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Segregation of Roma in Hungary's education system

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Contents

Abstract

This study aims to summarize the causes and mechanisms of Roma educational segregation in Hungary. Several European countries face similar challenges, but Hungary, according to estimates, has the largest Roma population in relation to its total population, making it a good example. Based on the case study, a systematic review was conducted on the given social issue from the time of the regime change to the present. According to this study, the reasons for the segregation of Roma pupils in the Hungarian educational system are primarily related to the characteristics of the Hungarian educational setting and its high level of social selectivity. Pressure to separate from schools, performance gaps between students from different backgrounds, and fragmented school networks drive social selection in the Hungarian education system. Social selection is also influenced by governance failures, parental aspirations, and too many formal selection points. To eradicate this phenomenon, policy recommendations would include rationalizing the school network and implementing accountability mechanisms.

Introduction

An outline of the problem

In light of recent events, contemporary discourse on race has emerged in Europe in response to the growing immigrant population. Only now that recent events are put into focus that societies are focusing on race inequality, whereas Europe's largest minority of racial and ethnic minorities the Roma have been oppressed for a long time (Balogh, 2012). However, this time offers an opportunity to reassess attitudes toward Roma minorities from the perspective of the majority. We can say that this is still today a pressing issue, even after several decades have passed because segregation persists and is on the rise. Many believe that the abolition of unlawful segregation in the education of Roma would have a long-term impact on the whole Roma minority and that segregated education is one of the most essential components in the reproduction of social and economic disadvantages, and it is therefore fundamentally important to eradicate this phenomenon (Eliason, 2016; Kende 2021).

Due to these reasons, I decided to study the segregation of Roma in the education system in Hungary for my thesis. I am interested in the causes and methods by which segregation occurs. I choose this as my area of study because school segregation against Roma is a particular problem in Hungary and Roma comprises the largest national or ethnic minority in the country (Amnesty International, 2009). Even though my chosen topic has been previously studied, there is no definitive answer, and the issue of Roma segregation in schools is still being debated to this day.

In choosing to concentrate on Roma's segregated education system, personal interest was evident in the choice of topic as well. I believe that irrespective of my interest in the problem, researching Hungary's Roma school segregation provides a perfect example of how other nations could be incentivized to do the same. The reasons for that are not only that many European countries grapple with the same problems, but according to estimates, Hungary has the largest Roma population in comparison with its population therefore it serves as a great example (Zemandl, 2018). Furthermore, there is distinctive discrimination regarding the Roma in Hungary's society and has been for a long time (Ladányi & Szelényi, 2001; Zemandl, 2018; Bihari 2021).

Overview of existing research

Hungary's Roma minority

There are thirteen recognized national or ethnic minorities in Hungary. Amongst them, the Roma minority accounted for the largest in number (Zemandl, 2018). Although, the figures regarding the Roma population depend on the source. It is because Roma identity is unlikely to be readily declared. The reasons behind it are rooted in historical, social, and psychological determinants, including the important role of fear of discrimination which is very much present among the members of the minority (Ladányi & Szelényi, 2001; Zemandl, 2018). Fear of revealing one's identity is illustrated by the use of terms around this ethnic minority. It's believed that the term 'Roma' carries an awkward connotation because it's a product of "spastic political correctness", while the other word 'cigány' carries a negative connotation. Roma identification is also complicated by uncertainty over what constitutes Roma identity (Zemandl, 2018). Among Hungary's 10 million population, around 315, 000 people declared their Roma identity in 2011. Despite this, social and international organizations estimate there were 700 000 to 800 000 Roma in Hungary in the same year (Zemandl, 2018).

In Hungary, the Roma ethnic group is culturally divided into three main groups: the Hungarian-speaking Romungro (70%) the Romani-speaking Olah (22%), and the Romanian-speaking Beas (8%) (Zemandl, 2018). These groups often face disputes over their relationship. This is one of the main reasons why the Roma minority in Hungary does not have a coherent political platform since they are not able to organize themselves or advocate for themselves with this inner conflict existing (McGarry, 2009).

The majority of Roma live mostly in marginalized communities of society, which means we can observe significant residential segregation between Roma and non-Roma groups (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009). These marginalized Roma neighborhoods are located at the end of small neighborhoods behind rural villages that are prone to erosion. 'Multiply disadvantaged child' is a term often used about this minority. Families living below the poverty line, those vulnerable to housing poverty, and families who have uneducated parents qualify for this definition (Zemandl, 2018).

An overview of school segregation in Hungarian public schools

The segregation of Roma children in the education system can be understood well through a comparison study that focused on the segregation of Roma children in Europe and compared it with the experiences of African Americans in the United States. Similarities could be observed in the efforts of the desegregation of schools. As a result of both instances when school systems were desegregated, white flight took place. This in turn resulted in education once again being segregated. African Americans in the United States and Roma in Europe have similar stigmas, both of which are often characterized by a lack of positive identity (Eliason, 2016). Stigmatization has social consequences in two different ways. Roma children who are stigmatized are psychologically harmed and deprived of self-respect and dignity (Eliason, 2016). In addition, Roma children will have fewer opportunities due to racial stigma, and with fewer opportunities to flourish, they will rarely succeed. This will lead to their inferiority being realized, and the stigma will become self-perpetuating (Eliason, 2016). In part, this stigmatization process has led to a common misconception that multigenerational poverty is a problem caused by the Roma themselves. Therefore, the most important factor to take into account for limiting Roma's opportunities and perpetuating their poverty cycle is the continued segregation of Roma students (Eliason, 2016).

