressing.
- Highly complex and differentiated positions, strategies, and perceptions were articulated by young people in relation to their experiences of school and community life. Young people's yearning to escape being "othered" was strongly voiced, with some able to articulate narratives of emancipation and liberation from differential and discriminatory treatment. But many felt locked into and unable to escape a tangled web of constraining circumstances and social worlds with serious consequences in terms of declining educational aspirations and dropping out from the educational system altogether.

103 Eligibility of Free School Meals (FSM) is the standard measure used to identify school pupils with high levels of social deprivation. FSM are available only to children whose parents/guardians are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits: Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related); Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Families in receipt of Child Tax Credit will also qualify provided that (a) they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit, and (b) their annual income, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs does not exceed GBP 16,040 as at 6 April 2009 (subject to annual review); Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.

## Policy implications and recommendations

The policy implications of these findings confirm that there is a pressing need to:

- Prioritise the objectives of racial and ethnic equality and multiculturalism in educational experiences, institutional arrangements, and achievement, and actively develop and support programmes, initiatives, and interventions to achieve these objectives in mainstream schooling. There are many ways in which individual schools and local education authorities and agencies can and have been responding to these challenges. Diversity was emphasised in these schools through the surface manifestations of ethnicity, which served to socially articulate and maintain differences through "boundary maintenance" rather than offering cohesive provision. First, it is necessary for schools and local educational authorities and agencies, and central government, to acknowledge and recognise the nature and extent of these processes identified here and to re-affirm and prioritise racial and ethnic equality and multiculturalism in educational contexts. The likelihood that these concerns and objectives will be downgraded in the current economic context is of serious concern, given the real prospects of increasing racial and ethnic inequalities amongst children, for example, in poverty and material conditions. Second, it is necessary to actively develop and support programmes, initiatives, and interventions to achieve these objectives in mainstream schooling. There is still a great need for stronger leadership, creative innovation, and transformative change on these matters. At the national level the strengthening of multiculturalism (Modood 2010) and a renewed commitment to racism reduction and anti-discrimination (Law 2010) are urgently needed. Diversity was emphasised in schools through the surface manifestations of ethnicity, which served to socially articulate and maintain differences through "boundary maintenance" rather than offering cohesive provision.
- Increase the participation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) children in secondary education. The continued failure to arrest declining educational attainment requires a new creative national campaign to address literacy and generate aspirational capital amongst these communities, led by these communities with government, LEA (Local Education Authority), and school support. Some local initiatives have shown that entrenched patterns of school non-attendance can be substantially transformed with effective outreach programmes, but they remain marginal and insecure and it is vital to build on the success of targeted initiatives like the Achievement Service programmes and Early Years Outreach teams, and also that schools show positive leadership and do not turn away these children due to concerns over absence figures. Empowerment of (GRT) community organisations, adult mentors, and securing the involvement of families and parents is also vital in achieving this objective.



- Reduce ethnic differentials in school experiences, particularly for Pakistani pupils in their perceptions of the unfair treatment of their schoolwork, in the classroom, and in their general perceptions of schooling, and particularly for African-Caribbeans in their perceptions of unfair treatment of their behaviour. Ofsted has a key role to play here in adequately addressing this issue in inspection regimes. Head teachers and governors have a statutory duty here to eliminate racial and ethnic equality and racial discrimination, and promote good relations and cohesion between all groups.
- Reduce informal ethnic segregation and peer-to-peer hostilities in all areas of schooling, and particularly interethnic hostility between African-Caribbean and Pakistani pupils; and also reduce societal racial stereotyping of Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, African-Caribbeans, and Pakistanis; and support pupils in consciousness raising, understanding, and dealing with these issues. The Education and Inspections Act of 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) into the Education Act of 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion that came into effect on September 1, 2007. The wealth of good practices in "racism reduction" in the United Kingdom outside school contexts (Law 2010) and in school (for example, Knowles and Ridley 2006, Runnymede Trust 2007) provide a valuable evidence base of successful interventions. It would also be valuable to allow pupils the space to understand about the African-Caribbean, Pakistani, and Gypsy/Roma presence in Britain, specifically in relation to the local context. Although all the schools promoted Black History Month, there were not any learning activities developed around this. White ethnic identities are currently often left out of these sorts of "ethnic" provisions and should be included.
- There must be an ongoing commitment to the professional development and training of both teaching and non-teaching staff working in multicultural schools. Too little assistance is provided to teachers to help them observe and construct the meanings and knowledge that guide their actions in the classroom. Teachers appear scared about the issues of race and ethnicity that seem to stem from hyperawareness and insecurity. Measures to address this could include training days and workshops with parents and community members where they break from the everyday insular routine and are able to learn about the ethnically diverse groups they teach in a very practical way. Greater attention needs to be paid to how teachers working in inner-city schools are trained, hired, and manage with the distinct challenges of inner-city teaching in ethnically diverse classrooms. There are two achievable options here. Option A is a PGCE (postgraduate certificate in education) specifically aimed at teachers wanting to teach in inner-city settings. This differs from the "mainstream" PGCE, as greater emphasis is placed on understanding pupil behaviour and the specific challenge of classroom management. Option B is to ensure that a statutory requirement of gaining Qualified Teacher Status is that all trainee teachers must successfully undertake a placement in an inner-city school. Following this, there must be an ongoing commitment to the professional development and training of both teaching and non-teaching staff