Among other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary exhibits a disguised form of school segregation (Eliason, 2016). Hungary's existing laws to promote national minority education create a segregated education. Originally intended to protect the culture of Roma ethnicity by allowing them to take classes about it, the backfire is that it creates a disadvantaged, segregated school environment for them (Balogh, 2012).

Roma children's educational reform focuses primarily on integrating them into schools with white students. This attitude is expressed in the language used in the integration plans about the Roma, namely, the 'catching-up' plan, which determines inferiority (Zemandl, 2018). As opposed to increasing positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and improving education for Roma youth. This is important because, as Eliason (2016) puts it, "In rare circumstances where negative perceptions of the Roma have not been entrenched in the historical consciousness, the Roma have thrived".

The disadvantage that is most noticeable in Hungary is the lower quality of education compared to the majority population (Balogh, 2012). This is because Roma has limited access to quality

education (Bihari, 2021). Roma's children are routinely sent to special needs classes, which are reserved for people with mental disabilities. As hard as it is to identify the processes behind the discrimination contained in the educational system against Roma, it is equally important to avoid the mistake of oversimplifying by putting all the blame on teachers for their biased or discriminatory behavior (Erőss & Gárdos, 2008).

A key consideration is that minority education is a method of segregation that is desired to protect the culture of an ethnic or national minority and therefore cannot be thought of as an illegal practice. Segregation is accepted if there is: first of all, a reasonable explanation for the use of segregation (maintaining cultural knowledge), secondly if the participation is an informed and voluntary choice, and last but not least the quality of education is equal to non-minority education (Farkas, 2007). Currently, the only known 'visible' minority that has substantial discrimination towards them is the Roma community (Farkas, 2007).

"… the unlawful segregation—that is, cases where no reasonable explanation is available to justify the practice or the situation of segregation (Cahn et al., 1998)—of Roma children in educational institutions is considered to be a persistent and widespread problem in Hungary." (Balogh, 2012). Besides these findings there are no exact data regarding this occurrence, because of prohibited data collection on national or ethnic origin data. Despite the lack of official statistics, however, the forms of unlawful segregation of Roma can be identified (Farkas, 2007; Balogh, 2012). We can determine intra-school segregation (separate Roma and non-Roma classes), inter-school segregation (children taught at the same class, but different learning materials) and individual segregation (homeschooling is offered often to Roma students) types.

The Amnesty International (2009) report on Hungary found that segregated Roma- only schools exist in approximately 170 localities across the country. Some local authorities have responded negatively to measures to end the segregation of Roma education; in addition, resources available to implement such measures have been underutilized or misutilized (Balogh, 2012).

What are ethnic minorities? A problem with terminology

Even among scholars, there is some discussion regarding the meaning of ethnicity. Hungary's law defines minorities as 'ethnic groups' settled in the country for at least a century who have their

language, culture, and tradition, and who possess a sense of collective affiliation (Simon, 2012). Accordingly, the Roma community is an ethnic minority in Hungary.

Identifying Roma

The census provides valuable insight into a country's definition of national or ethnic minorities. According to Act 77 on national and ethnic minorities (1993), national minorities are included in the Hungarian census (Simon, 2012). Below are two strategies for measuring ethnicities (Simon, 2012).

First, is self-identification. It is suggested that individuals should be left free to declare, or not declare, their ethnicity. Hungarian censuses ask the following categories: national origin, national affiliation, language, and religion, and allow up to three answers to the question about nationality, allowing Roma to self-identify.

Second, is third-party identification. Its measurement limitations made it especially suitable for identifying Roma populations in Central and Eastern European countries. Third-party identification is very fragile since it recreates stigmatization and is based on an individual's representation.

Theoretical framework

Segregation in schools has long been of interest to researchers and is growing in importance (Rado, 2020). To better understand the causes, solutions, and implications of school segregation, the comparative approach to education offers a unique opportunity to integrate studies of school segregation into a comprehensive and comparative framework (Perry et al., 2021).

Using a case study of Hungary's education system and the segregation of Roma, I will provide an overview of the causes of school segregation. To do so, I will conduct a systematic review. My goal is to provide a bridge between the existing knowledge of factors and aspects contributing to the educational segregation of Roma in Hungary. In addition, by providing an overview I hope that my research will serve as a catalyst for future research and the field of social policy.

It has been an enduring question in the fields of sociology of education and education policy as to the extent to which students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, or abilities are clustered in different schools from their peers. Segregation in schools has different causes and mechanisms depending on the context. This is because school segregation is influenced by multiple factors, including psycho-social, social and psychological factors, as well as policy and educational settings (Perry et al., 2021). Comparative education has the potential to draw upon differences, as well as similarities, to develop a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of how different factors shape and are shaped by school segregation.

Children who are segregated in schools that disproportionately serve socially disadvantaged children (such as students from low-income backgrounds or ethnic minorities) are often affected by school segregation because such schools are frequently underfunded (OECD, 2012). However, schools that enroll a high percentage of socially advantaged students may have access to a wide range of resources.

Social segregation in schools has been linked to inequalities in education opportunities, experiences, and outcomes, and is widely seen as both inefficient and inequitable (OECD, 2012). Moreover, it may result in negative consequences for social cohesion and tolerance in the larger society.

Factors

The reasons for school segregation can be divided into three categories. The first category is composed of societal norms and psychosocial dynamics related to class and how parents engage with schooling. Secondly, context-specific factors affect societies and communities, such as demographic characteristics, economic, cultural, and political development, and inequality. Third, there is the structure and organization of education, including policy and financial frameworks. These three areas of factors are complex and interrelated.
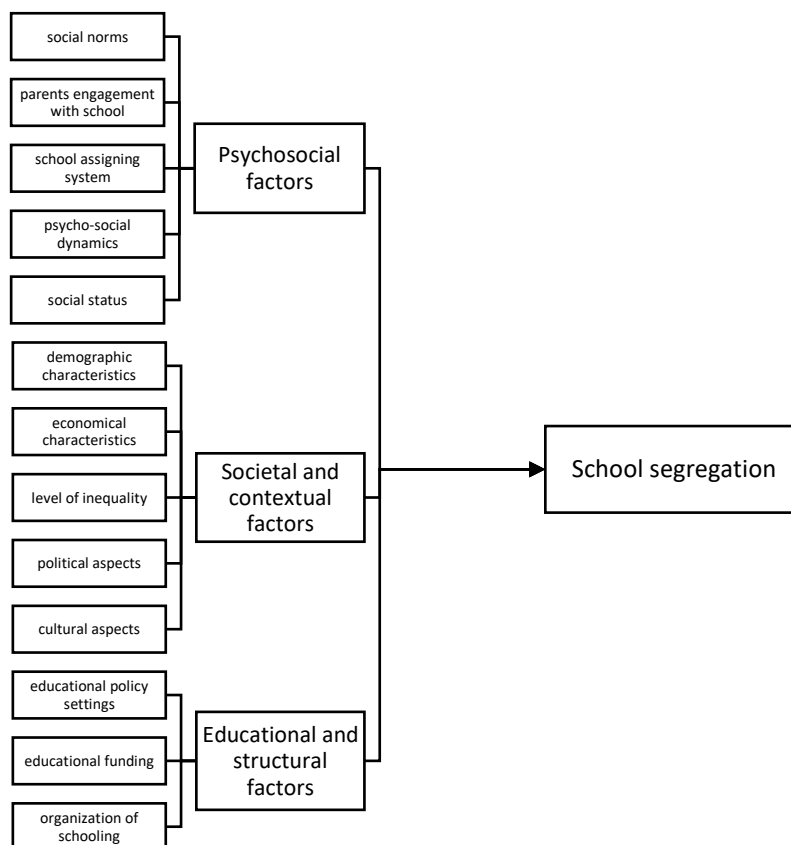
Key concepts

First, psychosocial factors. They provide insight into the role of education in society. Education plays a key role in social reproduction and mobility (McMahon, 2002; Lannert, 2004). Maintaining social status is the minimum goal of a parent. Therefore, higher social status requires more

education (Ball 2003; Lannert 2004). High-status families are more likely to participate in school choice. Disparities in educational quality make choices more necessary (Perry et al., 2021).

School segregation is influenced by several social and contextual factors. Social class, gender, race, and ethnicity are included, as well as demographic characteristics (Perry et al., 2021). Segregation of schools may differ in societies with high numbers of marginalized and stigmatized students. The labor market and economic inequalities also play a role (Perry et al., 2021). Those with high unemployment may have different causes and consequences of school segregation than those with plenty of employment opportunities. Residential segregation may also play a role.

Another aspect to take into account is structural and educational aspects. Education ecosystems include settings, structures, processes, and policy options. Studies have examined the impact of marketization on school segregation. Education marketization introduces market principles, such as competition and choice, into school systems (Rado, 2020). There has been an argument that the marketization of education increases educational effectiveness, but research shows it also increases segregation in schools (Perry et al., 2021). The domain is of most importance to policymakers as it is directly under their control. School choice, competition, admissions, autonomy, funding, and academic selection are included.

Conceptual model

social norms

parents engagement with school

school assigning system

psycho-social dynamics

social status

Psychosocial factors

demographic characteristics

economical characteristics

level of inequality

political aspects

cultural aspects

Societal and contextual factors

School segregation

educational policy settings

educational funding

organization of schooling

Educational and structural factors

Scientific and social relevance, interdisciplinarity

During the last few decades, researchers' interest in school segregation has increased in part due to PISA (international assessment) which provides new measurement opportunities. Further studies of school segregation will lead to new directions and help researchers expand existing branches within the subject that are not sufficiently understood (Perry et al., 2021). The same is true in this case, as I chose a topic that, despite previous research, hasn't found a definitive answer, and questions regarding segregation of Roma in schools persist to this very day. Furthermore, we see a growing trend of segregation of Roma students in Hungary's educational system, which makes it more of a burning question (Rado, 2020).

Because there is a continuing debate between policymakers in Hungary regarding educational policies, the research findings could contribute to the field of social policy. The never-ending debate over pro- and contra-segregation advocates in the Hungarian parliament reemerges every

time there's a scandalous school segregation case that gets magnified in the press. There is, therefore, no doubt that school segregation is still a crucial issue in Hungary today. An important mark by Rado (2020), an educational policy researcher in Hungary, demonstrates the need for research about school segregation: "Indeed, the repeated failure of educational policy interventions that aim at reversing the process of segregation is primarily caused by a poor understanding of the underlying reason" (Rado, 2020, p.4).

Considering that my field of study demands sensitive and complex research methodologies, my research was interdisciplinary. Factors from different fields of science need to be considered when dealing with socially vulnerable groups and they're long-term social and economic impacts. To give a comprehensive explanation of this subject, I believe it is necessary to incorporate aspects from the field of educational or social policy to grasp the educational policy and structural background of the examined population; psychosocial factors, including aspects of the student and their household psychology and social psychology, as well as sociology, to investigate factors in a societal and contextual perspective.

Research question

Based on the work described above, I formulated my research question as follows: *What are the causes and mechanisms of the segregation of Roma in Hungary's education system?* My research will examine the causes and mechanisms of segregation among the Roma community in Hungary, which I intend to examine as a case study. My overall goal is to gain a deeper understanding of school segregation. To that end, I will provide an overview of the subject.