working in inner-city schools. Too little assistance is provided to teachers to help them observe and construct the meanings and knowledge that guide their actions in the classroom. Measures to address this could include offering a mentoring scheme or offering opportunities for team teaching where they break from insularity and can learn from others' professional practice through action and reflection in a very practical way. It would also be of benefit for all teachers to be offered the opportunity to "see outside the box" and observe practice in a range of other types of schools. For instance, teachers working in inner-city schools may observe teaching practices in the differing contexts of independent schools, pupil referral units, academies, faith schools and special schools to gain a broader level of social insight in order to be equipped to trial new methods and make changes in their own milieu. Such experience would equip teachers with an understanding of how different groups of pupils of the same age perform in different settings with different organisational and social contexts. This could generate higher expectations of the pupils in their classes and could generate ideas for innovating lessons. To ensure a better understanding of teaching ethnically diverse groups of pupils, the content of the PGCE should also develop skills, knowledge, and understanding in managing ethnically diverse groups and in addressing racial hostility and ethnic and religious identities in school.

- Reduce the influence of postcode gangs and masculine "gangsta" culture on young people and everyday school life. Schools in this study were generally sensitive to the issues surrounding postcode gangs and some had taken a clear stance of zero tolerance, but much more work needs to be done to develop effective interventions to achieve this goal. The Department for Children, Schools, and Families has issued guidance and a toolkit for action for schools in dealing with gangs and group offending (DCSF 2008), and there are useful lessons set out in the experiences of the Tackling Gangs Action Programme which was carried out in 2007 (Home Office). There are also a variety of other toolkits and guides, for example, *Gangs at the Grassroots* (Brand and Ollerearnshaw 2008). Work must continue around boys' damaging and limited models of being masculine in the context of postcode gangs and also in addressing attitudes and patterns of behaviour that demean girls and women. Schools are well placed to address gender issues through specific units of work that explicitly discuss conceptions of gendered identity. Programmes may be either gender-specific or gender-relevant but should address social justice issues that allow pupils to build and explore individual identities and also girls' assertiveness and issues of sexual exploitation.
- Reduce the institutional processes of streaming and setting that fuel pupil and teacher dynamics of inclusion and exclusion as they have little impact on attainment, can reduce educational aspirations and attainment, and can also be detrimental to children (Blatchford 2005).
- A key challenge for policymakers at the national level is to find ways to promote the motivational disposition that encourages aspirations through education and

learning. There is a fundamental mismatch between school and disaffected pupils. Some of the pupils within this study were caught up in a culture that sees learning and intellectual activity as anti-identity, or school, for whatever reasons, was simply not a priority. While interventions in disaffection usually focus on "fixing" the pupil, focus must also be drawn to the role of the curriculum and pedagogy, which currently remains standardised and uniform. This exists as a consequence of school evaluation and pupil assessment that emphasises a narrowed range of outcomes. It is logical that a flexible, permeable, and responsive continuum of support and provision is needed to target the most challenging young people based on their particular continuum of need. What is needed is a flexible and creative response that offers an alternative to traditional education to meet the demands of challenging pupils. This requires more innovative measures than just tweaking the timetable. There is a need for a pedagogy that captures and sustains pupils' interest in learning. The goal of educational work with disaffected pupils should be one of social justice and schools should provide the space and resources for pupils to broaden their horizons and improve relationships. What this encompasses is self-actualisation. Schools are unable to affect the social circumstances in which pupils are living; but policy could do more to offer a curriculum that permits young people to make choices, to build their self-confidence, and to see the connections between learning and a better life.

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