As a result of my previous research, I anticipate that there is a high level of school segregation in Hungary and that the school segregation process is harmful to Roma children. I am eager to learn about exceptions.

Methods

Study design

A systematic review will be conducted for the study. Due to the difficulty in collecting statistical data on ethnic minorities, in particular, data collection on nationality or ethnicity is prohibited, I chose to employ a secondary, qualitative approach and conduct a systematic review.

Study sample

I started with collecting and identifying relevant work, which falls under scientific research on the subject. Papers were selected based on their main focus, as well as their timeframe. Following the collection process, I assessed the quality of the studies. The findings were summarized and an interpretation of the results was provided following the summary. On the basis of the main findings of the papers, I was able to organize them into categories, which later formed the basis for my results section. After summarizing the mainly homogeneous findings, I searched for contradictory papers, which I generally did not find. Mainly, it was the focus and time frame of research that differentiated them. Despite reading journalistic works and political communication platforms for the purpose of examples, my analysis was based solely on scientific research papers.

Data and measurements

As a source, I primarily relied on academic research. As part of my research, I also read publications from foundations, non-governmental organizations, and social organizations dealing with the issue I chose. In addition, I reviewed documentaries related to my chosen subject, as well as other materials written about the topic by journalists or experts. In the course of my research phase, I examined how the topic has been presented and discussed in the media and on political platforms.

Data analysis

The analysis consisted of a narrative synthesis. Using a narrative approach was the most appropriate method of summarizing the data. Using the major findings of all included studies, I determined if the collection suggests positive, negative, mixed, or inconclusive findings. In most

cases, my research produced homogenous findings, so my main objective was to structure the findings logically and interpret the connections between them.

Studying a socially vulnerable group raised ethical concerns. Minorities are vulnerable to discrimination, so they are often reluctant to declare their ethnicity and therefore reluctant to participate in research studies that ask them to reveal their identities. The fear of discrimination is very prevalent among the Roma minority in Hungary, the group I intend to study in my research (Ladányi & Szelényi, 2001). Ethnicities must be defined with great consideration. Furthermore, racial and cultural classifications affect societal norms and values in terms of what is appropriate and permissible (ELAM & FENTON, 2003). The characteristics of my study group require a great deal of sensitivity from researchers, and as a social scientist, I took this into account to the best of my abilities.

Results

Let me begin by explaining the structure of public education. Local governments, foundations, churches, and individuals establish and maintain schools and kindergartens in Hungary. Ninety percent of children attend public institutions (Hungary | Eurydice, 2021).

Education is under the Ministry of Human Capabilities. System maintenance became more centralized (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Rado, 2020). As of January 2013, the state maintains public education institutions (except kindergartens) (Rado, 2020; Hungary | Eurydice, 2021). For the maintenance of these institutions, the government established Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre. Kindergarten education is provided by municipalities as part of the central budget. Minority governments may establish schools and teach in their own languages (Hungary | Eurydice, 2021).

A Vocational Training Act of 2011 introduced a new vocational training system with reinforced dual elements, which provides practical training (as well as theoretical classes) from first grade (Hungary | Eurydice, 2021).

Stages of the education system

From 3 to 16 is the compulsory education age. Education is compulsory for 10 years plus 3 years of kindergarten. Studies are financially supported until the age of 18.

In the early childhood development center (bőlcsöde), children aged 20 weeks until 3 years are cared for, educated, and supervised. Kindergarten (óvoda) is compulsory for children aged 3 to 6.

In Hungary, primary and lower secondary education are organized through a single structure of eight-grade basic schools (általános iskola) (typically for students aged 6-14, covering grades 1-8).

Upper secondary education (typically for pupils aged 14-18, usually covering grades 9-12) is provided by general secondary schools (gimnázium), vocational secondary schools (szakgimnázium) or vocational schools (szakközépiskola) or vocational school for special education (szakiskola). However, general secondary schools can also offer longer programs starting earlier (from Grade 5 or 7).

A general secondary school provides general education and prepares students for the secondary school leaving examination, which is a prerequisite to pursuing higher education. The secondary vocational schools offer general and pre-vocational education, prepare students for secondary school leaving exams, and offer vocational post-secondary non-tertiary programs. General, prevocational, and vocational education are all offered in vocational schools, along with remedial lower secondary general education for students who haven't completed basic education. Upon completion of their vocational program, students can pursue upper secondary general school examinations.

Higher education programs are offered by public and private universities (egyetem) and colleges (főiskola). Bachelor degree programs can last six to eight semesters under the Bologna degree structure, followed by Master degree programs lasting two to four semesters. The third cycle offers doctoral studies. Some disciplines, such as medicine and law, offer undivided long programs.

As part of adult education and training, the public and private sectors offer non-formal courses as well as part-time general education programmes.

The structure of the Hungarian education system
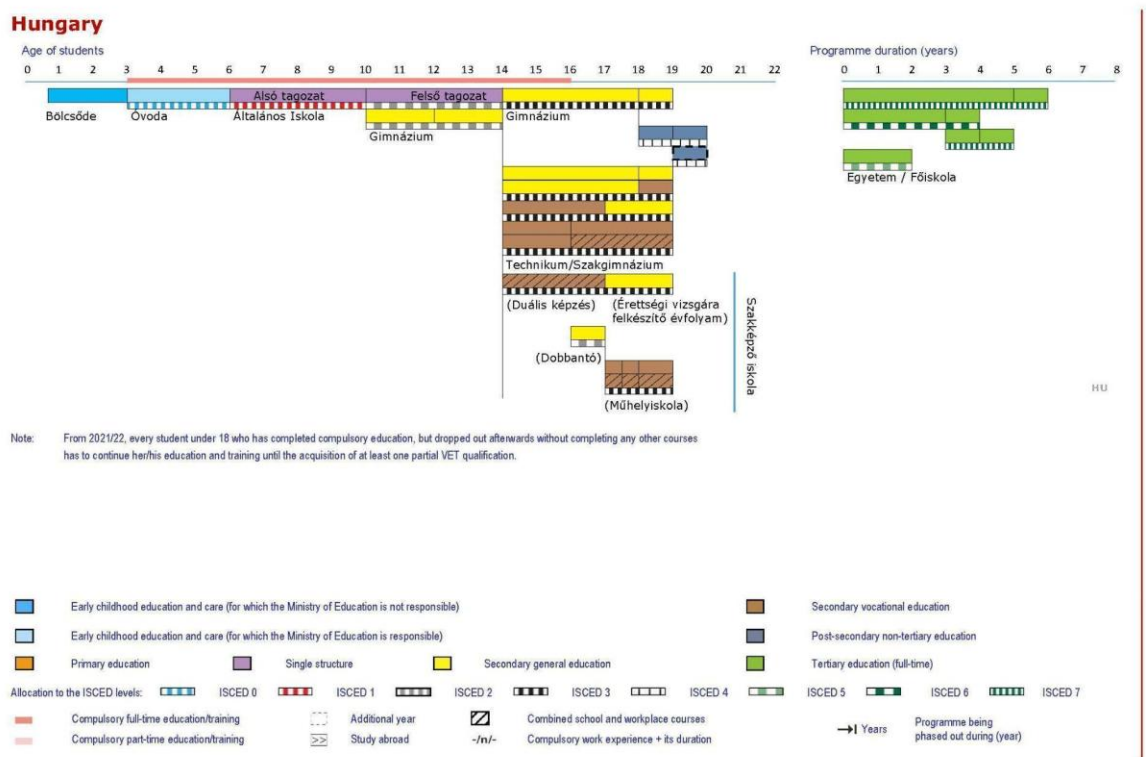
Hungary

Source: (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021)

All researchers seem to agree that the Hungarian education system is highly selective (Csapó et al., 2009; Kiss, 2016; Berényi, 2018; Hricsovinyi & Józsa, 2018; Rado 2020; Bihari 2021). Selective educational systems provide ample opportunities for ethnic segregation and vice versa: low selectivity reduces the likelihood of ethnic segregation (Rado, 2020). As part of human rights, segregation should be banned and enforced relentlessly, but alone it is insufficient. This prohibition cannot be enforced in an extremely selective public education system.

After switching from socialism to a democratic, capitalist state at the beginning of the 1990s, Hungary's economy and society underwent a rapid transformation (Csapó et al., 2009). The most obvious change is the high degree of differentiation in every aspect of life. We also observe this phenomenon in education, where there has been a growing difference between schools as well as the marketization of education (Bihari 2021). Throughout the 2000s, every three years, the international assessment PISA has provided Hungary with a great opportunity to examine this. If we examine these assessments, we can see that the differentiation has not stopped since then,

however, the extent of the increase has lowered, and now we can observe a slow and low rise (Csapó et al., 2009).

Although Hungary has had an officially unified, eight-grade primary school system since 1948, several hidden mechanisms and more or less open procedures for the selection of pupils at school and class level have emerged (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018). Official education policy has never supported segregating students according to ability or social background (Csapó et al., 2009). By expanding the possibilities of free school choice after the change of regime, the possibility of selection based on the social background has increased (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Bihari, 2021).

As Radó (2018) points out, in Hungary, two parallel educational discourses occur almost independently of one another. One is about the selectivity of the Hungarian public education system and the impact of selection on learning opportunities and learning outcomes, the other on discrimination against Roma pupils, including the segregation of these pupils and its consequences. I would like to emphasize here the important evidential connection between educational segregation and educational selectivity in research: segregation is an illegal ethnic-based separation and, therefore, a form of selection (Radó, 2018).

When it comes to selectivity or selective education systems, it is not about a lack of match between needs and capacities in schools, but rather that their family background plays a role in their chances of progress within the system (Radó, 2018). The Hungarian educational setting is part of the category of selective public education systems in Central Europe (Rado, 2020; Kende 2021). Common characteristics are the length of time spent in education above the European average, the almost complete completion of secondary education, the average equity of learning outcomes above or slightly below the OECD average, and the poor equity of learning outcomes. Poor compensatory capacity and strong selection (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009). Segregation and low value-added learning pathways are the price of keeping disadvantaged students in school (Radó, 2018).

PISA results show that Hungarian public education has been resembling the South-Eastern European model in the past few years: learning outcomes have been steadily declining and as a result of lowered compulsory schooling ages, more and more disadvantaged pupils are being left out of the system (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Radó, 2018; Bihari 2021).

Since the first PISA survey in 2000, it has been well known that the family background of Hungarian students has a huge impact on their performance. However, it is a lesser-known fact that, due to the selectivity of the school system, this effect very much affects student performance not directly but through school status (Radó, 2018).

Overview of factors

Below I discuss the main factors contributing to social selection and, at the same time, educational segregation. According to my main finding, I structure and discuss the variety of factors that researchers agree on and have not yet been contradicted.

Social inequalities and their impact

Results from Eurostat and PISA reveal that income inequalities do not deterministically affect equity in education (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Radó, 2018). The general conclusion to be drawn is that the explanation for the selectivity of Hungarian public education must be sought primarily in the operation of the education system and much less in the social environment (Radó, 2018).

The practice of pedagogy and pressure of separation

By the writings of experts, Hungarian pedagogy generally employs a frontal method of teaching (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018). Content-driven, one-way communication is the basis of this technique, in which whole classes are taught rather than individual children, based on uniform criteria. This teaching style can be described as 'undifferentiated' (Radó, 2018). Using such a methodology, only socially and culturally homogeneous compositions can be taught in a group setting.

It is also important to note that Hungarian public education is highly elitist. As it is in many Eastern-European countries, Hungarian teachers are largely responsible for translating the cultural codes of the intellectual middle class, to which they belong, into relevant school knowledge. Lower-status pupils are often negatively impacted by these expectations as a result of cultural exclusion. (Radó, 2018).

As a result of the above two characteristics, teachers are interested in assembling groups of students of the highest status and homogeneous composition. The expectations of teachers create extremely strong segregation pressures. This results in the selection of students at the entry-level of education (Radó, 2018).

Performance gaps

Public education becomes selective at later selection points as well as a result of early performance gaps. Family background always contributes to the development of differences in learning outcomes (Rado, 2020, Bihari 2021).

A serious quality problem in primary education contributes not only to segregation pressures due to distorted interests but also to the strength of selectivity due to learning achievement gaps. Different social disadvantages have a huge impact on learning performance. Due to the social disadvantage, Roma students and students in smaller settlements perform at a lower level, both directly and indirectly, as a result of their social background (Kiss, 2016).

School structure and selection points

When it comes to public education, it is important to take into account at what point the school structure operates selection points during the student's journey.

It is through institutionalized selectivity embedded in the school structure that ways out of uniform education in Hungary are opening upwards (towards institutions with higher aggregate status) and, more recently, downwards (towards institutions with lower aggregate status) (Bihari, 2021). A good example of the former is the transition to restructuring high schools, the latter to the so-called 'bridge' classes (Radó, 2018). They both strengthen the homogeneity of student groups and schools according to their family backgrounds, as well as the selectivity of public education.

School capacities

As Radó (2018) points out, one of the foremost factors in the social selection that is often overlooked is the gap between school capacity and enrollment. In general, the greater the gap between school capacity and enrollment, the greater the interest in maintaining selectivity and the greater the likelihood of parents and students making decisions that enhance the selection. Correlations are much stronger than those associated with school structure or the number of formal selection points (Radó, 2018).

School network space is determined by changes in school places and the combined dynamics of demographic processes. The number of students entering public education has been declining in Hungary for decades (Csapó et al., 2009; Radó, 2018).

Thus, the question is whether public education's supply of accommodation has followed the decline in headcount. Metrics indicate little. As the number of students declined in the early 1990s, the number of schools in primary education increased instead, resulting in an oversupply (Radó, 2018). Due to the financial incentives built into the funding of schools, local self-governments reduced the number of parallel classes later in the decade, mitigating efficiency problems. Despite this, the number of schools remained high due to the high political costs associated with school closures, resulting in a large space for social selection (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Rado, 2020).

In addition to unequally distributing pupils from different backgrounds among different schools, a large number of small schools also distribute all of the preconditions for a quality education unequally (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009). Because higher-status parents tend to choose better schools, capacity gaps, like early performance gaps, create selection spirals (Ball, 2003; Lannert, 2004; Kiss, 2016; Radó, 2018). The free choice of schools by parents is widely regarded as one of the most important underlying reasons for social selection in schools (Lannert, 2004; Radó, 2018; Bihari 2021).

Parental choices

Parental choices are affected by two important factors: the educational attainment of the parents and the achievement of the pupils (Lannert, 2004). Hungarian parents prioritize status preservation, which means that higher-status parents consider only learning pathways for their children that will lead to the highest possible educational achievement (Kiss, 2016; Rado, 2020).

In this context, influential social groups exert influence over national and local educational policy decision-making to ensure their children receive, as Rado (2020) puts it, "the royal road" to the best universities abroad and in Hungary. At the elementary level, this means choosing the 'best' primary schools, and at the secondary level, this means enrolling pupils in 'elite schools' (generally eight- or six-grade secondary schools). In selecting 'good schools', there is no comparison of sophisticated performance indicators, but rather a subjective perception based on student social/ethnic composition, school facilities, and location (Radó, 2018).

Parental behavior influenced by aspirations maintains a high demand for the network of 'elite schools' which strengthens the selectivity of the Hungarian education system (Kiss, 2016; Berényi, 2018). Thus, social selection occurs not through the active separation of disadvantaged students,

but through the selective school choice of high-status parents, which eventually increases the concentration of low-status students in certain schools (Rado, 2020).

Governmental effects

In education, governance plays a key role in management, planning, financing, and evaluating quality. As a result of financial incentives built into the financial allocation system between 1991 and 2012, school owners had a vested interest in ensuring some balance between school capacity and pupil enrollment. Due to these weak incentives, local school network rationalization programs were generally unsuccessful (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018, Varga, 2018; Rado, 2020). The education system was completely restructured by Orbán's government in 2011. All public educational institutions were taken over by Klebelsberg School Maintaining Authority (KLIK) in January 2013 from the self-governments (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021). This was widely referred to as the "nationalization of schools". School autonomy was terminated or reduced to a symbolic level. The government implemented a nationalized textbook system and issued a single curriculum to all schools in addition reduced the compulsory schooling age from 18 to 16 (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018).

All relevant educational outcome indicators in Hungary have declined very rapidly and dramatically since the complete reorganization of the system of governance in Hungary (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Rado, 2020). Therefore, from the middle of the decade, higher-status parents started parachuting their children into private schools. By actively supporting the rapid expansion of the school networks of the major Christian churches, the government created even new escape routes for higher-status pupils. The result was a greater concentration of low-status pupils in state-owned schools, making the already extremely selective school system even more selective (Ercse & Radó, 2019).

Educational policies

Governments communicate their educational policy expectations in three ways: through government-funded and initiated education development programs, through institutionalized stakeholder consultations, and through public communication (Rado, 2020).

Following 2010, almost all EU-funded school development programs in Hungary were suspended and funds were reallocated to newly established mechanisms such as centrally issued curriculum

and textbooks and administrative professional control of teachers. In line with the gradual establishment of an autocratic regime, all institutionalized stakeholder consultation mechanisms were also eliminated (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Rado, 2020).

During the period 2002-2010, public communication of overt and hidden policy expectations could be characterized as a cautious promotion of integration in education. As these expectations were rarely met by resolute policies that could override the local interests grids created by these factors, they did not change the behavior of local and institutional actors in education (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018). Communication from the government changed after 2010. Government officials approved all instances of social selection and segregation by absolving local actors of responsibility (Rado, 2020).

The ethnic dimension

In Hungary, segregation is most often caused by separating higher-status pupils from lower-status pupils without involving active discrimination. Despite this, psychological bias, such as stereotypes, prejudices, or even overt racism, may adversely affect the seemingly ethnically neutral selection practices of non-Roma parents, school directors, and teachers (Rado, 2020). To a large extent, Roma pupils are not concentrated in certain schools because of their ethnic affiliation, but because of their extremely low socioeconomic status (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009; Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Rado, 2020; Bihari, 2021).

A key indicator of the degree of segregation of Roma students is the proportion of ghetto schools, schools where more than half of the students are Roma. Data obtained from the National Assessment of Competences show that, except for a brief pause in 2008, the proportion of ghetto primary schools has increased steadily since 2006 (Csapó et al., 2009).

In part, ethnic separation is caused by spontaneous demographic changes. Hungary's Roma population is unevenly distributed, certain regions have a higher proportion than others. Roma population concentrations are leading to an increase in ghetto schools in rural areas rather than in cities. According to Kertesi and Kézdi (2009), residential segregation is not directly related to educational segregation, since parental choice reduces the role that residence school districts play as catchment areas. In case of over-application, schools are required to give an advantage to pupils from within their designated catchment areas. The cost of pupil mobility is also rather low in bigger

settlements. Therefore, the extent of segregation that cannot be explained by demographics is the result of social selection, which is the streaming of students of higher status into 'better' schools. Also determines patterns of Roma segregation in education, in cities, it occurs between schools, and in villages, due to higher transportation costs, it occurs between schools and non-Roma children enroll in other schools, leading to white flight (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009; Botterman, 2012; Rado, 2020).

In Hungary, between-school segregation is much stronger than within-school segregation because, during previous decades, local self-governments often mitigated the decline in efficiency caused by declining student numbers by reducing the number of parallel classes, not by closing or amalgamating schools (Rado, 2020). Consequently, many small schools were available, but students from different social and ethnic backgrounds had less space to separate within schools. The situation is especially prevalent in small rural schools that operate only one class per grade.

Havas and Liskó (2005) found that when the proportion of Roma pupils in a primary school exceeds 50%, non-Roma children stream to other schools to a considerable extent. A school that becomes a ghetto school enters an irreversible spiral of segregation.

Poor academic performance also contributes to Roma segregation, as it is a key factor in later selection. Roma pupils' poor performance, however, is associated with their very low family status, not with their ethnicity (Papp, 2011).

There is an ethnic dimension beyond the ethnically neutral reasons for social selection for Roma students. As revealed by the 2006 National Assessment of Competences survey, the segregation index calculated based on ethnicity is higher than that calculated based on disadvantaged status. The quality of schooling is judged by parents based on incomplete information; a high concentration of Roma pupils is often considered an indication of poor quality (Rado, 2020).

Although Roma pupils are mainly segregated in Hungary by strong social selection at a systemic level, certain segregation channels are based on their active exclusion from mainstream education (Farkas, 2007; Balogh, 2012; Radó, 2018). The traditional forms of segregation used by most Central-Eastern and South-East European countries include channeling Roma pupils into special schools (Eliason, 2016; Rado, 2020). As a result of Hungary's very successful SEN (special educational needs) integration policy over the past decade, this type of segregation is less common

(Rado, 2020). The Hungarian government has nevertheless established "bridge classes" and cultivated a new layer of segregation. The goal of these programs is to provide second chances to students who have dropped out of school before they reach the compulsory school attendance age. In actuality, bridge classes are used to house Roma pupils until the end of their compulsory schooling period, without providing any meaningful educational opportunities (Rado, 2020).

Several of the factors listed above can be attributed to a homogenous set of findings in research on educational segregation in Hungary, integration, and social selectivity. I present a model here to illustrate how complex and interconnected all these factors are.
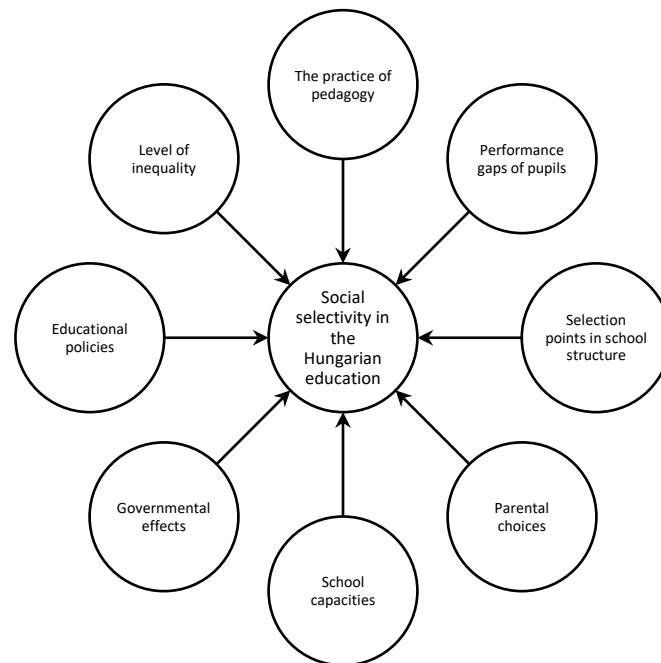
Discussion

Overview of main findings

All researchers seem to agree that the reasons for the segregation of Roma pupils in the Hungarian education system are largely due to the characteristics of the Hungarian educational system and its high social selectiveness. It is widely agreed upon that the major pattern of segregation of Roma pupils in Hungary is identical to the major pattern of overall social selection: Roma pupils are mainly concentrated in certain schools not because of their ethnic affiliation, but rather because of their low social status.

In summary, the factors contributing to social selection in the Hungarian education system are primarily a result of pressure for separation from schools, early performance gaps between students of different backgrounds, and fragmented school networks. Several governance failures, parental aspirations, and too many formal selection points amplify this social selection. As of recently, these factors have been supplemented by government-sponsored communications encouraging selection, as well as the rapid expansion of the highly selective private school network of churches aided by government action.

Research shows that despite significant resources mobilized for selection and segregation mitigation between 2002 and 2010, only small steps have been made (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Radó, 2018; Varga, 2018). In 2010, integrating took a step back. Due to the lack of commitment in education policy since then, there is little hope for progress. Moderating the selection mechanisms of each settlement implementation could serve as a model and have a wider impact after a future turn in education policy (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2009; Fejes & Szűcs, 2018).

My findings support my expectation that segregation is widespread in Hungary. However I have found that this segregation is a result of selectivity and is related to the low socioeconomic status of the majority of Roma in Hungary. The number of segregated schools has increased in recent years, which indicates that this is a trend on the rise. According to international comparisons, Hungary has one of the most selective educational systems in Europe, which leaves a great deal of room for segregation (Kende, 2021).

Strengths and limitations

A systematic review has many strengths, including addressing an unanswered question with a comprehensive search, selecting relevant evidence based on a criterion, assessing validity, summarizing findings objectively, and drawing evidence-based conclusions (Cook, 1997).

Among the limitations of systematic reviews are biased such as selection bias, inadequate blinding, attrition bias, and selective reporting of results. It is also necessary to address imprecision.

Policy recommendations

We can see that educational segregation in Hungary is largely caused by the characteristics of educational settings. Thus, interventions and education policy require careful consideration. After the change of regime, Hungary's educational policy has not been efficient enough or even has contradictory outcomes regarding liquidating selective and/or segregated education (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018; Radó, 2018; Varga, 2018).

There are two main approaches to Hungarian educational policy when it comes to equity. One is to implement interventions on the demand side and one is on the supply side. In the first case, parents would lose their freedom of school choice while mandatory district enrollment would be introduced, and in the second case, the school network system would be rationalized. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

Three typical arguments have been used in Hungarian education policy discourse to restrict parental choice (Berényi, 2018). The first is based on the observation that supply-side interventions haven't worked. It would be convincing only if successive governments did not offer alternatives to the rather mild measures they have already taken. The second is that free parental choice is fully responsible for selection and segregation. In reality, however, the social selection is considerably more complex than this, as seen above. The third argument is that families that are disadvantaged and/or Roma cannot benefit from the phenomenon of free parental choice. Social selection works because of this. However, the fact that one group of society does not benefit from something does not imply that nobody should be entitled to benefit from it.

It appears that there is a trade-off between ensuring Roma's rights are not violated and limiting parents' choices of schools. In any case, this trade-off only exists when demand-side intervention

is the only alternative. In addition, many would argue that shifting the responsibility to parents would not be right since social selection is largely the result of governance failures. The fact that such restrictions are easily circumvented also opposes free school choice. It is important to note that since social selection is one of the primary causes of segregation among Roma pupils, rationalizing the school system is essential to eliminate segregation, especially since Roma students are concentrated in small schools (Rado, 2020).

To implement Roma strategy plans, it is important to put in place systemic accountability mechanisms for both decision-makers and executors. Hungary in particular has seen that even existing initiatives for desegregating Roma in schools do not get to the implementation phases, and in some cases, funds are misappropriated or underutilized (Balogh 2012). I would recommend enforcement control as a policy. In Hungary, it is imperative to make the most of the legislative process by using accountability mechanisms on policies that affect minorities.

Create campaigns to educate parents about how to deal with school discrimination when it occurs. Hungary has several non-profit organizations that provide legal assistance to victims of discrimination, even identifying cases of systematic discrimination when victims may not be aware of it. TASZ is among the most well-known organizations like this. As well as the great work they do when a need arises, I would suggest a policy focused on prevention so organizations like TASZ aren't overloaded. To prevent discrimination, we should address the lack of knowledge and tools for combating discrimination practices.

Concluding statement

I would like to conclude my research with a personal statement. Investigating the reasons behind the segregation of the Hungarian educational system was a topic of personal interest to me. Throughout my academic career, I have always known I wanted to solve social issues, work for social justice, and work for human rights. My motivations were always rooted in the example of the Roma minority in Hungary. In the course of this study, I have gained an understanding of the extent of my contribution to the segregation of Roma students in the Hungarian educational system through the path I have chosen, referred to by Péter Radó as "the royal road" in education. Realizing the contradiction within my values and path, I have never been more motivated to make accurate interventions to achieve educational equity in the Hungarian scene.

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